

Overview

Halacha Highlight

Siman 32 Seif 28:

One should be careful that the top of the ל should not enter the airspace of a ה or נ even if they don't touch.

- ❖ The ט may also not enter the airspace of a ו or ך that is on the line below it. (M.B. 129)
- ❖ The wording of Shulchan Aruch implies that *b'dieved* if one letter enters the airspace of another it does not invalidate the text but if it changes the appearance of the letter it does invalidate. Once invalidated it cannot be repaired since repairing the word would involve writing out of order. (M.B. 132)

Siman 32 Seif 29:

If one is not fluent in the *parshiyos* he must copy from an existing text.

- ❖ One may also write *tefillin* by having someone read him the text. (M.B. 134)
- ❖ Even though one may write part of a *parsha* if he knows that part by heart, nevertheless, Bach holds that it is preferable for one to copy from an existing text. (M.B. 134)

Siman 32 Seif 30:

One may not write unless he can read.

Siman 32 Seif 31:

If one is not copying from an existing text he should not write based only what another person reads to him; rather he should repeat each word before he writes it.

- ❖ The wording implies that one who is copying from an existing text is not obligated to read the words out loud before writing but may later authorities disagree and maintain that in all cases one must read the words out loud before writing. Bach explains that reading the words out loud infuses them with sanctity. (M.B. 136)

Siman 32 Seif 32:

Empty space must be left at the top of the parchment to allow for the top of the ל so that it should be surrounded by parchment; empty space must also be left at the bottom for the ט and the ך but it is unnecessary to leave space on the right and left. Nevertheless, scribes have the practice of leaving empty space on the right and left. Between words should be the space of a letter, between lines of text should be an empty row and between each letter should be a hairsbreadth as is done in a Sefer Torah. An empty space should also separate each *pasuk*.

- ❖ There are those who maintain that one should leave additional space the size of half a fingernail above a ל or below a ט or ך. (M.B. 140)
- ❖ There are those who are stringent to leave at the beginning of the parchment enough empty space that could wrap around the parchment as is done with *mezuzos*. (M.B. 142)
- ❖ According to some opinions it is only necessary to leave an empty row in a Sefer Torah and that is the custom followed by scribes. (M.B. 144)

The ideal procedure for writing *tefillin*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 32 Seif 29

אם אין הפרשיות שגורות בפיו צריך שיכתב מתוך הכתב

If one is not fluent in the *parshiyos* he must copy from an existing text

It is preferable (עי כל זה בפסקי תשובות אות נ"א) for every scribe to accustom himself to the practice of reading and saying out loud every word that he writes even if he knows them by heart. Reading the words out loud before writing them infuses them with sanctity. If one wants, it is permitted to read two or three words at a time before writing as is commonly done amongst people who copy text, but experience indicates that only one word should be read and written at a time to avoid mistakes. When one reaches the name of Hashem it should be said out loud either by saying the name of the letters or to say הויה-ה When there is a *kri u'kesiv* the scribe should say the word as it is written in order not to become confused and incorrectly write the word as it is pronounced. Similarly, if there is a word that is *chaser* the scribe should read it as it is spelled rather than the way it is pronounced in order to avoid confusion. For example, the word *totafos* is spelled without the second ו, i.e. טוטפת. Since reading it as it is pronounced could lead a person to mistakenly add the second ו the scribe may read the word as written, i.e. *totafos*.

According to the essential halacha, when one is copying the words from a text it is unnecessary for one to pronounce the words before writing them since seeing the words is as helpful for accuracy as pronouncing the words. Similarly, if one says the words before writing it is unnecessary for him to copy from a text. These rulings, however, are limited to sections with which one is fluent. Those sections with which one is not fluent must be copied from a text and the scribe must say the word/s out loud before writing them down. One who fixes a damaged letter is not required to copy from an existing text. Similarly, when filling in a letter at the conclusion of writing a Sefer Torah one is not required to copy from an existing text since the outline of letter was made by a scribe and the others are merely filling in the inside of the letters.

the word אחד, giving it the appearance of a hei and presumably rendering it invalid. Even worse, perhaps it was a problem that could not be corrected.

He thought to himself, "Although if the head of a lamed protrudes into a dalet, this invalidates the dalet and cannot be rectified, perhaps here is different since the dalet is larger than average? After all, even if I were to erase part of the leg of the large dalet, the letter would still remain a dalet, albeit somewhat smaller."

When he asked the Imrei Shefer, zt"l, this question, he ruled that it is permitted. "Since in this case you only needs to erase a little to remove the head of the lamed thereby correcting this oversight, there is no problem at all. Doing this does not constitute חק תוכות—etching out the letter—and is absolutely permitted."

But the Kaf Hachaim, zt"l, prohibited such cases, "It is clear that the Kesef Hasofer, zt"l, disagrees with the Imrei Shefer in this case. He prohibits since the dalet became a hei and cannot be rectified by merely removing part of the leg. According to him, this is חק תוכות—like etching in the dalet, which is forbidden. Since he already wrote the word אלוקיד, the sofer cannot erase all the letters written until and including the dalet and rewrite it. Therefore there is no way to rectify this and it must be put in genizah."

קול יעקב, סי' ל"ב, סי"ק ק"י

Stories to Share

The Head of the Lamed

מ"ב ל"ב, קל"ב: "אם נכנס ראש הלמד בתוך דל"ת... ונראית כה"א דפסול"

A certain sofer reviewing the Shema parshah of tefilin noticed a problem. He had accidentally written an overextended lamed towards the beginning of the first section of shema. To his horror, he noticed that the head of the lamed protruded into the space of the big dalet of