

# Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf  
Middos Daf 36

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**Tzvi Gershon ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o"n.**  
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## Daily Daf

### The Temple

1. The base of the Altar was thirty-two *amos* by thirty-two *amos*. It rose up one *amah* and went inward one *amah*; this formed the base (*yesod*). It emerges that above the base, the Altar was thirty *amos* by thirty.

It rose up five *amos* and went inward one *amah*; this formed the ledge (*soveiv*). It emerges that above the base, the Altar was twenty-eight *amos* by twenty-eight.

The place of the horns was one *amah* on this side and one *amah* on that side. It emerges that there were left (*in between the horns*) twenty-six *amos* by twenty-six *amos*.

The place on which the feet of the *Kohanim* walked was one *amah* on this side and one *amah* on that side; it emerges that there were left twenty-four *amos* by twenty-four *amos* (*for the place of the pyre*).

Rabbi Yosi said: Originally (*in the First Temple*), the complete area (*occupied by the base of the Altar*) was only twenty-eight *amos* by twenty-eight, and it rose with the dimensions mentioned above, until the space left for the pyre was only twenty by twenty. When the people from the exile came up to *Eretz Yisroel*, they added four *amos* to the southern part of the Altar, as well as four to the western part, forming the shape of a Greek letter *gamma* (*like our letter L*).

The red line encircled the altar in the middle. This was in order to separate the upper bloods and the lower bloods.

The base was on the entire northern and western side of the Altar, and ate one cubit in the south and one on the east.

2. At the southwestern corner (*of the base of the Altar*) there were two holes like two fine nostrils through which the blood which was poured on the western side of the base and on the southern side flowed down until the two streams became mingled in the channel (*of water*) through which they flowed down to the Kidron Valley.

3. On the floor beneath at that corner (*the southwestern corner of the Altar*), there was a place an *amah* square, on which was a marble tile, with a ring fixed in it (*in order to lift it*), and through this, they (*once every seventy years*) used to go down to the *shis* to clean it out (*from the congealed wine*).

There was a ramp at the south side of the altar, which was thirty-two *amos* in length by sixteen cubits in width. There was a cavity in its western side where the disqualified *chatas* offerings of birds were placed (*until overnight, when they were taken out and burned*).

4. The stones of the ramp and of the Altar (*which needed to be smooth*) were taken from the valley of Beis Karem. They dug into virgin soil and brought from there whole stones that had not been touched by iron, since iron disqualifies by mere touch, though a nick made by anything could disqualify. If one of them was nicked, it was disqualified, but the rest were not. They applied lime (*to the walls and top*).

of the Altar) twice a year, once before Pesach, and once before Sukkos, and the *Heichal* was done once a year, before Pesach. Rebbe said: They would clean them every Friday with a cloth on account of the blood stains.

The lime was not applied with a trowel of iron, for fear that it might touch the stones and disqualify them.

[*The reason why iron disqualifies is because:*] Iron was created to shorten the life of man, and the Altar was created to prolong the life of man, and it is not right therefore that iron which shortens life should be lifted against the Altar, which prolongs life. (35a)

5. There were rings to the north of the Altar, six rows of four each, or, according to some, four rows of six each, at which they used to slaughter the sacrificial animals. [*They placed the animal's head inside of the ring in order to immobilize it during the slaughtering; this way, one Kohen was able to slaughter singlehandedly.*] The slaughtering area was north of the Altar. There were eight dwarf pillars there, on which were blocks of cedar. In these were fixed hooks of iron, three rows in each, upon which they hung and skinned the animals over tables of marble between the pillars. (35a)

6. The *Kiyor* (Laver) was between the Antechamber and the Altar, a little towards the south (*in a way that it did not interpose between the Altar and the entrance to the Antechamber*).

The space between the Antechamber and the Altar was twenty-two *amos*. There were twelve steps there, each step being half an *amah* high and its tread was one *amah*. There was an *amah* and an *amah* (*the height was two amos for the first four steps, since each step was half an amah high*) and a level space of three *amos* (*on the fourth step, there was a landing with an additional three amos*); then (*the next four steps*) there was an *amah* and an *amah* and a level space of three *amos*; then (*for the final four steps*) there was an *amah* and an *amah* and a level space of four *amos*. [*The horizontal distance of all these steps and landings were twenty-two amos.*] Rabbi Yehudah says that at the top there was an *amah* and an *amah* and a level space of five *amos* (*and since he does not disagree regarding the total being twenty-two, he maintains that one of the other two landings was one amah shorter*).

7. The entranceway to the Antechamber was forty *amos* high and twenty *amos* wide. There were five decorated crossbeams placed above the entranceway. The lowest projected an *amah* on each side beyond the doorway. The one above it projected beyond this one an *amah* on each side. Thus the topmost one was thirty *amos* long. There was a row of stones between each one and the next.

8. There were cross beams of cedar stretching from the wall of the *Heichal* to the wall of the Antechamber to prevent it (*the wall of the Antechamber*) from buckling (*due to its height*). There were chains of gold attached to the roof of the Antechamber by which the young *Kohanim* used to ascend and see the crowns (*the windows of the Sanctuary*). There was a golden vine on top of the door to the Sanctuary, strung on poles, and whoever would donate a leaf, grape or cluster of gold would put it on top. Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Tzadok says that one time they had to remove it, and they needed 300 *Kohanim* to do it (*an exaggeration*). (36a)

#### WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, HAMIZBEI'ACH

1. The entranceway to the *Heichal* was twenty *amos* high and ten wide. It had four doors, two on the inner side (*near the Sanctuary*) and two on the outer side (*near the Antechamber*), as it is written: *And the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies had two doors*. The outer doors (*each five amos wide*) opened into the interior of the doorway, so as to cover the thickness of the wall (*besides for one amah for the doorpost*), while the inner doors opened into the Sanctuary, so as to cover the space behind the doors, for the whole of the Sanctuary was plated with gold except the space behind the doors. Rabbi Yehudah says: The doors were placed within the doorway, and they resembled folding doors, one half covering two *amos* and a half (*of the wall*), and the other half covering two *amos* and a half, leaving half an *amah* for a doorpost at one end and half an *amah* for a doorpost at the other end.

2. The Great Gate had two small doors by it, one to the north and one to the south. The one to the south - no man ever went in, and this was distinctly explained by the mouth of Yechezkel, as it is written: and Hashem said to me, "*This gate shall be closed; it shall not be opened; any man shall not enter through it, for Hashem, the God of Israel enters through it; therefore it shall be closed.*" He took the key and opened the (*northern*) door and went in to the cell, and from the cell he went in to the *Heichal*. Rabbi Yehudah says: He used to walk along in the thickness of the (*Sanctuary*) wall (*on the eastern*

side) until he came to the space between the two sets of doors. He used to open the outer doors from the inside and the inner doors from the outside. (36b)

## INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

### ***Embellishing a Mitzvah when no one will See it***

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

It is a mitzvah to spend much money to embellish mitzvos, as we are told (Shemos 15:2): “This is my G-d and I shall embellish Him” (Bava Kama 9b and Rashi, s.v. Behidur). The Rishonim disagreed as to if this mitzvah, to beautify mitzvos, is from the Torah or a rabbinical decree (see at length in Meoros HaDaf HaYomi, Bava Kama, in the article “Payment for the chazan’s good voice) but everyone agrees that we should embellish mitzvos. Logic would say that as beauty is meant to enhance something to be seen, there’s no point in observing this mitzvah with an article that will remain hidden forever. Is this true? The Mordechai asserts otherwise!

A paroches that’s beautiful on its inner side: Referring to a paroches for a sefer Torah, the Mordechai states that if one side is made of silk and the other of flax, the paroches should be turned such that its silken side faces the sefer Torah – i.e., its finer side will be hidden from the public and next to the sefer Torah. The Remo (Shulchan ‘Aruch, O.C. 147:1) cites the Mordechai’s ruling and concludes “but we aren’t accustomed to do so.”

The Mordechai also rules so concerning embellishing tefillin. Referring to the inner part of tefillin, the closed part seen only by an examiner when he extracts the parashyos, the Mordechai asserts that “it is a mitzvah to beautify them outside and inside” (cited by the Remo in Shulchan ‘Aruch, O.C. 32:4). The Vilna Gaon zt”l adds (ibid) that the matter is not agreed upon amongst the Rishonim. The issue is if by the mitzvah of “This is my G-d and I shall embellish Him” we were commanded to beautify the article of the mitzvah whether it is seen by people or not.

Covering the walls of the heichal with gold: The Vilna Gaon (Shulchan ‘Aruch, O.C. 147, ibid) brings explicit proof from our mishnah, which clearly disproves the Mordechai’s opinion. We learn in the mishnah that all the walls of the heichal in the

Temple were covered with gold except for the wall behind the doors as this area was never seen since, when the doors were open, they concealed the wall and when they were closed, no one was there. We thus see that there is only beautification if it is seen by people.

This proof constitutes a difficult question on the Mordechai and on those who rule like him, as it is illogical that the Mordechai was unaware of such an explicit mishnah. HaGaon Rabbi Yosef Shaul Natanson zt”l, author of Responsa Shoel Umeishiv, reconciles the Mordechai’s opinion (in his remarks in Beis Shaul at the end of the Mishnah, here) according to a midrash which says that in the First Temple the wall behind the doors was also covered with gold. We must conclude that our mishnah concerns the Second Temple whereas in the First Temple all the walls were covered with gold. Why didn’t they cover that place in the Second Temple with gold? Some surmise that the poverty existing in that era caused them not to cover unseen places with gold (see Ezras Kohanim, here, who discusses the topic).