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Sukkah Daf 15

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MISHNAH: A roof that consists of boards that have not yet been covered with plaster [and one wishes to convert the roof into *s’chach*], Rabbi Yehudah says: Beis Shammai maintains that one must loosen the boards and he then removes one board from between every two boards. Beis Hillel, however, maintains that one can either loosen the boards or he can remove one board from between every two boards. Rabbi Meir says: He removes one board from between every two boards, but he does not (need to) loosen them. (15a1)

The *Gemora* asks: It is well according to Beis Hillel; their reason is that ‘You shall make (a Sukkah,’ which implies: but not from that which is already made (improperly); so that if he loosens the boards, he performs an action (and it is regarded as he is making the Sukkah anew), and if he removes one from between the two, he also performs an action; but what is the reason of Beis Shammai (for requiring both)? If it is that ‘You shall make (a Sukkah,’ which implies: but not from that which is already made (improperly), one action should be sufficient; and if it is because of a decree against using anything that resembles a roof, it should suffice if he removes one from between the two? The *Gemora* answers: Indeed it is because of a decree against using anything that resembles a roof, but they mean as follows: Even though he loosens them, if he removes one from between the two, it is valid, otherwise, it is not.

The *Gemora* asks: If so, consider the concluding part of the *Mishnah*: Rabbi Meir says: he removes one board from between every two boards, but he does not (need to) loosen them. Isn’t Rabbi Meir’s view thus identical with that of Beis Shammai? The *Gemora* answers: Rabbi Meir means as follows: Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel did not argue on this point.

The *Gemora* asks: What then is the *Mishnah* teaching us? Is it that Rabbi Meir holds that a decree (has been enacted) against

using anything that resembles a roof, while Rabbi Yehudah disregards the decree against using anything that resembles a roof? But have they not already disputed on this point, seeing that we have learned in a *Mishnah*: Boards may be used for the *s’chach*; these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah; Rabbi Meir forbids them? Rabbi Chiya bar Abba answered in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: The first *Mishnah* deals with smoothed boards, and they forbade them as a preventive measure against the possible use of utensils (which are susceptible to *tumah*).

The *Gemora* asks: But according to Rav Yehudah in the name of Rav who said: If he covered the Sukkah with arrow shafts, the halachah is as follows: If they are male ones (which lack a receptacle), it is valid (for they are not susceptible to *tumah*); with female arrow shafts, it is invalid; and he does not restrict male shafts on account of the possible use of female ones; here also, we should not restrict smoothed boards on account of the possible use of utensils? The *Gemora* therefore explains the dispute in the *Mishnah* differently: The dispute in the first *Mishnah* is regarding the question whether a preventive measure against using anything that resembles a roof has been enacted and that the dispute in the latter *Mishnah* is also on the same question; but why should they dispute the same question twice? The latter *Mishnah* is what Rabbi Yehudah said to Rabbi Meir: Why do you forbid boards? Is it as a preventive measure against using anything that resembles a roof? But it is Beis Shammai alone who hold this opinion, while Beis Hillel do not enact any preventive measure? To this Rabbi Meir answers that Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel do not dispute this point at all.

The *Gemora* asks: This is correct according to Rav who says that the dispute is where the boards are four tefachim wide, since in such a case Rabbi Meir holds that a preventive measure has been enacted against using anything that resembles a roof, while Rabbi Yehudah disregards the preventive measure against

using anything that resembles a roof; but according to Shmuel, who says that the dispute is where the boards are not four tefachim wide, but that where they are four tefachim wide all agree that it is invalid, on what principle do they argue about in the latter *Mishnah*? The *Gemora* answers: They dispute regarding the question of the nullification of a roof (thru the loosening of the boards): One master (R' Yehudah) holds the opinion that by this means it becomes nullified, while the other master (R' Meir) holds the opinion that by this means it does not become nullified. (15a1 - 15a2)

MISHNAH: If one covers his Sukkah with spits or with the sides of a bed, which are invalid as *s'chach*, if there are spaces between the spits or sides of the bed which are identical in size to the invalid *s'chach* and he fills the spaces with valid *s'chach*, the Sukkah is valid. (15a3)

Can we say that this is a refutation of Rav Huna, the son of Rav Yehoshua, since it was stated, regarding a wall whose breach is equal to the walled portion: Rav Pappa says that it is permitted [to carry in such an area on the Shabbos because we require just half the partition to be solid], whereas Rav Huna, the son of Rav Yehoshua maintains that it is forbidden. [Our *Mishnah*, however, rules that even if only half of the *s'chach* is comprised of valid materials, the *s'chach* is valid.] The *Gemara* deflects this argument, for Rav Huna, the son of Rav Yehoshua may explain that when the *Mishnah* says "identical in size," it refers to a case where [a spit] could go in and out [i.e., there is slightly more empty space, which can be filled with valid *s'chach*, than the invalid *s'chach*].

But is it not possible to measure them exactly? — Rabbi Ami answered: This is a case where he makes it larger.¹

Rava said: One can even say that he does not make it larger, but if they were placed lengthwise, he places [the valid *s'chach*] crosswise; if crosswise, he places them lengthwise.² (15a4 – 15b)

The *Mishnah* had stated: Or sides of the bed. Can we say that this confirms [a statement of] Rabbi Ami bar Tavyomi, for Rabbi

¹ I.e., the *Mishnah* actually referred only to a case where one did make it larger.

² The *Mishnah* refers to a case where the *s'chach* is placed perpendicular to the spits, thus creating a majority of valid *s'chach*, which would nullify the invalid *s'chach*.

Ami bar Tavyomi said: If he covered the Sukkah with worn-out pieces of clothing, it is invalid? — [No,] as Rabbi Chanan said elsewhere in the name of Rebbe: With the long board and two legs, or with the short board³ and two legs, so here also it may refer to the long board and two legs, or the short board and two legs. Where was this statement of Rabbi Chanan in the name of Rebbe stated? — In connection with what we have learned: A bed can become tamei [only] when it is assembled and be rendered tahor only when it is assembled; these are the words of Rabbi Eliezer, but the Sages say: it can become tamei when it is in parts and become tahor when in parts. What are [these parts]? — Rabbi Chanan said in the name of Rebbe: The long board and two legs or the short board and two legs. For what is it fit?⁴ — For placing against a wall and sitting upon it, and for tying it with ropes.⁵ (15a4-15b)

DAILY MASHAL

The *Gemara* states the Rabbis forbade the use of boards as *s'chach* as a preventive measure against using anything that resembles a roof. The *Sfas Emes* points out a fascinating concept from here: One may not use boards for *s'chach* (even if he has no other material), and thus he might not have the opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah of Sukkah, all on account of the concern that he might, on a different occasion, use materials that will constitute a real roof, and that will certainly be an invalid Sukkah. This is similar to the decree of not reciting Keiras Shema after chatzos, for they were concerned that one might recite it, on a different occasion, after the night has passed. How careful one must be to fulfill a mitzvah in its proper form!

³ The short boards are at the head and foot of the bed, the long at the sides.

⁴ So that it has the status of a 'vessel'.

⁵ To form a couch.