The Gemara questions the statement in the mishna with regard to the minimum width of the cross beam: A handbreadth? A handbreadth and a half is required, as a small brick is a handbreadth and a half wide.

The Gemara answers: Since the cross beam is wide enough to receive and hold a handbreadth, one can affix the remaining half handbreadth with plaster, a small amount on this side and a small amount on that side, and the brick will stand in place.

Rabba bar Rav Huna said: The cross beam of which the Sages spoke must be sturdy enough to receive and hold a small brick; however, the supports of the cross beam need not be sturdy enough to receive and hold a cross beam and a small brick. Criteria were established for the cross beam itself, which renders the alleyway fit for one to carry within it; criteria were not established for its supports. Rav Hida disagreed and said: Both this, the beam, and that, its supports, must be sturdy enough to hold a cross beam and a small brick.

Rav Sheeshet said: If one placed a cross beam over the entrance of an alleyway, and draped a mat over it, and raised the lower end of the mat three handbreadths from the ground, there is neither a cross beam here, nor is there a partition here to render the alleyway fit for one to carry within it. There is neither a cross beam here, as it is obscured and therefore inconspicuous. Nor is there a partition here, as it is a partition that is more than three handbreadths off the ground through which goats can pass, and therefore it does not have the legal status of a partition.

Our Sages taught in the Tosefta: If a cross beam projects from this wall of an alleyway and do not touch that wall opposite, or similarly, if there are two cross beams, one projecting from this wall and one projecting from that wall opposite, and they do not touch one another, if there is a gap of less than three handbreadths between the beam and the wall, or between the two beams respectively, one need not bring another cross beam to render the alleyway fit for one to carry within it, as they are considered joined based on the principle of lavud. However, if there is a gap of three handbreadths, one must bring another cross beam.

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: If the gap is less than four handbreadths, one need not bring another cross beam. However, if it is four handbreadths, he must bring another cross beam, as in his opinion the principle of lavud applies to a gap up to four handbreadths wide.

And similarly, if two matching, extremely narrow cross beams are placed alongside each other, even though there is not sufficient width in this beam to receive a small brick, and there is not sufficient width in that beam, if the two beams together can receive a small brick along its handbreadth width, one need not bring another cross beam to render the alleyway fit for one to carry within it, but if not, one is required to bring another cross beam.

The supports of the cross beam – חיבור קמא: Some hold that the supports of the cross beam must be sturdy enough to support the cross beam and a small brick on top of it. They rule in accordance with the opinion of Rav Hida because he was a greater authority than Rabba bar Rav Huna (Vilna Gaon; Rabbeinu Hananel; Rambam; Maggid Mishne; Or Zaru; Rokaf). Other authorities rule that the supports of the cross beam need be sturdy enough only to support the weight of the cross beam alone, and in accordance with the opinion of Rabba bar Rav Huna, because in disputes relating to rabbinic law the ruling is lenient (Rashi; Mordekhai; Rama; and others). In practice, some authorities ruled leniently (Shulhan Arukh HaRah), while others ruled stringently ab initio because the majority of authorities ruled stringently (Mishna Berura; Shulhan Arukh, Orah HaHayyim 363:18).

A cross beam covered by a mat – דקיקא דנקנסא: A cross beam covered by a mat that does not reach within three handbreadths of the ground does not render an alleyway fit for one to carry within it, in accordance with the opinion of Rav Sheeshet (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 363:24).

Adjacent cross beams that do not touch one another – דקיקא דקרוב: If a cross beam projects from one wall and reaches within three handbreadths of the opposite wall, or if two cross beams project from two opposite walls and reach within three handbreadths of each other, they render an alleyway fit for one to carry within it. Based on the principle of lavud, it is as though they were a single cross beam (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 363:21).

Matching, extremely narrow cross beams – דקיקא דקרוב: If two narrow cross beams are placed parallel to each other within three handbreadths of each other, and neither is wide enough to hold a small brick, they are considered as one cross beam and render the alleyway fit for one to carry within it, based on the principle of lavud (Rambam). Others say that they must be within one handbreadth of each other, as the Gemara requires that they must actually be capable of supporting a small brick (Tosafot; Tur; Haggahot Maimoniyot; Rabbeinu Yehonanan). Shulhan Arukh HaRah rules stringently (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 363:22).

Two cross beams – דקיקא דקרוב: The illustration below shows two cross beams projecting from two alleyway walls, but not touching each other. Each of these cross beams also serves as an example of a cross beam that projects from one wall but does not reach the opposite wall.

The supports of the cross beam – חיבור קמא: Some hold that the supports of the cross beam must be sturdy enough to support the cross beam and a small brick on top of it. They rule in accordance with the opinion of Rav Hida because he was a greater authority than Rabba bar Rav Huna (Vilna Gaon; Rabbeinu Hananel; Rambam; Maggid Mishne; Or Zaru; Rokaf). Other authorities rule that the supports of the cross beam need be sturdy enough only to support the weight of the cross beam alone, and in accordance with the opinion of Rabba bar Rav Huna, because in disputes relating to rabbinic law the ruling is lenient (Rashi; Mordekhai; Rama; and others). In practice, some authorities ruled leniently (Shulhan Arukh HaRah), while others ruled stringently ab initio because the majority of authorities ruled stringently (Mishna Berura; Shulhan Arukh, Orah HaHayyim 363:18).

A cross beam covered by a mat – דקיקא דנקנסא: A cross beam covered by a mat that does not reach within three handbreadths of the ground does not render an alleyway fit for one to carry within it, in accordance with the opinion of Rav Sheeshet (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 363:24).

Adjacent cross beams that do not touch one another – דקיקא דקרוב: If a cross beam projects from one wall and reaches within three handbreadths of the opposite wall, or if two cross beams project from two opposite walls and reach within three handbreadths of each other, they render an alleyway fit for one to carry within it. Based on the principle of lavud, it is as though they were a single cross beam (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 363:21).

Matching, extremely narrow cross beams – דקיקא דקרוב: If two narrow cross beams are placed parallel to each other within three handbreadths of each other, and neither is wide enough to hold a small brick, they are considered as one cross beam and render the alleyway fit for one to carry within it, based on the principle of lavud (Rambam). Others say that they must be within one handbreadth of each other, as the Gemara requires that they must actually be capable of supporting a small brick (Tosafot; Tur; Haggahot Maimoniyot; Rabbeinu Yehonanan). Shulhan Arukh HaRah rules stringently (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 363:22).

Two cross beams – דקיקא דקרוב: The illustration below shows two cross beams projecting from two alleyway walls, but not touching each other. Each of these cross beams also serves as an example of a cross beam that projects from one wall but does not reach the opposite wall.
HALAKHA

One above and one below – רוחב ארבעה.

If two cross beams that are narrower than required are set one above the other and they are within three handbreadths of each other, they constitute a valid cross beam, provided that neither of them is above twenty cubits or below ten handbreadths (Tur, citing Rambam). The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, whose opinion is cited elsewhere in the Gemara (Vilna Gaon; Shulhan Arukh, Oraĥ Ĥayyim 363:26).

Four handbreadths wide – רוחב ארבעה.

A cross beam that is four handbreadths wide renders an alleyway fit for one to carry within it, even if it is not sturdy enough to hold a small brick. This ruling is in accordance with the opinion of Rav (Shulhan Arukh, Oraĥ Ĥayyim 363:26).

The Gemara challenges this statement: Wide enough even though it is not sturdy enough. Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yehuda, says: One considers the upper one as though it were above, and the lower one as though it were below, i.e., close together. If the two together are fit to hold a small brick, they render the alleyway fit for one to carry within it, although they are not actually close to each other, provided that the upper cross beam is not above twenty cubits and the lower one is not below ten handbreadths, between which a cross beam renders an alleyway fit for one to carry within it.

And Rabbi Yosei disagrees with his father’s opinion with regard to one matter. While Rabbi Yehuda holds that a cross beam renders an alleyway fit for one to carry within it even if it is higher than twenty cubits, Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yeheuda, holds: Within twenty cubits, yes, it renders the alleyway fit for one to carry within it; above twenty, it does not.

It was stated in the mishna that Rabbi Yehuda says: It suffices if the cross beam is wide enough to hold a small brick, even though it is not sturdy enough to actually support it. Rav Yeheuda taught this clause of the mishna to Hyya bar Rav in the presence of Rav: It suffices if the cross beam is wide enough to hold a small brick, even though it is not sturdy enough to actually support it. Rav said to him: Teach it to him as follows: Wide enough and sturdy enough to hold a small brick.

The Gemara challenges this statement: Didn’t Rabbi Eliezer say that Rav said: A cross beam that is four handbreadths wide renders an alleyway fit for one to carry within it even if it is not sturdy enough to hold a small brick? The Gemara answers: A cross beam that is four handbreadths wide is different, as a beam of that width is considered a roof and not a beam. It is considered as though the edge of the roof descended and constituted an actual partition, not merely a conspicuous distinction.

It was stated in the mishna: Even if the cross beam is made of straw or reeds, one considers it as though it were made of metal. The Gemara asks: What is the mishna teaching us? If it is teaching that we say one considers the cross beam as though it were fit to bear a brick, then this clause is the same as the previous clause in the mishna: Wide enough even though it is not sturdy enough.

The Gemara answers: There is a novel point here, lest you say that with regard to a cross beam made of material that other beams of its own kind are sturdy, e.g., wood, we say that even the flimsiest of cross beams is considered sturdy. However, with regard to a cross beam made of material that only beams not of its own kind are sturdy, e.g., straw, which can never support a brick, we do not say that one considers the cross beam as if it were made of metal. Therefore, the mishna teaches us that there is no difference between the cases.
The diameter of a circle is the distance from one side to the other passing through the center. The circumference of a circle is the distance around the circle. The ratio between the circumference and the diameter of a circle is a constant, known as pi (π). The value of pi is approximately 3.14159.

It was taught in the mishna: If the cross beam is curved, one considers it as though it were square. The Gemara challenges: That is obvious. The Gemara answers: It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Zeira, as Rabbi Zeira said: If the cross beam is inside the alleyway, and its curved section is outside the alleyway; or it is within twenty cubits of the ground, and its curved section is above twenty cubits; or it is above ten handbreadths, and its curved section is below ten handbreadths, meaning that the cross beam itself is the part of the beam that is outside the area where a cross beam is effective, one considers the situation: In any case where were the curved section outside the area where a cross beam is effective, there would not be a gap of three handbreadths between this effective part of the cross beam and that effective part of the cross beam, one need not bring another cross beam. And if not, if the gap would be greater, he must bring another cross beam.

The Gemara comments: That too is obvious, as the curved portion of the cross beam is considered as though it were square. The Gemara asks: Why do I need this clause as well? Similar cases were already taught in the mishna. The Gemara answers: It was necessary to teach the halakha. Lest you say: Let us be concerned that he will come to be drawn after it and carry in the area where the curvature extends beyond the alleyway, Rabbi Zeira teaches us that this is not a concern.

The mishna continues: If the cross beam is round, one considers it as though it were square. The Gemara asks: Why do I need this clause as well? The Gemara answers: It was necessary to teach the last clause of this section, i.e., the principle that any circle with a circumference of three handbreadths is a handbreadth in diameter.

The Gemara asks: From where are these matters, this ratio between circumference and diameter, derived? Rabbi Yohanan said that the verse said with regard to King Solomon: “And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: It was round all about, and its height was five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits did circle it round about” (I Kings 7:23). The Gemara asks: But isn’t there its brim that must be taken into account? The diameter of the sea was measured from the inside, and if its circumference was measured from the outside, this ratio is no longer accurate.

Rav Pappa said: With regard to its brim, it is written that the brim is as the petals of a lily, as stated in the verse: “And it was a handbreadth thick; and its brim was wrought as the brim of a cup, as the petals of a lily, it contained two thousand bar” (I Kings 7:24). The brim was very thin. The Gemara asks: But nevertheless, isn’t there the minimal amount of the thickness of the brim? The Gemara answers: When one calculates the circumference, he calculates from the inside.

Rabbi Hiyya taught in a baraita: The sea that Solomon fashioned contained a volume of one hundred and fifty baths of ritual purification. The Gemara asks: After all, with regard to a ritual bath, how much is its volume? It is forty se’a, as it was taught in a baraita: And he shall bathe his flesh.

BACKGROUND

Curved cross beam – אַרְבָּעִים וְהָאִיכָּא מַשֶּׁהוּ! (40 and Moses said!) A round cross beam is valid, provided that its circumference is at least three handbreadths (Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 363:20).

A cross beam that is four handbreadths wide – מִכְּדִי, מִ ְוֶה כַּמָּה הָווֵי – אַרְבָּעִים וְהָאִיכָּא מַשֶּׁהוּ! (40 and Moses said!) A round cross beam is valid, provided that its circumference is at least three handbreadths (Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 363:24).

Halakha

The diameter of a circle is the distance from one side to the other passing through the center. The circumference of a circle is the distance around the circle. The ratio between the circumference and the diameter of a circle is a constant, known as pi (π). The value of pi is approximately 3.14159.

It was taught in the mishna: If the cross beam is curved, one considers it as though it were square. The Gemara challenges: That is obvious. The Gemara answers: It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Zeira, as Rabbi Zeira said: If the cross beam is inside the alleyway, and its curved section is outside the alleyway; or it is within twenty cubits of the ground, and its curved section is above twenty cubits; or it is above ten handbreadths, and its curved section is below ten handbreadths, meaning that the cross beam itself is the part of the beam that is outside the area where a cross beam is effective, one considers the situation: In any case where were the curved section outside the area where a cross beam is effective, there would not be a gap of three handbreadths between this effective part of the cross beam and that effective part of the cross beam, one need not bring another cross beam. And if not, if the gap would be greater, he must bring another cross beam.

The Gemara comments: That too is obvious, as the curved portion of the cross beam is considered as though it were square. The Gemara asks: Why do I need this clause as well? Similar cases were already taught in the mishna. The Gemara answers: It was necessary to teach the halakha. Lest you say: Let us be concerned that he will come to be drawn after it and carry in the area where the curvature extends beyond the alleyway, Rabbi Zeira teaches us that this is not a concern.

The mishna continues: If the cross beam is round, one considers it as though it were square. The Gemara asks: Why do I need this clause as well? The Gemara answers: It was necessary to teach the last clause of this section, i.e., the principle that any circle with a circumference of three handbreadths is a handbreadth in diameter.

The Gemara asks: From where are these matters, this ratio between circumference and diameter, derived? Rabbi Yohanan said that the verse said with regard to King Solomon: “And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: It was round all about, and its height was five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits did circle it round about” (I Kings 7:23). The Gemara asks: But isn’t there its brim that must be taken into account? The diameter of the sea was measured from the inside, and if its circumference was measured from the outside, this ratio is no longer accurate.

Rav Pappa said: With regard to its brim, it is written that the brim is as the petals of a lily, as stated in the verse: “And it was a handbreadth thick; and its brim was wrought as the brim of a cup, as the petals of a lily, it contained two thousand bar” (I Kings 7:24). The brim was very thin. The Gemara asks: But nevertheless, isn’t there the minimal amount of the thickness of the brim? The Gemara answers: When one calculates the circumference, he calculates from the inside.

Rabbi Hiyya taught in a baraita: The sea that Solomon fashioned contained a volume of one hundred and fifty baths of ritual purification. The Gemara asks: After all, with regard to a ritual bath, how much is its volume? It is forty se’a, as it was taught in a baraita: And he shall bathe his flesh.

NOTES

The diameter of a circle – רַבִּיסְיוּת שֶׁל כְּרוּב: Fosafot note that this calculation is imprecise, as the ratio between a circle’s circumference and its diameter is greater than three to one. In practice, the difference here is so small, i.e., less than one-twentieth of a handbreadth, that the Sages did not take it into consideration (Hilkei Shlomo). As for the principle itself, Rambam writes that since this ratio is clearly a number that fundamentally cannot be defined by means of other numbers, the Sages accepted the simplest approximation of three to one because they could not arrive at a true and definitive number for the ratio (Rambam’s Commentary on the Mishna).

He calculates from the inside – רַבִּיסְיוּת אָפְּאָא: Since it must have been obvious when measuring the laver that its circumference was nearly a cubit and a half longer (see Grün Yalok) than three times its diameter, some commentators explain that the diameter was measured from the outside, while the circumference was measured from the inside. Calculated in this manner, the inner circumference was in fact only slightly more than thirty cubits.
Three lower cubits were square – מְרוּבָּעוֹת וַעֲגוּלוֹת
In the Jerusalem Talmud, the conclusion is the same, based on the fact that Solomon's Sea is described in the verses as both square and round. Since the verse states that the rim of the laver was round, the implication is that below its rim it was square (Ge'on Ya'akov).

BACKGROUND

Square and round – תַּלְתָּה גָּזְעָה:

Model of Solomon's Sea according to Rami bar Yeĥezkel

The Gemara now calculates how many ritual baths should have been contained in Solomon's Sea. The volume of the sea was five hundred cubic cubits, as it was ten cubits in length, ten cubits in width, and five cubits in height. The minimum volume of a ritual bath is three cubic cubits. Therefore, three hundred cubic cubits is the volume of a hundred ritual baths, and one hundred and fifty cubic cubits is the volume of another fifty ritual baths. Consequently, four hundred and fifty cubic cubits are enough to contain a hundred and fifty ritual baths; but the volume of the sea was five hundred.

The Gemara answers that there is an error in the calculation: These calculations with regard to the volume of the sea would apply to a square, but the sea fashioned by Solomon was round, and its volume was therefore smaller.

The Gemara continues to ask: Now, how much larger is a square of ten-by-ten cubits than a circle with a diameter of ten cubits? A quarter. Consequently, four hundred cubic cubits of our original calculation must be reduced to three hundred, which is the volume of one hundred ritual baths; and the remaining hundred cubic cubits must be reduced to seventy-five, which is the volume of twenty-five ritual baths. According to this calculation, Solomon's Sea was the size of only one hundred and twenty-five ritual baths, not one hundred and fifty as stated above.

In answer to this question, Rami bar Yeĥezkel taught as follows: In the sea that Solomon fashioned, the three lower cubits were square and the upper two were round. Consequently, the three lower cubits of the sea contained the volume of a hundred ritual baths, and its upper three cubits contained the volume of fifty ritual baths, for a total of one hundred and fifty ritual baths.

The Gemara comments: Although you cannot say the opposite, that the bottom of the sea was round, as it is written in the verse that its brim was round; you can, however, say that only one cubit on top was round.

The Gemara rejects this possibility: This cannot enter your mind, as it is written with regard to the sea: “And it was a handbreadth thick, and its brim was wrought like the brim of a cup, like the petals of a lily; it contained two thousand but” (1 Kings 7:26). How much is the measure of a but? Three se'a, as the verse states: “Concerning the ordinance of oil, the but of oil, you shall offer the tenth part of a but out of the kor, which is a homer of ten but, for ten but are a homer” (Ezekiel 45:14). This proves that the but is a tenth of a kor, or three se'a, as a kor is thirty se'a. Consequently, the sea, which contained two thousand but, contained six thousand se'a, the volume of exactly one hundred and fifty ritual baths.

The Gemara asks: Isn't it written elsewhere with regard to Solomon's Sea: “It received and held three thousand but” (1 Chronicles 4:5)? The Gemara answers: That is referring to the heaped measure of dry goods that the sea could hold, as dry goods can be heaped above the brim.
Abaye said: Learn from it that the surplus of dry goods in a vessel relative to liquids is one-third of the contents of the vessel. We also learned the same thing in the following mishna: A carriage, a box, and a cupboard, a round straw barrel, and a round barrel made of reeds, and the cistern of an Alexandrian ship, which is a large vessel placed on a boat and filled with potable water, although these vessels have bottoms, i.e., they are receptacles, since they have a capacity of forty še’ah of liquid, which is the equivalent of two kor of dry goods, they are ritually pure.5 Even if they come into contact with a source of ritual impurity, they do not become impure. Beyond a certain size, containers are no longer considered vessels and, consequently, cannot become ritually impure. This mishna states clearly that a vessel that holds forty še’ah of liquids can hold two kor, or sixty še’ah, of dry goods.

MISHNA The side posts the Sages spoke of with regard to rendering an alleyway fit for one to carry within it, their height must be at least ten handbreadths, and their width and thickness may be any amount.6 Rabbi Yosei says: Their width must be at least three handbreadths.

GEMARA We learned in the mishna: The side posts of the Sages spoke of, etc. The Gemara asks: Shall we say the mishna taught an unattributed ruling in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, who said that in order to permit carrying in an alleyway, we require two side posts? The Gemara responds: No; what is meant by the plural term side posts? Side posts in general, and not those required by a single alleyway. The Gemara asks: If so, let the previous mishna also teach the halakha of a cross beam with the plural term cross beams, and we would say: What is meant by the plural term cross beams? Cross beams in general.

The Gemara answers that this is what the mishna is saying: Those side posts that Rabbi Eliezer and the Sages disagreed about, of which Rabbi Eliezer required two and the Sages sufficed with one, their height must be at least ten handbreadths, and their width and thickness may be any amount. The Gemara asks: And how much is any amount? Rabbi Hiyya taught: Even as small as the string used to tie a coat.7

It was taught in a Tosefta: With regard to one who erected a side post for half an alleyway, i.e., he put it up halfway down the alleyway rather than at its entrance, he has the right to carry only in the inner half of the alleyway, but not in the outer half. The Gemara asks: That is obvious; what novel element was introduced here? Rather, say: He may carry in the inner half of the alleyway even though there is no side post at the entrance to the alleyway. The Gemara asks: That too is obvious. The Gemara explains that nonetheless there is a novelty here: Lest you say that we should be concerned that if it is permitted to carry in the inner half one might come to use the entire alleyway, the Tosefta teaches that carrying in the inner half is permitted.

Rava said: With regard to one who erected a side post in an alleyway and raised it three handbreadths from the ground, or distanced it three handbreadths from the wall, he has not done anything, as it is not a valid side post. Even according to the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, who said: We say that objects separated by a gap of up to four handbreadths are considered connected, that applies only above, e.g., to a cross beam that does not reach the wall of the alleyway; but below, since it is a partition through which goats can pass, as a goat can pass through an opening three handbreadths high, even he did not say that they are considered connected.8

We learned in the mishna that Rabbi Yosei says: The width of the side posts must be at least three handbreadths. Rav Yosef said that Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: The halakha is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, not with regard to preparing salt brine [hîmelè]9 on Shabbat, and not with regard to side posts.

Notes

1. The Greek ἅλμη translates as יָלֶּכֶה, יָלֶּכֶה, יָלֶּכֶה, יָלֶּכֶה, יָלֶּכֶה, יָלֶּכֶה, יָלֶּכֶה. 2. מִן הַרְעָּשִׁים. 3. 4. רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר רָחְבָּן שְׁלֹשָׁה תָּנָא: עָשָׂה לֶחִי לַחֲצִי מָבוֹי – אֵין וְכַמָּה כָּל שֶׁהוּא? תָּנֵי רַבִּי חִיָּיא: הָכִי  אָמַר: אוֹתָן לְחָיַיִן שֶׁנֶּחְלְ וּבָּהֶן הָכִי וֹרָה נַמִי נִיתְנֵי וֹרוֹת, וּמַאי מתניפ לְחָיַיִן שֶׁאָמְרוּ – גּוֹבְהָן עֲשָׂרָה וּבוֹר סְ׳ִינָה אֲלֶכְּסַנְדְּרִית, אַב עַל וּמִגְדָּל, כַּוֶּורֶת הַ ַּשׁ, וְכַוֶּורֶת הַ ָּנִים, ‘ִּי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לָהֶן שׁוּלַיִם וְהֵן מַחֲזִי וֹת טְ׳ָחִים, וְרָחְבָּן וְעוֹבְיָין כָּל שֶׁהוּא רַבִּי הַכּוֹתֶל שְׁלֹשָׁה – לֹא עָשָׂה וְלֹא כְלוּם. בָּעֵינַן! 5. The question seems to be superfluous. Nevertheless, several talmudic sources indicate that at times, even when a halakha requires any amount of a particular item, there is a specific minimum measurement that is required. Consequently, the question is very pertinent (Rabbah). 6. As small as the string used to be a coat. 7. The other side post, which is placed on the ground, is invalid because it is raised from the wall by more than the permitted three handbreadths. The other side post, which is placed on the ground, is invalid because it is not positioned within three handbreadths of the alleyway wall. 8. The illustration below features two side posts, neither of which is valid, due to improper placement. The side post adjacent to the wall is invalid because it is raised from the ground more than the permitted three handbreadths. The other side post, which is placed on the ground, is invalid because it is not positioned within three handbreadths of the alleyway wall.

Background

A side post that is not in its place – יָלֶּכֶה יָלֶּכֶה יָלֶּכֶה יָלֶּכֶה. The question asks whether a brine solution or saltwater is subject to the same thing in the following mishna: The side posts that Rabbi Eliezer and the Sages disagreed about, of which Rabbi Eliezer required two and the Sages sufficed with one, their height must be at least ten handbreadths, and their width and thickness may be any amount. The Gemara asks: How much is any amount? Rabbi Hiyya taught: Even as small as the string used to tie a coat.

Language

Brine (hîmelè) – ἅλμη, from the Greek ἅλμη, salt, meaning concentrated salt water or brine.
Rav Huna bar Hīnana said to him: With regard to brine you told us that the halakha is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, but with regard to side posts you did not tell us this,⁷ possibly because you had forgotten that the halakha is in accordance with his view in that case. Rav Yosef asked: What is different about brine, with regard to which the Sages disagree with Rabbi Yosei? In the case of side posts also the Sages disagree with him, and therefore the halakha should not be in accordance with his view in either case. Rav Huna bar Hīnana said to him: Side posts are different, as Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, and therefore the halakha may be decided in accordance with their jointly held position.

The Gemara reports that Rav Rabhūnei taught this version of the previous discussion: Rav Yehuda, the son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheiit, said in the name of Rav: The halakha is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, not with regard to brine and not with regard to side posts. At some later point, someone said to him: Did you really say this? He said to them: No. Rav said, reinforcing his words with an oath: By God! He did in fact say this, and I learned it from him, but he later retracted this ruling. And what is the reason he retracted it? Due to the well-known principle that Rabbi Yosei’s reasoning ([nimmuka]⁷) is with him,⁷ and the halakha follows his opinion even against the majority view.

Rava bar Rav Hanan said to Abaye: What is the accepted halakha with regard to the width of a side post? He said to him: Go out and observe what the people are doing; it is common practice to rely on a side post of minimal width.

The Gemara notes that there are those who taught that this answer was given with regard to this discussion: One who drinks water to quench his thirst recites the following blessing beforehand: By Whose word all things came to be. Afterward he recites the blessing: Who creates the many forms of life and their functions. The practice is to say: By Whose word all things came to be.

The Gemara first narrows the scope of the dispute: In a place where the inhabitants of the alleyway did not rely on it from yesterday, e.g., the alleyway had another side post that fell down on Shabbat, all agree that it is not a valid side post. Where they disagree is in a case where they relied on it from yesterday. Abaye said: It is a valid side post, as they relied on it from yesterday. Rava said: It is not a valid side post; since it was not originally erected for this purpose, it is not considered a valid side post.

The Gemara comments: It might enter your mind to say that just as they disagree with regard to a side post, they also disagree with regard to whether a partition that was not erected to serve that function is considered a valid partition.

---

NOTES

With regard to side posts you did not tell us this – רבי יוסי סuffers from an illness later in life that caused him to forget much of his learning. Consequently, his students would sometimes remind him of what he had taught them before his illness.

Rabbi Yosei’s reasoning is with him – בִּלְחָיַיִן לָא אָמְרַתְּ לָן. The halakhic authorities disagree whether the principle: Rabbi Yosei, his reasoning is with him – he is limited to ruling in accordance with Rabbi Yosei when he disagrees with a single opposing Sage, or whether it applies even when a majority of the Sages disagree with him. Some authorities prove from this context that the halakha is in accordance with the view of Rabbi Yosei even against a majority (see Yad Malakh and Mahanta Hayoyd). Others state that usually the halakha is in accordance with the Sages when they argue with Rabbi Yosei, yet it could have been argued that in these specific cases the halakha is in accordance with Rabbi Yosei, as his reasoning is exceptionally logical here. Nonetheless, the halakha is in accordance with the view of the majority (Ritva).

The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei even against a majority (see Yad Malakh and Mahanta Hayoyd). Others state that usually the halakha is in accordance with the Sages when they argue with Rabbi Yosei, yet it could have been argued that in these specific cases the halakha is in accordance with Rabbi Yosei, as his reasoning is exceptionally logical here. Nonetheless, the halakha is in accordance with the view of the majority (Ritva).

The Gemara first narrows the scope of the dispute: In a place where the inhabitants of the alleyway did not rely on it from yesterday, e.g., the alleyway had another side post that fell down on Shabbat, all agree that it is not a valid side post. Where they disagree is in a case where they relied on it from yesterday. Abaye said: It is a valid side post, as they relied on it from yesterday. Rava said: It is not a valid side post; since it was not originally erected for this purpose, it is not considered a valid side post.

The Gemara comments: It might enter your mind to say that just as they disagree with regard to a side post, they also disagree with regard to whether a partition that was not erected to serve that function is considered a valid partition.

---

LANGUAGE

Reasoning ([nimmuk] – נימוק: Probably related to the Greek νομικός, meaning connected to the law or having knowledge of the laws. Consequently, the statement that Rabbi Yosei’s reasoning is with him means that his opinion is based upon sound legal reasoning.

HALAKHA

A side post that stands by itself – וּמִמֵּיתָה הָאֱלֹהִים! אֲמָרָהּ, וּגְמִירְנָא לָהּ מִינֵּיהּד. A side post renders permitted carrying in an alleyway even if it was not originally erected for that purpose, provided that one resolved to rely on it prior to the beginning of Shabbat. This principle is in accordance with the opinion of Abaye. One is not required to explicitly state that he is relying on the side post. Rather, if it was in place on Friday, it is assumed that the person relies on it (Rena), unless he explicitly states that he is not relying on it (Magen Avraham, Shulhan Arukh Haliẓot 363:31).

They relied on it from yesterday – הִילְמֵי לָא אָמַרְתָּ לָן. All the Sages, including Abaye, agree that a side post must be relied upon from the previous day, because a side post is not a real partition. However, a full-fledged partition functions as a wall according to Torah law in every regard, irrespective of whether or not someone relied upon it from the previous day (see M’rav).

It was stated that the amora’im disagreed about a side post that stands by itself, i.e., a side post at the entrance to an alleyway that was not put there for the express purpose of permitting one to carry on Shabbat. Abaye said: It is a valid side post. Rava said: It is not a valid side post.

The Gemara comments: It might enter your mind to say that just as they disagree with regard to a side post, they also disagree with regard to whether a partition that was not erected to serve that function is considered a valid partition.