

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah cites different opinions which discuss whether mountains and other things attached to the ground become prohibited when worshipped by idolaters.

2) Clarifying the Mishnah

It is noted that R' Yosi HaGalili and Tanna Kamma seem to subscribe to the same position.

Rami bar Chama in the name of Reish Lakish identifies the difference between their positions.

R' Sheishes offers another difference between their respective positions.

It is noted that R' Yosi bar Yehudah agrees with R' Yosi Haglili that trees that were planted with idolatrous intent and subsequently worshipped are prohibited.

A part of R' Yosi bar Yehudah's exposition is clarified.

A lengthy exchange between R' Yosi bar Yehudah and Rabanan regarding their respective positions and expositions is recorded. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. Why is an asheira prohibited if it is attached to the ground?
2. What is the difference between the position of R' Yosi HaGalili and Tanna Kamma?
3. What is a case where a cut part of a tree is prohibited but it's basic part is permitted?
4. What is derived from the words **ואבדתם את שמם**?

HALACHAH Highlight

Erasing the name of idolatry

נפקא ליה מ"אבדתם את שמם מן המקום ההוא"

It is derived from the verse, "You shall obliterate their name from that place."

Chinuch Beis Yehudah¹ cites a ruling of Maharal that there is no mitzvah to wipe out the name of idola-

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Distinctive INSIGHT

A tree becomes prohibited because it can be "handled by man"

מפני שיש בה תפיסת ידי אדם

The Mishnah establishes the basic principle that anything connected to the ground cannot become prohibited due to idolatry. This includes mountains and hills. The Mishnah then asks why is it that trees used for avodah zarah (asheira), are prohibited? Why are these trees prohibited (see Devarim 7:5) as they are connected to the ground and they should be permitted?

The Mishnah explains that these trees maintain **יד תפיסת** of the one who planted them. Literally, this means that man "has a hold of them." Rashi explains that this term refers to the initial planting of the tree and its connection to the ground was done by a person, and this original human input remains an integral part of the tree's nature forever. This is unlike hills and mountains, which are not prohibited, as they have been a part of the earth from the time of creation, without any human input.

In his Gur Aryeh (to Devarim 12:3), Maharal explains this concept a bit differently. Although an asheira tree is connected to the ground, it is not one piece with the ground. Man has the ability to grab onto the tree as it grows and to interfere with the connection the tree has with its source. And even the roots of the tree are susceptible to human interference, as man can dig up the roots of the tree. This is unlike a mountain, which is one and the same with the earth upon which it sits.

Gilyonei HaShas points out several problems with the definition of this term as explained by Maharal, who says that it is a function of the ongoing growth of the tree. The Gemara later (46a) classifies animals, and even the rocks which become dislodged from mountains, as items which do not have the "hold of man" upon them. According to Rashi, it is accurate to say that man is not a partner in bringing these things into being. However, Maharal defined the term **תפיסת יד** as a function of man's ability to interact and control things. Here, man apparently could handle animals and rocks. How does Maharal's definition fit in with the Gemara's classification of animals and rocks?

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try. That which it says in the verse **ואבדתם את שמם** – and you should destroy its name – was not meant to instruct us literally to destroy the name of idolatry. The intent of the pasuk is that there is a mitzvah to destroy the place where idolatry is worshipped so that there should not remain any memory of the idolatry. Chasam Sofer² disagrees and maintains that the verse teaches that there is a mitzvah to erase the name of idolatry. Furthermore, since the Torah includes the word **את** we derive that there is an obligation to destroy that which is secondary to the name of idolatry, namely, prefixes and suffixes attached to the name of the idol.

Divrei Yatziv³ cites the position of Chasam Sofer and wonders where Chasam Sofer found a mention of such a mitzvah since it is not included in the count of the 613 mitzvos mentioned by the earlier authorities. Regarding the assertion that the mitzvah is derived from the verse **ואבדתם את שמם** it seems from our Gemara that there is no such mitzvah. The Gemara relates that according to R' Yosi the son of R' Yehudah we derive from this verse that there is an obligation to uproot any remnant of idolatry. The Gemara wonders what Rabanan derive from this verse and responds that we derive from this pasuk the obligation to give an idol a derogatory nickname. Now if there is a mitzvah to erase the name of an idol as

(Insight...continued from page 1)

Gilyonei HaShas suggests that perhaps Maharal's definition of **תפיסת יד** is that because man can uproot a tree, even while it is still planted in the ground, the tree is not considered permanently attached to the ground. This is why a tree which is worshipped can become prohibited. A mountain, however, cannot be uprooted. Even though the Midrash tells us that Og the King of Bashan lifted a mountain, the mountain remains an integral part of the earth. This also explains why animals and rocks, although they can be lifted, are still connected to their source and remain part of it, even while they may be temporarily in the hands of man.

Gilyonei HaShas concludes that this definition still needs to be clarified. ■

Chasam Sofer maintains why didn't the Gemara respond that according to Rabanan the verse teaches that there is an obligation to erase the name of an idol? He then suggests that perhaps the obligation to erase the name of an idol is not an independent mitzvah but part of the overall mitzvah to "uproot" idolatry which can take on many forms including erasing the name of an idol. ■

1. שו"ת חינוך בית יהודה ס"י ע"ה.
2. שו"ת חתם סופר יו"ד סי' ר"ס, רס"ג.
3. שו"ת דברי יציב יו"ד סי' ק"פ. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Uprooting the Foreign Element

"העוקר עבודה זרה צריך לשרש אחריה..."

The Beis Avrohom of Slonim, zt"l, explains a statement on our daf in an inspiring manner. "In Avodah Zarah 45 we find that one who wishes to uproot idolatry must dig deep down after it. Tzaddikim would explain that this means that if one wishes that his Torah and tefillah not be considered zarah, he must remove the root of avodah zarah. This refers to the many character traits which are compared to idolatry. One example

of this is arrogance.¹ Another prevalent defect compared to idolatry is anger.² If he himself is not made strange through these negative character traits, his learning and davening will also not be strange."³

An article in the "Pri Hakerem" brings a similar teaching and expands on it with an apt parable. "Just as when one is physically ill one must delve to the source of his malady, the same is true regarding spiritual sickness. For example, if one were to have a fresh wound that began to fester, and eventually became infected, he obviously needs an expert doctor to combat the infection. If he goes to a fool who only thinks about curing the problem on the surface without

delving deeper, the infection will remain even if there is superficial improvement. And it will get even worse, causing many other symptoms. An expert doctor will go after the real cause not just the superficial symptoms.

"In spiritual matters as well, there are certain character defects which cause us to act a certain way, leading to sin. We must uproot such evil characteristics, compared to idolatry, from our hearts. Only then can we remove the sinful behavior in a lasting way."⁴ ■

1. כמבואר בסוטה, דף ד ע"ב
2. כמבואר בשבת
3. בית אברהם, בא, ע"י ע"ז
4. פרי כרם, תמוז תשנ"ה, ע"ה ■