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

Overview

Siman 32 Seif 19:

Before writing one must orally declare, "I am writing for the sanctity of *tefillin*." Additionally, each time one writes Hashem's name he must state that he is doing so for the sanctity of His name. Some hold that it is sufficient if one thinks that he is writing Hashem's name for the sake of the *mitzvah* since he already orally declared his intent before he began writing and *b'dieved* one could be lenient. One should not write while dozing since in such a state of mind one cannot have proper intent.

- If even a single letter was written without intent for *tefillin* it is invalid. (M.B. 92)
- "Before writing" means making the declaration once before writing all the *parshiyos* but it is preferable to make this declaration before writing each *parsha*. (M.B. 92)
- It seems that when repairing letters one must also declare one's intent. (M.B. 93)
- Thinking the correct intent without articulating it is invalid even *b'dieved*. (M.B. 94)
- There are authorities that write that one should add, "And each time I write Hashem's name it is for the sanctity of His name. (M.B. 96)
- One declaration is sufficient if one will write Hashem's name twice without interruption. (M.B. 97)
- If one did not orally declare his intent before writing or while writing he does not think that he is writing Hashem's name for the sanctity of His name, even *b'dieved* the *mitzvah* is not fulfilled. (M.B. 98)
- *L'chatchila* one should orally declare his intent each time he writes Hashem's name. (M.B. 99)

Halacha Highlight

Declaring one's intent before writing *tefillin*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 32 Seif 19

בתחלת הכתיבה יאמר בפיו אני כותב לשם קדשת תפלין

Before writing one must declare that he is writing for the sake of the sanctity of *tefillin*

Shulchan Aruch writes that before one begins to write *tefillin* he must orally declare his intent to write for the sake of the sanctity of *tefillin*. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק צ"ב) mentions that if even one letter in one's *tefillin* was not written with this orally stated intent the *tefillin* are invalid. According to some Poskim, even if part of a letter was written without the correct stated intent it is invalid (ע' פסקי תשובות אות כ"ט והע' 185). Technically, if one made this declaration before he began to write a pair of *tefillin* that declaration carries throughout the writing of those *tefillin* but it is preferable for one to make the declaration before writing each parsha. (מ"ב ס"ק צ"ב)

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק צ"ג) writes that one must have the intent of *l'shmah* even when repairing a letter that became split since in its present condition it is invalid. Not all repairs, however, are invalid if they are done without *l'shmah* intent. If two letters are attached in a manner in which each letter retains its shape, one must, nevertheless, scratch off the ink so that each letter should be completely surrounded by parchment. This type of repair may be performed without *l'shmah* intent since each letter retained its essential shape. Similarly, if two letters are separated by too large of a space or the space between two words is too large, if possible the space may be shortened by extending the end of one of the letters in order to fill the empty space. Even though the empty space may invalidate the writing as it exists, one may extend the letter without *l'shmah* intent since the letter retained its essential shape. Similarly, when one makes or repairs the *tagin* even according to those who maintain that *tagin* are essential, it is not necessary to have *l'shmah* intent since the letter retains its essential shape even without the *tagin*.

Stories to Share

A Sofer's Obligation

ש"ע סי' ל"ב, י"ט: "בתחלת הכתיבה יאמר בפיו אני כותב לשם קדושת תפילין"

When Rav Ovadya Yosef, zt"l, was the Sefardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, he found out that a huge percentage of tefillin being sold were invalid. He immediately called a meeting of official sofrim and asked one who had an exceptionally nice kesav, "What do you say before you begin writing a pair of tefillin?"

The sofer pondered the question for a moment in obvious puzzlement and answered, "I don't say anything."

"But in Orach Chayim 32:19 the Beis Yosef rules that before writing the parshios of tefillin one is obligated to say, 'לשם קדושת תפילין.' And perhaps you didn't realize another halachah brought there: before each time you write Hashem's Name you must first say 'הריני כותב שם ה' לשם קדושת השם' If you did not do so, the tefillin you have written are invalid!"

One of the sofrim who attended the shiur later told Rav Ovadya, "Although I learned the relevant halachos before I began to write, it was only during your shiur that I realized how serious this matter is. Ever since then I have always been careful, although before then I was not..."

Rav Ovadya commented, "See how important even one shiur can be. Although—tragically—all the tefillin that these sofrim wrote before the shiur is invalid, at least from on they will write valid tefiilln. Who knows how many Jews have tefillin which appear fine but are invalid due to their errors and the mistakes of others like them?"

הליכות מוסר, ח"ב, ע' תתשכ"ח