The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן ל"ג סעיף ד'

Overview

Siman 33 Seif 4:

It is preferable that the coloring is performed by a Jew for the sake of the *mitzvah* rather than a gentile. However, *b'dieved* the *tefillin* are valid if colored by a gentile but *retzuos* are invalid if colored by a gentile.

- According to Shulchan Aruch if the *retzuos* were colored by a gentile or not for the sake of the *mitzvah* they are *b'dieved* valid. Rema, however, disagrees because he maintains that coloring the *retzuos* black is a *Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai*, consequently if they were colored by a gentile they are invalid. (M.B. 22)
- All the procedures that are required from *Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai* must be done for the sake of the *mitzvah* and if they were not, they are invalid. Pri Megadim rules that these procedures should not be done by a minor or a woman. Coloring the *retzuos* may be done by a woman but a child or gentile should not color *retzuos* unless there is an adult standing nearby reminding them that it must be done for the sake of the *mitzvah*. (M.B. 23)
- There is a dispute whether coloring *retzuos* that were originally colored not for the sake of the *mitzvah* makes them valid. Pri Megadim suggests coloring the inside for the sake of the *mitzvah* and turning them around. This, however, should only be done if other *retzuos* are not available. (M.B. 24)

Stories to Share

The Humility of a Gadol

ש"ע ס' ל"ג, ד': "טוב שישחירם ישראל לשמה ..."

A certain bochur in yeshiva ketanah noticed that the black color had somewhat faded on his tefillin straps resulting in various whitish spots. The young man figured that he was obligated to blacken them but just to be sure he went to Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l, to check and see if this was really necessary.

When he showed the tefillin to Rav Chaim he was astounded at his unusual reaction. Rav Chaim calmly explained that the flecks did indeed require blackening and immediately got up from his seat, brought over some ink and blackened the straps himself.

When the shocked bochur told his friends about his experience they had trouble believing it. When one indicated that this seemed a bit unlikely, the bochur suggested that he take his own tefillin to Rav Chaim and see what he did.

The doubtful bochur admitted that his straps also had white flecks and agreed to ask Rav Chaim the very next day. To his surprise Rav Chaim reacted exactly as his friend had reported. When the other bochurim heard about this, they also wanted to see this with their own eyes and brought their tefillin to Rav Chaim for this special treatment as well.

Yet it seems a bit odd. Why did Rav Chaim color the tefillin himself rather than simply instruct the bochurim to go home and attend to it?

The author of Doleh Umashkeh, shlit"a, surmised that it had to do with today's amud. We find today that only an adult is permitted to blacken the tefillin straps. Perhaps a bochur who cannot yet grow a beard should also avoid blackening tefillin straps like the Biur Halachah rules regarding spinning tzitizis?

ביה"ל, ס' י"א, ד"ה טוואן

When he asked Rav Chaim about this he found that his hunch was correct. "It is better for such young bochurim to refrain from blackening even their own tefillin straps."

דולה ומשקה, ע' מ"א

Halacha Highlight

Coloring the *retzuos* for the sake of the *mitzvah*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 33 Seif 4

טוב שישחרם ישראל לשמן

It is preferable if they are colored by a Jew for the sake of the *mitzvah*

Shulchan Aruch writes that it is preferred that a Jew color the *retzuos* black for the sake of the *mitzvah*. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ט) in the name of Magen Avrohom observes that Shulchan Aruch's choice of words that it is preferred that a Jew color the *retzuos* black for the sake of the *mitzvah* indicates that *b'dieved* if one colored not for the sake of the *mitzvah* or if they were colored by a gentile it is valid. Rema records a dissenting opinion that maintains that if the *retzuos* were not colored for the sake of the *mitzvah* or if they were colored by a gentile they are invalid even *b'dieved*. Although all opinions maintain that one should preferably obtain *retzuos* that were colored by a Jew for the sake of the *mitzvah,* Sephardim permit the use of *retzuos* that were not colored for the sake of the *mtzvah* in accordance with Shulchan Aruch's opinion.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ד) cites Magen Avrohom who contends that if the *retzuos* were not colored for the sake of the *mitzvah* one may recolor them for the sake of the *mitzvah* thus making them valid. Proof to this position is the Gemara in Gittin (20a) that rules that if a scribe did not write Hashem's Name for the *mitzvah* he may trace over the Name thus sanctifying it. Pri Megadim rejects this conclusion pointing out that *l'halacha* we do not follow the opinion in the Gemara that maintains that tracing over Hashem's name sanctifies it if it was initially written not for the sake of the *mitzvah*. Machatzis HaShekel answers that although it is true that we follow the position that tracing over Hashem's Name is not sufficient nevertheless one may be lenient regarding coloring *retzuos*. The reason is that there is a disagreement in the first place whether they must be colored for the sake of the *mitzvah* therefore one may adopt the lenient position regarding tracing.