

Action vs. Intent: Human Domain vs. The Godly Realm Parshat Hukat

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1) Numbers 19

- 1 The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:
- **2** This is the statute of the Torah which the Lord commanded, saying, Speak to the children of Israel and have them take for you a perfectly red unblemished cow, **upon which no yoke was laid.**
- **3** And you shall give it to Eleazar the kohen, and he shall take it outside the camp and slaughter it in his presence.
- **4** Eleazar the kohen shall take from its blood with his finger and sprinkle it toward the front of the Tent of Meeting seven times.
- **5** The cow shall then be burned in his presence; its hide, its flesh, its blood, with its dung he shall burn it.
- **6** The kohen shall take a piece of cedar wood, hyssop, and crimson wool, and cast them into the burning of the cow.
- **7** The kohen shall wash his garments and bathe his flesh in water, and then he may enter the camp, and the kohen shall be unclean until evening.
- **8** The one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water and cleanse his body in water, and he shall be unclean until evening.
- **9** A ritually clean person shall gather the cow's ashes and place them outside the camp in a clean place, and **It shall be** as a keepsake for the congregation of the children of Israel for sprinkling water, [used] for cleansing.
- **10** The one who gathers the cow's ashes shall wash his clothes, and he shall be unclean until evening. It shall be an everlasting statute for the children of Israel and for the proselyte who resides in their midst.

אַ וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָּה אֶל־משֶׁה וְאֶל־ אָהַרְן לֵאמִר: בֹּ זָאת חֻקַּת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־צַּוָּה

יְהֹנֶת לֵאמֶר דַבֵּרְ וֹ אֶלְיבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִקְחָוּ אֵלֶידְּ פָּרָה אֲדָמָּה תְּמִימָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין־בָּהּ מוּם אֲשֶׁר לְ**אִעְלָה עְלֶיהָ עְל**ּ גּוּנְתַתֶּם אֹתָה אֶל־אֶלְעֻזִר הַפֹּחֵן וְהוֹצֵיא אֹתָהּ אֶל־מִחְוּץ דְּ וְלָקַח אֶלְעֻזְר הַכֹּחֵן מִדְּמָה דְּ וְלָקַח אֶלְעֻזְר הַכֹּחֵן מִדְּמָה בְּאֶצְבָּעִוֹ וְהוֹּיָה אֶלֹנְכַח פְּנֵי אְהֶל־מוֹעֵד מִדְּמָה שֶׁבַע בְּעָמֵים:

תۛ וְשָׂרֵף אֶת־הַפָּרָה לְעֵינֶיִו אֶת־ עֹרָהּ וְאֶת־בְּשָׂרָהּ וְאֶת־דָּמָהּ עַל־ פָּרִשֵּׁהּ יִשִּׂרָף :

וֹ וְלַקַחְ הַכּּהֵוֹ עֵץ אֲבֶיז וְאֵזְוֹב וּשְׁנֵי תוֹלֶעַת וְהִשְׁלִידְ אֶל תְּוֹךְ

שְׁרַפַּת הַפָּרֶה: זּ וְכָבֶּט בְּגָדִיו הַכּּהֵו וְרָחַץ בְּשָׁרוֹ הָטָמֵא הַכּּהֵן עִד־הָצֵרֶב: מָטָמֵא הַכָּהֵן עִד־הָצֵרֶב: בַּפִּיִם וְאָחָר יָבָא אֶל־הַמַּחָנֶה בַּפִּיִם וְרָחַץ בִּשְׂרוֹ בַּמֵּיִם וְטָמֵא בַּפִּיִם וְרָחֵץ בִּשְׂרוֹ בַּמֵּיִם וְטָמֵא

ט וְאָׁפַׁף וּ אַישׁ טָהוֹר אֵת אַפָּר הַפָּרָה וְהִנֶּים מְחִיּץ לַמַּחְנֶה בְּמָקוֹם טָהֵוֹר וְהָיְתָ**ה לַעְרַּת** בְּגֵיִישִׁרָאָל לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְמֵי נִדָּה

<u>עדיהערב</u>:

חַשָּאת הַוּא: • וְכָבֶּס הַאֹּלֵף אֶת־אֵפֶר חַפְּרָה אֶת־בְּנָדְיו וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרֵב וְהַיְתָּה לִבְנֵי יִשְׁרָאֵל וְלַגֵּרְ הַגָּר בָּתוֹכֵם לְחָקֵת עוֹלֵם:

2) Mishnah Gittin Chapter 5:4

One who renders another's food ritually impure, or one who mixes teruma [tithed for the priest] with another's non-sacred produce, or one who pours another's wine as a libation before an idol, in each of these cases causing the other a monetary loss, if he acted unintentionally, he is exempt from paying for the damage. If he acted intentionally, he is liable to pay. Priests who disqualified an offering through improper intention in the Temple, by expressing, while sacrificing the offering, the intention of sprinkling the blood of the offering, burning its fats on the altar, or consuming it after its appointed time, if they did so intentionally, they are liable to pay the value of the offering to its owner, who must now bring another offering.

משנה גיטין פרק ה משנה ד

המטמא והמדמע והמנסך בשוגג פטור במזיד חייב הכהנים שפגלו במקדש מזידין חייבין:



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3) Talmud Tractate <i>Gittin</i> 53a	תלמוד מסכת גיטין דף נג.
Ḥizkiyya says: By Torah law, one who commits one of the	
offenses listed in the mishna, whether he did so	אמר חזקיה:
unintentionally or intentionally, is liable to pay for the	דבר תורה אחד שוגג ואחד
damage he caused, like any other person who causes	מזיד - חייב;
damage.	
What is the reason for this? The reason is that even damage	
that is not evident/recognizable is categorized as damage.	מאי טעמא!
One is liable for damage not only when the damage is	היזק שאינו ניכר שמיה היזק,
evident, i.e., when he causes a change in the item's physical	ומה טעם אמרו בשוגג פטור! כדי שיודיעו.
state, but also when the damage is not evident, i.e., when he	. 12-11-0-12
causes a reduction in the item's value due to a change in its	
halakhic status, e.g., when he renders it impure. And what is	
the reason that the Sages said that if he committed one of	
these acts unintentionally he is exempt? This is so that the	
one who caused the damage will inform the injured party	
about what happened. If a fine were imposed even in a case	
where the damage is caused unintentionally, there would be	
a concern that the guilty party might not report the damage	
so as to avoid the penalty. In such a situation the injured	
party will not know what happened, as the damage is not	
evident, and he will inadvertently use that which has become	
impure, mixed with teruma, or poured before an idol.	
If it is so that there is a concern about this, then he should be	
exempt from liability even if he committed one of these	אי הכי, אפילו במזיד נמי!
	השתא לאוזוקי קא מכוין,
offenses intentionally, so that he will inform the owner of	אודועי לא מודע ליה?
the item. Now, since it was his intention to cause him	
damage, will he not inform him? If he does not tell him, the	
other person will never know that he suffered damage. Consequently, he will certainly inform him of what he did and	
that his property is now subject to a prohibition, and there is	
no concern that the injured party will inadvertently come to	
transgress the prohibition. This is Ḥizkiyya's opinion. And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: By Torah law, one who commits	
one of the offenses listed in the mishna, whether he did so	:ורי יוחנן אמר
,	דבר תורה אחד שוגג ואחד
unintentionally or intentionally, is exempt from liability for	; מזיד - פטור
the damage he caused.	
What is the reason for this? The reason is that damage that	מאי טעמא!
is not evident is not categorized/recognizable as damage.	נאי טענא: היזק שאינו ניכר לא שמיה
And what is the reason that the Sages said that if he	היזק,
committed one of these acts intentionally he is liable? This is	ומה טעם אמרו במזיד חייב?
so that each and every person who has a grievance with his	שלא יהא כל אחד ואחד
neighbor and wishes to cause him harm should not go and	הולך ומטמא טהרותיו של חבירו,
render impure the other person's pure foods, and say: I am	ואומר פטור אני.
exempt from liability.	



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4) Talmud Tractate Gittin 53a-b	תלמוד מסכת גיטין דף נג:
The Gemara raises an objection to the opinion of Ḥizkiyya	תנן:
from what we learned in a mishna (54b): With regard to	הכהנים שפגלו במקדש, מזידים - חייבין,
priests who disqualified an offering through improper	בואו ים - ווייבין,
intention in the Temple, by expressing, while sacrificing the	
offering, the intention of sprinkling the blood of the offering,	
burning its fats on the altar, or consuming it after its	
appointed time, if they did so intentionally, they are liable to	
pay the value of the offering to its owner, who must now	
bring another offering.	
And it is taught with regard to this mishna that the Sages	ותני עלה :
instituted this obligation for the betterment of the world, so	וונגי עסוד. מפני תיקון העולם ;
that priests should not act in this manner toward people to	, = 2 12 11 11/12 2 1 2= 2
whom they wish to cause harm.	
And if you say that damage that is not evident is	
nevertheless categorized as damage, it should have said that	ואי אמרת היזק שאינו ניכר שמיה היזק,
if they acted unintentionally they are exempt due to the	היזק שאינו ניכר שמינו היזק, האי שוגגין פטורין מפני תיקון
betterment of the world. This is because according to	האולם העולם
Ḥizkiyya, if they acted intentionally they should be liable by	מיבעי ליה!
Torah law for the damage they caused, and not by rabbinic	
ordinance instituted for the betterment of the world.	
That is also what the tanna is saying, and the mishna should	
be understood as follows: If they acted intentionally, they	:הכי נמי קאמר
are liable, but if they acted unintentionally, they are	מזידין - חייבין;
exempt. And the reason that they are exempt is for the	הא שוגגין - פטורין,
betterment of the world.	מפני תיקון העולם.
Rabbi Elazar raised an objection based on what was taught:	
_	: מתיב רבי אלעזר
With regard to one who performs a task with the water of	העושה מלאכה במי חטאת
purification, i.e., water that is to be mixed with the ashes of	ובפרת חטאת –
the red heifer, which was used to purify people and objects	פטור מדיני אדם וחייב בדיני
that had contracted ritual impurity by contact with a corpse,	, שמים
or performed labor with the red heifer of purification, and	
by doing so he disqualifies it, he is exempt according to	
human laws but is liable according to the laws of Heaven.	
And if you say that damage that is not evident is	ואי אמרת
nevertheless categorized as damage, then according to	היזק שאינו ניכר שמיה היזק, בדיני אדם נמי לחייב!
human laws he should also be liable.	,,,, ,=3 = ,,,
He, Rabbi Elazar, raised the objection and subsequently he	
himself resolved it: That which they said, that he performed	הוא מותיב לה,
labor with the red heifer, means that he placed it in a pen	והוא מפרק לה:
[lirvaka] so that it would nurse from its mother and would	פרה - שהכניסה לרבקה על מנת שתינק ותדוש,
incidentally thresh , meaning that his action is not defined as	מנוג שוגינק ווגדוש, מי חטאת - ששקל בהן
having the heifer perform labor. And that which they said,	משקלות.
that he performed a task with the water of purification ,	
means that he weighed weights with the water, which is not	
an actual task performed with the water.	



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But doesn't Rava say: Water of purification with which he weighed weights is fit?	והאמר רבא : מי חטאת ששקל בהן משקלות - כשרה!
It is not difficult: This baraita is referring to a case where he weighs an object with the water itself [using displacement], and therefore the water is disqualified. And this statement of Rava's, that the water is fit, is referring to a case where he weighs an object against the water.	לא קשיא : הא בגופן, הא בכנגדן.
If he weighs an object with the water itself, then he performs a real task with it, and if damage that is not evident is nevertheless categorized as damage, then he should also be liable according to human laws to pay for performing a task with the water.	בגופן מעשה קא עביד בהו, ואי היזק שאינו ניכר שמיה היזק, בדיני אדם נמי לחייב!
Rather, it is necessary to say that both this and that refer to a case where he weighed an object against the water, and still it is not difficult: This baraita is referring to a case where in the course of the weighing the object his attention was diverted from guarding the water, and owing to this lapse in attention the water became disqualified. And that statement of Rava's is referring to a case where his attention was not diverted, and therefore the water did not become disqualified.	אלא, אידי ואידי בכנגדן, ולא קשיא : הא דאסח דעתיה, הא דלא אסח דעתיה.
Rav Pappa raises an objection against Ḥizkiyya's opinion from that which is taught in a baraita: If one robbed another of a coin and afterward the coin was rendered invalid by the government, or if he robbed another of teruma and it became ritually impure, or if he robbed another of leavened bread and Passover then elapsed over it, rendering it forbidden, in each of these cases the robber can return the item and say to the robbery victim: That which is yours is before you. Since the robber returned the stolen item, he is not required to compensate the victim of the robbery for his monetary loss, although the stolen items are currently of minimal or no value.	מתיב רב פפא : גזל מטבע ונפסל, תרומה - ונטמאת, חמץ - ועבר עליו הפסח, אומר לו הרי שלך לפניך ;
And if you say that damage that is not evident is categorized as damage, then this man is a robber, and he should be required to pay full compensation for the damage he caused.	ואי אמרת היזק שאינו ניכר שמיה היזק, האי גזלן הוא, ממונא מעליא בעי שלומי!
This is a conclusive refutation , and the opinion of Ḥizkiyya is rejected.	תיובתא.