

Avodah Zarah – Simanim

פרק ד – רבי ישמעאל

דף נד – Daf 54

1. When an animal worshipped באונס is prohibited

A Baraisa defines נעבד – *a worshipped* [animal] which is disqualified as a *korban*: כל שעובדים אותו בין בשוגג – בין באונס ובין ברצון, *any animal that* [people] *worship, whether unintentionally or intentionally, whether against their will or willingly*. Rami bar Chama explains the case of "אונס" that gentiles coerced someone to bow down to his own animal. Rebbe Zeira objects: אונס רחמנא פטריה – *but the Torah exempts someone coerced for any aveirah from liability*, as we see in the case of a married woman who was violated!? Rava answers that when the Torah said "וְחַי בָּהֶם" – *and he will live by* [the mitzvos], it teaches: *and he shall not die because of them* (i.e., one may transgress aveiros under threat of death). Yet, the *passuk* says: *וְלֹא תַחֲלֹל אֶת שֵׁם קִדְשִׁי* – *and you shall not desecrate My Holy Name*, indicating one must even give up his life to avoid desecrating Hashem's Name. The difference is: *הא בצנעא* – *this permit to transgress aveiros to save his life is in private*, *והא בפרהסיא* – *and that warning not to desecrate Hashem's Name, even under pain of death, is in public*. There, the worshipped animal becomes prohibited. [Many Rishonim say that this is according to Rebbe Yishmael, but according to the Rabbonon that one must always give up his life to avoid idolatry, the animal would be prohibited even in private.]

2. עשה בה מעשה: a physical act of idolatry on someone else's property can prohibit it

The Gemara offers another explanation of the Baraisa that an animal becomes prohibited "באונס": כגון – *the case is where he poured wine between* [the animal's] *horns* as a libation of worship *to* [the animal], *דעבד בה מעשה* – *because he did an act in it*. This agrees with Rebbe Yochanan's statement: *אף על פי שאמרו המשתחוה לבהמת חבירו לא אסרה* – *even though they said that one who bows to his fellow's animal, he does not prohibit it*, *עשה בה מעשה אסרה* – *if he did an act in it, he does prohibit it*. Rav Huna similarly taught that if someone else's animal was lying in front of an idol, *אחד כיון ששחט בה סימן* – *as soon as he cuts one pipe of its neck, he prohibits it* in any benefit, although the animal is not his. The Gemara eventually proves this from a *passuk* teaching that vessels of the Mikdash were concealed because King Achaz had used them for idolatry. Although one cannot prohibit someone else's items, he can if he does an act of *avodah zarah* with them.

3. Why does Hashem not destroy idols?

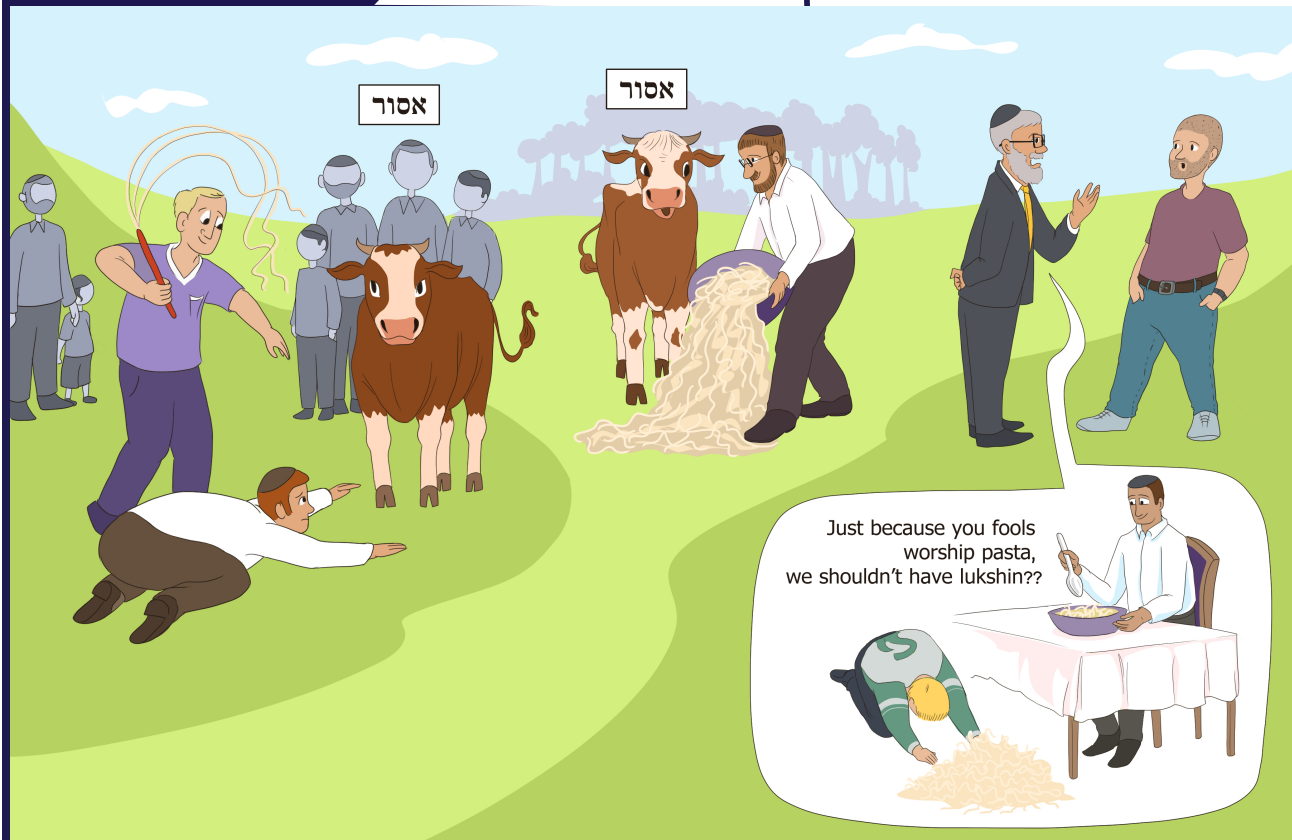
In the next Mishnah, philosophers asked the Sages in Rome, "If Hashem does not want an idol, למה אינו מבטלה – *why does He not get rid of it?*" They replied that if people would only worship items which the world does not need, He would get rid of it. However, people worship the sun, the moon, the stars, and constellations. *יבד עולמו מפני השוטים* – *"Should He destroy His world because of the fools?!"* The philosophers then asked why Hashem does not at least destroy unnecessary idols, and the Sages replied that this would be taken as evidence that the sun, etc. are true deities, since other idols were destroyed and they were not. A Baraisa relates that they added: *אלא עולם כמנהגו נוהג* – *Rather, Hashem directs the world to operate naturally*, *ושוטים שקלקלו עתידין ליתן את הדין* – *and the fools who sin will have to give an accounting*. Similarly, Hashem allows stolen wheat which was planted to grow, and a married woman who has illicit relations to become pregnant.

Siman – Noodles (Pasta Chef)

The man who was forced in public to bow down to a cow by a man with a whip made of noodles making the cow אסור, watched as his friend poured a pot of noodles as a libation before another cow making it אסור as well, as a Rabbi explained to a goy that Hashem doesn't destroy all of the idols so He shouldn't destroy the world because of the fools.

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3 things to remember

1. When an animal worshipped באונס is prohibited
2. עשה בה מעשה: a physical act of idolatry on someone else's property can prohibit it
3. Why does Hashem not destroy idols?

