

5 Elul 5781
August 13, 2021



Sukkah Daf 37

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h

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

But did Rabbi Yehudah rule that the Four Species alone [are valid for s’chach] and not anything else? — Was it not in fact taught: If he covered it with boards of cedar wood which are four tefachim wide, it is invalid according to all. If they are not four tefachim wide, Rabbi Meir declares it invalid and Rabbi Yehudah valid, but Rabbi Meir admits that, if there is a space of one board between every two boards, he may place pesal (i.e., material usable for s’chach) between them and the Sukkah is valid? — [the Gemara answers:] What is meant by ‘cedar’? Myrtle. This is in agreement with Rabbah son of Rav Huna, since Rabbah son of Rav Huna stated: In the school of Rav they said that there were ten species of cedar, as it is said: I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia tree, and the myrtle etc. (37a1)

The Mishnah had stated: Rabbi Meir says even with a cord. It has been taught: Rabbi Meir said: It occurred with the eminent men of Jerusalem that they bound their lulavim with [strands of] gold. They said to him: Is that evidence? They bound it in fact with strands of its own species underneath. (37a2)

Rabbah said to those who bind the hoshana 9i.e., the lulav bundle) at the house of the Exilarch, ‘When you bind the hoshanas at the house of the Exilarch, [be careful to] leave a handle so that there should be no interposition’.¹ Rava

¹ Between the hand of the holder and the lulav bundle. Rabbah holds that according to Biblical law, the binding is unnecessary hence it would form an interposition between one's hand and the bundle.

² Used for the sprinkling of the water containing the ashes of the Red Heifer.

³ To reach the level of the water in the tube.

[however] ruled: Whatever is used to beautify it constitutes no interposition.

Rabbah further stated: A man shall not hold the hoshana with a scarf, because it is required that the ‘taking’ shall be complete, and in this case it is not. Rava, however, ruled: Taking hold by means of something else is also regarded as a valid ‘taking’. From where, said Rava, do I derive that taking hold by means of something else is also regarded as a valid taking? From what we have learned: If the hyssop² is too short,³ it may be made to suffice with a thread or with a reed and so it is dipped and brought up, but one must hold the hyssop itself when sprinkling. Now why [is this permitted]? Didn’t the Merciful One say: And he shall take hyssop and dip? May we not then deduce from there that taking hold by means of something else is also regarded as a valid ‘taking’? — But where is the proof? That case perhaps is different; since [the thread or reed] was joined on [to the hyssop], it is regarded as part of it? — In fact [the deduction is made] from the following: [If the ashes of the Red Heifer] fell [of their own accord] from their tube into the trough they are invalid.⁴ From this it follows that if the man himself threw them into the water they are [presumably] valid.⁵ Now why [should that be so]? Didn’t the Merciful One say: And they shall take of the ashes . . . and he shall put? May we not then deduce

⁴ The ashes were carried in tubes from which they were emptied into a stone trough containing tile water. If the ashes fall into the water of their own accord they become invalid since the putting into the water must be done with intention.

⁵ Though, as in the case when they fell of their own accord, the man did not hold the ashes themselves but only the tube which contained them.



that taking by means of something else is also regarded as a valid 'taking'. (37a2 – 37b1)

Rabbah further stated: One should not thrust the lulav through the bound willow and myrtle lest some leaves are detached and thus form an interposition. Rava, however, ruled: A thing of the same species does not constitute an interposition. (37b1)

Rabbah further stated: One should not shear the lulav while it is in the bundle, since loose leaves might remain and form an interposition. Rava however ruled: A thing of the same species does not constitute an interposition. (37b1)

Rabbah further stated: It is forbidden to smell a myrtle branch [used] for the [fulfillment of the] mitzvah, but it is permitted to smell an esrog [used] for the [fulfillment of the] mitzvah. What is the reason? — The myrtle — since it is used as perfume, when it is set apart [for a mitzvah] is set apart from [use as a] perfume; the esrog, however, since it is used as food, when it is set apart [for a mitzvah] it is set apart [only] from [use as] food. (37b1)

Rabbah further stated: If a myrtle is attached to the ground, one may smell it; if an esrog is attached to the ground, one may not smell it. What is the reason? — The myrtle, since it is used as a perfume, [even] if you permit it, the man would not be tempted to cut it; the esrog, however, since it is used for food, if you permit it the man might be tempted to cut it. (37b1 – 37b2)

Rabbah further stated: The lulav [must be held] in the right hand and the esrog in the left. What is the reason? The former constitutes three mitzvos and the latter only one. (37b2)

Rabbi Yirmiyah enquired of Rabbi Zerika: Why in the blessing do we say only 'To take the lulav'? — Because it towers above the others. Then why shouldn't one lift up

the esrog and recite the blessing over it? — The reason is, the other answered him, that as a species it naturally towers above all of them. (37b2)

MISHNAH: At which point [during Hallel] is [the lulav] waved? During the verse: 'Hodu LaShem' – 'Give thanks to hashem,' both at the commencement and the conclusion of the psalm, and during the verse: 'Ana HaShem, Hoshiah Na' – 'Please Hashem, save now.' These are the words of Beis Hillel. Beis Shammai say: Also during the verse: 'Ana HaShem, Hatzlichah Na' – 'Please Hashem, bring success now.' Rabbi Akiva stated: I watched Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Yehoshua, and while all the people were waving their lulavim [at other verses], they waved them only at 'Ana HaShem, Hoshiah Na' – 'Please Hashem, save now.' (37b2 – 37b3)

GEMARA: Who has ever mentioned anything about waving [of the lulav]? — It was mentioned previously: A lulav which has a length of three tefachim, sufficient to wave with it, is valid, and in reference to this the Mishnah says: At which point [during Hallel] is [the lulav] waved? (37b3)

We have learned elsewhere: As to the Two Loaves and the Two Lambs of Shavuot, how does one proceed? [How does one wave the *shte'i halechem* together with the two lambs?] The *Kohen* places the two breads on top of the two lambs, places his hands underneath them, and waves them. He extends them outwards, inwards, up, and down. This is as the verse states: *that are waved and that are raised up*. Rabbi Yochanan explained: [One waves them] outward and inward [in honor of] the One Whom the four directions belong, and up and down [in acknowledgment of] the One Whom the heavens and earth are his.

In the West, they taught us thus: Rabbi Chama bar Ukva stated in the name of Rabbi Yosi son of Rabbi Chanina: He waves them outward and inward in order to restrain harmful winds; up and down, in order to restrain harmful

dews. Rabbi Yosi bar Avin, or, as some say, Rabbi Yosi ben Zevila, observed: This implies that even the residual parts of a mitzvah prevent calamities; for the waving is obviously a residual part of a mitzvah, and yet it shuts out harmful winds and harmful dews. In connection with this Rava remarked: And so with the lulav. Rav Acha bar Yaakov used to wave it outward and inward, saying, ‘This is an arrow in the eye of Satan’. This, however, is not a proper thing [for a man to do] since [Satan] might in consequence be provoked [to let temptation loose] against him. (37b3 – 38a1)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Biblical Laws and their Rationale

Rabbi Yehudah maintains that the maximum measurement of an esrog is the size at which one can hold two esrogim in one hand. Rabbi Yose maintains that an esrog is valid even if one needs two hands to hold one esrog.

Rav Yosef Engel lists approximately twenty instances throughout Shas where we find that the Torah states that something is not allowed and the prohibition is due to a concern that one will violate a different transgression. One example that he cites is the Ran in Pesachim who suggests that perhaps the reason the Torah prohibited one to see chametz on Pesach is because the Torah was concerned that a person will eat the chametz, as chametz is something that a person usually does not stay away from.

Another example that Rav Yosef Engel cites is a Medrash in Parshas Naso that states that the Torah prohibited a nazir from drinking vinegar wine because the Torah was concerned that the nazir may come to drink regular wine.

In the *Sefer Ma’adanei Chaim*, Rav Chaim Cohen wonders how Rav Yosef Engel, with all his erudition and scholarship in Shas and Poskim, did not cite our Gemara as one of the

examples. Rabbi Yehudah maintains that an esrog cannot be too large as there is a concern that he may have mistakenly placed the lulav bundle in his left hand and the esrog in his right hand, and when he attempts to reverse them, he may drop the esrog. Rashi (based on the explanation of the Sfas Emes) and the Ritva explain that if one drops the esrog, it may cause the esrog to become deficient and the person may not realize it, and he will unknowingly not have fulfilled the mitzvah of taking the four species. Although the measurements for the four species are derived from a *Halacha LeMoshe MiSinai* which is a Biblical requirement, it is nonetheless apparent that the rationale for the maximum measurement of an esrog is due to a concern that perhaps one may drop the esrog. The Sfas Emes maintains that based on this Gemara, we must say that Rabbi Yehudah’s requirement regarding the size of an esrog is only rabbinical in nature.

DAILY MASHAL

Gold and Humility

The Mishnah states that the people of Jerusalem would bind their lulav bundles with gold strings. The Chachamim said to Rabbi Meir that they would first bind the lulav with material of the same species in order to fulfill the mitzvah properly and then they added the gold strings as decoration. It is interesting that the word that the Mishnah uses for these gold strings is *gimoniyos*, which Rashi explains is derived from the word *ki’agmon*, which means bent. Perhaps the Mishnah is teaching us that the people of Jerusalem would glorify the mitzvah of lulav with gold fibers, which usually can be interpreted to be a display of arrogance. Nonetheless, the people of Jerusalem acted for the sake of Heaven, and their actions were done “bent over,” i.e. in a humble fashion.