The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Thurs, Nov 13, 2025 ■ כ"ב חשון, תשפ"ו
סימן ל"ב סעיף ד'-ה'

Overview

Siman 32 Seif 4:

One must make sure that two letters do not touch one another; rather each letter must be surrounded by blank parchment. The writing should be complete and even the tip of the "*yud*" should not be missing. The letters should have the proper *tagin* and preferably the letters should be wide so that they do not become erased quickly. It is also a *mitzvah* for the letters to be beautiful on the inside and the outside.

- If two letters touch at their end in such a manner that the connection could be erased and each letter would retain its shape there are those who maintain that it is valid as is and other disagree. Later authorities agree that one should be stringent and the point of connection should be erased. This repair may be done to *tefillin* and *mezuzos* as well. (M.B. 12)
- The requirement that each letter should be surrounded by empty parchment is essential to the validity of *tefillin*. (M.B. 13)
- *Tagin* are added *l'chatchila* but *b'dieved* it is valid even without *tagin*. (M.B. 16)

Siman 32 Seif 5:

One must write with his right hand, even if he is ambidextrous. If one writes *tefillin* with his left hand it is invalid if *tefillin* written by a scribe with his right hand are available. A lefty should write with his left hand since for these purposes it is considered to be his "right" hand.

- If a letter is repaired with one's left hand it is invalid but one is allowed to separate connected letters with his left hand. (M.B. 17)
- A scribe who writes with his right hand but performs other activities with his left hand should preferably not work as a scribe but *b'dieved* it is acceptable. (M.B. 18)

Halacha Highlight

Letters or *tagin* that touch one another

Shulchan Aruch Siman 32 Seif 4

צריך שלא תדבק שום אות בחברתה אלא כל אות תהיה מוקפת גויל

Letters should not touch one another; rather each letter should be surrounded by parchment.

Shulchan Aruch writes that one must be careful that letters do not touch one another since the requirement is that each letter should be completely surrounded by parchment (מוקף גויל). Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ב) writes that if two letters touch at their bottoms such that if one would scratch off the ink that connects the two letters each letter would retain its basic shape there are opinions who maintain that it is valid as is, whereas others maintain that it is invalid. Late authorities decided that one should adopt a stringent approach to this matter and one should scratch off the ink that connects the two letters. Since this repair does not involve creating the correct shape of either letter it may be performed even for *tefillin* and *mezuzos* that must be written in order.

Biur Halacha (ד"ה צריך שלא) elaborates on the halacha when one *tag* touches another. He explains that when two *tagin* of one letter touch one another, Teshuvas Rama MiPano (סי' ל"ח) rules that it is invalid. If two letters are recognizable but their *tagin* touch one another, whether it is a circumstance of two letters of the same word or two letters from different words, that matter is subject to debate. Meiri adopts a lenient approach whereas Magen Avrohom and Pri Chodosh adopt a stringent approach. Biur Halacha rules that one should *l'chatchila* adopt a stringent approach and scratch off the ink that connects the two *tagin*. Furthermore, as mentioned above scratching off ink that connects two *tagin* that does not change the shape of the letter may be repaired even in *tefillin* and *mezuzos* and the repair does not disqualify them due to the disqualification of writing them out of order.

Stories to Share

The Demands of Tefillin

ש"ע ס' ל"ב, ד': "צריך שלא תדבק שום אות בחברתה..."

During the times of the Rishonim, there were periods when it was common that many did not put on tefillin. When the Ba'al Ha'itur, zt"l, was asked why, he explained that due to the range and complexity of the halachos of constructing the tefillin, there were simply not enough to go around. Another reason he cites was that there were periods of religious persecution when wearing or owning tefillin was outlawed. In such trying times, not everyone is willing to risk his life to fulfill a precious mitzvah.

בעל העיטור, הל' תפילין, שער א', ח"ז

Even after it became less dangerous to wear tefillin, the habit stuck; when it was no longer illegal to wear tefillin and trained sofrim abounded, many simple people did not return to the practice. When the Smag, zt"l, would visit places where people were not careful to put on tefillin he would exhort them to change their ways. "I know that you think you should not bother wearing tefillin since you mistakenly believe that this is only for tzaddikim. But the truth is that a wicked person should be exceptionally vigilant to put on tefillin. The reason why is that tefillin are a zikaron, a reminder. This teaches that the main mitzvah of tefillin is for those who require a reminder!"

סמ"ג, מ"ע ג'

The Chidah, zt"l, brings that even where people were more careful to wear tefillin, they often could not fulfill the halachos properly. Rabbeinu Efraim, zt"l, said, "Since I left my rebbe, Rav Meir of Rottenburg, zt"l, I have not found almost anyone who was careful in the halachos of tzitzis or tefillin as is proper. I can only give two exceptions to this general deficiency: Rabbeinu Peretz of Korvil, and my teacher, HaRav HaChassid, Rav Zuslin, zt"l."

נחל קדומים, פרשת יתרו, אות כ'