The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן ל"ב סעיף א'-ב'

Overview

Siman 32 Seif 1:

The *mitzvah* of *tefillin* is to write the four *parshiyos* of קדש (Shemos 13:1-10), והיה כי (Shemos 13:11-16), שמע (Devarim 6:4-9) and והיה אם (Devarim 11:13-21). These *parshiyos* must be written in this order, which is the way they appear in the Torah and if someone deviated from this order they are invalid. *L'chatchila*, the *shel yad* should be written before the *shel rosh*.

- The "ד of the word אחד must be written larger than the other dalets. (M.B. 1)
- Each parsha must be written in order. If even one letter was omitted it may not be added later. (M.B. 3)
- The tefillin made from the parshiyos written out of order are invalid but they could be combined with other parshiyos if one knows that they were written in order. If one doesn't know that the parshiyos were written in order one must be stringent. Similarly, if the parshiyos were written and later one of them became invalid the parshiyos that were written after the invalid one are now invalid. (M.B. 4)
- According to some opinions the shel rosh is written first but the custom is like Rema that the shel yad is written first but b'dieved it doesn't matter. (M.B. 5)
- Sefer HaKavanos writes that the *shel yad* and *shel rosh* should be written consecutively without a verbal interruption. (M.B. 5)

Siman 32 Seif 2:

The *parshiyos* of the *shel rosh* should be written on separate pieces of parchment as opposed to the *shel yad* which are written on a single piece of parchment.

- The four *parshiyos* of the *shel yad* should be written in four separate columns. (M.B. 3)

Halacha Highlight

Which is written first, the *shel yad* or the *shel rosh*?

Rema Siman 32 Seif 1

ולכתחלה יכתב של יד קדם של ראש

Preferably one should write the *shel yad* before the *shel rosh*.

Rema writes that *l'chatchila* one should write the *shel yad* before the *shel rosh*. The source for this ruling is the Bais Yosef (סי' ל"ב ד"ה וכתב הר"י אסכנדרי) who writes in the name of R"I Askandri that there are those that maintain that in addition to the obligation to write the four *parshiyos* in the order in which they appear in the Torah, one should also write the *shel yad* before the *shel rosh* since the *pasuk* makes reference to the *shel yad* before it makes reference to the *shel rosh*. However, this halacha is only *l'chatchila* and thus if one's *tefillin* were not written in this order they remain valid.

Bach (ריש סי' ל"ב) disagrees based on the wording of the Tur. Tur writes that each *parsha* should be written on its own piece of parchment. That requirement obviously is limited to the *shel rosh* since the *parshiyos* of the *shel yad* are written on a single piece of parchment. The reason the Tur began with a discussion of the *shel rosh* is that the sanctity of the *shel rosh* is greater than the sanctity of the *shel yad* and therefore it should be written first. Prisha, however, rejects Bach's interpretation of the Tur and asserts that the Tur was also referring to the *shel yad*. When he wrote that each *parsha* must be written on a separate piece of parchment what he meant was that each *parsha* of the *shel yad* is written in a separate column. Accordingly there is no proof from the Tur that the *shel rosh* should be written first.

Mishnah Berurah (סק"ה) writes that our custom is to follow Rema's ruling to write the *shel yad* first. Shulchan Aruch HaRav (סע' א') on the other hand maintains that according to kabbalistic principles the *shel rosh* should be written first. Since both practices are well founded in halacha, one should follow his custom. One should be particular however, that the scribe should not write some of the *parshiyos* of the *shel yad,* then write the *parshiyos* of the *shel rosh* and then finish the *shel yad* since that practice does not follow either one of the two accepted opinions.

Stories to Share

The Proper Kavanah

ש"ע ס' ל"ב, א': "מצות תפילין שיכתוב ארבע פרשיות..."

The Arizal teaches very deep kavanos for a sofer to focus on while writing tefillin. These are so complex that the Mishnas Chassidim provides a short tefilah for sofrim to say to help them not err in writing or the kavanos. Tefillin written with kavanah are considered to impart greater holiness than tefillin written without them.

But kavanos are no simple matter, so a certain sofer asked Rav Sternbuch, shlit"a, if he should be mechavein the sheimos or not. Rav Sternbuch replied that it is not worthwhile to be mechavein in our times. "Regarding the kavanos of the words of the parshios and the sheimos of tefillin, it seems questionable whether anyone today is fitting or genuinely knows how to be mechavein. On the contrary, I am very wary of this, since any little deviation from exactly how it should be done can do more damage than rectification, chas v'shalom. It is therefore better to forgo this.

"But I do request that before you write you daven to Hashem: 'I am about to write these parshios in accordance with the proper kavanah as revealed by the Arizal, the Rashash, zt"l, and the Vilna Gaon, zt"l. Although I do not know these kavanos, may it be Your will Hashem, that this be considered as if I had focused on the proper kavanos.'

Rav Sternbuch concluded, "Your main work is to be particular that every point and every crown be written exactly as is proper. In this manner your writing will be desirable before Hashem, G-d willing!"

תשובות והנהגות, ח"ב, סוף ס' י"ט,