The Gemara answers: This mishna is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, who said that in order to permit carrying in a courtyard that was breached, we require two upright boards, one on either side of the breach. As it was taught in a baraita: If a courtyard was breached and opens into the public domain, and the width of the breach does not exceed ten cubits, it becomes permitted to carry there, even with only one upright board remaining on one side of the breach. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: It is permitted only with two upright boards remaining, one on each side of the breach.

The Gemara rejects this entire explanation: What is this comparison? Granted, if you say that the legal status of a side post that is visible from the outside but appears to be even with the wall from the inside is not considered like that of a side post; and that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei that a side post or an upright board in a courtyard must be at least three handbreadths wide; and that the explanations of the mishna offered earlier by Rabbi Zeira and Ravina are not accepted; that is why there is significance to the fact that the small courtyard is ten cubits wide and the large one is eleven cubits wide. It is due to the fact that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei. Since Rabbi Yosei holds that a side post must be three handbreadths wide, we require that the two upright boards together measure six handbreadths, i.e., one cubit, which is the minimal difference in size between the two courtyards.

However, if you say that the legal status of a side post that is visible from the outside but appears to be even with the wall from the inside is considered like that of a side post; and that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, why do I need to explain that the large courtyard measures eleven cubits?

Whichever way you look at it, there is a difficulty: If the baraita is coming to permit one to carry in the large courtyard, then a width of ten cubits and two handbreadths suffices. These two handbreadths can be considered the upright boards that render the courtyard fit for one to carry within it. And if it is coming to teach a novel halakha according to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and prohibit one to carry in the small courtyard, it should teach us a case where the walls of the two courtyards are much farther removed from each other, rather than a case where they are only one cubit apart. Therefore, the second explanation cannot be accepted.

Rather, can we not conclude from the baraita that a side post that is visible from the outside but appears to be even with the wall from the inside is not considered to have the legal status of a side post? The Gemara concludes: Indeed, conclude from this.

Rav Yosef said: I did not hear this halakha of Rabba bar Rav Huna from my teachers. Rav Yosef had become ill and forgotten his learning, which is why he could not recall the halakha that a side post that is visible from the outside is considered to have the legal status of a side post.

His student Abaye said to him: You yourself told us this halakha, and it was with regard to this that you told it to us. As Rami bar Abba said that Rav Huna said: With regard to a side post that extends along the wall of an alleyway and beyond,24 in which case it appears from the inside to be a continuation of the wall but due to its narrow width it is clearly visible as a side post from the outside, if that side post is less than four cubits long it is considered to have the legal status of a side post. And one may use the alleyway up to the inner edge of the side post. However, if the side post itself extends four cubits, the alleyway has no side post and it is considered to have the legal status of an alleyway, and it is prohibited to utilize the entire alleyway.
An alleyway that is wider than ten – if the entrance to an alleyway is wider than ten cubits, a cross beam cannot be used to permit carrying in the alleyway, unless its width is diminished to ten cubits or less. This halakha is in accordance with the unattributed mishna (Shuṭhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim 303:26).

The opening mishna states: If the entrance to an alleyway is wider than ten cubits, one must diminish its width. Abaye said that a Sage taught in the Tosefta: If the entrance to an alleyway is wider than ten cubits, a must diminish its width. Rabbi Yehuda says: He need not diminish it. The question arises: Until what width does Rabbi Yehuda still permit carrying in the alleyway?

Initially, Rav Alai thought to say before Rav Yosef: Up to thirteen and a cubits. And he derived this figure through an a fortiori argument from upright boards surrounding a well. Rabbi Yehuda maintains that if one placed upright boards up to thirteen and a cubits apart from one another, he may consider the partitioned area around the well as a private domain and therefore carry within it.

Rav Alai explains: Just as in the case of upright boards surrounding a well, where you permitted carrying, even though the boards form a partition where the breached segment is greater than the standing segment, you did not permit carrying within them if the gap between the boards is more than thirteen and a cubits wide; in the case of an alleyway, where you did not permit carrying if the breached segment of its walls is greater than the standing segment, is it not right that you will not permit carrying within it if there is a gap more than thirteen and a cubits wide?

But that reasoning provides support for a contrary conclusion as well. Just as in the case of upright boards surrounding a well, where you permitted carrying within them, even though the boards form a partition where the breached segment is greater than the standing segment, you will not extend the leniency and permit carrying within them, when the gap between the boards is more than thirteen and a cubits wide; in an alleyway, where you were stringent and did not permit carrying when the breached segment is greater than the standing segment, in a case where most of the walls are standing, you will certainly permit carrying, even when the gap is more than thirteen and a cubits wide.

Alternatively, one may argue to the contrary. One should be more stringent in the case of an alleyway. In the case of upright boards surrounding a well, with regard to which you were lenient and issued one leniency, be lenient and issue another leniency and maintain that a gap of up to thirteen and a cubits still be considered an entrance. However, in the case of an alleyway, you should not be lenient at all. Therefore, there is no way to determine Rabbi Yehuda’s opinion with regard to the width of an alleyway entrance.
Levi taught a baraita with regard to reducing the width of an alleyway in order to render it fit for one to carry within it. If an alleyway is twenty cubits wide, one may stick a reed in the center of its entrance and that is sufficient to create two separate alleyways, each ten cubits wide. He taught this baraita, and he said about it that the halakha is not in accordance with that teaching, as the insertion of a reed is not effective in reducing the width. Some say that Shmuel said in the name of Levi: The halakha is not in accordance with that teaching.

The Gemara asks: Rather, how should one act in order to render an alleyway of that sort fit for one to carry within it? Shmuel said in the name of Levi:

One prepares a board ten handbreadths high with a length of four cubits and stands it lengthwise down the middle of the alleyway, and thereby forms two small alleyways at the entrance to the alleyway, neither of which is more than ten cubits wide.16

Alternatively, one can act in accordance with the opinion of Rav Yehuda, as Rav Yehuda said: If an alleyway is fifteen cubits wide, how does one reduce its width? He distances himself two cubits from one of the walls of the alleyway and prepares a board three cubits wide, thereby leaving an opening of only ten cubits.17

The Gemara asks: And why must one reduce the width in this manner? One could also prepare a board a cubit and a half wide, and distance himself two cubits, and then prepare another board a cubit and a half wide, leaving the alleyway with an opening of only ten cubits. Apparently, one may conclude from the fact that Rav Yehuda did not suggest this possibility that if the standing segment of a wall is greater than the breached segment only when one combines the standing segments from two directions, i.e., both sides of the breach, it is not considered as though the standing segment were greater.

The Gemara rejects this: Actually, I would say to you that ordinarily it is considered as standing even when one must combine the standing segments on the two sides of the breach. However, it is different here, as the air, i.e., the one and a half cubit opening, of this one side of the far board and the air, i.e., the ten cubit opening, of this other side of the board come together and negate it. Therefore, in this case, the board that is farther from the wall cannot serve to close off the alleyway.

NOTES

16 Some commentaries state that it does not have the halakha of Rabbi Levi. The Rosh, Rabbeinu Yeruĥam and others, the Rishonim, and the Shulĥan Arukh in Orach Chayyim 363:34 agree with this assumption.

17 Board three cubits wide – עץ כף פס. The image depicts an alleyway fifteen cubits wide in which a board of three cubits has been set up across its entrance, in accordance with the opinion of Rav Yehuda.

BACKGROUND

Upright boards surrounding a well

An alleyway that is wider than ten – הגדול עלי יהודית

According to the Jerusalem Talmud, the cross beam is invalid only if it rests solely on the reed inserted in the center. However, if it rests on the alleyway’s two walls as well, it is valid. However, the Babylonian Talmud did not accept this assumption.

Diminishing the entrance of a wide alleyway – קשם מבפנים

If the entrance to an alleyway is twenty cubits wide, a low, thin board at least ten handbreadths high and four cubits wide should be positioned down the middle of the alleyway, forming two alleyways. A cross beam that reaches from one wall of the original alleyway to the other wall should be placed at the entrance to these two alleyways. Care should be taken that the cross beam is positioned above the board or within three handbreadths of it (Rashba; Rosh). The two new alleyways must each meet all the conditions of an alleyway in which carrying is permitted. The section of the alleyway from the board to the back wall is considered an L-shaped alleyway (Bait Yosef).

Some commentaries state that it does not have the halakha of an L-shaped alleyway unless the distance between the board to the back wall is greater than ten cubits (Rema, based on the Rosh; Rabbeinu Yeruĥam and others; Shulĥan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 363:33).

Diminishing the entrance of a wide alleyway – קשם מבפנים

Rav Yehuda proposed an alternate method to diminish the entrance to the alleyway, positioning a thin board across the alleyway entrance. There are several ways to accomplish this. If the alleyway is twenty cubits wide, one can prepare a thin board three cubits wide at a distance of two cubits from each of the alleyway’s walls.

Another method involves preparing a thin board that is a cubit and a half wide at a distance of one cubit from the alleyway wall. Then, another thin board, a cubit and a half wide, is prepared a cubit away from the first thin board. A matching set of thin boards is then prepared on the other side of the alleyway’s entrance.

Yet another method is to prepare a thin board, two cubits and four handbreadths wide, at a distance of two cubits and two handbreadths from the alleyway wall and to do the same on the other side (Maggid Mishne in the name of the Rashba).

All these methods are accepted in the Gemara. The basic principle of these constructions is that the width of the thin board should be greater than the space between it and the wall, in keeping with the principle that the standing segment must be greater than the breached segment from one direction (Shulĥan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 363:34).
The Ra’avad states that this concern applies only in a case where the cross beam does not span the entire width of the alleyway. However, if the cross beam spans the breached section as well, it makes no difference through which entrance one passes.

In what way is this different from the opinion of Rabbi Ami – and Rabbi Asi concerning an alleyway that is breached (Ra’avad; Rav Shimshon of Saens).

Large and small entrances – זוֹא וְדוֹגָל: When diminishing a wide alleyway by placing thin boards across its entrance, one must be careful not to make a habit of passing through the small entrance between the wall and the board. If one does so, carrying in the alleyway can be permitted only by means of the form of a doorway, as is implied by the statements of the Gemara (Shulhan Arukh, Oraĥ Ĥayyim 363:34).

When diminishing a wide alleyway, one must be careful not to make a habit of passing through the small entrance between the wall and the board. However, if the cross beam spans the breached section as well, it makes no difference through which entrance one passes.

The Gemara suggests: And one could instead prepare a board one cubit wide and distance itself one cubit, and prepare another board of a cubit and distance himself one cubit, and prepare a third board of one cubit, thus ensuring that the open space is not greater than the standing segment on both sides. Apparently, since Rav Yehuda did not suggest this possibility, one may conclude from this that if the standing segment of a wall is equal to the breached segment, carrying in the alleyway is prohibited.

The Gemara rejects this assumption: Actually, I would say to you that ordinarily carrying is permitted in that case. But here it is different, since the air, the opening, on this side of the board and the air, the opening, on that side of the board come together and negate the effectiveness of the board.

Large and small entrances – זוֹא וְדוֹגָל: When diminishing a wide alleyway by placing thin boards across its entrance, one must be careful not to make a habit of passing through the small entrance between the wall and the board. If one does so, carrying in the alleyway can be permitted only by means of the form of a doorway, as is implied by the statements of the Gemara (Shulhan Arukh, Oraĥ Ĥayyim 363:34).

The Gemara suggests: And one could distance himself one cubit from the wall, and prepare a board of a cubit and a half, and distance himself another cubit, and prepare another board of a cubit and a half. In this manner, one could diminish the width of the entrance of the alleyway to ten cubits.

The Gemara answers: Yes, it is indeed so; this would work equally as well. But the Sages did not burden him this much, requiring him to prepare two boards where one suffices.

The Gemara raises a new issue: But let us be concerned lest one abandon the larger entrance, which is ten cubits wide, and begin to enter the alleyway through the smaller entrance, which has a width of two cubits. This would negate the larger opening’s status as an entrance and render the alleyway unfit for one to carry within it, as it would no longer have an entrance with a side post. Rav Adda bar Mattana said: The presumption is that a person does not abandon a larger entrance and enter instead through a smaller entrance.

The Gemara raises a difficulty: And in what way is this different from the opinion of Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi, who maintain that in the case of an alleyway that is breached on its side wall close to its entrance, if the breach is large enough for one to enter through it, carrying in the alleyway is prohibited? There, too, such a breach should not be problematic, as a person does not abandon a larger entrance to enter through a smaller one.

The Gemara answers: There, in the case of Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi, the smaller entrance reduces his walking distance. If one approaches the alleyway from the side, the smaller entrance provides a shortcut, and therefore one might enter through it as well. However, here, in the case of the two entrances one two cubits and one ten cubits, it does not reduce his walking distance, as both openings are situated at the front of the alleyway.

The Gemara returns to the issue of the standing segment that is greater than the breached segment. We learned in the Tosefta there, in tractate Kelim: The leather covering of a stool (asla) and its hole join together to complete a handbreadth with regard to ritual impurity imparted by a tent over a corpse. Any person, vessel, or food that is beneath a covering that is at a distance, as both openings are situated at the front of the alleyway.

The Gemara asks: What is the leather covering of a stool referred to in the Tosefta? Rabba bar bar Hana said that Rav Yohanan said: The leather covering of a bathroom.
The Gemara asks: And how large can the hole be and still combine with the leather covering to complete the handbreadth? When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia, he said: Two fingers of leather from here, on one side, and two fingers of leather from here, on the other side, and a space of two fingers for the hole in the middle. However, when Ravin came from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia, he said: A finger and a half of leather from here, and a finger and a half on the leather from here, and a space of a single finger for the hole in the middle.

Abaye said to Ravin: Do the two of you, yourself and Ravin, disagree in principle? Ravin said to him: No, rather, this, Ravin's statement, is referring to the large finger, i.e., the thumb, and this, my own statement, is referring to the small finger, the pinkie, and we do not disagree. Both were describing one handbreadth, which equals the width of four thumbs or six pinkies.

Abaye said to him: This is not so. You disagree, and you disagree with regard to the measure of a handbreadth: if when one combines the standing segments only when one combines the standing segments from two directions, i.e., both sides of the breached segment. According to you, this wall is considered as standing, even when one must combine the standing segments from two directions. According to Ravin, if the standing segment on one side of the breach is greater, the wall is considered as standing; however, if the standing segment is greater only after combining the standing segments from the two directions, it is not considered as standing.

Abaye continues: For it should enter your mind to say that you do not disagree, but simply refer to the same measures by different names, to express his opinion, Ravin should have said as follows: A finger and a third of leather from here, and a finger and a third of leather from here, and a space of a finger and a third for the hole in the middle. In this case, there would still be a handbreadth in total, but each side of leather alone would not be greater than the space in the middle. The fact that Ravin presented a case where the hole in the middle is smaller than the width of the leather on either side indicates that his dispute with Rav Dimi is a fundamental one.

Rav Dimi responds: Rather, what do you wish to say, that we disagree? If so, to express the opinion attributed to me, I should have said as follows: A finger and two thirds of leather from here, and a finger and two thirds of leather from here, and a space of two fingers and two thirds in the middle. This would provide a more striking case where, despite the fact that the breach is much greater than the standing segments on either of its sides, the two standing segments combine together so that the standing segments are considered greater than the breached segment.

Rather, if there is room to say that we disagree, our dispute relates to a different point, and we argue in the case where the breached segment is exactly equal to the standing segment on each side. According to Ravin, it is considered breached; while according to Rav Dimi, it is considered standing.

The Gemara returns to the mishna: If the entrance to the alleyway has a doorframe, it is unnecessary to diminish the width of the entrance, even if it is greater than ten cubits, as stated by the mishna (Shabbat Arukh, Orach Hayyim 363:10).