

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Flavor imparted by a forbidden substance (cont.)

The Gemara continues its presentation of the exchange between R' Meir and R' Shimon whether something that imparts a prohibited taste is permitted when mixed in a permitted food.

Ulla asserts that the dispute is limited to a case where the prohibited food initially imparted a good taste but if even initially it imparts a bad taste all opinions agree that it is permitted.

R' Chaga unsuccessfully challenges this qualification.

R' Yochanan states that the disagreement applies when the prohibited taste ruins the food from the outset.

The Gemara inquires whether, according to R' Yochanan, there is also a disagreement if the prohibited taste initially imparted a good taste and the matter is left unresolved.

R' Amram searches for a source for R' Yochanan's position.

This source is rejected by R' Zeira

Another attempt to find a source for R' Yochanan's position is presented.

Abaye explains why it was necessary for the Baraisa to present three cases.

A point regarding R' Shimon's position is clarified.

A related incident is recorded in which R' Sheishes asserts in the name of Rav that although a mouse imparts a bad taste its flavor will nevertheless prohibit a mixture.

Two unsuccessful challenges to this ruling are presented.

Rava rules that a prohibited food that imparts a negative taste that becomes intermingled with other foods is permitted.

Rava also states that he is uncertain why Rav ruled that the beer was prohibited because a mouse fell in. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. According to Ulla, what is the point of dispute between R' Meir and R' Shimon?

2. Where did R' Amram find support for R' Yochanan's position?

3. Why did the Baraisa need to present three cases?

4. Does beer become prohibited if a mouse falls in?

Distinctive INSIGHT

The mouse in the beer

ההוא עכברא בשיכרא וכו'

The Gemara brings a story of a mouse which fell into a container of beer in order to illustrate the halacha of Rav regarding forbidden foods which contribute a taste which ruins a mixture.

A mouse fell into a barrel of beer, and it stayed there for a full day until it was removed. During that period of time, the taste of the dead mouse was absorbed by the beer. Even after the mouse was removed from the barrel, its taste was still perceptible in the beer. Rav prohibited the beer.

The students asked Rav Sheishes why Rav prohibited the beer. Was it because Rav agreed with the opinion of R' Meir who holds that a contribution of a damaging taste remains prohibited? Rav Sheishes explained that Rav generally holds that a damaging taste is not prohibited, but the taste of a mouse specifically could not be permitted. The reason was that the Torah teaches that rodents and creeping creatures are prohibited to be eaten, even though the taste of these repugnant beings is disgusting. We see that nevertheless, in the case of a mouse its having a repulsive taste is not a factor for leniency. Therefore, the negative taste of the mouse in the beer remained prohibited.

Ritva and Rashba explain that the case in which Rav ruled to prohibit the beer was where there was not enough beer in the container to overcome the taste of the mouse. There was not a volume of sixty times greater of beer than the calculated volume of the taste of the mouse. However, if there had been sixty times the amount of beer versus the taste of the mouse, Rav would have used the rule of nullification, and the beer would have been permitted.

Ritva adds that although we have a rule that the rules of nullification do not apply to an entire entity (בריה), that is only in regard to where the entire entity is present. However in this case the mouse was removed, and we are only dealing with the taste of the mouse, and this may be nullified.

The Yerushalmi (Terumos 10:5) states that the taste of a mouse is only nullified when diluted by one thousand times its volume. Ritva explains that the Yerushalmi holds that the taste of a mouse is pungent and powerful, to the extent that it is still present when diluted by sixty times its volume. Tosafos (69a, ד"ה אידי ואידי) says that the halacha does not follow the Yerushalmi, but rather according to our Gemara, which rules that the taste of a mouse is nullified in sixty times its volume. Ritva writes that perhaps the Yerushalmi

(Continued on page 2)

HALACHAH Highlight

Flies and bugs

אמר רבא הלכתא נותן טעם לפגם מותר

Rava states: The halacha is that if a prohibited substance imparts a detrimental flavor to a permitted food, it is permitted

The Gemara Megilla (13b) relates that one of Haman's criticisms of the Jewish People is that if a fly falls in their wine they throw it out and drink the wine but if Achashverosh were to touch their wine they would spill it out rather than drink it. The source of the halacha referenced by Haman is our Gemara where Rava rules **נותן טעם לפגם מותר** – if a prohibited substance imparts a detrimental taste into the permitted food into which it is mixed, the mixture is permitted. This ruling is codified in Shulchan Aruch¹ where he rules that if a fly or other repugnant, prohibited substance falls into a food one may throw away the repugnant substance and the food remains permitted. Even if the quantity of permitted food is not sixty times the prohibited food the prohibited taste is nullified since it is repugnant. Although there are authorities² who maintain that the taste of the repugnant prohibited item may only be nullified at a ratio of sixty to one, nevertheless, Rema³ writes that common custom is to follow the lenient position.

Sefer Chassidim⁴ writes about two people, one of whom

(Insight...continued from page 1)
is speaking about a situation where a non-Jewish cook tastes the beer and tells us that the taste of the mouse is still noticeable. In that case, we would still suspect that the taste has an effect until it is diluted by one thousand. ■

refused to burn flies because he considered it cruel. His friend told him that he should not be overly righteous. It is preferable to kill flies rather than take the risk of their ending up in one's food or drink and transgressing multiple prohibitions. Rav Moshe Feinstein⁵ was asked whether killing bugs and flies is prohibited as part of the prohibition against inflicting pain on animals (**צער בעלי חיים**). Rav Feinstein answered that anything that provides benefit for a person is not part of the prohibition of **צער בעלי חיים**. It is even permitted to kill bugs and flies to maintain the dignity of a person. This is evident from the halacha that teaches that an elderly person is not required to assist an animal that is buckling under the burden on its back if it is beneath his dignity. Nevertheless, it is preferable to kill them indirectly rather than directly since killing has a negative effect on one's character. ■

1. שו"ע יו"ד סי' קי"ז סעי' ב'.

2. בי"י ובי"ח יו"ד סי' קי"ז.

3. רמ"א שם.

4. ספר חסידים סי' תתלי"א.

5. שו"ת אג"מ חו"מ ח"ב סי' מ"ו. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

"No More Than Dust"

"ורבי יוחנן אמר בפוגם מעיקרא מחלוקת..."

Thanks to technology, we now have an amazing array of options, yet there was a time when finding an appropriate kosher dye for food products was a difficult task.

There was a certain very small red berry called kirmiz. Although this berry was an excellent dye for various alcoholic beverages and other purposes, many Jews felt uncomfortable using it. The reason they did not want to make use of this was that it was filled with worms, since each tiny berry contained several miniscule worms. The process was to pick the berries and compress them as much as possible. The next step was to

leave them out to dry completely in the sun during the warm months of Tamuz and Av. Once they were completely dried, they would be soaked in water and the dye which emerged was very useful commercially.

What merchants wondered is whether they could use this dye. After all, it was composed of a large percentage of worms. When a certain merchant asked the Sha'arei Tzedek, zt"l, he permitted using this dye even in beverages that would be consumed by Jews. "This is clear from the ruling of the Ramah, zt"l, who permits putting milk inside a skin made of the dried stomach of a neveilah.

"Now although the Nodah B'yehudah argues against this Ramah, presumably he would also permit in our case. He learns from Rav Yochanan's statement on Avodah Zarah 68 and the

opinion of Tosafos that even if something originally forbidden was completely dried it remains prohibited.¹ The reason he forbids is since if it were to be soaked in water it would be edible to a dog, even though it would still be inedible to a man. But in our case the worms are so completely dry that they are absolutely inedible and therefore do not constitute food at all.

"This can be compared to the halachah in siman 84 that even if a fruit was wormy, if it sat for twelve months, it is permitted, since the worms that were in it are considered to be no more than dust.² The same is true in our case."³ ■

1. שו"ת נו"ב, מהדורה קמא, יו"ד, סי' כ"ו

2. כ"כ הש"ע ביו"ד, סי' פ"ד, ס' ח'. וכמובן

מדובר בואפן שבטוח שלא נכנסו תולעים חדשים

3. שו"ת שערי צדק, ח' יו"ד, סי' ק' ■