

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) An ox of hekdes (cont.)

The Gemara concludes its defense of R' Shimon ben Menasya's opinion.

2) Damages involving a gentile

The Mishnah's ruling to differentiate between the case where the gentile's ox gored and the case where the gentile's ox was gored is questioned.

R' Avahu explains the rationale behind the Mishnah's two rules and relates it to the fact that gentiles did not observe the seven Noahide commandments.

The exposition that serves as the source for this ruling is cited.

A Baraisa is cited that supports this explanation.

The necessity for the Baraisa to cite two pesukim is explained.

Related teachings from R' Masna and R' Yosef are cited.

An incident related to this halacha is recorded.

3) Aggadaic teachings

Tangentially, the Gemara retells a conversation between Ulla and R' Shmuel bar Yehudah regarding the steps Hashem took to assure that Ruth and Na'amah would be born.

R' Chiya bar Abba in the name of R' Yochanan contrasts the behavior of Lot's older daughter with the behavior of the younger daughter.

R' Chiya bar Abba in the name of R' Yehoshua ben Levi emphasizes the importance of striving to be the first to fulfill a mitzvah

4) Damages involving a Cuthean

A Baraisa presents a dispute between Tanna Kamma and R' Meir regarding damages involving a Cuthean.

The implication that R' Meir maintains that Cutheans did not properly convert is challenged.

R' Avahu suggests a resolution to the contradiction.

R' Zeira challenges this explanation. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What were the consequences for not observing the seven Noahide laws?

2. Do gentiles receive reward for fulfilling mitzvos?

3. What is the source that one is rewarded even for refined speech?

4. What did R' Meir do to prevent Jews from intermingling with Cutheans?

Distinctive INSIGHT

Greater is the one who is commanded...

דאמר ר' חנינא גדול המצווה ועושה יותר ממי שאינו מצווה ועושה

Rabbi Chanina teaches that one who is commanded and fulfills mitzvos is greater than one who fulfills mitzvos without being commanded to do so, but does so out of his free will. Tosafos (Kiddushin 31a) explains that one who is commanded acts with a sense of urgency and mission (he is **דואג**). This "anxiety" to battle with his yetzer hara to make sure that he fulfills his commitment earns him greater reward. One who acts due to his free will does not experience this concern, for he may cease his mitzvah action at any moment. Ritva (ibid.) explains that only a person who is commanded is vexed by his yetzer hara, which must be overcome. The rule is that the reward is commensurate to the difficulty in doing the mitzvah, so greater reward is earned where the yetzer is resisting.

Ritva and Tosafos HaRosh add another reason for the rule of R' Chanina. Hashem does not benefit from our mitzvos, and He does not need them, per-se. We are the ones who benefit and gain, as we earn merit for obeying the word of Hashem. One who is commanded is able to fulfill the instructions of the King, and to perform His will. Someone else who is not commanded to do this task for the King cannot be considered to have fulfilled the will of his master. This is why the reward for the one who was not commanded is less.

המקנה (to Kiddushin, ibid.) explains that the one who is commanded receives reward not only for his fulfillment of the mitzvah, but he also is paid for having accepted upon himself to do the mitzvah in the first place. This was originally part of the declaration of **"נעשה ונשמע"** which was said at Har Sinai. This additional facet of reward for accepting the mitzvah upon one's self, beside the actual performance of the mitzvah, is only provided for one who is actually commanded.

Meshech Chochmah (to Bereshis 22:19) explains that there is a special aspect of **"נועם העליון ודביקות האלקי"** (a pleasant and comforting connection to Above, and an opportunity to cling to God) which is only achieved for one who is commanded to do a mitzvah, but not for those who do so voluntarily. ■

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 Mr. & Mrs. David Friedman
 In honor of the marriage
 of their children
 Jake & Michelle

HALACHAH Highlight

Teaching a gentile the seven Noahide laws

ראה שבע מצות שקיבלו עליהם בני נח ולא קיימום עמד והתירן להם
He saw the seven commandments that the descendants of Noah accepted upon themselves, and then failed to observe, so He stood and made the commandments permissible for them

Tosafos¹ questions the permissibility of teaching the two Roman officers Torah when the Gemara in Chagigah (13a) states explicitly that one who teaches Torah to gentiles is in violation of a positive commandment. He answers that the Roman government forced them to teach Torah to these gentile officers and there is no obligation to endure punishment or be put to death to avoid violating this positive commandment. Alternatively, one could suggest that the officers presented themselves as potential converts who are permitted to study Torah even before their conversion.

Sefer Yafeh Lalev² is uncertain whether it is permitted to teach gentiles the seven Noahide laws and he bases this uncertainty on our Gemara. Our Gemara relates that Hashem took note of the fact that gentiles were not fulfilling the seven Noahide laws so he made the commandments permissible for them. Consequently, if gentiles are no longer obligated to fulfill the seven Noahide laws it is logical to assume that they

are also prohibited from studying those laws since they are no longer relevant. Furthermore, perhaps we should be concerned with the possibility that if they begin to study the seven Noahide laws it could lead them to expand their scope of study and may begin to study other areas of Torah as well. On the other hand, one could argue that since the seven Noahide laws encourage proper behavior and etiquette it should be permitted.

Teshuvos Chasam Sofer³ cites an authority who maintains that, nowadays, the prohibition against placing a stumbling block before the blind (לפני עור) regarding a gentile is only Rabbinic. The rationale is that once Hashem declared that they are no longer bound by the seven Noahide laws their Biblical prohibitions no longer apply and thus it is not possible to violate the Biblical prohibition of לפני עור. Chasam Sofer disagreed because the Gemara in Avodah Zarah states explicitly that when Hashem released them from their mitzvos what he did was take away their reward as one who is commanded and fulfills the mitzvah and they are now categorized as one who is not commanded and fulfills the mitzvah. Even after the declaration, however, they will be punished for violating the seven Noahide laws, thus it is appropriate to teach them about their obligation to enable them to avoid punishment. ■

1. תוס' ד"ה קראו
2. ספר יפה ללב ח"ה סח' רמ"ו סק"ט
3. שו"ת חת"ס חר"מ סי' קפ"ה ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The Ger Tzedek of Vilna

חזר על כל האומות שיקבלוהו ולא רצו
When the Graf Pototsky, hy"d—better known as Avraham ben Avraham, the famous ger tzedek of Vilna—was "caught" converting and sentenced to death at the stake, his non-Jewish family pleaded with him to "return to the fold." They petitioned him, claiming that he should think of the great humiliation he would cause the family if he was publicly burned.

The ger tzedek replied, "It seems difficult on the face of it that some non-Jews convert. Conversely, it is surely remarkable that sometimes we find a Jew who goes away from the religion of his fathers. What could be the meaning of

this? We find in Bava Kamma 38 that Hashem went to all the nations and offered them the Torah—which they refused—before giving it to the Jewish people. Although the nations as a whole refused, do you think it likely that not one non-Jew was willing to accept the Torah? Surely there were, but Hashem went after the overwhelming majority that rejected Torah. Similarly, although there were plenty of Jews who were not willing to accept the Torah, whom the Vilna Gaon calls Eirev Rav, Hashem followed the overwhelming majority who did.

"Before the righteous moshiach arrives, all of these mixed-up souls require clarification. Why should a non-Jew who truly wanted Torah be denied, and why should a Jew who did not be allowed to keep it? For this, Hashem causes certain non Jewish souls to convert and other Jews to leave the path of their fathers.

"It comes out that although you always thought I was a gentile, you were mistaken since I am actually a Jewish soul from the time of the revelation of the Torah on Sinai. Surely you don't think you can prevent me from living out my destiny? The only problem I have always had is that I have a body from a non-Jewish mother. What can I do with this treif body? The Torah clearly says we must take care of ourselves physically. But if you want take care of my problem and rectify this body through burning, I will bless you from the bottom of my heart.

At that moment I will become a Jew in body and soul!" The Rebbe of Tzanz, zt"l, would exclaim several times at the high points of the third meal, "The Graf Pototski said 'What do we do with the treif body!'"¹ ■

מפיהם ופמי כתבם חלק ב' עמוד קפ"ד