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Thirteen Prostrations

The *Mishna* asks: Where were these prostrations (the thirteen mentioned in the previous *Mishna*) performed? Four in the north (of the Courtyard), four in the south, three in the east, and two in the west. There were done opposite the thirteen gates.

The *Mishna* lists the gates: On the south adjoining the west there were the Upper Gate, the Gate of Kindling, the Gate of the Firstborn and the Water Gate. It was so called because they brought in the pitcher of water for libation on the festival through it Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov says: By it the stream of water was as (*wide as comes out of*) a flask, and in the future, they will emerge from under the threshold of the Temple. Corresponding to them in the north adjoining the west were the Gate of Yechoniah, the Gate of the Offering, the Women’s Gate and the Gate of Song. It was called the Gate of Yechoniah because Yechoniah was exiled into captivity through it. On the east was the Gate of Nikanor; it had two wickets, one on its right and one on its left. There were further two gates in the west which had no name.

The *Gemora* notes that the *Mishna* follows the opinion of Abba Yosah ben Yochanan, who states that the prostrations were done opposite the thirteen

gates (in the Courtyard); but according to the Rabbis, there were only seven gates in the Courtyard.

The *Gemora* asks: According to the Rabbis, where were these prostrations performed? The *Gemora* answers: It is as it was taught in a *Mishna*: There were thirteen breaches in the soleg (fence around the Courtyard) that were breached by the Greek Kings, and the Chashmenoim referenced those sections, and decreed thirteen prostrations opposite them. (16b4 – 17a2)

The Great Water That Will Come Forth From Yerushalayim

Zechariah Hanovi prophesied that in the future great waters will come forth from Yerushalayim, and the *Gemora* details this as follows:

1. From the *Kodesh Hakodoshim* until the *Paroches*, the water stream will be as thin as snail's horns.
2. From the *Paroches* until the golden *mizbe'ach* (of the *ketores*) – as thin as grasshopper horns (somewhat thicker than snail's horns.)
3. From the golden *mizbe'ach* until the *Azara* – as thin as warp (yarn used in vertical weaving.)



4. From the *Azara* until the Beis Hamikdosh's thresholds – as thin as weft (yarn used in horizontal weaving.)
5. Once the water exited the Beis Hamikdosh, the stream was as thick as water being poured out of a container.

A similar prophecy from Yechezkel says that the Angel showed Yechezkel a river leaving the Beis Hamikdosh, and every 1000 amos the water increased in size and strength, as follows:

- First, the water reached Yechezkel's ankles.
- Next, the water reached his knees.
- Then, it reached his waist.
- Finally, the water was so mighty that even a large ship couldn't pass there.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman says in the name of Rabbi Yonasan (to explain a verse referring to the Messianic era): From the House of Dovid until the dwellers of Yerushalayim, the waters will be valid for a niddah (for she needs to immerse in rainwater or in spring water) and for chatas water (which is valid only with spring water). From that point and on, they are waters that are mixed, and they would be valid for a niddah but not as chatas water. Rabbi Elozar said: From the House of Dovid until the dwellers of Yerushalayim, the waters will be valid for a niddah (for she needs to immerse in rainwater or in spring water) and for chatas water (which is valid only with spring water). From that point and on, they are waters of slopes, and they would be invalid for a niddah or as chatas water.

The *Gemora* elaborates further: The spring of water emanating from the Temple will spill into the Great

Sea and the Dead Sea in order to sweeten their waters; and it will spill into the Sea of Tiberias and Samchu (which are anyway sweet) in order to increase their fish.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rabbi Yehudah says: In this world grain grows in six months, and a tree produces fruits every twelve months, but in the World to Come, grain will grow in one month, and trees will produce fruit every two months. Rabbi Yosi said: In this world grain grows in six months, and a tree produces fruits every twelve months, but in the World to Come, grain will grow in fifteen days, and trees will produce fruit every month.

And its leaf (from the tree that will grow from the river that will flow from the Holy of Holies in the Future Time) shall be for healing. Rav and Shmuel argue as to what is the meaning of this verse. One said that it is to open the mouth above (*the curing of one who has lost his appetite to eat*), and the other said that it is to open the mouth below (*and allow a constipated person to relieve himself*).

Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi argue as to what is the meaning of this verse. One said that it is to open the mouth of the barren (*and allow a barren woman to conceive*), and the other said that it is to open the mouths of the mute (*the curing of one who is mute and allowing him to speak*). (17a2 – 17a6)

An Event Leading Up to the Churban

When Nevuchadnetzar approached Yerushalayim to deal it its final blow, he came and stayed in the

outskirts of Antioch, and the Sanhedrin want out to greet him. They asked him: Has the time yet arrived for the Temple to be destroyed? He responded by requesting to take the one who he appointed to reign (Yehoyochin, the Jewish king who ruled at the time), and the Sanhedrin reported this back to the king. Upon hearing this news, Yehoyochin gathered all the keys of the Beis Hamikdosh, and climbed to the roof. He confessed to Hashem that prior to this time, the Jews were loyal to Hashem, and He trusted them with His keys. But now, since they are no longer trustworthy to Him, the keys are being returned.

There are two opinions as to what happened next. One says that Yehoyochin threw the keys Heavenward, and to this day they have still not fallen back. The other opinion says that a hand came out from the Heavens and took the keys. The noblemen of Yehudah saw this tragic event, and each climbed to his own roof and fell to his death. (17a7 – 17b1)

The Type of Tables in the Beis Hamikdosh

The *Mishna* states: There were thirteen tables in the Temple. Eight of them, which were made of marble, were in the slaughter house, on which they used to wash the intestines. Two of them were situated on the west of the ramp; one was of marble and the other of silver. On the marble one they used to put the limbs (*of private offerings*), and on the silver one they put the (*ninety-three*) service vessels (*after they were taken out each morning from the Chamber of Vessels*). Two tables stood inside the Antechamber at the entrance of the Temple - one was made of silver and the other of gold. On the Table of silver they placed the *lechem hapanim* when it was brought in

(*before arranging it on the Table in the Sanctuary*), and on the Table of gold, they placed the *lechem hapanim* when it was brought out (*until the levonah was burned on the Altar*). It was done in this manner (*first silver, and then gold*) since that which is sanctified, we must ascend, but not descend. And within the Sanctuary was a Table of gold where upon it the *lechem hapanim* rested continuously.

There is a dispute amongst the Tannaim in a *beraisa* if the first table was made of marble or of silver. One opinion states that it was made of silver, since must be no sign of poverty in the place of wealth (*the Temple*), and therefore it isn't befitting to include a marble table. The other opinion maintains that here silver is inappropriate, since the meat of the animals will be warmer on the silver table, and could spoil easier.

The *Gemora* asks from a *braisa* which states: A great miracle happened with the *lechem hapanim* (Showbread), viz., when it was removed it was as hot as when it was put on, as it was written: To put hot bread in the day it was taken away. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi answered: We do not bring a proof from a miraculous occurrence.

They inquired of Rabbi Ila: If there was no fresh bread available, would they leave the bread from the previous week on the Table for the following Shabbos?

He replied: It is derived from a verse that bread, and even unfit bread should continuously be on the Table.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* that King Shlomo made ten Tables and ten *Menoros* (*besides for Moshe's*). The Tables were all on the north side of the Sanctuary: Moshe's was in the middle, and five were on its right and five were on its left. The *Menoros* were all on the south side of the Sanctuary: Moshe's was in the middle, and five were on its right and five were on its left. The *braisa* continues: They arranged the *lechem hapanim* only on the Table made by Moshe. Rabbi Yosi ben Yehudah said: On all the Tables they arranged the *lechem hapanim*, as it is written: *And the Tables, and upon them was the lechem hapanim*. The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rebbe holds that the Tables were placed from east to west. This, he derives, from the *Menorah*. Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon maintains that the Tables were placed from north to south. He derives it from the Ark. The *Gemora* challenges the latter opinion, for it would emerge that the Tables are in the South (and they are only valid when situated in the North). This question is left unanswered. (17b1 – 17b3)

INSIGHT TO THE DAF

One of the reasons given why the table was made of marble (in the *mishna*) or silver (in the *beraisa*) is that we want to follow the halacha of "*maalin b'kedush v'lo moridin*" (we increase kedusha, but don't decrease) – therefore, the *lechem hapanim* starts on a silver (or marble) table, and continues with a golden table.

Rashi in *Menachos* explains that the bread was only placed on that table momentarily, to show everyone that we're following this halacha. However, the *Bartenura* explains that it was quite necessary to have the table be made of marble (following the

second reason of spoilage,) since the bread was left there from Erev Shabbos until its conclusion on Shabbos.

DAILY MASHAL

Rav Elyashiv - Maintaining The *Lechem Hapanim*

The *lechem hapanim* must be on the Shulchan, "*tamid*" - always. What does always mean? The *Mishna* says that the *Chachamim* hold that the new bread must be held up against the old bread and in one motion the old bread was removed as the new bread took its place. This way there was never even a split second that where the Shulchan was empty. Rabbi Yosi says you may remove the old bread and then set down the new bread, and this is also called *tamid*. The *Gemora* brings a *braisa* that says that according to Rabbi Yosi you may even remove the old bread in the morning and bring then new bread in the afternoon. From here Rabbi Ammi learns that if you learn one perek in the morning and one perek in the evening you have fulfilled the *mitzvah* of: *this book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth*. We see that it is also considered *tamid* if you are consistent and never miss your scheduled learning.

Rav Elyashiv points out that according to the *Chachamim* who we hold like, regarding *lechem hapanim*, we can make the same inference. From the *Chachamim* we learn that it is not considered *tamid* unless your learning is unabated even for a moment, just like the careful and meticulous process of maintaining a constant presence of the *lechem hapanim*.