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Yoma Daf 16

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o"h

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The Gemora raises a contradiction about the location of the sheep chamber between this Mishnah and one in Middos, which states that there were four chambers in the bonfire area, which opened as doors to the large area. Two were in the consecrated area, and two were not, and there was lattice at the boundary between the consecrated and non-consecrated areas.

The Mishna lists what each was used for:

1. Southwest: contained the sheep for sacrifices.
2. Southeast: for making lechem hapanim
3. Northeast: where the Chashmonaim stored the altar stones dislodged by the non-Jewish kings who entered the Bais Hamikdash
4. Northwest: the path to enter the mikvah

Rav Huna answers: Who is the anonymous Tanna who taught Tractate Middos? It is Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov, for it was taught in a Mishnah (in Middos): The women's courtyard was one hundred and thirty-five amos long by one hundred and thirty-five amos wide and there were four chambers in its four corners. And what were they used for? The southeastern chamber was the chamber of the Nazarites, who would cook their shelamim offerings there and they would cut their hair and throw it under the cauldron in which

their shelamim offerings were cooking. The northeastern chamber was the chamber where they stored wood that was used as fuel for the fires of the Altar. Kohanim who had physical blemishes and could not partake in the avodah would stand there and examine the wood to see if it had worms inside, because wood that contained worms was invalid for use on the Altar. The northwestern chamber was the chamber of the metzoraim (where a metzora would immerse himself in a mikvah before he had blood applied to his body). Regarding the southwestern chamber, Rabbi Eliezer Ben Yaakov said that he forgot what purpose the chamber served, and Abba Shaul said that in the southwestern chamber they used to store wine and oil and this chamber was referred to as the chamber that held the oil.¹ (15b3 - 16a2)

The Gemara notes: It is also reasonable to conclude that Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov is indeed the anonymous Tanna of Tractate Middos, for we learned in a Mishnah: The walls that enclosed the Temple Mount were very tall² except for the eastern wall of the Temple Mount,³ in order that the Kohen who burned the Parah Adumah could stand on the Mount of Olives (which is east of the Temple Mount), and he could aim and look at the entrance of the Heichal while sprinkling the blood of the Parah Adumah.⁴ The Gemara proves this by

¹ This proves that Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov is indeed the anonymous Tanna of Tractate Middos.

² With the gateways being twenty amos high and the area above the gateways made the walls even higher.

³ Which was twenty amos high but the wall did not rise high above the gateway like the other walls.

⁴ When the Kohen sprinkled the blood of the Parah Adumah, he was required to aim towards the Heichal, and it was also necessary for him to see into the entrance of the Heichal while sprinkling. When the Kohen stood on the Mount of Olives and faced westward towards the

Temple Mount, he was able to see into the entrance of the Heichal because all the gateways to the Temple Mount were lined up in a perfect row. For the Kohen to see into the entrance of the Heichal, he needed to look over the Temple Mount wall and through the gateways of the Women's Courtyard and the Inner Courtyard. The floor of the Heichal was twenty and a half amos higher than the floor of the Temple Mount, so the base of the Heichal entrance was a half an amah higher than the top of the Temple Mount gateway which was only twenty amos high. The Kohen could not see into the entrance of the Heichal by looking through the Temple Mount gateway, so the eastern wall



citing another Mishnah: All the gateways in the Bais HaMikdash and on the Temple Mount were twenty amos high and ten amos wide. And we learned in another Mishnah: Inside the Temple Mount wall was the soreg⁵ and inside the soreg was the cheil, which was an open area of ten amos, and within those ten amos there were twelve steps. The height of each of those twelve steps was a half an amah and its tread was a half an amah.⁶ And the Mishnah (elsewhere in Middos) states further that there were fifteen steps ascending from within the Women's Courtyard. These fifteen steps descended from the Israelite Courtyard into the Women's Courtyard. Here, too, the height of each step was half an amah and its tread was a half an amah (so the Israelite Courtyard was seven and a half amos higher than the women's Courtyard and thirteen and a half amos higher than the Temple Mount), and it was taught in another Mishnah that in the Courtyard, between the Ulam and the Altar was a space of twenty-two amos, and there were twelve steps there that led up to the Ulam. The height of each step was a half an amah, and its tread was a half an amah (so it was elevated an additional six amos).⁷ But it was taught in another Mishnah: Rabbi Eliezer Ben Yaakov says that there⁸ was a step one amah high and the platform⁹ was set on it, and on it were three steps half an amah high each.¹⁰

Now, if you will say that the anonymous Mishnah¹¹ is the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov, then that is why the

needed to be lower than the other walls so the Kohen could look over the wall and see into the Heichal entrance through the other gateways.

⁵ Which was a fence constructed of latticework and it served as a marker that a gentile or a Jew who was tamei from a corpse could not cross that point.

⁶ Thus, four amos of the cheil were flat and the remaining six amos were steps leading up to the Women's Courtyard, whose floor was six amos higher.

⁷ Thus, the floor of the Ulam and of the Heichal was six amos higher than the Israelite Courtyard. The Women's Courtyard was six amos higher than the Temple Mount area, the Israelite Courtyard was seven amos higher, and the Heichal was six amos higher, for a total of nineteen and a half amos high. Thus, all these Mishnahs in Middos that were cited prove that the Kohen who was standing on the Mount of Olives was able to see through the upper half of the Eastern Gate of the Temple Mount which was twenty amos high and he could see into the Heichal through the lowest half-amah of its entrance. The Kohen did

Eastern Gateway was blocked (by the floor of the mountain) For this reason the Eastern Wall needed to be lowered so that the Kohen could look over it. However, If the Mishnah follows the opinion of the Rabbis (who differ with Rabbi Eliezer Ben Yaakov, then it would not be necessary to shorten the Eastern Wall to allow the Kohen to look over it), why there was a half an amah at the top of the Eastern Gateway through which the Kohen standing on the Mount of Olives could see the entrance of the Heichal. Rather, we must learn from here that the Mishnah follows the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov.

Rav Adda bar Ahavah (attempts to reject this proof) says that the opinion in the anonymous Mishnah (that the Eastern Wall is shorter) is that of Rabbi Yehudah, for it was taught in a Baraisa: Rabbi Yehudah said: The Altar stood exactly in middle of the Courtyard and was thirty-two amos wide. The middle ten amos of the Altar were opposite the entrance of the Heichal, and eleven amos of the Altar extended to the north side of the entrance and eleven amos extended to the south side of the entrance. Thus, the entire width of the Altar was situated directly opposite the entire width of the Heichal and its walls.¹²

But if it should enter your mind that Tractate Middos follows the opinion of Rabbi Yehudah, can the Altar stand in the middle of the Courtyard? But it was taught in a Mishnah: The

not have to look over the top of the Eastern Wall and therefore it was not necessary to build the wall so low.

⁸ Between the Israelite Courtyard and the Kohanim's Courtyard.

⁹ It is the platform of the Leviim, on which they stood, when singing during the wine libation of the tamid and Mussaf offerings.

¹⁰ The base of the Heichal was twenty and a half amos higher than that of the Temple Mount, and therefore the Gemara will proceed to explain why Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov maintains that it was necessary for the Eastern Wall to be built lower than all the other walls.

¹¹ Which states that the Eastern Wall of the Temple Mount was lower than the other walls.

¹² Accordingly, the Altar blocked the view of someone looking through the Temple Mount Gateway to the Heichal Entrance. The top of the Altar was twenty-two and a half amos high above the base of the Temple Mount. The Temple Mount Gateway was only twenty amos high, so for the Kohen sprinkling the blood of the Parah Adumah on the Mount of Olives to see the Heichal Entrance, the Eastern Wall needed to be lower than the other walls.

entire Courtyard was one hundred and eighty-seven amos in length by one hundred and thirty-five amos in width.¹³ The Courtyard measured from east to west one hundred and eighty-seven amos, and this section consisted of the area where the Israelites walked as they wished for an area of eleven amos, and the area where even Kohanim unfit to perform the service would walk for another area of eleven amos. The area also included the Altar which occupied an area of thirty-two amos, the area between the Ulam and the Altar which measured twenty-two amos, and the Heichal which was one hundred amos long. There was an area of eleven amos behind the chamber of the kapores, which was the Holy of Holies.¹⁴ The Courtyard measured one hundred and thirty-five amos from south to north, and consisted of the following sections: the ramp of the Altar and the Altar occupied an area of sixty-two amos. From the Altar to the slaughtering rings was an area of eight amos. The area of the rings occupied twenty-four amos. From the rings to the tables where the innards of the offerings were rinsed was an area of four amos. From the tables to the dwarf-pillars was a space of four amos. From the dwarf-pillars to the northern wall of the Courtyard was an area of eight amos. The remainder of the one hundred and thirty-five amos was from the area between the ramp and the southern Courtyard and the area occupied by the dwarf-pillars. Now, if it should enter your mind that Tractate Middos follows the opinion of Rabbi Yehudah, can the Altar be found to be standing in the middle of the Courtyard? Most of the Altar would be standing in the southern side of the Courtyard!¹⁵ Rather, learn from here indeed that it (Tractate Middos) follows the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov. (16a2 – 17a1)

DAILY MASHAL

Perfection in every area

¹³ This is referring to the Inner Courtyard, which incorporated the Israelite's Courtyard and the Kohanim's Courtyard.

¹⁴ The Holy of Holies was in the rear of the Bais HaMikdash, so there were eleven amos between the rear of the Bais HaMikdash and the western Wall of the Courtyard that were unoccupied.

¹⁵ The figures given here as from south to north make a total of a hundred and ten amos. To this must be added the space of four amos occupied by the table, which is not mentioned here, then leaving a remainder of twenty-one amos which lay equally between the ramp

The Gemara states that any piece of wood that had a worm in it was invalid for use on the Altar. Although the wood itself is only a vehicle to bring an offering on the Altar, a sacrifice must be perfect in all aspects. This is a powerful lesson for one serving HaShem. One must realize that even the means with which one serves HaShem must be honed to perfection. One's dress must be immaculate, one must keep his body clean, and most important is that one must keep his thoughts free of sin. Only then can one fulfill the dictum of Dovid HaMelech who said *I wash my hands in purity and circle around Your altar, HaShem.*

GLOSSARY

1. **Avodah** Sacrificial service
2. **Amah** Cubit; a linear measure equaling six tefachim
3. **Heichal** The Sanctuary in the Temple
4. **Kapores** The cover of the Ark in the Temple
5. **Metzora** A person who has contracted tzaraas, erroneously referred to as leprosy, an affliction mentioned in Leviticus chapters 13 and 14.
6. **Mikveh** Ritualarium; a body of standing water containing at least forty se'ah, and used to purify by immersion people and utensils of their tumah-contamination. A mikveh consists of waters naturally collected, without direct human intervention.
7. **Soreg** A low lattice fence encompassing the Temple Courtyard which marked the point beyond which gentiles and Jews who were tamei from a corpse were rabbinically prohibited to proceed. It was located ten amos from the courtyard wall.
8. **Ulam** Antechamber

and the wall and the place of columns. This allows for ten and a half amos for the space between the ramp (which was on the south of the altar) and the southern wall of the Courtyard. Deducting this from sixty-seven and a half amos which was half the breadth of the Courtyard from south to north, we are left with fifty-seven amos within which lay the ramp, thirty amos in length, and twenty-seven out of the thirty-amos of the altar proper, with the result that the larger part of the altar lay in the southern half of the Courtyard.