

14 Adar 5778
March 1, 2018



Avodah Zarah Daf 45

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

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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

Mishna

If idolaters worship the mountains and the hills, they (*the mountains and the hills*) are permitted (*for benefit*), but benefit from whatever is upon them (*such as adornments of silver and gold*) is forbidden, as it is written: *You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them.*

Rabbi Yosi HaGelili says: ...*their gods upon the mountains...*, but the mountains are not their gods; ...*their gods upon the hills*, but the hills are not their gods.

Why is the *asheirah* (*a tree that is worshipped as an idol*) forbidden? It is because man’s handiwork is involved, and whatever involves man’s handiwork is forbidden.

Rabbi Akiva said: I will explain and discuss before you: Wherever you find a high mountain and a raised hill and a green tree - know that an idol is there. (45a)

Idolatrous Trees

The *Gemora* asks: What is the difference between Rabbi Yosi HaGelili’s opinion and that of the *Tanna Kamma*?

Rami bar Chama answers in the name of Rish Lakish: The difference between them would be regarding the *halachah* if the covering of the mountain is like the mountain. The *Tanna Kamma* would hold that it is not, and therefore forbidden; whereas Rabbi Yosi HaGelili maintains that the coverings have the same status as the mountain.

Rav Sheishes says that they both hold that the coverings do not have the same status as the mountain (*and they are therefore*

prohibited); they disagree regarding a tree which had been planted (*without any idolatrous intention*) and was subsequently worshipped. The *Tanna Kamma* holds that a tree which had been planted and was subsequently worshipped is permitted, whereas Rabbi Yosi HaGelili maintains that such a tree is prohibited.

The *Gemora* explains how it is deduced that Rabbi Yosi HaGelili is of this opinion: He stated in the latter part of the *Mishna*: Why is the *asheirah* (*a tree that is worshipped as an idol*) forbidden? It is because man’s handiwork is involved, and whatever involves man’s handiwork is forbidden. And what does he mean to include with the phrase, “whatever involves man’s handiwork”? It surely includes the case of a tree which had been planted and was subsequently worshipped.

The *Gemora* notes that Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah holds the same way, for it was taught in a *braisa*: Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah says: Since it is stated...*their gods upon the mountains...*, but the mountains are not their gods; ...*their gods upon the hills*, but the hills are not their gods, I might have similarly understood the next phrase: ...*their gods under every green tree*, but not the green tree itself is not their god (*which would therefore mean that trees are not prohibited as an idol*); therefore the Torah states: *And burn their asheirahs with fire.* [Evidently, even a tree which had been planted without any idolatrous intention and was subsequently worshipped is forbidden.]

The *Gemora* asks: Why, then, does the Torah write *under every green tree*?

The *Gemora* answers: This is required in accordance with the teaching of Rabbi Akiva; for Rabbi Akiva said: I will explain and

discuss before you: Wherever you find a high mountain and a raised hill and a green tree - know that an idol is there. [This is teaching the Jewish people, upon entering Eretz Yisroel, where the idols can be located, so they can be destroyed.]

The Gemora explains what the *Tanna Kamma* and Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah learn from the following verses:

| Verse | <i>Tanna Kamma</i> | Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah |
|--|---|--|
| <i>And burn their asheirahs with fire</i> | A tree planted for idolatry becomes prohibited | A tree planted for idolatry becomes prohibited |
| <i>And their asheirahs you shall cut</i> | They should cut down all idolatrous objects, then conquer Eretz Yisroel, then eradicate everything remaining (even the roots) | A tree which had been planted (without any idolatrous intention) and was subsequently worshipped is forbidden (the initial growth is permitted; the part that grew after it was worshipped is forbidden) |
| <i>Destroy, you shall destroy</i> | An idolatrous object must be uprooted | They should cut down all idolatrous objects, then conquer Eretz Yisroel, then eradicate everything remaining (even the roots) |
| <i>You shall obliterate their name from that place</i> | Give an idol a derogatory name | An idolatrous object must be uprooted |

(45b – 46a)

DAILY MASHAL

Napoleon's Tactics

Rabbi Bunim of Pshischa said that Napoleon changed the method of warfare. According to the old method, an army would attack a town unremittingly until its total defeat. Napoleon attacked a town, left his forces there and went on to attack others. From this, he said, we should learn how to serve Hashem. We shouldn't toil on just one thing for a long time till we conquer it but rather start at one point, set up a guard and go on.

The Gerer Rebbe zt"l, author of *Imrei Emes*, said that this method is explicitly stated in our *sugya*: "The attack on idols takes precedence over the conquest of Eretz Yisroel; the conquest of Eretz Yisroel takes precedence over the eradication of idolatry." We attack, go on to conquer and return to finally eradicate the idolatry.

Tomorrow

"Haman called for his friends and for his wife, Zeresh, and he told them about his wealth, his many children, and that the king made him great... And Haman said, 'Esther didn't invite anyone to the party she made for the king besides from me, and also tomorrow, she invited me with the king...' (5:10-11). Haman was obviously very proud of the honor he was receiving, but why didn't he suspect that Esther was scheming against him?

Reb Meilech answers that when Haman heard Esther say 'machar,' that she wants to speak with the king tomorrow (see Esther 5:8) Haman wasn't afraid anymore. Esther was speaking like Amalek, who say 'machar,' "do it tomorrow, and not today." As it states, "go fight a war against Amalek who always procrastinates and says 'machar,' I'll do something tomorrow, but not today" (17:9). Since Esther spoke the language of Amalek, Haman didn't suspect that she was plotting against him.

