

All of them do not diminish by a window כולן אין ממעטין בחלון -

Overview

The משנה mentions that snow, hail, frost and ice, do not diminish an opening of a פותח in a window and cannot prevent the טומאה to expand outward.

וטעמא משום דאין מתקיימין ונימסין¹ במים² -

And the reason they are not ממעט is because they do not last, for they melt ([like] water) –

negates an alternate explanation:

דליכא למימר דטעמא משום דקשו לכותל ושקיל להו -

For we cannot say that the reason (they are not ממעט) is because since they are harmful to the wall, so he will remove them; they are not permanent; this cannot be the reason -

דהא מלח נמי קשה לכותל וקתני דממעט -

For salt is also harmful for the wall and the ברייתא states that it is ממעט; the explanation is -

ומיירי³ כגון דמנחי בחספא והנך נמי ליתני דממעטי ודמנחי בחספא -

That it is in a case where the salt is lying on a potsherd, so it is not damaging the wall, **and** so therefore (if we assume that the reason snow, etc. is not ממעט, is because they are harmful) **regarding also these (snow, etc.) let the ברייתא state that they are ממעט and they are lying on a חרס** (just like מלח) -

אלא אפילו דמנחי בחספא דלא קשו לכותל לא ממעטי:

Rather since the ברייתא did not say it this way, it proves that (regarding snow, etc.) **even if they were lying on a חספא so they are not harmful to the wall,** nevertheless **they are not ממעט**, since they will melt and not last.

Summary

Snow is not ממעט because it will melt, but not because it damages the wall.

Thinking it over

Why is it that important what the reason is that snow is not ממעט?

¹ The הגהות הב"ח amends this to read ונימוסין דליכא (deleting the word במים). See footnote # 2.

² The רש"י amends this to read כמים (instead of במים). See footnote # 1.

³ See later in the גמרא. We need to assume that it is מנחי בחספא, because otherwise why is the salt ממעט, since it damages the wall, the owner will surely remove it, so it is not a המתקיים דבר.