



Volume 2. Issue 32.

## Height of a Sukkah

When beginning a new tractate in *Mishnayot* a question that is often raised is how does the first *Mishnah* relate to the essence of the tractate and why was it chosen as the starting point. This of course assumes that if we were to discuss a topic, the start of that discussion would contain a central point, after which the discussion can be broadened to include the other areas that are needed for a comprehensive *halachic* view.

The tractate of *Sukkah* begins with a discussion about the height of the *sukkah* and the thickness of the covering of the *schach*. The *Gemara* brings a number of reasons for the height restrictions on the *Sukkah* being twenty *amot*. One explanation is that visually, a roof that high would not noticeably be made of *schach*. A second reason (and the prevailing one amongst the commentators) is that any structure above this height ceases to be temporary.

The second explanation raises a difficulty with our initial hypothesis, since the main focus of the *Sukkah* is the *schach* - the root of the word *sukkah* - why then is the first *Mishnah* dealing with a structural issue of what is considered a temporary abode rather than purely the nature of the roof?

As an aside, there are two other areas in *Halacha* where the limit of twenty *amot* appears. The first is placement of the *Chanukah* candles and the second is the height of the *koreh* used in a *mavoi* relevant to the *halachot* of *eiruv*. The reason for these height limitations is that both these issues require people on the street to see them. Therefore if the *koreh* is decorated and thus visually recognisable higher than twenty *amot*, it is valid. (See Vol. 2 Issue 11. for further explanation, Ed.) The same cannot be said of the *Sukkah* when considering the second explanation cited above.

Therefore the *Sukkah* is a structure that contains two aspects that are complimentary expressed through the requirement that the *Sukkah* must be a temporary structure. The roof must be visible and lower than great halls found in stately homes that are permanent in their structure. It could also be suggested that these are meant to replicate the homes of the lower classes in society, and thus mirror the poor man's bread that is eaten on *Pesach* (of which more will be said soon). This may explain the remainder of the *Mishnah* that demands three walls. After having provided with the upper restrictions of the nature of a temporary structure, it continues to explain that it cannot be too temporary, and needs some sort of form so that it can be considered a room.

The *Gemara* cites a connection through a *gezeirah shava* that exists between *Pesach* and *Sukkot*, and a number of laws are learned through this about the nature of the two festivals, especially the connection between the *mitzvot* of *Sukkah* and *Matzah* fulfilled on the first days of the respective festivals. This could present a new connection. Although unlike *Pesach* there is no requirement of *vehigadeta le'vincha* (passing on the story) on *Sukkot*, it is nevertheless an important need to have the visual aid in the meal. Just as *Rabban Gamliel* requires us to speak of the *matzah*, so too we have to be able to see and feel like we are in a temporary structure as *Bnei Yisrael* were in the desert.

The temporary nature of the building is fundamental to the *Sukkah*, just as much as the covering. For this reason both are necessary in the first *Mishnah* to introduce us to the tractate. Even though the discussion of the structure itself does not appear until later in the first chapter after the discussion about the *schach*, this is a perfect introduction to the fundamentals of a *Sukkah*.

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## Revision Questions

יומא ח' – ב' – ח' ט'

- How much food has one eaten and how much food has one drunk one *Yom Kippur* if they are *chayav*? (ח' ב') (ח' ב')
- Does food and drink combine to make up this measure? (ח' ב')
- How many *korbanot chatat* would one be obligated to bring if they forgot it was *Yom Kippur* and: (ח' ג')
  - Ate and drank?
  - Ate and performed a *melacha*?
- How long before a child's *bar-* or *bat-mitzvah* does one begin teaching them to fast on *Yom Kippur*? (ח' ד')
- How does one determine how much food to feed a sick person if there is no doctor available to consult? (ח' ה')
- Complete the following phrase: (ח' ו')
 

”\_\_\_\_\_ נפשות \_\_\_\_\_”
- What case appears in the next *Mishnah* that is a practical example of the principle described in the previous question? (ח' ז')
- What else is required for *Yom Kippur* to atone? (ח' ח')
- On what sins does *teshuva* instantly atone? (ח' ט')
- How does the *Mishnah* respond regarding a person who says “I will sin and then do *teshuva*”? (ח' י')
- On which sins does *Yom Kippur* atone and which require further action in the individual part? (ח' יא')
- What does *R' Akiva* learn from the following *p'sukim*:
 

”וְזָרְקְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם מִיַּם טְהוֹרִים” (יחזקאל ל"ו: כ"ה)  
 ”מִקּוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל” (ירמיה י"ז: י"ג)

סוכה א' – א' – ו'

- What are the maximum and minimum heights of a *sukkah*? (א' א')
- What are the other two structural specifications of a *sukkah*? (א' א')
- What is a *sukkah yeshana*? (א' א')
- Can one make a *sukkah* under a tree? (א' ב')
- Can one make a two-storey *sukkah*? (א' ב')
- Can one spread a shade-cloth over the *schach*? (א' ג')
- How can one fix a *sukkah* that had a vine growing amongst the *schach*? (א' ד')
- What are the two criteria of *kosher schach*? (א' ד')
- Can one use bundles of straw as *schach*? (א' ה')
- Explain the debate regarding whether one can use planks of wood for *schach*? (א' ו')

## Local Shiurim

### Sunday -Thursday

Between mincha & ma'ariv  
Mizrachi Shul

### Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before mincha  
Mizrachi Shul

### Audio Shiurim on-line!

- [613.org/mishnah.html](http://613.org/mishnah.html)
- [www.shemayisrael.com/mishna/](http://www.shemayisrael.com/mishna/)

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**mishnah**  
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## Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
9 <sup>th</sup> April י"א ניסן	10 <sup>th</sup> April י"ב ניסן	11 <sup>th</sup> April י"ג ניסן	12 <sup>th</sup> April י"ד ניסן	13 <sup>th</sup> April ט"ו ניסן פסח	14 <sup>th</sup> April ט"ז ניסן פסח - א' לעומר	15 <sup>th</sup> April י"ז ניסן ב' לעומר
Sukkah 1:7-8	Sukkah 1:9-10	Sukkah 1:11-2:1	Sukkah 2:2-3	Sukkah 2:4-5	Sukkah 2:6-7	Sukkah 2:8-9

