

19 Menachem Av 5781
July 28, 2021



Sukkah Daf 21

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for his neshamah and may his soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

We have learned elsewhere: A hole which has been hollowed out by water or by insects or eaten through by mineral corrosion, and similarly a row of stones,¹ or a pile of beams, the roof overhead constitutes a shelter over the tumah.² Rabbi Yehudah said: Any ‘shelter’ which is not made by the hands of man³ is not⁴ considered as a shelter. What is the reason of Rabbi Yehudah? — He deduces it through a gezeirah shavah from the word ‘tent’ ‘tent.’ It is written here: This is the law, when a man dies in a “tent,” and it is written there (regarding the Tabernacle): And he spread the “tent” over the Tabernacle. Just as there [‘tent’ means one] made by the hands of man, so here [it means one made] by the hands of man. And the Rabbis? — The word ‘tent’ occurs many times, to include [all tents].⁵

Is then Rabbi Yehudah of the opinion that a shelter which is not made by the hand of man is no valid shelter? Let us point out an incongruity: [We have learned] There were courtyards in Yerushalayim that were built on bedrock (*untouched since Creation, where it would be highly unlikely that a body was buried there*) that had a space (*of at least a tefach*) underneath, in order to contain any impurity from “the grave of the deep.” [*The tefach of airspace blocks the tumah from penetrating the earth above it.*] Pregnant women were brought there, and they would give birth and raise their children in this area in order to be able to draw water for

service of the red heifer. When this was ready to be done, they would bring oxen with large doors on their backs upon which these children would sit. The children had stone cups in their hand. They would fill them up, and then go back to their place. Rabbi Yosi said: [Each child] used to lower [his cup] down and fill it from his place⁶ because of [the fear of] “the grave of the deep.” And it has been taught: Rabbi Yehudah said: They did not bring doors, but oxen.⁷ Now oxen, surely, are a ‘shelter’ which is not made by the hands of man, and does it not nevertheless teach: Rabbi Yehudah said: They did not bring doors, but oxen? - When Rav Dimi came, he said in the name of Rabbi Elazar, Rabbi Yehudah agrees⁸ in the case [of a ‘shelter’ that is as large as] a fistful.⁹ So it has also been taught: Rabbi Yehudah admits in the case of uprooted boulders and clefts of rocks.¹⁰ - But a door, surely, has an altitude of many fistfuls and yet Rabbi Yehudah teaches, does he not: They did not bring doors but oxen?¹¹ — Abaye replied, [It means that] they did not need to bring doors.¹² Rava said: [It means that] they did not bring doors at all because the child, feeling confident, might put out his head or one of his limbs and thus contract tumah on account of “the grave of the deep.”¹³ - It has been taught in agreement with Rava: Rabbi Yehudah said: They did not bring doors at all, because the child, feeling confident, might put out his head or one of his limbs and thus contract tumah on account of “the grave of the deep,” but they brought Egyptian oxen

¹ Under which a cavity was formed by the removal of a stone.

² A hollow formed by any of the above means is regarded as a ‘shelter’, rendering tamei whatever is within it if a piece of corpse lies there.

³ For the purpose of serving as a shelter.

⁴ As far as conveying tumah is concerned.

⁵ Even such as were not made for the purpose.

⁶ Sc. he did not go down to the water.

⁷ Whose bulky bodies served as a shelter and partition between any possible tumah below and the children above.

⁸ That a shelter is valid even if it was not made by the hands of man.

⁹ A size that is bigger than that of a tefach.

¹⁰ These, although naturally formed, constitute a valid ‘shelter’, since the hollow space is more than a tefach in height.

¹¹ Presumably because the doors cannot be regarded as a valid ‘shelter’. Now if a door is no valid shelter, how could the body of an ox be regarded as a valid one?

¹² The oxen alone were sufficient.

¹³ In the absence of a door the child, in his fear of falling down, would not venture to put any part of his body out beyond the width of the body of the ox.

with wide bellies, and the children sat on their backs with stone cups in their hands. When they reached the Shilo'ach spring, they descended, filled them, and ascended and sat again on their backs. - But hasn't a bed an altitude of many fistfuls, and yet we have learned: Rabbi Yehudah said: We were accustomed to sleep under a bed in the presence of the elders?¹⁴ — A bed is different, since it is made [to be slept] upon?¹⁵ But aren't oxen also made [to be sat] upon?¹⁶ — When Ravin came he explained in the name of Rabbi Elazar: Oxen are different, since they afford shelter for shepherds in summer from the sun, and in the rainy season from the rain.¹⁷ If so, shouldn't a bed [also be so regarded] since it affords shelter to the shoes and sandals under it? — The fact is, said Rava, that oxen are different since they naturally shelter their entrails,¹⁸ as it is written: You have clothed me with skin and flesh, and You have sheltered me with bones and sinews. - And if you like [you may say that] Rabbi Yehudah follows his own view that a Sukkah must be a permanent abode; and since a bed is but a temporary abode, while a Sukkah is a permanent 'shelter', a temporary shelter cannot annul a permanent one. - But doesn't Rabbi Shimon also say that a Sukkah must be a permanent abode, and yet [he holds that] a temporary shelter does annul a permanent shelter? — It is in this that they differ. One Master holds the opinion that a temporary shelter can come and annul a permanent shelter, while the other Master holds the opinion that a temporary shelter cannot annul a permanent shelter. (20b3 – 21b2)

The Mishnah had stated: Rabbi Shimon said: It happened that Tavi, the slave etc. It has been taught: Rabbi Shimon said: From the casual conversation of Rabban Gamliel we have learned two things. We have learned that slaves are free from the obligation of Sukkah, and we have learned that he who sleeps under a bed [in a Sukkah] has not fulfilled his obligation. But why doesn't he say: From the words of Rabban Gamliel? - He informs us of something [else] by the way in agreement with that which Rav Acha bar Adda, or as

¹⁴ Which shows that an occasional 'shelter' is no valid shelter.

¹⁵ And not underneath it. Hence it cannot constitute a valid 'shelter'.

¹⁶ And not underneath them. How then could they be regarded as a valid shelter?

some say, Rav Acha bar Adda in the name of Rav Hamnuna said in the name of Rav: From where do we know that even the casual conversation of scholars demands study? From Scripture where it is said: And whose leaves do not wither. (21b2)

MISHNAH: If a man supports his Sukkah with the legs of a bed, it is valid. Rabbi Yehudah said: If it cannot stand by itself, it is invalid. (21b2)

GEMARA: What is the reason of Rabbi Yehudah? — Rabbi Zeira and Rabbi Abba bar Mamal disagree. One says: It is because the Sukkah has no permanence, and the other says: It is because he keeps it up with something susceptible to tumah. What essentially differentiates them? — If, for instance, he fixed iron stakes [in the ground] and covered them with s'chach. According to the one who says, 'because it has no permanence,' here there is permanence; according to the one who says, 'because he keeps it up with something susceptible to tumah,' he is here also setting it up with something which is susceptible to tumah.

Abaye said: They taught this only if he supported it, but if he placed s'chach above a bed, it is valid. What is the reason? — According to the one who says, 'because it has no permanence,' here there is permanence; according to the one who says, 'because he sets it up with something susceptible to tumah,' here he does not set it up with something susceptible to tumah. (21b3)

¹⁷ So that the belly of the ox may well be regarded as a valid shelter.

¹⁸ Thus constituting a shelter.