

SURVEY OF RECENT HALAKHIC PERIODICAL LITERATURE

TEACHING TORAH TO NON-JEWS

"Moses has commanded us the Torah, an inheritance for the community of Jacob." Deut. 33:4

"And it shall come to pass in the end of days . . . And many nations shall come and say, 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob and He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths.'" Isaiah 2:2-3

The prohibition against teaching Torah to non-Jews is well known to students of Jewish law. Equally well known is the role of Abraham as the "father of the multitude of nations," entrusted with the sacred task of carrying the teaching of monotheism to idolatrous peoples. A person unfamiliar with the extensive rabbinical literature devoted to this topic may perceive a certain tension, and perhaps even contradiction, between a recognized need to disseminate religious truths and an almost xenophobic reluctance to share the greatest repository of such truth—the Torah. Yet even a cursory examination of the relevant sources dispels the notion that while the community of Israel jealously guards its spiritual wealth, it refuses to share these riches with others. On the contrary, it is unique among Western religions in its willingness to share its teachings without seeking to impose its observances. This necessarily involves a vocation of teaching despite the stricture against teaching Torah to non-Jews. The latter,

while based on substantive philosophical considerations and of definite halakhic import, admits of sufficiently broad exclusions to assure that Israel remains true to its role as a lamp unto the nations.

In every legal system there are laws that, at first glance, seem severely restrictive but that, on closer scrutiny, yield so many exceptions as to render such laws virtually nugatory. It would certainly be an overstatement to describe the prohibition against the study of Torah to non-Jews as an example of such a law. Nevertheless, in some contexts it is permissible to teach Torah to non-Jews; in other instances it is even praiseworthy to do so. The matter is greatly complicated by numerous disagreements between halakhic authorities with regard to the precise parameters of this prohibition. Thus numerous scholars permit the study or teaching of the Written Law, others permit forthright responses to inquiries with regard to any facet of Torah study and/or instruction to correct erroneous views, and still others permit the teaching

of Torah but not its "secrets or reasons." In the medieval period no less a personage than Rambam entirely excluded Christians from this prohibition, while in the last century Rabbi Israel Salanter, the acclaimed founder of the Mussar movement, actually mounted a campaign for the incorporation of talmudic studies in the curricula of European schools and universities. With regard to some points a consensus emerges: with regard to others controversy remains. In order to understand properly how it may be that for some authorities and under some conditions an act may constitute a violation of a Divine command while for other authorities or under other circumstances the deed may be meritorious, it is necessary to undertake a careful examination of the halakhic sources.

Rabbinic Sources and Responsa Literature

Judaism teaches that the study of Torah, whose essence is a covenant between God and the community of Israel, is a privilege reserved for adherents of Judaism. Non-Jews, who are not bound by the commandments of the Torah, are neither required nor permitted to study Torah. The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 59a) declares that a non-Jew who engages in the study of Torah has committed an offense deserving of the penalty of death. Rambam, *Teshuvot Pe'er ha-Dor* no. 50,¹ followed by *Kesef Mishneh, Hilkhot Melakhim* 10:9, explains that this punishment is to be meted out by Heaven but not by a mortal court.²

The biblical text cited in establishing this prohibition is the verse, "Moses has commanded us the Torah, an inheritance for the community of Jacob" (*Deuteronomy* 33:4). In explaining the nature of the prohibition against teaching Torah to non-Jews, the Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 59a) offers two distinct exegetic interpretations of this verse. Scripture speaks of the Torah as an inheritance bequeathed to the community of Jacob.

According to one explanation, this phraseology excludes non-Jews from participation in that legacy. Since the Torah was given only to the Jewish people, a non-Jew who studies Torah is, in a sense, appropriating something that was not intended for him. Study of the Torah by a non-Jew is, according to this explanation, described as an offense akin to theft. Alternatively, the Gemara suggests that the biblical term "*morashah*," meaning "inheritance," should be vocalized as "*me-orasah*," meaning "betrothed." The Torah is the "betrothed" of the community of Jacob. The bond between Jews and the Torah is depicted as similar to that between a bride and groom. One who is not a member of that community but nevertheless engages in the study of Torah has committed a violation akin to adultery; he has illicitly intruded on an intimate and exclusive relationship.³

It must, of course, be remembered that the Torah is not an abstract science. Judaism teaches that Torah study must be pursued for purposes of implementation, not as a theoretical, intellectual discipline. A non-Jew, who is under no obligation to observe its precepts, would subvert the very purpose of Torah study were he to pursue such study solely for purposes of satisfying intellectual curiosity. Misappropriation of the Torah in this manner is both a form of theft and a violation of the unique relationship that exists between the Torah and its adherents. In this context it is significant to note the Me'iri (*Sanhedrin* 59a) declares that a non-Jew may study Torah and, indeed, acquires merit in doing so if it is his intention to fulfill the precepts that he studies.

Me'iri, in his commentary on *Sanhedrin* 59a, quite apparently views the terminology employed by the Gemara in depicting the nature of this prohibition as metaphoric and explains that the prohibition against a non-Jew studying Torah is rooted in the fear that a non-Jew who becomes proficient in Torah scholarship

may be accepted as a Jew and thus be in a position to subvert the religious practices of Jews. Rabbi Solomon Luria (*Yam shel Shlomoh, Baba Kamma* 4:9), although he does not explicitly state that this is the rationale underlying the prohibition, decries the fact that some Jews in Spain and in oriental countries were wont to provide instruction in Torah studies to non-Jews for personal gain and asserts that this practice contributes to heresy. The possibility that non-Jews, particularly those engaged in missionary activity, might misinterpret the teachings of the Torah, whether consciously or otherwise, and thereby undermine the faith of Jews was indeed, historically speaking, a cogent cause for concern. The prohibition against teaching Torah to a non-Jew thwarts such an untoward misuse of Torah.

Just as non-Jews are prohibited from studying Torah, so are Jews forbidden to teach Torah to gentiles. *Tosafot* (*Chaggigah* 13a) declares that a Jew who causes a non-Jew to transgress in this manner is guilty of violating the commandment "You shall not place a stumbling block before the blind" (Leviticus 19:14).⁴ Moreover, the Gemara (*Chaggigah* 13a) states that teaching Torah to a non-Jew is a violation of an admonition inherent in the words of the Psalmist, "He declareth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel. He hath not done so with any nation; and as for His ordinances, they have not known them" (Psalms 147:19-20). This verse, according to *Tosafot*, serves to establish a prohibition against teaching Torah to a non-Jew that is independent of any infraction on the part of the non-Jew.⁵

Over the course of centuries various questions have arisen with regard to possible exceptions to the prohibition against teaching Torah to non-Jews. One question frequently posed in our age of rampant intermarriage is whether the child of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother who, insofar as Jewish law is concerned, is a non-Jew, may enroll in a

Talmud Torah or Day School and, conversely, whether the instructor teaching Torah to a class while such a child is in attendance is guilty of an infraction of Jewish law. This very modern question is addressed by Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef in the Adar 5737 issue of *Or Torah*, but was discussed much earlier by Rabbi David Hoffman, *Melamed le Ho'il, Yoreh De'ah* no. 77. An earlier, broader treatment of the topic by Rabbi Yosef is included in *Yabi'a Omer* II, *Yoreh De'ah* no. 17. The question addressed to Rabbi Hoffmann seems to have been posed by a teacher in the German equivalent of our public school. Apparently, a specified number of hours were designated for religious instruction to be provided on behalf of each student in accordance with his or her religious persuasion. The problem referred to Rabbi Hoffmann involved a child born of a gentile mother and a Jewish father. The child was registered as *konfessionslos*, but the father nevertheless desired that his son receive religious instruction together with the Jewish children. In his response Rabbi Hoffman correctly notes that conversion of the child is not an acceptable approach in obviating the problem, since "what benefit is there to us in converts such as those who without doubt will desecrate the Sabbath and transgress all commandments?" But, at the same time, Rabbi Hoffmann was loath to counsel expulsion of the child from the class lest the father "forsake the community or create controversy within the community." Rabbi Hoffmann's advice to the teacher was that he explain to the parent that such an education can only lead to conflict and breed disdain for the parent on the part of the child. Since the father is a Sabbath violator, asks Rabbi Hoffmann, "How can the son honor his father if he hears from his teacher of religion that his father is guilty, according to his religious faith, of a capital transgression?" Such counsel may well have been cogent in an age when impious persons were viewed as pariahs, but similar advice would fall on deaf ears

in an age when, all too frequently, parents of many children in the same peer group are equally unobservant.

More significantly, insofar as application in our day is concerned, Rabbi Hoffmann offers alternative advice as well and, in the process, indicates that certain aspects of Torah may be taught to non-Jews with impunity.⁶ It may readily be demonstrated that a non-Jew may be taught all matters⁷ pertaining to the fulfillment of the Seven Commandments of the Sons of Noah.⁸ Such a conclusion represents a position that is entirely cogent. Since the Noachide Code is binding on non-Jews, it stands to reason that they must be thoroughly familiar with its contents in order to observe its provisions properly.⁹ Moreover, the Noachide Code is the "Torah" of non-Jews. Hence there can be no question of "theft" with regard to appropriation of its contents. Moreover, *Shiltei Gibborim*, in his comments on Alfasi's citation of *Avodah Zarah* 20a, declares that non-Jews may be taught the Prophets and Hagiographa so that they may be aware of the "consolation and redemption vouchsafed to Israel." Such study is not forbidden because it serves a proper purpose: to influence in a positive manner the comportment of gentiles vis-a-vis Jews. By the same token, argues Rabbi Hoffmann, they may be taught the narrative portions of the Pentateuch so that they may recognize the omnipotence and grandeur of God and become more aware of His miracles and thereby be spurred to renounce paganism, as is their obligation according to the Noachide Code. Accordingly, Rabbi Hoffmann advises the teacher to divide his time and to devote specific hours of instruction to Bible and to the study of those *mitsvot* that are included in the Noachide Code and to devote the balance of his time to the study of *mitsvot* of a ritual nature, which are incumbent only on Jews. The non-Jewish child would be permitted to participate in the former studies but be excluded from the latter. Rabbi Hoffmann takes it for

granted that this arrangement would prove satisfactory to the father since, he argues, there is no logical reason for the father to want his son to study the detailed nature of observances in which the son will not participate. Rabbi Yosef also gives blanket permission for non-Jewish students to participate in classes devoted to the study of Bible and of *mitsvot* that are incumbent on non-Jews for reasons that will be delineated presently.

Similar questions are discussed by Rabbi Pinchas Teitz, *Ha-Pardes*, Tammuz 5714, reprinted in *Ha-Ma'or*, Av-Elul 5726; Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, *She'elot u'Teshuvot mi-Ma'amakim* I, no. 14; Rabbi Yechiel Ya'akov Weinberg, *Seridei Esh*, II, no. 92; Rabbi Menasheh Klein, *Mishneh Halakhot*, no. 172 V; Rabbi Moses Feinstein, *Iggerot Mosheh*, *Yoreh De'ah*, II, no. 132; and Rabbi Isaiah Even-Sapir, *Tevunah*, Tishri 5715 and *No'am* X (5727), 128-142.

Rabbi Teitz' article was written shortly after the inauguration of his popular Yiddish-language *Daf ha-Shevu'a* radio program. His question regards the propriety of a similar program in the English language. Although such a program would be directed to a Jewish audience, the distinct possibility would exist that some non-Jews might be among the members of the radio audience. The propriety of Torah broadcasts in the vernacular is also the subject of Rabbi Even-Sapir's contribution to *No'am*. Rabbi Klein was asked the identical question with regard to Torah programs on television.

During World War II, Rabbi Oshry was placed in charge of a warehouse in the Kovna ghetto in which the Nazis had assembled rare and valuable rabbinic works. On a number of occasions the Germans demanded of him that he read and translate some of the texts in his custody. Rabbi Oshry examines the question of whether or not compliance with these requests would constitute an infraction of the prohibition against teaching Torah to non-Jews. Rabbi Weinberg was

asked whether it was permissible to lecture "on a talmudic topic" at a non-Jewish university. In his responsum Rabbi Weinberg reports that he first considered the question many years earlier, when he himself had been appointed instructor of Jewish studies at the University of Giessen in Germany.

The question submitted to Rabbi Feinstein concerns a young man, apparently of a non-observant background, about to return home from his *yeshivah* for the Passover holiday. The young man wished to translate the *Haggadah* at the *seder* table so that his parents would be able to fulfill the *mitsvah* as well. His problem was that a relative and his spouse were to be invited by his parents as *seder* guests. The woman in question had been converted to Judaism by a Reform clergyman. Since her status as a non-Jew remains unchanged in the eyes of halakhah, the student wished to know whether he might translate the *Haggadah* in her presence.

The answers to the specific questions posed in each of these responsa is affirmative, although the reasoning advanced by the various decisors is not always identical.

Written Law as Distinct from Oral Law

The first question that must be analyzed is whether the prohibition against a non-Jew studying Torah is limited to study of the Oral Law only or whether it includes the Written Law as well. The most extreme view in this regard is that recorded in *Sefer Chasidim*, no. 238, which advises that a Jew should not teach even the Hebrew alphabet to a priest.¹⁰ However, the phraseology and context of this statement are indicative of prudent advice rather than of a statutory prohibition. Incidents of persecution and arousal of anti-Semitism by clerics claiming proficiency in Jewish law and lore were not at all infrequent during the medieval period. Hence prudence dictated that no assistance be provided to enemies of

Judaism in their attempts to distort Jewish teaching for their own malevolent purposes. The *Zohar*, *Acharei Mot* 73a, also categorically forbids teaching non-Jews "words of Torah," but the reason given is clearly mystic rather than halakhic.¹¹

In another age and under quite dissimilar circumstances, Rabbi Israel Salanter endeavored to gain acceptance of Talmud as a recognized academic discipline.¹² As noted earlier, he sought to have the study of Talmud incorporated in the curricula of European universities and gymnasia. His primary concern, presumably, was to dispel prejudice born of ignorance. One historian speculates that, in addition, Rabbi Israel Salanter was motivated by a desire to enhance the dignity and prestige of the Talmud among Enlightenment figures who, despite their own profession of Judaism, tended to denigrate all rabbinic studies. He perhaps also felt that recognition of Talmud as a respected academic discipline might have a positive effect on nonobservant Jewish students.¹³

Between the polar views forbidding any instruction and permitting all instruction are a significant number of positions that view the prohibition as operative with regard to certain forms of instruction but not with regard to others. Chief among these is the view that the prohibition serves to restrict only instruction in the Oral Law.

A clear distinction between the Oral and the Written Law is formulated by Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Chayes in his commentary on *Sotah* 35b and *Chaggigah* 13a as well as in his *Teshuvot Maharatz Chayes*, no. 32. The Gemara (*Sotah* 35b) states that gentiles acquired knowledge of the contents of the Pentateuch prior to the entrance of our ancestors into *Eretz Yisra'el*. Maharatz Chayes, without citing specific sources, explains that the "decisors" have long distinguished between the Oral and Written Law. Restrictions with regard to the study of Torah by non-Jews, he declares, apply only to the

Oral but not to the Written Law.

Although *Maharatz Chayes* (with one exception, as will be noted later) does not identify the earlier authorities who distinguish between the Oral and the Written Law, this distinction may readily be inferred from a comment incorporated by Rabbenu Gershom in his commentary on *Baba Batra* 21b.¹⁴ The Gemara declares that although residents sharing a common courtyard cannot prevent one of their group from accepting Jewish pupils for Torah instruction, they may legitimately prevent any person who shares their courtyard from providing instruction to non-Jewish students. Since it is generally forbidden to teach Torah to non-Jews, the immediate question that presents itself is what type of instruction is under consideration. Rabbenu Gershom comments that the type of instruction under discussion is instruction "in medical texts or *mikra*" (i.e., the Written Law).¹⁵ The obvious implication is that, when such instruction is provided under conditions that do not cause nuisance to others, the Written Law may indeed be taught to non-Jews.

A similar distinction may be inferred from the comments of Me'iri (*Sanhedrin* 59a). Me'iri states that a non-Jew may study Torah if he does indeed intend to fulfill the precepts that he studies but is deserving of punishment if he studies solely in order to acquire knowledge of "our Torah and our Talmud." Me'iri's inclusion of the phrase "our Talmud" would indicate that it is only the study of the Oral Law that is objectionable.¹⁶ Again, in his commentary on *Chaggigah* 13a, Me'iri speaks of "secrets of the Torah" that may not be imparted to non-Jews. It may be inferred that the Written Law, which is readily accessible to all, may be taught to a non-Jew. Among later authorities, Rabbi Naphtali Zevi Yehudah Berlin, *Meshiv Davar*, II, no. 77,¹⁷ rules that one may teach the Written Law to non-Jews as, do Rabbi Judah Asad, *Teshuvot Maharya, Yoreh De'ah*, no. 135, and the son of this author in a

gloss appended to *Teshuvot Maharya, Orach Chaim*, no. 4. *Meshiv Davar* points to the fact that "God commanded Joshua to translate the Pentateuch into seventy languages," presumably for the edification of non-Jews.¹⁸ A similar distinction is made by numerous other authorities, including *Sefer ha-Metzaref*, no. 97; Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschutz, *Ahavat Yohanatan, Parshat Beshalach; Ma'or va-Shemesh, Parshat Chukat*; Rabbi Jacob Meskin, *Mishpat le-Ya'akov*, no. 24; and *Anaf Yosef, Chaggigah* 13a.¹⁹ Nevertheless, some authorities fail to distinguish between the Oral and Written Law and view the prohibition as encompassing both. This certainly seems to be the position of Shiltei Gibborim as expressed in his previously cited comments. Shiltei Gibborim permits the teaching of the Prophets and the Hagiographa to non-Jews (and, according to Rabbi Hoffmann, the narrative sections of the Pentateuch as well). He certainly implies that other portions of the Written Law (i.e., the sections of the Pentateuch dealing with law and ritual) may not be taught to non-Jews.²⁰

Maharatz Chayes, in his comments on *Chaggigah* 13a and in *Teshuvot Maharatz Chayes*, no. 32, cites Shitah Mekubetzet (*Ketubot* 28a) in substantiation of his distinction between the Written Law and the Oral Law.²¹ Indeed, Shitah Mekubetzet as the sole source cited by Maharatz Chayes in drawing this distinction. Nevertheless, as Rabbi Oshry correctly points out, a distinction between the Oral and Written Law is advanced only tentatively by Shitah Mekubetzet, while in his concluding remarks Shitah Mekubetzet states that references to Torah study forbidden to non-Jews are general in nature and hence presumably refer to the Written Law as well. Accordingly, Shitah Mekubetzet must be numbered among those authorities who forbid the teaching of even the Written Law to non-Jews.

Among latter-day decisors there are a number who do not distinguish between

the Written and Oral Law with regard to the prohibition against teaching Torah to non-Jews. Chief among those who explicitly reject such a distinction is Rabbi Joseph Saul Nathanson in the comments appended to his letter of approbation that appears among the prefatory pages of Rabbi Judah Asad's *Teshuvot Maharya*. His argument is that no such distinction is made by *Tosafot, Baba Kamma* 38a,²² or by *Yam shel Shlomoh, Baba Kamma* 4:9. This argument, however, does not seem to be conclusive. The comments of both *Tosafot* and *Yam shel Shlomoh* focus on the talmudic narrative concerning two Roman officials who were sent to the sages by their government to study Torah. The problem to which *Tosafot* and *Yam shel Shlomoh* address themselves is, in the light of the prohibition against teaching Torah to non-Jews, how was it permissible for the Sages to accede to this request? Rabbi Joseph Saul Nathanson draws attention to the failure of these authorities to draw a distinction between the Oral and Written Law in resolving this difficulty. Their failure to do so, he argues, indicates that they regard any such distinction as invalid. However, examination of the problem as formulated by *Tosafot* and *Yam shel Shlomoh* reveals that such a distinction, even if valid, would not dispel the difficulty. The Gemara records that, among other things, the Sages instructed the non-Jewish emissaries with regard to the laws governing liability for damages in the event that an ox belonging to a Jewish master gores an ox belonging to a non-Jew, and vice versa. The provisions of law that are cited are clearly part of the Oral²³ and not the Written Law.²⁴

Rabbi Yosef and Rabbi Oshry both infer from the comments of Maharsha (*Shabbat* 31a) that this authority also refuses to make a distinction between the Written and Oral Law. The Gemara reports that Hillel agreed to the conversion of a non-Jew who wished to become a proselyte in order that the latter might be appointed High Priest, but only after

teaching him Torah so that the convert was aware that he would not be qualified for this office. It is evident that in this instance Hillel taught Torah to a non-Jew despite the prohibition against doing so. Maharsha states that it was permissible for Hillel to teach Torah to the non-Jew because it is permissible to teach Torah to a prospective convert. A much simpler explanation would have been that the requirement that a high priest be a lineal descendant of Aaron is readily obvious on even superficial study of the Bible and requires no knowledge of the Oral Law. A distinction between the Oral and Written Law would readily have dispelled the question raised by Maharsha. Failure to supply this answer indicates that Maharsha does not recognize the validity of any such distinction.²⁵

'Reasons and Secrets'

Another limitation on the prohibition against teaching Torah to non-Jews is expressed by Maharsha (*Chaggigah* 13a), who states that the prohibition is limited to instruction in the "reason and secret of the *mitsvot*."²⁶ This position is based on the fact that the terminology employed in the formulation of the prohibition is not "It is not permitted to teach the words of Torah to non-Jews" but, instead, "It is not permitted to *give over* the words of Torah to non-Jews."²⁷ Similarly, Me'iri (*Chaggigah* 13a) speaks of a prohibition against transmitting "secrets of the Torah" to a non-Jew. Maharsha states that the prohibition against teaching "reasons and secrets" extends to instruction in these aspects of Noachide commandments as well.²⁸ In direct opposition to this latter point, Me'iri (*Sanhedrin* 59a) indicates that insofar as the content of the Noachide Code is concerned, there are no limitations on the nature of instruction that may be provided. It would then seem, that, according to Maharsha, there is no restriction on teaching the factual content of any portion of the Torah

to non-Jews.²⁹ *Teshuvot Be'er Sheva, Be'er Mayim Chaim*, no. 14, makes a similar distinction between "reasons and secrets" and other aspects of Torah study insofar as the prohibition is concerned, but nevertheless cautions against teaching Torah in any form to non-Jews. A similar position is maintained by *Teshuvot R. Eliyahu, Mizrachi*, no. 57. This authority adds, however, that it is forbidden to disclose the rationale underlying a *mitsvah* or law only when it is possible to avoid doing so. When, however, one cannot readily extricate oneself from such a situation even this information may be provided.

In his comments, Maharsha makes no reference to a distinction between study of the seven Noachide commandments and other aspects of Torah. Since he fails to draw such a distinction, there seems to be strong reason to assume, as stated earlier, that Maharsha does permit a non-Jew to study any area of Torah so long as he avoids the "reasons and mysteries" of the *mitsvah*. Maharsha was certainly understood in this manner by *Teshuvot Yad Eliyahu*, no. 48 and *Teshuvot Ma'aseh Ish, Yoreh De'ah*, no. 7.

However, one recent authority, Rabbi Aaron Walkin (*Teshuvot Zekan Aharon II*, no. 71) argues that this *arugmentum ad silencium* is entirely fallacious and that, quite to the contrary, when Maharsha's comments are examined in context, it becomes evident that this is not at all his intention. The ban against a non-Jew studying Torah is formulated in the Gemara in two places. *Sanhedrin* 59a cites the words of Rabbi Yochanan, who declared, "A non-Jew who engages in the study of Torah is culpable of death." *Chaggigah* 13a records the dictum of Rabbi Ami, who stated, "It is not permitted to give over the words of Torah to a non-Jew." Maharsha's distinction is predicated on the terminology employed by Rabbi Ami. Rabbi Yochanan's statement is more general in nature and does not lend itself to the same inference. Indeed, Rabbi Ami's statement, which is based on a

passage in Psalms, seems redundant, as noted by *Tosafot*, since Rabbi Yochanan had already posited a pentateuchal prohibition: "Moses commanded us the Torah, an inheritance for the community of Jacob." It is this difficulty that Maharsha seeks to dispel. Rabbi Yochanan's dictum is all encompassing and proscribes Torah study of any nature, excluding only the study of the seven Noachide commandments. Study of the latter are specifically permitted to non-Jews, as stated in *Sanhedrin* 59a. Rabbi Ami's statement, declares Zekan Aharon in his analysis of Maharsha's comments, explicates the dictum of Rabbi Yochanon. Rabbi Ami's intent is to circumscribe the exception admitted by Rabbi Yochanan (i.e., study of the seven commandments). Although a non-Jew may study the seven commandments, declares Rabbi Ami, he may not be introduced to their "reasons and mysteries." According to this understanding of Maharsha, other areas of Torah study are totally forbidden to non-Jews on the basis of Rabbi Yochanan's statement and are not within purview of Rabbi Ami's dictum.³⁰

Maharsha's distinction between "reasons and secrets" and other aspects of Torah study is not accepted by all authorities. Maharsha's position is based entirely on use of the phrase "*ain moserin*" which means "It is not permitted to give over" or "It is not permitted to deliver." Rabbi Weinberg, citing *Teshuvot Maharatz Chayes*, no. 32, points out that *Tosafot* must certainly reject any inference based on considerations of phraseology because the textual reading of the Gemara, as cited by *Tosafot Baba Kamma* 38a, is "One who teaches Torah to non-Jews transgresses a positive commandment" and does not at all contain the phrase "*ain moserin*."

Other Exclusions

Intensity of Study. Another significant limitation on this prohibition is found in

