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Eiruv Daf 58

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

Moshe Raphael ben Yehoshua (Morris Stadtmauer) o”h
Tzvi Gershon ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h

Mav the studing of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and mav their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

The Mishna says that when we measure techum, we use ropes of exactly 50 amos, not more and not less, and each one measures holding it at chest level. If they reach an incline (e.g., valley, fallen fence, or mountain), they subsume it in that leg of measurement and continue. If it is less than 50 amos, they hold the 50 amos rope above it, while if it is more, but it narrows further away, they go to the area where it is less than 50 amos, measure there, and then return to their original path. If the only place it is this small is outside of the techum, they may not go to there to measure. If he can't subsume since it is large, Rabbi Dostai the son of Yannai quotes Rabbi Meir saying that we modify the measurement, akin to boring a hole through the mountain. Instead of using one rope of 50 amos, smaller segments are measured, 4 amos each, with the higher end at the feet of the person, reducing the impact of the slope on the measurement. (57b – 58a)

The Gemora asks: From where is this (*that the measuring must be done with a fifty-amah rope*) deduced?

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: It is from that which the verse states: *The length of the courtyard shall be one hundred amos, and the width fifty by fifty.* The Torah thus ordained: Measure with a rope of the length of fifty amos.

The Gemora asks: But isn't this verse required for the ordinance to take away fifty (*the excess of the length – one hundred amos, over the width - fifty amos*), and surround (*the remaining*) fifty (*to form a perfect square, which equals 5,000 square amos, which amounts to 70 and 2/3 amos by 70 and 2/3 amos*)?

The Gemora answers: If it was written only for that purpose, the Torah might have said 'fifty, fifty,' why then did it say 'fifty by fifty'? Therefore, both laws may be derived. (58a)

The Mishna had stated: not more and not less.

The Gemora cites a braisa: Neither less, because the measurements are increased (*for a shorter rope is likely to be stretched, and each unit of rope would consequently cover more amos of ground than the standard number it represents; the Shabbos techum would in consequence be greater than the permitted distance*); nor more, because they are reduced (*for a longer rope cannot be so well stretched, and each unit of it would cover less ground than the standard number it represents; this would result in a loss in the Shabbos techum*). (58a)

Rabbi Assi ruled: One must measure only with a rope of *afsakima*.

Rabbi Abba explained: This is *nargila*.

Rabbi Yaakov explained: *Nargila* is a palm tree which has only one vine (*growing from it*).

The Gemora cites a different version (*regarding the meaning of afsakima*): Rabbi Abba explained: This is *nargila*, whereas Rabbi Yaakov explained it that it is a palm tree which has only one vine (*growing from it*).

It was taught in a braisa: Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya said: You have nothing more suitable for measuring than iron chains, but what can we do in face of what the Torah said: *With a measuring rope in his hand.*



The *Gemora* asks: Is it not, however, written: *And in the man's hand was a measuring stick?*

The *Gemora* answers: That was used for measuring the (*width of the*) gates. [*Smaller distances are measured with sticks; longer distances are measured with rope.*]

Rav Yosef taught the following *braisa*: There are three kinds of rope. Those made of reeds, of peeled willow branches, and of linen. The ropes made of reeds were used for the red heifer; for we learned in a *Mishna*: They bound it with a rope of reeds and put it on its pyre. [*Reeds were used, for they cannot become tamei.*] The ropes made from peeled willow branches were used in connection with the *sotah*; for we learned in a *Mishna*: And afterwards, he (*the Kohen*) brings a willow rope and binds it above her breasts. The linen rope was used for measuring purposes. (58a)

The *Mishna* had stated: If there is a valley, he can swallow it up in the techum [and return to his measuring].

Since it was stated: 'resumes his measuring' it may be inferred that if he is unable to span it he proceeds to a position from where he is able to do so and, after spanning it, he makes the necessary observations [whereby he is enabled to locate the point on the far side] that is in a straight line with his original line of measuring and then he resumes [his measurements in a straight line] — Thus we have here learnt what the Rabbis have taught elsewhere: If in the course of measuring the measuring rope reached a valley, the surveyor may span it if he can do so with a rope of fifty cubits, but if not, he proceeds to a position from where he is able to span it and, having spanned it, he makes the necessary observations [whereby he is enabled to locate the point on the far sides that is in a straight line with his original line of measuring] and then he resumes his measuring. If the valley

¹ Sc. that poles towering above it shall be held up on both its sides and the rope stretched from one to the other.

² Why then is a mere estimate allowed in this case?

³ One for instance that rises gently to a height of ten handbreadths in all area of four cubits. Hence it must either be spanned or pierced.

was a crooked one it is pierced in an upward, as well as in a downward direction. If it reached a wall we do not say: 'Let the wall be bored through';¹ its thickness rather is estimated and the measuring continues. Have we not, however, learnt: He spans it and resumes his measuring?² — There it is a case of one that can be conveniently used³ but here it is a case of one that cannot conveniently be used.⁴

Rav Yehudah citing Shmuel stated: This⁵ was learned only in the case where a plumb line does not descend in a straight line, but if it does descend in a straight line the bottom of the valley is measured by the ordinary method. (58a – 58b)

What may be the depth of a valley? — Rav Yosef replied: Two thousand cubits. Abaye raised an objection against him: [If a valley was] a hundred cubits deep and fifty cubits wide one may span it, otherwise one may not! — He holds the view of 'Others', it having been taught: Others rule: Even though a valley was two thousand cubits deep but only fifty cubits wide one may span it.

Some there are who read: Rav Yosef replied: Even if it was deeper than two thousand cubits. In agreement with whose view is this ruling? Is it neither in agreement with that of the first Tanna nor with that of the 'Others'? — There it is a case where the plumb line does not descend in a straight line, but here it is one where it does descend in a straight line.

Where the plumb line does not descend in a straight line how much [deviation] is allowed? — Avimi replied: Up to four cubits; and so learned Rami b. Ezekiel: Up to four cubits.

IF HE REACHED A HILL HE SPANS IT AND RESUMES HIS MEASURING. Rava explained: This⁶ was learnt only in respect of a hill that has a rise of ten handbreadths to a gradient of four cubits, but a hill that has a rise of ten handbreadths to

⁴ A wall, for instance, that rose sharply in a perpendicular direction. As its sides are of no use for walking purposes they may be disregarded and only the estimated thickness of the wall need be included in the measurements.

⁵ That the method of piercing is admissible.

⁶ That the method of spanning or piercing is allowed.



five cubits must be measured in the usual manner.⁷ Rav Huna son of Rav Nassan taught this in the direction of leniency: Rava explained. This was learnt only in respect of a hill that has a rise often handbreadths to a gradient of five cubits, but a hill that has a rise of ten handbreadths to a gradient of four cubits⁸ one need only estimate its base and proceed with his measuring. (58b)

PROVIDED HE DOES NOT GO BEYOND THE SHABBOS LIMIT. What is the reason? — Rav Kahana replied: This was ordained as a preventive measure against the possible assumption that the Shabbos limit reached to that point. (58b)

IF HE IS UNABLE TO SPAN IT. Our Rabbis taught: How is the method of piercing carried out? The man on the lower level holds his end of the rope on a level with his heart while the man on the higher level holds his end on a level with his feet. Abaye stated: We have it as a tradition that piercing may be effected only with a rope of the length of four cubits.

Rav Nachman citing Rabbah bar Avuha stated: The method of piercing must not be employed in measurements in connection with the eglah arufah nor in those around the cities of refuge, because these are ordinances of the Torah. (58b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Types of Ropes

The Gemora quoted Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya as stating that a chain of metal is good for measuring. However, what can he do, as the prophet states, “And in his hand is a measuring rope.” The Gemora seems to conclude that a linen rope should be used.

The Meiri quotes an argument regarding how to understand the Gemora. He first quotes many Rishonim who hold that our Gemora is saying that one can only use a flax rope while measuring techumin. Nothing else is suitable.

However, the Meiri himself argues that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya was saying that it would be *preferable* to use a rope of metal, being that it cannot be pulled and stretched out. However, being that the verse says that “And in his hand was a measuring rope,” it is clear that one may also use a rope of flax. According to the Meiri, Rabbi Yehoshua still concludes that a rope of metal can be used.

DAILY MASHAL

At the beginning of the current Daf Yomi cycle, a certain Jew from the Bayit Vegan neighborhood in Yerushalayim began attending a local Daf Yomi shiur. Each day, he would bring his own Maseches Berachos from his set of Shas. Like many others, he felt attached to his own seforim, and preferred using them, as opposed to the Gemaros that were available in shul. As they approached the conclusion of Berachos and the beginning of Shabbos, he was reminded of the unfortunate absence of Maseches Shabbos from his Shas. He had lost it sixteen years earlier in a cab. His many attempts to locate the cab driver were fruitless, and he long ago abandoned any hope of recovering the gemara.

To be cont.....

⁷ Such a gentle slope is deemed to be on a par with level ground which may not be measured either by spanning or by piercing.

⁸ Being too steep and hardly suitable for walking.