

## הלכות עבודת פוכבים • פרק שמיני

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

## CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, we learn the fundamental guidelines regarding what can and cannot become forbidden as an idol. Hashem made a beautiful world, and the Sages teach us a major yesod: anything that has not been manipulated or made by man—such as mountains, hills, rivers, and animals—does not become forbidden for our use, even if misguided people actually bowed down to them and worshiped them as deities.

We will also learn the specific conditions under which these natural objects can become forbidden. For instance, we look at what happens if a person performs a physical action on an animal for the sake of an idol, or if someone digs into the earth to alter it for a pagan deity, as well as the important halachic rule that a person cannot make his friend's property forbidden without his consent.

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

ה'א

דברים שנעבדו ואינם נאסרים בהנאה

Halacha 1 • Objects of Idol Worship That Are Permitted for Benefit

כָּל שֵׂאִין בּוֹ תַפְסִיט יָד אָדָם וְלֹא עָשָׂהוּ אָדָם אַף עַל פִּי  
 though · even man made it and not man hand of manipulation of in it that there is not Any  
 שֶׁנֶּעֱבַד הָרִי זֶה מִתֵּר בִּהְנָאָה. לְפִיכָךְ עוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים הָעוֹבְדִים אֶת  
 — who worship stars worshipers of therefore for benefit is permitted this behold that it was worshiped  
 הָהָרִים וְאֶת הַגְּבָעוֹת וְאֶת הָאֵילָנוֹת הַנִּטְוִעִין מִתְחִלָּתָן לְפִרֹת וְאֶת  
 and — for fruit from their beginning that were planted the trees and — the hills and — the mountains  
 הַמַּעֲיָנוֹת הַנוֹבְעִין לְרַבִּים וְאֶת הַבְּהֵמָה הָרִי אֵלּוּ מִתְרִין בִּהְנָאָה  
 for benefit are permitted these behold the animal and — for the public that flow the springs  
 וּמִתֵּר לֶאֱכֹל אוֹתָן הַפִּרֹת שֶׁנֶּעֱבְדוּ בְּמָקוֹם גְּדִילָתָן וְאוֹתָהּ  
 and that their growth in the place of that were worshiped the fruits them to eat and it is permitted  
 הַבְּהֵמָה. וְאִין צָרִיךְ לוֹמַר הַבְּהֵמָה שֶׁהִקְצַת לְעִבּוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים שֶׁהִיא  
 that it stars for worship of that was set aside the animal to say need and there is no animal  
 מִתְרֵת בְּאֻכְלָהּ בֵּין שֶׁהִקְצוּהָ לְעִבְדָּהּ בֵּין שֶׁהִקְצוּהָ לְהַקְרִיבָהּ הָרִי  
 behold to sacrifice it that they set it aside whether to worship it that they set it aside whether for eating is permitted  
 זֶו מִתְרֵת. בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אֲמוּרִים שֵׂאִין הַבְּהֵמָה נִאֲסָרַת בְּשִׁלָּא עָשָׂה בָּהּ  
 to it he did in that not is not forbidden the animal that are said words In what is permitted this  
 מַעֲשֵׂה לְשֵׁם עִבּוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים אֲבָל עָשָׂה בָּהּ מַעֲשֵׂה כָּל שֶׁהוּא אֲסָרָה.  
 he forbade it that it is any an action to it if he did but stars worship of for the sake of an action

כיצד, כגון ששחט בה סימן לעבודת פוכבים. עשאה חליפין

an exchange or made it stars for worship of a sign in it that he slaughtered for example how so

לעבודת פוכבים אסרה. וכן חליפי חליפין. מפני שנעשים

that they become because an exchange the exchange of and likewise he forbade it stars for worship of

דמי עבודת פוכבים. במה דברים אמורים בבהמת עצמו. אבל אם

if but himself regarding the animal of are said words In what stars worship of the value of

שחט בהמת חברו לעבודת פוכבים או החליפה לא נאסרה שאין

since not it is forbidden not exchanged it or stars for worship of his fellow the animal of he slaughtered

אדם אוסר דבר שאינו שלו. המשתחוה לקרקע עולם לא אסרה. חפר

if he dug he forbade it not the world to ground of One who bows down his that is not a thing forbids a man

בה בורות שיחין ומערות לשם עבודת פוכבים אסרה:

he forbade it stars worship of for the sake of and caves ditches pits in it

*This halacha outlines which natural objects and animals do not become forbidden when worshiped, and under what conditions human actions render them prohibited.*

הליב

דין מים ואבני הר שנעבדו

Halacha 2· The Status of Worshiped Water and Detached Mountain Stones

מים שעקרו הגל והשתחוה להן לא אסרו. נטלן בידי

in his hand if he took them forbid them he did not to them and he bowed down the wave that uprooted them Water

והשתחוה להן אסרו. אבני הר שנדלדלו ועבדו במקומם

in their place and he worshiped them that detached a mountain stones of he forbade them to them and he bowed down

מתרות שהרי אין בהן תפיסת יד אדם:

man the hand of manipulation of in them there is not since they are permitted

*This halacha delineates when natural elements like water and stones become forbidden through worship, based on whether they were manipulated by human hands.*

הליב

דין אשרה ואילן הנעבד ותקרוכת עבודה זרה

Halacha 3· The Laws of an Asherah Tree, Worshiped Trees, and Objects Set Aside for Idolatry

ישראל שזקף לבנה להשתחוות לה ולא השתחוה לה ובא עובד

a worshiper of and came to it bow down and did not to it to bow down a brick who stood up A Jew

פוכבים והשתחוה לה אסרה בהנאה שזקיפתה מעשה. וכן אם

if and so is an action because its standing up for benefit he made it forbidden to it and bowed down stars

זקף ביצה ובא עובד פוכבים והשתחוה לה אסרה. חתך

If he cut he made it forbidden to it and bowed down stars a worshiper of and came an egg he stood up

דלעת וכיוצא בה והשתחוה לה אסרה. השתחוה לחצי דלעת

a gourd to half of If he bowed down he made it forbidden to it and bowed down of it and the like a gourd

וְחֻצֵי הָאֲחֵר מְעֵרָה בּוֹ הָרִי זֶה אָסוּר מִסָּפֵק שְׁמָא זֶה הִחְצִי כְמוֹ יָד  
a handle is like half this lest out of doubt is forbidden this behold to it is attached other and the half

לְחֻצֵי הַנֶּעֱבָד. אֵילָן שֶׁנִּטְעָו מִתְחִלָּה שִׁיְהִיָּה נֶעֱבָד אָסוּר  
is forbidden worshiped that it should be from the beginning that one planted it A tree that was worshiped for the half

בְּהִנָּאָה וְזוֹ הִיא אֲשֶׁרָה הָאֲמוּרָה בַּתּוֹרָה. הָיָה אֵילָן נָטוּעַ וְגִדְעוּ  
and he pruned it planted a tree If there was in the Torah the one spoken of an asherah is and this for benefit

וּפָסְלוּ לְשֵׁם עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים אֶפְלוּ הַבְּרִיָּה וְהִרְפִּיב בְּגוּפוֹ שֶׁל  
of into the body and grafted he bent a branch even if stars worship of for the sake of and carved it

אֵילָן וְהוֹצִיא שָׂרִיגִים כּוֹרֵת אֶת הַשָּׂרִיגִים וְהֵם אָסוּרִים בְּהִנָּאָה  
for benefit are forbidden and they the shoots — he cuts off shoots and it produced the tree

וּשְׁאֵר הָאֵילָן מִתֵּר. וְכֵן הַמְשַׁתְּחָוָה לְאֵילָן אֵף עַל פִּי שְׁלֹא נֶאֱסַר  
was forbidden that not though even to a tree one who bows down And so is permitted the tree and the rest of

גּוּפוֹ כָּל הַשָּׂרִיגִים וְהָעָלִים וְהַלּוּלָבִין וְהַפְּרוֹת שִׁיּוּצִיא כָּל זְמַן  
the time all that it produces and the fruits and the young and the leaves the shoots all its body branches

שֶׁהוּא נֶעֱבָד הָרִי אֵלָיו אָסוּרִין בְּהִנָּאָה. אֵילָן שֶׁהָיוּ הָעוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים  
stars the worshipers of that were A tree for benefit are forbidden these behold is worshiped that it

מְשַׁמְרִין אֶת פְּרוֹתָיו וְאוֹמְרִים שֶׁהֵם מוֹכְנִים לַעֲשׂוֹת שֶׁכֶּר לְבֵית  
for the house of beer to make are designated that they and saying its fruits — guarding

עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים פְּלוּנִי וְעוֹשִׂין מִהֵן שֶׁכֶּר וְשׁוֹתִים אוֹתוֹ בְּיוֹם חֲגֻם  
their festival on the day of it and drink beer from them and they make of so-and-so stars worship of

הָרִי זֶה הָאֵילָן אָסוּר בְּהִנָּאָה מִפְּנֵי שִׁסְתָּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא אֲשֶׁרָה וּלְפִיכָּךְ  
and therefore is an asherah is that it the presumption of it because for benefit is forbidden tree this behold

עוֹשִׂין בְּפְרוֹתָיו כֹּךְ שֶׁזוֹ הִיא חֻקָּה שֶׁל אֲשֶׁרָה:  
an asherah of the custom of is since this so with its fruits they do

*This halacha details how objects and trees become forbidden for benefit through acts of preparation and worship by Jews and non-Jews.*

הליך

אָסוּר הִנָּאָה מִבֵּית וְאֶכָּן וְאֵילָן שֶׁנֶּעֱבָדוּ

Halacha 4 - Prohibition of Benefit from a House, Stone, or Tree Used for Idol Worship

אֵילָן שֶׁמַּעֲמִידִין תַּחְתָּיו עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהִיא תַּחְתָּיו אָסוּר  
is forbidden under it that it is time all stars worship of under it that they place A tree

בְּהִנָּאָה. נִטְלָה מִתַּחְתָּיו הָרִי זֶה מִתֵּר מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאֵין הָאֵילָן עֲצָמוֹ הוּא  
is itself the tree that not because is permitted this behold from under it if he removed it for benefit

הַנֶּעֱבָד. בֵּית שֶׁבָּנָא הָעוֹבֵד כּוֹכָבִים מִתְחִלָּה שִׁיְהִיָּה הַבֵּית  
the house that should be from the beginning stars the worshiper of that built it A house the worshiped object

עֲצָמוֹ נֶעֱבָד וְכֵן הַמְשַׁתְּחָוָה לְבֵית בְּנוֹי הָרִי זֶה אָסוּר בְּהִנָּאָה. הָיָה  
If it was for benefit is forbidden this behold built to a house one who bows down and likewise worshiped itself

בְּנוֹי וְסִידוֹ וְכִירוֹ לְשֵׁם עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים עַד שְׁנֵת־חֲדָשׁ נוֹטֵל

he removes it was renovated until stars worship of for the sake of and he decorated it and he plastered it built

מֶה שְׁחֲדָשׁ וְהַחֲדוּשׁ אָסוּר בְּהִנָּאָה מִפְּנֵי שֶׁעָשָׂאָהּ לְעִבְדוֹ וּשְׂאָר

and the rest of to worship it that he made it because for benefit is forbidden and the renovation he renovated what

הַבַּיִת מֵתֵר. הַכִּנִּיס עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים לְתוֹךְ הַבַּיִת כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהִיא שָׁם

there that it is time all the house into stars worship of If he brought in is permitted the house

הַבַּיִת אָסוּר בְּהִנָּאָה. הוֹצִיאָהּ הֵתֵר הַבַּיִת. וְכֵן אֶבֶן שֶׁחֲצָבָהּ

that he quarried it a stone And likewise the house is permitted if he removed it for benefit is forbidden the house

מִתְחִלָּה לְעִבְדָּהּ אָסוּרָה בְּהִנָּאָה. הִיְתָה חֲצוּבָהּ וְצִירָהּ וְכִירוֹ

and he decorated it and he drew on it quarried If it was for benefit is forbidden to worship it from the beginning

שֶׁתַּעֲבֹד אִפְלוּ צִיר וְכִיר בְּגוֹף הָאֶבֶן וְאִין צָרִיךְ לֹאמַר אִם

if to say need and there is no the stone on the body of and decorated if he drew even that it be worshiped

כִּיר עָלֶיהָ נוֹטֵל מֶה שְׁחֲדָשׁ וְהוּא אָסוּר בְּהִנָּאָה הוּאִיל וְנִעְשָׂה

since for benefit is forbidden and it he renovated what he removes upon it he decorated

שֶׁיַּעֲבֹד וּשְׂאָר הָאֶבֶן מֵתֵר:

the stone and the rest of to be worshiped it was made

This halacha details when a tree, house, or stone becomes forbidden for benefit due to being worshiped or having an idol placed within or under them.

ה'ה

דִּין אֶבֶן שֶׁהָעֶמִיד עָלֶיהָ עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים וְכַתֵּל הַסְּמוּךְ לָהּ

Halacha 5 • Laws of a Stone Used for Idolatry and a Wall Adjacent to an Idol's Temple

אֶבֶן שֶׁהָעֶמִיד עָלֶיהָ עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים הִרי זוֹ אָסוּרָה כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהִיא עָלֶיהָ.

upon it that it is the time all is forbidden this behold stars worship of upon it that he placed A stone

סִלְקָהּ הָאֶבֶן מִתֵּרֶת. מִי שֶׁחָזָה בֵּיתוֹ סְמוּךְ לְעֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים וְנָפַל

and it fell stars to worship of adjacent house was whose One is permitted the stone if it was removed

אָסוּר לְבָנוּתוֹ. פִּיּוּצַד יַעֲשֶׂה. כּוֹנֵס לְתוֹךְ שְׁלוֹ וּבּוֹנֶה וְאוֹתוֹ הָרוּחַ

space and that and builds his own into He withdraws shall he do How to rebuild it it is forbidden

מִמְלֵאָהּ קוֹצִים אוֹ צוֹאָה. כְּדִי שֶׁלֹא יִרְחִיב לְבֵית עֲבוֹדַת

worship of for the house of expand that he should not in order excrement or with thorns he fills it

כּוֹכָבִים. הָיָה הַכֵּתֵל שְׁלוֹ וְשֶׁל עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים יִדּוּן מֶחֶצֶה לְמֶחֶצֶה,

to half half it is judged stars worship of and of his the wall If it was stars

מֶחֶצֶה שְׁלוֹ מֵתֵר בְּהִנָּאָה וְשֶׁל עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים הַכֵּל אָסוּר בְּהִנָּאָה.

for benefit is forbidden the whole stars worship of and of for benefit is permitted half His

אֲבָנָיו עֲצָיו וְעֶפְרוֹ הַכֵּל אָסוּר בְּהִנָּאָה:

for benefit is forbidden the whole and its dust its wood Its stones

This halacha details the status of a stone base for an idol and the restrictions on rebuilding a wall adjacent to or shared with an idolatrous temple.

ה'ל'ו

פיצוד מאבד עבודת כוכבים ושאר דברים האסורים בגללה כגון  
such as on its account that are forbidden the things and the rest of stars worship of does one destroy How

משמייה ותקרבת שלה. שוחק וזורה לרוח או שורה ומטיל לים  
into the Sea of and casts burns or to the wind and scatters He grinds of it and the offering its accessories

המלח:

Salt

This halacha details the specific methods required to completely destroy and dispose of idols and their forbidden accessories.

הלי ז

### אסור הנאה מצפויי עבודה זרה

Halacha 7 · The Prohibition of Benefiting from the Coatings of an Idol

דבר שאין בו תפיסת יד אדם שנעבד כגון הרים ובהמה  
and an animal mountains such as that was worshiped of man of the hand grasp in it that there is not An object

ואילן אף על פי שהנעבד עצמו מתר בהנאה צפויי אסור  
is forbidden its coating for benefit is permitted itself that the worshiped though · even and a tree object

בהנאה והנהגה בכל שהוא מהן לוקה שנאמר דברים ז כה  
25 7 Devarim as it is said receives lashes from them that it is in any amount and one who benefits for benefit

"לא תחמד כסף וזהב עליהם". וכל צפויי עבודת כוכבים הרי הן  
they behold stars worship of coatings of and all upon them and gold silver covet Do not

בכלל משמייה:

its accessories are in the category of

This halacha teaches that although natural objects worshiped as idols remain permitted for benefit, any artificial coatings applied to them are strictly forbidden.

הלי ח

### עבודת כוכבים של עובד כוכבים שבטלה

Halacha 8 · A Star Deity of a Non-Jew That Was Nullified Before Entering Jewish Possession

עבודת כוכבים של עובדי כוכבים שבטלה קדם שתבוא לידי  
into the hand of that it comes before that they nullified it stars worshipers of of stars Worship of

ישראל הרי זו מתרת בהנאה שנאמר דברים ז כה "פסילי אלהיהם  
their gods "The carved images of 25 7 Devarim as it is said for benefit is permitted this behold a Jew

תשרפון באש", כשבאו לידינו והן נוהגין בהם אלהות, אבל אם  
if but as a deity with them behave and they into our hands when they came with fire" you shall burn

בטלום הרי אלו מתריין:

are permitted these behold they nullified them

This halacha teaches that a non-Jew's idol is permitted for benefit if it was nullified before coming into Jewish hands.

הלי ט

עבודת פוכבים של ישראל אינה בטלה לעולם אפלו היה לעובד  
 to a worshiper of there was even if forever nullified is not a Jew of stars Worship of  
 פוכבים בה שתפות אין בטולו מועיל כלום אלא אסורה בהנאה  
 for benefit it is forbidden rather at all effective his nullification there is not a partnership in it stars  
 לעולם וטעונה גניזה. וכן עבודת פוכבים של עובד פוכבים שפאת  
 that came stars a worshiper of of stars worship of and so too entombment and requires forever  
 ליד ישראל ואחר כך בטלה העובד פוכבים אין בטולו  
 his nullification there is not stars the worshiper of he nullified it that and after a Jew to the hand of  
 מועיל כלום אלא אסורה בהנאה לעולם. ואין ישראל מבטל עבודת  
 worship of nullifies a Jew and not forever for benefit it is forbidden rather at all effective  
 פוכבים ואפלו ברשות עובד פוכבים. עובד פוכבים קטן או שוטה  
 a fool or a minor stars a worshiper of stars a worshiper of in the domain of and even stars  
 אינו מבטל עבודת פוכבים. ועובד פוכבים שפטל עבודת פוכבים  
 stars worship of who nullified stars and a worshiper of stars worship of nullify does not  
 בין שלו בין של עובדי פוכבים אחרים בעל כרחו אף על פי  
 though · even his will against others stars worshipers of of whether his own whether  
 שאנסו ישראל על כך הרי זו בטלה. ובלבד שיהא העובד פוכבים  
 stars the worshiper of that he be and only is nullified this behold this upon a Jew coerced him  
 המבטל עובד עבודת פוכבים. אבל מי שאינו עובד עבודת פוכבים  
 stars worship of a worshiper of who is not one but stars worship of a worshiper of who nullifies  
 אין בטולו בטול. המבטל עבודת פוכבים בטל משמשיה. בטל  
 nullified its accessories nullified stars worship of one who nullifies a nullification his nullification there is not  
 משמשיה משמשיה מתרים והיא אסורה בהנאה כמו שהיתה עד  
 until it was just as for benefit is forbidden and it are permitted its accessories its accessories  
 שיבטלנה. ותקרבת עבודת פוכבים אינה בטלה לעולם:  
 forever nullified is not stars worship of and an offering of he nullifies it

*This halacha details who has the power to nullify an idol and its accessories, and when such nullification is ineffective.*

הליך

## פיצול מבטלין עבודה זרה

Halacha 10· How an Idol is Nullified and Actions That Do Not Constitute Nullification

פיצול מבטלה. קטע ראש חטמה ראש אונה ראש אצבעה פחסה  
 he flattened its finger the tip of its ear the tip of its nose the tip of He cut off does he nullify it How  
 בפניה אף על פי שלא חסרה או שמכרה לצורף ישראל הרי זו  
 this behold who is a Jew to a smith that he sold it or he diminished it that not though · even its face

בטלה. אבל אם משפנה או מכרה לעובד פוכבים או לישראל  
to a Jew or stars to a worshiper of he sold it or he gave it as security if But is nullified  
שאינו צורף או שנפלה עליה מפלת ולא פנה. גנבוה לסטים  
robbers thieves stole it he cleared it away and not debris upon it that there fell or a smith who is not  
ולא תבעוה. רקק בפניה. השתין בפניה. גררה. זרק בה את הצואה  
the excrement — at it he threw he dragged it in its face he urinated in its face he spat he demanded it and not  
הרי זו אינה בטלה:  
nullified is not this behold

This halacha details the physical actions that successfully nullify an idol's status and those that merely express temporary anger without nullifying it.

הלי יא

בטול עבודת פוכבים שהנחה או שנשברה

Halacha 11 · Nullification of an Abandoned or Broken Idol

עבודת פוכבים שהניחיה עובדיה בשעת שלום מתרת בהנאה שהרי  
for surely for benefit is permitted peace in a time of its worshipers that left it · An idol  
בטלוה. בשעת מלחמה אסורה מפני שלא הניחיה אלא מפני  
because of except they left it that not because it is forbidden war In a time of they nullified it  
המלחמה. עבודת פוכבים שנשברה מאליה שבירה אסורים בהנאה עד  
until for benefit are forbidden its pieces by itself that broke · An idol the war  
שיבטלוה. לפיכך המוצא שבירי עבודת פוכבים הרי אלו אסורין  
for benefit are forbidden these behold an idol pieces of one who finds Therefore that they nullify it  
בהנאה שמה לא בטלוה העובדי פוכבים. ואם היתה של פרחים  
and a layman joints of it was And if stars the worshipers of they nullified it not lest  
והדיוט יכול להחזירם צריך לבטל כל פרק ופרק מפרקיה ואם  
he is not And if of its joints and joint joint every nullify he must to reassemble them is able  
אינו יכול להחזיר כיון שבטל איבר אחד ממנה בטלו כל  
the pieces all are nullified from it one limb that he nullified once to reassemble able  
השבירים:

This halacha details the status of an idol abandoned during peace or war, and the laws of nullifying broken pieces of an idol.

הלי יב

בטול מזבח ובימוס ואכני מרקוליס ואשרה

Halacha 12 · Nullifying Altars, Platforms, Stones of Marculis, and Asherah Trees

מזבח עבודת פוכבים שנפגם עדין הוא אסור בהנאה עד שישנתץ  
there is smashed until for benefit is forbidden it still that was damaged stars worship of An altar of  
רבו ביד עובד פוכבים. ובימוס שנפגם מתר. אי זהו  
is which is permitted that was damaged but a platform stars a worshiper of by the hand of its majority

בִּימוֹס וְאִי זֶהוּ מִזְבֵּחַ. בִּימוֹס אֶבֶן אַחַת. מִזְבֵּחַ אֲבָנִים הִרְבֵּה. וְכִיצַד

And how is many stones an altar is one stone a platform an altar is and which a platform

מִבְטָלִין אֲבָנֵי מַרְקוּלִיס. כִּיּוֹן שִׁבְנָה מֵהֶם בְּנִין אוֹ חִפָּה בָּהֶן אֶת

— with them paved or a building from them that he built once Marculis the stones of does one nullify

הַדְּרָכִים וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָּאלוֹ הָרִי הֵן מִתְּרִים בְּהִנָּאָה. כִּיצַד מִבְטָלִים אֶת

— does one nullify How for benefit are permitted they behold of these and the like the roads

הָאֲשֵׁרָה. קָרַס מִמֶּנָּה עֵלָה אוֹ זָרַק מִמֶּנָּה יוֹנֵק נֹטֵל מִמֶּנָּה מִקָּל אוֹ

or a stick from it took a shoot from it pruned or a leaf from it If he trimmed the asherah

שֶׁרְבִיט אוֹ שִׁשְׁפָּאָה שְׁלֹא לְצִרְכָּה הָרִי זֶה בְּטִלָּה. שִׁפָּאָה לְצִרְכָּה הִיא

it for its benefit If he planed it is nullified this behold for its benefit not that he planed it or a staff

אֲסוּרָה וְשִׁפָּאָהּ מִתְּרִים. וְאִם הָיְתָה שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּין לְצִרְכָּה בֵּין שְׁלֹא

not whether for its benefit whether a Jew of it was And if are permitted but its shavings is forbidden

לְצִרְכָּה בֵּין הִיא וּבֵין שִׁפָּאָהּ אֲסוּרָה לְעוֹלָם שֶׁעֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים שֶׁל

of stars because worship of forever is forbidden its shavings or whether it whether for its benefit

יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין לָהּ בְּטוּל לְעוֹלָם:

forever nullification for it has no a Jew

*This halacha details how different objects of idol worship, such as altars, platforms, Marculis stones, and asherah trees, are nullified, noting that an idol belonging to a Jew can never be nullified.*

#### CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter establishes that natural, unaltered creations like mountains, springs, and animals remain permitted for benefit even if they were worshipped. However, if a person performs a physical action on an animal for an idol (such as shearing it or cutting a sign of shechitah), or exchanges it for an idol, it becomes forbidden—provided it is his own animal, as one cannot forbid another person's property. Similarly, while bowing to the earth does not forbid it, digging pits or channels in the ground for the sake of a false deity alters the land and renders those changes forbidden.

The deep chiddush of this sugya lies in the boundary between what is untouched and what has been manipulated by human hands. The Rambam teaches us that the natural world, the mountains, the springs, the trees, and the animals, cannot become forbidden as an idol, even if people worshiped them, because "there is no manipulation by human hands." But the moment a person performs even a small action on an object, or exchanges it, he stamps his own intention onto it and changes its status.

This contains a profound lesson for our daily avodah. Hashem created a beautiful, pure world, and He gave us a pure neshama that is naturally drawn to holiness. But Hashem also gave us the power of "tfeisas yad adam", the power of human action and choice. With a single action, a person can take something neutral and elevate it to a mitzvah, or, chas v'shalom, drag it down into the realm of the forbidden. Our actions are not light things; they stamp a spiritual reality onto the physical world around us.

Look at how much power Hashem put into your hands. Just as a negative action can ruin, a positive action has the power to sanctify. When you use your hands to give tzedakah, your mouth to speak words of Torah, or your home to host guests, you are taking the physical world and stamping it with the seal of the King. You are choosing not to let the world remain merely "natural," but to actively make it a dwelling place for the Shechinah.

Today, make a conscious effort to stamp one physical action with holy intention. Before you eat, make a berachah with real focus, or use your hands to do a physical favor for another Yid, consciously dedicating that action to the service of Hashem.