


# HALOCHOSCOPE



lead to undue hardship for Jews. The principle behind this is *sakanta*, danger. If the restriction is Rabbinical in nature, the Rabbis did not intend to cause antisemitism. In truly dangerous cases, even Scriptural violations are permitted. Situations where the gentile is in a position to cause harm to the Jew, or to others, call for this consideration.

*Aivah* permits accepting a gift from a gentile on his holiday, if the Jew interacts with this gentile the rest of the year. If a gentile insists on buying something from a Jew close to his holiday, the Talmud debates whether *aivah* plays a role. One view forbids it but permits benefit after the fact. Another even allows it before the fact when the gentile is well acquainted with the Jew, but not on the holiday. A third view allows it on the holiday. One who enters a gentile town and finds them celebrating may join in to flatter them. One may not go to greet a gentile on his holiday. If he meets a gentile, one may greet him softly, due to *darkei shalom*. [See Avoda Zara 2a, 6b, 26a, 64b-65a, Gitin Perek 4-5, esp. 62a, Yerushalmi A.Z. 1:1, Etc., Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. Y.D. 148:5 9 12, 154:2, commentaries. Teshuvos Chasam Sofer C.M. 94.]

The poskim debate whether *aivah* would permit participation in a gentile's family event, depending on the reason for the ban. *Aivah* and *darkei shalom* might be invoked in cases where there is a debate. One might rely on a lenient view. Where *aivah* is invoked to permit an activity, the Jew may still not violate the portions that apply to him personally. [See Avoda Zara 6b 7b 26a etc., Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. Y.D. 148:5 152:1 154:2 158:1, commentaries. Igros Moshe C.M. IV:77, etc.]

In conclusion, if the non-Jew secularizes the ceremony, the Jew may attend, but may not participate in anything 'religious'. She may bless the bride cautiously, as mentioned. She should try to send a gift ahead of the event.

**On the Parsha ...** *And you shall be fruitful and multiply ... [9:7] In its plain meaning, the first time [in Beraishis] it is a blessing for mankind. This time, it is a command. [Rashi Ramban] This mitzvah was not repeated at Sinai. Therefore, Benei Noah are not commanded. [Sanhedrin 59b] The mitzvah for a Jew to marry is this mitzvah to reproduce. Benai Noah also have a mitzvah to marry, stated in Beraishis, vedavak be'ishto, he shall cleave to his wife. That is the source for their mitzvah forbidding illicit relationships. Why was this separate mitzvah, to marry to be fruitful, given at first to Benai Noah, needed? [See Tosfos, Sanhedrin] Why was it then withdrawn from them, when the Jews were given the Torah? Why were all mankind not given this mitzvah until Noah's times, as opposed to the seven mitzvos given to Adam? Perhaps, since the Jews were given many other mitzvos forbidding illicit relationships specifically, it would be understood that the mitzvah to be fruitful would mean marriage. For Adam, by giving the single mitzvah to marry, all other relationships were forbidden. This would be the purpose of marriage. Being fruitful would be a blessing, rather than a specific mitzvah. After the flood, so many had been wiped out, in part due to, and punishment for, their neglecting the mitzvah of vedavak be'ishto [see 6:1-4 11]. Now there was a need to command reproduction, to repopulate the world. The first part still also applied. When the Torah was given, this second part of the mitzvah was retained only for Jews, who received separate mitzvos forbidding illicit relations.*

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Chanah Clara. May she be a source of *yidische nachas* for the entire *mishpacha*. Mazal tov. 🕎

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**This week's question:**

**Is there an issue with a Jew attending a wedding of a non-Jewish friend? Is there any difference between attending the ceremony and attending the meal?**

**The issues:**

- A) Attending a non-Jewish religious ceremony
- B) Attending a wedding celebration and festivities of a non-Jew
- C) *Aivah*, adjustments made due to potential antisemitism

**A) Attending a non-Jewish religious ceremony**

Attending a non-Jewish religious ceremony raises issues of the Jew's perceived approval of the gentile's behavior. This pertains to helping or condoning the gentile's worship [see next section.] If it is considered idolatry, a Jew may not be involved in a gentile's sin. However, the actual ceremony and the religion practiced are not necessarily considered idolatry for the gentile. There remains an issue of the Jew showing 'approval', if the gentile views it as conceding to the truth of his religion. This depends on the society. In a freedom-professing society, where one respects other opinions but does not agree with them, it would be viewed as politeness, but not endorsement. Nonetheless, the origins of some rituals are pagan according to all opinions. If any such rituals are practiced at a religious wedding ceremony, the practice is idolatry. Thus, even if the religion *per se* is not considered idol-worship for the gentile, the ceremony might be so.

Presence at these rituals and ceremonies raises personal issues for the Jew. His presence could constitute participation, and violate certain *mitzvos* related to idolatry. If the gathering is held inside a house of worship, it is forbidden to enter the building, if it houses an icon. Even if the wedding is not held in the sanctuary, but in a separate part of the building, it can be prohibited. If the building does not house an icon, entering with worshippers raises its own issues, especially for a religious ceremony.

In fact, one must distance himself from such buildings, avoiding being seen walking towards them or in their immediate vicinity. This involves both an appearance issue and a prohibition in its own right. If the ceremony is held in a religiously neutral location, so that entering there is no issue, other issues arise. For example, during the ceremony, the audience might participate in certain rituals, or bow their heads. They might respond to some prayers, or sing hymns. These all create problems for the Jewish participant. A religious symbol might appear at some point, or be on display. In the presence of such symbols, a Jew may show no sign of reverence. This includes removing one's hat.

Assuming that the non-Jew has a totally secular ceremony, the Jew would not be prohibited from being present for the ceremonial part. In fact, it is a good deed for a non-Jew to marry, as part of the *mitzvah* of *Bnai Noah* to refrain from immoral relationships. Most gentiles from a religious background consider their marriage a quasi-holy occasion,

no matter where it is held. One may not greet a gentile on his holiday. Since the gentile in this case made an effort to secularize the event, one could greet him, but may not use a Name of Hashem in his blessing. This includes using the word *Shalom*, which is one of the quasi Names of Hashem. Using the word meaning G-d could be construed by the gentile to mean his deity. This is forbidden, because one is indirectly invoking this other god. Using a Name of Hashem is forbidden, because His Name should not be invoked in an idolatrous setting. If, however, the gentile has no religious feelings about the occasion, greeting him with *Shalom* would seem to be permitted. [see section C]. [See Sanhedrin 63b Avoda Zara 17a 47b 51b, Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. YD 142:10 143:3 145:3 148:3 5 148:7-9 12 149:1-2 150:, commentaries.]

### **B) Attending a non-Jew's parties**

If a gentile invites a Jew to a festive affair, the Jew may not attend. This general prohibition is linked to a Scriptural passage, '*Beware, lest you draw up a covenant with the [gentile] inhabitants of the land ... and they will slaughter [livestock] to their gods, and he will invite you and you will eat of his slaughtering, and you will take of his daughters for your sons ...*' The context of the Talmudic passage recording this prohibition discusses religious celebrations. Gentiles are forbidden to worship idols. This is one of the seven laws for the children of *Noah*. A Jew may not aid and abet another in sinning. This is a Scriptural *mitzvah*, under the category of *Lifnei ivair lo sitain michshol*, do not place a stumbling block before the blind. The sinner is being led to 'stumble' by the one helping him. This also applies to helping gentiles sin. Causing a gentile to increase his idol-worship is thus forbidden. A number of activities that could lead to this are therefore forbidden. These include some other interactions that could cause additional joy to a gentile around the times that he would anyhow be involved in his religious rites and celebrations.

It is in this passage that the Talmud discusses attending a feast at the invitation of the gentile. At communal idolatrous celebrations, participation, including many interactive activities, is universally forbidden to Jews. At personal celebrations, such as the day that the gentile was released from imprisonment or the day of his son's wedding, participation and interaction is also forbidden. However, in the former, interaction with all gentiles must be curtailed on those days, and in Eretz Yisroel, on the days prior to them. In the latter, only interaction with the particular gentile is forbidden, and only on that day.

The Poskim debate a connection between the passages. The implication is that at the root of this prohibition is the problem of supporting the gentile in his celebration, which leads to his idolatry. He will thank his gods for success in garnering the friendship of the Jew. Yet the verse cited indicates that the problem is from the Jew's perspective. He must avoid close relationships that could lead to intermarriage. True, the reason the Torah gives for prevention of intermarriage is the eventual seduction to idolatry. However, this does not necessarily typify the actual prohibition. It clearly stands in its own right. In reality, it seems to be Rabbinical in origin. Nonetheless, the juxtaposition leads to debate on the root cause for the prohibition. Accordingly, some consider this a Scriptural or quasi-Scriptural prohibition. As such, the reason is based on a Scriptural need to distance oneself. If it is Rabbinical, though linked to the verse, it could be related to the other institutions to avoid being party to the gentile's idol-worship.

This has some bearing on our case. One possible difference is whether the prohibi-

tion applies in a case of *aivah*, antisemitism. If the reason is to create a distance, *aivah* would not come into consideration. In fact, the entire purpose is to create some *aivah*. If it is connected to joining in with an idol-worshiper's celebration, there might be a dispensation based on *aivah*. Another difference could arise if the gentile is not an idol-worshiper. If the concern is about causing him to thank his idols, this gentile will not do so. If it is to deter friendships leading to intermarriage, it would apply to all gentiles equally.

The prohibition applies primarily to a feast held in the home of the gentile. He 'invites' the Jew to his feast. However, if the gentile is ultimately the host inviting, many forbid it even on the premises of the Jew. It is permitted only when the Jew comes to pick up the food to take home with them. If the gentile sends some of the food to the Jew's home it is permissible [assuming it is kosher]. [See Avoda Zara 8a-b 31b-32a, Poskim. Rambam Isurei Biah 17:10. Tur Sh. Ar. Y.D. 114:1 3, 152:1-2, commentaries.]

### **C) Aivah**

The case under discussion involves a Jewish woman who developed a close friendship with this non-Jewish bride. After the Jew became religious, they kept up the friendship, and the bride changed her wedding arrangements to accommodate her best friend. She is willing to do anything it takes to have her friend present at her wedding. This raises the issue of *aivah*, arousing antisemitism. If the Jew does not attend after all, the non-Jew, or more likely, others who know about this, might turn against Jews. The concern is that non-Jews will react directly to the incident, and that they might harbor a negative feeling that could indirectly affect a later situation. Making this determination is dependent on specific precedents in *halacha*, as well as the specific factors in the case. Thus, *aivah* may not be invoked wholesale, even to apply to a 'minor' *halachic* ruling.

Literally translated, *aivah* means enmity. In *halachic* terms it refers to strife between two parties. *Tikun olam*, institutions for the good of society or to prevent laxities in *halacha*, and *darkei shalom*, institutions to promote harmony and common decency, are related to and sometimes overlap with *mishum aivah* institutions. The basis for these institutions is the *mitzvah* to avoid disputes, and the verses, '*The ways of Torah as peaceful and pleasant [Hashem] is good to all beings and His mercy extends to all of His works.*'

These reasons are used to prevent fights over a lost item found by a child, due to jealousy. They are invoked to avoid a dispute based on honor, when distributing the order of *aliyos* in *shul*. They protect financial interests of neighbors. They are also invoked frequently to avoid angering gentiles, who might not understand or agree with Jewish laws and practices. The conditions for employing *aivah* as a dispensation include that it be done infrequently. It may not involve direct violation of something intended to create a distance. The predicted *aivah* must be quite obvious. To defuse a possible *aivah* one must find a diplomatic solution, but not override a prohibition. If there is any plausible excuse acceptable to the gentile party, one may not rely on *aivah*. This includes using a religious practice that the gentile is familiar with, that would not arouse *aivah*. One would say "I'm sorry, you know I can't do that due to religious reasons." This applies even if the true reason is different, but one that could arouse *aivah*. (It is better to hide behind a falsehood. Unfortunately, it is sometimes easy for the gentile to discover the truth. In this case, lying would definitely make matters worse. Good judgment should be exercised.)

Some of the restrictions on interaction with gentiles are relaxed when they could