

אישתכח דלמעלה מי' היה קאי - *T'fochim* It turns out that it stood above ten

Overview

The *גמרא* derives from the carrying of the *ארון* that when the *לויים* carried the *ארון* it was higher than ten *טפחים* from the ground. The entire *ארון* was ten *טפחים* high. People carry burdens at the third from the top (two-thirds from the bottom);¹ and then when it was raised on their shoulders the entire *ארון* was above ten *טפחים* from the ground. *תוספות* makes this calculation and resolves certain contradictions.

דמכתף אדם עד לארץ שלש אמות² כדאמר בתרגום מגלת אסתר -

Since that from the shoulder of a person till the ground is three אמות, as it states in מגילת אסתר that -

פרשנדתא אצטליב על תלת אמין וכן כלו וראשיהם³ היו קטועים⁴ -

and all the other son's of המן were hung up on three אמות, for their heads were chopped off, so three אמות was sufficient.

תוספות responds to an anticipated difficulty:

ומקוה דאמר (יומא לא, א) דהוי כל גופו עולה בהן אפילו ראש באמה על אמה ברום ג' אמות⁵ -

And regarding a מקוה which is an אמה long by an אמה wide by a height of three אמות, which meets the requirement that the entire body fits into it, even the head; how could that be if a person is three אמות tall up to the shoulder, how could his whole body [including his head] fit into a מקוה whose waters are only three אמות high?!

תוספות responds

דכשיכנס במים יעלו המים למעלה מראשו⁶ -

That when he will enter into the water, the water will rise above his head –

תוספות discusses another (seemingly) difficult case:

וכוכין דאמר בסוף המוכר פירות (בבא בתרא דף ק, ב) דאורכן ארבע אמות -

¹ The staves (the *בדי הארון* with which they carried the *ארון*) was placed one third down from the top of the *ארון*; ten divided by 3 = 3 and 1/3. When the *בדי הארון* were on their shoulders, 6 and 2/3 *טפחים* of the *ארון* were below their shoulders.

² An אמה is six *טפחים*; three אמות = 18 *טפחים*; the *ארון* hung down below the shoulder the *לויים* 62/3 *טפחים* (see footnote # 1), this means the bottom of the *ארון* was 11 1/3 *טפחים* above the ground (18-62/3=11 1/3).

³ The *הגהות הב"ח* amends this to read *דראשיהם* (instead of *וראשיהם*).

⁴ The *בני המן* were first killed (presumably beheaded), then אסתר requested that they be hung up. A slab three אמות high was sufficient on which to attach their corpses since from the shoulder down (they had no head) they were three אמות.

⁵ A מקוה of that volume, 3 cubic אמות, contains forty סאה in which the entire body of a person can be immersed.

⁶ The walls of the מקוה are higher than three אמות; it is only the water that needs to be (only) three אמות high.

And regarding the 'cavities'⁷ mentioned in the end of פירוק המוכר פירות whose length was four אמות; the reason it was so deep -

היינו עם ראש וצואר ועובי הארון עם מה שמשקעין ארון בתוך הכוך⁸ טפח או טפחיים -
That is taking into account the body (three אמות) with the head and neck, and the thickness of the walls of the coffin, considering they inserted the coffin one or two טפחים inside the כוך. That is why four אמות are necessary.

תוספות discusses another case:

וגבי היזק ראייה⁹ דהצריך ארבע אמות¹⁰ בריש בבא בתרא (דף ב,ב) -
מס' And regarding היזק ראייה where four אמות are required in the beginning of -
ד' אמות the reason it needs to be so high, even though a person is not tall כ"ב;
משום צואר וראש ובקל יגביה עצמו שיוכל לראות לכך צריך ארבע אמות -
Because the neck and the head make him taller than three אמות and he can easily raise himself on his toes¹¹ to see the other's property, Therefore four אמות are required to prevent היזק ראייה.

One final clarification:

והא דאמרינן במי שהוציאוהו¹² (עירובין דף מח,א) דמקומו של אדם ארבע אמות -
And this which the גמרא states in פרק מי שהוציאוהו that a person's 'place' is four אמות, even though that according to תוספות a person is less than אמות ד', the answer is -
היינו¹³ כשפושט ידו למעלה מראשו:

That is when he extends his hands above his head, he is then אמות ד' in total.

Summary

A person is three אמות tall up to his shoulder and less than four אמות tall overall.

⁷ The manner of burial then was that they dug holes (כוכין) into the walls of a cave and inserted the coffins into these כוכין. The depth of these כוכין was four אמות

⁸ The coffin did not fill the entire four אמות of the כוך; there was one or two extra טפחים (perhaps taller people would need the extra space). [It seems that the height of a person (if we assume an אמה to be about 19 inches [the שיעור of [הר' אברהם חיים נאה] if it is about 3 and 2/3 אמות (we are taking off a טפח or טפחיים) this would translate to about 68 inches or 5'8".]

⁹ היזק ראייה means invasion of privacy when someone else can see what you are doing on your property. This reduces the usage and the value of the land. See footnote # 10.

¹⁰ When two partners divide their courtyard either one can require the other to join him in building a dividing wall, which must be at least four אמות high in order to prevent היזק ראייה.

¹¹ See תוס' יומא לא, ד"ה אמה.

¹² The משנה on מ"א states that if one awakens and finds himself outside the תחום שבת, he has only four אמות in which he can maneuver himself. The גמרא explains that the תורה writes (בשלח טז, כט) שבו איש תחתיו (every person should sit in his 'place') and the place of a person is אמות ד'. The question is that a person is not tall אמות ד'.

¹³ See 'Thinking it over.'

Thinking it over

¹⁴ The גמרא there addresses this issue, explains why מקומו של אדם is three אמות (?) and another אמה to extend his hands and feet; while ר' מאיר says his body is three אמות for the body and an extra אמה to take an object from under his feet and place it under his head, עיי"ש. It is surprising that תוספות does not mention that מחלוקת.

¹⁴ See footnote # 13.