

Seder Moed | Masechet Sukkah 11-17 | Shabbat Parashat VeEtchanan | 9-15 Av (July 18-24)



FROM THE TALMUD
SEDER MOED
MASECHET SUKKAH
DAF 11

מן התלמוד:

סדר מועד, מסכת סוכה דף י"א:

"יתיב רב יוסף קמיה דרב הונא, ויתיב וקאמר: או שקצצן כשרה, ואמר רב: צריך לנענע. אמר ליה רב הונא: הא שמואל אמרה. אהדינהו רב יוסף לאפיה ואמר ליה: אטו מי קאמינא לך דלא אמרה שמואל? אמרה רב ואמרה שמואל."

Translation

Ahedrinhu ... Turned away
Atu ... Is it, Did I?

Explanation

Rav Yosef sat before Rabbi Huna and cited a *halachah* in the name of Rav. Rav Huna remarked it was in fact Shmuel who stated that *halachah*. Rabbi Yosef turned to him and said: "Did I say that Shmuel did not state that *halachah*? Rav said it, and Shmuel said it as well."

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צוים ט' באב

Daf 11: גוֹי מִצְוָה – THE BEAUTY OF MITZVOT

On *Sukkot*, there is a *mitzvah* to hold four species together: (1) *etrog* (citron); (2) *lulav* (palm branches); (3) *hadass* (myrtle); (4) *aravah* (willow). The *etrog* is held in the left hand, and the *lulav*, *hadass*, and *aravah* are held in the right hand. There is a *mitzvah* to gather and bundle together the *lulav* with *hadassim* and *aravot*, because it is nice for the *lulav* to be bound with other species. The required beautification of the *mitzvah* is achieved by bundling the species as one unit.

B'nei Yisrael sang "*Shirat HaYam*" (Song of the Sea) after miraculously making their way through the parted waters of the Red Sea. They said: "This is my God, and I will glorify Him [*ve'anvehu*]" (Exodus 15:2), which was interpreted to mean: we will fulfill the *mitzvot* in a beautiful manner, and in fine form. Therefore, we make a fine *sukkah*, fine *tzizit*, and try to sound a fine *shofar*. The Torah scroll is written by a *sofer* (scribe) with beautiful handwriting, and when it is complete, we wrap the Torah in a lovely mantle.



Daf 12: מִמָּה מוֹתֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת סִכָּה? – WHAT MATERIAL IS PERMISSIBLE TO USE FOR S'CHAH?

Suppose a person possesses a beautiful leather mat at home. Is it permissible to place that mat on top of the *sukkah* as its *s'chach* (roofing)? The answer is, no.

Why? There are two important *halachot* regarding *s'chach*:

- (1) The *s'chach* should be "something grown from the ground." That is, something that grows in the earth, i.e., branches and leaves. The skin of an animal, obviously, does not grow from the ground, and therefore, it is *pasul* (unfit) to be used as *s'chach*.
- (2) The *s'chach* should be an item that is "not susceptible to *tum'ah* (ritual impurity)." Meaning, it is impossible to use an object as *sukkah* roofing that could become *tameh* (ritually impure) were it to come into contact with a source of *tum'ah*.

What objects are susceptible to *tum'ah*? People, food items, and utensils — for example, cups and plates. From this *halachah* we know it is impossible to use wooden plates as *s'chach* because they are susceptible to *tum'ah*.



Daf 13: סִכְךָ עִם תְּמָרִים – S'CHACH WITH DATES

Reuven knew the *s'chach* of a *sukkah* needs to be “something grown from the ground.” Meaning, it is only permissible to use items that grow from the earth. But Reuven wanted to make an extraordinary *sukkah*, and so he said to his sons: “We have a huge palm tree in the yard, whose branches are full of fragrant dates. Let’s take a ladder and a saw, climb up the tree, and cut down the branches with the dates; then we’ll have the most beautiful *s'chach* in the city — *s'chach* with dates.”



The problem is that *s'chach* of that type (with dates) is *pasul* (invalid). Although the palm branches and the dates are “things that are grown in the ground,” foods are not to be used as *s'chach* because they are susceptible to *tum'ah* (impurity). Therefore, this type of *s'chach* is *pasul*.

Daf 14: וַיִּעַתֵּר יִצְחָק – YITZCHAK PLEADED



In *Parashat Toldot*, the Torah discloses that Yitzchak Avinu and Rivkah Imeinu were unable to have children for many years. Yitzchak and Rivkah prayed to God from the depths of their hearts. God answered their prayers and the twins Esav and Ya'akov were born.

The Torah describes the prayer of Yitzchak Avinu: “*Va'ye'etar Yitzchak l'HaShem*” (and Yitzchak pleaded to God.) Yitzchak Avinu pleaded (implored, begged) with God to hear his request. Rabbi Elazar questioned: Why did the Torah write “And Yitzchak pleaded” when the Torah could have written “And Yitzchak prayed”? Because the Torah sought to teach us something more important, i.e., that prayer of the righteous is like an “*eter*” (pitchfork).

What is an “*eter*”? An “*eter*” is a tool used to turn over piles of grain in the field. The *eter* was inserted under the grain pile and then turned over the grain. From this analogy, we learn that prayer of the righteous can overturn reality and change things for the better. That is why the word “*Va'ye'etar*” was written, from the word “*eter*.”

Daf 15: סִכְךָ שֶׁל מוֹטוֹת מְבַרְזָל – S'CHACH MADE OF IRON RODS

The *s'chach* placed on top of the *sukkah* must be “something grown from the ground.” Therefore, iron is not *kosher* to be used as *s'chach*, as iron does not grow from the earth.

A *sukkah* that has some *s'chach* that is *kosher*, together with some *s'chach* that is *pasul* (invalid), is a valid in some cases and invalid in others. If there is more *s'chach kasher* than *s'chach pasul* — the *sukkah* is valid. However, if there is more *s'chach pasul* than *s'chach kasher* — then the *sukkah* is invalid.

Suppose there are equal amounts of *s'chach kasher* and *s'chach pasul*. What is the ruling? *Amoraim* disagreed about the answer to this question. Rav Pappa said that this *sukkah* is also *k'sherah*; but Rav Huna son of Rabbi Yehoshua, said that such a *sukkah* is invalid.



**Dvar Torah
Ve'ETCHANAN**

וְאֶתְחַנֵּן

At the beginning of *Parashat Ve'Etchanan*, Moshe asks and pleads for the privilege to cross over and see *Eretz Yisrael*, after receiving a punishment that prohibited him from entering. Even Moshe Rabbeinu, greatest of the great, stood helpless in the face of the disappointment of his greatest unfulfilled desire and dream — entry into the Promised Land.

When Moshe encountered a shortcoming, he turned directly to the prayer — “And I will pray to God”. The nature of the world is that there is no human without defect or difficulty. The greatest test is to see shortcomings as an opportunity — the opening of a door, that can lead us to prayer and closeness to God and His will. Accordingly, it is understandable that the reasoning behind the punishment of the serpents roaming free, permitted to find wanted people in every corner. For without experiencing any lack [as Moshe did], the need to pray and entreat God would never arise; and if so, people would remain detached and distant from God.



Daf 16: סיכה בתוך ערמת חציר – SUKKAH INSIDE A HAY PILE



Once, a youngster named Netanel lived in a village. His father permitted him to build a small *sukkah* for the holiday of *Sukkot*. Netanel went out to the cowshed and noticed a large pile of hay. Netanel, who was an intelligent boy, decided — This is great! I'll just need to work a little bit to have an exemplary *sukkah*.

Netanel took a pitchfork and began digging into the haystack. He continued to dig, until he had burrowed a tunnel inside the hay; it was truly a *sukkah* — with both walls and *s'chach*. All the materials were kosher, because hay grows in the ground and it makes excellent *s'chach*. But was this *sukkah* kosher? The *Gemara* says no.

Why? Because the *s'chach* of the *sukkah* needs to be placed expressly to provide shade from the sun. Now let's clarify: Why was the haystack placed in the barn? So that the cows could feed from it, and in no way to provide shade.

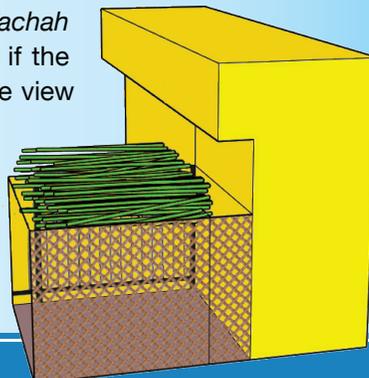
Being smart, Netanel dug down under the hay, so that the pile of hay would serve only as *s'chach*. However, this did not suffice, because *s'chach* that was not initially placed to provide shade cannot be considered kosher.

Daf 17: דופן עקומה – A CURVED WALL

The *Mishnah* states that the *s'chach* of a *sukkah* must reach the walls of the *sukkah*. If there is distance between the *s'chach* and the *sukkah*, that *sukkah* is invalid. For instance, if a person has a large *sukkah*, and places *s'chach* only in the center, and there is a space of three *tefachim* (approximately 12 inches) between the *s'chach* and the walls, then the *sukkah* is invalid.

However, there is a special case in which a *sukkah* is kosher, even though the *s'chach* does not reach the walls: If surrounding the *sukkah*, in the places there is no *s'chach*, there is an ordinary ceiling — for instance, a person dismantled the ceiling in the center of a room and set down *s'chach* in its place, and the ceiling in the rest of the room remained intact.

In such a case, the *sukkah* is *kosher*, because of the *halachah* “*dofen akumah*” (curved wall) — which stipulates that if the *s'chach* is not farther than four *amot* from the walls, we view the walls of the *sukkah* as if they are curved, or crooked, and they extend to reach the *s'chach*.



QUESTIONS FOR THE WEEK

1. What do we learn from “*Shirat HaYam*” about the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah*?
2. Is it permissible to make *s'chach* from plastic bags?
3. In which case would *s'chach* made from hay not be kosher?

***NOTE**
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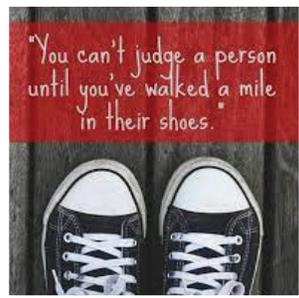
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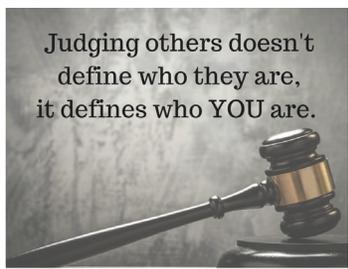
According to tradition, the first *Beit HaMikdash* in Jerusalem was destroyed as a consequence of idol worship, prohibited relations, and bloodshed; while the second *Beit HaMikdash* was destroyed because of

widespread *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred — a sin so detestable that it appears equal to the three cardinal sins combined. As a remedy, we are called upon to rectify this wrongdoing, in every generation, by practicing *ahavat chinam* — freely loving others, without pre-judgement.



In *Pirkei Avot* 2:5, Hillel states; “Do not judge your fellow human being, until you have been in their situation” Giving others the benefit of the doubt is a cherished Jewish value. It helps us avoid anger and unnecessary placement of blame, and can lead to better relationships— and a great way to practice *ahavat chinam*.

Giving another person the benefit of the doubt requires that we don't immediately assume the motivation behind their actions is a negative one. Instead, try to assume the other person's intentions were positive. Attempt to seek out the good in the behavior of others, and refrain from reacting negatively, or assuming the other person is intentionally being inconsiderate.



הוא היה אומר, כל שרוח הבריות נוחה הימנו, רוח המקום נוחה הימנו. וכל שאין רוח הבריות נוחה הימנו, אין רוח המקום נוחה הימנו. (פרקי אבות ג"ז)

In *Pirkei Avot* 3:10, “He (Rabbi Hanina Ben Dosa) used to say: A person with whom other human beings are pleased, God is pleased. But anyone with whom human beings are displeased, God is displeased.”

When we attribute negative motives to the actions of another person, it makes us angry. When we're angry, we often say things we don't mean. This can place the other person in a situation where their only recourse is to attack or defend themselves. They are put into a position where they generally exhibit more negative or even oppositional behavior.



Alternatively, if we give others the benefit of the doubt, we show faith in their innate goodness. We promote strong and positive interactions. Giving others the benefit of the doubt is a great way to practice *Ahavat Chinam* and lead to a happier, and more stress-free world.

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