The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Wed, Nov 26, 2025 ■ ו' כסלו, תשפ"ו
סימן ל"ב סעיף כ"ג-כ"ד

Overview

Siman 32 Seif 23:

If it is discovered that a letter is missing there is no rectification since adding the missing letter would involve writing out of order which is invalid since the pasuk states והיו which teaches that it must be written in order. An extra letter at the beginning or end of a word could be erased but if it is in the middle of a word it cannot be repaired since erasing the letter would leave the remaining part of the word appearing like two words.

- If there is an extra or missing letter one could erase all the letters that follow to correct the error, assuming that Hashem's name is not in the section to be erased. (M.B. 108)
- An extra letter could be erased assuming that the empty space is not as large as nine letters and even then it may be possible to repair the error by extending a letter to fill up some of that empty space. (M.B. 110)
- Pri Megadim writes that if a word was mistakenly repeated the second one should be erased. (M.B. 110)
- Sometimes one could repair a word that has an extra letter if the letter before is the type of letter whose end could be extended outward, e.g. a ב or a כ. Even if the previous letter cannot be extended it may be possible to repair if it could be thickened to fill the empty space. (M.B. 110)

Siman 32 Seif 24:

It is permitted to write even Hashem's name on a spot that had letters scratched off or erased. One should not erase letters that are moist; rather one should wait until they dry so that it scratches off completely without leaving a mark.

- Scratching off refers to when the ink dried and erasing refers to when the ink is still moist. (M.B. 103)
- Shulchan Aruch's statement related to erasing ink when it is wet is not a halachic mandate; rather it is good advice. (M.B. 103)
- Pri Megadim is uncertain whether one may write a word on top of ink that did not come off completely. (M.B. 103)

Halacha Highlight

Writing on erased words

Shulchan Aruch Siman 32 Seif 24

ולא ימחוק בעודו לח אלא ייבשנו יפה

One should not erase the ink while it is yet moist; rather one should wait until it is fully dry

Shulchan Aruch writes that one should wait for ink to dry before scratching it off so that none of the ink will remain when he wants to rewrite the necessary letters or words. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק קי"ג) in the name of Pri Megadim expresses concern that, even *b'dieved* it is invalid if one were to write on top of some of the remaining ink. The basis for his concern is that it may be considered as though he is writing words on ink that was not written *l'shmah*. Even if the word that was erased was written *l'shmah* the spreading of the ink that occurred while erasing was not done *l'shmah* and thus invalid. Consequently, he writes, that one should be careful that none of the old ink should remain before beginning to rewrite.

Teshuvas Shevet HaKehasi (שו"ת שבט הקהתי ח"ו סי' מ"ה) writes that one is allowed to use a chemical that will get absorbed into the parchment that will whiten any remaining ink. The fact that another substance is now on the parchment is not an issue of being an interposition between the parchment and the ink due to the principle that anything that is added to beautify the item does not constitute an interposition. Furthermore, since the chemical becomes absorbed into the parchment it is no different than any of the other chemicals that are used to treat the parchment that become absorbed in the parchment.

Another point that relates to writing on top of erased words is the question of whether it is permitted to write a word on space that has been previously occupied by the name of Hashem. Piskei Teshuvos (אות מ"ד) cites authorities who rule that one may not write a word on a space that had been previously occupied by Hashem's name, even if the ink was completely removed since the part of the parchment became more sanctified by writing Hashem's name.

Stories to Share

First Things First

ש"ע סי' ל"ב, כ"ד: "מותר לכתוב על מקום הגרר ..."

Rav Ovadya Yosef, zt"l, once asked the rhetorical question, "Everyone is careful not to eat what is prone to damage them physically, so why aren't they concerned about what damages them spiritually? We all know that certain foods are dangerous and others are healthy. People avoid even foods that have a chance of harming them so as to ensure that they will not be damaged. Even regarding clothes which cannot harm them, people are careful to only buy good and strong clothing. They first check to see if there are any rips or blemishes. How much more so should this be their attitude regarding holy objects such as tefillin!

He continued, "It is very strange that people sometimes spend large sums of money on what is not essential while scrimping on what is most important. We make a bar mitzvah to celebrate that a young man is finally obligated in mitzvos. The parents invite many people and spend huge sums of money on the party. Yet when procuring tefillin— which is the main point of the celebration—anything goes. These people should go to an expert sofer and purchase a worthy pair of tefillin. The bar mitzvah boys also do not treat tefillin as is fitting. Once, when a certain chassid attended a bar mitzvah he noticed that the bar mitzah boy removed his tefillin without wrapping them and began to attend to his tie instead.

"This chassid went over to the young man and said, 'I cannot understand. You wear your tie all day, and obviously can wait a few moments to fix it. Tefillin are worn for a short time each day and should be treated with reverence—don't you think you should put them away before dealing with your tie?!"

הליכות מוסר, ע' תתשכ"ו-תתשכ"ז