

## NACH NUGGETS

### Sefer Yehoshua Perek 10:21 through Perek 11:6

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Vol. 10

This week we covered Sefer Yehoshua Perek 10 starting from pasuk 21 and going up to and including Perek 11 Pasuk 6.

This week's learning is only mentioned once in Talmud Bavli. The only pasuk mentioned is the very last pasuk that we learned this week. Perek 11 starts off telling us that Yavin the king of Chatzor sent messages to many other kings in order to all gather together at the Waters of Merom to do battle with Bnei Yisroel. Once they are all gathered Hashem speaks to Yehoshua (Perek 11:6):

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל-תִּירָא מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי-מִחָר כָּעֵת הַזֹּאת אֲנֹכִי נֹתֵן אֶת-כָּלֶם חַלְלִים לְפָנָי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-סוּסֵיהֶם תַּעֲקֹר וְאֶת-מִרְכָּבֵיהֶם תִּשְׂרֹף בְּאֵשׁ:

But the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them; tomorrow at this time I will have them all lying slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots."

The Gemarah in Avodah Zarah daf 13a brings this pasuk in the following context. The Mishna on daf 12b stated:

עיר שיש בה עבודת כוכבים והיו בה חנויות מעוטרות ושאינן מעוטרות זה היה מעשה בבית שאן ואמרו חכמים  
המעוטרות אסורות ושאינן מעוטרות מותרות:

*With regard to a city in which idol worship is practiced and in which there are stores that are adorned for the sake of idol worship and there are others that are not adorned, this was in fact an incident that occurred in Beit She'an, and the Sages said: With regard to the adorned shops, it is prohibited to buy from them, but in the case of those that are not adorned it is permitted.*

The Gemarah daf 13a then brings that Reish Lakish made a statement and said that the Mishna is saying that it is forbidden to buy only from stores crowned with roses and myrtle, for one who enters the store benefits from the scent of ornaments of idolatry;

On this Rabbi Nosson asks: "On the day that the idolatry pardons taxes, they announce 'anyone who honors the idolatry by putting crowns on his head and his donkey's head, he is exempt. Others are liable.' What should a Yisrael do? If he places the wreath on his head and on the head of his donkey, he will be found to derive benefit from idol worship. And if he does not place the wreath on his head, he will be found to cause benefit to idol worship, through the tax that he pays. From here the Sages stated: One who conducts business in a market of idol worship will be forced either to benefit from or cause benefit to idol worship. Therefore, any animal he bought there should be destroyed, any produce, clothing or vessels should be left to decompose, and with regard to any money or metal vessels, which would not decompose on

their own, one should take them and cast them into the Dead Sea. And what constitutes destroying the animal? One cuts off the hooves of the animal from the knee and below.”

The Gemarah then proceeds to answer the question on Reish Lakish. Through a somewhat lengthy exchange that we will not discuss here. However a little further in the Gemarah we circle back to what was mentioned: Namely that any animal should be destroyed by cutting off the hooves from the knee and below. On this point the Gemarah asks: “But there is a prohibition against causing suffering to living creatures?” (NOTE: The issue of causing suffering to living creatures is a lengthy one and one worth investigating, however it is beyond the scope of the purpose of this essay. For our purposes we are only bringing what directly pertains to the Gemarah in Avodah Zarah)

The Gemarah answers:

אמר אביי אמר רחמנא (יהושע יא, ו) את סוסיהם תעקר

*Abaye said: Although there is an enjoinder against causing suffering to a living creature, it is permitted when necessary, as the Merciful One states to Joshua: “You shall destroy their horses” (Joshua 11:6).*

The Ramban (see also Rama, Even HaEzer 5:14) explains this Gemarah to mean that the prohibition against causing suffering to living creatures pertains only to *needless* cruelty, not that which is necessary for the benefit of man. Since the verse indicates that maimin animals in order to subjugate idolaters is on the permitted category, the Baraisa similarly ordains it for the purpose of diminishing the influence of idolaters by deterring Jews from doing business at their fairs, and in order to prevent a Jew from deriving prohibited benefit from animals purchased there.

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Haftoros mentioned in this week's learning: This week's learning is not mentioned in any haftoros
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