The cubit of the base of the altar and the cubit of the surrounding ledge – according to Rava, the measure of the altar – is a cubit and a handbreadth, and is a cubit wide. Everyone agrees that this is the base of the altar, which is five cubits above the base, and six cubits above the ground, which are measured with cubits of five handbreadths.

The height of the altar, including its horns, was ten cubits. However, these cubits were not uniform in length. Rather, some were longer and others were shorter. Consequently, the height of the altar totaled fifty-eight handbreadths, and not sixty. The altar had five horns, was ten cubits. However, these cubits were not uniform in length. Rather, some were longer and others were shorter. Consequently, the height of the altar totaled fifty-eight handbreadths, and not sixty. The altar had five horns, was ten cubits.

The Gemara raises a difficulty. As it is written: “And these are the measures of the altar – a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and its border by its edge round about, “ these are the horns of the altar;” (Ezekiel 43:11). And the Sages explained this verse as follows: “The bottom shall be a cubit,” this is the base of the altar; “and the breadth a cubit,” this is the surrounding ledge of the altar; “and its border by its edge round about,” these are the horns of the altar, i.e., extensions of the corners of the altar; “and this shall be the higher part of the altar,” this refers to the golden altar that stood inside the Sanctuary and was also measured by small cubits.

The Gemara answers: This is not necessarily the case, as it is taught in the latter clause of the baraita that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: All the cubits that the Sages mentioned with regard to diverse kinds of seeds are measured with cubits of six handbreadths, provided that they are not measured with exact handbreadths? This proves by inference that the anonymous first tanna is speaking of all cubits, and not only those in the case of diverse kinds of seeds.

The Gemara answers: Abaye could have said to you: Isn’t there Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, who holds in accordance with my opinion? I stated my opinion in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel.

The Gemara comments: According to Abaye, the issue of large and small cubits is certainly subject to a dispute between tanna’im, as his ruling can only be in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. According to Rava, however, must it be said that this is subject to a dispute between tanna’im?

The Gemara answers: This is not necessarily the case, as Rava could have said to you: Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel does not dispute the basic teaching of the anonymous first tanna that all the cubits mentioned by the Sages are cubits of six handbreadths. Rather, he came to teach us this: One should not reduce the cubit of diverse kinds of seeds, i.e., one should not measure it with compressed handbreadths.

The Gemara raises an objection. And if that is the case, let him say: One must not reduce the cubit of diverse kinds of seeds. What does the phrase: A cubit consisting of six handbreadths come to exclude? Does it not come to exclude the cubit of a sukkah and the cubit of an alleyway, which are measured with cubits of five handbreadths?

The Gemara rejects this argument. No, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel’s formulation comes to exclude the cubit of the base of the altar, which is the bottom level of the altar, one cubit high with a ledge one cubit wide, and the cubit of the surrounding ledge of the altar, which is five cubits above the base, six cubits above the ground, and one cubit wide. Everyone agrees that those cubits are small cubits of five handbreadths.

As it is written: “And these are the measures of the altar by cubits; the cubit is a cubit and a handbreadth, the bottom shall be a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and its border by its edge round about shall be a span: And this shall be the higher part of the altar” (Ezekiel 43:11). And the Sages explained this verse as follows: “The bottom shall be a cubit,” this is the base of the altar; “and the breadth a cubit,” this is the surrounding ledge of the altar; “and its border by its edge round about,” these are the horns of the altar, i.e., extensions of the corners of the altar; “and this shall be the higher part of the altar,” this refers to the golden altar that stood inside the Sanctuary and was also measured by small cubits.

The Gemara answers: Abaye could have said to you: You must not reduce the cubit of diverse kinds of seeds, which are measured with expansive handbreadths, and those, the cubits of sukkah, should be measured with compressed handbreadths. However, according to Abaye, it is difficult.
Since the Gemara discussed measurements, it proceeds to cite that which Rabbi Hiyya bar Ashi said that Rav said: The measures relating to mitzvot in the Torah, and the halakhot governing interpositions that invalidate ritual immersions, and the halakhot of partitions are all halakhot transmitted to Moses from Sinai. These halakhot have no basis in the Written Torah, but according to tradition they were orally transmitted by God to Moses together with the Written Torah.

The Gemara questions this assertion: Are measures⁵ a halakha transmitted to Moses from Sinai? They are written in the Torah, as it is written: “A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey” (Deuteronomy 8:8), and Rav Hanan said: This entire verse was stated for the purpose of teaching measures with regard to different halakhot in the Torah.

Wheat was mentioned as the basis for calculating the time required for one to become ritually impure when entering a house afflicted with leprosy, as that which we learned in a mishna: One who enters a house afflicted with leprosy⁶ of the house⁷ (see Leviticus 14:47), and his clothes are draped over his shoulders, and his sandals and his rings are in his hands, both he and they, the clothes, sandals, and rings, immediately become ritually impure. However, if he was dressed in his clothes, and his sandals were on his feet, and his rings were on his fingers, he immediately becomes ritually impure, but they, the clothes, sandals, and rings, remain pure until he stays in the house long enough to eat half a loaf of bread. This calculation is based on wheat bread, which takes less time to eat, and not on barley bread, and it relates to one who is reclining and eating it together with relish, which hastens the eating. This is a Torah measurement connected specifically to wheat.

Barley is also used as a basis for measurements, as we learned in a mishna: A bone from a corpse the size of a grain of barley⁸ imparts ritual impurity through contact and by being carried, but it does not impart impurity by means of a tent, i.e., if the bone was inside a house, it does not render all the articles in the house ritually impure.

The halakhic measure determined by a vine is the quantity of a quarter-log of wine for a nazirite.⁹ A nazirite, who is prohibited to drink wine, is liable to be flogged if he drinks that measure.

NOTES

Measures...are written in the Torah – Rav Hanan understands that the verse speaks in praise of the fruit of Eretz Yisrael, such that even the measures for various Torah laws are determined by its fruit (Rashi).

One who enters a house afflicted with leprosy – A house plagued with leprosy (zara'at) is in a certain sense treated like a house containing a corpse: Anything inside it and anyone who enters it in contracts impurity. However, two verses refer to this situation: “One who enters the house shall be impure until the evening” (Leviticus 14:46), and “One who eats in the house shall wash his clothes” (Leviticus 14:49). The first verse refers to the impurity of the person himself or to that of anything brought into the house, while the second verse, which speaks of washing clothes, deals with the clothing worn by a person who enters the house. The clothing contracts impurity only if it remains in the house for the duration of “eating” which, according to rabbinic tradition, is the time required to eat half a loaf of bread.

A quarter-log of wine for a nazirite – In order to point out that Rashā’s explanation, which states that if a nazirite drinks this measure of wine he is liable for flogging, requires elaboration. This is based on the fact that the word vines indicates more than simply the prohibition against a nazirite drinking wine. Rather, one should explain as follows: A quarter-log is a measurement of volume. Indeed, all measures of a quarter-log, whether for wine or water, are equal. However, the volume of solid food is determined, according to halakha, by measuring the amount of liquid displaced by the food when it is inserted into a liquid. Consequently, when measuring foods prohibited to a nazirite, e.g., grapes and grape products, to which the measure of a quarter-log applies, there will be a slight difference between measuring with water and measuring with wine, because the viscosity of wine and that of water are different. Therefore, the amount of liquid displaced will be different (Gelion Waks).
A dried fig-bulk with regard to carrying out on Shabbat – אפל: One who carries food fit for human consumption on Shabbat, provided that he carries a dried fig-bulk of that food.

Pomegranate teaches the measure, as that which we learned in a mishna: All ritually impure wooden vessels belonging to ordinary homeowners become pure through being broken, as broken vessels cannot contract or maintain ritual impurity, and they are considered broken if they have holes the size of pomegranates.

The Sages interpreted: A land of olive oil and honey, as: A land, all of whose measures are olive-bulks. The Gemara poses a question: Does it enter your mind that it is a land all of whose measures are olives-bulks? Yet aren’t there those measures that we just mentioned above, which are not olives-bulks? Rather, say: A land, most of whose measures are olives-bulks, as most measures, e.g., those relating to forbidden foods and to impurity imparted by a corpse in a tent and by contact with an animal carcass, are olive-bulks. Honey, i.e., dates from which date honey is extracted, also determines a measure, as with regard to eating on Yom Kippur, one is liable only if he eats a large date-bulk of food. Clearly, the measurements pertaining to mitzvot are explicitly written in the Torah and were not transmitted to Moses from Sinai.

The Gemara refutes this argument: And can you hold that all these measures are explicitly written in the Torah with regard to each of the halakhot mentioned above? Rather, they are halakhot that were transmitted to Moses from Sinai, and the Sages based them on verses in the Torah.

Rabbi Hiyya bar Ashi said above that Rav said that the laws governing interpositions that invalidate ritual immersion are halakhot transmitted to Moses from Sinai. The Gemara challenges this assertion: These, too, are written in the Torah, as it is written: “And he shall bathe all his flesh in the water” (Leviticus 15:16), and the Sages derived that nothing should intervene between his flesh and the water. The definite article in the phrase “in the water” indicates that this bathing is performed in water mentioned elsewhere, i.e., specifically in the water of a ritual bath, and not in just any water. And the phrase “all his flesh” indicates that it must be in water into which all of his body can enter, i.e., in which a person can immerse his entire body at once. And how much water is that? It is a cubit by a cubit by the height of three cubits. And the Sages calculated the volume of a ritual bath of this size and determined that the waters of a ritual bath measure forty se’ah. As this is derived from the Written Torah, what need is there for a halakha transmitted to Moses from Sinai?

The Gemara answers: The halakha transmitted to Moses from Sinai is needed with regard to his hair, that it too must be accessible to the water without interposition. And this is in accordance with the opinion of Rabba bar Rav Huna, as Rabba bar Rav Huna said: A single hair tied in a knot constitutes an interposition and invalidates the immersion. Three hairs tied together in a knot do not constitute an interposition, because three hairs cannot be tied so tightly that water cannot penetrate them. With regard to two hairs tied together in a knot, I do not know the halakha. This halakha with regard to hair is a halakha transmitted to Moses from Sinai.

The Gemara raises a difficulty: The halakha with regard to his hair is also written in the Torah, as it was taught in a baraita: And he shall bathe all [et kol] his flesh. The superfluous word et comes to amplify and include that which is subordinate to his flesh, and that is hair.
The Gemara answers: The halakha transmitted to Moses from Sinai comes to teach the details of interpositions on the body with regard to its majority and its minority, and with regard to one who is particular and one who is not particular, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yitzḥak.

As Rabbi Yitzḥak said: By Torah law, if there is an interposition between a person and the water, and it covers the majority of his body, and he is particular and wants the interposing substance removed, only then is it considered an interposition that invalidates immersion in a ritual bath. However, if he is not particular about that substance, it is not considered an interposition. The Sages, however, issued a decree prohibiting substances covering the majority of one's body with regard to which he is particular, due to substances covering the majority of one's body with regard to which one is particular, due to substances covering the majority of his body with regard to which one is particular.

The Gemara answers: The halakha transmitted to Moses from Sinai is necessary only according to the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, who said: The cubit mentioned with regard to the building of the Tabernacle and the Temple was a large cubit of six handbreadths, whereas the cubit mentioned with regard to the sacred vessels was a cubit of five handbreadths. According to this opinion, the Ark, which was a cubit and a half, and its cover, which was a handbreadth, measured eight and a half handbreadths. Therefore, nothing can be derived with regard to a partition of ten handbreadths.
The Gemara answers: According to the opinion of Rabbi Meir, the halakha with regard to a partition of ten handbreadths is indeed written in the Torah. However, the halakha transmitted to Moses from Sinai comes to teach other halakkot concerning partitions, e.g., the halakhot of extending [ gode], according to which an existing partition is extended upward or downward to complete the requisite measure; and the halakhot of joining [lavud], according to which two solid surfaces are joined if they are separated by a gap of less than three handbreadths; and the halakhot of the curved wall of a sukka. A sukka is valid even if there are up to four cubits of invalid roofing, provided that this roofing is adjacent to one of the walls of the sukka. In that case, the invalid roofing is considered a bent extension of the wall. These concepts are certainly not written in the Torah.

The Gemara returns to the laws of alleyways: If the cross beam spanning the entrance to an alleyway was higher than twenty cubits from the ground and one comes to diminish its height, how much must he diminish it? The Gemara is surprised by the question: How much must he diminish it? The amount that he needs in order to render its height less than twenty cubits.\(^{26}\)

Rather, the space between the cross beam and the ground must, of course, be reduced to twenty cubits. However, when one raises the alleyway, how much must the width of the raised section be in order to render the alleyway fit for carrying within it? Rav Yosef said: One handbreadth. Abaye said: Four handbreadths.\(^{27}\)

The Gemara suggests: Let us say that these amona'im disagree about this: The one who said one handbreadth holds that one is permitted to utilize the area beneath the cross beam spanning the entrance to the alleyway, as he maintains that the cross beam serves as a partition, and the alleyway is considered as if it were sealed by a partition descending from the outer edge of the cross beam that faces the public domain. Since the area beneath the cross beam is part of the alleyway and is less than twenty cubits, there is a conspicuous demarcation for one standing in the alleyway.

\(^{26}\) Or, everyone agrees that it is permitted to utilize the area beneath the cross beam, and they disagree with regard to this: This Master, Rav Yosef, holds that a cross beam functions in an alleyway as a conspicuous marker that demarcates the alleyway from the public domain, and consequently a mere handbreadth is sufficient, as even a handbreadth is sufficiently conspicuous. And this Master, Abaye, holds that a cross beam serves as a partition, and a partition is not effective for an area of less than four handbreadths. The principle that an outer edge descends and seals the alleyway does not apply if the beam is higher than twenty cubits. In order for it to be considered a partition, there must be at least four handbreadths that are less than twenty cubits beneath the cross beam.

\(^{27}\) The Gemara rejects this explanation: No, everyone agrees that it is permitted to utilize the area beneath the cross beam, and they disagree with regard to this: This Master, Rav Yosef, holds that a cross beam functions in an alleyway as a conspicuous marker that demarcates the alleyway from the public domain, and consequently a mere handbreadth is sufficient, as even a handbreadth is sufficiently conspicuous. And this Master, Abaye, holds that a cross beam serves as a partition, and a partition is not effective for an area of less than four handbreadths. The principle that an outer edge descends and seals the alleyway does not apply if the beam is higher than twenty cubits. In order for it to be considered a partition, there must be at least four handbreadths that are less than twenty cubits beneath the cross beam.