

What's so bad about Idol Worship?

Source sheet for shiur by Menachem Leibtag / YCT Tanach Ymei Iyun 5781

I. Definitions:

'עבודה זרה' או עבודה 'זרה'

[Idol Worship vs. Idle worship]

i.e. serving the wrong god

or serving the right God in the wrong manner

Examples:

In Ten Commandments – Shmot 20:2-3

ב אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים: **לֹא-יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים**, עַל-פְּנֵי.

2 I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

ג לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל, וְכָל-תְּמוּנָה, אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל, וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת--וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם, מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ.

3 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

In contrast – 20:19

יט לֹא תַעֲשׂוּן, אֱלֹהֵי כֶסֶף וְאֱלֹהֵי זָהָב, לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם.

כ מִזִּבַּח אֲדָמָה, תַעֲשֶׂה-לִּי,

19 Ye shall not make with Me--gods of silver, or gods of gold, ye shall not make unto you.

See also Devarim 4:13 thru 18

Discuss 'machloket' re: why Aharon makes the Golden Calf

II. The Jewish holidays – in their Biblical context

[discuss agricultural vs. historical]

Concept of Canaanite Idol Worship – ‘baal’ ; ‘asherah’

Discuss the unit in Shmot chapters 21 thru 23
& reason for the “shalosh regalim”

III. Yirmiyahu chapter 7

- א** הַדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ, מֵאֵת יְהוָה לֵאמֹר.
- 1** The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying:
- ב** עֲמֹד, בְּשַׁעַר בַּיִת יְהוָה, וְקִרְאתָ שָׁם, אֶת-הַדְּבַר הַזֶּה; וְאָמַרְתָּ שְׁמֵעוּ דְבַר-יְהוָה, כָּל-יְהוּדָה הַבָּאִים בְּשַׁעְרֵים הָאֵלֶּה, לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת, לַיהוָה. {ס}
- 2** Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say: Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. {S}
- ג** כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, הִיטִיבוּ דַרְכֵיכֶם, וּמַעַלְלֵיכֶם; וְאֲשַׁכְנָה אֶתְכֶם, בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה.
- 3** Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.
- ד** אַל-תִּבְטְחוּ לְכֶם, אֶל-דְּבַרֵי הַשָּׁקֶר לֵאמֹר: הַיְכָל יְהוָה הַיְכָל יְהוָה, הַיְכָל יְהוָה הֵמָּה.
- 4** Trust ye not in lying words, saying: 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, are these.'
- ה** כִּי אִם-הִיטִיב תִּיטִיבוּ, אֶת-דַּרְכֵיכֶם וְאֶת-מַעַלְלֵיכֶם: אִם-עָשׂוּ תַעֲשׂוּ מִשְׁפָּט, בֵּין אִישׁ וּבֵין רֵעֵהוּ.
- 5** Nay, but if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbour;
- ו** גֵּר יִתּוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה, לֹא תַעֲשֻׁקוּ, וְדָם נָקִי, אַל-תִּשְׁפְּכוּ בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה; וְאַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לֹא תֵלְכוּ, לְרַע לְכֶם.
- 6** if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt;
- ז** וְשִׁכַנְתִּי אִתְּכֶם, בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה--בְּאֶרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם: לְמִן-עוֹלָם, וְעַד-עוֹלָם.
- 7** then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

ח הִנֵּה אַתֶּם בֹּטְחִים לָכֶם, עַל-דְּבָרֵי
הַשָּׁקֶר--לְבַלְתִּי, הוֹעִיל.

8 Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

ט הִגְנַב רֹצַח וְנָאֵף, וְהִשָּׁבַע לְשָׁקֶר
וְקִטֵּר לְבַעַל; וְהִלָּךְ, אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים
אֲחֵרִים--אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַעְתֶּם.

9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and offer unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye have not known,

י וּבֹאתֶם וְעַמַּדְתֶּם לִפְנֵי, בַּיִת הַזֶּה
אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא-שְׁמִי עָלָיו, וְאָמַרְתֶּם, נִצְלָנוּ--
לְמַעַן עֲשׂוֹת, אֵת כָּל-הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה.

10 and come and stand before Me in this house, whereupon My name is called, and say: 'We are delivered', that ye may do all these abominations?

יא הַמְעַרְת פֶּרְצִים, הֲיָה הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה
אֲשֶׁר-נִקְרָא-שְׁמִי עָלָיו--בְּעֵינֵיכֶם; גַּם
אֲנֹכִי הִנֵּה רָאִיתִי, נְאֻם-יְהוָה.

11 Is this house, whereupon My name is called, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, saith the LORD.

יב כִּי לָכוּ-נָא, אֶל-מְקוֹמִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁילוֹ,
אֲשֶׁר שָׁכַנְתִּי שְׁמִי שָׁם, בְּרֵאשׁוֹנָה; וּרְאוּ,
אֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂיתִי לוֹ, מִפְּנֵי, רָעַת עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

12 For go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I caused My name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel.

יג וְעַתָּה, יַעַן עֲשׂוֹתְכֶם אֶת-כָּל--
הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה--נְאֻם-יְהוָה; וְאִדְבַּר
אֵלֵיכֶם הַשָּׁכֵם וְדַבֵּר, וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם,
וְאָקְרָא אֶתְכֶם, וְלֹא עֲנִיתֶם.

13 And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spoke unto you, speaking betimes and often, but ye heard not, and I called you, but ye answered not;

יד וְעָשִׂיתִי לְבַיִת אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא-שְׁמִי עָלָיו,
אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם בֹּטְחִים בּוֹ, וְלַמָּקוֹם, אֲשֶׁר-
נָתַתִּי לָכֶם וְלְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם--כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי,
לְשִׁלוֹ.

14 therefore will I do unto the house, whereupon My name is called, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.

טו וְהִשְׁלַכְתִּי אֶתְכֶם, מֵעַל פְּנֵי, כַּאֲשֶׁר
הִשְׁלַכְתִּי אֶת-כָּל-אֲחֵיכֶם אֵת כָּל-זֶרַע אֶפְרַיִם.

15 And I will cast you out of My sight as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.

טז וְאַתָּה אַל-תִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַד-הָעָם הַזֶּה,
וְאַל-תִּשָּׂא בְּעַדָם רִנָּה וּתְפִלָּה--וְאַל-
תִּפְגַּע-בִּי: כִּי-אֵינְנִי שֹׁמֵעַ, אֶתְךָ.

16 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me; for I will not hear thee.

יז הֲאֵינְךָ רֹאֶה, מָה הֵמָּה עֹשִׂים בְּעָרֵי
יְהוּדָה, וּבַחֲצוֹת, יְרוּשָׁלַם.

17 Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

יח הַבָּנִים מְלַקְטִים עֵצִים, וְהָאֲבוֹת
מְבַעְרִים אֶת-הָאֵשׁ, וְהַנְּשִׂים, לָשׁוֹת
בָּצֶק: לַעֲשׂוֹת כֹּוֹנִים לְמַלְכֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם,
וְהִסִּדּוּ נִסְכִּים לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים--לְמַעַן,
הַכְעִיסֵנִי.

18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke Me.

יט האתי הם מְכַעְסִים, נֹאֵם-יְהוָה; הֲלוֹא אַתֶּם, לְמַעַן בְּשֹׁת פְּנֵיהֶם.

19 Do they provoke Me? saith the LORD; do they not provoke themselves, to the confusion of their own faces?

כ לָכֵן כֹּה-אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, הִנֵּה אֲפִי וְחַמְתִּי נִתְּכַת אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה, עַל-הָאָדָם וְעַל-הַבְּהֵמָה, וְעַל-עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה וְעַל-פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה; וּבְעָרָה, וְלֹא תִכְבֶּה. {פ}

20 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: Behold, Mine anger and My fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the land; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched. {P}

כא כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: עַל־וֹתֵיכֶם סָפוּ עַל-זְבַחֵיכֶם, וְאָכְלוּ בָשָׂר.

21 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh.

כב כִּי לֹא-דִבַּרְתִּי אֶת-אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם, וְלֹא צִוִּיתִים, בַּיּוֹם הוּצִיא (הוֹצִיאִי) אוֹתְם, מִמִּצְרָיִם מִצְרַיִם--עַל-דְּבַרִּי עוֹלָה, וְזָבַח.

22 For I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices;

כג כִּי אִם-אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה צִוִּיתִי אוֹתְם לֵאמֹר, שְׁמְעוּ בְקוֹלִי--וְהִיִּיתִי לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים, וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ-לִי לְעָם; וְהִלַּכְתֶּם, בְּכָל-הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶה אֶתְכֶם, לְמַעַן, יֵיטֵב לָכֶם.

23 but this thing I commanded them, saying: 'Hearken unto My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people; and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.'

כד וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ, וְלֹא-הִטּוּ אֶת-אָזְנָם, וַיִּלְכוּ בְּמַעְצוֹת, בְּשִׁרְרוֹת לִבָּם הָרָע; וַיִּהְיוּ לְאַחֹר, וְלֹא לְפָנִים.

24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in their own counsels, even in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward,

כה לְמִן-הַיּוֹם, אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם מִצְרַיִם, עַד, הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה--וְאֲשַׁלַּח אֲלֵיכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֲבָדֵי הַנְּבִיאִים, יוֹם הַשָּׁכֵם וְשָׁלַח.

25 even since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day; and though I have sent unto you all My servants the prophets, sending them daily betimes and often,

כו וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי, וְלֹא הִטּוּ אֶת-אָזְנָם; וַיִּקְשׁוּ, אֶת-עַרְפָּם--הֲרָעוּ, מֵאֲבוֹתָם.

26 yet they hearkened not unto Me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff; they did worse than their fathers.

כז וְדִבַּרְתָּ אֵלֵיהֶם אֶת-כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֵלַיךָ; וְקָרָאתָ אֵלֵיהֶם, וְלֹא יַעֲנוּכָהּ.

27 And thou shalt speak all these words unto them, but they will not hearken to thee; thou shalt also call unto them, but they will not answer thee.

כח וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלֵיהֶם, זֶה הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁמְעוּ בְקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו, וְלֹא לָקְחוּ, מוֹסָר; אַבְדָּהּ, הָאֱמוּנָה, וְנִכְרְתָהּ, מִפְּיָהֶם. {ס}

28 Therefore thou shalt say unto them: This is the nation that hath not hearkened to the voice of the LORD their God, nor received correction; faithfulness is perished, and is cut off

