The Chicago Center
Digest
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סימן קמ״ג סעיף ד׳

Halacha Highlight

Correcting a mistake in the Torah in the middle of an *aliyah*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 143 Seif 4 (a)

אם נמצא טעות בספר תורה

If they found an error in the *sefer Torah*

Shulchan Aruch, Rema and the other *Poskim* write at length about the proper procedure to follow when a mistake is found during *krias hatorah*. Much of the debate relates to when and where the mistake was found. A thorough presentation of all of the different opinions is beyond the scope of our publication but we will endeavor to present some related *halachos* over the next three days.

Sometimes a mistake is found in a *sefer Torah* and there happens to be a scribe present with the instruments that would be used for repairing the mistake. The question is whether they should pause for the scribe to make the necessary repair to avoid the issues involved in removing a second *sefer Torah* or not. Although the matter is subject to a debate between authorities, the *halacha* is as follows. If the repair does not involve anything more than scraping off some ink that is attached to a letter, it is acceptable to perform this type of repair in the middle of the *aliyah* in which the error was found. If the repair will take a bit of time, e.g. the scribe must do some actual writing rather than just extending the length of a letter, it is preferred to take out a second *sefer Torah* to avoid the extended delay. The length of an "extended delay" is the amount of time to complete the *aliyah* that is currently being read.

In the event there is no other *sefer Torah* available, the correct procedure depends upon whether they have read three *pesukim* and it is a place where an *aliyah* can end, meaning they are not within two *pesukim* of the end of a paragraph. If three *pesukim* were read and it is a place where an *aliyah* can end the *oleh* should recite the *beracha* after Torah reading and the repair should be made between *aliyos*. If it is not a place where an *aliyah* can end or if they have not read three *pesukim* the scribe should make the repair in the middle of the *aliyah* (פסקי תשובות אות ז׳).

Overview

Siman 143 Seif 4 (a):

If a mistake was found in a *sefer Torah* during *krias hatorah* a new *sefer Torah* should be taken out and they should start reading from the place where the error was discovered and complete the minimum number of *aliyos* including the *aliyos* that were received from the *sefer torah* with the error. If the mistake was discovered while actually reading the Torah they should finish that reading from a valid *sefer Torah* and recite the *beracha* that follows that reading but they do not repeat the *beracha* before reading.

- Most *Poskim* maintain that if a mistake is found in a *sefer Torah* it is invalid for reading and even if all seven *aliyos* were read it is necessary to start reading again from the beginning of the *parsha* from a valid *sefer Torah*. According to some *Poskim* even if a *sefer Torah* is missing a few *pesukim* it may be used for *krias haTorah* if there is no other *sefer Torah* available. Shulchan Aruch rules that an invalid *sefer Torah* should not be used for *krias haTorah* but if the mistake was not found until after some of it was read one may rely upon those opinions who maintain that one may read from an invalid *sefer Torah* and they are not required to read again the *aliyos* that were read. If it is possible to read seven *aliyos* from the valid *sefer Torah* it is appropriate to do so. The discussion up until this point is limited to where the mistake was found after an *oleh* recited the *beracha* after Torah reading. (M.B. 13)
- There is a disagreement what should be done when the mistake is found in the middle of an *aliyah*. One approach is that a valid *sefer Torah* must be removed in the middle of the reading and three *pesukim* should be read from the valid *sefer Torah* before the *beracha* after Torah reading is recited. A second approach is that if three *pesukim* were read and it is possible to stop where the mistake was found, meaning it is not within two *pesukim* of the end of a paragraph, the *oleh* should recite the *beracha* after Torah reading and a valid *sefer Torah* should be taken out for the remaining *aliyos*. If three *pesukim* were not read or if it is not a place where an *aliyah* can end the mistake should be read by heart, the *aliyah* should be completed, the *beracha* after Torah reading should be recited and then a valid Torah should be taken out for the remaining *aliyos*. Rema rules that when they did not read three *pesukim* or if the mistake is found in a place where an *aliyah* cannot end they should take out a valid *sefer Torah* and complete the *aliyah* from the valid *sefer Torah*. If three *pesukim* were read and the mistake was found in a place where an *aliyah* can end the *oleh* should recite the *beracha* on the invalid *sefer Torah* and the remaining *aliyos* should be read from a valid *sefer Torah*. (M.B. 13)
- Shulchan Aruch refers to where some of the *aliyos* were completed and the mistake was found between *aliyos*. (M.B. 14)
- Even if the mistake was not discovered until an additional three or four *pesukim* were read it is not necessary to go back to the mistake; rather they continue in the valid *sefer Torah* from the place where they stopped. (M.B. 15)
- It is preferable, if possible to divide the remainder of the *parsha* into seven *aliyos*. (M.B. 16)
- If the *beracha* after reading Torah was not yet recited they can not conduct themselves as though they have discharged their obligation and must take out a valid *sefer Torah*. (M.B. 17)
- They must read at least three *pesukim*. (M.B. 18)
- If the mistake was found after the *beracha* but before any *pesukim* were read a valid *sefer Torah* should be taken out but a new *beracha* is not necessary. It is not necessary to protest those who have the custom to repeat the *beracha* before Torah reading since they have authorities upon whom to rely. (M.B. 20)

Stories to Share

Erasing to Rectify

ש״ע קמ״ג, ד׳: ״אם נמצא טעות בס״ת...״

A certain sofer wrote a sefer Torah and when checking it for errors, discovered that instead of אלוקים he had written אלוקיכם. Although with most errors he would only have to erase the problem and rewrite, he was unsure whether he could do so in this case, as it is forbidden to erase the Name of Hashem. In this case, the problem was not the name per se, but the suffix, כם. Since he did not want to rewrite the entire amud, he wanted to fix the error if this was permitted by the halachah.

When this question reached the Taz, he ruled that the sofer could not erase the suffix כם. "It is obvious to me that it is forbidden to erase a suffix to one of the Divine Names. Here is the proof: although we find in Maseches Sofrim that if a drop of ink fell on one of the Divine Names it is permitted to erase the ink in order to correct the blot, the Mordechai explains that this may only be permitted if letter wasn't yet formed properly. However, if ink fell on a complete Name it would be forbidden to erase the ink. Similarly, if the letter were accidentally connected this would also be forbidden and the same is true regarding a suffix."

When the Chut Hameshulash saw this response, he presented a different view. "In my opinion, although the Beis Yosef brings this Mordechai and it is l'halachah, there is room for leniency regarding a suffix. The proof to this is from Menachos 48. There we find that Rav Yochanan asks if we may do a sin in order to gain something with regard to sacrifices. From the Rambam there it is clear that we hold like the opinion of Rav Yochanan.

He concluded, "Since rectifying the shem Hashem is like saving a sacrifice, it is clear that in this case we may erase to rectify, especially since erasing a suffix is only a rabbinic prohibition."

שו״ת חוט המשולש, ח״ג, סי׳ ל״ט