

# Overview

## Siman 629 Seif 18:

It is prohibited to use boards that are four *tefachim* wide even if one turned them on their side that is not four *tefachim* wide. If the boards are not four *tefachim* wide they are valid *schach* even if they are smoothed so that they are similar to utensils. The custom is to not use these boards at all.

- ❖ Once the boards are four *tefachim* they are similar to one's roof. (M.B. 45)
- ❖ Even though the boards are fit for sitting or putting other objects on them they are not susceptible to *tumah* since they are designated for construction. (M.B. 48)
- ❖ The rationale for the custom is the concern that one's *schach* will not allow the rain to enter. Some *Rishonim* write that it is prohibited to use such boards since nowadays boards smaller than four *tefachim* are used to make roofs. (M.B. 49)
- ❖ *Poskim* write that in a pressing circumstance, meaning one has no other *schach*, one may use boards that are four *tefachim* as well as any other *schach* that was prohibited by *Chazal*. (M.B. 50)

# Stories to Share

## The Chazon Ish's Practice

ש"ע ס' תרכ"ט, י"ח: "וכן אסרו לסכך בנסרים שרחבן ארבעה..."

Many people in Bnei Brak people try to follow the rulings of the Chazon Ish to the letter. That works very well with all the many opinions that the Chazon Ish committed to writing, but when there are contrary rumors about how the Chazon Ish held, things can get confusing.

One prevalent question regards a halachah brought on today's amud. We find that one may not use boards that are wider than four *tefachim* for *schach*. Many wondered about the Chazon Ish's opinion regarding longish sticks that were much less than four *tefachim* thick—known in Israel as *belafonim*—for *schach*. Some claimed that the Chazon Ish permitted them. Others hotly disputed this claim, pointing out that the Chazon Ish himself never used these convenient longish sticks. Surely, they argued, this shows that using these is *b'dieved* at best.

When this question reached Rav Nissim Karelitz, zt"l, he recalled that the Chazon Ish had indeed permitted using these for *schach*. "The Chazon Ish explicitly permitted using this for *schach* since it is not normal to use such things to

# Halacha Highlight

## Schach made from boards

Shulchan Aruch Siman 629 Seif 18  
וכן אסרו לסכך בנסרים שרחבן ארבעה

It is also prohibited to make *schach* from boards that are four *tefachim* wide

Shulchan Aruch writes that Chazal decreed that one may not use boards that are four *tefachim* wide as *schach*. The reason, explains Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק מ"ה) is that boards that wide are similar to the boards that one uses for the roof of his house and it could lead one to sit under the roof of his home and think that it is a valid *sukkah*. If the boards are less than four *tefachim* wide they may be used for *schach* even if they are smooth but the custom is not to use them as *schach* at all. The rationale behind the custom is the concern that one may arrange his *schach* in a manner that does not allow rain to enter the *sukkah*. (מ"ב ס"ק מ"ט) Mishnah Berurah then notes that according to some *Rishonim* it is *halachically* prohibited to use boards less than four *tefachim* for *schach* since boards this size are used to make roofs nowadays.

Pri Megadim expresses uncertainty whether the concern that boards are similar to one's roof applies to reeds that are round. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, however, takes it for granted that people use branches and reeds for *schach*. (ע' פסקי תשובות אות ט"ו) Sefer Sukkah HaShalem (מילואים לפ"ח אות מ"ט ד"ה מידת רוחב הפלפון) cites authorities who assert that as long as a board is less than a *tefach* it is valid for use as *schach*. He then notes that Rav Chaim Kanievski related that the Chazon Ish did not approve of the use of boards for *schach* and always used tree branches. In contrast, the custom in Yerushalayim for generations was to permit the use of boards as *schach*. The rationale is that people do not use such boards to construct roofs; therefore, the injunction does not apply. Sefer Piskei Teshuvos (ה"י"ל) writes that the boards should be no more than 8 cm and preferably they should be less than 5 cm wide.

roof any permanent dwelling—and the same holds true today. As for the proof from the Chazon Ish's *sukkah*, someone asked the Chazon Ish himself about this. He reasoned that it could not really be *l'chatchilah* if the Chazon Ish himself did not use them. He explained that he used branches because during his time Bnei Brak was surrounded by forest. He didn't use the *balifonim* because he had no need for them!"

חוט שני סוכה, ע' רט"ו