

False Weights and Measures

Ref: *Sefer Nezikin, Hilchot Gneivah, Chapters 7–8*



Not to act deceitfully with weights and measures.⁴

Not to possess imperfect weights and measures.⁵

Although a person who deals with false measures is a thief (or a robber if done aggressively), he is not fined to pay 2x. All that is necessary is for him to give the proper amount.

Nor is the punishment *malkot*, because he is compensating with finance. Similarly with only possessing false measures, no *malkot* are given as punishment, because here no deed is involved.

This transgression applies when dealing with a Jew or Gentile.

Similarly with land measurements. (Previous discussion was about weights and measures of goods.)

Reminder

Pack on Punishment for *Sefer Nezikin*



Not to usurp the boundaries of a colleague.⁶

This applies to:

- Measure used for land measurement
- Moving boundary [even 1 *etzba* (finger breadth)]

Weights and measures. Sizes used:

Reminder

Pack on Weights and Measures



Dry: *seah*

$\frac{1}{2}$ *seah*

$\frac{1}{4}$ *seah*

kav

$\frac{1}{2}$ *kav*

$\frac{1}{4}$ *kav*

$\frac{1}{8}$ *kav*

$\frac{1}{24}$ *kav*

Liquid: *hin*

$\frac{1}{2}$ *hin*

$\frac{1}{3}$ *hin*

$\frac{1}{4}$ *hin*

Log

$\frac{1}{2}$ *log*

$\frac{1}{4}$ log

$\frac{1}{8}$ log

$\frac{1}{64}$ log

As mentioned there is no punishment of *malkot* for dealing with false weights and measures (because there is financial compensation), nor with possessing false weights and measures (no deed involved).

However the punishment for false measures is greater than the punishment for *arayot*.

This is because sin of false measures is one between man and man.

Arayot (forbidden sexual behaviour) are sins between man and G-d.

Sins between man and G-d can be corrected by *teshuva* alone, whereas sins between man and man needs *teshuva* plus compensation.

The *Rambam* states that the neglect of the *mitzvah* of weights and measures is equivalent to denying the First of the Ten Commandments (where it is mentioned that *Hashem* came down to the physical world to take us out of Egypt).

And conversely one who keeps the *mitzvah* of correct weights and measures, it is as if he admits to the exodus from Egypt which was then the cause of all the other *mitzvot*.

[The *Rambam* seems to be stressing that the more ‘mundane’ *mitzvot* carry more weight than the more ‘spiritual’ ones and should therefore be treated with much care.]

Reminder

Pack on Punishment for *Sefer Nezikin*



 | To correct one's scales and measures carefully.³

One should be most exact when dealing with weights and measures including land measurements.

- E.g. Rope lengths vary in summer and winter. Therefore, one should always measure during the same time of the year or he should use rods or iron chains etc.
- Weights should be made of non-rust materials like glass or marble.
- Levelling sticks should be made from a solid wood like olive wood so that the surface will be smooth, and because it is not too light, nor too heavy.
- Scale designs (size varies to make it more accurate for its function).