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Sanhedrin Daf 59

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Idolaters Learning Torah

Rabbi Yochanan says: An idolater who learns Torah is liable to be killed, as the verse says: *Torah was given to us as an inheritance*. The implication is that it is only an inheritance for Jews, not for gentiles.

The *Gemora* asks: Why isn't this counted as one of the seven Noahide laws?

The *Gemora* answers: The one who understands that the source of the law is from the verse *Torah etc.* understands that this is included in the prohibition against stealing. The other opinion (see *Pesachim 49b*) that says that the source is the continuation of this verse (*Torah etc.*) *betrothed to the congregation of Jacob* understands that this is included in the prohibition against promiscuous relations with a betrothed woman, which is subject to stoning.

The *Gemora* asks a question on this law from the following *braisa*. Rabbi Meir says: How is it known that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a *Kohen Gadol*? It is written (with respect to the Torah's laws): *that man shall perform and by which he shall live*. It does not say: *Kohanim, Leviim or Yisroelim*. Rather, it says "man." This teaches us that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a *Kohen Gadol*. [It emerges that they do receive credit for observing the Torah! How can Rabbi Yochanan say he is liable to be killed?]

The *Gemora* answers: Rabbi Meir is discussing a gentile who learns about the Noahide laws. (59a)

Blood

Rabbi Chanina ben Gamliel says: Even blood from a live animal is forbidden to the Noahites.

The *braisa* states: [*Hashem said to Noach:*] *But flesh with its soul, which is its blood, you should not eat*. This refers to eating a limb from an animal that is still alive. Rabbi Chanina ben Gamliel says: Even blood from a live animal is forbidden to a Noahite.

The *Gemora* asks: What is Rabbi Chanina's reasoning? The verse is read as if it says: *the flesh with its soul should not be eaten; its blood with its soul should not be eaten*. The Rabbis, however, understand that this extra aspect of the verse teaches that there is no prohibition of eating a limb from live insects. [*They are not kosher anyway.*]

Rabbi Chanina derives a similar thing from the following verse: *Only be strong not to eat blood because the blood is the soul*. [*This teaches us that one may not consume the blood of a live animal.*]

The Rabbis (who hold that blood is not included in the prohibition against eating a limb from a live animal) understand (the juxtaposition between the prohibition against consuming blood and eating a limb from a live animal) that the blood of bloodletting is also forbidden, provided that it is blood with which the soul departs (for if not for this teaching, we would have thought that only blood from a slaughtered animal is forbidden).

The *Gemora* asks: Why were the Noahide prohibitions said to Noach and then again at Har Sinai?

The *Gemora* answers: This is answered by the teaching of Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Chanina. He says: Any *mitzvah* that was said to the Noahites and then again at Har Sinai was given



to both the Noahites and Israelites. If it was only said to the Noahites and not said at Har Sinai, it is only for Israelites. The only such *mitzvah* we find is *gid hanasheh* (*displaced sinew – sciatic nerve*) according to Rabbi Yehudah (*who says that the mitzvah was indeed given to the sons of Yaakov, not later at Har Sinai*). (59a)

Stated and Repeated

It was stated: Any *mitzvah* that was said to the Noahites and then again at Har Sinai was given to both the Noahites and Israelites.

The *Gemora* asks: On the contrary! The fact that it was given over again at Har Sinai should show that it was only given to Jews!?

The *Gemora* answers: Being that the commandment against idolatry was given at Har Sinai, and we find that idolaters were punished for doing that, it must be that when it was said again at Har Sinai it was given to both Noahites and Israelites.

It was stated: If it was only said to the Noahites and not said at Har Sinai, it is only for Israelites.

The *Gemora* asks: On the contrary! The fact that it was not given over again at Har Sinai should show that it was given only to Noahites and not given to Israelites!?

The *Gemora* answers: This cannot be, as there is nothing that is permitted to a Jew and forbidden to an idolater.

The *Gemora* asks: Is this true? What about an *ishes yefas to'ar* (*beautiful captive taken in battle; she is forbidden to a Noahite, but permitted to an Israelite*)?

The *Gemora* answers: The reason that she is not permitted to the Noahites is because they were not commanded to capture lands (*like the Israelites, who were commanded to capture Eretz Yisroel*).

The *Gemora* asks: What about stealing less than a *perutah* (*where a Noahite will be executed, but an Israelite is not liable at all*)?

The *Gemora* answers: This is merely because idolaters generally do not forgo someone taking anything from them, even if it is less than a *perutah*.

It was stated: Any *mitzvah* that was said to the Noahites and then again at Har Sinai was given to both Noahites and Israelites.

The *Gemora* asks: Circumcision was said to the Noahites (*Avraham, before Bnei Yisroel received the Torah*), as the verse says: *and you should guard my covenant*. It was also repeated to *Bnei Yisroel* at Har Sinai, as the verse says: *and on the eighth day he should circumcise*. Why, then, do we say that only Jews are obligated to circumcise their sons?

The *Gemora* answers: *And on the eighth day* etc. only comes to permit circumcision on *Shabbos*, implying that even if the eighth day is *Shabbos* one should do so. [*It was not said again as a commandment, rather as additional information.*]

The *Gemora* asks: The commandment “*be fruitful and multiply*” was said to the Noahites, as the verse says: *and you should be fruitful and multiply*. It was repeated at Har Sinai, as the verse says: *go tell them, “Return to your tents.”* Yet we say that this is only a *mitzvah* for Israelites, not for Noahites!?

The *Gemora* answers: This was only said at Har Sinai to teach that once the *Chachamim* assemble to render a ruling, they are required to gather (*and vote*) again to rescind the ruling. [*Although the prohibition was for a certain amount of time, permission is not granted automatically when the time limit expires; permission is explicitly required.*]

The *Gemora* asks: If so, why don't we say that everything that was said again was in order to teach an additional law (*and there are not commandments for the Noahites, aside from the possibility of gid hanasheh*).

The *Gemora* answers: When the warning was stated again, it must be to say that both Israelites and Noahites are commanded in this *mitzvah*.

It was stated: The only commandment we know for certain is *gid hanasheh* according to Rabbi Yehudah.

The *Gemora* asks: All the other *mitzvos* (i.e. *circumcision*) could merely have been repeated for an additional teaching (as stated above regarding *circumcision*)! [Why didn't Rabbi Yosi include these *mitzvos* together with *gid hanasheh*?]

The *Gemora* answers: These other *mitzvos* were repeated to give additional information, whereas *gid hanasheh* was not repeated at all.

Alternatively, the *Gemora* answers: The Torah originally warned Avraham about *circumcision* by saying *and you should guard my covenant, you and your children after you for your generations*. This implies that only you and your children should do so, not others.

The *Gemora* asks: Shouldn't this mean that the sons of Yishmael should also be commanded?

The *Gemora* answers: The verse says *for in Yitzchak you will be called as one who has children*.

The *Gemora* asks: The sons of Esav should be required to be circumcised!?

The *Gemora* answers: *In Yitzchak* implies part of Yitzchak's children, meaning Yaakov, not Esav.

Rav Oshaya asks: Does this mean that the sons of Keturah should not be required in *circumcision*?

The *Gemora* answers: Rabbi Yosi bar Avin, and some say Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina, say: *You have negated My covenant* includes

the sons of Keturah. [This is a special verse that includes them.] (59a – 59b)

Adam

Rav Yehudah says in the name of Rav: Adam was not permitted to eat meat. This is as the verse states: *for you it (the vegetation) will be yours for food, and for all the animals of the land*. This implies that the animals are not given for man to eat. When the sons of Noach arrived, Hashem permitted this, as the verse says: *I have given you everything (including animals) to be like the stalks of grass*. One would think they did not have to keep the prohibition against eating a limb of a live animal. The verse therefore states: *however the meat in its soul in its blood you should not eat*. One would think this prohibition even applies to the limbs of insects. The verse therefore states "however" (excluding insects).

The *Gemora* asks: How do we see that insects are excluded from "however"?

Rav Huna answers: *His blood* implies one whose blood is different than his flesh, unlike insects. who have blood that is similar to flesh (in that the blood is not forbidden as "blood," but rather as the flesh of the insect; consuming blood is subject to the penalty of *kares* – eating insects is subject to lashes).

The *Gemora* asks a question from a *braisa*. The *braisa* states: *And rule over the fish of the sea*. This must imply that people can eat fish. [Adam therefore was able to eat meat!?!]

The *Gemora* answers: No, it implies that they can be used for work.

The *Gemora* asks: Are fish used for one's work?

The *Gemora* answers: Yes, they are, as implied by Rachavah's inquiry. Rachavah inquired: If a person tied his chariot to a *shibuta* fish and a goat (near a body of water) and drove it, is he liable for *kilayim*? [This shows that fish can be used for work.]



The *Gemora* asks another question from a *braisa*. The *braisa* states: *And rule over the birds of the heavens*. This implies that Adam could eat them.

The *Gemora* answers: No, it implies that they can be used for work.

The *Gemora* asks: Are birds used for one's work?

The *Gemora* answers: Yes, they are, as implied by Rabbah bar Rav Huna's inquiry. Rabbah bar Rav Huna inquired: According to Rabbi Yosi bar Yehudah who holds that one may not muzzle an animal working with food if the animal is working with both its hands and feet, what is the law if one uses chickens and geese to thresh grain?

The *Gemora* attempts to bring another proof from a *braisa*. The *braisa* states: *And rule over all the living things that creep on the land*. [*Insects are not fit to work, so the verse must be teaching us that they can be eaten!?*]

The *Gemora* answers: This includes a snake (*that one may use a snake to work for him*). This is as the *braisa* says that Rabbi Shimon ben Menasya made the following statement: Woe that the world lost a great servant. If the snake would not have been cursed, each Jew would have had two good snakes. He would send one to the north and one to the south to bring him *sandalbon* gems, other precious stones, and pearls. Moreover, we would put a strap under its tail, and it would dig up good earth for one's garden and ruin.

The *Gemora* asks a question from a *braisa*. The *braisa* states: Rabbi Yehudah ben Teima used to say that Adam Harishon was lying in Gan Eden, and the angels would roast meat for him, and filter his wine. The snake looked at this and became jealous of his honor. [*This implies he ate meat.*]

The *Gemora* answers: This meat came down from the heavens.

The *Gemora* asks: Is there such a thing?

The *Gemora* answers: Yes. Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta was going on the road, and met up with some lions that were going towards him and roared in his face. He cited the following verse: *the lions scream for prey*. Two thighs of meat fell down from the heavens. They ate one and left the other. He took the leftover one and went to the *Beis Medrash*. He asked: Is this considered non-kosher or kosher? They answered him: A non-kosher thing will not descend from the sky (*in this manner*).

Rabbi Zeira inquired of Rabbi Avahu: What if something that appeared like a donkey fell from the sky?

He answered him: Demented *yarud!* [*Rashi explains that he meant that this will never happen. However, if it did, we would revert to the old rule.*] Didn't they say that a non-kosher thing will not descend from the sky? (59b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

TEACHING TORAH TO AN IDOLATER

Rabbi Ami said (Chagigah 13a): One is forbidden from teaching Torah to a non-Jew. This is derived from the verse [Tehillim 147: 19 – 20]: *He declared His word unto Yaakov, His statutes and ordinances unto Israel. He has not done so with any nation; and as for His ordinances, they have not known them.*

Tosfos asks: The *Gemora* in Sanhedrin (59a) states explicitly that a non-Jew who studies Torah is liable for death; accordingly, one should be forbidden to teach him Torah because he is transgressing the prohibition against placing a stumbling block in front of a blind man? The idolater cannot study Torah, so the Jew should not be able to teach him Torah, why is this new verse necessary?

Tosfos states: The gentile is permitted to study the seven Noahide laws as the *Gemora* Sanhedrin (ibid) states: Rabbi Meir said: A gentile who engages in the study of Torah is like



a Kohen Gadol and the *Gemora* explains that this is referring to the seven laws which are incumbent upon him to adhere to. A Jew has an obligation to teach him these halachos.

Tosfos answers: Our *Gemora* is referring to a case where the idolater has another idolater who is willing to teach him Torah and therefore there would be no prohibition (based on the *Gemora* in Sanhedrin) of teaching him Torah; our *Gemora* teaches us that nevertheless, a Jew is forbidden from teaching a non-Jew Torah.

The Meor Veshemesh (Parshas Chukas) writes that it is permitted to teach the Written Law to an idolater as we find that Moshe wrote the Torah in seventy languages. The prohibition of teaching Torah to a gentile applies only to the Oral Law.

The Divrei Chaim (Chanukah) rules similarly: The Torah was written on the stones and the nations of the world copied it over. The Medrash states that the Holy One, Blessed is He did not protest and allowed them to study the Written Law. It is forbidden to teach them even one word of the Oral Law.

There are many commentators who disagree with this vehemently and they maintain that it is evident from many sources that it is even forbidden to teach the Written Law to a non-Jew.

In the sefer, Beis Pinchas (I P. 169) from Rabbi Pinchas HaLevi Horowitz, he writes that all are in agreement that it is forbidden to teach even the Written Law to a non-Jew; the aforementioned commentators are merely stating that we are not obligated to protest and prevent a non-Jew from studying the Written Law. This is derived from the Medrash which stated that Hashem allowed the idolaters to copy over the Written Law. It is incumbent on us, however, to ensure that the gentiles do not study the Oral Law.

This explanation is seemingly inconsistent with a ruling issued by Reb Moshe Feinstein in Igros Moshe (Y"D II: 132): He states that it is forbidden to directly teach Torah to a gentile;

however, if he happens to be in the room when one is teaching Torah to other Jews, the teacher is permitted to continue teaching Torah since it is not his intention to teach the gentile.

If there is an obligation to ensure that the gentile does not study the Oral Law, it should follow that one would be compelled to cease his discourse and wait for the non-Jew to leave before continuing with the teaching of Torah.

TEACHING TORAH TO A GENTILE PLANNING ON CONVERTING

The Rambam (Issurei Bi'ah 14:2) writes that we inform the prospective convert the essentials of the faith, which is the unity of God and the prohibition of idolatry, and they go on at great length about these matters.

The Machaneh Chaim (Y"D II, 45) asks: Why isn't this forbidden on account of a gentile studying Torah? The *Gemora* in Sanhedrin (59a) states explicitly that a non-Jew who studies Torah is liable for death.

He answers by citing a Medrash Tanchuma in Parshas Vayelech: The numerical value of Torah is six hundred and eleven. The remaining two mitzvos which complete the six hundred and thirteen are the two mitzvos which were given by Hashem directly at Har Sinai. This is the explanation of the verse: The Torah that Moshe commanded us to observe. Moshe instructed us regarding six hundred and eleven mitzvos; the other two were from Hashem.

The prohibition against teaching an idolater Torah is only applicable to the six hundred and eleven mitzvos that Moshe taught us. The other two, I am Hashem your God and the Unity of God; one would be permitted to teach to them. This is where the Rambam derived his ruling from; we can go on with great length discussing the unity of God and the prohibition of idolatry.



The Maharsha (Shabbos 31a) writes that it is permitted to teach Torah to an idolater who wishes to convert. He proves this from the incident with Hillel and the convert.

Reb Akiva Eiger (41) disagrees and maintains that it is forbidden to teach Torah to an idolater even if he is planning on converting. Hillel taught the convert Torah only after he converted.

DAILY MASHAL

ADAM - UNITY

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* that Rabbi Meir said: How is it known that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a *Kohen Gadol*? It is written (*with respect to the Torah's laws*): *that man shall perform and by which he shall live*. It does not say: *Kohanim, Leviim* or *Yisroelim*. Rather, it says "man." This teaches us that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a *Kohen Gadol*.

Tosfos asks from a *Gemora*: Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said (*Yevamos* 61a): The graves of idolaters do not transmit *tumah* through the roof (*if the tumah source and a person or object is under the same roof*). He cites a Scriptural source to prove this point. It is written [*Yechezkel* 34:31]: *Now you my sheep, the sheep of my pasture; you are adam*. You, Israel, are referred to as "Adam," man, but an idolater is not regarded as "Adam." (*The word "Adam" is the term used in the Torah regarding the laws of tumah by way of a roof; thus we see that the grave of an idolater does not transmit this tumah.*)

Rabbeinu Tam answers that there is a distinction between the word "*adam*" and "*ha'adam*."

The Ol'los Efraim says that there are four names for man; Adam, Gever, Enosh and Ish. Each of them can be written in a singular form as well as in a plural form. However, the term "Adam" can only be written in a singular form. He explains this with our *Gemora*. Only a Jew is referred to as Adam, not an idolater. Klal Yisroel has the quality of *achdus*, uniting as one; therefore only we can be called Adam.

Using this principle, we can answer a famous question. It is written [*Koheles* 12:13]: *The end of the matter, all having been heard: fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole man*. The Shalah comments that the verse *fear God* is referring to the negative prohibitions; the verse *and keep His commandments* is referring to the positive commandments; and the verse *for this is the whole man* is the essence of man, the two hundred and forty eight limbs and the three hundred and sixty five veins, which are corresponding to the two hundred and forty eight positive commandments and the three hundred and sixty five negative prohibitions.

There are those that ask: If so, it is impossible for any single individual to be complete; it is impossible to fulfill all six hundred and thirteen *mitzvos*. Some *mitzvos* are only applicable to a *Kohen*; some are unique to a Levi; others are only to a Yisroel; men have *mitzvos* that are only relevant to them, and women have their special *mitzvos*. How can a person be considered complete?

Perhaps the answer is because Klal Yisroel is Adam. We are all united. One person's performance of a *mitzvah* effects everyone else. If everyone does their particular *mitzvah*, Klal Yisroel can be regarded as being complete.