The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן קמ״ג סעיף ד׳

# Halacha Highlight

## Mistakes found in a *sefer Torah*

Rema Siman 143 Seif 4 (b)

**דוקא שנמצא טעות גמור**

**Only when they find an actual mistake**

Rema explains that the requirement to take out a second *sefer Torah* is limited to where there is an actual mistake. If the only issue is extra or missing letters and the presence of absence of that letter does not change the meaning of the words a second *sefer Torah* should not be taken out since our *sifrei Torah* are not so precise that we could state definitively that the second *sefer Torah* is more accurate than the first. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ״ה) elaborates on many different types of errors and we will summarize a couple of those errors here.

**Extra or missing letters:** If there are extra or missing letters that change the pronunciation of the word even if the meaning does not change (כבש – כשב) or if the meaning changes but the pronunciation remains the same (ויקרה – ויקרא) it is necessary to take out a second *sefer Torah*. If the extra or missing letter does not change the pronunciation or meaning of the word (לאמור – לאמר) it is not necessary to take out a second *sefer Torah*.

**Fading letters:** If letters are fading but can still be recognized it is not necessary to take out a second *sefer Torah*. If the ink falls off and all that remains is a red mark where the letter used to be it is necessary to take out a second *sefer Torah*. Mishnah Berurah then instructs the reader to look at what he wrote in *siman* 32 *seif koton* 128 regarding what he wrote in the name of Chasam Sofer. Chasam Sofer differentiates between ink that turned red right away which indicates that the ink was not manufactured properly and ink that was black and the letter were written properly but over time turned red. In the latter case the letter is valid and it is unnecessary to take out a second *sefer Torah*.

# Stories to Share

## The Mistaken Sofer

ש ס, ע״ י קמ יד, ג׳ : ״והא דמוציאין אחרת דוקא שנמצא טעות גמור...״

On today's amud we find that if an error was discovered in a sefer Torah it is invalid until the error is rectified.

Safrus is a very big responsibility. One mistaken stroke of the pen can sometimes invalidate an entire sefer Torah. Every holy name of Hashem must be written with proper intention. If this is forgotten, the Torah cannot be used.

The student of a certain sofer was writing his first sefer Torah. Upon reaching the phrase phrase, "Adonei Ha'adonim" in parshas Ekev, he was unsure if he needed to be mekdadesh the word Adonei. His teacher told him not to. The student did as he was told and continued writing the sefer. They gave the sefer to the purchaser and all was well until the student, who was carefully making his way through Meseches Sofrim found that it states there that Adonei in Eikev does need to be sanctified. He was horrified and quickly told the purchasers that presumably the sefer could not be used, at least until they consulted with a chacham. They all went to the "master" sofer and asked him how he could possibly have made such a blatant mistake. His answer shocked everyone, "I always figured it was obvious that it is not kadosh. In all the sirfrei Torah I have ever written I have never sanctified this shem…"

If this statement was true it invalidated over half a dozen sifrei Torah which would cost a veritable fortune to replace.

When this question reached the Shoel U'meishiv, he ruled decisively. "Although one cannot use such a Torah, there is a simple way to correct this problem since others may hold that one need not sanctify this shem. He should erase the word and rewrite it with the proper intention in all of the Toros he ever wrote. Since the word itself is not intrinsically kodesh and was not yet sanctified, he may certainly erase it."

שואל ומשיב, מהדורא א׳, חלק א׳, סימן פ״א

# Overview

**Siman 143 Seif 4 (b):**

If they already read three *pesukim* and it is possible to stop where the error was found they should stop reading and recite the *beracha* that follows Torah reading and complete the minimum number of *aliyos* from the other *sefer Torah*. Reading from a second *sefer Torah* is mandated only when there is a serious error but if there are missing or extra letters it is unnecessary to take out a second *sefer Torah* since our *sifrei Torah* are not so precise that we can say that the second *sefer Torah* would be any better.

- The custom is not to take out a second *sefer Torah* for *maftir*. In other words if a mistake was found after reading the entire *parsha* but before *kaddish* was recited they should not take out a second *sefer Torah* for *maftir*. Instead the *kaddish* should be recited after the *haftorah*. If the mistake was found in the middle of the seventh *aliyah* Magen Avrohom maintains that they should complete the *aliyah* in the defective *sefer Torah* including the *beracha* after Torah reading, read the *haftorah* and then recite the *kaddish*. Others contend that there is no difference between a mistake found in the seventh *aliyah* and a mistake found in any other *aliyah*. If a mistake was found after seven *aliyos* but before the *parsha* was completed all opinions agree that a second *sefer Torah* must be used to complete the *parsha*. When a mistake is found in *maftir* they should finish the *aliyah* but should not recite the *beracha* afterwards. Regarding a *maftir* on Yom Tov or one of the special *parshiyos* another *sefer Torah* must be removed. (M.B. 23)
- Examples of actual errors are missing or extra words or letters, if the קרי was written instead of the כתיב or if the paragraph was open when it should have been closed or the reverse. (M.B. 25)
- If part of a letter became erased but a child is still able to recognize the letter it is not necessary to take out a second *sefer Torah* but if the black came off leaving in its place a red mark the *sefer Torah* is invalid but see *siman* 32 *seif koton* 128 for circumstances in which another *sefer Torah* should not be taken out. (M.B. 25)
- If the stitches become torn but five or six stitches remain intact the *sefer Torah* remains valid. (M.B. 25)
- Some mistakes require taking out another *sefer Torah* but some mistakes are minor and do not change the appearance of the letter, nevertheless, such a *sefer Torah* should not be taken out for *krias hatorah* but if the mistake was found in the middle of an *aliyah* and it could be easily repaired during the week when it could be repaired it should be repaired even during the *aliyah* but if there is no one present who can make the needed repair or on Shabbos when the repair cannot be made it is permitted to continue reading. If the invalid connection is at the beginning of the letter or the middle so that the remainder of the letter was written in an invalid manner there is a disagreement whether another *sefer Torah* should be removed. When no other *sefer Torah* is readily available one may follow the lenient opinion and finish reading in this *sefer Torah*. (M.B. 25)
- Remember the following rule, anytime the *halacha* says that a *sefer Torah* is invalid it is necessary to take out a second *sefer Torah*. When the *halacha* is subject to a dispute one could be lenient and not take out a second *sefer Torah*. (M.B. 25)