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MISHNAH: If one distanced the *s’chach* three *tefachim* from the walls, it is invalid.¹ If [the roof of] a house is breached,² and he placed *s’chach* over it, if there is a distance of four *amos* from the wall to the *s’chach*, it is invalid.³ Similarly in the case of a courtyard which is surrounded by porches.⁴ If [the *s’chach* of] a large sukkah was surrounded with a material which is invalid for a *s’chach*, if there is a space of four *amos* beneath it, it is invalid. (17a1)

GEMARA: Why are all these [rulings] needed?⁵ — It is necessary [to state them all]. For if he had only informed us of [the roof of] a house which is breached, [one would have said that the validity applied to this case only] because the partitions are made for the house,⁶ but in the case of a courtyard which is surrounded by porches, where the partitions are not made for the porches it does not apply; and if he had informed us of those two, [one would have said that the validity applied to these cases only] because their *s’chach* might be a valid *s’chach*, but in the case of a large Sukkah which is surrounded with a material

which is invalid for a *s’chach*, since the very material of the *s’chach* is invalid, it does not apply, [therefore it is] necessary [to mention all]. (17a2)

Rabbah stated: I found the Rabbis of the Academy of Rav sitting and saying: An air space invalidates if it is three [*tefachim* wide]; invalid *s’chach* invalidates if it is four [*tefachim* wide], and I said to them: from where do you know that an air space of three [*tefachim*] invalidates? [Presumably] because we learned: If one distanced the *s’chach* three *tefachim* from the walls, it is invalid. [But if so,] invalid *s’chach* too should not invalidate unless it extends to four *amos*, since we have learned: I If [the roof of] a house is breached,⁷ and he placed *s’chach* over it, if there is a distance of four *amos* from the wall to the *s’chach*, it is invalid. And they said to me: Exclude that [from this discussion] since Rav and Shmuel both say that the reason of its validity is because of the principle of ‘*dofan akumah*’;⁸ and I said to them: What [would the law be] if the invalid *s’chach* were less than four [*tefachim*], with an air space⁹ of less than three [*tefachim*]? [Surely] it

¹ Since the mere air cannot be regarded as a valid part of either the roof or the walls.

² In the center at some distance from the walls.

³ Since the portion of the roof that intervenes between the walls and the valid *s’chach* constitutes a break. If the distance, however, is less than four *amos* each wall and the portion of the roof adjacent to it is regarded as one ‘bent wall’ – ‘*dofan akumah*’, reaching from the ground to the valid *s’chach*. It is forbidden to use the portion of the Sukkah under the solid roof but the center of the house is regarded as a valid Sukkah.

⁴ A roof projects from the sides of the courtyard in front of the houses that surround it while the center of the courtyard is exposed. If this center has been covered with the proper

materials the courtyard is subject to the same laws as the house spoken of in the previous clause.

⁵ All of which are based on the principle of ‘*dofan akumah*’ where the invalid part of the roof is less than four *amos* in width.

⁶ And the house becoming a Sukkah, the ‘partitions’, i.e., the walls, are, on the principle of the ‘*dofan akumah*’, regarded as the valid walls of the Sukkah also.

⁷ In the center at some distance from the walls.

⁸ While they spoke of invalid *s’chach* that was far removed from the walls and that could not consequently be treated as a continuation of these walls.

⁹ Next to it.

would be valid.¹⁰ And what if he filled in this space with spits?¹¹ [Surely] it would be invalid.¹² Now shouldn't an air-space which invalidates with three [*tefachim*] be treated like invalid *s'chach* which only invalidates with four?¹³ And they answered me: If so, then even according to you, who say that invalid *s'chach* invalidates only if there are four *amos*, how [would it be] if there was invalid *s'chach* of less than four *amos*, and [next to it] an air space of less than three *tefachim*? [Surely] it would be valid. And if he filled in this space with spits? [Surely] it would be invalid. Now [can it not similarly be argued] shouldn't an air space which invalidates with three [*tefachim*] be like *s'chach* which invalidates [only] if there are four *amos*? And I answered them: How can you compare the two cases? It is well according to me who say four *amos*, because [in this case the validity of the Sukkah depends on] whether there is the standard size¹⁴ or not, and here there is not the standard size, for since their standard sizes¹⁵ are unequal, they do not combine; but according to you, who say that the size is solely dependent on the principle of division,¹⁶ what does it matter whether the division is made through invalid *s'chach*, or through invalid *s'chach* and space? Abaye said to him: And according to the Master also, admitted that their standards are unequal in a large Sukkah, but in a small Sukkah are they not equal?¹⁷ — He answered: The reason there¹⁸ is not because the standards are equal, but because there is not the [minimum] size of a Sukkah remaining. (17a2 – 17b1)

¹⁰ Since the invalid *s'chach* is less than the prescribed minimum.

¹¹ Which owing to their susceptibility to *tumah* are invalid for *s'chach*.

¹² Since there are now more than four *tefachim* of invalid *s'chach*, whereas if it was air space the Sukkah would not be invalidated.

¹³ And consequently the Sukkah under discussion would be invalidated by the air space though it is less than three *tefachim*.

¹⁴ To invalidate a Sukkah; the standard being received as a tradition from Sinai.

¹⁵ For invalid *s'chach* and for air space.

¹⁶ The standard of four *tefachim* in connection with invalid *s'chach* has no basis in tradition, it not being

Do we not then combine standards when they are unequal? Have we not in fact learned: A garment that is three [*tefachim*] square, a sack four *tefachim* square, leather five *tefachim* square and a mat six *tefachim* square [are susceptible to *tumah*]. And it has been taught concerning this: Garments and a sack, a sack and leather, leather and a mat combine with one another?¹⁹ — In that case the reason has been given, as Rabbi Shimon said: What is the reason?²⁰ Since they are susceptible to *tumah*²⁰ if [a *zav*] sits on them, as we have learned: If he cuts from any one of them a piece one *tefach* square, it is susceptible to *tumah*. To what use can a piece one *tefach* square be put? — Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish in the name of Rabbi Yannai replied: It can be used as a patch for [the saddle of] a donkey. (17b1 – 17b2)

In Sura they taught this decision in the above words; in Nehardea they taught [as follows]: Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: Invalid *s'chach* in the middle [of the Sukkah] invalidates if it is four [*tefachim* wide]; at the side only if it is four *amos* wide; while Rav says: Whether in the middle or at the sides, [it invalidates] only if it is four *amos* wide. We have learned: If he placed over it a plank four *tefachim* wide, it is valid. It is well according to Rav who says that whether in the middle or at the sides [the invalid *s'chach* must be no less than] four *amos* [to invalidate it]; for this reason it is [here] valid; but according to Shmuel

mentioned even in the Mishnah; it has been fixed merely on the principle that four *tefachim* represent a 'division, i.e., the minimum size of a separate place, breaking up the unity of the Sukkah.

¹⁷ A Sukkah of minimum size, i.e., of seven *tefachim* square, is invalid if there are either three *tefachim* of invalid *s'chach* or of air space; why then shouldn't the two combine?

¹⁸ In the case of a small Sukkah where three *tefachim* of air space or invalid *s'chach* equally invalidate.

¹⁹ To form the prescribed larger size.

²⁰ The same standard of size applying to each material.

who says that at the middle a width of four [*tefachim* invalidates], why is it here valid? — Here it is a case where [the plank was placed at] the side.

Come and hear: Two sheets combine,²¹ two boards do not combine.²² Rabbi Meir says: Boards are like sheets. It is well according to that version which says that Rav says that whether in the middle or at the sides [it invalidates only] if it is four *amos* wide; for thus by ‘combine’ was meant - combine to make four *amos*; but, according to the version which says that Rav says that in the middle [even, only] four *tefachim* [width of invalid *s’chach*] invalidates, what kind of boards are we to imagine? If they are each four *tefachim* wide, why do they need to combine? And if they are each less than four *tefachim* wide, they are mere sticks! — This is indeed a case where they are each four *tefachim* wide; and what does ‘combine’ mean? That they combine to make up four *amos* at the side.

Come and hear: If he covered the Sukkah with planks of cedarwood which are four [*tefachim* wide], according to all it is invalid; if they do not have four *tefachim* in their width, Rabbi Meir declares it invalid and Rabbi Yehudah declares it valid, but Rabbi Meir admits that if there is the space of one plank between every two planks that one may place *pesal*²³ between them and it is valid. It is well according to the one who says that whether in the middle or at the sides it needs four *amos* [of invalid *s’chach* to invalidate a Sukkah], for this reason it is here valid; but according to the one who says that in the middle four [*tefachim* of invalid *s’chach* invalidate] why is it valid? — Rav Huna the son of Rav Yehoshua answered: We are dealing here with a Sukkah which measures no more than a bare eight [*amos*], and he places [alternately] plank and *pesal*, plank and *pesal*, plank and *pesal* on one side and

[similarly] plank and *pesal*, plank and *pesal*, plank and *pesal* on the other side, so that there are two *pesalim* in the middle, and thus a valid Sukkah is formed in the middle. (17b2 – 18a1)

DAILY MASHAL

Together for Purity

The Gemara quotes a Mishnah in Keilim as proof that materials with disparate minimum measurements can combine with each other. The Gemara states that the reason that they can combine with each other is because each material can contract tumah when a *zav* sits on the material.

Perhaps this idea is analogous to the nation’s hatred for the Jewish People. The Medrash states that Midyan and Moav were always enemies, but they united to cause harm to the Jewish People. The converse should also be true. Even if Jews do not see eye to eye on all issues, we should at least unite for matters of purity and sanctity, and when HaShem sees that we can demonstrate signs of friendship, He will likewise nullify the plans of the gentiles and redeem us from the exile.

²¹ To constitute the prescribed minimum to invalidate the Sukkah on account of their susceptibility to tumah.

²² To form the prescribed minimum, to invalidate a Sukkah as a preventive measure against the possible use of boards all along the roof.

²³ Material eligible for *s’chach*.