

CHAVRUTA

SHABBAT – DAF PEH GIMEL

Translated by: *Chavruta staff of scholars*
Edited by: *R. Shmuel Globus*

And the Gemara asks: **And** according to **Rabbi Akiva, for what law was it** an idol **compared to a niddah**¹, being that they are not similar? Only **for carrying**², but not in regards to a *mesamah* stone³.

And the Gemara asks further: If idols are not completely comparable to niddah, then **compare it to *neveilah***⁴, since *neveilah* imparts impurity via carrying, but not via a *mesamah* stone?

And the Gemara answers: **Indeed, here also**, i.e., it is as you say—that we could have derived that an idol imparts impurity via carrying from *neveilah*.

Rather say: The reason why an idol is compared to a niddah is to teach us that **just as niddah** does **not** impart impurity **via** detached **limbs**, **so too an idol** does **not** impart impurity **via** detached **limbs** (i.e. severed limbs of a niddah or an idol do not have the same status as the niddah or idol itself).

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And the Gemara raises a difficulty: **But that which Rav Chama bar Guria inquired: An idol— does it impart impurity by means of limbs or not?** I.e. do the detached limbs of an idol retain the same status as the idol itself and impart impurity? **Resolve it from here, that both the Rabbis and Rabbi Akiva** would say that **an idol** does **not** impart impurity **to** detached **limbs**. Yet since we see that Rav Chama nevertheless posed such an inquiry, it cannot be that the answer is so simple and obvious.

And the Gemara answers: **Rav Chama bar Guria taught**, i.e. understood, the dispute between the Rabbis and Rabbi Akiva **like Rabbah** did, **and only posed his inquiry according to** the view of **Rabbi Akiva** (as Rabbah answered above, daf 82b).

¹ A woman with the impurity of menstruation.

² A niddah or idol imparts impurity when carried, even though there is no direct contact with them.

³ Certain categories of impure items, such as a Niddah, convey impurity onto utensils that are beneath them even if they are resting their weight on a stone that is held up by pegs that in turn are resting on the ground, and the utensils are beneath the stone. The utensils become impure for being beneath the impure source (that is in our example, the Niddah) even though there is no physical contact between the utensil and the source either directly or indirectly, and even though the weight of the impure source does not rest on the utensil becoming impure. This type of impurity conveyance is called *even mesama*, a placed stone.

⁴ The corpse of an animal that died by means other than shechitah.

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They contradicted this, from a Baraita: **An idol** imparts impurity **like a *sheretz***⁵, only through direct contact. **And also its items which serve** the idol and its worship impart impurity **like a *sheretz***.

Rabbi Akiva says: an idol imparts impurity **like a *niddah***. **And yet its items which serve** the idol and its worship impart impurity **like a *sheretz***.

It is alright according to Rav Elazar, since the first view of the Baraita matches his version of the Rabbis' view (above daf 82b)—

But according to Rabbah it is difficult, since his version of the Rabbis' view (above daf 82b) is that an idol imparts impurity even via carrying, which is not like *sheretz*.

And the Gemara answers: **Rabbah will tell you: Is it** this Baraita **stronger** i.e. more authoritative **than the Mishnah** in tractate *Avodah Zarah*?

For it was taught in that Mishnah: According to the Rabbis, **its wood, stones and dirt** (used as mortar) of a temple for idol worship **impart impurity like a *sheretz***. **And we set it** the Mishnah **up** as follows: **what is** the meaning of '**like a *sheretz***'? **That it does not impart impurity via a *mesamah* stone**, but would still impart impurity via carrying, which is not completely like *sheretz*—since *sheretz* only imparts impurity via direct contact.

Here too in the Baraita, we can understand it along the same lines: an idol is compared to a *sheretz* only in **that it does not impart impurity via a *mesamah* stone**. But an idol still imparts impurity via carrying.

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They contradicted this from a Baraita: A male **gentile, female gentile**⁶, **an idol and its items which serve** the idol and its worship, **they** are impure. **But not their moving**, i.e. carrying them without direct contact with them does not cause impart impurity. **Rabbi Akiva says: They and their moving** impart impurity.

According to Rav Elazar it is well, since the view of this Baraita matches his version of the Rabbis' view (above daf 82b), that an idol does not impart impurity via carrying.

But according to Rabbah it is difficult, since the view of this Baraita does not match his version of the Rabbis' view (above daf 82b), that an idol also imparts impurity via carrying.

⁵ Eight creeping creatures mentioned in the Torah, whose carcasses only impart impurity via direct contact.

⁶ The Sages enacted a decree that gentiles impart impurity like a *zav* does.

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And the Gemara answers: **Rabbah will tell you: According to your reasoning**—that we interpret the Baraita in its simplest meaning—in regards to a male **gentile and female gentile** we will **also** say “**they** [are impure], **but not their moving**”? I.e., will we say that they do not impart impurity when carried?

And yet, surely it was taught in a Baraita: The Torah states in regards to *zivah*⁷(*Vayikra*⁸ 15:2): “**Speak to the Israelites...**” and this verse implies that **Israelites become impure with *zivah*, but gentiles do not become impure with *zivah***. I.e. they are not susceptible to this form of impurity, according to Torah law. **But the Rabbis decreed upon them that they are** always considered impure **like a *zav* in all matters**. Therefore, just as a *zav* imparts impurity even via carrying, so too a gentile does.

Rather, we have to say that this Baraita was recorded inaccurately and requires emending. If so, **Rabbah will** emend and thereby **answer** the contradiction raised against him, **in accordance with his view** of the Rabbis on the previous daf (82b), as follows:

A male **gentile and female gentile, they and their moving and their *mesamah* stone** impart impurity. **An idol, it and its moving impart impurity, but not its *mesamah* stone.**

Rabbi Akiva says: An idol, it and its moving and even its *mesamah* stone impart impurity.

Rabbi Elazar will emend the Baraita and **answer according to his view** of the Rabbis on the previous daf (82b) as follows:

A male **gentile and female gentile, they and their moving and their *mesamah* stone** impart impurity. **An idol, it imparts impurity, but not its moving.**

Rabbi Akiva says: An idol, only it and its moving impart impurity, but not its *mesamah* stone.

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Rav Ashi challenged the interpretations given for Rabbah and Rav Elazar:

If you define “their moving” of the Baraita as *others moving them*, i.e., anyone who carries a male gentile or female gentile or idol becomes impure, **what is** the need for stating that “**they** impart impurity”?

⁷ A *zav/zivah* imparts impurity via direct contact, moving others, being carried, an object used for sitting and reclining and via *mesamah* stone. *Zav* is someone who had a type of impure emission. *Zivah* is the emission itself.

⁸ Leviticus

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It is superfluous to state “*they* impart impurity”, since one carrying or moving them can only become impure if the idols themselves are impure. If they are impure, one who touches them will obviously become impure.

Rather, Rav Ashi said: This is what it is saying, regarding the definition of “their moving”:

A male gentile and female gentile, whether they moved others and whether others moved i.e. carried **them, they** the ‘others’ **are** also **impure**—since the Rabbis enacted a decree that gentiles impart impurity like a *zav*.

An idol that moved others, the ‘others’ remain **pure**, since an idol does not impart impurity via moving others. **Others that moved** i.e. carried **it**, an idol, they become **impure**—since it indeed imparts impurity when carried.

Rav Ashi thus follows the view of Rabbah, that the Rabbis maintain that an idol also imparts impurity when carried, since it is compared to a *niddah*. But not via a *mesamah* stone or via moving others, since it is compared to a *sheretz* (see daf 82b).

Their i.e. an idol’s **items which serve items which serve, whether they moved others and whether others moved** i.e. carried **them**, the ‘others’ remain **pure**, since items which serve only impart impurity via direct contact.

Rabbi Akiva says: A male gentile and female gentile and an idol, whether they moved others and whether others moved i.e. carried **them, they**, i.e., the ‘others’, **are** also **impure**. For an idol also imparts impurity via moving others and even via a *mesamah* stone, since it is completely compared to a *niddah* (see daf 82b).

Their items which serve, whether they moved others and whether others moved them, they the ‘others’ remain **pure**. For according to Rabbi Akiva, the reason why an idol is compared to a *sheretz* is to teach that its items which serve only impart impurity via direct contact.

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And the Gemara challenges Rav Ashi: Regarding **an idol, it is alright** to say “**others that moved it** i.e. the idol”, since such a case can **be found**. But “**it an idol that moved others**”, **where do we find it**, such a case? How is it possible for an idol to move something else?

And the Gemara answers: **Rami the son of Rav Yeyva said:** We indeed find such a case. **For it was taught in a Mishnah: A zav** is sitting in one **pan of a scale and** opposite it, **food and drink** are placed **in the second pan**. If the *zav* is **outweighing**, causing the side with the food and drink to rise, **they** the food and drink **are impure**, as they are considered having been moved by the *zav*—which imparts impurity to them.

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The same would apply should an idol be placed on one side of a scale and an item that can receive impurity is placed on the other side. Should the idol outweigh the other item, it will cause it to ‘move’ upwards, thereby rendering it impure.

Ammud Bet

And the above-quoted Mishnah continues: And if **they outweigh, they are pure**. I.e. should the food and drink outweigh the idol, causing the idol to rise, the food and drink do not become impure, since imparting impurity via carrying an idol only applies to people who carry it, not to food that carries it.

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Like whose view does it follow, this which was taught in a Baraita: All impure things that move others, the others remain pure, except for the moving of a zav⁹, concerning which the Torah stated that he should impart impurity to whatever he moves. For we do not find for it an associate, i.e., anything similar to it, in all the Torah, as regards other impure things.

Whose view does this Baraita express?

Let us say that it is not like Rabbi Akiva, since if it like Rabbi Akiva, there is also the idol that imparts impurity when it moves others, according to the view of Rav Ashi?

The Gemara rejects this: You can **even say** that it follows the view of **Rabbi Akiva**. It can be reconciled if we emend the Baraita as follows: **Teach** in the Baraita, “...except for the moving of **a zav and all that are similar to it**”—thus an idol is also included in the category of *zav*. For we derive the law that idols impart impurity via moving others through the comparison of idols to *niddah* (which is considered for this purpose a type of *zav*).

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Rav Chama bar Guria posed an inquiry regarding an idol constructed of individual parts, which later became disconnected. An idol— does it impart impurity by means of limbs? i.e. does each of the detached limbs of an idol retain the same status as the idol itself and impart impurity individually, or does it not impart impurity by means of its limbs?

And the Gemara clarifies: **Where a common person can reassemble the idol without the need for a craftsman, we do not inquire**. In this case, **since** a craftsman is not required, **it is considered as if it is still attached**.

⁹ Niddah is included in the category of *zav*.

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When do I pose the inquiry to you? Where a common person is not able to reassemble it without the assistance of a craftsman. What is the law then?

Do we say: **since a common person is not able to reassemble it, it is considered as if it is broken**, and thereby no longer considered an idol?

Or perhaps we will say: **it is not missing** any of its parts, and should be considered as if it is assembled.

And there are those who pose the inquiry this way:

Where a common person is not able to reassemble it without the assistance of a craftsman, **we do not inquire. For it is considered as if it is broken**, and no longer an idol.

When do I pose the inquiry to you? Where a common person is able to reassemble it. What is the law?

Do we say that **since a common person is able to reassemble it, it is considered as if it is attached? Or perhaps** we say that **now, though, they the parts are removed and dismantled**.

And the Gemara concludes: *Teiku*, i.e., the issue stands unresolved.

Rav Achdevoiy bar Ami posed an inquiry: An idol the whole of which is **less than a kazayit**¹⁰, **What is the law?** I.e., is there a minimum size to be considered an idol?

Rav Yosef challenged the inquiry: **For what**, i.e. in regards to what law are you inquiring? **If you wish to say in regards to prohibition**, that it is forbidden to have any benefit from it, it is obvious that it is forbidden. **For it should not be less significant than Zevuv the idol of Ekron**, an idol that was the size of a small fly!

For it was taught in a Baraita: It is written (*Shoftim*¹¹ 8:33), **“And they placed over them the idol Baal Brit as a god”**. This is referring to **Zevuv, the idol of Ekron**. This verse **teaches that each and every one made an image of what he revered and placed it in his pouch. When he would think of it, he would take it out from the pouch and hug it and kiss it**. This is derived from the fact that the verse describes the idol as *Baal Brit*—the Idol of Covenant, referring to a covenant of love and endearment. We see here that although being the size of a mere fly (*zevuv* means ‘fly’), it was embraced as an idol.

¹⁰ 0.9 fluid oz. or 28 cu. cm.

¹¹ Judges

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Rather, the inquiry must be **in regards to imparting impurity**, i.e., does an idol smaller than a *kazayit* impart impurity. **What** is the law?

Do we say that **since it is compared to a *sheretz***, then **just as a *sheretz*** imparts impurity even **with the size of a lentil**, so too an idol **with the size of a lentil**? And this is less than a *kazayit*.

Or perhaps we say: **it is also compared to a human corpse** (see below). Thus, **just as a corpse** only imparts impurity **with the size of a *kazayit***, so too an idol **with the size of a *kazayit***.

Rav Avya said, and if you wish to say, i.e. some say **Rabbah bar Ula said: Come and hear** a proof that an idol is compared to a corpse, and therefore imparts impurity only from the size of *kazayit*. **For it was taught** in a Baraita: **An idol that is less than a *kazayit* has no impurity**, i.e., ability to impart impurity, **at all**.

For it says (*Melachim*¹² II 23:6): **“And he threw the dust of the idol on the graves of the people”**. The verse compares the dust of an idol to graves, which only impart impurity if the corpse buried therein is at least the size of a *kazayit*. Therefore, **just as a corpse** imparts impurity only **with the size of a *kazayit***, so too an idol imparts impurity only **with the size of *kazayit***, not less.

The Gemara questions Rabbi Elazar’s version of the Rabbis’ view: **And regarding the Rabbis, for what law is it an idol compared to a *sheretz*? To teach you that it does not impart impurity by means of carrying**. And for what law is an idol compared to **niddah? That it does not impart impurity when it is as detached limbs**. And for what law is an idol compared to **a corpse? That it does not impart impurity with the size of a lentil**, only if it is a *kazayit*. If so, it appears that the Rabbis interpret all the comparisons in a lenient manner. Why did the Rabbis choose a lenient comparison?

Perhaps we should **say to stringency**, i.e., interpret the comparison in the opposite—a stringent manner: **For what law is it an idol compared to a *sheretz*? To impart impurity even with the size of a lentil**. And for what law is an idol compared to **a niddah? To impart impurity via a *mesamah* stone**, and it goes without saying via carrying. And for what law is an idol compared to **a corpse? To impart impurity via an *ohel***¹³.

And the Gemara answers: **The imparting of impurity by an idol is Rabbinical**. For the comparisons are based on verses that are not written in the Torah, but in other parts of Scripture. And even the comparison to a *sheretz*, based on a verse in the Torah, is not so

¹² Kings

¹³ Impurity caused by being under the same roofing as a corpse, e.g., being in the same room with a corpse

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solid. For the verse does not actually state “*sheretz*”; it states “*sheketz*” — which could be understood as *sheretz*. Yet since it is not an exact reference, the comparison cannot be considered a Torah prohibition, only Rabbinical.

And when we have a choice between **leniency and stringency** in regards to a Rabbinic law, **we compare it for leniency**, i.e., to be lenient, but **we do not compare it for stringency**.

Mishnah

From what source do I know **about a boat that it is pure**, i.e. not susceptible to impurity? **For it is stated** (*Mishlei*¹⁴30:19): “...**the path of the ship is in the heart of the sea**”. And we derive from this verse that a ship is compared to the sea, which is not susceptible to impurity.

Gemara

The Gemara clarifies how the Mishnah came to the conclusion it did: **It is obvious** that the path of **a ship is in the heart of the sea**. Therefore, why was it necessary to be stated?

Rather, **it** the verse **comes to inform us** that the Halachah of a ship is **like the sea**. **Just as the sea is pure** i.e. not susceptible to impurity, **so too a boat is pure** i.e. not susceptible to impurity.

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It was taught in a Baraita: **Chanania says: Let us derive it**, the law that a ship is not susceptible to impurity, **from a sack**. For the ship we are referring to is a wooden vessel, and the Torah compares wooden utensils to a sack (*Vayikra*¹⁵ 11:32).

This is the comparison between wooden utensils and a sack: **Just as a sack is carried while full and while empty** and can be rendered impure, **so too everything that is carried while full and while empty** can be rendered impure. This is **to exclude a ship**,

¹⁴ Proverbs

¹⁵ Leviticus

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which is not carried while **full and** while **empty**, since it cannot be carried when it is full due to its size.

And the Gemara explains: **What is** the difference **between them**, i.e., between the view in the Mishnah and Chanania's view?

There is between them the difference of **a boat made of clay**, since the verse does not compare earthenware to a sack.

The one the view in the Mishnah **that says** that derives it from the **'ship in the heart of the sea'**, will say that **this one**, a boat made from clay, **also is** included in **'heart of the sea'**, and would therefore also not be susceptible to impurity.

While **the one** Chanania **that says** that it is **like a sack**, only **these materials that are written** in the verse **by a sack**, do we say **that if they are carried** both while **full and** while **empty**—then **yes**, they can become impure. And **if not**, then **not**.

But a boat of clay, a material not mentioned in the verse, I will say that **even though it does not carry** while **full and** while **empty**, it will still be susceptible to impurity.

Or also, there is the difference of **a boat of the Jordan** River, which, since it is shallow, can only be used by small boats.

The one the view in the Mishnah **that says** that derives it from **'ship in the heart of the sea'**, then **this**, a boat in the Jordan, **also is** considered like **'a ship in the heart of the sea'** since 'sea' refers to any body of water.

While for **the one** Chanania **that says** only utensils that are **'carried while full and** while **empty'** can become impure, the comparison will not be valid. For **this also** a small boat **is carried** while **full and** while **empty**, and will therefore be susceptible to impurity.

For Rabbi Chanina ben Akavya said: For what reason did they the Rabbis **say that a boat of the Jordan is impure** i.e. susceptible to impurity? **Since they load it on land and lower it to the water.** Therefore we see that the smaller boats used in the Jordan are carried even while they are full.

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: A person should never hold himself back from the study hall, even for a short period of time. For this Mishnah that the boat of the Jordan can become impure **was taught for many years and yet its reasoning was not revealed** why it should be different from a ship, **until Rabbi Chanina ben Akavya came and explained it.**

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A person should never hold himself back from the study hall and from words of Torah, even for a short period of time, as it is stated (*Bamidbar*¹⁶ 19:14): “This is the Torah; when a person dies in a tent”. This is interpreted to mean: even at the time of death one should be involved with Torah.

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Reish Lakish said: Words of Torah only stay with someone who kills himself over it the Torah. As it is said (ibid.): “This is the Torah; when a person dies in a tent”. This implies that a person who refrains from pursuing an empty and superficial life will be able to permanently retain his Torah knowledge (*Iggeret Chazon Ish*).

Rava said...

¹⁶ Numbers