

### Can't Say "I Can't Say"

In Acco there was a bathhouse located in the courtyard of the temple of the idol Aphrodite. When Rabbi Gamliel was once bathing there he was challenged by a Roman official as to how he was able to do so when the Torah forbids deriving any benefit from idols.

Rabbi Gamliel, says the Mishnah, had three different answers to this challenge but offered no response at all while he was in the bathhouse. Only after he and the official left the bathhouse did the sage turn to him and explain that he could not respond while in the bathhouse because the stench in such a place renders it unfit for speaking sacred words of Torah. Then he proceeded to explain why his bathing there was not considered benefiting from the idol. This incident indicates that even to say "One is forbidden to respond to a Torah subject in a bathhouse," is itself considered a statement of Torah, and therefore too sacred for a place with an offensive odor.

Avodah Zarah 44b

### Who Will Save the Queen?



The story is told of an Egyptian king who presented the chief rabbi in his country with an extremely difficult challenge. While strolling in the royal gardens with his wife on a very hot day the queen could not resist bathing in a cool spring despite the fact that the king thrice forbade her to do so. The royal ministers cited an Egyptian law that such disobedience is punishable by death and insisted on the queen's execution. Anxious to save his beloved queen, the king turned to the Jewish rabbi, the Moslem mufti and the Christian archbishop, promising a reward to the one who found a solution and threatening punishment if no solution were found.

The rabbi anxiously turned for help to the famed Rav of Brisk, Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin, who then lived in Jerusalem. He immediately sent the rabbi in Egypt a letter citing the Talmudic law that if someone bows in idolatrous worship to specific waters of a flowing spring, the waters which follow them are unaffected and benefit may be derived from them. The reason is that the waters to which he bowed have already passed and these are other waters. In similar fashion the waters which the

king had forbade the queen to bathe in had already passed and she had not defied his command when she bathed in the waters which followed.

The solution was accepted by the ministers and the king sent the Brisker Rav a gold medallion in appreciation of the brilliant service.

Avodah Zarah 47a

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

©1995 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

The Weekly Daf is available from several sources:

- World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.jer1.co.il/orgs/ohr>
- Fax and Mail in Israel and US-MAIL in America . Send us a note requesting a subscription in Israel, or call 800-431-2272 in the US for details.
- E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message 'sub dafyomi {your full name}' to [listproc@jer1.co.il](mailto:listproc@jer1.co.il)

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

972-2-810-315

fax: 972-2-812-890

[ohr@jer1.co.il](mailto:ohr@jer1.co.il)

38 East 29th Street 8<sup>th</sup> floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

1-212-213-3100

fax: 1-212-213-8717

[RZCorlin@aol.com](mailto:RZCorlin@aol.com) or [estern@Gramercy.ios.com](mailto:estern@Gramercy.ios.com)

613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada

1-905-886-5730

fax: 1-905-886-6065

[avram.rothman@canrem.com](mailto:avram.rothman@canrem.com)

Dedication opportunities are available for The Weekly Daf — Please contact us for details.

This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Do not let this land on a garbage heap.

Production Design: Lev Seltzer