

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Chagiga 24 - Yevamot 5

Week of 20 - 26 Kislev 5760 / 29 November 5 December 1999

Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide **Daf Yomi** cycle

The Table as Altar

In the days of the *Beit Hamikdash*, say Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish, it was the altar upon which a

This is derived from a passage in the prophecy of Yechezkel (41:22) regarding the *Beit Hamikdash* of the future; the prophecy begins by describing the dimensions of the altar and concludes with the words

What is it that transforms a table upon which we eat into a virtual altar and places it in the exalted

us to the statement of the very same Rabbi Yochanan (*Sanhedrin 103b*) about the power of dining together to bring people closer to each other.

Variations on this theme are found in other places. Rabbi Yehuda (*Berachot 55a*) states that one who spends a long time at his table so that there will be a possibility to offer food to a poor, hungry person will be rewarded with long life. In *Pirkei Avot (3:4)* Rabbi Shimon declares that a table at which words of

eating from the Divine table.

The theme of the table as an instrument of hospitality and charity finds poetic expression in a custom cited by one of the early commentaries on Chumash, Rabbeinu Bachaye.

from their tables to make the coffins in which they are buried. This is to demonstrate that a man takes nothing with him and that nothing of all his labors will accompany him, except for the charity that he performed in his lifetime and the kindness that he dispensed at his table. This is what the Sages meant when they said that one who spends a long time at his table (in order to have the opportunity of offering food to a poor person who may come along) will be blessed

Chagiga 27a

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Relative Respect

The respect for parents demanded by the Torah is so far-reaching that one might have even presumed that if parents ask a child to perform a service for them that involves the violation of Shabbat he is obligated to do so. To dispel such a notion, the Torah tells us (*Vayikra 19:3*) mother and his father and you shall observe my Shabbat for I am Hashem, your G-phrase, Hashem resolved the conflict between respect for parents and respect for Shabbat by reminding us that He is the G-d of the parents as well, and they must therefore defer to His will.

Tosefot raises the question as to how the *gemara* deduced from the passage that Hashem placed Shabbat above respect for parents. We could just as easily assume that the reminder at the end of the passage refers to the first command in the passage, and that its purpose is to reiterate the need to respect parents even if it means putting aside the Shabbat.

It may be suggested that the challenge presented by Tosefot is based on the concept that respect for parents is a form of respect for the ultimate parent, Hashem. The *gemara* (*Bava Metzia 32a*) calls attention to the fact that Hashem uses the same term in referring to the honor due to parents and to Himself in order to equate the two.

Despite this equation, states Tosefot in his response to this challenge, it was clear to our Sages that respect for Shabbat is a greater form of honoring Hashem than is respect for parents. This is so because observance of Shabbat is testimony that Hashem created the world. One who fails to observe Shabbat, say our Sages (*Eruvin 69b*), is considered as if he denies that Divine creation took place.

mentioned in that passage and serving as a limitation on it. We find that the Midrash comments on the

My holiness is more exalted than yours. In the same fashion, concludes Tosefot, Hashem qualifies the respect he demands for parents by reminding us that the respect due to Him takes precedence.

Yevamot 5b

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