

## For the בני ישראל are my slaves

## כי לי בני ישראל עבדים –

### OVERVIEW

The גמרא explains the reason a worker may initially quit his job (without suffering any consequences), is that otherwise it would contradict the פסוק of עבדים, ולא עבדים לעבדים, which is interpreted to mean עבדים, לי בני ישראל עבדים. This indicates that hired workers are included in the term עבדים. One may think therefore that it is wrong to hire out oneself to work<sup>1</sup>. תוספות rejects this notion.

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נראה לי דמכל מקום מותר אדם להשכיר עצמו<sup>2</sup> –

It is the opinion of תוספות that notwithstanding this דרשה of עבדי הם ולא עבדים לעבדים (which prohibits one from selling himself as a slave) a person is permitted to hire himself out for work -

– דדוקא עבד עברי שאינו יכול לחזור בו ואינו יוצא קודם זמנו אלא בשטר שחרור<sup>3</sup> –

For the prohibition of עבדים לעבדים applies specifically to an עבד עברי who cannot quit and cannot leave his master before his time (of six year servitude) unless he receives a notice of emancipation, only the ע"ע -

עובר משום עבדי הם:

transgresses the command of; 'they are my slaves', but not a hired worker.

### SUMMARY

One may hire himself as a worker and does not transgress עבדי הם.

### THINKING IT OVER

1. תוספות writes that an ע"ע can leave his master only by receiving a שטר שחרור<sup>4</sup>. Seemingly he can also leave through גרעון כסף (by paying back to the master the pro-rated money owed to him), so why is the ע"ע considered as one who cannot quit?<sup>5</sup>

2. How could we have possibly understood עבדי הם (as pertaining to a פועל), and how does תוספות ultimately explain it?

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Thinking it over # 2.

<sup>2</sup> This would seem to imply that he may hire himself even for an extended period of time. See הגהות הגר"א.

<sup>3</sup> See 'Thinking it over' # 1.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote # 3.

<sup>5</sup> See סוכ"ד אות סז (ואילך) and רש"ש.