

הלכות עבודת כוכבים • פרק חמישי

Complete Word-for-Word Interlinear • Navy & Gold Edition

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam takes us into the severe halachos of a mesit—one who tries to entice a fellow Jew to serve avodah zarah—and a madiach, who leads an entire city astray. We will learn the strict procedures the Torah demands to bring such a person to justice, including the unique allowance to set a trap for him, and the absolute prohibition to show him any mercy or defend him in court.

We will also learn the halachos of a navi sheker, a false prophet who claims to speak in the name of an avodah zarah. The Rambam explains the severe prohibition against even listening to his arguments or contemplating the signs and wonders he might perform to prove his words, showing us how we must guard our emunah with absolute purity.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

ה"א

דין המסית לעבודת כוכבים

Halacha 1 • The Law of One Who Incites an Individual to Worship Idols

הַמְּסִית אֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל בֵּין אִישׁ בֵּין אִשָּׁה הָרִי זֶה נִסְקָל אֹף עַל

· even is stoned this one behold a woman whether a man whether of Israel one One who incites

כִּי שֶׁלֹּא עָבַד הַמְּסִית וְלֹא הִמּוֹסֵת עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים אֶלָּא מִפְּנֵי

because but stars worship of the incited and not the inciter worshiped that not though

שֶׁהוֹרָהוּ לְעַבֹּד. בֵּין שֶׁהָיָה הַמְּסִית הַדִּיּוֹט בֵּין שֶׁהָיָה נָבִיא בֵּין

whether a prophet that was whether an ordinary person the inciter that was whether to worship that he instructed him

שֶׁהָיָה הִמּוֹסֵת יָחִיד אִישׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה אוֹ יְחִידִים מִיתָתוֹ בְּסָקִילָה:

is by stoning his death individuals or a woman or a man an individual the incited that was

This halacha establishes that the punishment of stoning applies to anyone who incites a fellow Jew to worship idols, regardless of whether the inciter or the incited actually performed the worship.

ה"ב

ההבדל בין מסית למדיח ודין נביא המדיח

Halacha 2 • The Distinction Between a Mesit and a Madiach and the Law of a Prophet Who Misleads

הַמְּסִית אֶת רַב אֲנָשִׁי הָעִיר הָרִי זֶה מַדִּיחַ וְאִינוֹ נִקְרָא מְסִית.

a mesit called and is not is a madiach this behold the city the people of the majority of — One who incites

הָיָה זֶה שֶׁהָדִיחַ רַב הָעִיר נָבִיא מִיתָתוֹ בְּסָקִילָה וְהַנִּדְחִים הָרִי

behold and those led astray is by stoning his death a prophet the city the majority of who led astray this If he was

הֵן כִּיחִידִים וְאִינָם כְּאֲנָשִׁי עִיר הַנִּדְחָת עַד שֶׁיִּהְיוּ הַמַּדִּיחִים

the madiach-inciters there will be until led astray a city like the people of and they are not are like individuals they

שְׁנַיִם. וְאֶחָד הָאוֹמֵר אֶמְרָה לִי עֲבוֹדַת פּוֹכְבִּים עֲבֹדָה. אוֹ שֹׁאֵמֵר אֹמֵר

said who said or worship her stars the worship of to me she said one who says And both two

לִי הַקְדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא עֲבָדוֹ עֲבוֹדַת פּוֹכְבִּים הִרִי זֶה נָבִיא שֶׁהִדִּיחַ.

who led astray is a prophet this behold stars the worship of worship is He blessed the Holy One to me

וְאִם הִדְּחוּ אַחֲרָיו רַב הָעִיר נִסְקָל. הַמְּסִית שֶׁהִסִּית בֵּין

whether who incited The mesit he is stoned the city the majority of after him they were led astray and if

בְּלִשׁוֹן רַבִּים בֵּין בְּלִשׁוֹן יַחִיד הִרִי זֶה נִסְקָל. פִּיּוּצָד. הָאוֹמֵר

One who says How so one is stoned this behold an individual in the language of whether many in the language of

לְחֵבְרוֹ אֶעֱבֹד פּוֹכְבִּים אֵלָּה וְאֶעֱבֹד נִלְךְ וְנַעֲבֹד בְּעֲבוּדָה

with the worship and let us worship let us go and I will worship I will go stars I will worship to his fellow

פְּלוּגִית שֶׁדָּרָךְ אוֹתָהּ עֲבוֹדַת פּוֹכְבִּים לְהַעֲבֹד בָּהּ. אֲזַבַּח אֵלָּה

I will go I will slaughter with it to be worshiped stars worship of that that is the way of such and such

וְאֲזַבַּח נִלְךְ וְנִזְבַּח. אֶקְטֹר אֵלָּה וְאֶקְטֹר נִלְךְ

let us go and I will burn incense I will go I will burn incense and let us slaughter let us go and I will slaughter

וְנִקְטֹר. אֶנְסֹךְ אֵלָּה וְאֶנְסֹךְ נִלְךְ וְנִנְסֹךְ.

and let us pour a libation let us go and I will pour a libation I will go I will pour a libation and let us burn incense

אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֵלָּה וְאֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה נִלְךְ וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה הִרִי זֶה מְסִית. הִסִּית

If he incited is a mesit this behold and let us bow down let us go and I will bow down I will go I will bow down

לְשְׁנַיִם הִרִי הֵן עֲדֵיו וְהֵן מְבִיאִין אוֹתוֹ לְבֵית דִּין וּמַעֲיִדִין

and they testify law to the house of him bring and they are his witnesses they behold two

עָלָיו שֶׁכָּה אָמַר לָהֶן וְסוֹקְלִין אוֹתוֹ:

him and they stone to them he said that thus against him

This halacha defines the legal differences between one who incites an individual (mesit) and one who misleads an entire city (madiach), detailing the specific expressions of incitement and the rules of testimony.

ח"ג

דִּין הַכְּמָנָה לְמְסִית לַעֲבוּדָה זָרָה

Halacha 3: The Law of Setting a Trap to Convict an Enticer to Idolatry

וְאִין הַמְּסִית צָרִיךְ הִתְרָאָה. אָמַר לְאֶחָד הוּא אוֹמֵר יֵשׁ לִי חֲבֵרִים

friends to me There are says he to one He said warning needs the mesit And not

רוֹצִים בְּכָה וּמַעֲרִים עָלָיו עַד שֶׁיִּסִּית בְּפָנָי שְׁנַיִם כְּדֵי לְהַרְגּוֹ.

to execute him in order two in the presence of that he entices until against him and he schemes in this wanting

אִם לֹא רָצָה הַמְּסִית לְהִסִּית לְשְׁנַיִם מִצְוָה לְהַכְמִין לוֹ. כָּל חֲיָבִי

those liable to All for him to set a trap it is a mitzvah to two to entice the mesit wanted not If

מִיתוֹת שֶׁבַּתֹּרָה אֵין מְכַמִּינִן עָלֵיהֶן חוּץ מִזֶּה. פִּיּוּצָד מְכַמִּינִן לוֹ.

for him do we set a trap How from this except for them set a trap we do not that are in the Torah deaths

הַמוֹסֵת מְבִיא שְׁנַיִם וּמַעֲמִידִן בְּמָקוֹם אָפֵל כְּדֵי שֶׁיִּרְאוּ הַמְּסִית

the mesit that they will see in order dark in a place and places them two brings The musat

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ דְבָרָיו וְלֹא יָרָאָה אוֹתָם, וְהוּא אוֹמֵר לַמֵּסִית אֲמַר מַה שֶּׁאֲמַרְתָּ
 that you said what Say to the mesit says and he them he will see and not his words and they will hear
 לִי בְּיָחִיד, וְהוּא אוֹמֵר לוֹ, וְהַמוֹסֵת מְשִׁיבוֹ הֵיאָךְ נִנְיַח אֶת אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 our God — can we leave How answers him and the musat to him says and he in private to me
 שֶׁבַשְׁמַיִם וְנִלְךָ וְנַעֲבֹד אֶת הָעֵצִים וְאֶת הָאֲבָנִים. אִם חֲזַר בּוֹ אוֹ
 or in it he retracted If the stones and — the wood — and serve and go Who is in heaven
 שֶׁתֵּק פָּטוּר. וְאִם אָמַר לוֹ כֹּךְ הִיא חֻבַּתְנוּ וְכֹךְ יִפֶּה לָנוּ, הָעוֹמְדִים
 those standing for us is good and thus our obligation it is Thus to him he said and if he is exempt remained silent
 שָׁם בְּרָחוֹק מִבֵּיֵאִין אוֹתוֹ לְבֵית דִּין וְסוֹקְלִים אוֹתוֹ:
 him and they stone law to the house of him bring at a distance there

This halacha details the unique legal procedure of setting a hidden trap with witnesses to convict a mesit, an exception to the standard rules of warning and testimony.

ה'ל"ד

החובה להרג את המסית והאסור לרחם עליו

Halacha 4 · The Obligation to Execute an Enticer and the Prohibition of Showing Him Mercy

מִצְוָה בְּיַד הַמוֹסֵת לְהַרְגוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים יג י "יָדְךָ תִּהְיֶה בּוֹ
 against him shall be your hand 10 13 Devarim as it is said to kill him the enticed one is in the hand of A mitzvah
 בְּרֵאשׁוֹנָה לְהַמִּיתוֹ" וְגו'. וְאָסוּר לְמוֹסֵת לְאַהֲבֹת אֶת הַמֵּסִית שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
 as it is said the enticer — to love for the enticed one And it is forbidden etc. to kill him first
 דְּבָרִים יג ט "לֹא תֹאכֶה לוֹ". וּלְפִי שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּשׂוֹנֵא שְׁמוֹת כג ה
 5 23 Shemos regarding an enemy it is said And since to him be attracted do not 9 13 Devarim
 "עֹזֵב תִּעְזֹב עִמּוֹ" יָכוֹל אֶתָּה עֹזֵב לָזֶה תִּלְמּוּד לומר דְּבָרִים יג ט
 9 13 Devarim says the teaching this one must help you one might think with him you shall help surely
 "וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע אֵלָיו". וּלְפִי שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַיִּקְרָא יט טז "וְלֹא תִעַמַּד עַל
 by stand and do not 16 19 Vayikra it is said And since to him listen and do not
 דָּם רֵעֶךָ" יָכוֹל אִי אֶתָּה עוֹמֵד עַל דָּמוֹ שֶׁל זֶה תִּלְמּוּד
 the teaching this one of the blood by may not stand you one might think your fellow the blood of
 לומר דְּבָרִים יג ט "וְלֹא תַחוּס עֵינֶךָ". וְאָסוּר לְמוֹסֵת לְלַמֵּד
 to argue for the enticed one And it is forbidden your eye pity and do not 9 13 Devarim says
 עָלָיו זְכוּת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים יג ט "וְלֹא תַחְמַל". וְאִם יָדַע לוֹ חֻבָּה
 guilt against him he knew And if compassionate and do not 9 13 Devarim as it is said merit on his behalf
 אֵינוֹ רָשָׁאי לְשֶׁתֵּק מִמֶּנָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים יג ט "וְלֹא תִכְסֶּה עָלָיו".
 for him cover up and do not 9 13 Devarim as it is said from it to remain silent permitted he is not
 וְאִתְּהָרָה לְהַדְיוּט הַמֵּסִית מִנֵּין שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים יג יב "וְכָל
 And all 12 13 Devarim as it is said from where is it derived who entices for an ordinary person And the warning

יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּרְאוּ:

and fear shall hear Yisrael

This halacha details the unique stringencies applied to a mesit (one who entices others to worship idols), including the prohibition of defending him or saving his life.

ה'ה

הַמְּסִית לְעַצְמוֹ וְהַמְּסִית לְעַבֹּדֶת כּוֹכָבִים אֲחֵרִת

Halacha 5 · One Who Entices to Worship Himself Versus One Who Entices to Another Deity

הַמְּסִית אֲחֵרִים לְעַבְדוֹ וְאָמַר לָהֶם עֲבֹדוּנִי אִם עֲבָדוּהוּ נִסְקָל וְאִם
and if he is stoned they worshiped him if worship me to them and said to worship him others One who entices
לֹא עֲבָדוּהוּ אָף עַל פִּי שֶׁקִּבְּלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְאָמְרוּ הֵן אֵינוֹ נִסְקָל. אָבֵל
but stoned he is not yes and said from him that they accepted though · even they worshiped him not
אִם הִסִּית לְעַבֹּדֶת אִישׁ אֲחֵר אוֹ לְשָׂאֵר מִיְּנֵי עַבֹּדֶת כּוֹכָבִים אִם קִבֵּל
he accepted if stars worship of kinds of to other or another a man to the worship of he enticed if
מִמֶּנּוּ וְאָמַר הֵן נִלְךָ וְנַעֲבֹד אָף עַל פִּי שֶׁעֲדִין לֹא עָבַד שְׁנֵיהֶן
both of them he worshiped not that still though · even and we will worship we will go yes and said from him
נִסְקָלִין הַמְּסִית וְהַמּוֹסֵת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים יג ט "לֹא תִאֲבָה לוֹ וְלֹא
and not him you shall desire not 9 13 Devarim as it is said and the enticed the enticer are stoned
תִּשְׁמַע אֵלָיו" הָא אִם שָׁמַע וְאָבָה חֵיב:
he is liable and desired he listened if behold to him you shall listen

This halacha distinguishes between a mesit who entices others to worship himself and one who entices them to worship another person or deity.

ה'ו

הַמִּתְנַבֵּא בְּשֵׁם עַבֹּדֶת כּוֹכָבִים וְעָנְשׁוֹ

Halacha 6 · The Punishment of a Prophet Who Prophesies in the Name of Idols

נָבִיא הַמִּתְנַבֵּא בְּשֵׁם עַבֹּדֶת כּוֹכָבִים כִּי־צַד. זֶה הָאוֹמֵר אֶמְרָה לִי
to me said one who says this is how so stars worship of in the name of who prophesies A prophet
עַבֹּדֶת כּוֹכָבִים פְּלוֹנִית אוֹ כּוֹכַב פְּלוֹנִי שֶׁמִּצְוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּךְ וְכָךְ אוֹ
or and so so to do that it is a mitzvah such and such a star or such and such stars worship of
שֶׁלֹּא לַעֲשׂוֹת, אֲפֹלוּ כִּוֵּן אֶת הַהִלָּכָה לְטֵמֵא אֶת הַטָּמֵא וּלְטַהֵר
and to declare pure the impure — to declare impure the halacha — he directed even if to do not
אֶת הַטָּהוֹר, אִם הִתְרוּ בּוֹ בְּפָנָי שְׁנַיִם הָרִי זֶה נֶחֱנַק שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
as it is said is strangled this one behold two in the presence of him they warned if the pure —
דְּבָרִים יח כ "וְאֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹּר בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וּמֵת הַנָּבִיא הַהוּא."
that the prophet and shall die other gods in the name of shall speak and who 20 18 Devarim
וְאִזְהָרָה שְׁלוֹ מִכָּל־ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר שְׁמוֹת כג יג "וְשֵׁם אֱלֹהִים
gods and the name of 13 23 Shemos as it is said is from the general rule of it and the warning
אֲחֵרִים לֹא תִזְכְּרוּ:
shall you mention not other

This halacha defines the transgression and capital punishment of one who falsely claims that an idol commanded a specific law or practice.

ה'ל' ז

אסור וכו' עם נביא שקר וענשו בחנק

Halacha 7 · Prohibition of Debating a False Prophet and His Punishment of Strangulation

ואסור לערף דין ותשובה עם המתנבא בשם עבודת פוכבים

stars worship of in the name of one who prophesies with and response argument to arrange And it is forbidden

ואין שואליו ממנו אות ומופת. ואם עשה מעצמו אין משגיחין

pay attention we do not on his own he performed and if and wonder a sign from him ask and we do not

עליו ואין מהרהרין בו. וכל המחשב באותות שלו שמה אמת הן

they are truth perhaps his about the signs who thinks and anyone on it contemplate and we do not to him

עובר בלא תעשה שנאמר דברים יג ד "לא תשמע אל דברי

the words of to listen Do not 4 13 Devarim as it is said commandment a negative transgresses

הנביא ההוא". וכן נביא השקר מיתתו בחנק אף על פי

though even is by strangulation his death falsehood a prophet of And likewise that the prophet

שנתנבא בשם ה' ולא הוסיף ולא גרע שנאמר דברים יח כ

20 18 Devarim as it is said diminish and did not add and did not Hashem in the name of he prophesied

"אף הנביא אשר יזיד לדבר דבר בשמי את אשר לא צויתי" דברים

Devarim I commanded not which — in My name a matter to speak will dare who the prophet But

יח כ "ומת הנביא ההוא":

that the prophet and shall die 20 18

This halacha forbids engaging in debate with a false prophet or requesting signs from him, and establishes that a false prophet is executed by strangulation even if he prophesies in the name of Hashem.

ה'ל' ח

דין נביא שקר ומיתתו בחנק

Halacha 8 · The Definition and Punishment of a False Prophet

אחד המתנבא מה שלא שמע במראה הנבואה או מי ששמע דברי נביא

a prophet the words of who heard one or prophecy in a vision of he heard that not what who prophesies One

חברו ואמר שדבר זה לו נאמר והוא נתנבא בו הרי זה נביא שקר

falsehood is a prophet of this behold with it prophesied and he was said to him this that matter and said his fellow

ומיתתו בחנק:

is by strangulation and his death

This halacha defines the two categories of a false prophet and establishes their punishment of strangulation.

ה'ל' ט

האסור לירא מנביא השקר ודינו בסנהדרין

Halacha 9 · Prohibition of Fearing a False Prophet and the Requirement of Sanhedrin

כל המונע עצמו מהריגת נביא השקר מפני מעלתו שהרי הולך

he walks for behold his level because of the falsehood a prophet of from killing himself who refrains Any

בְּדַרְכֵי הַנְּבוּאָה הִרִי זֶה עֹוֹר בְּלֹא תַעֲשֶׂה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים יח כב
 22 18 Devarim as it is said commandment a negative transgresses this one behold the prophecy in the ways of
 "לֹא תִגּוֹר מִמֶּנּוּ". וְכֵן הַמוֹנֵעַ עֲצָמוֹ מִלְלֵמַד עָלָיו חֹזֵק אוֹ
 or guilt against him from teaching himself one who refrains And likewise him" fear "Do not
 הַפּוֹחֵד וַיֵּרָא מִדְּבָרָיו הִרִי הוּא בְּכָלֹל לֹא תִגּוֹר מִמֶּנּוּ. וְאִין
 And we do not him fear do not is included in he behold from his words and fears one who is afraid
 דִּנְיָן נָבִיא הַשֶּׁקֶר אֵלֶּא בֵּית דִּין שֶׁל שִׁבְעִים וְאַחַד:
 and one seventy of judgment in a house of except the falsehood a prophet of judge

This halacha teaches that one must not hesitate to prosecute or execute a false prophet due to his spiritual stature, and that a false prophet can only be tried by the High Court of seventy-one judges.

הל"י

אסור שְׂבוּעָה וְהִזְכָּרַת שֵׁם עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים

Halacha 10 · The Prohibition of Swearing by or Mentioning the Name of an Idol

הַנוֹדֵר בְּשֵׁם עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים וְהַנִּשְׁבַּע בָּהּ לֹוֹקָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר שְׁמוֹת
 Shemos as it is said receives lashes by it and one who swears stars worship of in the name of One who vows
 כַּגִּיג "וְשֵׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לֹא תִזְכִּירוּ". אֶחָד הַנִּשְׁבַּע בָּהּ לְעַצְמוֹ
 for himself by it one who swears Whether you shall mention not other gods and the name of 13 23
 וְאַחַד הַנִּשְׁבַּע בָּהּ לְעוֹבֵד כּוֹכָבִים. וְאִסוּר לְהַשְׁבִּיעַ הָעוֹבֵד
 the worshiper of to cause to swear and it is forbidden stars for a worshiper of by it one who swears and whether
 כּוֹכָבִים בִּירְאָתוֹ. אֶפְלוֹ לְהִזְכִּיר שֵׁם עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים שְׁלֹא דֶרֶךְ
 by way of not stars worship of the name of to mention Even by his object of fear stars
 שְׂבוּעָה אִסוּר שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר לֹא תִזְכִּירוּ:
 you shall mention not as it is said is forbidden an oath

This halacha details the prohibition against swearing by or even mentioning the name of a false deity, whether for oneself or a non-Jew.

הל"י

אסור הִזְכָּרַת שֵׁם עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים וּגְרִימַת נֶדֶר בְּשֵׁמָה

Halacha 11 · Prohibition of Mentioning the Name of a False Deity and Causing Others to Vow in Its Name

לֹא יֹאמַר אָדָם לְחֵבְרוֹ שְׁמִר לִי בְּצַד עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים פְּלוֹנִית וְכִיּוֹצֵא
 and similar such-and-such stars worship of by the side of for me wait to his fellow a person shall say Not
 בָּהּ. וְכָל עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים הַפְּתוּכָה בְּכַתְּבֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִתֵּר לְהִזְכִּיר
 to mention it is permitted the Holiness in the Writings of that is written stars worship of And any to it
 שְׁמָהּ כְּגוֹן פְּעוֹר וּבֵל וְנֵבּוֹ וְגַד וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָּהֶן. וְאִסוּר לְגַרֵם לְאַחֲרִים
 others to cause And it is forbidden to them and similar and Gad and Nevo and Bel Peor such as its name
 שְׂיִידָרוֹ וְשִׂיקְמוֹ בְּשֵׁם עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים. וְאִינוֹ לֹוֹקָה אֵלֶּא
 except lashed and he is not stars worship of in the name of and that they swear that they vow

בְּשֵׁמָהּ:

in its name

הַנִּשְׁבָּע

the one who takes an
oath

וְהוּא בְּשֵׁמָהּ

and he is in its name

וְהַמְקִימִים

and the one who
swears

בְּשֵׁמָהּ

in its name

הַנוֹדֵר

the one who vows

This halacha details the prohibition of mentioning the names of false deities, except those written in the Torah, and the prohibition of causing others to swear by them.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter details that a mesit is executed by stoning even if no actual worship took place, whereas a madiach is one who entices the majority of a city. To convict a mesit, the Torah uniquely permits setting a hidden trap with witnesses, and the musat (the enticed individual) is commanded to lead the execution, forbidden from loving, pitying, or defending the mesit in any way. Additionally, if someone entices others to worship him, he is only liable if they actually worship him, but if he entices them to worship another deity, both are liable as soon as they agree. Finally, the Rambam rules that a prophet who prophesies in the name of false gods is executed by strangulation, and it is strictly forbidden to debate him, ask for a sign, or pay any attention to his wonders.

לְמַעַן

WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The Torah goes to unprecedented lengths to stop the mesit, the one who tries to persuade another Jew to turn away from Hashem. We are commanded not to love him, not to protect him, and even to set a hidden trap to expose his words. Why is the Torah so uniquely severe here, even if no actual worship ever took place? Because the greatest danger to a Yid is not a physical threat, but the subtle, persuasive voice that tries to quietly pull our hearts away from Hashem.

In our own lives, the most dangerous "mesit" we encounter is often the quiet, inner voice of the yetzer hara, or the negative influences around us that whisper, "Just this once, let's do what everyone else is doing; it's beneficial for us." These thoughts don't always come with a loud roar; they come as a gentle, logical suggestion to compromise on our emunah or our standards of yiras Shamayim. The lesson of the sugya is that we cannot play nice with these negative influences. We cannot try to find excuses for them or show them compassion. We have to expose them for what they are and shut them down immediately.

Today, when a whispering thought or an outside influence tries to persuade you to compromise on a mitzvah or slide away from your closeness to Hashem, do not argue with it or try to accommodate it. Recognize it as a spiritual threat, stand strong in your emunah, and firmly say, "How can I forsake my Father in Heaven?"