

A wall **wide five** טפחים – **קאי טפי לא קאי** –  
**Can support a height of four** אמות **but not more**

### OVERVIEW

The גמרא infers from our משנה that a stone wall of גזית four אמות high requires a width of ה' טפחים<sup>1</sup> in order to be structurally sound. In fact a width of ה' טפחים will only support a wall of ד' אמות; but not higher than ד' אמות. תוספות will argue that both our משנה and life experience contradict this assumption.

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תוספות asks:

**וקשיא לרבינו תם הא לבינין דגריעי קאי בשלשה טפחים –**

**The ר"ת has a difficulty** with this statement; **for bricks which are inferior** to גזית, and nevertheless **they stand on** a width of even **three** טפחים for a height of four אמות.<sup>2</sup> Why therefore does the גמרא assume that גזית which is stronger<sup>3</sup> than לבינין require a full ה' טפחים width in order to be able to remain standing upright?

תוספות has an additional question:

**ועוד הא קא חזינן דקאי בגזית טפי אפורתא –**

**And furthermore we do actually see that** even a גזית wall **can stand more** than ד' אמות high even **on a** width that is **less** than five טפחים wide. Why does the גמרא say that גזית requires ה' טפחים (and even then only for ד' אמות high).

תוספות answers:

**ותירץ דהכי קאמר טפי לא קאי כמשפט גזית –**

**And the ר"ת answered that this is what** the גמרא is saying; **more than** ד' אמות high **it will not** remain standing for a sufficient time **as is appropriate** for גזית -

**שרוצים בני אדם לבנותו שיעמוד ימים רבים כשבונים בגזית:**

**For people want to build** גזית, provided **that it should last for many years when they build with** גזית. It is true that גזית walls can be supported for more than ד' אמות high even on widths of less than ה' טפחים. However the longevity of these walls will be shortened. People building with expensive גזית material want their walls to last much longer. Therefore the increase in width is required to assure maximum longevity. לבינין walls that are not that expensive; a width of three טפחים is sufficient to assure the limited longevity, commensurate with its cost.

<sup>1</sup> An אמה is usually considered approximately 18 inches; a טפח 3 inches.

<sup>2</sup> The משנה clearly states that for לבינין a total of only ג' טפחים is required for a ד' אמות.

<sup>3</sup> One would naturally assume that the stronger the building material the less width is required to attain the same height. In our משנה we see the opposite. לבינין which are inferior to גזית require a narrower width than גזית, which is a stronger material.

### **SUMMARY**

To assure the maximum longevity for the expensive גזית wall a minimum of ה' ד' אמות width is required to attain a height of טפחים.

### **THINKING IT OVER**

What is the difference between the הוה אמינא and תוספות of מסקנא as to the reason for the various thicknesses of the walls?