

Proof That Indian Hair Itself is a Sacrifice

There has been recent discussion among Rabbonim whether Indian hair is permitted for the Jewish people to use in wigs. Some Rabbonim argue that when a Hindu person shaves their head at their temple, the act of shaving the hair is the sacrifice, not the hair itself. That then makes the hair permitted to be used in our sheitels, since the hair is a by-product of the avodah zorah, not the actual avodah zorah.

Many Rabbonim rule against this view, saying the hair itself is avodah zorah. They say the hair is a gift to the Hindu idol. Therefore, they rule that the appearance of one Indian hair in the sheitel makes the whole sheitel forbidden to wear or sell. The Gemara says that avodah zorah is never batel, so that is why the whole sheitel becomes forbidden (sources #18, 19).

This author would like to present proof from websites, written and explained by the Hindu people themselves, that 2 intentions are possible when a Hindu shaves their hair at their temple.

The first intention is for the hair to be a gift to their god. A popular one is "lord Balaji." There is a legend that goes along with this gift of hair, proving the hair is intended to be a physical gift to their god. (This reason is in-line with the rabbinical view mentioned in paragraph 2).

The second reason the Hindus give for shaving their hair is that the act of shaving their head sacrifices their ego by decreasing the person's beauty. (This reason is in-line with the rabbinical view mentioned in paragraph 1.)

Both reasons are given in these Hindu websites written by Hindu people. Sometimes the first reason is given, sometimes the second reason, and sometimes both. If the hair donation takes place because it is a thanksgiving offering or a gift in hopes of their god fulfilling a wish, that would make the resulting hair actual avodah zorah (source #18).

Regardless of the devotee's intention, as the hair is shaved from each person in line, it is grouped by length and added to the large bag with hair that contains that same length of hair. This results in the bag having hair from many people mixed together. The bags are purchased through e-auction by wig and hair extension companies.

Please review the proofs below, which are direct quotes from the Hindu people about the intentions of the Hindu devotees. Also included are some news articles dealing with this topic. Most quotes pertain to showing that the Rabbinical view mentioned in paragraph 2 is a reality.

Source #1 from Wikipedia Article titled “Venkateswara Temple, Tirumala”

This is an online dictionary written by people knowledgeable in the topic at hand:

Hair Tonsuring-

Many devotees have their head tonsured as "Mokku", an offering to god... When lord Balaji was hit on his head by a shepherd, a small portion of his scalp became bald. This was noticed by Neela Devi, a Gandharva princess. She felt "such an attractive face should not have a flaw". Immediately, she cut a portion of her hair and, with her magical power, implanted it on his scalp. Lord Balaji noticed her sacrifice.

As hair is a beautiful asset of the female form, he promised her that all his devotees who come to his abode would offer their hair to him, and she would be the recipient of all the hair received. Hence, it is believed that hair offered by the devotees is accepted by Neela Devi. The hill, Neeladri, one of the seven hills, is named after her.

Found at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venkateswara_Temple,_Tirumala>.

Source #2: New York Times Article titled “A Religious Tangle Over the Hair of Pious Hindus”

Written by Saritha Rai

“When she came to the temple three years ago, Ms. Subhasri, 35, offered her a waist-length hair to the temple deity, Venkateshwara, in a sign of absolute devotion. She then prayed that her husband, Satyanarayana Raju, be cured of his acute stomach ulcers.

Last week she was back, offering her hair again in thanks for the recovery of her husband, and saying a new prayer for the success of her older son, Veeraraju, 15. "He has scored 490 marks out of 600 in his recent school exams and, god willing, he will be a doctor one day," Ms. Subhasri said, wiping her tears with one end of her sari...”

From <<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/14/world/a-religious-tangle-over-the-hair-of-pious-hindus.html>>. *Please note, an immodest picture appears on the web page. That is why a link is not present.*

Source #3 from Stack Exchange, a Question and Answer Forum answered by Hindu People:

Question: Many Hindus who visit Tirumala Venkateswara temple in Tirupati get their head tonsured [shaved] and offer their hair to lord Venkateswara. Why is this tradition followed? Why is it only followed in Venkateswara temple and not other temples? [Note to readers, from author of this report: Head tonsuring occurs at many other temples throughout India. However, Tirumala is the largest of them. The person asking the question doesn't know that].

Answer: A small but popular story is there for this.

When lord Sri Venkateshawara (MahaVishnu/Balaji) was inside the snake-antHill on Tirumala , one sacred cow is to come and give milk to the lord daily (Brahma took the form as sacred cow), When a cow-herd man at once saw the sacred-cow pouring milk in the snake-ant Hill, he became angry and without understanding the truth, the Cow-herd man took the axe and has hit the cow on the cow's head with the axe.

The Supreme lord Sri Venkatesha(Vishnu) who was present inside the snake-ant Hill received the hurt of the axe on his head from the cow-herd man instead of Cow getting hurt. When lord received the hurt of the Axe on his head, the portion of his hair on his head disappeared due to hurt by the axe.

When mother Neela Devi saw lord being hurt on his head, she immediately removed the hair from her head and placed on the lord's head in the portion where the lord was hurt. Immediately lord became well and Lord's hair reappeared as beautiful as before he was hurt.

Lord Venkatesha(Vishnu), knowing that hair is one of the beautiful features of women, promised that his devotees will shave hair of their head (tonsure) and dedicate their hair to her. Neela Devi accepts the hair sacrificed by devotees of lord Venkatesha(Vishnu) and lord blesses his devotees who sacrifice their hair for the sake of the lord. This is the reason why devotees tonsure or shave their head in Tirumala.

There are also Spiritual reasons: Tonsure or Shaving hair as offering for lord represents a real sacrifice of material beauty and giving up false-ego in the way of shaving their hair as the sacrifice to please supreme lord.

Found at <<https://hinduism.stackexchange.com/questions/3137/why-does-one-get-their-head-tonsured-and-offer-the-hair-to-lord-venkateswara-in>>

Source #4 From “Go Tirupati” Website:

This website has information posted about visiting the temple, such as tonsuring hours, directions, accommodations, etc. Here is a screenshot taken from their webpage. They themselves bolded the sentence shown below on their website:

Story behind Tirumala Hair Offering At KalyanaKatta

First devotee who gave her hair to god is Neela Devi. Lord Srinivasa named this hill by her name as Neeladri. When Lord Srinivasa was hit by a Shepard on his head, a small portion of his scalp becomes bald. There is no hair growth over that place and this was noticed by Gandharva princess, Neeladevi. She felt such a handsome face should not have any defect. Immediately she cuts a portion of her hair and implants it on his scalp with her powers. As hair is considered as the beautiful aspect of women, Lord Srinivasa notices her sacrifice and **he said all the hair given to him by devotees in Tirumala or Tirupati belongs to Neeladevi**. Giving our hair to god is the symbol of leaving our ego. The word “Talanelalu” is also came from her name.

Found at <<https://www.gotirupati.com/tirumala-hair-offering-timings/>>.

Source #5 from a Question and Answer Forum for Hindu People on Quora:

Question: Why is it believed to do Mundan (donating Hair) to lord Tirupati Balaji? What is the story/significance behind it?

Some of the Answers Given:

By Lalitha Bhattiprolu on April 3, 2016:

Mundan [hair donation] is the favorite sacrifice for lord Venkateswara.

The story behind it goes like this: Once NEELA a devotee of the lord offered her hair for him when he lost it accidentally which deprived her of her beauty.

Lord balaji promised her that he will repay it by taking the hair from his devotees as an offering. Thus, mundan became a favorable offering for him.

The legend says, when we offer our hair we bow in front of him. It is a common practice that along with hair, mustache also should be given to him. Then only our offering to him will be completed.

We must go for his darshan [visiting the temple to see the idol] after mundan to show him that we kept our promise of offering our hair.

By Choudhary Abhishek on Nov 14, 2014:

Every devotee (Bhakta) sees god in his/her own way and interprets god's actions(leela) his/her own understanding.

There are various reasons for doing Mundan

- 1 "Mannat" A wish - When the wish is fulfilled one does Mundan / For the fulfilment of the wish.
- 2 New born babies are taken to temples for mundan I've heard its auspicious and may be because the hair grew when the baby was in mother's womb for some reason.
- 3 After someone's death.

By Akhila Kittu, on Nov 5th, 2016:

When lord Balaji went to meet Padmavati Devi there security guards threw stones at him as she was a princess. He found an injury at forehead and lost his hair to some extent. Then Goddess Neeladevi cut and gave her hair to Balaji. Then she was granted a boon that she will get hair by devotees of Balaji in reciprocal.

By Mithilesh Kunal, on July 16, 2015.

She refers to herself as a "Hindu at heart and soul":

"It is said that all the bad works and the sin resulted from them will reside at the edges of your hair.

So in Tirumala, the god is kind hearted to accept all your sins. It is achieved by giving your hair to god. I came to know about this from a priest."

Found at <<https://www.quora.com/Why-is-it-believed-to-do-Mundan-donating-Hair-to-Lord-Tirupati-Balaji-What-is-the-story-significance-behind-it>>.

Source #6: Article titled "Belief Behind Donating hair at Tirupati Balaji"

By Jeevan Mantra, on Sep 12, 2010.

Chittur, a district in Andhra Pradesh is known for the richest and the most prosperous god, Shri Tirupati Balaji, and his temple. For devotees, especially Hindus, it is one of the most sacrosanct pilgrimages. It is believed that the temple is the heavenly abode of lord Vishnu and goddess Laxmi.

A 7 feet bluish-black idol of Shri Tirupati Balaji was founded inside the temple. In India, every religious place is known for observing certain beliefs, traditions and customs. Similarly, tonsuring the head and offering hair at Tirupati Balaji's temple is done with a special purpose. While offering hair, a devotee casts off all the vices, vanities and sins from his whole being. By doing so, he/she wants to become a complete devout. This is also done so that, Shri Balaji, who is all benevolent, showers all his love, benevolence, affection and piety over the devotee by fulfilling all his/her desires.

In older days, people followed the tradition of offering hairs in their own houses but now-a-days people visit a place close to Shri Balaji's temple, known as Kalyan Katta, for a ceremony to donate hair. After the ceremony, devotees take a plunge in the holy river of Pushkarini and visit the temple to offer prayers and to receive Shri Balaji's blessings.

Found at <http://daily.bhaskar.com/news/belief-behind-donating-hair-at-balaji-1354990.html>.

Source #7 from Quora, a Question and Answer Forum answered by Hindu people:

Question: Should I donate my hair at Tirupati temple? What is the reason behind this to donate hair?

Answer Submitted by Thirumal Kamalashanthini on Aug 24, 2016

“...Hair or the ThamiL word ‘ sihai/சிறைகை ’ was considered the crowning glory of a person....As crowning glory it would be considered sacrifice given to God ...”

Found at <https://www.quora.com/Should-I-donate-my-hair-at-Tirupati-temple-What-is-the-reason-behind-this-to-donate-hair>.

Source #8 from Quora, a Question and Answer Forum answered by Hindu people:

Question: Can someone send hair to Tirupati Balaji?

3 Answers Given:

By Nirmalananda Reddy Kasivi, said on May 11, 2017:
This person lives in Tirupati, India.

“If someone sends human hair through someone to Tirupati Balaji, when unable to make pilgrimage, the same could be left or placed at the premises of tonsure ‘*kalyanakatta*’.”

By Sri Venkata Rama, said on May 11, 2017:

“Yes you can. Just ensure there is someone you know well is going to Tirumala. You can give them the hair and request them to drop it in Hundi. It is a strong belief that anything offered in Hundi is a offering to lord Venkateswara. My sisters who are in USA had their kids hair sent to me and we personally took it to Thirumala and offered it in hundi.”

By Sasidhar Darla, said on May 16, 2017:

“I wouldn’t recommend doing that. The whole point of pilgrimage is the journey you undertake to visit lord Balaji. It has it’s complete effect only when someone goes to Tirupati in person and offers the hair.”

Found at <<https://www.quora.com/Can-someone-send-hair-to-Tirupati-Balaji>>.

Source #9 from Quora, a Question and Answer Forum answered by Hindu people:

Question: Why do people get their head shaved when they visit Tirupati Balaji?

Some Of the Answers Given:

By Nirmalananda Reddy Kasivi, lives in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India, said on April 26, 2017:

“There are many reasons.

- 1 People give their hair (tonsure) to the lord Venkateswara when they visit Tirupati -Tirmala on pilgrimage mainly to fulfill their “*mokkubadi*” (vow or obeisance).
- 2 Some offer their hair out of a gesture or token of respect and submit to the lord that they carry no arrogance or ego before Him.
- 3 It could be purely devotional and total worship to the lord Venkateswara. And their visit to the holy and sacred complex would be completed by giving away the hair(tonsure).
- 4 Since lord Venkateswara is *Kuladivam* (family as well caste & societal god) people give hair of their children as a tradition before they complete three years of age.
- 5 The practice of giving hair (tonsure) to the lord is so sacred and Mandatory, many of women who don't wish to give away their long hair, do offer *mudu katharimpulu* (cutting of hair at three places of head).
- 6 Such is the significance of giving hair (tonsure) at Tirumala Hills, the abode of lord Venkateswara or Srinivasa.
- 7 “Tirupati Balaji” is the name used by many of North Indians for lord Venkateswara or Srinivasa. Balaji is actually a devout devotee of the lord Venkateswara and he proved his devoutness when he was cornered by the temple priests. Hence, the devotee name supersedes the lord's name as ‘Tirupati Balaji’.”

By Aravinth Murugan answered on November 23, 2014:

“Many legends and myths. Here is a few to list:

1) Hair is considered as a pride for men. Tonsure your head for lord, means you are giving up your PRIDE for him

2) During one of lord Vishnu's penance, a cow would give him milk regularly. Not knowing the fact that it was feeding lord Vishnu, the owner hits it with an axe. The god was humble by protecting the cow's head and took the blow to his head, thus losing out some hair. On seeing this , goddess Lakshmi cut few of her hair and pasted it on the injured head. Again, symbolizing the sacrifice of the thing that a women considered as beauty, Devotees tonsure their head.”

By Anonymous, on October 6, 2014:

Its a token of gratitude by the devotees towards lord balaji for fulfilling their wishes. And also there is a story related with this:

According to history, once lord Balaji got hurt and got a bald spot on his head . At that time one divine lady sacrifices bit of her hair and covers it. By this gesture, lord Balaji got very pleased and promised that lady to give hair through out the kaliyug whatever he got from his disciples. Thats why devotees do that.

By Sai Kiran M, on March 23, 2016:

When lord Balaji was hit on his head by a shepherd, a small portion of his scalp became bald. This was noticed by Neela Devi, a Gandharva princess. She felt "such an attractive face should not have a flaw". Immediately, she cut a portion of her hair and, with her magical power, implanted it on his scalp. Lord Balaji noticed her sacrifice. As hair is a beautiful asset of the female form, he promised her that all his devotees who come to his abode would offer their hair to him, and she would be the recipient of all the hair received. Hence, it is believed that hair offered by the devotees is accepted by Neela Devi. The hill, Neeladri, one of the seven hills, is named after her.

Found at <<https://www.quora.com/Why-do-people-get-their-head-shaved-when-they-visit-Tirupati-Balaji>>.

Source #10 is an Article Written about the Hindu Religious Laws:

“Hindu Tonsure”

“...If for any cause whatever, the boy's mother has made a vow to a certain god, it is the rule for this cutting of the hair to be made at the shrine of the god invoked. A pilgrimage is arranged to the place and there the ceremony is performed. If, for financial or other reasons, it is not convenient to make such a pilgrimage at the time when it is imperative to perform the ceremony, then the shaving takes place at home ; but a small tuft is left near the sikha, to be removed at the shrine when opportunity for a pilgrimage occurs. Sometimes the hair that has been clipped off is preserved, and tied up in a cloth to the rafters of the house until a pilgrimage can be arranged. This is the only occasion upon which the hair is allowed to remain in the house, for cut hair is always considered impure. When opportunity offers, the hair is then taken to the shrine and thrown into the sacred tank of the temple, or delivered to the officiating priest for disposal. The god Venkateshvara at Tirupati is a favorite one in South India for such vows. This god also has a shrine at Dvaraka Tirumala, near Ellore in the Kistna District, which is for all practical purposes held to be as holy as Tirupati.”

Found at <<http://www.oldandsold.com/books/hindu/hindu-6.shtml>>.

Source #11: Article Titled “Tirupati Balaji Temple”

By Parikshit Bisen, on November 15, 2012:

“The Tirupati Balaji temple which lies on the Tirumala hill town of Tirupati lying in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, India is one of the richest and biggest gold reserve centers of the world. The temple is so popular that thousands of people visit it just for a little glance of the god 'Venkatesh' who is also known as 'Balaji' who is an incarnation of lord Vishnu. Almost each and every devotee who visits this temple donates something to the temple in the form of cash, gold, diamonds, ornaments, jewelry, precious and valuable items in the temple 'hundi'. Thus there is a particular department of temple handling this and big machines are installed in the temple to collect and track donations from the devotees.

Donating hair in Tirupati is considered as a goodwill and thus the place is one of the biggest suppliers of hair for cosmetic and other purposes...”

Found at < <http://tirupatibalajistory.blogspot.com>>.

Source #12: Yahoo Question and Answer Forum, answered by Indian people.

Question: Why do people shave their heads in Tirupati?

Awarded “Best Answer” on the Yahoo Answer post:

Best Answer, by Sudhakar Kuruvada: Here is my opinion on why tradition of tonsuring may have come into being. Hair is a matter of Pride (ego) for men and women alike. It is not easy to strut around with a tonsured head and through the days when the hair is re-growing without a form or shape. In offering your hair to God, you are in the spiritual sense offering your pride and ego to God...”

Other Answers Given:

By Raj: “Its a belief if someone donate anything to god Tirupati's temple it will bring good luck to him, So most of people who are unable to donate money they donate their hair.”

By Ranjith: “There is a story behind this when lord venkateswara sleeping one woman saw him he has no hair on a particular spot on his head and the woman plucked her hair which bled her and gave to him so it is a custom that we should sacrifice our hair to god.”

Found at <<https://in.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20120928114704AAhMdC3>>

Source #13 Article from IndiaToday:

By Amarnath K. Menon

“The sacred strands are given away with untold stories of sacrifice and thanksgiving: the birth of a baby, a good harvest after a drought, long life, good health and happiness. Believers say that the hair offerings are supposed to pay back the legendary loan that lord Venkateshwara took for his marriage expenses, which will be repaid by the end of Kalyug.”

Found at <<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/tirupati-hair-offering-spiritual-and-commercial-aspects-of-the-ritual/1/180793.html>>. *Please note, immodest pictures appear on the webpage, which is why a link was not given.*

Source #14 Article from IndiaParenting.com, titled “Hair Care: My Head Shave Experience at Tirumala”

Submitted on January 14, 2008:

During my school days and college days, I taken a vow to offer my hair to lord venkateswara, if I scoring good marks and placements, after those dreams come true, I was very happy and decided to offer my hair to lord balaji with pleasure. So to fulfill my vow I had decided to take a trip to tirumala on Saturday night. After finishing my office work I started to tirumala from Bangalore, my thoughts are filled with lord venkateswara and the hair offering ceremony, after a long time I am going to hair offering (Complete head shave, I remembered, I had cried a lot during my hair offering at childhood) but this time totally with joyful heart...

Found at <<http://www.indiaparenting.com/boards/showmessage.cgi?messageid=4192&table name=dis hair care>>.

Source #15 Article titled “Read This Before You Plan Your Trip to Tirupati”

Did You Know?

The Tirupati temple is amongst the richest temples in the world. You will see people giving away bags of gold and other valuables at the Sri Vari Hundi here. It is believed that up to a whopping Rs. 650 crores are collected in donations every year.

Story behind the donations: It is believed that lord Srinivasa had to make arrangements for his wedding. Lord Kubera credited money to lord Venkateswara (a form of the god Vishnu) for his marriage with Padmavathi. Together, Srinivasa and Padmavathi lived for all eternity while goddess Lakshmi, understanding the commitments of lord Vishnu, chose to live in his heart forever. In remembrance of this, devotees go to Tirupati to donate money in Venkateswara's hundi (donation pot) so that he can pay it back to Kubera. The hundi collections go as high as 22.5 million INR a day. Devotees offer gold as a token of their love for god.

Found at <<https://www.makemytrip.com/blog/tirupati>>

Source #16 Article from The BBC, titled “Temple Hair Sale”. This is a very informative article.

Because of BBC copyright laws, I cannot quote what they say on their article, but it is very informative. You can access the article at this link:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/highlights/010622_hair.shtml>

Source #17: Article from The Wall Street Journal, titled ““Religion Today: The Great Indian Hair Auction”

This article shows that the hair is all gathered together based on length, once it is shaved.

Published on May 31, 2012, by Joanna Sugden

“...Once a team of around 60 men has collected it, the hair is sorted each day into five categories based on length. The tresses are then dried because pilgrims’ hair is made wet during tonsuring and stored in chambers in stacks up to 2.5 meters high ready for buyers to inspect before the e-auction. The main buyers are companies...”

Sri Venkateswara Temple is planning another e-auction this fall after the Brahmotsava annual festival, when large quantities of hair will be offered...”

Found at <<https://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2012/05/31/religion-journal-the-great-indian-hair-auction/>>. *Please note: An immodest picture appears on the webpage. That is why a link is not present.*

Source #18 Article describing how hair used for avodah zorah is forbidden to be used in Jewish wigs:

Ohr Somayach <https://ohr.edu/1698>

Ask!

For the week ending 29 May 2004 / 9 Sivan 5764

Wigs and Idolatry

by Rabbi Yirmiyahu Ullman - www.rabbiullman.com

From: T. R. in Belgium

Dear Rabbi,

Could you please enlighten me on the controversy surrounding wearing wigs made of human hair from India, and also is it permissible to continue wearing one. Thank you in advance, T. R.

Dear T.R.

The Rabbis who oppose the use of Indian-hair wigs are not just splitting hairs. The root of the problem is that the hair from India seems to come from idolatrous ceremonies. Worshipers grow their hair in honor of a certain god, pledging to cut the hair at the temple of the god as a sacrificial thank-offering when their prayer is answered. Of the 20 million annual pilgrims to the Tirupati temple in Andhra Pradesh, millions offer their hair. Six hundred barbers are employed by the temple to shave the pilgrims' hair 24 hours a day. Inside the "tonsuring" room, devotees sit cross-legged on the floor, and bend their head forward to let a temple barber shave their scalp with a straight razor blade. Attendants collect the bundles of hair in dustpans and deposit them in large bins.

The hair is then auctioned to wigmakers, earning the temple a hair-raising 5.6 million dollars. Although India is a small part of the global hair business compared to China, Indian temple-hair heads the industry in price. Indian hair is generally finer than Chinese and more similar to European and American hair. After being processed, Tirupati hair longer than 16 inches sells for as much as \$165 a kilogram (2.2 pounds). Shorter hair goes for about \$100 a kilogram. Some strands bought at auction are made into hair extensions that are sold to Western women for as much as \$3,000 for a full head of hair.

The problem is that the Torah not only forbids idolatry itself, but also prohibits deriving benefit from any accessory, decoration or sacrifice to idol worship. Primarily, such a sacrifice is forbidden only when it is similar to the Jewish Temple offerings of meat, flour, oil, wine and water. However, when this object of idolatrous sacrifice (*tikrovet avoda zara*) is what's normally offered, and is cut or broken in honor of the god, it is also forbidden to derive benefit from it in any way. Furthermore, the sacrificed object can never be nullified, even if it's been changed or altered by some process, and even if it's been indiscernibly mixed with some other permitted material.

According to this, the Indian woman who tilts her head to have her hair cut, as well as the idolatrous barber who cuts it, are both actively offering a sacrifice to the god (even if the hair is discarded), prohibiting the hair from being used in any way, even if it's eventually processed and mixed with other, permitted hair. [In fact, L-Cysteine, a certain food ingredient that can be produced from human hair, would also prohibit an entire food if the hair is from India, for the above reason that anything which is sacrificed to idolatry can never be nullified.] This means that any wig with human hair would be forbidden to wear unless it could be ascertained for certain that none of the hair originated in India.

A leading Torah authority, Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch, asserts that there are other problems than just wearing such a wig. Rambam writes that the prohibition against deriving benefit from offerings to idol worship is from the verse, "Nor shall you bring an abhorrence into your house" (Deut. 7:26). Accordingly, he writes, it should be forbidden to keep such a wig in the home even without wearing it. Also, since the actual money received for objects sacrificed in idol worship becomes forbidden, one must be careful not to receive money from one who sells or otherwise works with such wigs. He suggests that one who

buys a synthetic wig or other permitted item from a person who profits from such wigs should pay the exact price in cash, or with a check or credit card, in order to avoid receiving change from money that may have been paid for them.

Maran HaGaon Rabbi Elyashiv has also recently prohibited Indian wigs. After sending Rabbi A. D. Dunner from England to India to witness the Tirupati temple ceremony first hand, he ruled as follows: Regarding human hair wigs in Israel, since most are from Indian hair, all are forbidden unless the origin is known. Regarding wigs in other countries, if the majority of wigs are from a permitted source, all wigs are technically permitted, but one must clarify the source of each specific wig. Regarding wigs made from synthetic hair, if they contain human hair as well (which is often the case), they must be treated as other human hair wigs as above. In a case of doubt whether they contain human hair, they are permitted. Rabbi Elyashiv concludes that since objects associated with idol worship are to be burnt in fire, wigs from hair generally known to originate in India (but not specifically from the temple) *should* be burned, while wigs specifically known to be from the Tirupati temple *must* be burned.

Since the mitzvah of womens hair covering is a highly individual issue, this is not a personal ruling. Rather one must consult a local halachic expert who is able to ascertain the origin of the wigs available in ones community. Also, it should be clear that we are not taking sides on the issue, but merely presenting the opinions currently available. This controversy has been explored in the past, and, as then, lenient opinions may be forthcoming.

Sources:

Avoda Zara 50a,b

Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 139:1,2,3

Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch, Daat vHalacha; Teshuvot vHanhagot 2:414, 3:265; Public letter of Iyar 5764

Rabbi Mordechai Gross, in Teshuvot MBeit Levi (regarding L-Cysteine)

Rambam, Avoda Zara 7:2, also see Rashi, Avoda Zara 64a, s.v. "Rabbanan"

Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 133:1

Public letter of Rabbi Yoseph Efrati in the name of Maran HaGaon Rabbi Elyashiv, 22 Iyar 5764. In a letter of 5 Sivan, Rabbi Elyashiv confirmed Rabbi Efratis account of his ruling.

© 1995-2017 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

Articles may be distributed to another person intact without prior permission. We also encourage you to include this material in other publications, such as synagogue or school newsletters. Hardcopy or electronic. However, we ask that you contact us beforehand for permission in advance at ohr@ohr.edu and credit for the source as **Ohr Somayach Institutions www.ohr.edu**

Ohr Somayach International is a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation (letter on file) and your donation is tax deductible.

.....

Source #19: Article from the Star K on Batel B'Shishim and it states that Avoda Zora is never batel.

“WHEN IT’S NULL AND VOID: UNDERSTANDING BATEL BSHISHIM (ONE-SIXTIETH)”
 BY: RABBI DOVID HEBER PUBLISHED SPRING 2011

(some of article omitted)...

II. ITEMS THAT ARE NOT *BATEL*

There are various cases when we do not apply the *din* of *bitul*, where *Chazal* say “*afilu b’elef lo batul*” – these non-kosher items are not nullified even if mixed in one thousand, and the entire mixture is not kosher:

A ***Davar Hama’amid*** is something that “creates” a particular product. A classic example of this is non-kosher animal rennet used to make cheese.¹⁵ Without the enzymatic reaction caused by the rennet, there would be no cheese. Hence, even if the milk is sixty times the rennet, the finished product is not kosher.

...(some of article omitted)...

Nikker – If the non-kosher item is detectable (e.g. one can see and notice a small non-kosher piece of meat in vegetable soup), one may not eat the food until the non-kosher item is removed. This is true, even if the non-kosher item is less than one-sixtieth.²⁶

Chometz on *Pesach* – If *chometz* was mixed into Kosher for *Pesach* food **on** *Pesach*, the food is considered *chometz* even if the kosher for *Pesach* food is 60 times the non-kosher for *Pesach* food.²⁷

Davar She’bminyán – If something is usually sold individually, it does not become *batel*.²⁸ For example, pomegranates are a *davar she’bminyán* since they are sold in supermarkets only by the piece, not by weight or by the dozen.²⁹

Chaticha Re’uya L’hischabed– A prominent piece of food, such as a piece of chicken (e.g. a top or bottom), fit to be prepared (e.g. ready to be baked) for a guest is “important.” If a non-kosher piece of this chicken became mixed with many kosher pieces, all of the pieces would be *assur* (forbidden).³⁰

Avoda Zara – An idol, or anything used in the service of idolatry including wine,³¹ is not *batel*.³²

Chazusa – According to some opinions, something that is not kosher that adds color to a food is not *batel b’shishim*. An example of this is carmine, derived from an insect. Carmine used at even less than one-sixtieth would render the product not kosher.³³ Other opinions disagree.³⁴ One should consult a *Rav*...” (article continues.)...

You can see the full article here: <https://www.star-k.org/articles/kashrus-kurrents/611/when-its-null-and-void-understanding-batel-bshishim-one-sixtieth/#_ftn31>.

For questions on this report, please email EmesofWigs@gmail.com or call (732) 806-7674.

In order to permit gathering Hindu information for this report, a psak from a well-know dayan was obtained.