

In order not to crowd the beams

כי היכי דלא לידחקו קרשים –

OVERVIEW

The גמרא asked why did the עגלות need to be five אמות long; they could have been only four and a half אמות. The גמרא answered they were five אמות in order not to crowd the קרשים. There is a dispute between רש"י and תוספות how to interpret this גמרא.

פירש רש"י¹ אם באת לסדרן על רוחבן² -

explained, 'if you will arrange the קרשים by placing them on their width' they would crowd each other if the עגלות were four and a half אמות.

פרש"י asks on תוספות:

וקשה דהא מסיק לעיל דמנח להו אחודן³ -

And there is a difficulty with פרש"י, for the גמרא concluded previously that he set them down on their narrow thickness, so there was ample space.

תוספות offers his interpretation:

אלא נראה לפרש דלא לידחקו קרשים⁴ [לטבעות⁵ שהן זו כנגד זו⁶] -

Rather it is preferable to explain as follows; in order the קרשים do not crowd the rings which were opposite and corresponding one to the other –

[והיו שם אטבעי כדפירש' שהן גלוא"ש] -

And the אטבעי, which are explained to be גלוא"ש, were also there –

תוספות anticipates a difficulty:

אף על גב דדי היה בארבע וחצי לטבעות –

¹ בד"ה דלא.

² Each קרש was 1 1/2 אמות wide; three קרשים would be 4 1/2 אמות; that would be crowding the קרשים.

³ See צח,א. The קרשים were placed on their thickness which was one אמה, three (or even four) קרשים can fit comfortably in 4 1/2 אמות.

⁴ The הגהות הב"ח amends this to read, גלוא"ש אע"ג דדי היה, (instead of בארבע וחצי מ"מ). We have inserted this גירסא in [bracketed italics] and translated accordingly.

⁵ This refers to the upper and lower rings into which the בריחים were inserted. (See previous בנס ד"ה בנס).

⁶ The four קרשים were laid down on the עגלה (on their thickness) in two sets of two, back to back (with the טבעות on both outsides of each set), so the טבעות of the inner קרשים of the two sets faced each other. If they would collide into each other they would be bent out of shape.

⁷ See ד"ה אמר. והוא גלוא"ן בלע"ז who writes רש"י צח,ב ד"ה אמר. [For those with an interest in particle physics, a 'gluon' is the force which holds (glues) together the three quarks in protons and neutrons.] Presumably the אטבעי may have taken up additional space on the עגלה. See 'Thinking it over'.

Even though that for the rings (and the אטבעי) four and a half אמות would be sufficient -

(שהן זו כנגד זו והיו שם אטבעי כדמפרש שהן גלוא"ש) –
מכל מקום מפני כובדן משתרבבים ודוחקין זה לזה אם לא שיש ריוח גדול ביניהם⁸ ורחוקין:
Nevertheless, because of their heaviness, the קרשים shift about and crowd each other unless there is a large separation between them; and (concludes תוספות) this explanation is wanting.

SUMMARY

The reason four and a half אמות was insufficient is because of the concern that the קרשים (because of their weight) may shift and press against the טבעות and compress them.

THINKING IT OVER

It would seem that the 'גלוא"ש' of תוספות and the 'גלואו"ן' of רש"י are the same.⁹ However it seems from תוספות previously¹⁰ that תוספות does not interpret אטבעי to mean גלואו"ן (or גלוא"ש), so why does תוספות cite this interpretation here?

⁸ The הגהות הב"ח and the מהרש"א amend this to read ודוחק (instead of ורחוקין ביניהם)

⁹ See footnote # 7.

¹⁰ See תוס' צח,א ד"ה אטבעי.