

The Weekly Daf



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Shabbos 100-106

Week of 11-17 Adar 5758 / 9-15 March 1998

Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Write or Wrong?

Although Torah law forbids writing on Shabbos only in durable script, the Sages prohibited even such non-durable forms of writing as dipping a finger in juice and writing letters on the table, or etching letters into dust, sand or ashes. This extends even to drawing letters on a frosted window pane, but does not include drawing imaginary letters with your finger in the air or on a dry sheet of paper.

What about etching letters into a congealed layer of fat?

There is no doubt that this is forbidden since it is no less an act of writing than the aforementioned examples prohibited by rabbinic law. The question is whether such writing is forbidden even by Torah law.

There is no explicit mention of such writing on congealed fat in our *gemara*, and one of the great halachic authorities indeed concluded that it is forbidden only by rabbinic law. But if one turns to the very last pages of a standard *gemara* and consults the *Tosefta* (a body of law citing the rulings of the Tannaic Sages not included in the *Mishna* and similar in many ways to the *Beraisa* — both of which are frequently quoted in the *gemara* for supporting or challenging the view of an Amoraic Sage) he will note that in Chapter 12, *Tosefta* 6 it is stated clearly that writing upon congealed fat is a violation of Torah law.

The logic behind the view that the ban on such writing is only of rabbinic origin is that it lacks durability since it will disappear once the fat is melted. The *Tosefta's* approach, as it was understood by leading commentaries cited by *Mishna Berurah* (240:20), is that since such writing will last as long as no action is taken to dissolve it we must consider such writing as durable and therefore prohibited by Torah law.

Shabbos 104b

Long Days and Long Years

When one Jew wishes another long life he traditionally blesses him that "Hashem should lengthen his days and years." The reason for this apparent redundancy can be appreciated from a closer look at what the *gemara* tells us about the importance of properly eulogizing a deceased Torah scholar.

One who is lax in eulogizing such a scholar, says Rabbi Chiya bar Abba in the name of Rabbi Yochanan, will not live long. This is a punishment of measure for measure. Since he was so indifferent to the tragedy of a scholar's life being cut short, there will be an indifference in Heaven regarding his own life.

A challenge is presented to Rabbi Yochanan's statement by the very same Rabbi Chiya who quoted it. The elders who survived Yeshoshua were so guilty of not properly eulogizing him that a volcano threatened to erupt and kill them (*Yehoshua* 24:30). Yet it is concerning these very same elders that we are told (*Shoftim* 2:7) "they lived long lives after the passing of Yehoshua."

"Babylonian that you are," Rabbi Yochanan rebuked this disciple who had left his land to learn Torah under Rabbi Yochanan in *Eretz Yisrael*, "they did indeed enjoy long days but they did not merit long years." Rashi explains that "long days" refers to the quality of life, while "long years" refers to the quantity. Although their other merits gained for them an enjoyment of their years, the number of those years was lessened by their failure to adequately eulogize a Torah scholar like Yehoshua.

So when we wish someone "long days and long years" we are blessing him with both quality and quantity of life.

Shabbos 105b

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