



# THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

## HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

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**RABBI DOVID OSTROFF shlita**

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### Tying Knots cont.

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

The *Shulchan Aruch* says <sup>1</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>2</sup> This is not a blanket *heter* because the *Magen Avraham* <sup>3</sup> says that this is on condition that a normal permitted knot would not suffice.

For example, one may tie a rope to fence 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; 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.

The *P'ri Megadim* raised an interesting question. Since one is permitted to tie a rabbinically forbidden knot for the sake of mitzvah, why then if one's *tzitzis* tore on Shabbos, or if one does not possess a garment with *tzitzis* is one 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 rabbinically forbidden knot as it is not permanent.

The *Bi'ur Halacha* <sup>4</sup> explains saying that one does not look at the individual's intention rather at the global manner of tying those particular knots. Since knots tied in *tzitzis* are always permanently tied, it would not help deciding or intending to untie them after Shabbos and they remain a knot that is biblically forbidden to tie on Shabbos. Therefore there is no option on Shabbos but to remain without *tzitzis* that Shabbos.

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

If one tied the cords on one's robe in a double knot intending not to untie the knot for a few days (being it his habit to slip off the robe without untying the knot). He later realized that the cords are too tight and he cannot slip off the robe. The option other than opening the knot would be to remain inside the robe until the end of Shabbos with all the discomfort entailed. In such circumstances he may untie the knot. <sup>5</sup>

The same scenario, but one tied a double knot in one's shoelaces also not intending to untie them for a few days. He later realized that he cannot slip off his shoes. This, of course, prevents one from getting into bed etc, which causes a great deal of annoyance and discomfort. Seeing that the knot is a rabbinically prohibited knot and it causes great distress it may be untied.

### *How is a slipknot classified?*

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

<sup>2</sup> The *בית מאיר* says that this *halacha* is only according to the *Rif* and the *Rambam* but according to *Rashi* and *Tosefos* such a knot is *ossur* even for the sake of a mitzvah. This is quoted but M"B 317:13. The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* and other *poskim* did not mention the *בית מאיר*. See also the *SS"K* 15:49 in footnote 162.

<sup>3</sup> See M"B 317:12.

<sup>4</sup> *B"H* *simon* 317:1 'הקושר'.

<sup>5</sup> *Rama siman* 317:1.

Although the *gemora Shabbos* 113a says that there is a dispute between the Chachamim and R' Yehuda as to whether a slipknot or a bowknot is considered a knot, the *halacha* is according to Chachamim who hold that it is not a knot at all. Accordingly one is permitted to tie a slipknot indefinitely and as tight as one likes because it is not classified as a knot.

#### **How does the halacha classify a bow over a single knot?**

Although a bow is not called a knot, as stated above, a single knot with a bow is considered a knot. The best example is the single and bow with which we fasten our shoes. It is not that the bow evolves into a knot because of the single knot beneath it; rather it is because the single knot, which is also not classified as a knot, now stands firm.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Is a bow over a single knot completely permitted without restrictions or are there rules that must comply?**

The bow by itself and the single knot by itself do not have rules and regulations and they may be tied forever. The combination of the bow and the single have to comply with the rules of tying knots. Therefore one is forbidden to intentionally tie one's shoes (with a single knot and bow) for longer than 24 hours.<sup>7</sup> One is forbidden to tie a plastic bag with two handles into a single and a bow when he knowingly intends it to remain tied for longer than 24 hours. Therefore challah or bread placed into a bag with the intention of not untying it for the next 24 hours may be tied into a bow **without** the single knot beneath it.

#### **What if I do not know when I will need the challah or bread?**

The *Taz*<sup>8</sup> and the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* say that if one does not intentionally tie for longer than the permitted period, and one often unties it within the permitted time, one may tie it on Shabbos. Therefore when tying the bread bag

(with a single and bow), since one may require the bread within 24 hours, even though 24 hours might pass before one opens it, one may tie the bag.

If you habitually tie your shoes without thinking when you will untie them and sometimes you (excuse me) just kick them off, since it is possible that you will untie them within 24 hours it is permitted.

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#### **Vort on the Parsha**

The *posuke* says *Re'eh* – see, I am giving you *b'rachah* and *k'lalah*, which is unusual because we often find in the Torah the word **hear**, as in **Shema** Yisrael, or understand. How is sight applied in this instance?

The S'lonimer Rebbe says that we know that the *yetzer tov* must counter the *Yetzer rah*, but it seems unequal, because the *yetzer rah* seemingly overpowers us with sight – we see evil things that have tremendous influence over us and we don't have much to overpower that; surely we should have something to use to balance it out? He answers that *Emunah* was given to us from *Hashem* in such a clear way that it is equivalent to sight. *B'nei Yisrael* **saw** the voices at Har Sinai – their *Emunah* was tangible. Here too the Torah says, **See** you have *b'rachah* and *k'lalah*, because our *Emunah* can be as concrete as a seeable object. With concrete *Emunah* we can fight the seductions of the *Yetzer Harah*. You might ask that our level of *Emunah* is not that strong. The answer is that you can bring it to that level because we were all at Har Sinai and we all have the ability to ascend to that level.

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לזכר נשמת חנה בת ברוך

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<sup>6</sup> אבני נזר או"ח סי' קע"ט סק"ד.

<sup>7</sup> *M"B* 317:29.

<sup>8</sup> *Taz* *Simon* 317:2 and the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 317:1.

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If you would like to send a question to Rav Ostroff, you can write to him at [shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com](mailto:shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com).

**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.