The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תק"ס סעיף א'-ב'

Overview

Siman 560 Seif 1:

When the *bais hamikdash* was destroyed the Torah scholars of the generation enacted that one may never build a building that is limed and decorated like a regal building. Instead one may cover his house with plaster and lime it but leave a space of an *amah* by an *amah* opposite the door without lime. If one purchases a courtyard that is limed and decorated, it retains its presumption and we do not obligate him to strip the walls.

- Whenever making a *simcha* one must do something to commemorate the destruction of the *bais hamikdash*.
- These are different types of decorating. It was common to apply plaster to walls and then lime and kings would use lime exclusively and for that reason using lime by itself is prohibited. The wording implies that one may not build a regal building even if he leaves an *amah* by an *amah* space which follows Rambam's position, but others are lenient and permit the use of lime and decorating provided that one leave an *amah* by an *amah* space and custom follows this opinion. (M.B. 1)
- The *amah* space should be with plaster but without lime. If one adds sand to the lime it is also permitted if one leaves an *amah* space and some are lenient when sand is added and do not even consider that to be lime. Nowadays people do not have the custom to leave an empty square and perhaps it is that they rely on the lenient opinion but it is not clear the basis of the leniency. If only plaster covers the walls all opinions agree that it is unnecessary to leave a space open. (M.B. 2)
- It should be opposite the entrance so that it is visible as one enters. Some people leave a space empty above the door even though it is not visible as one enters and perhaps the rationale is that it should be visible to the owner as he sits in his house. It is not proper to color an *amah* square black since that is considered a decoration. Some people color a space black and write on it זכר לחורבן. If the walls are covered with embroidering one should leave an empty space. (M.B. 3)
- We assume it was constructed by a gentile and a Jew purchased it from him. If one knows it was constructed by a Jew the new owner must strip off a square. If the house collapses and is rebuilt all opinions agree that he must leave bare an *amah* square, even if it was originally built by a gentile. (M.B. 4)

Siman 560 Seif 2:

They also enacted that one who sets a table to serve a meal for guests must leave it deficient and should leave a place empty without a plate that would have been appropriate to place there. When a woman makes silver and gold jewelry she should leave off one piece so that her jewelry should not be complete. When a groom marries a woman we take ash and place it on his head where his *tefillin* rests. Some places have the custom to break a cup at the time of the *chupah* or to place a black cloth or other mourning article on the groom's head. **All of these things are done to remember Yerushalayim as the *pasuk* says, אם לא אעלה את ירושלים על ראש שמחתי and אם אשכחך ירושלים.**

- This applies even to a *seudas mitzvah*, e.g. a *bris* or a wedding. On Shabbos and Yom Tov one should not refrain from serving everything. (M.B. 5)
- One should not serve all the foods that should be served, instead he should leave something out, even fish fry. (M.B. 6)
- When the space is left empty people will realize that something is missing. Levush does not mention this prerequisite, perhaps because he maintains that not serving it is sufficient. (M.B. 7)
- Women who wear all of their jewelry not only violate this but they incite the nations by making them jealous. (M.B. 8)
- This is also the reason we break a vessel at the *tenaim*. The vessel used under the *chupah* should be whole. (M.B. 9)

Halacha Highlight

Zecher l'churban

Shulchan Aruch Siman 560 Seif 1

ומשיר מקום אמה על אמה

And leaves an *amah* by *amah*

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') mentions the enactment of Chazal following the destruction of the *bais hamikdash* restricting one from building and decorating his home in a regal manner. When building a home one may apply plaster and lime but must leave an *amah* by an *amah* opposite the door without lime. A simple reading of Shulchan Aruch would seem to indicate that one must leave specifically a square that is an *amah* by an *amah*. This, in fact, is the position adopted by Pri Megadim (א"א סק"ג). In the event that opposite the front door one does not have an *amah* by an *amah* to serve as the commemoration of the *bais hamikdash,* Rav Moshe Feinstein (ספר הבית סי' י"ט הע' י"א) maintains that one could leave a rectangle the size of an *amah* square and that is sufficient. On the other hand, Rav Chaim Kanievski (שאלת רב עמ' 370) requires one to always leave empty a square. Therefore, if opposite the front door there is no enough space to leave empty an *amah* square one should find another nearby location to leave empty.

Shulchan Aruch's phrase כנגד הפתח—opposite the entrance—gives the impression that it must literally be opposite the entrance as one enters. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ג) explains that its placement is there so that one should see it immediately upon entering the home. He then notes that some people leave the *zecher l'churban* above the front door on the inside even though it cannot be seen as one enters the house. He suggests that the rationale is so that one could see it as he sits in his home. Others write that when it is not possible for it to be on the wall opposite the entrance it should be left on the wall that is closest to that location (פסקי תשובות אות ב').