



OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Writing (.cont) שמעון from שם

The Gemara concludes its unsuccessful challenge to R' Chisda's position that open and closed letters could be used interchangeably.

2) The writing of the luchos

R' Chisda states: The letters "mem" and "samech" of the the luchos stood miraculously. Additionally, the writing could be read from both sides of the the luchos.

3) The Aleph Beis

The Gemara presents a long discussion regarding the letters of the Aleph Beis. The first part discusses lessons deduced from the shape and order of the letters. The discussion continues as the Gemara explains how to expound the Aleph Beis with different configurations, i.e. א"ל ב"ם ג"ן and א"ח"ס ב"ט"י"ע and א"י"ת ב"י"ש.

4) MISHNAH: Details regarding the melacha of writing are presented.

5) Clarifying the Mishnah

A number of the words in the Mishnah are translated into Aramaic.

Additional inks are added to the list of inks that carry liability.

The disagreement between R' Eliezer and Chachamim is explained.

Rava bar R' Huna points out that the Mishnah is inconsistent with the opinion of R' Eliezer and R' Chisda points out that the Mishnah is inconsistent with the opinion of R' Yehudah.

6) Writing rulings

A Beraisa rules: If a person writes one letter and completes a book or weaves one thread and completes a garment he is liable.

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Daf DIAGRAM



מאי טעמא פשוטה כרעיה דגימ"ל לגבי דל"ת - שכן דרכו של גומלי חסדים לרוץ אחר דלים

The leg of the ג is raised toward the ד (see arrow #1) to indicate that when one is גומל חסד, he must run to the needy to provide them with their needs. The ד is faced away from the ג (arrow #2) to indicate that the needy person does not want to be embarrassed by facing the one who provides for him. Yet, the leg of the ד extends back to the ג (arrow #3) to show that he should not make it difficult for the giver to find him. ■

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לע"נ דוד בן מענדל
By his children
Mr. and Mrs. Craig Cowan, London, England

Distinctive INSIGHT

Writing in Dust

באבק דרכים

The Gemara states that it is prohibited to write with dust. Rashi explains this in two manners. One is that a person may not take dust or mud and use it to write on a surface. Although this type of writing will not last long, it is still rabbinically prohibited. Alternately, Rashi explains that if dust is spread on a surface, it is prohibited for a person to use his finger and write in the dust. Rashash favors the first explanation which Rashi offers, because in the second explanation, where a person is writing in the dust, the Gemara would have used the phrase "בחול ובאבק דרכים" – in the dust or the sand of the road", which is the common phrase the Gemara uses when discussing an act done with or in the ground.

An opinion of the ר"י is quoted by ר"ן. He says that these types of writing are very temporary, but they do last at least for a moment. This is why these forms of writing are rabbinically forbidden. This is according to the understanding that writing with "dirt" means forming letters with moist dirt, which can last on a temporary basis. However, if a person runs his finger along water to make wavy letters, or if he writes in the sand which immediately falls back into place, these do not have any duration at all, and this would be permitted. Ritva argues and poses that any formation of letters in prohibited. The chiddush of the Gemara would be that we might have thought that writing in a manner which will last in any form, even temporarily, would be חייב on a Torah level. The rule is, however, that even writing in dust is only rabbinically prohibited. Nevertheless, Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 340:4) rules that writing in a manner which has no duration is allowed. Writing in frost on a window or in dust is prohibited (see שער הציון כ"ח ■).

REVIEW and Remember

- How did the luchos appear from the back?
- The words אמת and שקר are different in two ways. What lessons are extracted from these differences?
- Why is one exempt for writing two letters in dust?
- Under what condition would everyone agree that one is liable for writing one letter?

HALACHAH Highlight

The Basic Premise Of Kosaiv¹

Forming of any kind of letter, symbol, picture, or design that conveys a particular meaning or represents an idea (in any language), is the basic concept of the melacha of Kosaiv.

A) Any method of forming a letter or symbol is Kosaiv

As a general rule, any method of forming a letter or symbol is the melacha of Kosaiv. Thus, Kosaiv may be accomplished by writing, scratching or engraving on a surface. Etching raised letters or symbols on a stone is likewise included under Kosaiv. Stamping with a rubber stamp or pressing embossed letters or designs into a surface (such as labels or corporate seals) are also methods of Kosaiv and are prohibited. Even forming a letter or design by cutting it out of paper or plastic is Kosaiv. Similarly, perforating the paper (or any surface) whereby the perforations depict a letter or picture is the melacha of Kosaiv.

B) Only meaningful symbols are Kosaiv

Kosaiv only applies where the inscription represents a meaningful symbol or illustration that conveys a particular thought or message. Merely scribbling, doodling, or aimlessly dabbling meaningless lines or markings is not Kosaiv, (although to actually do so may be prohibited for other reasons). Similarly, cutting meat or cake into simple square, round, or triangular shapes is not Kosaiv (even though cutting out human shapes or other meaningful depictions is indeed Kosaiv). However, any symbols that represent some sort of idea or meaning are subject to Kosaiv.

C) Destructive writing

The melacha M'deoraisa of Kosaiv can occur even if the inscription defaces the surface upon which it was inscribed.

(Insight...continued from page 1)

R' Ami rules: If a person writes one letter in Teveria and one in Tzipori he is liable since no impediment prevents him from being able to group these letters together.

A Beraisa rules: If one corrects even one letter he is liable. R' Sheishes and Rava offer different suggestions as to the novelty of this ruling. ■

This is not "Mekalkel" because the melacha of Kosaiv entails the formulation of the symbol or letter itself, not improvement of the written surface.

D) Temporary writing (Aino Miskayim)

Only a symbol that is lasting and made on a permanent surface is included in the melacha M'deoraisa of Kosaiv. A symbol that can last only temporarily, (e.g. tracing letters on a frosted or fogged windowpane) is not the Melocho M'deoraisa. A temporary inscription is referred to as a K'sivah Sh'aino Miskayim (inscription that cannot last permanently). Although not forbidden M'deoraisa, there are rabbinical restrictions on the making of temporary forms of Kosaiv.

E) Writing on one's skin

Human skin is Halachically considered a full-fledged writing surface with respect to the melacha of Kosaiv (and other Halachos as well). Therefore, writing or drawing on one's skin with a pen or marker is Kosaiv M'deoraisa. The fact that the ink will fade (as a result of perspiration, natural shedding of skin, etc.) does not classify the writing as "Aino Miskayim" because the written letters and the surface upon which they were inscribed (i.e. the skin) are technically of permanent quality. The fading that occurs later is caused by natural body functions and is merely comparable to a subsequent erasure of full-fledged Kosaiv symbols. ■

¹ The 39 Melachos, by Rabbi Dovid Ribiat, pages 945-949. Used with the permission of the author. ■

Gemara GEM

Falsehood Doesn't Stand a Chance

שי"ן שקר תי"ו אמת. ומאי טעמא שיקרא אחדא כרעיה קאי - שיקרא לא קאי

The symbolism of the letters of the word שקר/falsehood is indicated already with its first letter, שי"ן, which comes to a sharp point, and is therefore unstable. The letters which comprise the word truth/אמת, however, are solidly based. This hint is associated with the letter תי"ו, which is the last letter in the

word. What message is there for us in this contrast?

Ben Yehoyada points out that lies and mistakes are often based upon initial and superficial observations. Falsehood and deceit attempt to succeed by creating impressions which are spurious and misleading. This is indicated by the very first letter of the word שקר which is already not on firm ground. However, it is truth which ultimately prevails. Before it is all over, truth will prevail and it will become clear that truth will be sustained. It is the final letter of the word אמת which represents this concept, in order to show

that that truth will triumph in the end.

The Rishonim write that we see from this Gemara that the proper form of the letter שי"ן is that it come to a single point at the bottom (ש), and not that it be formed with a flat base with three stems rising from it (ש). Meiri writes that this is not necessarily a conclusive proof, because the context of this statement is aggadic, not halachic.

Maharsha writes that when the Gemara says that truth "stands", it means that it is sustained and constant. Falsehood, on the other hand, wreaks havoc and is destructive to the world. ■