

The Weekly Daf



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Chullin 131-137

Week of 20-26 Teves 5757 / 30 Dec. 1996-5 January 1997
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Skipping a Meal

If one ate *terumah* before it was given to a *kohen*, ruled Rabbi Chisda, he has no obligation to compensate any *kohen*. But if the king confiscated a Jew's field as payment for a debt, that Jew must give the *kohen* the tithe due on the confiscated produce from another of his fields. This is not considered compensation for consumed *terumah*, explains the Talmud, but rather an obligation to give the *kohen* the money which the Jew saved by paying his debt with the *kohen's* *trumah*. That saved amount is considered as if the *terumah* is still intact and must therefore be awarded to the *kohen*.

Why, ask Tosefos, do we not apply this same logic to the case where one ate the *terumah* due to the *kohen*? He too saved the money he otherwise would have spent on a meal. That saved money should also be considered as *terumah* intact and the *kohen's* property?

Tosefos' resolution of the problem is that when the king confiscates *terumah* for a debt there is a definite saving of money which otherwise would have been collected for the debt. But when a man eats *terumah* there is no definite saving of money, because there is a possibility that he might not have eaten that particular meal so no money was saved.

There is an interesting discussion amongst the commentaries as to whether this Tosefos can be applied to the halachic question of whether a man who invites one to eat a meal can subsequently charge him for it. One view is that the one who ate the meal can argue that he saved no money by accepting the offer, because he would have gone without the meal. Another view contends that this argument is valid only in the case of *terumah*, because there is no obligation to pay for damaging or benefiting from the gifts due to a *kohen*, and the possibility of shipping a meal eliminates the claim of the *terumah* being intact. In regard to eating a meal, however, you can be charged for the enjoyment you had even if you saved nothing.

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The Tall and the Great

A fascinating glimpse of the greatness of the Talmudic Sages and the pattern of decline from generation to generation is provided by an exchange in our section of the Talmud.

When the Sage Issi bar Hini came to *Eretz Yisrael* from Babylon he met the foremost sage there, Rabbi Yochanan, who asked him: "Who is the Rosh Yeshiva in Babylon?" The reply he gave was "Abba Aricha."

"Abba Aricha you call him and not Our Master!" Rabbi Yochanan castigated him. "I remember him before he left *Eretz Yisrael* for Babylon. I sat 17 rows behind him in the *Beis Midrash* and watched him discuss Torah with Rebbie (Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi, the head of the Sanhedrin). It seemed as if flames were shooting out of their mouths and I was unable to understand a word of what they said — and you simply call him Abba Aricha!"

Abba Aricha was the sage Rav, so called because he was the teacher of his generation. He was also the tallest man of his generation so that 'Aricha' — Aramaic for 'tall' — was added to his given name of Abba. Rabbi Meir, relates the Talmud (*Mesechta Niddah* 24b), was the tallest of his generation, and Rebbie came up to his shoulder. Rebbie was the tallest of his generation, and Rabbi Chiya reached his shoulder. Rabbi Chiya was the tallest of his generation, and Rav reached only his shoulder.

The description of the exchange between Rebbie and Rav as shooting flames, explains Maharsha, is based on the Biblical comparison of Torah to fire, and refers to the nature of Torah to generate a fire within those who study it. Other commentaries expand on this comparison. One of them (*Eitz Yosef* in the *Ein Yaakov*) draws attention to the nature of a coal whose fire is dormant within until someone stirs it to life and releases brilliant flames of many colors. So it is with Torah. The brilliance of its illumination is locked within until one comes along to release the multicolored flames of knowledge.

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