Preface *Taggim*

Day 57

The Talmud teaches (*Menahot* 29): Rav Yehuda cited Rav saying that when Moshe Rabbenu rose to Heaven, he found the Blessed Holy One sitting and attaching crowns to the letters. He said, "Master of the Universe! Can anyone prevent You from Your actions (meaning, is there any significance to these crowns)?"

"Many generations in the future," He replied, "there will be someone named Akiva ben Yosef who will derive entire collections of halakhot based on each point of these crowns."

Rava said that there are seven letters that are given a triple crown. Those letters are ש' ע' ט' נ' ז' ג' צ'. This includes the letters ן' and ץ'.

According to *Igeret Hatiyul* (cited in the *Mishna Berura* 36:15 and the *Kol Yaakov* 36:14), these letters spell the names of three destructive angels: *Satan*, *Az*, and *Gatz*. The pointed crowns we add to these letters protect us from being harmed by these angels.

If the *Taggim* Are Missing

Rabbenu Asher, cited by the *Arba'a Turim* (*Y.D.* 274) ruled that the scroll is not kosher if the *taggim* are not added to these letters. The *Bet Yosef* (*O.H.* 36) added that this appears to be the opinion of the *Sefer Hateruma* and of Rabbenu Tam, cited by the *Agur* (#63).

Rambam (*Hilkhot Tefillin* 2:9), however, ruled that if someone omitted the *taggim* the scrolls are still kosher, and the same applies if someone added *taggim* to other letters besides these seven. He repeated this ruling in responsa *Pe'er Hador* (#68), explaining that the main purpose of *taggim* is to beautify the mitzvah. Maran added in his *Bedek Habayit* (*Y.D.* 274) that Rabbenu Yeruham cited Rav Hai Ga'on and other commentators concurring with Rambam's ruling. Furthermore, the *Sefer Yere'im* (cited in the *Bet Yosef O.H.* 36) ruled that as long as the "head" of the letter is rectangular and not rounded, it can be considered to be a letter containing *taggim*. That is, the corners of that rectangle are the *taggim* according to the author of *Yere'im*. The *Hazon Ish*, cited in the *Halakha Berura* (page 178), however, offered a different interpretation to the words of the *Yere'im*.

Maran's Ruling

In the *Bet Yosef*, Maran ruled that we may follow Rambam's lenient ruling when there is no one available who knows how to add *taggim* to the letters. In the *Shulhan Arukh* he ruled simply that if someone failed to add *taggim* to the letters it is kosher, inferring that it is kosher even if there is someone available to add them.

Harav HIDA (responsa *Yosef Ometz* #41, cited in the *Kol Yaakov* 36:17) suggested that Maran at first had reservations about ruling leniently in this matter, but once he saw that Rabbenu Yeruham cited Rav Hai Ga'on ruling that *taggim* are an added feature meant to beautify the mitzvah, he then ruled in the *Shulhan Arukh* that one may be lenient in any case. Harav HIDA was of the opinion that the *Bedek Habayit* was composed before the *Shulhan Arukh*.

The *Melekhet Shamayim* offered a different resolution, explaining that Maran decided to rule more leniently upon learning that the *Sefer Yere'im* interpreted the meaning of *taggim* as the corners of a rectangular "head" of the letter.

Opposing *Aharonim*

The *Bayit Hadash*, the *Perisha*, and *Eliya Rabba* ruled that if the *taggim* are missing the scroll is not kosher. Harav Zalman (36:5) ruled that we must take this opinion into account since we are dealing with Torah law. The *Mishna Berura* (36:15) warns us to be careful to make sure that our scrolls have the necessary *taggim* since there are many *Poskim* who ruled that a scroll is not kosher if the *taggim* are missing.

On the other hand, the *Magen Avraham*, the *Peri Megadim*, and Harav HIDA (*LeDavid Emet*) all ruled that the scroll is still kosher despite the missing *taggim*. We may certainly rely on this since it follows Maran in the *Shulhan Arukh*.

Even so, it is important to see to it that one's tefillin scrolls and mezuzah scrolls are written with all the prescribed *taggim*. The *Kol Yaakov* (36:18) added that the Arizal placed great importance on the *taggim*, and therefore if a Torah scroll is missing its *taggim*, it should not be used in the synagogue until it is repaired.

דיני התגין

ח. צריך לתייג אותיות שעטנ"ז ג"ץ. [ש"ע סי' לו ס"ג]. והוא הדין לצד"י כפופה (צ) ולנו"ן פשוטה (ן). [רש"י מנחות כט ע"ב הו"ד בב"י, ובמשנ"ב ס"ק יג, וקול יעקב ס"ק יד]

ט. בדיעבד שלא עשה תגין לאותיות, העיקר להלכה כדעת מרן השלחן ערוך (שם) שאינו פסול. ומכל מקום הואיל ויש פוסקים שמחמירים בזה, על כן נכון שלא יוציא ספר תורה לכתחילה עד שיתקנוהו. [ראה קול יעקב ס"ק יח]. אולם אם אין ספר תורה אחר, יכולים לסמוך על דעת מרן השלחן ערוך ולקרות בספר התורה הזה שאינו מתוייג, ואף רשאים לברך עליו. [יבי"א ח"י חיו"ד סי' כח]

וכן הדין אף לגבי תפילין, שאם אין פרשיותיהן מתוייגות, שנכון שיניח תפילין אחרות שפרשיותיהן מתוייגות. אולם אם אין לו תפילין אחרות, רשאי להניח תפילין אלו שפרשיותיהן אינן מתוייגות,

Taggim

Which letters need *taggim*

8) *Taggim* crowns must be added to the letters ש', ע', ט', נ', ז', ג',ץ'. This includes the letters צ' and ן'. This applies to all sacred scrolls.

A scroll missing the *taggim*

9) If a scroll is written but it is missing these crowns, it is still kosher based on the ruling of the *Shulhan Arukh*. Many *Poskim* ruled that it is not kosher, however, and if a Torah scroll is missing these *taggim* it should not be used in the synagogue until the *taggim* are added. If it is the only Torah scroll available, however, we can rely on the ruling of the *Shulhan Arukh* and use it in the synagogue and recite the blessings on it.[211]

Regarding tefillin as well, if the scrolls are missing the *taggim* it is best to use another set with scrolls written with *taggim*. If no other set of tefillin is available, however, one may use this set and recite the blessing on it. When the opportunity arrives, he must make sure to have the *taggim* added as required by halakha.[212]

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211. The various opinions and rulings regarding scrolls that are missing *taggim* are presented in the preface to these halakhot. The *Shulhan Arukh* and Harav HIDA ruled leniently that the scrolls are kosher. Although many *Poskim* ruled that the scrolls are not kosher, we do not apply the principle of *safek berakhot lehakel* in this case since Maran ruled that the scroll is kosher for the mitzvah. This was explained above in *Siman* 33 in the footnote to halakha 3, based on the ruling of Maran the Rishon Letziyon in responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. IX, #97). Regarding a Torah scroll, we can rely on an extra factor: according to Rambam it is permissible to recite blessings in the synagogue on a Torah scroll that is flawed and not kosher. See responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. X, *Y.D.* #28).

212. As explained in the previous footnote, there is a much stronger basis for leniency regarding Torah scrolls. Nevertheless, even regarding tefillin scrolls we may rely on the principle that once Maran ruled that an item is kosher for use, we may recite the appropriate blessing, and the principle of *safek berakhot lehakel* does not apply. Note that Harav Yaakov Hayim Sofer (*Birkat Yaakov* #9) disagreed with this principle, but the *Yalkut Yosef* (page

ואף רשאי לברך עליהם. אולם מיד כאשר יתאפשר לו, יתקן הפרשיות לתייגם כהלכה. [ראה משנ"ב ס"ק טו, והלכה ברורה עמ' קעז]

י. לכתחילה צריך שיכתבו התגין לשמה "לשם קדושת תפילין". ומכל מקום בדיעבד אין מעכב, כיון שקיימא לן כהסוברים שאין התגין מעכבים בדיעבד. כמבואר לעיל בסימן ל"ב הלכה צ"ד.

יא. צורת התגין באותיות שעטנ"ז ג"ץ, שיעשה שלשה תגין קטנים, זקופים וישרים, על אלו האותיות. ולא יהיה אחד נוטה לימין ואחד לשמאל. [ראה משנ"ב ס"ק יב. וראה פסקי תשובות אות ד]. ויעשה התג האמצעי גדול משני התגין אשר בצידו. [קול יעקב ס"ק יג]. וגובה התג לכתחילה כעובי הקולמוס. [יריעות שלמה ח"א פי"ד] **ובאות** שי"ן עושה התיוג של שלושת הזיוני"ן על הראש השמאלי של האות. וכן באותיות: ע', ט', צ', על ראש השמאלי. [משנ"ב ס"ק יג ובשעה"צ ס"ק טז בשם הב"י].

For the sake of the sanctity

10) Before adding the *taggim*, the scribe must declare that he is writing for the sake of the sanctity of tefillin.[213] If he failed to make this declaration, the *taggim* are still kosher, especially since we follow the ruling that the scroll is kosher even before the *taggim* are added, as explained above in *Siman* 32:94.

Form and size of *taggim*

11) Each of the letters ש', ע', ט', נ', ז', ג',ץ needs a crown consisting of three[214] straight lines rising from the letter's head. All three lines should be vertical – they must not turn to the right or left. The central *tag* should be a bit longer than the other two. The length of the *tag* should ideally be equal to the height of the heads of the letters in that scroll. In halakhic terms, this measurement is referred to as "as wide as the quill's point."[215]

625) and the *Halakha Berura* (page 181) refuted his position. Maran the Rishon Letziyon likewise refuted the *Birkat Yaakov* in an unpublished treatise.

213. The *Matzat Shimurim*, cited in the *Kol Yaakov* (36:15), instructs the scribe to have in mind that each *tag* is the shape of a tiny letter *zayin*, and that the word *zayin* is spelled *zayin yod nun*. Those letters have the combined numerical value of 193, equal to that of the word טפטפיה. If the scribe has these intentions, then the person wearing the tefillin will receive Heavenly assistance to avoid sinful thoughts.

214. More than three *taggim*

The Talmud (*Menahot* 29b) defines *taggim* as three *zayins*. Harav David Hakohen, cited in the *Kenesset Hagedola* and the *Eliya Rabba* (36:25), ruled that if a scribe added more than three *zayins* the scroll is not kosher. Rambam (*Hilkhot Tefillin* 2:9), however, ruled that if a scribe added more or less than the prescribed number of *taggim*, the scroll is still kosher. It could be that Rambam concurs with Harav David Hakohen, and that the reference to extra *taggim* mentioned by Rambam means that the scribe added *taggim* to extra letters, but not that he added more than three *taggim* to the letters. The *Mikdash Me'at* (36:6) ruled leniently, while the *Halakha Berura* (page 184) cited the opinion that the scroll is not kosher if the scribe added more than three *taggim* to any letter.

The Arizal's instructions, cited in the *Kol Yaakov* (36:18), are to add three *taggim* to each of the letters ש', ב', ד', ק', ע', ט', נ', ז', ג',ץ, and to add a single *tag* to the letters ח', י', ה', and not to add or subtract from these numbers, and not to add any *taggim* at all to other letters.

215. *Taggim* that interfere with the letters written above them

There is no minimum length for kosher *taggim*. The *Mishnat Hasofer* (5:182) wrote that if a scribe notices that by adding regular-sized *taggim* to a letter he will encroach upon the space of a ד', ר', or ך written in the line above the *taggim*, he should make those *taggim* very short. Otherwise, it is possible that the *taggim* will inadvertently change the letter in the line above into a letter ה' and render the scroll