

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Serving an idol with a rod (cont.)

Rava responds to the challenge to his explanation.

It is suggested that Rav's teaching that breaking a rod in worship of an idol is similar to slaughtering an animal is the matter of Tannaitic debate.

This suggestion is rejected.

R' Nachman cites others who provide guidelines for the status of a rod that was used in worship of an idol.

Rava challenges R' Nachman's ruling and this leads to an exchange between them.

R' Nachman's position is unsuccessfully challenged from a Mishnah.

2) Slaughtering a blemished animal for an idol

R' Avahu in the name of R' Yochanan ruled that one who slaughters a blemished animal for an idol is not subject to death.

Rava analyzes the circumstance of this ruling which leads the Gemara into a discussion regarding gentiles offering blemished animals as sacrifices.

3) Slaughtering for markulis

R' Elazar teaches that one who slaughters an animal to markulis is liable to death.

This ruling is unsuccessfully challenged from a Baraisa.

4) MISHNAH: The Mishnah teaches that some items found on an idol are permitted whereas other items are prohibited.

5) Adornments

R' Chiya bar Yosef in the name of R' Oshaya present the exposition that teaches that items that are not adornments to idols are not prohibited.

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REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the difference between breaking a rod in front of an idol and throwing a rod toward an idol?

2. What is the difference between one who is תמים and one who is a צדיק?

3. In what circumstance are coins not considered an adornment to an idol?

4. What is the point of dispute between R' Yishmael and R' Akiva?

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 By the Okner family
 In memory of their grandfather
 Dr. Peter Harry Okner
 ר' פנחס הערש בן ר' שמואל, ע"ה

Distinctive INSIGHT

Finding money or clothing placed on top of Markulis

מצא בראשו מעות כסות או כלים הרי אלו מותרין

The Mishnah deals with the details of the idol of Markulis. If we find money, clothing or any other utensils laying on top of this idol, the items are permitted as they are not considered as enhancements to the beauty of the idol. However, if we find bunches of grapes, stalks of wheat, wine, oil or flour draped upon the idol, these are forbidden from benefit. The rule is that any item becomes prohibited when adorning an idol if it is of the type that is used in the Beis HaMikdash for our service.

Rashi explains that the Mishnah is speaking about finding items adorning the idol of Markulis, as we explained. Tosafos Ri"d notes that the reason the Mishnah illustrates these laws in reference to Markulis, although these halachos apply to all idols, is in order to emphasize that although the procedure of worship for Markulis was by throwing stones at it, nevertheless, if someone decorated it with grapes or any commodity which was used for the service in the Beis HaMikdash, these items become prohibited due to their being used in the service of idolatry.

Rosh points out that grapes, wheat and oil are edible items, of which we produce wine, flour and oil for service in the Beis HaMikdash. Therefore, these items are not decorative, but rather seen as service items (תקרובת) and a tribute for idolatry. This is why they are prohibited. Beis Yosef (Y.D. 139) understands that the opinion of Tur is that although it is clear that this particular cluster of grapes or stalk of wheat has not been used for service, its being brought into the domain of the idolatry already makes it prohibited. Ra"n says that some wine or oil or flour from these very commodities might have been used, and the pieces we find are the remnants, which are also prohibited as a result.

Ritva explains that the point of using Markulis as an example of this halacha is that money and clothing are not prohibited, because they are never used as decorations for any idolatry. However, grapes, stalks of grain, wine and oil are used for decoration in general. Even though they are not specifically used for Markulis, these items become prohibited due to their general designation as decorations for other idols. He explains that when we say that a particular service is prohibited only when it is the standard manner of serving any particular idol, that is regarding the culpability of the server. Regarding decorations, the object becomes prohibited even if it is not the designated item normally used for this idol.

When Rambam (Hilchos Avodah Zarah 7:16) records this halachah, he writes, "If someone finds clothing or money on top of an idol, if these items are placed in a disrespectful manner, they are permitted." Rambam seems to have a text which read "ראש עבודה זרה—on the head of an idol," rather than "בראש מרקוליס—on the head of Markulis." ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Purchasing candles from priests

נהנין מהן שלא בטובה

We may benefit from them as long as it does not provide financial benefit for the priests

Drisha¹ noted a contradiction between two rulings found in the Tur. On the one hand he ruled in accordance with our Gemara that one may not benefit from a garden or bath if by doing so one will give financial support to idolatrous priests². On the other hand he ruled that it is permitted to purchase extinguished candles from priests since the sale of these leftover candles causes the prohibition against benefit to become nullified. How is it permitted for one to purchase these leftover candles when it will inevitably provide money to the idolatrous priest who is selling them? Drisha answered that the leniency is based on the fact that the candles were not manufactured to be used in the worship of idolatry. When they were lit in front of the idol they became prohibited as an adornment to an idol. Once the priest extinguishes the flame and sells them their status as an adornment to an idol becomes nullified. The reason there is no issue of giving the idolatrous priest financial support is that when the candles are purchased from the priest they have lost their status as an adornment to an idol.

Taz⁴ cites Drisha's question and answer and then writes that the initial question was misplaced. Chazal prohibited giving financial benefit to idolatrous priests only when their practice dictates that the priests have the exclusive right to charge money for that particular service. Thus, for example, since priests had the exclusive right to charge money for their gardens and baths Chazal prohibited one from benefitting from these activities in a manner that provides the priests with financial benefit. When it comes to candles, their practice is that the candles should be used

(Overview...continued from page 1)

This exposition is unsuccessfully challenged.

The Gemara explains the rationales behind a number of the Mishnah's rulings.

R' Asi bar Chiya presents the guidelines for determining whether an item should be presumed to be an offering or an adornment.

R' Yosi bar Chanina adds a qualification to these guidelines.

6) MISHNAH: The Mishnah begins with a discussion related to the use of a garden or bath made for an idol. The Mishnah identifies the point at which an idol becomes prohibited.

7) Consideration

Abaye explains that the Mishnah's concern for payment applies only when it is to go to the priest as opposed to if it went to the worshipers.

According to a second version this statement was made in reference to a latter ruling of the Mishnah.

The Gemara discusses the difference between the two versions.

8) Identifying the author of the Mishnah

The Gemara asserts that the last ruling in the Mishnah reflects the opinion of R' Akiva and cites the Baraisa that contains his opinion.

One of the statements in the Baraisa is unsuccessfully challenged. ■

for idolatry and the priest who takes the candles to sell them is acting on his own initiative. Consequently, it is no different than any other object that a priest may sell that one may purchase without concern for providing financial support for idolatrous priests. ■

1. דרישה יו"ד סי' קמ"ג אות ד'
2. טור יו"ד שם
3. טור שם סי' קל"ט
4. ט"ז שם סק"ה ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Decorative Arts

דבר של נוי אסור

A certain person wished to go to an exhibit of various artifacts that had been used to adorn historic churches. His entire intent in going was to gaze at the artwork. After all, why couldn't he look at such priceless art and become more cultured while he was at it? Of course, he would never have even considered gazing upon a religious article used in idolatry, but he had no idea why he might be required to

miss out on becoming a more cultured person to avoid gazing at innocuous and beautiful artwork.

When this question was brought before Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, he ruled that it was prohibited. "It is obvious that one may not enter into a church which is used for their prayers and worship even if one's sole intent in doing so is to look at pictures which we are sure are only decorative. Even if we know this artwork is not used for worship at all, this is still forbidden. Although Tosafos writes that there is no prohibition to gaze at statues and the like which were not created for religious purposes, Tosafos is only referring to when

these objects are not decorating a place of worship.

"If they were made to adorn a church they are forbidden from benefit according to all authorities. This is clear from the Gemara in Avodah Zarah 51. There we find that any form made to adorn a church is prohibited, even if it is not used for worship at all. In addition, the hashkafah of someone who wishes to go to such a place is seriously perverted. My son, Rav Dovid shlit" a, said that they arrange these exhibits only as a way to draw innocent people nearer to their beliefs. Chas v'shalom that anyone should go there!"¹ ■

1. אג"מ יו"ד ח"ג ס' קכ"ט אות ו'