

HALAKHA

The writing of the Megilla – כתיבת המגילה – A Megilla that is written on paper or on untreated parchment is unfit. Moreover, it must be written in ink, as a Torah scroll is written (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 691:1*).

קנקנתום – תרתא דאושכפי,
דיפתרא – דמליח וקמיה ולא עפיץ,
נייר – מחקא.

Kankantom is what is called in Aramaic *harta de'ushkafei*, a black dye used by shoemakers. *Diftera* is hide that was processed with salt and flour,⁸ but not with gallnuts. *Neyar* is known in Aramaic as *mahaka*,⁹ paper made from reeds.

עד שתהא בתובה אשורית: דכתיב
"ככתבם וכזמנם":

§ It was taught in the mishna: He does not fulfill his obligation unless the Megilla is written in *Ashurit*. The Gemara explains the reason for this: As it is written concerning the Megilla: "According to their writing and according to their time" (Esther 9:27), i.e., the way it was originally written.

"על הספר ובדיו" וכו': מנלן? אתיא
בתיבה בתיבה, כתיב הכא "ותכתב
אסתר המלכה" וכתב התם "ויאמר
להם ברוך מפיו יקרא אלי את כל
הדברים האלה ואני בותב על הספר
בדיו".

The mishna concludes: He does not fulfill his obligation unless the Megilla is written upon parchment and with ink.¹⁰ The Gemara asks: From where do we derive this? The Gemara answers: It is derived by way of a verbal analogy between one instance of writing and another instance of writing.¹¹ It is written here in the book of Esther: "Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote all the acts of power, to confirm this second letter of Purim" (Esther 9:29), and it is written there: "Then Baruch answered them: He pronounced all these words to me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink on the parchment" (Jeremiah 36:18). Just as there the writing was with ink on parchment, so too here, a Megilla must be written with ink on parchment.¹²

מתני' בן עיר שהלך לפרך ובן
פרך שהלך לעיר, אם עתיד לחזור
למקומו – קורא במקומו, ואם לאו –
קורא עמהן.

MISHNA With regard to a resident of an unwalled town who went to a walled city, where the Megilla is read on the fifteenth of Adar, and conversely, a resident of a walled city who went to an unwalled town where it is read on the fourteenth, the following distinction applies: If he is destined to return to his original place, he reads it according to the *halakha* governing his own place, and if not, i.e., if he is not destined to return to his place, he reads with them, the residents of his current location.

ומהיכן קורא אדם את המגילה ויוצא
בה ידי חובה? רבי מאיר אומר: בולה,
רבי יהודה אומר: מ"איש יהודי". רבי
יוסי אומר: מ"אחר הדברים האלה".

Beginning from where must a person read the Megilla in order to fulfill his obligation? Rabbi Meir says: He must read all of it. Rabbi Yehuda says: He need read only from "There was a certain Jew" (Esther 2:5). Rabbi Yosei says: From "After these things" (Esther 3:1).

BACKGROUND

Processed with salt and flour – דמליח וקמיה: There were several methods used to process hides in ancient times. It appears that hide prepared for writing parchment was first processed with salt and then with a mixture of salt and other substances. The final step was to process it again with gall juice to prevent the ink from fading. *Diftera* is a kind of parchment that was not fully processed.

Mahaka – מחקא: According to the opinion that the reference is not to paper, it is apparently referring to what is called in other places *matza*, which is skin that is almost completely crude, meaning that it had its hair removed but was not properly processed with salt and gall.

NOTES

Neyar, mahaka – נייר, מחקא: The commentaries disagree as to the meaning of these words. Some say that they are similar to modern paper (Rashi), and others say that it means parchment that was written on and then erased (Rav Natan Av HaYeshiva; see Meiri). Still others explain that it is parchment that underwent only partial processing (*Arukh*).

referred to as a book, meaning that it is similar in its *halakhot* to a Torah scroll, and is also referred to as a letter. Consequently, it has some similarities to the *halakhot* pertaining to Torah scrolls and certain dissimilarities, and the Gemara finds it necessary to offer proofs with regard to various details of *halakhot* for writing a Megilla. The Gemara apparently concludes that with regard to issues relating to writing, such as the requirement for ink and parchment, the *halakhot* of a Torah scroll apply to the Megilla, and with regard to other matters it is considered only a letter, and the stringencies of the Torah scroll do not apply to it.

Derived by verbal analogy between writing and writing – אתיא בתיבה בתיבה: The Ramban explains the Gemara's discussion as follows: The Gemara later tells us that the Megilla is

They taught the mishna only with regard to one who is destined to return – לֹא שָׁנוּ אֶלָּא שְׁעָתִיד לְחֹזֵר – There are two main approaches to understanding Rava's statement. The discussion revolves around the question of whether or not Rava was specifically discussing residents of walled cities when he mentioned: The night of the fourteenth (Rashi), or referring to residents of both walled cities and unwalled towns (Rosh). Practically speaking, then, according to Rashi, the *halakha* depends on one's intended location at the time they read in his own dwelling place: If he intends to be in his hometown on the day they read, he reads with them. If he intends to be in a different place at that time he should read in accordance with the *halakha* governing that different place. According to the Rosh, however, the *halakha* depends on one's intended location on the fourteenth of Adar. Other early commentaries as well (Ran; Ritva) discuss these two approaches at length, as well as several approaches in between (Rabbi Zerahya HaLevi; Ra'avad; Rashba). The opinions of the Rif and the Rambam are unclear, and are subject to much discussion (see *Peri Megadim*).

HALAKHA

בְּן עִיר – A resident of a town who went to a walled city – שְׁהֵלֵךְ לְכַרְךָ: With regard to a resident of an unwalled town who went to a walled city or a resident of a walled city who went to an unwalled town, if he intends to return to his original place when the Megilla is read, he reads like the people of his place, even if he did not yet return. And if he does not intend to return by the time the Megilla is read, he should read in accordance with the custom of where he is presently, as the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rava. There is a fundamental dispute among the early commentaries with regard to the details of this *halakha*, and there are many variations within the main opinions. It appears that most of halakhic authorities follow Rashi's interpretation of the passage (see *Mishna Berura*, *Yemei HaPurim*, and other contemporary sources).

If one leaves an unwalled town for a walled city on the fourteenth of Adar, without intending to return shortly, he must read in both places (*Mishna Berura*, citing Vilna Gaon), though some dispute this (*Kaf HaHayyim*). Conversely, one who leaves a walled city on the fourteenth of Adar is exempt from Megilla reading in both places (Rema MiPano). All these opinions are based on the Jerusalem Talmud. It is also taught there that one who is traveling in a desert or on a ship reads the Megilla on the fourteenth of Adar, even if he lives in a walled city (*Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 688:5, and in the comment of Rema).

GEMARA Rava said: They taught the mishna that one who is destined to return to his own place reads according to the *halakha* governing his own place **only** with regard to **one who is destined to return**ⁿ to his own place **on the night of the fourteenth** of Adar. **But if he is not destined to return on the night of the fourteenth**, although he does intend to return to his own place eventually, **he reads with the residents of his current location.**^h **Rava said: From where do I say this? As it is written: "Therefore the Jews of unwalled towns, who dwell in the unwalled towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting"** (Esther 9:19). **Since it is already written: "The Jews of unwalled towns," why do I need it to write further, "who dwell in the unwalled towns"?** It comes to teach us this: **That one who is in an unwalled town even for the day is also called one who lives in an unwalled town.**

The Gemara asks: **We have found proof for a resident of a walled city who is temporarily located in an unwalled town. But from where do we derive the opposite case, that one from an unwalled town who is temporarily in a walled city is governed by a similar halakha?** The Gemara answers: **It is based on logical reasoning: Since one who is in an unwalled town for the day is called someone from an unwalled town, so too conversely, one who is in a walled city for a day is called someone from a walled city.**

And Rava said further: Someone from a village, where the Megilla is read on the Monday or Thursday prior to Purim (2a), who went to a town, reads the Megilla with the residents of the town, even if he had already read it in his own place. He does so in all circumstances, whether or not he will be returning to his own village. The Gemara explains: What is the reason for this ruling? This villager should actually have read at the same time as the residents of the towns, but the Sages showed leniency toward the people of the villages and allowed them to advance their reading of the Megilla to the previous day of assembly so that they would be free to supply water and food to their brethren in the cities on the day of Purim. This, however, applies only when the villager is in his place, in the village, but when he is in a town, he is required to read like the residents of the town, and not like the villagers.

Abaye raised an objection to Rava from a *baraita*: **A resident of a walled city who went to an unwalled town, in all circumstances, whether or not he will be returning to his own city, reads the Megilla according to the halakha governing his permanent place.** The Gemara first questions the text of the *baraita* as it is currently worded: **Can it enter your mind that the resident of a walled city always reads in accordance with the halakha governing his own place, even if he is currently situated in an unwalled town? But doesn't the matter depend on whether or not he will be returning on Purim to his hometown, as stated in the mishna?** Therefore, it is clear that the *baraita* must be emended. **Rather, is it not to be changed to: A resident of a village who went to an unwalled town?** The *baraita* therefore teaches that a resident of a village who is visiting in a town must read the Megilla according to the *halakha* governing his own place, the village, unlike Rava's teaching.

The Gemara rejects this: **But did you not emend the reading in the baraita?** Since you admit that the *baraita* in any event requires revision, change it further and **teach: He reads the Megilla with the residents of the town.** This wording in the *baraita* would then support the opinion of Rava.

§ The mishna teaches that three Sages disagree about the question: **Beginning from where must a person read the Megilla in order to fulfill his obligation? It is taught in a baraita that there is a fourth opinion as well: Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai says: One must start to read from "On that night"** (Esther 6:1).

גמ' אָמַר רַבָּא: לֹא שָׁנוּ אֶלָּא שְׁעָתִיד לְחֹזֵר בְּלֵילֵי אַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר, אֲבָל אֵין עָתִיד לְחֹזֵר בְּלֵילֵי אַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר – קוֹרֵא עִמָּהֶן. אָמַר רַבָּא: מִנָּא אָמִינָא לָהּ – דְּכֵתִיב "עַל בֶּן הַיְהוּדִים הַפְּרוּזִים הַיּוֹשְׁבִים בְּעָרֵי הַפְּרוּזוֹת", מִכְּדִי כְּתִיב "הַיְהוּדִים הַפְּרוּזִים" לְמָה לִי לְמִי כְּתִיב "הַיּוֹשְׁבִים בְּעָרֵי הַפְּרוּזוֹת"? הֲאֵל אָמַר מִשְׁמַע לָן דְּפָרוּ בֵּן יוֹמוֹ נִקְרָא פְּרוּז.

אֲשַׁבְּחֵן פְּרוּז, מוֹקֵף מִנָּא לָן? סְבָרָא הוּא, מְדַפְרוּ בֵּן יוֹמוֹ קְרוּי פְּרוּז – מוֹקֵף בֵּן יוֹמוֹ קְרוּי מוֹקֵף.

וְאָמַר רַבָּא: בֵּן כְּפָר שֶׁהֵלֵךְ לְעִיר – בֵּין כֶּךָ וּבֵין כֶּךָ קוֹרֵא עִמָּהֶן. מֵאִי טַעְמָא? הָאִי כִּבְנֵי הָעִיר בְּעֵי לְמַקְרֵי, וְרַבְּנֵי הוּא דְאִקְלוּ עַל הַכְּפָרִים כְּדִי שְׂיִסְפְּקוּ מִים וּמִזֶּן לְאַחֵיהֶם שְׂבִכְרֵי. הֲנֵי מִלִּי – כִּי אֵיתִיָּה בְּדוּכְתִיָּה, אֲבָל כִּי אֵיתִיָּה בְּעִיר – כִּבְנֵי עִיר בְּעֵי לְמַקְרֵי.

אֵיתִיבִיה אַבְיָי: בֵּן כְּרִךְ שֶׁהֵלֵךְ לְעִיר – בֵּין כֶּךָ וּבֵין כֶּךָ קוֹרֵא כְּמִקְמוֹ. בֵּן כְּרִךְ סָלְקָא דְעֵתָךְ? בְּאֵם עָתִיד לְחֹזֵר תְּלִיָּא מִדְּתָא! אֶלָּא לָאו – בֵּן כְּפָר!

וְלֹא תְרוּצֵי מִתְרַצֵּת? תִּנֵּי קוֹרֵא עִמָּהֶן.

"מֵהֵיכָן קוֹרֵא אָדָם אֶת הַמְּגִילָה" וכו': תִּנְיָא, רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בְּרִי יוֹחָאִי אָמַר: מִבְּלִילָה הַהוּא."

אמר רבי יוחנן: וכולן מקרא אחד דרשו: "ותכתב אסתר המלכה... ומרדכי היהודי את כל תוקף". מאן דאמר בולה - תוקפו של אחשוורוש,

Rabbi Yoḥanan said: And all of these *tanna'im*, in arriving at their respective opinions, were expounding the same verse. As it is stated: "Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote about all the acts of power to confirm this second letter of Purim" (Esther 9:29). The one who said that the Megilla must be read in its entirety interprets "acts of power" as referring to the power of Ahasuerus, and so the Megilla must be read from the beginning, where the power of Ahasuerus is recounted.

ומאן דאמר מ"איש יהודי" - תוקפו של מרדכי, ומאן דאמר מ"אחר הדברים האלה" - תוקפו של המן, ומאן דאמר מ"בלילה ההוא" - תוקפו של נס.

And the one who said that it needs to be read from "There was a certain Jew" explains that "acts of power" is referring to the power of Mordecai. And the one who said that it needs to be read from "After these things" maintains that "acts of power" is referring to the power of Haman. And the one who said that it needs to be read from "On that night" understands that the expression is referring to the power of the miracle, which began on that night when Ahasuerus could not sleep, and therefore one must begin reading the Megilla from there.

רב הונא אמר מהכא: "ומה ראו על ככה ומה הגיע אליהם",

Rav Huna said: The four Sages derived their respective opinions from here: "Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, and of that which they saw concerning this matter, and that which had befallen them, the Jews ordained...that they would keep these two days" (Esther 9:26-27).

מאן דאמר בולה - מה ראה אחשוורוש שנשתמש בכלים של בית המקדש "על ככה" - משום דחשיב שבועים שנין ולא איפרוק. "ומה הגיע אליהם" - דקטל ושתמי.

Rav Huna continued: The one who said that the Megilla must be read in its entirety explains the verse as follows: "They saw" refers to what Ahasuerus saw, in that he used the vessels of the Temple. "Concerning this matter" was because he had calculated seventy years from the Babylonian exile and the Jews were still not redeemed, and he consequently thought that they would never enjoy deliverance. "And that which had befallen them" is referring to the fact that he had killed Vashti. Since the Megilla was written and continues to be read in order to inform future generations of all these events and what had happened to the people who were involved, and these are detailed at the beginning of the Megilla, it must be read in its entirety.

ומאן דאמר "מאיש יהודי", מה ראה מרדכי דאיכני בהמן "על ככה" - דשוי נפשיה עבודה זרה, ומה הגיע אליהם - דאתרחיש ניסא.

And the one who said that the Megilla needs to be read from "There was a certain Jew" interprets this verse as follows: That which Mordecai "saw" in that he acted so zealously concerning Haman. "Concerning this matter" was because Haman had made himself an object of idol worship. "And that which had befallen them" is referring to the fact that a miracle took place. Therefore one must read the Megilla from "There was a certain man," where all this is recounted.

ומאן דאמר "מאחר הדברים האלה" מה ראה המן שנתקנא בכל היהודים "על ככה" משום דמרדכי לא יכרע ולא ישתחוה, "ומה הגיע אליהם", "והלו אותו ואת בניו על העץ".

And the one who said that it needs to be read from "After these things" interprets the verse in this way: That which Haman "saw" in that he became incensed with all the Jews. "Concerning this matter" was because "Mordecai did not bow down, nor prostrate himself before him" (Esther 3:2). "And that which had befallen them" is referring to the fact that "he and his sons were hanged on the gallows" (Esther 9:25). Accordingly, the Megilla must be read from the first mention of Haman.

ומאן דאמר מ"בלילה ההוא", מה ראה אחשוורוש להביא את ספר הזכרונות "על ככה" - דזמינתייה אסתר להמן בהדיה, "ומה הגיע אליהם" - דאתרחיש ניסא.

And the one who said that the Megilla must be read from "On that night" offers the following explanation: That which Ahasuerus "saw" in that he commanded to bring the book of chronicles before him. "Concerning this matter" was because Esther had invited Haman along with him to the banquet she made. "And that which had befallen them" is referring to the fact that a miracle took place. And therefore one must read the Megilla from "On that night the king could not sleep and he commanded to bring the book of chronicles."

אמר רבי חלבון אמר רב חמא בר גוריא אמר רב: הלכה כדברי האומר בולה. ואפילו למאן דאמר "מאיש יהודי" - צריכה שתהא כתובה בולה.

Rabbi Helbo⁹ said that Rav Hama bar Gurya said that Rav said: The *halakha* is in accordance with the statement of the one who says that the Megilla must be read in its entirety.¹⁰ And moreover, even according to the one who said that it need be read only from "There was a certain Jew" and onward, the Megilla itself must nevertheless be written in its entirety.

PERSONALITIES

Rabbi Helbo – רבי חלבון: Rabbi Helbo was a Babylonian *amora* of the third generation who moved to Eretz Yisrael. He was a student of Rav Huna and apparently received most of his Torah education from him; indeed, he often quotes Rav Huna. It appears that he went to Eretz Yisrael near the time of Rav Huna's death and was there when the latter's coffin was brought for burial. In Eretz Yisrael he was a student and colleague of the greatest students of Rabbi Yoḥanan and became one of the leaders of the generation and a halakhic codifier. In the area of *aggada* he was a student of Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani and quotes aggadic traditions in his name. Rabbi Helbo settled in Tiberias and was close to Rabbi Yehuda Nesia. The Talmud relates that he had no children.

HALAKHA

מהיכן - מיהיכן: From where does one read the Megilla - מיהיכן: The Megilla is read in its entirety, as Rav rules in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir (Shulḥan Arukh, *Orah Hayyim* 690:3).

BACKGROUND

The stitches of the Megilla – תְּפִירוֹת הַמְּגִלָּה: In most cases one piece of hide is not enough to write an entire Megilla, and therefore several sheets of parchment must be attached together. The Sages taught that like the parchment itself, even the stitches must be from a material that comes from an animal, i.e., thin tendons that are made into strings and used to stitch. Since not all the stringencies of a Torah scroll apply to a Megilla, it is not required that one follow the halakhot of stitching a Torah scroll, and it is enough that it be sewn with only three stitches.



Two pieces of parchment connected by three stitches

וְאָמַר רַבִּי חֵלְבּוֹ אָמַר רַב חָמָא בַּר גּוּרְיָא אָמַר רַב: מְגִלָּה נִקְרָאת סֵפֶר וְנִקְרָאת אֲגָרָת, נִקְרָאת סֵפֶר – שָׂאֵם תְּפִירָה בְּחוּטֵי פִּסְוֹלָה, וְנִקְרָאת אֲגָרָת – שָׂאֵם הַטֵּיִל בְּהַ שְׁלִשָּׁה חוּטֵי גִידֵין בְּשָׂרָה, אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן: וּבְלִבְד שְׂרִיהוּ מְשׁוּלָּשִׁין.

And Rabbi Helbo said further that Rav Hama bar Gurya said that Rav said: The Megilla is referred to as a “book” (Esther 9:32), and it is also referred to as a “letter” (Esther 9:29). It is called a book, indicating a comparison to the book of the Torah, i.e., to a Torah scroll, to teach us that if one sewed its parchment sheets together with flax threads the Megilla is unfit, just as a Torah scroll sewn in this manner is unfit. And it is called a letter to teach us that if one stitched the Megilla sheets together with only three threads of sinew,^{BH} in the manner of a letter, the Megilla is fit for use, as it does not have to be completely stitched like a Torah scroll. Rav Nahman said: This is true provided that the stitches are made in three parts.^N

אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר שְׁמוּאֵל: הַקּוֹרֵא בְּמְגִלָּה הַבְּתוּבָה בֵּין הַבְּתוּבִים – לֹא יֵצֵא. אָמַר רַבָּא: לֹא אִמְרוּן אֱלָא דְלֵא מַחְסְרָא וּמִיִּיתְרָא פּוֹרְתָא, אֲבָל מַחְסְרָא וּמִיִּיתְרָא פּוֹרְתָא – לִית לֵן בְּהּ.

Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: If one reads from a Megilla that was written together with the rest of the Writings he has not fulfilled his obligation, as it must be evident that one is reading specifically from the Megilla rather than simply reading ordinary passages from the Bible. Rava said: We said this only in a case where the parchment of the Megilla is not a little shorter or longer than the parchment of the other biblical books on the scroll and are consequently not plainly discernible among them. But if it is a little shorter or longer than the other sheets of parchment of the other biblical books, we have no problem with it, and one may read from such a scroll.

לֹוי בַּר שְׁמוּאֵל הוּדָה קָא קְרִי קַמֵּיהּ דְּרַב יְהוּדָה בְּמְגִלָּה

It was related that Levi bar Shmuel was once reading before Rav Yehuda from a Megilla

HALAKHA

The stitches of the sheets of a Megilla – תְּפִירוֹת הַמְּגִלָּה: A Megilla that is stitched with flax threads is unfit. However, it does not need to be stitched entirely like a Torah scroll; it is sufficient that it be stitched with sinews in threes. Since there are several different interpretations of this expression, one should sew three stitches at the top, three at the bottom and

three in the middle, and one stitch at the quarter mark from the top and another at the quarter mark from the bottom. If he has sufficient sinews to do so, he should stitch it entirely (Rema), but he should then leave a small space unstitched (Arukh HaShulhan; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim 691:5–6, and in the comment of Rema).

NOTES

In three parts – מְשׁוּלָּשִׁין: There are several opinions with regard to the meaning of this expression. Rashi explains that it means that the stitches should be evenly spaced, i.e., that the distance from the edge of the sheet, both at the top and on the bottom, to the first stitch should equal the length of each stitch.

Another opinion is that the page should be divided into three equal parts, with one stitch per part (Rabbeinu Ḥananel). The Rambam’s opinion is that the Megilla should be stitched in three places, each stitched area itself consisting of three stitches. See HALAKHA.

Perek II
Daf 19 Amud b

הַבְּתוּבָה בֵּין הַבְּתוּבִים. אָמַר לִיה: הֲרֵי אָמְרוּ הַקּוֹרֵא בְּמְגִלָּה הַבְּתוּבָה בֵּין הַבְּתוּבִים לֹא יֵצֵא.

that was written together with the rest of the Writings.^H Rav Yehuda said to him: The Sages have said: If one reads from a Megilla that was written together with the rest of the Writings he has not fulfilled his obligation.

HALAKHA

A Megilla that was written together with the rest of the Writings – מְגִלָּה הַבְּתוּבָה בֵּין הַבְּתוּבִים: A Megilla that was written together with the rest of the Writings may not be read for the public, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yohanan. Even after the fact, if one has read from such a text, he has fulfilled his obligation only if the parchment of the book of Esther is bigger or smaller than the other parchments of the

scroll, so that it is distinguishable as an independent entity. However, a private individual may read from such a text and fulfill his obligation, provided it is written as a scroll, as opposed to bound books, which are common nowadays. Some say that an individual may read from such a scroll even *ab initio* (Vilna Gaon, citing Rosh; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim 691:8).

NOTES

But they hit this *halakha* on its head – וּמָחוּ לָהּ אֲמוּחָא: This expression means that the scope and strength of the previously stated *halakha* is diminished, though not invalidated completely. It appears that the mitigation of the *halakha* was stated by a later Sage than the one who had stated the original *halakha* (Rav Ya'akov Emden), although it is also possible to explain that the same Sage who said the first statement subjected it to a more restricted interpretation afterward.

They taught this only with respect to a congregation – בְּצַבּוּר שָׁנָה: Many commentaries note the difficulty in saying that there is an activity that each individual may do on his own, i.e., read the Megilla from a scroll containing other books of the Bible, whereas if this same act were done in public the reading would be invalid. The *Turei Even* suggests that when the Gemara rules that it may not be done in public, it is referring not to a reading that happens to be done with a congregation, but to those situations in which the Megilla is required to be read with a congregation, as previously discussed (5a; see *Sefat Emet*). However, bearing in mind the reasons given for not reading a Megilla that is written on a scroll with other biblical passages, the Gemara may be understood in its plain sense. Some of these reasons are: (1) Unlearned people may not realize that a special reading is taking place, but will think that it is just an ordinary biblical excerpt being read (Jerusalem Talmud); (2) It is an embarrassment for the congregation that they do not possess a separate Megilla scroll (Ran); and (3) Reading from a Megilla written with other biblical passages diminishes the publicizing of the Purim miracle, but when the reading is done in private there is in any event no publicity (Ritva).

HALAKHA

Leaving a space without stitches – שִׁיּוּר הַתָּפֶר: When the sheets of a Torah scroll or a Megilla are stitched, an unstitched space must be left at the top and the bottom of the sheet so that it not rip. A minimal margin is sufficient. After the fact, if a margin was not left unstitched, the Torah is fit nevertheless (*Arukh HaShulhan; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 691:7 and Yoreh De'a 278:1*).

אָמַר רַבִּי חֵיִיא בַר אֲבָא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: הַקּוֹרֵא בְּמַגִּילָה הַכְּתוּבָה בֵּין הַכְּתוּבִים – לֹא יֵצֵא. וּמָחוּ לָהּ אֲמוּחָא: בְּצַבּוּר שָׁנָה.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי חֵיִיא בַר אֲבָא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: שִׁיּוּר הַתָּפֶר – הַלֵּכָה לְמִשְׁחָה מִסְּפִי. וּמָחוּ לָהּ אֲמוּחָא: וְלֹא אָמְרוּ אֲלָא כְּדֵי שְׂלֵא יִקְרַע.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי חֵיִיא בַר אֲבָא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אֶלְמָלִי נִשְׁתַּיֵּר בְּמַעְרָה שְׁעָמַד בְּהַ מִשְׁחָה וְאֵלֵיהֶוּ בְּמִלָּא נִקְבַּ מַחַט סְדֻקִית – לֹא הָיָו יְכוּלִין לְעַמּוּד מִפְּנֵי הָאוֹרָה, שְׁנֵאמַר "כִּי לֹא יִרְאֵנִי הָאָדָם וְחָי".

וְאָמַר רַבִּי חֵיִיא בַר אֲבָא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: מֵאֵי דְכְּתִיב "וְעֲלֵיהֶם כָּכָל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ה' עִמָּכֶם בְּהָרִ" – מִלְּמַד שְׁהָרָא הִוּוּ הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְמִשְׁחָה דְקְדוּקֵי תוֹרָה וְדְקְדוּקֵי סוֹפְרִים, וּמֵה שְׁהַסּוֹפְרִים עֲתִידִין לְחַדֵּשׁ, וּמֵאֵי גֵיהוּ – מִקְרָא מְגִילָה.

Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: **If one reads from a Megilla that was written together with the rest of the Writings he has not fulfilled his obligation. But they hit this *halakha* on its head,^N i.e., immediately after reporting this ruling they added a qualification that removed much of its force: They taught this *halakha* only with respect to reading the Megilla for a congregation.^N An individual who reads the Megilla in private fulfills his obligation even if the Megilla was written together with the rest of the Writings. Only when it is read in public must it be from a Megilla that is a separate scroll.**

Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba also said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The *halakha* of leaving a space without stitches,^H i.e., that the parchment sheets of a Torah scroll must not be sewn all the way to the edge, but rather a small margin must be left at the top and at the bottom, is a *halakha* transmitted to Moses from Sinai, i.e., it was not written in the Torah but was received in the framework of the Oral Law. **But they immediately hit this *halakha* on its head,** explaining that this *halakha* is not due to the special sanctity of a Torah scroll; rather, **they said that it is only so that it not rip.** If the scroll is wound too forcefully, the sheets of parchment will begin to spread apart since they are not sewn together at their extremities, and the one who is winding will cease to wind it so forcefully. If the stitching went all the way to the end there would be no such warning and the stitches would cause the parchment to rip.

And Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba also said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: **Had there been left open a crack so much as the size of small sewing needle in the cave^N in which Moses and Elijah stood when God's glory was revealed to them, as it is written: "And it shall come to pass, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in a cleft of the rock" (Exodus 33:22), and: "And he came there to a cave... and, behold, the Lord passed by" (1 Kings 19:9–11), they would not have been able to endure due to the intense light that would have entered that crack, as it is stated: "For no man shall see Me and live" (Exodus 33:20).**

And Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba further said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: **What is the meaning of that which is written: "And the Lord delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words^N which the Lord spoke with you in the mountain" (Deuteronomy 9:10)? This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, showed Moses on the mountain all the inferences that can be derived from the words of the Torah; and all the inferences that can be derived from the words of the Scribes,^N the early Sages; and also all the new *halakhot* that the Scribes were destined to introduce in the future in addition to the laws of the Torah. And what is it specifically that the Scribes would introduce in addition to the laws of the Torah? The reading of the Megilla.**

NOTES

אֶלְמָלִי נִשְׁתַּיֵּר – בְּמַעְרָה: Had there been left a crack...in the cave – When Moses was in the cave, God said, "And I will cover you with My hand until I have passed by" (Exodus 33:22), meaning that God blocked Moses' vision so that nothing would be seen (Maharsha). See Guide of the Perplexed for an explanation of these concepts.

וְעֲלֵיהֶם כָּכָל הַדְּבָרִים – וְעֲלֵיהֶם כָּכָל הַדְּבָרִים: And on them was written according to all the words – The Gemara explains that this expression includes all the inferences that can be derived from the words of the Torah. This is based on the seemingly superfluous word "all." And from the expression "according to all the words," which in Hebrew could also mean "like all the words," the Gemara derives that there are other *halakhot* like the words of the Torah, i.e., the new *halakhot* that the Scribes were destined to introduce in the future, such as

the reading of the Megilla, in addition to the laws of the Torah (Maharsha).

The inferences from the words of the Torah and the inferences from the words of the Scribes – וְדְקְדוּקֵי סוֹפְרִים: The early and later commentaries discuss this principle at length. The *Derashot HaRan* explains that not only was the Torah given to Moses, but also all the various approaches of interpretation found in halakhic midrash and aggadic midrash, as well as the questions and dilemmas that the sages of future generations would raise. Although these matters are decided according to the opinion of the majority of sages in those generations, nevertheless all the concepts involved were shown to Moses, along with the stipulation that in all such disputes the majority opinion should be followed.

הכל כשרין לקרות – את המגילה
 Everyone is fit to read the Megilla – **אֵת הַמְּגִלָּה**: Anyone who is obligated to read the Megilla may read it for himself and for others. However, some say a man who hears a woman reading the Megilla does not fulfill his obligation.

Most of the halakhic authorities rule that one cannot fulfill his obligation by hearing the Megilla read by a deaf person, in accordance with the opinion of the first *tanna* (see *Taz*). Others write that after the fact, he has fulfilled his obligation, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda (*Bah*, citing *Rashba*; *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 689:2).

מתני' הכל כשרין לקרות את המגילה
 חוץ מחרש שוטה וקטן, רבי יהודה מכשיר בקטן.

גמ' מאן תנא חרש דיעבד נמי לא? –
 אומר רב מתנה: רבי יוסי היא. דתנן: הקורא את שמע ולא השמיע לאזנו – יצא, רבי יוסי אומר: לא יצא.

וממאי דרבי יוסי היא, ודיעבד נמי לא?
 דלמא רבי יהודה היא, ולכתחלה הוא דלא. הא דיעבד – שפיר דמי!

לא סלקא דעתך, דקתני חרש דומיא
 דשוטה וקטן, מה שוטה וקטן דיעבד נמי לא, אף חרש – דיעבד נמי לא.

ודלמא הא כדאיתא והא כדאיתא!
 מדקתני סיפא: רבי יהודה מכשיר בקטן – מפלל דרישא לאו רבי יהודה היא.

MISHNA Everyone is fit to read the Megilla,^H except for a deaf person,^N an imbecile, and a minor. Rabbi Yehuda disagrees and says that a minor is fit to read the Megilla.

GEMARA The Gemara asks: **Who is the *tanna* that taught that the reading of a deaf person, even after the fact, no, it is not valid?** **Rav Mattana said: It is Rabbi Yosei,^N as we learned in a mishna elsewhere (*Berakhot* 15a): If one recites the *Shema* but does not make it audible to his ears, he has nevertheless fulfilled his obligation. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Yosei said: He has not fulfilled his obligation. Rabbi Yosei's statement implies that one who does not hear what he is saying does not fulfill his obligation. Presumably the *halakhot* for *Shema* recitation and Megilla reading are equivalent.**

The Gemara questions the assumption on which the previous discussion is based: **But from where** do you know that the mishna, which states that a deaf person may not read the Megilla, reflects the opinion of **Rabbi Yosei**, and that it means to say that **even after the fact, no, one does not fulfill his obligation if the Megilla is read by a deaf person?** **Perhaps** the mishna was taught in accordance with the opinion of **Rabbi Yehuda**, and it should be understood as saying that a deaf person **may not read *ab initio*, but after the fact his reading is valid.**

The Gemara rejects this proposal: **This should not enter your mind, as the mishna teaches the *halakha* of a deaf person, an imbecile, and a minor together, implying that a deaf person is similar to an imbecile or a minor.** Therefore, it may be inferred that **just as the readings of an imbecile and a minor are not valid even after the fact, so too, even after the fact, no, the reading of a deaf person is not valid.**

The Gemara asks: **But perhaps** it is not so that all three cases are equivalent. Perhaps with regard to the imbecile and the minor, **this *halakha* is as it is, and with regard to a deaf person, that *halakha* is as it is.** Although all three cases are taught together, this may be merely because in all three cases he may not read *ab initio*; there may be a difference between them with regard to their status after the fact. It is possible that the mishna means that the reading of a deaf person is valid after the fact, and is citing the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda. The Gemara rejects this: It is impossible to say that the anonymous first *tanna* of the mishna is Rabbi Yehuda, as **from the fact that the latter clause teaches: Rabbi Yehuda says that a minor is fit, it may be inferred that the first clause of the mishna was not taught by Rabbi Yehuda.**

NOTES

Except for a deaf person – חוץ מחרש: The deaf person mentioned here is different from the standard deaf-mute mentioned in every other place in the Talmud, as usually this term refers to someone who is incapable of both hearing and speaking. Such an individual is often classified along with an imbecile and a minor, under the assumption that his mental capacity is quite low due to his inability to communicate verbally.

The deaf person here, however, is able to speak, since he is capable of reading the Megilla. Consequently, he is considered to be on a par with hearing people. His only disability is that he cannot hear the words he says, as the Gemara discusses in detail.

The early commentaries, and to an even greater extent the later commentaries, distinguish between a hearing individual who did not make his voice heard because he did not speak loudly enough, as in the case of reciting the *Shema*, and a deaf person who does not have the ability to hear himself even if he

speaks loudly. Some explain that the essence of the mitzva of Megilla is to read it, not to hear it, but the reading of an individual who cannot hear what he says is considered deficient (*Sefat Emet*).

In the Jerusalem Talmud, a different approach to the term deaf is presented. There it is stated that the deaf person in the mishna is a deaf-mute. Consequently, this term does not belong in the mishna at all, as a deaf-mute by definition cannot possibly read the Megilla (*Rid*). Despite the word's irrelevance, it is mentioned here along with the imbecile and the minor only because these three terms are so often grouped together throughout the Talmud.

The opinion of Rabbi Yosei – שׁוֹמֵר רְבִי יוֹסֵי: In the Jerusalem Talmud it is explained that the opinion of Rabbi Yosei is based on the verse: "And you will give ear to his mitzvot" (Exodus 15:26), indicating that all mitzvot that involve recitation must also include hearing.

וְדַלְמָא כּוּלָּהּ רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הִיא? מִי דְמִי?
רִישָׁא לְפִסּוּלָהּ וְסִיפָא לְכִשְׁרָהּ.

The Gemara continues to ask: **But perhaps** the mishna in its entirety was taught by Rabbi Yehuda after all, but the first clause of the mishna was taught anonymously, whereas the latter clause was taught explicitly in the name of Rabbi Yehuda. The Gemara rejects this argument: **Are** the two parts of the mishna **comparable**, that they can be associated with a single Sage? **The first clause** of the mishna comes to **disqualify** the reading of a minor, whereas **the latter clause** comes to **declare** a minor fit. These two contradictory opinions therefore cannot be understood as the statement of a single Sage.

וְדַלְמָא כּוּלָּהּ רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הִיא, וְתַרְי גּוּוּנִי
קִטְּוֹן קִתְּנִי לָהּ, וְחִסּוּרִי מִיְחִסְרָא וְהִכִּי
קִתְּנִי: הִכְּל כְּשֵׁרִין לְקִרוֹת אֶת הַמְּגִלָּה
חוּץ מִחִרְשׁ שׁוֹטָה וְקִטְּוֹן, בְּמָה דְבָרִים
אֲמוּרִים – בְּקִטְּוֹן שְׁלֵא הִגִּיעַ לְחִינּוּךְ,
אֲבָל בְּקִטְּוֹן שֶׁהִגִּיעַ לְחִינּוּךְ – אֲפִילוּ
לְכַתְּחִלָּה, שְׂרַבִּי יְהוּדָה מְכַשֵּׁיר בְּקִטְּוֹן.

The Gemara asks: **But perhaps** the mishna in its entirety expresses the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda after all. **And it is teaching** the *halakha* concerning two different types of minors, and the mishna is **incomplete**, lacking some words of elaboration, and is **teaching the following**: Everyone is fit to read the Megilla except for a deaf person, an imbecile, and a minor. In what case is this statement said? Only with regard to a minor who has not reached the age of training in mitzvot. **But a minor who has reached the age of training** in mitzvot may read the Megilla **even *ab initio***, as Rabbi Yehuda says that a minor who has reached that requisite age is fit to read the Megilla.

בְּמֵאֵי אֲוִקִימְתָא – כְּרַבִּי יְהוּדָה,
וְדִיעְבַד.

The Gemara raises a difficulty with this interpretation of the mishna: **In what manner did you establish** the mishna? You established it as being in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, and you understand the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda to be that a deaf person is disqualified from reading the Megilla *ab initio*, but **after the fact** his reading is valid.

אֲלֵא הָא דְתַנִּי (רַבִּי) יְהוּדָה בְּרִיהַ דְּרַבִּי
שְׂמַעוֹן בֶּן פִּזִּי: חִרְשׁ הַמְּדַבֵּר וְאִינוּ
שׁוֹמֵעַ – תּוֹרָם לְכַתְּחִלָּה, מִנֵּי אִי רַבִּי
יְהוּדָה – דִּיעְבַד אִינוּ, לְכַתְּחִלָּה לֹא. אִי
רַבִּי יוֹסֵי – דִּיעְבַד נִמְי לֹא!

But then that which Rabbi Yehuda, son of Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi, taught will present a difficulty, as he taught a *baraita*: A deaf person who can speak but cannot hear may set aside *teruma* even *ab initio*, although he cannot hear himself reciting the blessing that is recited before setting aside *teruma*. Upon whose opinion is this *baraita* based? If you say it is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, that cannot be, as you have established that Rabbi Yehuda maintains that if one recites something and does not hear it, **after the fact, yes**, his action is valid, but he should **not** do so *ab initio*. **And if you say** it is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, this is even more difficult, as he maintains that **even after the fact, no**, his action is not valid. Who, then, is the Sage who would say that a deaf person may set aside *teruma* even *ab initio*?

וְאֵלֵא מֵאֵי – רַבִּי יְהוּדָה וְאֲפִילוּ
לְכַתְּחִלָּה? אֲלֵא הָא דְתַנִּינָא: לֹא יִבְרַךְ
אָדָם בְּרִפְתַּת הַמְּזוּן בְּלִבּוֹ, וְאִם בִּירֶךְ –
יֵצֵא, מִנֵּי? לֹא רַבִּי יְהוּדָה וְלֹא רַבִּי יוֹסֵי.
אִי רַבִּי יְהוּדָה – אֲפִילוּ לְכַתְּחִלָּה, אִי
רַבִּי יוֹסֵי – אֲפִילוּ דִּיעְבַד נִמְי לֹא!

The Gemara rejects this reasoning: **Rather, what** then do you propose to say, that this *baraita* is in accordance with Rabbi Yehuda and that Rabbi Yehuda permits a deaf person to read **even *ab initio***, whereas Rabbi Yosei would disqualify him even after the fact? **But then whose** is the opinion that is represented in **that which is taught** in a *baraita*: A person should not recite the Grace after Meals in his heart,¹¹ i.e., inaudibly, but if he recited it in this manner, **he has fulfilled** his obligation. It is the opinion of **neither Rabbi Yehuda nor Rabbi Yosei**. As, if it follows the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, it should be permitted **even *ab initio***, and if it follows the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, then **even after the fact, no**, this should not be valid.

HALAKHA

The Grace after Meals in his heart – בְּרִפְתַּת הַמְּזוּן בְּלִבּוֹ – One should recite all blessings loudly enough to hear them himself; however, after the fact, if he did not hear them, he has fulfilled his obligation (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Berakhot* 1:7).