

Ask The Rabbi – February 1, 2022

Question:

During last week's Ask the Rabbi the verse 1 Corinthians 10:27 came up as part of the discussion. I had thought then about expanding upon it further, in order to offer further clarification and thus better understanding.

[1Co 10:27](#) If some unbeliever invites you to a meal, and you want to go, eat whatever is put in front of you without raising questions of conscience.

Response:

The first thing we must pay attention to is the intent of Sha'ul's letter to believers in Corinth. His first letter addresses many issues going on within this community of believers...

[1Co 1:10](#) Nevertheless, brothers, I call on you in the name of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah to agree, all of you, in what you say, and not to let yourselves remain split into factions but be restored to having a common mind and a common purpose.

1. Reported disorders - [1Co.1:10-1Co. 6:20](#)
 - A. Spirit of divisiveness - [1Co. 1:10-1Co. 4:21](#)
 - B. Sexual misbehavior - [1Co_5:1-13](#), [1Co_6:12-20](#)
 - C. Appeals to pagan law courts – [1Co_6:1-11](#)
2. Problems raised by the Corinthians - [1Co. 7:1-1Co. 15:58](#)
 - A. Celibacy, Marriage, Divorce - [1Co_7:1-40](#)
 - B. Food sacrificed to idols-used to teach self-control and consideration for others. Rights of emissaries and self-control ([1Co_9:1-18](#)). Evangelism and empathy (an aspect of self-control) ([1Co_9:19-23](#)). - [1Co. 8:1-1Co. 11:1](#)
 - C. Disorders in public worship - [1Co. 11:2-1Co. 14:40](#)
 1. Veiling of women in public worship - [1Co_11:2-16](#)
 2. Disorder at the Lord's Supper (Communion) - [1Co_11:17-34](#)
 3. Charismatic gifts from the Holy Spirit and their use in public. Love, the "better way" ([1Co. 12:31-1Co. 14:1](#)) - [1Co. 12:1-1Co. 14:40](#)
 - D. Resurrection of the dead - [1Co_15:1-58](#)
3. *Conclusion. Organizing the charitable collection. Greetings - [1Co_16:1-20](#)*

Thus, there are a great deal of issues within the community being addressed by Sha'ul. Our focus tonight is on one such issue for which the verse of focus is part of a greater narrative...

B. Food sacrificed to idols-used to teach self-control and consideration for others. Rights of emissaries and self-control ([1Co 9:1-18](#)). Evangelism and empathy (an aspect of self-control) ([1Co 9:19-23](#)). - 1Co. 8:1-1Co. 11:1

Thus, in order to understand this single verse 1 Corinthians 10:27, we must understand the entire context, beginning with 1 Corinthians 8:1...

The question raised in this chapter is whether a believer is free to eat meat which he knows or suspects may have been part of an offering in a pagan temple. This apparently minor issue pervades the next three chapters (through [1Co 11:1](#)). Though the details relate to another era of history, the underlying principles are very relevant for life in today's world. (Jewish New Testament Commentary – David Stern)

The structure of these three chapters is:

(1) Presentation of the question and the new underlying elements being misused, "knowledge" ([1Co 8:1-6](#)) and "freedom" ([1Co 6:12](#), [1Co 10:23](#));

1Co 8:1 Now about food sacrificed to idols: we know that, as you say, "We all have knowledge." Yes, that is so, but "knowledge" puffs a person up with pride; whereas love builds up.

1Co 8:2 The person who thinks he "knows" something doesn't yet know in the way he ought to know.

1Co 8:3 However, if someone loves God, God knows him.

1Co 8:4 So, as for eating food sacrificed to idols, we "know" that, as you say, "An idol has no real existence in the world, and there is only one God."

1Co 8:5 For even if there are so-called "gods," either in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are "gods" and "lords" galore—

1Co 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom all things come and for whom we exist; and one Lord, Yeshua the Messiah, through whom were created all things and through whom we have our being.

(2) A principle for resolving such questions-limiting oneself in order to edify others ([1Co 8:7-13](#));

(3) Illustrations of the principle (1Co. 9:1-1Co. 10:22);

(4) Application of the principle to the question at hand (1Co. 10:23-1Co. 11:1).

The former pagans of Corinth who became believers knew that even though they once worshipped idols, offering similar sacrifices in the same shrines, God has forgiven their past sins. Further, as believers they do not offer such sacrifices now; rather, they know that the idols to which they sacrificed have "no real existence" at all ([1Co 8:4](#)). Therefore, since they have this "knowledge" ([1Co 8:1](#), [1Co 8:4-6](#)), and since "everything is permitted" ([1Co 6:12](#), [1Co 10:23](#)), is there any reason why they should have scruples against buying meat in the public meat-markets-as some of them, whom Sha'ul considers "weak" ([1Co 8:7-12](#)), do have? (Jewish New Testament Commentary – David Stern)

Thus, the entire narrative of these three chapters is focused on one aspect "Food Sacrificed to Idols" Sha'ul then expands upon these first verses of chapter 8 as it pertains to knowledge in relation to their strength or weakness as a believer and those around them.

1Co 8:7 But not everyone has this knowledge. Moreover, some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat food which has been sacrificed to them, they think of it as really affected by the idol; and their consciences, being weak, are thus defiled.

1Co 8:8 Now food will not improve our relationship with God—we will be neither poorer if we abstain nor richer if we eat.

1Co 8:9 However watch out that your mastery of the situation does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

1Co 8:10 You have this "knowledge"; but suppose someone with a weak conscience sees you sitting, eating a meal in the temple of an idol. Won't he be built up wrongly to eat this food which has been sacrificed to idols?

1Co 8:11 Thus by your "knowledge" this weak person is destroyed, this brother for whom the Messiah died;

1Co 8:12 and so, when you sin against the brothers by wounding their conscience when it is weak, you are sinning against the Messiah!

1Co 8:13 To sum up, if food will be a snare for my brother, I will never eat meat again, lest I cause my brother to sin.

*The key to Sha'ul's answer ([1Co 8:7-13](#), [1Co 10:23-1Co 11:1](#)) is doing what **builds up** or "edifies." (The Greek word is "oikodomeō," a word whose literal sense has to do with putting up houses but which, like "constructive" in English, has a metaphorical meaning too; the word is so used ten times in this letter—[1Co 8:1](#), [1Co 8:10](#), [1Co 10:23](#); and seven times in chapter 14). What **builds up** is **love**; whereas **knowledge**—unless it is governed by love ([1Co 13:2](#))—only **puffs up**, or, worse, "builds up wrongly" ([1Co 8:10](#); "wrongly" is not in the Greek but is implied by the context; KJV's rendering, "emboldened," captures the sense but misses the connection with the other instances of "oikodomeō"). Likewise, in union with the Messiah we have freedom; therefore, in a sense, "everything is permitted"; but, as Sha'ul puts it, "not everything is edifying" ([1Co 10:23](#); see also [1Co 9:1](#) ff. And [1Co 6:12-13](#)). (Jewish New Testament Commentary – David Stern)*

Thus, when we look at the actual verses in relation to the context of Sha'ul's narrative within this letter we should not attempt to draw a conclusion that is not supported by the context and thus the author's original intent as it pertains to his purpose of the letter.

1Co 10:23 "Everything is permitted," you say? Maybe, but not everything is helpful. "Everything is permitted?" Maybe, but not everything is edifying.

1Co 10:24 No one should be looking out for his own interests, but for those of his fellow.

1Co 10:25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience,

1Co 10:26 for the earth and everything in it belong to the Lord.

1Co 10:27 If some unbeliever invites you to a meal, and you want to go, eat whatever is put in front of you without raising questions of conscience.

1Co 10:28 But if someone says to you, "This meat was offered as a sacrifice," then don't eat it, out of consideration for the person who pointed it out and also for conscience's sake—

1Co 10:29 however, I don't mean your conscience but that of the other person. You say, "Why should my freedom be determined by someone else's conscience?"

1Co 10:30 If I participate with thankfulness, why am I criticized over something for which I myself bless God?"

1Co 10:31 Well, whatever you do, whether it's eating or drinking or anything else, do it all so as to bring glory to God.

1Co 10:32 Do not be an obstacle to anyone—not to Jews, not to Gentiles, and not to God's Messianic Community.

1Co 10:33 Just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not looking out for my own interests but for those of the many, so that they may be saved;

Sha'ul is not establishing a new commandment but rather an observation as it pertains to a situation that will likely occur within the cultural dynamic of Corinth, a still heavily pagan community where believers in Messiah were confronted with the pagan culture and its constant presence. Thus the potential to be confronted by a meal comprising animals sacrificed to idols was very real and thus a very real and constant challenge.

Any attempt to incorporate a narrative that is not supported by the author such as justifying a position against Kashrut, the dietary laws as revealed through Torah, is not only ingenuous but also deceptive and speaks of an agenda. It is even worse when such a perspective is done in ignorance, lack of knowledge and understanding. Taking a single verse and applying a narrative that is contrary to the author's narrative is equally dangerous.

We have seen such hijacking of verses and their intended understanding in...

Acts 10 – Kefa's dream as it pertains to Gentiles while utilizing the vision of clean and unclean animals.

Romans 14:1 – 15:6 – Those with strong faith in relation to those with weak faith.

***Rom. 14:1-Rom. 15:6** Among believers there are two groups, those with "strong trust" and those with "weak trust." The latter are depicted in this passage as feeling they must abstain from meat or wine and/or observe certain days as holy, while the former feel no such compunctions. (Jewish New Testament Commentary – David Stern)*

Rom 14:1 Now as for a person whose trust is weak, welcome him—but not to get into arguments over opinions.

Rom 14:2 One person has the trust that will allow him to eat anything, while another whose trust is weak eats only vegetables.

Rom 14:3 The one who eats anything must not look down on the one who abstains; and the abstainer must not pass judgment on the one who eats anything, because God has accepted him—

Rom 14:4 who are you to pass judgment on someone else's servant? It is before his own master that he will stand or fall; and the fact is that he will stand, because the Lord is able to make him stand.

Rom 14:5 One person considers some days more holy than others, while someone else regards them as being all alike. What is important is for each to be fully convinced in his own mind.

Rom 14:6 He who observes a day as special does so to honor the Lord. Also he who eats anything, eats to honor the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; likewise the abstainer abstains to honor the Lord, and he too gives thanks to God.

On the basis of this passage Messianic Jews are sometimes asked by Gentile Christians to stop observing Jewish holidays or keeping kosher. Or they are criticized as having "weak faith" if they adhere to Jewish practices. But the specifics of the passage are clearly in a Gentile cultural and religious context, not a Jewish one. It does not teach that following Jewish practices is a sign of "weak faith." Rather, it exhorts believers, Jewish or Gentile, whose trust is "strong" not to look down on those whose trust they consider "weak"-

precisely the opposite of the behavior described above. (Jewish New Testament Commentary – David Stern)

The reference is not specifically to Jewish holidays but to any days that any believer might have come to regard as especially holy. This is because the "weak" are not specifically Jewish believers, but any believers attached to particular calendar observances.

We see this hijacking of verses and context in a passage such as Colossians 2:16:

Col 2:16 So don't let anyone pass judgment on you in connection with eating and drinking, or in regard to a Jewish festival or Rosh-Hodesh or Shabbat.

Thus, over the next couple of weeks, we will look at both Romans 14:1 – 15:6 and Colossians 2 in greater detail in that they pertain to how others have interpreted these verses and thus apply these interpretations, justifying an action that is contrary to Torah and thus imposing it upon believers, while at the same justifying their inaction towards such foundational aspects for which Yeshua has conveyed that He did not come to abolish or change.

Mat 5:17 "Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete.

Mat 5:18 Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud (ך) or a stroke will pass from the Torah—not until everything that must happen has happened.

Mat 5:19 So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mat 5:20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

And thus affirms through not only through his Words, but also through His actions.