The Gemara answers: According to the opinion of Rabbi Meir, the halakha with regard to a partition of ten handbreadths is indeed written in the Torah. However, the halakha transmitted to Moses from Sinai comes to teach other halakhot concerning partitions, e.g., the halakha of extending [gode], according to which an existing partition is extended upward or downward to complete the requisite measure; and the halakha of joining [lavud], according to which two solid surfaces are joined if they are separated by a gap of less than three handbreadths; and the halakha of the curved wall of a sukka. A sukka is valid even if there are up to four cubits of invalid roofing, provided that this roofing is adjacent to one of the walls of the sukka. In that case, the invalid roofing is considered a bent extension of the wall. These concepts are certainly not written in the Torah.

The Gemara returns to the laws of alleyways: If the cross beam spanning the entrance to an alleyway was higher than twenty cubits from the ground and one comes to diminish its height, how much must he diminish it? The Gemara is surprised by the question: How much must he diminish it? The amount that he needs in order to render its height less than twenty cubits.

Rather, the space between the cross beam and the ground must, of course, be reduced to twenty cubits. However, when one raises the alleyway, how much must the width of the raised section be in order to render the alleyway fit for carrying within it? Rav Yosef said: One handbreadth. Abaye said: Four handbreadths.

The Gemara suggests: Let us say that these amora’im disagree about this: The one who said one handbreadth holds that one is permitted to utilize the area beneath the cross beam spanning the entrance to the alleyway, as he maintains that the cross beam serves as a partition, and the alleyway is considered as if it were sealed by a partition descending from the outer edge of the cross beam that faces the public domain. Since the area beneath the cross beam is part of the alleyway and is less than twenty cubits, there is a conspicuous demarcation for one standing in the alleyway.

And the one who said four handbreadths holds that the alleyway is considered as if it were sealed from the inside edge of the cross beam, and consequently it is prohibited to utilize the area beneath the cross beam. As the area beneath the cross beam is not part of the alleyway, a significant demarcation, i.e., one of four handbreadths, is required within the alleyway itself.

The Gemara rejects this explanation: No, everyone agrees that it is permitted to utilize the area beneath the cross beam, and they disagree with regard to this: This Master, Rav Yosef, holds that a cross beam functions in an alleyway as a conspicuous marker that demarcates the alleyway from the public domain, and consequently a mere handbreadth is sufficient, as even a handbreadth is sufficiently conspicuous. And this Master, Abaye, holds that a cross beam serves as a partition, and a partition is not effective for an area of less than four handbreadths. The principle that an outer edge descends and seals the alleyway does not apply if the beam is higher than twenty cubits. In order for it to be considered a partition, there must be at least four handbreadths that are less than twenty cubits beneath the cross beam.
A conspicuous marker above and a conspicuous marker below – 363:26. When the ground is raised in order to diminish the height of a cross beam to less than twenty cubits, a raised area one handbreadth wide suffices, in accordance with the opinion of Rav Yosef. However, care must be taken that it not be worn down by people walking over it (Magen Avraham; Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 363:26).

The length of the hollowed-out area in an alleyway – 365:1. When hollowing out an alleyway to complete its height to ten handbreadths, the hollowed-out area must extend four cubits into the alleyway. This ruling is in accordance with the view of Abaye, because the talmudic discussion appears to endorse his opinion, both in this context (Hagahot Maimoniyot) and elsewhere (Vilna Gaon). The width of the hollowed-out section is a matter of dispute between the early commentators. Some say that a width of four handbreadths is sufficient (Korban Netaneh), but not all authorities maintain that it must extend the entire width of the alleyway (Rash), so long as its width is not greater than its length (Baal Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 365:1).
Houses and courtyards opening into it – מַבוֹי בֵּן אַרְבָּעָה טְ׳ָחִים

The Sages permitted one to carry in an alleyway with a conspicuous marker of a side post or cross beam, if at least two courtyards open into the alleyway and each courtyard contains at least two houses (Rashi; Rosh; Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 36.1.26).

Notes

Whose length is greater than its width – מָבוֹי בֵּן אַרְבָּעָה טְ׳ָחִים

This statement demonstrates that the length of an alleyway is not necessarily its longest side. If that were the case, the idea of an alleyway whose width is greater than its length would be meaningless. Rather, the length of an alleyway refers to the direction of the alleyway that extends from the opening onto the public domain, while the other dimension is called the width of the alleyway.

Background

An alleyway of four handbreadths – מָבוֹי בֵּן אַרְבָּעָה טְ׳ָחִים

The area of the alleyway is four handbreadths by four handbreadths. The entrances to the two adjacent courtyards are on either side of the alleyway. The diagram below differs slightly from the diagram found in Rashi in order to present the measurements more precisely (ToSofit).

Small alleyway, the length and width of which are four handbreadths

And if there is no upright board there, the following distinction applies: If the breach is less than three handbreadths, the cross beam or side post renders it permitted to carry in the alleyway, based on the principle of lavud. If the breach is three or more handbreadths, the cross beam or side post does not render it permitted to carry. The Gemara proposes that Rav Yosef, who says that the hollowed-out area need only extend four handbreadths, adopts the opinion of Rabbi Ami, whereas Abaye, who requires a hollowed-out area of four cubits, does not adopt the opinion of Rabbi Ami.

Abaye said: From where do I say that a length of at least four cubits is required? As it was taught in a baraita: An alleyway is permitted by means of a side post or cross beam only if it has both houses opening into courtyards and courtyards opening into it, as only in that case can it be called an alleyway.

And if the entire length of the alleyway is only four handbreadths, as is indicated by Rav Yosef’s opinion, how can you find this case? Under what circumstances is it possible for such a short alleyway to have courtyards opening into it? Even if there are only two such courtyards, the entrance to each is at least four handbreadths wide.

And if you say that the alleyway opens into the courtyards through its middle wall, i.e., the alleyway is only four handbreadths long but is wide enough to have two entrances opening into two courtyards, this is difficult. Didn’t Rav Nahman say that we hold on the authority of tradition: Which is an alleyway that is permitted by a side post or a cross beam? Any alleyway whose length is greater than its width and has houses and courtyards opening into it. Accordingly, if the alleyway is only four handbreadths long, its width must be even less than that. Consequently, argues Abaye, a length of at least four cubits is required.

And Rav Yosef, how would he respond to this? Rav Yosef explains that the baraita is dealing with a case where the courtyards open into the alleyway at its corners. In this way it is possible to have two openings, each of which is at least four handbreadths wide, although the length of the alleyway itself is no greater than four handbreadths, as the four handbreadths of the openings to the courtyards are divided between the width and the length of the alleyway.

Abaye further said: From where do I say that a length of at least four cubits is required? As Rami bar Hama said that Rav Huna said: With regard to a side post that protrudes from the wall on the side of an alleyway into the opening of the alleyway, if its protrusion was less than four cubits, it is deemed a side post that renders it permitted to carry in the alleyway, and no other side post is required to render it permitted to carry in it. However, if it protruded four cubits, that section is deemed an alleyway, as though there were an additional alleyway within an alleyway, and another side post is required to render it permitted to carry there. This shows that anything less than four cubits does not have the status of an alleyway, which supports the position of Abaye.

The Gemara asks: And Rav Yosef, how would he respond to this? Rav Yosef distinguishes between the cases: With regard to removing its status as a side post, this status remains until there are four cubits in the length of the side post. However, in order to be deemed an independent alleyway, even with a wall of four handbreadths it is also considered an alleyway.
The Gemara examines Rami bar Hama’s statement cited in the course of the previous discussion. As to the matter itself: Rami bar Hama said that Rav Huna said: With regard to a side post that protrudes from the wall on the side of an alleyway into the entrance of the alleyway, if its protrusion is less than four cubits, it is deemed a side post that renders it permitted to carry in the alleyway, and no other side post is required to render it permitted. However, if it protrudes four cubits, that section is deemed an alleyway, and another side post is required to render it permitted to carry in it.

The Gemara poses a question: That side post, which is added in order to permit carrying within the alleyway that was formed by the four-cubit side post, where does one position it such that one may carry within the alleyway? The Gemara clarifies its difficulty: If one positions it alongside the first side post as an addition to it, it looks as if he is merely extending the original side post, and it is not noticeable that an extra side post is present.

Rav Pappa said: He should position it, the extra side post, on the other side of the alleyway, near the opposite wall. Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, said: Even if you say that he positions it alongside the first side post, it is valid, so long as he adds to it or diminishes from it in thickness or height, so that it will be noticeable that it is a side post of its own.

Rav Pappa: It is enough if one hollows out three handbreadths into the alleyway, while the openings onto the public domain, while the other dimension is so long as one digs adjacent to its walls.

If the side wall of an alleyway was breached toward its entrance – Houses and courtyards opening into it – A cross beam – A conspicuous sign – Utilizing the area beneath the cross beam – A cross beam as a conspicuous sign – Whose length is greater than its width – A side post along the width of an alleyway – A cross beam as a conspicuous sign – Whose length is greater than its width – A side post along the width of an alleyway – A cross beam as a conspicuous sign – Whose length is greater than its width – A side post along the width of an alleyway.

And this is derived by means of an a fortiori inference from a courtyard: Just as in a courtyard, which is not rendered a permitted domain by means of a side post or a cross beam, but actual partitions are required, it is nevertheless rendered a permitted domain even if there are gaps in the partitions, as long as the standing segment is greater than the breached segment in an alleyway, with regard to which the Sages were lenient, as it is rendered a permitted domain by means of a side post or a cross beam, is it not right that it is rendered a permitted domain when the standing segment of the partition is greater than the breached segment?

The Gemara refutes this a fortiori inference that was based on the fact that the legal status of a courtyard is more lenient than that of an alleyway, as it is in fact more stringent than that of an alleyway in at least one respect. With regard to what is true of a courtyard, that as long as its breach is less than ten cubits it remains a permitted domain, can you say the same of an alleyway, which is more stringent, as in a case where its breach is only four handbreadths it is not permitted to carry in the alleyway? Therefore, the halakha of an alleyway cannot be derived from the halakha of a courtyard.
An alleyway that is eight – לֶחִי הַבּוֹלֵט לְמָבוֹי: The laws mentioned above with regard to a side post only apply to an alleyway that is wider than eight cubits. However, if the alleyway is exactly eight cubits wide or less, it is permitted to use a side post of four cubits, in accordance with the opinion of Rav Ashi, which is the later opinion (Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 363:12).

Halakha

The standing segment is equal to the breached segment – אָמַר רַב הוּנָא בְּרֵיהּ דְּרַב יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: כְּגוֹן וְאִי ’ָּרוּץ נָּּׁישׁ – נִידּוֹן עַל ה׳ָּרוּץ, וְאִי ’ָּרוּץ נָּּׁישׁ – נִידּוֹן עַל ה׳ָּרוּץ הָּתַחְא הוּא, מֵרֹאשׁוֹ נַמִי – נֵימָא עֶשֶׂר בְּעֶשֶׂר, דְּאָמַר רַב חָנִינ בְּרֵיהֶם דְּרַב יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: כְּגוֹן מַאי שְׁנָא מִצִּידּוֹ בְּעֶשֶׂר – דְּאָמַר רַב חָנִינ בְּרֵיהֶם דְּרַב יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: כְּגוֹן מַאי אָמְרַתְּ – דְּשָׁווּ תַּרְוַיְיהוּ כִּי הֲדָדֵי, מַאי אָמְרַתְּ – דְּשָׁווּ תַּרְוַיְיהוּ כִּי הֲדָדֵי הֲדָדֵי בְּרוֹחָב מָבוֹי.

The Gemara answers: Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, holds that the breach of an alleyway is also ten cubits. The Gemara raises a difficulty: But in accordance with whose opinion did we state this a fortiori inference? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rav Huna. But doesn’t Rav Huna himself hold that the breach of an alleyway is four handbreadths.

The Gemara answers: Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, did not come to explain Rav Hanin’s position. Rather, he stated his own view, and he does not accept Rav Hanin’s opinion with regard to the law of a breach in an alleyway.

The Gemara considers a new case: Rav Hanin bar Rava said that Rav said: With regard to an alleyway that was breached, if it was breached from its side,6 the side wall of the alleyway, carrying within the alleyway is prohibited if the breach is ten cubits wide. But if it was breached from its front,7 the wall that faces the public domain, carrying within the alleyway is prohibited even if the breach is only four handbreadths wide.

The Gemara poses a question: What is the difference such that carrying is prohibited due to a breach from the side only if the breach is ten cubits? This is because you say that up to ten cubits it is deemed an entrance. If the breach is in the front, let us also say it is an entrance, and carrying should be permitted if the breach is less than ten cubits.

Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, said: We are dealing with a case where the breach is in a corner.8 Since people do not make an entrance in a corner, a breach of this kind cannot be viewed as an entrance, and if the breach is larger than four handbreadths it must be sealed.

Notes

Various opinions were offered with regard to the phrase: Breached from its front. Some commentators explained this as a case where the side wall of the alleyway was breached at the end that opens out into the public domain. Therefore, there was nothing left of the entrance to the alleyway (cited by the Meiri). Other authorities taught that the above phrase means that the end wall of the alleyway was breached (Rena). Rabbeinu Hananel interpreted the phrase in the latter manner as well, and even had a variant reading that supports this interpretation. The Mei’iri also preferred this opinion, and the wording of the Jerusalem Talmud supports it as well.