

By a metal barrel

בחבית של מתכת –

OVERVIEW

The גמרא asked, why does the משנה say that the straw and figs (in a container) can be חוצץ only under certain conditions, the barrel itself should be חוצץ (regardless of the תבן וגרוגרות that it contains). The גמרא answered that it was a metal container, and since metal is טומאה מקבל, there is a rule that anything which is טומאה מקבל cannot be חוצץ בפני הטומאה. Our תוספות has some difficulty with this answer.

תוספות asks:

הקשה רבינו תם דחבית גופה תביא טומאה לבית אחר¹ -

The ר"ת asked that the metal barrel itself should convey the טומאה from the room where the corpse is to the other adjacent room -

דעל ידי אהל נעשית המתכת כחלל² להיות אבי אבות הטומאה³ כדמוכח במסכת אהלות⁴ -

Since through the metal barrel becomes like the corpse, to be considered an אבי אבות הטומאה, as is evident in מסכת אהלות -

והוי כחלל נמי לטמא אחרים באהל⁵ -

- טומאת אהל through מטמא others as a corpse to be considered And so the barrel is also considered as a corpse to be דכוליה קרא דוכל⁶ אשר יגע על פני השדה בחלל חרב וגומר -

For the entire פסוק of 'and anything which will touch, on the face of the field, the corpse killed by the sword, etc.'; this entire verse -

דריש לה בנוזיר פרק כהן גדול (דף נד,א ושם) לענין אהל⁷ -

Is expounded in טומאת אהל regarding פרק כ"ג in מסכת נזיר.

¹ The barrel is in the opening between the two rooms (one in which there is the מת) and is exposed to the airspace of both rooms. The barrel becomes טמא because it is in the same airspace under the same roof as the מת. We are assuming that the barrel is not flush with the sides of the opening but rather extends somewhat into both rooms (the room with the מת and the adjoining room, which we wish to protect from טומאה). See נחלת משה.

² The פסוק (in יט,טז) reads, (במדבר [חקת] יט,טז) and וכל אשר יגע על פני השדה בחלל חרב, this is expounded (in פסחים יד,ב) to teach us that the metal חרב (sword), which killed and came in contact with the corpse, has the same level of טומאה as the חלל (corpse). This rule (according to תוס') applies even if the metal became טמא (not only by touching the מת, but even) by being in the same אהל as the מת, as the case is here by the metal barrel.

³ A מת is the highest (lowest) level of טומאה; it is the 'grandfather' of טומאה; anything which touches the מת (a person) becomes an אבי אבות הטומאה. A מת is the only טומאה which is מטמא באהל (except for a מצורע in certain cases).

⁴ פרק א' משנה ג'.

⁵ This barrel which became an אבי אבות הטומאה (since it is open to the airspace of the מת), should be able to be מטמא anything which is in the adjacent room (which has no מת), since the contents of this second room is open and is under the same אהל (airspace) as the barrel which is like a מת. See end of footnote # 1.

⁶ See footnote # 2.

⁷ Tosfos maintains that the rule of חלל היא חרב (see footnote # 2) is not only regarding the טומאה which is conveyed through touching or carrying (מגע ומשא), but also regarding טומאת אהל that metal can become טמא and convey טומאה through טומאת אהל alone, even if there was no מגע ומשא with the מת or with the other objects.

question is how can we establish the משנה that it was a metal barrel, for in that case the תוספות will surely be conveyed (through אהל) to the other בית!

answers: תוספות

ונראה לרבינו תם דהכא מיירי כגון שהגרורות בולטות חוץ לפי חבית כל סביבותיו -
And it appears to the ר"ת that here it is a case where for instance the dried figs extend outside the barrel on all its sides

ומכסות אותו לגמרי שאין נראה כלל⁸ -
And they cover the barrel completely that the barrel itself cannot be seen at all -

justifies this unusual explanation: תוספות

ודייק רבינו תם מדנקט גרורות ולא נקט פירות -
And the ר"ת inferred that the משנה is discussing this case (where the barrel was completely covered with the גרורות), since the משנה specified and did not instead merely mention fruits (were inside the barrel), the reason is -

לפי שהם מדובקות יחד אע"פ שיוצאות חוץ לחבית אין נופלות⁹ -
That since the גרורות stick together, so even if they extend outside the barrel, they do not fall down and can cover the barrel from the outside.

supports this inference: תוספות

וכי האי גוונא דייק בפרק חבית¹⁰ (שבת דף קמו,א) -
And we find a similar instance of this type of inference in פרק חבית -

offers an alternate solution to the initial question: תוספות

ועוד אומר רבינו יצחק דהכא מיירי בשאין חבית יוצאה חוץ לכותל¹¹ -
And furthermore answers the ר"י that here it is a case where the barrel does not extend outside the adjacent wall of the room where there is no דהשתא דרך החלון לא יבא טומאה לבית -

⁸ Therefore since the entire barrel is covers with the גרורות, it is not exposed to the אהל המת, therefore it does not become an אבי אבות הטומאה and it cannot be באהל. See 'Thinking it over' #1 & 2.

⁹ The fact that the משנה chose to discuss this case with גרורות specifically is an indication that the barrel was covered with the dried (and sticky) figs.

¹⁰ The משנה there states that one may take a knife (or sword) and break open a barrel in order to eat the גרורות inside. ר' אשעיא limited this ruling to case of גרורות which are pressed together so a knife is required to break them apart in order to eat them. Therefore, since one may take the knife to cut the גרורות, he may also move the knife to break open the barrel; otherwise it would be prohibited because the משנה follows the view of נחמיה ר' that אין כלי ניטל. The גמרא asked why establish the משנה according to ר"נ, say that the משנה follows the view of the רבנן that a כלי may always be moved even not for בו תשמיש המיוחד בו. The גמרא answered that since the משנה mentioned גרורות that means that the knife is needed to cut the גרורות. עיי"ש.

¹¹ This answer assumes that the barrel does not protrude into the adjacent room (it may or may not protrude in the בית המת). This is different from our previous assumption, see footnote # 1.

So now no *טומאה* can be conveyed to the adjacent room via the window opening - *דטומאה רצוצה*¹² בוקעת ועולה ואינה מתפשטת לצדדין¹³ שהרי אין בו פותח טפח:
For a 'squished' *טומאה* bursts upwards but does not extend sideways, since there is no opening of a *טפח*.

SUMMARY

The metal barrel does not convey *טומאה* to the adjacent room (even though *חרב הרי* [even regarding *אהל*]), either because it is completely covered by the sticky dried figs, or because the barrel does not extend into the airspace of the adjacent room.

THINKING IT OVER

1. *תוספות* in the first answer writes that the figs covered the barrel entirely and therefore it is not *טומאה מקבל* presumably because it was not exposed to the *טומאה*.¹⁴ This rule that whatever is not exposed to the *טומאה* is not *טומאה מקבל* (the rule of *צמיד פתיל*) is only regarding to prevent the items which are *טהור* from becoming *טמא*, but there is no such rule regarding the item which it itself is *טמא* (like the barrel), so how can the figs prevent the barrel from being *מטמא*?¹⁵
2. *תוספות* in the first answer explained the case of the figs; how will that explain the case with the straw (which is not sticky)?
3. According to *תוספות* second answer, why did the *משנה* mention *גרורות* and not *פירות*?¹⁶

¹² If there is a *מת* in a box (together with other objects [which are not touching the *מת*]); if the box contains airspace of a *טפח* above the *מת*, the roof of the box becomes an *אהל* and everything in the box is *טמא*, and anything on top of the box is *טהור* (for the *אהל* prevents the *טומאה* from going out). If however there is no *פותח טפח*, we say that the *טומאה* of the *מת* bursts upwards (בוקעת ועולה) so anything which is above the *מת* including anything which is on top of the box up to the sky and is directly over the *מת*, they are *טמא*, but there is no *טומאת אהל* for the items which are in the box (but not touching the *מת*).

¹³ The barrel (which became *טמא* because it was exposed to the airspace of the *מת* with a *טפח*) is under the upper frame of the window and there is no *פותח טפח* (since the barrel fills the entire space of this opening), therefore the *טומאה* of this barrel shoots straight up going through the top of the window up till the sky, but it does not extend to the sides. [If the barrel extended into the adjacent room then it would have a *פותח טפח* above it (presumably the ceiling is at least higher by a *טפח* over the opening) then it would be *מטמא באהל המת*.]

¹⁴ See footnote # 8.

¹⁵ See *נחלת משה*.

¹⁶ See *פורת יוסף* and *תורת חיים*.