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Our Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: A mat of shifah or of gemi,<sup>1</sup> if large, it is valid for *s’chach*, if small, it is invalid for *s’chach*.<sup>2</sup> One of reeds or of sedge,<sup>3</sup> if it is braided,<sup>4</sup> is valid for *s’chach*, if it is woven, it is invalid. Rabbi Yishmael son of Rabbi Yosi said in the name of his father: Both the one and the other, are valid for *s’chach*; and Rabbi Dosa also ruled according to his view.

We have learned elsewhere: All reed mats are susceptible to corpse tumah.<sup>5</sup> These are the words of Rabbi Dosa. The Sages, however, say: They are susceptible to the tumah of midras.<sup>6</sup> [Can it mean] to the tumah of midras but not to that of a corpse seeing that we have learned: Whatever is susceptible to [primary] tumah of midras is also susceptible to [primary] tumah from a corpse? — Say rather also to the tumah of midras. (20a2)

What is meant by chotzalos (reed mats)? — Rav Avdimi bar Hamduri said marzovlei. What is marzovlei? — Rabbi Abba said: Leather bags. Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: Real mats. And Rish Lakish is consistent [in this view], since

<sup>1</sup> These mats are made from rush plants; they are suppler than those made out of reeds.

<sup>2</sup> Since the materials are soft they are in either case suitable for reclining upon.

<sup>3</sup> Which is hard.

<sup>4</sup> And therefore uneven and unsuitable for reclining upon.

<sup>5</sup> They are ordinarily regarded as vessels that are susceptible to the various degrees of tumah, except that they, not being intended for lying upon, contract primary tumah only through contact with a corpse and not through midras.

<sup>6</sup> In their opinion the mats are as a rule intended for lying upon and are, therefore, susceptible to primary tumah even through midras.

Rish Lakish said: May I be an atonement for Rabbi Chiya and his sons.<sup>7</sup> For initially, when the Torah was forgotten from Israel, Ezra came up from Babylon and reestablished it. [Some of] it was again forgotten and Hillel the Babylonian came up and reestablished it. Yet again was [some of] it forgotten, and Rabbi Chiya and his sons came up and reestablished it. And thus said Rabbi Chiya and his sons: Rabbi Dosa and the Sages did not dispute about reed-mats of Usha,<sup>8</sup> that they are susceptible to tumah,<sup>9</sup> or of Tiberias that they are not susceptible.<sup>10</sup> About what do they dispute? About those of other places. One Master is of the opinion that since they are not [as a rule] used for sitting upon, they are like those of Tiberias, and the Masters are of the opinion that since it sometimes happens that they are used for sitting upon, they are like those of Usha. (20a2 – 20b1)

The Master said: All reed mats are susceptible to corpse tumah. These are the words of Rabbi Dosa. But was it not taught: And Rabbi Dosa also said according to his words?<sup>11</sup> -This is no difficulty. The former refers to one that has a

<sup>7</sup> A respectful way of mentioning one's deceased parent or teacher.

<sup>8</sup> The reeds of Usha, a town in Galilee famous as one of the seats of the Sanhedrin, were soft and were used exclusively for mattresses, those of Tiberias were hard and not used for this purpose.

<sup>9</sup> Even to that of midras since they are intended for lying upon and for no other purpose.

<sup>10</sup> Since no one would use them for lying upon.

<sup>11</sup> That such mats are valid for *s’chach*. From which it follows that they are not regarded as a ‘vessel’ that is susceptible to tumah.

rim,<sup>12</sup> the latter to one that has no rim.<sup>13</sup> - It was objected: Mats of shaam, of gemi, of goats' hair and horsehair are susceptible to corpse tumah,<sup>14</sup> these are the words of Rabbi Dosa, while the Sages say: They are also susceptible to midras tumah. It is well according to the one who says [that chotzalos means] 'shepherd bags', since those of shaam and of gemi can be used for baling large produce, while those of goats' hair and horsehair can be used for pouches or sacks, but according to the one who says that it means 'real mats', it is well with regard to those of goats' hair and horsehair, since they can be used for curtains or for sieves, but to what use can those of shaam and of gemi be put?<sup>15</sup> — They can be used for [covering] brewing vats. (20b1 – 20b2)

Some read [as follows]: It is well according to the one who says [that chotzalos means] 'real mats', since those of shaam and of gemi may be used for [covering] brewing vats while those of goats' hair and horsehair can be used for curtains or for sieves, but according to the one who says that it means 'shepherd bags', it is well with regard to those of goats' hair and horsehair which may be used for pouches or sacks, but to what use can those of shaam and of gemi be put? — They may be used for baling large produce. (20b2)

It was taught in a Baraisa: Rabbi Chanina stated: When I descended to the Diaspora I came across an old man who said to me, 'A mat may be used as *s'chach*'. And when I came before Rabbi Yehoshua, my father's brother, he agreed with his words. Rav Chisda said: Only if it has no rim. Ulla said: Those mats of the people of Mechoza, were

<sup>12</sup> And it is thus a finished article, a 'vessel'.

<sup>13</sup> Which, being used for no other purpose but that of covering a Sukkah cannot be regarded as a 'vessel'.

<sup>14</sup> But not to that of midras, since they can be regarded as 'vessels', but not as objects used for reclining or sitting upon.

<sup>15</sup> Since these are not made for lying upon and since they are useless for any other purpose why should they be susceptible to tumah?

it not for their rim, would be valid as *s'chach*.<sup>16</sup> So it has also been taught: Reed mats are valid as *s'chach*, but if they have rims they are invalid as *s'chach*. (20b2)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, SUKKAH SHEHI GAVOHAH

## CHAPTER II

MISHNAH: He who sleeps under a bed in the Sukkah<sup>17</sup> has not fulfilled his obligation.<sup>18</sup> Rabbi Yehudah stated: We were accustomed to sleep under a bed in the presence of the elders, and they said nothing to us. Rabbi Shimon said: It happened that Tavi, the slave of Rabban Gamliel, used to sleep under a bed, and Rabban Gamliel said to the elders, 'Have you seen Tavi my slave, who is a scholar, and knows that slaves are exempt from [the law of] a Sukkah, therefore he sleeps under the bed,' and Incidentally we learned that he who sleeps under a bed has not fulfilled his obligation. (20b3)

GEMARA: But, surely, there are no ten [tefachim in the height of the bed, are there]?<sup>19</sup> — Shmuel interpreted, [that it refers to] a bed which is ten [tefachim high]. (20b3)

## INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

### Food Under the Bed

The Mishna rules that if one sleeps underneath a bed, he will not fulfill his obligation of Sukkah. Rashi writes that the primary activities one engages in while in a Sukkah is eating, drinking and sleeping. *Shearim Mitzuyanim B'Halacha* notes that it is clear to him why the Mishna

<sup>16</sup> Since they were generally used for covering a Sukkah and were unsuitable for any other purpose.

<sup>17</sup> Since the bed forms a 'tent' that intervenes between him and the Sukkah roof.

<sup>18</sup> During the festival of Sukkos, one must eat, drink and sleep in a Sukkah.

<sup>19</sup> The bed not being ten tefachim high how can it be regarded as a 'tent'?

mentioned sleeping under a bed and the Mishna did not mention eating under a bed. The reason for this omission is because the Gemara in Pesachim 112a states that it is forbidden to eat under a bed because food or drink that is under a bed will contract an evil spirit. The *Toras Chaim* writes that it is well-known that sleep is one sixtieth of death because the soul of a person leaves him at night. For this reason one must wash his hands in the morning, so he will remove the tumah that he contracted at night. Thus, it follows that one should not leave food under a bed because when one sleeps on a bed, the bed is deemed to be an *ohel hameis*, the tent where a corpse lies, and it is akin to having food in the same room as a corpse. From our Mishna we learn that we are only concerned for food under a bed at night and only when one is sleeping on the bed.

#### DAILY MASHAL

##### **Sukkah is a Reward**

The Mishnah cites an incident regarding Tevi, the Canaanite slave of Rabban Gamliel, who would sleep under the bed in a Sukkah. Rabban Gamliel commented to the Chachamim that Tevi was a Torah scholar and he knew that a Canaanite slave is not obligated to dwell in a Sukkah, and therefore Tevi slept under the bed. One must wonder why if Tevi was exempt from sleeping in a Sukkah, he found it necessary to sleep under the bed inside the Sukkah. Tosfos, quoting the Yerushalmi, writes that Tevi slept under the bed to leave room for the Chachamim who were in the Sukkah and they were obligated to dwell in the Sukkah. The reason Tevi did not dwell outside the Sukkah is because Tevi sought to hear words of Torah from the Chachamim. The Medrash Tanchumah states that in the merit of Avraham offering the angels who visited him to recline under the tree, his descendants merited the mitzvah of Sukkah. The Gemara in Avodah Zara states that in the future when the gentiles request from HaShem that he offer them the Torah, HaShem will offer them the mitzvah of Sukkah, but when it will be too hot, the gentiles

will kick the Sukkah and leave. The words of the Gemara and the Medrash offer us a profound lesson in mitzvah observance. Although one may find it difficult to perform a mitzvah, one can learn from Tevi, who was not obligated in mitzvos that were dependent on time, yet he still dwelled in the Sukkah. Nonetheless, he was not attempting to perform the mitzvah properly. Rather, Tevi sought to hear words of Torah from the Chachamim. In the future, the gentiles will claim that they desire to come close to HaShem, but when HaShem offers them a simple mitzvah to perform, they quickly lose interest because of the difficulty involved. This is thus the meaning of the Medrash Tanchumah. Avraham was confined to his tent because of his recent circumcision, yet when he saw wayfarers, albeit pagans, Avraham still sought them out and invited them to recline under the tree. When HaShem saw that Avraham was willing to persevere even at a time when he was exempt from hosting guests, HaShem rewarded Avraham that his descendants would merit the mitzvah of Sukkah, where one can dwell in a Sukkah and engage in Torah study.