

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Wheat that was worshiped (cont.)

The Gemara concludes its rejection of the suggestion that the question of using wheat for a Korban Mincha that was worshiped is an issue debated by Tannaim.

A second version of this exchange is presented.

2) Worshiping a palm tree

Reish Lakish inquires whether a lulav becomes disqualified from use for the mitzvah if the tree from which it was taken was worshiped.

Two explanations of this inquiry are presented.

The second explanation is unsuccessfully challenged and the initial inquiry is left unresolved.

3) Worshiping an animal

R' Pappa inquires whether wool taken from an animal that was worshiped is disqualified from use for techeles.

After demonstrating that this question has already been covered the Gemara explains that this question was posed to ask another question, namely, whether different parts of this animal may be used to make instruments used in the Beis Hamikdash.

This inquiry is also left unresolved.

Rabbah inquires whether one may use water for libations taken from a spring that was worshiped.

The question is explained and then left unresolved.

4) MISHNAH: The Mishnah discusses different consequences of a wall collapsing that belonged to a building of idolatry.

5) Rebuilding the collapsed wall

The Gemara questions the Mishnah's ruling that one should withdraw four amos when it allows the house of idolatry to expand.

Different answers are suggested and rejected until the Ge-

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REVIEW and Remember

1. What are the two ways to understand Reish Lakish's question related to one who worshipped a palm tree?

2. What is the main part of song; the music or the singing?

3. What type of tuma'ah does a collapsed wall of idolatry have?

4. What are the three categories of idolatrous stones?

Distinctive INSIGHT

A lulav from an asheira—the inquiry of Reish Lakish

יש דיחוי אצל מצוות

Reish Lakish presents a question regarding a lulav which is cut from an asheira tree. The Gemara clarifies the situation about which this question is relevant. If the tree was originally planted as an asheira tree, there is no question that it is prohibited from any benefit, even for secular use. The question is regarding a tree which was first planted and later worshiped. And even in this case the opinion of R' Yose b. Yehuda (35b) is that this type of tree is also prohibited from any benefit, so a lulav taken from such a tree would not be kosher. The remaining situation to probe is according to Rabbanan who disagree with R' Yose b. Yehuda, for they hold that a tree that was first planted and only later worshiped is not prohibited for secular use. Is mitzvah usage different, so that we should say that such a lulav would be objectionable for usage, or is it technically allowed to be used, just as it is permitted for secular use?

The opinion of Rava in Sukkah (31b) is that a lulav from an asheira tree should not be chosen to fulfill a mitzvah (לכתחילה), but if it was used, the mitzvah observance is satisfied. This is based upon the principle that the advantage and profit we gain with mitzvah fulfillment is not considered as personal benefit. Therefore, even if a lulav comes from a tree which is prohibited from our personal benefit, a mitzvah may be fulfilled with it. Tosafos (ד"ה מי מאיס) notes that the question of Reish Lakish could be understood even according to Rava's rule. Rava's ruling was said in reference to a case before the idolatrous nature of the lulav was canceled, where personal benefit is clearly still prohibited from the lulav. The question of Reish Lakish is in reference to a situation where the asheira tree had its idolatrous identity nullified. The question is whether this sinful history leaves a residual aspect of abhorrence which would disqualify the lulav from mitzvah usage לכתחילה.

Ramban explains that Reish Lakish disagrees with Rava's opinion in Sukkah. It seems from the words of Reish Lakish that there is a question whether the lulav would be "abhorrent, just as for holy purposes—כגבוה." This is not precisely the same text as we have (ours is "כלפי גבוה"), but according to Ramban it seems that the lulav would be disqualified just as an animal which has been worshiped may not be brought as an offering.

Rav Dimi explains that the question of Reish Lakish is whether an item which was disqualified from mitzvah usage may be reconsidered if the disqualification is removed. Rashi explains that the question is not only whether the lulav may be used now, during the holiday of Sukkos when the idolatrous nature of the lulav was nullified, but also whether it may ever be used, even in subsequent years (ידחה עולמית). ■

HALACHAH Highlight

A clock on an idolatrous house of worship

אמר רב המשתחוה לבית אסרו

Rav teaches that one who bows to a building in worship makes it prohibited

Teshuvus Minchas Yitzchok¹ was asked whether it is prohibited to look at a clock that is affixed to the top of an idolatrous house of worship. He first mentions that this same question was addressed to the author of Minchas Elazar² who concluded that it is permitted since the clock was not even affixed to the building to serve as an adornment to idolatry. The reason clocks were commonly placed atop such buildings is simply that they were the tallest buildings in town and could be seen from great distances away. Nevertheless, Minchas Elazar mentions that it is appropriate for one to be stringent. Minchas Yitzchok suggests another basis for leniency. The clock is an adornment to something that serves an idol – נוי לתשמישי עבודה זרה. The building in which idolatry is practiced is only an accessory to the idol, as explained in our Gemara, and the clock that is on the building just adorns that building and as such is too far removed from the idol for it to be prohibited from benefit.

Rav Moshe Shternbuch³ also addressed the issue and suggested that it should be prohibited since the use of the clock is a form of wanting the continued existence – רוצה בקיומו – of the idolatrous house of worship. Although there is no obligation to destroy idolatry that belongs to an idolater, nevertheless, it is prohibited to want its continued existence and using the clock affixed to the top of the building should violate that

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mara accepts a couple of solutions.

6) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah enumerates three categories of buildings used for idolatry.

7) **Bowing to a house**

Rav rules that a house becomes prohibited when someone bows to it.

The implication of this ruling is challenged.

The Gemara answers that according to Rav both rulings are correct and it is explained why there are three categories in the Mishnah rather than four.

8) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah enumerates three categories of idolatrous stones.

9) **Removing plaster from a stone**

R' Ami qualifies the Mishnah's ruling related to removing plaster from a stone.

This qualification is challenged and revised. ■

prohibition. He then suggests that use of the clock is not considered a form of רוצה בקיומו. In this case the clock is not directly associated with the idolatry; it is associated with the building and even if one were to remove all of the idolatry from the building the building would still stand and the clock would remain in place. In his conclusion he writes that one should make an effort to avoid looking at the clock and in the event that one inadvertently sees the time he should recite the following verse, "שקץ תשקצנו ותעב תתעבנו כי חרם הוא". ■

1. שו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ד סי' פ"ז.

2. שו"ת מנחת אלעזר ח"ב סי' ע"ג.

3. שו"ת תשובות והנהגות ח"ב סי' תי"ב. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Complex Reasoning

"וקמאי קמאי אזור..."

About a century ago the king and queen of Egypt took a stroll through their beautifully appointed garden when the queen suddenly decided to bathe in the spring that ran through the palace courtyard. The king was very unhappy about this idea and did his best to discourage it. When he saw that the queen was insistent he ordered her not to bathe in that water. She completely ignored him, in front of all of his officers.

After her bath, the king's officers re-

spectfully pointed out that the king could not just accept his will being defied publicly by his wife. It would be his duty to either punish her severely or explain why she did not deserve such punishment.

But this king was wiser than Achashverosh. He had a special council made up of an Islamic cleric, a priest, and the Chief Rabbi of Egypt. When he consulted this board, the rav, whose name was Rav Nochum decided to send an emergency messenger to Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin, zt"l, the Rav of Yerushalayim, to request advice as to how he should advise the king.

Rav Yehoshua Leib immediately replied that the king did not have to punish the queen. "In Avodah Zarah 47 we find

that if one bowed to a stream it does not become prohibited because the water he worshiped has been replaced with fresh water that was never worshiped. Why should the new water be prohibited?

"Similarly, the king ordered his queen not to bathe in the water that was in the spring. By the time the queen bathed there was different water in the spring. She therefore was not technically disobeying the king's order at all. This argument can serve as her defense."

When Rav Nochum told this reasoning to the king he was thrilled, since he did not wish to punish the queen. He made use of Rav Nochum's argument and then appointed him his chief advisor.¹ ■

1. טוביך בינעו, ח"א, ע"י ע"ד ■