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Shabbos Daf 103

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Carving a Hole in a Block

The rule of the *Mishna* that one who performs an act of labor, and the labor endures, is liable, includes one who carved out a hole that can hold a *kefiza* in a block that can contain a *kav*.

The *Mishna* had stated: This is the rule: One who performs a labor on *Shabbos* and the labor endures, is liable. This statement includes one who carved out a hole in a block that can hold a *kefiza*, which is a measurement that is three quarters of a *kav*. The person did not complete the carving of the block, which measures a full *kav*, but he is still liable because there are those who leave the block only partially carved out. (103a)

Striking a Hammer on the Anvil

Striking a hammer on the anvil is akin to an act of labor that was performed in the mishkan.

Rabbah and Rav Yosef suggest that one who strikes the hammer on the anvil is liable, according to Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, because he is practicing how to strike precisely with a hammer.

The sons of Rachavah rejects this because then even one who observes a craftsman performing his work on *Shabbos* and learns the trade should be liable, and this obviously is not so, as he has not performed any labor.

Rather, Abaye and Rava both say that in the Tabernacle, the wooden beams were covered with sheets of gold. Those who hammered the gold sheets onto the wood would strike the hammer onto the anvil after striking the gold sheets three times. This would ensure that the surface of the hammer would continue to be smooth and not damage the gold sheets. Smoothing out the hammer is considered performing a labor on *Shabbos*. The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* which supports this interpretation. (103a)

Mishna

One who plows, weeds, prunes dry branches, or prunes young shoots, even if he only performs a minute amount, is liable.

Plowing is a labor, weeding is a derivative of planting, and pruning is akin to sowing, as they allow the trees to go better. One is liable even for doing a minute amount of any of these prohibited acts of labor.

One who gathers wood, and cuts off branches from a tree, his liability will depend on his intentions.

When one gathers wood and cuts branches off a tree, if his intention is to improve the growth of the tree, he is liable for even the most minute amount of gathering. By intending to improve the tree, he is liable for sowing. If his intention is to improve the ground around the tree, he will be liable for plowing. If his intention in gathering wood was to use the wood for kindling, he is liable for the

amount that is necessary to cook an egg that cooks easily. As we learned previously (80a) the measure of an easily cooked egg is a hen's egg, but not the amount that is needed to cook an entire egg. Rather, the measure is the amount of egg whose volume is equal to that of a dried fig. (103a)

Plowing

The *Gemora* explains that plowing a small amount of land is fit for planting the seeds of a pumpkin. Similarly, in respect to the Tabernacle, such a labor was performed, because it is fit for one stalk of (*a herb needed for a certain type of*) dye.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: He who plucks endives, and he who prunes reeds, if it is being done for human consumption, the standard of liability is the size of a dried fig; if it is for (*the purpose of*) animal food, a kid's mouthful; if it is for (*the purpose of*) fuel, as much as is required for boiling a light egg; if it is in order to improve the soil, (*he will be liable*) for any amount.

The *Gemora* asks: Aren't they all in order to improve the soil (*for when the land is weeded, it is improved*)?

Rabbah and Rav Yosef both say: They learned this of a swamp (*where the land does not need to be improved*).

Abaye said: You may even say that they were taught regarding a field that is not a swamp, but (*he is exempt, for it is*) a case where he has no intention (*to improve the land, and according to R' Shimon, an unintended act is permitted*).

The *Gemora* asks: But surely Abaye and Rava both said: Rabbi Shimon admits in a case where the consequences are inevitable?

The *Gemora* answers: This applies only when he works in his fellow's field (*and since he receives no personal*

benefit, he is not liable, unless he specifically intends to improve it). (103a)

Writing

One who writes two letters, whether he writes with his right hand or left hand, whether he writes one letter twice or two different letters, whether he wrote with one ink or two inks, or in any language, he is liable.

One who writes two letters with the right hand or left hand is liable. A left-handed person is certainly liable for writing with his left hand, as his left hand is the equivalent to a right-handed person's right hand. One who is ambidextrous is also liable for writing with either hand. With regard to the writing of two letters, there is no distinction between one who writes the same letter twice, i.e. *aleph aleph*, or if he wrote two different letters, i.e. *aleph beis*. If one wrote with ink and a different substance, he is also liable for writing on *Shabbos*. If one writes in any script used by any nation in the world, he is liable for writing on *Shabbos*. (103a)

Markings

Rabbi Yosi maintains that one who writes two letters is only liable for making markings, and the entire *Mishna* follows the opinion of Rabbi Yosi.

Rabi Yosi posits that we derive the prohibition of writing on *Shabbos* from the act that was performed in the Tabernacle, and in the Tabernacle they merely marked the board to know which board matched the other. Consequently, according to Rabbi Yosi, one is not required to write specifically letters on *Shabbos* to be liable for writing on *Shabbos*. Even one who draws two symbols will be liable according to Rabbi Yosi.

The *Gemora* therefore suggest that the statement in the *Mishna* that one who writes with his left hand will be



liable can be according to Rabbi Yosi, because one who makes markings with his left hand will also be liable. It will then follow that the entire *Mishna* follows the opinion of Rabbi Yosi. (103a)

How Many Letters?

There are four different opinions with regard to the amount of letters one must write on *Shabbos* in order to be liable.

It is said: *nefesh ki secheta... Vasah achas mehiena, when a person will sin unintentionally... and he will do from one of them.* The word one implies that one must perform the whole act to be liable. One opinion maintains that one will not be liable unless he writes a word that is part of a longer word. An example of this would be the word *Shem* from the name *Shimon*.

Rabbi Yehudah posits that even if one wrote two of the same letters, such as the letter *shin* twice, which would be the beginning of a longer word, such as *sheshbetzr* (a name mentioned in the *Book of Ezra*).

Rabbi Yosi, however maintains that since in the Tabernacle they made markings to match the boards, even if one makes one scratch on two boards or two scratches on one board, he is liable.

Rabbi Shimon maintains that one will only be a liable if he performs an act that will endure. According to Rabbi Shimon, one is liable when he writes the entire word that he originally planned to write. It is not necessary according to Rabbi Shimon to write the entire verse that he had originally planned on writing. (103a - 103b)

Writing Tefillin, Mezuzah and Sefer Torah

The writing of *tefillin* and *mezuzah* scrolls must be perfect.

It is said regarding the writing of *mezuzos* and *tefillin*: *uchsavtam, you shall write,* and the *Gemora* interprets the word to be a contraction of the words *kesiva tamah*, a complete writing. This teaches that a scribe must not confuse different letters, such as the letter *aleph* with the letter *ayin*, the letter *beis* with the letter *chaf*, and other such easily confused letters. If even one letter is written wrong, the entire *mezuzah*, *tefillin*, or Torah scroll is invalid. (103b)

One should not write an open passage of the Torah closed, nor should one write a closed passage of the Torah open.

Rabbi Yehudah maintains that one is liable even if he wrote a short word that is part of a long word, i.e. *Shem* from the name *Shimon*. Although the letter *mem* in the word *Shimon* is an 'open' *mem*, and the letter *mem* in the word *Shem* is a 'closed' *mem*, a closed letter which one made open is valid.

A precedent for this is found regarding the libations mentioned in the Torah concerning the festival of Sukkos. It is said: *viniskeihem* (and their libations, written with an extra *mem*), *unesacheha* (and its libations, written with an extra *yud*), and *kimishpatam* (in accordance with their law, written with an extra *mem*), and the extra letters spell out the word *mayim*, water. This alludes to the libation of water that was performed in the Bais HaMikdash on the festival of Sukkos. Although the letter *mem* from the word *viniskeihem* is written as a 'closed' *mem*, the *Tanna* uses it for this exegesis as an 'open' *mem*, to spell out the word *mayim*, water. This implies that an open letter that was written closed is valid, and



we can assume that a closed letter that was written as an open letter is also valid. Therefore, one who wrote *Shem* from *Shimon* on *Shabbos* will be liable. (103b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

The Laws of Left-Handed People

When the *metzora* undergoes his purification process, a Kohen places olive oil and blood from a korban on the *metzora's* right thumb, in his right ear, and on his right foot (Vayikra 14). From here, the *Gemora* (Menachos 10a) learns that the right side takes precedence to the left in regard to many other mitzvos of the Torah.

For most people, and indeed most animals as well (Chullin 91a), the right side of the body is more powerful. However, there are many people who differ from this norm, exhibiting greater strength and precision with their left hands. The *Gemora* refers to left-handed people as "*iter yad.*" *Iter* literally means closed or hindered. In this context, the phrase implies that the usually stronger hand, the right, is hindered from performing tasks with full strength (see commentaries on Shoftim 3:15). The Torah takes into account their differences, and in certain cases gives preference to their left side, instead of the right. In his sefer on the laws of tefillin, R' Chaim Kaniefski shlit"za included a treatise on the laws of left-handed people. He divides the halachos in which preference is given to the right side into eight categories, and in each category details how the halacha applies to lefties.

1 – Halachos that depend on strength: In certain cases, preference is given to the right hand because it is generally the stronger of the two. Since an *iter yad's* left hand is stronger, the halacha changes accordingly. Conversely, tefillin is usually worn on the left hand, since it is the weaker. The head-tefillin are removed with the weaker left hand, in order to show that we hesitate to remove them (Mishna Berurah 28, s.k. 6). So too, when

we take three steps back after davening Shemoneh Esrei, we begin with the left foot, to show that we hesitate to leave Hashem's presence. In all these cases, the halacha would change accordingly, and favor the lefty's weak right hand (Magen Avraham 123, s.k. 10).

2- The Shechina rests on the right side: In other cases, preference is given to the right, since the Shechina rests upon our right side. For example, if a person must spit during davening, he should spit to his left side, out of respect for the Shechina. In this case, the halacha is the same for a lefty. The Shechina rests on his right side, and therefore he should also spit to his left (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 97:2).

3- Leaning on Seder night: Sometimes the halacha is based on the position of the body's organs. In such cases, the halacha is the same for righties and lefties. For example, on Seder night we lean to our left side, in order that the food flow more readily down the esophagus, and not down the windpipe (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 472:3).

4- The Torah regards the right side as more important: At times, the halacha favors the right side, since it is deemed as more important. When reciting a beracha over lulav and esrog, the lulav, hadasim and aravos are held in the right hand, and the esrog in the left, since the three species take precedence over the one. The Rishonim debate whether a lefty should hold the three species in his left hand, and the Shulchan Aruch and Rema take up sides in their debate (O.C. 651).

5- The Torah dictates that only the right hand may be used: Sometimes the right side is not merely a matter of precedence, but the left hand is entirely unfit. For example, when a Kohen serves in the Beis HaMikdash, he must use only his right hand. If he shechts a korban with his left hand, the korban is posul. In this case, the *Gemora* rules that a lefty is unfit for the service of the Beis HaMikdash. Rashi explains that this is because he has no stronger right hand (Bechoros 45b. See also Rambam



hilchos Bias HaMikdash 8:11, who lists left-handedness as one of the blemishes that renders a Kohen unfit for service in the Beis HaMikdash).

6- Turning to the right: The Torah prefers the right not only as a side, but also as a direction. For example, when we lift up the Sefer Torah for *hagba*, we first rotate it to the right. When we light Chanuka candles, we begin from the leftmost candle, and proceed to the right. In these cases, the Magen Avraham (651, s.k. 21) rules that a lefty should follow the same procedure as a righty.

7- The right side of a person who faces us: Some halachos depend not on our own right side, but on the right side of a person who faces us. For example, the parshiyos of tefillin are arranged from right to left, from the perspective of a person who faces the tefillin-wearer (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 34:1, Magen Avraham s.k. 1). Therefore, it makes no difference if the tefillin are worn by a righty or lefty. Similarly, a mezuzah is attached to the right doorpost, even if the person affixing it is a lefty, since most people who enter the house are righties.

8- Tying shoelaces: Above, we learned that the left shoe is tied first, in deference to the tefillin which are bound to the left arm (Shabbos 61a). The Poskim debate whether a lefty should tie his right shoe first, since he wears tefillin on his right arm.

Over the course of his treatise, R' Chaim lists eighty-eight halachos that favor the right side, and in each case discusses how the halacha applies to lefties.

Writing as a Form of Speech

Our *Gemora* cites a *braisa* which lists a long array of letters that are commonly confused. The *braisa* therefore warns us, that when writing a Sefer Torah we must be careful not to write the letter *beis* instead of *kaf*, *tes* instead of *peh*, and so on. The *braisa* then cites a possuk in the Torah, "And you shall write," which implies that the writing must be perfect, and without mistakes.

R' Yaakov Kaminetzky *zt"l* (Emes L'Yaakov on the Torah, pp. 290-292) remarks that this seems to imply that if not for the possuk warning us otherwise, there would be no prohibition against writing an imprecise Sefer Torah. Why should this be so? It would seem obvious that if a Sefer Torah was written incorrectly, then it should be *pasul*.

R' Yaakov explains that even incorrect writing is an effective form of communication. That is to say, one writes in order that his words should later be read and understood. If a person could read the Sefer Torah, and understand its message despite its mistakes, then it constitutes an effective form of writing. Therefore, if not for the possuk stating explicitly to the contrary, minor mistakes that do not alter the message of the Torah would not render it *pasul*.

This theory is supported from the argument raised by the Maharshah against the Tur (Yam shel Shlomo, Kiddushin 81). As is known, the Tur's extensive halachic compilation was based primarily on the works of his father, Rabbeinu Asher, also known by his acronym, the Rosh. As such, the Tur regularly quotes his father's rulings, stating, "My father, the Rosh, ruled...". The Maharshah asks that this is contrary to the halacha that a son is forbidden to say his father's name. The Maharshah assumed that this prohibition extends also to writing one's father's name. Although the Tur did not write his father's full name, but merely his acronym, "Rosh," the Maharshah still considered this a violation of calling one's father by his name, since the written acronym is a means of conveying the full name to the reader.

We can further apply this theory to resolve an interesting question posed by R' Akiva Eiger (Teshuvos, 30). The Poskim debate whether writing is considered speech, in regard to halachos such as counting sefiras ha'omer, or taking a vow. According to the Poskim who hold that writing is considered speech, how may a sofer write Hashem's ineffable four-letter Name? Just as it is



forbidden to pronounce the Name as it is written, it should be forbidden to write it?

According to what we have explained, this question is very neatly answered. Since writing is a means of conveying a message to the reader, and the reader will surely pronounce Hashem's Name, not as it is written, but rather with the substitute "Adon-," therefore it is considered as if the writer had also spoken the name Adon-, although the letters were those of the Tetragrammaton.

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

DAILY MASHAL

Nisuch Hamayim

The *Gemora* states that regarding the *tamid* offerings on the second day of *Sukkos*, it is said: *viniskeihem*, and their libations, instead of stating *viniskah*, and its libations; a mem was added. Regarding the *tamid* offered on the sixth day of *Sukkos*, it is said: *unesacheha*, and its libations, instead of stating *viniskah*, and its libation; a yud was added. Regarding the *Mussaf* offering on the seventh day of *Sukkos*, it is said: *kimishpatam*, in accordance with their law, instead of *kimishpat*, in accordance with the law; a mem was added. The extra letters mem yud mem allude to the libations of water that were performed in the *Bais HaMikdash* on the festival of *Sukkos*.

What is the significance of these libations of water that were performed at the *Simchas Bais Hashoeva*? The *Gemora* goes so far to say that one who did witness the joy of the *Simchas Bais Hashoeva* never experienced true joy in his lifetime. The idea of this joy is that it is an expression of thanksgiving to Hashem who provided us with a abundant produce and now, after the ingathering of the crops, we express our thanks to Hashem by declaring that everything emanates from Him, and we do this with libations of water.

We still need to understand, however, why a small amount of water offered as a libation is used to demonstrate our gratitude to Hashem. We find that after Dovid HaMelech conquered the *Plishtim* and everyone was aware of the great miracles that Hashem had wrought, it is said that Dovid desired a drink. When his officers brought Dovid some water he did not drink the water; rather, he offered the water to Hashem. What was Dovid's intention with this peculiar act? Rav Rosen explains in the *Sefer Bais Hashoeva*¹ that there are two forms to one who proffers a present to someone. One aspect is that the giver is cognizant of the beneficiary's lack, and therefore he bestows a gift upon him. In this situation, the presenter must ensure that the recipient does not currently own the specific gift, as he is seeking to fill his deficiency. The greater the gift, the more the beneficiary will appreciate the gift. Another scenario, however, is when the recipient is not in need of the gift, and perhaps is not lacking anything. Due to the love that the giver has for his beneficiary, however, he desires to offer him at least a token of his affection towards him. In such a case, one does not need to lavish the other person with extravagant gifts. Rather, he is giving his heart to the one he loves, and the present itself is insignificant. This idea is reflected in the libations of water and in the desire of Dovid HaMelech to drink water. Both situations demonstrated that we desire to give Hashem everything that we have, but because we know that Hashem has everything, we express our love for Hashem by offering a token present. These are essentially the words of Rabbeinu Yonah² who writes that one who cries when he prays will merit that his prayers be answered. This is because the gates of tears are never sealed. Tears correspond to the libations of water that were offered on the altar. The gesture may be small, but it is an expression of a Jew to give over everything he possesses to Hashem.

¹ Year 5757

² Shaarei Ha'avodah 11