

הלכות יסודי התורה • פרק ששי

Complete Word-for-Word Interlinear • Navy & Gold Edition

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam teaches us the profound respect and awe we must have for the holy names of Hashem, as well as the physical structure of the Beis HaMikdash and sacred Torah writings. We learn the strict Torah prohibition against erasing or destroying any of the seven holy names of Hashem, which is derived from the warning not to do to Hashem what we are commanded to do to the idols of the non-Jews. The halachos outline which letters connected to the names carry this holiness, which abbreviations are protected, and how we must treat a holy name written on a utensil or even on a person's flesh.

We also learn about the severe prohibition against destroying any part of the Beis HaMikdash, such as removing a stone from the Mizbe'ach or the Azarah with destructive intent, or burning consecrated wood. The Rambam then guides us in the proper care for holy seforim and their commentaries, explaining when they must be buried and the unique, painful case of a Torah scroll written by a heretic, which must be burned to erase their memory.

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

ה"א

אסור מחיקת שם השם מן התורה

Halacha 1 • The Torah Prohibition Against Erasing the Holy Names of Hashem

כל המאבד שם מן השמות הקדושים הטהורים שנקרא בהם הקדוש
the Holy One by them that is called the pure the holy the names from a name who destroys Any
פרוץ הוא לוקה מן התורה. שהרי הוא אומר בעבודת פוכבים
stars regarding worship of says it for behold the Torah from receives lashes is He blessed
גמרא שבת קכ ב "ואבדתם את שמם מן המקום ההוא לא תעשו כן
so shall you do not the that the place from their name — "And you shall destroy b 120 Shabbos Gemara
לה' אלהיכם":
your God" to Hashem

This halacha establishes that erasing any of the holy names of Hashem is a Torah prohibition carrying the penalty of lashes.

ה"ב

אסור מחיקת שבעה שמות שאינם נמחקים

Halacha 2 • The Prohibition of Erasing Any of the Seven Sacred Names of Hashem

ושבעה שמות הם. השם הנכתב יו"ד ה"א וא"ו ה"א והוא השם
is the Name and it Heh Vav Heh Yud that is written the Name they are names And seven
המפורש. או הנכתב אדני. ואל. אלהי. ואלהים. ואלהי. ואלהי. ואלהי.
and Tzvaos and Shaddai and Elohei and Elohim Eloah and El Adonai that is written or Explicit

כָּל הַמוֹחֵק אֶפְלוּ אוֹת אַחַת מִשִּׁבְעָה אֱלֹו לֹוּקָה:

receives lashes these from seven one letter even one who erases any

This halacha lists the seven holy names of Hashem that are forbidden to be erased, establishing that erasing even a single letter from them incurs the penalty of lashes.

ה'י ג

מְחִיקַת אוֹתִיּוֹת הַנְּטָפְלוֹת לְשֵׁם

Halacha 3 · Erasing Letters Attached as Prefixes or Suffixes to the Divine Name

כָּל הַנְּטָפֵל לְשֵׁם מִלְפָּנָיו מִתֵּר לְמַחְקוֹ כְּגוֹן לֹמ"ד מִלִּיהוָה וּבִי"ת
and the beis from the Name the lamed such as to erase it is permitted from before it to the Name prefix Any

מִבְּאַלְהִים וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן אֵינָן בְּקִדְשָׁת הַשֵּׁם. וְכָל הַנְּטָפֵל לְשֵׁם
to the Name suffix and any the Name like the holiness of they are not to them and similar from Elokim

מֵאַחֲרָיו כְּגוֹן ה' שֶׁל אֱלֹהֵיךָ וְכ"ם שֶׁל אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן אֵינָם
are not to them and similar Eloheichem of and the chaf-mem Elohecha of the chaf such as from after it

נִמְחָקִים וְהִרִי הֵם כְּשֶׁאֵר אוֹתִיּוֹת שֶׁל שֵׁם מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַשֵּׁם מְקַדְּשָׁם.
sanctifies them the Name because the Name of the letters are like the rest of they and behold erased

וְאֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁנִּתְקַדְּשׁוּ וְאִסּוּר לְמַחְקֵם הַמוֹחֵק אֱלֹו הָאוֹתִיּוֹת
letters these one who erases to erase them and it is forbidden they became sanctified though · and even

הַנְּטָפְלוֹת אֵינָן לֹוּקָה. אֲבָל מִפִּין אוֹתוֹ מַכַּת מִרְדּוּת:
rebelliousness stripes of him they strike but receive lashes does not that are attached

This halacha distinguishes between prefixes to God's Name, which may be erased, and suffixes, which are sanctified by the Name and may not be erased, though erasing them does not incur Torah-mandated lashes.

ה'י ד

אִסּוּר מְחִיקַת אוֹתִיּוֹת מִן הַשֵּׁם הַקְּדוֹשׁ

Halacha 4 · The Prohibition of Erasing Letters Written from the Holy Names of Hashem

כָּתַב אֶל"ף לֹמ"ד מֵאַלְהִים, יו"ד ה"א מִיְהוָה, אֵינָן נִמְחָק. וְאֵין
and there is no erased it is not from Hashem hey yud from Elohim lamed alef If one wrote

צָרִיךְ לוֹמַר יָהּ שֶׁהוּא שֵׁם בְּפִנֵּי עֲצָמוֹ. מִפְּנֵי שֶׁזֶה הַשֵּׁם מְקַצֵּת שֵׁם
the Explicit part of name this because its own on a name which is Kah to say need

הַמְּפָרֵשׁ הוּא. אֲבָל הַכּוֹתֵב שִׁי"ן דָּל"ת מִשְׁדִּי, צַדִּי בִי"ת מִצְבָּאוֹת,
from Tzvaos beis tzadi from Shaddai dalet shin one who writes but is Name

הִרִי זֶה נִמְחָק:

may be erased this behold

This halacha details which partial letters of the holy Names of Hashem are forbidden to be erased.

ה'י ה

מְחִיקַת כְּנוּיֵי הַשֵּׁם וּשְׂאֵר פְּתֻכֵי הַקְּדוֹשׁ

Halacha 5 · Erasing Descriptive Titles of Hashem and Other Holy Writings

שְׂאֵר הַכְּנוּיִין שֶׁמְשַׁבְּחִין בָּהֶן אֶת הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא כְּגוֹן חַנוּן
Gracious such as He blessed is the Holy One — with them that we praise the descriptive titles The rest of

וְרַחוּם הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּבוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא הַנֶּאֱמָן קָנָא וְחֶזֶק וְכִיּוּצָא בְּהֵן הֲרִי
behold them and like and Strong Jealous the Faithful and the Awesome the Mighty the Great and Merciful
הֵן כְּשָׂאָר כְּתִבֵּי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּמִתֵּר לְמַחְקוֹ:
to erase them and it is permitted the holiness writings of like the rest of they are

This halacha distinguishes between the actual names of Hashem, which may never be erased, and His descriptive attributes, which may be erased if necessary.

ה'ל'ו

אָסוּר מַחִיקֵת הַשֵּׁם הַכָּתוּב עַל כְּלִי אוֹ עַל הַבֶּשֶׂר

Halacha 6: The Prohibition of Erasing the Name Written on a Utensil or on the Flesh

כְּלִי שֶׁהָיָה שֵׁם כָּתוּב עָלָיו קוֹצֵץ אֶת מְקוֹם הַשֵּׁם וְגוֹנְזוֹ. וְאִפְלוּ הָיָה
if was And even and buries it the Name the place of — one cuts off upon it written a Name that was A utensil
הַשֵּׁם חֲקוּק בְּכִלֵּי מִתְּכוֹת אוֹ בְּכִלֵּי זְכוּכִית וְהִתִּיף הַכְּלִי הֲרִי
behold the utensil and he melted glass on a utensil of or metals on a utensil of engraved the Name
זֶה לּוֹקֵה אֲלָא חוֹתֵף אֶת מְקוֹמוֹ וְגוֹנְזוֹ. וְכֵן אִם הָיָה שֵׁם כָּתוּב עַל
upon written a Name was if And likewise and buries it its place — he cuts off rather is lashed this one
בִּשְׂרׁוֹ הֲרִי זֶה לֹא יִרְחֹץ וְלֹא יִסּוֹף וְלֹא יַעֲמִיד בְּמָקוֹם הַטְּנֵפֶת.
filth in a place of stand and shall not anoint and shall not wash shall not this one behold his flesh
נִזְדַּמְנָה לוֹ טְבִילָה שֶׁל מִצְוָה פוֹרֵף עָלָיו גָּמִי וְטוֹבֵל. וְאִם לֹא מָצָא גָמִי
reeds he found not and if and immerses reeds upon it he winds a mitzvah of an immersion to him If happened
מִסְבָּב בְּבִגְדָיו וְלֹא יִהְיֶה כְּדִי שֶׁלֹּא יִחַץ. שֶׁלֹּא אָמְרוּ לְכֹרֵף
to wind did they say for not it will intervene that not so shall he tighten but not with his garments he wraps
עָלָיו אֲלָא מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאָסוּר לַעֲמִיד בְּפָנֵי הַשֵּׁם כְּשֶׁהוּא עָרֹם:
naked when he is the Name before to stand that it is forbidden because except upon it

This halacha details the prohibition of destroying God's Name when written on utensils or on one's body, and the proper procedures for handling such situations.

ה'ל'ז

אָסוּר נְתִיצַת אֶבֶן מִן הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וְהַמִּזְבֵּחַ

Halacha 7: The Prohibition of Demolishing a Stone from the Temple or the Altar

הַסּוֹתֵר אֶפְלוּ אֶבֶן אַחַת דֶּרֶךְ הַשְּׁחָתָה מִן הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אוֹ מִן הַהִיכָל אוֹ
or the Sanctuary from or the altar from destruction by way of one stone even One who demolishes
מִשְׁאֵר הָעֵזְרָה לּוֹקֵה שְׁנַאֲמַר בְּעִבּוּדַת פּוֹכְבִּים שְׁמוֹת לַד יִג "כִּי
"For 13 34 Shemos stars regarding worship of as it is said receives lashes the courtyard from the rest of
אֶת מִזְבְּחָתָם תִּתְּצוּן" וְכָתוּב דְּבָרִים יב ד "לֹא תַעֲשׂוּן כֵּן לָה'
to Hashem so do "Do not 4 12 Devarim and it is written you shall tear down" their altars —
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם". וְכֵן הַשּׁוֹרֵף עֵצִי הַקֹּדֶשׁ דֶּרֶךְ הַשְּׁחָתָה לּוֹקֵה שְׁנַאֲמַר
as it is said receives lashes destruction by way of the Sanctuary woods of one who burns And likewise your God"

דברים יב ג "וְאֲשֵׁרֵיהֶם תִּשְׂרֹפוּן בָּאֵשׁ" וְכָתִיב לֹא תַעֲשֶׂוּן כֵּן לַה'
to Hashem so do Do not and it is written with fire" you shall burn "and their Asherah 3 12 Devarim
trees

אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:
your God

This halacha teaches that destroying any part of the Beis HaMikdash or its altar, as well as burning consecrated wood destructively, is strictly forbidden and incurs lashes.

ה' ח

אסור השמדת כתבי קדש ודין ספר תורה שכתב אפיקורוס

Halacha 8: The Prohibition of Destroying Sacred Texts and the Law of a Torah Scroll Written by a Heretic

כְּתָבֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ כָּלָן וּפְרוּשֵׁיהֶן וּבִאֲוֵרֵיהֶן אָסוּר לְשַׂרְפָּם אוֹ
or to burn them it is forbidden and their explanations and their commentaries all of them the holiness Writings of
לְאַבְדָּם בִּיד וְהַמַּאֲכֵדָן בִּיד מִכֵּין אוֹתוֹ מִכַּת מְרִדוֹת. בְּמַה דְּבָרִים
words In what rebelliousness lashes of him we strike by hand and the one who by hand to destroy them
destroys them

אֲמֹרִים בְּכָתֵב הַקֹּדֶשׁ שִׁכְתָּבָם יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשָׁה אָבֵל אֶפִּיקוּרוֹס
a heretic But with holiness a Jew that wrote them the holiness regarding writings of are said
יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁכְתָּב סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה שׁוֹרְפִין אוֹתוֹ עִם הָאֲזְכָּרוֹת שָׁבוּ. מִפְּנֵי
because that are in it the Divine Names with it we burn Torah a scroll of who wrote Jew
שָׂאִינוּ מֵאֲמִין בְּקִדְשַׁת הַשֵּׁם וְלֹא כָתְבוּ לְשֵׁמוֹ אֶלָּא שֶׁהוּא מַעֲלָה
raises that he rather for Its sake did he write it and not the Name in the holiness of believe that he does not
בְּדַעְתּוֹ שֶׁזֶה כְּשֶׁאֵר הַדְּבָרִים וְהוֹאִיל וְדַעְתּוֹ כֵּן לֹא נִתְקַדֵּשׁ הַשֵּׁם.
the Name was sanctified not is so and his mind and since the things is like the rest of that this in his mind
וּמִצְוָה לְשַׂרְפוֹ כְּדִי שֶׁלֹּא לְהַנִּיחַ שֵׁם לְאַפִּיקוּרוֹסִים וְלֹא לְמַעֲשֵׂיהֶם.
to their deeds and not to the heretics a name to leave that not in order to burn it and it is a mitzvah
אָבֵל עוֹבֵד כּוֹכָבִים שִׁכְתָּב אֶת הַשֵּׁם גּוֹנְזִין אוֹתוֹ. וְכֵן כְּתָבֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ
the holiness writings of and likewise it we bury the Name — who wrote stars a worshiper of But
שָׁבְלוֹ אוֹ שִׁכְתָּבָן עוֹבֵד כּוֹכָבִים יִגְנְזוּ:
shall be buried stars a worshiper of that wrote them or that became worn out

This halacha details the prohibition against destroying holy writings and explains the differing laws for scrolls written by Jewish heretics versus non-Jews.

ה' ט

קדשת שמות השם הכתובים בתורה ובנביאים

Halacha 9: The Sanctity of Divine Names Written in Specific Biblical Passages

כָּל הַשְּׁמוֹת הָאֲמֹרִים בְּאַבְרָהָם קֹדֶשׁ אֵף זֶה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּרֵאשִׁית יח ג
3 18 Bereishis which is said this even are sacred concerning Avraham said the names All
"אֲדֹנָי אִם נָא מִצָּאתִי חֵן" הֲרִי הוּא קֹדֶשׁ. כָּל הַשְּׁמוֹת הָאֲמֹרִים בְּלוֹט
concerning Lot said the names All is sacred it behold favor" I have found please if "My Lord

חל חוץ מזה גמרא שבועות לה ב "אל נא אֲדַנִּי הִנֵּה נָא מִצָּא

has found please behold my Lord please "Do not 2 35 Shevuos Gemara from this except are non-sacred

עֲבָדְךָ חַן". כָּל הַשְּׁמוֹת הָאֲמוּרִים בְּגִבְעַת בְּנִימִין קֹדֶשׁ. כָּל הַשְּׁמוֹת

the names All are sacred Binyamin concerning the hill of said the names All favor" your servant

הָאֲמוּרִים בְּמִיכָה חל. כָּל הַשְּׁמוֹת הָאֲמוּרִים בְּנִבּוֹת קֹדֶשׁ. כָּל

Every are sacred concerning Navot said the names All are non-sacred concerning Michah said

שְׁלֹמֹה הָאֲמוּר בְּשִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים קֹדֶשׁ וַהֲרִי הוּא כְּשֶׁאֵר הַכְּנוּיִין חוץ

except descriptive terms is like other it and behold is sacred Songs in the Song of said Shelomoh

מִזֶּה שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ח יב "הָאֶלֶף לָךְ שְׁלֹמֹה". כָּל מַלְכֵיָּא הָאֲמוּר

said king Every Shelomoh" for you "The thousand 12 8 Songs Song of from this

בְּדַנְיָאֵל חל חוץ מזה דניאל ב לו "אַנְתָּ מַלְכָּא מְלִיךְ מַלְכֵיָּא" וַהֲרִי

and behold kings" King of O king "You 37 2 Daniel from this except is non-sacred in Daniel

הוא כְּשֶׁאֵר הַכְּנוּיִין:

descriptive terms is like other it

This halacha clarifies which occurrences of the names of God, Shelomoh, and King in specific biblical narratives are sacred and which are non-sacred.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter begins by identifying the seven holy names of Hashem that may never be erased, detailing the status of prefixes, suffixes, and partial names, while distinguishing them from other descriptive praises of Hashem which may be erased. The Rambam rules on how to handle a holy name written on a utensil or on one's skin, and details the Torah prohibition against destroying any part of the Beis HaMikdash or burning consecrated wood. Finally, the halachos address the prohibition of destroying sacred texts, the requirement to bury worn-out seforim or those written by non-Jews, the mitzvah to burn a Torah scroll written by a Jewish heretic, and a detailed guide clarifying which ambiguous names in Tanach are kadosh and which are chol.

When we learn about the severe prohibition of erasing or destroying Hashem's holy names, it is easy to think of this as a technical law reserved only for Sofrim (scribes) or those handling worn-out sefarim. But the Rambam reveals a profound principle of kedushah here: the letters that are attached to the end of Hashem's name, like the "chaf" in "Elohecha" (your G-d), become holy themselves simply because they are connected to the Name. The Rambam writes, "the name conveys holiness upon them."

Think about what this means for you. If ink on parchment becomes so holy that it is forbidden to erase it just because it is attached to Hashem's name, how much more does this apply to a Jewish neshama? You are connected to Hashem. Your very existence is bound up with His name. Because of that connection, you possess an inherent, untouchable holiness. Every mitzvah you do, every word of Torah you speak, and every moment you spend striving to do His will attaches you even closer to Him, elevating your entire physical being.

This awareness must also transform how we look at our fellow Yidden. Every single Jew is connected to the Creator. When you see another person, you are looking at someone who carries a spark of the Divine, someone whose very essence is "attached to the Name." Just as we would never treat a holy name of Hashem with disrespect or carelessness, we must treat every single Yid with the utmost reverence, love, and sensitivity, recognizing the kedushah that rests upon them.

Today, when you speak to or about another person, pause for a moment before you react or speak, and remind yourself: "This person is connected to Hashem; I must treat them with the same respect and care that I would show to a holy sefer Torah."