

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Pedestals (cont.)

Chizkiyah gives the source for the ruling concerning the stones from an idolatrous altar.

2) Worshipping an animal

A Baraisa teaches that if one worships his own animal it may not be used for a korban whereas if one worships a friend's animal it may be used for a korban.

This ruling is challenged from a Baraisa.

Rami bar Chama resolves the contradiction.

R' Zeira challenges this explanation but Rava defends it.

A proof to Rava's position is suggested but rejected by Rava and R' Ashi.

Chizkiya offers an alternative resolution to the contradiction between the two previously-cited Baraisas.

Chizkiyah's resolution is unsuccessfully challenged.

The Gemara inquires after the source for Chizkiyah's assertion that one can cause someone else's object to be forbidden if he uses that object for the worship of idolatry.

3) Idolatry

(Continued on page 2)

REVIEW and Remember

1. Explain אונס רחמנא פטריה.
2. According to Chizkiyah, what is the circumstance in which one can cause another's property to be forbidden because it was used for idolatry?
3. Why doesn't Hashem eradicate objects that are worshipped that are essential?
4. How did R' Gamliel respond to the report that an idol miraculously saved itself from a fire?

Today's Daf Digest is dedicated
By Mr. and Mrs. Michael Schultz in memory of their brother
ר' חיים לייב בן ר' יצחק ע"ה
Mr. Harvey Schultz O.B.M.

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Distinctive INSIGHT

The world continues according to its nature

דבר אחר הרי שגזל סאה של חטים וכו' דבר אחר הרי שבא על אשת חבירו וכו'

The Mishnah tells the story of when the wise men representing the nations of the world confronted the Jewish elders about idolatry. They noted that if God does not want idolatry in His world, why would He tolerate it? "Why," they asked, "doesn't God eradicate it from His world?"

The Jewish elders responded by pointing out that if the idolaters had worshiped something which was not essential for the world, perhaps God would have indeed eradicated it. However, the idolaters chose to worship the stars, the moon and constellations, which are essential for the world. Should God destroy His world just because of these fools? Rather, the world continues according to its nature, and these misdirected worshippers will have to account for their deviant ways.

The Baraisa brought in the Gemara elaborates and mentions two addition parables which the Jewish elders used in their argument to refute the question of the wise men from the gentiles.

One parable is that if someone steals some wheat seeds, technically he has violated the word of God and the seeds should not grow. However, the world functions according to its nature, and the thief will eventually pay for his crime.

Finally, the Jewish elders said that if a man commits adultery with another man's wife, due to his sin the woman should technically not conceive. However, the world continues according to its nature, and the foolish sinners will pay the price for their sin.

Iyun Yaakov explains that the three responses of the Jewish elders each contributes to a full response to the scoffing remarks of the wise men of the gentiles, as each example reflects one of the three cardinal sins.

The first example of worshipping the stars, moon and the constellations referred to the sin of idolatry. The parable of stealing wheat and planting it referred to the sin of murder. This is because the Gemara teaches (Sanhedrin 72a) that a person will not stand idle and let his property be taken from him without trying to defend it. This can lead to bloodshed. Furthermore, stealing even a small item from someone may be a life-threatening situation, as it might deprive him of something essential he needs to eat to remain alive (Bava Kamma 119a).

Finally, the parable of adultery deals with the sin of illegal marriages. Therefore the point of the Jewish sages was that if God allows the world to continue when the worst three sins are committed, how much more so does He allow the world to continue when other sins are committed, and the foolish sinners will have to answer for their sins. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Is the dirt of a grave prohibited from benefit?

חפרה בה בורות שיחין ומערות אסרה

If he dug in it pits, ditches or caves, he does prohibit it

The Gemara Sanhedrin (47b) relates that people were taking dirt from Rav's grave and using it for medicinal purposes. When people complained to Shmuel about the practice he told them that it was permitted and cited for them an exposition that teaches that just as an idol that is attached to the ground does not become prohibited, so too, the ground of a grave does not become prohibited. Talmidei Rabbeinu Peretz¹ challenge this statement from our Gemara. Our Gemara teaches that although the ground does not become forbidden if a person worships it, if a person were to dig pits in the ground as an act of worship the ground would be prohibited. Why then does a grave which is equated to idolatry not become prohibited since one digs a hole in which to place the body? Ritva² answers that Chazal had a tradition that only with regards to idolatry does the ground become prohibited when an act is done to the ground but there is no such tradition with regards to a grave.

Teshuvav Avnei Nezer³ resolves this matter based on the opinions that maintain that ground only becomes prohibited from benefit if it was dug for the sake of worshiping idolatry. Following that approach a clear distinction emerges between the case of idolatry and the case of the grave. When it comes to idolatry the principle הזמנה מילתא ההיא – designation is significant – applies. As such, once the grave was dug with the

(Overview...continued from page 1)

Two rulings cited in the name of R' Yochanan related to idolatry are recorded.

Ravin reports that there is a dispute between R' Yishmael bar Yosi and Rabanan regarding the status of objects exchanged for an idol.

The exchange between these two positions regarding their respective sources is presented.

4) MISHNAH: The Mishnah presents a discussion between some of our sages and some idolatrous philosophers regarding Hashem's allowance for the continued existence of idolatry.

5) Idolatry

A Baraisa further elaborates on the debate of the Mishnah. A related statement of Reish Lakish is recorded.

The Gemara recounts a discussion between a philosopher and R' Gamliel. ■

intention to worship idolatry the land becomes prohibited. When it comes to burial, however, halacha follows the opinion (See Sanhedrin 47b) that designation is not significant. Consequently, when the grave was dug for the purpose of burial the ground did not attain the status of a grave and halachically it is not different than any other pit that is dug in the ground and is not prohibited from benefit. ■

1. מובא בוס' רבינו פרץ בסנהדרין מ"ד ד"ה מקיש
2. ריטב"א ד"ה ונראה
3. שו"ת אבני נזר או"ח סי' ט"ז ■

STORIES Off the Daf

"Why Does He Not Destroy It?"

למה אינו מאבדה

On today's daf we find that Polipus asked the elders of Rome this very question, to which they replied that Hashem does not destroy His world because of fools.

The Maharash of Belz, zt"l, once offered a further explanation. "This teaches that Hashem leaves the world as it is to maintain free will. As the verse states, 'כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל דְּרָכָיו יֵלֶכּוּ בָם וְרַשְׁעִים יִכְשָׁלוּ בָם' – The ways of Hashem are straight. The righteous will go in them and the wicked will stumble on them."¹ Hashem maintains the world and does not Himself

destroy idolatry despite its odiousness since He wishes to maintain free will.

"It is precisely because questions such as what they asked in Rome are able to nag us that we have free will. Hashem leaves the sun and moon, despite those who worship them, to give everyone an honest choice."²

But the Kisei Chaim explains differently. "Hashem commands us to uproot idolatry but does not uproot it Himself since He desires our actions more than His own. Although idolaters believe that Divine acts are greater than man's deeds, we believe the opposite, so we find in Kesuvos: גדולים מעשה צדיקים ממעשה שמים וארץ. This is why Hashem commands us to get rid of idolatry, but does not do so Himself.

"This is also why one who turns a blind eye to those who ask for charity is

compared to one who worships idols. He is essentially agreeing with Turnus Rufus who asked Rabbi Akiva, 'If Hashem does not like poverty, why does he allow people to be poor?'

"Rabbi Akiva replied that this is so that we should have the merit of helping our fellow Jews. But one who ignores the poor despite his ability to help shows that he agrees with Turnus Rufus that one need not help the poor, since Hashem made him destitute. By the same token he also tacitly agrees that one need not uproot idolatry, since Hashem turns a blind eye to it!"³ ■

1. הושע י"ד: ג'
2. ליקוטי מהר"ש מבעלז ליקוטים
3. כתבי חיים ליקוטים