Resolve, that it is not similar to his power   – תפשוט דלאו ככחו דמי

OVERVIEW

There are (at least) two ways to interpret the ברייתא of תרנגולין שהיו מחטטין וכו'. We can say that he pays a נ"ש for the דלי because בתר מעיקרא אזלינן (thus resolving s'רבא query); or we can say that this ברייתא follows the view of סומכוס (that צרורות pays a נ"ש) and indeed the סיפא of this ברייתא (which states that if a shard of the pail broke another vessel that he pays only a ח"נ) resolves the query of רב אשי the כח כחו is not like כחו (according to סומכות). The גמרא concluded that we cannot resolve either query since it is a case of דקאזיל מיניה מיניה (so it is not צרורות at all). תוספות explains that this final answer was not necessary.

תוספות anticipates and responds to an apparent difficulty:

הוה מצי למימר דזיל הכא קמדחי ליה[1] וזיל הכא קמדחי ליה אלא דבלאו הכי משני[2] שפיר:
The גמרא **could have responded that if you go this way, it can be pushed aside, and if you go this** other **way it can be pushed aside,** so that no query can be resolved; **however** even **without this** maneuver the גמרא offers **a proper response**.

SUMMARY

If we are not certain which of the two queries is resolved; it is considered as if no query can be resolved.

THINKING IT OVER

What are the relative advantages of תוספות proposed answer and the s'גמרא actual answer?[3]

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[1] If we will want to assume that the ברייתא follows the view of the רבנן, which would force us to conclude that בתר מעיקרא אזלינן, we can refute this proof by saying, perhaps the ברייתא is according to סומכס (and there can be no resolution of s'רבא query), and if you will argue that since the ברייתא is according to סומכות we can resolve s'רב אשי query that כח כחו is לא ככחו, we will respond that perhaps the ברייתא is according to the רבנן and there is no resolution to s'רב אשי query. In this manner we cannot resolve either of the two queries. This is the approach, תוספות suggests, which the גמרא could have taken.

[2] תוספות is referring to the answer of רב ביבי בר אביי that it is according to the רבנן and nevertheless there is no resolution to s'רבא query since it is קאזיל מיניה מיניה.

[3] See נחלת משה