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Avodah Zarah Daf 68

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and may their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

Imparting a Taste to the Detriment of the Mixture

Ulla says: The argument (*between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Shimon*) is regarding a case where the added forbidden element first improved the dish, and then impaired it. However, if it impaired it immediately, everyone agrees it is permitted.

Rav Chaga challenged Ulla from the following *braisa*. The *braisa* states: Forbidden wine that fell into lentils and forbidden vinegar that fell into split beans renders it forbidden. Rabbi Shimon says that it is permitted. Aren't these cases where the wine or vinegar impaired the taste of the lentils or split beans immediately? Yet we still see that the *Tanna Kamma* says it is forbidden!?

Ulla answered: Chaga does not know what the Rabbis said, and yet he is asking a question from there?! The *braisa* is referring to a case where the vinegar fell into cold split beans and then he heated them up, meaning that it is as if he at first improved the mixture, and only later did he impair it.

Rabbi Yochanan says: The argument (*Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Shimon*) is indeed about a case where it is impaired right away.

They inquired: Does Rabbi Yochanan mean that they argue when it was impaired right away, but if it improved the taste of the mixture originally and then impaired it, everyone agrees it is forbidden? Or do they argue in both of these cases? The *Gemora* leaves this question unresolved.

Rav Amram says: Is it possible that Rabbi Yochanan is correct, but there is no source for this in the *Mishna*? He therefore checked, and indeed found a source that says this. The *Mishna* says: If leaven of *chullin* fell into a dough of *chullin*, and the amount was enough to leaven the dough. Afterwards, leaven of *terumah* or *kilayim* fell into the dough, and it had enough to leaven the dough. The entire mixture is prohibited (*or terumah*). Rabbi Shimon says: It is permitted. This is a case where the prohibited element impaired the mixture from the start, and even so there is an argument about this! [*This proves Rabbi Yochanan's statement that they argue even about a case where it was impaired from the start.*]

Rabbi Zeira answers: This case is not considered completely detrimental, as the (*overly leavened*) dough can now be used to leaven other doughs.

The *Gemora* attempts to prove Rabbi Yochanan's point from a *braisa*. The *braisa* states: If leaven of both *chullin* and *terumah* fell into a dough, and each one alone would have been enough to leaven the dough, and they leavened it (*and therefore they overleavened it*), the dough is forbidden (*considered terumah*). Rabbi Shimon says that it is permitted. If the leaven of *terumah* fell in first, everyone agrees it is *terumah*. If the leaven of *chullin* fell in first, and only afterwards the leaven of *terumah* or *kilayim* fell into the dough, the entire mixture is prohibited (*or terumah*). Rabbi Shimon says: It is permitted. In this last case, it is impaired right away (*for it was already leavened by the chullin*), and it is still an argument whether or not it is permitted!



If you will give Rabbi Zeira's answer (*that it is considered a benefit, for it can now leaven many other doughs*), how do you explain the second part of the *braisa*? The *braisa* states: Forbidden wine that fell into lentils and forbidden vinegar that fell into split beans renders it forbidden. Rabbi Shimon says that it is permitted. Aren't these cases where the wine or vinegar impaired the taste of the lentils or barley immediately? Yet we still see that the *Tanna Kamma* says it is forbidden!

If you will suggest that here too, we can answer like Ulla answered Rav Chaga (*that the braisa is referring to a case where the vinegar fell into cold split beans and then he heated it up, meaning that it is as if he at first improved the mixture, and only later did he impair it*), is there actually an argument in such a case? The *braisa* itself said that if the leaven of *terumah* fell in first, everyone agrees that it is forbidden!? This therefore clearly proves Rabbi Yochanan's statement that there is even an argument when the added forbidden element impairs it right away.

The *Gemora* asks: Why do we need all of the three cases stated in the *braisa* above? The last case is clearly needed to teach that there is even an argument in a case where the added element impairs it right away. The middle case is needed to say that if the prohibited element provided benefit originally and only later impaired it, everyone agrees that it is forbidden. Why is the first case (*where they fell in together*) necessary? If the Rabbis say that it is even forbidden when it impairs it right away, they will certainly say it is forbidden when they fell in together and originally improved it!?

Abaye answers: The first case is needed to teach Rabbi Shimon's position. The Rabbis argue that it should be forbidden, as the dough would normally have taken two hours to become leavened. It only took one hour because of the forbidden leaven. Rabbi Shimon answers: When they improved the dough, they both improved it. When they impaired it, they both impaired it.

The *Gemora* asks: According to Rabbi Shimon, let the permitted and forbidden leaven combine to make it forbidden!?

The *Gemora* answers: Rabbi Shimon's position is based on his reasoning that even one prohibited item and another prohibited element do not combine (*to forbid a mixture*). This is as the *Mishna* says: *Orlah* and *kilayim* combine. Rabbi Shimon says: They do not combine.

There was a mouse that fell into a barrel of beer. Rav prohibited the beer. The Rabbis said before Rav Sheishes: This implies that he holds that even if it impairs it (*the beer*), it causes it to be forbidden!

Rav Sheishes answered: Usually, Rav holds that if a forbidden item imparts a detrimental taste to the mixture, it is permitted. However, a mouse is a novel law, as people think it is repulsive, yet even so, the Torah specifically forbids it. It therefore forbids other things as well even though it imparts a detrimental taste to the mixture.

The Rabbis asked Rav Sheishes: If this is so, whether it is moist or dried out it should transmit *tumah*!?! However, the *Mishna* says that it only transmits *tumah* if it is moist (*i.e. alive in normal conditions*) and not if it is dried out!?

The *Gemora* replies: According to this, semen should also transmit *tumah* both when it is moist and dry. However, the *Mishna* says it only transmits *tumah* when it is moist. It therefore must be that the Torah only said it transmits *tumah* when it is in a form where it can fertilize, as opposed to when it is dry. So too, the *Mishna* says that a mouse only transmits *tumah* when it is dead, implying it should be in the form it is normally in when it dies (*not dried up*).

Rav Simi from Nehardea asks: Is a mouse really repulsive? Aren't they served on the table of kings?

Rav Simi from Nehardea answered: The city mice are not eaten, while the field mice are.

Rava says: The law is that if a forbidden item imparts a detrimental taste to the mixture, it is permitted. We are unsure as far as the reason Rav forbade the mouse in the beer. It could be because he holds that a forbidden item that imparts a detrimental taste to the mixture renders it forbidden, in which case we would not hold he is correct. It could also be that he generally holds it is permitted, but in this case he held that the mouse actually improved the taste of the beer. (68a – 68b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Is Gelatin Allowed?

Our Torah is called “the Torah of life”. Our *sugya* gives us one of countless opportunities to realize that each line of *Gemora* is vital and topical even for our era, expressing itself in all walks of life. In this article we shall focus on how the Talmud sages connected a certain *halachah* to a verse and the resultant *halachic* implication for many foods now in widespread use.

The production of gelatin powder: Much use is made of gelatin in factories throughout the world. Gelatin is a phenomenal substance. It can thicken and solidify, it can consolidate watery and fatty foods and it gives foods a clear appearance, etc. Gelatin is produced from the skin and bones of animals. The original method was to completely dry the skin and bones, rinse, cook, dry and grind them, resulting in gelatin powder.

Our *sugya* explains that the Torah asserts that forbidden food which has completely gone bad is permitted to be eaten, as we are told: “You shall not eat any *neveilah*; give it to the *ger* (*toshav*) at your gates and he will eat it” (Devarim 14:21) – “anything fit for a *ger* is called a *neveilah*; anything unfit for a *ger* is not called a *neveilah*”, and the *halachah* was so ruled.

Still, the *poskim* disagree as to if food that is unfit for eating is forbidden by rabbinical decree (*miderabanan*) and according to those who forbid it, what is the *halachah* pertaining to such food when mixed with permitted food. (See *Sefer HaChinuch*, mitzvah 472; *Bedek HaBayis*, *Re’ah*, *bayis* 4, *sha’ar* 1; *Pri Chadash*, Y.D. 103, S.K. 1; *Minchas Kohen*, *Ta’aroves*, I, 89; *Pri Toar*, 103; *Shaagas Aryeh*, 75; *Sedei Chemed*, *Kelalim*, *Ma’areches Beis*, *kelal* 25; *Responsa Noda’ BiYehudah*, 1st edition, Y.D. 26).

Since the production of gelatin renders the skin and bones unfit for consumption, the resulting powder is apparently allowed and even according to those who maintain that it is forbidden *miderabanan*, the gelatin is mixed with permitted food. Only according to the strictest opinion, that an inedible food is still forbidden when mixed with permitted food, is the mixture forbidden. But we still face trouble, for if we examine the matter carefully, we notice a hardly discernible obstacle according to which gelatin is forbidden by the Torah according to all opinions! During the production of gelatin, the skin and bones indeed become unfit for consumption. But at the end of the process, the gelatin can be eaten. In other words, what was unfit becomes fit once again for consumption.

Facing this dead end, we will come to appreciate the priceless value of each interpretation in the Talmud. In his *Chavos Da’as* on *Yoreh Dei’ah* (103, S.K. 1), Rabbi Yaakov of Lissa zt”l proves from the interpretation in our *sugya* that, beyond doubt, any food that became inedible is permitted **forever**, even though it again becomes fit for consumption. After all, a basic rule pertaining to all prohibitions of consumption (aside from meat with milk and *kil’ei hakerem*) asserts that any unusual form of consumption is not considered eating (Pesachim 24b). Why, then, did *Chazal* need to learn from a verse that a *neveilah* unfit for consumption may be eaten? It can only be, then, that the food remains permitted **forever**, even if it again becomes fit for consumption. We are now left with the difference of opinions as to if it is forbidden *miderabanan*.

Gelatin has continued to interest many *poskim* till our era but the innovation of *Chavos Da'as*, learnt from our *sugya*, serves as a firm foundation in the halachos of forbidden food. (We point out that we might be able to permit gelatin made from bones as it could be that bones are not considered forbidden food; see Rambam, *Hilchos Maachalos Asuros*, 4:18; Responsa *Achi'ezer*, II, 11, and III, 33; Responsa *Mishnas Rabbi Aharon*, I, 17; Responsa *Tzitz Eli'ezer*, who cites HaGaon Y. Avramsky; etc.)

May One Drink Water from an Aquarium?

May one drink water from an aquarium containing a crab or another sea creature forbidden to be eaten? No, we don't think anyone would willingly drink it but we should consider the *halachic* definition of such water, with its implications.

A taste absorbed from pickled food: Our *sugya* discusses the *kashrus* of beer into which a mouse fell. The *Rosh* asks what could be the problem. After all, we are all familiar with Haman's claim to Achashveirosh, that the Jews considered the king inferior to a fly. If a fly falls into a Jew's wine, he removes it and drinks the wine but if a gentile, even the king, touches a Jew's wine, the Jew rejects it (Megillah 13b). Apparently, then, a non-kosher animal that falls into permitted food does not forbid it. The *Rosh* therefore assumes that our *sugya* concerns a mouse that remained in the beer for a whole day and was therefore "pickled" (soaking for 24 hours is halachically equivalent to pickling in vinegar). Pickling food is like cooking food and exudes its taste; Tosfos agree.

Was the "pickled" mouse alive or dead? The *Rosh* did not relate to this question but it aroused a tremendous difference of opinions among *halachic* authorities. Some hold that as pickled meat exudes a taste, there is no difference if the meat is from a live or dead mouse. Others maintain that a live animal exudes no taste at all while still others believe that a live animal exudes a taste but that only

the taste of a dead animal forbids food (Responsa *Shoel Umeishiv*, 3rd edition, 43).

The hen that jumped into the butter: The writings of the *poskim* are full of examples of stories that aroused *halachic* storms. In Frankfurt a simple hen caused a tremendous dispute among the *talmidei chachamim* when it fell into a pot of boiling butter. The hen died within seconds but its memory remains alive among the *poskim*. One *rav* commanded that the butter be discarded and not even be given to gentiles as the taste of the hen's limbs was absorbed by the butter **while it was alive** and a limb from a live animal is forbidden also to gentiles by one of the seven Noachide Mitzvos. Judging this case (Responsa, *Y.D.* 94), the Chasam Sofer zt"l tends to agree with this decision and also asserts that an animal exudes a taste while still alive. A very tragic case was considered by the *poskim* (*Pri Chadash* and *Beis Hillel*, cited in Responsa *Shoel Umeishiv*, *ibid*) when an infant drowned in a vat of honey and the *poskim* had to decide if the honey was allowed to be eaten.

A kosher fish with the taste of a non-kosher fish: We return to the fish. Apparently, if a live mouse, staying a whole day in a barrel of beer, exudes its taste in the beer, then a non-kosher fish, staying a long time in an aquarium, exudes its taste in the water. This subject is very topical if we consider shops owned by gentiles in which live kosher and non-kosher fish are sold. The kosher fish are "pickled" with the non-kosher fish for a day or two and, apparently, the kosher fish absorbs the taste of the non-kosher fish and becomes forbidden. In the same vein, we should clarify the *halachah* of a drink into which fell water from an aquarium containing a non-kosher fish.

The difference between land animals and marine animals: Indeed, Maharam Schick zt"l (*Y.D.* 101), a pupil of the Chasam Sofer, asserts that his mentor's comment concerns land animals. These absorb the water in which they stay and exude their taste therein. Marine animals are immune to water and do not exude their taste.