

## May One Give a Corporate Gift To an Akum?

### Rabbi Yosef Kushner

**Question:** When it comes to this time of year, many companies give out corporate gifts to all of their employees. Is there a problem with giving a gift to an *Akum* in this setting?

The Gemara says (Avoda Zarah 20), that it is assur d'oraysa to give an Akum a *matnas chinam* (free gift). The way we come out *Halacha L'maysseh* is that this applies to all *Bnei Noach*, not just *ba'alei avodah zorah*.

**Question:** There does seem to be a widespread custom to give these gifts to all employees including an akum. How do we reconcile this practice?

**Answer:** There are two potential heterim for this:

1. If there is a person who is "makiro" (an acquaintance) it may be permitted. As you have a relationship with these individuals, it will most likely be reciprocated in kind, that being the case, *Chazal* look at it more like a *mecher* (transaction), therefore it is not considered a standard gift. This would be true for employees in a company or a cleaning lady in your house. In both cases showing appreciation will most likely spur them to work harder in order to pay you back.
2. The second heter is *darkei shalom*, which is not a blanket heter. The Rishonim explain this to mean that if you don't give it, there will be *eiva* (enmity). The Gemara explains that if you are supporting *Yidden* and *Bnei Noach* together, and you only give to the *gid*, then there will be complaints and issues.

These two heterim both have a similar reasoning behind them. The idea is that we cannot just give gifts out for no reason, but if there is some sort of benefit to be received by you, or you are avoiding potential problems, that would be allowed.