

Avodah Zarah – Simanim

פרק ד – רבי ישמעאל

דף נ- 50 Daf

1. *Machlokes* about stones found in the area of מרקוליס

On the previous Daf, the fourth Perek begins with Rebbe Yishmael's ruling: שלש אבנים זו בצד זו בצד: *three stones found near each other near Markulis are prohibited*, but two such stones are permitted. The Chochomim say: שנראות עמו: *those appearing to be with [מרקוליס]* are prohibited, but those that do not appear to be with it are permitted (regardless of the number of stones).

Rebbe Yochanan explains that if they were known to have fallen from מרקוליס, all agree the stones are forbidden. They argue where it is unknown if the stones were part of the idol. Furthermore, the Gemara ultimately explains that if there is no obstruction between the idol and the stones, all agree that stones within four *amos* are forbidden. They argue where a mound lies between מרקוליס and these stones (or they lie further than four *amos*). Rebbe Yishmael holds: עושין מרקוליס קטן בצד מרקוליס גדול: *they make a small מרקוליס near a large מרקוליס*; therefore, three stones, which are similar to מרקוליס, are forbidden, but two are permitted. The Rabbonon hold they do not make a small מרקוליס near a large one, and so only prohibit stones close enough to have fallen from the idol.

2. *stones which were removed to pave streets*

Once, idolators who did not worship מרקוליס removed stones which had been placed for the idol and paved roads with them. Some Rabbi avoided using these roads, and other did not. Rebbe Yochanan commented, בן של קדושים מהלך עליהן ואנן נפרוש מהן: *"The 'son of holy ones' walks upon them, and we should avoid them"*? [This expression referred to Rebbe Menachem the son of Rebbe Simai, who would not even gaze at the image on a coin]. Those who avoided the roads did so based on Rav's statement: מנין – שאין לה בטילה עולמית: *from where do we derive about an idolatrous offering – that it can never be nullified?* The *passuk* refers to a תקרובת עבודת כוכבים: *offerings of the dead*. Just as the dead can never be nullified, neither can a תקרובת עבודת כוכבים. Those who used the roads held these stones never became a תקרובת עבודת כוכבים, because: בעינא ענין פנים וליכא: *we require offerings similar to those brought inside [the Mikdash], and that is lacking here*, since stones are not used for sacrifices in the Mikdash.

3. *regarding shemittah and Chol HaMoed*

A Baraisa permits deworming or applying fertilizer to a wounded tree during *shemittah*, but not during Chol HaMoed. One may not prune a tree in either period but may smear a pruned branch with oil during both. Rabbah bar Yirmiyah commented: ולית נגר ולא בר נגר דיפרקינה: *there is no scholar nor scholar's son who can explain* [this Baraisa]! Ravina declared that he was neither a scholar nor a scholar's son, but would explain the Baraisa, and he sought to identify the difficulty. The difference between Chol HaMoed and *shemittah* is understandable, because regarding *shemittah*, the Torah prohibited מלאכה – *labor*, whereas on Chol HaMoed, even טירחא – *exertion* is forbidden. Deworming and applying fertilizer, which are אוקומי אילנא – *preserving the tree's health*, are permitted on *shemittah*, but pruning, which is אברויי – *strengthening the tree*, is prohibited. This distinction also resolves contradictions found regarding some of the above activities, by explaining that there are two forms of each, where the protective form is permitted while the constructive form is prohibited. The Gemara concludes that Rabbah bar Yirmiyah did not understand why smearing oil is permitted but applying fertilizer is prohibited, since both are אוקומי אילנא – *preserving the tree*.

Siman – Nonstop Flight

The man about to board a nonstop flight who was not sure if the rocks separated from Markolis by a pile of suitcases were *mutar* to use or not, saw the flight crew take the stones and use them to pave the runway, for the flight that was going to spray fertilizer on a field during *shemittah* but not during Chol Hamaed.

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Nonstop Flight



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3 things to remember

1. Machlokes about stones found in the area of מרקוליס
2. מרקוליס stones which were removed to pave streets
3. אברויי אילנא vs. אוקומי אילנא regarding shemittah and Chol HaMoed

