The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Wed, Jul 10 2024 ■ ד' תמוז תשפ"ד
סימן ש"מ סעיף ב'-ג'

Halacha Highlight

Wiping ink from one's hands

Shulchan Aruch Siman 340 Seif 3
המוחק דיו
One who erases ink

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ג') discusses the prohibition of erasing. He rules that one who erases ink that is on parchment or wax from a ledger has violated the prohibition against erasing provided that one could write two letters in the space that was erased. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ט) notes that one is certainly liable if he erases two letters that were written improperly so that he could rewrite them since that is the primary act of erasing that the Torah prohibited. Chaye Adam (ח"ב כלל מ' סע' ח' ובנשמתת אדם אות ב') writes that it is Rabbinically prohibited on Shabbos for one to remove ink that stained one's hands. Even though one does not intend to write additional letters in that place so that it does not constitute a Biblical prohibition, nevertheless, it is Rabbinically prohibited the same as erasing letters from parchment without the intent to write two letters in that space. Additionally, when one who has ink on his hands washes his hands he should allow them to air dry rather than dry them with some material since while doing so he will remove and thereby erase some of the ink from his hands. There are later authorities who write that one should be cautious regarding Chaye Adam's position regarding this matter (פסקי תשובות אות ג').

On the other hand, there are other authorities (פתחי תשובה או"ח סי' קס"א סע' ב') who are not concerned with this. They explain that wiping away the ink is an act of cleaning dirt from one's hands rather than erasing. Others suggest (קצות השלחו סי' קמ"ד בדה"ש סק"י) another rationalization for leniency. When Chazal enacted that one may not erase even though he does not intend to write in the erased space, they did so only when erasing ink from a material that is normally used for writing. Since the hand is not a place that is normally used for writing, it was not included in the Rabbinic injunction. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שו"ת מנחת שלמה תנינא סי' ל"ד) expresses uncertainty about the *halacha* but does observe that the custom is to be lenient.

Overview

Siman 340 Seif 2:

It is prohibited to cut off a wart whether one removes it by hand or with an instrument and whether he removes it from himself or from another person.

- It is prohibited to remove it no matter what but one is not liable unless the wart was moist and it was removed with an instrument. (M.B. 6)
- It is also prohibited to remove other pieces of loose skin which became separated from one's hand or some other part of the body. (M.B. 7)

Siman 340 Seif 3 (a):

One who erases ink from parchment or wax from a ledger, if that area contains space on which one could write two letters, he is liable.

- One is certainly liable if he erases two letters that were written improperly in order to rewrite two other letters in their place. (M.B. 9)
- Bach warns against removing s smudge of ink or wax that are covering letters since doing so is comparable to erasing in order to write and even if the smudge covers one letter he is liable. If such a smudge is discovered while reading the Torah, although it is prohibited to remove the smudge, nevertheless, it is unnecessary to replace the *sefer* Torah and that word can be read by heart. Derech Chaim writes that if it is discovered between *aliyos* they should take out another *sefer* Torah. (M.B. 10)
- It is prohibited to place wax on a page as a reminder to look at it the next day out of concern that one will smooth the wax. (M.B. 13)