

הלכות עבודת פוכבים • פרק תשיעי

Learned like the daf, the literal words in bold, flowing with the elucidation

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, we learn the halachos of how a Yid must distance himself from the avodah zarah of the non-Jews around him, specifically regarding business dealings and social interactions during their holidays. Hashem wants us to be a holy nation, so the Chachamim put safeguards in place to ensure we do not assist them in their idol worship or cause them to offer thanks to their false deities.

We will also learn about the prohibitions against selling items that could be used directly for avodah zarah, as well as dangerous items like weapons that could bring harm to the public. The Rambam guides us in how to navigate these halachos in Eretz Yisrael versus Chutz la'Aretz, and how to handle situations where we must maintain peaceful relations with the local government.

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

הלכה א

Halacha 1 • Prohibition of Business Transactions with Idolaters Before Their Festivals

שלושה ימים לפני חגם של עובדי פוכבים

For three days before the festival of worshipers of stars,

אסור לקח מהם ולמכור להם דבר המתקיים,

it is forbidden to buy from them and to sell to them a thing that endures, because they might go and thank their idols for this successful transaction on their festival,

ללוות מהן ולהלוותם,

and it is likewise forbidden to borrow from them and to lend to them,

לפרע מהן ולפרע להם

and to collect payment from them and to pay to them

מלוה בשטר או על המשכון

a loan with a document or upon a collateral, as these are secure debts and collecting them brings them joy;

אבל מלוה על פה נפרעין מהן

but a loan by mouth we collect from them even during these three days,

מפני שהוא כמצייל מידם.

because that it is like saving money from their hand, since an oral loan is difficult to collect later.

וּמִתֵּר לְמִכֹּר לָהֶן דָּבָר שְׂאִינוּ מִתְקַיִּים

And it is permitted to sell to them a thing that is not enduring,

כְּגוֹן יִרְקוֹת וְתִבְשִׁיל עַד יוֹם חַגָּם.

such as vegetables and a cooked dish, and this may be done until the day of their festival itself.

בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אֲמוּרִים בְּאַרְץ יִשְׂרָאֵל

In what words are said? This restriction of three days applies in the Land of Yisrael;

אֲבָל בְּשָׂאֵר אֲרָצוֹת אֵינוֹ אָסוּר אֶלָּא יוֹם חַגָּם בְּלֻבָּד.

but in the rest of lands it is not forbidden except on the day of their festival alone.

עָבַר וְנָשָׂא וְנָתַן עִמָּהֶן בְּאוֹתָן הַשְּׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים

If he transgressed and conducted business and gave with them during those three days,

הֲרִי זֶה מִתֵּר בְּהִנָּאָה.

behold this is permitted for benefit after the fact.

וְהַנּוֹשֵׂא וְנוֹתֵן בְּיוֹם חַגָּם עִמָּהֶן

And one who conducts business and gives on the day of their festival with them,

הֲרִי זֶה אָסוּר בְּהִנָּאָה:

behold this is forbidden for benefit.

הִלְכָּה ב

Halacha 2 · Prohibition of Sending and Receiving Gifts from a Non-Jew on His Holiday

וְאָסוּר לְשַׁלַּח דּוֹרוֹן לְכוֹתֵי בְּיוֹם אִידוֹ

And it is forbidden to send a gift to a non-Jew on the day of his holiday, because he might use it to thank his idol,

אֶלָּא אִם כֵּן נֻדַּע לוֹ שְׂאִינוּ מוֹדָה בַּעֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים וְאִינוֹ עוֹבְדָהּ.

unless it is known to him that this non-Jew does not acknowledge the worship of stars and he does not worship it.

וְכֵן כּוֹתֵי שְׁשַׁלַּח דּוֹרוֹן לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיוֹם חַגּוֹ

And similarly, a non-Jew who sent a gift to a Jew on the day of his festival,

לֹא יִקְבָּלֵנוּ מִמֶּנּוּ.

the Jew should not accept it from him, so as not to make him happy on his holiday.

וְאִם חָשַׁשׁ לְאִיבָהּ

And if he feared for ill-feeling and enmity if he refuses it,

נוטלו בפניו

he may take it in his presence to keep the peace,

ואינו נהנה בו

and yet he may not benefit from it at all,

עד שיודע לו שזה הכותי אינו עובד פוכבים ואינו מודה בה:

until it becomes known to him that this non-Jew does not worship stars and does not acknowledge it.

הלכה ג

Halacha 3 · The Prohibition of Business Transactions During Multi-Day Festivals of Idolaters

היה אידן של אותן עכו"ם ימים הרבה

If the festival of those idolaters was spread over many days,

שלשה או ארבעה או עשרה

such as three or four or ten days,

כל אותן הימים כיום אחד הן

all of those days are like one single day,

ובכלן אסורין

and all of them are forbidden for business dealings,

עם ג' ימים לפנייהן:

along with three days before them all.

הלכה ד

Halacha 4 · Prohibition of Business Transactions with Idolaters Before Their Festivals

כנענים עובדי פוכבים ומזלות הם

The Canaanites are worshipers of stars and constellations

ויום ראשון הוא יום אידם.

and Sunday, the first day of the week, is the day of their festival.

לפיכך אסור לתת ולשאת עמם בארץ ישראל

Therefore, it is forbidden to give and to take in business with them in the Land of Yisrael

יום חמישי ויום שישי שבכל שבת ושבת

on the fifth day, Thursday, and the sixth day, Friday, that is in every week and week, as preparation days for their festival,

ואין צריך לומר יום ראשון עצמו שהוא אסור בכל מקום.

and there is no need to say that the first day itself, Sunday, is forbidden to do business with them in every place, even outside the Land.

וכן נוהגין עמם בכל אידיהם:

And so we conduct ourselves with them on all of their festivals, to restrict business beforehand.

הלכה ה

Halacha 5 · Prohibition of Business on Individual Festivals of Idolaters

יום שמתכנסין בו עובדי כוכבים להעמיד להן מלך

A day that gather on it worshipers of stars to establish for themselves a king,

ומקריבין ומקלסים לאלהיהם

and they sacrifice and praise to their gods,

יום חגם הוא ויהרי הוא כשאר חגיהם

the day of their festival it is, and behold it is like the rest of their festivals, and is subject to all the restrictions of a pagan holiday.

אבל עובד כוכבים שעושה הוא חג לעצמו

But a worshiper of stars who makes he a festival for himself,

ומודה לכוכב שלו ומקלסו

and thanks the star his and praises it,

ביום שנו ליד בו

on the day that was born on it,

ויום תגלחת זקנו או בלוריתו

and the day of shaving of his beard or his hair-lock,

ויום שעלה בו מן הים

and the day that he went up on it from the sea,

ושיצא מבית האסורים

and that he went out from the house of the prisoners,

ויום שעשה בו משתה לבנו וכיוצא באלו

and the day that he made on it a feast for his son, and the like of these private celebrations,

אינו אסור אלא אותו היום ואותו האיש בלבד.

it is not forbidden except that day and that man alone.

וכן יום שימות להן בו מת ויעשוהו חג

And likewise, a day that dies for them on it a dead person and they make it a festival to commemorate him,

אותם העושים אסורין אותו היום.

only those who make it a festival are forbidden to do business with on that day.

וכל מיתה ששורפין בה כלים ומקטרים קטרת

And any death that they burn at it vessels and burn incense,

בידוע שיש בה עבודת כוכבים.

it is known that there is in it worship of stars.

אין יום החג אסור אלא לעובדיה בלבד.

Is not the day of the festival forbidden except to its worshipers alone.

אבל אותם ששמחים בו ואוכלין ושותין ומשמרין אותו

But those who rejoice on it and eat and drink and keep it

מפני מנהג או מפני כבוד המלך

because of custom or because of the honor of the king,

אבל הם אין מודין בו

but they do not thank it as a deity,

הרי אלו מתרין לשאת ולתת עמהן:

behold these are permitted to give and to take with them.

הלכה ו

Halacha 6 · Prohibition of Selling Items Designated for Idol Worship

דברים שהן מיחדין למין ממיני עבודת כוכבים שבאותו מקום

Items that are designated for a type of the types of idol worship that is in that place,

אסור למכור לעובדי אותה עבודת כוכבים שבאותו המקום לעולם.

it is **forbidden to sell to worshipers of that idol worship that is in that place forever**, because we must not assist them in their avodah zarah.

וְדָבָרִים שֶׁאֵינָן מֵיְחָדִין לָהּ

And items that are not designated for it, meaning they can be used for mundane purposes as well,

מוֹכְרִין אוֹתָם סְתָם.

we sell them without specifying any purpose, and we do not need to assume they are buying them for idol worship.

וְאִם פָּרַשׁ הָעוֹבֵד כּוֹכָבִים שֶׁהוּא קוֹנֶה אוֹתָם לְעִבּוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים

And if the idol worshiper specified that he is buying them for idol worship,

אָסוּר לְמַכְרֵה לּוֹ

it is **forbidden to sell to him**

אֲלֵא אִם בֵּן פֶּסֶל מְלַהֲקָרִיב לְעִבּוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים.

unless the seller disqualified it from offering it to idol worship, such as by making a blemish in an animal.

לְפִי שֶׁאֵין מְקַרְבִּין חֶסֶר לְעִבּוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים:

This is because they do not offer a blemished animal to idol worship, so it will no longer be used for their pagan service.

הַלָּכָה ז'

Halacha 7 · Selling Mixtures Containing Items Designated for Idol Worship

הֵיוּ מְעֻרְבִין

If they were mixed together,

דָּבָרִים הַמֵּיְחָדִין עִם דָּבָרִים שֶׁאֵין מֵיְחָדִין

articles that are designated for idolatry with articles that are not designated for it,

כְּגוֹן לְבוֹנָה זָכָה בְּכֻלָּל לְבוֹנָה שְׁחוּרָה

such as high-quality pure frankincense which is used for idolatry, mixed within a batch of ordinary black frankincense,

מוֹכֵר הַכֹּל סְתָם

the merchant may sell the whole mixture to a non-Jew without specifying,

וְאֵין חוֹשְׁשִׁין שֶׁמָּא יִלְקֹט הַזָּכָה לְבִדּוּדָה לְעִבּוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים

and we do not suspect and say lest he will gather the pure frankincense alone for the purpose of worship of stars,

וְכֵן כָּל כֵּיוָצָא בְּזֶה:

and so is the law for all cases similar to this.

כַּשֵּׁם שֶׁאֵין מוֹכְרִין לְעוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים דְּבָרִים שֶׁמַּחֲזִיקִין בָּהֶן יְדִיעָה לְעִבּוּדַת כּוֹכָבִים

Just as we do not sell to an idolater items that strengthen their hands for idolatry, because we must not assist them in their sin,

כֹּךְ אֵין מוֹכְרִין לָהֶם דְּבַר שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ נֹזֶק לְרַבִּים

so we do not sell to them an item that has in it damage to the public, as they might use it to harm others,

כְּגוֹן דְּבָרִים וְאַרְיוֹת וְכָלֵי זֶיֶן וְכַבָּלִים וְשִׁלְשָׁאוֹת.

such as bears and lions, and weapons, and fetters and chains which can be used to bind captives.

וְאֵין מְשַׁחֲזִין לָהֶם אֶת הַזֶּיֶן.

And we do not sharpen weapons for them, as this also assists them in preparing instruments of harm.

וְכֹל שֶׁאָסוּר לְמָכְרוֹ לְעוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים

And anything that is forbidden to sell to an idolater

אָסוּר לְמָכְרוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל הַחֹשׂוֹד לְמָכַר לְעוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים.

is forbidden to sell to a Jew who is suspected of selling to an idolater, because we would be enabling the forbidden sale.

וְכֵן אָסוּר לְמָכַר כָּלֵי נֹזֶק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְסֻטִּים:

And likewise, it is forbidden to sell weapons of damage to a Jewish bandit, as he will surely use them to terrorize and harm people.

הִיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל שׁוֹכְנִים בֵּין הָעוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים

If Yisrael were dwelling among the worshippers of stars

וְכָרְתוּ לָהֶם בְּרִית

and they made with them a covenant of peace,

מִתֵּר לְמָכַר כָּלֵי זֶיֶן לְעַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְגִיסוֹתָיו

it is permitted to sell weapons of armour to the servants of the king and his legions,

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁעוֹשִׂים בָּהֶם מְלַחְמָה עִם צָרֵי הַמְּדִינָה לְחַצִּילָהּ

because that they make with them war with the enemies of the province to save it,

וְנִמְצְאוּ מִגְנִים עָלֵינוּ שֶׁהָרִי אָנוּ שְׂרוּיִין בְּתוֹכָם.

and they are found protecting us since we are dwelling in their midst.

עיר שיש בה עבודת כוכבים

A city that there is in it worship of stars,

מותר להלך חוצה לה

it is permitted to walk outside of it,

ואסור להכנס בתוכה.

and it is forbidden to enter into its midst.

היה חוצה לה עבודת כוכבים

If there was outside of it worship of stars,

מותר להלך בתוכה:

it is permitted to walk in its midst.

הלכה י

Halacha 10 - Prohibition of Passing Through a City Containing an Idol

ההלך ממקום למקום

One who goes from one place to another place

אסור לו לעבר בעיר שיש בה עבודת כוכבים.

it is forbidden for him to pass through a city that has in it an active worship of stars, so that he does not appear to be going there to worship.

במה דברים אמורים

In what circumstances are these words said?

בזמן שהדרך מיוחדת לאותו מקום

At a time that the road is designated only to that place of idolatry, which creates the suspicion that he is going to worship;

אבל אם יש שם דרך אחרת

but if there is there another road that leads elsewhere,

ונקרה זהלך בזו מותר:

and it happened by chance and he went on this road, it is permitted, because people will assume he is traveling to the other destination.

אָסור לְבִנוֹת עִם הָעוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים

It is forbidden to build with the worshippers of stars

כִּפֶּה שֶׁמַּעֲמִידִים בָּהּ עֲבֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים.

a dome that they set up in it an object of worship of stars.

וְאִם עָבַר וּבְנָה

And if he transgressed and built it anyway,

שְׂכָרוֹ מִתָּר.

his wage is permitted to be used.

אֲבָל בּוֹנֶה הוּא לְכַתֵּחַ לָהּ

But he may build ab initio

הַטֶּרֶקְלִין אוֹ הַחֲצֵר

the palace or the courtyard

שֶׁיֵּשׁ בָּהּ אוֹתָהּ הַכִּפֶּה:

that there is in it that dome, since he is not building the actual place of the idol itself.

עִיר שֶׁיֵּשׁ בָּהּ עֲבֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים

In a city that has in it an active festival of worship of stars,

וְהָיוּ בָּהּ חֲנִיּוֹת מְעֻטָּרוֹת וְשֵׁאִינָן מְעֻטָּרוֹת

and there were in it shops that were adorned with wreaths in honor of the idol, and others that are not adorned,

הַמְעֻטָּרוֹת אָסוּר לְהִנּוֹת בָּהֶן בְּכָל מָה שֶׁבְּתוֹכָן

as for the adorned ones, it is forbidden to benefit from them or with all what is inside them,

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁחֲזָקָתָן שֶׁבִּגְלַל עֲבֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים נִתְעַטְּרוּ

because their presumption is that because of the worship of stars they were adorned, and the sellers pay a tax to the temple of the idol;

וְשֵׁאִינָן מְעֻטָּרוֹת מִתְּרוֹת בְּהִנָּאָה.

and those that are not adorned are permitted for benefit, as they have no connection to the idolatrous festival.

חֲנִיּוֹת שֶׁל עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים אָסוּר לְשַׁכְּרָן

Regarding shops of the temple of worship of stars itself, it is forbidden to rent them from the pagan priests,

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁמֶהֱנֶה עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים:

because by paying rent, he benefits and enriches the treasury of the worship of stars.

הִלְכָּה יג

Halacha 13 · The Prohibition of Benefiting from the Sale of a House to Idolaters

הַמוֹכֵר בֵּית לְעֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים

One who sells a house for the purpose of idol worship

דָּמִיו אָסוּרִים בִּהֲנָאָה

its money is forbidden in benefit

וְיוֹלִיכֵם לַיָּם הַמֶּלַח.

and he must take them to the Salt Sea to destroy them.

אָבֵל עוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים שֶׁאָנְסוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל

But idolaters who coerced a Jew

וַגְזָלוּ בֵּיתוֹ

and robbed his house

וְהַעֲמִידוּ בוֹ עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים

and set up in it an idol worship

דָּמִיו מִתְּרִין,

if the Jew later receives payment for it, its money is permitted to him, since he did not willingly sell it for idolatry,

וְכוֹתֵב וּמַעֲלֶה בְּעֶרְכָּאוֹת שְׁלָהֶם:

and he may write and submit the sale documents in their courts to secure the payment.

הִלְכָּה יד

Halacha 14 · Purchasing Property and Livestock from Idolaters at a Pagan Fair

וְחִלְלִין שֶׁל עוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים

And flutes of idolaters, which are played during their pagan rites,

אָסור לְסַפֵּד בָּהֶן.

it is forbidden to eulogize with them at a Jewish funeral, as this honors their practice.

הוֹלְכִין לְיָרִיד שֶׁל עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים

One may go to a fair of idol worship

וְלוֹקְחִין מֵהֶן בְּהֶמָּה עֲבָדִים וְשִׁפְחוֹת בְּגִיּוֹתָן

and purchase from them livestock, Canaanite servants, and maidservants in their gentility—meaning before they have been immersed for conversion—

וּבָתִּים וְשָׂדוֹת וְכַרְמִים

and houses, and fields, and vineyards,

וְכוֹתֵב וּמַעֲלָה בְּעֶרְכָּאוֹת שְׁלָהֶן

and write the bill of sale and register the deed in courts of theirs, even though this gives them recognition,

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא כּוֹמָצִיל מֵיָדָם.

because doing so is like one who rescues property from their hand and brings it into Jewish ownership.

בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אֲמוּרִים

In what case are these words said?

בְּלוֹקַח מִבַּעַל הַבַּיִת שֶׁאֵינוֹ נוֹתֵן מַקָּס

With a purchaser from a private homeowner, who does not give tax to the temple of the idol from his sales.

אֲבָל הַלוֹקַח שֶׁם מִן הַתֹּגֵר אָסוּר

But one who purchases there from the merchant, it is forbidden to buy from him,

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא נוֹתֵן מַקָּס

because that he gives tax on his sales,

וְהַמַּקָּס לְעֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים

and the tax is for the benefit of idol worship,

וְנִמְצָא זֶה מְהֵנָּה עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים.

and it turns out that this purchaser benefits and supports idol worship.

עָבַר וְלָקַח מִן הַתֹּגֵר.

If he transgressed and purchased from the merchant:

אם בהמה לקח

If livestock he purchased,

מנשר פרסותיה מן הארכבה ולמטה.

he must cut off its hooves from the knee joint and below so that it is rendered useless, and he may not benefit from it.

ואם פסות וכלים לקח ירקבו.

And if clothing and utensils he purchased, they must rot and be destroyed.

לקח מעות וכלי מתכות יוליכם לים המלח.

If he purchased money and utensils of metals, he must bring them to the Sea of Salt to be cast away forever.

לקח עבד לא מעלים ולא מורידין:

If he purchased a servant, not do we raise him to a position of status, and not do we cast him down to destroy him.

הלכה טו

Halacha 15 · The Prohibition of Benefiting and Eating at an Idolater's Wedding Feast

עובד כוכבים שעשה לבנו או לבתו משתה

A worshiper of stars who made for his son or for his daughter a feast,

אסור להנות מסעדתו.

it is forbidden to benefit from his meal.

ואפילו לאכל ולשתות הישראל משלו שם אסור

And even to eat and to drink, if the Jew brings and consumes food from his own kosher food there at the non-Jew's home, it is forbidden,

הואיל ובמסבת עובדי כוכבים אכלו.

since he is sitting and in a gathering of worshipers of stars he ate it, which brings about closeness.

ומאימתי אסור לאכל אצלו

And from when is it forbidden to eat by him?

משיתחיל לעסק ולהכין צרכי סעדה

From when he begins to engage and to prepare the needs of the meal,

וכל ימי המשתה

and all the days of the feast,

ולאחר ימי המשתה שלשים יום.

and after the days of the feast for thirty days.

ואם עשה סעודה אחרת מחמת הנשואין

And if he made another meal because of the marriage,

אפלו לאחר שלשים יום אסור עד שנים עשר חדש.

even after thirty days it is forbidden until twelve months have passed from the wedding.

וכל ההרחקה הזאת מפני עבודה של פוכבים הוא

And all this distancing is because of the concern of being drawn after worship of stars,

שנאמר "וקרא לך ואכלת מזבחיו"

as it is said in the Torah, "and he will call to you and you will eat from his slaughtering,"

שנאמר "ולקחת מבנותיו לבניה וזנו וגו'":

and immediately after, "and you will take from his daughters for your sons and they will stray" etc.

הלכה טז

Halacha 16 · Midwifery and Nursing for an Idolater and Receiving These Services from Them

בת ישראל לא תניק את בנה של עובדת פוכבים

A daughter of Yisrael should not nurse the son of an idol worshiper

מפני שמגדלת בן לעבודת פוכבים.

because she thereby raises a son for idol worship.

ולא תילד את הנכרית עכו"ם

And she should not deliver the baby of a non-Jewish idolater for free,

אבל מילדת היא בשכר משום איבה.

but she may deliver her for a fee because of the need to prevent hostility.

והנכרית עכו"ם מילדת את בת ישראל

And a non-Jewish idolater may deliver the baby of a daughter of Yisrael,

ומיניקה את בנה

and she may nurse her son

ברשותה

specifically **in her**, the Jewish mother's, **domain**,

כְּדִי שֶׁלֹא תִהְרַגְנוּ:

so that she will not kill him if left alone with the child.

הַלְכָה יז

Halacha 17 · The Prohibition of Trading with Idolaters and Apostates Traveling to Idolatrous Worship

הָהוּ לְכִין לְתַרְפוֹת עֲכוּ"ם

Those who are going to a place of idol worship

אָסוּר לְשֵׂאת וּלְתֵת עִמָּהֶן

it is **forbidden to buy and to sell with them**, because they will thank their idol for a successful transaction,

וְהַבָּאִים מִתְּרִין

but those who are returning from there are **permitted** to do business with, as they have already finished their worship.

וְהוּא שֶׁלֹא יִהְיוּ קְשׁוּרִין זֶה בָּזֶה

And this is only when they are not bound and traveling together as a caravan, this one to that one,

שָׂאֵם הָיוּ קְשׁוּרִין שָׂמָא דַּעְתָּן לְחֹזֵר.

for if they were bound together, perhaps their mind is to return there again, and they are still considered as going.

יִשְׂרָאֵל הָהוּ לָהּ לְתַרְפוֹת עֲכוּ"ם,

Regarding a Jew who goes to a place of idol worship,

בְּהַלִּיכָה מִתֵּר לְשֵׂאת וּלְתֵת עִמּוֹ

on the journey there, it is permitted to buy and to sell with him,

שָׂמָא יִחְזֹר בּוֹ

because we say perhaps he will turn back from it and regret his sin before he gets there,

וּבְחֲזִירָה אָסוּר.

but on the return, once he has already sinned, it is **forbidden** to do business with him.

יִשְׂרָאֵל מוֹמֵר

However, a Jew who is an apostate and has completely cast off the yoke,

בֵּין בְּהַלִּיכָה בֵּין בְּחֲזִירָה אָסוּר:

whether on the journey there or whether on the return, it is **forbidden** to do business with him, as we do not assume he will regret his ways.

יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁהָלַךְ לִירֵיד שֶׁל עֲבוֹ"ם,

In the case of a Jew who went to a fair of idol worshipers,

בְּחֲזִירָה אָסוּר לְשָׂאת וּלְתֵת עִמּוֹ

upon his returning it is forbidden to trade and to deal with him,

שֶׁמָּא עֲבוֹ"ם מָכַר לָהֶן שָׁם,

lest an object of idol worship he sold to them there,

וְדָמֵי עֲבוֹ"ם בְּיַד יִשְׂרָאֵל אָסוּרִים בְּהִנָּאָה

and the money of an idol in the hand of a Jew is forbidden in benefit,

וּבְיַד עֲבוֹ"ם מֻתָּרִין בְּהִנָּאָה,

but in the hand of an idolater the money is permitted in benefit.

וּמִפְּנֵי זֶה נוֹשְׂאִין וְנוֹתְנִין עִם עֲבוֹ"ם הַבָּא מִן הַתְּרָפוֹת שֶׁל עֲבוֹ"ם

And because of this, we trade and we deal with an idolater who comes from the festival of idol worship,

וְאֵין נוֹשְׂאִין וְנוֹתְנִין עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּא מִן הַתְּרָפוֹת הַהֵוא

but we do not trade and deal with a Jew who comes from that festival,

וְלֹא עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל מוֹמֵר

and not with an apostate Jew,

לֹא בְּהִלְכָתוֹ וְלֹא בְּחֲזִירָתוֹ:

neither on his going and nor on his returning.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter begins by forbidding business transactions, loans, and gifts with idolaters within three days of their festivals in Eretz Yisrael, or on the day of the festival itself in Chutz la'Aretz, though certain non-durable goods and verbal loans are permitted to prevent financial loss. It distinguishes between communal festivals and private celebrations of an individual, and details the strict prohibition against selling items specifically used for avodah zarah or dangerous items like weapons and wild animals. Finally, the Rambam outlines the guidelines for traveling near cities containing avodah zarah and the halachos of building structures, such as domes or courtyards, that might be used for pagan worship.

My dear talmid, when you look at the detailed halachos of how we must distance ourselves from the festivals and practices of avodah zarah, a profound truth of the neshamah emerges. The Torah is teaching us about the incredible power of association and influence. We are forbidden to do business with them before their holidays because we do not want our actions, our livelihood, or our energy to even indirectly fuel or validate something that stands against the oneness of Hashem.

This is not just about ancient temples and statues; it is about the spiritual environment we build around ourselves every single day. The people we connect with, the places we walk, and the transactions we make all leave an imprint on our hearts. If we allow ourselves to get too close to influences that do not align with Torah and yiras Shamayim, those influences slowly seep into our thoughts and weaken our connection to Hashem.

Just as the halacha warns us not to sell weapons or dangerous things that can cause harm, we must protect our own spiritual safety. We have to be mindful of what we bring into our homes and what we allow to occupy our minds. Our avodah is to keep our hearts pure and dedicated solely to Hashem, ensuring that everything we touch and do brings us closer to Kedushah.

Today, take a moment to look at your daily routine and identify one environment, media source, or social circle that does not elevate your yiras Shamayim, and make a conscious decision to step back from it to keep your neshamah pure.