26.4.1

49b (משנה א') → 50b (לית נגר ולא בר נגר דיפרקינה)

> 1. וַיִּצָּמְדוּ לְבַעַל פְּעוֹר וַיֹּאכְלוּ זִבְחֵי מֵתִים: תהלים קו:כח

I   משנה א': identifying the location of a Mercury-stele
- a   ר' ישמעאל: three rocks placed next to Mercury are themselves a מרקוליס; if there are only 2 – not מרקוליס
- b   חכמים: if the rocks appear to be associated with the central statue – אסורות; if not – מותרות
  - i   Analysis: רבנן's position is clear – עכו"ם do not worship shards (→ separate piles of rocks, assumed to have broken off of מרקוליס, are ignored); but ר"י's position is unclear –
    - 1   *If*: he holds that they worship shards – why not identify 2 (or 1?) as מרקוליס?
    - 2   *And if*: he holds that they don't, even three shouldn't be reckoned
  - ii   *Proposal (ר' יוחנן)*: all agree that if we know that the rocks fell from the idol, they are אסור
    - 1   *Even*: the מ"ד that עכו"ם don't worship shards will agree that in the case of Mercury, they do (אורחיה)
    - 2   *Dispute*: plain rocks (that didn't fall from idol)
      - (a)   *Even then*: if they are close to the idol, they agree that they are אסורות – (offered to idol)
      - (b)   *Dispute*: if they are far away (in spite of wording "בצד מרקוליס" – means within ד"א)
        - (i)   ר"י: their custom is to make a small מרקוליס next to the big one; it is made of 3 rocks → אסור
        - (ii)   *חכמים*: they don't make a small מרקוליס there →if they're not obviously attached to idol – מותר
  - iii   *Revisiting ר' יוחנן*: rocks that fell from מרקוליס are אסור
    - 1   *Challenge*: ברייתא – rocks that fell from מרקוליס are only אסור if they appear to be connected to it
      - (a)   *Dissent*: ר' ישמעאל – only if there are three; two are not אסורות
      - (b)   *Defense (רבא)*: don't read "that fell (שנשרו)", rather "that were found (שנמצאו)"
        - (i)   *Challenge*: ר' ישמעאל doesn't permit 2; he rules that 2 which are בתפיסה are אסור; 3, even if distant
        - (ii)   *Answer*: if they abut the idol, even 2 are אסור; if a bit away – only 3 אסור
          - 1. *Meaning*; if there is some barrier between them
          - 2. *Question*: is this how they make מרקוליס? ברייתא rules that בית קוליס is 2 rocks and one on top
          - 3. *Answer*: that is in re: base idol
  - iv   *Realted story*: בי ינאי was destroyed, מרקוליס was set up there; non-מרקוליס worshippers took stones to pave road
    - 1   *Ruling*: some חכמים walked there; others didn't
      - (a)   ר' יוחנן: even ר' מנחם בר סימאי) בנן של קדושים, who wouldn't look at images on coins) would walk there
    - 2   *Rationale*: for prohibiting – per v.1; just as מת is never בטל, so תקרובת ע"ז (the rock) is never בטל
    - 3   *Rationale*: for permitting (ר' גידל בשם רב) – תקרובת must be similar to עבודת פנים (e.g. שחיטה)

II   Two indecipherable ברייתות, each brought by רבה בר ירמיה and reported by ר' יוסף
- a   *If*: a non-Jew brings מרקוליס-rocks and paves a road – מותר if a ישראל does so – אסורות
  - i   *Solution (ר' ששת)*: as per ר' גידל above – תקרובת is only אסור if done כעין פנים
- b   *Care for trees*: we may deworm and "heal" trees (by putting fertilizer on "wound") during שמיטה, but not on חוה"מ;
  - i   *But*: in neither case may we prune
  - ii   *However*: in both cases we may apply a balm to the pruned section
    - 1   *Question (רבינא)*: what was indecipherable?
    - 2   *If*: the distinction between חוה"מ and שמיטה –
      - (a)   *Resolution*: שמיטה is an איסור מלאכה – no מלאכה involved; חוה"מ is a problem of טירחא
    - 3   *If*: the distinction between healing and pruning (on שמיטה)
      - (a)   *No question*: healing maintains the tree; pruning helps the tree grow further
    - 4   *If*: "healing" vs. ברייתא which only permits it during תוספת שביעית (until ר"ה)
      - (a)   *Answer*: follows distinction between two kinds of healing; one which promotes growth is אסור
    - 5   *If*: applying balm vs. ברייתא which only allows applying oil to small fruit during תוספת שביעית
      - (a)   *Answer*: in that case, it's fattening the fruit; in our case, it's maintaining it
    - 6   *Answer (ר' סמא בריה דר' אשי לרבינא)*: he was bothered by the contradiction between "healing" and "applying the balm" on חוה"מ – since both are there just to maintain tree, why is one (applying balm) מותר and the other אסור?
      - (a)   *No answer*: that's why it was considered indecipherable