

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Pesachim 2- 8

Week of 26 Av - 2 Ellul 5758 / 17 - 23 August 1998
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Good Neighbor Policy

It's Pesach and your home, thanks to the family's arduous efforts, is completely free of *chametz*. In walks the son of your non-Jewish neighbor who is munching on a sandwich while paying a courtesy visit. What should be your reaction?

Your mind flashes back to the Torah command of "*chametz* should not be seen by you" (*Shemos 13:7*) which is the source for so much of the halachic discussion of this first section of *Mesechta Pesachim*. Is it then forbidden to *see* the bread in your neighbor's sandwich?

This is an unnecessary concern. The Torah prohibited the *possession* of *chametz*, not the viewing of it. The physical presence of this *chametz* in your home also presents no problem because the Torah, in the aforementioned passage, uses the term "by you" to signal that *chametz* in your precincts is forbidden only if it is yours and not if it belongs to a non-Jew.

One problem does seem to stand in the way of your being a tolerant neighbor. Rabbi Yehuda cites the ruling of the Sage Rav regarding a Jew who has the *chametz* of a non-Jew in his home during Pesach. Even though he has not violated the Torah prohibition on possessing *chametz* since he has not assumed any responsibility for guarding it, he is required to erect a barrier ten *tefachim* (approximately 38 inches) high in front of this *chametz* so that he will remember not to eat from this forbidden food. Does this same caution regarding a forgetful indulgence in *chametz* obligate you to ask the sandwich-packing neighbor to leave your home?

The answer is supplied by a *beraisa* which clearly states that there is no requirement for you to eliminate the *chametz* which a non-Jew brings into your home. Rashi explains that this means that there is no requirement to eject him from your home and the language of the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 440:3)* is: "There is no need to remove him from the home even though the Jew sees the *chametz*."

The reason why we are not required to removed the neighbor as we are to construct a barrier is that since the non-Jew is in complete control of the sandwich, there is no concern that his Jewish neighbor will come to eat from it as there is in a case where the *chametz* is only stored by the Jew.

Pesachim 6a

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

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Issue #236 - Pesachim 2- 8

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Two Divine Guarantees

“Those involved in fulfilling a mitzvah shall suffer no harm.”

This guarantee of Divine protection from those performing a mitzvah (except where there is a high probability of danger) is applied by our *gemara* to a situation in which a Jew is searching for *chametz* in the rubble of a collapsed wall in which food had previously been stored. Even though there is the possibility of a scorpion lurking there, this would not have been sufficient reason to exempt him from sticking his hand into the rubble to search for *chametz*, even if he was simultaneously searching for a lost needle in that pile. His ulterior motive does not detract from the fact that he is also doing a mitzvah, and he is still privileged to enjoy immunity from the low-probability of the danger of a scorpion.

As proof that a selfish motive does not deprive the performer of a mitzvah of Divine protection the *gemara* cites a *beraisa*:

One who says ‘I am giving this money to charity in order that my sick son should recover, or that I should merit reward in the World to Come’ is considered a completely righteous person.”

But how, asks Tosefos, do we reconcile this with the counsel of the Sage Antigonos of Socho (*Pirkei Avos 1:3*) to avoid serving Hashem for the purpose of gaining reward?

Tosefos makes a distinction between the person who will regret having performed the mitzvah if the expected reward is not forthcoming and the one who will have no such regrets.

Could Tosefos not have offered a simpler solution, asks Maharsha, based on the *gemara* (*Mesechta Ta’anis 9a*) that a person may test Hashem’s promise of reward when it comes to charity?

In that *gemara* it is clearly stated that although the Torah (*Devarim 6:16*) warns us that “you must not test Hashem your G-d,” one may test His providence when it comes to charity, as the Prophet Malachi declares in Hashem’s name (*Malachi 3:10*): “Bring all of your tithes ... and test Me with this ... whether I shall not open the windows of Heaven for you and shower you with limitless prosperity.”

This *gemara* would seemingly have provided Tosefos with a distinction between performing other *mitzvos* with an ulterior motive, which is discouraged in *Pirkei Avos*, and offering charity with a motive for reward, which is encouraged by the Prophet Malachi. Tosefos’ decision not to make this distinction leads the Maharsha to the conclusion that the test of Hashem regarding charity is limited to His promise of prosperity and not to other rewards. The reason why the promise of prosperity is different is explained by Maharsha in *Mesechta Ta’anis* (*ibid.*): Since human logic cannot comprehend how giving away grain or money can possibly enrich rather than impoverish, Hashem offered us this opportunity of actually seeing Divine Providence meet the test of such supernatural power.

Pesachim 8b

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