MIDDOS

Middoth Chapter 1


MISHNAH 2. THE OFFICER OF THE TEMPLE MOUNT USED TO GO ROUND TO EVERY WATCH, WITH LIGHTED TORCHES BEFORE HIM, AND IF ANY WATCHER DID NOT RISE [AT HIS APPROACH] AND SAY TO HIM, PEACE BE TO THEE, SUPERVISOR OF THE TEMPLE MOUNT, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT HE WAS ASLEEP, AND HE USED TO BELABOUR HIM WITH HIS STICK, AND HE WAS ALSO AT LIBERTY TO BURN HIS CLOTHES, AND THE OTHERS USED TO SAY, WHAT IS THE NOISE IN THE AZARAH? IT IS THE CRY OF A LEVITE WHO IS BEING BEATEN AND WHOSE CLOTHES ARE BEING BURNT, BECAUSE HE WAS ASLEEP AT HIS POST. R. ELIEZER B. JACOB SAID: ONCE THEY FOUND MY MOTHER'S BROTHER ASLEEP, AND THEY BURNT HIS CLOTHES.


MISHNAH 5. ON THE NORTH WAS THE GATE OF THE FLASH WHICH WAS SHAPED LIKE A VERANDAH. IT HAD AN UPPER CHAMBER BUILT ON IT, AND THE PRIESTS USED TO KEEP WATCH ABOVE AND THE LEVITES BELOW, AND IT HAD A DOOR OPENING INTO THE HEL. NEXT TO IT WAS THE GATE OF OFFERING AND NEXT TO THAT THE FIRE CHAMBER.


MISHNAH 7. THE FIRE ROOM HAD TWO GATES, ONE OPENING ON TO THE HEL AND ONE ON TO THE AZARAH. R. JUDAH SAYS: THE ONE THAT OPENED ON TO THE
AZARAH HAD A SMALL LATTICE GATE THROUGH WHICH THEY WENT IN TO SEARCH THE AZARAH. 37

MISHNAH 8. THE FIRE ROOM WAS VAULTED. IT WAS A LARGE ROOM SURROUNDED WITH STONE SLABS ON THESE THE ELDERS OF THE FATHERS’ HOUSE [ON DUTY] USED TO SLEEP HAVING WITH THEM THE KEYS OF THE AZARAH, WHILE THE PRIESTLY NOVITIATES SLEPT EACH ON HIS GARMENT ON THE GROUND.


WHEN HE HAD FINISHED LOCKING UP, HE WOULD REPLACE THE KEYS ON THE CHAIN AND THE SLAB IN ITS PLACE AND LAY HIS GARMENT ON IT AND SLEEP THERE. IF A SEMINAL EMISSION HAPPENED TO ONE OF THEM, HE WOULD GO OUT BY THE WINDING STAIR WHICH WENT UNDER THE BIRAH, WHICH WAS LIGHTED WITH LAMPS ON BOTH SIDES, UNTIL HE REACHED THE BATHING PLACE. R. ELIEZER B. JACOB SAYS: HE DESCENDED BY THE WINDING STAIR WHICH WENT UNDER THE HEL AND HE WENT OUT BY THE TADDI GATE.

(1) At night time. For the rule that there should be twenty-four watches, v. Tamid, 27a.
(2) Heb. Beth ha-Mikdash. ‘House of the Sanctuary’, a term covering the whole space round the Temple buildings which a person in a higher degree of ritual uncleanness was forbidden to enter, and the measurements of which are given in this Tractate.
(3) For the explanation of these names, v. Tamid, ad. init. (Sonc. ed.) and notes. These three rooms adjoined the priestly Azarah or court in which was the altar of sacrifice.
(4) Enumerated below in Mishnah 3.
(5) The name given to the outer wall of the Sanctuary, though it is also used to designate the space enclosed by the wall.
(6) In Mishnah 4 it says that there were seven gates to the Azarah, and in Tamid 27a we find a difference of opinion on the question, so it is doubtful whether we should translate here ‘the five’ or simply ‘five’.
(7) Temple court, v. infra p. 2. n. 10.
(8) Because it was not permitted to sit down in the Azarah, and they were not required to stand the whole time.
(9) This may be the same as the Lamb Chamber mentioned in Tamid 27a as being one of four rooms opening out from the Flash Chamber.
(10) Where the new veils for the Holy of Holies were woven. V. Tamid, l.c. These two rooms were apparently under the places where the priests watched. V. infra 5 and Tamid 26b.
(11) The Holy of Holies retained this name in the second Temple, although it contained no Ark. The western part of the Azarah wall ran a short distance behind it.
(12) Var. lec.: If any watcher did not rise... the officer would say to him, Peace be to thee, and if it was obvious that he was asleep, he would belabor him, etc. v. Tamid 27b.
(13) It is not known whether these had any connection with Huldah the prophetess mentioned in II Kings, XXII, 14.
(14) A certain Koponius succeeded Archelaus as procurator of Judea and Samaria, A.D. 6-7 (Josephus, Ant. XVIII, 2 and 29). Possibly this gate was called after him.
(15) Or perhaps Todi = GR. **. The origin of this name is not known.
(16) But it was used for other purposes, as explained at the end of the section.
(17) According to Jewish tradition, this was in commemoration of the permission to rebuild the Temple given by the kings of Persia. Cf. Men. 98a.
(18) This follows the opinion of R. Meir. According to the Rabbis, any priest was competent to perform the ceremony. Parah IV, 1.
(19) Maim. renders ‘all its appurtenances’.
(20) On the east of Jerusalem, where the heifer was burnt.
(21) The term here includes the whole of the area extending inward2 from the Court of the Israelites, in which the Temple services were carried out. It was evidently surrounded by a wall.
(22) So called because the wood for the fire was brought in by it.
(23) Perhaps the sacrificial animals were brought in by this gate. V. infra 5. Another reading is ‘gate of the firstborn’.
(24) V. infra, II, 6.
(26) I.e. it was called after a certain Phinehas who
used to robe the High Priest. V. Shek. V, I.
(27) Where the wafers were made for the High
Priest’s daily offering.
(28) Apparently the same as the ‘flash chamber’
mentioned above in Mishnah 1.
(29) I.e., it was open on one side, giving, perhaps a
glance of the altar fire, whence its name.
(30) I.e., the back of it led out into the Hel, or
outer circuit, v. infra II, 3.
(31) I.e., a little further south. The gate of the
spark was near the north-west corner.
(32) The two former were to the south adjoining
the Azarah and the other two to the north,
adjoining the Hel.
(33) Lit., ‘heads of pebbles’, perhaps level with the
floor but of a different color.
(34) V. supra, Mishnah I. Var. lec.: the lambs for
the offering.
(35) This incident is referred to in I Macc. I, 46,
59, IV, 36, 46.
(36) Priests who had become defiled.
(37) To see that nothing had been left there. V. Tamid, 28a.
(38) On the outside.
(39) Let into the wall.
(40) The priests were divided into family groups of
‘fathers’ houses’, which ministered in rotation.
(41) Lit., ‘flowers of the priesthood’, young priests
who had just commenced to minister.
(42) Var. lec. pillow.
(43) The gates of the Temple were always closed at
nightfall.
(44) The point of this remark is not at all clear.
Perhaps it means that the Levite was sleeping until
it was time for him to rise and go on night duty.
perhaps it was only a gangway, not a stair.
(46) Lit., ‘palace’ or ‘fortress’, some building
adjoining the Sanctuary on the north-west. V.
Yoma 2a. For further notes on the passage v.
Tamid (Sonc. ed.) p. 2.

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Mishnah 1. The Temple Mount was five hundred cubits by five
hundred. The greater part of it was on the south; next to that on
the east; next to that on the north; and the smallest part on the west.
The part which was most extensive was the part most used.

Mishnah 2. All who entered the Temple Mount entered by the right
and went round [to the right] and went out by the left, save for one
to whom something untoward had happened, who entered and went
round to the left. [If he was asked], why do you go round to the left,
[and he answered] because I am a mourner, [they said to him], may he
who dwells in this house comfort thee.

[If he said] because I am excommunicated, [they said] may he
who dwells in this house inspire them to befriend thee again. So R.
Meir said R. Jose to him: you make it seem that they treated him
unjustly. What then should they say? May he who dwells in this
house inspire thee to listen to the words of thy colleagues so that
they may befriend thee again.

Mishnah 3. Within it was the Soreg nine handbreadths high. There were
thirteen breaches in it; these had been originally made by the kings
of Greece, and when they repaired
them they enacted that thirteen
prostrations should be made facing
them. Within this was the Hel, which
was ten cubits [broad].

There were twelve steps there. The height of each step was half a
cubit and its tread was half a cubit. All the steps in the temple were
half a cubit high with a tread of half a cubit, except those of the
porch. All the doorways in the temple were twenty cubits high and
ten cubits broad except those of the porch. All the doorways there
had doors in them except those of the porch. All the gates there had
lintels except that of Taddi which
HAD TWO STONES INCLINED TO ONE ANOTHER. ALL THE ORIGINAL GATES WERE CHANGED FOR GATES OF GOLD EXCEPT THE GATES OF NICANOR, BECAUSE A MIRACLE WAS WROUGHT TO THEM; SOME SAY, HOWEVER, IT WAS BECAUSE THE COPPER OF THEM GLEAMED [LIKE GOLD].


MISHNAH 5. THE WOMEN'S AZARAH WAS A HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE CUBITS LONG BY A HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE BROAD. IT HAD FOUR CHAMBERS IN ITS FOUR CORNERS, EACH OF FORTY CUBITS. THEY WERE NOT ROOFED, AND SO THEY WILL BE IN THE TIME TO COME, AS IT SAYS, THEN HE BROUGHT ME FORTH INTO THE OUTER COURT, AND CAUSED ME TO PASS BY THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE COURT, AND BEHOLD IN EVERY CORNER OF THE COURT THERE WAS A COURT. IN THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE COURT THERE WERE SMOKED COURTS AND SMOKED MEANS ONLY THAT THEY WERE NOT ROOFED. FOR WHAT WERE THEY USED?

THE SOUTHEASTERN ONE WAS THE CHAMBER OF THE NAZIRITES WHERE THE NAZIRITES USED TO BOIL THEIR PEACE-OFFERINGS AND POLL THEIR HAIR AND THROW IT UNDER THE POT. THE NORTH-EASTERN ONE WAS THE WOOD CHAMBER WHERE PRIESTS WITH A PHYSICAL DEFECT USED TO PICK OUT THE WOOD WHICH HAD WORMS, EVERY PIECE WITH A WORM IN IT BEING UNFIT FOR USE ON THE ALTAR. THE NORTH-WESTERN ONE WAS THE CHAMBER OF THE LEPERS. AS FOR THE SOUTHWESTERN ONE, A. ELIEZER B. JACOB SAID: I FORGET WHAT IT WAS USED FOR. ABBA SAUL SAYS: THEY USED TO STORE THERE WINE AND OIL, AND IT WAS CALLED THE OIL STORAGE ROOM. IT [THE WOMEN'S AZARAH] HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN QUITE BARE BUT SUBSEQUENTLY THEY SURROUNDED IT WITH A BALCONY SO THAT THE WOMEN COULD LOOK ON FROM ABOVE WHILE THE MEN WERE BELOW, AND THEY SHOULD NOT MIX TOGETHER.

FIFTEEN STEPS LED UP FROM IT TO THE AZARAH OF ISRAEL, CORRESPONDING TO THE FIFTEEN [SONGS OF] ASCENTS MENTIONED IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS. THE LEVITES USED TO CHANT PSALMS ON THESE. THEY WERE NOT RECTANGULAR BUT CIRCULAR LIKE THE HALF OF A THRESHING FLOOR.


A. ELIEZER B. JACOB SAYS: THERE WAS A STEP A CUBIT HIGH ON WHICH WAS PLACED A PLATFORM AND THIS HAD THREE STEPS EACH OF HALF A CUBIT. IN THIS WAY THE COURT OF THE PRIESTS WAS MADE TWO AND A HALF CUBITS HIGHER THAN THAT OF ISRAEL. THE WHOLE OF THE AZARAH WAS A HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVEN CUBITS IN LENGTH BY A HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE CUBITS.
IN BREADTH, AND THIRTEEN PROSTRATIONS WERE MADE THERE.  


(1) By ‘Temple Mount’ is apparently meant all that part of the temple area which lay outside of the Azarah, between the wall of the Azarah and the outer wall. This area was not actually consecrated but it had to be treated with a certain respect; thus one was not supposed to enter it with stick and wallet, to use it for a short cut, etc. (Ber. 54a). According to Hollis, the corresponding areas in the present Haram-esh-Sherif are found by measurement to be 255,000 sq. feet on the southern side, 150,000 on the east, 92,900 on the north and 90,600 on the west, a total of 488,500 sq. ft., which reckoning a cubit at 12/2 feet, is nearly 500 cubits square.

(2) V. previous note.

(3) I.e. the majority of people entered from the south.

(4) I.e., on entering they turned to the right, even if their immediate objective was to the left, so that they had to make a circuit to reach it.

(5) Lit., ‘bring thee back’.

(6) So that it was necessary for them to alter their mind.

(7) Excommunication was usually inflicted on an elder who would not conform to the ruling of the majority.

(8) Viz., the wall of the Temple Mount.

(9) According to the Jewish commentators, this was a kind of lattice work, the root Sarag meaning ‘to entwine’. Josephus, however, says it was of stone. Its exact purpose is not known as there was no higher degree of holiness till the Hel was reached.

(10) Cf. I Macc. IX, 54, 55.

(11) By worshippers in the Azarah. V. infra 6.

(12) A level promenade running right round the Azarah.

(13) Leading up from the Hel to the Court of Women. Apparently these steps ran the whole length of the Hel on its southern side.

(14) Which had a tread of a cubit.

(15) Which were forty cubits high and twenty broad.

(16) Hollis (p. 267) supposes this to mean that the two sides of the gate converged not in the vertical plane (which would have been unsafe), but in the horizontal, so that it was narrower on the outside than on the inside, and required no lintel. It is doubtful, however, if the Hebrew will bear this meaning.

(17) V. Yoma 38a.

(18) In accordance with the biblical injunction, And he shall sprinkle facing (E. V. toward) the front of the lent of meeting, Num. XIX. 4. There were three walls between the Mount of Olives and the door of the Hekal — the outer wall of the Temple Mount, the wall of the Women’s Azarah, and the wall between the Court of Women and the Court of Israel. As the ground level of the outer wall was much lower than that of the Hekal — over 22 cubits — this wall would have had to be very high to obstruct the view from the Mount of Olives, and Hollis therefore (p. 273) thinks that it is the inner wall, separating the Court of Women from the Court of Israel, which is referred to.

(19) V. Yoma 16a.

(20) It is not certain whether these rooms were in the court or adjoining it on the outside.

(21) It is not clear whether this means forty cubits square.

(22) E. V. enclosed.

(23) Ezek. XI, VI, 21, 22.

(24) The Hebrew word is Keturoth, which is connected by the Mishnah with the root Katar, to send up smoke, and is taken to mean that the smoke was allowed to ascend without impediment.

(25) V. Num. VI, 18.

(26) Where they bathed on purification before the blood of the offering was placed on their thumb; v. Neg. XIV, 8-9.
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(27) Lit., ‘room of the house of oils’.
(28) At the festival of the drawing of water. V. Suk. 51b.
(29) Ps. CXX-CXXXIV.
(30) Running alongside of the Women’s Court. The longer side of any area is called by the Talmud its length.
(31) V. supra, p. 3. n. 12.
(32) From which the priests blessed the people. Perhaps it was really a movable pulpit.
(33) The whole of the sanctified area of the Temple from the Court of Israel to the Holy of Holies.
(34) By worshippers in the Azarah. According to the Rabbis, they were made towards the thirteen breaches in the Soreg (v. supra), but Abba Jose b. Hanan differs.
(35) These were not all necessarily in the outer wall.
(36) Through which firstlings of flock and cattle were led to be offered, v. supra, p. 3, n. 2.
(37) These last three are mentioned in I, 4.
(38) V. Ezek. XLVII, 1, and Yoma 77b.
(39) Mentioned in I, 5. It is hard to say what was the relation of the other gates mentioned here to the ‘Room of the Flash’, and the Fire Chamber mentioned there.
(40) Which serves, perhaps, as exit for women.
(41) Through which, perhaps, the Levites brought in their instruments.
(42) V. II Kings XXIV, 8-16.
(43) After paying his last visit to the Temple.
(44) Not in it but adjoining it, and therefore reckoned as two separate gates.

R. Jose said: Originally the complete area [occupied by the altar] was only twenty-eight cubits by twenty-eight, and it rose with the dimensions mentioned until the space left for the altar pile was only twenty by twenty. When, however, they returned from the captivity, they added four cubits on the north, and four on the west like a gamma, since it is said: and the hearth shall be twelve cubits long by twelve broad, square. Am I to suppose that it was only twelve cubits by twelve?

When it says, in the four sides thereof, this shows that he was measuring from the middle, twelve cubits in every direction. A line of red paint ran round it in the middle to divide between the upper and the lower blood. The foundation ran the whole length of the north and of the west sides, but it left open one cubit on the south and one on the east.

MISHNAH 2. At the south-western corner [of the foundation] there were two openings like two fine nostrils through which the blood which was poured on the western side of the foundation and on the southern side flowed down till the two streams became mingled in the channel, through which they made their way out to the brook of Kidron.

MISHNAH 3. On the pavement beneath at that corner there was a place a cubit square on which was a marble slab with a ring fixed in it, and through this they used to go down to the pit to clean it out. There was an ascent on the south side of the altar, thirty-two cubits [long]...
BY SIXTEEN BROAD. IT HAD A CAVITY IN ITS WESTERN SIDE WHERE REJECTED SIN-OFFERINGS OF BIRDS WERE PLACED.24

MISHNAH 4. THE STONES BOTH OF THE ASCENT AND OF THE ALTAR WERE TAKEN FROM THE VALLEY OF BETH KEREM.25 THEY DUG INTO VIRGIN SOIL AND BROUGHT FROM THERE WHOLE STONES ON WHICH NO IRON HAD BEEN LIFTED, SINCE IRON DISQUALIFIES BY MERE TOUCH, THOUGH A SCRATCH MADE BY ANYTHING COULD DISQUALIFY. IF ONE OF THEM RECEIVED A SCRATCH, IT WAS DISQUALIFIED, BUT THE REST WERE NOT. THEY WERE WHITEWASHED TWICE A YEAR, ONCE AT PASSOVER AND ONCE AT TABERNACLES, AND THE HEKAL WAS WHITEWASHED ONCE A YEAR, AT PASSOVER.

RABBI SAYS: THEY WERE WHITEWASHED EVERY FRIDAY WITH A CLOTH ON ACCOUNT OF THE BLOOD STAINS. THE PLASTER WAS NOT LAID ON WITH A TROWEL OF IRON, FOR FEAR THAT IT MIGHT TOUCH AND DISQUALIFY, SINCE IRON WAS CREATED TO SHORTEN MAN’S DAYS AND THE ALTAR WAS CREATED TO PROLONG MAN’S DAYS, AND IT IS NOT RIGHT THEREFORE THAT THAT WHICH SHORTENS SHOULD BE LIFTED AGAINST THAT WHICH PROLONGS.

MISHNAH 5. THERE WERE RINGS TO THE NORTH OF THE ALTAR, SIX ROWS OF FOUR EACH, OR, ACCORDING TO SOME, FOUR ROWS OF SIX EACH, AT WHICH THEY USED TO SLAUGHTER THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS. THE SLAUGHTERERS SHED WAS AT THE NORTH OF THE ALTAR. THERE WERE EIGHT DWARF PILLARS THERE, ON WHICH WERE BLOCKS OF CEDAR-WOOD. IN THESE WERE FIXED HOOKS OF IRON, THREE ROWS IN EACH, ON WHICH THEY HUNG THE CARCASSES, AND FLAYED THEM OVER TABLES OF MARBLE BETWEEN THE PILLARS.29


MISHNAH 8. THERE WERE CROSS BARS OF STONE STRETCHING FROM THE WALL OF THE HEKAL TO THE WALL OF THE PORCH TO PREVENT IT FROM BULGING. THERE WERE CHAINS OF GOLD FIXED IN THE ROOF BEAMS OF THE PORCH BY WHICH THE PRIESTLY NOVITIATES USED TO ASCEND AND SEE THE CROWNS, AS IT SAYS, AND THE CROWNS SHALL BE TO HELEM AND TO TOBIJAH AND TO JEDAIAH AND TO HEN THE SON OF ZEPHANIAH AS A MEMORIAL IN THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD. A GOLDEN VINE STOOD AT THE DOOR OF THE HEKAL TRAINED ON POLES, AND ANYONE WHO OFFERED A LEAF OR A GRAPE OR A BUNCH USED TO BRING IT AND HANG IT THEREON. R. ELIEZER SON OF R. ZADOK SAID: ON ONE OCCASION THREE HUNDRED PRIESTS WERE COMMISSIONED [TO CLEAR IT].
(1) For a description of the altar, cf. Zeb. 54a.
(2) At its base.
(3) Which was thus a kind of step one cubit high and one wide going right round the altar.
(4) The Mishnah here does not mention that from the surround the altar rose three cubits, as this is known from the statement of Scripture, and the height thereof shall be three cubits (Ex. XXVII, 1).
(5) They were also one cubit high, so that the whole height of the altar was ten cubits.
(6) Quite clear of the horns.
(7) Le., one for the foundation and five for the surround.
(8) Lit., ‘when the children of the exile came up’.
(9) So the text. The proper reading, however, is ‘south’ as appears from Zeb. 61b.
(10) Le., two sides of a square.
(11) Le., the place of the altar fire.
(12) Ezek. XI, III, 16.
(13) Ezek. XI, III, 16.
(14) Maim. calculates that this ‘middle’ was 26 handbreadths from the ground.
(15) The blood of animals brought as sin-offerings and of birds brought as burnt-offerings was sprinkled above the line, of other sacrifices below the line.
(16) Lit. ‘consumed’.
(17) Le., the south-east corner. So Maim. Asheri, however, explains that it ran only one cubit on the south and on the east side. The reason is given in Zeb. 53b.
(18) The blood of the offerings which was left after the sprinkling.
(19) A channel which flowed through the Azarah into the brook of Kidron.
(20) In order to lift it.
(21) Young priests detailed for the task.
(22) Into which the wine of the libations flowed.
(23) According to Suk. 49a, this was done only once in seventy years.
(24) Until they became unrecognizable, when they were taken out and burnt. Birds were killed at the altar, and therefore if a disqualification was subsequently found in the bodies they could not be taken away.
(25) Mentioned in Jer. VI, 1. It was not far from Jerusalem.
(26) With wooden spades.
(27) So that it was certain that no plow had touched them.
(28) Hoops fixed round the necks of the animals to keep them in place. V. Tamid IV, 1.
(29) V. Tam. III, 5. (Sonc. ed.) notes.
(30) V. Ex. XXX, 18.
(31) This is taken by Asheri to mean that there were four steps each half a cubit high and each a cubit broad, which with level pavement of three cubits would make seven cubits. Then came four more steps and a level of three cubits, making another seven cubits, and then four more steps and a level space of four cubits, making eight cubits. Thus altogether between the altar and the porch there were twelve steps and twenty-two cubits. It is not clear on this explanation why it should say, ‘a cubit, a cubit’ and not ‘two cubits’ or ‘four steps’. Maim. takes the whole statement to refer to the wall of the porch and to mean that after every two cubits there was a projection issuing from the wall. Certainly the word robed which Asheri takes to mean ‘level pavement is used for ‘projection’ in Tamid I, 1, but it is much more natural to take the passage here as referring to the steps. The reading is uncertain.
(32) R. Judah (according to Asheri) must suppose that one of the previous level spaces was only two cubits.
(33) Var. lec.: ‘cedar’.
(34) On account of its great height.
(36) Which were placed as ornaments in the windows of the upper chambers of the Porch. According to Asheri, the young priests climbed up to see if they were in good order, not merely for pleasure, which was forbidden.
(37) Zech. VI, 14.

**MIDDOSH**

**Mishnah**

**Chapter 1**

1. The doorway of the Hekal: it was twenty cubits high and ten broad. It had four doors, two on the inner side, and two on the outer, as it says, and the temple and the sanctuary had two doors. The outer ones opened into the interior of the doorway so as to cover the thickness of the wall, while the inner ones opened into the temple so as to cover the space behind the doors, because the whole of the temple was overlaid with gold except the space behind the doors.

R. Judah says: The doors were placed within the doorway, and they resembled folding doors, one half covering two cubits and a half [of the wall] and the other half covering two cubits and a half, leaving half a cubit and a doorpost at the one end and half a cubit and a doorpost at the other end, as it
SAYS: AND THE DOORS HAD TWO LEAVES APiece, TWO TURNING LEAVES, TWO LEAVES FOR THE ONE DOOR AND TWO LEAVES FOR THE OTHER.9

MISHNAH 2. THE GREAT GATE10 HAD TWO WICKETS, ONE TO THE NORTH AND ONE TO THE SOUTH. BY THE ONE TO THE SOUTH NO MAN EVER WENT IN, AND CONCERNING THIS THE RULE WAS DISTINCTLY LAID DOWN BY THE MOUTH OF EZEKIEL, AS IT SAYS, AND THE LORD SAID UNTO ME: THIS GATE SHALL BE SHUT, IT SHALL NOT BE OPENED, NEITHER SHALL ANY MAN ENTER IN BY IT, FOR THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL HATH ENTERED IN BY IT; THEREFORE IT SHALL BE SHUT.11 HE [THE PRIEST] TOOK THE KEY AND OPENED THE [NORTHERN] WICKET AND WENT IN TO THE CELL,12 AND FROM THE CELL HE WENT IN TO THE HEKAL.

R. JUDAH SAYS: HE USED TO WALK ALONG IN THE THICKNESS OF THE WALL13 UNTIL HE CAME TO THE SPACE BETWEEN THE TWO GATES.14 HE USED TO OPEN THE OUTER DOORS FROM WITHIN AND THE INNER DOORS FROM WITHOUT.15

MISHNAH 3. THERE WERE THIRTY-EIGHT CELLS THERE,16 FIFTEEN ON THE NORTH, FIFTEEN ON THE SOUTH, AND EIGHT ON THE WEST. ON THE NORTH AND ON THE SOUTH THERE WERE FIVE OVER FIVE AND FIVE AGAIN OVER THESE;17 ON THE WEST THERE WERE THREE OVER THREE AND TWO OVER THESE. EACH HAD THREE OPENINGS,18 ONE TO THE CELL ON THE RIGHT AND ONE TO THE CELL ON THE LEFT AND ONE TO THE CELL ABOVE. IN THE [ONE AT THE] NORTHEASTERN CORNER THERE WERE FIVE OPENINGS, ONE TO THE CELL ON THE RIGHT,19 ONE TO THE CELL ABOVE, ONE TO THE MESIBBAH,20 ONE TO THE WICKET,21 AND ONE TO THE HEKAL.22


IN THE DOORWAY OF THE UPPER CHAMBER WERE TWO COLUMNS OF CEDAR BY WHICH THEY USED TO CLIMB UP TO THE ROOF OF THE UPPER CHAMBER, AND AT THE TOP OF THEM WAS A ROW OF STONES SHOWING THE DIVISION IN THE UPPER CHAMBER BETWEEN THE HOLY PART AND THE HOLY OF HOLIES.30 THERE WERE TRAP DOORS IN THE UPPER CHAMBER OPENING INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES BY WHICH THE WORKMEN WERE LET DOWN IN BASKETS SO THAT THEY SHOULD NOT FEED THEIR GAZE ON THE HOLY OF HOLIES.31

MISHNAH 6. THE HEKAL23 WAS A HUNDRED CUBITS BY A HUNDRED WITH A HEIGHT OF A HUNDRED. THE SUBSTRUCTURE WAS SIX CUBITS, THEN IT ROSE FORTY, THEN A CUBIT FOR THE ORNAMENTATION, TWO CUBITS FOR THE GUTTERING,35 A
CUBIT FOR THE ROOF AND A CUBIT FOR
THE PLASTERING. THE HEIGHT OF THE
UPPER CHAMBER WAS FORTY CUBITS,
THERE WAS A CUBIT FOR ITS
ORNAMENTATION, TWO CUBITS FOR THE
GUTTERING, A CUBIT FOR THE CEILING, A
CUBIT FOR THE PLASTERING, THREE
CUBITS FOR THE PARAPET AND A CUBIT
FOR THE SPIKES. R. JUDAH SAYS THE
SPIKES WERE NOT INCLUDED IN THE
MEASUREMENT, THE PARAPET BEING
FOUR CUBITS.

MISHNAH 7. FROM EAST TO WEST WAS A
HUNDRED CUBITS — THE WALL OF THE
PORCH FIVE CUBITS, THE PORCH ITSELF
ELEVEN, THE WALL OF THE HEKAL SIX
CUBITS AND ITS INTERIOR FORTY, A CUBIT
FOR THE PARTITION AND TWENTY
CUBITS FOR THE HOLY OF HOLIES, THE
WALL OF THE HEKAL SIX CUBITS, THE
CELL SIX CUBITS AND THE WALL OF THE
CELL FIVE. FROM NORTH TO SOUTH WAS
SEVENTY CUBITS — THE WALL OF THE
MESIBBAH FIVE CUBITS, THE MESIBBAH
ITSELF THREE, THE WALL OF THE CELL
FIVE AND THE CELL ITSELF SIX, THE
WALL OF THE HEKAL SIX CUBITS, THE
CELL AGAIN SIX AND THE CELL SIX
AND ITS WALL FIVE, THEN THE PLACE OF
THE WATER DESCENT THREE CUBITS
AND ITS WALL FIVE CUBITS.

THE PORCH EXTENDED BEYOND THIS
FIFTEEN CUBITS ON THE NORTH AND
FIFTEEN CUBITS ON THE SOUTH, AND THIS
SPACE WAS CALLED THE KNIFE-HOUSE
WHERE THEY USED TO STORE THE
[SLAUGHTERERS’] KNIVES. THUS THE
HEKAL WAS NARROW BEHIND AND BROAD
IN FRONT, RESEMBLING A LION, AS IT
SAYS, AH, ARIEL, ARIEL, THE CITY WHERE
DAVID ENCAMPED. JUST AS A LION IS
NARROW BEHIND AND BROAD IN FRONT,
SO THE HEKAL WAS NARROW BEHIND AND
BROAD IN FRONT.

(1) The Temple proper exclusive both of the Holy
of Holies and the Porch.
(2) It was also six cubits thick.
(3) Towards the Hekal.
(4) Ezek. XLII, 23.
(5) Thus the outer doors were drawn back a right
angle, the inner ones a full half circle.
(6) I.e., the outer doors.
(7) Drawn back a little from the edge of the wall.
(8) They consisted of two leaves joined by hinges.
R. Judah does not differ from the First Tanna, but
adds a new detail.
(9) Ibid. 24.
(10) So the doorway of the Hekal is now called.
(11) Ezek. XLIV, 2.
(12) Heb. Ta, a small apartment let into the wall.
V. infra. 3.
(13) Parallel to the direction of the wall, back
towards the gateway.
(14) I.e., between the two ends of the great
gateway.
(15) The terms ‘within’ and ‘without’ here are
used relatively to the Hekal. According to R.
Judah, the priest did not enter directly from the
cell into the Hekal.
(16) Surrounding the Temple.
(17) I.e., three stories of five each.
(18) This was the general rule, but some must have
had more and some less.
(19) Of one looking towards the Hekal.
(20) V. infra. 5.
(21) V. supra. 2.
(22) This follows the view of the First Tanna above
in 1. According to R. Judah, one door opened not
into the Hekal, but into the great gateway.
(23) When the wall of the Hekal rose as high as the
top of the lowest storey chambers, it narrowed one
cubit, and this space was used for extending the
ceiling beams of the chamber.
(24) I Kings VI, 6.
(25) Lit., ‘circuit’, an ascent running from the foot
of the chambers on the north-east to the roof and
then the whole length of the north side to the roof
of the north-west.
(26) On the roofs of the chambers.
(27) This must have been a chamber adjoining the
Holy of Holies and part of it must have projected
over the Holy of Holies.
(28) By rungs or by hooks.
(29) V. supra p. 3, n. 12.
(30) I.e., the stones were exactly over the dividing
partition. cf. n. 5.
(31) V. Pes. 26a.
(32) Including the Porch and the Holy of Holies.
(33) In front; behind it was narrow, as is explained
infra.
(34) The lower blocks or packed earth on which the
weight of the whole rested.
(35) Affording protection against a leak in the upper roof (Maim.).
(36) A panel ornamented with carvings and figures.
(37) Lit., ‘consuming the raven’, the object of the spikes being to keep birds from settling on the roof.
(38) The two curtains with one cubit space between them dividing the Hekal and the Sanctuary. V. Yoma 51b.
(39) The western wall of the Hekal embracing also the Holy of Holies.
(40) V. supra Mish. 4.
(41) This was really a continuation of the Mesibbah on the south side, and it was called thus because it contained a conduit leading water to the brazen sea.
(42) Maim.: which had become disqualified.
(43) Isa. XXIX, I. ‘Ariel’, the lion of God.

Middoth Chapter 5


A PRIEST IN WHOM WAS FOUND A DISQUALIFICATION14 USED TO PUT ON BLACK UNDER GARMENTS AND WRAP HIMSELF IN BLACK AND CLEAR AWAY. ONE IN WHOM NO DISQUALIFICATION WAS FOUND USED TO PUT ON WHITE UNDER GARMENTS AND WRAP HIMSELF IN WHITE AND GO IN AND MINISTER ALONG WITH HIS BROTHER PRIESTS. THEY USED TO MAKE A FEAST BECAUSE NO BLEMISH HAD BEEN FOUND IN THE SEED OF AARON THE PRIEST, AND THEY USED TO SAY
THUS: BLESSED IS THE OMNIPRESENT,
BLESSSED IS HE, BECAUSE NO BLEMISH HAS
BEEN FOUND IN THE SEED OF AARON.
BLESSSED IS HE WHO CHOSE AARON AND
HIS SONS TO STAND TO MINISTER BEFORE
THE LORD IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES.

(1) The Temple Court. The space which was called
‘the camp of the divine presence’.
(2) Lit. ‘place of the treading of the feet of the
Israelites’.
(3) More precisely behind the western wall of the
Hekal. V. supra p. 1, n. 11.
(4) Cf. supra III, 3. Apparently the base of the
ascent was thirty cubits.
(5) Of the hundred and thirty-five cubits.
(6) I.e., the southern wall.
(7) We must also suppose the space occupied by
the tables to be included, although strangely
enough this is not mentioned.
(8) Supposed to have been so called after a man
named Parwah. V. Yoma, 35a. Or it may be
connected with Parim, bulls.
(9) V. Yoma 30a.
(10) Abba Saul’s remark has nothing to do with R.
Eliezer’s.
(11) This apparently is the ‘Chamber of
Parhedrin’ mentioned at the beginning of Tractate
Yoma.
(12) Supposed to have been dug by the returned
exiles.
(13) V. Tam. (Sonc. ed.) p. 14, n. 9.
(14) E.g., that his mother had been a divorced
woman.
(15) Heb. Ha-makom, lit., ‘the Place’.