

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Pesachim 44-50

Week of 8-14 Tishrei 5759 / 28 September-4 October 1998
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Preparing In Time

Although cooking and baking are forbidden on Shabbos, they are permitted on Yom Tov holidays for the purpose of preparing meals for the day itself. It is not permitted, however, to cook and bake for the next day. (This is true even outside Eretz Yisrael where the second day is also a holiday by rabbinic law.)

What happens when Yom Tov is the day before Shabbos and you want to cook and bake for Shabbos? You may do so only if you have made an eruv tavshilin before Yom Tov. This is done by setting aside two food items, one which has been baked before Yom Yov and one which has been cooked before Yom Tov, and designating them as the start of your Shabbos preparations which will be completed on Yom Tov itself. (Eruv tavshilin literally translates as the "blend of cooking" achieved by beginning the process on one day and completing it on the other.)

Eruv tavshilin is a rabbinic creation to ensure that one who cooks on Yom Tov for Shabbos will not mistakenly extend this right to cooking on Yom Tov for a weekday. But what about the Torah ban on preparing on Yom Tov for another day? The Sages certainly did not sanction the violation of a Torah law through the medium of eruv tavshilin.

Two approaches are found in our gemara as to why the Torah ban is not applicable. Rabba's position is that if one cooks on Yom Tov, even though he has no intention of eating from that food, he has not violated Torah law because there exists the possibility that unexpected guests may arrive who will enjoy this food on Yom Tov itself. There is a rabbinic ban on cooking in such a case because it may lead people to cook for tomorrow even where no such possibility exists, but this ban is lifted when an eruv tavshilin is made as a distinction between the permitted and the forbidden.

The Sage Rabbi Chisda disagrees with Rabba. Rabbi Chisda contends that one who cooks on Yom Tov for a weekday has violated Torah law. But when that next day is Shabbos, he adds, the Torah does permit preparing from Yom Tov for Shabbos because both days are viewed as one long Shabbos. He too agrees that there is a rabbinical ban on doing so for fear that this right will be improperly extended, and an eruv tavshilin is necessary to create the distinction.

The crucial difference between these two approaches is hinted at by Tosefos and expanded on by the Shulchan Aruch commentaries: According to Rabbi Chisda's approach, we satisfy the Torah law even if we do our cooking for Shabbos at the very end of the Yom Tov day preceding it. But according to Rabba's approach, the food must be prepared in time for those unexpected guests to enjoy it on Yom Tov itself.

Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim 627:1) urges an early preparation of the food in such a situation in order to satisfy the requirements of Rabba's approach. Mishna Berura, however, rules that in a situation where one forgot or was unable to do so, he may rely upon Rabbi Chisda's approach and do his cooking at the very end of Yom Tov.

Pesachim 46b

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With Talmud In Hand

When Rabbi Yosef miraculously recovered from a deathly coma, his father, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, asked him to describe the glimpse he caught of the World of Souls where he had briefly sojourned.

"I saw an upside down world," he replied, "in which those so honored here because of their wealth were placed very low, while those so low here because of their poverty were there so highly placed."

"You saw a clean world," his father assured him. "But tell me, what was the status of Torah scholars like ourselves?"

"The same honor we enjoy in this world," replied the son, "is accorded to us there."

"I also heard an announcement made up there," added the son, "which declared: Fortunate is he who arrives here with his Talmud in his hand."

There is a popular tradition, based on this gemara, that a person specialize in one mesechta of the entire Talmud, in addition to his general study of the rest, so that when the time comes he will arrive in the World to Come with "his Talmud in his hand." This is the concept of an "Olam Haba's Mesechta"— a tractate for the World to Come — which is touted by this tradition as a ticket to a place of honor in the hereafter.

Maharsha makes an interesting observation: We generally think of the Talmudic learning we have achieved in our lifetime as something stored in our heads and our hearts. What is the significance, then, of arriving in Heaven with the Talmud in our hand?

The most lasting impression which Torah study can make on a person, he explains, is when it is accompanied by writing what he learns. For this reason, he concludes, Talmudic Sages are referred to as Scribes.

Pesachim 50a

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