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be·ma  (bē mǝ)

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n. pl. be·ma·ta (-mə-tǝ)

1. *Judaism* The platform from which services are conducted in a synagogue. Also called *almemar*.
2. *Eastern Orthodox Church* The area of a church in which the altar is located; the sanctuary.

[Ultimately from Greek *bēma*, step, platform; see **g^wā-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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