

דרומית מזרחית – היא לשבחה שהיו עושים בה לחם הפנים, מזרחית צפונית – בה גנו בית חשמונאי אבני מזבח ששקצום מלכי גוים, צפונית מערבית – בה יורדין לבית הטבילה. אמר רב הונא: מאן תנא מדות – רבי אליעזר בן יעקב היא.

דתנן: עזרת נשים היתה אורך מאה ושלשים וחמש על רוחב מאה ושלשים וחמש, וארבע לשכות היו בארבע מקצועותיה. ומה היו משמשות? דרומית מזרחית – היא היתה לשכת הנזירים, ששם נזירים מבטלים את שלמיהן ומגלחין שערן ומשלחין תחת הדוד. מזרחית צפונית – היא היתה לשכת דיר העצים, ששם בהנים בעלי מומין עומדין ומתליעין בעצים, שכל עץ שיש בו תולעת פסול לגבי מוצבת.

צפונית מערבית – היא היתה לשכת המצורעין. מערבית דרומית – אמר רבי אליעזר בן יעקב: שכחתיה מה היתה משמשת. אבא שאול אומר: בה היו נותנין יין ושמן, והיא היתה נקראת לשכת בית שמניא.

the southeast chamber in the Hall of the Hearth was the chamber in which the shewbread was prepared. The northeast chamber was the chamber in which the Hasmoneans sequestered the altar stones that were desecrated by the gentile kings when they sacrificed idolatrous offerings. The northwest chamber was the chamber in which the priests descended through tunnels to the Hall of Immersion. There is a contradiction between the sources with regard to the location of the Chamber of the Lambs. Rav Huna said: Who is the *tanna* who taught the *mishnayot* in tractate *Middot*? It is Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov, who has a different opinion with regard to this matter.

As we learned in a mishna in tractate *Middot*:^B The dimensions of the women's courtyard^H were a length of 135 cubits by a width of 135 cubits, and there were four chambers in its four corners.^{BH} And what purpose did these chambers serve? The southeast chamber was the Chamber of the Nazirites,^B as there the nazirites cook their peace-offerings and shave their hair and cast it in the fire to burn beneath the pot in which the peace-offering was cooked, as the Torah instructs (see Numbers 6:18). The northeast chamber was the Chamber of the Woodshed, where blemished priests, who are disqualified for any other service, stand and examine the logs to determine if they were infested by worms, as any log in which there are worms^N is disqualified for use on the altar.

The northwest chamber was the Chamber of the Lepers, where lepers would immerse for purification. With regard to the southwest chamber, Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov said: I forgot what purpose it would serve. Abba Shaul says: They would place wine and oil there for the meal-offerings and libations, and it was called the Chamber of the House of Oils. From this mishna it may be inferred that the *tanna* who taught the *mishnayot* in tractate *Middot* is Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov, as that is why the mishna finds it necessary to mention that he forgot the purpose of one of the chambers.

HALAKHA

The women's courtyard – עזרת נשים: The women's courtyard was 135 cubits by 135 cubits. That is where Israelites gathered to pray and to observe the sacrificial services (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBe'ira* 5:7).

The chambers in the women's courtyard – לשכות שבעזרת נשים: There were four chambers in the women's courtyard: The Chamber of the Nazirites, the Chamber of the Woodshed, the Chamber of the Lepers, and the Chamber of the House of Oils (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBe'ira* 5:7).

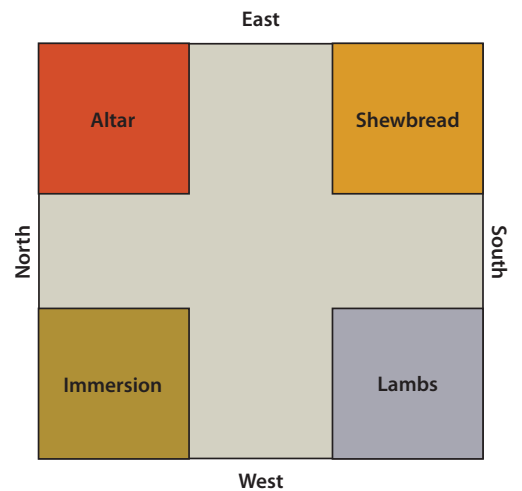
NOTES

A log in which there are worms – עץ שיש בו תולעת – The reason for the precaution is that worms are not kosher, and any food forbidden to Jews may not be burned on the

altar. Alternatively, the reason is that worms are disgusting and it is a display of contempt to place them on the altar (*Me'iri*).

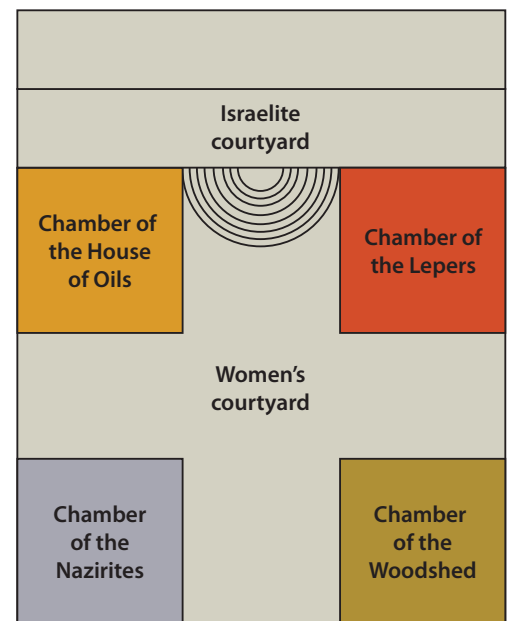
BACKGROUND

Chambers in the Hall of the Hearth – לשכות בבית המוקד – Illustration of the chambers in the Hall of the Hearth, based on the configuration described in tractate *Middot*.



Chambers in the Hall of the Hearth

עזרת נשים ולשכותיה – The women's courtyard and its chambers – The women's courtyard was a square measuring 135 cubits by 135 cubits. In the corners of this courtyard were four chambers, which were actually unroofed courtyards, each forty by forty cubits.



Women's courtyard

לשכת הנזירים – Chamber of the Nazirites



Nazirite having his head shaven in the Chamber of the Nazirites

BACKGROUND

Directs his attention and looks toward the entrance of the Sanctuary – מכון ורואה כנגד פתחו של היכל – The drawing depicts the priest facing the entrance of the Sanctuary before burning the red heifer.



Burning of the red heifer

הכי נמי מסתברא דרבי אליעזר בן יעקב היא. דתנן: כל הכתלים שהיו שם היו גבוהין, חוץ מכותל מזרחי. שהכהן השורף את הפרה עומד בהר המשוחה, ומכון ורואה כנגד פתחו של היכל בשעת הזאת הדם.

ותנן: כל הפתחים שהיו שם גובהן עשרים אמה ורוחבן עשר אמות. ותנן: לפנים ממנו סורג. ותנן: לפנים ממנו החיל, עשר אמות, ושתיים עשרה מעלות היו שם רום מעלה חצי אמה ושילחה חצי אמה.

חמש עשרה מעלות עולות מתוכה היורדות מעזרת ישראל לעזרת נשים. רום מעלה חצי אמה ושילחה חצי אמה. ותנן: בין האולם ולמזבח עשרים ושתיים אמה, ושתיים עשרה מעלות היו שם, רום מעלה חצי אמה ושילחה חצי אמה.

ותנן, רבי אליעזר בן יעקב אומר: מעלה היתה שם, וגבוה אמה, ודוכן נתון עליה ובו שלש מעלות של חצי אמה.

So too, it is reasonable to conclude that the *mishnayot* in tractate *Middot* are in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov, as we learned in a mishna there: All the walls that were there surrounding the Temple Mount were high except for the Eastern Wall,^{HN} as the priest who burns the red heifer stands on the Mount of Olives, where the red heifer was slaughtered and burned, and directs his attention and looks toward the entrance of the Sanctuary^B when he sprinkles the blood.

The Gemara seeks the opinion according to which this would be feasible. And we learned in a mishna: All the entrances that were there in the Temple^H were twenty cubits high and ten cubits wide. And we learned in a different mishna describing the layout of the Temple:^H Inside the eastern wall of the Temple Mount was a latticed gate. And we learned in a different mishna: Inside the latticed gate was the rampart, which was an elevated area ten cubits wide. In that area there were twelve stairs; each stair was half a cubit high and half a cubit deep, for a total ascent of six cubits.

In addition, fifteen stairs ascend from within the women's courtyard and descend from the Israelite courtyard to the women's courtyard. Each stair was half a cubit high and half a cubit deep, for an additional ascent of seven and a half cubits. The total height of both staircases together was thirteen and a half cubits. And we learned in that mishna: The area between the Entrance Hall and the altar was twenty-two cubits wide, and there were twelve stairs in that area. Each stair was half a cubit high and half a cubit deep, for an additional ascent of six cubits and a total height of nineteen and a half cubits.

And we learned in that mishna that Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov says: There was an additional stair there between the Israelite courtyard and the priests' courtyard.^H That stair was one cubit high, and the platform on which the Levites stood on was placed upon it^H and on it were three stairs, each with a height and depth of half a cubit, for a total of twenty-two cubits.

HALAKHA

Eastern Wall – כותל מזרחי – The Eastern Wall of the Temple Mount was lower than the others to allow the priest who slaughtered the red heifer to see the entrance to the Sanctuary (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBehira* 6:5).

Entrances to the Temple – פתחים שבמקדש – All the entrances to the Temple Mount and the courtyards were ten cubits wide and twenty cubits high (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBehira* 5:2).

The layout of the Temple – מבנה הר הבית – Inside the Temple Mount wall was an open area, and inside that was the latticed gate. Inside the latticed gate was an area ten cubits high known

as the rampart. From there one ascended twelve stairs to the women's courtyard. Each of the stairs was half a cubit high and half a cubit deep. Fifteen stairs, also half a cubit high and half a cubit deep each, led to the Israelite courtyard (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBehira* 5:3, 8:1–2).

The stair leading to the priests' courtyard – העלייה לעזרת כהנים – A stair one cubit high led from the Israelite courtyard to the priests' courtyard. A platform one and a half cubits high stood on that stair, meaning that the priests' courtyard was two and a half cubits higher than the Israelite courtyard, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBehira* 6:3).

NOTES

Except for the Eastern Wall – חוץ מכותל מזרחי – Some commentaries claim that only the part of the Eastern Wall opposite the gate was lower, not the entire wall. That was sufficient to enable the priest to see the Sanctuary entrance from the Mount of Olives (*Me'iri*; Rambam).

The stair and the platform – מעלה ודוכן – Rashi differs from other commentaries with regard to the disparity between the height of the Sanctuary floor and the floor of the Temple Mount. Most commentaries (Rabbeinu Hananel; *Tosafot Yeshanim*) maintain it was twenty-two cubits, since it is clear

that the platform was not a small structure but one that spanned the width of the Temple. Therefore, its height must be factored into the height disparity. The *Tosefot Rid* agrees with Rashi that the height of the platform is not factored into the total. Therefore, the floor of the Sanctuary was only twenty and a half cubits higher than the Temple Mount. This is because just as there were stairs up to the platform from the Israelite courtyard, there were stairs up to the platform from the priests' courtyard as well. The height of the platform is not factored into the height of the Sanctuary floor.

אי אמרת בשלמא רבי אליעזר בן יעקב
היא – היינו דאיכפי ליה פיתחא,

אלא אי אמרת רבנן – הא איכא פלגא
דאמתא דמתחזי ליה פיתחא בגויה.

אלא לאו שמע מינה: רבי אליעזר בן
יעקב היא. רב אדא בר אהבה אמר: הא
מני – רבי יהודה היא. דתנא, רבי יהודה
אומר: המזבח ממוצע ועומד באמצע
עזרה, ושלשים ושתים אמות היו לו.

Perek I

Daf 16 Amud b

עשר אמות כנגד פתחו של היכל, אחת
עשרה אמה לאפון, ואחת עשרה אמה
לדרום, נמצא מזבח מכונן כנגד היכל
וכותליו.

ואי סלקא דעתך מדות רבי יהודה היא –
מזבח באמצע עזרה מי משפחת ליה?
והתנן: כל העזרה היתה אורך מאה
ושמונים ושבע על רחב מאה ושלשים
וחמש. מן המזרח למערב מאה ושמונים
ושבע; מקום דריסת רגלי ישראל אחת
עשרה אמה, מקום דריסת רגלי הכהנים
אחת עשרה אמה, מזבח שלשים ושתים,
בין האולם ולמזבח עשרים ושתים,
והיכל מאה אמה, ואחת עשרה אמה
אחורי בית הכפורת.

Granted, if you say that the *mishnayot* in tractate *Middot* are in accordance with the opinion of **Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov**, that is how it can be understood that **the entrance was concealed**. The threshold of the entrance to the Sanctuary was more than twenty cubits higher than the threshold of the eastern gate of the Temple Mount. One looking through the Eastern Gate would be unable to see the entrance of the Sanctuary, because the gate was only twenty cubits high. In order to provide the priest performing the red heifer ritual on the Mount of Olives with a view of the entrance to the Sanctuary, the eastern wall had to be lowered.

However, if you say that the *mishnayot* in tractate *Middot* are in accordance with the opinion of the **Rabbis**, who do not add the two and a half cubits of the stair and the platform added by Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov, **isn't there half a cubit through which the entrance can be seen?** Since the threshold of the Sanctuary is only nineteen and a half cubits higher than the threshold of the gate, the priest on the Mount of Olives could look through the eastern gate of the Temple Mount and see the bottom of the Temple entrance. There would be no need to lower the eastern wall.

Rather, must one **not conclude from it** that that the *mishnayot* in tractate *Middot* are taught by **Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov**? **Rav Adda bar Ahava said:** This is not a definitive proof, and it is still possible to interpret *halakhot* of this tractate in a different manner. **Rather, whose is that opinion** that the Eastern Wall was lowered? **It is the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda,**^N as it was taught in a *baraita* that **Rabbi Yehuda says: The altar is centered and stands in the middle of the Temple courtyard, directly aligned with the entrances of the courtyards and the Sanctuary, and it was thirty-two cubits long and thirty-two cubits wide.**

Ten of those cubits stood **opposite the entrance to the Sanctuary**. Eleven of those cubits were **to the north** of the entrance and **eleven** of those cubits were **to the south** of the entrance. **It follows that the altar was aligned precisely opposite the Sanctuary and its walls.** According to this opinion, since the altar was directly aligned with the entrance of the Sanctuary, it blocked the entrance. The floor of Israelite courtyard was thirteen and a half cubits above the threshold of the Eastern Gate. Add nine cubits, which was the height of the altar, and the result is that the top of the altar was twenty-two and a half cubits higher than the threshold of the gate, rendering it impossible to see the entrance of the Sanctuary through the eastern gate of the Temple Mount. Therefore, it was necessary to lower the eastern wall to enable the priest standing on the Mount of Olives to see the entrance of the Sanctuary.

And if it enters your mind to say that the *mishnayot* in tractate *Middot* are in accordance with the opinion of **Rabbi Yehuda**, **do you find that the altar stood in the middle of the courtyard^N** in tractate *Middot*? **But didn't we learn in a mishna there: The dimensions of the entire courtyard were a length^H of 187 cubits by a width of 135 cubits.** That mishna elaborates: The length of the courtyard **from east to west** was 187 cubits, divided as follows: **The area of access for the Israelites, known as the Israelite courtyard, was eleven cubits long. The area of access for the priests to walk and serve was eleven cubits long, and the altar itself was thirty-two cubits long. There were twenty-two cubits between the Entrance Hall and the altar, and the Sanctuary was one hundred cubits long. And there was an additional eleven cubits of space behind the Hall of the Ark Cover, the Holy of Holies, which was at the western end of the Sanctuary.**

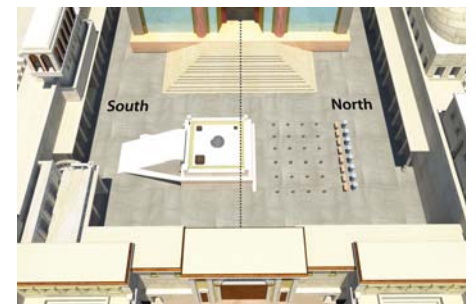
NOTES

It is the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda – **הא מני רבי יהודה היא** – Later in his commentary, Rashi explains Rav Adda bar Ahava's opinion slightly differently. In his explanation, Rav Adda is saying that it is the *mishnayot* in tractate *Tamid* that are in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, not the *mishnayot* of tractate *Middot*. Therefore, any discrepancy between the two tractates can be attributed to a dispute between Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov, the *tanna* of tractate *Middot*, and Rabbi Yehuda, the *tanna* of tractate *Tamid*. The continuation of the Gemara must be explained differently as well, according to this understanding.

NOTES

מזבח באמצע עזרה – **Altar in the middle of the courtyard** – For the altar to be aligned opposite the entrance to the Sanctuary in the middle of the courtyard, it would require a gap of almost twenty cubits between the ramp and the altar. It would also require changes in the location of the other items located in the courtyard. Indeed, according to this opinion, the altar was not aligned precisely opposite the entrance of the Sanctuary, but was slightly off to the side. In addition, since the altar was not constructed as a solid mass, as there were recesses at the base and the ledge, there was sufficient open space to enable a view of the entrance of the Sanctuary even if the priestly courtyard was elevated in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov.

The diagram shows that part of the altar is directly opposite the entrance to the sanctuary while most of the altar is on the southern side of the courtyard.



Altar in the courtyard according to the opinion of the Rambam

HALAKHA

The length of the courtyard – **אורך העזרה**: The length of the courtyard, not including the women's courtyard, was 187 cubits distributed in the following manner. The Israelite courtyard was eleven cubits long, as was the priests' courtyard. The altar was thirty-two cubits, and there was a space of twenty-two cubits between the altar and the Entrance Hall. The Sanctuary was one hundred cubits in length and behind it were an additional eleven cubits (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBeHira* 5:12).

The width of the courtyard – רוחב העזרה: The width of the courtyard was 135 cubits. The distance from the northern wall to the place where the animals were flayed and sliced on pillars was eight cubits. The width of the pillars section was twelve and a half cubits. The width of the tables was eight cubits, and next to that was the area of the rings, which was twenty-four cubits. Between the rings and the altar was a distance of eight cubits. The altar and the ramp extended for sixty-two cubits, after which there was a distance of twelve and a half cubits to the southern wall. The Rambam, in contrast to Rashi, rules in accordance with the measurements in tractate *Middot*, evenly dividing the unstated measurements (*Kesef Mishneh*; Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBehira* 5:13–15).

מִן הַדְרוֹם לְצִפּוֹן מֵאָה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים וְחֲמִשׁ; הַכֶּבֶשׂ וְהַמִּזְבֵּחַ שְׁשִׁים וּשְׁתַּיִם, מִן הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְלִטְבַּעוֹת שְׂמוֹנֶה אַמּוֹת, מְקוֹם הַטְּבָעוֹת עֶשְׂרִים וְאַרְבַּע, מִן הַטְּבָעוֹת לְשִׁלְחָנוֹת אַרְבַּע, מִן הַשְּׁלֵחָנוֹת לְנִסְיֵין אַרְבַּע, מִן הַנִּסְיֵין לְבֵית עֶזְרָה שְׂמוֹנֶה אַמּוֹת, וְהַמּוֹתֵר בֵּין הַכֶּבֶשׂ וְלִבְוֹתָל וּמְקוֹם הַנִּסְיֵין.

וְאִי סֵלְקָא דְעֵתִיד מְדוּת רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הִיא – מִזְבֵּחַ בְּאֲמֻצַּע עֶזְרָה מִי מְשַׁבְּחָתָ לִיהָ? הֲאֵר וּבֵא דְמִזְבֵּחַ בְּדָרוֹם קֵאִי!

The Gemara provides the dimensions of the Temple's width^H from south to north, a total of 135 cubits. The ramp and the altar^N together were sixty-two cubits. The ramp and altar were each thirty-two cubits long, but two cubits of the upper part of the altar were subsumed in the base and ledge surrounding the altar. There were eight cubits from the altar to the rings to the north of the altar, through which the heads of the sacrificial animals were placed for slaughter. The area of the rings itself was twenty-four cubits, and from the rings to the tables on which the animals were rinsed there were an additional four cubits. From the tables^N to the pillars on which the animals were suspended for flaying there were an additional four cubits. From the pillars to the courtyard wall there were eight cubits. The total to this point is 110 cubits. And the balance of twenty-five cubits was between the ramp and the southern wall, along with the area filled by the pillars themselves, which was not included in the above tally. This yields a total of 135 cubits.

And if it enters your mind to say that the *mishnayot* in tractate *Middot* are in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, do you find the altar in the middle of the courtyard? Most of the altar stands in the southern part of the courtyard.

NOTES

The ramp and the altar, etc. – הַכֶּבֶשׂ וְהַמִּזְבֵּחַ וכו' – Despite the apparent precision in the measurements given, it is clear that some details were omitted, e.g., the length of the table area. Similarly, the spaces between the ramp and the wall on one end, and the area of the pillars on the other end, are not precisely delineated. Furthermore, there are certain differences of opinion with regard to the Temple measurements. According to the *Me'iri* and the Rambam there were twelve and a half cubits between the ramp and the southern wall, and the width of the section of the pillars was also twelve and a half cubits. Between the pillars and the northern wall were eight cubits, which was also the length of the table area,

while the distance between the tables and the pillars was eight cubits.

The tables – הַשְּׁלֵחָנוֹת: The space filled by the tables is not mentioned in the text, and Rashi explains that he relies on the description in the book of Ezekiel that states that each table was a cubit and a half long. Based on that, the table area was six cubits long. Of course, conceivably, the top of the tables might have been wider than the space filled by their legs. In addition, the measure would be affected by the manner in which they were positioned (see *Me'iri, Leviyat Hen*, and Rav Shmuel Strashun).

Perek I
Daf 17 Amud a

NOTES

This chamber was removed – הָאֵי לְשִׁבְחָה אֶקְצוּי מִקְצֵיא: According to Rashi, this chamber was long and could be seen from both corners. Rabbi Moshe HaDarshan writes that it was equidistant from the two corners and stood in the middle of the western side of the Hall of the Hearth (*Arukh; Me'iri*).

It appears to him to be in the south...in the north – מִתְחַוֵּיא – הָאֵי לְשִׁבְחָה אֶקְצוּי מִקְצֵיא, וְדָאֲתִי מִצְפּוֹן – מִתְחַוֵּיא לִיהָ בְּדָרוֹם, וְדָאֲתִי מִדְרוֹם – מִתְחַוֵּיא לִיהָ בְּצִפּוֹן.

From the fact that we raise a contradiction that the shewbread – מִדְרָמִינָן לְחֵם הַפָּנִים: This is an example of the Gemara raising a question from a source that does not appear in the sources that are available nowadays. It is possible that this contradiction and its resolution were discussed at the time, but no appropriate spot for the discussion was found in the Talmud. There is no Gemara accompanying the mishna of tractate *Middot* (Rabbeinu Hananel).

אֵלָּא לֹא שָׁמַע מִינָהּ: רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר בֶּן יַעֲקֹב הִיא, שָׁמַע מִינָהּ.

Rather, must one not conclude from it that that the *mishnayot* in tractate *Middot* are in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov? The Gemara concludes: Indeed, conclude from it that this is so.

רַב אֲדָא בְרִיה דְרַב יִצְחָק אָמַר: הָאֵי לְשִׁבְחָה אֶקְצוּי מִקְצֵיא, וְדָאֲתִי מִצְפּוֹן – מִתְחַוֵּיא לִיהָ בְּדָרוֹם, וְדָאֲתִי מִדְרוֹם – מִתְחַוֵּיא לִיהָ בְּצִפּוֹן.

In an additional attempt to resolve the contradiction with regard to the Chamber of the Lambs, Rav Adda, son of Rav Yitzhak, said: This chamber was removed^N from the corner, as it was not actually in the corner of the Hall of the Hearth but was located along the middle of the western side of the hall. And therefore, for one who comes from the north, the chamber appears to him to be in the south of the hall; and for one who comes from the south, the chamber appears to him to be in the north of the hall.^N

וּמִסֵּתְבְּרָא דְבַמְעַרְבִית דְרוֹמִית הוּאִי. מִמּוֹאֵי – מִדְרָמִינָן לְחֵם הַפָּנִים אֵלֶּחֶם הַפָּנִים

The Gemara comments: In any event, it is reasonable to say that this chamber was closer to the southwest corner than it was to the northwest corner. From where does one arrive at that conclusion? From the fact that we raise a contradiction between the mishna in tractate *Tamid*, where we learned that the chamber in which the shewbread^N was prepared stood in the northeast corner, and the mishna in tractate *Middot*, where we learned that the chamber in which the shewbread was prepared stood in the southeast corner.