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Zevachim Daf 58

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**Mishna**

If *kodshei kodashim* were slaughtered on top of the altar – Rabbi Yosi says: They are valid as if they were slaughtered at the north. Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah says: From the middle of the altar northward – they are valid as if they were slaughtered at the north; from the middle of the altar southward – they are invalid as if they were slaughtered at the south. (58a)

**Location of the Altar**

Rav Assi said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Rabbi Yosi maintained that the entire altar stood in the north. The novelty of the *Mishna’s* ruling is that we do require them to be slaughtered on the side of the altar.

Rabbi Zeira asked Rav Assi: If so, will you indeed say that Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah holds that the altar is precisely half in the north and half in the south? And that cannot be, for surely it was you who said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan that Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah admits that if they were slaughtered in a corresponding position on the ground (*where the altar is located*), they are invalid?

Rav Assi replied: Rabbi Yochanan explained the dispute in the *Mishna* as follows: The source for their viewpoints is the same Scriptural verse: *And you shall sacrifice on it your olah offerings, and your shelamim offerings*. Rabbi Yosi holds: The entire altar is fit for the slaughtering of an *olah* and for a *shelamim*. Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah maintains that the verse teaches us that half of the altar is for an *olah*,

and half of it is for a *shelamim*. This is based upon the following logic: If you would think that the entire altar is fit for an *olah*, then seeing that it is fit for an *olah*, need it be said that the entire altar is fit for a *shelamim*?!

The *Gemora* notes: Rabbi Yosi would respond that you might have thought that only an *olah* is fit if slaughtered on the top of the altar, for we are pressed for space (*since it is only valid when slaughtered in the north*), but as for a *shelamim*, I would say that it may not be slaughtered on the altar at all! The text teaches us otherwise.

It was stated above: Rav Assi in the name of Rabbi Yochanan said that Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah admits that if they were slaughtered in a corresponding position on the ground (*where the altar is located*), they are invalid.

Rav Acha of Difti asked Ravina: Which place is he referring to? He cannot mean the base or the ledge of the altar, for that is the altar itself! He cannot mean that he made a cavity in the ground underneath the altar and slaughtered *kodshei kodashim* there, for then the altar itself would not be valid. This is because it was taught in a *braisa* that the altar must be attached to the earth, which means that it must not be built over cavities or on rocks!?

The *Gemora* answers: It means that he diminished the size of the altar (*and slaughtered in the now empty location*).

Rabbi Zeira said: Is it possible that this statement of Rabbi Yochanan is correct (*that the entire altar is situated in the north of the Courtyard*), and yet we have not learned it in a

*Mishna?* So he went out, searched, and found it. For we learned: They selected from there (*the wood storehouse*) fine fig-tree wood pieces to arrange the second pile (*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* for the *lechem hapanim*.

Now, why does the *Mishna* state that it was four *amos* north of the corner? This agrees with Rabbi Yosi, for it was taught in a *braisa*: Rabbi Yosi said: This is the rule: Whatever is taken from inside (*the Sanctuary*) to be placed outside (*on the Outer Altar*) is placed (*on the altar*) as near as possible to the Sanctuary; and whatever is taken from outside (*on the Outer Altar*) to be placed inside (*the Sanctuary*), is taken from (*the altar*) as near as possible to the Sanctuary.

The *Gemora* explains the meaning of the *Mishna*: “Whatever is taken from inside (*the Sanctuary*) to be placed outside (*on the Outer Altar*)” means the two spoons of *levonah* for the *lechem hapanim*, which we derive from the remainder of the blood (*of the inner chataos, which is poured onto the base of the altar closest to the Sanctuary*). “Whatever is taken from outside (*on the Outer Altar*) to be placed inside (*the Sanctuary*)” means the coals (*used for the incense*) of every day, which we derive from the coals of *Yom Kippur* (*where those coals were located on the part of the altar closest to the Sanctuary*).

Now, what does Rabbi Yosi hold (*regarding the location of the altar*)? If he holds that the entire altar is in the south, he would have to move the pile twenty-seven *amos* from the southwestern corner (*in order for it to be corresponding to the entranceway of the Sanctuary; this can be explained as follows: The width of the entranceway was ten amos, five of which were in the north and five in the south, while the altar was thirty-two square; now, deducting the five amos which the entranceway passed into the north, the nearest point to*

*the entranceway would thus be twenty-seven amos from the opposite corner*). And even if he holds that the sanctity of the Sanctuary and that of the Antechamber are one, he would still have to move the pile twenty-two *amos* from the corner (*since the entranceway of the Antechamber was five amos wider than that of the Sanctuary on each side, five amos can be deducted from the preceding calculation*)! And if he holds that the altar was half in the north and half in the south, he would have to move the pile eleven *amos* from the corner (*for then there will be sixteen amos of the altar in the south*)! And even if he holds that the sanctity of the Sanctuary and that of the Antechamber are one, he would still have to move the pile six *amos* from the corner! It must therefore be that he holds that the entire altar was in the north, and these four *amos* are as follows: One *amah* for the base, one for the ledge, one for the horns, and one for the feet of the *Kohanim*. The pile should be no further than this, for otherwise, it would not be opposite the entranceway.

Rav Adda bar Ahavah suggests another explanation to this *Mishna*: This is in accordance with Rabbi Yehudah, for it was taught in a *braisa*: Rabbi Yehudah said: The altar stood in the middle of the Courtyard. Now, it was thirty-two *amos* square, of which (*its middle*) ten *amos* faced the entranceway of the Sanctuary, and it extended eleven *amos* on either side of the entranceway. It emerges that the altar was exactly opposite the width of the Sanctuary.

The *Gemora* asks: Yet even so, according to Rabbi Yehudah, the pile would have to be moved eleven *amos*? And even if he holds that the sanctity of the Sanctuary and that of the Antechamber are one, he would still have to move the pile six *amos* from the corner!?

The *Gemora* answers: Do you think that these four *amos* include the *amah* of the base and the *amah* of the ledge? They are excluding those. (58a – 58b)