



Parshas Vayigash 5763

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*May I tie a knot at the end of my tzizis, after all it is not a double knot?*

In the previous Shabbos sheet we mentioned that the *poskim* hold that a strong **double knot** is classified as a craftsman's knot due to its sturdiness and strength; hence one may not tie a double knot even for less than 24 hours.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, a single knot is not classified as a knot at all and may be tied for an unlimited time. However, one must be careful to know which knot the *halacha* considers a single knot before tying any seemingly 'innocent' knots.

The **permitted single knot** is the knot beneath the bow on one's shoe (without the bow). Such a knot cannot last at all and is not strong. For example, tying two handles of a plastic bag in the same manner as the knot on a shoe (we are not referring to the knot where the two handles are twisted into one and tied, that comes later). Since this is only a single knot and if one were to apply any pressure to the bag the knot would open.

Such a knot may be tied for an unlimited time.

The **forbidden single knots** include a single knot tied into the middle of a string, the knot tied at the ends of one's *tzizis* to prevent them from unraveling, two handles twisted into one, forming a loop and threading the head through the loop and the

knot tied at the end of a sewing thread.

Seeing that these knots can be tight and strong they share the same characteristics as the double knot and are forbidden to tie on Shabbos.

Being that the forbidden single knot is classified as a craftsman's knot (similar to the double knot) it is forbidden to tie it even if one intends untying it within 24 hours.

*Would I be permitted to untie such a knot?*

Untying knots is the parallel of tying knots and any knot prohibited to tie is also prohibited to untie. Therefore one is forbidden to untie the knot at the end of his *tzizis*. If one sturdily tied the handles of a plastic bag either in a double knot or by twisting the handles through a loop and pulling tight it would be forbidden to open such a bag on Shabbos. It is permitted to rip open the bag – but that is another issue.

*If one must tie a knot on Shabbos, either for the sake of a mitzvah or for safety reasons, is he permitted to do so?*

The *Shulchan Aruch* says<sup>2</sup> that when necessary, for the sake of a *mitzvah*, one is permitted to tie a knot that would normally be forbidden *mid'rabanan*.<sup>3</sup> This is not a

<sup>2</sup> *Simon* 317:1.

<sup>3</sup> The *Beit Mizrach* says that this *halacha* is only according to the *Rif* and the *Rambam* but according to *Rashi* and *Tosfos* such a knot is *ossur* even for the sake of a *mitzvah*. This is quoted but M"B 317:13. The

<sup>1</sup> *Rama* at the end of *simon* 317:1.

blanket *beter* because the *Magen Avraham*<sup>4</sup> says that this is on condition that a normal permitted knot would not suffice. For example, one may tie a rope to fence off a hole in the ground to prevent people from getting hurt. Tying a slipknot or a bow, which are permitted knots, would not suffice as it leaves potential danger; rather one is permitted to tie a craftsman's knot with the intention of leaving it tied for a short time. Such a knot is normally *ossur mid'rabanan*, but to facilitate for a mitzvah Chazal permitted it.

*If the answer to the above is yes, is there a restriction as to which type he may tie and which knot not?*

One may not tie a knot which is forbidden *mid'oraisa* (a Biblical prohibition) even for the sake of a *mitzvah*. Therefore a permanent double knot or any other craftsman's knot is forbidden under all circumstances. The *P'ri Megadim* raised an interesting question. Since one is permitted to tie a knot, which is only rabbinically forbidden, for the sake of a mitzvah, why then if one's *tzitzis* tore on Shabbos, or if he does not possess a garment with *tzitzis* is he forbidden to make *tzitzis* on Shabbos? The solution supposedly would be to tie the *tzitzis* **intending** to untie them after Shabbos, thereby only tying a knot rabbinically forbidden being that it is not a permanent one.

The *Bi'ur Halacha*<sup>5</sup> explains the matter saying that one does not look at the individual's intention rather at the global manner of tying those particular knots. Since

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*Shulchan Aruch HaRav* and other *poskim* did not mention this **בית מאיר**. See also the *SS"K* 15:49 in footnote 162.

<sup>4</sup> See *M"B* 317:12.

<sup>5</sup> *B"H* simon 317:1 'הקושר'.

knots tied in *tzitzis* are always permanently tied, it would not help deciding or intending to untie them after Shabbos and they remain knots that are biblically forbidden to tie on Shabbos. Therefore there is no option on Shabbos but to remain without *tzitzis* on that Shabbos.

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### Vort on the Parsha

Yosef Hatzadik said to his brothers "you did not send me here", (45:8) teaching us that not only should one forgive one's fellowman for any misdeeds perpetrated by him, he should try and make the other person feel that there was no harm done either. The esteemed *Ga'on* Rav Yitschak of Petersburg thus explained the *Rosh* in '*Orchos Chaim*' who said "avoid thinking about another as being guilty when he apologizes, whether it is true or false" to mean that even if his apologies are not fully sincere, make him feel that you absolve him totally of any guilt and hard feelings. This is a trait of angels, and following in our forefathers footsteps will surely make our lives that much happier.

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### Food For Thought

*Am I permitted to untie a double knot that is causing discomfort?*

*How is a slipknot classified?*

*How do you classify a bow over a single knot? Is it completely permitted without restrictions or are there rules it must comply with?*

*Is there any particular way a Sefer Torah must or must not be tied?*

Answers coming next week.

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Dedicated to the hatzlacha and yeshua of Chaim ben Liba.

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**Note:** The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.