Have You Ever Wondered...

In the Zechus of a Refuah Shleima of my Rabbeim, Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky shlita, הגאון הרב שמואל בן איטא עטיל and Rav Moshe Heinemann Shlita, הגאון הרב משה בן פיגלא.

Q: A two-year-old toddler was vigorously shaking her bottle in the kitchen, causing a few drops of milk to fly across the room and land in a pot of chicken soup. What is the status of the pot and its contents?

A: The laws of ביטול בשישים / nullifying the milk in 60 times the soup are from the most detailed, complex, and lengthy issues in all of שולחן ערוך. In fact, the criteria and syllabus to receive סמיכה / ordination has constantly changed over the years. *Hilchos Taaruvos*, which the Kollel happens to be learning currently, has always consistently remained an important and often required area of study.

Rabbi Avrohom Weinrib (Rav of Cong. Zichron Eliezer in Cincinnati) shared with me that when he took his *Semicha Bechina* from Harav Hagoan R' Nissim Karelitz, *zt"l*, he was asked one simple שאלה, "What is *batel* and what isn't?" That gave him enough material to talk about *Yoreh Deah* סימן צ"ח thru סימן ק"י for a long time.

Since there are so many variables and exceptions, it is recommended to ask a competent Rabbi when these *shaylos* come up.

But on the most basic level, the Gemara in *Chullin* 96a teaches us that not just is the actual non- kosher food forbidden but also the טעם, noticeable taste that remains after the איסור is removed, cannot be eaten. This principle, known as טעם כעיקר, is discussed at length in *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* סימן צ"ח.

Back in the day, one would have an option to turn to an עכום to taste and ascertain whether the non-kosher taste is discernible or not. The Rama (ibid.) rules that Ashkenazim can no longer rely on this test. Instead, based on the Gemara *Chullin* 98a we always go with whether there is 60 times more kosher than the איסור or not. When this ratio is met, we can then assume that the איסור will no longer be detectable and the mixture can be eaten.

The more accurate way to assess the ratio is not through משקול / weight, since heavier doesn't necessarily mean more *ta'am* / stronger taste, but through מידה / volume (see *Pischei Teshuvah YD* 98:2 and *Chochmas Adam* 52:3).

Often, the proportions are obvious and can be estimated by eye. The Tur (*Orach Chaim* 456) offers a practical method for certain situations: fill a container to the top with a measured amount of water, immerse the solid in it, and then measure the displaced water to determine its volume.

Rav Moshe Heinemann, *shlit"a*, shared with me that this is the method he used to determine the volume of a כזית and כביצה, relevant to ברכה אחרונה and the minimum *shiur* required to fulfill the *mitzvah* of אכילת מצה.

He cautioned, however, that some foods absorb liquid, which can distort the measurement. Such foods must therefore be coated and sealed beforehand to ensure an accurate result.

In our case, since none of the following concerns apply, דבר המעמיד, דבר שיש לו מתירין, בריה, חמץ, דבר שבמנין, חתיכה הראויה להתכבד, ביטול איסור לכתחילה or חזותא, עבודה זרה, (just to give you a "taste" of how many factors must be considered!), if the contents of the pot are at least פי שישים the amount of milk that fell in, you can eat and enjoy your chicken soup!

Rav Moshe Heinemann shared with me that though he cannot talk for other kashrus agencies, the Star-K does not rely on ביטול. Accordingly, the Vaad's policy requires that all ingredients used in certified products be 100% kosher. Even if there is a 60:1 ration, which means that the non-kosher ingredient is less than 1.7% of the total, they will not give the product a Hechsher

There are a few reasons for this:

-There can potentially be an issue of מבטלים איסור לכתחילה / one cannot deliberately nullify a forbidden substance (YD 99:5). One could raise the question of whether the additional production and inventory generated by expanded sales under kosher certification might also fall under this prohibition. See *Rabbi Akiva Eiger* 99:4 & *Badei HaShulchan s.v. Shenisbatel)*

-Consumers rely on the kashrus agency and reasonably assume that all ingredients in a certified product are kosher. Permitting a product containing a non-kosher ingredient, even when halachically בטל, could raise concerns in חושן משפט regarding the agency's responsibility to those relying on its certification.

-If word gets out that a certified product contains a non-kosher ingredient, the agency may find itself on the defensive, having to explain its policy. Maintaining a clear, consistent standard avoids such complications and preserves public confidence in the certification.

There is a famous story that took place over a century ago, where the women of ירושלים were preparing a feast for ז' אדר, the day of Moshe Rabbeinu's Yahrtzeit, traditionally marked by some *Chevra Kadishas* with fasting followed by a סעודה. Suddenly, a gust of wind knocked over a container of milk that spilled into a large pot of meat stew. The women knew that unless the stew contained sixty times the volume of the milk, the entire pot would be טרף.

Realizing that the feast might have to be canceled, they brought the שאלה to the Rav Shmuel Salant, *zt"l* (1816–1909). To their surprise, the Rav asked them to return in an hour. When they did, he ruled that the stew was unquestionably kosher, but refused to explain why. To demonstrate his confidence in the פסק, he attended the feast and ate the stew himself, allowing the celebration to proceed.

Years later, the mystery was finally solved.

After Rav Shmuel Salant's passing, Yerushalayim's elderly milkman revealed that Rav Shmuel Salant had once asked him whether he ever diluted his milk with water. The milkman admitted that he had done so, including that very morning. The Rav agreed to keep the matter confidential, on condition that he stop the practice.

Now the secret was clear: knowing that the milk contained a significant amount of water, Rav Shmuel Salant calculated that the remaining milk was less than one-sixtieth of the stew. The mixture was therefore kosher. The women finally understood both the Rav's ruling and why he had kept his reasoning to himself.

CINCINNATI Community KOLLEL

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann is a Rosh Kollel in the Cincinnati Community Kollel. The above relevant shaylos are a sampling of questions that were asked recently. Rabbi Heinemann can be reached at RabbiCHeinemann@gmail.com or 513-835-5005.