



## Not Tying the Knot

The beginning of the fifteenth *perek* discusses the prohibition of tying and untying knots. It differentiates between the knots that are prohibited on a biblical or rabbinic level and knots that are permitted. It is difficult to categorise the different types of knots and that task is taken up by the *Rishonim*. *Kehati* summarises two of the opinions.

*Rashi* explains that permanent knots are prohibited from the *Torah*. Knots that are not permanent, however due to being tied for extended periods appears so, are prohibited rabbinically. Whereas knots that will be undone close to their tying (or within the day) are permitted.

The *Rif* however has a different categorisation that is based on two factors. If the knot is professional and permanent then it is prohibited on a biblical level. If however it is either professional or permanent then it is prohibited rabbinically. If it is neither professional nor permanent then it is permitted to tie.

A fundamental point that is discussed however is, what is the source of the prohibition of tying and untying? We already know that the *melachot* are learnt from the activities that were engaged in during the construction of the *mishkan*, but on what particular activity is this *melacha* based?

*Rashi* (*Shabbat* 111b, s.v. *ve'elu*) explains they would tie the torn threads from the *yeriyot* (curtains). For the *melacha* of untying, recall that the *chilazon* was a creature which was used as the source for *techelet* dye. *Rashi* (*ibid.* s.v. "*kach*") explains that the prohibition of untying is learnt from the trappers that would untie knots within their nets in order to adjust its size. The *Bartenura* here also learns that source for the prohibition of tying is learnt from those that repaired the *yeriyot*.

*R' Akiva Eiger* however has a difficulty with *Bartenura's* explanation. The *Gemara* earlier (*Shabbat* 74b) asks our very questions. Initially it suggests that it was learnt from those that tied the *yeriyot* to the anchor pegs. This is rejected as such knots were not permanent and everyone agrees that the *melacha* relates to permanent knots. The

next suggestion is that it is learnt from when they tied torn threads in the *yeriyot* (*Rashi's* source above). The *Gemara* however rejects this as the source as it can only be a source for tying, but not untying. The *Gemara* concludes that the source for both tying and untying is learnt from the *chilazon* trappers. Therefore, why does the *Bartenura* (and *Rashi*) learn the prohibition of tying from those that repaired the curtains when the *Gemara* concludes that both tying and untying are learnt from the *chilazon* trappers? Furthermore, the *Bartenura* himself earlier (7:2) comments that both tying and untying are learnt from the *chilazon* trappers!

The *Tifferet Yisrael* explains that there are two ways to understand the *Gemara's* conclusion. The *Gemara* was unsatisfied with the *yeriyot* repairers as a source for both tying and untying as it was only suitable for the *melacha* of tying. The *Gemara* then suggests the *chilazon* trappers. The question is, was the intention that this is the source for both tying and untying or was it meant to be the source for only untying. More fundamentally what difference does it make if the source for tying is the *yeriyot* repairers or the *chilazon* trappers?

The *Tifferet Yisrael* explains that the knot of a *chilazon* trapper is a professional knot whereas the knots of one that repairs a torn thread in a curtain is... not. Recall that according to the *Rif* the *melacha* of tying a knot applies only to a permanent and professional knot. Consequently according to that understanding the *Gemara* initially suggest that the *melacha* is learnt from the *yeriyot* repairers and applies even to regular knots. The *Gemara* then concludes that the *melacha* is learnt from the *chilazon* trappers, and it follows that it only applies to professional knots.

*Rashi* however holds that whether the knot is professional is irrelevant. The critical issue is its permanence. Consequently the *Gemara* must maintain its original source for the prohibition – the *yeriyot* repairers – which relates to even regular knots. The *Gemara's* conclusion is not to replace the suggested source for the *melacha* of tying knots, but to provide another source for the *melacha* of untying.

*Yisrael Yitzchak Bankier*

**Revision Questions**

שבת ט"ו – י"ז: ג'

- What rule does *R' Meir* give for determining whether one is *chayav* for tying a knot on *Shabbat*? (ט"ו: א')
- List some knots that are completely permissible to tie on *Shabbat*. (ט"ו: ב')
- When is one allowed to fold clothing on *Shabbat*? (ט"ו: ג')
- Explain the debate between *R' Yishmael* and *R' Akiva* regarding whether one can prepare on *Shabbat* for *Yom Kippur* (that falls on Sunday). (ט"ו: ג')
- Can one save a *tefillin* bag when saving *tefillin* for a house set on fire? (ט"ו: א')
- How much food is one allowed to save from a fire? (Include both opinions) (ט"ו: ב')
- Regarding the previous question, would it make a difference if all the food was contained in one basket? (ט"ו: ג')
- Can one invite others to also take food for themselves from the fire? (ט"ו: ג')
- How many items of clothing can one save from a burning house? (ט"ו: ד')
- What can one do to prevent the fire from spreading? (Provide two solutions.) (ט"ו: ה')
- Can one ask a non-Jew to put out the fire? (ט"ו: ו')
- If a non-Jew comes to put out the fire, must the owner stop him? (ט"ו: ו')
- What can one do if the flame from their candles is close to the ceiling? (ט"ו: ז')
- What can one do if there is a scorpion in their house? (ט"ו: ז')
- If a non-Jew turns on a light on *Shabbat*, when is an *Yisrael* allowed to benefit from that light? (ט"ו: ח')
- What *melacha* did a non-Jew perform, after which *Rabban Gamliel* and the *Zekeinim* benefited from? (ט"ו: ט')
- What topic is discussed in the seventeenth *perek*?
- What is the difference between doors and doors of utensils? (ט"ו: י')
- One is allowed to use a hammer to crack open nuts on *Shabbat*: (ט"ו: יא')
  - What category of *heter* in the laws of *muktza* is this an example of?
  - Describe five other examples listed in the *Mishnah*.
- When is a reed used for olives susceptible to *tum'ah* and why? (ט"ו: יב')

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17 <sup>th</sup> July ט"ו תמוז	18 <sup>th</sup> July ט"ז תמוז	19 <sup>th</sup> July י"ז תמוז	20 <sup>th</sup> July י"ח תמוז	21 <sup>st</sup> July י"ט תמוז	22 <sup>nd</sup> July כ' תמוז	23 <sup>rd</sup> July כ"א תמוז
Shabbat 17:4-5	Shabbat 17:6-7	Shabbat 17:8-18:1	Shabbat 18:2-3	Shabbat 19:1-2	Shabbat 19:3-4	Shabbat 19:5-6

