

מסכת גיטין · דף כ' ע"א

Elucidated Talmud · Statement and Proof · Navy & Gold Edition

THE SUGYA

In this segment of our learning on Daf 20a, we dive into the essential halachic requirements of writing a get (bill of divorce). The Gemara first addresses whether a Torah scroll could ever inadvertently act as a get, leading us into a deep discussion on the absolute necessity of writing a get lishmah—specifically for the sake of the husband and wife. We also explore the fascinating halachic question of writing over existing letters with a reed pen to correct a lack of proper intent, drawing a beautiful parallel to a scribe who mistakenly wrote the Shem Hashem without the proper kavanah (sanctified intent) in a Sefer Torah.

Additionally, the Gemara brings us to a famous and stirring statement of Rav Chisda, who suggests he could theoretically invalidate all the gittin in the world. This prompts a vital discussion regarding who must pay the scribe for the writing of the get, how the husband must legally own the parchment, and whether the material upon which the get is written must possess any actual monetary value.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

OBJECTION

אי משום פְּרִיטוֹת דְּאִית בָּהּ –

If you say there is a concern **because of** the verses of **severance that are in it**, i.e., in the Torah scroll, which could theoretically serve as a get,

ANSWER

הָא בְּעִינָא "וְכָתַב לָהּ" – לְשִׁמָּהּ, וְלִיכָא.

behold, we **require** that which is written, "And he shall write for her," which teaches that the writing must be done **for her sake, and** here that **is lacking**, since a Torah scroll is written for the sake of the mitzvah, not for this specific woman.

QUESTION

וְכִי תֵימָא, לִיחְוֹשׁ דִּילְמָא אֶקְדִּים וִיהֵב לִיהּ זִוְזָא לְסַפְרָא מַעֲיָקְרָא;

And if you would say that we should apprehend that perhaps he went ahead and gave a zuz to the scribe at the outset, instructing him to write those specific verses of divorce for his wife's sake,

ANSWER

הָא בְּעִינָן "שִׁנָּה שְׁמוֹ וְשִׁמָּהּ, שֵׁם עִירוֹ וְשֵׁם עִירָהּ", וְלִיכָא.

behold, we **require** the specific details of the husband and wife, and the Mishnah states that if the scribe **changed his name or her name, the name of his city or the name of her city**, the get is invalid; thus, these details must be written, **and they are lacking** in the standard text of the Torah.

QUESTION

ורב יוסף מאי קא משמע לן?

And if so, what is Rav Yosef teaching us by saying that a Torah scroll cannot be used as a get?

ANSWER

שאין מי מילין על גבי מי מילין.

He teaches us that **gall water** writing is not permanent when written **on top of gall water** writing; thus, we do not fear that a get was written in gall water on top of the Torah scroll's text.

STATEMENT

אמר רב חסדא: גט שכתבו שלא לשמה, והעביר עליו קולמוס לשמה, באנו למחלוקת רבי יהודה ורבנן.

Rav Chisda said: In the case of a **get which** a scribe **wrote not for her sake**, and then he **passed a quill over it** writing the letters a second time **for her sake**, we have arrived at the dispute of Rabbi Yehuda and the Rabbis regarding writing over writing.

PROOF

דתנאי: הרי שהיה צריך לכתוב את השם, ונתפנין לכתוב "יהודה" וטעה ולא הטיל בו דלת,

As it is taught in a braisa: If a scribe **needed to write the Name** of Hashem, and he **intended to write "Yehuda"** and erred and **did not place in it** the letter **dalet**, thereby writing the letters of the Divine Name but without the proper sanctified intent,

PROOF

מעביר עליו קולמוס ומקדשו, דברי רבי יהודה.

he may pass a quill over it and thereby sanctify it with the proper intent; these are the words of Rabbi Yehuda.

PROOF

וחכמים אומרים: אין השם מן המוכחר.

And the Sages say: Writing over writing in this manner is **not the optimal way** to write the Name, and it is invalid.

OBJECTION

אמר רב אחא בר יעקב: דילמא לא היא;

Rav Acha bar Yaakov said: Perhaps it is **not so** that this is the same dispute,

EXPLANATION

עד כאן לא קאמרי רבנן התם, דבעינא זה אלי ואנוהו, וליכא;

for the Rabbis only say there, regarding a Sefer Torah, that it is invalid because we require the fulfillment of the verse, "This is my G-d and I will glorify Him," and writing over writing is **lacking** beauty;

EXPLANATION

אבל הכא לא.

but here, regarding a get, where there is no requirement of "and I will glorify Him," **no**, they would not invalidate it.

STATEMENT

אמר רב חסדא: יכול לנא למיפסלינהו (לכולי) [לכולהו] גיטי דעלמא.

Rav Chisda said: I am able to invalidate all the gittin in the world based on strict scriptural requirements.

QUESTION

אמר ליה רבא: מאי טעמא?

Rava said to him: What is the reason you say this?

EXPLANATION

אילימא משום דכתב "והוא יכתוב", והוא אינו קא פתבה ליה;

If we say it is because it is written, "And he shall write," and here, in most cases, she writes it by paying the scribe's fee,

EXPLANATION

ודילמא אקנוי אקנו ליה רבנן?

but perhaps the Rabbis transferred ownership of the get to him, making it as if he paid for it?

EXPLANATION

ואלא משום דכתב: "ונתן", והוא לא יחייב לה מידי?

But rather, is it because it is written, "And he shall give," and here he does not give her anything of monetary value, since the paper belongs to her?

EXPLANATION

דלמא נתינת גט היא!

Perhaps the mere giving of the get is the "giving" required, regardless of its monetary value!

PROOF

תדע, דשלחו מתם: כתבו על איסורי הנאה – פשר.

Know that this is so, as they sent from there, from Eretz Yisrael: If he wrote it on items from which benefit is forbidden, which have no monetary value, it is valid.

STATEMENT

גופא – שלחו מתם: כתבו על איסורי הנאה – פשר.

The Gemara analyzes the text itself: They sent from there: If he wrote it on items from which benefit is forbidden, it is valid.

PROOF

אמר רב אשי: אף אנו נמי תנינא: "על העלה של זית"!

Rav Ashi said: We also have learned this in our Mishnah: A get may be written "on an olive leaf," which has no real value!

REFUTATION

דילמא שאני עצה של זית, דחוי לאיצטרופי.

The Gemara rejects this: **Perhaps an olive leaf is different, because it is fit to be combined** with other leaves to have monetary value, whereas forbidden items have no value even in large quantities.

PROOF

תנא, רבי אומר: כתבו על איסורי הנאה – כשר.

It is taught in a braisa: Rabbi says: If he wrote it on items from which benefit is forbidden, it is valid.

STATEMENT

נפק לוי, דרשה משמיה דרבי, ולא קלסוה.

Levi went out and expounded it in the name of Rabbi, and they did not praise him, because they thought it was only an individual opinion.

STATEMENT

משמיה דרבים, וקלסוה.

He then expounded it in the name of the public as an anonymous halacha, and they praised him.

INFERENCE

אלמא הלכתא כותיה.

Consequently, the halacha is like him, and it is the accepted ruling.

BRAISA

תנו רבנן: "וכתב" – ולא חקק.

The Rabbis taught in a braisa: The verse says, "And he shall write," which implies and not chisel.

QUESTION

למימרא דחקיקה לאו כתיבה היא?!

Is this to say that chiseling is not considered writing?

OBJECTION

ורמינהו: עבד שיצא בכתיב שעל גבי טבלא, ופינקס, יצא לחירות.

And they raised a contradiction from a braisa: A slave who went free through a document that was chiseled upon a tablet or a writing tablet, goes free!

OBJECTION

אבל לא בכתיב שעל גבי כיפא ואנדוכתרי!

But not with writing that is upon a cap or embroidery, which is not permanent.

RESOLUTION

אמר עולא, אמר רבי אלעזר: לא קשיא – הא דחק תוכות, הא דחק יריכות.

Ulla said that Rabbi Eleazar said: This is not difficult; this case of invalidity is where he hollowed out the insides of the letters, and this case of validity is where he hollowed out the borders, leaving the letters raised.

QUESTION

ותוכות – לא?!

And is hollowing out the insides not valid?

OBJECTION

ורמיננהו: לא הִיהָ כְּתָבוֹ שׁוֹקֵעַ, אֶלָּא בּוֹלֵט – כְּדִינָרֵי זָהָב.

And they raised a contradiction from a braisa regarding the Tzitz: Its writing was not sunken, but rather raised, like gold dinars.

OBJECTION

וְהָא דִּינָרֵי זָהָב תּוֹכוֹת הֵן!

But behold, gold dinars are made by hollowing out the insides of the mold, which makes the letters on the coin stand out!

RESOLUTION

כְּדִינָרֵי זָהָב, וְלֹא כְּדִינָרֵי זָהָב.

The Gemara answers: It was like gold dinars, and yet not like gold dinars.

RESOLUTION

כְּדִינָרֵי זָהָב – דְּבוֹלֵט; וְלֹא כְּדִינָרֵי זָהָב – דְּאֵילוּ הֵתָם תּוֹכוֹת, הֵכָא יִרְיכוֹת.

Like gold dinars in that it was raised; and not like gold dinars, for whereas there on the coin it is formed by hollowing out the insides, here on the Tzitz it was formed by hollowing out the borders.

QUESTION

אָמַר לִיהָ רַבִּינָא לְרַב אָשִׁי: רוֹשָׁמָא – מִיִּתְרָץ חֲרִיץ, אוּ כְּנוֹפִי מְכַנִּיף?

Ravina said to Rav Ashi: Regarding the writing on the Tzitz, is the impression made by engraving into the metal, or by pushing the metal from behind to make it protrude?

ANSWER

אָמַר לִיהָ: מִיִּתְרָץ חֲרִיץ.

He said to him: It is made by engraving.

OBJECTION

אֵיתִיבֶיהָ: לֹא הִיהָ כְּתָבוֹ שׁוֹקֵעַ, אֶלָּא בּוֹלֵט כְּדִינָרֵי זָהָב.

He objected to him from the braisa: Its writing was not sunken, but rather raised like gold dinars.

OBJECTION

וְאִי סְלָקָא דַּעְתָּהּ מִיִּתְרָץ חֲרִיץ –

And if it enters your mind that it was made by engraving, how could it be raised?

SUMMARY

The Gemara on Daf 20a establishes that a Torah scroll cannot serve as a get because it lacks both the specific names of the couple and the necessary lishmah (intent). Through a comparison to the laws of writing a Sefer Torah, the Sages debate whether tracing over existing letters with ink (k'sav al gabai k'sav) can validate a get that was originally written without the proper intent. Finally, the Gemara clarifies that while a get must be legally owned by the husband at the time of delivery, the physical material itself does not need to hold any monetary value; hence, a get written on an olive leaf or even on materials from which benefit is forbidden (issurei hana'ah) remains completely kosher and valid.

למעשה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

In our sugya, the Gemara discusses the dispute between Rabbi Yehuda and the Rabbis regarding a scribe who accidentally wrote the Name of Hashem without the proper holy intention (lishmah). Rabbi Yehuda holds that the scribe can simply trace over the letters with a pen to sanctify them, while the Rabbis hold that this is not the optimal way to write the holy Name. Rav Acha bar Ya'akov explains that the Rabbis' concern is rooted in the pasuk, "This is my God, and I will glorify Him" (Ze Eli v'Anvehu). A mitzvah, especially the writing of Hashem's Name, must be beautiful and pristine, not a patched-up correction.

This teaches us a profound lesson about our daily avodah. How often do we approach our mitzvos or our tefillah with a "traced-over" attitude? We might rush through a berachah or perform a mitzvah mechanically, thinking, "Well, at least I got it done, I can just patch up my lack of focus later." But the Torah demands more from us. "Ze Eli v'Anvehu" means we must strive to make our connection to Hashem beautiful from the very first stroke. We should not rely on spiritual shortcuts or half-hearted efforts, but rather invest our heart, mind, and true intention into the mitzvah from the very beginning.

Today, before you say a berachah or perform a mitzvah, pause for three seconds to focus your mind. Do not just "trace over" the action out of habit; make it beautiful, fresh, and full of genuine intention for the sake of Hashem.