

1 Tammuz 5778
June 14, 2018



Zevachim Daf 62

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and may their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

Adding onto the Altar

Rav Yosef suggests another reason for the adding onto the Altar of the First Temple: Is it not that which was taught in the following *braisa*: And they set the altar upon its foundations, which means that they (*the Men of the Great Assembly*) realized its exact measurements? [*Rav Yosef had once fallen sick, and after his recovery it was found that he had forgotten many of his earlier teachings. He would say one thing and then retract from it. So too here: Initially he had explained that it was because the heavenly fire did not help them, a larger altar was necessary, and now he retracted and stated this reason. It was revealed to them through a prophetic communication exactly which site was sacred for the altar, and therefore they were able to make it larger; this knowledge was withheld from Shlomo when he built the first altar.*]

The *Gemora* asks: But surely it is written: (*Dovid told Shlomo*) *And all this (the exact dimensions of the Temple) is in writing, as Hashem has elucidated me?*

Rather, said Rav Yosef: They found the following verse and interpreted it (*which Shlomo did not understand*): *Then Dovid said: This is the house of Hashem, God, and this is the altar for olah offerings of Israel.* This intimated that the altar was like the Temple: Just as the Temple was sixty *amos* in length, so too the altar can be (*a maximum of*) sixty *amos* (*and they extended it to the measurements that they deemed necessary*). (62a)

Location of the Altar

The *Gemora* asks: As for the Temple, it is well (*how they knew its location*), for its outline (*through its foundation*) was

distinguishable; but how did they know the precise site of the altar?

Rabbi Elozar answered: They saw (*in a vision*) the altar built, and Michael the great officer, standing and offering sacrifices upon it.

Rav Yitzchak Nafcha said: They saw the ashes of Yitzchak lying in that place.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini said: From the entire Temple area, they smelled the odor of the incense, while from this location (*the site of the altar*), they smelled the odor of limbs.

Rabbah bar bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Three prophets went up with them from the Exile: One testified to them about the dimensions of the altar; another testified to them about the site of the altar; and the third testified to them that they could offer sacrifices even though there was no Temple.

In a *braisa* it was taught: Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov said: Three prophets went up with them from the Exile: One testified to them about the dimensions and the site of the altar; another testified to them that they could offer sacrifices even though there was no Temple; and the third testified to them that the Torah should be written in *Ashuri* script (*the one that we use today on our Torahs*). (62a)

The Altar

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: The horn, ramp, base and square shape are indispensable; the measurements of its length, width and height are not indispensable.

Rav Huna said: This is known from that which is written: *The altar*; and wherever ‘*the altar*’ is written (*like by the horns, ramp, base and square shape*), it is indispensable.

The *Gemora* asks: If so, is the design (*that encompassed the altar*), according to Rebbe, and the ledge, according to Rabbi Yosi son of Rabbi Yehudah, also indispensable? For it is written: *And you shall place it under the karkov of the altar from beneath*, and it was taught in a *braisa*: What was the *karkov*? Rebbe said: It was the design, and Rabbi Yosi son of Rabbi Yehudah said: It was the ledge.

The *Gemora* answers: Yes! It is indeed indispensable, for it was taught in a *braisa*: On that day (*a certain Sadducee, who was from a group of Jews who denied the authenticity of the Oral Law, poured the water of the libations on his feet instead of pouring the water into the bowl, and all the people threw their esrogim at him*) the horn of the altar was damaged, and they brought a fistful of salt and stopped it up. This was not done because it would now be fit for service, but rather, that it should not appear damaged, for every altar which lacks a horn, ramp, base and square shape is invalid. Rabbi Yosi son of Rabbi Yehudah said: The same applies to the ledge

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: What is the *karkov*? It is an *amah* wide space between the horns, so the *Kohanim* may walk there.

The *Gemora* asks: Did the *Kohanim* walk between one horn and another?

The *Gemora* answers: Rather say that there was also an *amah* wide space between the horns, so the *Kohanim* may walk there.

The *Gemora* asks: But it is written: below its *karkov* downwards until its midpoint (*proving that the karkov was on the side of the altar, not on the top*)!?

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak answers: There were two; one was for ornamental purposes (*on the side of the altar*), and the other for the *Kohanim* that they should not slip (*which was on the top of the altar; an indented space on top of the altar surrounded by a rim*).

The *braisa* had stated: The measurements of its length, width and height are not indispensable.

Rabbi Mani said: This is provided that it is not made smaller than the altar made by Moshe. And how much is that? Rav Yosef said: One *amah* square.

They ridiculed him, citing the verse: *And you shall make the altar five amos long, and five amos wide – the altar shall be square!?*

Abaye said to him: Perhaps the master meant the place of the pyre (*since two amos must be deducted from each side due to the horns and the space for the Kohanim to walk*).

Rav Yosef said to him: The master (*you, Abaye*), who is a great man, knows what I meant.

Then Rav Yosef dubbed them, “the sons of Keturah” (*they are indeed Avraham’s descendants, but they do not conduct themselves like true descendants through Yitzchak and Yaakov*).

The sons of Rabbi Tarfon’s sister were sitting before Rabbi Tarfon when he cited the verse: *And Avraham took another wife whose name was Yochani*. They said to him: “Keturah” it is written. He dubbed them “the children of Keturah.” (62a – 62b)

Logs on the Pyre

Abaye bar Huna said in the name of Rav Chama bar Gurya: The logs which Moshe made (*for the pyre on the altar*) were an *amah* long and an *amah* wide, and their thickness was that

of the instrument for leveling off the top of a container which has the volume of a *se'ah*.

Rabbi Yirmiyah notes: It was measured with a short *amah* (in order to leave space for the Kohanim to walk).

Rav Yosef said: Is that not which was taught in the following *braisa*: Upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: This intimates that the wood must not protrude at all beyond the altar! (62b)

The Ramp of the Altar

The *Gemora* cites a *Mishna*: There was a ramp at the south side of the altar, which was thirty-two *amos* in length by sixteen cubits in width.

Rav Huna cites the Scriptural source for this: And he shall slaughter it on the side of the altar northward. This intimates that its "thigh" must be in the north and its "face" in the south (which is where the ramp should be).

The *Gemora* asks: Perhaps its "thigh" and its "face" should be in the north?

Rava answers: Place the man on his face (where his thigh and his face are in opposite directions).

Abaye asked him: On the contrary, let the man sit straight up!?

Rava answers: It is written: *rabua* (literally meaning square, but also having the connotation of lying in a prone position).

The *Gemora* asks: But surely that is required to teach that it must be square!?

The *Gemora* answers: Since it says *rabua* and not *meruba*, which would mean square, we can interpret it to mean lying prone.

The *Gemora* asks: But according to your reasoning, does the Torah write *ravutz* (which, more clearly, denotes lying prone)?

Rava answers: It says *rabua*, which implies both,

The *Gemora* notes that a *Tanna* derives that the ramp is on the south of the altar from the following *braisa*: Rabbi Yehudah said: And its ramp turns eastward. This intimates that every turning which you make (while performing a service in the Temple) must be rightward and to the east. [Evidently the ramp was on the south of the altar.]

The *Gemora* asks: Perhaps it means that when you turn leftward you shall be facing the east!?

The *Gemora* answers that you cannot think so, For Rami bar Yechezkel recited the following *braisa*: The pool which Shlomo made (placed in the Courtyard, to be used as a mikvah for the Kohanim) stood upon twelve oxen, three turned toward the north, and three turned toward the west, and three turned toward the south, and three turned toward the east. This teaches us that every turning which you make (while performing a service in the Temple) must be rightward and to the east.

Rabbi Shimon ben Yosi ben Lekunya asked Rabbi Yosi: Did Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai maintain that there was a space between the ramp and the altar?

Rabbi Yosi replied: And do you not maintain so? Surely it is written: And you shall offer your olah offerings, the meat and the blood: This intimates that just as the blood requires throwing (to be applied on the altar), so does the meat require throwing (and this must be because there is a space between the ramp and the altar).

Rabbi Shimon ben Yosi ben Lekunya responded: I assert that he stood at the side of the pyre and threw it from there (and

therefore it proves nothing regarding a space between the ramp and the altar).

Rabbi Yosi said to him: When he threw the meat, did he throw it on the burning part of the pyre (*the innermost part*) or on the part of the pyre that was not burning? Surely he threw it on the burning part of the pyre, and there it would be impossible to do otherwise (*without throwing; the hekesh would therefore not be necessary to teach that it is thrown – it must be to teach us that there is a space between the ramp and the altar*).

Rav Pappa said: It must be like the (*throwing of the*) blood. Just as by the blood there was air space of ground interposing between the *Kohen* and the altar, so too regarding the meat, there was air space of ground interposing between the *Kohen* and the altar.

Rav Yehudah said: Two small ramps branched off from the main ramp, by which one (*on the west side*) turned to the base and one (*on the east side*) to the ledge, and these were also separated from the altar by a hairsbreadth, because it is written: *around*.

Rabbi Avahu said that the word *rabua*, meaning square, teaches us that they must be separated from the altar by a hairsbreadth.

The *Gemora* cites a *Mishna*: The ramp and the altar were sixty-two *amos*.

The *Gemora* asks: But should it not be sixty-four (*for both the altar and the ramp were sixty-two amos long*)?

The *Gemora* answers: It therefore emerges that the ramp extended an *amah* over the base and an *amah* over the ledge. (62b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Ramps in the Mishkan

Rav Yehudah said: Two small ramps branched off from the main ramp, by which one (*on the west side*) turned to the base and one (*on the east side*) to the ledge, and these were also separated from the altar by a hairsbreadth, because it is written: *around*.

HaRav Dovid Meyers, author of the fabulous sefer on the construction of the Mishkan, Melech HaMishkan V'Kailav, notes: This is referring to the altar in the Beis HaMikdash. It is logical to assume that there would also be one to the ledge in the Mishkan if the ledge in the Mishkan was for the *Kohanim* to walk upon. According to Rashi in Chumash there was no ledge for the *Kohanim* to walk on in the Mishkan, so there was no need for a small ramp to the ledge. There are commentators that maintain that there was a ledge for the *Kohanim* to walk on in the Mishkan (page 234), so according to them there was a need for a small ramp to the ledge.

Was there a small ramp to the base in the Mishkan? According to what Shitah Mekubetzes (letter 12) states that the purpose of the small ramp to the base was because of the following: if the *Kohen* would have to go down the ramp and then go to the base, the blood might coagulate and become unfit for sprinkling; accordingly, it would seem that there should also be one in the Mishkan. Even though it would seem that the ramp in the Mishkan was a little shorter than the ramp in the Beis HaMikdash, it is not logical to say that since the ramp in the Mishkan was a few *amos* shorter than the ramp in the Beis HaMikdash, there would be no concern that the blood would coagulate. According to what we have written, it seems that there was only one small ramp in the Mishkan.