

Laws of Idolatry Chapter 8 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of Shiur – Laws of Idolatry Chapter 8

Introduction to the Chapter

Chapter 8 deals with **specific laws** regarding the prohibition of deriving benefit from idolatry – what types of things can actually become forbidden due to idolatry. The previous chapters dealt with the prohibition of benefit from idolatry itself, from offerings to idolatry, from accessories of idolatry.

Foundation of the chapter: Not everything can a gentile render forbidden. A gentile who worships the sun – the sun does not become forbidden in benefit, because it doesn't belong to him. **It is much easier for something to become hekdesch (consecrated) than for something to become forbidden through idolatry** – by hekdesch, "when a man makes an extraordinary vow" and it immediately becomes holy, but by idolatry one must learn many details before something becomes forbidden. The practical reason: a gentile can worship the entire world – it cannot be that everything should become forbidden (similar to the law of ir hanidachas where one cannot forbid entire territories).

Law 1 – Tefisat Yad Adam: Mountains, Hills, Trees, Springs, Animals

The Rambam: Anything that has no tefisat yad adam (human grasp) and was not created by him – if it was worshipped, even if it was worshipped, it is permitted in benefit. Therefore, gentiles who worship mountains and hills, or trees that were planted from the beginning for fruit, or springs that flow for the public, or animals – these are all permitted in benefit. It is permitted to eat those fruits that were worshipped in their place of growth.

Simple meaning: Things that a person did not create and has no control over – cannot become forbidden through idolatrous worship.

Novelties and explanations:

1. **Meaning of "tefisat yad adam":** Two approaches are presented: (a) It is **physically too large to grasp** – one cannot lift it; (b) **It doesn't belong to you, it's not under human control** – a more abstract approach. The Rambam's addition of "**and he did not create it**" is his interpretation of "tefisat yad": it means something that **the person did not make/create** – the Almighty made the mountain, not the person. These are **two expressions in the Rambam** that together define the concept.

2. **Question regarding an animal:** An animal a person can indeed lift – how is it "without tefisat yad"? The answer: "tefisat yad" doesn't mean physically lifting, but rather **you made/created it**. An animal is a natural creation that the Almighty made – the person was not its creator. This confirms the abstract approach.

3. **The foundation:** All natural things – mountains, springs, trees that are planted from the beginning for fruit, animals – are **part of nature**, and the gentile's worship has **not changed what it is**. The mountain doesn't know it's being worshipped.

4. **A spring flowing for the public – to exclude:** When a person builds a dam and makes a waterfall – **he has tefisat yad**, because he made it. But a spring that flows naturally – no.

5. **Exposition from the Gemara:** "They have a sea but cannot create rivers" – the verse is expounded that natural things do not become forbidden.

Law 1 (continued) – Designation for Idolatry by an Animal

Rambam: And needless to say an animal that was designated for idolatry, whether designated to be worshipped or designated to be an offering – it is permitted.

Simple meaning: Even when an animal was designated/set aside for idolatry (either to worship or as an offering) – it does not take effect, because the animal doesn't belong to you in the sense of "creation."

Novelties: This is a kal vachomer – if even when one **actually worshipped** an animal it is permitted, how much more so when it was only **designated**.

Law 2 – An Act with an Animal: Slaughtering One Sign, Exchange

Rambam: When does this apply? When he did not perform an act with it for idolatry. But if he performed any act with it – he forbade it. How so? Such as slaughtering one sign in it for idolatry, or making it an exchange for idolatry – it is like the monetary value of idolatry and is forbidden.

Simple meaning: If one performed an act on the animal for idolatry – even a small act (slaughtering one sign) – it becomes forbidden. Also if one exchanged it (chalilin) for an idolatry – it becomes forbidden as "like the monetary value of idolatry."

Novelties:

1. **Slaughtering one sign:** An animal can still live after one sign (one needs two signs for slaughter), but this alone is already a "minimal act" that forbids it.

2. **Chalilin – like the monetary value of idolatry:** When one exchanges an animal for an idolatry (gives an animal instead of money) – the animal becomes **like the monetary value of idolatry**. This is not idolatry itself, but rather the financial worth/price of idolatry. The language "**like the monetary value**" (similar to monetary value) perhaps means it is a **weaker level** of prohibition – because it's an animal, not

actual money, but it is treated similarly to the monetary value of idolatry.

3. Why doesn't "no tefisat yad" help by chalilin: By chalilin the principle that an animal cannot become forbidden because it is "without tefisat yad" doesn't apply – because here the animal doesn't become idolatry itself, but rather **the monetary value of idolatry**, and the monetary value of idolatry is forbidden in benefit (tachtav tachtav – one must throw it into the Dead Sea).

Law 2 (continued) – His Fellow's Animal / Slaughtering His Fellow's Animal

Rambam: When does this apply? With his own animal. But one who draws his fellow's animal to idolatry or exchanges it – it is not forbidden, for he cannot forbid something that is not his. One who slaughters his fellow's animal for idolatry – it is not forbidden, for a person cannot forbid something that is not his.

Simple meaning: Only the owner of the animal can forbid his own animal. A stranger who drags or slaughters someone else's animal for idolatry – cannot forbid it.

Novelties:

1. "That is not his" – even with permission? The essence is that **the owners did not do it** – the other person has no right to it. With your own animal you have a right – you may slaughter it, exchange it. But with someone else's animal you are simply a thief – a thief is honest regarding tefisat yad, you have no right in it.

2. Connection to tefisat yad: The law of "he cannot forbid something that is not his" is **similar to the concept of tefisat yad** – you have no ownership over the thing, you cannot forbid it.

3. Question: One can indeed **pour libation** on someone else's wine (stam yeinam), and one can **render impure** someone else's things – how does this fit with the principle that one cannot forbid something that is not his? The distinction: an animal, which is not truly yours (a person doesn't make animals), you can make your own into a prohibition, but not someone else's.

4. Novelty of the Rambam – dispute with the Raavad: It is not clear how the Rambam derived this law. **The Raavad disagrees** and holds that a person can indeed forbid something that is not his. The Raavad says that the Gemara doesn't mean at all regarding laws of idolatry, but simply the enemy of "your enemy is like your beloved." The Rambam's position that one cannot forbid someone else's animal is a novelty.

5. Proof from the Paschal offering: The Egyptians worshipped the lamb (seh), and yet it was offered as the Paschal offering – we see that as long as the other person did not slaughter it or sell it, one can offer it, it has no prohibition of benefit.

Law 3 – One Who Bows to the Ground of the World

Rambam: One who bows to the ground of the world – did not forbid it. If he dug in it a pit, ditch, or cave – he forbade it.

Simple meaning: One who bows to the earth, it does not become forbidden – because he made no change, no tefisat yad. But if he dug a pit – that portion becomes forbidden.

Novelties:

1. Earlier the Rambam spoke about a mountain ("mountains and hills"), but here he means not even a mountain – even just a piece of land, a "lot." He mentioned mountains because that is a common thing, but the essence is: land that is not yours, not an object you hold in your hand.

2. When he digs a pit, ditch, or cave, only **that portion** that he built becomes forbidden. And if one breaks it back, apparently it becomes permitted again.

3. Even if it fell: Even if a piece fell off, if "they worship it in its place" – he worships it there as it is – one permits it, because this is like broken pieces of idolatry with tefisat yad adam. But if he moved it, he placed it there where he laid it – it is indeed his creation, he made the stone be there, and it is forbidden.

Law 3 (continued) – Water That a Wave Uprooted

Rambam: Water that a wave uprooted – did not forbid it. If he took it in his hand – he forbade it.

Simple meaning: Water that a wave splashed out – does not become forbidden by bowing to it. But if he scooped a bit of water with his hand – it becomes forbidden, because he has tefisat yad.

Novelties:

1. The entire sea certainly does not become forbidden. A person would think that the bit of water that splashed out (a wave, a waterfall) is not connected to the large body of water – but no, "it is not forbidden."

2. The Raavad's position: The Raavad holds that what the Rambam brought earlier "water of the public" applies even to water uprooted by a wave. The Raavad holds that the reason is because there is multiple ownership (like Yirmiyah ben Chama), and he brings that there is a dispute in the Gemara.

3. Two problems with land/water: (1) It doesn't belong to you – of the public, a mountain; (2) He did not perform an act – the act must be a significant act (uprooting by a wave or not).

Law 4 – A Brick That He Placed to Bow to It

Rambam: A brick that he placed to bow to it, and a gentile came and bowed to it – he forbade it in benefit, for the setting up is an act.

Simple meaning: A Jew takes a brick (a built stone) and says "this is idolatry to bow to" – he set it up in order to bow, but he himself did not bow. A gentile comes and bows – it becomes forbidden in benefit, because "the setting up is an act."

Novelties:

1. Earlier we learned that merely designating for idolatry (without worship) does nothing – one must actually worship it. Here a gentile worshipped it, and that is the "setting up is an act."

2. The setting up itself is the act: It doesn't say in the Mishnah "made a brick" – he did not carve the stone for idolatry, it was a finished brick. He only set it up – and that

setting up is the act. One does not bow to a lying brick, but to a standing one – the erection itself is an act.

Law 4 (continued) – An Egg

Rambam: An egg – and a gentile came and bowed to it, it is forbidden in benefit.

Novelties: The Gemara says it is a novelty: even an egg, where it barely looks like it's raised (a small difference from the path), yet it is called "the setting up is an act" – the placing of an egg is already enough of an act.

Law 4 (continued) – Cut a Gourd

Rambam: He cut a gourd and fashioned a form in it and bowed to it – he forbade it.

Simple meaning: He cut off a fruit (gourd/pumpkin) and made a form, and bowed – the cutting is an act, and after bowing it becomes forbidden.

Law 4 (continued) – Bowed to Half a Gourd

Rambam: He bowed to half the gourd – the other half is forbidden out of doubt.

Simple meaning: Someone bows to half a fruit, he wants to accept the half of the gourd as a god. The other half becomes forbidden out of doubt.

Novelties:

1. This is not a historical case – this is a halachic question that the Sages pondered in the study hall.
2. The doubt is: "perhaps they divide like one who descended to half the river" – perhaps the other half becomes like a "needed for it" of the idolatry (like the idolatry's attendant). The Gemara brings a doubt in this, and one must be stringent out of doubt.
3. [Digression: The verse in Isaiah is mentioned "half of it he burned in fire" – which mocks that half of the wood for his idol he used for baking. But it is noted that this doesn't mean the same thing, perhaps just a reference to that verse.]

Law 6 – A Tree That Was Planted From the Beginning for Idolatry

Rambam: A tree that was planted from the beginning for idolatry – it is forbidden in benefit, as it says "you shall not plant for yourself an asherah."

Simple meaning: A tree that was from the beginning planted for idolatry is forbidden in benefit from the Torah.

Novelties: The foundation: a regular tree that grows and a gentile comes and worships it, cannot become idolatry (because it lacks tefisat yad adam). But when he **planted it from the beginning** for idolatry, he indeed created the tree, he performed an act – he planted the idolatry. Therefore it is forbidden in benefit from the Torah from the law of "you shall not plant for yourself an asherah."

Law 7 – A Tree That Was Already Planted and He Fenced It and Carved It for Idolatry

Rambam: Since it was planted – and he fenced it and carved it for idolatry, even if he grafted and layered in the body of the tree and it produced a shoot – the

shoots are forbidden, but the rest of the tree is permitted. And so one who bows to a tree – even though its body is not forbidden, the shoots and leaves and branches and fruits that emerge all the time it is worshipped – are forbidden in benefit.

Simple meaning: By a tree that was already planted (not from the beginning for idolatry), even if one did grafting/layering and it produced new growth – only the new parts (shoots) are forbidden, but the essence of the tree remains permitted. The same by one who bows to a tree.

Novelties:

1. **Grafting and layering – definition:** Layering means one takes a branch from the tree and bends it into the earth so it will take root. Grafting means one brings a branch from another tree and connects it to the tree so it will join.
2. **The foundation of tefisat yad adam:** Even when one did grafting/layering and it produced new growth (produced a shoot) – one would think that this is already a real change in the tree. But no: the **essence of the tree** was already planted before, therefore one has no tefisat yad adam in it. Only the **new addition** (shoots) can one forbid, because that has tefisat yad adam.
3. **Difficult question by one who bows to a tree:** By bowing (only bowing, without an act on the tree) – the new branches/fruits that grow afterward become forbidden. This is difficult: earlier we learned that one needs an **act** (tefisat yad adam) to forbid. By bowing one did not perform any act on the tree! The tree itself does not become forbidden – but why should the new branches become forbidden? One did not perform any act that caused the growth! By water that comes afterward it is not forbidden – why is a tree different? No clear answer is given – "it's a good question, and one can live with a question."

Law – A Tree Whose Fruits Were Designated for a House of Idolatry (Sign of an Asherah)

Rambam: A tree that one sees that gentiles guard its fruits and say they are preparing it for a certain house of idolatry, and they make from it beer at the time they prune and hoe – this is a tree forbidden in benefit, for this is the statute of an asherah.

Simple meaning: If one sees that gentiles treat a tree in a certain way – guard the fruits, make beer from it for their holiday – this is a sign/presumption that the tree is an asherah.

Novelties:

1. Simply so the tree would not have been forbidden in benefit. Only we see that he worships it – he hoes it, he guards its fruits – and this is a presumption that it is an asherah.
2. The custom of idolatry is that from an asherah one does not use the fruits simply, but rather one makes beer/liquor in honor of the holiday. The source is from the Gemara, where someone from Pumbedita gave this advice/sign.
3. [Digression: Beer/liquor – in the Gemara one speaks almost always of liquor from dates. Today one makes beer from barley (also in the Gemara). The Baal Shem Tov said that beer (from barley) one cannot make all day (blessing of shehakol), but from dates one can indeed (blessing of the tree/ground).]

Law – A Tree Planted Under Idolatry (Accessory)

Rambam: A tree that is planted under idolatry – as long as it is under it, it is forbidden in benefit. If he removed it from under it – it is permitted.

Simple meaning: A tree that was planted under an idolatry (to make shade, or as an accessory) – is forbidden as long as it is under the idolatry. When one removes the idolatry, the tree becomes permitted.

Novelties:

1. **Distinction between worshipped and accessory:** The tree itself is **not worshipped** (one doesn't worship it), it is only an **accessory** for idolatry (shade, announcement that here is idolatry). Therefore, as long as it is an accessory it is forbidden, but when one removes the idolatry, the tree is back to "just a tree" – a part of nature.

2. **Question on the Rambam:** By other accessories one needs nullification to permit. Why doesn't the Rambam say that one needs "that the owners despaired"? There are indeed other opinions that one needs to despair. This remains a problem.

3. **Answer from the Mishnah:** Because the tree itself was not worshipped – it was never worshipped – therefore one does not need any formal nullification. If one had worshipped the tree itself, merely removing would not help – one would have needed a law of nullification.

Law – A House Built From the Beginning for Idolatry / One Who Bows to a Built House

Rambam: A house that was built from the beginning for this, and so one who bows to a built house – it is forbidden in benefit.

Simple meaning: A house that was built from the beginning to worship, or a house to which one bowed – is forbidden in benefit. (Parallel to the three laws by a tree.)

Novelties:

1. A house has **tefifat yad adam** (a person built it), therefore it can become idolatry – either when it was built from the beginning for idolatry, or when one bows to it.

2. **Distinction between tree and house regarding tefifat yad adam:** A tree that grows naturally has no tefifat yad adam (it's part of nature). A house however a person built – it's entirely man-made.

Law – Painting and Decoration on a House / Brought Idolatry Into the House

Rambam (painting and decoration): If a house was already built, and one decorated it, painted it, and made beautiful paintings for idolatry – one removes only what was added, but the rest of the house is permitted.

Simple meaning: The house itself does not become forbidden, because one doesn't worship the bare house – one worships only the beauty, the paintings. If one removes the painting and decoration, the house is permitted.

Novelties:

1. Comparison to the law of a tree: just as by a tree only the new branches become forbidden (because that is what was added), so too by a house only the paintings become

forbidden. The foundation is the same – one doesn't worship the essence of the object, but rather the addition/supplement.

2. Distinction from the previous law: there one built the house for idolatry, here one only decorated an already-existing house.

Rambam (brought idolatry): If one did not worship the house at all, but rather placed an idolatry in the house – the house is an accessory to idolatry, and when one removes the idolatry, the house is permitted again.

Simple meaning: Just like the law of a tree as an accessory – as long as the idolatry is there, it is forbidden; if one removes it, it is permitted.

Law – A Stone Hewn From the Beginning / Painted and Carved It / Stone as Accessory

Rambam: A stone that was hewn from a mountain for idolatry – is forbidden in benefit. But if the stone was already hewn, and one only painted and carved it so one would worship it – only the addition becomes forbidden, and the essence of the stone remains permitted. A stone upon which he placed idolatry – is forbidden as long as it is upon it; if he removed the idolatry – it is permitted.

Simple meaning: Three cases: (1) hewn from the beginning for idolatry – entire stone forbidden; (2) already existing stone decorated – only addition forbidden; (3) stone as accessory – forbidden as long as idolatry is there.

Novelties:

1. The distinction: In the first case one created the stone itself (cut from mountain) for idolatry – then the entire stone is forbidden. In the second case the stone already existed, one only added – then only the addition is forbidden.

2. "That stone as it is a stone was never forbidden" – the essence of the stone underwent no change regarding prohibition.

Law – A House Adjacent to a House of Idolatry / Shared Wall**First Case: His Own Wall**

Rambam: One whose house was adjacent to a house of idolatry and it fell – it is forbidden to build it, because when he builds his wall, he also builds a wall for the house of idolatry.

Simple meaning: The wall serves both houses. When he builds it back, he is benefiting idolatry.

Novelties:

1. **Advice:** He should withdraw into his own – move the wall into his own space, so that the idolatry has no benefit from his wall.

2. **Difficulty:** Even if he moves in, doesn't the idolatry have benefit from the empty space (more room)! To this the advice is: he should place in the empty space thorns, excrement, and other unpleasant things – "so as not to expand the house of idolatry."

3. [Digression: People used to have a collection of excrement for their fields – this is a well-known thing in laws of partnership.]

Second Case: Wall of Partnership

Rambam: If it is a wall of partnership – they divide: his half is permitted in benefit, and that of idolatry is forbidden.

Simple meaning: One divides the thickness of the wall in half – his half is permitted, the idolatry's half is forbidden.

Novelties:

1. **Its stones and wood and dust of the wall are forbidden in benefit** – when the wall falls down, every stone is a doubt (perhaps it is from the forbidden half), therefore everything is forbidden. Each individual stone is a doubtful idolatry, and doubtful idolatry is forbidden.
2. **Rashba** says that one may take only if one knows which stones were on his side.
3. **Rashi** has a different interpretation of the Gemara – that this speaks when the house itself is worshipped (not just an accessory).

Law – How Does One Destroy Idolatry

Rambam: He grinds and scatters to the wind, or burns, or casts into the Dead Sea.

Simple meaning: Three methods of destruction: (1) grind and scatter to the wind, (2) burn, (3) throw into the Dead Sea.

Novelties:

1. If one already ground it, what is the point of "scatter to the wind"? So that no one will stumble with the dust – the dust goes somewhere, but then it is entirely nullified.
2. Perhaps "burns and casts" go together (like "grinds and scatters") – one burns and then throws the ashes into the Dead Sea. One can learn both ways.

Law – Plating of Idolatry by Something Without Tefisat Yad Adam

Rambam: Something that has no tefisat yad adam, but one worshipped it – the worshipped thing itself is permitted in benefit, but its plating that one places on it is forbidden in benefit.

Simple meaning: The mountain does not become idolatry itself (because it has no tefisat yad adam), but if one decorates the mountain, it is as if one decorates idolatry, and the plating is forbidden.

Novelties:

1. The verse "**you shall not covet the silver and gold upon them**" – the simple meaning is silver and gold that is upon them (as Tosafot learns), but the Rambam's novelty is that even the "upon them" itself – that which lies upon something without tefisat yad adam – is forbidden.
2. **Plating of idolatry** is not the category of idolatry itself, but rather of **accessories of idolatry** – things that one makes for beauty to cover idolatry.

Law – Nullification of Gentile Idolatry

Rambam: Idolatry of gentiles that gentiles nullified before it came into Jewish hands, it is permitted in benefit, as it says the graven images of their gods you shall burn with fire – and it did not say their graven

images, but the graven images of their gods, as long as they are their gods.

Simple meaning: When gentiles nullify their idolatry before it comes into Jewish hands, it is permitted in benefit. The verse says "the graven images of their gods" – only when they are still "their gods," but when they have nullified it, it is no longer "their gods."

Law – Idolatry of a Jew Cannot Be Nullified Ever

Rambam: Idolatry of a Jew cannot be nullified ever... its nullification is of no effect at all, but it is forbidden in benefit forever.

Simple meaning: A Jewish idolatry can never be nullified. One must **bury** it (bury or burn) so that no one will stumble.

Novelties:

1. **Why is a Jew worse than a gentile?** The Sages' explanation: a Jew is **stubborn** – he is serious in his beliefs. When a Jew sees that a pious person comes and takes away his idolatry, he says "I nullify it," but he doesn't mean it seriously – he truly holds that it is idolatry. Therefore one doesn't trust him. **Unlike a gentile** – a gentile is more frivolous, one day it's idolatry, tomorrow he no longer cares.
2. **Partnership of Jew and gentile in idolatry:** The gentile partner cannot nullify the portion that belongs to the Jew, because a Jew cannot nullify idolatry.
3. **Proof from Jacob our father: "And Jacob hid them under the oak"** – Jacob buried the foreign gods. From this: **idolatry of a Jew requires burial** – this is more than by gentile idolatry, because even after breaking there still remains something (ash, smell and the like), therefore one must bury it.

Law – Nullification After It Comes to Jewish Hands / A Jew Nullifies Idolatry

Rambam: And so idolatry that was nullified by a Jew after the gentile's nullification – its nullification is of no effect. And a Jew does not nullify idolatry even with the gentile's permission.

Novelties:

1. Even if a gentile nullified it, but afterward it came into Jewish hands – the nullification is not effective. Because now it is already in the Jew's possession, and **a gentile can only nullify something that is in his possession.**
2. **A Jew cannot nullify idolatry at all**, even if it belongs to the gentile.

Law – Who Can Nullify Idolatry

Rambam: A gentile minor or imbecile does not nullify idolatry. And a gentile who nullified idolatry, whether his own or another gentile's, it is nullified, even if he nullified it against his will, even if a Jew forced him to do so.

Novelties:

1. **Against his will:** Interesting – by a minor/imbecile we say it doesn't work because he has no understanding, but by against his will we say it works even without will. Perhaps there is a law of "acquires and sells against his will."

2. **Only an idolater:** A gentile who is himself an idolater has the power to nullify. But a pious gentile, a monotheist, a God-fearing person – he cannot nullify, because he never accepted it. But it doesn't have to be specifically that particular idolatry – a gentile who worships one idolatry can nullify another (like a pagan who nullifies a Mercurius).

3. **Political explanation of nullification:** By against his will – the gentile himself admitted, even against his will. By a Jew the Sages say that against his will is not accepted, but by a gentile yes. It's more like one takes a place and tells him "say that you spit on your god" – he doesn't mean it, but one is rejecting its importance.

Law – Nullification of Idolatry vs. Nullification of Its Accessories vs. Offering

Rambam: Nullification of idolatry is also nullification of its accessories. But nullification of its accessories alone does not nullify the idolatry. An offering to idolatry cannot be nullified ever.

Novelties – Distinction between accessories, plating, and offering:

1. **Accessories of idolatry** = a tablecloth that one places on the idolatry, decoration/beauty.

2. **Offering** = a plate of food that was placed before the idolatry, a sacrifice. It must be **like inside** – it's obvious that it's a sacrifice, it was offered. Therefore it can never be nullified – it already became a sacrifice, it already happened.

Law – How Does One Nullify It: Act of Nullification

Rambam: How does one nullify it? He cut off its ear tip or cut off its finger – even if nothing was missing – or if he sold it to a Jewish goldsmith who will melt the gold – it is nullified, because all these things are a change in the body of the idolatry.

Simple meaning: Nullification must be an act – a change in the body of the idolatry. Cutting off a pointed ear, nose, or finger, or even just crushing (without loss), or selling to a Jewish goldsmith who will melt it – all is nullification.

Novelties:

1. **Nullification requires an act, not just revelation of intent:** The Rambam rules that nullification must be **some act** – a change in the idolatry itself. There are authorities who hold that nullification can be even without an act (he just says "I no longer value it"), but the Rambam does not hold so.

2. **What is not nullification:** The Rambam lists a whole series of things that are **not** nullification:

- He **pawned** it (pledge)

- Sold it to a **gentile** or to a **Jew who is not a goldsmith** (because he won't melt it)

- A **wall fell** on the idolatry and he left it lying (but idolatry is completely underneath)

- **Thieves** stole it and he did not demand it back

- He

spat on it in its presence

- He **dragged it through excrement**

3. **All these – are not nullification**, because the nullification must be a change in the idolatry itself, not just a

revelation of intent of disgrace. There was enough revelation of intent (spitting, dragging in excrement), but revelation of intent alone does not help according to the Rambam.

4. **Connection to the bathhouse of Aphrodite:** By the idolatry on the bathhouse, where we say that because one urinates before it it is not worshipped – there we speak when it was not certain to be idolatry from the outset. Here we speak when it was already idolatry, and disgrace alone is not nullification. One should not think that the gentile has a bad mood and he is angry at his idolatry, he has already nullified it – no, **"anger causes cursing and blaspheming"** – he curses his god but he still believes in it.

Law – Idolatry That Was Abandoned in Time of Peace vs. Time of War

Rambam: Idolatry that was abandoned in time of peace – is permitted in benefit. In time of war – is forbidden in benefit.

Simple meaning: If one finds an abandoned idolatry, the law depends on the circumstances. In a time of peace, if gentiles abandoned it, it is permitted in benefit – this is a sign of nullification. But in a time of war, if they fled, it is forbidden – this abandonment is no proof that they stopped honoring the idolatry, they were just afraid.

Novelties:

1. It is discussed whether the mere abandonment in time of peace is itself the act of nullification, or perhaps they also did some actual act of nullification, and this abandonment is only proof/revelation of intent that they mean it seriously. It is not certain that the abandonment itself is the act – perhaps it is only a revelation of intent that he means it seriously.

2. The reasoning by war: they will not carry the idol when there is a war – this is no proof that they stopped honoring it, they were just afraid.

Law – Idolatry That Broke By Itself

Rambam: Idolatry that broke by itself – its fragments are forbidden in benefit until they nullify them.

Simple meaning: An idolatry that broke by itself – the fragments remain forbidden until a gentile nullifies them.

Novelties:

1. Reish Lakish held that idolatry that broke by itself – presumably the gentiles nullified it, because they say: it cannot save itself, will it save me? But Rabbi Yochanan disagrees, and the Gemara does not rule like Reish Lakish – one must nullify everything.

2. **An important law:** If the idolatry is broken but one can put it back together (like a puzzle), one must nullify **each and every piece** – each piece separately. Because if one only nullified one piece, it doesn't mean that the other pieces are nullified, because we are concerned lest one will be able to find the second piece and fix it back.

3. One cannot nullify one limb and thereby all the limbs become nullified.

Law – Altar of Idolatry That Was Damaged

Rambam: An altar of idolatry that was damaged – it is still forbidden in benefit, until most of it is broken by

gentiles.

Simple meaning: An altar for idolatry that was damaged – remains forbidden until most of it is broken by gentiles.

Novelties:

1. **Question:** Why by an idolatry itself is it enough to remove one piece (diminishing its face), and by an altar one must break most of it?
2. **Answer:** By an altar the gentile is not particular about a defect – he will still sacrifice on it even if it is somewhat damaged. This is different from a Jewish altar, which if it is not square (whole) it is not valid.
3. **Distinction between bamah and altar:** A bamah is one stone – if a piece is missing it is no longer nice, one cannot sacrifice on it, therefore damage is enough. An altar is many stones – if a piece is missing it became a smaller altar, but still an altar.

Law – Stones of Mercurius

Rambam: Once he selects from the building and removes it outside – it is immediately permitted.

Simple meaning: By Mercurius (where one throws stones as worship), if one removes a stone from the building and places it separately – it is permitted immediately.

Novelties: The reasoning: Mercurius is simply an area where one throws stones. Each stone is an accessory for idolatry. But when one removes a stone and makes it a separate thing – it is nullified, because it is no longer part of the Mercurius.

Law – Nullification of Asherah

Rambam: He took from it a stick or branch, took from it food for other animals, or pruned it not for its benefit – it is nullified. But if he pruned it for its benefit – the asherah is forbidden, and the pruning is permitted.

Simple meaning: An asherah (a tree of idolatry) is nullified if one tears off a branch, a leaf, a young branch, a stick, or prunes a piece not for the benefit of the tree. But if one pruned for the benefit of the tree (for its beauty/growth), the asherah remains forbidden, only the pruned piece is permitted.

Novelties:

1. By pruning for its benefit: the piece that was removed is permitted – apparently because there is despair and change. But the tree itself was not nullified, because the removal was for the tree's benefit, not a nullification.

Law – Idolatry of a Jew: Asherah

Rambam: And the act of a Jew – whether for its benefit or not for its benefit, whether plowing or pruning – is forbidden forever, for idolatry of a Jew has no nullification ever.

Simple meaning: A gentile can nullify idolatry by removing a piece. But an asherah (or idolatry) of a Jew – no nullification helps, neither for its benefit nor not for its benefit.

Novelties:

1. Even when one removes a piece – that piece itself he nullified on its own, but the idolatry in general one cannot nullify because it is a Jewish idolatry.

2. **A beautiful insight:** From here we see the power of a Jew – even a Jew's idolatry does not become nullified, how much more so a Jew's holy matter. This is a foundation of **all stringency from impurity is from the measure of purity** – if by impurity it is so strong, by holiness it is a kal vachomer.

Law – Idolatry of a Jew: Asherah (continued)

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Full Transcript**Laws of Idolatry Chapter 8 – Possession by Human Hand and Nullification of Idolatry****Introduction to the Chapter**

We are learning Laws of Idolatry Chapter 8. In the previous chapters we learned that there is a commandment (mitzvah) to destroy idolatry, and there is also a prohibition that comes from this commandment, to derive benefit from idolatry, whether from the idolatry itself, whether from everything that serves it, whether from offerings to idolatry, there is a prohibition, uh, accessories of idolatry, there is a prohibition to derive benefit.

Now in this chapter, and also in the next chapter, we will learn many detailed laws regarding the prohibition of deriving benefit from idolatry. This is a very relevant matter, because there is much idolatry, especially when Jews live among idol-worshipping people, called gentiles, it's important to know what becomes forbidden and so forth.

So the first section of this chapter we will learn what kinds of things can become forbidden due to idolatry. That is, the principle we will learn is that not everything can a gentile forbid. If a gentile worships the sun, the sun doesn't become forbidden to derive benefit from, because the sun doesn't belong to him to forbid. And so on regarding how he can forbid. But there are indeed ways that one can forbid things, so

we must learn what constitutes something that can at all become idolatry that would be forbidden, and what not. How something can become forbidden as idolatry or as an accessory to idolatry.

Right, but first we learn the point that there are things, apparently, you see how it begins, you can't take an entire mountain and he says "I worship the mountain," a Jew may not go on the mountain. It doesn't work that way. The moral lesson from this is that it's much easier for something to become holy than for something to become impure. "Ish ki yafli neder," a Jew has God forbid said "this is charity" or "this is consecrated," a fearful thing, it has become a fearful holy thing. But becoming idolatry doesn't become idolatry so easily, one must learn all these details.

Because we believe that a Jew doesn't really want to worship idolatry. No, no, I mean that all these details are that there are specific detailed laws, because it's not possible. A gentile can come and worship the entire world. One must find things that may be used. It can't be that everything should become forbidden. This is more... I mean that even we saw that one doesn't make three cities for a... what's it called? For a... well, what we learned there, ir hanidachat. One can't forbid entire territories, because now Jews won't be able to travel in entire countries. A little bit yes. Okay, we'll see.

Law 1: Anything Without Possession by Human Hand

There is a concept of possession by hand. **Anything without possession by human hand**, something that a person cannot grasp with his hands, something that is larger, something that a person cannot simply grab so easily. **And he did not create it**, the person did not create it, the person did not make it.

Discussion: What Does Possession by Hand Mean?

Speaker 1: I would translate possession by hand as it's too large to grasp.

Speaker 2: I would translate it as things that a person doesn't grasp with his actions, one can't have control over it. It's not in human hands, it's not in human hands in a more abstract way. It's not in his control. One sees the mountains, it's not your property, it doesn't become yours. A person has no possession in this, because it's so large, it's not... It doesn't belong to you. It's not under the dominion of people.

Speaker 1: He says an animal. An animal can be a small animal, a person can indeed lift it.

Speaker 2: It means natural things, things that the Almighty made, not what people made. He didn't create it.

Speaker 1: Yes, or what he can't create. But he says "and he did not create it" there it's like two things. I mean that this is the translation, this is the translation. "Possession by human hand" is the language of the Gemara. So it says in the Gemara: anything that has possession by human hand, anything that doesn't have possession by human hand is forbidden. The Rambam translates that possession by hand means, this is how he learns it, there are two versions in the Rambam, that this is the translation for now. That "and he did not create it" means that this is something that a person did not make. Who made the mountain? You didn't make it, the Almighty made it. That's the translation.

Speaker 2: The translation is literally that the person didn't lift it, he doesn't acquire it, it doesn't lie in his hand. But let's

see inside, we'll see the details and we'll understand the translation of possession in this.

Mountains, Hills, Trees, Springs, Animals

So, **if it was worshipped**, even if one worshipped idolatry to it, **it is permitted for benefit**, because we say that your act of worshipping it did not take effect on the thing.

That doesn't lie in your control. **Therefore, gentiles who worship mountains and hills, or trees that were planted from the beginning for fruit**, trees that were, one didn't plant a tree in order to have the tree for idolatry, it was already planted from the beginning, and later a gentile came and worshipped idolatry to it, **or springs that flow for the public**, if gentiles worship idolatry to a spring of water that flows for the public, and we have to exclude when a person makes a spring, a person builds a small one and he makes a waterfall, he has possession by hand, he has a bit of control, but a spring that already flows, it flows, it is yes. The same thing is an animal, one worships an animal, **these are permitted for benefit**, because you worship, but the thing doesn't know, the mountain doesn't know that you worship it, the mountain is a mountain, you have your craziness, we don't believe you and we don't accept you.

Therefore, it is permitted to eat those fruits that were worshipped in their place of growth, one may continue to eat fruits from the tree that grew, the tree is indifferent to your craziness, and the same thing with an animal, one may eat the animal. One must understand, an animal yes there is a bit of possession, a person can lift an animal, but from what he says that possession by hand means that you can't lift it, possession by hand means that it belongs to you, you made it, that's the translation, you didn't make the animal, and if one thinks, when a person carves out a piece of wood, he created the thing, and he made it for idolatry, or he carves out a creation, because all these things are natural, are part of nature, and your worship didn't change what it is, it remained exactly as one can make a bit. But the Gemara brings on this a derivation, "to them is the sea and they did not create the rivers."

That an animal if he indeed worships the mountain, you know that all kinds of holy mountains, the mountain is something a trinket, it doesn't become forbidden.

An Animal Designated for Idolatry

And needless to say that this is even an animal that he already actually worships. How much more so an animal that was only designated for idolatry, and one designated it, one prepared it for idolatry, it doesn't take effect, and the animal is still permitted for eating. No difference which way, whether one designated that the animal will be worshipped, the animal will be idolatry, or one designated the animal that it should be an offering to idolatry, it is permitted, because the animal doesn't belong to you.

This is as long as... because an animal is something that the Almighty made. This is what we will learn in the next point, that it was indeed, you can do an action, you may not do it, but you can indeed do it to an animal.

Law 2: An Action with an Animal

When are these words said? That an animal is not forbidden, **when he did not do an action with it for the sake of idolatry**, he did nothing to the animal, he only

prepared it. **But if he did any action whatsoever with it, he forbade it.** He did even a small thing, he indeed forbade it. And he explains, **How so? Such as if he slaughtered one sign in it for idolatry,** he slaughtered even not completely slaughtered, he slaughtered one sign, which an animal can still live after, yes, because by slaughter one needs two signs.

Or made it an exchange for idolatry... Another thing, another thing, another thing. Made it an exchange is not about an action, it's money of idolatry. This is the only thing we mean now. Such as if he slaughtered one sign in it for idolatry, this is an action that we saw earlier, even it becomes an offering to idolatry, all the parts, the hides and garments and so forth. The accessories of idolatry have the simple meaning that he made an action, and then it indeed becomes forbidden.

Exchange for Idolatry

There is another way for an animal to be forbidden for idolatry, which is if one bought idolatry instead of it. One makes an exchange. This is not idolatry itself, but money of idolatry, which financially, its value is idolatry. **Made it an exchange for idolatry,** someone sold an animal and with the money that he made from it he made idolatry? No, no, no, exchange, he exchanged idolatry with an animal. He bought, he went to the idolatry store, and instead of giving him money he gave him an animal.

Yes, this is called exchange. The animal became an exchange, became an exchange, he exchanged the animal for another animal, then it is like money of idolatry, and we learned earlier that idolatry is forbidden for benefit, because its substitute, its substitute etc., you buy idolatry, you must take the money and the Dead Sea etc., and this is indeed idolatry, so there's no problem that an animal doesn't have possession by hand. This is not relevant, because the animal becomes like money of idolatry, because this is the price that was paid for idolatry. So then the principle that an animal cannot become idolatry doesn't apply.

I think that when he says like money of idolatry, he means that it's similar, as if it's a weaker prohibition. This means money from idolatry, yes? It's not money, it's exchange, but it's the same way that money of idolatry is forbidden for benefit, so this is a type of money of idolatry. It could be that it's "like money," this is what he holds is a novelty, because it's an animal, it's not money.

Law 3: One's Own Animal Versus Another's Animal

Therefore according to this it is so, what we learned that one can slaughter an animal or make an exchange for idolatry with an animal, and then even an animal becomes forbidden, this is specifically **with one's own animal,** it's his own animal. That is, I have a right, as much right as I have on my animal, I may slaughter it, I may exchange it for idolatry. **But one who takes another's animal for idolatry or exchanges it, then it is not forbidden, for one cannot forbid something that is not his.** You can't go take from someone else, is this by theft? What does "not his" mean? Perhaps even with permission? So he perhaps argues.

That is, the owners didn't do it, you did it, and you have no right to it. It's similar to possession by hand. It's similar to theft, to a thief. A thief is something, if a thief acquires, then you indeed have possession by hand on it. But it must be connected to the fact that you have no right in it. Therefore

you can't forbid. One must understand, because one can indeed make someone else's wine libation wine, or one can make someone else's thing impure. For idolatry... no, for idolatry...

Law 3 (Continued): One Who Slaughters Another's Animal for Idolatry

Words of the Rambam: "When are these words said, with one's own animal. But if one slaughtered another's animal for idolatry, or exchanged it — it is not forbidden, for a person cannot forbid something that is not his."

This is specifically with one's own animal, his own animal. That is, I have a right, as much right as I have on my animal, I may slaughter it, I may, that is, exchange it for idolatry. But one who slaughters another's animal for idolatry, also vice versa, then "it is not forbidden, for a person cannot forbid something that is not his." You can't go to someone else's animal and steal and without punishment? Perhaps for the death penalty of the court perhaps.

The owner didn't do it, you did it, you have no right in it. You're simply a thief. A thief is honest regarding possession by hand. But it's probably connected to the fact that you have no right in it, therefore you can't forbid.

Question: Why Can't One Forbid Another's Animal?

One must understand, because one can indeed make someone else's wine libation wine, or one can make someone else's thing impure. By idolatry, no, by an animal perhaps, the thing that is not truly yours, a person doesn't make animals, so your animal you can make into a prohibition, by someone else's animal you can't.

The Rambam's Novelty and the Raavad's Dispute

He says that it's not clear how the Rambam derived this law. The Rambam says that there is such a principle "a person cannot forbid something that is not his." And the Gemara speaks about this principle, whether one can forbid something that is not his, and it's not at all so simple. I mean that the Raavad, yes? What does the Raavad say? The Raavad argues in general, yes? The Raavad says that a person can indeed forbid something that is not his. It's only a Jew, however, the Gemara says that he doesn't mean at all regarding the laws of idolatry, he means him simply an enemy from "your enemy is like one who loves you."

So the Rambam, it's a novelty of the Rambam this, that he says that a person cannot forbid someone else's animal. As you say, one can indeed generally forbid something that is not his, but there is an exception that one cannot. But in this manner it appears that one can indeed in the Gemara, and one must understand the Rambam's position. But this is what the Rambam says.

Proof from the Paschal Offering

I thought that one learns that the Paschal offering that the Egyptians worshipped the lamb, the sheep, but one sees that it's not a problem, one can offer an animal that another worships, as long as he didn't slaughter it or sell it one can offer it even, it has no prohibition of benefit.

Law 4: One Who Bows to the Ground of the World

Words of the Rambam: "One who bows to the ground of the world — he did not forbid it. If he dug in it pits,

ditches and caves for the sake of idolatry — he forbade it."

Well good, so this we learned regarding mountains and hills and animals. Now he will go into the details of land. As he said, an animal he already said when an animal indeed becomes forbidden, and now he will say when land does.

He says, "One who bows to the ground of the world," someone bows to the ground, the earth, "he did not forbid it," because you didn't make any change in it, you don't have possession by hand on it, you didn't have any benefit. This we learned at the beginning of the law.

Earlier we learned about a mountain, but here he means even not a mountain, even not the street, the lot. He simply grabbed a mountain because that's a common thing, that mountains, as it says "mountains and hills," but the point is because it's earth that is not yours, it's not an object that you hold in your hand.

How can one indeed forbid a piece of earth? If one indeed makes a change in it, one does something, "he dug in it a pit, ditch and cave," he is an idol worshipper, "he forbade it," because now he indeed has possession by hand in it, he changed and made and built. The part that he built, yes. And we'll see further later that only the part becomes forbidden, and if one breaks it back, apparently it becomes permitted again.

Water That the Wave Uprooted

Words of the Rambam: "Water that the wave uprooted and he bowed to it — he did not forbid it. If he took it in his hand and bowed to it — he forbade it."

What about water? "Water that the wave uprooted," water was a wave that... certainly the entire sea doesn't become forbidden, but sometimes a person will think that this bit of water that splashed out, or that a wave runs or a bit of waterfall, and he bowed to this bit of water, he will think that this is not connected to the large water. But no, "he did not forbid it."

But how can one indeed forbid water? If he took a bit of the water, "he took it in his hand," he scooped there a bit of water, and he bowed to this bit of water, "he forbade it," because on this you indeed have possession by hand, now you indeed... There is a difference, he made an action in this, he took this bit, he lifted it. He does nothing with the stone, he only put it away, he took it somewhere. This is the Gemara.

The Raavad's Dispute Regarding Public Water

The Raavad also argues on this law. The Raavad argues that what the Rambam brought earlier "public water," "public water" applies even to what the wave uprooted. In short, not so simple. The Raavad holds that the point is because there are many owners, like Yirmiyah ben Chama, such a thing. The Raavad argues, he brings that there is a dispute in the Gemara. One can say that there is a dispute in the Gemara, and the Rambam rules as he rules.

Two Problems: Ownership and Action

English Translation

But you see that here there are, as you say, here there are two problems. Here there's one problem that it doesn't belong to you, that it's of the public (shel rabim), or it's a mountain, I don't know, perhaps every mountain is perhaps a public thing (davar shel rabim). And the second problem is that he didn't

do any action (maaseh). The action that one must consider as a significant action is the uprooting of the mountain (ekirat hagal) or not uprooting the mountain, taking it as a sign and for appointed times and the like.

Stones of a Mountain That Rolled Down — Worshiping Them in Their Place

Words of the Rambam: "Stones of a mountain that rolled down and one worshiped them in their place — they are permitted, for there is no human handling in them."

The same thing as you say, there's still a problem with the word "even if it rolled down" (afilu im nidaldel), yes, it's not just that a piece fell down, but even if a piece fell down. Yes. But "worshiping them in their place" (ovdin bimkoman), he worships it there where it is, then it's permitted also because this is like fragments of idolatry with human handling (tfisat yad adam).

But if he's not worshiping it in its place but he moved it, he placed it there where he laid it, then yes it's his creation, he made the stone be there. No, that's simple, that if a gentile makes a stone somewhere and he makes from it an idol (getchke), it's forbidden because he brought it there. Ah, the wonder is that he made there actually from this something a picture, because even the ground of the world stands still, yet if he moved it.

Law 5: A Brick That Was Set Up to Bow Down To

Words of the Rambam: "A Jew who stood up a brick to bow down to it, and did not bow down, and a gentile came and bowed down to it — it's forbidden in benefit, for the standing it up is an action."

We're going to learn now about a brick (levena), a brick is not a built stone. But so it seems, the Rambam doesn't say explicitly, true. But he already said "worshiping them in their place." No, that's what it means, yes.

Now he's going to say a new law, that bowing down is not enough. For this he says here "brick," about this he wants to say that even when there isn't the problem of human handling (tfisat yad adam), about this he wants to first begin to make clear why is there a brick, ah, let's see what he says. Let's see what he says. No one knows what you're talking about, let's see what he says. Law one, he says "brick."

That when a Jew takes a brick and he said "behold this is idolatry to bow down to it," that means he said, he made an intention, he set it up in order to bow down. He didn't bow down. Then a gentile comes and bows down (yavo goy veyishtachaveh lah), a gentile came and bowed down. Then it's forbidden in benefit (asrah behanaah). Why? Because the standing up is an action (shehatakifah maaseh), meaning it was an action. This is the standing up. And we learned earlier that making it for idolatry doesn't do anything, one must actually worship it. But here there's a second thing, a gentile worshiped it.

What will be if even a gentile did it? Together both things were done, that it was designated and someone worshiped it for idolatry. Designating it doesn't do anything, but the action does it. This was the standing up was an action (hatakfah maaseh). Without setting it up nothing would have happened apparently, because there was no action, that handling the Jews didn't turn it. No, because it's just a brick. You see that a

brick, that even a brick which is yes perhaps a built thing after all, the sun perhaps gets carved out.

It doesn't say in the Mishnah "he made a brick." He didn't carve out the stone for idolatry, it was already a brick. He found a brick and he set it up, so the setting up was the action. So he says, that the standing up is an action (shehatakifah maaseh). And the setting up was an action. Yes, but one doesn't bow down to a lying brick, but to a standing one. The standing up itself is not an action.

An Egg — Even a Small Lifting

Words of the Rambam: "And likewise if he stood up an egg, and a gentile came and bowed down to it — it's forbidden."

Certainly, this is an egg. This is a law. He says, an egg and a gentile comes and bows down to it (veyavo goy veyishtachaveh lah), it's also forbidden in benefit. Why? No difference. The Gemara says that there's a novelty (chiddush) that even an egg which barely looks like it's lifted up, it's a small difference from this way, that way, and yet the standing up is called an action.

He Cut a Gourd — Cutting Down a Fruit

Words of the Rambam: "He cut a gourd and the like and bowed down to it — it's forbidden."

Right. The same thing, he cut a gourd (chatach delaat), he cut down a fruit, and went out with it and bowed down to it (veyatza bah veyishtachaveh lah), the cutting was an action, and after bowing down it was an action, with idolatry it becomes forbidden.

He Bowed Down to Half the Gourd — Doubtfully Forbidden

Words of the Rambam: "He bowed down to half the gourd, and the other half is attached to it — behold this is forbidden from doubt, lest this half is like a hand to the worshiped half."

He bowed down to half the gourd (hishtachavah lachatzi hadelaat), a person bows down to half a fruit, but the other half is with it (chatzyo ha'acher im ovdo), he worships idolatry, he says, I want now to accept by me the half of the gourd by me as a god. He has a little tiny god, he makes a tiny god.

This is not an incident that they came to ask the rabbis. This is the incident, the law. This is the whole reason one can see. They sat by the sages in the study hall (beit hamidrash), and they thought, what will be if he bows down to one gourd from the pile, what will happen to half of the gourd? It's not a question, it happens. Yes. Then it's forbidden from doubt (asur misafek). Why? From doubt lest the half is like a hand to the half of the river (misafek shema yechatzyo kemo yad lachatzi hanahar). Because we're talking here even, for example he says I bow down to the right half of the gourd, yes? But the gourd couldn't exist, it would quickly rot or what, it wouldn't... It holds together, they're just best friends, one lives with the other. And perhaps also as it stays fresh as long as it's one gourd.

No, it's not such a thing. We learned earlier a similar law, that a part is a prohibition and an animal, the animal survived the other animal. That was already. Because here the question is when one makes half of the idolatry to the other half, does it become like the idolatry's attendant, whatever. Yes, the hand means he holds it, it's necessary for it (nitrach lo). But the

Gemara brings a doubt in this, and one must be stringent from doubt. If someone finds a Jew who wants to bow down, as it's only to half the door, he should know that it doesn't hold on one the other half, about that he doesn't hold. Why must one be stringent? Because it wants to spare the other half which can it is... No, but he wants to give a lesson, he's a gentile who saw that a Jew doesn't have a sugya, he came upon him.

Proof from Isaiah — "Half of it he burned in fire"

There's a verse in Isaiah, yes, "half of it he burned in fire" (chatzyo saraf bemo esh), where he made mockingly, that half of the wood that he made for his idol he used to bake, to make a pizza. But it doesn't mean that, perhaps it's just a remembrance of that verse.

Law 6: A Tree That Was Planted — Trees of Idolatry

Words of the Rambam: "A tree that was planted from the beginning to be worshiped — is forbidden in benefit, and this is the 'asherah' mentioned in the Torah."

Okay, already. Now we're going to learn, until now we learned about what, about water, about wood, we're going to learn about trees. Pumpkin isn't such a thing, we already know. Pumpkin is something that gentiles use as symbolic. Ah, what's the meaning? Not that, it's a newer thing. They don't worship it, it's more than symbolic. Perhaps even it's worship of idolatry. Adornment of idolatry. Yes, such a thing.

Okay, now we're going to see about a tree, and they learned that one can't forbid a tree. There are two types of trees of idolatry. They learned earlier that there's what one plants next to the idolatry to announce that here is the idolatry, and in honor of that they forbade planting an asherah alone next to the Temple. There is when one worships the idolatry itself.

Let's see, a tree that was planted (ilan shenatao), but the novelty here is, we're talking regarding, when we're still talking about the topic that one can't essentially forbid a tree. There's a tree that was planted and simply there's a tree that grows, a gentile comes and he worships it, he can worship it, it doesn't become idolatry. But if he planted it initially for idolatry,

Law 6 (Continued): A Tree Planted from the Beginning for Idolatry

Speaker 1:

We learned earlier that there's what one plants next to the idolatry to announce that here there is idolatry, and in honor of that they forbade planting an asherah next to the altar. Here we're talking about worshipping the idolatry itself.

Let's see, **a tree that was planted from the beginning for idolatry** (ilan shenatao matchilah leshem avodah zarah). This is what we're talking about here. We're still holding from the topic that one can't essentially forbid a tree. There's a tree that was planted, simply there's a tree, it grows, a gentile comes and he worships it, it can't become idolatry.

But if he planted it from the beginning for idolatry, then? **A tree that was planted from the beginning for idolatry**, he planted it, he did the action, he planted the idolatry, he created the tree, he planted it. Then **it's forbidden in benefit, as it says "you shall not plant for yourself an asherah"** (asur behanaah, shene'emar "lo tita lecha

asherah"). It's explicit that it's forbidden in the Torah, and one shouldn't say that it's not an asherah.

Law 7 – A Tree That Was Planted and He Trimmed and Carved It for Idolatry

Speaker 1:

Ay, good. **Since it was planted** (hoil venatua), what happens if it was a planted tree? We learned that in such a case it's called not, there's no human handling (tfisat yad adam).

But he did do something to it, he did change it. **And he trimmed it** (ugidro), he cut off branches from it, **and carved it** (ufislo), he carved it out for idolatry. Even **he grafted and bent in the body of the tree itself** (hirkiv vehevrich begufo shel ilan), not just when he played only with branches, but even he did a grafting and a bending.

Definition of Grafting and Bending

Speaker 1:

What are two types of graftings? He attached two trees. Yes, bending I think means that one brought from somewhere else. Bending, I don't remember. One means one brings a second piece of tree, one means one brings the tree to a second, something like that.

I think that bending (havrachah) means when he takes a branch, so he translates, one takes a branch and one bends it into the ground, that it should take roots, it should make its roots in the ground. And grafting (harkavah) means that he brings a branch from another tree and one connects it to this tree that it should connect.

The Law of the Shoots and the Rest of the Tree

Speaker 1:

So, I would have said that when the new grafted part has begun to bring forth, **and it brings forth a shoot** (veyotzi tzitz), after it has begun to grow from it new branches, I would have thought that in such a case he did indeed make actually a change in the tree.

But it's still the same law. The foundation, the essence of the tree (etzem ilan), was already planted before, so your addition you can indeed forbid, but in the essence of the tree you still don't have human handling (tfisat yad adam).

So it causes that the shoots (srigim), you can cut off the shoots, the part that became idolatry. That which became afterwards, you indeed have a human handling that made it for idolatry, but **the rest of the tree is permitted** (shear ilan mutar), in the tree itself no change happened, so it's permitted.

The Law of One Who Bows Down to a Tree

Speaker 1:

And likewise one who bows down to a tree (vechen hamishtachaveh le'ilan), a tree that already has plantings from the beginning, **even though its body is not forbidden** (af al pi shelo ne'esar gufo), even though the tree doesn't become forbidden, but that which grows afterwards, **the shoots, the branches, and the leaves, and the palm branches, and the fruits** that are not made to eat, **and fruits**, proper fruits, **that come out all the time it was worshiped** (sheyotze kol zman shene'evad), that grows yes after one began to worship, this is indeed yes after the idolatry.

The tree is before the idolatry (kodem la'avodah zarah), it has nothing to do with you. The thing indeed happened already, it already grew after the tree already had some status of idolatry.

So **it's fitting to forbid them in benefit** (ra'uy le'osran behana'ah).

Question: Why Do the Shoots Become Forbidden Without an Action?

Speaker 1:

This is difficult, because you were taught earlier that one must make a human handling (tfisat yad), here you see that something is not so simple. Why don't we say that I know, ground of the world that doesn't grow? But one finds another way. Water, the water that began to come after she bowed down, is not forbidden. But by a tree there's something this law. Do you understand what he's asking?

Earlier he learns that there must be an action, here you see that no, that one bows down, and the parts that were until then don't become forbidden, but the parts of the tree that grow out afterwards, it seems that they become forbidden.

Speaker 2:

Interesting, a minute ago it was said that one must make an action.

Speaker 1:

Yes, indeed interesting. Because if the whole tree is not... where should we have the new branches? In the tree. You say that the tree didn't become forbidden. Your bowing didn't make the new branches.

Speaker 2:

Would the case have been when he cut and he made a grafting and a bending?

Speaker 1:

That's what I understood, that one must make an action.

Speaker 2:

Yes, interesting.

Speaker 1:

And also a bit the previous piece which seems at all to say the shoots and leaves all the time it was worshiped (srigim ve'alim kol zman shene'evad), that indeed comes in the next piece.

Speaker 2:

One can say the grafting, it could be that it would help even without that, even what grows naturally.

Speaker 1:

Nu, what are the simple hand (yad peshutah) or what... he doesn't say, the simple hand doesn't answer such sorts of problems, he only brings gemaras. I don't know. It's a good question, and one can live with a question. It seems that perhaps trees are different from water or such a thing. I don't know. But let's see this piece in Piskei Tosafot. I don't know the explanation. What is this doing here? I don't know. Let's go learn further. I don't know, I don't know what he says in Ramban further. No, no, about this he doesn't say. I looked in the Gemara how one learns from the verse. Okay, further. No, in short, let's learn further.

Law 7 (Continued): A Tree Whose Fruits Were Designated for the House of Idolatry (Sign of Asherah)

Speaker 1:

A tree, a new idea, this is perhaps a side law, it's apparently just knowledge (yedi'ah be'alma) this law. There's perhaps a type of tree, a tree that we don't know that one worships it for idolatry, but what a Jew does know yes is that the gentiles

guard the fruits of this tree, and they say that they're preparing it, they intend to let them belong to such and such house of idolatry, they're going to make from this beer for such and such church.

And they indeed make the beer **when they prune and hoe, behold this tree is forbidden in benefit** (bisha'at shenosrim ve'odrim, harei zeh ilan asur behana'ah). They say, one judges from the law, they know that the tree is forbidden in benefit. Why? Simply so it wouldn't be forbidden in benefit, but the fruits that grow afterwards.

Ah, no, he says that one sees that he worships it, he sees that he hoes it, he guards its fruits. But he says but the law that simply one establishes an asherah, therefore he signs and marks thus, **for this is the statute of asherah** (shezeh chukat asherah). If one does so it's a sign that it's yes idolatry to which one worships, because from an asherah tree is what they make, the custom is from idolatry is that one makes an asherah, what an asherah is is what one learns earlier, is afterwards with uncovering of hair, which that is essentially he worships it.

But besides this there's a custom that from the asherah one doesn't use the fruits, but rather one makes afterwards beer. And what does one drink in honor of the holiday, whatever, in honor of the festival? Simply a type of brandy.

Digression: What is Beer?

Speaker 1:

Beer one usually makes from barley. Sometimes counted, in the Gemara it says, one speaks almost always of intoxicating drink (sheichar), one speaks of dates. I don't know what it is, something a type, it seems, fermented dates, what right do I know? Today one makes from barley usually. Also in the Gemara there is from barley. It's a type, it's a type of drink.

I saw this week in Ba'al Shem Tov, that the Ba'al Shem Tov said that a beer one can't make all day. If someone has a question and he remembers. If he creates a beer from dates one can yes. We're talking about our beer.

Speaker 2:

Yes, say further.

Speaker 1:

Okay, in short, this is interesting, this is simply a law that's brought in the Gemara. The Gemara brings it that someone told him, to those of Pumbedita, such an idea, what do I know? It's a presumption (chazakah), like all presumptions, if one sees so one knows that it goes so.

Law 8 – A Tree Under Which They Place Idolatry (Attendant)

Speaker 1:

Now we're going to learn, as you said, the second type of tree, not the tree that one worships. Until now we learned about a tree that one worships. Now we're going to learn about a tree that one doesn't worship at all, but a tree that is a... announcement that here there is idolatry. It's made to announce, or an attendant (meshameish) of idolatry, or it's its shade on the idolatry.

A Tree Planted Under Idolatry, As Long As It Is Beneath It, Is Forbidden in Benefit

A tree that is planted under idolatry, as long as it is beneath it, is forbidden in benefit, because the tree is

called a meshameish (accessory) for idolatry.

Discussion: Why Does the Tree Become Permitted When the Idolatry Is Removed?

Speaker 1:

And if this doesn't help, that we don't say the tree is forbidden because it is itself a cheftza (object) of impurity - that we couldn't say because on the simple level it's a yadayim (extension). But a meshameish it can indeed be, it seems. Yes, I don't know. I'm mistaken, the tree seems to me more complicated, it's already a second thing, such a tree, that the way it is forbidden even if nothing is done with it.

So I don't know. But it's only forbidden **as long as it is beneath it**. The moment it's taken away, look, the moment it's taken away, **if it was removed from under the idolatry**, the entire tree is permitted. **If it was removed from under the idolatry, it is permitted.**

Speaker 2:

Don't you understand the Mishnah?

Speaker 1:

Ah, the question is the Mishnah. **A tree that was planted beneath it** means what was planted in order to place idolatry. So we're talking about **a tree that was planted**. But it doesn't match with the previous law. Only **everything beneath it**.

Ah, because it was planted to be a meshameish for idolatry. Therefore, as long as it's a meshameish it's forbidden. Once it's no longer a meshameish, it's back to being just a tree, it's back to being part of nature.

With this it's different from other things. Other things that once were a meshameish, need to actually be nullified.

In short, you can answer the Mishnah, that he said the answer he said, but **the idolatry was nullified**, once the idolatry was removed, he rises with his face, **because the tree itself was not worshipped**. Because the tree wasn't worshipped.

Indeed so, if one had worshipped the tree itself and it had been initially for the purpose of worship, it wouldn't help even if one stopped worshipping, one became disgusted, one went and found a disgusting tree, one began worshipping, it would still remain idolatry, one would need to do the law of nullification.

But when it wasn't idolatry, it was only a meshameish for idolatry to make it have shade, only as long as it's shade is it forbidden.

Question: Why Doesn't the Rambam Say "That the Owners Despaired"?

Speaker 1:

Yes, it's not clear. You can answer the Mishnah, there's a problem with the law, something doesn't fit so well. The meshameish... there are other opinions, and according to the other opinions the Rambam should have ruled that it needs to be despaired of, and including. He doesn't say here "that the owners despaired of it". Perhaps he means that, but he doesn't say it clearly.

Law 9 - A House Built Initially for Idolatry / One Who Bows to a Built House

Speaker 1:

Okay, what about the same thing with a house? But this is the law that the Rambam says by the Mishnah. **A house that was built initially for this, a house itself that is**

worshipped, he builds a house that should be worshipped to the house.

Ah, this he does say clearly, one needs... ah, by this it is... it needs to be... yes. The same law. Okay, it's the same stated law. It's the same three laws. Let's see the same stated three laws.

If one built a house initially that the house should be worshipped, "Blessed are you, house" says the gentile, I know what. Or... ah, and then he says **and similarly one who bows to a built house**. Or there is a house and one bows to the house, **it is forbidden in benefit**.

Discussion: Distinction Between Tree and House Regarding Human Intervention

Speaker 1:

A house does indeed have human intervention. But because initially a person's intent was, it was initially that it should be idolatry, it should be for fruits. But a normal tree, that one despaired afterwards and then worshipped, perhaps it does become forbidden, it becomes a taking hold from now on, as the Rambam indeed said. Because it was a person's intent, it's not a mountain that no one ever touched.

There are two different types of human intervention, you understand? It's different from a house, yes, one can hear. Indeed a person has at least a connection to it, yes. One can say a distinction, but it sounds somewhat so. I see that a tree is with the seed and the sun and the water. It's part of the... from which one has benefit from the earth there.

Speaker 2:

Okay, what was perhaps the seed?

Law 9 (Continued): Painting and Decoration on a House - Innovation for Idolatry

There are two different types of human intervention, right? It's different from a house, yes, one can hear. It's indeed a person, there's a system in it. Yes, true, one can make a distinction, but it sounds somewhat so. I see that a tree is... we learned earlier that a tree is a zivei zivei gorem (multiple causes), because it has the earth, and the seed, and the sun, and the water. Yes, regarding the... from which one has benefit from the earth there.

Okay, what was somewhat... **a built house**, there was a built house, and it was decorated, it was painted, and beautiful pictures were made for the sake of idolatry, to such an extent that it was refreshed, the house became new, it got a new look. The essential house itself didn't become forbidden, because the house didn't become... why not? A minute ago he said that **one who bows to a built house is forbidden in benefit**. He says no, only **he takes what was innovated, and the innovation is forbidden in benefit, but the rest of the house is permitted**. Perhaps he only worships the pictures? He only worships the beauty. He worships the beautiful house. It's somewhat so. The house, the bare ugly house, he doesn't worship. He only worships it as a beautiful house. Makes it, take away the decoration and painting, it's permitted. Somehow I'm missing the basic learning here, the definition of all these laws. Not clear.

Bringing Idolatry Into the House - Third Case

What about... ah... **he brought in**? Yes, okay. Let's have a bit clear the three laws. Afterwards, what is the third case? That he didn't worship a house at all, but he brought in idolatry into the house. Then it's the same law as the tree, which is not

idolatry itself, but a meshameish of idolatry. But once it's taken out, the house is again permitted.

So it seems that the painting and decoration, right, means that one doesn't worship the house itself, one only worships the pictures of the house. And so apparently one would say. It's very similar to a tree, where one has the branches, from the new branches it becomes forbidden. So it sounds.

Law 10: A Stone Hewn for Idolatry

Okay. **A stone that was hewn, was cut for idolatry**, a large piece of stone was cut from a mountain to worship, its benefit is forbidden, because when cutting it down it was cut for this purpose. But if it was already hewn, that it was already cut, and it was only **painted and engraved**, it was only made beautiful so it should be worshipped, then **even if it was painted and engraved in the body of the stone, even if the picture was in the body of the stone, not that it was only painted, it's not the body of the stone itself, only the addition becomes forbidden**, and when one wants one can reuse the essential stone, only what was added, the picture etc., that is forbidden.

He says, this is how it is with benefit, this was the benefit that was worshipped, the pictures were made so that one should worship for this idolatry, so those parts are forbidden, but the rest of the stone, with the essential stone itself, no change happened in the stone itself. That is, even if there was a change, that can be made to undo the change, you know, the stone itself wasn't hit, even a picture on the stone itself, one still sees that one worships the painted stone, make it back into a simple stone vessel, a simple stone, then it's again permitted. Not again, it was never forbidden further. Yes, that stone as it is a stone was never forbidden.

A Stone Upon Which Idolatry Was Placed - Meshameish

And the same thing is **a stone that is not idolatry itself, but it's a meshameish**, like for example for a stand, **a stone upon which idolatry was placed, it is forbidden as long as it is upon it**, as long as the idolatry is on it the stone is also forbidden as accessories of idolatry, but **if the idolatry was removed**, it was taken away, the stone is still permitted.

Law 11: One Whose House Was Adjacent to a House of Idolatry and It Fell

Now we're going to learn an interesting case, this is really what was asked what happens with Jews. My previous law was also a case, but he says here, this is really a practical problem that is done. I didn't understand the law either, I already looked at it a bit before, I didn't understand the law so properly for all the details, but let's see what it says.

One whose house was adjacent to a house of idolatry and it fell, a person had a house right next to the house of idolatry, and the wall fell down. That is, the wall serves both houses, he has here one wall between the houses. **It is forbidden to build it**, he may not build it, because when he builds back his wall, he builds a wall for the house of idolatry. He means an honor, but in practice he benefits idolatry. That he has a complicated partnership with them.

Question: Why Is This Not a Partnership?

The next law states the partner. You see that's my problem. It seems that his house is up to the wall, and his property is entirely his, but the fact is that the idolatry is on the other side of the wall.

Advice: Withdraw Into His Own

Aha, the next law, **withdraw into his own**, he lets in into his space. He builds, but the idolatry will still have benefit that there is a wall. There is advice from Rabbi Akiva Eiger. If so, they will have benefit from the wall, so apparently the first law says that he may not. Rather what, that he lets in into his space, a measure of space. I understand that the word is word. That he has benefit that he has a good wall, on this the advice is that one shouldn't have benefit from the wall. But they explain to me that the advice is that he should make the wall with space. That he says I'm building it. It seems, so I don't understand so well the books of the law, but it seems that the simple meaning is he needs to withdraw, it doesn't say how much he needs to withdraw. As if there is peace. Let's say a cubit, a handbreadth, I don't know.

Now the idolatry could say, okay, I don't have a wall, because the wall is at the Jew's property. One can say he actually has benefit, but that's not the problem. He has benefit from the space. But he has now received more space. The Jew has actually waived from his... no, not waived. That on that place he puts in... he should put things that... that one shouldn't have benefit from that piece of space. **So that he won't expand the house of idolatry.** He shouldn't expand the house of idolatry.

Digression: Excrement as a Collection

Because he will be very angry, that he throws excrement at his property, they can't do anything. The simple meaning is that it wasn't just idolatry by him. He means to say things that aren't nice. He caught thorns, excrement. He doesn't mean the word in the matter of dirty things. It sees the reason. Yes, people used to have excrement. Yes, in law, in partnership one sees the... people had a collection of excrement for their fields, it's a term. It's a... something covered in it. The word is, that he shouldn't have benefit from the empty space.

A Wall of Partnership - They Divide

If it's not his wall that happens to be that on the other side there is idolatry, but it's actually a wall of partnership of a wall of idolatry, **they divide**, half and half. Then one divides the wall in half, **his half is permitted in benefit**, it's already divided in thickness, yes, it's thick a handbreadth, **his half is permitted in benefit, and that of idolatry is forbidden.** And then when he goes to build it, when he builds his part, apparently he negotiated with the idolatry, and the idolatry needs to pay him half.

It's not so well explained.

Its Stones and Wood and Dust of the Wall Are Forbidden in Benefit

Then he says the next last thing, **its stones and wood and dust** of idolatry, of the wall. Which stones and wood and dust? From that wall that fell down. Certainly one must already say that it's not idolatry. And why doesn't one say that half is permitted? Each piece is a doubt of idolatry, it's a doubt forbidden.

Its stones and wood and dust of the wall are forbidden in benefit. Why is everything forbidden? Because the stones and wood and dust that was up from the part of idolatry is forbidden. It already stands so, a person, the wall fell down, so you need to calculate that half the wall is permitted and half the wall is forbidden. Therefore you need from the rubble, from the part that is broken, you need to calculate that half is idolatry. You can't rebuild the wall, but

you can only rebuild half of the wall, because the stones and wood and dust are forbidden in benefit. Not clear actually. You see that the commentator that he brings, he brings that Rashi has a completely different interpretation on the Gemara.

I say, stones and wood and dust can be a good continuation of the word forbidden. **Of idolatry is forbidden**, therefore when the wall fell down he can't use half of the stones, wood and dust. Okay, but half is his, he can't use it anyway. Let's say the idolatry stopped caring, I don't know what. He wants now to rebuild the wall, he needs to remember that half the wall is idolatry. And at least he may not have benefit from the stones, wood and dust. Let's say even this is indeed his in a way that the idolatry was removed from there. But since half of the wall was a wall of idolatry, because from that side it's not from idolatry, yes, that is perhaps a distinction. That this is interesting, it's interesting that it speaks of that half indeed. So says the Rashba, he says that he may only take if he can his stones, he knows which stones were on his side. Okay.

This is the law of the house. He brings that Rashi says, he didn't tell me that Rashi says that this speaks that the house itself is worshipped, not just a meshameish, which is already something else. That the house is... the Rambam didn't say so clearly, I don't know what he brings on Rashi.

Law 12: How Does One Destroy Idolatry

The Rambam says further, **how does one destroy idolatry?** Now we're going to talk about the mitzvah of... not the mitzvah, the mitzvah of destroying idolatry we learned earlier, but how does destroying idolatry work? What does one do to nullify idolatry? **Grinds it and scatters it to the wind**, one grinds it and sends it to the wind, **or burns it**, or one burns it, **or casts it to the Dead Sea.** Perhaps both together? What, the fire? Perhaps burns and casts, yes. Like grinds and scatters to the wind. Yes, I mean that there is a nice... because once you've ground it, what's the point of scattering to the wind? That someone shouldn't stumble with the dust. Indeed, how will the dust go? Somewhere it will go, and then it's already completely nullified. Yes, there is a nice one, and one can learn both ways. I don't remember how one learns simply, but so it seems. Okay.

Plating of Idolatry That Has No Human Intervention

Further. Ah, what about the... a new law, a new law. Okay. He says, it stands, we have learned until now that a thing that stands for human intervention is forbidden. But this is only... he says, **a thing that stands for human intervention that was worshipped** a thing that has no human intervention, but idolatry was worshipped from it, like mountains and animals and trees.

Even if the worshipper himself with benefit, even if the worshipped touched that the tree is still with benefit, but plating perhaps means that there is no law of taking effect of idolatry. There is just no law of taking effect of idolatry that the mountain shouldn't become idolatry.

But it's still called idolatry regarding that if one places there platings, one decorates the mountain, it means like one decorated idolatry - platings which are forbidden in benefit.

Law 12 (Continued): Platings of Idolatry - A Thing That Has No Human Intervention

He says, here is relevant human intervention that was worshipped. A thing that has no human intervention, but idolatry was worshipped from it, like mountains and animals

and trees, even though the worshipped itself is permitted in benefit - even if the worshipper said that the tree is still permitted in benefit.

But its platings - perhaps he means that it doesn't hold, there is no such law of idolatry that the mountain shouldn't become idolatry, but it's still called idolatry regarding that if one places there platings, one decorates the mountain, it means like one decorates idolatry - platings are forbidden in benefit. This is what he wanted to say, such a novelty.

"And it has no value whatsoever, as it says 'do not covet the silver and gold upon them.'"

Because the simple translation is indeed, the silver and gold that is upon them. The simple translation is indeed, even the Tosafos says it's simple if it's silver and gold. But he says a novelty: even the "upon them" itself, which is something that is not tangible by human hand, is not so difficult to understand, because in practice one does serve the statue, it's not his, yet it is his.

But there is indeed a special commandment or a special verse about this. He says, and all the plating of idolatry is included. What is the definition of plating of idolatry? Something that is made for beauty to cover the idolatry. It's not the definition of idolatry itself, but it's the definition of accessories of idolatry, of the beauty of idolatry. When we speak of his, it's not even on the mountain, just like that.

So this is an extra law of plating of idolatry, and this he says, this becomes nullified idolatry.

Nullification of Gentile Idolatry

The Rambam says: **"Idolatry of gentiles that was nullified by gentiles before it came into the possession of a Jew"** — this is the work of destroying chametz, simply it's not exactly. Idolatry of gentiles that was nullified by gentiles before it came into the possession of a Jew, idolatry of gentiles that gentiles nullified, they made it no longer idolatry, before it came into the hands of the Jews — **it is permitted for benefit, as it says 'the graven images of their gods you shall burn with fire,' and it doesn't say 'their graven images,' but 'the graven images of their gods,' as long as they are their gods. But if they nullified them, they are no longer their gods.**

But if they nullified them, when it's no longer the graven images of their gods, one doesn't need to burn it. Gentile idols that one burns, gentile things that were once idols, former gods, that one must burn with fire. What has already been nullified, let's say, an idolatry.

Jewish Idolatry — Can Never Be Nullified

But this is with a gentile. Earlier we saw that a Jew is different. That a Jew is less wise than a gentile, there are certain things, I don't remember. There's a Chashmona, there's that thing that there's such a thing, I don't remember.

Here we'll see that a Jew is worse, when a Jew serves idolatry he is worse than a gentile.

Why? Idolatry of a Jew can never be nullified.

A Jew cannot nullify his idolatry.

Did you know? A Jew cannot nullify idolatry.

Still nullify idolatry, how does one nullify idolatry?

Explanation: Why a Jew Cannot Nullify

It says that the simple explanation is that Jews, so I see he brings, that Jews are serious people, yes. A Jew is not frivolous. He sees that a pious person comes, a second one comes, he takes it away, he says, okay, I've nullified it. But he doesn't mean it seriously, he truly believes it's idolatry. Therefore one doesn't trust him.

Unlike a gentile, a gentile is nothing. A gentile, one day it's idolatry, and tomorrow he doesn't care. He's not very strong. The Jew, he knew, he knew it's idolatry, but a Jew doesn't give in, a Jew is stubborn. So it seems.

Partnership of Jew and Gentile

For example, you'll see that if a Jew has a partnership with a gentile in idolatry, I would have thought that perhaps the gentile who is a partner can nullify it. But no, the portion of it belongs to the Jew, and the Jew doesn't nullify. **Its nullification is of no use at all, rather it is forbidden for benefit forever.**

And what does one do? One must bury it, one must bury it, so that no one should stumble. Bury it means apparently burn it, or bury it, so that no one should... the same law exists here, simply why does it say bury it?

Proof from Jacob Our Father

He brings that by Jacob our father it says **"and Jacob hid them under the terebinth,"** he took the foreign gods and buried them. We see that there is burial for idolatry. We're speaking apparently in a case when one cannot break it.

Ah, the Gemara says, **idolatry of a Jew requires burial.** There's a difference, the idolatry of a gentile doesn't require burial, but idolatry of a Jew requires burial. This means that this is more, because it's a crime, there still remains something of the smell, the ashes, and so on. Jewish idolatry must be buried. Jewish idolatry is worse than gentile idolatry.

Nullification After It Comes to Jewish Hands

And likewise idolatry that was nullified by a Jew after the gentile's nullification — the same thing, that idolatry that a gentile nullified, and afterwards a Jew came, even if the gentile nullified it, **its nullification is of no use**, because now it's the Jew's idolatry, **rather it is forbidden for benefit forever.**

What does Jewish idolatry mean, and the Jew considered it as idolatry? No, even just like that. Because it's no longer now in the possession of the gentile. A gentile can only nullify something that is in his possession. A gentile can nullify idolatry, a Jew cannot nullify idolatry. **"And a Jew does not nullify idolatry even in the possession of a gentile."** Besides this, first of all idolatry of a Jew cannot be nullified, and even if yes, the Jew doesn't nullify idolatry. The Jew must burn or bury it, but he cannot nullify it.

Who Can Nullify Idolatry?

A gentile minor or fool, one who cannot nullify idolatry, only a gentile of understanding. **"And a gentile who nullified idolatry, whether his own or another gentile's, it is nullified, even if he nullified it against his will."** A gentile can nullify even another gentile's idolatry. He can even do it against his will, **"even if a Jew forced him to do so, even if the gentile acted unwillingly."** A complete nullification.

Discussion: Against His Will — Why Does It Work?

Interesting, we don't say that the gentile lacks understanding. Interesting, because a minor or fool that you say doesn't work, because he has no understanding. The gentile is not at all a person of understanding. Perhaps there's a law of "buying and selling against his will," that the gentile knows that the idolatry must be nullified or what. That's the fear that it will be understood this way. I saw someone say that we don't look at what the gentile thinks. He says it's nullified, so it's nullified.

Condition: The Nullifier Must Be an Idolater

But only if the gentile who is nullifying is himself an idolater, now when he nullifies he has power. But one who never was, he never took part in this, he cannot nullify.

Yes, but this says though, it says in the Gemara that even if he doesn't serve that idolatry. He's a pagan, and he's nullifying a Mercury, there's a difference. Yes, it doesn't have to be. One who is a gentile, a pious gentile, a God-fearing person, a monotheist, I don't know what, he cannot. But a gentile who is an idolater, that's all.

Political Explanation: The Commandment of Nullification

I think the law must be understood a bit politically. In other words, the commandment here is that the Jews should nullify the idolatries, take the gentiles' idolatries, break them. If the gentile nullifies, it's also a kind of nullification. Jewish idolatry is a different problem.

So, it doesn't mean that we want to get involved in which level of converting the gentile, making the gentile not believe in idolatry. The point is, it's a kind of breaking. The gentile himself admitted against his will, okay. By a Jew, the Sages say that always against his will it's not accepted. But a gentile, something like this is how I look at it.

It's more like imagine one takes a place, and tells him, "Say that you spit on your god." He doesn't mean it, he says one is nullifying the importance of it, yes. Strong, very good, it has become unimportant. Very good.

Nullifying Idolatry vs. Nullifying Its Accessories vs. Offerings

Nullifying idolatry is nullifying its accessories — with this he also nullifies the accessories of idolatry. The accessories of idolatry can only be an accessory, it wasn't a sacrifice. **Nullifying accessories, but with this the idolatry is not nullified** — the accessories indeed become permitted, but **the idolatry itself is forbidden for benefit until it is nullified**, until one nullifies the idolatry itself.

Offerings to idolatry can never be nullified — but offerings to idolatry cannot be nullified.

Explanation: Why Offerings Are Different

Right, because the simple explanation is, that it was already offered, it already became a sacrifice. But offerings, the simple explanation is that it now stands, and it's one of the beautiful things. Offerings means that one slaughtered, one placed an offering before the idolatry. Yes, but one must do something with it. But what can't one do? One must give over the fruits, we learned that there must be something like idolatry somewhat, we learned that there must be some kind of breaking.

Offerings aren't something like decoration, yes? Accessories of idolatry means like a cloth that one places on the idolatry, such a thing. Offerings means that one placed a plate of food before the idolatry. But the simple explanation is, whatever the law is, something was done with this, and now the vessel of the

idolatry has eaten, whatever, it doesn't eat. So somehow, somehow one is pushing off making some work, I don't know, we'll see it soon. Something happened, but the offerings, the simple explanation is that now, Tuesday's supper of the idolatry was the thing. It's not in the festival already in a certain sense, so I think is the simple explanation. But it could be that simply that's the decree. No, I think it makes sense. The Gemara brings a verse from this.

The Rambam says, it says yes, there must be like a face, there are a few laws, there must be... in short, if it's simple that it's a sacrifice, it's simple that it's a sacrifice, it's offered to be.

How Is It Nullified — What Is an Act of Nullification?

Ah, what does nullification mean? Ah, until now we learned about nullification, it sounded like it only means he says, "Look, I no longer consider it important." There are poskim who hold this way. The Rambam doesn't rule this way, he says that nullification requires doing some action. We'll see, not just holding and selling, we'll see. For the sake of a Jew, because the Jew will hold it.

Very good. So, but no, there are those who hold that nullification means even without an action. The Rambam learns that nullification is only an action.

Actions of Nullification

What? Cut off the tip of its ear or cut off its finger, we'll see. There's an action in the next section, it's very simple. **How does one nullify it? Cut off the tip of its ear or cut off its finger** — the tip of the ear, or the tip of a nose, or the tip of a finger. Like a slave who goes free with the chief limbs.

One point is that it becomes a blemish here. One point is that it becomes a blemish here. That one simply chopped off a piece, yes. **Even "if it didn't lack"**, even if it doesn't really lack, he crushed it.

Or if he sold it to a Jew who is a "goldsmith," who melts the gold and makes from it a new thing, he also, he did it with the intention that it should be melted, that it shouldn't remain the same thing — **it is nullified**. Because all these things are a change in the idolatry itself, in the body of the idolatry.

What Is Not Nullification

But if he polished it, or he sold it to a gentile, or to a Jew who is not a goldsmith, therefore he won't, the Jew won't melt it, he'll just use it as it is. Or if a wall fell on the idolatry, and he left the rubble lying on it, but the idolatry lies completely under the wall. Or if it was stolen by bandits and they didn't demand it back. Or he angered the gentile and he spat on the idolatry in his presence, or the gentile dragged it through excrement — **these are not nullified**, because the nullification must be some change in the idolatry itself.

Discussion: Doesn't Revealing Intent Help?

Interesting, yes, there was enough and still plenty of revealing intent, that the revealing intent doesn't help, yes. Could be that this doesn't mean revealing intent. I'm not sure, I'm not sure. We'll need to be a bit precise, we'll go see in the next piece, it's not so simple.

And... yes, they indeed saw that for example by the idolatry that is on the bathhouse, and one says that since one urinates before it, that simply it's not worshipped, that then it's not nullification.

When you speak when it wasn't certain to be idolatry.

No, I say, I say another such thing. One shouldn't be able to think that the gentile now has a bad mood, and he's angry at his idolatry, perhaps he's already nullified it.

Ah, it causes cursing and blaspheming. Okay.

And now, but the idolatry stands peacefully on the...

Like in peacetime.

Idolatry That Its Worshippers Left

So, so like this, the idolatry on this, he says, we'll generally find idolatry abandoned, an abandoned, abandoned...

Idolatry That Was Designated in Peacetime vs. Wartime

Eh, here we speak when it wasn't certain about the idolatry. I say, I say still, I only remember that it is... it can't be thought, he had now a bad time, and he's angry at his idolatry, but he's already nullified it. Ah, like one who curses and blasphemes... we'll proceed for now.

Okay, **idolatry that was designated in peacetime**. So, like this, must the... the... on this, we see that we'll go in general, we find idolatry abandoned, an abandoned... idolatry out? **Permitted for benefit**. Permitted for benefit in peacetime. We say that the gentiles left it willingly, by choice. There was a dispute that it's simple. That it's simple. And they nullified it... with this they nullified it, they left it.

But perhaps this is a proof, and simply they also did some act of nullification, we speak this way. Go look at the whole thing, I don't know. Yes, it helps you crushed it in his presence even if it didn't lack. But you don't know. Why not, it looks like it's a nullification, I don't know. I'm not sure that the wealth is the action. The action is perhaps a revealing of intent, that he means it seriously. I don't know. I don't know. One must be precise.

They left it and like went away. They left it hanging. They left it, but **in wartime**. But if they fled, they left a house of idolatry, idolatry in wartime is **forbidden**. **Because they designated it in wartime!** They only left it because of war! They didn't become convinced that the idolatry is nothing! It means that... for example, they'll now find the idol when there's a war! Not a proof that they stopped honoring it! They're just afraid! It's idolatry knowing!

Idolatry That Broke By Itself — Its Fragments Are Forbidden

But **idolatry that broke by itself**... but idolatry that broke by itself is not nullification! **Its fragments are forbidden for benefit! Until they nullify them!** The fragments of the idolatry remain, the pieces! Who nullified it!

Reish Lakish argued that one assumes idolatry that broke by itself! Presumably they nullified it! Because they say indeed it can no longer save itself! We'll save it! But Rabbi Yochanan, the Gemara doesn't rule like Reish Lakish. And one must nullify it all.

Therefore, we learned there, yes, the limbs of chapters will be lost. That is, it's broken, but one can put it back together, so **one needs to nullify each and every piece**, so that it should be completely broken. Because if one broke a puzzle it's not broken, it's made to be broken. And if one only nullified one piece, it doesn't nullify the other pieces, because we're concerned lest one will be able to find the second piece.

Here we have one more law about idolatry, one cannot nullify one limb and all the limbs become nullified, because with this

one won't be able to fix it back or easily? Not clear. The Rav distinguished it for me on the law. Okay, we'll go further.

Altar of Idolatry That Was Damaged

The Rambam says further, **an altar of idolatry that was damaged**, an altar on which one offers sacrifices for idolatry, where the altar was broken, **it is still forbidden for benefit**, because it must become more than damaged, it's not enough, **until most of it is demolished by gentiles**, until most of it will be broken by gentiles.

Why by idolatry is enough one of the majority of limbs, and an altar not? Because this is the way always, one looks with the eyes. What does one see? The gentile, he'll still offer on it, because even if it's a bit damaged, he's not particular about a blemish of an altar. Unlike a Jewish altar, where if it's not mostly damaged he doesn't offer. Okay, the gentile is not particular about it.

If it became damaged, yes, it is permitted. There is a bamos, there is a mizbe'ach. A bamos is one stone, because apparently that's the word, and by one stone, if a piece is missing it's no longer beautiful, one cannot offer sacrifices on it. A mizbe'ach is many stones, so it became a smaller mizbe'ach.

Stones of Markulis

Okay, good. He says, one gathers stones for Markulis, where each stone is indeed serving idolatry, yes, but this is a thing where one throws stones. How will one nullify the idolatry? **Since one selects from the structure and takes it outside, it is immediately permitted.** Because Markulis is simply, one makes an area and throws stones. But one takes it and makes it a separate thing, so it's nullified.

Nullification of an Asheira

How does one nullify an asheira? Ah, an asheira is a tree. So the same way one breaks an idolatrous object, that one removes a piece from it. If he tore off a piece, a branch, a leaf, or tore off a young shoot, a branch that is young from the tree, **he removed from it food for an animal**, he took off a stick. **Or trimmed it not for its benefit**, he peeled off a piece from the tree. **This nullifies it**, such things nullify idolatry, he broke off a piece from it.

But if he trimmed it for its benefit, if he broke off a piece for the benefit of the tree, for the beauty of the tree, then **the asheira remains forbidden, but the trimming is permitted**, the piece that was broken off is indeed permitted, because this is no longer, this had a ye'ush and shinui apparently. Ah, the piece that one took the trouble to tear off, but the tree itself he was not nullifying.

Idolatry of a Jew — It Can Never Be Nullified

And the act of a Jew, ah, if the, ah, a non-Jew helps, because with this he made nullification, a non-Jew can make nullification. But if the asheira is an asheira of a non-Jew, of a Jew, then **whether for its benefit, whether not for its benefit, whether a shoot, whether trimming, it is forbidden forever, for idolatry of a Jew can never be nullified.**

Very good, that even if he removes a piece, that piece he nullified on its own, but it's a Jewish idolatry which cannot be nullified.

From here one sees the power of a Jew, that even a Jew's idolatry doesn't become nullified, how much more so a Jew's

holy matter. Indeed, the stringency of impurity is less than the stringency of purity.

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