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Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן שצ"ח סעיף ז'-ח'

Overview

Siman 398 Seif 7:

If there are two cities within 141 and 1/3 *amos* of one another so that each is assigned 70+ *amos*, they are considered one city and residents may walk throughout the entire other city plus 2000 *amos* beyond it. The same is true concerning a city whose walls were breached on opposite sides but are aligned. If the houses are destroyed leaving a gap on each side 141 and 1/3 *amos* it is considered enclosed. One house, even if very large is not considered a city so that it should be granted 70 and 2/3 *amos*.

- According to Rema it is given 70 and 2/3 *amos* before measuring 2000 *amos*. (M.B. 36)
- If the breach is greater than 141 and 1/3 it is considered as though they are two different cities. (M.B. 37)
- Three yards, with two houses each are categorized as a city. (M.B. 38)

Siman 398 Seif 8:

If there are three villages and there is no more than 2000 *amos* between the middle one and each of the two outer villages and the distance between the two outer villages is no more than 282 and 2/3 *amos* (besides the width of the village) **so that if we were to shift the middle village between them there would be no more than 141 and 1/3 between each outer village and the middle village, they are considered one village and we measure 2000 *amos* from the outside of each village.** (Some maintain that we measure from the walls of the middle village rather than from its imaginary location aligned between the other two.)

- If the middle village is more than 2000 *amos* from one of the outer villages we would not combine them into one city. (M.B. 39)
- Therefore, residents of the outer villages could walk to the other city and beyond that an additional 2000 *amos* since it is categorized as one city. (M.B. 41)
- This is allowed even if the distance between the two outer villages is greater than 4000 *amos* since we imagine as though the middle village is aligned between them. (M.B. 42)
- Imagining the middle village as though it is aligned with the others is effective only for the outer two villages and thus its *techum* is measured from its wall. Since the issue is Rabbinic, we follow the lenient position. (M.B. 44)

Halacha Highlight

Defining a city

Shulchan Aruch Siman 398 Seif 7

היו שתי עירות זו סמוכה לזו

If there are two cities in proximity to one another

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ז') discusses when we consider two adjacent cities as one and when they are considered independent of one another. The primary consequence of this consideration is how to measure the *techum*. If the two cities are close enough and therefore categorized as one city, the residents of each section may walk in the entire area of both cities and the *techum* is measured from the far ends of each city. If the cities are far enough apart that they are considered separate, each city will measure its *techum* according to its boundaries. Rema adds that a single house, even if very large, is not categorized as a city and thus is not granted 70 and 2/3 *amos* given to cities which allows cities that are close in proximity to *halachically* consider them one. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ל"ח) explains that a house is never given 70 and 2/3 *amos* regardless of whether it is isolated from any city or close to another city but further than 70 and 2/3 *amos* from that city.

Mishnah Berurah (שם) further explains that the minimum qualification of a city is for there to be three yards, each of which contains two houses. Chazon Ish (או"ח סי' ק"י ס"ק י"ט) adds a number of important qualifications to the formation of a city. One point he raises is that each house must have four *amos* of space in the yard in front of his entrance. Consequently, if a building has multiple floors, but all of the residents exit the same door and share the same space, it counts as a single house rather than multiple houses. He also writes that if there are residents who dwell in the requisite number of houses who are away for Shabbos, the area remains categorized as a city. However, if people never dwelled in the houses, the area is not categorized as a city. This is relevant when a new city is being built and units were constructed but people do not yet dwell in them so that the area would not qualify as a city despite the numerous homes that were constructed.