

Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf
Tamid Daf 29

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

Mishna

When his brother *Kohanim* saw him descend (*from the Altar as he was removing the ashes*), they quickly ran and sanctified their hands and feet at the *Kiyor* (*to remove the extra ashes from the Altar*). They then took the shovels and the forks and went up to the top of the Altar. The limbs and pieces of fat that had not been consumed during the night, they removed to the sides of the Altar (*with the intention of replacing them after the fire had been lit and the morning tamid offered*). If there was not enough room on the sides (*of the Altar*) they arranged them on the surrounding ledge (*the soveiv*) and on the ramp (*so they should not become disqualified through linah – by being off the Altar at night*).

They then began to pile the ashes on to the mound. This mound (*of ashes*) was in the middle of the Altar, and sometimes there was as much as three hundred *kor* on it. [*One kor equals thirty se'ah – in volume. 300 kor would equal over 675 cubic amos, which would be an extremely large size. The Gemora will explain that this is an example of hyperbole used by the Gemora.*] On festivals they did not clear away the ashes, because it was reckoned as an ornament to the Altar. It never happened that the *Kohen* was neglectful in taking out the ashes (*when there was a large quantity on the Altar*).

They then began to bring up the logs to arrange the pyre. Were all kinds of wood suitable for the pyre? All kinds of wood were suitable for the pyre except vine and olive wood. What they mostly used, however, were branches of fig trees, nut trees and of oil trees.

He then arranged the large pyre on the east side of the Altar with its open side (*resembling a window – between the logs*) facing east, while the inner ends of the logs touched the mound (*in the middle, located to the west of the large pyre*). Spaces were left between the logs in which they kindled the chips (*to start the fire, which subsequently ignited the logs*).

They selected from there (*the wood storehouse*) fine fig-tree wood pieces to arrange the second pyre (*on the Altar*) which was used for incense. This was situated by the southwestern corner of the Altar - four *amos* northward of the corner. Sufficient wood was placed there to make approximately five *se'ahs* of coals, and on *Shabbos*, there were about eight *se'ahs*, because they placed there the two spoons of *levonah* (*frankincense*) for the *lechem hapanim* (*the showbread*).

The limbs and the pieces of fat that had not been consumed during the night were put back on the pyre (*to be burned completely*). They then kindled the two pyres with fire and descended and went to the Chamber of Hewn Stone (*to cast further lots for the remainder of the Temple services*). (28b – 29a)

Exaggeration

Rava says that this *Mishna* (*when it states that sometimes there was as much as three hundred kor of ashes on it*) is an exaggeration.

Pyre

Similarly, there is a *Mishna* which states that they used to give the sheep offered as a *tamid* – daily sacrifice, a drink out of a golden cup, and Rava says that is also an exaggeration (*for, in truth, it was copper, but due to being polished, it appeared like gold*).

Rabbi Ami says that the Torah, the prophets, and the Sages all use hyperbole, and offers examples of each:

1. The Torah refers to the cities in Eretz *Yisroel* as “cities, big and fortified up to the sky.”
2. The *Mishnayos* cited above.
3. The verse in *Nevi'im* describes the celebration at Shlomo’s coronation as so powerful, that the “ground broke, from the sound.”

Rabbi Yannai bar Nachmeini quoted Shmuel saying that the Sages used hyperbole in three instances. They are: the mound, the grapevine and the Curtain. This excludes the case cited by Rava, for we have learned in a *Mishna*: They used to give the sheep offered as a *tamid* – daily sacrifice, a drink out of a golden cup, and Rava says that is an exaggeration. This teaches us that this is true of the other cases, but not of this one, because there is no poverty in the place of wealth (*the Temple*).

The *Gemora* now explains the three instances:

1. The mound – the *Mishna* cited earlier about the size of the mound of ashes on the Altar.
2. The grapevine – the *Mishna* says there was a golden vine on top of the door to the sanctuary of the Bais Hamikdash, 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*).
3. The *Paroches* curtain – the *Mishna* cites Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel in the name of Rabbi Shimon HaSegan saying that the *paroches* was a *tefach* – hand breadth wide, and was woven on 72 strings, each one of which was spun from 24 threads. It was 40 *amos* long, and 20 *amos* wide, and contained 820,000 threads. Two were made each year, and 300 *Kohanim* (*an exaggeration*) were needed to immerse it in the *mikvah* (*if it became tamei*). (29a – 29b)

The *Gemora* asks: Why were these (*vine and olive wood*) excluded?

Rav Pappa said: It is because they have knots (*holes which retain moisture and so prevents the wood from burning well*).

Rav Acha bar Yaakov said: It is because of the settlement in the Land of Israel (*and since vines and olive trees are needed for wine and oil, the supple for these would be greatly diminished if their wood was used for the Temple, which required a great deal of wood*).

The *Gemora* asks (*on Rav Acha*) from the following *braisa*: It is written: *upon the wood that is on the fire*; this implies that wood which melts away and rapidly becomes fire is needed. Which kind is that? Fine (*smooth*) logs, which do not possess knots - that do not become knotted inwardly. And are all kinds of wood (*that fit the above requirement*) suitable for the Altar pyre? Yes! All kinds are suitable except olive and vine. What they mostly used, however, were branches of fig trees, nut trees and of oil trees. Rabbi Eliezer adds (*as not suitable*): wood from the *mayish* tree, the *alon* (*oak*) tree, palm tree, the carob tree and the sycamore tree.

Now, there is no difficulty here for the one who says that it (*why vine and olive trees cannot be used*) is because they are knotted, for the argument according to him is that Rabbi Eliezer holds that although they (*the five trees that he adds*) are not knotted on the inside, yet since they are knotted on the outside, we do not use them, while the other master holds that since they are not knotted on the inside, although they are knotted on the outside, we still bring them. But to the one who says that it is because of the settlement in the Land of Israel, we can object, doesn’t the palm tree contribute to the settlement in the Land of Israel (*for dates are also one of the seven species that the Land of Israel is praised, just like wine and oil; so why would the Tanna Kamma permit the usage of palm trees*)?

The *Gemora* answers: He can retort to you as follows: By the same reasoning, doesn’t the fig tree contribute to the settlement in the Land of Israel (*so why does everyone permit the wood from a fig tree to be used for the Altar*)? What would you answer to this - that we speak of a fig tree which does not produce fruit; similarly then, we can speak of a palm tree which does not produce fruit.

The *Gemora* questions this: But are there fig trees which do not produce fruit?

The *Gemora* answers: Yes, as stated by Rachavah, for Rachavah said: They bring white fig trees and scraped them with a rope of palm-tree bark (*until the barks of the tree were removed*), which caused the seeds to fall out, and they buried them near the riverbank. These trees produced boards but not fruit. Three branches from such trees could not be supported by a bridge (*for on account of their weight, the bridge would collapse*).

The *Gemora* asks: What is the reason (*for the opening between the logs*)?

Rav Huna and Rav Chisda answered: One said that it was in order that a wind might blow on it (*causing the wood to ignite*), and the other said that it was in order that they might kindle the chips from there (*which subsequently would kindle the logs*).

The *Gemora* asks (*on the latter opinion*) from the *Mishna* which stated that spaces were left between the logs in which they kindled the chips (*which indicates that the chips were placed between the logs, and not by the opening*)?

The *Gemora* answers: He can reply that there were several places (*in the pyre where these chips were placed*). (29b – 30a)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, RA'UHU ECHAV

DAILY MASHAL

Hyperbole

The *Gemora* (90b) says that the Sages and the Torah use hyperbole in their descriptions, and cites various examples. Rava cites a *Mishna* which states that the pile of ashes on the altar was 300 *kur*, and one which states that the sheep of the tamid sacrifice was given a drink in a golden cup, both of which are exaggerations. Shmuel is quoted as citing three *Mishnayos*: the pile of ashes, the vine at the entrance of the Bais Hamikdash, and the *paroches* curtain.

Rashi explains that Shmuel does not cite the example of the golden cup, as he maintains that this is literal, in order to ensure that the service be done in a wealthy manner. Rashi

says that the exaggeration of the *paroches* was the *Mishna's* statement that 300 *Kohanim* were necessary to take it to the *mikveh*.

Rabbi Ami says that Torah uses hyperbole, and cites as an example a verse that refers to cities, big and fortified up to the sky. The verse cited is in Devarim (1:28), which is quoting the report of the spies, who referred to these cities.

The Torah Temimah on this verse (note 35) cites the Sifri, which says that the Torah speaks in hyperbole, citing a verse later in Devarim (9:1), which refers to cities, big and fortified up to the sky. He quotes the Gra, who amends the Sifri, to say, "and an additional verse with hyperbole is," before citing the later verse.

The Torah Temimah disagrees, since the true proof that the Torah uses hyperbole is actually from the later verse. The verse in Devarim (1:28) is a quote of the spies, while the later verse is Moshe telling the Jews about what they will encounter when crossing into *Eretz Yisroel*. The first verse does not prove that the Torah itself uses hyperbole, as it was simply quoting a person speaking, but the second verse, said directly by Moshe, is indicative of the language of the Torah itself, and therefore is the only verse cited by the Sifri.

Exactly 300

Three hundred *kohanim* immersed the *paroches* of the *kodesh kodoshim*! The Vilna Gaon *zt"l* explains that this number is very exact since, as stated here, the *paroches* was 20 *amah* by 40 *amah* and therefore its circumference was 120 *amah*. We have the tradition that the *amah* of utensils contains five *tefachim* and therefore the circumference of the *paroches* contained 600 *tefachim*. Therefore, as a handbreadth equals a *tefach*, 300 *kohanim* could merit the mitzvah of immersing the *paroches*, each of them with both hands, amounting to 600 *tefachim*. And as for our *Gemara*, which says that the number is exaggerated, this does not pertain to the number of *kohanim* but to that said previously, that it was "made by 820,000 maids" (*Kol Eliyahu, Terumah*).