The Gemara asks: He established residence on a boat – the halakha: One who establishes residence on a boat may walk throughout the entire boat. If the walls of the boat are breached while it is at sea, he may still walk throughout the entire boat. However, if it has come to a stop, he may only walk four cubits (Hagahot Halachot), in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiva. Since the halakha accords with the opinion in disputes with Rabbi Zeira (Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 405:7).

The Gemara asks: What is the practical difference between these two explanations? The Gemara answers: There is a practical difference between them with regard to a case where the walls of the boat were breached, so that the person is no longer located between its partitions. Alternatively, there is a difference with regard to a case where the person jumped from one boat to another, so that he is no longer on the boat where he had acquired his place of residence. In both of these cases, Rabba’s reason no longer applies, but Rabbi Zeira’s reason does.

HALAKHA

A boat that is moving and that is stationary – the halakha: One may walk throughout a moving boat even if its gunwales were breached. However, if the boat stopped moving after its gunwales were breached, one may only walk a distance of four cubits on it, as the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiva. Since the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Gamliel, but they maintain that it is best to be stringent. Therefore, the passengers do have a fixed, particular location that can be considered their four cubits (Riivah).

The Gemara asks: As for Rabbi Zeira, what is the reason that he did not state his opinion in accordance with the opinion of Rabba, whose explanation is more straightforward? The Gemara answers: He could have said to you: The sides of a boat are not considered proper partitions, for they are only made to keep the water out; that is to say, a boat’s walls are not designed to turn it into a place of residence, but to protect it from the water. Therefore, they do not have the status of partitions made for the purpose of residence.

The Gemara asks: As for Rabba, what is the reason he did not state his opinion in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Zeira? The Gemara answers: With regard to a boat that is moving, all agree, i.e., even Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiva, that one is permitted to walk about the entire boat. They disagree only with regard to a boat that is stationary. Rabban Gamliel holds that the boat’s walls constitute effective partitions, whereas Rabbi Yehoshua disagrees.
Yehoshua himself was a party to the dispute. Therefore, his determination of the dispute is not accepted, as they were concerned that perhaps the boat would stand, i.e., come to a stop. It is difficult, as the words: They wished to be stringent upon themselves, imply that there was no fundamental dispute at all. The Gemara asks: From where is this implied? From that which is taught: "There was an incident where all of these Sages were coming from Pelandarsin, and their boat sailed on the sea on Shabbat, taking them out beyond their Shabbat limit. Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya walked about the entire boat, while Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiva did not move beyond four cubits, as they sought to be stringent with themselves.

Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak explains: Granted, if you say that they do not disagree with regard to a moving boat, that is why it is taught that they sought to be stringent with themselves, i.e., they wished to practice stringency although they were under no obligation to do so, as they were concerned that perhaps the boat will stand, i.e., come to a stop.

But if you say that they disagree even in the case of a boat that is moving, this phrase: Sought to be stringent, is problematic, for the mishna should not refer to a desire to be stringent, as according to their opinion it is an outright prohibition.

With regard to the previous issue, Rav Ashi said: The mishna is also precise, implying this point in another manner as well, for it teaches the law governing a boat parallel to the law governing a pen and a stable. Just as a pen and a stable are fixed in their place, so too, the mishna discusses a boat that is fixed in its place.

Rav Aha, son of Rava, said to Rav Ashi: Rav and Shmuel both said that the halakha is in accordance with Rabban Gamliel with regard to a boat, and if they had to decide the halakha, then this proves by inference that the tanna'im disagreed on the issue. This is difficult, as the words: They wished to be stringent upon themselves, imply that there was no fundamental dispute at all.

Rav Ashi replied: Yes, the tanna'im do in fact disagree about a boat that is standing. When the mishna says that Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiva wished to be stringent upon themselves, implying that there is no real dispute, it is referring to a boat that is in motion. And it was taught in a baraita: Hananya, son of Rabbi Yehoshua’s brother, says: All that day they spent on the boat, they sat and discussed the matter of halakha; and come evening my father’s brother, i.e., Rabbi Yehoshua, determined. The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Gamliel with regard to a moving boat, i.e., one is permitted to walk about all of it. And the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Akiva with regard to a pen and a stable, i.e., one may only walk four cubits in them, and the same applies to a stationary boat.

Rav Ḥananya raised a dilemma: Does the prohibition of Shabbat limits apply above ten handbreadths from the ground, or perhaps does the prohibition of Shabbat limits not apply above ten handbreadths? In other words, does the Shabbat limit apply only close to the ground, in which case walking more than ten handbreadths above the ground, would be permitted?

The Gemara clarifies the case in which this dilemma arises: With regard to a post ten handbreadths high and four handbreadths wide, partly within the limit and partly outside of it, this case should not be a dilemma for you. Such a stable post is like solid ground, although it differs from the surrounding area in height; therefore, it is prohibited to walk from the part within the limit to the part outside of it.

The case where there should be a dilemma for you is that of a post ten handbreadths high but not four handbreadths wide, or the like. Alternatively, the case is one where he advances by way of a leap in the air above ten handbreadths from the ground.
The Gemara presents another version of the previous dilemma: What is the halakha with regard to a boat sailing on the surface of the water more than ten handbreadths from the sea or river bed? Does the prohibition of Shabbat limits apply or not?

Rav Hoshaya said: Come and hear a resolution to this dilemma from what was taught in the mishna: It once happened that all of these Sages were coming from Pelandarsin, and their boat set sail on the sea, etc. Granted, if you say that the prohibition of Shabbat limits applies above ten handbreadths, this is why Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiva sought to be stringent. However, if you say that the prohibition of Shabbat limits does not apply above ten handbreadths, why did they seek to be stringent?

The Gemara answers: It may be suggested as Rava said with regard to a parallel case, establishing that case as one where the boat was moving through shallow, swampy water, here, too, we are dealing with a case where the boat was moving through shallow, swampy water, within ten handbreadths of the sea’s bed, so that the prohibition of Shabbat limits certainly applies.

The Gemara cites another proof. Come and hear a resolution from the mishna: On one occasion on a Shabbat eve, they did not enter the port until after nightfall, etc. Granted, if you say that the prohibition of Shabbat limits applies above ten handbreadths, it was well that they asked whether or not they may disembark. However, if you say that the prohibition of Shabbat limits does not apply above ten handbreadths, even if Rabban Gamliel had told them: We were not within the city’s limit before nightfall, what difference would it have made? They could have alighted from the boat, for the boat was above ten handbreadths, where the prohibition of Shabbat limits does not apply.

The Gemara answers that Rava said: The mishna refers to a case where the boat was moving through shallow, swampy water within ten handbreadths of the sea’s bed.

The Gemara cites another proof: Come and hear a resolution from the incident involving the seven teachings that were first said on Shabbat morning before Rav Hizada in Sura and then repeated toward the conclusion of that Shabbat before Rava in Pumbedita, despite the fact that the distance between them is too great for someone to have traversed it on Shabbat.

Who said those teachings, and delivered them from one place to the other? Was it not Elijah the Prophet, who traveled from Sura to Pumbedita by way of a miraculous leap through the air above ten handbreadths from the ground, who said them? Apparently, the prohibition of Shabbat limits does not apply above ten handbreadths, for Elijah would not have transgressed this prohibition. The Gemara rejects this argument: This is no proof; perhaps Yosef the demon, who does not observe Shabbat, reported these teachings and brought them from Sura to Pumbedita.

The Gemara attempts to bring a different proof: Come and hear that which was taught in a baraita: With regard to one who said: I will be a nazirite on the day that the son of David comes, i.e., upon the arrival of the Messiah, he is permitted to drink wine on Shabbat and Festivals, for the Messiah will not arrive on one of those days.

Seven teachings – ימי חייו של נח: The author of the Meiri claims that these seven teachings are identical to the seven teachings mentioned in tractate Hullin (42b), all of which refer to the Haalot of animals with conditions that will cause them to die within twelve months [reelfrot].

Was it not Elijah who said them – זרי נח: The author of the Meiri suggests that the Gemara is not referring here to Elijah the Prophet. Rather, it means that the person who taught these statements traveled quickly. He is referred to as Elijah due to the allucity with which he performed his mission. The difficulty is that he traveled more than the length of two Shabbat limits, which could only take place above ten handbreadths. However, since the distance between Sura and Pumbedita is roughly one hundred kilometers by direct flight, it appears that the Gemara is indeed referring here to the Elijah the Prophet, who must have traveled by miraculous means.

Yosef the demon – ימי חייו של נח: Yosef the demon and Yonatan the demon feature in another talmudic source as well. It is unclear in that context whether the reference is to the name of a demon or to a person who dealt with demons. Some commentaries explain that Yosef the demon did not transfer the teachings by actually traveling from one place to another. Rather, he possessed an apparatus that enabled him to transfer the information. Consequently, no proof can be brought from this case with regard to Shabbat limits (Or Zarua).
The question of whether or not the prohibition of Shabbat limits applies above ten handbreadths is left unresolved by the Gemara. Consequently, anywhere that the prohibition is at most rabbinic, i.e., on a weekday, since it is only on that day that he is permitted to drink wine, for the Messiah will certainly not arrive from outside the Shabbat limit on those days. But if you say that the prohibition of Shabbat limits does not apply above ten handbreadths, why is he permitted to drink wine on Shabbat and Festivals?

The Gemara answers: It is different there, as the verse stated: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 3:23–24). This verse teaches that Elijah will arrive the day before the coming of the Messiah. Since Elijah did not come the previous day, the Messiah will not come today, and therefore he may drink.

The Gemara comments: It might enter your mind to say that since Elijah will not come on Shabbat eve due to the trouble involved, the Messiah will also not come then, and if so, on Shabbat eve he should also be permitted to drink wine. However, this reasoning is rejected: It is only Elijah who will not arrive on Shabbat eve, but the Messiah himself may arrive, for once the Messiah comes, all the nations will be subservient to the Jewish people, and they will help them prepare whatever is needed for Shabbat.

The Gemara raises a difficulty: He should be permitted to drink wine on a Sunday, for if Elijah cannot come on Shabbat, the Messiah will not come on a Sunday. Let us resolve from here that the prohibition of Shabbat limits does not apply above ten handbreadths, as if the prohibition of Shabbat limits applies above ten handbreadths, on Sunday he should be permitted to drink wine, as Elijah cannot come on Shabbat.

The Gemara answers: This tanna was uncertain whether there is a prohibition of Shabbat limits above ten handbreadths or there is no prohibition of Shabbat limits. Therefore, he ruled stringently in this regard concerning Sunday.

The Gemara poses a question: When did the person who took the vow of naziriteship arise and take his vow? If you say he arose and took his vow on a weekday, since the vow of naziriteship already took effect, how can Shabbat come and annul it? Naziriteship cannot take effect one day and be annulled on the next; rather, once it applies, it remains in effect for the entire period of his vow.

Rather, it must be that he arose on Shabbat and took his vow, or else he arose on a Festival and took his vow, and it is only on that day that he is permitted to drink wine, as the Messiah will not come; but from that day on he is prohibited to drink wine, for once the naziriteship takes effect on a weekday, it remains in effect from that point onwards, even on Shabbat and Festivals. It was taught in the mishna: On one occasion, they did not enter the port until after nightfall on Shabbat eve, and they asked Rabban Gamliel whether they were permitted to alight from the boat. He told them that they were permitted to alight, for he had been watching, and he knew that they had entered within the city’s limit before nightfall, and therefore they may walk throughout the city.
In order to clarify this issue, the Gemara cites that which was taught in a baraita: Rabban Gamliel had a special tube
t through which he would look and see a distance of two thou-
sand cubits on land, and also determine a corresponding
distance of two thousand cubits at sea.

In general, one who wishes to know the depth of a valley
can bring such a tube and look through it, and he will know
the depth of the valley.

The Gemara cites another statement with regard to measure-
ments: One who wishes to know the height of a palm tree,
but does not want to actually climb the tree to measure it,
can measure his own height, and the length of his own shadow,
and the length of the shadow of the height of the palm tree,
and calculate the proportions, and he will know the height
of the palm tree.8

The Gemara cites related advice: If, out of honor for the dead,
one wishes that a wild beast should not rest in the shade of
a grave, he should insert a reed into the ground at the end of
the fourth hour of the day, roughly ten o’clock in the morning,
when it is hot in the sun and cooler in the shade, and beasts
begin to seek shelter in the shade. And he should observe in
which direction the shadow of the reed inclines, and then slant
the gravestone upwards and downwards until he finds
an angle at which it casts no shadow at that hour, and the beasts
will not come to rest at the grave during the heat of the day.

The Gemara relates that Nehemya, son of Rav Hanilai, was
once so engrossed in his learning that he did not notice that
he was going out beyond his Shabbat limit. Rav Hisda said
to Rav Nahman: Your student Nehemya is in distress, as he is
outside the Shabbat limit and cannot enter. What can we do
for him?

Rav Nahman said to him: Establish a human partition for
him,90 i.e., people who are permitted to go out there should
line up and form human walls, through which he is permitted
to walk and thereby reenter the Shabbat limit.

Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak sat behind Rava, and Rava sat
in the first row before Rav Nahman. Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak
said to Rava: What precisely was Rav Hisda’s dilemma
that he addressed to Rav Nahman with regard to Nehemya’s
distress?

The Gemara explains: If you say that we are dealing with a
case where the space between Nehemya and the Shabbat
limit could be filled with people who had established an eiruv
and were permitted to go out beyond the Shabbat limit and
establish a human partition for Nehemya, and then it can be
argued that the dilemma that he raised was: Is the halakha in
accordance with the opinion of Rabban Gamliel that a person
may walk throughout an enclosed area, although he had not
established residence there before Shabbat while it was still
day, and the same applies to a human partition of this kind;

One who wishes to know the depth of a valley –
This statement is cited only incidentally. Since
reference was made to Rabban Gamliel’s special tube and its
capabilities, the Gemara also mentions other ways that such a
tube can be used for measurement, as well as other simple meth-
ods for calculating indirectly, i.e., without actually measuring the
distances (Me’iri).

A human partition –
Rashi teaches that this partition was formed by people who had established a
joining of boundaries (eiruv), allowing them to go out beyond
the Shabbat limit. However, it is possible to explain that the parti-
tion was made by gentiles, who are not bound by the restrictions
of Shabbat limits, and who can also form a partition in this manner
(Rabbeinu Yehonatan).