The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Shabbos, Dec 13, 2025 ■ כ"ג כסלו, תשפ"ו
סימן ל"ג סעיף ה'

Overview

Siman 33 Seif 5:

If the *retzuah* becomes torn there are authorities who maintain that the pieces may be sewn together from the inside. According to others the part that surrounds the head and the part that goes around one's arm including the length necessary to reach and wrap around the middle finger may not be repaired by either tying or sewing the severed pieces together. The remaining length which is wrapped around one's forearm and hangs down from the *shel rosh* does not become invalidated if it is sewn or tied together. In pressing circumstances one may rely upon the lenient opinion in order not to lose the fulfillment of the *mitzvah*.

- The first opinion allows repairing the *retzuos* even for the part that goes around one's head and what is essential for the arm. (M.B. 25)
- According to this first opinion *retzuos* may only be repaired by sewing together the two pieces and one must use sinew rather than thread. (M.B. 26)
- Mishnah Berurah records many different opinions about when one's *retzuos* could be repaired and when it is permitted to recite the *beracha* on repaired *tefillin*. He concludes by emphasizing that one should only relying on the lenient opinions if one is not able to obtain *retzuos* that are intact. (M.B. 29)

Stories to Share

The Preciousness of the Retzuos

ש"ע סי' ל"ג, ה': " אם נפסקה הרצועה..."

Many people tend to make light of the halachos of the straps of tefillin, reasoning that the main element is the parshios. Yet as we see on today's amud, the retzuos are also essential. The best parshios in the world, inserted into the finest batim, are invalid if the straps are less than the minimum shiur.

Once a certain young man came to Rav Aharon of Belz with a fairly common question, "After davening, I wrapped my tefillin and placed them in their bag, I slipped and the bag fell on the ground..."Before he even had a chance to finish his question, the rav began to groan, "Oy! Oy!"

"But what is the tragedy? The tefillin had two coverings when they fell!"

The rav saw that this young man was unaware of the proper respect due the retzuos. "Yes, regarding the tefillin, it is not so bad since they were wrapped twice, but the retzuos were not!"

Rav Aharon of Belz told him that, as a tikkun for what had happened, he should donate the amount of money that he spent on an average day for food to tzedakah. "In this manner, the tzedakah will be considered as if you had fasted and it will atone for this inadvertent disrespect."

עלים לתרופה, י"ז מנ"א תשנ"ו, ע' ד'

Many are unaware of the deep meaning of the retzuos. Rav Moshe Aryeh Freund, the former Ra'avad of Yerushalayim, once explained this in the name of his father, Rav Yisrael. "The custom is to count the straps wrapped on one's arm before wrapping the hand. While we check to make sure that there are seven wraps we focus on the significance of these windings and tefillin in general. We remember the verse, 'ואתם הדבקים בה' אלוקיכם חיים כולכם היום'. This verse that describes the bond that we have with Hashem has seven words which should be focused on while counting the wrappings."

הללו עובדי ה', ע' תק"ה

Halacha Highlight

Repairing a ripped *retzuah*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 33 Seif 5
אם נפסקה הרצועה וכו'
If one's *retzuah* rips etc.

The Gemara Menachos (35b) teaches that if one's *retzuah* rips it may not be repaired by tying the two ends together. Regarding the question of whether the two ends may be sewn back together, the Gemara declares that one should go and see how the people behave about this matter. Rashi writes that if one observes how people behave about this matter one will see that they are stringent. Tosafos, on the other hand asserts that the intent of the Gemara was to be lenient. After first quoting the lenient position and then the more stringent position, Shulchan Aruch rules that when one is in a difficult circumstance he may follow the lenient opinion in order to not forgo the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* altogether.

Taz (סק"ז) writes that when relying upon the lenient position one should not recite the *beracha* on such *tefillin*. Machatzis HaShekel (סק"ח) asserts that Taz disagrees with Shulchan Aruch about this matter. Shvus Yaakov (שו"ת שבות יעקב ח"א סי' א') disagrees and cites many examples of similar circumstances which indicate that Shulchan Aruch agrees that the *beracha* should not be recited. Pri Megadim (מ"ז סק"ז) recommends borrowing a friend's *tefillin* and having in mind the *tefillin* with questionable *retuzos* while reciting the *beracha* on the borrowed pair and then wearing the questionable *tefillin* for the remainder of davening.

Sefer Halacha Berurah (בירור הלכה אות י"ט) rules that if the part of the *retzua* that goes around the head or the minimal length needed for the arm rips one should adopt a stringent approach and the *beracha* should not be recited. If, however, the part of the *retzua* that rips is not essential to the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* one may adopt a lenient approach and one may even recite the *beracha* after the *retzuah* is repaired.