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Where was the Base?

The *Gemara* asks a question from a *Mishnah*. The *Mishnah* states: How was the *olah* bird done? The *Kohen* would do *melikah* from the back of its neck, cutting through the esophagus and trachea. He would then press the area that was cut onto the wall of the altar. If the southeastern corner (where this was done) did not have a base, wouldn't the blood fall to the floor after he did the *melikah*?

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak says: It is possible to say that the airspace belonged to (the tribe of) Binyamin and the land belonged to (the tribe of) Yehudah. (Rashi explains that they made a small *yesod* more than three *tefachim* above the ground, in order that it should be in Binyamin's portion. This is where the blood of the *olas ha'of* falls.) (54a1)

The *Gemara* asks: What did the *Gemara* mean earlier when it said the southeastern corner did not have a base?

Rav says: There was actually part of the base missing in the southern and eastern portion of the altar. Levi says: It was there, but blood was not placed there.

Rav understands that the Targum explains regarding Binyamin's portion, "in his portion the altar will be built." (This means that the structure of the altar can only be built in Yehudah's portion.) Levi understands that the Targum explains regarding Binyamin's portion, "in his portion the Temple will be built." This means that the place that is sanctified for the blood is only in his portion (however, part of the structure can still be built in Yehudah's portion).

The *Gemara* asks a question on Levi from a *Baraisa*. The *Baraisa* states: 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. (How can we reconcile this with Levi's opinion that the base actually went around the entire altar?)

The *Gemara* answers: The term "ate" refers to the fact that the altar only ate (meaning had blood placed there) in the areas listed, despite the fact that the base was built all around the altar.

The *Gemara* asks a question on Rav from a *Mishnah* in Midos (3:1). The *Mishnah* states: The altar was thirty-two by thirty-two cubits. (This indicates that it was exactly thirty two by thirty two, which would not be the case if the base was only on portions of the altar.)

The *Gemara* answers: It means that from the northern and western side it was thirty-two by thirty-two, not on the eastern and southern side.

The *Gemara* asks a question from the *Baraisa* later (62b). The *Gemara* understands that the ramp on the southern side of the altar covered over one cubit of the base and one of the ledge. This indicates that the base was in fact built on the southern side (unlike Rav).

The *Gemara* answers: The *Baraisa* means that the ramp covered over one cubit where the base would have been if it had been built, and the cubit of the ledge.

The *Gemara* asks a question. Levi teaches: How did they build the altar? A square mold of thirty-two by thirty-two cubits that was one cubit high (*Rashi explains it was made out of wooden planks*) was brought. It was filled with smooth wet stones. They would then pour plaster, lead, and pitch onto these stones. This is the area of the base. They would then bring another mold that was thirty by thirty cubits and five cubits tall, and repeat this procedure. (*This was the ledge.*) They would then bring another mold of twenty-eight by twenty-eight cubits by three cubits and repeat this procedure. This is the area where the fire of the altar was found (*the top of the altar*). They would then bring a mold of one cubit by one cubit for each corner of the altar and repeat this procedure. (*The Gemara now asks its question.*) If you will say that they cut off the area of the base that was in Yehudah's portion, doesn't the verse state that the altar must be of whole stones (*indicating it cannot be cut*)?

The *Gemara* answers: It must be that they placed a beam in the mold in the area where the base was not supposed to be, in order that it should not be made in that area. They merely took the beam out of the mold afterwards. If one does not say this answer, how can we understand Rav Kahana's statement that the corners of the altar had deep whole going through them (*from top to bottom, so that the blood of the chatas could fall in and be absorbed*). Didn't the verse say that the stones must be whole? It must be that they put small pieces of wood in to make these holes, and took them out after it was made. This is also how they did not make the southern and eastern part of the base. (54a1 – 54b1)

Where shall the Temple be Built?

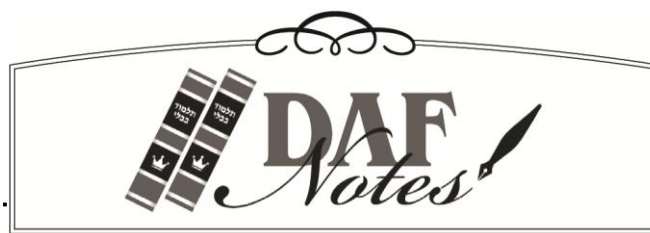
Rava taught: What does the verse mean when it says, *And David and Shmuel went and say in Binayos b'Ramos*? What does Nayos have to do with Ramah? Rather, it must be that they were sitting in Ramah (*the city where Shmuel lived*) and dealing with the beauty of the world (*Rashi explains they were trying to find a source for where the Beis Hamikdash should be located.*) They said: The verse states: *and you will*

rise up and ascend to the place. This teaches that the Temple is higher than all of *Eretz Yisroel*, and *Eretz Yisroel* is higher than other lands. They did not know which area this referred to. They brought the Book of Yehoshua (*to check the boundaries of Eretz Yisroel, see Rashi at length*). Regarding all of the boundaries of the portions of the tribes in *Eretz Yisroel* the verse states both that the boundary descended, that it ascended, and the description of the boundary. Regarding Binyamin, it just states that it ascended, but does not state that it descended. They said: It must be that it is in the portion of Binyamin.

They thought to build it in Ein Eitam which is very high up. They then decided to make it slightly lower in Yerushalayim, based on the verse, *and between his shoulders (lower than the head) he will dwell.*

Alternatively (*the reason they did not build it in Ein Eitam*), there was a tradition that *Sanhedrin* was supposed to sit in the portion of Yehudah, and that the Heavenly Presence would reside in the portion of Binyamin. If they would make the Temple higher, there would be too much of a distance between *Sanhedrin* and the place of the *Shechinah*. They agreed that it would be better to make it slightly lower, as the verse states: *and between his shoulders (lower than the head) he will dwell.*

Doeg the Edomite was jealous of David for this reason (*that David had understood from the Torah where the Temple should be located, see Maharsha*). This is as the verse states: *For the jealousy of your house has consumed me (referring to Doeg, see Maharsha).* The verse also states: *Remember regarding David, Hashem, all of the difficulty that he subjected himself to, as he swore to Hashem...if I will come to the tent of my house, if I will give sleep to my eyes, to my eyebrows rest, until I find a place for Hashem...We have heard about this in Efrat, we found it in the fields of the forest.* In *Efrat* refers to Yehoshua who came from Efraim. *We found it in the fields of the forest* refers to Binyamin. This is as the



verse states: *Binyamin is a wolf who will tear (apart his prey).* (54b1 – 54b3)

Mishnah

The next sacrifices (*discussed by the Mishnah*) are sacrifices of the *shelamim* of the public (*known as the "kivsei atzeres"*) and *asham* offerings. *Asham* offerings include: *Asham gezeilos* (*someone who swears falsely that he did not take an item that he was watching for someone else*), *asham me'ilos* (*one who usurped and benefited from hekdes*), *asham shifchah charufah* (*Rashi understands that this is a person who cohabited with a woman who was a half-Canaanite maidservant and half Jewish who was already designated for a Jewish servant*), *asham nazir* (*the ashame brought by a nazir who becomes impure to a dead person*), and an *asham taluy* (*brought by a person who possibly committed a sin for which one brings a chatas*). All of these are slaughtered in the north and their blood is accepted in the north, and their blood requires two sprinklings that are four. They are eaten inside the curtains by male *Kohanim* in any way (*of cooking, not specifically roasted like the korban pesach*) for one day and night until (*halachic*) midnight. (54b3 – 54b4)

DAILY MASHAL

Eretz Yisroel and the Beis HaMikdash are Higher than all other Places

Do High and Low Apply to Spherical Objects?

In our *sugya* the *Gemara* cites a verse in *Yirmiyahu* (23:7) "...Who brought *Bnei Yisroel* up from the land of Egypt" and a verse in *Devarim* (17:8) "...then you shall arise and go up unto the place which the Lord thy G-d shall choose" to demonstrate that *Eretz Yisroel* is higher than any other land, and that the *Beis HaMikdash* is the highest point in *Eretz Yisroel*. The wording of the *Gemara* seems to indicate that *Eretz Yisroel* is physically higher. In fact, the *Yam Shel Shlomo* (*Kiddushin* Chap. 4, 1) goes so far as to say that if someone

standing in *Eretz Yisroel* says, "I vow to go up to *Chutz La'aretz*," the vow is considered to be made in vain and is invalid. Leaving *Yerushalayim* or *Eretz Yisroel* is always referred to as "going down."

Many commentators maintain that our *Gemara* should not be interpreted literally. The *Chasam Sofer* (*Responsa, Part II, Y.D. §234*) stresses this point, writing, "...in fact, those who are somewhat familiar with the world map can see otherwise...actually the world is round, and high and low do not apply to spherical objects; from any given point one sees the skies high overhead and low on the horizon, forming a dome. Someone who approaches from a point on the horizon appears as if he emerged from a deep pit, and high and low do not apply."

Furthermore, the *Maharal of Prague* (in his book on Talmudic Aggados and in *Tiferes Yosef*, Chagiga 3b, s.v. *Eizehu*) writes that the *Gemara* is referring to the spiritual loftiness of *Eretz Yisroel*, and not to its physical height.

It is interesting to note that the *Chasam Sofer* (*ibid*) writes that *Eretz Yisroel* is said to be "higher than all other lands" because Creation began from the *even shesiya* [foundation stone] located on *Har HaBayis* (see *Rashi, Sanhedrin* 26b, s.v. *veshesiya*). Thus all eyes are raised to *Eretz Yisroel* and *Har HaBayis* because mankind lifts its gaze to the spot where the ground beneath its feet was first created.