

מרחיקין השובך מן העיר חמשים אמה –

We distance the dovecote fifty cubits from the city

OVERVIEW

The משנה did not explain why we distance the שובך fifty אמות from the city. תוספות gives his reason¹ and explains why it is not relevant in other cases.

מפני התבואה הנשטחת בגגות העיר כדי לייבש² -

We distance the שובך fifty אמות from the city, **on account of the grain which is spread out to dry on the roofs of the city –**

תוספות responds to an anticipated difficulty:³

אבל לתבואה שבשדות ליכא למיחש בקרוב לעיר לפי שהשדות רחוקין מן העיר אלף אמה⁴ -
But there is no concern for the grain in the fields which are close to the city (within אמה of the שובך), since the fields are a thousand אמות away from the city -

כדתנן (ערכין דף לגה) אין עושין מגרש שדה⁵ ולא שדה מגרש:

As the משנה taught, ‘we do not make the open area (מגרש) into a field (for growing crops) and we do not make the field into a מגרש.

SUMMARY

If the שובך is placed fifty אמות from the city it will not eat the grain that is spread out to dry on the roofs, and not the grain in the fields which are a thousand אמות distance from the city.

THINKING IT OVER

Why did not תוספות accept פרש"י⁶

¹ See מרחיקין ד"ה רש"י who writes שלא יפסדו זרעוני גינה תוספות offers a different explanation.

² We are concerned that the doves will reach the roofs and consume the grain.

³ Seemingly, if we will place the שובך outside the city (where the fields are), the birds will eat the grain in the fields (within fifty אמות of the שובך).

⁴ If the שובך is placed fifty אמות from the city it will still be nine-hundred-fifty אמות away from the fields.

⁵ The תורה writes (במדבר [מסעי] לה,ד) regarding the ערי הלוויים that a space of one thousand אמות around the city should be left vacant from plowing etc. This open space is intended to beautify the city. Presumably this applies to all cities.

⁶ See footnote # 1. See נחלת משה. See following תוס' ד"ה ולא (TIE footnote # 3).