The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תקמ"ה סעיף א'-ב'

Overview

Siman 545 Seif 1:

It is prohibited to write during *chol hamoed* and even fixing one letter in a *sefer* is prohibited. For communal needs there are authorities who prohibit it if is not needed for the *moed* but others permit it. The custom is to be lenient for our script since they are not professional.

- The reason is that another *sefer* Torah is available and the restriction applies even if the mistake was found during *chol hamoed*. (M.B. 1)
- If letters were connected or one needs to merely trace a letter that became dull, it is permitted. If two panels must be sewed together, one should find someone who does not have food to eat to make the repair. (M.B. 2)
- This opinion maintains that writing is professional work whereas the lenient opinion maintains that writing other than what is used for *sifrei torah, tefillin* and *mezuzos* is non-professional since people are not so particular about how it appears. (M.B. 4)
- We maintain that משיטי"א is non-professional writing, however, the custom is to change but when it is needed for a communal project, a change is not necessary. (M.B. 5)

Siman 545 Seif 2:

It appears to me that if they do not have a valid *sefer torah* to read from in public, it is permitted to make repairs during *chol hamoed* so that it could be used for communal Torah reading. Similarly, works of Scripture or Gemara that are needed for reading during *chol hamoed* may be repaired since it is considered a *davar ha'avud*. If they do not have a *sefer torah* altogether and one could be written during *chol hamoed* by many scribes, it may be written since reading from the Torah in public represents a *moed* need. The same is true concerning other *sefarim* needed for studying.

- Shulchan Aruch refers to one who will correct the text based on his analysis of the material rather than from an existing text and he may forget his analysis by the time Yom Tov is over so that it is a *davar ha'avud*. Others explain that he cannot study from the *sefer* due to the numerous textual errors and his inability to study is a *davar ha'avud*. (M.B. 8)
- Bais Yosef implies that the allowance is limited to when the public requires the *sefer* but others are lenient even for the benefit of an individual. (M.B. 9)

Halacha Highlight

Printing during *chol hamoed*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 545 Seif 1
אסור לכתב בחל המועד
It is prohibited to write during *chol hamoed*

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') states that it is prohibited to write during *chol hamoed* and even correcting a single letter violates the prohibition. Rema then presents a disagreement whether it is permitted to write for public needs. The first opinion prohibits it whereas the second opinion adopts a lenient position. Rema then concludes that the custom is to be lenient concerning our script since it is a non-professional script. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ד) explains that the stringent opinion contends that any script involves professional work and thus is prohibited during *chol hamoed*. The lenient opinion maintains that other than the script used for *sifrei torah*, *tefillin* and *mezuzos*, writing is a non-professional activity since people are not particular about the appearance of the letters.

Poskim debate what part of writing is professional. According to some, it is the skill that the writer or artist employs to make clear and professional looking letters. Others contend that it is not the skill of the writer that is essential, it is the appearance of the final product. Does the final product appear as though it was made professionally, even though the forming of the letters did not involve great effort? Practical differences between these two approaches is printing professional looking letters from even a home printer, or printing pictures. There is certainly no great effort involved in printing since everyone can do it, but the final result will look professional. Since the matter is subject to debate, there are *Poskim* who rule that one should refrain from printing unless what is printed is necessary for the *moed*, e.g., printing a boarding pass for a flight during *chol hamoed*. On the other hand, it is permitted to use a computer or similar device that displays letters or numbers on a screen and one need not be concerned that making the letters or numbers appear on the screen violates the prohibition against writing since it is merely electronic and not intended to last for an extended period of time. Even saving the information into memory is permitted since the information is not saved in the shape of letters of numbers (פסקי תשובות אות ב').