

## OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah enumerates certain activities that are prohibited in anticipation of the festivals of idolaters. A debate regarding one of these activities is recorded.

### 2) Spelling the word אידיהן

Rav and Shmuel disagree whether the word אידיהן is spelled with an "א" or an "ע".

Each Amora explains the basis for his position and why he rejects the other's opinion.

The opinion that spells the word with an "ע" is challenged forcing the Gemara to cite an alternative source for the spelling of the word with an "ע".

### 3) Claiming reward in the future

The Gemara digresses into an exposition of the pasuk that was cited.

The story of the different nations coming forward to collect their reward is recounted.

The nations' defense for not fulfilling the Torah is recorded. ■

## REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the point of dispute between Rabanan and R' Yehudah in the Mishnah?  
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2. What happens to the mitzvos performed by the Jewish People in this world?  
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3. With what claim will the Romans claim reward from Hashem?  
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4. Why did Hashem release the nations from their obligation to fulfill the seven Noahide laws?  
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## Distinctive INSIGHT

*The nations contend with Hashem on the Day of Judgment*

אומרים לפניו רבונו של עולם כלום כפית עלינו הר כגיגית ולא קבלנוה?

In the future, the nations of the world will claim that they did not accept the Torah when it was offered them because they were not coerced as Israel was. "Did you force us to accept it as You forced Bnei Yisrael by holding the mountain over them?"

Rabbeinu Tam of Orleans notes the Midrash Tanchuma teaches that Bnei Yisrael readily accepted the Written Torah, and it was only with respect to the Oral Torah that coercion was involved. Does the argument of the nations continue to have any force after this Midrash is taken into account?

Rav Shlomo Fisher, shlit"א, explains Hashem's reply to the nations in the following way. "The Holy One, blessed be He, will then ask them, did you then fulfill the seven commandments which I commanded you?"

How does this answer the complaint of the nations? In Sanhedrin 56a Chazal explain that these seven mitzvos were transmitted to the nations orally. This clearly implies that these mitzvos were a part of the Oral Torah which was given to the other nations. In the course of time, though, the nations failed to observe these seven mitzvos. Yisroel, on the other hand, observed all of them, even before they were given the Torah. This demonstrated Yisroel's willingness to adhere to the Oral Law. Thus, when Hashem concluded his argument to the nations, He maintained, "If you were not even willing to observe seven commandments which were transmitted to you orally, what good would it have done to force you to accept the whole Torah?"

In his explanation of the conclusion of the above-mentioned Gemara in Avoda Zara, the Gri"z HaLevi explains that the nations will then claim, "Everything we did, we did for the sake of Israel, to enable them to study the Torah." But Hashem will disprove this claim. "What you did you did for your own selfish interests." On the day of judgment which the Gemara is discussing here, Hashem will sit in judgment with a Sefer Torah on His lap. With this He will challenge the nations with a question. "If indeed, as you say, everything you did was for the sake of Israel, to enable them to learn Torah, then you must hold the study of Torah to be a sacred value. Why, then, did you not engage in any Torah study of your own?" Their inability to

# HALACHAH Highlight

## Teaching Noahide law to gentiles

ראה ז' מצות שקבלו עליהן בני נח ולא קיימום עמד והתירן להן  
*He saw the seven laws that descendants of Noah accepted upon themselves but they did not observe and He stood and released them from them*

Rambam<sup>1</sup> writes that Moshe Rabbeinu was instructed to compel the nations of the world to accept upon themselves the seven Noahide laws. Tosafos<sup>2</sup> writes that there is a mitzvah to teach gentiles the details of the seven Noahide laws. Rav Yaakov Emden<sup>3</sup> asserts that the wording that we have in Tosafos is inaccurate and he further maintains that nowadays it is prohibited to teach gentiles the seven Noahide laws. The basis of his position is our Gemara. The Gemara cites a pasuk in Chavakuk which Chazal exposit to mean that when Hashem took note of the fact that the gentiles are not fulfilling the Noahide laws He released them from their obligation. Once they were released from this obligation it became prohibited to teach them those laws. Bach<sup>4</sup> also quotes authorities who subscribe to this position.

Rav Moshe Feinstein<sup>5</sup> cites the opinion of Bach and writes that in his opinion it is not logical. He prefers the position of Tosafos as recorded in our versions that not only is it permitted to teach gentiles the seven Noahide laws but it is also a mitzvah. The only prohibition would be to teach them Torah.

Sefer Yafeh Lalev<sup>6</sup> was also asked whether it is permitted

*(Insight...continued from page 1)*

reply reveals an essential principle, which can teach us an important lesson. If one believes that the Torah is central to human existence, then to simply pay lip service to it and even to support Torah scholars and institutions with one's money alone is not enough. We must not only live by all the laws contained within the Torah, but we are also challenged to center our hearts and souls and all our endeavors, worldly as well as emotional and intellectual, upon its study and practice. Only then can we truly say that we have accepted the Torah. ■

to teach gentiles the seven Noahide laws. Initially he writes, based on our Gemara, that it is prohibited. Once Hashem rejected their service and released them from their responsibility one who would teach them these laws is acting in opposition to the will of Hashem. Yafeh Lalev then writes that based on the conclusion of our Gemara it seems that it is permitted to teach them the Noahide laws. The Gemara relates that even though Hashem released them of their responsibility when they fulfill the Noahide laws they are certainly rewarded, albeit as one who fulfills a mitzvah that he is not commanded to fulfill. Accordingly, it could be said that Hashem is still happy with the fulfillment of these laws and it is permitted to teach them to gentiles. ■

1. רמב"ם פ"ח מה' מלכים ה"י.
2. תוס' חגיגה י"ג. ד"ה אין מוסרין.
3. הגהות היעב"ץ לתוס' הנ"ל.
4. הגהות הב"ח על התוס' הנ"ל.
5. שו"ת אג"מ יו"ד ח"ג סי' פ"ט.
6. ספר יפה ללב ח"ה יו"ד סי' רמ"ו סק"ט. ■

# STORIES Off the Daf

## "We Only Did It for the Jewish People!"

"לא עשינו אלא בשביל ישראל..."

Once Rav Yitzchak of Vorki, zt"l, explained a very difficult question on today's daf. "On Avodah Zarah 2 we find that the non-Jews demand reward from Hashem for having provided various physical advantages for the Jewish people. They will even claim that everything they have done is for the sake of Yisrael. How did they dare lie to Hashem? Surely they know that in truth they did these things for themselves?"

"We can understand this from the words of my teacher Rav Dovid of Le-lov, zt"l, who said that even the Jewish baker who bakes all night to provide Jews with bread, does this to help his fellow Jew. Although he may be thinking about the money he will make, in the depths of his heart he does this to help his fellow. The non-Jews also knew that what they did served the Jewish people, so they claim to be no different than a Jewish baker and the like."

He concluded, "Hashem responds by calling them fools, since unlike a Jew, they are thinking of themselves even in the innermost part of their hearts."<sup>1</sup>

The Brisker Rav, zt"l, explained similarly, "The non-Jews know that every-

thing that happens in this world is really for the sake of the Jewish nation. They therefore claim that they were instrumental in helping the Jews. Hashem responded that they are fools. Since they had not intended this in the slightest when they performed this inadvertent service, they are unjustified asking to be rewarded for it."<sup>2</sup>

But Rav Eliyahu Dessler, zt"l, learned differently. "We see from here how completely taken in a person is by his own rationalizations. Even when Hashem is judging him, he unconsciously lies to cover for himself!"<sup>3</sup> ■

1. גודלת הצדיקים, דף ט"ו
2. הקדמה לגר"י ע"ש דברים נפלאים
3. מכתב מאליהו, ח"א, מאמר חכמת העולם ■