The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תרצ"א סעיף א'-ב'

Overview

Siman 691 Seif 1:

The *megilla* must be written with ink on *gevil* or parchment similar to a *sefer torah*. If it was written with gallnut resin or vitriol it is valid. If it was written with other ink it is invalid. The parchment must be scored like a *sefer torah*. It is not necessary to process the hide for the sake of writing a *megilla* but some maintain that it must be processed for the sake of the *mitzvah*.

- This is hide that was not smoothed and only the hair was removed but on the flesh side nothing was done. (M.B. 2)
- Gra explains that Shulchan Aruch refers to where one used a mixture of gallnut resin and vitriol. (M.B. 4)
- Carving out the letters is invalid but if a minority of the letters were carved out it is valid since they can be missing altogether. (M.B. 6)
- Maharam Mintz subscribes to the latter opinion. (M.B. 7)

Siman 691 Seif 2:

If it was written on paper or hide that was not processed or if it was written by a gentile or heretic, it is invalid. It shares the same *halacha* as a *sefer torah* in that the letters must be surrounded by parchment and the necessity for חת"ין to have humps and הה"ין וקופ"ין to have suspended legs and the letters must have their shape and one may not add or leave out letters. It must be written by copying from an existing text and the scribe must verbalize each word before writing it as is done when writing a *sefer torah*. All of the paragraphs are closed and if they were made open it is invalid. *B'dieved*, a *megilla* is not invalidated due to extra or missing letters since it is no worse than leaving them out altogether in which case it is valid as explained in *siman* 690:3. **It requires a column at the end and a blank section at the beginning to surround the scroll. Some maintain that crowns are required but others maintain that they are not necessary.** The custom is to add crowns and it is also customary to not leave a blank column at the end.

- Each line must be equal length and the width of each column should be as wide as it takes to write the word למשפחתיכם three times and the other *halachos* of a *sefer torah* are applicable as well. (M.B. 8)
- It is also acceptable for one person to read the text to the scribe so that he should not err. If one wrote a *megilla* without copying from an existing text there are authorities who maintain that it should not be used unless there is a pressing need to use it. (M.B. 9)
- *B'dieved*, one need not be stringent if he did not err. (M.B. 10)
- Maharam Mintz questions this ruling and one may rely upon his position in a pressing circumstance. (M.B. 13)
- If one does not have another *megilla* he may use this one even *l'chatchila*. (M.B. 14)
- The empty column at the beginning is still done and a *megilla* is rolled from the end to the beginning. (M.B. 15)
- Gra questions this ruling. (M.B. 16)

Halacha Highlight

Manufacturing *megilla* parchment for the sake of the *mitzvah*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 691 Seif 1
ואין העור שלה צריך לעבד לשמה
And the hide need not be manufactured for the sake of the *mitzvah*

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') presents a dispute regarding the manufacturing of parchment to be used for a *megilla*. He first cites Rambam's position that it is not necessary to manufacture the parchment for the sake of the *mitzvah* and then in the name of יש אומרים he references Rabbeinu Tam who rules that the parchment must be manufactured for the sake of the *mitzvah*. The rationale behind Rabbeinu Tam's position is that since the *megilla* is described as a *sefer* (ונכתב בספר) it shares the *halachos* of a *sefer torah* which includes the necessity to manufacture the parchment for the sake of the *mitzvah*. As far as Rambam's position, the Ran (מגילה ו. מדפי הריי"ף ד"ה וצריך) in the name of the Ramban explains that a *megilla* is similar to a *sefer torah* only regarding those factors that are part of the physical structure of the scroll but those requirements that are external to the actual scroll, a *megilla* is not similar to a *sefer torah*. One should certainly make an effort to read from a *megilla* whose parchment was manufactured for the sake of the *mitzvah*. However, if another *megilla* is not available one may rely upon the first opinion cited by Shulchan Aruch and even recite the *beracha* when reading such a *megilla* (שו"ת יביע אומר ח"ח סי' נ"ה אות ג').

Poskim debate whether according to Rambam it is necessary for a *megilla* to be written for the sake of the *mitzvah*. Some authorities contend that just as Rambam does not require the parchment to be manufactured for the sake of the *mitzvah*, so too it is not necessary for it to be written for the sake of the *mitzvah* (שו"ת זרע אמת ח"ג או"ח סי' ע"ח). Others disagree and contend that with regards to writing there is no difference between a *megilla* and other *sifrei kodesh* in that it must be written for the sake of the *mitzvah* (מעשה רוקח על הרמב"ם). Avnei Nezer (או"ח סי' תקי"ח אות י') argues that a *megilla* should be no different from a *mezuzah* that must be written for the sake of the *mitzvah* even though it is not necessary for the parchment to be manufactured for the sake of the *mitzvah*.