

Avodah Zarah, Daf Ayin Bet, Part 5

Introduction

Today's sugya continues to discuss whether downward flow counts as a connecting link.

ת"ש המערה מכלי לכלי את שמערה ממנו מותר הא דביני ביני אסור
ש"מ נצוק חיבור

Come and hear: If he poured from one vessel into another, the [liquid] in the vessel from which he poured remains permitted.

[Deduce from here] that what is between [the two vessels] is prohibited; Learn from this that the flow is a connecting link!

A Jew pours wine from his vessel directly into that of a non-Jew. The wine in the upper vessel remains permitted. The Talmud (somewhat strangely) deduces from here that the wine in between the two vessels is forbidden, and thus tries to prove that flow is considered a connecting link.

אי נצוק חיבור אפילו דגויה דמנא נמי ליתסר הא לא קשיא דקא מקטיף קטופי

But if flow is a connecting link, then what is inside [the upper] vessel should also be prohibited!

This is not a difficulty, because this is a case where he cuts off [the outflow].

If flow contaminates the upper liquid, then the wine in the container should also be nesekh. The Talmud has to therefore say that the baraita refers to a case where he cuts off the flow from the top to the bottom before it reaches the bottom container. This would seem to be a recipe for mess.

מ"מ נצוק חיבור ולטעמיך אימא סיפא את שעירה לתוכו הוא דאסיר הא דביני ביני שרי
אלא מהא ליכא למשמע מינה

In any case, it seems from here that flow is a connecting link!

But according to your reasoning I can say the end of the mishnah: And [the wine in the vessel] into which he poured is prohibited.

What is between [the two vessels] is permitted! Consequently there is nothing to be learned from this mishnah.

The second clause in the mishnah says that the wine in the bottom vessel is prohibited. We could deduce that what is in between is permitted, leading to the conclusion that flow is not a connecting link.

In the end, nothing can be learned from this mishnah concerning the concept of flow. [I might add that clearly the simple reading of the mishnah is that downward flow is not a connecting link. The Talmud does not seem to want to prove this quite yet].

ת"ש המערה מחבית לבור קילוח היורד משפת חבית למטה אסור
תרגמה רב ששת בעובד כוכבים המערה דאתי מכחו

Come and hear: One who pours from a cask into a vat [which contains yayin nesekh], the spout of liquid which descends from the rim of the cask is prohibited!

R. Sheshet explained that this refers to a non-Jew pouring out so that [the wine flows] because of his action.

This baraita seems to imply that flow is a connective. As soon as the wine flows out of the cask into the vat of yayin nesekh, the wine becomes prohibited.

R. Sheshet says that the baraita refers to a case where a non-Jew is doing the pouring. Thus he invents a new category that is not found in tannaitic sources—wine poured by a non-Jew is considered nesekh.

אי עובד כוכבים המערה אפי' גוא דחביתא נמי מתסר! כח דעובד כוכבים מדרבנן הוא
דאסיר ההוא דנפק לבראי גזרו ביה רבנן ההוא דלגואי לא גזרו ביה רבנן

But if it is a non-Jew pouring out, what is in the cask should also be prohibited! What is poured because of the power of the rabbis is prohibited by decree of the rabbis, and they decreed only against what came out [of the cask] and not against what was inside it.

The Talmud here refines the prohibition of wine poured by non-Jews, which was created above by R. Sheshet. This is considered to be a rabbinic decree, an add-on if you will to the main prohibition of yayin nesekh. Since it is an add-on, the rabbis can shape it the way they want. So the rule is that if the gentile pours the wine, what comes out is prohibited but what is inside is permitted. This, by the way, is why in kosher restaurants non-Jews do not pour wine for the customers. What comes out of the bottle is prohibited, even though the non-Jew never touched it.