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Megillah Daf 10

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The Mishnah states: There is no difference between a major Altar (*Moshe’s mizbeach when the Mishkan was in Nov and Givon*) and a small altar (*private altar that one erects in his backyard, during the time that these were permitted*), except Pesach sacrifices. This is the general rule: What one vowed and donated freely may be offered on a private altar, but what is neither vowed nor donated freely, but rather compulsory, may not be offered on the altar. (9b3)

The Pesach offering and nothing else? — We should say, things like the Pesach offering. Whose view is this? — It follows the viewpoint of Rabbi Shimon, for it was taught in a Baraisa: Rabbi Shimon says: The community may not bring obligatory korbanos on the major altar except for the korban Pesach and any communal korban that has a set time. Korbanos that did not have a set time were not brought at all. (9b3 – 9b4)

The Mishnah states: There is no difference between Shiloh and Yerushalayim except that in Shiloh (*when the Tabernacle was there*), one may eat *kodshim kalim* (*sacrifices with a lesser degree of sanctity*) and *ma’aser sheni* in any location that Shiloh can be seen, however, in Yerushalayim, one could eat only inside the wall. And in both locations, *kodshei kodashim* (*sacrifices with a higher degree of sanctity*) must be eaten inside the enclosures. The sanctity of Shiloh is followed by permission (*private bamos may be used after the destruction of the Shiloh Tabernacle*), and the sanctity of Jerusalem is not followed by permission (*once the Temple was constructed, bamos are always prohibited*). (9b4 – 10a1)

Rabbi Yitzchak said: I have heard from my teachers that one may sacrifice in the Temple of Chonyo, even at this time. (*The Gemora (Menachos 109b) records the story of Shimon*

Hatzaddik, the great Kohen Gadol, who, nearing death, instructed his younger son, Chonyo, to take over as Kohen Gadol. Soon thereafter, an incident occurred, which forced him to flee to Alexandria, Egypt. Once there, Chonyo built a temple, an altar and offered sacrifices there.)

The Gemora explains: Rabbi Yitzchak maintains that Chonyo’s Temple was not regarded as a house of idol worship and the sanctification of Yerushalayim and the Beis Hamikdosh were only for the period that the Beis Hamikdosh was in existence and that explains why it would be permitted to offer sacrifices in Chonyo’s Temple.

The Gemora provides the source for his viewpoint that the initial sanctification of Yerushalayim was only for its time (while the Temple stood), but not for future times: It is written: *For you have not yet come to the resting place and to the inheritance: to the resting place* alludes to Shiloh; *inheritance* alludes to Jerusalem. And ‘inheritance’ is compared to ‘resting place’ to show that just as after the destruction of the ‘resting place’ (Shiloh), the bamos were again permitted, so too after the destruction of the ‘inheritance’ (the Temple), they will be permitted.

They said to him (R’ Yitzchak): Did you really say so? He replied: No (I retracted it). Rava said: By God! He did say it and I learned it from him. Why then did he retract? It was on account of the difficulty raised by Rav Mari. For Rav Mari challenged R’ Yitzchak’s viewpoint from our Mishnah: The sanctity of Shiloh is followed by permission (*private bamos may be used after the destruction of the Shiloh Tabernacle*), and the sanctity of Jerusalem is not followed by permission (*once the Temple was constructed, bamos are always prohibited*). We have also learned in a different Mishnah:

When they came to Jerusalem, the *bamos* were forbidden, and were never again permitted, and that constituted the “inheritance” (*mentioned in the Torah*). (10a1)

The Gemora notes: There is a difference of Tannaim on this point. The Gemora attempts to prove from a Mishnah in Eduyos (8:6) that there is a Tannaic dispute whether the sanctity of Yerushalayim and the Beis Hamikdosh ceased upon its destruction. The Mishnah states: Rabbi Eliezer said: I heard that when they were building the Beis Hamikdosh, they made curtains for the Sanctuary and hangings for the courtyards (*temporary partitions until the walls were constructed*), except that for the Sanctuary they built the wall outside those curtains, and in the courtyard they built the walls from within. Rabbi Yehoshua said: I heard that one may offer sacrifices on the site of the Beis Hamikdosh even after its destruction, and that the kohanim may eat the *kodshei kodashim* even though there are no curtains, and we may eat *kodshim kalim* and *ma'aser sheni* in Yerushalayim even though there is no wall surrounding the city, because the first sanctification of Yerushalayim and the Beis Hamikdosh was sanctified for that time and for the future.

The Gemora assumes that Rabbi Eliezer, the first Tanna of the Mishnah, disagrees with Rabbi Yehoshua and maintains that after the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdosh, there was no sanctity there and that is why it was necessary to hang the curtains there; the hanging of the curtains resanctified the Beis Hamikdosh, thus permitting the offering of sacrifices.

Ravina said to Rav Ashi: How can we draw this inference? Perhaps all agree that the first sanctity was conferred upon it for the time being and for all time, and one master reported what he had heard and the other what he had heard. Should you ask: In that case, why were curtains needed according to Rabbi Eliezer, we can answer that they were merely for privacy.¹ (10a1 – 10a2)

¹ Ravina rejects this explanation and states that Rabbi Eliezer agrees to Rabbi Yehoshua that the initial sanctification remained even after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh; the

The Gemora proves from two other Baraisos that the issue is indeed a dispute amongst the Tannaim. The Baraisa states: Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yosi said: Why did the Sages enumerate these (*eight walled cities as those which had walls surrounding them in the days of Yehoshua; there were many more which could have been mentioned*)? It was because when the exiles returned, they came upon these, and sanctified them; but the sanctity of the earlier ones was abolished when the sanctity of the land was abolished. Evidently, he holds that the initial sanctification was only for that time, but not for the future. [The Baraisa teaches us a novelty that if Yerushalayim loses its sanctity after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh, a walled city in Eretz Yisroel loses its sanctity as well. This is significant because of the following halacha: One who sells a house inside a walled city has one year to redeem the house. If he chooses not to redeem the house, it becomes the property of the buyer permanently. If their sanctity ceased at the time of the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh, they would be required to resanctify them upon returning from exile.]

But, the *Gemora* points out a contradiction: Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yosi said: Were there only these (*eight*) cities? Surely it is written: *Sixty cities, the entire region of Argov, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these were fortified cities, with high walls.* Then why did the Sages enumerate only these? It is because when the exiles returned, they found these, and sanctified them.

The *Gemora* interrupts: They sanctified them now! Surely it will be stated that it was not necessary to sanctify them!?

The *Gemora* emends the *Baraisa* to read: They found these, and enumerated them.

The *Baraisa* continues: And there were not only these, but any city about which you may have a tradition from your fathers that it was surrounded by a wall in the days of

curtains were needed only for privacy (to prevent people from peering inside while the kohanim were performing the service).

Yehoshua, the son of Nun, then all these *mitzvos* (regarding the sale of a house: one who sells a house inside a walled city has one year to redeem the house, but if he chooses not to redeem the house, it becomes the property of the buyer permanently; sending a *metzora* outside the city; and that the open space (1,000 cubits) surrounding the city should be left uncultivated) apply to it; because the initial sanctification was for that time, and for the future.

There is thus a contradiction between the statement of Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yosi (in the first *Baraisa* that he initial sanctification was only for that time, but not for the future), and that of Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yosi (in the latter *Baraisa* that the initial sanctification was for that time, and for the future)!?

The *Gemora* answers: Either you may say that they reflect the opinions of two *Tannaim* who disagree about the opinion of Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yosi. Alternatively, you may say that one of the statements was said by Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Yosi, for it has been taught: Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Yosi said: The Torah says: The city that has a wall - although it does not have a wall now, as long as it had one before (at the time of Yehoshua, it is considered a walled city). [Evidently he holds that the initial sanctification was for that time, and for the future.] (10a2 – 10b1)

The *Gemora* begins discussing various verses in the *Megillah*. The *Megillah* begins: And it was in the days of Achashverosh. Rabbi Levi and according to others Rabbi Yochanan, said: This is a tradition that has been passed down from the men of the Great Assembly, that wherever it is written *vayehi*, (and it was), this introduces some disaster. Regarding the *Megillah*, there was Haman who wanted to destroy the Jews.

[The *Gemora* cites many other examples from Scriptures proving that *vayehi* introduces disaster.] And it came to pass in the days when the Judges judged — ‘there was a famine’.

² The *Gemora* amends the statement and says: Wherever it is written *vayehi bimeei*, (and it was in the days), this introduces some disaster.

And it came to pass when man began to multiply — then ‘Hashem saw that the wickedness of man was great’. And it came to pass, as they journeyed east — then ‘they said, come let us build a city’. And it came to pass in the days of Amrafel — then ‘they made war’. And it came to pass when Yehoshua was in Yericho — then ‘his [the angel's] sword was drawn in his hand’. And Hashem was [vayehi] with Yehoshua — then, ‘the children of Israel transgressed’. And there was a certain man of Ramathaim — then, for he loved Channah but Hashem had closed her womb’. And it came to pass when Shmuel was old — then, ‘his sons did not walk in his ways’. And David had [vayehi] great success in all his ways — then, ‘And Shaul eyed David’. And it came to pass when the king dwelt in his house — then, ‘Nevertheless you shall not build the house’.

[The *Gemora* challenges this contention that whenever it is written in Scripture states *vayehi*, it introduces disaster and the *Gemora* cites several examples where it denotes fortunate times.] But is it not written, — And it came to pass on the eighth day, and it has been taught: ‘On that day there was joy before the Holy One, Blessed be He, as on the day when heaven and earth were created. For it is written: And it came to pass [vayehi] on the eighth day, and it is written in the other place: And there was [vayehi] one day?’ - Nadav and Avihu died on that day. - But is it not written: And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year. And it came to pass when Yaakov saw Rachel, and it is also written: And there was evening and there was morning one day, and there is the second day and the third, and there are many other cases? — Rav Ashi replied: The fact is that ‘vayehi’ sometimes has this signification and sometimes not, but the expression ‘and it came to pass in the days of’ always indicated trouble.² Five times we find the expression ‘and it came to pass in the days of’; viz., ‘And it came to pass in the days when the Judges judged’, ‘and it came to pass in the days of Amrafel’, ‘and it came to pass in the days of Achaz’, ‘and it came to pass in the days of Yehoyakim’. (10b2 – 10b3)

Rabbi Levi also said: The following is a tradition that we have from our ancestors, that Amotz and Amatziah were brothers. What does this tell us? — It confirms what was said by Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini in the name of Rabbi Yonasan: Every bride who is modest in the house of her father-in-law is rewarded by having kings and prophets among her descendants. How do we prove this? From Tamar, as it is written: And Yehudah saw her and thought her to be a harlot; for she had covered her face. Now because she had covered her face did he think her to be a harlot? Rather, what it means is that because she had covered her face in the house of her father-in-law and he did not know her, she was rewarded by having among her descendants who were kings and prophets; kings from David, and prophets — as Rabbi Levi said, ‘It is a tradition handed down to us from our ancestors that Amotz and Amatziah were brothers’, and it is written: The vision of Isaiah son of Amotz. (10b3)

Rabbi Levi also said: This is a tradition that has been passed down from our ancestors that the place of the Aron (*the Holy Ark in the Beis Hamikdosh*) miraculously did not take up any space inside the Kodesh Kodoshim (*Holy of Holies*). This can be proven from the following Baraisa: The Aron that Moshe made had ten *amos* (*cubits*) of space in each direction between it. Now it is written: And in front of the Sanctuary was twenty cubits in length [and twenty cubits in breadth], and it is also written: And the wing of the one cherub was ten cubits and the wing of the other cherub was ten cubits. Where then was the ark itself? We must therefore conclude that it stood by a miracle [without occupying any room]. (10b3 – 10b4)

Rabbi Yonasan prefaced his discourse on this section with the text: And I will rise against them etc. and cut off from Babylon name and relative and offspring and prosperity, says Hashem, [which he expounded as follows]: ‘Name’ means script; ‘relative’ is language; ‘offspring’ is kingdom, and ‘prosperity’ is Vashti.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini introduced his lecture on Megillas Esther with the following interpretation: It is written [Yeshaya 55:13] *Instead of the thorn, shall come up a cypress, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle. Instead of the thorn*, i.e., instead of Haman the wicked, who made himself an idol, as it is written:³ and upon all thorns and upon all branches. *Shall come up a cypress*, i.e., Mordechai, who was the essence to all the spices, as it is said: And you, take for you the finest spices, flowing myrrh, which [last words] we translate [in Aramaic], mari dechei. *Instead of the nettle*, i.e., Vashti the wicked, who was granddaughter of Nebuchadnezzar the wicked, who had burnt the Beis Hamikdosh, as it is written:⁴ His resting place was gold. *Shall come up the myrtle*, i.e., shall rise Esther the righteous, who was called Hadassah (*myrtle*), as it is said: And he brought up Hadassah. *And it shall be to Hashem for a name*, i.e., the reading of the Megillah; *for a sign of everlasting that shall not be cut off*, i.e., the Days of Purim. (10b4)

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi introduced his lecture on Megillas Esther with the following interpretation: It is written [Devarim 28:63]: *And it shall come to pass that as Hashem rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you, so will Hashem rejoice to destroy you*. Does the Holy One, Blessed be He, rejoice when the wicked are in misfortune? Is it not written: as they went out before the army, and say, “Give thanks to Hashem, for his mercy endures forever,” and Rabbi Yochanan said: Why are the words ‘for he is good’ omitted from this thanksgiving? Because the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not rejoice in the downfall of the wicked. And Rabbi Yochanan also said: What is the meaning of the verse: And one did not come near the other all the night? The angels of heaven wanted to sing a song of praise when the Egyptians were drowning, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to them: My creations are drowning in the sea, and you want to sing songs? Rabbi Elozar answers: He Himself does not rejoice, but He makes others rejoice. This is indicated also by the text, which writes *yasis* (He will make rejoice) and not *yasus* (He rejoices); which proves [what we said]. (10b5)

³ Proving that thorns symbolize idolatry.

⁴ Proving that ‘rephidah’ means ‘resting place.’

Rabbi Abba bar Kahana introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: For to the man that is good in his sight He gives wisdom, and knowledge and joy. This, he said, is the righteous Mordechai. But to the sinner He gives the task, to gather and to heap up; this is Haman. That he may leave it to him, that is good in the sight of God; this refers to Mordechai and Esther, as it is written: And Esther set Mordechai over the house of Haman. (10b5)

Rabbah bar Ofran introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: And I will set my throne in Elam, and will destroy from there king and princes. 'King' indicates Vashti, and 'princes' indicates Haman and his ten sons. (10b5)

Rav Dimi bar Yitzchak introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: For we are slaves; yet has God not forsaken us in our bondage, but has extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia. When was this? In the time of Haman. (10b5 – 11a1)

Rabbi Chanina bar Pappa introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: You have caused men to ride over our heads, we went through fire and through water: through fire in the days of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, and through water in the days of Pharaoh. But you did bring us out into abundance, in the days of Haman. (11a1)

Rabbi Yochanan introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel, all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. When did all the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God? In the days of Mordechai and Esther. (11a1)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

THE CHOSEN CITY

Tosfos cites the opinion of Rabbeinu Chaim that even if one maintains that the initial sanctification of the Beis Hamikdosh was not for all time and it would be forbidden to offer

sacrifices on the site of the Temple Altar, one is nonetheless prohibited from offering a sacrifice on a private altar.

Rashi disagrees and holds that if the sanctity of the Beis Hamikdosh ceased by its destruction, it would be permitted to offer sacrifices on a private altar nowadays.

The commentators ask on Rabbeinu Chaim: If the sanctity ceased after the destruction, why would it be forbidden to offer sacrifices on a private altar? After the destruction of Shiloh, *bamos* became permitted, so why not after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh?

Minchas Chinuch (254:7) writes that although Yerushalayim has lost its sanctity in regards to offering sacrifices and eating Kodoshim, the city remains the "chosen place" and the third Beis Hamikdosh will be built there. This is why private altars are still forbidden. This is the distinction between Shiloh and Yerushalayim. Shiloh was not the chosen city and when the Tabernacle was destroyed, there was no vestige of sanctity left in the city and *bamos* became permitted. Minchas Chinuch states that this is the explanation as to why we are still subject to a prohibition of fearing the Mikdash nowadays, since it is still the chosen place although it has not retained its sanctity.

LOCATION OF THE ARON

Rabbi Levi also said: This is a tradition that has been passed down from our ancestors that the place of the Aron (*the Holy Ark in the Beis Hamikdosh*) miraculously did not take up any space inside the Kodosh Hakodoshim (*Holy of Holies*). This can be proven from the following Baraisa: the Aron that Moshe made had ten *amos* (*cubits*) of space in each direction between it and the walls of the Kodosh Hakodoshim. However, the space of the Kodosh Hakodoshim itself was only twenty *amos* by twenty *amos*. It emerges that the place of the Aron did not take up any space.

The Rambam writes that the Aron was located on the west side of the Kodosh Hakodoshim. Some explain (Chasam

Sofer, Chanukas Habayis) that this is because the Shechina resides towards the west of the Kodesh Hakodoshim. The Chanukas Habayis adds that this way there would be a greater miracle that the poles could reach the curtains in front of the Heichal. Rabbi Dovid Meyers in his sefer M'leches Hamishkan V'keilav (p. 453) cites the Ezras Kohanim who explains the Rambam as follows: The stone where the Aron was situated on top of was originally in the west of the Kodesh Hakodoshim. After the Aron was placed on top of the stone, a miracle occurred and the Aron was precisely in the center. When the Aron was hidden, the miracle was removed and the stone was located on the west side.

The Ritzva (cited in Tosfos, Bava Basra 25a) writes that the Aron was located on the east side of the Kodesh Hakodoshim. The Minchas Chinuch (95) explains: There were times that the Aron and the Sefer Torah needed fixing and they would be required to enter the Kodesh Hakodoshim. If the Aron would be situated in the east, it would minimize the amount of steps that would be required to reach the Aron.

The commentators ask from our Gemora which explicitly states that the Aron was in the center of the Kodesh Hakodoshim. Minchas Chinuch (95) answers based on the Rashbam (B"V 25a) that the Aron was only in the center in respect to north and south; however, the Gemora is not discussing where the Aron was located in respect to east and west. This would be consistent with the Rashbam who writes later in Bava Basra (99a) that there were twenty amos from the Aron until the Heichal.

Rashi seemingly would not subscribe to this opinion since he states here that the Aron was ten amos away from the wall in all directions.

DAILY MASHAL

VAYEHI CONVEYS ANGUISH

The Gemora begins discussing various verses in the Megillah. The Megillah begins: And it was in the days of Achashverosh. Rabbi Levi and according to others Rabbi Yochanan, said: This

is a tradition that has been passed down from the men of the Great Assembly, that wherever it is written *vayehi*, (*and it was*), this introduces some disaster. Regarding the Megillah, there was Haman who wanted to destroy the Jews. The Gemora cites many other examples from Scriptures proving that *vayehi* introduces disaster.

The Pnei Yehoshua asks that there is a distinction between here and all the other places. All the places cited have the impending disaster written immediately after the word *vayehi*, but Haman's decree against the Jewish people is not written until much later?

He answers that the root cause that brought about Haman's decree was the fact that Klal Yisroel benefited from Achashverosh's feast and that is written immediately after *vayehi*.

The Megillas S'tarim answers: The Gemora Pesachim (87b) states that Hashem does a kindness to Klal Yisroel by scattering them among the nations, so that if some of the nations make decrees against us or wish to destroy us, at least those of us living under other rulers will survive and Klal Yisroel will not be completely destroyed. Here, the anguish is immediate by the fact that Achashverosh ruled over the entire world and there was no safe haven.