

רָגַל בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ לְעֵנֵן פּוֹר קֶשׁ"ב: פֵּיִים  
בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ, זְמַן בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ, רָגַל בְּפָנֵי  
עֲצָמוֹ, קָרְבָן בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ, שִׁירָה בְּפָנֵי  
עֲצָמוֹ, בְּרָכָה בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ.

מִתְנִי' הַהֲלֵל וְהַשְׁמֵחָה שְׂמוֹנָה, כִּי צֵד?  
מִלְמַד שְׁחֵיב אָדָם בְּהֲלֵל וּבְשִׂמְחָה  
וּבְכָבוֹד יוֹם טוֹב הָאֶחָדוֹן שֶׁל חַג כְּשֶׁאָר  
כָּל יְמוֹת הַחַג.

גַּמ' מִנָּא הֵי מִלֵּי? דְּתַנּוּ רַבְנֵי: "וְהֵיִתָּ  
אֶךְ שְׂמֵחָ" לְרַבּוֹת לֵילֵי יוֹם טוֹב הָאֶחָדוֹן.  
אוֹ אֵינוֹ אֵלָּא יוֹם טוֹב הָרֵאשׁוֹן? בְּשֶׁהוּא  
אוֹמֵר "אֶךְ" – חֵלֶק.

וּמָה רֵאִיתָ לְרַבּוֹת לֵילֵי יוֹם טוֹב הָאֶחָדוֹן  
וְלְהוֹצִיא לֵילֵי יוֹם טוֹב הָרֵאשׁוֹן? מִרְבָּה  
אֲנִי לֵילֵי יוֹם טוֹב הָאֶחָדוֹן – שֵׁשׁ שְׂמֵחָה  
לְפָנָיו, וּמוֹצֵיא אֲנִי לֵילֵי יוֹם טוֹב הָרֵאשׁוֹן  
שְׁאִין שְׂמֵחָה לְפָנָיו.

is a Festival in and of itself<sup>N</sup> with regard to the matter of: *Peh, zayin, reish; kuf, shin, beit*. This is an acronym for: **A lottery [payis] in and of itself,**<sup>H</sup> i.e., a new lottery is performed on that day to determine which priests will sacrifice the offerings that day, and the order established on *Sukkot* does not continue; the blessing of time [*zeman*], i.e., Who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this time, **in and of itself**, as it is recited just as it is recited at the start of each Festival; **a Festival [regel] in and of itself**, and there is no mitzva to sit in the *sukka* (see *Tosafot*); **an offering [korban] in and of itself,**<sup>H</sup> as the number of offerings sacrificed on the Eighth Day is not a continuation of the number sacrificed on *Sukkot* but is part of a new calculation; **a song [shira] in and of itself,**<sup>N</sup> since the psalms recited by the Levites as the offerings are sacrificed on the Eighth Day are not a continuation of those recited on *Sukkot*; **a blessing [berakha] in and of itself,**<sup>NH</sup> as the addition to the third blessing of Grace after Meals and to the *Amida* prayer (see *Tosafot*) is phrased in a manner different from that of the addition recited on *Sukkot*.

**MISHNA** This mishna elaborates upon the first mishna in this chapter. **The obligation to recite hallel<sup>H</sup> and the mitzva of rejoicing on the Festival by sacrificing and eating the meat of peace-offerings are always for eight days.**<sup>H</sup> The mishna explains: **How so? This teaches that a person is obligated in hallel, and in the mitzva of rejoicing, and in reverence for the last day of the Festival like he is for all the other days of the Festival.**

**GEMARA** The Gemara asks: **From where are these matters,** that on the eighth day of the Festival one is obligated to rejoice, derived? It is as the Sages taught that the verse states with regard to *Sukkot*: **"And you shall be altogether joyful"** (Deuteronomy 16:15).<sup>N</sup> The verse comes to include the evenings of the last day of the Festival, i.e., then too, one is obligated to rejoice by partaking of the meat of the peace-offerings sacrificed the previous day. The Gemara asks: Does the verse come to include the evening of the eighth day? **Or perhaps it comes to include only the evening of the first day of the Festival.** The Gemara answers: **When the verse says: Altogether,** it is exclusionary, and it has distinguished this night from the other nights of the Festival.

The Gemara asks: **What did you see that led you to include the evenings of the last day of the Festival in the mitzva of rejoicing and to exclude the evenings of the first day of the Festival?** Why not require one to sacrifice peace-offerings on the afternoon preceding the Festival to be eaten on the first night? The Gemara answers: **I include the evenings of the last day of the Festival, before which there is a day of rejoicing,** as it is reasonable that the rejoicing should continue, **and I exclude the evenings of the first day of the Festival, before which there is not a day of rejoicing,** as there is no obligation to sacrifice offerings on the afternoon preceding the Festival.

**HALAKHA**

**A lottery in and of itself – פֵּיִים בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ:** The lottery for the Eighth Day of Assembly is unrelated to the lottery conducted among the priestly watches on *Sukkot* (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Temidin UMusafin* 10:13).

**An offering in and of itself – קָרְבָן בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ:** The offerings sacrificed on the Eighth Day of Assembly are not a continuation of the offerings sacrificed on *Sukkot*. This day has its own distinct additional offering (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Temidin UMusafin* 10:5).

**A blessing in and of itself – בְּרָכָה בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ:** On the Eighth Day of Assembly, both in prayers and in Grace after Meals, one mentions the Eighth Day of Assembly and not *Sukkot* (Shulhan Arukh, *Orah Hayyim* 668:1).

**The obligation to recite hallel is for eight days – הַהֲלֵל שְׂמוֹנָה:** *Hallel* is recited in its complete form during the seven days of *Sukkot* and on the Eighth Day of Assembly, and a blessing is recited before *hallel* both communally and individually (Shulhan Arukh, *Orah Hayyim* 644:1).

**The mitzva of rejoicing is for eight days – הַשְׂמֵחָה שְׂמוֹנָה:** There is a positive mitzva that by Torah law to rejoice during the seven days of *Sukkot* and the Eighth Day of Assembly. Although the rejoicing in the Torah involves bringing peace-offerings, included in this mitzva is a person and the members of his family rejoicing in any appropriate manner (Rambam *Sefer Zemanim, Hilkhot Yom Tov* 6:17; Shulhan Arukh, *Orah Hayyim* 669:1).

**NOTES**

**A Festival in and of itself – רָגַל בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ:** There are many explanations of this phrase, and several commentaries address it at length (see Ramban and Ritva). Rashi and the Rid understand that the Eighth Day of Assembly is not part of *Sukkot*, and therefore there is no obligation to observe the mitzvot of *sukka* and *lulav*.

Many commentaries (Rif; Ran; Rabbeinu Hananel; *Arukh*; Rabbeinu Yehonatan) explain this in accordance with the opinion of the *ge'onim* that it is referring to the *halakhot* of mourning. The Eighth Day of Assembly is a Festival in and of itself in terms of canceling the seven-day period of mourning as well as the thirty-day period of mourning.

Some explain that this is referring to the obligation to remain overnight in Jerusalem, as one is required to do on other Festivals (Rabbeinu Tam; *Me'iri*). Others say that the day is considered a Festival in and of itself in terms of being considered one of the three Festivals that must pass in order to violate the prohibition: You shall not be slack in paying one's vows (Ramban).

Yet others explain this as referring to the obligation to bring the burnt-offering of appearance and the Festival peace-offering. On the Eighth Day of Assembly it is possible to compensate for failure to bring these offerings during *Sukkot*; however, should one who was not obligated when *Sukkot* began become obligated over the course of the Festival, e.g., if a minor reaches majority or if one who was ill recovers, the Eighth Day of Assembly is considered a separate Festival, and such an individual would be obligated to bring those offerings on the eighth day (Ramban; Ritva).

**A song in and of itself – שִׁירָה בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ:** Although there was a song recited on each of the days of *Sukkot*, some say that unlike the days of *Sukkot*, a complete psalm was recited on the Eighth Day of Assembly. Others explain that unlike the psalms on the other days of *Sukkot*, the psalm of the Eighth Day of Assembly was not displaced by the psalm of Shabbat (Ritva). Yet others explain that on the Eighth Day of Assembly, the theme of the psalm is different from the theme of the psalms recited on the days of *Sukkot*, which all discuss gifts to the poor (see *Me'iri* and others).

**A blessing in and of itself – בְּרָכָה בְּפָנֵי עֲצָמוֹ:** Most commentaries explain that this means that one mentions the Eighth Day of Assembly and not *Sukkot* in prayers and in Grace after Meals. Rashi, citing the *Tosefta*, notes that there was a special blessing for the king recited that day.

**And you shall be altogether [akh] joyful – וְהֵיִתָּ אֶךְ שְׂמֵחָ:** There is a well-known question discussed in this context: The term *akh* is usually interpreted as indicating restriction or exclusion; how is it interpreted here inclusively?

One answer is that in this case it is restrictive in that it comes to rule out any conduct other than rejoicing; one must be altogether joyful. Others understand that the word joyful in this context is superfluous, as the Torah already mentioned joy in the context of the Festival. Therefore, the apparently superfluous word joyful comes to include rejoicing on other days, and the term *akh* comes to restrict that rejoicing to the Eighth Day of Assembly (*Me'iri*).

The Vilna Gaon explains that *akh* excludes all obligations of *Sukkot*, other than rejoicing, from applying to the Eighth Day of Assembly (Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Chajes).

NOTES

He should not dismantle his *sukka* – לא יתיר את – סוכתו: Rabbeinu Yehonatan adds an additional reason for this *halakha*: Dismantling one's *sukka* before the end of the Festival can be misinterpreted as a display of contempt for the mitzva.

He reduces the roofing of the *sukka* by four handbreadths – פוחת בה ארבעה: The commentaries discuss why the Gemara requires that four handbreadths be removed if three are generally sufficient to render a *sukka* unfit. Rabbeinu Yehonatan explains that were one to leave a gap of three handbreadths, it would be too uncomfortable to sit in the *sukka*. Therefore, the Gemara recommends replacing the fit roofing with unfit roofing materials. However, a *sukka* is unfit only if there are four handbreadths of unfit materials.

In *Sefer Hashlama* it is written that while three handbreadths are technically sufficient to render a *sukka* unfit, four are removed in order to render it more conspicuous. Rav Yehuda ben Rav Binyamin HaRofeh explains that the four handbreadths are removed from the wall in a small *sukka* since it is more accessible than the roofing.

Fill...from the Siloam pool – ממלא מן השילוח: There is a dispute whether drawing the water from the Siloam pool is merely the optimal manner of performing the mitzva; however, if doing so is impossible one may draw the water from any other source of pure water, even rainwater (Rambam), or whether water for the water libation may be drawn exclusively from a spring, based on the verse: "With joy you shall draw water out of the springs of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3; see *Tosafot*).

BACKGROUND

Jug – צלוחית: This image depicts the reverse side of a silver *zuz* coin from the bar Kokheva revolt. The jug imprinted upon it is very likely representing a jug used for the water libation since the branch seems to be that of a willow tree.



Zuz from the bar Kokheva revolt depicting a jug for libation

Libation basins – ספלי הנסוך:



Replica of silver libation basin

מתני' סוכה שבועה, כיצד? גמר מלאכול – לא יתיר את סוכתו, אבל מוריד את הכלים מן המנחה ולמעלה מפני כבוד יום טוב האחרון של חג.

גמ' אין לו כלים להוריד מהו? אין לו כלים! אלא כי אשתמש במאי אשתמש? אלא: אין לו מקום להוריד כליו מהו? רבי חייא בר (רב) אמר: פוחת בה ארבעה, ורבי יהושע בן לוי אמר: מדליק בה את היר.

ולא פליגי: הא – לן, והא – להו.

הא תינהי סוכה קטנה, סוכה גדולה מאי איכא למימר? דמעיל בה מאני מיכלא. דאמר רבא: מאני מיכלא – בר ממטללתא, מאני משתיא – במטללתא.

מתני' ניסוך המים, כיצד? צלוחית של זהב מחוקת שלשה לוגים היא ממלא מן השילוח, הגיעו לשער המים תקעו והריעו ותקעו. עלה בכבש ופנה לשמאלו. שני ספלים של כסף היו שם, רבי יהודה אומר: של סיד היו, אלא שהיו מושחרין פניהם מפני היין. ומנוקבין

**MISHNA** The mitzva of *sukka* is seven days. How does one fulfill this obligation for seven full days? When one finished eating on the seventh day, he should not dismantle his *sukka*<sup>n</sup> immediately, because the obligation continues until the end of the day. However, he takes the vessels down from the *sukka* into the house from *minha* time and onward in deference to the last day of the Festival,<sup>h</sup> when he will require the vessels in the house.

**GEMARA** The Gemara asks: If one does not have vessels to take down from the *sukka*, what should he do? The Gemara asks: One does not have vessels? But when he utilized his *sukka* during the Festival, with what vessels did he eat when he utilized the *sukka*? Rather, this is the question: If he has no place into which he can take down his vessels and he must continue eating in the *sukka*, what is the *halakha*? What can he do to underscore the fact that he is eating there not to fulfill a mitzva, thereby violating the prohibition against adding to the mitzvot of the Torah, but only due to the lack of an alternative? Rabbi Hiyya bar Rav said: He reduces the roofing of the *sukka* by four handbreadths,<sup>n</sup> thereby rendering the *sukka* unfit. And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: He lights a lamp inside the *sukka*, which is prohibited during the festival of *Sukkot*.

The Gemara notes: And they do not disagree with regard to the *halakha*. Instead, they are providing different solutions for different locations. This is for us, who live outside Eretz Yisrael, and this is for them, who live in Eretz Yisrael. Those who live in Eretz Yisrael reduce the roofing, since the obligation to sit in the *sukka* no longer applies. However, those who live outside of Eretz Yisrael, who are obligated to sit in the *sukka* on the eighth day with regard to which there is uncertainty that it might be the seventh day, must find another way to distinguish the eighth day from the days of the Festival of *Sukkot*.

The Gemara asks: This works out well with regard to a small *sukka*, since it is prohibited to light a lamp due to the danger of a conflagration, and lighting a lamp will underscore the distinction. However, with regard to a large *sukka*, in which there is no prohibition and therefore no distinction, what can be said? The Gemara answers: One underscores the distinction in that he brings eating vessels, e.g., pots in which food was cooked, into the *sukka*, as Rava said: Eating vessels are taken out of the *sukka*; drinking vessels remain in the *sukka*. By leaving the pots and pans in the *sukka*, he indicates that the *sukka* is no longer involved in fulfillment of the mitzva.

**MISHNA** With regard to the rite of water libation<sup>h</sup> performed in the Temple during the Festival, how was it performed? One would fill a golden jug<sup>b</sup> with a capacity of three log with water from the Siloam pool.<sup>n</sup> When those who went to bring the water reached the Gate of the Water, so called because the water for the libation was brought through this gate leading to the Temple courtyard, they sounded a *tekia*, sounded a *terua*, and sounded another *tekia* as an expression of joy. The priest ascended the ramp of the altar and turned to his left. There were two silver basins<sup>b</sup> there into which he poured the water. Rabbi Yehuda said: They were limestone basins, but they would blacken due to the wine and therefore looked like silver. The two basins were perforated at the bottom

HALAKHA

*Sukka* on the last day of *Sukkot* – סוכה ביום אחרון של סוכות: After the morning meal on the seventh day of *Sukkot* one may not dismantle the *sukka*. However, in the late afternoon one may remove all the vessels that were used therein, to prepare for the Eighth Day of Assembly. If he has nowhere to place the vessels and he wishes to eat in the *sukka* on the eighth day as well, he must remove a four-by-four-handbreadth section of the roofing as a conspicuous indicator that by sitting in the *sukka* his intention is not to fulfill the mitzva of *sukka*. However, no indicator is required if one wishes to sit in the *sukka* on any other day of the year. Outside of Eretz Yisrael, where one is required to sit in the *sukka* on the eighth day because there is uncertainty that it might be the seventh, if one wishes to eat in the *sukka* on the ninth day, he may not remove any roofing,

since the eighth day is a Festival day. In that case, he must indicate that he does not intend to fulfill the mitzva in a different way, e.g., by bringing a lamp into a small *sukka* or by bringing his cooking utensils into a large one. This ruling is in accordance with the distinction in the Gemara: This is for us and this is for them (Rosh; Rif; and others; *Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 666:1).

**Water libation** – ניסוך המים: The water libation rite is performed on the altar on each of the seven days of *Sukkot*. This is a *halakha* transmitted to Moses from Sinai. The water is poured each morning together with the wine libation, each in its own specific location, accompanying the daily morning offering (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Temidin UMusafin* 10:6).



במין שני חוטמין דקין, (ואחד) מעובה ואחד דק, כדי שיהו שניהם כלין בבת אחת. מערבין של מים, מזרחו של יין. עירה של מים לתוך של יין, ושל יין לתוך של מים – יצא.

רבי יהודה אומר: בלוג היה מנסך כל שמונה. ולמנסך אומר לו: "הגבה ירך", שפעם אחד נסך אחד על גבי רגליו ורגמוהו כל העם באתרוגיהן.

במעשהו בחול כך מעשהו בשבת, אלא שהיה ממלא מערב שבת חבית של זהב שאינה מקודשת מן השילוח, ומניחה בלשכה. נשפכה נתגלתה – היה ממלא מן הכיור. שהיו והמים מגולין פסולין לגבי מזבח.

**גמ'** מנא הני מילי? אמר רב עינאי, דאמר קרא: "וישאבתם מים בששון" וגו'.

הנהו תרי מיני, חד שמייה ששון וחד שמייה שמחה, אמר ליה ששון לשמחה: אנא עדיפנא מינך, דכתיב: "ששון ושמחה ישגו" וגו'. אמר ליה שמחה לששון: אנא עדיפנא מינך, דכתיב: "שמחה וששון ליהודים". אמר ליה ששון לשמחה: חד יומא שבקוך ושיווך פרוווקא, דכתיב: "כי בשמחה תצאו". אמר ליה שמחה לששון: חד יומא שבקוך ומלוך בך מיא, דכתיב: "וישאבתם מים בששון".

אמר ליה ההוא מינא דשמייה ששון לרבי אבהו: עתידיתו דתמלו לי מים לעלמא דאתו, דכתיב: "וישאבתם מים בששון". אמר ליה: אי הוה כתיב "לששון" – בךקאמרת, השתא דכתיב "בששון" – משכיה דההוא גברא משוינן ליה גודא, ומלינן ביה מיא.

with two thin perforated nose-like protrusions. One of the basins, used for the wine libation, had a perforation that was broad, and one, used for the water libation, had a perforation that was thin, so that the flow of both the water and the wine, which do not have the same viscosity, would conclude simultaneously.<sup>N</sup> The basin to the west of the altar was for water, and the basin to the east of the altar was for wine. However, if one poured the contents of the basin of water into the basin of wine,<sup>N</sup> or the contents of the basin of wine into the basin of water, he fulfilled his obligation, as failure to pour the libation from the prescribed location does not disqualify the libation after the fact.

Rabbi Yehuda says: The basin for the water libation was not that large; rather, one would pour the water with a vessel that had a capacity of one log on all eight days of the Festival and not only seven. And the appointee says to the one pouring the water into the silver basin: Raise your hand,<sup>H</sup> so that his actions would be visible, as one time a Sadducee priest intentionally poured the water on his feet, as the Sadducees did not accept the oral tradition requiring water libation, and in their rage all the people pelted him with their etrogim.

Rabbi Yehuda continues: As its performance during the week, so is its performance on Shabbat,<sup>H</sup> except that on Shabbat one would not draw water. Instead, on Shabbat eve, one would fill a golden barrel that was not consecrated for exclusive use in the Temple from the Siloam pool, and he would place it in the Temple chamber and draw water from there on Shabbat. If the water in the barrel spilled, or if it was exposed overnight, leading to concern that a snake may have deposited poison in the water, one would fill the jug with water from the basin in the Temple courtyard, as exposed wine or water is unfit for the altar. Just as it is prohibited for people to drink them due to the potential danger, so too, they may not be poured on the altar.

**GEMARA** With regard to the customs accompanying the drawing of the water, the Gemara asks: From where are these matters derived?<sup>N</sup> Rav Eina said that it is as the verse states: "With joy [sason] you shall draw water out of the springs of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3), indicating that the water was to be drawn from the spring and the rite performed in extreme joy.

Apropos this verse, the Gemara relates: There were these two heretics, one named Sason and one named Simḥa. Sason said to Simḥa: I am superior to you, as it is written: "They shall obtain joy [sason] and happiness [simḥa], and sorrow and sighing shall flee" (Isaiah 35:10). The verse mentions joy first. Simḥa said to Sason, On the contrary, I am superior to you, as it is written: "There was happiness [simḥa] and joy [sason] for the Jews" (Esther 8:17). Sason said to Simḥa: One day they will dismiss you and render you a messenger [parvanka],<sup>L</sup> as it is written: "For you shall go out with happiness [simḥa]" (Isaiah 55:12). Simḥa said to Sason: One day they will dismiss you and draw water with you, as it is written: "With joy [sason] you shall draw water."<sup>N</sup>

The Gemara relates a similar incident: A certain heretic named Sason said to Rabbi Abbahu: You are all destined to draw water for me in the World-to-Come, as it is written: "With sason you shall draw water." Rabbi Abbahu said to him: If it had been written: For sason, it would have been as you say; now that it is written: With sason, it means that the skin of that man, you, will be rendered a wineskin, and we will draw water with it.

NOTES

**סדר ניסוך – עיריה של מים לתוך של יין:** The water libation ritual was not performed in one continuous process, as the mishna seems to indicate. Rather, it took place in stages over a longer period of time. As it does in similar descriptions of other matters, the mishna cites all the procedures together (Arukh LaNer).

If one poured the contents of the basin of water into the basin of wine – עיריה של מים לתוך של יין: From the Rambam (Hilkhot Temidin 10:6) it is clear that if one mixed the two by pouring the water into the wine or vice versa, and then poured them together on the altar, he fulfilled the obligation.

**מנא הני – מילי:** Apparently, the Gemara is asking this question with regard to several issues: Drawing water from the spring, sounding the shofar, and rejoicing, as the verse cited applies to all those matters (Ritva). In the Jerusalem Talmud it is explained that the water was drawn with much fanfare to publicly rebuff the position of the Sadducees, who did not acknowledge the validity of this practice. In fact, according to the Rid, based on the Jerusalem Talmud, the only reason that the water was drawn from the Siloam pool and not taken from the Temple basin was in the interest of publicity.

**מחלוקת המינים – מילי:** It is not clear why these exchanges are cited here and what they mean. Some suggest that after citing the verse from Isaiah, these exchanges are cited to mock the heretics. The early heretics would interpret verses, especially those adjacent to the depiction of the Messiah in Isaiah, as referring to themselves or their leaders. These exchanges demonstrate how ridiculous these interpretations were, and how each interprets the texts in his own honor to indicate that he is mentioned in the visions of the prophets. The false prophets would employ similar tactics, adducing allusions from the Torah. These exchanges expose the meagerness of their claims. The same can be seen from the reply of Rabbi Abbahu, who was renowned for his anti-heretic polemics, to those who utilized their own exegetical methods (see Maharsha and others).

HALAKHA

**Raise your hand – הגבה ירך:** The appointees would say to the one pouring: Raise your hand, because once a Sadducee priest intentionally poured the water on his feet, the people pelted him with their etrogim (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Temidin UMusafin 10:8).

**ניסוך המים בשבת – עיריה של מים לתוך של יין:** The ritual of the water libation was performed on Shabbat as it was conducted during the week, except that when the libation was performed on Shabbat, they filled a golden barrel that was not one of the consecrated Temple vessels and placed it in a chamber on Friday. On the next day, Shabbat, they filled a pitcher with that water and poured it on the altar. If the water in the barrel spilled or was exposed, they would fill the pitcher with water from the Temple basin and pour it (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Temidin UMusafin 10:9).

LANGUAGE

**Messenger [parvanka] – פרוווקא:** From the Middle Iranian parwānak, meaning guide or messenger.

**עליה והקפה במזבח** – Ascending and circling the altar – All those who climb the altar ascend on the right side, circle the altar, and descend on the left, with three exceptions. Those three rituals are the wine libation, the water libation, and the bird sacrificed as a burnt-offering. For those three elements of the Temple service, performed at the southwest corner of the altar, the priest climbs the ramp to the ledge of the altar and immediately turns left to the southwest corner, performs the service, and descends the way he ascended. The reason he does not circle the altar with these three items before their service is due to the concern lest the wine or water become tainted, or lest the bird suffocate from the smoke of the fire as he circles the altar (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhhot Ma'aseh HaKorbanot* 7:11).

NOTES

**Perforated at the bottom with two thin perforated nose-like protrusions** – מְנוקָבִים כְּמִין שְׁנֵי חוֹטְמִין: Due to several considerations, the basins, whether made of silver or limestone, were apparently permanently fixed to the altar (see Ritva and *Me'in*). With regard to the nose-like protrusions, Rashi explains that there were small tubes protruding from the outer surface of the basins, like nostrils (see *Tosafot*). Ritva explains that these nose-like protrusions were situated beneath the bowls and aligned with the altar's drainpipes. A small, tube-like protrusion jutted out from the bowl and led directly into the drainpipe to ensure that not even one drop of the libation would spill.

BACKGROUND

**Poured on his feet** – נִסַּךְ עַל גְּבֵי רַגְלָיו: This incident is cited in several places in the Talmud and is described at length in the works of Josephus. The individual who poured the water on his feet is identified as Alexander Yannai, the Hasmonean king, who, due to his Sadducee leanings, rejected the tradition of the water libation. Therefore, instead of pouring the water on the altar, he poured it on his feet. This elicited outrage among the people, who reacted by pelting him with their *etrogim*. He, in turn, summoned his gentile guard, who proceeded to kill many of those present in the Temple.

”עֲלָה בְּכַבֵּשׁ וּפְנֵה לְשִׁמְאֵלוֹ” כּוּ. תִּנּוּ רַבְּנָן: כָּל הָעוֹלִים לְמִזְבֵּחַ עוֹלִין דְּרָךְ יְמִין, וּמְקִיפִין וְיורְדִין דְּרָךְ שְׁמָאל. חוּץ מִן הָעוֹלָה לְשִׁלְשָׁה דְבָרִים הַלְלוּ. שְׁעוֹלִין דְּרָךְ שְׁמָאל וְחוֹזְרִין עַל הָעֵקֶב, וְאֵלוּ הֵן: מִסּוּךְ הַמִּים, וְנִסּוּךְ הַיַּיִן, וְעוֹלַת הָעוֹף בְּשׂוֹרְבָתָהּ בַּמּוֹרָח.

”אֵלֶּיךָ שָׁהִיו מְשַׁחֲרִין”. בְּשִׁלְמָא דִּינָן מְשַׁחֲרִין, דְּמִיָּא אֲמַאי מְשַׁחֲרִין? בִּינָן דְּאָמַר מַר: עֵירָה שֶׁל מִים לְתוֹךְ שֶׁל יַיִן וְשֶׁל יַיִן לְתוֹךְ שֶׁל מִים – יֵצֵא, שֶׁל מִים אֲתֵי לְאִשְׁחֹרֵי.

”וּמְנוקָבִים כְּמִין שְׁנֵי חוֹטְמִין” וכו'. לִימָא מְתַנְיָתִין רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הֵיא וְלֹא רַבְּנָן. דְּתַנְנָן, רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אָמַר: בְּלוֹג הִיא מְנַסֵּךְ כָּל שְׂמוּנָה, דְּאֵי רַבְּנָן – כִּי הִדְרֵי נִנְהוּ!

אֶפְלוּ תִימָא רַבְּנָן, חֲמַרָא סְמִיךְ מִיָּא קְלִישׁ.

הַכִּי נִמִּי מְסַתְבָּרָא, דְּאֵי רַבִּי יְהוּדָה – רַחֵב וְקָצֵר אֵית לֵיהּ. דְּתַנְיָא, רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אָמַר: שְׁנֵי קְשׁוּאוֹת הֵיוּ שָׁם, אֶחָד שֶׁל מִים וְאֶחָד שֶׁל יַיִן, שֶׁל יַיִן פִּיהָ רַחֵב, שֶׁל מִים פִּיהָ קָצֵר, כְּדֵי שְׂיֵהוּ שְׂנִיחָם כְּלִין בְּבַת אַחַת, שְׂמַע מִינָהּ.

”מְעַרְבוּ שֶׁל מִים”: תִּנּוּ רַבְּנָן: מַעֲשֵׂה בְּעִדּוֹקֵי אֶחָד שְׂנִיסַךְ עַל גְּבֵי רַגְלָיו, וְרַגְמוּהוּ כָּל הָעָם בְּאִתְרוּגֵיהֶן. וְאוֹתוֹ הַיּוֹם נִפְגְּמָה קֶרֶן הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, וְהִבְיֵאוּ בּוֹל שֶׁל מֶלַח וְסַתְמוּהוּ, לֹא מִפְּנֵי שְׂהוּכְשֵׁר לְעִבּוּדָה אֶלָּא מִפְּנֵי שְׂלֵא יִרְאֶה מִזְבֵּחַ פְּגוּם.

The mishna continues: The priest ascended the ramp of the altar and turned to his left. The Sages taught: All who ascend the altar ascend and turn via the right, and circle the altar,<sup>11</sup> and descend via the left. This is the case except for one ascending to perform one of these three tasks, as the ones who perform these tasks ascend via the left, and then turn on their heel and return in the direction that they came. And these tasks are: The water libation, and the wine libation, and the bird sacrificed as a burnt-offering when there were too many priests engaged in the sacrifice of these burnt-offerings in the preferred location east of the altar. When that was the case, additional priests engaged in sacrificing the same offering would pinch the neck of the bird west of the altar.

The mishna continues: Rabbi Yehuda said that they were limestone, not silver, basins, but they would blacken due to the wine. The Gemara asks: Granted, the basin for wine blackened due to the wine; however, why did the basin for water blacken? The Gemara answers: Since the Master said in the mishna: However, if one inadvertently poured the contents of the basin of water into the basin of wine or the contents of the basin of wine into the basin of water, he fulfilled his obligation. Then even the basin for water would come to blacken over the course of time as well.

The mishna continues: And the two basins were perforated at the bottom with two thin, perforated, nose-like protrusions,<sup>12</sup> one broad and one thin. The Gemara asks: Let us say that the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda and not with that of the Rabbis, as we learned in the mishna that Rabbi Yehuda says: One would pour the water with a vessel that had a capacity of one log on all eight days of the Festival, unlike the wine libation, for which a three-log basin was used. According to his opinion, there is a difference between the capacity of the wine vessel and that of the water vessel; therefore, it is clear why the opening in the wine vessel was broader. As, if the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis, they are the same as the capacity of the water basin, three log. Why, then, were there different sized openings?

The Gemara answers: Even if you say that the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis, the reason for the different-sized openings is that wine is thick and water is thin, and therefore wine flows more slowly than water. In order to ensure that the emptying of both basins would conclude simultaneously, the wine basin required a wider opening.

So too, it is reasonable to establish that the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis, as, if it is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, unlike the description of the two openings in the mishna as broad and thin, elsewhere he is of the opinion that the openings as wide and narrow, as it was taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Yehuda says: There were two small pipes there, one for water and one for wine. The mouth of the pipe for wine was wide and the mouth of the pipe for water was narrow, so that the emptying of both basins would conclude simultaneously. The disparity between wide and narrow is greater than the disparity between broad and thin, thereby facilitating the simultaneous emptying of the three-log and one-log basins according to Rabbi Yehuda. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, learn from it that the mishna is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda.

The mishna continues: The basin to the west of the altar was for water, and the basin to the east of the altar was for wine, and they would tell the one pouring the water to raise his hand. The Sages taught: There was an incident involving one Sadducee priest who poured the water on his feet,<sup>13</sup> and in anger all the people pelted him with their *etrogim*. And that day, the horn of the altar was damaged as a result of the pelting and the ensuing chaos. They brought a fistful of salt and sealed the damaged section, not because it rendered the altar fit for the Temple service, but in deference to the altar, so that the altar would not be seen in its damaged state.