

הלכות שבת • פרק י"א

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, we will learn the halachos of several of the thirty-nine melachos of Shabbos, focusing on those related to taking life and preparing hides. Hashem commanded us to refrain from these creative acts on His holy day, and we begin by exploring the melacha of Shochet (slaughtering), which includes any form of taking a creature's life, whether it is a mammal, bird, fish, or even certain insects. We will learn which creatures are forbidden to kill and the special cases where dangerous pests may be destroyed to protect human life.

Following this, the Rambam guides us through the melachos involved in processing leather, which were used in the Mishkan to make the beautiful coverings. These include Mafshit (skinning), Me'abed (tanning/processing), and Memachek (smoothing). Through these halachos, we gain a deeper understanding of how we must guard our actions on Shabbos, ensuring that every act of labor is sanctified and kept within the boundaries of the Torah.

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

ה"א

אסור נטילת נשמה ותולדות שוחט בשבת Halacha 1 • The Prohibition of Taking a Life and the Derivatives of Slaughtering on Shabbos

השוחט חייב. ולא שוחט בלבד אלא כל הנוטל נשמה לאחד מכל

of all from one a soul who takes anyone but only slaughters and not is liable One who slaughters

מיני חיה ובהמה ועוף ודג ושרץ בין בשחיטה או

or by slaughtering whether and creeping creature and fish and fowl and domestic animal wild beast types of

בנחירה או בהפאה חייב. החונק את החי עד שימות הרי זה

this behold it dies until the living creature — One who strangles is liable by striking or by stabbing

תולדת שוחט. לפיכך אם העלה דג מספל של מים והניחו עד שמת

it died until and left it water of from a bowl a fish one took up if Therefore slaughtering is a derivative of

חייב משום חונק. ולא עד שימות אלא כיון שיבש בו כסלע בין

between like a sela on it there dried once but it dies until and not strangling because of he is liable

סנפיריו חייב שעוד אינו יכול לחיות. הושיט ידו למעי הבהמה

the animal into the womb of his hand One who inserts to live able it is not for further he is liable its fins

ודלדל עבר שבמעי חייב:

is liable that is in its womb the fetus and detached

This halacha defines the melacha of slaughtering, explaining that taking any creature's life by any means—including strangling, drying out a fish, or detaching a fetus—renders one liable.

ה"ב

רמשים שהן פריז ורבין מזכר ונקבה או נהוין מן העפר כמו
like the dust from are formed or and female from male and multiply reproduce that they creeping things

הפרעושיין ההורג אותן חיב פהורג בהמה וחייה. אבל
but or a wild animal a domestic animal like one who kills is liable them one who kills the fleas

רמשים שהותן מן הגללים ומן הפרות שהבאישו וכיוצא בהן
with them and the like that rotted the fruits and from the dung from whose formation is creeping things

כגון תולעים של בשר ותולעים שבתוך הקטניות ההורגן פטור:
is exempt one who kills them the legumes that are inside and worms meat of worms such as

The Rambam distinguishes between creatures that reproduce sexually or from dust, and those that spontaneously generate from rotting matter, regarding the prohibition of killing on Shabbos.

ה"ג

התר הריגת כנים בשבת

Halacha 3 · Permissibility of Searching for and Killing Lice on Shabbos

המפלה כליו בשבת מולל את הכנים וזורקן. ומתר להרג את
— to kill and it is permitted and throws them the lice — rubs on Shabbos his garments One who searches

הכנים בשבת מפני שהן מן הזעה:
the sweat from that they because on Shabbos the lice

Lice may be killed on Shabbos because they are considered to generate from sweat rather than through male and female reproduction.

ה"ד

התר הריגת מזיקין ובעלי חיים מסכנים בשבת

Halacha 4 · Permissibility of Killing Dangerous Animals and Pests on Shabbos

חיה ורמש שהן נושכין וממיתין ודאי כגון זבוב שפמצרם וצרעה
and the hornet that is in Mitzrayim the fly such as certainly and kill bite that they and insect A beast

שבנינוה ועקרב שפחדייב ונחש שבארץ ישראל וכלב שוטה
mad and a dog Yisrael that is in the Land of and the snake that is in Chadyab and the scorpion that is in Nineveh

בכל מקום מתר להרגן בשבת כשיראו. ושאר כל המזיקין אם
if the damaging ones all and the rest of when they are seen on Shabbos to kill them it is permitted place in every

היו רצין אחריו מתר להרגן ואם היו יושבין במקומן או בורחין
fleeing or in their place sitting they were and if to kill them it is permitted after him running they were

מלפניו אסור להרגן. ואם דורסן לפי תמו בשעת הלוכו
his walking at the time of his innocence according to he steps on them and if to kill them it is forbidden from before him

והורגן מתר:
it is permitted and kills them

This halacha details which dangerous creatures may be killed on Shabbos due to life-threatening danger, and the rules for other pests.

ה"ה

המפשיט מן העור כְּדֵי לַעֲשׂוֹת קִמְעַ חַיֵּב. וְכֵן הַמַּעְבֵּד מִן הָעוֹר
 the hide from one who processes and similarly is liable an amulet to make enough the hide from One who skins
 כְּדֵי לַעֲשׂוֹת קִמְעַ חַיֵּב. וְאֶחָד הַמּוֹלֵחַ וְאֶחָד הַמַּעְבֵּד שֶׁהִמְלִיחָהּ מִין
 a type of for salting one who processes and one who salts and both is liable an amulet to make enough
 עֲבוּד הוּא וְאֵין עֲבוּד בְּאֶכְלִין. וְכֵן הַמּוֹחֵק מִן הָעוֹר כְּדֵי
 enough the hide from one who smooths and similarly regarding foodstuffs processing and there is no is processing
 לַעֲשׂוֹת קִמְעַ חַיֵּב. וְאִי זֶה מוֹחֵק זֶה הַמַּעְבִּיר שְׁעָר אוֹ הַצֹּמֵר מֵעַל
 from upon the wool or hair one who removes this smoothing is and which is liable an amulet to make
 הָעוֹר אַחֲרֵי מִיתָה עַד שְׂיַחֲלִיק כְּפִי הָעוֹר:
 the hide the surface of he makes smooth until death after the hide

This halacha defines the minimum measures and specific actions that constitute the forbidden labors of skinning, processing, and smoothing hides on Shabbos.

הל"ו

תולדות מפשיט מעבד ומוחק בשבת

Halacha 6 · Derivatives of Skinning Processing and Smoothing on Shabbos

הַמַּפְרֵק דּוּכְסוּסְטוֹס מֵעַל הַקְּלָף הֵרִי זֶה תוֹלְדֵת מִפְּשִׁיט וְחַיֵּב.
 and is liable of skinning is a derivative this behold the k'laf from upon duchsustos One who separates
 הַמַּפְרֵק מִן הָעוֹר כְּדֵי לַעֲשׂוֹת קִמְעַ חַיֵּב. הַדּוֹרֵס עַל הָעוֹר
 the hide upon One who treads is liable an amulet to make enough the hide from One who separates
 בְּרָגְלוֹ עַד שִׁיתְקַשֶּׁה אוֹ הַמְרַכֵּכוֹ בְּיָדוֹ וּמוֹשְׁכוֹ וּמִשְׁוֶה אוֹתוֹ
 it and levels and stretches it with his hand one who softens it or it hardens until with his foot
 כְּדָרָךְ שֶׁהֲרָצְעָנִין עוֹשִׂין הֵרִי זֶה תוֹלְדֵת מַעְבֵּד וְחַיֵּב. הַמּוֹרֵט
 One who plucks and is liable of processing is a derivative this behold do that the leather workers in the manner
 נוֹצָה מִן הָאֵבֶרָה הֵרִי זֶה תוֹלְדֵת מוֹחֵק וְחַיֵּב. וְכֵן הַמְמַרֵחַ רִטְיָה
 a poultice one who smears And likewise and is liable of smoothing is a derivative this behold the wing from a feather
 כָּל שֶׁהוּא אוֹ שֶׁעוֹה אוֹ זָפֶת וְכִיּוֹצָא בָּהֶן מִדְּבָרִים הַמְתְּמָרְחִין עַד שְׂיַחֲלִיק
 he smooths until that are smeared from things of them and the like pitch or wax or amount any
 פְּנִיָּהֶם חַיֵּב מְשׁוּם מוֹחֵק. וְכֵן הַשָּׂף בְּיָדוֹ עַל הָעוֹר הַמְתוּחַ
 that is stretched the hide upon with his hand one who rubs And likewise smoothing on account of is liable their surface
 בֵּין הָעֲמוּדִים חַיֵּב מְשׁוּם מוֹחֵק:
 smoothing on account of is liable the pillars between

This halacha details the derivatives of the forbidden labors of skinning, processing hides, and smoothing surfaces on Shabbos.

הל"ז

המחתך מן העור כדי לעשות קמע חיב. והוא שיתכוון

provided that he and this is is liable an amulet to make enough the hide from One who cuts intends

למידת ארכו ומידת רחבו ויחתך בכונה שהיא מלאכה. אבל אם

if but melacha which is with intention and cuts its width and the measure of its length for the measure of

חתך דרך הפסד או בלא כונה למדתו אלא כמתעסק או

or like one acting without but for its measure intention without or destruction by way of he cut intent

כמשחק הרי זה פטור. הקוים את הכנף הרי זה תולדת מחתך

cutting is a derivative of this behold the wing — One who trims is exempt this one behold like one playing

וחיב. וכן המגרד ראשי כלונסות של ארז חיב משום מחתך.

cutting because of is liable cedar of beams the heads of one who scrapes and similarly and is liable

וכן כל חתיכה שיחתך חרש עץ מן העצים או חרש מתכת מן

from metal a craftsman of or the woods from wood a craftsman of that he cuts piece any and similarly

המתכות חיב משום מחתך. הנוטל קיסם של עץ מלפניו וקטמו

and trimmed it from before him wood of a splinter One who takes cutting because of is liable the metals

לחצץ בו שניו או לפתח בו את הדלת חיב:

is liable the door — with it to open or his teeth with it to pick

This halacha defines the parameters of the forbidden labor of cutting to a specific size, including its derivatives such as trimming wings or shaping wood.

ה"ח

קטימת מאכל בהמה ועצי בשמים בשבת

Halacha 8 • Trimming Animal Fodder and Fragrant Wood on Shabbos

כל דבר שהוא ראוי למאכל בהמה כגון תבן ועשבים לחים והוצין

and palm-branches moist and grasses straw such as an animal for food of fit that is thing Any

וכיוצא בהן מותר לקטם אותן בשבת מפני שאין בהן תקון כלים.

utensils fixing of in them that there is not because on Shabbos them to trim it is permitted of them and the like

ומותר לקטם עצי בשמים להריח בהן אף על פי שהן קשים

hard that they are though even them to smell spices wood of to trim and it is permitted

ויבשין. ומפשח מהן כל מה שירצה בין שפשח עץ גדול בין

whether large wood that he stripped whether that he wants what any from them and one may strip and dry

שפשח עץ קטן:

small wood that he stripped

This halacha discusses the permissibility of trimming animal food and fragrant branches on Shabbos, as the prohibition of making a utensil does not apply to these items.

ה"ט

הַכּוֹתֵב שְׁתֵּי אוֹתִיּוֹת חַיֵּב. הַמּוֹחֵק כָּתֵב עַל מְנַת לְכַתֵּב בְּמָקוֹם

in the place of to write condition on writing One who erases is liable letters two One who writes

הַמּוֹחֵק שְׁתֵּי אוֹתִיּוֹת חַיֵּב. הַכּוֹתֵב אוֹת אַחַת גְּדוֹלָה כְּשִׁתְּיִם פְּטוֹר.

is exempt like two large one letter One who writes is liable letters two the erasure

מָחַק אוֹת אַחַת גְּדוֹלָה וַיֵּשׁ בְּמָקוֹמָהּ כִּדֵּי לְכַתֵּב שְׁתֵּי חַיֵּב.

he is liable two to write enough in its place and there is large one letter If one erased

כָּתֵב אוֹת אַחַת וְהַשְׁלִים בָּהּ אֶת הַסֵּפֶר חַיֵּב. הַכּוֹתֵב עַל מְנַת

condition on One who writes he is liable the book — with it and completed one letter If one wrote

לְמַלְקָל הָעוֹר חַיֵּב שְׂאִין חִיּוּבוֹ עַל מְקוֹם הַכְּתִיב אֶלָּא עַל הַכְּתִיב. אָבֵל

But the writing on but rather the writing the place of is on his liability for not is liable the hide to ruin

הַמּוֹחֵק עַל מְנַת לְמַלְקָל פְּטוֹר. נִפְלָה דִּיו עַל גִּבֵּי סֵפֶר וּמָחַק אוֹתָהּ.

it and he erased a book top of on ink If fell is exempt to ruin condition on one who erases

נִפְלָה שִׁעוֹרָה עַל גִּבֵּי הַפִּנְקָס וּמָחַק אוֹתָהּ. אִם יֵשׁ בְּמָקוֹמָהּ כִּדֵּי לְכַתֵּב

to write enough in its place there is if it and he erased the tablet top of on wax or if fell

שְׁתֵּי אוֹתִיּוֹת חַיֵּב:

he is liable letters two

This halacha defines the minimum measure of writing and erasing for which one is liable on Shabbos, as well as the status of completing a book with a single letter.

הֲלִי

הַכּוֹתֵב שְׁתֵּי אוֹתִיּוֹת בְּכָל כְּתִיב וּלְשׁוֹן

Halacha 10 • Writing Two Letters of a Word in Any Script or Language

הַכּוֹתֵב אוֹת כְּפוּלָה פְּעָמִים וְהוּא שֵׁם אֶחָד כְּמוֹ דָד תַּת גַּג רַר שִׁשׁ סָס

sas sas rar gag tet dad like one is a word and it twice doubled a letter One who writes

חַח חַיֵּב. וְהַכּוֹתֵב בְּכָל כְּתִיב וּבְכָל לְשׁוֹן חַיֵּב וְאֶפְּלוּ מִשְׁנֵי סִימְנִיּוֹת:

marks from two and even is liable language and in any script in any and one who writes is liable chach

This halacha defines the liability for writing on Shabbos, including writing a two-letter word by repeating a single letter, or writing in any language or script.

הֲלִי יֵא

כְּתִיבָה שְׁתֵּי אוֹתִיּוֹת שְׂאִינָן נִהְיִין יַחַד וְכְתִיבָה עַל גִּבֵּי כְּתִיב

Halacha 11 • Writing One Letter Next to Existing Writing and Letters That Cannot Be Read Together

הַכּוֹתֵב אוֹת אַחַת סָמוּךְ לְכְּתִיב אוֹ כְּתִיב עַל גִּבֵּי כְּתִיב וְהַמְתְּכּוֹן לְכַתֵּב

to write and one who intends writing top of on writing or writing next to one letter One who writes

חִי"ת וְכָתֵב שְׁנֵי זִיגִין וְכֵן פִּיּוּצָא בְּזָה בְּשָׂאֵר אוֹתִיּוֹת וְהַכּוֹתֵב אוֹת

letter and one who writes letters with other to this similar and so zeinins two and wrote a chet

אַחַת בְּאַרְצֵי וְאוֹת אַחַת בְּקוֹרָה שְׁהָרִי אֵין נִהְיִין זֶה עִם זֶה אוֹ שְׁכָתֵב

who wrote or this with this read they are not for behold on the beam one and letter on the ground one

שְׁתֵּי אוֹתוֹת בְּשְׁנֵי דְּפֵי פִּנְקָס וְאֵינָן נִהְגִּין זֶה עִם זֶה פְּטוּר. כְּתֹבָן

If he wrote them is exempt this with this read and they are not a tablet pages of on two letters two

בְּשְׁנֵי כְּתָלֵי זֵוִית אוֹ בְּשְׁנֵי דְּפֵי פִּנְקָס וְהֵן נִהְגִּין זֶה עִם זֶה חַיֵּב:

he is liable this with this are read and they a tablet pages of on two or a corner walls of on two

This halacha discusses the exemption for writing letters that cannot be read as a single unit due to their separation, and the status of writing over existing writing.

ה'לי"ב

כְּתִיבַת שְׁתֵּי אוֹתוֹת בְּשְׁנֵי מְקוֹמוֹת בְּשִׁבְתָּ

Halacha 12 · Writing Two Letters in Two Different Places on Shabbos

לָקַח גִּוִּיל וְכִיּוּצָא בּוֹ וְכָתַב עָלָיו אוֹת אַחַת בְּמַדִּינָה זוֹ וְהָלַךְ בְּאוֹתוֹ

on that and went this in a province one letter upon it and wrote to it and similar parchment If he took

הַיּוֹם וְכָתַב אוֹת שְׁנִיָּה בְּמַדִּינָה אַחֶרֶת בְּמַגְלָה אַחֶרֶת חַיֵּב. שְׁבֻזְמָן

because at the time he is liable another on a scroll another in a province second a letter and wrote day

שֶׁמְקַרְבָּן נִהְגִּין זֶה עִם זֶה וְאֵינָן מְחַסְרִין מַעֲשֵׂה לְקָרִיבָתוֹ:

for their bringing close an action lacking and they are not this with this they are read that he brings them close

This halacha teaches that writing two letters on separate parchments in different locations still incurs liability because they can be brought together to be read.

ה'לי"ג

כְּתִיבַת אוֹת אַחַת וְחִלּוּק אוֹתוֹת בְּשִׁבְתָּ

Halacha 13 · Writing a Single Letter and Dividing Letters on Shabbos

הַכּוֹתֵב אוֹת אַחַת אֶף עַל פִּי שְׁקוּרִים מִמֶּנָּה תְּבֵּה שְׁלֵמָה פְּטוּר. פִּיּוּצָד.

How so is exempt complete word from it that they read though · even one letter One who writes

כְּגוֹן שֶׁכָּתַב מ' וְהִכָּל קוֹרִין אוֹתָהּ מַעֲשֵׂר. אוֹ שֶׁכָּתְבָהּ בְּמָקוֹם מִנְּיָן

number in place of that he wrote it or ma'aser it reads and everyone mem that he wrote for example

שֶׁהָרִי הִיא כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַב אַרְבָּעִים הָרִי זֶה פְּטוּר. הַמְּגִיָּה אוֹת אַחַת

one letter One who corrects is exempt this one behold forty that he wrote is like it for behold

וַעֲשֵׂה אוֹתָהּ שְׁתֵּים כְּגוֹן שֶׁחֲלַק גִּג הַחֵי"ת וְנַעֲשִׂית שְׁנֵי זַיִנֵי"ן

zayins two and it became the chet the roof of that he divided for example two it and made

חַיֵּב. וְכֵן כָּל כִּיּוּצָא בְּזֶה:

to this similar all and so is liable

This halacha discusses the liability of writing a single letter that represents a full word or number, and the liability of dividing one letter into two.

ה'לי"ד

כְּתִיבָה בְּשֻׁנוֹי וּבִיד שְׂמָאל וְעַל יְדֵי קֶטָן

Halacha 14 · Writing in an Unusual Manner, with the Left Hand, or via a Minor

הַכּוֹתֵב בְּשֻׂמְאָלוֹ אוֹ לְאַחֵר יָדוֹ בְּרִגְלוֹ בִּפְּיוֹ וּבִמְרִפְקוֹ פְּטוּר.

is exempt or with his elbow with his mouth with his foot his hand with the back of or with his left One who writes

אִטֵּר שֶׁכָּתַב בְּיָמִינוֹ שֶׁהִיא לוֹ כְּשֻׂמְאָל כָּל אָדָם פְּטוּר. וְאִם כָּתַב

he wrote and if is exempt man every like the left of to him which is with his right who wrote A left-handed person

בְּשִׂמְאָלוֹ חַיֵּב. וְהַשּׁוֹלֵט בְּשֵׁתֵי יָדָיו בְּשִׁוּהָ וְכָתַב בֵּין בִּימִינוֹ בֵּין

whether with his right whether and wrote equally his hands with both of And one who rules he is liable with his left

בְּשִׂמְאָלוֹ חַיֵּב. קָטָן אוֹחֵז בְּקַלָּמוֹס וְגָדוֹל אוֹחֵז בְּיָדוֹ וְכוּתֵב חַיֵּב. גָּדוֹל

An adult is liable and writing his hand holding and an adult a pen holding A minor he is liable with his left

אוֹחֵז בְּקַלָּמוֹס וְקָטָן אוֹחֵז בְּיָדוֹ וְכוּתֵב פֶּטוּר:

is exempt and writing his hand holding and a minor a pen holding

This halacha details the exemptions for writing in an unusual manner, the rules for left-handed and ambidextrous individuals, and the status of joint writing by an adult and a minor.

ה'ל"ט

כְּתִיבָה וּמַחֲקָה בְּדָבָר הָעוֹמֵד עַל גַּבֵּי דָבָר הָעוֹמֵד

Halacha 15 · Writing and Erasing with a Permanent Substance on a Durable Surface

אֵין הַכּוֹתֵב חַיֵּב עַד שְׂיִכְתֵּב בְּדָבָר הָרוּשָׁם וְעוֹמֵד כְּגוֹן דִּיּוֹ

ink such as and endures that leaves a mark with a substance he writes until is liable one who writes Not

וְשָׁחֹר וְסִקָּרָא וְקוֹמוֹס וְקִנְיָנוֹתוֹם וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶם. וְיִכְתֹּב עַל דָּבָר

a thing on and he writes of them and the like and vitriol and gum and vermilion and blacking

שְׁמֵתָקִים הַכָּתֵב עָלָיו כְּגוֹן עוֹר וְקָלָף וְנֵיזָר וְעֵץ וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶם. אֲבָל

but of them and the like and wood and paper and parchment hide such as upon it the writing that preserves

הַכּוֹתֵב בְּדָבָר שֶׁאֵין רְשוּמוֹ עוֹמֵד כְּגוֹן מִשְׁקִין וּמִי פְּרוֹת. אוֹ

or fruits and juice of liquids such as does not endure mark whose with a substance one who writes

שֶׁכָּתֵב בְּדִיּוֹ וְכִיּוֹצֵא בּוֹ עַל עָלֵי יֵרְקוֹת וְעַל כָּל דָּבָר שֶׁאֵינוֹ עוֹמֵד פֶּטוּר.

is exempt endure that does not thing any and on vegetables leaves of on of it and the like with ink who wrote

אֵינוֹ חַיֵּב עַד שְׂיִכְתֵּב בְּדָבָר הָעוֹמֵד עַל דָּבָר הָעוֹמֵד. וְכֵן אֵין

not and likewise that endures a thing on that endures with a substance he writes until liable he is not

הַמוֹחֵק חַיֵּב עַד שְׂיִמְחַק כָּתֵב הָעוֹמֵד מֵעַל דָּבָר הָעוֹמֵד:

that endures a thing from upon that endures writing he erases until is liable one who erases

This halacha defines the Melacha of writing and erasing on Shabbos, establishing that liability is only incurred when both the writing material and the writing surface are durable and permanent.

ה'ל"ט

כְּתִיבָה עַל הַבָּשָׂר וְעַל הָעוֹר וְכִתְיָה עַל גַּבֵּי כָתֵב

Halacha 16 · Writing on Human Skin, Tearing Letters in Hide, and Tracing Over Existing Writing on Shabbos

הַכּוֹתֵב עַל בָּשָׂרוֹ חַיֵּב מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא עוֹר אֲף עַל פִּי שֶׁחֲמִימוֹת בָּשָׂרוֹ

his flesh that the warmth of though even is hide that it because is liable his flesh on One who writes

מֵעֲבָרָת הַכָּתֵב לְאַחַר זְמַן הָרִי זֶה דּוֹמֶה לְכָתֵב שֶׁנִּמְחַק. אֲבָל הַמְשָׁרֵט

one who scratches but that was erased to writing is similar this behold time after the writing passes away

עַל בָּשָׂרוֹ צוּרָת כָּתֵב פֶּטוּר. הַקּוֹרֵעַ עַל הָעוֹר כְּתִבָּנִית כָּתֵב חַיֵּב מִשּׁוּם

because of is liable writing the shape of the hide on One who tears is exempt writing the form of his flesh on

כּוֹתֵב. הַרוֹשֵׁם עַל הָעוֹר כְּתִבְנִית כָּתֵב פֶּטוּר. הַמַּעֲבִיר דִּיו עַל גִּבִּי

top of on ink One who passes is exempt writing the shape of the hide on One who marks writing

סֶקְרָא חֵיב שְׁתֵּים אַחַת מְשׁוּם כּוֹתֵב וְאַחַת מְשׁוּם מוֹחֵק. הַמַּעֲבִיר דִּיו עַל

on ink If he passed erasing because of and one writing because of one two is liable vermilion

גִּבִּי דִּיו וְסֶקְרָא עַל גִּבִּי סֶקְרָא אוֹ סֶקְרָא עַל גִּבִּי דִּיו פֶּטוּר:

he is exempt ink top of on vermilion or vermilion top of on or vermilion ink top of

This halacha details the parameters of the melacha of writing on Shabbos, including writing on skin, scratching letters, and tracing over existing ink or vermilion.

הַלָּכָה

מְלָאכַת כּוֹתֵב וּמוֹחֵק וּמַשְׁרִיט בַּשָּׁבָת

Halacha 17 · The Forbidden Labors of Writing, Erasing, and Ruling Lines on Shabbos

רוֹשֵׁם תּוֹלְדֵת כּוֹתֵב הוּא. פִּיּוּצָה. הַרוֹשֵׁם רְשָׁמִים וְצוּרוֹת בְּכֶתֶל

on a wall and forms designs one who makes how so is of writing a derivative Making designs

וּבִשְׂשֵׁר וְכִיּוּצָא בְּהֵן בְּדֶרֶךְ שֶׁהַצִּירִין רוֹשְׁמִים הֵרִי זֶה חֵיב מְשׁוּם

because of is liable this one behold design that artists as the way with them and the like and with red color

כּוֹתֵב. וְכֵן הַמוֹחֵק אֶת הָרְשׁוּם לְתִקּוֹן הֵרִי זֶה תּוֹלְדֵת מוֹחֵק

of erasing is a derivative this one behold to correct the design — one who erases and likewise writing

וְחֵיב. הַמַּשְׁרִיט כְּדִי לְכָתֵב שְׁתֵּי אוֹתִיּוֹת תַּחַת אוֹתוֹ שְׂרִטוּט חֵיב.

is liable line that under letters two to write in order one who rules a line and is liable

חֲרָשֵׁי הָעֵצִים שֶׁמַּעֲבִירִין חוּט שֶׁל סֶקְרָא עַל גִּבִּי הַקּוֹרֶה כְּדִי שִׁינְסֹר

that he may saw in order the beam the back of upon red paint of a line who draw of wood carpenters

בְּשׂוּהָ הֵרִי זֶה תּוֹלְדֵת מַשְׁרִיטָה. וְכֵן הַגִּבְלִים שֶׁעוֹשִׂים כֵּן בְּאֲבָנִים

on stones so who do stonecutters and likewise of ruling a line is a derivative this one behold evenly

כְּדִי שִׁיפְצֹל הָאֶבֶן בְּשׂוּהָ. וְאֶחָד הַמַּשְׁרִיט בְּצֶבַע אוֹ בְּלֹא צֶבַע הֵרִי

behold color without or with color one who rules a line and both evenly the stone that he may split in order

זֶה חֵיב:

is liable this one

This halacha defines the derivatives of writing, erasing, and ruling lines, including drawing designs, erasing to correct, and marking wood or stone to ensure straight cuts.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter details the prohibitions of taking life and preparing hides on Shabbos. The Rambam rules that anyone who takes the life of any living creature—whether by slaughtering, stabbing, or even removing a fish from water—is liable for Shochet, though exceptions are made for killing dangerous pests that pose a threat to life. The chapter then transitions to the melachos of processing hides, explaining that skinning, salting, tanning, and smoothing a hide to the minimum size of an amulet makes one liable. Finally, the Rambam defines the specific act of separating the layers of a hide, namely duchsustos from k'laf, as a derivative of the melacha of smoothing.

The holy Shabbos is a day of complete rest, but our learning teaches us that this rest is not a passive slumber; it is a state of deep, active mindfulness. When the Torah forbids us from taking a life—even that of a tiny fish by merely letting it dry out, or an insect that reproduces—it is training our souls to recognize the immense power of our actions. On Shabbos, we step back from manipulating the physical world. We do not skin, smooth, salt, or cut to size, nor do we write even two small letters. We realize that every small act of ours leaves a permanent mark on creation.

This is the beautiful avodah of Shabbos. By carefully governing our hands, our speech, and our movements, we build a sanctuary of yiras Shamayim. We show Hashem that we recognize His mastery over every detail of the universe. If the Torah cares so deeply about the life of a small creature or the writing of two letters, how much more does Hashem cherish every single word of Torah we speak, every mitzvah we perform, and every moment we choose restraint over impulse?

Today, take one moment before Shabbos begins to consciously pause and think about the holiness of your actions. Before you do a simple physical act, remind yourself: "I am a servant of Hashem, and my hands are holy."