

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Clarifying the Mishnah

The Gemara defines the term איצטרוכלין.

This definition is successfully challenged and an alternative explanation is offered by R' Safra and echoed by R' Elazar.

Different items mentioned in the Mishnah are defined.

A Baraisa teaches that one may sell the items listed in the Mishnah in a bundle.

Abaye explains why selling the items listed in the Mishnah do not pose a concern of לפני עור.

It is taught that one may sell a white rooster if the idolater merely asks for a rooster without specifying that it should be white.

This ruling is unsuccessfully challenged from our Mishnah.

Support for the alternative explanation of the Mishnah is found in a Baraisa.

A ruling in this Baraisa is unsuccessfully challenged from a Mishnah.

Another unsuccessful challenge to the ruling that one may sell a white rooster to an idolater as long as he does not specify that it should be white is presented.

2) White roosters

R' Ashi asks whether it is permissible to sell an unblemished white rooster to an idolater who asks for a mutilated white rooster.

A follow up inquiry is posed and both questions are left unresolved.

3) Masseches Avodah Zarah

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REVIEW and Remember

1. What type of growths are subject to the laws of shemitah?
2. When is it permitted to sell a white rooster to an idolater?
3. Is it permitted to sell an unblemished white rooster if the idolater asks for one that was maimed?
4. What is the reason one may not sell large domesticated animals to idolaters?

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 The family of
 Mrs. Esther Wolper
 מרת אסתר בת ר' ישעי' משולם זיסל ע"ה

Distinctive INSIGHT

Specified intent to purchase for idolatrous purposes

לעולם סתמן דקאמר חיטי חוורתא, ופירושו דקאמר לעבודת כוכבים

The commentators deal with the issue of what might be prohibited from selling to idolaters in our times. Tosafos (ד"ה חצב) cites Rabeinu Baruch who notes that the conclusion of our Gemara is that it is prohibited to sell any object to an idolater if he specifies that he intends to use it for his idolatry. Therefore, it is prohibited to sell frankincense (לבונה) to a priest of idolatry, because it is certain that he will use it for his worship, and it is as if he stated that this is his intention. A Jew who sells לבונה to such a person would be in violation of placing a stumbling block before the blind.

Sefer Avodas Avodah finds it difficult to understand why Tosafos has to present an argument to prohibit the sale of frankincense when it is one of the items listed explicitly in the Mishnah itself (13b). He suggests three approaches to explain Tosafos.

Tosafos understands that the לבונה in the Mishnah which is clearly prohibited is pure לבונה, similar to the case of a chicken, which is specifically speaking about a white chicken. Nevertheless, Tosafos adds that the case of לבונה is only prohibited using the general guidelines of selling to an idolater. The Mishnah ruled that all items are prohibited to be sold if the idolater specifies that his intent is to purchase the item for idolatry ("פירושו אסור"). The Gemara analyzes this term and concludes that even if the idolater asked for white wheat, or a white chicken, this is not prohibited. This is in the realm of סתם - an unspecified purchase. The prohibition is where the idolater stated clearly that he needs the wheat for his god. Therefore, plain לבונה may be sold to a common idolater, but it may not be sold to a priest, as this is considered as if he specified his intent. Pure לבונה may not be sold to anyone, as the Mishnah states.

We can also say that לבונה was only used for worship on the day of the festival, and it was rare for it to be used on other days. This is the case which the Mishnah rules to be prohibited. Tosafos deals with the case of a priest who comes to the market looking to buy לבונה on a regular day. The reason it is generally prohibited to sell items to an idolater when he specifies his intent is that we believe him when he says he will use it for his god's service. We must therefore refuse to provide the priest with goods even on non-festival days.

A third approach may be that the case of Tosafos is where the priest is buying a large volume of לבונה. Any other person buying so much would be assumed to be buying it for resale. A priest who comes to the market looking for לבונה is assumed to be buying it for the idolatrous service. It is prohibited to sell this to him, as it is as if he has specified his intent. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Sterilizing a rooster

אלפני דלפני לא מפקדין

We were not commanded about a "before" of a "before."

Terumas Hadeshen¹ was asked whether a Jew is permitted to sell a rooster to a gentile knowing that the gentile intends to sterilize the rooster. He writes that the halacha seems to depend on whether gentiles are also prohibited from sterilizing animals. Semag² holds that gentiles are also prohibited from sterilizing animals whereas Rosh³ maintains that gentiles are not prohibited from sterilizing animals. Therefore, according to Semag it would be prohibited to sell a rooster to a gentile knowing that he will sterilize the rooster but according to Rosh it would be permitted. Since we pasken like Semag that gentiles may not sterilize animals it would seem that it is prohibited to sell roosters to a gentile who intends on sterilizing it.

Terumas Hadeshen then suggests that there is a case in which even Semag would agree that it is permitted. If the gentile who purchases the rooster will not sterilize the rooster himself but will have his slave or maidservant sterilize the rooster it would be permitted. The basis for this leniency is the principle established in our Gemara by Abaye that one is not prohibited from placing a stumbling block before a person who will place it in front of another person – אלפני דלפני לא מפקדין. Consequently, since the gentile who purchases the rooster will not violate the prohibition; he merely hands it to another gentile; the Jew who sold the rooster is not responsible for what the second gentile does to the rooster.

Rema⁴ rules that it is permitted to sell to a gentile animals

(Overview...continued from page 1)
R' Chisda tells Avimi that Avrohom Avinu had four hundred chapters to study when he learned Masseches Avodah Zarah and we have only five and find them difficult.

R' Chisda gives an example of a difficult ruling in the massecta.

Avimi explains why this ruling is not difficult.

A number of the items mentioned by R' Meir in the Mishnah are defined.

4) **MISHNAH:** The guidelines of selling animals to idolaters are presented.

5) **Selling livestock to idolaters**

The Mishnah's statement that the permissibility of selling livestock to idolaters is subject to local custom is challenged.

Rav offers one resolution to this contradiction. ■

and roosters even though the gentile will sterilize the animal, however, other authorities prohibit selling animals and roosters if the gentile will sterilize them. If the gentile is not going to sterilize the animal himself but will give it to another person to sterilize it, it is permitted. Additionally, Chasam Sofer⁵ discusses the case of a Jew who sells his rooster to a gentile with the instructions that the gentile should have another gentile sterilize the bird and then after the bird is sterilized wants to purchase it back. He writes that there is room for leniency in this case. ■

¹ שו"ת תרומת הדשן סי' רצ"ט.

² סמ"ג לאוין ק"כ.

³ רא"ש ב"מ פ"ז סי' ו'.

⁴ רמ"א אהע"ז סוס"י ה'.

⁵ שו"ת חתם סופר חו"מ סי' קפ"ה. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Four Hundred Chapters

"ד' מאה פירקי הויין..."

The Munkatcher Rav, zt"l, offers a fascinating explanation of a famous passage on today's daf. "On Avodah Zarah 14 we find that Avraham Avinu's meseches Avodah Zarah had four hundred chapters, of which only a tiny portion remains. Obviously, five chapters out of four hundred is a small percentage. But it seems hard to understand that we lack these chapters if they are essential. And if they are not essential, why did Avraham Avinu need them?"

"The answer lies in that Avraham converted the men, while Sora converted the women. Since they were required to see that potential converts had completely divested themselves from idolatry, they needed to know what to teach. For example, the midrash tells us that the Arabs who visited Avraham Avinu worshiped the dust on their feet. Because Avraham and Sora dealt with such people constantly, they had to know all the laws and customs of their idolatrous culture to aid potential converts to sincerely change."¹

The Avnei Nezer, zt"l, explained as follows. "His tractate Avodah Zarah discussed all of the many character traits that our sages compared to idolatry."²

Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Rimanov, zt"l, used

this teaching to show how to truly serve Hashem. "A tzaddik rises ever higher in avodas Hashem. To the tzaddik, his old ways of serving Hashem feels like idolatry, since he now recognizes that his old ways of serving Hashem were shallow. Through this we can explain how Avraham's meseches Avodah Zarah had four hundred chapters. This means that Avraham kept ascending in his personal avodah, looking on each day like a new page, and every earlier avodah—which was a pale shadow of his deeper service—as idolatry. Is it any wonder that he made it to four hundred chapters?"³ ■

1. דברי תורה, ח"ג, אות ט"ז
2. שם משמואל, במדבר תרע"ה, ע"י ל"ו
3. בארת המים, ע"י מ"ג ■