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

Overview

Siman 32 Seif 18 (a):

If the left leg of a מ touches its entrance thus closing it, it may not be repaired by scratching off the extra ink to open it since that involves חק תוכות. The only option is to scratch off the leg altogether so that what remains looks like a נ and then rewrite the left leg. If one made a ר that looks like a ד one should be stringent to not merely scratch off the leg or the roof to reshape it like a ר since both were made incorrectly; rather one should scratch them both off. If two letters touch, regardless of whether this occurred before or after the letter was completed, it is invalid but if one scratches off the extra ink connecting the two letters it is valid and not considered חק תוכות since the letter was written correctly.

- If one wrote an end letter where the regular letter is supposed to be or vice versa it is invalid. (M.B. 71)
- Any letter that lost its shape may not be repaired by simply scratching off extra ink to reform the letter. (M.B. 72)
- The possibility of fixing letters in *tefillin* or *mezuzos* assumes that the subsequent letters were not written because if they were, it is invalid since it was written out of order. (M.B. 74)
- Whenever a letter that is written in two strokes loses its shape it is only necessary to erase the stroke that lost its shape. (M.B. 75)
- When scratching off additional ink is permitted because the letter retained its original shape there is no concern that the repaired letter was written out of order. (M.B. 79)

Stories to Share

Mehadrin Min Hamehadrin

ש"ע סי' ל"ב, י"ח: "ואם גרר והפרידה..."

Many people are stringent regarding various chumros when purchasing tefillin, since this mitzvah is exceedingly precious. Rav Moshe Sternbuch, shlit"a, gives important advice to one who wishes to obtain the best tefillin possible. "Many people pay large sums of money to obtain the best parshios possible, written perfectly with all the dikdukim. It seems strange that they are not careful about what some authorities hold renders the tefillin invalid b'dieved! I am talking about the halachah in the Mishnah Berurah 32:18 regarding two letters that touch each other. Although the mechaber writes that this can be rectified by erasing the place where the letters are joined even if the two letters became attached as long as the sofer has not yet finished writing the second letter completely, this heter is not certain at all. The Biur Halachah right there brings that both the Vilna Gaon and the Sha'arei Efraim are unsure as to whether this is permitted.

"The Rashba is certain, though. He holds that it is invalid and that this parshah is invalid. The Rama MiPano agrees. (שו"ת הרשב"א, ח"א, ס' תרי"א) (שו"ת רמ"ע מפענו, ס' ל"ו) And the Chazon Ish also writes that there is no reliable source to permit erasing in such a case, even though some earlier sources leaned toward leniency. Soferim are absolutely indifferent about this, erasing by rote without hesitation. And this problem cannot be detected after the parshah has been written. Yet it seems obvious that this is a question of possible violation of Torah law and is of paramount importance.

Rav Sternbuch added, "To be honest, I don't understand why our great teacher the Mishnah Berurah was lenient despite the many stringent opinions. It is also possible that the Mishnah Berurah only means that we can be lenient b'dieved. But l'chatchilah one must certainly be stringent to ensure that he is putting on unquestionably kosher tefilin. In my opinion, if a sofer takes a very high price for what are purported to be very mehudar tefilin, he must be careful of this chumrah too, or he is misleading the public. His price shows that he presents the parshios as being mehadrin min hamehadrin and if he is not careful in this regard, it is obvious that they are not!"

תשובות והנהגות, ח"ה, ס' ט"ו

Halacha Highlight

Squaring the top right corner of an *end chof*

Mishnah Berurah Siman 32 Seif Koton 73

וכן אם טעה ועשה כ"ף פשוטה למעלה כמין דל"ת וכו'

Similarly, if one erred and made the top of an *end chof* like a *dalet* etc.

Bais Yosef (סי' ל"ו) in the name of R"I Askandarni asserts that if one wrote an *end chof* with the top corner squared like a ד rather than rounded, the letter is invalid. Furthermore, he maintains that since it is invalid as it presently appears, one may not round it off by scratching off the additional ink since that would involve חק תוכות. Magen Avrohom (ס"ק כ"ו) cites Maharam Galanti who contends that the *end chof* is valid without having to scratch anything off. Since there are many communities who square the top corner, it is a circumstance in which there are two acceptable ways of writing the letter and each one is acceptable. It is only when the Gemara describes a letter as having a particular shape does it become invalid if written differently but parts of a letter that are not described in the Gemara can be written in different ways. Knesses HaGedolah (סי' ל"ו) also rules leniently regarding an *end chof* that is squared rather than rounded and reports that the *Sifrei Torah* in Saloniki are written using that method of writing the *end chof*. Birkei Yosef (סק"ו) also reports that he saw a *Sefer Torah* written by the Maharlbach and the *end chof*'s were squared rather than rounded.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ע"ג) writes that according to many Poskim, if the *end chof* is squared it is invalid. Since the letter as shaped is invalid, it may not be repaired by merely scratching off the additional ink. Therefore, the method of repair is to add ink to the corner to round it off. He then adds that adding ink to change the shape of the letter does not disqualify the text as having been written out of order since it had its essential shape. Sefer Halacha Berurah (בירור הלכה אות ע') asserts that in a circumstance in which one cannot add ink it is acceptable to scratch off the additional ink to round the corner since *b'dieved* it had the shape of an *end chof*. Support for this ruling, he writes is in Teshuvas Shevet HaLevi (ח"ח סי' ט"ו אות א').