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Avodah Zarah Daf 27

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and may their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

It has been stated: From where could it be deduced that circumcision performed by an idol worshiper is invalid? — Daru bar Pappa said in the name of Rav: [From the words:] And as for you, you shall keep my covenant; while Rabbi Yochanan [deduces it from the words] Himmol yimmol – circumcise, he shall be circumcised.

What practical difference is there between these two? — The case of a circumcised Arab or a circumcised Gibeonite: According to the one who relies on ‘Circumcise, he shall be circumcised,’ [the qualification] is there, but according to the one who relies on ‘You shall keep my covenant,’ it is not there.

The Gemora asks: But is such a one qualified according to the one who relies on ‘Circumcise, he shall be circumcised’! Have we not learned: [He who says], “I vow not to enjoy anything belonging to uncircumcised persons,” may enjoy anything of uncircumcised Israelites, but must not enjoy anything of circumcised idol worshipers. This proves that idol worshipers who undergo circumcision are still designated as uncircumcised!

The Gemora answers: We must therefore say that they differ in the case of an Israelite whose brothers died in consequence of circumcision, so that he was not circumcised: according to the one who relies on ‘You shall keep my covenant,’ the qualification is there; while according to the one who relies on ‘Circumcise, he shall be circumcised,’ it is not there.

The Gemora asks: And is such a one not qualified according to the one who relies on ‘Circumcise, he shall be circumcised’? Have we not learned: [He who says,] “I vow not to enjoy anything belonging to circumcised persons, must not enjoy of uncircumcised Israelites, but may enjoy of circumcised idol

worshippers. This proves that Israelites who are not circumcised are designated as ‘circumcised’!

The Gemora answers: We must therefore say that the case wherein they differ is that of a woman. According to the one who relies on ‘You shall keep my covenant,’ the qualification is not there, since a woman is not subject to the observance, while according to the one who relies on ‘Circumcise, he shall be circumcised,’ the qualification is there, for a woman should be classed among the ‘circumcised.’

The Gemora asks: But does anyone hold that a woman is not [qualified to perform circumcision]? Doesn’t scripture say: Then Tziporah took a flint?

The Gemora answers: Read into it, she caused to be taken.

The Gemora asks: But it also says: And she cut off!

The Gemora answers: Read into it, and she caused it to be cut off, by asking another person, a man, to do it. Or you may say it means that she only began and Moshe came and completed it.

MISHNAH. We may allow them (idol worshipers) to heal us when the healing relates to money, but not personal healing; nor should we have our hair cut by them in any place; these are the words of Rabbi Meir; but the sages said: in a public place it is permitted, but not when the two persons are alone.

GEMARA. What is healing relating to money and what is personal healing? Shall we say that healing relating to money means for payment and personal healing free? Then the



Mishnah should have said: We may allow them to heal us for payment but not free! Healing relating to money must therefore mean where it is not life threatening and personal healing where there is danger.

The Gemora asks: But hasn't Rav Yehudah said: Even a scar over the puncture caused by bleeding should not be healed by them?

The Gemora provides a different explanation: Healing relating to money therefore relates to one's cattle, and personal healing to one's own body, about which Rav Yehudah said that even a scar over the puncture caused by bleeding should not be healed by them.

Rav Chisda said in the name of Mar Ukva: But if [an idol worshipers physician on being consulted] says to one that such and such potion is good for him and such and such potion is bad for him, it is permitted [to follow his advice], for he will think that he is merely asking him, and just as he is asking him so he will also ask others, so that that man [by giving wrong advice] would have his reputation damaged.

Rabbah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan [and some say Rav Chisda in the name of Rabbi Yochanan]: In the case where it is doubtful whether [the patient] will live or die, we must not allow them to heal; but if he will certainly die, we may allow them to heal. 'Die [etc.]! Surely there is still momentary life [to be considered]? Momentary life is not to be considered.

What authority have you for saying that momentary life is not to be considered? — The scriptural words: If we say: we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. Now there is momentary life [which they might forfeit]! This implies that momentary life is not to be considered.

An objection was raised: No man should have any dealings with Minim (people who worship idols obsessively), nor is it allowed to be healed by them even [in risking] momentary life. It once happened to Ben Dama the son of Rabbi Yishmael's

sister that he was bitten by a serpent and Yaakov, a native of Kefar Sechaniah, came to heal him, but Rabbi Yishmael did not let him; whereupon Ben Dama said, "My brother Rabbi Yishmael, let him, so that I may be healed by him: I will even cite a verse from the Torah that he is to be permitted"; but he did not manage to complete his saying, when his soul departed and he died. Whereupon Rabbi Yishmael exclaimed: Happy are you Ben Dama for your body is pure and your soul likewise left you in purity; nor have you transgressed the words of your colleagues, who said: He who breaks through a fence, a serpent shall bite him?

The Gemora answers: It is different with the teaching of Minim, for it attracts (followers), and one [having dealings with them] may be drawn after them.

The Gemora asks: The master said: Nor have you transgressed the words of your colleagues, who said: He who breaks through a fence, a serpent shall bite him. But a serpent did indeed sting him!

The Gemora answers: The bite of the serpent [which is inflicted upon those transgressing the words] of the Rabbis is such as can never be cured.

The Gemora asks: Now, what is it that he (Ben Dama) might have said?

The Gemora answers: He shall live by them, but not die by them.

The Gemora asks: And Rabbi Yishmael?

The Gemora answers: This is only meant when in private, but not in public; for it has been taught: Rabbi Yishmael used to say: From where can we deduce that if they say to one, "Worship the idol and you will not be killed," that he may worship it so as not to be killed? Because Scripture says: He shall live by them, but not die by them; you might take this to mean even in public, therefore Scripture says: And you shall not desecrate my Holy Name.