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Avodah Zarah Daf 6

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Noach's Animals

Rabbi Elozar had stated: How do we know that an animal that is missing a limb cannot be brought as a *korban* (to Hashem) by a gentile? The verse says: *From all of the living (animals), from all flesh, two from each etc.* The Torah indicated that one must bring a *korban* from an animal whose limbs are alive (i.e. intact).

The *Gemora* asks: But this verse is needed to teach us that an animal which is a *tereifah* (an animal with a physical defect that will cause its death; it is forbidden to be eaten even if it was slaughtered properly) should not be brought into the Ark!?

The *Gemora* answers: This is derived from the verse: *to keep seed alive (for a tereifah cannot beget offspring).*

The *Gemora* asks: This is true only according to the opinion that a *tereifah* cannot give birth, but according to the opinion who holds that a *tereifah* can give birth, what is there to say?

The *Gemora* answers: It may be derived from the verse: (Noach was commanded to take animals into the Ark) *to be alive with you* – this means that they should be similar to you (and since Noach wasn't a *tereifah*, he should not bring in an animal that is a *tereifah*; for although they give birth, they are not healthy, and not so fit for the continuance of the world).

The *Gemora* asks: But perhaps Noach himself was a *tereifah*?

The *Gemora* answers: That cannot be, for it is written regarding Noach that he was *complete*.

The *Gemora* asks: But perhaps the Torah means that he was “complete” in his conduct with people?

The *Gemora* answers: That is known from the fact that it is written about him that he was *righteous*.

The *Gemora* asks: But perhaps the Torah means that he was “complete” in his conduct, and “righteous” in his deeds?

The *Gemora* answers: Noach could not have been a *tereifah*, for if Noach was indeed a *tereifah*, would the Torah have instructed him take in animals similarly affected, and keep out the whole ones (what would be the logic in that)?

The *Gemora* asks: Now that we derive this from the verse *with you*, why do we need the phrase *to keep seed alive*?

The *Gemora* answers: *With you* might have meant that he should bring in animals that would just keep him company, even if they are old or sterile (and cannot give birth), therefore the Torah stated *to keep seed alive* (to indicate to us that the purpose of bringing in these animals was to repopulate the world, and therefore, old and sterile animals would also be excluded). (5b – 6a)

Three Days

The *Gemora* inquires: When the *Mishna* stated that we are not allowed to conduct business with idolaters three days



before their festivals, do the “three days” include the day of the festival itself (*and the prohibition applies two days before the festival, and the day of the festival*), or perhaps, the three days do not include the day of the festival (*and the prohibition applies three days before the festival, and the day of the festival*)?

The *Gemora* attempts to resolve this from the *Mishna* below: Rabbi Yishmael said: On the three days preceding (*the day of the festival*) and the three following days it is forbidden. Now if it should enter your mind that the three days are inclusive of the festival itself, Rabbi Yishmael must be taken to include the day of the festival both in the preceding and the following days! [*He should have said that the prohibition applies for three days preceding, and the two following days!?*]

The *Gemora* rejects this proof: It is only because he uses the words “*the three preceding*” that he also states “*the three following*” (*even though he only means two days*).

The *Gemora* attempts to resolve this from the following teaching: Rav Tachlifa bar Avdimi said in the name of Shmuel: According to Rabbi Yishmael, it should always be forbidden to conduct business with idolaters because of Sunday (*for pagans had a sun-worshipping festival on that day every week*)! Now, if the festival is included in the three days, there would still remain Wednesday and Thursday on which dealing with them in business would be permitted!?

The *Gemora* rejects the proof, for according to Rabbi Yishmael, there was no inquiry that the period does not include the festivals themselves. It is only according to the Rabbis’ opinion that I inquire as to what is the law.

Ravina said: It can be resolved from the following *Mishna*: These are the festivals of idolaters: Calenda, Saturnalia and Krateisim. And Rav Chanin bar Rava explained that Calenda lasts for eight days after the winter solstice, and Saturnalia is celebrated for the eight days preceding the winter

solstice; and as a mnemonic (*to remember which one is when*) take the verse: *Later and earlier you formed me.* [*The festival that follows (is later) than the solstice is mentioned first in the Mishna, just as the word “later” is mentioned before “earlier” in the verse.*] Now, if you think that the periods are inclusive of the festivals, then there are times that the prohibition would last ten days (so why does the *Mishna* only say three)?

The *Gemora* deflects this proof, for perhaps the *Tanna* considers the whole Calenda as one day.

Rav Ashi attempts to resolve the inquiry from the *Mishna* itself, which stated: Preceding the festivals of idol worshippers for three days etc. Now were it to mean that the three days includes the festival itself, it should have said: Regarding the festivals of idol worshippers for three days etc. From the words actually used in the *Mishna*, it may be proven that the period is exclusive of the festival. This is indeed conclusive. (6a)

Reason for the Prohibition

The *Gemora* inquires: What is the reason for the prohibition? Is it because of the profit (*any profit they may derive might cause the idolater to give praise to his idols and utter his deity’s name: and a Jew is prohibited from even causing someone to do that*) or perhaps it is based upon the verse: You shall not put a stumbling block before the blind (*and if the Jew will sell him something that can be sacrificed, he is causing the idolater to stumble*)?

The *Gemora* notes that a difference would affect a case where an idolater has an animal of his own. If you say that one must not conduct business with him because of profit, here, too, there is profit; if, however, you say it is because of placing a stumbling block before the blind, here, then, he has an animal of his own (*and since he does not need the Jew’s animal, it would be permitted*).



The *Gemora* asks: And if he has his own, is there no prohibition? But it was taught in a *braisa*: Rabbi Nassan said: How do we know that one should not pass a cup of wine to a *nazir* or a limb from a living animal to a Noahite? It is written: *You shall not place a stumbling block before the blind*. Now here, too, were it not passed to him, he could take it himself (*for the forbidden item belongs to him*), yet the one who gives it to him is guilty of placing a stumbling block before the blind!?

The *Gemora* answers: Here we may be dealing with a case of two people on opposite sides of a river (*where if it were not passed to him, he would not be able to get it by himself*). This can be proven from the words used in the teaching: “one should not pass etc.,” and it does not say: “one should not give.” This indeed is a proof. (6a – 6b)

Proceeds

The *Gemora* inquires: What is the *halachah* if one did conduct business (*during the three days before their festival*)? Rabbi Yochanan says: The proceeds of the transaction are forbidden. Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says: The proceeds of the transaction are permitted.

Rabbi Yochanan cited the following *braisa* as a challenge against Rish Lakish: As to the festivals of idolaters, if one conducts any business with them, the proceeds are forbidden. Does not this refer to the three days preceding the festivals?

The *Gemora* deflects the proof: No! It is referring exclusively to the festival itself.

Others say that Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish asked Rabbi Yochanan from that *braisa*: As to the festivals of idolaters, if one conducts any business with them, the proceeds are forbidden. Does this not mean that the proceeds are only forbidden if the transaction was done on the festival itself; but transactions which occurred prior to the festival would be permitted!?

The *Gemora* answers: The *Tanna* refers to the days before the festival as “their festivals.”

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* in support of Rish Lakish: The prohibition of conducting business with them prior to their festivals only applies to items that will endure until the festival, but not to items that will perish; and even in the case of items that will endure until the festival, if the transaction is made, the proceeds are permitted.

Rabbi Zevid taught a *braisa* from the academy of Rabbi Oshaya: An item that is perishable may be sold to them, but may not be bought from them (*for the idolater will thank his deity that he was able to sell this item before it deteriorated*).

A certain heretic once sent on his festival day a Caesarean *dinar* to Rabbi Yehudah Nesiah, while Rish Lakish happened to be sitting before him. Rabbi Yehudah Nesiah said to him, “What shall I do? If I accept it, he will go and praise his deity for it (*that a distinguished person accepted a gift from him*); if I do not accept it, it will promote animosity towards us (*and he may cause harm to the Jews*)!” Rish Lakish answered him, “Take it and throw it into a pit in the idolater’s presence.” Rabbi Yehudah Nesiah asked him, “But this will certainly promote hatred towards us!” Rish Lakish told him, “I meant that you should do it backhandedly (*so he should not feel offended*).” (6b)

Explaining the Mishna

The *Mishna* had stated: It is forbidden to lend them something or to borrow something from them.

The *Gemora* asks: It is understandable why it is forbidden to lend to them, for that benefits them; but surely borrowing from them (*should be permitted, for it*) is only diminishing their assets!?! [*Will they then go and praise their deity?*]



Abaye answers: The Rabbis decreed that borrowing from them is forbidden as a safeguard against lending to them.

Rava answers: All of these decrees are forbidden on account of their going to offer thanks to their deity (*which they will do even when the Jew borrows from them – this is because they are pleased that the Jew requires their assistance*).

The *Mishna* had stated: It is forbidden to lend them money (*without interest*) or to borrow money from them.

The *Gemora* asks: It is understandable why it is forbidden to lend to them, for that benefits them; but surely borrowing from them (*should be permitted, for it*) is only diminishing their assets!?! [*Will they then go and praise their deity?*]

Abaye answers: The Rabbis decreed that borrowing from them is forbidden as a safeguard against lending to them.

Rava answers: All of these decrees are forbidden on account of their going to offer thanks to their deity (*which they will do even when the Jew borrows from them – this is because they are pleased that the Jew requires their assistance*).

The *Mishna* had stated: It is forbidden to pay back a loan to them or to receive payment for a loan from them.

The *Gemora* asks: It is understandable why it is forbidden to repay them, for that benefits them; but surely collecting payment from them (*should be permitted, for it*) is only diminishing their assets!?! [*Will they then go and praise their deity?*]

Abaye answers: The Rabbis decreed that collecting payment from them is forbidden as a safeguard against repaying them.

Rava answers: All of these decrees are forbidden on account of their going to offer thanks to their deity (*which they will*

do even when they pay back their debt – this is because they are pleased that they are free from debt). (6b)

Rejoicing Later

Rabbi Yehudah had stated: One may collect a loan from them, as this causes them distress. They said to him: Even though he is distressed now, he will be happy later (*that his debt is all paid up*).

The *Gemora* asks: Does Rabbi Yehudah not agree to this logic? But it was taught in a *braisa*: Rabbi Yehudah says: She may not plaster (*with lime*) her skin (*during Chol Hamoed*) because it is a defacement to her (*even though, it will improve her appearance when the lime is removed; presently it cause her grief*); however, he agrees with lime that can be peeled off, for although it causes her grief now, she will rejoice later (*when it is removed*).

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak answers: Leave the *halachos* of Chol Hamoed alone, for those things are all permitted because even though it causes grief now, they will rejoice later.

Ravina answers: With regard to repayment, an idolater is always distressed. (6b)

DAILY MASHAL

Avodah Zarah

Though the Kenesses HaGedolah banished the evil inclination for idolatry (Yoma 69b), Chazal said that someone who commits certain sins is as though he worships idolatry (see Seder Ya'akov, p. 340, for a list of 28 transgressions of that type). It seems, asserts Seder Ya'akov, that just as learning tractate Kerisos is a segulah for rectifying sins punishable by kareis (Likutei Halachos, Kerisos, in the name of the Ari z"l), learning Avodah zarah is a segulah to rectify those transgressions described as being equivalent to idolatry.