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Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Shabbos, Dec 6, 2025 ■ ט"ז כסלו, תשפ"ו
סימן ל"ב סעיף מ"ב-מ"ג

Halacha Highlight

Forming the ש on the *shel rosh*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 32 Seif 42
שי"ן של תפלין הלכה למשה מסיני
The ש on one's *shel rosh* is a *Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai*

Shulchan Aruch writes that *Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai* teaches that one must fashion a ש that protrudes on each side of the *shel rosh*. The one on the right should have three arms and the one on the left should have four arms. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק קצ"א) teaches that although it is not essential for the ש to be fashioned in *Ksav Ashuris*, nevertheless, the custom amongst scribes is to fashion the ש in *Ksav Ashuris*.

Bais Yosef references Orchos Chaim who writes that one should not form the ש on the side of the *shel rosh* by pressing a form onto the leather since that would constitute חק תוכות—forming the image of a letter by pressing down the leather around the letter – which is not an acceptable manner to shape the letter. Darkei Moshe cites other authorities who write that the issue of חק תוכות is not relevant when it comes to making the ש on the side of the *shel rosh*. Teshuvas Rama MiPano (סי' ל"ח) takes this a step further and relates that forming the ש by pressing a form onto the leather is the preferred manner of forming the ש.

The way some people form the ש on the *shel rosh* to avoid this question is by using two pieces of wood or metal. On one piece the letter ש protrudes and on the second piece the letter ש is indented. The hide is placed in between these two pieces and pressed together until the leather retains the shape of the ש on its own. Another way to form the ש is by pressing the leather against a single board that has a ש that protrudes. This pushes the leather above the ש outwards and thus the letter was formed by pushing out the letter rather than pushing down the leather around the ש to avoid the issue of חק תוכות. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק קצ"ג) mentions a dispute about the latter method of pushing out the ש and observes that the common custom is for the ש to be fashioned in this manner.

Overview

Siman 32 Seif 42:

***Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai* teaches that a ש should protrude from the leather of the *shel rosh*. The ש on the right of the wearer should have three heads while the ש on the left side should have four heads.** If one switched the location of the *shins* the *tefillin* do not become invalidated.

- If the ש becomes damaged it must be repaired. (M.B. 190)
- The ש does not have to be made in *kesav ashuris* but the custom is that it is made in *kesav ashuris*. (M.B. 191)
- There is a disagreement whether it could be made with a mold but common custom is to use a mold. (M.B. 193)
- If one made a ש with three heads on both sides or with four heads on both sides the *tefillin* are invalid. (M.B. 195)

Siman 32 Seif 43:

The bottom of the ש on the side of the *shel rosh* should reach the stitches. The י of the ש must reach the bottom of the ש but the ש should not descend too far; rather the bottom of the ש should be visible above the stitches.