

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Idolatry (cont.)

The Gemara concludes the second unsuccessful challenge to the assertion that Jews practiced idolatry to permit illicit relations.

A third unsuccessful attempt to refute this assertion is recorded.

The Gemara recounts the attempt by Sanhedrin to subdue the Evil Inclination.

R' Yehudah in the name of Rav recounts an incident of a woman worshipping idolatry and her reaction to the method of worship of Pe'or.

A Baraisa is cited that further elaborates of the worship of Pe'or.

2) Pe'or and Markulis

The Gemara explains that defecating before Pe'or and throwing stones at Markulis are their method of worship even if the worshiper's intent is to degrade the idol.

A related incident is recorded.

3) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah teaches that one is stoned for worshipping Molech only if a child is given to their priests and passed through fire.

4) Molech

R' Avin infers from the Mishnah that Molech is not a form of idolatry.

A Baraisa presents a dispute whether Molech is a form of idolatry.

(Continued on page 2)

REVIEW and Remember

1. What happened when the yetzer hora for illicit relations was confined?
2. Is Molech a form of idolatry?
3. How do we know that one is exempt if he hands all of his children to Molech?
4. Why does the Torah mention kares in the context of idolatry three times?

Distinctive INSIGHT

Submitting all of one's children to the service of Molech

העביר כל זרעו פטור

The Mishnah teaches about the idolatry of Molech. The halacha is that one is liable if he submits one or some of his children to the officers of the idol, and they are then passed by the fire. If any of these factors is lacking, the worship is not complete, and one is not liable for this idolatrous act.

In the Gemara, Rav Acha the son of Rava teaches that if someone submits all of his children to the officer of Molech, he is not liable. The verse states that it is prohibited to give "from your children," which suggests that this violation is only in effect when some of one's children are submitted for this service, but not when it is all of one's children. The commentators all deal with this seemingly ironic technicality. Shouldn't giving all of one's children to the worship of idolatry be worse than giving only some of them? Why is it that submitting some of one's children is liable, but giving all of one's children is not?

Sefer Mitzvos Gedolos (Negative, #40) writes that when capital punishment is meted out, the sinner achieves an atonement for his wrongful act. In a case of submitting some of one's children to Molech, which is a serious crime, there is still a possibility for forgiveness. However, the sin of giving all of one's children to this idolatry is so severe, the message is that God is not willing to give this person an opportunity for atonement.

The Chinuch (Mitzvah 208) provides a different reason for this halacha. He explains that the manner of worship of Molech was that the priest who officiated promised and assured the father of the children that as a reward for submitting some of his children to the service the remaining children would succeed and be blessed by the god. The family would thereby be enticed to participate specifically when there were other children who would be the recipients of this reward. The Torah only holds a person liable when he worships the idolatry in the manner in which it was normally done, and submitting all of one's children to this ritual was not the normal manner.

Minchas Chinuch notes that there is a practical difference between the reasons we have seen. If we would find an idol whose manner of worship is to give all of one's children to it, and one does exactly that, according to the Chinuch he would be liable, because he has worshipped it in its normal manner. However, according to Sma"g, his crime is too grievous to be atoned, so he would theoretically be exempted from being punished by beis din. Minchas Chinuch adds that a person would be punished even according to Sma"g, because we cannot claim that we know the true reasons for the Torah's laws, and we cannot manipulate our reasoning and claim that the halacha does not apply in this case. ■

Today's Daf Digest is dedicated
 By Mr. & Mrs. B. Rottman in memory of their parents
 ר' יהוסף בן הרב פנחס שלום הלוי, ע"ה
 ומרת טויבא בת ר' דוב, ע"ה

HALACHAH Highlight

May converted siblings go into seclusion with one another?

אהני ביה דלא איגרי איניש בקרובתיה

What they accomplished with it is that it would not incite a person to sin with his relatives

The Gemara relates that Sanhedrin succeeded at blinding the eyes of the Yetzer Hora of illicit relations. Rashi¹ explains that this means that people no longer have a Yetzer Hora for illicit relations with their mother or sister. The Gemara Kiddushin (81b) rules that one is permitted to be in seclusion (יחוד) with his sister and Rashi² explains that this leniency is built on our Gemara's statement that the Yetzer Hora for illicit relations with a sister no longer exists. This forms the basis of an interesting question posed to the author of Teshuvos B'tzeil Hachochma. If a brother and sister convert are they permitted to be in seclusion with one another? Do we say that as converts it is as if they were just born and thus are no longer related to one another and seclusion is prohibited or do we say that the nullification of this Yetzer Hora applies since its basis is the natural bond that exists between brother and sister and this bond remains intact even after the siblings convert?

Teshuvos B'tzeil Hachochma³ ruled stringently. One of the reasons he gave was that the prohibition against seclusion is a Biblical prohibition and as such we can not apply the rationale for a mitzvah (דורש טעמא דקרא) to arrive at a leniency. Rav Moshe Feinstein⁴ ruled leniently and based his position on the assumption that Hashem infused into the nature of man a revulsion towards illicit relations with a sister. This revulsion has nothing to do with the halachic relationship between brother and sister; rather it is a function of the closeness they share having grown up together in the same home. This revulsion is not even something unique to Jews. Even gentiles are repulsed by relations

(Overview...continued from page 1)

Abaye aligns the positions of R' Elazar the son of R' Shimon and R' Chanina ben Antigonus.

Rava asserts that there is a point of dispute between these two Tannaim.

R' Yannai explains the intent of the Mishnah when it references passing the child to Molech.

A Baraisa is cited that supports this understanding.

R' Acha bar Yaakov rules that one who gives all of his children to Molech is exempt from liability.

Three inquiries related to liability for serving Molech are presented and the Gemara resolves one of these inquiries.

R' Yehudah rules that one is not liable for Molech unless he passes the child through the fire in the normal manner.

Abaye and Rava disagree about what is considered the normal manner.

A Baraisa is cited that supports Rava's position.

Ulla explains the rationale of R' Elazar the son of R' Shimon in the Baraisa and the theoretical exchange between him and Rabanan.

5) Kares for idolatry

R' Yosi the son of R' Chanina explains why kares is mentioned three times in reference to idolatry.

An alternative explanation is presented for the opinion that maintains that Molech is a form of idolatry.

The Gemara explains the rationale behind a possible fourth mention of kares in the context of idolatry. ■

between brother and sister. Therefore, it doesn't matter whether the siblings are halachically related to one another or not, either way seclusion is permitted. ■

1. רש"י ד"ה אהני.
2. רש"י קידושין פ"א: ד"ה ודר עם אמו.
3. שו"ת בצל החכמה ח"ד סי' י"ד.
4. שו"ת אג"מ אה"ע ח"ד סי' ס"ד. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The Seal of Hashem

"חותמו של הקב"ה אמת..."

Once, Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshischa, zt"l, demurred before the Chozeh of Lublin, zt"l. "I am nothing," he stated simply.

"Excellent!" replied the Chozeh.

"No, I don't mean it as a kind of avodah. I mean that I am really nothing."

"Well, it is certainly better to feel as though you are nothing from nothing than to feel that you are something from

something."

Suddenly Rav Bunim began to cry out, "Oy! But I am absolutely nothing!"

The Chozeh's final reply assuaged Rav Bunim. "You may feel like you are nothing but at least you go in the way of Hashem. In Sanhedrin 64 we find that the seal of Hashem is truth. If a person thinks that he achieves something on his own, he is living a lie. As our sages say, if Hashem does not help one in his daily struggle with his evil inclination, evil would prevail."¹

Rav Simcha Henschel of Alexander, zt"l, explained why Hashem's seal is specifically truth. "Why not use one of the attributes that are mentioned earlier in the

grouping of His thirteen middos, such as רחום or חנון? The answer is that every other attribute can be faked, in which case it is false. A person can show mercy where it is not warranted, or be gracious inappropriately. Usually he will then be cruel when it is proper to show mercy, like our sages tell us about Shaul and Agag.

"The only attribute that cannot be falsified is truth. The reason why is obvious. If one falsifies truth, it is not truth at all!"² ■

1. חשבה לטובה, ע"י קכ"א
2. שיח שרפי קודש, ח"א, ע"י ק"נ ■