

## If you will say a third of his house

## אילימא שליש ביתו -

### OVERVIEW

רב הונא stated that by a מצוה you have to pay up to a third. The גמרא questions the meaning of this ruling. It cannot mean that for a מצוה you should pay a third of your assets, for then if three מצוות happen (simultaneously) you will have to spend all your assets for these three מצוות and remain with nothing. This certainly cannot be what רב הונא meant.<sup>1</sup> גמרא draws conclusions, based on this, how much one is obligated to spend for a מצוה.

משמע<sup>2</sup> דאין צריך לבזבז כל ממון לקנות אתרוג -

It seems from this גמרא that it is not necessary to squander all of one's money in order to purchase an אתרוג -

אפילו לא ימצא בפחות והוא מצוה עוברת<sup>3</sup> -

Even if an אתרוג cannot be acquired for less than all his money, and it is a מצוה that is passing; if we do not purchase the אתרוג now for ממון, the מצוה will not be fulfilled; nevertheless one is not required to spend all his money for an אתרוג, even if he will not be מקיים this מצוה.

adds: תוספות

ואפילו שליש ביתו משמע דלא מחייב -

And it seems that one is not obligated to spend even a third of his assets. Not only is one not obligated to spend all his money; there is no obligation to spend even a third of one's money (only less). The גמרא rejects the notion that עד שליש means that you are required to pay up to a שליש ביתו for a מצוה.

מצוה: offers additional proof that one is not obligated to pay inordinate sums for a

ואמרין נמי (כתובות דף נא,) המבזבז<sup>4</sup> אל יבזבז יותר מחומש -

And the גמרא also states that 'he who squanders, should not squander more than a fifth of his assets' for צדקה -

ובסוכה (דף מא,ב) חשיב ליה רבותא דרבן גמליאל שקנה אתרוג באלף זו:

And in סוכה ר"ג that he purchased the גמרא mentions it as a greatness of מסכת סוכה

<sup>1</sup> Others explain that if this happens and he becomes poor, the community will have to support him.

<sup>2</sup> The גמרא states that עד שליש cannot mean שליש ביתו, for then, if one has to observe three מצוות, he will have to spend everything he owns. Spending everything one owns for מצוות is 'a priori', unconscionable.

<sup>3</sup> One cannot argue that by a מצוה עוברת there is an obligation to spend עד שליש (כל ממון); for if that were so, the גמרא could have established the דין of רב הונא by a מצוה עוברת.

<sup>4</sup> The גמרא there is discussing limitations for giving צדקה for poor people. (See, however, פ"ג [בספר התניא] אגה"ת.)

**an אתרוג for a thousand זוז;**<sup>5</sup> indicating that ordinary people do not pay such large sums of money for מצות.

### **SUMMARY**

One is not obligated to pay (even) a third of one's assets for a מצוה, even if it is a מצוה עוברת.

### **THINKING IT OVER**

1. What is the דין if someone has to make a פדיון הבן (which costs five סלעים), and his total assets are five סלעים. Is he required to spend all his assets for this מצוה of פדה"ב?<sup>6</sup>

2. ר"ג cites the story of ר"ג, seemingly to prove that there is no requirement to spend (even) a third [or more than a fifth] for a מצוה. Perhaps ר"ג was very wealthy, and one thousand זוז was less than a third or a fifth, etc. of his total assets.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> ר"ג was traveling on a ship, and the אתרוג cost him זוז אלף. It seems that this great expense was due to the fact that he was traveling on a ship, and it was difficult to procure an אתרוג. This price was much greater than the usual price of an אתרוג. The גמרא concludes there that the price of the אתרוג was mentioned in order to let us know כמה מצות חביבות עליהן. See "Thinking it over" # 2.

<sup>6</sup> See משנ"ב סי' תרנו בד"ה אפי' מצוה עוברת (in ביאור הלכה).

<sup>7</sup> See footnote # 5.