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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן תקל"ז סעיף א'-ב'

# Overview

Siman 537 Seif 1:

**It is permitted to perform a *melacha* for a *davar ha'avud* during *chol hamoed* without deviating from the normal manner** (However, whatever one can do to ease the exertion should be done)**. Therefore, a *bais hashalchin*** (thirsty land) **that one began to water before the *moed* may be watered during the *moed*. Once one began to water it before the *moed* if one stops for the *moed* he will suffer a loss. In contrast a *s'dei haba'al* which is not watered other than to improve its quality may not be watered.** Some authorities are stringent and prohibit and the custom is to be stringent and refrain from cutting them with a knife or scissors unless it is in preparation for immersion in which case they may be cut normally.

- This refers to a circumstance in which if it is not done now, it will result in a loss. If one is uncertain whether it will constitute a loss Magen Avrohom adopts a lenient position whereas Chaye Adam only permits one to ask a gentile to perform the *melacha*. Pri Megadim asserts that according to Magen Avrohom one may also be lenient if it is uncertain whether something is needed for the *moed*, meaning it is likely that the matter will be used for the *moed*. (M.B. 1)
- If it is not watered regularly, it will ruin. (M.B. 2)
- If one did not begin watering it, it will not become ruined if one waits to begin watering it for a few days. (M.B. 3)

Siman 537 Seif 2:

**Even a *bais hashalchin* is not permitted if it will involve a large amount of exertion, for example, a spring, whether new or old that continues to flow and will water the field. One may not draw water from a pit or a collection of rain water since that involves a considerable amount of exertion. Even if half a row is raised and the other half is low, one may not draw water from the low half to water the higher half.**

- Meaning, it just started gushing. (M.B. 5)
- The term refers to gathered water in a deep pit that requires considerable exertion to draw the water up with a utensil. (M.B. 6)
- Even if the pit or collection of water is full so that one could direct the water to the field with his foot, it is prohibited since it will lead to drawing the water with a utensil. It is permitted to direct water from a spring with one's foot. (M.B. 7)
- If the row contains vegetables that one intends to use during the *moed* it is permitted. (M.B. 8)

# Halacha Highlight

## Watering gardens and household plants

Shulchan Aruch Siman 537 Seif 1

**שהתחיל להשקותה קדם המועד מתר להשקותה**

**That one began to water before the *moed* may be watered during the *moed***

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') rules that one may perform *melacha* to prevent a loss. As an example he explains that if one has a *bais hashalchin*, meaning a thirsty field that requires irrigation, and he began watering it before the *moed*, it is permitted to water the field during the *moed*. The reason is that if one does not continue to water the field, he will suffer a loss. On the other hand, had he not begin watering it before the *moed* he would not suffer a loss by delaying the start time of watering the field until after the *moed* (מ"ב סק"ג). Although Shulchan Aruch implies that it is permitted to begin watering such a field before the *moed* even though it means that he will have to water it during the *moed* to prevent a loss, nevertheless, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שמירת שבת כהלכתה פס"ז הע' כ"א) writes that if one could delay planting the produce until after the *moed* he should do so. On the other hand, it is prohibited to water a *bais haba'al* which is a field that is sufficiently watered from rain since the only reason to irrigate the field is to improve the quality and exertion is not permitted to merely improve the quality.

In *seif* 2 Shulchan Aruch adds that even in a *bais hashalchin* it is only permitted if watering the field does not involve a significant amount of exertion but if it does, e.g., one must draw water from a well, it is prohibited even though one will suffer a loss. *Poskim* write that nowadays that watering fields and gardens is very easy and does not require any exertion, there is no prohibition to water food gardens or flower gardens that people have in their yards. It is also permitted to water plants that one has growing in his home since it requires minimal effort to bring the needed water to the pots. However, if one does not have to water the plants or garden during *chol hamoed* since refraining from doing so will not damage the plant, one should wait until after the *moed* to water them.