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

Overview

Siman 36 Seif 2:

Every letter must be a single unit. Therefore, the "yud" that is above or below the א or the "yuds" of the ש and ע and the back of the צ must be connected to the letter and if it is not connected to the letter it is invalid. The same principle applies to the other letters except for the ה and ק whose left leg should not touch the roof and if it does it is invalid.

- Even if the separation is subtle and cannot be easily discerned it is invalid but as long as it appears that it is attached it may be repaired without concern that the letter was written out of order. (M.B. 8)
- The separation between the leg and the roof of the ה and ק should be large enough that one could see the separation as the Torah rests on the bimah but it shouldn't be too far apart. (M.B. 10)

Siman 36 Seif 3:

One must put a תיג on the letters שעטנ"ז ג"ץ and scribes are accustomed to adding תגים to other letters. If one did not add תגים even to the letters שעטנ"ז ג"ץ it is not invalid.

- תגין are three lines on the top of the letter and it is preferable that each line should have the shape of a ז. (M.B. 12)
- The תגין should be attached to the letter and if it is not attached it must be erased. (M.B. 13)
- When a letter has multiple heads the תגין are added on the left side of the letter and it should be located in the middle of the head. (M.B. 13)
- The תגין must not touch one another. (M.B. 13)
- One must be careful that the תגין should not be too large which could affect the appearance of the letter. (M.B. 14)
- Bach maintains that the letter is invalid if it does not have the necessary תגין, therefore, one should be strict and add the missing תגין. (M.B. 15)

Halacha Highlight

Tagin

Shulchan Aruch Siman 36 Seif 3

צריך לתיג שעטנ"ז ג"ץ

One must add *tagin* to the letters שעטנ"ז ג"ץ

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ג') writes that the letters שעטנ"ז ג"ץ as well as the צ and the ן (ע' מ"ב ס"ק י"ג) must have *tagin* on their top. The appearance of the *tagin* is three lines that emerge from the middle of the top of the letter (מ"ב ס"ק י"ג) with a small circle of ink at the top of each line so that it looks somewhat like a ז. When a letter has more than one top, e.g. the ש or the ע, the *tagin* are placed on the top that is furthest to the left. Customarily the center line is the tallest, the one on the right is next tallest and the one on the left is the smallest. One must be cautious that that the *tagin* do not touch one another so that it should not appear as though another letter was written on top. It is also essential that the *tagin* are attached to the top of the letter. In the even that they do not touch the top of the letter, one must scratch off the *tag* that is there and then rewrite it, unless one knows that the *parsha* was written by an expert and the *tag* became separated after it was written correctly.

Shulchan Aruch mentions that there is a custom for scribes to put *tagin* on other letters. Bais Yosef (בשם הר"י אסכנדרי) relates that there is a custom to put a single line on the top if the letters בד"ק חי"ה. Additionally, there is a tradition cited by Tur and Bais Yosef in the name of Shimusha Rabba to add *tagin* to other letters when writing tefillin (ע' משנה ברורה עם פאר הלכה על הלכות תפילין עמ' 265). The majority of scribes do not add the *tagin* mentioned in Shimusha Rabba out of concern that the *tagin* will touch one another and damage the essential appearance of the letters.

Stories to Share

An Irreparable Error

ש"ע ל"ו, ג': " צריך לתייג שעטנז ג"ץ..."

Someone once asked the Rashash how many tagin should be placed on each letter written in the parshios of tefillin. "Each of the letters שעטנז ג"ץ should have three crowns; the letters בדק חיה, require exactly one tag. G-d forbid that one should add or subtract since it is only in this manner that one rectifies the letters in a fitting manner."

ספר אמת ושלום, דף כ"ט ע"א

But even a sefer with the letters written in accordance with halachah and which includes the required amount of tagin is not always acceptable. A certain sofer had written a sefer Torah whose letters were exceedingly narrow. Of course this should be perfectly acceptable as far as the letters themselves are concerned, but these letters were so narrow that there wasn't any room to append normal-sized tagin to them. The sofer realized that he had blundered, tried to get around the problem by making very narrow crowns. Sometimes a crown would be added to a letter, and other tagin would be flush against it, but the sefer did have exactly the amount of tagin usually found in a Torah scroll. Unfortunately, space considerations meant that most crowns would be contiguous.

When a certain person wished to purchase this sefer, the rav of his city protested. "Even though if there were no crowns and a sofer was not available to correct the sefer I would permit even reading in it for the time being as the Sefas Emes ruled, this case is much worse than a sefer without tagin since it cannot be corrected. Better a sefer which is missing the tagin but can be fixed than a sefer in this state which can never be rectified."

מובא בקול יעקב, ס' ל"ז, אות יוד