

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Pesachim 16-22

Week of 10 Elul - 16 Elul 5758 / 31 August -6 September 1998
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

A Forbidden Favor

Just as a Jew is forbidden to transgress the commands of the Torah, so too is he forbidden to assist someone else in sinning. This is the meaning of the passage: "You shall not place a stumbling block before a blind person." (*Vayikra* 19:14)

This extends also to assisting a non-Jew transgress one of the commandments given to all mankind (the Seven Noachide Laws). Therefore, Rabbi Nassan informs us, it is forbidden to hand a non-Jew a limb which was removed from an animal while the animal was still alive for the purpose of eating it, because this too is considered placing an obstacle in the path of one blind to his obligation.

The following is inferred from this statement: If not for the fact that the Jew is an accomplice to a forbidden act, it would be permissible for him to sell or give such a limb to a non-Jew, even though the Jew is thus deriving benefit from something the Torah has forbidden him to eat. There is, in fact, a consensus of the Sages that one may derive benefit from such a limb, such as feeding it to his dog.

Tosefos raises a problem regarding this deduction: Who owns the forbidden limb, the Jew or the non-Jew? It is clear from the *gemara* (*Mesechta Avoda Zara 6b*) that it belongs to the non-Jew, since Rabbi Nassan speaks of "handing" it to a non-Jew rather than "giving" it. "Giving" it would have implied a transfer of ownership. If the Jew is neither selling nor giving it to the non-Jew, what possible benefit does he derive which allows us to make the above inference, namely that deriving benefit from this forbidden food is permissible?

Tosefos' resolution is that we must compare his handing the limb to the non-Jew to a situation in which he receives payment in exchange for handing the limb. If it is forbidden to sell to the non-Jew (or present it as a gift, since every gift is viewed in law as a virtual sale, because it is offered either as payment for a gift received or as an invitation for a return gift), then it should also be forbidden to simply perform the service of handing it to him, since this would give him the benefit of the non-Jew being beholden to him for doing him this favor.

Pesachim 22b

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

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Little Word With A Big Meaning

A powerful dilemma faced the Sage Shimon the Amsonite. He had made a lifelong project of interpreting the word "es" every time it appeared in the Torah. Even though it often seemed superfluous, he would find some way of explaining how it came to include something not explicitly mentioned in the passage in which this word appeared.

Then he came to the passage in which this word "es" precedes the command "You shall fear Hashem your G-d." (*Devarim 10:20*) What could this "es" possibly include, he asked, since nothing could be equated to Hashem and included with Him as an object of fear? He therefore decided to abandon his approach: "But Rebbie," asked his distraught disciple, "what will happen to all the interpretations you made until now on the word 'es'?"

"Just as I received Heavenly reward for the *drisha* (the interpretation)," replied the Sage, "so shall I receive this reward for the *prisha* (the abandonment of this approach)."

Maharsha explains this cryptic response as follows: This Sage's objective in offering interpretations for every "es" in the Torah was to honor Hashem and His Torah by demonstrating that there was not a single superfluous word in the Torah. Since his purpose was to thus honor Hashem, he felt that he would achieve that same goal by avoiding any interpretation which might cause anyone to be included in the same category with Hashem.

But, asks Maharsha, why did this Sage not reach the same impasse in an earlier passage in which the word "es" precedes the command of "You shall love Hashem, your G-d?" (*Devarim 6:5*)

This was a surmountable challenge, explains Maharsha, because it is conceivable that the "es" here teaches to include loving a Torah scholar, which could be equated to love of Hashem. But fear of Hashem, which stems from fear of retribution, could hardly be extended to any mortal, even Torah scholars.

Rabbi Akiva, however, did interpret the "es" in regard to Torah scholars, not from the point of view of fear of retribution, but rather of respect. He saw this not as a slight to the honor of Hashem, but as a tribute to the Torah scholars who learn Hashem's Torah.

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