The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן שצ"ח סעיף ב'-ד'

Overview

Siman 398 Seif 2:

If a city is round we give it corners and look at it as though it is contained in a square and measure 2000 *amos* from beyond those protrusions so that they will benefit from the corners. The same is true if a city has three or more sides in that we square it and then measure 2000 *amos* from the edges of that square.

- We extend the string from the furthest edges of the city. (M.B. 6)

Siman 398 Seif 3:

When squaring a city we align the square with the directions of the world so that each side corresponds to a side of the world and is parallel to it.

Siman 398 Seif 4:

If a city is wide on one end and narrow on anther we look at it as though it is completely wide. If it is shaped like a sort of gamma or bow but between the two ends are less than 4000 *amos* we measure from the "bowstring" and see the area between the "bowstring" and "bow" as though it is filled with houses. If there is more than 4000 *amos* we measure from the bow. Some maintain that we measure from the space where the bow narrows to the point that there is less than 4000 *amos*. This applies when there is more than 2000 *amos* between the "bow" and "bowstring" but if there is not more than 2000 *amos* we measure from the "bowstring" and it appears that one may follow the lenient opinion.

- We look at the narrow end as though it is as wide as the wide end and measure 2000 *amos* from there. (M.B. 8)
- We look at the empty area as though it is filled with houses and measure 2000 *amos* from the edges of the "bow". (M.B. 11)
- We look at the area between the two edges of the gamma as though it is filled with houses when the diagonal between the two edges is not more than 4000 *amos*. (M.B. 13)
- One may walk the entire area between the "bow" and "bowstring" and it does not count towards his 2000 *amos* since it is considered part of his four *amos*. (M.B. 14)
- *Poskim* explain that this is relevant if one intends to walk from the "bow" to the "bowstring" and beyond but it is certainly permitted for one to walk the entire area of the houses and then an additional 2000 *amos* beyond that. (M.B. 15)
- Once the bow narrows to less than 4000 *amos* we look at the area as though it is filled with houses and we begin to measure 2000 *amos* from that place. (M.B. 16)
- Magen Avrohom asserts that this is limited to those who live at the edges of the bow so that they could walk from one edge to the other even though it is more than 4000 *amos* but does not permit the people living in the "bow" to measure from "bowstring" but others disagree and maintain that for those living in the "bow" they may measure to measure 2000 *amos* from the "bowstring." All opinions permit those who live in the "bow" to measure 2000 *amos* from their homes. (M.B. 18)

Halacha Highlight

An empty square in the middle of a city

Shulchan Aruch Siman 398 Seif 4

או כקשת

Or like a bow

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ד') addresses a city that is shaped like a bow. He rules that when the two ends of the bow are not more than 4000 *amos* apart, we measure the *techum* from the imaginary "bowstring" as though the empty part of the bow is filled with houses. If the distance between the two ends of the bow is more than 4000 *amos* the *techum* is measured from the "bow" rather than the "bowstring." Rema cites authorities who maintain that we measure 2000 *amos* from the place where the "bow" narrows to the point where there is no longer a distance of 4000 *amos* between the two ends. Rema then adds that if the distance between the "bow" and "bowstring" is less than 2000 *amos* we measure the *techum* from the "bowstring" rather than the "bow." Mishnah Berurah (סי"ק י"ח) presents a dispute regarding the intent of this *halacha*. According to Magen Avrohom it means that the people at the ends of the "bow" could travel to the other side even though it is a distance greater than 4000 *amos* but the people in the center of the "bow" do not measure the *techum* from the "bowstring." Other authorities disagree and contend that this *halacha* also permits those living in the center to measure their *techum* from the "bowstring."

Teshuvas Bais Yitzchok (שמלקס או"ח סי' מ"ב אות י"ג) discusses a city that is square but contains an area in the middle that is larger than 4000 *amos* by 4000 *amos* in the center that is empty of houses. Is it permitted for residents on one side of the empty space to travel to the other side through the empty space? He ruled that all authorities consider this to be a single city, including the large empty space in the center. The debate in Shulchan Aruch relates to a city shaped like a bow that is open to an area that is not inhabited and no part of the city encloses that space on the open side. In this instance since the city completely surrounds the empty space, it is part of the city and does not pose a *techum* issue to walk through it.