

Parsha Plug: Parshat Kedoshim

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| Vayikra 19:28 | ויקרא יט:כח |
| 28 You shall not make cuts in your flesh for a person [who died]. You shall not etch a tattoo on yourselves. I am the Lord. | כח וְשָׂרֵט לְנֶפֶשׁ לֹא תִתְּנוּ בְּבָשָׂרְכֶם וְכָתַבְתָּ קַעֲקָע לֹא תִתְּנוּ בְּכֶם אֲנִי ה'. |

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| Rashi on Vayikra 19:28 | רש"י על ויקרא יט:כח |
| You shall not make cuts in your flesh for a person [who died]: This was the practice of the Amorites to make cuts in their flesh when a person [related] to them died. Etch a tattoo: An inscription etched and sunken, never to be erased, for one etches it with a needle, and it remains permanently black. | ושרט לנפש: כן דרכן של אמוריים להיות משרטין בשרם כשמת להם מת: וכתבת קעקע: כתב המחוקה ושקוע שאינו נמחק לעולם שמקעקעו במחט והוא משחיר לעולם: |

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| Masechet Makot 21a | מסכת מכות כא. |
| Mishnah: A person who writes an 'incised'-imprint [in his flesh, is flogged]. If he writes [on his flesh] without incising, or incises [his flesh] without imprinting, he is not liable: [he is] not liable until he writes and imprints the incision with ink, eye-paint or anything that marks. Rebbe Shimon ben Yehudah said in the name of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai that he is not liable until he has written the name, as it is said, "You shall not etch a tattoo on yourselves. I am the Lord" | מתני'. הכותב כתובת קעקע, כתב ולא קעקע, קעקע ולא כתב - אינו חייב עד שיכתוב ויקעקע בידו ובכחול ובכל דבר שהוא רושם; ר"ש בן יהודה משום ר' שמעון אומר: אינו חייב עד שיכתוב שם את השם, שנאמר: "וכתבת קעקע לא תתנו בכם אני ה'." |

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| Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 180:2 | שולחן ערוך יורה דעה קפ"ב |
| If a person tattoos the skin of another person, he who was tattooed is exempt [from punishment], unless he also assisted in the tattooing. Biur HaGra: [3] In the third perek of the Tosefta we learn that a person who writes a tattoo into the skin of another, both the writer and the receiver are liable. Alternatively, at the time when the tattoo was done, if both of them were intentionally involved they are both liable; but if they were both unintentionally mistaken, then they are exempt [from punishment]. If one was unintentionally mistaken and the other was intentionally involved, then the former is exempt and the latter is liable. | אם עושה כן על בשר חבירו, אותו שנעשה לו פטור, אא"כ סייע בדבר. ביאור הגר"א: [ג] אם עושה כו'. בתוספתא פ"ג הכותב כתובת קעקע בבשר של חבירו שניהן חייבים בד"א בזמן ששניהן מזידין אבל אם היו שוגגין פטורין א' שוגג וא' מזיד שוגג פטור ומזיד חייב. |

| Rabbi Chaim Jachter <i>Gray Matter: Exploring Contemporary Halachic Challenges</i> (Volume 3) |
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| [T]he Torah prohibits both applying a tattoo and allowing a tattoo to be applied to one's body. Nowadays, though, tattoo removal is readily possible and is a common procedure. Does the Torah also forbid maintaining a tattoo on one's body when he can so easily remove it? It seems from the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch that no such prohibition exists. However, it is possible that these authorities did not address this issue because in their time it was impossible to remove a tattoo. Dayan Weisz (Teshuvot Minchat Yitzchak 3:11) discusses a case in which someone had a disgraceful tattoo on his body (applied before he became observant) on the place where he now affixed his tefillin. Dayan Weisz advises him to remove the tattoo, but makes no mention of an obligation to remove the tattoo under the kitovet ka'aka prohibition. Furthermore, Rav Ephraim Oshry (Teshuvot Mima'amakim 4:22) strongly urges a Holocaust survivor not to remove the tattoos that the evil Nazis (yemach shemam) branded on her. He writes, "God forbid that this woman should remove this number, because by doing so, she aids those who wish to erase the evil actions perpetrated on the Jewish people...Just the opposite, it is incumbent upon us to bear this mark with pride." Accordingly, there appears to be no obligation to remove a tattoo. |

| Responsa Tzitz Eliezer 11:41 | שו"ת ציץ אליעזר חלק יא סימן מא |
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| There is much room for objection against this practice [of plastic surgery when there is no illness or suffering present], for the Torah did not give the doctors permission to heal for this reason [if you can call it healing at all]. A person does not have permission to allow his doctor to wound him for this goal [beauty], nor does the doctor have permission to implement this. We must know and believe that there is no artist like our God, may His name be blessed, Who fittingly shaped and coined each one of us from His creatures in His image and in His likeness for Him. We are not to add or detract from [His creation]. | ...ויש מקום גדול לטענה זאת שלא על כגון דא הוא שנתנה תורה רשות לרופא לרפאות [אם אפילו נקרא זה בשם לרפאות], ואין רשות לבני אדם לתת לרופאים לחבול בעצמם לשם מטרה זאת, וגם אין רשות לרופא לבצע זאת, ויש לדעת ולהאמין כי אין צייר כאלקינו והוא ית"ש צר והטביע לכאו"א מיצוריו בצלמו ובדמותו ההולמת לו ועליו אין להוסיף וממנו אין לגרוע... |

| Seforno on Vayikra 19:27 | ספורנו ויקרא יט:כז |
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| You shall not round:...He prohibited us from tattooing any marks on the body so as not to have any sign on our flesh other than the sign of the covenant (brit milah). | לא תקיפו. [וצוה שלא נחללם] וכן בכתובת קעקע לתת אות בשרנו מלבד אות הברית: |

| Yeshayahu 49:15-16 | ישעיהו מט:טו-טז |
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| 15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Others may forget, but I will not forget you. 16 Behold, I have etched you upon the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me. | טו הַתְּשַׁכַּח אִשָּׁה עוֹלָהּ, מִרְחֵם בֶּן-בִּטְנָה; גַּם-אֵלֶּה תִשְׁכַּחנָּה, וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא אֲשַׁכַּח. טז הֲיֵן עַל-כַּפַּיִם, חֻמְתֶּיךָ; חוֹמֹתֶיךָ נִגְדִי, תָּמִיד. |