

# Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf  
Tamid Daf 25

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## Daily Daf

### Mishna

**[Tractate Tamid will describe the daily procedures of the Temple, its structures and the Kohanim's routines.]**

In three places the *Kohanim* keep watch in the Temple (*not that the Temple or its contents needing guarding, but as a fulfillment of a Scriptural verse: and they shall guard the guarding of the Tent of Meeting; it was also a mark of honor*): in the Chamber of Avtinas (*he was the head of the family which had the secret of preparing the incense in its special manner; the Gemora in Yoma cites a dispute as to whether this chamber was located on the south side of the Courtyard or the north side*), in the Chamber of the Ray (*so called because the rays of the sun illuminated it, as it was closed on three sides and opened on the fourth side; it was located by the northern wall of the Courtyard*) and in the Fire Chamber (*so called because a fire was kept burning in it for the benefit of the Kohanim who had to serve barefooted on the cold marble floor and wearing only one linen garment*). In the Chamber of Avtinas and in the Chamber of the Ray there were upper chambers where the youngsters (*under thirteen years old, who were not yet fit to serve in the Temple*) kept watch. The Fire Chamber was a dome (*and had no upper chambers above it*). It was a large room surrounded with stone ledges (*which would serve as steps to mount the wall where they would sleep*). The elders of the Beis Av used to sleep there (*for they were not even able to sit on the consecrated area of the Chamber*). [*The Kohanim were divided up into twenty-four Mishmaros – watches, where each Mishmar would serve in the Temple for one week; each Mishmar was subdivided into Beis Av's – paternal groups, where each family would serve on one*

*day of the week; the elders of the family who would serve the next day would sleep here.*] The keys of the Courtyard were in their hands (*under their supervision; it wasn't actually in their hands, for they were stored under a tile in the chamber*). The young *Kohanim* used to place a pillow on the ground (*on which they slept*). They did not sleep in their sacred garments, but rather, they used to take them off and fold them, and place them under their heads, and cover themselves with their own ordinary garments.

If one of them (*during the night, while sleeping*) experienced a seminal emission, he would go out and make his way down via a spiral staircase (*into a tunnel*) which went under the *Birah* (*the Temple*), and which was lit by lamps on each side (*to illuminate the way for him*) until he reached the Immersion Room (*where he would immerse to become tahor*). There was a large fire close by (*so he can warm himself after immersing*) and an honorable latrine (*so he can urinate before immersing; otherwise, he would need to immerse himself again after urinating*). Its superiority lay in this: If he found the door locked, he knew there was someone there; if it was open, he knew there was no one there (*and therefore, there was no necessity to speak*). He would go down and immerse and then come up and dry himself and warm himself in front of the fire, and then return and sit next to his brother *Kohanim* until the gates were opened, when he would take his departure (*from the Temple Mount, for he is still regarded as being tamei until nightfall*).

[*The Mishna now proceeds to discuss the first service of the day – the terumas hadashen: the separation of the ash; they*

would separate ash from the *ma'arachah* – the pyre on which all offerings were burned. This would be placed on the floor of the Courtyard near the Altar. The remaining ashes were gathered and piled into a mound in the middle of the Altar. These would eventually be removed and taken out to the place of ashes, outside Yerushalayim.] Anyone who desired to remove the ashes from the Altar used to rise early and immerse himself before the appointed *Kohen* (who was in charge of the lotteries for the opportunity to perform the Temple service) came. And at what time did the appointed *Kohen* come? He did not always come at the same time; sometimes he came just as the rooster cried, and sometimes a little before or a little after. The appointed *Kohen* would come and knock (on the gates of the Temple) and they would open for him. He would say to them, "Let all who have immersed themselves come and join in the lottery." They drew lots, and whoever won, won. (25b – 26a)

## INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

### *The Mitzvah to Guard the Temple in our Era*

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

HaGaon Rabbi Hilel Moshe Meshil Gelbstein zt"l arrived in Eretz Israel in the summer of 5629 (1869) at the age of 34. He came originally from Bialystok and his personality was molded in the beis midrash of the Kotzker Rebbe zt"l and after the latter passed away, he became very close to the Chidushei HaRim of Gur zt"l.

This gaon settled in Yerushalayim in a room whose windows faced the Kossel Ma'aravi and starting in the winter of 5630, he devoted 40 years to clarifying the order of the guard around the Temple: how many kohanim and Leviim guarded the Temple, where they were posted, what was their appointment, etc., as cited at length in his *Mishkenos Laavir Ya'akov*.

Rabbi Gelbstein aroused a commotion in Yerushalayim when he warned about the prohibition for an impure person to put his fingers between the stones of the Wall (see at length in *Meoros HaDaf HaYomi*, *Yevamos 7b*, in the article "Putting notes in the Kossel", and *Shevu'os 2b* in the article "May gentiles enter the Temple Mount?"). Most of the leaders of his generation – Maharil Diskin, the Imrei Binah, the Aderes, the Sedi Chemed zt"l and others – agreed with him (see *Keilim 1:8* and *Pesachim 67b*).

Guarding by night or also by day? Rambam states (*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah 8:4*) that 30 kohanim guarded at three places in the Temple, ten at each place, and 210 Leviim guarded 21 places around the Temple. The Rishonim disagreed about the times of the guarding. Rambam (*ibid*, halacha 2) and the Rash (*Midos 1:1*) hold that the mitzvah of guarding applies only at night. The Raavad (*ibid*) and the Rosh maintain that the mitzvah applies at all times, by day and by night. The person responsible for the guards, called the *Ish Har HaBayis*, would check their wakefulness at all times to ensure that they performed their job faithfully.

Why is there a need to guard the Temple? The Rishonim explain that the purpose of the guard was not to avert thieves. What then was the purpose of the guard? The Rishonim offer two reasons, depending on the above-mentioned disagreement. Rambam (*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah 8:1*), who holds that the mitzvah of guarding applies only at night, writes that the mitzvah was meant to honor the Temple. Therefore, by day, when sacrifices are offered and people constantly come and go, the absence of guards is not considered any less of an honor for the Temple. But by night, when the place is empty of people, the Temple's honor demands guards. The Rosh, however, who holds that the mitzvah of guarding applies day and night, gives the reason for this mitzvah that the Torah wanted that people should not distract their attention from the Temple. This aim is valid both by day and by night.

In his *Moreh Nevuchim* (III, Ch. 45), Rambam mentions another reason for the close watch on the Temple: to prevent the impure and onenim from entering, as they are forbidden to enter the Temple.

Stationing guards around the destroyed Temple: Rabbi Gelbstein suggested an innovative idea: to station guards around the destroyed Temple in our era! How do we know, he contended, that the mitzvah to guard the Temple ended with its destruction? On the contrary, from Rambam's phrasing (in his commentary on the *Mishna*) it seems that this mitzvah is valid forever: "This is a way to aggrandize the Temple and thus they would guard the Sanctuary in the desert and in Shlomo's era and forever." He finds a reason in Rambam's statement (*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah 6:14-15*) that the Temple's sanctity remains forever because the Shechinah doesn't leave it. If so, we should be guarding the site of the Temple.

Establishing batei midrash near the Kossel Ma'aravi: As he was aware that it was impossible to observe the mitzvah to guard

the Temple properly, as will be explained, he suggested establishing batei midrash near the Western Wall where people would pray and learn Seder Kodoshim all the time. This was no mere vision. He collected contributions for his idea and succeeded in raising 270 napoleons – a tremendous sum – to acquire three courtyards to build three synagogues around the Temple Mount. In his letter to Sir Moshe Montefiore he spurs him to participate in his plan, mentioning that he who is called Moshe should begin this mitzvah (the handwritten letter was published in his Mishkenos Laavir Ya'akov). In the end, the plan didn't succeed for various reasons.

Guarding on the Temple Mount itself didn't come into question because it is forbidden for the impure to enter the Temple Mount and in our era everyone is tamei meis (see at length in our Vol. 192, in the articles "Entering the site of the Temple" and "May gentiles ascend the Temple Mount?"). The suggestion he discussed was if there is a possibility to observe the mitzvah of guarding the Temple outside the Temple Mount and that maybe the exact places of the Leviim's guardposts on the Temple Mount are not crucial to fulfilling the mitzvah. Various questions and doubts accompanied this idea, one being that as the kohanim cannot participate in guarding the Temple, even outside it, as their posts are specifically inside the 'azarah, maybe the mitzvah of guarding by the Leviim is also not relevant, as it could be that the guarding by Leviim and kohanim are linked and the Leviim's guarding depends on the observance of the mitzvah by the kohanim.

Also, we have learned ('Arachin 11b) that "a singer who guarded is punished with death": a Levi appointed to be a singer in the Temple is not allowed to guard the Temple. How can we know that the Levi before us does not descend from a family of singers and woe is to him if he dares to be a guard (see at length our Vol. 194 in the article "Why is a Levi only allowed to do one job in the Temple?"). Furthermore, can we identify the exact places where they should stand?

These doubts do not undermine the very idea but put obstacles in the way of its application. The Sochatchover Rebbe zt"l, author of Avnei Nezer (Responsa, Y.D. 449), had doubts about the innovation itself since if the reason for guarding the Temple is to honor it, although not meant to prevent thievery, it must still be done in a way of guarding something precious, while today we have nothing precious on the Temple Mount: the Temple is destroyed, its utensils were robbed and the site is waste. Is there anything to guard? Guarding a desolate hill is not the slightest honor.

The Aderes claimed that even if guarding the Temple Mount was meant to prevent the entrance of the impure, there's no reason to maintain it because Jews anyway cannot go there. Of course, this statement was correct for his era. To our sorrow, in our era Jews are able to enter the Temple Mount, though they transgress a prohibition of the Torah.

## DAILY MASHAL

### *The Disgrace of Beis Avtinus*

By: Daf Digest

Rav Shalom Shwadron, zt"l, explains that although the intention of Beis Avtinus seemed to be for the sake of heaven (*they zealously guarded the secret of making the smoke of the ketores rise in a straight column*), the *Mishna (in Yoma)* does not reflect this. If they truly intended to withhold the secret of the incense in order to keep it from being defiled by idolatry, why was it held against them? Only because they did not consult the Sages of their time before they made their decision. They were not submissive to the Sages of their generation, and they acted upon their own understanding and initiative. This is what places them in the category of the wicked!

The Alter from Kelem, zt"l, once mentioned the pivotal importance of this characteristic of deference. "When one goes to learn, there is a very important preparatory step that many skip without realizing it. Every day, before beginning the day's seder, one must bless the One who "chose them and their teachings." Why? Because the *Mishna* states clearly that one of the forty-eight traits through which Torah is acquired is "faith in the Sages."

The Midrash Shmuel explains that we must believe that everything that Chazal stated is of the same status as that which was transmitted at Har Sinai. This is an avodah of its own that precedes the actual learning and acquisition of understanding. And it is just this quality that completes one's Torah education. Even when we do not completely understand, we must be prepared to accept what the Rav says unconditionally."

Someone once asked the Chazon Ish, zt"l, "What is the path to emunas chachamim?" The Chazon Ish explained: "The knowledge that there is no true Torah that isn't revealed through the soul of a living Sage!"