

והוא שפירשו כלפי מעלה –

And provided that they were severed towards the top

OVERVIEW

Regarding a שפירש רובו (presumably what we call a 'hangnail'), ר' יהודה said that the הלכה is like ר"ש (that one may rip it off by hand provided that a majority has been severed). ר' יוחנן said in the name of רבב"ה that this only if they were separated towards the top. There is a dispute between רש"י and תוספות as to the meaning of כלפי מעלה.

פירש בקונטרס¹ כנגד ראשי אצבעותיו שהן למעלה כשמגביה ידיו² -

רש"י explained that they were severed towards his fingertips, which is considered above when he picks up his hands.

ורבינו תם מפרש שכלפי גוף קרי כלפי מעלה³ –

However the ר"ת explains that the part of the finger which is towards the body is called כלפי מעלה; תוספות offers a proof -

כדאשכחן בפרק ב' דנדה (דף יג,ב) דקאמר⁴ מן העטרה⁵ ולמעלה והתם⁶ היינו לצד הגוף:

As we find in the second פרק of נדה, where ר' יוחנן ruled from the 'crown' and above it is prohibited (to touch), and there מן העטרה ולמעלה means towards the body.

SUMMARY

רש"י maintains מעלה meant toward the fingertip and תוספות maintains it means toward the body (joint)

THINKING IT OVER

Seemingly by fingers which can be lifted (above the head), the fingertips can be called כלפי מעלה; the same cannot be said regarding מן העטרה ולמעלה; so what is proof?!⁷

¹ לצד הצפורן וכו' rather just שפירש רובו. However רש"י does not state 'כנגד ראשי אצבעותיו'.

² According to רש"י the part of the 'hangnail' which is attached to his finger is closer to the finger joint, and the part which is detached is closer to the fingertip. [This is the common hangnail prevalent today.]

³ According to תוס' the part of the שפירש which is attached is towards his fingertips and the detached part is towards the body (the joint).

⁴ The גמרא there is discussing how one may hold his אבר when urinating.

⁵ The עטרה is the enlarged part at the end of the אבר.

⁶ See לצד הגוף, where he writes, בד"ה מעטרה פרש"י.

⁷ See תוס' מנחות יא,א ד"ה מלמטה.