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Avodah Zarah Daf 41

Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

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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

WHICH IMAGES ARE FORBIDDEN?

Rabbah says: They argue about statues in villages, but all permit statues in big cities. This is because they are for beauty, and not to be Ne'evadim (worshipped).

The *Gemora* objects: No one would say that statues in villages are for beauty (all agree that they are to be Ne'evadim, and are forbidden)!

The *Gemora* corrects itself: Rather, they argue about statues in big cities, but all forbid statues in villages.

The *Mishna* had stated: *Chachamim* say, the only forbidden statues... If he holds a staff (or bird or ball), this shows that he rules over the entire world like over a staff (or bird or ball).

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Additionally, they said that if he holds a sword, crown or ring, it is forbidden. Originally, *Chachamim* understood that a sword indicates a mere bandit, a crown indicates a craftsman that makes crowns, and a ring indicates that he is the king's messenger. Later, *Chachamim* understood that a sword indicates that he kills whomever he wants, a crown indicates kingship, and a ring indicates that his seal is supreme in the world.

The *Mishna* had stated: Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel says...

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Even if he holds a pebble or chip of wood (it is forbidden).

Rav Ashi asks: If excrement is in his hand, what is the law? Does it mean that the whole world is lowly in his eyes, like excrement? Or, does it mean that the whole world looks down on him, like excrement?

This question is not resolved. (41a)

FRAGMENTS OF IDOLS

The *Mishna* states: If one finds fragments of images, they are permitted. If one finds a form of a hand or leg, it is forbidden, for such forms are Ne'evadim.

Shmuel said: Even if one finds fragments of idols (the idols were definitely Ne'evadim), they are permitted.

The *Gemora* asks: The *Mishna* permits fragments of images (it is doubtful if the images were ever Ne'evadim). This implies that fragments of idols are forbidden!

The *Gemora* answers: Fragments of idols are also permitted. The *Mishna* taught fragments of images due to the latter part which states: If one finds a form of a hand or leg, it is forbidden, for such forms are Ne'evadim. (Had the former part taught fragments of idols, it would imply that the latter part forbids only a form of a hand or leg that came from an idol, but not from an image.)

The *Mishna* had stated: If one finds a form of a hand or leg, it is forbidden, for such forms are Ne'evadim.

The *Gemora* asks: Even though it is a fragment, it is



forbidden!

Shmuel answers: The case is, it rests on a base (Rashi - it was fixed there, to be Ne'evad; Tosfos - it is not a fragment. It was made that way.)

Rabbi Yochanan said: If an idol broke by itself, it is forbidden. Rish Lakish says: It is permitted.

The *Gemora* explains: Rabbi Yochanan forbids, for the owner did not nullify it. Rish Lakish permits, for presumably the owner nullified it. He sees that it could not save itself, so he realizes that it cannot help him!

Rabbi Yochanan asks: "V'Rosh Dagon u'Shteitl Kapos Yadav Kerusos El ha'Miftan... Lo Yidrechu Kohanei Dagon... Al Miftan" (even though the idol was mutilated, they still revere it)!

Rish Lakish answers: They do not consider it mutilated. They thought that it moved (parts of) itself!

The *Gemora* challenges Rish Lakish from our *Mishna*: If one finds fragments of images, they are permitted. The inference is: Fragments of idols are forbidden!

The *Gemora* answers: No. Rather, it implies that complete images are forbidden. The *Mishna* is like Rabbi Meir.

The *Gemora* challenges Rabbi Yochanan: We can learn from Rabbi Meir to *Chachamim*! Even though Rabbi Meir forbids complete images, he permits broken images. Presumably, the same principle applies to *Chachamim*. Even though they forbid complete idols, they permit broken idols!

The *Gemora* answers: No. Rabbi Meir permits broken images due to a double doubt. Perhaps the images were never Ne'evadim, and even if they were Ne'evadim, perhaps the owner nullified them. An idol was definitely Ne'evad (and forbidden), and we do not know if the owner nullified

it. A doubt does not permit what was definitely forbidden! (41a – 41b)

CAN A 'SAFEK HETER' PERMIT WHAT WAS DEFINITELY FORBIDDEN?

The *Gemora* asks: Is it really true that a doubt does not permit what was definitely forbidden?! The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: If a *chaver* (one trustworthy about tithing) died and left produce, even if they were harvested that day, we assume that he tithed them. Even though they were definitely *tevel*, and we are in doubt whether he tithed them, we permit them!

The *Gemora* answers: There, he definitely tithed them, like Rabbi Chanina Chuza'ah taught. There is a presumption that anything one gets from a *chaver* was tithed.

An alternative answer: The produce was not definitely forbidden. Perhaps he did like Rabbi Oshaya's scheme; for he said: One may scheme, and bring produce into his house with the chaff, and his animal (or himself, if he does not eat in a fixed way) may eat without tithing. (41b)

DAILY MASHAL

The Cane That Was Long on One Side

A Hungarian rabbi received an unusual gift from the king: a cane of pure silver topped with a golden cross. Having no choice, the rabbi took the cane and removed the cross. A while later, the rabbi came to the king and the latter was shocked to see that the cross was removed.

"Why did you remove the cross?" asked the king.

"Because the cane was too long and I had to shorten it."

"And why didn't you shorten it from the other end?"

"Because," smiled the rabbi, "the lower end was the right size. It reached exactly down to the ground but the upper end was too high." (*Eish Das*)

