

He was riding on top of an animal

היה רוכב על גבי בהמה -

Overview

The ברייתא states that if a זב was riding on an animal and there were four טליתים under its four legs, the טליתים are טהורים.¹ Our תוספות qualifies this rule.

בעומדת איירי דאי במהלכת כל שעה עוקרת רגל הא' ועומדת על ג' -

The משנה is discussing a case where the animal is standing still; it is not moving, for if it were moving, it constantly picks up one foot and is supported by the other three feet -

וטמא מה שתחתיהן² שאינה יכולה לעמוד על³ שתיים:

And the טליתים under these three feet are טמא, since the animal cannot stand on two feet.

Summary

If the animal would be walking the טליתים would be טמא. The animal is standing still.

Thinking it over

Can one disagree with תוספות and maintain that even במהלכת they are טהורין?⁴

¹ See (Overview to) previous ד"ה ור"ש. תוספות ד"ה ור"ש. The animal can stand on three feet, so regarding each foot, we say that it is not supporting the זב (it is merely מסייע), therefore they are all טהורים (see רש"י ד"ה מפני).

² Presumably ר"ש would maintain that they are טהור even in this case (it is no different than a מטה).

³ Each of these three feet are necessary to support the (בהמה and the) זב; it is the same as by a מטה.

⁴ See חידושי הריטב"א.