



Volume 10. Issue 37

Sales Before the Festival

This week we begin *masechet Avodah Zarah* whose focus is on the laws surrounding the prohibition of idol worship. The first *Mishnah* relates to dealings with idol worshippers that are prohibited three days prior to their festivals. The first of these is “*laset ve'latef*” – business dealings. We shall attempt to analyse the reason for the prohibition.

The *Gemara* (6a) probes the reason and two possibilities are suggested. One is that as a result of the business dealing, the idol worshiper will be happy, crediting his god and he will thank his god on his festival. This result would be a violation of the prohibition, “...the name of the gods of others you shall not mention, nor shall your mouth cause it to be heard” (*Shemot* 23:13). Alternatively the *Gemara* suggest that the concern is over the potential violation of “...and you shall not place a stumbling block before the blind...” (*lifnei iver*) (*Vayikra* 19:14) This would occur if, e.g. he sold an animal to the idol worshiper thereby making it possible for him to offer a sacrifice. A practical difference noted by the *Gemara* is if the idol worshiper already had an animal. According to the first understanding there is still a concern that he will thank his god as a result of the purchase. However since he already has an animal, there would be no violation of *lifnei iver*. The *Gemara* does not appear to resolve the question.

Rashi, commenting on our *Mishnah*, explains that the concern is due to the joy he will derive from the sale. *Rashi* comments later (12b) that the prohibition is specifically selling and not buying. He explains that there is joy in the purchase of the product. When one however is forced to sell their property it is not

necessarily joyous, so purchasing from them would be permitted. The *Ritva* (13a) however argues that there is also pleasure when selling property due to the profits gained and the money made available. Indeed the *Tosfot* (12b) understood that *Rashi* ultimately held that both forms of transaction were prohibited.

The *Rabeinu Tam* (cited by *Ritva* 2a) however maintains that since the *Gemara* did not resolve the question regarding the reason for the prohibition the more lenient answer is adopted. In other words, the concern is *lifnei iver* and it is only prohibited to sell an idol worshiper something that he can offer before his idol. Due to the give-and-take nature of business, a regular transaction however is not grounds for concern that he will thank his idol about that particular sale or purchase.

Note that according to *Rabeinu Tam* the prohibition of *lifnei iver* is only regarding selling. The *Ritva* adds that the language of the *Mishnah* “*laset v'latef*” does not mean buying and selling, but more simply taking the money and handing over the product (which is part and parcel of sell). The *Tosfot* (6a) however suggest that *lifnei iver* could perhaps apply also to purchasing from them since money is made available to them for idol worship. The *Ritva* however rejects this possibility for a number of reasons. Firstly the money itself cannot be offered or be used to directly decorate the idol. Secondly they are not prohibited from using the money to pay the priests. Finally even if the money would be used to purchase an animal for sacrifice it is once step removed – *lifnei de'lifnei* – and not considered a violation of *lifnei iver*.

Yisrael Yitzchak Bankier

Revision Questions

עדינות ז' ד' ח' ז'

- What did R' Tzadok testify regarding *Zochalin* that pass over the "aleh" of a nut? (Explain) (ז': ז')
 - What is a *kalal shel chatat* and what did R' Yehoshua and R' Yakim testify regarding if it is place on top of a *sheret*? (ז': ז')
 - Who disagrees with the previous law? (ז': ז')
 - If someone accepted two terms of *nezirut* what, *bedi'eved* could be the minimum length of his *nezirut*? (ז': ז')
 - Explain the debate regarding what is done with the offspring of a *shlamim* offering. (What case did R' Papyas bring as support?) (ז': ז')
 - What did R' Yehoshua and R' Papyas testify regarding *Aruchot shel Nachtomim*? (ז': ז')
 - What other case was debated in a similar manner? (ז': ז')
 - How late did R' Yehoshua and R' Papyas maintain that *Beit Din* could declare a year a leap year and how did they differ from the *Chachamim*? (ז': ז')
 - What other innovation did they present regarding the law in the previous question? (ז': ז')
 - About what two items did *Menachem ben Signai* testify in opposition to the *Chachamim*, one of which *tameh* and the other *tahor*? (ז': ז')
 - About which four things did R' *Nechunya ben Gudgedah* testify? (ז': ז')
 - How does R' *Yehoshua ben Beteira* rule regarding the earlier debate (5:1) between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* concerning the blood of a *neveilah*? (ז': ז')
 - Regarding what does R' *Shimon ben Beteira* rule:
"נגע טמא בקצתו טמא כולו"
and how does R' *Akiva* expand this rule? (ז': ז')
 - Which one of R' *Nechunya's* laws (7:9), do R' *Yehuda ben Beteira* and R' *Yehuda HaKohen* also bring and what do they add? (ז': ז')
 - Regarding the case that R' *Yosi HaKohen* and R' *Zecharya ben haKatzav* presented, why did the family in *Ashkelon* distance themselves from one of their members and how did the *Chachamim* respond? (ז': ז')
 - What is an *almanat issa*? (ז': ז')
 - What did R' *Yehoshua* and R' *Yehuda ben Beteira* present regarding the previous case and how did *Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel* respond? (ז': ז')
 - What three laws did R' *Yosi ben Yo'ezer ish Tzreida* present? (ז': ז')
 - What was the ruling given after they found bones in the *dir eitzim*? (ז': ז')
 - Explain the debate regarding how they constructed the *heichal* in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*. (ז': ז')
- What are the various opinions regarding the task of *Eliyahu Ha'Navi*? (ז': ז')
- עבודה זרה א' א':
- When is one prohibited from trading with *goi'im*? (ז': ז')
 - What else is prohibited at that time? (ז': ז')
 - What is R' *Yehuda's* opinion? (ז': ז')

Local Shiurim

Melbourne, Australia

Sunday -Thursday

10 minutes before *Mincha*
Mizrachi Shul
Melbourne, Australia

Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before *Mincha*
Beit Ha'Roeh
Melbourne, Australia

Efrat, Israel

Shiur in English

Sunday -Thursday

Rabbi Mordechai Scharf
9:00am
Kollel Magen Avraham
Reemon Neighbourhood

ONLINE SHIURIM

Rabbi Chaim Brown
www.shemayisrael.com/mishna/

Rav Meir Pogrow
613.org/mishnah.html

Rabbi E. Kornfeld
Rabbi C. Brown
<http://www.dafyomi.co.il/calendars/myomi/myomi-thisweek.htm>

SHIUR ON KOL HALOSHON

Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss
In US dial: 718 906 6400
Then select: 1 – 2 – 4

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
27 th October כ"ג חשוון	28 th October כ"ד חשוון	29 th October כ"ה חשוון	30 th October כ"ו חשוון	31 st October כ"ז חשוון	1 st November כ"ח חשוון	26 th November כ"ט חשוון
Avodah Zara 1:2-3	Avodah Zara 1:4-5	Avodah Zara 1:6-7	Avodah Zara 1:8-9	Avodah Zara 2:1-2	Avodah Zara 2:3-4	Avodah Zara 2:5-6

