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

Overview

Siman 32 Seif 14:

Scribes that are particular make three varieties of *klaf*. The thickest *klaf* is for שמע which is the shortest *parsha*. Thinner than that is the *klaf* for the *parsha* of והיה אם. The thinnest *klaf* is used for קדש and והיה כי which are the longest *parshiyos*. This practice will allow each section to be equally filled and this beautifies the *mitzvah*.

- The text is mistaken and the *klaf* used for והיה כי should be the middle size thickness and the *parsha* of והיה אם should be on the thinnest. (M.B. 33)
- Levush reports that their scribes make *klaf* that is uniform in length and thickness and the difference between the different size *parshiyos* is the quantity of empty space on the *klaf*. (M.B. 33)

Siman 32 Seif 15:

If after the text was written the parchment in the center of a ה״ or a מ״ is punctured and even if the entire center is punctured it is valid. Yerushalmi, however, implies that the inside of the letter must also be surrounded by parchment. If the inner (left) leg of the ה״ is punctured it remains valid according to Rosh even if only a small remnant of the leg remains. Other Poskim require that there should remain the size of a small letter and this is the halacha. **If the right leg is punctured it is valid if there remains the length of a small letter but if not it is invalid.**

- Every letter must retain its essential shape and if it does not it is invalid. All letters must be surrounded by parchment when they are written but if the parchment around the letter is punctured after the letter was written, it is valid. Most Poskim, save the Yerushalmi, maintain that the requirement to be surrounded by parchment is limited to the outside of the letter. Therefore according to most Poskim one may, *b'dieved* write a letter around a hole in the parchment. (M.B. 34)
- The halacha of this *seif* applies to any letter that has a center surrounded by three sides. (M.B. 35)
- Some later authorities maintain that one should be stringent in accordance with Yerushalmi's position. (M.B. 37)
- The halachos of the leg being punctured applies if the דיו scratches off as well. (M.B. 38)
- Although Rema follows the stringent position that the left leg must retain the size of a small letter one could be lenient and make a repair to lengthen that letter if necessary. (M.B. 40)
- If the thickness of the letter wears away or is scratched off it remains valid as long as a thin strip of that part of the letter remains. (M.B. 41)
- Pri Megadim writes that the minimum size of a small letter remaining applies to any letter that has a leg that is punctured or scratched out. (M.B. 42)
- The length of the remaining part of the leg is measured from the top of the leg going down until it is broken. If the letter is too short it is invalid even if a child reads the letter correctly. If it retains the size of a small letter it is unnecessary to show it to a child. (M.B. 43)
- A small letter refers to a *"yod"* including its small right leg. (M.B. 34)

Stories to Share

Proper Sofrim

ש״ע ס׳ ל״ב, י״ד: ״הסופרים הזריזים...״

Today's amud discusses the actions of sofrim zerizim, "scribes with alacrity," who are careful to do their holy work in the best possible manner. As an illustration of the importance of this quality, the Mishnas Chassidim, zt"l, brings that the Arizal warns about sofrim who are the opposite. He also outlines the reward of sofrim who do their heavenly work as is fitting.

"One who looks at the lowliness of this present orphaned generation finds that people do not even seek to fulfill their obligation regarding things like the halachos of STaM, which are the loftiest matters. On the contrary, every empty fool with the ability to write any kind of reasonable Hebrew print immediately puts himself forward as an expert sofer. These people put on a tallis for which they are not worthy and find a way to get semichah as a sofer and everyone, great and small relies on these ignoramuses for sifrei Torah, tefillin, and mezuzos. And they wonder why we beg Hashem to deliver us and still remain unanswered! With such inferior sofrim, why is this tragedy such a wonder to them?

"If merely missing a vav in a sefer Torah is so severe that the Zohar records that those who used it for the public reading are banished from the heavenly academy for engaging in falsehood, how much more so is a sefer riddled with errors a terrible stumbling block that prevents Jewish souls from ascending on high? I do not posses the ability to rectify this tragedy, but at least I can raise my voice and cry, 'Woe!' In this way I am revealing my pain to the masses. Perhaps Hashem will have mercy and in the generations to come people will find some way to rectify this terrible situation!"

משנת חסידים, תפילין, ס׳ רכ״ח, מובא בקסת הסופר ס׳ א׳, בלכ״ה ס״ק א׳

Halacha Highlight

Does the inside of a letter have to be in contact with parchment?

Shulchan Aruch Siman 32 Seif 15

אם לאחר שנכתב נקב בתוך הה״א או המ״ם כשר וכו׳

If after writing the text the middle of the letter ה״or the letter מ״ was punctured etc.

A thorough understanding of this *seif* requires some background information. The Gemara Menachos (29a) teaches that any letter that is not surrounded by parchment (מוקף גויל) is not valid. This ruling was already cited in Shulchan Aruch (לעיל סעי׳ ד׳) and Bach maintains that the origin of this requirement is *Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai*. The Gemara there also teaches that if the inside (תוכו) of the letter is punctured it is valid and if the leg (יריכו) of the letter is punctured its validity depends upon whether there remains the size of a small letter (A "*yod*" with its small right leg. M.B. 44). According to Rashi's first explanation, and this is Rosh's position as well, the term "inside" refers to the small left leg of the ״ה and the term "leg" refers to the larger right leg of the ״ה. According to this explanation there is no minimum size that must remain of the left leg as long as it is still detectable. According to Rashi's second explanation the term "inside" referred to the parchment inside of the ״הand it teaches that if the inside of the ״ה is punctured the letter remains valid. In other words, the requirement that a letter is surrounded by parchment refers to the outside of the letter but it is not necessary for the inside of the letter to be in contact with empty parchment. According to this explanation the term "leg" refers to both legs of the ״ה and it teaches that each leg must retain at least the size of a small letter.

Yerushalmi (מגליה פ״א ה״ט) maintains that the requirement for a letter to be surrounded by parchment includes the inside of the letter as well. Mishnah Berurah (ס״ק ל״ז) in the name of Taz writes that one should be stringent in this matter in accordance with Yerushalmi's position. In the event that a letter is punctured inside one may scratch off some of the thickness of the letter leaving blank parchment so that the letter is now surrounded by parchment inside and outside.