

Avodah Zarah – Simanim

פרק ג – כל הצלמים

דף מג – Daf 43

1. Rebbe Elazar HaKappar forced an עכו"ם to be מבטל a lost idol

Rebbe Yehoshua ben Levi reported that he was once walking behind Rebbe Elazar HaKappar, and he found a ring with the figure of a dragon. He met an עכו"ם who was a קטן, and said nothing, and then met an adult עכו"ם, and instructed him to nullify the idol, but he did not. Rebbe Elazar slapped him, and he nullified it. The Gemara proves three laws of ביטול from this incident: (1) An עכו"ם may nullify any idol, even someone else's. (2) Only one familiar with the details of idolatry may be מבטל an idol (therefore, the קטן could not nullify it). (3) עובד כוכבים מבטל בעל כרחו – *an idolator can nullify an idol even when coerced*, like this עכו"ם who was forced to nullify the found idol. Rebbe Chanina objected that ביטול should not have been necessary, since something found in a public area belongs to the finder, because the owner despairs of retrieving them, and by despairing should also have nullified it!? Abaye answers: נהי דמיאש – *granted that he despaired of retrieving it*, מאיסורא מי מייאש – *but did he despair of its prohibited status?* He assumes that if an עכו"ם finds it, he will worship it, and if a Jew finds it, he will sell the valuable ring to an עכו"ם, who will worship it.

2. Rabban Gamliel's images of the moon

A Mishnah states that Rabban Gamliel had forms of various phases of the moon on a tablet and the wall, and would ask witnesses to the new moon if they saw it like one shape or another. The Gemara asks that making such shapes is forbidden: "לא תעשון אתי" – *you shall not make with Me*, which teaches: לא תעשון במרום – *you shall not make images of My servants who serve before Me!*? This prohibits not only those which are possible to physically replicate, such the prohibition to replicate the היכל, the שולחן, or the Menorah (although a different number of lamps is permitted), but it is also prohibited to make images His servants "המשמשין לפני במרום" – *who serve before Me on high*. This includes not only the Four Faces on the כסא הכבוד together, but also making a human face, as well as מלאכים, and the sun, moon, stars, and constellations. How, then, did Rabban Gamliel make images of the moon? The Gemara initially answers that others (i.e., non-Jews) made the images for him.

3. The prohibition to own an image (חשדא)

The Gemara objects to the above answer, that Rav Yehudah owned a signet ring, and Shmuel told him: "Sharp one! Blind this one's eyes (i.e., destroy the image)!" A Jew may not even own an image, so how did Rabban Gamliel own images of the moon? The Gemara says that the above prohibition only applies to חותמה בולט – *a protruding signet*, ומשום חשדא – *and it is because of suspicion* that its owner worships it. A Baraisa prohibits wearing such a ring but permits stamping a seal with it (because the wax image does not protrude). The Gemara questions this entire suspicion, because Shmuel's father and Levi davened in a shul with a statue inside, and were unconcerned about suspicion!? It answers: רבים שאני – *a multitude of people, such as in a shul, is different*, and there is no suspicion that the masses worship this statue. Although Rabban Gamliel was an individual, since he was the Nasi, many people were often with him, and there is no suspicion of idolatry. Alternatively, his images were made of פרקים – *segments*, and only connected when examining עדים. Finally, the Gemara answers that it is permitted to make images להתלמד – *for instruction*.

Siman – Magazine

The popular Avodah Zarah magazine with the picture on the cover of a Rabbi slapping a goy to be mevatel Avodah Zarah, featured a story about how a Rabbi used a tablet with various images of the moon on it to determine Rosh Chodesh, and a back page advertisement from Ephraim's Engraving, selling signet rings that are בולט ולא חותם.



The popular Avodah Zarah magazine with the picture on the cover of a **Rabbi slapping a goy to be mevatal Avodah Zarah**, featured a story about **how a Rabbi used a tablet with various images of the moon on it to determine Rosh Chodesh**, and a back page advertisement from Ephraim's Engraving, selling signet rings that are **חותרם ולא בולט**.

3 things to remember

1. Rebbe Elazar HaKappar forced an **עכו"ם** to be **מבטל** a lost idol
2. Rabban Gamliel's images of the moon
3. The prohibition to own an image (**חשדא**)

