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Avodah Zarah Daf 22

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***Jew and Idolater Sharecropping a Field Together –
regarding Shabbos***

The *Gemora* relates: There were two saffron-cultivators (*who together, were sharecroppers on a field*), one of whom was an idolater who worked the field on Shabbos, and the other was a Jew who worked it on Sunday. Rava declared that this partnership is permissible.

Ravina challenged this ruling from the following *braisa*: If a Jew and an idolater accepted a field as sharecroppers, the Jew cannot say to the idolater, “Take your share of the work and perform it on Shabbos and I will take my share on a weekday” (*as the partnership was entered into unconditionally, the obligation of working the field rests equally on both partners – every day, including Shabbos, they each should work half the day; the idolater, by performing the work on the entire day of Shabbos, is in effect, the agent of the Jew, and he is working for the Jew – which is forbidden*). If this condition was made originally (*at the time when they accepted the deal*), it is permitted (*for the Jew was never obligated to work the field on Shabbos*). If they calculate the profit at the end (*without stipulating the division of labor in the beginning*) it is forbidden (*for by stating that the idolater should receive the profit for Shabbos and the Jew will receive for Sunday, it is regarded as if the Jew hired the idolater as his agent for Shabbos, and the profit earned on that day is considered “Shabbos earnings,” which is forbidden for benefit*). [This *braisa* contradicts Rava’s ruling!?] Rava (*upon realizing that he ruled incorrectly*) was embarrassed. Subsequently, it was

revealed that the partners had stipulated that condition originally (*and Rava was correct in his ruling*).

Rav Geviahah of Bei Kasil had a different version of this incident: It was plants of *orlah* (*the fruit that grows from a tree; the first three years of its life, they are forbidden for all benefit*). The idolater ate the fruits during the forbidden years (*the first three years*) and the Jew ate them during the permitted years (*from the fourth year and on*). They came before Rava and he permitted it.

The *Gemora* asks: But didn’t Ravina challenge Rava from a *braisa* (*dealing with Shabbos; not orlah*)!?

The *Gemora* answers: It was cited in order to support it. [*The braisa stated that if the condition was made originally, it is permitted – we see from there that the Jew may derive benefit from the idolater’s work on Shabbos as long as he did not appoint him as an agent to work for him; so too regarding orlah, the labor may be divided in this manner – even though the Jew is deriving benefit from the orlah.*]

The *Gemora* asks: Then why did Rava get embarrassed?

The *Gemora* answers: That (*according to this version*) never happened at all.

The *Gemora* inquires: What would be the *halachah* if they never specified their division (*not in the beginning, not by the working, and not by the calculating*)?

The *Gemora* attempts to prove from the *braisa* that this



would be forbidden, but concludes that nothing can be learned from the *braisa* regarding this. (22a)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, LIFNEI EIDEIHEN

Mishna

One is forbidden from leaving any animal in an idolater's inn, since we suspect that he may sodomize the animal. A woman may not be secluded with them, for they are suspect in regard to immorality. No person should be secluded with them, for we suspect that they will murder a Jew. (22a)

Fear of Sodomy

The *Gemora* contradicts the *Mishna's* ruling (*that idolaters are suspected of committing bestiality*) with the following *braisa*: One may purchase cattle from idolaters for use as a sacrifice, and we do not fear that it sodomized a person, or had been sodomized by a person, or had been designated as an offering to idols, or had been worshipped (*which would all render the animal unfit for a korban*). Now it is understandable that we are not concerned about its having been designated as an offering to idols or having been worshipped, since if it had been so designated or worshipped, its owner would not have sold it to a Jew; but why are we not concerned that it perhaps sodomized a person, or had been sodomized by a person?

Rav Tachlifa quoted Rabbi Shila bar Avimi, who said in the name of Rav that an idolater will not sodomize his own animal, since he is concerned that it will become sterile.

The *Gemora* asks: This explains the case of a female animal, but what answer would you give regarding males?

Rav Kahana answered: They do not sodomize their male animals because it has a deteriorating effect on their flesh.

The *Gemora* asks from a *braisa*: One may purchase an

animal from any shepherd of theirs; should we not be concerned that perhaps he sodomized it (*for they do not own the animals*)?

The *Gemora* answers: Their shepherds would be afraid (*to sodomize animals that they are watching*) to forfeit their income (*should people find out*).

The *Gemora* asks: But let us consider a different *braisa* which has been taught: One should not entrust cattle to a shepherd of theirs. Why don't we assume that the shepherd would be afraid of forfeiting his income?

The *Gemora* answers: They fear detection by other idolaters since they know about each other (*that they do these things*), but they are not afraid of us, since we do not know about them.

Rabbah said: This is an illustration of the following popular proverb: As the stylus scores marble (*although marble is an extremely strong substance, it knows that the stylus can penetrate it, and it is therefore "scared" of it*), so does the slanderer detect another (*and is afraid of another slanderer, for he knows his cunning ways*).

The *Gemora* asks: Accordingly, we should not be allowed to purchase a male animal from an idolatress, for fear that she used it to sodomize herself!?

The *Gemora* answers: She would be afraid of doing so, for the animal would cling to her (*and then the public would know*).

The *Gemora* asks: But let us consider then the *braisa* which Rav Yosef taught: A widow should not raise dogs (*for she will desire to commit bestiality with them*), nor should she provide lodgings for a Rabbinical student. Now it is understandable in the case of a student, as she might count on his modesty (*that the matter will not become public knowledge*), but in the case of a dog, why not say that she



would be afraid of the dog clinging to her?

The *Gemora* answers: Since it would also cling to her if she would throw it a piece of raw meat, people will say that it is because of the raw meat being given to it that it follows her.

The *Gemora* asks: Why do we not allow female animals to be secluded with female idolaters (*where there is no possibility of sodomy*)?

Mar Ukva bar Chama answers: It is because idolaters consort with their fellows' wives, and should one by chance not find her in, and find the Jew's cattle there, he might sodomize it instead. You may also say that even if he should find her in, he might sodomize the animal anyway, as a master has said: Idolaters prefer the cattle of Israelites to their own wives, for Rabbi Yochanan said: When the serpent seduced Eve, he infused impurity into her.

The *Gemora* asks: If that is so, the same should apply to the Jewish people!?

The *Gemora* answers: When Israel stood at Sinai, that impurity was eliminated, but the impurity of idolaters, who did not stand at Sinai, did not cease. (22a – 22b)

Birds

The *Gemora* inquired: Do these *halachos* apply to birds as well?

The *Gemora* resolves this from that which Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel in the name of Rabbi Chanina: I saw an idolater buy a goose in the market, sodomize it, strangle it, roast it, and eat it.

And Rabbi Yirmiyah of Difti said: I saw an Arab who bought an animal thigh and he pierced a hole in it for the purpose of sodomy. He sodomized it, roasted it and ate it. (22b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Removal of Impurities

The *Gemora* stated that the Jewish People who stood at Har Sinai had the impurities removed from them, and idolaters who did not stand at Har Sinai did not have impurities removed from them.

With regard to converts to Judaism, the *Gemora* (*Shabbos* 146a) states that even though the converts themselves did not stand at Har Sinai, their *Mazal*, i.e. the heavenly advocate, was there, as it is said: *those who are standing here with us today before Hashem our G-d, and those who are not here etc. with us today.*

In the *Sefer Shalmei Todah* it is brought in the name of the Chofetz Chaim that the *Ger Tzedek*, righteous convert, Avraham ben Avraham, said in the name of the Vilna Gaon, that when Hashem offered the nations of the world an opportunity to accept the Torah and the gentiles questioned what was written in the Torah, there were actually individual gentiles who accepted the Torah. Although no nation formally accepted the Torah, individuals from some nations did accept the Torah, and it is these gentiles that the *Gemora* refers to when stating that their *Mazal* was witness to the Revelation at Sinai. In subsequent generations, these souls converted to Judaism.