

השבתוני על המזונות – You answered me regarding his sustenance

OVERVIEW

The dialogue between ר"מ and the חכמים is as follows: ר"מ maintains that if he is an עבד it is a חוב for him for he loses his תרומה rights. The חכמים respond this is not a חוב for the master can withhold his food completely. ר"מ then responded, 'ומה אלו'. The השבתוני explained that ר"מ meant (in this last response) 'עבד כהן שברח וכו'. Seemingly this is not understood, for תרומה is מזונות; how is ר"מ differentiating between the two?¹ תוספות resolves this issue.

רבנן שהשיבו לו ומה אם ירצה שלא לזון רשאי היו סבורין הא דקאמר רבי מאיר -

The רבנן who replied to ר"מ, saying; 'and what if the master does not want to feed the slave, he is permitted to do so'; they (the רבנן) thought that this which ר"מ argued -

שאם היה עבד כהן פוסלו מן התרומה הוי חוב לו -

That if he was a slave of a כהן the freedom would disqualify him from תרומה which is a חוב for the עבד, the רבנן thought that the reason ר"מ maintains that it is a חוב for the עבד, is -

לפי שנותן לו הרב מזונות בריוח בשביל שיש תרומה הרבה לכהנים -

Because the master gives him an abundance of food since the כהנים possess much תרומה and now that he is free the עבד will no longer have this much food -

או משום שיש מצוה באכילת תרומה² -

Or (another reason why the חכמים thought that it is a חוב according to ר"מ) because there is a מצוה to eat תרומה (and once he is freed the עבד will no longer have this מצוה); this is what the רבנן assumed -

ומשום הכי מהדרי ליה ומה אם ירצה שלא לזון³ -

And therefore they replied to ר"מ; but what if he chooses not to feed him at all?!

וקאמר להו רבי מאיר השבתוני על המזונות מה תשיבוני על התרומה -

And ר"מ responded to the חכמים, 'you answered me concerning his sustenance, what will you answer me regarding תרומה, meaning -

שאפילו לא ירצה הרב לזון יש חובה -

That even if the master will not want to feed the עבד (as you claim) nevertheless there is a חוב for the עבד in becoming free -

¹ See רש"י ד"ה מה who is (seemingly) also addressing this issue. See 'Thinking it over' # 2.

² See 'Thinking it over' # 3.

³ Even if the master does not free the עבד, it is still possible that the עבד will not reap any of the (two) benefits of תרומה mentioned, since the master has the option of not feeding him; so what is the עבד losing by becoming free?

דמכל מקום מוצא העבד לקנות תרומה בזול יותר מן החולין⁴ –

Because in any event (even if the master does not feed him), **the עבד finds that it is cheaper to buy תרומה than to buy חולין** -

וגם חולקין לו על הגורן לרבי יוסי דאמר (כתובות דף כח, ב) –

And the farmers will also dispense תרומה to the עבד at the threshing floor according to ר"י who maintains that -

חולקין תרומה לעבד אף על פי שאין רבו עמו:

We dispense תרומה to an עבד כהן even if his master (the כהן) is not together with the עבד.⁵ However, now that he is freed he will lose these two privileges.

SUMMARY

The רבנן thought that the advantage of תרומה is (only) that it is plentiful and a מצוה; however ר"מ maintains that it is [also] cheap, and for free (according to ר"י)

THINKING IT OVER

1. According to תוספות explanation, what is meant by מזונות and what is meant by תרומה?
2. What is תוספות adding on פירש"י?⁶
3. When תוספות states that there is a מצוה באכילת תרומה,⁷ does he mean that there is a מצוה for the עבד to eat תרומה?⁸

⁴ חולין is something which everyone can use therefore it fetches a higher price; תרומה on the other hand is only fit for כהנים, so there are not so many buyers, pushing down the price.

⁵ Not only can the עבד buy תרומה cheaper than חולין, he can actually receive תרומה for free as long as he is an עבד (according to ר"י). Even if the master will not feed him, he can still go directly to the farmers and receive תרומה.

⁶ See footnote # 1.

⁷ See footnote # 2.

⁸ See אמ"ה # 102-103.