

To their length; they are *Toh'may*

לאורכן טמאין -

Overview

The גמרא cites a משנה concerning a זב who was lying on five benches, etc. The rule is if he was lying on the length of the benches (the length of his body paralleled the length of the bench), the benches are טמאין (as טומאת מדרס), however if he was lying on the width of the benches (the length of his body was perpendicular to the length of the benches [he was laying on many benches at once]), the benches are טהורין.

כן גריס הקונטרס ופירש¹ דטמאין משום דאיכא למימר דכל אחד נושא רובו עליו -

The above is the גירסא of רש"י (לאורכן טמאין לרחבן טהורין) רש"י, and רש"י explained that because one can say that each one of the benches carries the majority of the זב on itself, meaning -

פעמים על זה ופעמים על זה² -

Sometimes the s'זב weight is on this bench, and sometimes it is on another bench -
לרחבן טהורין שאין רובו נישא על כל אחד מהן -

However if he was lying to the width of the benches, they are טהורין for a majority of his weight was not borne on any one of these benches. This concludes פרש"י.

comments: תוספות

ולפי זה אתיא כרבי שמעון³ דבעי שיהא רוב הזב נישא עליו -

And according to this פרש"י, this משנה is according to ר"ש, who requires that the majority of the weight of the זב be borne by the item which we wish to declare טמא.

presenting an alternate view: תוספות

ורבינו יצחק אומר דמצי למימר דאתיא אפילו כרבנן -

And the ר"י says that we can say that this משנה is even according to the רבנן -
וטעמא דטהורות משום דהוי ליה כל אחד מסייע שאין בו ממש⁴ -

¹ בד"ה אורכן, טמאין, לרחבן.

² The זב presumably moves while he is lying on the benches, so we assume that in the time he was lying on the benches, his weight, at one time or another, was supported by each bench.

³ See ד"ה ור"ש previously תוס'. Therefore in the case of לרחבן they are טהורין, since no bench carries the majority of the זב; they each bear only a minority of his weight (which is dispersed along the five benches), the benches are therefore טהורין. However according to the רבנן (who argue with ר"ש) in the case of a זב lying on a bed and maintain that all four towels are טמא (even though none of them [or the legs of the bed] support the majority of the זב), so here too seemingly they would maintain that even לרחבן טמאין. See 'Thinking it over'.

⁴ In the case of a bed, all four legs are required to support the זב, therefore even though each one does not support רובו, nevertheless they are all crucial to support the זב therefore they are טמא. However here all five benches are not essential in order to support the זב; we certainly can make do with one less bench and the other four (or three) will

And the reason they are טהורות when he lies לרחבן is because each bench is considered as a מסייע which is ממש – אין בו ממש

⁵addresses an anticipated question:

ומהך רישא הוה מצי למיפרך דמטמאין לאורכן מספיקא⁶ -

And the גמרא could have asked from the רישא where it states that if he lied לאורכן the benches **are מטמאין מספק** for perhaps he was lying on all the benches -

אלא ניחא ליה למיפרך מסיפא דמפרש בה טעמא אמאי טמאין:

Rather the reason the גמרא did not ask from the רישא is because **it was preferable** for the גמרא **to ask from the סיפא** where the משנה **explains explicitly the reason why they are מטמאין** is because ספק מתהפך עליהן which proves that even by a ספק it is טמא; however in the רישא it does not state clearly that they are מטמאין מספק.

Summary

The משנה of the benches can follow even the view of the רבנן who argue with ר"ש. It is preferable to prove a point from something explicit than from something inferred.

Thinking it over

ר"ש who writes (initially) that this משנה (of the benches) is according to ר"ש who maintains that we require רוב הזב נישא עליו⁷. However previously in תוספות we learnt⁸ that the רבנן also require רוב הזב נישא אליו (in the case of the balancing scale), so why does תוספות assume here that it is only according to ר"ש that we require רוב הזב כו' but not according to the רבנן?!⁹

support him, therefore we say regarding each bench that this one is considered the מסייע (the non-essential bench), and therefore they are all טהורין.

⁵ The גמרא cites this משנה (of the benches) in order to prove that even by a ספק it is טמא (not like by the cow where we say that by a ספק it is טהור). The גמרא asks the question from the last case in the משנה regarding a זב המתהפך who was יושן that the benches are טמא even if he slept לרחבן, since it is possible that during his sleep he twisted and was lying לאורכן. The question here is that the same conclusion can be drawn from the first case of the משנה where he lied לאורכן, why ask from the last case.

⁶ See footnote # 2.

⁷ See footnote # 3.

⁸ [TIE footnote # 7]. The difference here by מטה is that the רבנן maintain אינו יכול וזה אינו יכול is considered as if the זב is supported by each one.

⁹ See רש"ש.