

Laws of Idolatry, Chapter 9 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of Lecture – Chapter 9 of Laws of Idolatry (Rambam)

Introduction to the Chapter

The order of the Rambam in Laws of Idolatry:

- **Chapters 1–5** – The fundamental laws of idolatry, the worship itself, the idolaters.
- **Chapters 7–8** – Peripheral laws: nullification of idolatry, prohibitions of deriving benefit from idolatry.
- **Chapter 9** – A new level: **Business dealings with idolaters** – the relationship with non-Jews in general, especially business relationships.

Innovation in the Rambam's order versus the order of the Mishnah: The Rambam places the topic of "lifnei eideihem" only in Chapter 9, after he has gone through all the fundamental laws of idolatry. But **Tractate Avodah Zarah begins** with "lifnei eideihem shel goyim" – in the order of times, just as Tractate Pesachim begins with "or l'arba'ah asar bodkin et hachametz." In this lies a **hint**: Jewish life revolves around Jewish holidays (positive commandments), and the negative commandment is to distance oneself from gentile festivals. Proof from the verse "elohei masekha lo ta'aseh lach, et chag hamatzot tishmor" – the Gemara learns that one who disgraces the festivals is as if he worships idolatry. Also from Hillel: "isru chag ba'avotim ad karnot hamizbe'ach."

Practically this is the most relevant-to-halachah part of the Laws of Idolatry, because which Jew actually worships idolatry? But every Jew who lives among non-Jews needs to know how to deal with them.

Law 1 – Three Days Before Their Festivals

The Rambam: Three days before the festivals of the non-Jews it is forbidden to buy from them or give to them anything that endures. And it is forbidden to lend to them or borrow from them, to repay a debt from them or to repay to them. But an oral loan is permitted, because it is like saving from their hands.

Plain meaning:

Three days before gentile festivals one may not do business with non-Jews, because the non-Jew will rejoice from the business and go thank his idolatry at his festival. This applies to buying, selling (something that endures), lending, borrowing, and paying/receiving debts (a documented loan or with collateral). An oral loan is permitted because the non-Jew doesn't rejoice – he could have gotten out of it, so the fact that the Jew takes it is "saving from their hands."

Innovations and explanations:

1. **"Eideihem" – language of troubles:** The Gemara expounds "eideihem" like "eid" – troubles, not just festivals.
2. **Reason for the prohibition – two directions:**

- **Simply:** The non-Jew will go to church at his festival and thank his idolatry for the business, and Jews may not have a part in this (lifnei iver – the non-Jew will acknowledge the idolatry).

- **A broader idea:** The Sages **did not want Jews to be drawn into the gentile festival environment** – not only because of lifnei iver, but so that **Jews should distance themselves from gentile festivals**. One should not have that a Jew's "best season" is around the gentile festival (like Christmas). The later authorities of the Shulchan Aruch were already lenient, but the fundamental principle remains.

3. **Something that endures vs. something that doesn't endure:** Only something that endures is forbidden. Something that doesn't endure like vegetables and cooked food is permitted **until the day of their festival**, because by the holiday he has already eaten it and forgotten about it – he won't thank for it.

4. **Oral loan – explanation:** The non-Jew doesn't rejoice when he pays an oral loan, because he could have gotten out of it (no proof, no document, no collateral). Therefore this is "saving from their hands" – the Jew extracts from him what he can. Another reason: by collecting the oral loan **one takes away money from the non-Jew** – he has less money for his holiday, so it is even a merit.

Law 1 (continued) – Land of Israel vs. Outside the Land

The Rambam: When does this apply – in the Land of Israel. But in other lands it is only forbidden on the day of their festival alone.

Plain meaning:

The prohibition of three days applies only in the Land of Israel. Outside the Land only the day of the festival itself is forbidden.

Innovations and explanations:

Two reasons for this distinction:

- **Reason A:** In exile Jews are more dependent on non-Jews for livelihood, one cannot forbid three days because it would harm the entire Jewish livelihood. The Sages therefore limited the prohibition to the day of the festival itself.

- **Reason B:** The non-Jews outside the Land are **not such pious non-Jews** – they are less devout. In the Land of Israel the non-Jews came for religious reasons (Crusaders, believers), with strong faith. Outside the Land (like Rome/Italy) everyone is "religious" but no one means it seriously – "Jerusalem syndrome" – in the Land of Israel they mean it seriously.

Law 1 (continued) – Business Dealings After the Fact

The Rambam: If a Jew transgressed and did business with them during the three days – the choice is his, the money is permitted in benefit.

Plain meaning:

After the fact what one earned is permitted. This shows that the entire prohibition is a rabbinic decree.

Innovations and explanations:

But on the day of the festival itself – there after the fact it is **forbidden in benefit**, because this is a **penalty from the Sages**. Why is the day of the festival stricter? Because on the day of the festival there is a greater chance that the non-Jew will actually bring a sacrifice or use the money directly for idolatry, not just thank.

"Three days" means only before – the three days are only **before** the festival, not after.

Law 3 – Prohibition to Send a Gift to a Non-Jew on His Festival Day

The Rambam: And it is forbidden to send a gift to a non-Jew on the day of his festival, unless it is known to him that he does not acknowledge idolatry and does not worship it.

Plain meaning:

One may not send a gift to a non-Jew on his festival day, unless one knows that he doesn't believe in idolatry and doesn't worship it.

Innovations and explanations:

1. **Distinction between business dealings and sending a gift:** In business dealings the prohibition is three days before the festival day, but in sending a gift the prohibition is only on the festival day itself. The leniency of "it is known to him that he does not acknowledge idolatry" helps only with sending a gift, but not with business dealings three days earlier – because in business dealings there is another side reason (he will go thank for the business).

2. **Source for the leniency of "it is known to him":** Comes from incidents in the Gemara where Amoraim were lenient when they knew that the non-Jew was not an idolater.

3. **Distinction between "worships idolatry" and "acknowledges it":** The Rambam requires **two conditions**: he doesn't worship idolatry **and** he doesn't believe in it. "Acknowledges" means he believes that idolatry is true, even if he doesn't worship it practically (as the Rambam says: "one who acknowledges idolatry even though he does not worship").

Law 3 (continued) – A Non-Jew Who Sent a Gift to a Jew on His Festival Day

The Rambam: And likewise a non-Jew who sent a gift to a Jew on the day of his festival, he should not accept it. And if he was concerned about enmity – he takes it in his presence but does not benefit from it.

Plain meaning:

If a non-Jew sends a gift to a Jew on his festival day, the Jew should not accept it. But if he is afraid of hatred (enmity), he may take it in his presence but not benefit from it.

Innovations and explanations:

1. **Reason why one should not accept:** The non-Jew rejoices that the Jew comes to him – this is as if he confirms the non-Jew's idolatry.

2. **What is the reason for "does not benefit from it"?** A question: is it a penalty or an actual prohibition of benefit? If it's a penalty – why does he get a penalty, he didn't do any transgression, he must take it because of enmity? If it's an actual prohibition of benefit – what is the basis? The suggestion: the prohibition of benefit is because the reason why the non-Jew sends the gift is because of idolatry (he wants the Jew to thank him afterward), and therefore the benefit from the gift is like benefit from idolatry.

3. **Opinion of the Levush:** He distinguishes between a non-Jew who worships/acknowledges idolatry, and one who doesn't. If one knows that the non-Jew is not an idolater and doesn't believe in it, one can benefit from the gift. But if the non-Jew acknowledges idolatry, one may not benefit.

Law 4 – Christians Are Idolaters

The Rambam: Christians are idolaters, and Sunday is their festival day. Therefore it is forbidden to do business with them in the Land of Israel on Thursday and Friday of every week, and needless to say Sunday itself which is forbidden everywhere. And the same law applies to all their festivals.

Plain meaning:

Christians are idolaters, Sunday is their festival day. Therefore in the Land of Israel one may not do business with them on Thursday and Friday every week (three days before Sunday), and Sunday itself is forbidden everywhere. The same applies to all their festivals.

Innovations and explanations:

1. **Source in the Gemara:** Shmuel says "Christians their festival day is Sunday." The Rambam understands that "Christians" in the Gemara means disciples of that man (Jesus), who held that he was the messiah.

2. **Reason why Christians are idolaters:** The Rambam holds that they worship two gods – the Trinity is more than one god, and this is idolatry. The Rambam says this explicitly.

3. **Opinion of Tosafot – two leniencies:** (1) Tosafot was generally lenient to do business on their festival days, which the Shulchan Aruch rules that we follow. (2) Tosafot says in another place that Christians don't swear in the name of actual idolatry, but "in partnership" – they believe in the Almighty plus another god. Tosafot argues that a non-Jew may worship the Almighty in partnership with another god (shituf), and therefore it is not complete idolatry for a non-Jew. The Rambam does not hold of this leniency of shituf.

4. **Opinion of the Meiri:** The Meiri says that "Christians" that the Rambam means has something to do with a "netzer" (branch). This is not so simple.

5. **Whether Protestants are different from Catholics:** Almost all Christians – both Catholics and Protestants – believe in the Trinity, and this has not changed. People like to say it's different, but it's not true. The main reasoning of the Rambam – that they believe in three gods (even if they say it's one, we don't believe them) – applies to all.

6. **Practically speaking:** Practically one must ask a rabbi, because the opinions of the Rishonim are more relevant for halachah today than the Rambam's opinion alone. Practically we don't follow this – one cannot say that one may not sell to

non-Jews on Sunday. In certain places stores must close on Sunday, which is "their Sabbath."

Law 5 – Day They Appointed a King / Festivals of Multiple Days

The Rambam: The day the gentiles appointed a king – an inauguration day, where they appoint a king, and they offer sacrifices and thank the idolatry – this is their festival day, and the other days are forbidden three days before it.

Also: Since it is known that idolaters have many days, some three and some ten and some twenty, all those days are like one day, all of them are forbidden if three days before them.

Plain meaning:

A national festival day affects all non-Jews three days earlier. When the festival day of the non-Jews is multiple days (3, 10, 20 days), one counts all the days as one festival day, and adds three days before the entire block.

Innovations and explanations:

This applies only when it's a national thing – when the entire kingdom celebrates. A private gentile celebration has different laws (see further).

Law – A Non-Jew Who Made a Festival for Himself (Private Celebrations)

The Rambam: A non-Jew who made a festival for himself – on the day he was born, the day of shaving his beard and his haircut, the day he came up from the sea, left prison, a feast for his son – only that day and that person alone is forbidden.

Plain meaning:

A private celebration of an individual non-Jew is only forbidden that day and only with that person.

Innovations and explanations:

1. **Birthday and chalachah in the Rambam:** This is the only place in the Rambam where he mentions "birthday" and also the only place where he mentions a "chalachah" (haircut). In the Laws of Idolatry regarding the commandment of chalachah (sidelocks) the Rambam doesn't mention it. "Lurito" is an idolatrous custom – not exactly clear what it means, but it has to do with hair.

2. **Feast for his son – what does it mean?** It is discussed whether this means a wedding, a bar mitzvah, or another feast. In Chazal we see both – the groom makes the feast himself, but also the father makes the feast. The Rambam's intention is not exactly clear.

Law – Sign of Idolatry at Death

The Rambam: The day a king's son died for them – also only that day and those people. For any death where they burn vessels and offer incense – this is the death of idolaters.

Plain meaning:

The sign that a funeral/yahrzeit is connected to idolatry is when they burn vessels and incense.

Law – Non-Jews Who Are Not Actually Idolaters

The Rambam: Only the festival day is forbidden only for actual idolaters. But the non-Jews who rely on them and eat and drink and observe their festivals as the custom of their fathers, but do not acknowledge their festivals – these are permitted to do business with.

Plain meaning:

The prohibition of festival day applies only to non-Jews who actually believe in idolatry. Non-Jews who keep the days only as a cultural custom but don't actually believe in it – with them one may do business.

Innovations and explanations:

1. **This is the basis of Tosafot's leniency** that we use practically – that the non-Jews of today are in the category of "the custom of their fathers is in their hands" and not actual believers. They don't go honestly to church, they observe the days only as cultural tradition.

2. **"Acknowledges" means "believes in it"** – the Rambam's language "do not acknowledge" means that they don't actually believe in the religious content.

3. **[Digression: The reality in Rome]** In Rome there was such a reality that everyone had their idols, with devotees and worshipers. But the general populace – workers, "going about their business and guilty about their business" – were not connected to the idolatry, they only did it because the master is making a festival today. This is the reality of "the custom of their fathers is in their hands" – even in those times.

Law – Selling Items for Idolatry

The Rambam: Items that are designated for idolatry it is forbidden to sell to idolaters ever. But items that are not designated, such as pure frankincense among black frankincense – it is permitted, and we are not concerned lest he select the pure alone for idolatry.

Plain meaning:

Items that are specifically for idolatry (sacrifices, pure frankincense alone) one may never sell. But when it's mixed with other items (pure frankincense together with black), one may.

Innovations and explanations:

1. **Distinction from previous laws:** Earlier we spoke about the concern that the non-Jew will later use it for idolatry (because of takruvat). Here is a new law – items that are **designated** for idolatry, where the prohibition is actually because one strengthens the hands of idolaters.

2. **Why may one with mixed frankincense?** A question: is the reason because the non-Jew actually won't do it (because it's mixed, he won't pick out), or is it a law in the object that it's not "designated"?

3. **Lifnei iver for Noahides:** The basis of this prohibition is **lifnei iver** – one may not help a non-Jew do a transgression (idolatry is forbidden also for Noahides). The principle of lifnei iver is that it applies only when the non-Jew has no other way to get it – "two sides of the river."

Law – Selling Weapons

The Rambam: Just as we do not sell to non-Jews items that strengthen their hands to worship idolatry,

so it is forbidden to sell to them anything that causes harm to the public – bears, lions, weapons, chains, shackles – and it is forbidden to sell to a non-Jew, and it is forbidden to sell to a Jew who is suspected of selling to a non-Jew. Also we do not sell weapons to Jewish bandits.

Plain meaning:

The Rambam broadens the prohibition of "strengthening their hands" from idolatry to bloodshed. One may not sell weapons to non-Jews, not to Jewish bandits, and not to a Jew who is suspected of reselling to non-Jews.

Innovations and explanations:

- 1. The language "strengthening their hands"** – this is the detail of all previous laws: one supports, one makes easier their idolatry or bloodshed.
- 2. Lifnei iver for bloodshed:** The prohibition to sell weapons to a non-Jew is based on lifnei iver – bloodshed is forbidden also for Noahides (seven commandments). The prohibition to sell to a Jew who will resell to a non-Jew is also lifnei iver.
- 3. [Digression: Practical application – Land of Israel and weapons]** In the Land of Israel there are people involved with the government that sells sophisticated weapons also to dictatorships. Honest Jews protest against this, because this is a prohibition of strengthening the hands of bloodshed.

Law – Leniency of Making a Covenant

The Rambam: If Jews were dwelling among them and made a covenant with them – it is permitted to sell them weapons to protect them from their enemies.

Plain meaning:

When Jews live among non-Jews and have a covenant (federal affiliation, citizenship), one may sell weapons for defensive purposes – to protect the land from enemies.

Innovations and explanations:

- 1. "Making a covenant with them" = citizenship:** The Rambam doesn't mean a special covenant, but what a Jew is a citizen of the land – the land protects him, sends soldiers for him.
- 2. The leniency is only "to protect from their enemies"** – for defense, not for external aggressive wars.
- 3. Source in the Gemara:** Rabbi Yehoshua says that Persians one may sell to because they protect us. The distinction between ordinary non-Jews (a "mafioso") and the government: when America goes to war, it's not only for the non-Jews – it also goes for the Jews who live there, because Jews are part of the state.
- 4. Practical application:** If a Jew is a manufacturer of weapons and sells to the government's military, this is permitted because: (a) the government wages war with enemies of the land, (b) if the enemy wins, he will also kill the Jews, (c) therefore the Jew protects himself through this.
- 5. An important condition:** This is only when it's clear that the Jews have a "deal" with the government, a covenant. When one doesn't know who will be worse for the Jews (for example Napoleon or the Russians), perhaps in such a case not.
- 6. Jews used to go into the military of the land, even often not forced.** We don't see a clear prohibition on this – only when

one feels that one cannot maintain Judaism.

Law – A City That Has Idolatry: Forbidden to Pass Through It

The Rambam: A city that has idolatry... it is forbidden to pass through a city that has idolatry. When does this apply, when the road is designated for that place, but if there is another road there and he only passes through this way...

Plain meaning:

A person traveling from one place to another and must pass through various cities, may not pass through a city that is an idolatry city. This is only when the road is designated for that city; but if there is another road (an interstate highway that also goes through other places), one may.

Innovations and explanations:

- 1. What does "a city that has idolatry" mean?** This doesn't mean just a city that has a church. It means a city that is a center of idolatry – for example the Vatican. In Europe there were many cities that were named after idolatry, Jews gave them a name.
- 2. A strong question:** If one may not enter a city that has idolatry, how can one live in exile at all? Every gentile city has multiple idolatries! The Shach and other later authorities struggle with this question.

3. The Raavad's opinion: The Raavad argues and says that one may not enter the fair (market/fair) of idolatry – he doesn't hold of this law as the Rambam formulates it.

4. An answer: Perhaps the Rambam means only when one has a choice – when one can live in a second city or go on another road. But Jews in exile are "stuck" – one needs livelihood, one needs a Jewish community, one has no choice. In such a case it is permitted. The verse "v'lo taturu acharei levavchem" shows that one transgresses every day when one lives in such a city, but when there's no choice it is permitted.

Law – Decorated and Undecorated Stores

The Rambam: A city that has idolatry, if there were decorated and undecorated stores – the decorated ones it is forbidden to enter at all even to buy what is inside them, and the undecorated ones are permitted in benefit.

Plain meaning:

In a city that has idolatry, stores that are decorated in honor of the idolatry holiday – one may not enter even to buy something. Stores that are not decorated – permitted.

Innovations and explanations:

A question: how does one even get to the store, if one may not enter the city? This supports the answer that when one has no choice (one already lives there), one may enter the stores that are not decorated.

Law – Forbidden to Build a Dome of Pillars for Idolatry

The Rambam: And it is forbidden to build with them a dome of pillars for idolatry. And if he transgressed and built it – his wages are permitted. But he may build initially a hall or courtyard that has that dome in it.

Plain meaning:

One may not build for non-Jews a dome (a round roof/structure) where they will place idolatry inside. But if he already built it, his wages are permitted. And one may initially build a hall or courtyard where later they will place the dome.

Innovations and explanations:

1. **Why are his wages permitted after the fact?** Because when he built it it was not yet idolatry – it's not yet serving idolatry, only later they place idolatry inside.

2. **Dome** doesn't mean an entire building – it means specifically the round roof/structure (like in a cloister), the place where they actually place the idolatry (for example in the windows). But the rest of the building (hall, courtyard) one may build.

Law – One Who Sells a House for Idolatry

The Rambam: One who sells a house for idolatry – its proceeds are forbidden in benefit, and he should cast them into the Dead Sea. But non-Jews who forced a Jew and stole his house and placed idolatry in it and gave him money – its proceeds are permitted.

Plain meaning:

Whoever sells his house for idolatry – the money is forbidden in benefit, one must throw it into the Dead Sea. But if non-Jews forced the Jew and stole his house and placed idolatry inside, even if they threw him money – the money is permitted.

Innovations and explanations:

1. **The distinction:** When the Jew sells willingly, he has a choice – he can sell to a Jew, but he chooses to sell for idolatry. Therefore the money is forbidden. But when he was forced, we don't say to him "suffer!" – he doesn't have to lose his money because of his expulsion.

2. **Question:** Earlier the Rambam said that one may build a dome (after the fact his wages are permitted) – how does this fit with the fact that one who sells his house for idolatry its proceeds are forbidden? The distinction: with a dome he only builds part of the building, it's not yet idolatry; but with selling his house he actually sells the place for idolatry.

Law – Stores of Idolaters

The Rambam: Stores of idolaters – it is forbidden to rent them because of idolatry.

Plain meaning:

Stores that belong to idolatry one may not rent (lease/use), because the money goes to idolatry.

Law – Flutes of Idolaters

The Rambam: Flutes of idolaters – it is forbidden to eulogize with them.

Plain meaning:

Flutes (musical instruments) that belong to idolatry one may not use for a eulogy/funeral. At a funeral they used to use a flute to sing.

Innovations and explanations:

It's not takruvat avodah zarah (sacrifice for idolatry) – it's simply the vessel (instrument) that belongs to idolatry, and one may not benefit from it. The money that one pays for the

rental goes to idolatry – just as one may not rent a store of idolatry.

Law – Fair of Non-Jews: What One May Buy

The Rambam: One may go to the fair of non-Jews and buy animals, slaves and maidservants (in their lands), houses, fields, and vineyards. One may even write and register in their courts, because it is like saving from their hands.

Plain meaning:

Because if he doesn't write it in, he will lose the money – it is like saving it from their hands. Here we're not speaking about their festival days.

Innovations and explanations:**1. When does this apply, when buying from the owner:**

The Rambam distinguishes – when one buys from the owner (the original producer/seller), it is permitted. But when one buys from a merchant/wholesaler, it is forbidden – because the merchant gives half to idolatry. At a fair where the priests were the rulers/leadership, the money goes to idolatry, and one benefits idolatry. The Maharam Alshkar was lenient when the seller doesn't give any half.

2. After the fact, if one already bought from the wholesaler – an order of penalties:

- **Animal:** breaks the hoof – one breaks the legs (uprooting), makes the animal a blemished one that one cannot use.

- **Clothing:** lets it rot – one lets it rot/mold.

- **Vessels:** lets them deteriorate – one lets them wear out.

- **Slave:** one doesn't kill him, but one also may not save him.

This is a **penalty**, not just a prohibition of benefit – because with a prohibition of benefit one would simply have to throw it away. Here it's a specific measure of penalties for each category. With the slave there is an innovation: because the slave can become a slave of Israel (and through this he becomes a Jew), one leaves him – this is permitted.

Law – Feasts of a Non-Jew (Wedding)

The Rambam: A non-Jew who made a feast for his son or daughter – it is forbidden to benefit from his feast. Even to eat from one's own and drink from one's own there – it is forbidden, since one reclines with the non-Jews eating. And from when is it forbidden? From when he begins to engage and prepare the needs of the feast.

Plain meaning:

One may not go to a gentile wedding, even if one brings one's own kosher food. The prohibition begins when he starts to prepare the feast (soaking the rolls, as in the Gemara).

Innovations and explanations:**1. Time-frames of the prohibition:**

- For all the days of the feast.

- After the feast – thirty days.

- If he makes a feast because of a journey (travel connected to the wedding) – even after thirty days, forbidden until twelve months.

An interesting point: for Jews sheva berachot is only seven days, but for non-Jews there are thirty days. A question:

whether this has a connection to the law that sheva berachot can be made until thirty days (with new faces), or simchat mere'im/menunim.

2. The Zohar (Shemot page 110a) as a source: The verse says "v'kara lecha v'achalta mizivcho, v'lakachta mibenotav l'vanecha, v'zanu benotav acharei eloheihen, v'hiznu et banecha acharei eloheihen." The Zohar shows that the order is: first one goes to his sacrifice (feast), then one meets there gentile girls, then wedding, then worshiping idolatry.

3. The deeper reason: The prohibition is **not only** because the food is zivchei metim/takruvat avodah zarah. Even when one eats kosher food, the prohibition is because this **can lead** to idolatry – through meeting non-Jews there, one becomes friendly, one intermarries, and ultimately one worships idolatry. This is the deeper reason for the prohibition of gentile feasts – it's a "v'zanit acharei eloheihen" situation.

Law – A Jewish Woman Should Not Nurse a Gentile Child / Midwife

The Rambam: A Jewish woman should not nurse a gentile child – lest she raise him to be an idolater. Also she should not deliver a gentile woman. But delivering her for payment – because of enmity.

Plain meaning:

When one is a volunteer, one can choose yes or no. But when one does it for payment (as a profession), if one won't do it, it will bring enmity/hatred.

Innovations and explanations:

A gentile woman delivering/nursing a Jewish woman: A gentile woman may deliver a Jewish woman and nurse a Jewish child, but **only in her domain** – in the domain of the Jewish woman. One may not send the Jewish child to the non-Jew's house, because here there is a concern that the non-Jew can kill the Jewish child. But in the Jewish house it is permitted.

Law – Those Who Go to Terafim / A Jew Who Goes to a Fair of Non-Jews

The Rambam: Terafim – language of a place of filth, a bad language for idolatry (like the terafim that Rachel stole). Jews who go to a fair of non-Jews – going there is permitted (because perhaps he will repent), returning is forbidden (because perhaps they are connected, perhaps their intention is to return). With a non-Jew it's the opposite: going is forbidden, returning is permitted.

Plain meaning:

A Jew who goes to a fair of non-Jews – on the way there it is permitted to do business with him, on the way back it is forbidden. With a non-Jew it's the opposite.

Innovations and explanations:

1. The distinction between Jew and non-Jew – two separate prohibitions:

With **going** (going to the festival) the concern is that the person is going to idolatry – he makes a good deal, he will go thank the idolatry. With **returning** (coming from the righteous) the concern is completely different – **proceeds of idolatry**, that the money he has with him came from selling idolatry, and such money is forbidden in benefit.

- **A non-Jew** – with going there is the concern of "going to the festival" (he's going to idolatry). But with returning it is **permitted**, because **proceeds of idolatry in the hand of a non-Jew are permitted** – a non-Jew has no prohibition to buy/sell idolatry, his money is not forbidden.

- **A regular Jew** – with going there is **no** concern of "going to the festival", because a Jew doesn't go thank idolatry – we believe that he can always have a thought of repentance. But with **returning** it is **forbidden**, because if he sold idolatry, the money is proceeds of idolatry in the hand of a Jew, which is forbidden in benefit.

2. The reason for the prohibition on returning for a Jew: Idolatry in the hand of a Jew is forbidden in benefit – when a Jew returns from a fair of non-Jews, we fear that idolaters sold him items there, and his merchandise/money is "contaminated" with idolatry. This is the explanation for the penalties of the previous law (breaking the animal, letting it mold, etc.).

3. An apostate Jew – the stringency of both sides:

The Rambam: With an apostate to idolatry the principle of "perhaps he will repent" doesn't apply – an apostate is an apostate, we already know the truth. His money is like yayin nesech, like idolatrous money.

The apostate has **both deficiencies**: (a) he is like a non-Jew in that we cannot rely on him not going to idolatry (going to the festival) – therefore **going is forbidden**. (b) but he is still halachically a Jew, therefore his money from idolatry is forbidden in benefit (proceeds of idolatry in the hand of a Jew) – therefore **returning is also forbidden. Both going and returning it is forbidden to do business with him** – he has the stringency of both sides.

The innovation in the reasoning: The apostate is a combination of the worst sides of both – he is halachically a Jew (his money is forbidden), but in practice he is like a non-Jew (we cannot rely on him). This gives a nice explanation why the Rambam lists the law of the apostate separately – he's not just a stringency, but a logical combination of two separate prohibitions.

Summary and Closing Thoughts

This chapter of the Rambam deals with the practical interface between Jews and non-Jews, particularly in business contexts. The underlying themes are:

- 1. Distancing from idolatry** – not just the act itself, but the entire environment and culture surrounding it.
- 2. Lifnei iver** – not enabling others (even non-Jews) to sin.
- 3. Economic reality vs. ideal** – the tension between the ideal of complete separation and the practical necessity of living among non-Jews and earning a livelihood.
- 4. Gradations of prohibition** – the Rambam carefully distinguishes between different levels: biblical vs. rabbinic, before the fact vs. after the fact, penalties vs. actual prohibitions.
- 5. The special status of the apostate** – who combines the worst of both worlds and therefore has the most stringent laws applied to him.

The practical application of these laws has evolved significantly, with later authorities (particularly Tosafot and the Shulchan Aruch) being more lenient based on the changed

reality of gentile society. However, the fundamental principles — avoiding strengthening idolatry, maintaining Jewish distinctiveness, and being careful about the social and cultural influences of the surrounding society — remain relevant.

The chapter concludes with laws about fairs, feasts, and various forms of interaction, always balancing the need for Jews to function in the world while maintaining their spiritual integrity and avoiding any support or encouragement of idolatry.

Full Transcript

Chapter 9 in the Laws of Idolatry – Business Dealings with Idolaters

Introduction: The Rambam's Order and the Practical Relevance

Good, we are learning the ninth chapter in the Laws of Idolatry. In the previous chapters we learned which things become idolatry and how one nullifies idolatry. Now we are going to learn the topic of... whoever has learned tractate Avodah Zarah remembers it well, because the first chapter in tractate Avodah Zarah speaks about this. When one may deal and how one may deal with non-Jews, because the concern is that when one does business with non-Jews and the non-Jew goes and is happy, he will go thank his idolatry. And other similar things about dealing with non-Jews, more generally it's about relationships with non-Jews.

Masa umatan (business dealings) can mean, literally masa umatan usually means business dealings, but also to have masa umatan with someone means simply to have a relationship with that person. So one can say masa umatan both ways.

So one can say, if I want to think a bit more broadly, we would say that just as we learned the first five chapters in tractate Avodah Zarah were really the essential laws of idolatry and the transgressions of idolatry, the things that are actually like a part of the worship, a part of the service of the idol worshippers. Now, the last two chapters we learned more peripheral things, not actually serving idolatry, but rather destroying idolatry, not deriving benefit from idolatry. Now we're learning even one level a bit further from that, which is even having to do with, one could say having to do with idolaters, secondary to the law and by way of the law, so to speak.

And presumably this is most practically relevant, because how often does one encounter an actual little idol? But these are really laws that if you're a merchant, a businessman, and you deal with idolaters, one needs to know the laws of what is permitted and what is forbidden.

And these are the laws for Jews, I mean this is where tractate Avodah Zarah begins, because for a Jew, the laws we've learned until now are very fundamental, but which Jew serves idolatry? It's interesting regarding the philosophy, to understand the ideas, but practically speaking, halachah l'maaseh, the question that a Jew encounters is, if he is a neighbor with a non-Jew, how does he deal with his non-Jewish neighbor? That's the question, the idolater.

Law 1: Three Days Before Their Festivals

The Prohibition of Business Dealings Before Their Festivals

The Rambam says, the law says as follows: **Three days before the festivals of the non-Jews, three days before the holidays of the non-Jews – I mean, eideihem, the Gemara speaks about this that eideihem is a language**

of eid, of troubles, troubles come to them on the right, yes, eideihem, yes – before their holidays, it is forbidden to buy from them or sell to them, one may not do any business with them.

To sell to them **something that lasts**. A davar hamitkayem (something lasting), because he rejoices that he bought from a Jew, he rejoices that he made a good purchase, or that he sold to a Jew, he rejoices that he made the money. And I mean the Gemara says the reason, because he will go to church at the holiday, he goes there to say his hallel of idolatry, and he will give thanks for the money he made, and we may not have a part in that.

Digression: Three Days Before a Yahrzeit

Furthermore, this is the source for what everyone says that three days before the yahrzeit... no, it's a chok v'lo ya'avor (an absolute decree). If even in the laws of idolaters three days beforehand there is already an obligation, a chok v'lo ya'avor, three days before the thirty days. Do I understand it? On the contrary, if a Jew doesn't think that a Jew will go to the beit midrash on Pesach he'll think about with whom he did business in the last three days. He'll thank the Almighty that he lives, he'll thank the Almighty that he's a Jew, he's already put aside his business the whole day. Along comes a chassid, the non-Jews should earn so much and be... okay, we can twist it however we want, it's already drush, drush (homiletical interpretation).

Okay, let's get back to the matter at hand.

Prohibitions of Lending and Repayment

Furthermore, **to lend to them** one also may not lend, **and to borrow from them** one also may not borrow, because in both cases it also makes him happy. He has to come to him, or that he received funding that he had to repay, to pay for a debt that was owed to him, or to repay or take money from him. Because he also rejoices that he's been freed from a debt, from a worry on his head.

This is however **a loan with a document**, or where there is collateral on it. But **an oral loan** one may indeed take, **so that one can save from them**, because with an oral loan, that he pays is actually a novelty, because he could have gotten out of it. So that he took it, about that he doesn't rejoice. He has no proof, he can make a celebration, he can even rejoice. Yes, but the Jew... the act of lending, the act of lending, but not a complete permission was permitted so that you could save. I mean the point is, because the non-Jew doesn't remember. Yes, but he doesn't rejoice, but you extracted from him as much as you could.

But I thought, that perhaps it's simply a matter of time, that it has substance. Perhaps the non-Jew has a few extra dollars for his holiday.

Davar Hamitkayem Versus Davar She'eino Mitkayem

We learned that one may not buy or sell, and we also learned that it's only a davar hamitkayem, something that lasts for a

while. But we learned that a **davar she'eino mitkayem (something that doesn't last)**, something that spoils like **vegetables and cooked food**, one may indeed sell **until their festival day**, because it's already eaten up, he will have already forgotten about it, he won't give thanks on his festival day for what he ate yesterday. That's the difference between a Jew and a non-Jew.

Eretz Yisrael Versus Outside the Land

Okay, in short, one can stop wherever one wants. **These matters**, says the Rambam, **are said about Eretz Yisrael**. In Eretz Yisrael they forbade three whole days. We're presumably speaking here about in Eretz Yisrael but when the Jews don't have control, because at that time we learned the law about expelling from Eretz Yisrael.

But **in other lands it is only forbidden on their festival day itself**, they only forbade the festival day itself. And the reason is apparently simple, because in other lands we are more dependent, and one cannot forbid such a thing, it would harm the entire Jewish... Jews couldn't do any business. Today one lives a bit, there is at least a large portion of Jews who only do business among themselves, but in a place where one lives among non-Jews, one cannot forbid so extensively, so Chazal only limited the prohibition to the festival day.

Two Reasons for the Distinction

Other commentators bring, the Rambam brings you, he brings once good reasons that are stated in the commentators, that what you say is a reason why they were more lenient. But it's stated explicitly in the Gemara, he brings that the non-Jews in chutz la'aretz are not such pious non-Jews, they are less devoted worshippers. Three days he doesn't forget. One day he still remembers, the second day he's already forgotten. A chutz la'aretz non-Jew doesn't make a big deal with his idolatry.

The commentators say that simple worshippers in Eretz Yisrael generally went for religious reasons, like crusaders or non-Jews who live there because they want to live there in places like Esau lives in Mount Seir, or like the believers in the East. Perhaps those who went up went up with strong faith.

Okay, in short, it can be both things. Either the reason is as I said, that they were lenient in exile because one must do business with non-Jews, there's no choice. Or that the other Rishonim learn that in Eretz Yisrael the non-Jews are more serious and they must be taken more seriously.

Jerusalem syndrome. Obviously simple, Jerusalem syndrome. Eretz Yisrael is more orderly. Chutz la'aretz means, you go to Rome, you go to Italy, yes, everyone is religious there, but no one means it seriously. In Eretz Yisrael unfortunately they mean it seriously. That's the difference. It's not the non-Jews, it's the Jews.

The Law of One Who Transgressed and Did Business in the Three Days

Okay. The Rambam says further, what happens if a Jew was not careful with this prohibition, and he transgressed **and did business with them in the three days**, he did indeed do business with the non-Jews in the three days of the holiday? Three days means three days before, or a day and a half before and a day and a half after? And the days means everything only before, yes, only before, not the period.

So **he has permission**, the money afterwards is **permitted in benefit**. It is not forbidden. And you see that it's only a

stringency, because we think he'll go thank in the churches, but it's not actually so, and it's a stringency of Chazal.

But this is if yes, it's still meaning always **on their festival day**, on the holiday itself, he has permission but it is **forbidden in benefit**. If I remember correctly, perhaps... he says it's a penalty. Well, we have fear, we won't have fear, that on the festival day itself he'll go bring a sacrifice, or he'll use the money more for idolatry, not just simply thank. Rav, rav, rav, rav, I'm saying here, he brings that it means it's a penalty from the Rabbis, because you ask yourself, why is it stricter on the festival day? Because there's a greater chance.

Discussion: Why is There a Prohibition?

I think, but this I'm just thinking off the top of my head into the air. We assume the usual mode, it's a stumbling block. We're speaking when the stumbling block is lifnei iver (before the blind), the non-Jew will give thanks to idolatry, and therefore Jews may not sell.

I feel that it's more that Jews should distance themselves from the... I just can't say the whole... all these laws that we're learning here... is more that Jews should distance themselves from the non-Jewish holidays. So before a holiday when he comes, he makes a sale, yes, it's the honor, the holiday makes the holiday and makes a sale, and he sells, he buys, Jews shouldn't have to do with that. Something like an idea, the Sages didn't want.

I don't want to say, we don't want that the best season for a Jew should be in the days of the non-Jewish holidays, then he should do business. According to this, indeed, the Jews that I know Christmas is their big busy season, perhaps that's indeed what Chazal didn't want. The bearers of the Shulchan Aruch already said it's permitted. But I mean to say the thought, people who say that their good season is the days of... we don't want that a Jew's season should be when it's the Jewish holidays. We don't want that his season should be the three days of the non-Jewish holidays.

No, no, it's not that. It's exactly the opposite. From what you're saying, it would be that you're part of them, you could say that you're from their like... you're part of the mitzvot. We don't want to be part of the mitzvot. You're a Jew, you have your own... as you say, you have your own before and within.

The Rambam's Order Versus the Order of the Mishnah: A Homiletical Interpretation

It's very interesting, I've thought a lot about this, a bit homiletically, but I mean that it's really the plain meaning. We've learned many times that the Rambam's order is different from the order of the Mishnah. The Rambam goes with the idea of what is the essence of idolatry, until chapter 9 he arrived at lifnei eideihem. And tractate Avodah Zarah goes really, it begins, the first law is lifnei eideihem. And it's similar to the example of Pesach, yes? Pesach, how does tractate Pesachim begin? "On the night of the fourteenth one searches for chametz." It begins in chronological order, the first thing, the preparation one makes for Pesach. Yes? Even though there's thirty days before, it's not stated in the Mishnah. And it goes in order. The same thing, the laws of idolatry go in order. It's the same hint. The laws of idolatry go in order of the non-Jewish holidays. The first thing is three days before their festivals, then on their festivals, what's not on their festivals, etc.

So it's like the same hint. A non-Jew, a Jewish... a Jew's very important part of being a Jew that belongs to you, the Almighty, is that you have Jewish holidays. For this you have... this is the positive and negative commandment. The positive commandment is your holidays, and you should not do their holidays. It's indeed that you should know when it's their holidays, regarding when you should distance yourself from them.

You can even look, you can see that in the section about holidays it says "you shall not make molten gods for yourself; you shall observe the festival of matzot." The Gemara says that it's as if one disgraces the festivals, as if one serves idolatry. Or we see it in the Hallel that we say on the holiday, our service, what do we say there? "Bind the festival offering with cords to the horns of the altar." We're speaking about not... the broken ones, their... the eideihem, the broken ones, the idols that must be broken. I asked yesterday...

No. Okay, fine. That's just because it's soon a holiday. Very good. It's once soon a holiday, one must, one must.

Law 3 (Continued) — Prohibition to Send a Gift to a Non-Jew on His Festival Day

Speaker 1: Just as the positive and negative commandment. The positive commandment is your holidays, and you should not do their holidays, simply that you should know when it's their holidays, regarding when to distance yourself from them.

One can understand, one can see that in the section about holidays it says "these are the appointed times that you shall proclaim," or the Gemara says "as if one disgraces the festivals as if one serves idolatry," or we see in the Hallel that we say all the holidays, our festivals, what do we say there? "Bind them as bound ones." We're speaking about this, they don't have the forms, very good, the eideihem, the forms that must be broken. We'll speak about this in the next chapter.

Okay, fine, that's just because it's soon a holiday. Very good.

It's always soon a holiday for a Jew, it's not a great novelty. Okay.

"And it is forbidden to send a gift to a non-Jew on his festival day" — another law, very good. One may not send a gift, a gift one may not on that day, on the festival day itself. About this we're not concerned about the three days before.

"Unless it is known to him that he does not acknowledge idolatry and does not worship it" — unless if one knows that he is not one who thanks the idolatry and he is not an idolater.

Discussion: Does "Known to Him" Help Regarding Three Days Before?

Speaker 2: So, the "known to him" doesn't help regarding three days before doing business?

Speaker 1: It could be as you said that regarding doing business there's still some other reason.

It could be that yes, we don't know. Because what permission did the Rambam bring about this? You see that Tosafot said that what does it mean that he knows that the non-Jews are not engaged in this, and they were indeed lenient. But it's not clear.

Speaker 2: Yes, continue.

Speaker 1: But we see in the Gemara, what he sent, he says I know that that one is not an idolater. So I mean, it comes from the stories in the Gemara that the Amoraim already conducted

themselves to permit this, that they said that the non-Jew is not an idolater.

Very good.

Law 3 (Continued) — A Non-Jew Who Sent a Gift to a Jew on His Festival Day

Speaker 1: Further, **"And similarly a non-Jew who sent a gift to a Jew on his festival day"** — a non-Jew sent a gift to a Jew on his holiday, **"he should not accept it"** — the Jew should not receive the gift, he should not accept it, because the non-Jew rejoices that he, the Jew, has to come to him. That's the sending of portions.

But **"if he is concerned about enmity"** — if the Jew is afraid... the law presumably goes back to the second law, the previous one, but the last law is mainly... a non-Jew sent a gift, and if the Jew will send back the gift to him, the non-Jew will hate him, and a dispute will result, and from the dispute bad things will come. Perhaps even a danger to life, **"he takes it in his presence"** — he should take it in front of him, but in a way that he should not derive benefit from it.

The Opinion of the Levush: Distinction Between One Who Worships Idolatry and One Who Acknowledges It

Speaker 1: An answer from the Levush is, that a non-Jew, one who worships idolatry and one who acknowledges, he should wait. It's not that he must do it immediately, but he can wait, as it becomes such a doubt among the Rabbis. He should wait, and derive benefit. That means, if he knows that the non-Jew is not an idolater and he won't go acknowledge, then he can derive benefit from it. But if the non-Jew does acknowledge idolatry, one may not derive benefit from it, it means like benefit from idolatry.

Discussion: Why is it Forbidden in Benefit?

Speaker 1: The Drisha says differently, but it sounds like that. It could be the advice that the Levush says, I don't know, it could be such a type. If he's concerned, if he knows... No, it could be that the whole reason why the non-Jew sends a gift is so that he can thank him afterwards, and through that it becomes as if he has benefit from idolatry, because the reason why the non-Jew sent it is because of idolatry.

Speaker 2: I just told you that it's not a matter of benefit. Ah, because you learned "yodea meheichan ba lo" (he knows where it comes from). What kind of benefit is it? You told me the reason before. We thought that it's a matter of a fine (knas), but you don't see here, he holds that it's about enmity (eivah), so he doesn't get a fine. What does that mean? Forget it, he's not allowed to have benefit. Why isn't he allowed to have benefit? Because it wasn't really [given for idolatry].

Speaker 1: Okay, but if it's a fine, it means we're fining him because he committed a transgression, but here he didn't commit a transgression. He has to accept, it's not a transgression. It's not a transgression. But a bit of a transgression is having benefit from that person's mishloach manos (gift portions).

Speaker 2: It's not relevant, come in, let's think a little bit. Imagine someone has a neighbor, a young man, and they're good friends. The Rebbe's brother makes a wedding, yes? And he sends him mishloach manos from the Chassidim. Should the real Chassid of the Rebbe not take from that person? Okay, good, he shouldn't take the mishloach manos that he sends for the garbage.

Distinction Between "Oved Avodah Zarah" and "Modeh Bah"

Speaker 1: He's precise, Rav Rabinovitz, that there are two levels. There's "oved avodah zarah" (one who worships idolatry) and there's "modeh bah" (one who acknowledges it). I think it's not correct, I think it's the same thing. Because he says there are people who actually worship idolatry, but when a holiday comes he remembers that he acknowledges. Because it's already a habit even for idolatry.

But it's not correct, because "modeh bah" that we learned in chapter one or two, that there's "hamodeh ba'avodah zarah af al pi she'eino oved" (one who acknowledges idolatry even though he doesn't worship). "Modeh" means that he believes it's true. Here, on the contrary, there are people who aren't religious, they don't worship, but they acknowledge, they believe in it. "Modeh" means "I believe," "modeh" doesn't mean that he's going to be "oleh modeh" (offering acknowledgment). "Modeh" means that he doesn't believe.

So he needs to know that the non-Jew believes in any case, not only that he doesn't worship any idolatry, he doesn't worship anything, he's lazy, but he's a believer in idolatry, he holds that it's nonsense.

Law 3 (Continued) — Many Days of Idolatry

Speaker 1: Here he says, "**Since it's known that idolaters have many days, some three and some ten and some twenty, all those days are like one day, all of them are forbidden if three days before them**" — one adds another three days. It's not simple that the three days only means when it's one day, or when the holiday itself.

Law 4 — Christians Are Idolaters

Speaker 1: Now, the Rambam says a very important law, law four. The Rambam rules that "**Christians are idolaters**" — Christians in the European countries.

The Rambam doesn't say who Christians are. Christians, there's such a thing, let's say what it says. I know he means these. There's such a type of person, just like everything we've learned, there are general rules and there are details, there are certain things. And the Gemara says there's such a thing "notzrim" (Christians), they are idolaters. This is a Gemara, everything is a Gemara. One can't distinguish idolaters. They are idolaters, "**and Sunday is their holiday**" — Sunday is their holiday. Where, it already says that one may not do business with the non-Jews of the Land of Israel.

"Therefore it's forbidden to do business with them in the Land of Israel on Thursday and Friday of every week" — every week Thursday and Friday one may not do business with the Christians of the Land of Israel. "**And needless to say Sunday itself which is forbidden everywhere**" — every Sunday one may not do all these businesses that we discussed here with a non-Jew, because he's going to be oleh modeh (offer acknowledgment). "**And the same law applies to all their holidays**" — all their holidays. This is the position of the Rambam.

Discussion: The Rambam's Position Regarding Christians

Speaker 1: Now, this is the position of the Rambam. But there are those who argue. The Rambam, the Rambam holds, it's interesting that the Meiri who says that the Christians that he means has something to do with a netzer (branch).

Speaker 2: It's not so simple, but that's how he learns it.

Speaker 1: Let's understand. This is the Rambam who says here, it's literally the language of the Gemara in Avodah Zarah, in Shmuel says, Christians' holiday is Sunday. Therefore one doesn't do any business with them three days before their holiday, three days after, which is basically three days before their holiday, Thursday, Friday, and Shabbos, or Shabbos.

And the Rambam understood that Christians means what he says, disciples of that man, who held that he was the messiah, and the Rambam says explicitly in the Mishneh Torah that all these types of them are idolaters, because the Rambam held that they worship two gods, the trinity is more than one God, so that's idolatry, and therefore one may not do any business with them.

This is what the Rambam says.

Position of Tosafos — Permission for Business and Shituf

Speaker 1: Tosafos has two things. Tosafos generally permitted in tractate Avodah Zarah to do work, which they say that our Shulchan Aruch ruled that one does conduct business on their holidays, for whatever reasons, because they don't desecrate Shabbos and the like.

Besides that, Tosafos in another place said that a Jew may do business with a non-Jew. We learned before that one generally may not do business with a non-Jew, because he won't swear to you in the name of idolatry. Tosafos said that Christians don't swear in the name of idolatry, they only swear in the name of idolatry with shituf (partnership). That means, they believe in... Tosafos also holds that they believe in two gods, but Tosafos argued that a non-Jew may worship the Almighty plus another god. The Rambam doesn't see that he held this permission for the non-Jew.

So that's another thing.

Discussion: What Does "Notzrim" Mean in the Gemara?

Speaker 1: In any case, this is what the Rambam says. He brings that "notzrei mitzrayim" (guardians of Egypt) appears in Jeremiah. It could be that the Gemara that says notzrim doesn't mean the Christians. I don't see that he asked the position of the Maharyu that he brings. Anyway, I haven't yet found from where is the first source of this word notzrim.

For us today, notzrim is the simple translation in Hebrew for Christians, but one needs to know... But one doesn't see, do you know anyone who doesn't sell to any non-Jews on Sunday? They'll kill you half... Ah, only Sunday. There are places where Sunday they have to close the store, which is their Shabbos. Now, it's a usual thing, one saves Jews from sin.

Discussion: Are Protestants Different?

Speaker 1: Ah, okay, this is the law of the Rambam. But the Rambam comes into not entirely politics, because the Rambam had another law. Now, and practically, what one should do, one needs to ask the local rabbi. But this is the position of the Rambam, and I have in my rulings a long book from someone who says all today's Christians, how every single other position can be some are yes, some are not.

Okay, okay, okay. Okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, I don't see here anywhere perhaps not exactly here that he speaks about this. Okay, yes, that the Rambam further... Okay, further. Day, but I'm happy with my thing, the Rambam says the Gemara, he must have held that the Gemara speaks of the disciples of that one, now, there's something has a question the deed should ask down, I don't know.

Okay, today I also want to check if they're from the same categories as the Rambam says to be between Protestant and the forbidden things.

Speaker 2: Yes, in my opinion, in my opinion it's fine. People like to say that they're different. As far as I know isn't it closed? Exactly exactly one sense of.

Speaker 1: Yes, one sense of like how good it starts. Full of modeh. Yes. Inside, but the main point, this is that they believe that there are three gods or or we say that the three gods is to say that it's one, but we don't believe them. This hasn't changed. There are almost no Christians who don't believe in the trinity. People like to say, but it's not true. The Protestants, every one believes in the same trinity.

The main law was what the early authorities meant is more about the law today. But, practically it could be it's different. Better, worse. Now very good. For practical law we need to stick to the practical law.

Speaker 2: Yes.

Law 5 — The Day They Established a King

Speaker 1: And now the vessels say further, "**A day when the nations gather to crown a king**" — inauguration day, yes? It's a joyful day when they establish a king. But that day they offer in the temple to their gods, and they offer sacrifices and thank the idolatry. Yes. Does that also count as such a holiday? Should it be according to the laws like other holidays, forbidden that day, or three days before. But this is when it's a national thing, when the entire kingdom, but a non-Jew who makes a holiday for himself individually.

Law 9 (Continued) — Holidays of Individual Non-Jews

Speaker 1: For practical law one needs to check for practical application. Yes.

Now, so we go further. **A day when the nations gather to establish a king for themselves**, a day that's inauguration day, yes? It's a joyful day when they establish a king. But that day **they offer and burn to their idols**, they offer sacrifices and thank the idolatry. This also counts as a holiday. So according to law, **and the other days are forbidden three days before it**. But this is when it's a national thing, when the entire kingdom.

But a non-Jew who makes a holiday for himself, a non-Jew who makes his own holiday, **and acknowledges his idolatry and burns incense, for example, on the day he was born**, he makes a birthday, **or the day he shaved his beard and his locks** — here is also the only place that mentions birthday in the Rambam. Yes. Or he makes a chalachah (haircutting ceremony), also the only place where the Rambam mentions a chalachah. The Rambam in the laws of cutting, when he mentions the commandment of chalachah, he doesn't mention the commandment of chalachah. Yes, but his beard, not the hair of a small boy. His beard and his locks. His locks is a... locks is some custom of idolatry that one goes, do you remember? It's a... I don't know exactly what it is, yes.

Speaker 2: He already stood about the hairs between the beard with the...

Speaker 1: Okay, okay.

Or the day he came up from the sea or went out from prison, he makes a thanksgiving meal for his miracle. **Or the day he makes a feast for his son**, a bar mitzvah for the son, or what kind of meal is a... a wedding, isn't it usual?

Speaker 2: No, here one sees the matter that a... yes, often it's interesting, often they say in the Gemara a groom's feast, people say that the groom used to make the feast himself. So it says in tractate Kesubos it comes to say, yes, one person needs to prepare a feast and a feast. But also often one sees that the father makes the feast, yes, a feast for his son. Not he makes it himself. The in-laws, that's the reality, the father makes the feast.

Speaker 1: Okay, but a feast for his son, I don't know exactly what the Rambam means here, a baby or what. I think that...

Speaker 2: No, baby he already said.

Speaker 1: Ah, the day he was born is himself being born.

Only all these, only that day that each person made is forbidden. When it's a big event for all people, it affects three days for all people, but only that day.

When he's excited there's the one who acknowledges. He says, **and likewise the day a king's son died for them**, only that day and that person. Ah, there's no three days before either. **And likewise the day a king's son died for them**, when someone died by the non-Jews, one makes a holiday for that. A *yahrzeit*. A *yahrzeit*, or he means the day itself apparently. One makes the day of the funeral into a holiday.

Speaker 2: What does the... yes? Forbidden that day. Only that day, only for the people who celebrate it.

Speaker 1: He says, for every death, how does a person know if the non-Jew, the specific non-Jew, is an idolater on the day of death? There's a sign, **for every death where they burn vessels and burn incense**, they burn vessels, they make fires, they burn incense, **this is the death of idolaters**.

Law 7 — Non-Jews Who Aren't Really Idolaters

The Rambam says further, regarding holidays, the prohibition of holidays, is only **forbidden for idolaters alone**, only for those who actually worship idolatry. **But the non-Jews who rely on the non-Jews**, who are part of the culture, the one who is like we say the custom of their fathers is in their hands, **who rely on them and eat and drink and observe their festivals in the manner**, they keep it as a custom, or they join because this is the national holiday of the land. But the king who made the holiday, to establish a king, it could be it speaks of that one. Or what is a Christian land, or whatever is a land of their religion. **But they don't acknowledge their festivals**, they're not really into it, **these are permitted to do business with them**.

And this is the permission that they bring from Tosafos. And apparently they say not to hold that the American non-Jews are approximately at this level, it's more such a custom. They don't honestly go to church, now only that they observe the days that they observe.

Apparently modeh is further, modeh means believers in it, that's the translation. Modeh means someone who says heresy, modeh means he doesn't believe in it. Or walks in their festivals, yes. Okay, in short.

Discussion: What Does "They Don't Acknowledge Their Festivals" Mean?

Speaker 1: But I think that here he doesn't mean here, simply he doesn't mean here, perhaps also. He means that a whole village of non-Jews, but perhaps he means that in the city, that there the king for example makes them believe in it, but the masses come just to a party. It could be at the time, even in the

time when it was really the custom of their fathers, there were such people who just come. And celebrate on the holiday, look around, those who are that day in the church that they make half and half, or those who the whole day they're only eating and celebrating.

Speaker 2: Aha, very good.

Speaker 1: One sees, there was once in the Gemara usual, when they speak of idolatry, Rome of idolatry, Rome of idolatry was such a reality that I am the worshiper, everyone had to it was many idols. Their idols to create their followers, their worshipers, and other people from the generation sometimes come. It doesn't lift in the more, in Rome over length, was the aristocracy or who were the real people they were always, a huge people of workers going out from their time and coming from their time, who perhaps they weren't connected. They only did it, because the or makes today a holiday.

Law 8 — Selling Things for Idolatry

Further, now we're going to talk about selling things for certain things that can be used for idolatry.

The Rambam says, **things that are specifically designated for idolatry**, things that the non-Jews need to have for their idolatry — like certain sacrifices for example — **it's forbidden to sell them to idolaters and in the place of idolatry forever**. No one may sell these things.

It's understood differently, because we learned before that it's the concern that the non-Jew will later make it for idolatry.

Speaker 2: No, I said that it's not because of "tikrovah" (you shall not bring near).

Speaker 1: Now we're talking about a new thing. The prohibition of selling.

Speaker 2: A question, we discussed that it's actually becoming prohibited because of tikrovah.

Speaker 1: Aha.

But things that aren't designated. For example, one may sell flour even if he'll bake cake for the idolatry. Because one makes it for all things. No store and such. **And if the non-Jew explicitly said for idolatry**. If he says I want these things for idolatry, **it's forbidden to sell**, no dealing with bringing near to idolatry. For example, selling an animal, one should sell an animal with a blemish, so he won't offer the animal for idolatry.

Law 9 — Pure Frankincense Including Black Frankincense

The Rambam says, but **things that are designated, things that are not designated, such as pure frankincense included with black frankincense**. A person has frankincense, part of it is the pure kind that is used in idolatry, and part is black frankincense, he may sell it without restriction, **and we are not concerned that perhaps he will select only the pure kind for idolatry, and so too all similar cases**. Because this is not so obvious, it's not so clear that this is an item for idolatry.

Speaker 2: That's the reason? Perhaps we're not concerned because the gentile actually won't do it, because it's mixed, so maybe he won't do it.

Speaker 1: Lifnei iver, that one may not help a gentile commit a transgression. Did you know that? That one may not help a gentile commit a transgression. So apparently it has all

the rules of lifnei iver, except he has no other way to do it. The Gemara says "lifnei," the Gemara says this, "lifnei lifnei we don't interpret," it's something that requires more [distance].

Halacha 10 — Weapons and Things That Cause Harm to the Public

The Rambam says, **just as we don't sell to gentiles things that strengthen their hands to worship idolatry...** a new halacha, that there are still other things that one must be careful about in connection with gentiles. Yes, but you see that here he uses the language "strengthen their hands," this is somewhat the detail of the previous matters. We support, we help something. It seems, we make their idolatry easier for them.

It could be that the Jews were great businesspeople, and the Jews, if the Jews opened stores where they sold holiday items, they had a good yom tov, and if not, not. So the Jews enabled them a good yom tov. In short, we strengthen them.

The Rambam says here another matter of connection with idolatry. This is the topic of the matter of connection with idol worshippers. There's a problem that we cause them to stumble, we do lifnei iver that we make it so the gentiles can easily serve idolatry.

The Rambam says here something that is helping the gentiles be able to commit bloodshed. The Rambam says, just as one may not sell to gentiles things that will help them with idolatry, **so too it is forbidden to sell them anything that causes harm to the public, such as** one may not sell them bears and lions, because they will use them for bloodshed, or weapons, shackles, chains, I don't know what, handcuffs, and such things that will lead to bloodshed, one may not supply them with their weapons.

The Rambam says, **and it is forbidden to sell them weapons**. This is a matter of not helping bloodshed. This is forbidden for a Jew. **And it is forbidden to sell to a gentile, and it is forbidden to sell to a Jew who is suspected of selling to a gentile**. Ah, excuse me, to a Jew. A Jew who will sell it next to a gentile. A Jew who is suspected of bloodshed one also may not. This is lifnei iver. But this is not the law of lifnei iver. But he says, one also may not, the lifnei iver on this, yes there is a prohibition of lifnei iver, meaning, one may not sell to a Jew who will sell it to a gentile weapons. I can think that this is actual lifnei iver. This is a matter of murder from the seven Noahide commandments. Yes, we don't want them to have instruments of destruction. You're making it. This is something that one may not sell at all, just to say.

If we go further, we'll already see in the next section a permission. **And one does not sell them weapons to Jewish bandits**. Ah, this he says clearly. One may not sell a weapon to a Jew who is a bandit. Obviously, a Jew who has a gun shop, oops, sorry, he must make sure he sells it only to honest people.

Discussion: Selling Weapons to Dictatorships

There is in Eretz Yisrael, we shouldn't have any connection with Eretz Yisrael, but there are those who are involved with the government, and the government there has very sophisticated systems and weapons, and they are in the business. They also sell it to dictatorships. There are perhaps a few Jews, not from us, but ehrliche Jews, who hold

demonstrations against this, because this is a prohibition, one may not strengthen bloodshed.

Speaker 2: Nu, what is actually the heter? Nu, what actually?

Speaker 1: It's actually not permitted, and it's business.

Speaker 2: They don't sell it to dictatorships, yes.

Halacha 11 — The Permission of Making a Covenant

The Rambam says further, **if Jews dwell among them and make a covenant with them.** Ah, there is a permission. What is if Jews live among gentiles and they have a deal with the gentiles? What does "and make a covenant with them" mean? It means nothing. It means that I am a citizen of America. Despite the fact that I have a covenant with America, America sends soldiers if there is a threat against me, protects me. Right, and if there is a Jew who has a factory or whatever in America that manufactures weapons, **it is permitted to sell them weapons to protect them from their enemies.** Ah, not for their external wars. The enemies of the state to save it, they use it for war with the enemies of the land, and it turns out that it protects us.

Selling Weapons to the Government (Continued)

Speaker 1:

America sends soldiers, if there is a threat against me, it fights for me.

And if there is a Jew who has a factory or whatever, he is a manufacturer of weapons, selling him weapons to the king's servants his armies, not for making war with the enemies of the state to save it, they use it for war with the enemies of the land, and they take from him payment, and it turns out protecting us, that in practice if the enemy will win and he will come in to kill also the Jews of the land, so when the Jew does this, obviously he also protects the Jews. They dwell among them, and they have made a covenant with the gentiles, and they have mixed among them, therefore one may go, because with this one saves oneself.

Yes, the Gemara says that Rabbi Yehoshua said, Persians sell to them because they protect us. The meaning is, when America goes to war, one should not say that America goes to war for the gentiles. It goes for the Jews too, and they make peace with them, they let us live, and we're part of this, and they protect us also.

By the way, Jews used to go into the military of the land, even often not necessarily forced. We don't see that it should be a clear prohibition. We don't see that there is a responsum that begins "one may not, one may not take children, if one feels one cannot keep Judaism." But it's not necessarily because here is something like war.

Speaker 2:

Yes, wait, you see even... okay, here is a weaker proof. We're not really talking about any war, we're talking now about selling a small item that he can use. It's interesting, but I tell you, the inquiry is interesting. The Gemara spoke about some gentile who is not an idol worshipper, selling to some gentile in a place where we don't live, or he is not with us, just a mafioso, not the land, not the government. Here we're talking about the government. Ah, that's the distinction. Things from the gentiles means just anyone. Here we're talking about the government.

Speaker 1:

And also in a manner that the Jews have a covenant. If you don't know who will be worse for the gentiles, whether Napoleon or the Russians there, or there can be many situations when one doesn't know who will be worse for the Jews. Perhaps in such a case actually not. When it's clear that here the Jews have a deal. In this stands in making the covenant, they know that the Jews are more safe now, and when the gentile has come in it's worse, ah, by all means, one may. So, says the Rambam further.

A City That Has Idolatry — Forbidden to Pass Through It

Speaker 1:

Now you'll see even greater distances from what one may get involved with gentiles. Behold the idolatrous city.

A city that has, with idolatry, one may pass by the city, but not actually go in, and perhaps to buy and such is forbidden idolatry, a city where the idolatry is outside the city, inside if it is one may go inside.

So, it turns out, that if the law is strong, a whole city, that in that city there is one church, one does not enter the city.

So he stands.

Speaker 2:

Oy, Rebbe this is the Rebbe is designated, idolatry doesn't mean there is a church there. It means that it is a... there is the great... it's a center of idolatry.

Speaker 1:

There is a church.

Speaker 2:

The Vatican.

Discussion: What Does "A City That Has Idolatry" Mean?

Speaker 1:

And until now it looks like in every second house, the other side of the house is the idolatry. You ask a good question? This is a good question? The two halachas are a good contradiction. You ask a good question, but the Rav actually holds like you. The Rav says the halacha speaks like Rashi and Tosafos, he's not talking about in a city a church?

Speaker 2:

Yes, a church or such a thing.

Speaker 1:

But it's not about a church, one may not go to a city that has a church. So it says here, what should I say? We don't see in this, yes, we don't see here a halacha that one may not go to a church. We see even a greater halacha. One may not go even to a city. I mean, but it's justified with just that it means some such some manner that it stands stands. I would find it difficult because every gentile city has more idolatries. One may not go to a gentile city.

Speaker 2:

Obviously, it says there they said there in the end for the halacha for us.

Speaker 1:

Obviously, a house of heresy a...

Speaker 2:

No, one may not go to a gentile city actually one may go to a gentile city.

Speaker 1:

Okay, further. What, let's see, let's learn further, and see whether in the end one actually may not travel.

But yes, let's see one will need to ask when one finishes the shiurim, and one will need to be troubled to ask for a new house. I don't believe that in Holland there is idolatry. I still don't believe. In a house like Rabbi Yitzchak... no, what does a city mean? A city is a neighborhood, and my neighborhood doesn't have. I searched here, exactly, there is a church there, I'll give a work-around, I don't live on that street. Okay, there is found a solution, there is a quick solution given. Exactly, many times, I do here travel, I pass through, there is a church with a large parking lot, I sometimes think that I want to turn around in their parking lot.

The Rambam's Language

Speaker 1:

A city that has idolatry means, that it means when there was in Europe, there were many cities that were called by the name of idolatry, Jews gave it a name. A city that has idolatry is more symbolic, a city that is an idolatrous city. A person travels from one place to another, he must pass through various cities, it is forbidden to pass through a city that has idolatry, he may not pass through the city that is idolatry. Of what are we speaking, when the road is designated for that place, but if there is another road there, and he only passes through this way...

They say, exactly, there is a road, he may yes go and walk on a road, it's not the road goes through, it's a major highway, it's not a highway of only the city, it's an interstate highway, he also travels through the city. Something like this, another road, I don't understand what he means. There are two roads from the city, or the road is designated for the city. He means to say, the road also goes to other places, right?

Speaker 2:

Yes, that means.

It is Forbidden to Build a Domed Structure with Pillars for Idolatry

Speaker 1:

So, further, **and it is forbidden to build with them a domed structure with pillars for idolatry.** He may not help, be part of a business, or do construction for a gentile to build a dome, a building, a round building, that one will afterwards place in it an idolatry. But dome, I mean that dome doesn't mean a building, you'll see in a minute, it can be a hall, a courtyard. Dome, I mean, means like in a cloister there is the round roof. Yes, but for example, it was like in the windows one placed on the idolatry. It's in the place, but he sees the building, one may yes. Look what he says. **And if he transgressed and built it, his wages are permitted.** So, does this mean not servants of idolatry? Because what is built is not yet idolatry apparently, only later one places in idolatry, like we learned earlier. No, it's not yet serving idolatry, and perhaps meanwhile it is permitted. **But he builds initially a hall or courtyard that has in it that dome.** One may yes build the hall or the courtyard that later one will place in it the dome of idolatry.

Discussion: How May One Enter the City at All?

Speaker 1:

So how may one enter the city at all? Because now there was not yet any idolatry. I asked you that I... okay, so the entering the city is something that requires investigation. I don't know what to tell you. One may not go to a city and one wants to do that one may not. You ask a question? It's a good question. I don't know what to tell you.

First of all, the Ra'avad argues and says that one may not enter the fair of the idolatry. We spoke, the Ra'avad doesn't hold of the halacha at all. But I don't know, I don't know what the meaning is. It's a difficult thing. They bring that the Shach struggles, and others among the Acharonim. Ah, yes, usually when we struggle, the first who struggled on these matters. Okay. Yes.

A City That Has Idolatry — Decorated Shops and Undecorated Ones

Speaker 1:

A city that has idolatry, if there were in it decorated shops and undecorated ones, if it was a city that has idolatry, and there are shops, stores, that have such plants, I don't know what, decorations in honor of the holiday of the idolatry, are decorated, it is forbidden to enter them at all, even to buy what is in them. Those that have the decorations, that are nicely decorated for idolatry, one may not enter there even to buy something. We assume that one can imagine that the reason why it's now so nicely decorated is because of idolatry. **And those that are not decorated, are permitted in benefit.**

Further, how does one come to the shop at all? We don't stand. If one may not enter where there is idolatry. Perhaps it means one has a choice, if you have an option, like you go on the road, or if you can live in another city, you can go to another city. But you're stuck, Jews are in exile. All these halachas are all such half-exile, half-redemption. Must one move away? Where will you move? A person is stuck. "And you shall not stray after your hearts" stands a verse. "And you shall not stray after your hearts" means that one transgresses the halacha. Every day one lives in a city that has idolatry, and one transgresses it. What should one do? But there's no choice. One needs livelihood, one needs... a Jew who lives in a city that has idolatry, you live there for a reason. You live there perhaps because there is a Jewish community, or you have livelihood. It's not... you can afterwards that when one could have one was not allowed, but one has no choice. Then it is permitted to enter the shops.

Shops of Idol Worshippers — Forbidden to Rent

Speaker 1:

The very next halacha, **shops of idol worshippers, it is forbidden to rent to them because of idolatry.**

Stores that belong to idolatry one may not rent. Rent means I will make the store, right?

Speaker 2:

Yes, rent a store for them, because it is for idolatry.

Speaker 1:

Interesting. Yes, it was rented for the idolatry. Okay.

One Who Sells a House for Idolatry — Its Money is Forbidden

Speaker 1:

One who sells a house for idolatry. Okay. If someone sells his house for idolatry, he makes himself money, he has benefit from idolatry. Okay. **Its money is forbidden in benefit, and he should cast it into the Dead Sea.** He must go gather all the money to the Dead Sea. He brings, that the Dead Sea doesn't mean just a peaceful sea, he must with the money most destroy it. They can mean a great Dead Sea. **But gentiles who forced a Jew and stole his house.** This is only if the Jew sells, willingly. But if the gentiles forced and they installed an idolatry, and they even threw him money, then yes **its money is permitted.** Why? The whole reason is still because it's not... it's not a matter of...

Discussion: The Distinction Between Selling Willingly and Under Duress

Speaker 1:

English Translation

He even asks a question: didn't we say earlier that he's allowed to build in structures of a dome, even a dome over idolatry is entirely dead? Here is the house, and we say that the house makes him serve the house, perhaps that's what he thought earlier. Perhaps he'll say that he'll say like a measure of building on the idolatry. No, the one who sells his house. Ah, but the second one says, ah, he would make a cent. That he speaks about the half thing. No, the distinction isn't about a measure of building, the distinction appears to be because he was forced. And then he may write and bring up in their courts, and then he may even make it a loss that he comes to. Because he doesn't have to lose his money because of his dwelling. And why must the seller lose his money? Because he didn't live there. Because he sold it to him. He can't, you can't sell to a Jew, because you're selling for idolatry. You should sell to the gentiles, they're forcing, they're hitting me. A forced thing. We don't say to him! The law doesn't say. He can sell to a Jew, and afterwards. And yes, it's his money and when it's not his money, it stands. When it's forced, it's not his money. We don't speak... He means to say, only when it's his and not that he'll seek the idolatry, and we speak... a kingdom way upon idolatry, one can indeed think, one has no other choice but to sell. The only customer who wants it here is the idolatry. Okay, one must think. Yes, it's permitted. That one is a type of coercion. I don't know. But the previous one can indeed be strict about everything. Okay.

Flutes of Idolaters — Forbidden to Eulogize with Them

Speaker 1:

Now, **the flutes of idolaters, it is forbidden to eulogize with them.** What does this mean? To use them for the funeral, because at a funeral one uses a flute to sing. Further, what should one pay them for it? Just as we are not allowed to hire from them any store, it's the same thing. Not waiting, not sanctified. It's not an offering of idolatry. It's simply the vessel.

Law 49 (Continued) — Flute of Idolatry

Speaker 1: What does this mean? Is it permitted? Okay, one must think. That one is a type of coercion, I don't know. Coercion of money. But the previous one can indeed be strict about everything. Okay.

Now, **the flute of idolatry is forbidden to hire them.** What does this mean? To use their music for the funeral, because at a funeral one uses a flute to sing. Wait a minute, why should one pay them for it? Just as we are not allowed to hire from them any store. The same thing. Not because it's

sanctified, it's not an offering of idolatry. It's plain money of idolatry. It belongs to them, they rent it out. Very good.

Law 50 — Fair of Gentiles

Speaker 1: Law 50 - Fair of gentiles. What may one indeed trade with gentiles? One may go to the fair of gentiles, **and purchase from them animals, slaves and maidservants when they are gentiles,** when the slaves and maidservants are still gentiles, **and houses, fields, and vineyards. And one may write and bring up in their courts,** one may even write in their laws that it has become mine, **because it is like saving from their hands,** because he takes something that he would have lost the money. If he doesn't register it, he will lose it. He's not speaking here about their festival days.

Distinction: Purchasing from the Homeowner or from the Merchant

Speaker 1: When does this apply? When purchasing from the homeowner, one who doesn't give half. One who doesn't give half, the Maharam Alshkar already permitted. But if he buys from a merchant, what does homeowner mean? I mean he buys from the end, from the actual, from the person who made it. But if he buys from a middleman, from a wholesaler, **it is forbidden, because this one gives half,** because he gives half, **and half to idolatry.** If it's a fair of which we speak in certain situations, when the idolatry, the priests were also the leadership, the priests were the ruler in the city, then if he gives half, and the half is to idolatry, and he comes to benefit idolatry, if he's going to benefit the idolatry, he's going to make the idolatry have money.

Post Facto: Penalties on One Who Purchased from a Merchant

Speaker 1: So what happens if post facto he purchased? When one day, a robber transgressed, he couldn't restrain himself, or he had no choice, he did purchase from the wholesaler. Must he destroy it?

If he purchased an animal. If he purchased an animal, **he should break its hoof from the riding downward,** should he break it, should he make the animal blemished? Yes, he breaks the leg, that is essentially I mean if I remember, and then one can do nothing with it, it becomes such an animal that one cannot use, one cannot slaughter.

But the point is about he benefited idolatry, the idolatry made money from him, no? Yes, I don't know, it's a penalty, again, something interesting. What was there? Was there an offering of idolatry or something, it appears to be some punishment, because if it were forbidden benefit he would simply have had to, it's more a penalty, he may not have benefit from it, he bought an ox to be able to plow, this is such a measure of penalties, "if garments and pillows for this he sold, should it rot?" How should he let it mold? "For this he sold, vessels that perish he should consume them, son of a king, for this a slave", he doesn't have to kill the slave, but he also may not save the slave, yes, you have many such things that appear interesting.

Yes, it's not clear, a penalty, because the best of the slave now becomes, if the slave becomes a slave of Israel he will indeed become, it appears that this one leaves, so says the Rambam, the slave one leaves, why? Because the slave if he becomes a Jew is permitted. Okay, enough.

Law 16 — Feasts of Gentiles (Wedding)

Speaker 1: Yes, there is another benefit from feasts of that wicked one, **a gentile who made a feast for his son and for his daughter**, yes, this is real, we say that one may not sell weapons and festivals and such things, a gentile makes a feast, he makes a wedding for his son and for his daughter, **it is forbidden to benefit from his feast, even to eat what belongs to the Jew**, even if the Jew only goes to eat there, **"and to drink from his own there is forbidden"**, even if he brings his own food it's forbidden, **"since at the reclining of gentiles he ate"**, one may not go to a gentile wedding, so stands here the law, if it's an idolatry wedding. **"And from when is it forbidden to eat with him? From when he begins to occupy himself and prepare the needs of the feast"**. Yes, from when we say already joy in his dwelling, yes, from when one wakes up the bands it says in the Gemara, means from when it begins to be called a wedding, also regarding the gentile, from when he already begins to occupy himself with the needs of the feast means it's already like it's already his wedding, and this is already the prohibition that a Jew may not be there. Also regarding a celebration of circumcision, or it's simply a matter of gentile customs.

The Source of This Prohibition: The Verse "And He Will Call You"

Speaker 1: Just as what stands in the verse of **"You shall not take of their daughters for your sons"**? That here is as it were one may not go to such a wedding. I mean, I've seen it. Yes. **For all the days of the feast, after the feast thirty days**. Thirty days. Interesting, by Jews there are only seven blessings, by gentiles there are thirty days. If he makes another feast, one can make... because seven blessings is thirty days? Is it strong? Because seven blessings, but something one can make. A joy of scholars, I mean, I remembered. Perhaps one blessing.

If he makes the feast because of a journey, even after thirty days it's forbidden, if he makes the feast because of the wedding. Until twelve months. A whole year. And all similar to this.

The Zohar: "And He Will Call You and You Will Eat from His Sacrifice"

Speaker 1: Let's see with the Zohar, Shemos, page 110 side A. **"And he will call you"**, there when the Torah speaks that one should expel the gentiles from the Land of Israel, because we don't want Jews to have a connection with gentiles. Why? Because **"and he will call you"**, he will call you, **"and you will eat from his sacrifice"**, you will eat from his feast that he slaughtered, **"and you will take of his daughters for your sons"**, and you will marry them, and afterwards **"and his daughters will go astray after their gods"**, his daughters will serve their idolatry, and your children, your sons who are born there, a grandchild with Philistine eyes, from his father-in-law's side, from his father's side he's a Jew, from his father-in-law's side he's a Christian. Dead Christian. **"And they will cause your sons to go astray after their gods"**.

One sees that one must distance from idolatry. And this is the simple meaning that he speaks here of a wedding. But here it says that... but here one sees that the prohibition is **"and he will call you and you will eat from his sacrifice"**. The verse said that one makes a covenant, he goes to his sacrifice. Simply it means indeed a sacrifice that he makes for idolatry. But you see what happens, because the verse indeed continues.

He makes a sacrifice for idolatry, that means it's a sacrifice of an offering of idolatry, but afterwards he goes to have a wedding with his daughter whom he will meet there, and his children and grandchildren will serve idolatry. So, it's not only the idolatry, it's not only the idolatry also, because after he has a wedding with them one indeed serves idolatry.

Innovation: The Prohibition Is Not Only About Offerings of Idolatry

Speaker 1: So, one may not go to a gentile wedding even if he eats kosher, even if he brings his own kosher food, even if there's no question of sacrifices of the dead and the feast of offerings of idolatry, there's still a question of this can lead to idolatry because he goes there to meet gentile girls. And have a wedding and afterwards serve that idol. Afterwards one can serve that idol. Afterwards if you simply mix in a bar with simple idolaters, everywhere where there's a situation of **"and they will go astray after their gods"**, if there's a situation of **"and you will go astray after their gods"**, if it's a place that... but you see, you may not eat with a gentile. The whole thing, all these laws, when is it called a feast? If it's simply one eats a meal, if it's for conversation, but when it's for a match, a fiesta, a celebration.

Law 18 — A Jewish Woman Shall Not Nurse / Midwife

Speaker 1: The Rambam says further more laws: **A Jewish woman shall not nurse the son of a gentile woman**, one should not nurse, one should not give to eat for the son of the gentile woman, **lest she raise him to be an idolater**. It says so, when she doesn't do it for livelihood, she does it simply as a favor, the same thing as **she shall not deliver the gentile woman. But she may deliver her for payment because of enmity**, if she's a midwife, whatever, a midwife, and she's a deliverer, she may not deliver a gentile woman for free, but for payment, when she does it for livelihood, then she should yes, because of enmity, so they won't have complaints against her. Because it says so, when you're a volunteer, you can choose yes or no, but when you do it for payment, if you're not going to do it, it will bring enmity, it will bring hatred.

Further, **and a gentile woman may deliver a Jewish woman and nurse her son in her domain**. The gentile woman may deliver a Jewish woman, and they may nurse a Jewish son, but only in her domain, only when it's in the domain of the Jew, because sending your Jewish child to the gentile's house there's a concern that the gentile will kill your Jewish child. This one may not. But in your house one may. **"So that she won't kill him"**. One must be careful that the gentile shouldn't kill him. Okay, we're speaking in a manner where there's a concern of killing. There's a concern.

Law 19 — Those Who Go to Teraphim / A Jew Who Goes to a Fair of Gentiles

Speaker 1: Now, says the Rambam, **"Those who go to teraphim"**, those who go to idolatry, it is so: teraphim is simply not a nice word. The teraphim that Rachel stole. Yes, teraphim means "a term for a place of filth", which means dirt. One calls idolatry teraphim. No, that is... it says by Rachel it's the same thing. Yes, it's a bad term. One calls it on idolatry one calls dirt. "Cover it, cover it and cover it with refuse". **"But those who come"**, those who have already returned, were, have already returned with Torah, but he says that "and they will not return, their blood", if there's one who goes in the coming, then yes it's forbidden to do even to those who have

already returned, lest they are connected, lest their mind is to return. They go in a great fear, so perhaps they will return, and afterwards he will go to idolatry.

Distinction: Gentile Going and Returning, Jew Going and Returning

Speaker 1: What is the difference? Rabbi Yisrael, ah, Rabbi Yisrael, it's reversed. Going when he's on the way, it's permitted. Just as in the previous one we had that when a Jew says he's going to serve idolatry, we still don't believe him. A Jew can always have a thought of repentance (teshuva), and we believe that God will return in repentance (teshuva). A Jew won't truly stumble. Returning, we know that he's already also stumbled, and then it's forbidden. Although by a gentile returning is permitted, because he's already come from there, he won't go back, by the Jew he might go back. Interesting.

Discussion: Why Is Returning Forbidden?

Speaker 1: What is the reason why returning is forbidden? Here more like we can understand, one may not deal with such a Jew. One sees that the gentile goes... I don't know... will go back. But one should fear that his money is from idolatry, and one does business with him and deals with money that he made in the teraphim. His money has become contaminated.

Ah, very good. He means to me that he thinks what means a fair of idolatry. He goes to a gentile city, and there... all money that circulates there is mixed money. Our business will become contaminated. Okay. One will buy from him and the money is idolatrous money. An apostate Jew (Yisrael meshumad), a Jew that we know he is... and his money is a type of mixture of idolatry. It's wine of libation (yayin nesech), wine of idolatry. It's their tithe. An apostate to idolatry is an apostate to idolatry. Ah, okay. No, but here it's not the same. Lest he return, because we know he's an apostate. Very good. If one sees from here, that even though we say that a Jew perhaps there he will return, here we already say for an apostate. An apostate is an apostate. One knows the truth, one sees the idolatry.

The Rambam's Explanation: Idolatry in the Hand of a Jew Is Forbidden in Benefit

Speaker 1: A Jew who goes to a fair of gentiles, upon return it is forbidden to do with him lest he served idolatry and sold to them there. Idolatry in the hand of a Jew is forbidden in benefit. A Jew who now returns from a fair of gentiles we fear. This is the explanation that comes for the previous law. One must also, and grow. One has penalties with the elementary. This is the explanation for the previous law.

Explanation of Law 19: Money of Idolatry in the Hand of a Jew

A Jew who now returns from a fair of gentiles, we fear... this is the explanation for the previous law apparently, yes? That when he returns, he perhaps sold idolatry, then he indeed has money of idolatry. Money of idolatry is indeed forbidden in benefit. Idolatry of a gentile is permitted, money of the gentile... very good. Here is the explanation for the previous law.

Interpretation of "Fair of Star Worshipers"

A fair of star and constellation worshippers, doesn't necessarily mean when it's a fair, it's a place of idolatry, but presumably some business he did there. A person comes to a place, he must indeed have money, he rubs a bit of money. We speak here of a fair of gentiles, a fair of gentiles, even if we don't know for certain that it's idolatry, but we fear that a part of the fair of gentiles was idolatry. Understood?

Now, a fair of star and constellation worshippers, doesn't necessarily mean a fair, means the same thing.

Two Separate Prohibitions: "Going to the Festival" by Going, "Money of Idolatry" by Returning

Precisely the Rambam is clear, let's understand it, let's understand it simply. Here there are two other prohibitions. Here there's one prohibition of "going to the festival", when a person is on the way to idolatry and he makes a good deal, he bought or sold, it could be that he goes to idolatry "going to the festival". This doesn't serve for one who has a concern. Who has the concern? A gentile. A Jew doesn't have the concern, only an apostate.

But upon returning, "coming from righteousness", there's another concern, here the concern is "money of idolatry". Money of idolatry in the hand of a gentile is permitted. A gentile has no prohibition to buy idolatry, his money is permitted. Therefore when he comes there's no question at all. A Jew is forbidden, because this is money of idolatry, this is money from idolatry. Perhaps? It's not a perhaps.

Law of an Apostate: Combination of Both Deficiencies

An apostate is both, both he's a Jew and he has the deficiency that his money is forbidden, both he's an apostate and it doesn't help him that he won't go to idolatry, therefore both going and returning it's forbidden to do business with him.

Correct?

Wonderful!

Okay.