

ומסיים מלמטה ומתחיל מלמעלה –

And he finishes at the bottom and begins at the top

OVERVIEW

The גמרא states that between each חומש of the תורה and between each נביא one must insert four empty lines (and by the תרי עשר of נביאים three lines); the ruling concludes מלמעלה ומתחיל מלמטה. Our תוספות cites different interpretations of this ruling.

פירש בקונטרס ואינו צריך להניח ד' שיטין¹ –

רש"י explains this to mean that it is not necessary to insert the four blank lines between the ספרים (of [תורה or] נ"כ) if he finished the ספר at the bottom of the column, but he can begin the next ספר at the very top of the following column.

רש"י's explanation qualifies תוספות:

ונראה לרבינו יצחק דבין חומש לחומש של תורה צריך להניח –

And it is the view of the ר"י that between one חומש of the תורה and another it is necessary to insert the four empty lines even when he was מסיים מלמטה -

ואנביאים דוקא קאמר דאין צריך כדמפרש טעמא לקמן² שאם בא לחתוך חותך³ –

And only regarding the נביאים does the גמרא state that it is not necessary to insert the blank lines, as the גמרא later explains the reason, 'for if he wishes to cut he may cut' -

אבל בין חומש לחומש של תורה לא –

However between one חומש and another it is not so; but rather he still must insert the four lines even if he finishes at the bottom of a column -

מידי דהוי אפרשה פתוחה⁴ שאם היה מסיים מלמטה היה צריך להניח שיטה אחת⁵ –

¹ נ"ך רש"י does not state clearly if he is referring to תורה as well, or only to נ"ך; however since רש"י does not specify נ"ך (but rather writes ספר), he may be referring to תורה as well.

² At the very top of יד.

³ When he finishes a נביא at the bottom of the column, there is the option to cut the parchment, and begin a new scroll (on the top) with the separated parchment. It is not presentable that the new column should begin with four blank spaces thus making it different than all the ensuing columns (see רש"י יד, ד"ה הכי).

⁴ A פתוחה (an open פתוחה) begins on a new line. If the previous פתוחה ended more than (the space of) nine letters from the end of the line, then the פתוחה begins on the (beginning of the) next line. If however there is less space remaining on the line (or no space at all) one must skip a line and begin the פתוחה after the blank line.

⁵ See previous footnote # 4. If the previous line ends at the bottom of the column ([towards] the end of the line), one must leave a blank line on the top of the following column and begin the פתוחה below the blank line. This proves that beginning a new column is not considered a sufficient separation (of [even] one line). The same is true regarding חומשים that beginning a new column cannot substitute for the leaving four blank lines.

For it is like a פרשה פתוחה where the rule is that if he would finish a פרשה פתוחה at the bottom of a column, it would still be necessary to leave one blank line on the top of the following column, so -

הכא נמי דין הוא להניח בסוף כל חומש פרשה של ד' שיטין -

Here too it is similarly required to leave at the end of each חומש a blank פרשה of four lines (even if he was חומש מסיים at the bottom of the column).

In summation; if one concludes a חומש מלמטה he must leave four blank lines מלמעלה, however by a נביא it is not necessary.⁶

ומסיים מלמטה וכו' offers an alternate explanation of תוספות

ורבינו יצחק בן אברהם מפרש ומסיים מלמטה ומתחיל מלמעלה ולעולם מניח ד' שיטין -

And the ומסיים מלמטה ומתחיל מלמעלה ברייתא states explains that when the ריצב"א means that one must always leave four blank lines even when -

ודוקא בין נביא לנביא אבל בין חומש לחומש לא יסיים מלמטה ומתחיל מלמעלה -

However, this is only between one נביא and another (that one may be מסיים מלמטה), but between one חומש and another חומש one should not be מסיים מלמטה ומתחיל מלמעלה -

אפילו בהנחת ד' שיטין -

Even with leaving four blank lines on the top of the following עמוד -

כדאמר בירושלמי בפרק קמא דמגילה⁷ וצריך שיהא גומר באמצע הדף ומתחיל באמצעיתו -

As the גמרא states in ירושלמי in the first פרק of מגילה (ס"ת), and it is necessary that he should end a חומש in the middle of the page and begin the following חומש also in the middle of the page -

ובנביא מסיים בסופו ומתחיל בראשו כולי -

However by a נביא he may conclude at the end of the דף, and begin the following נביא at the top of the דף, etc'.

In summation; one must always insert [four] blank lines; however by נביאים one may end at the bottom (and still require the four lines), but by תורה it must always end in the middle of the column.⁸

נביאים and תורה explains the difference between תוספות

ונראה לי הטעם דאין לו לסיים בסוף הדף אפילו יניח ארבעה שיטין משום שמא יבוא לחתוך -

⁶ The words ומתחיל וכו' and מסיים is referring to נ"ך (to תנ"ך according to רש"י) that he may start at the top (if he finished on the bottom) without entering the four blank lines.

⁷ הלכה ט' (יב,א). The ירושלמי also mentions there the inserting of the four (three) blank lines.

⁸ The words ומתחיל ומסיים refers only to נ"ך; however by ס"ת he must be באמצע.

And it seems to me the reason why he should not conclude a חומש at the bottom of the דף, even if he will leave four blank lines is because he may come to cut the ס"ת between the חומשים (which should not be done by a ס"ת, because it diminishes its - (חומש from a ס"ת to a חומש קדושה

אבל בין נביא לנביא שאם בא לחתוך חותך מסיים מלמטה:

However between one נביא and another where if he wants to separate them he may cut, therefore he may conclude at the bottom (but the four blank lines are required [at the top of the דף] if he did not cut [yet]).

SUMMARY

According to רש"י and the ר"י one may conclude a ספר at the bottom of a column, provided he leaves four lines on the top (only by a ס"ת according to the ר"י). According to the ריצב"א only a נביא may end at the bottom but not a ס"ת.

THINKING IT OVER

1. The words ומסיים מלמטה ומתחיל מלמעלה is referring to a ס"ת, or to נביאים or to both?
2. How will the ר"י explain the ירושלמי which states that a חומש must conclude ⁹?! באמצע

⁹ נח"מ.