

Daf 5a

and it is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Yosei says: The Divine Presence never actually descended below, and Moses and Elijah never actually ascended to heaven on high, as it is stated: “The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, and the earth He gave to the children of man” ([Psalms 115:16](#)), indicating that these are two distinct domains. Apparently, from ten handbreadths upward is considered a separate domain. Consequently, any *sukka* that is not at least ten handbreadths high is not considered an independent domain and is unfit.

ותניא ר' יוסי אומר מעולם לא ירדה שכינה למטה ולא עלו משה ואליהו למרום שנאמר (תהלים קטו, טז) השמים שמים לה' והארץ נתן לבני אדם

Comment/Chiddush

Some see here a homily; the mortals never rise to understand the heavens, and the celestials cannot dwell amongst the mortals who have the power of choosing good or bad. The two domains are entirely distinct.

The Gemara asks: **And did the Divine Presence never descend below ten handbreadths? But isn't it written: “And God descended onto Mount Sinai”** ([Exodus 19:20](#))?

The Gemara answers: Although God descended below, He always remained **ten handbreadths above** the ground. Since from ten handbreadths and above it is a separate domain, in fact, the Divine Presence never descended to the domain of this world.

The Gemara asks: **But isn't it written: “And on that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives”** ([Zechariah 14:4](#))? The Gemara answers: Here, too, He will remain **ten handbreadths above** the ground.

ולא ירדה שכינה למטה והכתיב (שמות יט, כ) וירד ה' על הר סיני למעלה מעשרה טפחים והכתיב (זכריה יד, ד) ועמדו רגליו ביום ההוא על הר הזיתים למעלה מעשרה טפחים

Comment/Chiddush

The Shchina referred to here has physical boundaries and is governed by place. Tis is distinct from Hashem who is entirely incorporeal. The Shchina, we learn here, does have physicality to it, and interacts with the physical world.

The Gemara asks: **And did Moses and Elijah never ascend to the heavens on high? But isn't it written: “And Moses went up to God”** ([Exodus 19:3](#))?

The Gemara answers: Nevertheless, he remained **below ten handbreadths** adjacent to the ground.

The Gemara asks: **But isn't it written: “And Elijah went up by a whirlwind heavenward”** ([II Kings 2:11](#))?

The Gemara answers: Here, too, it was **below ten handbreadths**.

The Gemara asks: **But isn't it written: “He grasps the face of the throne, and spreads His cloud upon him”** ([Job 26:9](#))? And Rabbi Tanḥum said: This teaches that the Almighty spread of the radiance of His Divine Presence and of His cloud upon him. Apparently, Moses was in the cloud with God.

The Gemara answers: Here, too, it was **below ten handbreadths**.

ולא עלו משה ואליהו למרום והכתיב (שמות יט, ג) ומשה עלה אל האלהים למטה מעשרה והכתיב (מלכים ב, יא) ויעל אליהו בסערה השמים למטה מעשרה והכתיב (איוב כו, ט) מאחז פני כסא פרשז עליו ועננו ואמר ר' תנחום מלמד שפירש שדי מזיו שכינתו ועננו עליו למטה מעשרה

Comment/Chiddush

The spreading of cloud upon Moshe was to allow him to exist without food or drink for forty days and nights.

The Gemara asks: **In any case: “He grasps the face of the throne,” is written**, indicating that Moses took hold of the Throne of Glory. The Gemara rejects this: **The throne was extended for him down to ten handbreadths and Moses grasped it**; however, he remained below ten handbreadths. And since the Divine Presence speaks to Moses from above the Ark cover ten handbreadths above the ground, clearly a height of ten handbreadths is a distinct domain.

מכל מקום מאחז פני כסא כתיב אישתרבוני אישתרבב ליה כסא עד עשרה ונקט ביה

Comment/Chiddush

Holding Hashem's chair was for Moshe's protection against the angels protesting delivering the Torah to us mortals.

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The Gemara wonders about the proof offered: **Granted**, the height of the Ark was **nine** handbreadths, as it is written: **“And they shall make an Ark of acacia wood; two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height”** ([Exodus 25:10](#)), and one and a half cubits equal nine handbreadths. **However, from where do we derive the fact that the thickness of the Ark cover was one handbreadth?** The Torah never states its dimensions explicitly, as **Rabbi Ḥanina taught**: For all the vessels that Moses crafted for the Tabernacle, the Torah provided in their regard the dimension of their length, the dimension of their width, and the dimension of their height. However, for the Ark cover, the Torah provided the dimension of its length and the dimension of its width; but the Torah did not provide the dimension of its height.

בשלמא ארון תשעה דכתיב (שמות כה, י) ועשו ארון עצי שטים אמתים וחצי ארכו ואמה וחצי רחבו ואמה וחצי קומתו אלא כפורת טפח מגלן דתני רבי חנינא כל הכלים שעשה משה נתנה בהן תורה מדת ארכן ומדת רחבן ומדת קומתן כפורת מדת ארכה ומדת רחבה נתנה מדת קומתה לא נתנה

The Gemara answers: **Go out and learn from the smallest** dimension mentioned in connection with any of the Tabernacle vessels, as it is stated with regard to the shewbread table: **“And you shall make unto it a border of a handbreadth around”** ([Exodus 25:25](#)). **Just as there**, the frame measures one handbreadth, so too, here, the thickness of the Ark cover measures a single handbreadth. The Gemara asks: **And let us derive** the thickness of the Ark cover **from the vessels themselves**, the smallest of which measures a cubit. The Gemara answers: **If you grasped many, you did not grasp anything; if you grasped few, you grasped something**. If there are two possible sources from which to derive the dimension of the Ark cover, then without conclusive proof one may not presume that the Torah intended to teach the larger dimension. Rather, the presumption is that the Torah is teaching the smaller dimension, which is included in the larger measure.

צא ולמד מפחות שבכלים שנאמר (שמות כה, כה) ועשית לו מסגרת טפח סביב מה להלן טפח אף כאן טפח ונילף מכלים גופייהו תפשת מרובה לא תפשת תפשת מועט תפשת

Comment/Chiddush

This is a general Torah principle. If a measure was unstated, learn it from what was stated.

The Gemara asks: If so, **let us derive** the thickness of the Ark cover **from the frontplate**, which is even smaller than a handbreadth, **as it is taught** in a *baraita*: The frontplate is a type of plate made of gold that is two fingerbreadths wide and stretches from ear to ear. **And written upon it are two lines**: The letters *yod, heh, vav, heh*, the name of God, **above**; and the word *kodesh*, spelled *kuf, dalet, shin*, followed by the letter *lamed*, **below**. Together it spelled *kodesh laHashem*, meaning: Sacred to the Lord, with *yod, heh, vav, heh* written on the upper line in deference to the name of God. **Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei, said: I saw** the frontplate in the emperor's treasury **in Rome**, where it was taken together with the other Temple vessels when the Temple was destroyed, **and upon it was written: Sacred to the Lord, on one line**. Why not derive the thickness of the Ark cover from the frontplate and say that it was only two fingerbreadths?

ונילף מציץ דתניא ציץ דומה כמין טס של זהב ורחב ב' אצבעות ומוקף מאזן לאזן וכתוב עליו ב' שיטין יו"ד ה"א מלמעלה וקדש למ"ד מלמטה וא"ר אליעזר בר' יוסי אני ראיתיו ברומי וכתוב עליו קדש לה' בשיטה אחת

Comment/Chiddush

Rashi understands that Hashem was written on the upper line and Kodesh li below it. Tosfos explains that the words Kodesh li were written at the the begining of the line and Hashem at the end of the line so that it could be read coherently. Rabbi Yossi, by contrast, holds that so long as they are the same level, there is no problem putting Hashem's name after other words, and therefore they could all be on the same line.

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The Gemara answers: **One derives** the dimension of a **vessel from** the dimension of a **vessel**, and **one does not derive** the dimension of a **vessel from** the dimension of an **ornament**. The frontplate is not one of the Tabernacle vessels but one of the ornaments of the High Priest.

דנין כלי מכלי
ואין דנין כלי
מתכשיט

Comment/Chiddush

Kodesh L'hashem meant that he, the Kohen Gadol, was holy unto G-d. This was an ornament to him!

The Gemara suggests: **Let us derive** the thickness of the Ark cover **from the crown** featured atop several of the Tabernacle vessels, **as the Master said**: This **crown**, with regard to which the Torah did not specify its dimensions, could be **any size**. The Gemara answers: **One derives** the dimension of a **vessel from** the dimension of a **vessel**, and **one does not derive** the dimension of a **vessel from** the dimension of the **finish of a vessel** that serves decorative purposes. The Gemara asks: **If it is so** that one does not derive the dimensions of a vessel from the dimensions of the finish of a vessel, then how can dimensions be derived from **the border** of the table, which is **also** the **finish of a vessel** and not an integral part of the table? The Gemara answers: The **border** of the table **was below**, between the legs of the table, and the tabletop rested upon it. As it supports the table, it is an integral part of the table and not merely decoration.

ונילף מזר
דאמר מר זר
משהו דנין כלי
מכלי ואין דנין
כלי מהכשר
כלי אי הכי
מסגרת נמי
הכשר כלי הוא
מסגרתו
למטה היתה

The Gemara asks: **This works out well according to the one who said that its border was below** the tabletop; **however, according to the one who said that its border was above** the tabletop, **what can be said?** According to that opinion, **this border is indeed the finish of a vessel**.

הניחא למאן דאמר מסגרתו למטה
היתה אלא למאן דאמר מסגרתו
למעלה היתה מאי איכא למימר האי
הכשר כלי הוא

Rather, the thickness of the Ark cover must be derived from a different source. **One derives** the missing dimensions of **an object for which the Torah provided** part of its **dimension**, e.g., the Ark cover, for which the Torah provided the dimensions of length and width, **from an object for which the Torah provided** its **dimension**, e.g., the border of the table. **And the frontplate and the crown, for which the Torah did not provide any dimension at all**, and their dimensions were determined by the Sages, **will not prove** anything. It is certainly appropriate to derive the dimension of the thickness of the Ark cover from that which was stated clearly in the Torah.

אלא דנין דבר
שנתנה בו תורה
מדה מדבר שנתנה
בו תורה מדה ואל
י'וכיחו ציץ וזר שלא
נתנה בהן תורה
מדה כלל

Comment/Chiddush

Would this not also provide the size of the width of the tabletop itself, for it too was given a width and length?

Rav Huna said that the thickness of the Ark cover is derived **from here**: **"Upon the face of [penei] the Ark cover on the east"** ([Leviticus 16:14](#)), and there is no **face [panim]** of a person that measures **less than one handbreadth**.

רב הונא אמר מהכא (ויקרא טז, יד)
על פני הכפורת קדמה ואין פנים
פחות מטפח

Comment/Chiddush

The Aron had no face. Rather, the use of face is borrowed from its usage by man, which is always a handbreadth.

The Gemara asks: And why say that the face in the verse is specifically the face of a person? **Say** that the Ark cover is **like the face**

ואימא
כאפי

