

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Pesachim 51-57

Week of 15 - 21 Tishrei 5759 / 5 - 11 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

What's For Pesach?

It is forbidden, declares Rabbi Yehuda in the name of the Sage Rav, to say “this meat is for Pesach.” The reason he gives is that such a statement creates the impression that one has consecrated the animal as a sacrifice — the korban Pesach which was offered and eaten in the time of the Beis Hamikdash — and when he subsequently eats from it, it appears as if he is illegally eating from a sacrifice offered outside of the Beis Hamikdash.

But if one says “this wheat is for Pesach,” adds Rabbi Papa, there is no problem, since it is clear that he means that he is merely putting this grain aside as food for consumption on Pesach.

How far does the ban on saying “this meat is for Pesach” extend?

One approach is that it applies only to the meat of a lamb or kid, animals which qualified for use as a Pesach sacrifice. Even if he makes such a statement after the animal has been slaughtered, people may think that this is an indication that he had made the consecration while it was alive and had offered it as sacrifice, something which is forbidden to do when we have no Beis Hamikdash.

Rashi, however, extends the ban to all animals, because the misleading statement can be interpreted as consecration of the monetary value of that animal for the purpose of buying a lamb or kid for the Pesach sacrifice, a suspicion strengthened when he is subsequently seen eating that meat on Pesach night.

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 469:1) rules in accordance with Rashi, that the ban extends to every sort of animal, domesticated or wild. The implication is that this applies only to animals because of their similarity to the species offered as the Pesach sacrifice. Other authorities extend the ban even to fowl and even to fish.

If even a statement about fish, which is something never offered as a sacrifice, can be misinterpreted as consecrating the monetary value of the fish to purchase an animal for the Pesach sacrifice, why, then, is wheat not a problem?

The answer is that since wheat has to be guarded from becoming chametz, the meaning of “this wheat is for Pesach” is clearly that it is being watched to assure that it will be kosher for Pesach use.

[This explanation given by the Mishna Berura (469:1 in Sha'ar Hatziyun 6) implies that anything which cannot become chametz would come under the ban, according to the opinion that fish is included. But perhaps the rabbinical decree was limited to things of the animal kingdom while all other foods were placed in the category of wheat.]

Pesachim 53a

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Issue #243 - Pesachim 51-57

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Silent Praise

After we loudly proclaim our classical “pledge of allegiance” to our Divine King with the passage “Shema Yisrael,” we silently add the words “Baruch shem kevod malchuso le’olam va’ed.”

The gemara explains that “Shema Yisrael” was first said by the sons of Yaakov when they reassured him (“Hear, our father Yisrael...”) that they were as loyal as he in their monotheistic belief. The response of Yaakov-Yisrael was the praise of “Baruch shem kevod...”

What should we do? asked the Sages. Shall we say “Baruch shem” as Yaakov did? But Moshe did not record that praise in the Torah! Shall we then omit it? But Yaakov did say it! The solution they arrived at was to say it, but silently.

Rabbi Avahu notes, however, that in places where heretics were prevalent, the rabbis decreed that this praise be said aloud so that they would not be able to claim that we were silently making some sort of disclaimer of our faith. In Nahardea, where there was no such danger, they continued to say it silently and this is the custom everywhere today.

An apparent contradiction to this conclusion is posed by the commentaries from a gemara (Berachos 12a) which tells us that the Sage Ameimar wanted to institute in Nahardea the daily recital of the Ten Commandments along with the shema. He abandoned the plan for fear that heretics would claim that this was the only part of the Torah which is true because we heard it directly from Hashem.

If no exception was made for Nahardea in regard to the danger of heretics, despite the lack of heretics in that Torah-true community, why was an exception made in regard to the silent saying of “Baruch shem...”?

The difference, explains Rabbi Shmuel Shtrassen of Vilna in his footnotes in the back of the Vilna Shas, lies in the degree of danger involved. The damage to the truth of Torah in its entirety which could arise from singling out the Ten Commandments was considered so grave that it was outlawed in every place. But the suspicion that the silent praise following the shema be construed as disclaimer was so remote that it was given consideration only where heresy was rampant, not in Nahardea then, or anywhere today.

Pesachim 56a

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