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

Overview

Siman 32 Seif 3:

The *parshiyos* should be written in black ink and may or may not include מי עפצים. Preferably the ink should be made from עשן עצים or oils soaked in מי עפצים as explained in Yoreh Deah (271). **If even one letter was written in a different color or with gold it is invalid. If one sprinkled gold dust on the letters it must be removed and the ink that remains is valid but if the gold dust was sprinkled on Hashem's Name there is nothing that could be done to remove the gold dust since it is prohibited to erase even part of Hashem's Name.**

- The ink requirements are *l'chatchila* requirement and the custom nowadays is to boil together מי עפצים, קומא and קנקנתום. (M.B. 8)
- Ink made from מי עפצים alone is invalid but it may include סתם יינם and does not have to be manufactured לשמה. (M.B. 8)
- If even part of a letter was made with colored ink or gold dust it is invalid. (M.B. 9)
- Although when the color is still in place the letter is invalid, once it is scraped off it is valid since the ink below remains in place and it is not considered as though the letter was formed by scraping. (M.B. 11)

Stories to Share

An Unfortunate Innovation

ש"ע ס' ל"ב, ג': "יכתבם בדיו שחור..."

A certain sofer ran out of ink and was forced to purchase a new stock for his work. When he heard about an exceptionally fine ink which was said to be kosher for tefillin he decided to look into it, rather than buy a fresh supply of what he had always used. When he examined the ink he noticed that it was somehow different. Words written with the substance had a sheen to them which made them very pleasing to the eye. When he inquired about the exact ingredients and process of making this very impressive ink he was told that it consisted of gallnuts whose dye is extracted by cooking them in alcohol and water.

When the Kaf Hachaim, zt"l, was asked about using this kind of ink, he ruled that it was clearly forbidden. "In recent times certain people have gotten too clever for their own good and began using this new ink. When I tested it out I found that after a few days the dried ink begins to flake and bits of the letters tend to jump off the parchment! This ruins the writing and renders all sifrei Torah, tefillin, or mezuzos written with this ink invalid. Those who are lenient and use this ink are going to have a harsh judgment since they cause the many to sin and there is no way to evaluate the vastness of their punishment!

He added, "Although it is permitted to use gallnut dye that has been extracted by water, it was never permitted to cook it in alcohol which causes the letters to jump and be ruined. People who purchase sifrei Torah, tefillin and mezuzos must be on guard that they do not mistakenly procure items which were written with this type of ink."

קול יעקב, ס' ל"ב, ס"ק י"ב

Halacha Highlight

Manufacturing דיו for *Sifrei Torah, tefillin* and *mezuzos*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 32 Seif 3

יכתבם בדיו שחור וכו'

They should be written with black ink etc.

Yerushalmi (מגילה פ"א ה"ט) states that *Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai* teaches that *Sifrei Torah, tefillin* and *mezuzos* must be written with דיו. There are numerous opinions about how to make דיו. Rambam (פ"א מהל' תפילין ה"ד) writes that any black ink that is permanent is considered דיו. *Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai* excludes ink made from other colors but does not provide instruction for how to manufacture דיו. Additionally, *l'chatchila* the ink should be erasable and for that reason one should preferably not include קנקנתום since adding that to the ink makes it non-erasable. Rosh (הל' ספר תורה סי' ד') maintains that black ink is not sufficient and it must be דיו. Nevertheless, it may be manufactured by combining מי עפצים and גומא or מי עפצים and קנקנתום. Rabbeinu Tam (תוס' גיטין י"ט: ד"ה דיו) contends that דיו must be made from the soot of trees and if the דיו was made from מי עפצים it is invalid.

Practically, Poskim enumerate a number of practices that should be followed when manufacturing דיו. Rema (יו"ד סי' רע"א סע' ו') writes that one should manufacture דיו from substances that are derived from a tree. A second issue is that all the ingredients should not include something *tamei* that was taken from a living creature. The manufacturing process should involve cooking and the final preference is that the דיו should be made for the sake of the *mitzvah*. These issues, however, are preferences *l'chatchila* but all that is essential is that the דיו should be black and should be capable of holding to the parchment. Therefore, when there is no alternative one is allowed to repair his *batim* or *retzuos* with any black ink that is permanent.

דיו that was manufactured for use for *tefillin* is considered sacred and may not be used for mundane purposes. Although designation of an item is not significant (הזמנה לאו מלתא היא), designation for a holy purpose is significant.