

Arei Miklat (Cities of Refuge)

Ref: *Sefer Nezikin, Hilchot Rotzeach, Chapters 5, 7, 8*

Ref: *Sefer Nezikin, Hilchot Chovel Umazik, Chapter 5*

Whenever a person kills unintentionally, he should be exiled to an *Ir Miklat* – a City of Refuge, until the High Priest dies.



To exile the one who kills unintentionally (to a City of Refuge).³

Not to take ransom from the person sentenced to exile (in City of Refuge).⁴

Living within *Arei Miklat*.

- A Torah Scholar has to take his *Rav* with him.
- A *Rav* has to take his *yeshivah* with him.
- A woman has still to be provided for by her husband.
- Levites. They lived in these cities permanently.

They (Levites), plus other inhabitants should make up the majority of the city. If not, the city is no longer a refuge of killers. (Levites had **48** cities i.e. **6** *Arei Miklat* plus **42** other cities. – see chapter 8:9)

Killers may only leave city after death of *Kohen Gadol*. At this stage he regains full atonement but he can never return to the same stature as he had previously enjoyed.

Until this point, the killer may never leave the city. Not even to save another person life. Even if he dies while in the city, he must be buried there until the *Kohen Gadol* dies. Thereafter, his coffin may be removed.

If there was no High Priest when sentence was passed, then killer is exiled and stays there forever.



It is a *mitzvah* to set aside *Arei Miklat* (cities of refuge) and to prepare roads towards them.⁹

Only applies in *Eretz Yisrael* i.e. the setting up of the cities.

There were **6** *Arei Miklat*

- **3** were set up by *Mosheh Rabenu* in Trans Jordan.
- **3** were set up by *Yehoshua* in Canaan.

All 6 had to be set up before any became a refuge.

When *Mashiach* comes another **3** will be added in cities of *Keni, Knizi* and *Kadmoni*.

Special roads had to be constructed to make it easy for killer to reach the City. The *Bet Din* had to construct, maintain and check them (checked every year on **15th of Adar**).

They had to be double the width of a normal road (**32 amah**) and all obstacles had to be removed.

Bridges were constructed where necessary and signs were placed. All this was to make it easy for 'killer' to reach the City of Refuge.

City should be of intermediate size, in a trading place, and where water is also found.

The setup of these cities prevents a blood redeemer from trying to kill the 'killer'.

The other **42** cities of Levites also can serve as refuge for the 'killer' but are not as secure as the **6** Cities of Refuge.

- I.e. – one needs to have intention to be protected (whereas in City of Refuge it protects automatically).
- Has to pay rent (whereas in City of Refuge this is free).