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Moed Katan  
Daf 2

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of  
**Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h**

May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for his neshamah and may his soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

*(There is a matter of dispute among the Rishonim if the prohibition against performing labor on Chol Hamoed (the intermediate days of Pesach and Sukkos) is Biblical (Rashi) or Rabbinic (Tosfos). There are many different categories of labor that is permitted on Chol Hamoed. The first Mishna discusses the permissibility of performing labor on Chol Hamoed when otherwise; the person will suffer a substantial loss (Chagigah 18a). Even in such cases, one cannot perform labor that involves excessive exertion.)*

The Mishnah states: One is permitted to water an irrigated field (*one that is located on a mountain and cannot survive on rainfall alone*) on Chol Hamoed and during Shemitah (*the Sabbatical year, when generally, it is forbidden to work the field*). This may be done whether the water is from a newly emerged spring (*where the walls are not very strong and there is a concern that they will collapse and he will repair them in a manner that is prohibited to do on Chol Hamoed*) or from an older one. One may not water this field from a pool of rainwater or from a well and he may not dig ditches surrounding the grapevines (*these are all forbidden on Chol Hamoed because they involve excessive exertion*).

Rabbi Elozar ben Azaryah says: One may not create a new irrigation canal during Chol Hamoed or Shemitah but the Chachamim maintain that this is permitted during Shemitah. One may repair a damaged canal on Chol Hamoed.

*(Performing labor for the sake of the public is also permitted on Chol Hamoed.)* One may make repairs to the water containers in the public domain, and clean them (from the mud and small stones that accumulate in them). One may repair the roads, streets and ritual baths, and they may do all public needs, and they may mark the graves, and they may

go out to inspect the fields for *kilayim* (*the prohibition against planting together different species of vegetables, fruit or seeds – agents of beis din would be sent out at this time to warn the people to uproot any shoots of other seeds that appear among the grain*). (2a1 – 2a2)

[The Mishnah had stated: One is permitted to water an irrigated field whether the water is from a newly emerged spring or from an older one.] The Gemora asks: Now, one might argue that after having permitted watering from a newly emerging spring, where the walls of the spring may come to collapse; need further mention be made of drawing from an older spring, where it is unlikely that its walls will collapse?

The Gemora answers that it is necessary to mention the latter; for if the Tanna had mentioned only the newly emerging spring, I might have said that only here, where it is for an irrigation field, is it permitted, but not for a rain-watered field, because the walls of the spring may come to collapse; but from a spring that is not newly emerging, where it is unlikely that its walls may come to collapse, I might say that even a rain-watered field may be watered; therefore the Tanna informs us that there is no difference; be it a spring newly emerging, or a spring not newly emerging, an irrigation field may be watered from it, but a rain-watered field may not be.

The Gemora asks: And from where do we know that the term ‘beis hashalchin’ denotes a ‘thirsty’ field (as it needs to be irrigated)? The Gemora answers: It is written: When you were faint and weary, and we render (in the Targum) the word ‘faint’ by meshalhei.

The Gemora asks: And from where do we know that the term 'beis haba'al' denotes a 'settled' field (as it is satisfied with rain-water, and has no need for irrigation)? The Gemora answers: It is written: For as a young man lives [yival] with a virgin, so shall your children live in you, and we render (in the Targum): Behold, as a young man settles down with a virgin, so will your children settle in you. (2a2)

The Gemora states: The Mishnah rules that it is permitted to water an irrigated field on Chol Hamoed whether the water is from a newly emerged spring or from an older one; however, it is forbidden to water a rain-watered field because the water is not needed to prevent damage to the crops.

The Gemora asks: Who is the Tanna that holds that it is permitted to perform labor on Chol Hamoed only if it will prevent one from suffering a substantial loss; however, it will be forbidden to perform labor for the sake of making a profit or to cause a benefit; and even when it is permitted to perform labor, it will only be allowed if there is no excessive exertion involved.

Rav Huna answers: It is the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov. He states in a Mishnah below (6b): One is permitted to draw water from one tree to another on Chol Hamoed by creating a path from the tree that has water underneath it however, one is forbidden to water his entire rain-watered field (*since the watering is beneficial and not to prevent a loss.*)

The Gemora asks: It is evident that Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov maintains that one cannot perform labor on Chol Hamoed if it is only beneficial and not to prevent a loss, but where do we see that he holds that there is a prohibition against excessive exertion even in situations where he is performing labor to prevent a loss?

Rather, Rav Pappa answers: The Tanna of the Mishnah is Rabbi Yehudah. We have learned in a Baraisa: One may water from a freshly emerging spring, even for a rain-watered field.

This is the opinion of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yehudah says: One may only water an irrigation field that has dried up. Rabbi Elozar ben Azarya disagrees and says: Neither this nor that (*whether the old spring dried up or whether it didn't*). Furthermore, Rabbi Yehudah says: One should not clean out his spring of water and use it to water his garden or his ruin on Chol Hamoed.

What does "dried up" mean? If you say that it means that it literally dried up, what purpose would there be in watering it (as nothing would grow there)? Abaye explains Rabbi Yehudah's viewpoint: One may water an irrigation field if the spring of water that was used until now to water the field has dried up and now there is a new spring of water which can be used (*stopping the watering of the seeds will cause damage*). Rabbi Elozar ben Azaryah maintains that there is no difference if the springs dried up or not; in both cases, a newly emerging spring may not be used.

[It emerges from Rabbi Yehudah that one cannot perform labor on Chol Hamoed for the sake of a benefit because he holds that it is only permitted to water the irrigated field if it has previously been watered; he also maintains that one cannot use excessive exertion even to prevent a loss and that is why he ruled that one cannot clean out the spring of water to water his garden.]

The Gemora challenges Abaye's proof: Perhaps Rabbi Yehudah would hold that an old spring of water, where we are not concerned that the walls will collapse, may be used to water even a rain-watered field. This would be inconsistent with our Mishnah which ruled that a rain-watered field may never be watered.

The Gemora answers: That cannot be Rabbi Yehudah's opinion, for if so, our Mishnah would not be following the opinion of any Tanna. The Gemora concludes that Rabbi Yehudah does not make a distinction between a new spring and an old one. Both springs may be used to water an irrigated field but they may not be used to water a rain-watered field. (2a3 – 2b1)

(The Gemora discusses a halachah pertaining to Shabbos, which will be relevant to our discussion later.) The Gemora asks: On account of which category of labor shall we legally warn a person who weeds or waters seeds on Shabbos? (There are thirty-nine main categories of labor that are forbidden on Shabbos and in order for one to be liable to receive a punishment for intentionally performing a prohibited labor on Shabbos; he must receive a legal warning prior to performing the act not to perform this specific labor.) Rabbah said: He is warned not to plow. Rav Yosef said: He is warned not to plant. Rabbah said: My view seems the more reasonable, for what is the object of one who plows? To loosen the soil; here too, he loosens the soil. [Just as plowing softens the earth, watering and weeding soften the earth.] Rav Yosef said: My view seems the more reasonable, for what is the object of one who sows? To promote the growth of the produce; here too, he promotes the growth of the produce. [Just as planting causes the produce to grow, watering and weeding the seeds cause the produce to grow.]

Abaye (disagrees and maintains that he is actually transgressing both plowing and planting and therefore, he can be legally warned on account of either one) said to Rabbah: Your view presents a difficulty and Rav Yosef's view presents a difficulty. Your view presents a difficulty, for does the act come [only] under the category of plowing [and] not under that of sowing [only]? Rav Yosef's view presents a difficulty, for does it come [only] under the category of sowing [and] not under that of plowing also? And should you rejoin that where there are two [possible categories], the offender is liable only on one count (and therefore, there cannot be a choice as to what to warn him for), [this cannot be], for Rav Kahana said: If one prunes and he needs the wood, he is liable to bring two chatas offerings. He is liable for planting and for harvesting. The Gemora notes that this (Abaye's challenge) is indeed a difficulty.

Rav Yosef asked Rabbah from the following Baraisa: One who pulls out weeds or covers *kilayim* seeds with earth receives lashes. Rabbi Akiva said: Even one who merely maintains

them. Now, this is understandable according to my view, as I say that one who weeds is to be warned under the category of planting, which explains the penalty, because planting is explicitly forbidden in connection with kilayim; but according to you, who say that he is to be warned under the category of plowing, is plowing forbidden in connection with kilayim?

Rabbah said to him, He incurs lashes under the category of maintaining them.

The Gemora asks: But surely, since the last clause states: Rabbi Akiva said: Even one who merely maintains them. May we not infer that according to the Tanna Kamma, the penalty is not on account of maintaining them?

The Gemora answers: The entire statement is to be taken as recording Rabbi Akiva's view, and the latter clause is explanatory: On what ground does one who pulls out weeds or covers *kilayim* seeds with earth receive lashes? It is because he comes under the category of maintaining, for Rabbi Akiva said: Even one who merely maintains them.

What is Rabbi Akiva's reason? - It was taught in a Baraisa: You shall not plant your field with kilayim. This tells me about planting; from where is the prohibition against maintaining (that which is already planted) known? It is from the instructive wording kilayim in your field, no. (2b1 – 2b3)

The Mishnah had stated: One is permitted to water an irrigated field on Chol Hamoed and during Shemitah.

The Gemora asks: It is understandable why this is allowed on Chol Hamoed but not during Shemitah? It is forbidden to perform labor on Chol Hamoed because it is considered exertion and where there is a financial loss, the Rabbis were lenient and permitted it. In regards to Shemitah, where there is a Biblical prohibition against planting and plowing, why would one be allowed to water an irrigated field?

Abaye answers: Our Mishnah follows the opinion of Rebbe who maintains that Shemitah nowadays is only a Rabbinic



injunction. For it was taught in a Baraisa: Rebbe says: “*And this is the word of shemita (relinquishing), relinquish.*” The verse is teaching about two types of relinquishing. One is relinquishing possession of the land, and one is relinquishing loans. When relinquishing the land is applicable, one must also relinquish loans. If it is not applicable, one does not have to relinquish loans. Why not derive that in a place where relinquishing the land applies, so must relinquishing loans apply etc.? The verse states, “*For shemita was called to Hashem,*” implying that relinquishing loans applies anywhere.

Rava answers: Even if Shemita nowadays is subject to the Biblical prohibition, only the main categories (*av melochah*) are Biblically forbidden and not the secondary labors (*toldos*). (2b3 - 3a1)

#### **INSIGHTS TO THE DAF**

##### **WHY MOED KATAN?**

What is the meaning in the name “Moed Katan”?

The Torah refers to the sun as the *meor hagadol* and the moon as *meor hakatan*. Rashi cites from Chazal that they were both created the same size, but the moon complained and said that two kings cannot use the same crown and therefore the moon was diminished. The question is asked: It is well known that the moon does not have any intrinsic light source of its own, but rather it is only reflecting the sun light. What is the meaning that they were created equally?

The Gemora Bava Metziah (12b) states: An adult who is supported by his father is regarded as a *katan*, a minor and a *katan* who is not provided for by the father, but rather supports himself, he is referred to as an adult, a *gadol*.

It emerges that the term *gadol* means that he has from himself and *katan* means that he receives from someone else.

Reb Aryeh Tzvi Frummer answers that that this was precisely the punishment to the moon; the moon did not decrease in size but rather its retribution was that it will not contain its own light and it will only provide light that it receives from the reflection of the sun.

Initially, the sun and the moon were both *gedolim* since they both had an intrinsic light source; afterwards, the moon became a *katan* because it could not provide light by itself. The Zohar in Breishis seems to explain in an identical manner.

The Beis Yosef (O”C 31) cites the Zohar in Shir Hashirim that Chol Hamoed is akin to the moon; it does not have its own sanctity but rather it receives *kedusha* from the Yom Tov.

It is for this reason why the name of this Mesechta, which contains many halachos regarding Chol Hamoed, is called *Moed Katan*.

##### **DAILY MASHAL**

##### **INCIDENT WITH CHAFETZ CHAIM**

Reb Moshe Bik used to say over the following incident: It once happened in Radin that there were several men that passed away one after the other in a very short span of time. They called a gathering to contemplate as to what was the message that Hashem was sending them.

The Chafetz Chaim arose and proclaimed that the Mesechta *Moed Katan* is complaining to the *Ribino shel Olam* that it is a Mesechta that the Yeshivos do not learn. Only mourners learn this Mesechta and that is why many people were passing away.

(Sefer Meir Einei Yisroel 2: P. 239)