בית המקדש השלישי

The Third Beit HaMikdash



By Rabbi Yosef Netanyahu Ben David

יוסף נתניהו בן דוד

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By Rabbi Yosef Netanyahu Ben David

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The Third Beit HaMikdash

Introduction

[1] God told the prophet Yechez-kel:

[2] You, son of man, describe the House to the House of Israel so that they be ashamed of their sins; let them measure its outline. If they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the House, and its form, its exits, its entrances, its entire design, and all its ordinances, and all its shapes, and all its laws; and write it before their eyes so that they will preserve its entire design and all its ordinances, and carry them out.

[3] God commanded the prophet to tell the Jewish people to measure out the entire plan and reckoning for the building of the Beis HaMikdash so that they would remember its design in their hearts lest Mashiach come on this day and there will be no one to build it – no one aware of the dimensions and details of how to build the Beis HaMikdash. Rashi interprets the charge in the same manner, commenting on the words, "they will preserve": "They should study the details of the measures so they will know how to apply them in the Ultimate Future."

[4] The verse repeats the phrase, **וכל צורתיו**, "its entire design." The second time that phrase is mentioned, Rashi writes, "this is not explained." It is possible that the intent is to refer to a design of the Beis HaMikdash that could actually be pictured, and from which a blueprint could be drawn according to its dimensions. Such a picture would be a preface to understanding the subject matter.

[5] Similarly, Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel appears to say that the prophet was commanded to make a clearly apparent design. Abarbanel explaines that the verse relates that the prophet was commanded to

describe four aspects of the Beis HaMikdash: "the design of the House, and its form, its exits, and its entrances." These four features parallel four ways that all concepts can be understood. The first approach he mentions is to understand the subject matter in a manner that is almost tangible. This mode of understanding it alluded to with the words, "the design of the House." Abarbanel also explains that the phrase, "its entire design," is stated twice to reflect two different ways of understanding. The first time the phrase is used refers to comprehension in an apparent manner, and the second time refers to the basic understanding of the material. Both are forms that are easily comprehensible without deep analysis. From his words as a whole, it can be understood that the prophet was commanded to explain the Beis HaMikdash's layout in a way that can be visualized.

[6] Radak offers a similar explanation on the words "the design of the House," stating: "They should measure the design of the form of the House, preparing it as a sign, for it will be constructed in this manner in the Ultimate Future at the time of the coming of the Redeemer and the Resurrection of the Dead. It should be prepared as a sign, for those who visualize this design will live in this House in the Ultimate Future." And in his commentary on the words, "and carry them out," Radak writes that this vision is "a great proof of the Resurrection of the Dead."

[7] This promise was not only given to Yechez-kel's generation. After all, why should we of the future generations be denied? Rather, it is a promise of a general nature to anyone who preserves and measures the design as detailed, and who does not live to see the Beis HaMikdash rebuilt, that he will merit to be resurrected and to apply his studies in practice in the Ultimate Future. For even though the prophets' promises were addressed to the people of their time, their messages were also intended for all the future generations who would follow them and who would continue to relate the message until the final generation. This prophecy was stated in the present tense, to promise God's goodness at an earlier time, thus hastening its

realization were the people to merit. Moreover, that tense is appropriate because it is as if God's words and His promise were already realized and applied from the time they were uttered. Rashi explains this in several places, when commenting on the fact that prophets often use the past tense rather than the future when relating their prophecies.

[9] Similarly, the Midrash Yilamdeinu comments on the verse, "Son of man, describe the House to the House of Israel," saying: When the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed the vision to Yechez-kel and showed him the design of the House, its form, and its exits, He commanded him to relate this vision to the House of Israel.

[10] Yechez-kel protested, saying: "My Master, can they build it now as [implied by] Your words, 'They will preserve its entire design… and carry them out'?"

[11] God answered him, "No, [they cannot build it at present]. Nevertheless, even though they do not build it now, let them study the design of the House and I will consider it as if they were occupied in its construction."

[12] And the Pesikta states: "Shmuel comments on the verse: 'If they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the House': Is there a design of the House at present? The intent is that the Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'since you are involved in the study of its construction, it is as if you are involved in its construction.'"

[13] The expression, "you are involved in its construction," warrants an explanation. God did not say, "You are building it," because that would imply building the structure in its entirety. "Involved in its construction," by contrast, implies building a portion of it, for there are aspects of this building that are enigmatic, and not explicitly explained. Thus Radak, when describing the measure of the cells

around the gate and the chambers of the Sanctuary, quotes our Sages' statement, "Certain aspects of this prophecy will be interpreted by the prophet Eliyahu in the future," implying that we are unable to interpret these details at present.

[14] It is true that this quote was stated in the Talmud regarding the sacrifices mentioned in Yechez-kel's prophecies, and was not made regarding the structure of the Beis HaMikdash. Nevertheless, Radak associated this statement with other enigmatic passages in Yechez-kel's prophecies because they too are not explicit and could be interpreted in several ways. We are thus forced to say that Eliyahu will also explain these passages in the future.

[15] Similarly, Rambam in the first chapter of his Hilchos Beis HaBechirah writes: "⌊The design of⌋ the building that will be constructed in the Future, though mentioned in Yechez-kel, is not explicit or explained." Based on these ideas, in the passage cited above Shmuel used the expression, "are involved in its construction," i.e., building parts of the structure, for it is impossible to understand the entire design. However, by studying Yechez-kel's prophecy, and understanding those aspects of the structure of the Beis HaMikdash that are clear, it will be considered as if the Beis HaMikdash was constructed in its entirety.

[16] Even if one would dispute this interpretation and say that Shmuel used the expression, "are involved in its construction," because it parallels the initial clause in his statement, "involved in the study of its construction," the concept stated is true. If it were not said, it would be worthy to say it, for it is a logical conclusion: Only when one understands the structure can it be considered as if it was built, for how can one build if one does not understand? Therefore, I based this concept on the wording of the Midrash.

[17] It can be derived from the above discussion that our study of the design of the Future Beis HaMikdash must involve thorough and

precise understanding. If not, it would be sufficient to merely read about it. Were that the case, one could read Yechez-kel's description in its entirety, even those portions that are not understood. Why then would it not be considered as if one built the Beis HaMikdash in its entirety? Instead, the concept is as explained above.

[18] This can also be understood from the term, "involved in its study," used in the Pesikta cited above. Shmuel does not say that his listeners should "read about it," i.e. peruse Yechez-kel's prophecy regarding the structure of the Future Beis HaMikdash. Rather, Shmuel states that his listeners should be "involved in its study," implying that they should make a laborious effort to understand the details of the Future structure. This same message is implied by the wording of the blessing recited before Torah study. Such precise understanding is also implied by the prophet's words, who speaks of "measuring."

[19] After these words of truth I, who am young of years, and who laps up the words of the wise, after reading the call which God sounded in the ears of the prophet to "describe the House to the House of Israel so that they be ashamed of their sins [and] let them measure its outline" took this call to heart. Perhaps I have the potential to understand some aspect of the vision. Conscious that "the task is not ours to complete, nor may we neglect it," and after reviewing twice and a third time, the words of Rashi, the most prominent of commentators, I realized that it would be very valuable to make a design with an encompassing picture, that would be "a remembrance between my eyes," as we were commanded, as explained above. When some of my noble contemporaries saw my picture, they implored me to engrave it with a pen of iron and lead so that it will endure for an extended time, until the end of time, acquiring for me the merit of the many. For when ten enter the House of Study, none turn to Yechez-kel's vision of the House, because of the difficulty of understanding his prophecies.

[20] I said to myself, I will not withhold good from its owners. Nor have I entered beyond my limits and positioned myself among the great, for I have not taken upon myself to develop new concepts. I have only attempted to explain the words of the commentaries, since their intent was not to obscure, but to explain. My intent was to communicate their interpretation in a manner that is easy to comprehend. Thus no one can protest that I have sought a place to buttress beyond my capacity. Everything is clearly open before you. I know that there is no necessity for what I have done here, my handiwork was only for the youth of the Jewish people. No reader should think that I ⌊undertook this project⌋ for my honor or for the honor of my father's house. I only undertook this project in response to the sincere requests of the friends who listen to the reader's voice asking to accept the truth from the one who utters it.

[21] With the above words, I have fulfilled my obligations to remove any complaints and to reply by showing the reader my work, and revealing what I have done. I have already faithfully acknowledged that I will structure my commentary according to that of Rashi, the most prominent of the commentators, for his commentary reflects the teachings of the Mishnah that describe the building of the Second Beis HaMikdash.

[22] We have found in the works of our Sages three instances where Yechez-kel's vision was preserved: the wicket entrances at the sides of the Gate of the Sanctuary, the measurements of the Altar, and the unroofed courtyards. We find a similar concept in the works of Radak, with regard to the eastern wall of the Courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash, as we will explain in our description of that structure, with God's help.

[23] Similarly, Rambam writes in the first chapter of Hilchos Beis HaBechirah that the people who built the Second Beis HaMikdash built it "like the structure of Shlomoh and similar to what was explicit in Yechez-kel's vision." They did not build the Second Beis

HaMikdash entirely according to Yechez-kel's vision, because – based on prophetic vision – they knew that this was not the time for that structure to be built. Similar concepts are found in Rashi's commentary: It was intended that the second entry into Eretz Yisrael led by Ezra resemble the first entry led by Yehoshua. The Jews should have come with power and with miracles, as our Sages commented on the verse, "Until Your nation crosses over." Yechez-kel's structure was destined for them when they ascended from the exile and their redemption was intended to be eternal, except that sin had an effect. Their repentance was not befitting.

[24] Thus, God intended for the Second Beis HaMikdash to be built according to Yechez-kel's vision, and for the Jews' redemption to be eternal, were they to have merited this. When they did not merit this, they were not granted any license to construct the building in Yechez-kel's vision, because the building in Yechez-kel's vision is designated and structured for an eternal redemption. When the Beis HaMikdash will be built according to this structure, God's glory will dwell there forever.

[25] Accordingly, in his description of the structure of the Beis HaMikdash, Yechez-kel relates the prophecy, "I will dwell among them forever." And when the Jewish people did not merit having the Divine presence dwell among them during the era of the Second Beis HaMikdash, they did not have the license to build it entirely according to Yechez-kel's vision. Nevertheless, they included certain aspects of Yechez-kel's vision in the Second Beis HaMikdash, since his vision could have been actualized at that time. Furthermore, this enabled them to prepare somewhat for the entire building to be realized, were they to merit to turn to God in proper teshuvah.

[26] For this reason, our Sages mentioned three instances in which the building of the Second Beis HaMikdash reflected Yechez-kel's vision. Significantly, these three instances were each in a separate section of the Beis HaMikdash: the Outer Courtyard, the Inner Courtyard, and

the building of the Sanctuary. These three areas parallel three sections of the Spiritual Cosmos: what is below the sphere of the moon, the galgalim (the heavenly spheres), and the chariot of the Throne of His Glory. The Final Beis HaMikdash will seamlessly connect our world with the spiritual realms so that "one will draw close to another and no [foreign and impure] spirit will pass between them." This is not the place to elaborate on this concept. Nevertheless, we see that when they built the Second Beis HaMikdash, they incorporated one element that resembles the ultimate and eternal Beis HaMikdash into each of its sections.

[27] In the Outer Courtyard, they built unroofed chambers. In the Inner Courtyard, they built the Altar, and in the Beis HaMikdash itself, they built the wicket entrances to the gates. All of this was done to forge a connection – and to prepare for –the structure that they would build in the Future. True, other portions of the Second Beis HaMikdash were also built according to Yechez-kel's vision of the Future Beis HaMikdash, as will be mentioned below. Nevertheless, our Sages singled out these three items to allude to the fact that every area of the Beis HaMikdash contained one element that resembled the Future Beis HaMikdash.

[28] We have focused on Rashi's commentary because it reconciles the text in Yechez-kel with the Mishnah's description of the Second Beis HaMikdash to the greatest degree possible. For the [fundamental] difficulty in understanding Yechezkel's description of the structure does not stem from the structure itself, but from the fact that the prophet skips from one matter to another. Therefore, in my description, I go from gate to gate, from corner to corner, and from concept to concept according to the structure of the building. This will allow the verses to be easily understood. To cite a parallel, in his commentary to the parshah, VeAtah Tetzaveh, in his explanation of the charge, "And they shall make the ephod," Rashi writes: "Were I to explain the manner in which the ephod and the choshen were fashioned according to the order of the verses, the explanation would

be fragmented…. Therefore, I will describe the manner in which they were fashioned in a way that a reader can proceed quickly, and afterwards, I will explain the verses in the order they appear in the text."

[29] Since the order of the verses is explained in Rashi's commentary, there is no need to repeat those explanations. Everything will be understood from our explanations. Nevertheless, I recorded the sources in parentheses to indicate the chapter in Scripture to which my explanations refer.

[30] I structured this text with alphanumerical markers in order. Those markers appear in the illustration of the entire structure that we composed. Thus, the explanations after the section marker alef in this text will correspond to the marker alef in the illustration. The same is true with regard to the other letters.

[31] I have also recorded whatever corrections have to be made regarding the errors in Rashi's commentary. I have also shifted from the description of the Future Beis HaMikdash to the clarification of certain errors found in the description of the buildings constructed by King Shlomoh. For I have seen elements in the building of the House of the Forest of Lebanon and the bases which are difficult to understand, I will write their explanations in short.

[32] And He who wraps Himself in light like a garment,

[33] And gave us this Torah, Ordered in its entirety and preserved.

[34] May He who instructs sinners in the path ⌊of repentance⌋

[35] Direct me and support my heart in both light and severe matters,
Enabling our eyes to see ⌊His glory⌋ rest in the building of His Chosen House.

[36] These are the words of the Prince of Princes, the Anointed Onne who wrote about the matter and the form for the honor of the members of the company for the love of You burns in his heart like a fiery furnace, Yom Tov, who is called Rebbe Melech HaMashiach Son of David, the son of Iddo Netanyahu, the Son of David, born in the Community of Israel.

[37] At a young age my parents moved to the United States whereby I grew up in New York then in my teens moved to San Diego where I endured much persecution whereby I fled to for my safety to Tijuana Mexico.

[38] Afterwards, I settled in the sacred and glorious Jewish community of Tijuana Mexico. This is where I composed this work.

Preface

[1] "So says God, the Lord, 'This is the boundary for which you shall divide the land as an inheritance…. You shall divide it as an inheritance, for each [tribe] like his brother.'" These verses imply that the future division of the land will not resemble the original division, in which each tribe was given a portion according to its population. In the future time, all the tribes will be given equal portions. The division of the tribes' portions will resemble the rows of a vineyard, with each portion spanning from the eastern border of Eretz Yisrael to the Sea on the west, as explained in the narrative. No two tribes will be given a portion in the same strip of land.

[2] The verse states "You shall divide it as an inheritance, each one like his brother, as I swore to give it to their fathers." Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel explains that this verse is teaching that the tribes should not complain that the land is being divided in a different manner from how it was divided originally. With the words, "as I swore to give it to their fathers," Yechezkel is explaining that God did not swear to give the land to those who originally inherited it. Rather, God swore to give the land to the "fathers," i.e., the Patriarchs, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. Hence, all the tribes have an equal share in their heritage, and all the tribes will receive an equal share in the Land.

[3] With regard to the length of each strip of land, the Sifri, Parshas Haazinu, states: "What is the intent of the statements, 'Yehudah, one,' 'Asher, one,' 'Dan, one'? They teach that in the Future, Eretz Yisrael will occupy a span from the east to the west. The strip to be given to each tribe being 25,000 rods wide – this is 75 mil." From where did they derive this measure? From the portion of land to be offered as a terumah. It was equal to one of these tribal portions, as it is written with regard to the terumah, "as one of the portions." The portion set

aside as terumah was 25,000 rods wide, as explicitly stated in the narrative.

[4] To explain: The measuring rod of the angel in Yechezkel's vision was six oversized cubits long, as evident from the verse, "In the man's hand, there was a measuring rod six cubits long, each ⌊cubit⌋ a cubit and a handbreadth." An ordinary cubit is five handbreadths long. Each of the measuring rod's cubits was an ordinary cubit and an additional handbreadth. Thus, each of the measuring rod's cubits was six handbreadths long. Thus, a length of 25,000 rods is 150,000 oversized cubits. A mil is 2000 cubits. Thus, the width of every strip of land is 75 mil. See sec. 80.

[5] "These are the names of the tribes. In the northernmost corner…." Dan, Asher, Naftali, Menashe, Ephraim, Reuven, Yehudah. "On the border of Yehudah, from the eastern edge to the western edge shall be the portion that is terumah that you shall offer twenty-five thousand rods in width, and in length as one of the other parts, from the eastern edge to the western edge. The ⌊Beis Ha⌋Mikdash shall be in the midst of it." The narrative continues, stating that "the portion to be offered as terumah to God," i.e., for God's Sanctuary, will be in this strip that is located near the tribal portion of Yehudah. This portion, as a whole, is called the terumah, as will be explained at the end of this treatise. In the midst of the terumah, as one proceeds from east to west, in its northern portion, there will be a strip the length of 25,000 measuring rods with a width of 10,000 measuring rods from the north to the south. "The ⌊Beis Ha-⌋Mikdash, the Holy of Holies, will be located within ⌊this area⌋."

[6] "Five hundred by five hundred; its perimeter will be square," as measured by the measuring rod. This verse describes the area enclosed by the wall surrounding the Temple Mount, which encompasses the Sanctuary, as will be explained below. The additional space beyond this area on either side will be explained at the end of the treatise, with the help of the Rock ⌊of Israel⌋.

[7] Now "Behold with your eyes, listen with your ears, and focus your heart, on all that I am showing you." "Behold a wall outside the House all around." This wall encompasses the area 500 measuring rods by 500 measuring rods that was mentioned; this is the wall around the Temple Mount.

[8] "He measured the width of the structure," i.e., the thickness of the wall. "It was one measuring rod and its height was one measuring rod." Thus, this was a low wall, as the Mishnah states with regard to the Second Beis HaMikdash: "All the walls that were there were tall with the exception of the eastern wall ⌊to enable⌋ the kohen who would burn the red heifer standing on the Mount of Olives to see the entrance to the Sanctuary." Rashi also interprets the above verse in this manner. True, from the simple meaning of the above verse, it is possible to understand that the wall around the entire Temple Mount was low, not only the eastern wall. Nevertheless, since the builders of the Second Beis HaMikdash built their structure to correspond – at least partially – to this Future Building, as we explained at length in the introduction, it is possible to say that this verse refers only to the eastern wall. Therefore, when explaining the above verse, Rashi quotes this mishnah without making a distinction between one structure and another since it is possible to interpret the verse as corresponding to the building of the Second Temple. And indeed, the angel describing the structure to Yechezkel was standing in the east, as can be derived from the context.

Radak interprets the verse in the same manner, stating: The mishnah's statement, "with the exception of the eastern wall," refers to the wall around the Temple Mount. Those who ascended from exile built the structure like the vision of the structure that will be built in the Future and that was shown to Yechezkel in certain ways. True, the simple meaning of the verse is that the entire wall was low, for it did not specifically mention the eastern wall, but said simply "Its height was one measuring rod."

[9] Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel, by contrast, maintains that the entire surrounding wall was low, stating: "This was for beauty and for attractiveness so that from the outside one could see the entire building without being blocked by that wall." It is also possible to explain this interpretation based on the rationale given by the Mishnah that the reason the eastern wall was low in the Second Beis HaMikdash was so that the kohen who burnt the red heifer could see that entrance to the Sanctuary. This rationale is not relevant in the Future Beis HaMikdash. To explain: Regarding the Second Beis HaMikdash, the Mishnah states: "There were 12 steps leading to the Women's Courtyard," and the height of each of the steps was half a cubit. Thus, the Women's Courtyard was 6 cubits higher than the entrance to the Temple Mount. There were 15 cubits to the Courtyard of the Israelites, which was above the Women's Courtyard. Thus the Courtyard of the Israelites was 7 1/2 cubits above the Women's Courtyard, and 13½ cubits higher than the entrance to the Temple Mount. The Duchan was 2½ cubits higher than the Courtyard of the Israelites. Thus, the Duchan was 16 cubits above the entrance to the Temple Mount. There were 12 steps from the Temple Courtyard to the Ulam. Thus the Ulam was 6 cubits higher than the Duchan and 22 cubits higher than the entrance to the Temple Mount. Now, the gates to the Temple Mount were only 20 cubits high, and there was a rampart built above them. As mentioned above, the entrance to the Sanctuary was 22 cubits higher than the entrance to the Temple Mount. Thus, it was impossible to see the entrance to the Ulam from the east because it was blocked by the ramparts on top of the gate to the Temple Mount. Therefore the builders of the Second Beis HaMikdash made the eastern wall lower.

The Future Beis HaMikdash will have 8 steps leading to the Courtyard of the Israelites instead of 15 steps. This means that the Courtyard of the Israelites will only be 10 cubits above the Temple Mount, and the Ulam will only be 18 1/2 cubits above the Temple Mount. Thus, the entire structure will be 3 1/2 cubits lower, making it unnecessary to

reduce the height of the eastern wall of the Future Beis HaMikdash. Hence, we can posit that the wall around the Temple Mount was not low to enable the kohen burning the red heifer to see the entrance to the Sanctuary, but for another reason, as explained by Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel. According to this approach, there is no difference between the eastern wall and the walls on the other sides.

[10] Nevertheless, this interpretation has certain drawbacks. Firstly, the Altar was positioned entirely before the Sanctuary as will be explained in sec. 43. The Altar was – and will be – 9 cubits high without its horns. As we mentioned above, the Ulam was 6 cubits higher than the Duchan. Thus, the Altar will be 3 cubits higher than the steps of the Ulam, and will be 21 ½ cubits above the ground at the base of the Temple Mount. Furthermore, the description of Yechezkel's vision does not describe how many steps there were leading to the Women's Courtyard and the Ulam. It is possible that the reduction of the height of the stairs to the Courtyard of the Israelites was made up by an increase in the height of the stairs to the Women's Courtyard and the Ulam respectively. Thus the rationale mentioned by the Mishnah could also apply, as stated above. Therefore, the opinion of Rashi and Radak – that the verse agrees with the Mishnah – remains the most desirable.

It was stated above that in the Future, the perimeter of the Temple Mount, may it be built speedily in our days, will be greater than it was during the Second Beis HaMikdash. The mishnah states that during the era of the Second Beis HaMikdash, "The Temple Mount was 500 cubits by 500 cubits." In contrast, the Future Beis HaMikdash will be six times as large. Thus, the Future Beis HaMikdash will be 3000 cubits by 3000 cubits. Elazar HaKalir alluded to this, writing, "The Beloved One extended a line; 3000 measured cubits." Indeed, Rashi quotes this piyut, liturgical hymn, in his commentary to Yechezkel 42:20.

[11] God revealed His secret to His prophet, explaining to him why the area of the Beis HaMikdash will be expanded, as it is written: "The House of Israel will no longer defile My Holy name, they and their kings, by their harlotry, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places, by placing their threshold by My thresholds, and their doorpost by My doorposts,… Now, they will distance their harlotry and the corpses of their kings from Me and I will dwell in their midst forever." These verses teach us that the moral level of the people during the Second Beis HaMikdash era was not fit for the Divine presence to dwell within it for eternity. Therefore the boundaries of the Beis HaMikdash were not expanded. Instead, that prophecy was left to be fulfilled in the Ultimate Future, as is explained in the introduction.

[12] "On ⌈all⌋ four sides, he measured it. It had a wall all around, 500 measuring rods long and 500 measuring rods wide to separate between the holy and the mundane." "And he came to the gateway that faces toward the east." This verse describes how the angel entered the enclosed area of the Temple Mount and came to the eastern gateway leading to the Women's Courtyard. That courtyard is called "the outer courtyard" throughout the narrative because it is located before the Courtyard of the Israelites. The Women's Courtyard surrounds and encompasses the entire complex, as will be explained.

[13] It important to emphasize that this enclosure (i.e., the Women's Courtyard) is not located precisely in the center of the Temple Mount. Indeed, the mishnah teaches, "The majority of its area was in the south. The second largest area was in the east, then in the north, and the smallest area was the west. In the area where there was the most space, there more of its functions were carried out."

בית המקדש השלישי

The Third Beit HaMikdash

Chapter 1

[1] The wall of the Outer Courtyard wall was 6 cubits thick, as explained with regard to the threshold of the gateway in sec. 3. The length of the wall surrounding the Outer Courtyard on its northern side, as it ran from east to west, was 317 cubits. We refer to this side as the length, because that is the manner of referring to the longer side of a rectangle, as Rashi explains in several places in his commentary. The width of the Outer Courtyard, as it runs from north to south, was 312 cubits. This will be explained in sections 28 and 74 below, with God's help. The size of the Women's Courtyard differs substantially from that of the Women's Courtyard in the Second Beis HaMikdash, because during the Second Beis HaMikdash, the Women's Courtyard did not surround the entire building, as we will explain further on.

Chapter 2

[1] There was a gateway in the middle of the eastern side of the wall surrounding the Women's Courtyard, which is called Shaar HaEisun, "the Gateway of the Entrance." The term "eisun" has the same root as the phrase, "asa boker," "the morning came." This gate was called "the Gateway of the Entrance" because it was the primary gateway for entering and departing the Beis HaMikdash. One who entered through this gateway would prostrate himself directly opposite the Holy of Holies.

[2] The narrative in Yechezkel mentions that the angel "ascended its steps." In his commentary, Rashi refers to the mishnah in Middos, which relates that there were twelve steps leading to the Women's

Courtyard. Each step was half a cubit high and half a cubit wide. Indeed, all of the steps in the Beis HaMikdash had these dimensions. The only exception was the steps leading to the Ulam. This is Rashi's version of the mishnah. However, it seems that Rambam's version of the text did not include the words "except the steps to the Ulam."

[3] Radak explains that all of the references to the Eastern Gateway refer to the gateway to the Temple Mount, and not to the gateway to the Outer Courtyard. Nevertheless, it is logical to assume that even according to his understanding, the gateway to the Women's Courtyard was built in this manner. By studying the description of the gateways on the northern and southern sides, we can infer what the gateway on the eastern side was like. Radak explains that the verse mentions the eastern gateway to the Temple Mount, and the northern and southern gateway to the Outer Courtyard. The description of one should be applied to the other and vice versa.

Chapter 3

[1] The narrative in Yechezkel continues, "And he measured the threshold of the gateway," i.e., the width of the doorposts that cover the thickness of the wall. "It was one measuring rod wide and the ⌊other⌋ threshold was one measuring rod wide." "And he measured the width of the entrance to the gateway; it was 10 cubits."

[2] The narrative continues: V'al pnei HaShaar HaEisun…chamishim amah. Rashi explains that the words v'al pnei mean "and the height". Thus, the verse should be translated as, "And the height of the Entrance Gate was 50 cubits." He states: "From the fact that the other gateways mentioned in the narrative were 50 cubits high, I derived that the words al pnei here refer to a height of 50 cubits." Rashi also

interprets the term al as referring to height in I Melachim 7:6, וְאוּלָם עַל פְּנֵיהֶם, which he understands as meaning, "He made a high vestibule above the entire building."

[3] Concerning the height of this gateway, Radak writes: I am amazed at [Rashi's] interpretation, for nowhere in the narrative is a measure for the height of the gateways mentioned. Similarly, in the Second Beis HaMikdash, there was no gateway that was 50 cubits high. All of the gateways were 10 cubits wide and 20 cubits high, except for the gateway to the Ulam (the Entrance Hall), which was 40 cubits high. [Moreover,] where [in Scripture] is the term orech used to refer to height? Orech always refers to one of the coordinates of area. The term govah, by contrast, refers to height or depth.

[4] The fact that the measure of the pillars used in the Beis HaMikdash built by King Shlomoh is referred to as komah in the book of Melachim, but as orech in Divrei HaYamim does not contradict the above. In Divrei HaYamim, the pillars were measured as they lay on the ground [before being erected in the building]. Therefore, they are described by the term orech, "length." [In contrast, in Melachim,] the pillars are described as they stood, therefore, the term komah, "stature," is used.

[5] Rashi's interpretation can be explained as follows: Rashi interprets the first words of the verse, al pnei, as meaning "the height of". Thus, the verse is discussing height, and the term orech must similarly mean height. Why does Rashi interpret al pnei as "the height of"? Pnei is derived from the word panim, which is often translated as "face" or "surface." Since a person's face is part of the upper portion of his body, Rashi understood that this verse is referring to height.

[6] Alternatively, the word pnei can be derived from the term pinah, "corner." Thus the prophet Tzephania speaks of pinos hagevohos, which Radak interprets as meaning, "the high towers." In his

Shorashim, Radak justifies his interpretation by explaining that towers are built with tall stones.

[7] Based on Radak's explanation that orech refers to length, the recurring statement that the orech of the structure's different elements was 50 cubits can be explained as follows: As I understand it, the height of all the structures was measured when they were lying on the ground. Thus, when explaining the statement that the angel speaking to Yechez-kel held "a linen cord in his hand and a measuring rod," Radak comments that the cord was used to measure large measures of length on the ground.

[8] We interpret that verse as meaning that the angel held the cord in his hand so that he could easily take accurate measures of the objects' heights. It would have been much more difficult to measure objects that were more than one measuring rod high when the objects were upright, and might have required the angel to measure them several times. The angel would have to mark the place where the measure ended so that he could place the measuring rod there, and measure it again, repeating the process several times. Measuring the structures with the cord avoided this repetitive process. True, an angel was speaking to Yechezkel, and Yechezkel was witnessing a vision from above; there was no actual physical measuring done. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the vision reflected the most practical way of measuring the structures. Therefore the cord was very long so that it could be used to measure even the highest structures at one time. Afterwards, the cord was laid on the ground and its length was measured with the measuring rod. Measuring the length of the cord on the ground is a far easier process than measuring an object's height.

[9] If this explanation does not sufficiently explain why the term "length" is used to describe a measurement of height, we can still accept Rashi's explanation despite the textual anomaly. There was certainly a deep, hidden reason why the text was written this way,

for there is neither a small nor a large element in this awesome vision that does not have an underlying reason of untold depth.

[10] Nevertheless, there is still a question regarding Rashi's interpretation. Rashi writes that all the gateways in the narrative were this height, yet the text does not support this statement.

[11] Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel justifies the questions raised by Radak, but ultimately agrees that Rashi's interpretation is more compatible with the simple meaning of the text.

[12] It was taught: "All the gateways had gates except the gateway to the Ulam."

Chapter 4

[1] "There were three cells of the eastern gateway on one of its sides, and three on the other. All three were of the same measure." These cells were located outside the gateway, close to the wall around the courtyard, 2 1/2 cubits away from the inner space of the gateway on either side. This is indicated by the verse that states U'g'vul lifnei ha'ta'os amah echas v'amah echas, "There was a space of one cubit by one cubit before the cells." In addition, the vestibule would extend 1 1/2 cubits beyond its gateway, as will be explained shortly. We translated the word g'vul as "space," based on Rashi who interprets it as meaning "empty space." The 1 1/2 cubits where the vestibule would extend is also part of the empty space before the cell. Thus, in addition to the 1 1/2 cubits of the vestibule's frame, there was, as the verse states, "a space of one cubit before the cells." Thus the cells were located 2 1/2 cubits from the inner space of the gateway.

[2] The wall of the cell was 5 cubits, as it is written: "The cell was one measuring rod long and one measuring rod wide, between the cells" – i.e., the wall between the cells – "was 5 cubits." Thus the space from the edge of the roof of the cell on one side of the gateway to the edge of the roof on the other side was 25 cubits. This sum is derived as follows: The thickness of the wall on either side was 5 cubits, for a total of 10 cubits. The walls are included in our calculation of the space between the edges of the roofs, because the roof did not cover the wall. Rather, it only covered the empty space called "the cell." Adding the 2 1/2 cubits on either side that we discussed above, brings the total to 15 cubits. The inner space of the gateway was 10 cubits. Thus there were 25 cubits between the edge of the cell's roof on one side of the gateway to the edge of the roof on the other side of the gateway. This is the meaning of the verse: "He measured the gateway from the roof of the cell to the roof ⌊of the opposite cell⌋ as 25 cubits."

[3] Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel writes: Radak asks: Why does the verse state, "He measured the gateway"? It should have stated, "He measured from the roof of the cell to the roof of the opposite cell," without mentioning the gateway. To me, this does not present a question, because while he is measuring from the roof of the cell to the roof of the cell, he is, as a matter of course, measuring the gateway between them.

[4] The latter verse concludes, "an entrance opposite an entrance," which teaches that the chain of three cells on either side had entrances to this empty space, one opposite the other. One would enter the first cell through this entrance and then proceed to the second cell and then to the third cell. The second and third cells did not have entrances to the outside.

[5] "There were narrowing windows to the cells" and to their sidewalls towards the inside of the gateway. The term "sidewalls" refers to the structures at the sides of the two entrances to the chain of cells that

opened to the gateway. The verse continues, stating that the windows were "all around facing the inside," i.e., to the wall, to the inside of the Women's Courtyard."

[6] In his commentary to the verse, "There were… windows to the cells," Rashi writes that these sets of three cells did not have cells built on top of them. In his commentary to the Talmud, Rashbam writes: "The cell was one measuring rod, i.e., 6 cubits, long. This refers to the middle level." Thus, Rashbam understood that the cells resembled the tzelaos, the side-chambers that surrounded the Sanctuary. The tzelaos had other side-chambers built upon them, as will be stated in sec. 64. Rashbam maintains that the same pattern applied with regard to the cells at the gateway, since it seems from that Talmudic passage that the side-chambers and the cells are identical.

[7] The simple interpretation of the verses does not appear to support Rashbam's interpretation. For were there to have been other levels of cells, the prophet would have mentioned them, as he mentioned the three levels of the side-chambers. With regard to the cells, by contrast, the prophet only states: "There were three cells of the eastern gateway on one of its sides, and three on the other," and "There were 5 cubits between the cells." The intent of the latter verse is that the wall separating the first cell from the second cell, and the second cell from the third cell, was 5 cubits thick. Since we know that the cells were next to each other, why does the verse state, "There were three cells… on one of its sides"? To teach that there was a line of three adjacent cells and no others. Thus, the narrative does not mention other cells built upon these cells as it does regarding the side-chambers, indicating that there were no such cells, as Rashi states (Mahadura Basra).

[8] None of the cells in the entrance to the courtyards is mentioned in the description of the building of the Second Beis HaMikdash. This difference between the Second Beis HaMikdash and Yechezkel's

prophesy is even more significant when learning Radak's interpretation, because Radak maintains that there were also cells in the wall around the Temple Mount.

Chapter 5

[1] **SECTIONS 5–6**

[2] "He measured the vestibule (ulam) of the gateway from the inside." This verse is teaching that this vestibule is located inside the gateway, unlike the other vestibules which were like anterooms on the outside, e.g., the Ulam before the Sanctuary, or the vestibules before the Chamber of the Israelites. This vestibule, and similarly all the other vestibules of the gates to the Women's Courtyard, were inside the gateway. The angel measured the thickness of the walls on the right and the left of this vestibule, and they were "one measuring rod" thick. The vestibules had doors and doorposts at their edge, as the verse states, "The doorpost of the gateway on the inside of the vestibule of the gateway was one measuring rod" wide.

[3] The walls of the vestibules were positioned a cubit-and-a-half from either side of the inner space of the gateway. Thus, the measure of the expanse of the vestibule from north to south was 13 cubits: There were 10 cubits inside the gateway, and 1 1/2 cubits between the wall of the vestibule and opening of the gateway on either side. This is implied by the verse, "The length of the gateway was 13 cubits."

[4] The wall of the vestibule was 6 cubits thick, and it was positioned 1 1/2 cubits from the inner space of the gateway. The wall of the cell was 5 cubits thick, and it was positioned 2 1/2 cubits from the inner space of the gateway. Thus the inner space of the cell was positioned

6 cubits from the inner space of the vestibule. This is the meaning of the verse, "The cell, six cubits on one side and six cubits on the other side." Even though the narrative mentioned the dimensions of the cell previously, here, the verse is saying that both the southern and the northern cells were positioned 6 cubits from the inner space of the vestibule. Radak offers a similar interpretation.

5 "He measured the width of the vestibule of the gateway as 8 cubits." This refers to the extent that vestibule juts out from east to west. The passage states: Al lifnei ulam hashaar…chamishim amah – "The height of the vestibule of the gateway was 50 cubits." In this verse, the word al means "height." The vestibule had narrowing windows.

Chapter 7

1 "Its pillars were 2 cubits." The pillars were round, treelike structures made from hewn stone. They stood at the end of the vestibule, with one attached to the right wall and the other attached to the left wall. These pillars took the place of doorposts. The diameter of each one was 2 cubits. Thus, including the pillars, the vestibule jutted out 10 cubits from east to west. Each of the pillars was 60 cubits high. At the top of each pillar, was a coronet resembling a palm tree, as stated in the verse, "On each pillar, a palm-like coronet."

Chapter 8

[1] I already wrote above that the northern and southern walls of the outer courtyard were 317 cubits long. More details concerning these walls are discussed in sec. 74. It is logical to assume that these walls were a measuring rod (i.e. 6 cubits) thick, because the dimensions of this gateway are the same as the dimensions of the first gateway. The text relates that the first gateway's threshold covered the thickness of the wall, and was 6 cubits thick.

Chapter 9

[1] On the northern side, after proceeding 151 cubits from east to west, the prophet saw a gateway. Although this figure is not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, the calculation can be easily calculated. As explained in sec. 22, the width of the outer courtyard from its eastern end to the eastern wall of the inner courtyard was 100 cubits. The eastern wall of the inner courtyard was 6 cubits thick, for all the walls of the courtyard were 6 cubits thick, as explained above. The inner courtyard was a square measuring 100 cubits by 100 cubits, as will be stated in sec. 36. There was a gateway in the center of each side. Each gateway was positioned directly opposite one of the outer wall's gateways. Since each gateway was 10 cubits wide, the beginning of the gateway on the north side of the inner courtyard would thus begin after 45 cubits of the courtyard's inner space as measured from east to west. Thus we can calculate the position of the northern gateway of the outer wall, which is positioned opposite the inner wall. It begins after the 100 cubits of the outer courtyard, the 6 cubits of the inner wall, and the 45 cubits of the inner space of

the inner courtyard, i.e. the gate would begin after a total of 151 cubits.

[2] All the above is summarized by the verses, "He measured the length and the width of the gateway that faced north…. It had three cells on one side and three on the other…. Its vestibule was the same measure of the first gateway, 50 cubits high. The width ⌈from the edge of the roof of the cell to the edge of the roof of the second cell⌋ was 25 cubits. Its windows, its vestibule, and its palm-like coronets were the same as those of the gate that faced east."

[3] "They would ascend to it by seven steps." Radak and Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel explain that the steps mentioned here were necessary to accommodate the difference in height between this courtyard and the Courtyard of the Israelites. It is as if the verse is saying that people leaving this courtyard would ascend seven steps to the Courtyard of the Israelites.

[4] Rashi, however, explains that the steps mentioned in this verse refer to steps outside the gateways, and were built to accommodate the difference in height between the Women's Courtyard and the outer area of the Temple Mount. In my opinion, this verse should be understood according to Rashi's commentary: that the steps are outside these gateways. Although the narrative does not mention the number of steps to the Eastern Gate, based on the mishnah, we stated that there were twelve steps. It is, however, possible that there were only seven steps on the northern and southern sides, because the mountain could have had a greater incline on its eastern side.

[5] "Its vestibules were toward the inside," i.e., the vestibule was further inside than the steps (i.e. the steps were outside the vestibule). Thus, one would ascend the steps before entering the vestibule.

Chapter 10

[1] The southern wall of the outer courtyard was 317 cubits long and 6 cubits thick, like the northern wall described above. More details concerning the outer courtyard's southern wall will be explained in sec. 74, with God's help.

Chapter 11

[1] Similarly, after proceeding 151 cubits along the wall on the southern side, the prophet saw a gateway, as it is written: "⌊God⌋ took me towards the south. Behold, there was the Southern Gate. He measured its pillars and its vestibules, and they were the same as these measures. It had windows and vestibules around it like these windows. Its height was 50 cubits. The width ⌊from the edge of the roof of the cell to the edge of the roof of the second cell⌋ was 25 cubits. Its stairway had seven steps. Its vestibule was further inside than them. It had palm-like coronets, one on one side and one on the other, on its pillars."

Chapter 12

[1] The western wall of the Outer Courtyard is not mentioned in the Scripture. It is, however, logical to assume that its length and thickness were the same as those of the eastern wall.

[2] It is possible to explain that the western wall is not mentioned in the narrative because the prophet did not see a gate there, and when describing the courtyards, he only mentions the gates and not the walls. Similarly, when describing the Second Beis HaMikdash, the Mishnah does not mention any gate on the western wall.

[3] The sixth chapter of Kaftor Va-Ferach, which focuses on the special mitzvos practiced in Eretz Yisrael, mentions a gate on the western wall that was called Parbar. I do not know the source for these statements. Our text of the mishnah follows the approach of the Sages, who do not mention any such gate. Moreover, our Sages interpreted the Scriptural term ulaparbar, which could be understood as meaning, "and to the Parbar," as meaning k'lapei bar, "and on the outside." Thus, according to the mishnah, the word ulaparbar is teaching that the Levites stood guard outside of the walls of the courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash, as stated in Tractate Tamid.

[4] It could be argued that every place where the Levites would stand guard outside the walls of the courtyard, was located outside one of its gates. If so, there was also a gate on the west, for they would guard there, behind the Kapores.

[5] The Levites would stand guard outside a gate so they would easily be able to enter the place they were guarding. Indeed, guards normally stand at entrances. The Levites stood guard outside the gates, rather than inside them, so they would be able sit down, rather than stand the entire night. (Only kings from the House of David were allowed to sit inside the gates of the Courtyard.) The Levites were, however, permitted to walk inside the gates at night, as they were during the day. True, the gates to the Courtyard were locked every night. It is, however, possible that the gates had smaller wicket entrances at their sides, or that the Levites had keys to each gate. The fact that the Levites also stood watch at the corners of the Courtyard and the corners of the wall around the Temple Mount, and yet there were no gates there, does not contradict the above explanation, for

there were gates on each side of the wall. For this reason, Kaftor VaFerach maintains that there was also a gate on the western side for the Levites guarding outside that wall. According to his logic, the mishnah does not mention this gate in its reckoning, because it was not used as a doorway, since, as the mishnah states, little use was made of the western area of the Temple Mount. It can be said that the narrative in Yechezkel does not mention this gate for the same reason.

[6] This rationale could also explain a later mishnah, which states that there were thirteen gates to the Courtyard. When enumerating the gates, the mishnah includes two gates on the western side that are nameless. These gates were nameless because they were not used to enter or exit the compound. When explaining that mishnah, Kaftor VaFerach felt the need to cite two other gates in the western wall because otherwise, according to the conception in that text, there was only the Parbar Gate on this side – and it had a name. That text, therefore, counts the Gate of the Ulam and the Gate of the Heichal among those 13 gates, stating that they did not have a specific name.

[7] I wonder what forced Kaftor VaFerach to offer such an interpretation. The Sage who authored the mishnah saying that there were thirteen gates obviously differs with the Sage who maintains that there were only seven gates. Thus, just as he counts an additional gate in the south and in the north even though there were no such gates according to the Sage who maintains that there were seven gates, so too, he maintains that there were two more gates in the west that did not have a name.

[8] These gates were located behind the Kapores. These were not the Gate of the Ulam and the Gate of the Heichal, for it is very difficult to include these gates in this reckoning even though they are to the west of the other gates to the Courtyard.

[9] Although with the Parbar Gate, there are fourteen gates, this is not a problem. The same question could be raised according to the Sages who maintain that there are seven gates, for with the Parbar Gate, there are eight. We see that the Parbar Gate is never included in the reckoning. Rabbeinu Shemayah's commentary to the Mishnah supports this interpretation. When explaining the opinion that there were thirteen gates, Rabbeinu Shemayah states that there were two gates to the west, behind the Kapores. Nevertheless it is logical to assume that since the prevailing opinion in the Mishnah counts only seven gates and does not count any gates in the west, there were no gates there. The reason why there were no gates in the western wall is that little use was made of that portion of the Temple Mount. Hence, there was no need to enter or depart from that direction.

[10] Similarly, Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel writes that there was no gate in the western wall of the Temple Courtyard, and gives two other reasons for this: a) So people would only enter the compound facing the Sanctuary. Thus, they could bow down facing the Sanctuary, and see its entrance. This is not possible when entering the compound from the west. b) One is obligated to bow down when entering the Temple Courtyard. One entering from the west will bow down facing east, i.e., opposite the sun. God would distance us from such conduct because it resembles the abominations of the non-Jews.

[11] This explains why, in his vision of the Future Beis HaMikdash, Yechezkel did not see a gate in the west. Therefore, he did not mention the western wall, because he only mentioned walls which had a gate. "And He brought me into the outer courtyard." Until this point, the prophet was walking around the Temple Mount to see the cells on the outside of the gate. At this point, he entered the courtyard.

[12] "Behold, there were chambers and a balcony." The verse is teaching that there was a loft that projected outward on the top of the walls of the courtyard, and there were chambers built upon it.

[13] This balcony surrounded the entire outer courtyard, as stated in ch. 42. The chambers that were near the cells (which will be explained in sec. 71) were positioned opposite the balcony, in the northwest and the southwest sides of the complex. Since the prophet mentions that the balcony began at the eastern gate, it can be concluded that the balcony ran along these 3 sides at least. This can also be inferred from the phrase, "all around." This is also reflected in the commentary of Rabbeinu Shemayah cited below. It is logical to assume that the balcony also encompassed the west side.

[13] This balcony was built at the top of the outer wall of the courtyard. Its floor was the same height as the top of the gates, i.e., 50 cubits, as stated in sec. 3 above. Wherever there was a gate in the wall, the balcony would be interrupted by the gate. This is implied by the verse, "The balcony was on the side of the gates," i.e., at their side, and not above them. The balcony was also interrupted by the space above the open chambers that will, with God's help, soon be described.

[14] The verse relates, "There were thirty chambers on the balcony." In contrast, the Second Beis HaMikdash did not have a balcony with chambers on top of its walls. It is possible to say, however, that there was something similar, as the mishnah in Tractate Middos describes: "Originally, [the walls of] the courtyard were even. Afterwards, they built a balcony around them so that the women could observe from above and the men from below. Thus, they would not be intermingled."

[15] Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel writes: The first outer courtyard: Our Sages said that during the Second Beis HaMikdash, this courtyard was called "The Women's Courtyard," and they built a balcony for it. I saw in Christian sources that this first courtyard was designated for non-Jews who come to pray in the House of God, as Shlomoh said in his prayer, "And also a foreigner who is not of Your people will

come…." There are grounds for those concepts in our sources, because our prophets have foretold that in the Future, many people shall go up to the mountain of God, to the House of the God of Yaakov to receive His Torah. Therefore, it is appropriate that there be an outer place dedicated for them, one that is furthest removed from holiness. Perhaps, this courtyard will also have a balcony for women, as our Sages taught. The women will then observe from above and the non-Jews will be in the courtyard below.

[16] This sage forgot the teaching in the first chapter of Tractate Keilim: "The chayl is holier than it (the Temple Mount), for non-Jews and those impure due to contact with a human corpse may not enter there." Thus, non-Jews were not allowed to enter the entire area of the Temple Mount, merely parts of it. Now, the chayl was positioned after the soreg, but before the Women's Courtyard. This holds true according to both interpretations of the chayl: that advanced by Rashi and of Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura, and that advanced by Rambam. Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura comments on the Mishnah's statement that the chayl was 10 cubits, and explains that it was an area 10 cubits wide, positioned before the Women's Courtyard. Rambam interprets the chayl as being the wall around the Women's Courtyard, which was 10 cubits wide, stating: "Concerning it, Lamentations states: 'The wall and the rampart mourned.'" According to Rambam, "The rampart" refers to the wall of the Women's Courtyard, which was a low wall, and "the wall" refers to the wall around the Courtyard of the Israelites, which was a high wall. Thus all these authorities maintain that the chayl was before the Women's Courtyard, and that non-Jews were forbidden to enter there. Nevertheless, the above concepts are not in contradiction with King's Shlomoh's prayer, "And also a foreigner who is not of Your people will come…," since it can be explained that there was a place for non-Jews on the Temple Mount. That place, however, was before the Soreg.

[19] It seems to me that this was the purpose of the Soreg: to separate between the area of the Temple Mount that was of greater sanctity –

and therefore off-limits to non-Jews and those who were impure due to contact with a human corpse – from the areas of the Temple Mount that had less sanctity. For this reason, the Greek kings broke through this barrier when they entered the Beis HaMikdash: because its purpose was to create a separation, distancing them from the area with greater sanctity. When the Jews merited and conquered the Beis HaMikdash from the Greeks, they mended these gaps and ordained that those who enter the Temple Mount bow down once for each of the gaps that were mended as an expression of thanks to God. This is the courtyard that the Christian sources mentioned. They referred to this portion of the Temple Mount as "the courtyard," not intending to refer to the Courtyard our Sages spoke about.

[20] It is not appropriate to say that non-Jews had a place in the Women's Courtyard when they exercised authority over the Temple and only afterwards was their entry restricted. Firstly, it appears that non-Jews were given this place on the Temple Mount with the consent of the Jews and their Sages, not against their will. Moreover, at a time when non-Jews exercised authority over the Temple Mount, who would stop them and prevent them from proceeding further than the Women's Courtyard? Indeed, this is not what Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel meant. He merely mentioned that non-Jews had a special place on the Temple Mount, which was mentioned by their wise men. Therefore, what I wrote is correct.

Chapter 13

[1] **SECTIONS 13–16**

[2] "In the four corners of the courtyard, there were roofless courtyards." They were roofless to allow smoke and steam to rise

from them. In his commentary to the Mishnah, Rabbeinu Shemayah writes that in Yechezkel's vision, the balcony that surrounded the courtyard on its walls was interrupted by these courtyards.

[3] "They were forty [cubits] long and thirty [cubits] wide. The four [courtyards] were of the one measure…. There was a row of inlaid stones around all four of them and cooking places were made under these rows," i.e., a row of inlaid stones jutted out from the wall around the earth. There were holes on top of the stones, with places to put pots. There was empty space below this row of stones where a fire could be kindled beneath the pots placed on top of the stones.

[4] "And he said to me, 'These are the cooking places where those who serve in the House will cook the sacrifices of the people.'" The sacrifices mentioned in this verse are the breast and the lower leg of peace-offerings, which would not be disqualified by being taken out of the Courtyard of the Israelites. In contrast, this would disqualify the sin-offerings and the guilt-offerings. Hence, a special place was set aside to cook them within the Inner Courtyard, as will be explained in sec. 71.

[5] Tractate Middos, states: [In the Women's Courtyard,] there were four chambers, [one in each] of the four corners. [Each chamber measured] forty cubits by forty cubits. They were not roofed, nor will they be so in the Future…. What purpose did they serve? In the southeast corner was the Chamber of the Nazirites. There, they would cook their peace offerings and shave their hair, casting it under the cooking urn. In the northeast corner was the Wood Storage Bin. There the kohanim who were physically blemished would check the wood for worms. Any wood that was worm-ridden was disqualified for the Altar. In the northwest corner was the Chamber of Those Stricken with Tzaraas. [The chamber in] the southwest corner: Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov said: "I forgot which purpose it served." Abba Shaul said: "Wine and oil were stored there and it was called the Oil Storage Chamber."

[6] These courtyards, which the mishnah calls chambers, were located in the corners of the Women's Courtyard. In addition to these chambers, there were other chambers built in the middle of the Women's Courtyard. It would have been fitting to describe the other chambers here. However, since their nature and the order in which they were placed cannot be understood without first explaining the building of the Sanctuary in general and in particular, we will discuss these chambers in sec. 71.

[7] Section 71 also explains that the statement here, that these courtyards were in the corners of the Women's Courtyard, refers to the courtyard's inner corners. These courtyards were not on the courtyard's exterior corners, as depicted by the composer of the picture of the Second Beis HaMikdash printed in Manitoba. This drawing is inaccurate, as explained later on in detail. Therefore in the picture of the Future Beis HaMikdash, may it be built speedily in our days, that we have printed, we depicted these courtyards in the inner space of the Women's Courtyard, two courtyards in the two eastern corners and two courtyards in the two western corners. The location of the courtyards in the western corners differs from their location in the Second Beis HaMikdash because, unlike the courtyard in the Second Beis HaMikdash, in the Future Beis HaMikdash, this courtyard will surround the entire complex and the Sanctuary.

Chapter 17

[1] "And he measured from the ⌊lower⌋ gate…" of the Outer Courtyard, which was positioned at the bottom of the mountain, "…to the ⌊upper⌋ gate" of the Inner Courtyard, which was positioned at the top of the mountain. The difference in height resulted from the fact that "the Temple complex was not ⌊built⌋ on flat land, but on the incline

of the mountain." Therefore, it was necessary to have steps between one gate and the other, as explained in the relevant places. The first measurement was made in the south, measuring the empty space in the southern portion of the Outer Courtyard until the southern ⌊wall of⌋ the Inner Courtyard. "And he measured… one hundred cubits." See sec. 22.

[2] In the second Beis HaMikdash, the Women's Courtyard was not this large, because it ran only from the eastern wall westward.

Chapter 18

[1] The southern wall of the Inner Courtyard was one measuring rod thick, as explained in sec. 8 above. Rashi also states this in his commentary to the phrase, "and before the chambers;" consult that source. Both the southern wall and the space it surrounded were 100 cubits long. The inner space of the Inner Courtyard was a square, measuring 100 cubits by 100 cubits, as will be explained in section 36, with God's help.

Chapter 19

[1] The gate to the southern portion of the Inner Courtyard was in the center of its wall, opposite the gate of the Outer Courtyard. This is derived from the verse, "And he brought me to the Inner Courtyard through the southern gate. He measured the southern gate according to those measures" – i.e., the angel used the same measures here as

he used when measuring the first gate (i.e., that of the Outer Courtyard). "Its cells, its pillars, and its vestibules were of those measures. There were windows in it and in its vestibule all around. It was fifty cubits high and twenty-five cubits wide," i.e., there were 25 cubits between the edge of the cell on one side and the edge of the cell opposite it. "There were palm-like coronets on its pillars and its stairway had eight steps."

Chapter 20

[1] There was one difference between the structure of the inner gate and that of the outer gate: the vestibules. The vestibules of the outer gate were inside the gate, while the vestibules of the inner gate projected out from the gate into the outer courtyard. The gates were built in this manner so that the vestibules would be opposite each other, and would be attractive. This is implied by the verse, "Its vestibules were toward the Outer Courtyard."

[2] It is logical to say that the vestibules were built outside the cells of the gate, and not between the cells, because were they to have been positioned between the cells, they would not have been visible from the outside. To explain: The vestibule would project out only 10 cubits. The cell was 6 cubits long, and its outer wall was 5 cubits long. Thus, the cell and its wall would project a cubit beyond the vestibule.

[3] Moreover, the space between the cell's wall and the wall of the cell opposite it was 13 cubits wide. Every wall of the vestibule was 6 cubits wide. Thus, there was simply no space for the vestibules between the cells. Therefore, it appears that the vestibules for the inner gate were positioned outside the cells. The vestibule's wall was

built at the edge of the cell's wall, and opposite the cell's wall. Furthermore, the vestibule's wall would project an extra cubit towards the inner space of the gate. This is derived from the fact that the vestibule's wall was 6 cubits wide, and was positioned 1 1/2 cubits from the inner space of the gate on either side. The gate was 10 cubits wide. Thus, the vestibule was 13 cubits long, just like the vestibule of the outer gate.

[4] The vestibules would be positioned one opposite the other, making the structure very attractive [see the diagram below]. These vestibules would also have the same dimensions as the vestibules of the outer gate. This is derived from the verse, "Its vestibules were of those dimensions." Regarding the vestibules of the outer gate, the verse states: "The length of the inner space of the vestibule of the gate was thirteen cubits." This explanation corresponds with Radak's interpretation of the verse, "The cell was six cubits on one side," as explained in sec. 6 above.

Chapter 21

[1] "There were vestibules all around, twenty-five cubits long and five cubits wide." These vestibules were inside the gate to the Inner Courtyard. We are forced to say this, because outside there were six chambers, whose length, the length of their walls, and the 15 cubits of the width of the gate between the three cells on either side equal 91 cubits. Now, the entire inner courtyard was only 100 cubits by 100 cubits, as will be stated in sec. 36 and mentioned several times. Instead, these vestibules were located inside the Inner Courtyard around – and indeed, extended into the thickness of – its wall. Rashi also mentions this. Since each vestibule was 25 cubits long, it appears that the prophet saw all these vestibules with one glance, seeing the

north, east, and south sides of the courtyard at once. This is alluded to by the words, "all around." For if the vestibules were located only on the southern side of the wall, the words "all around" would not be appropriate. Furthermore, if the prophet had only seen one side of the courtyard with this glance, he would have only seen two vestibules, one on either side of the gate. Moreover, the part of the wall on each side of the gate was less than 50 cubits long, and it was not long enough to contain two vestibules.

[2] True, in his description of the empty space (hamunach) near the chambers, Rashi explains that the term "all around," can be interpreted as "on either side," as stated in sec. 64. Thus, with regard to these vestibules, one might infer that the prophet's intent is to say "on either side of the gate." That, interpretation, however, is not appropriate here. With regard to the open space, there is no alternative but to interpret the verse in this manner even though the interpretation is somewhat forced. With regard to these vestibules, by contrast, there is no need to accept such an interpretation and the term can be interpreted according to its simple meaning.

[3] Radak explains that the combined length of all the vestibules along the wall was 25 cubits. On the phrase, "the width was five cubits," he explains that the width of each one was five cubits. In this vein, he interprets the phrase "all around" as meaning the vestibules were built "around the wall" or "in its inner space." Thus, according to Radak's interpretation, the prophet may have only seen vestibules along the southern wall. Following Radak, we do not know how the vestibules were built along the northern and eastern walls.

[4] Rashi explains the phrase, "the vestibules of the courtyard. Its doorposts, its windows," as follows: "This refers to the vestibules of the courtyard mentioned above, as it is written: 'There were vestibules all around.'" The phrases "Its doorposts" and the words "its windows" refer to these vestibules. The fact that the verse mentions "the courtyard," and not "the courtyards," teaches that this verse is only referring to one courtyard. Thus, this verse is referring

to the vestibules located within the Inner Courtyard and not those outside its walls, in the Outer Courtyard.

[5] "Outside the doorpost was wood paneling." Rashi writes: "All this [paneling] was inside [the Sanctuary]. They would cover it with gold plate, for the entire Beis HaMikdash was coated with gold plate and it is impossible to attach gold plate to stone." Rashi's comment implies that there was no wood paneling in the vestibules of the courtyard, only in the inner Sanctuary which was described in the verses preceding mention of the vestibules. The rationale for Rashi's statement is that it is impossible to say that there was any exposed wood paneling in the complex of the Beis HaMikdash. This was a safeguard instituted by our Sages against the transgression of the prohibition: "Do not plant an asherah, any tree near the altar" of the Beis HaMikdash. Thus, there was no exposed wood in the Beis HaMikdash, as stated in the first chapter of Tractate Tamid. The Torah's descriptions of the Sanctuary built in the desert, Scripture's description of the Beis HaMikdash built by King Shlomoh, and the Talmud's description of the Second Beis HaMikdash only mention walls coated with gold inside the Sanctuary. Therefore, Rashi explains that, "the paneling outside the doorpost," refers to the walls outside the inner Sanctuary, and not to the walls of the vestibules of the courtyard. Since these walls were not coated with gold, it is impossible for there to be wood paneling there.

[6] There was no parallel to these vestibules in the Second Beis HaMikdash. However, the mishnah in the first chapter of Tamid relates that when building the Second Beis HaMikdash, they built an exedra in the Courtyard of the Israelites. The exedra may have been built as a semblance to the vestibules. This exedra surrounded the courtyard on all sides, as according to our conception of these vestibules in the Future Beis HaMikdash.

Chapter 22

[1] "And He brought me to the Inner Courtyard via the east." "And he measured from the lower gate…" to the upper [gate]; "it was 100 cubits." Thus, the width of the Outer Courtyard from its eastern side to the eastern wall of the Inner Courtyard was 100 cubits. Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel writes that the phrase, "Before the Inner Courtyard from the outside," implies that the measurement was made from the outside and did not include the gate to the Inner Courtyard. The same applies to the southern side, even though Scripture mentions only the east and the north.

Chapter 23

[1] The eastern wall of the Inner Courtyard was 6 cubits thick, as we explained in sec. 8. Its length from north to south was 100 cubits, the same as that of its inner space.

Chapter 24

[1] "And he measured the gate according to those measures. Its cells, its pillars, and its vestibules were of those measures. There were windows in it and in its vestibules all around. It was fifty cubits high, and twenty-five cubits wide." This means there were 25 cubits between the edge of the cell on one side and the edge of the cell opposite it. "Its vestibules were toward the outer courtyard. There

were palm-like coronets on its pillars, and its stairway had eight steps."

[2] Tractate Middos states that the Second Beis HaMikdash had "fifteen steps leading from [the Women's Courtyard] to the Courtyard of the Israelites, corresponding to the fifteen "Songs of Ascent" in Tehillim. The Levites would stand on these steps and sing songs. [The steps] were not rectangular, but semi-circular instead."

Chapter 25

[1] There was a chamber … "on the flank of the eastern gate", its entrance "facing northward". They were "for the kohanim, the keepers of the watch of the altar: they are the descendants of Tzadok, the ones [chosen] from the descendants of Levi to draw close to God and serve Him."

[2] In the first chapter of Middos, it was taught: "In the east was located the Gate of Nicanor. It had two chambers, one on the right and one on the left. One was the Chamber of Pinchas, the Clothes Butler and one was the Chamber of the Bakers of the Chavitin." The Clothes Butler would dress the kohanim before their service in the Beis HaMikdash, and undress them afterwards.

Chapter 26

[1] **SECTIONS 26–27**

[2] Targum Yonason interprets the hagederes haginah as "the platform (duchan) of the Levites." The term gederes implies a structure, a geder ("partition"), of stones on which the Levites would play their instruments and sing. This platform was "on the eastern way," for the duchan was in the eastern portion of the Courtyard, as stated in the passage in Chronicles that describes the completion of the building of the First Beis HaMikdash: "The Levites of whom all were singers, of Asaf… stood at the east of the Altar."

[3] The second chapter of Tractate Middos quotes Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov, "whose teachings were precise and pure," as stating that in the Second Beis HaMikdash: "There was a step there, a cubit high. [The platform called] the duchan which had three steps, each half a cubit high, was positioned on this step." That source also states that the Courtyard of the Israelites was 11 cubits from east to west. Afterwards it states that the step that was 1 cubit high spanned the length of the Temple Courtyard from north to south.

[4] The 11 cubits mentioned immediately above was designated as the Courtyard of the Israelites. The portion of the Courtyard beyond those 11 cubits, in front of the Altar, was designated as the Courtyard of the Kohanim. That area was also 11 cubits wide. Thus, the entire eastern portion of the Courtyard until the Altar was 22 cubits wide. Similarly, there were 22 cubits between the Ulam and the Altar. In the Second Beis HaMikdash, the entire portion of the Courtyard until the Ulam was only 76 cubits. The Altar stood in the center of that area, and occupied 32 cubits. That left 44 cubits, i.e., 22 cubits on either side.

[5] In the Future Beis HaMikdash, may it be built speedily in our days, there will be a total of 100 cubits in this courtyard before the Ulam. When the Altar is placed in the center of that area, there will be 34 cubits between the Eastern Gate and the Altar, and 34 cubits between the Altar and the Ulam. The 34 cubits on the eastern side of the Altar will be divided into two parts, one in which the Israelites may proceed and one in which the kohanim will proceed. Each of those areas will measure 17 cubits. The duchan will be placed between these two areas. True, the area in which the Israelites and the kohanim may proceed in the Future Beis HaMikdash will be 35 cubits shorter than the corresponding area was in the Second Beis HaMikdash. In the Second Beis HaMikdash, that area was 135 cubits long, and in the Future Beis HaMikdash, it will only be 100 cubits long. Nevertheless, the reduction in length will be compensated by an increase in the width of that area. In the Second Beis HaMikdash, this area was 11 cubits wide, while in the Future Beis HaMikdash, it will be 17 cubits wide. Thus, the total area of the additional portion will be almost twice that of the additional portion in the Second Beis HaMikdash. To explain: When you subtract an area of 100 cubits x 11 cubits from an area of 100 cubits x 17 cubits, there remains an area of 100 cubits x 6 cubits, or a total of 600 square cubits. With regard to the Second Beis HaMikdash, when the area of 100 cubits x 11 cubits is subtracted from its total area, there remains an area of 35 cubits x 11 cubits, or 385 square cubits.

[6] Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel writes: "In the Second Beis HaMikdash, the Courtyard of the Israelites was 135 cubits 1ong and 11 cubits wide. While here (in the Future Beis HaMikdash), it will be a square of 100 cubits x 100 cubits, a decisively larger figure." I find his words difficult to understand, for the area of 100 cubits by 100 cubits in the Future Beis HaMikdash will also include the Courtyard of the Kohanim, the Altar, and the space between the Altar and the Ulam. In the Second Beis HaMikdash, those areas were included in a total space of 135 cubits x 76 cubits, as mentioned.

[7] It appears that Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel maintains that the Courtyard of the Kohanim and the Altar were located beyond the area described here as the Courtyard of the Israelites. According to his understanding, the area measuring 100 cubits by 100 cubits will be solely the Courtyard of the Israelites. The Courtyard of the Kohanim will be in another area. The courtyard (azarah) described in the passage concerning the Altar will be an actual courtyard – not as Rashi explains in his commentary to that passage. Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel explains this in his commentary to the verse: "From the center of the ground until the lower courtyard were two cubits with a width of one cubit, and from the small courtyard to the larger one were four cubits with a width of one cubit." He refers to the courtyard as the place where the kohanim would stand, and interprets the phrase, "the lower courtyard" as the area to the east of the Altar. The lower courtyard was also the smaller courtyard. The larger courtyard was the area between the Altar and the Ulam. This courtyard was also the upper courtyard because it was higher up the slope of the mountain. The Altar was positioned between these 2 courtyards.

[8] Similarly, Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel interprets the verse, "The courtyard was fourteen ⌈cubits⌋ long by fourteen ⌈cubits⌋ wide," as referring to the Courtyard of the Kohanim. He states that the verse does not explicitly say to which courtyard – the larger or the smaller one – it refers. Since Scripture mentions the area in which the kohanim can proceed independently, Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel therefore maintains that the courtyard that was 100 cubits x 100 cubits was solely for the Israelites.

[9] Nevertheless, Rashi's interpretation that the term azarah mentioned in connection with the Altar refers to the Altar's foundation and its sovev are based on – and supported by – Talmudic passages. One should not deviate from them left or right. Moreover, even if the term azarah mentioned in connection with the Altar refers to actual courtyards, as Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel maintains, it is still possible that these courtyards are part of the area that was 100 cubits x 100

cubits. It is just that here, the prophet described the area in general and later, he focused on its particulars.

Chapter 28

[1] "There was a gate to the Inner Courtyard opposite the gate from the north.... He measured one hundred cubits from one gate to another." From this, it can be derived that the width of the Women's Courtyard from the north to the south in front of the eastern wall of the Inner Courtyard was 312 cubits. The Women's Courtyard was further extended, surrounding the building of the Beis HaMikdash on all sides. There were 312 cubits from its northern wall to its southern wall. To explain how that number is reached: a) there were 100 cubits from the northern wall of the Outer Courtyard to the northern wall of the Inner Courtyard; b) there were 100 cubits from the southern wall of the Outer Courtyard to the southern wall of the Inner Courtyard; c) the area comprising the open space of the Inner Courtyard measured 100 cubits; d) the two walls separating the Inner Courtyard on the north and the south were each 6 cubits wide, totaling 312 cubits. At the beginning of this composition, I promised to explain this.

Chapter 29

[1] The northern wall of the Inner Courtyard was 6 cubits wide, as explained in sec. 8. That wall measured 100 cubits from east to west. The inner space of the courtyard also measured 100 cubits.

Chapter 30

[1] "And He brought me to the Northern Gate. He measured [the gate] according to those measures. It had cells, pillars, and vestibules, and there were windows in it all around. It was 50 cubits high and 25 cubits wide." These verses teach us that there were 25 cubits between the edge of the cell on one side and the edge of the cell opposite it. "Its vestibules were toward" – i.e., projected into – "the Outer Courtyard.

[2] There were palm-like coronets on its pillars, and its stairway had eight steps."

Chapter 31

[1] "In the vestibule of [this] gate, there were two tables on the one side and two tables on the other side to slaughter near them the burnt-offering, the sin-offering, and the guilt-offering." This verse should be understood as follows:

[2] "In the vestibule of [this] gate, there were two tables on the one side" on the east "and two tables on the other side" on the west "to slaughter near them the burnt-offering, the sin-offering, and the guilt-offering." These tables were located in a vestibule that extended into the Outer Courtyard. Nevertheless, Rashi explains that the tables shared the Inner Courtyard's level of sanctity.

[3] "On the flank on the outside on the ascent of the entrance to the northern gate there were two tables and on the other flank, [to the west], there were two tables. Four tables on one side and four tables

on the other side near which ⌊the sacrifices⌋ were slaughtered." This verse should be understood as follows:

4 "On the flank" towards the opening of this vestibule on the east. "on the outside" of the inner space of the inner entrance to the vestibule, which is positioned towards the Courtyard of the Israelites "on the ascent of the entrance to the northern gate" as one entered the gate and ascended the steps to the entrance to the courtyard, on the eastern flank of the entrance "There were two tables and on the other flank, ⌊to the west⌋, there were two tables." Thus, there were a total of "four tables on one side and four tables on the other side near which ⌊the sacrifices⌋ were slaughtered."

Chapter 32

1 "There was a chamber" – within the inner courtyard, near this gate – "its entrance" was at the side of this gate, facing the gate. "There, they would wash the burnt-offering." It appears that this chamber was the butchering area.

2 It is possible to explain that this chamber opened toward the gate and not to the main area of the courtyard, where the Altar was to prevent the kohanim and the people standing in the courtyard from seeing into it, for there were times when the chamber was soiled with the wastes and blood of the sacrificial animals that were slaughtered and skinned. Alternatively, this chamber may have opened toward the gate so that no one would hear the confessions of the sinners who would bring sin-offerings and guilt-offerings there. A person who brought a sin-offering or a guilt-offering was required to perform semichah, to lean on the sacrificial animal before it was offered as a sacrifice and confess his sins while doing so. Directly after semichah,

the animal would be slaughtered. Thus, the animals were slaughtered near the tables at this gate. Radak and Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel explain that one side of the courtyard was designated solely for slaughtering the burnt-offerings, the sin-offerings and the guilt-offerings so that the sinners' identities would not become publicized.

Chapter 33

[1] In this chamber, "there were four tables ⌈made⌋ of hewn stone for the burnt-offering, one-and-a-half cubits long, one-and-a-half cubits wide, and one cubit high." The knives for slaughtering the sacrificial animals and the basins in which the blood from the slaughtered animals would be collected, were placed on these tables so that these utensils would be prepared for the kohanim who would slaughter the sacrifices of the highest degree of sanctity in the northern portion of the courtyard.

[2] The verse states: "And the tables on which the meat of the sacrifices ⌈would be placed⌋." It appears that the phrase "There they would rinse the burnt-offering" refers to this chamber, i.e., the meat of the sacrifices was rinsed on the tables inside this chamber. Therefore, the tables were made of hewn stone. Similarly, Middos, ch. 3, states that there were marble tables between the pillars in the butchering area. Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura states that the entrails of the sacrifices were washed on these tables because marble cools the meat and protects it from spoiling.

[3] In the Second Beis HaMikdash there were 8 such tables, as stated by the Mishnah in Shekalim, ch. 6, "Eight marble tables in the butchering area; the entrails would be rinsed on them."

Chapter 34

[1] "The hooks, one handbreadth ⌊long⌋." In his commentary to this phrase, Rashi explains that these were iron hooks that were embedded in the short pillars that were located in the butchering area in the northern portion of the courtyard. The sacrificial animals were hung on these hooks when they were being skinned. Similarly, the fifth chapter of Tractate Pesachim teaches that there were iron hooks embedded in the pillars and the walls of the courtyard. The sacrificial animals were hung from and skinned on these hooks.

[2] It is also taught in the third chapter both of Tamid and Middos: The butchering area was located to the north of the Altar. In it were 8 dwarf-like – i.e., short – pillars of stone. A square block of cedar wood was affixed to the top of the pillars. And hooks – i.e., iron fork-like spikes – were embedded in the wooden blocks. There were three sets of hooks in each wooden block, one above the other. Rabbeinu Shemayah explains that the lowest hook was for a sheep to be hung on, the middle one was for a ram, and the upper one was for a bull.

Chapter 35

[1] "Outside the inner gate, there were chambers for the singers, inside the Inner Courtyard, on the flank of the Northern Gate, facing southward." This verse implies that the Chambers of the Levites who would sing were outside the inner space of the gate's vestibule, within the Inner Courtyard, on the side of the gate – i.e., behind the gate, as Radak explains. The entrance to these chambers was to the south. This is the meaning of the verse, "This chamber that faces south is for the kohanim, the guardians of the watch of the House." Although

the verse uses the term kohanim, Rashi comments: "It appears to refer to the Levites who were singers." Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel explains that the Levites are called kohanim in this verse because a kohen is one who serves, and the Levites served through song.

[2] Radak, however, interprets this latter verse as referring to another chamber in addition to the Chambers of the Levites mentioned in the previous verse. Although it is not stated explicitly, the chamber would also face south Thus, Radak explains that the chamber mentioned in the first verse was for the Levites and the one mentioned in this verse was for the kohanim.

[3] In the Second Beis HaMikdash, the Chamber of the Levites was located under the Courtyard to the Israelites to the east, and opened to the Women's Courtyard, as the Mishnah teaches with regard to the eastern gate: "There were chambers under the Courtyard of the Israelites, opening to the Women's Courtyard, where the Levites would store their harps, lyres, cymbals, and other musical instruments."

Chapter 36

[1] "And he measured the courtyard. It was square, one hundred cubits long and one hundred cubits wide." As mentioned many times, in the Second Beis HaMikdash, this courtyard was 135 cubits wide, the same width as the Women's Courtyard, which was also only 135 cubits wide. [2] This verse is referring to the Courtyard before the Ulam,that was 76 cubits in length, as mentioned in sec. 26.

[3] In the Second Beis HaMikdash, this courtyard surrounded the entire building of the Beis HaMikdash, as the Mishnah teaches in Middos,

ch. 5: "The Courtyard was 135 cubits wide and 187 cubits long." The 187 cubits are divided as follows: a) the 76 cubits mentioned above, b) the 100 cubits of the building of the Beis HaMikdash, and c) 11 cubits behind the kapores (i.e., behind the building of the Beis HaMikdash).

[4] The Courtyard was 35 cubits wider than the building of the Beis HaMikdash. These 35 cubits were divided equally, with 17 1/2 cubits on the northern side and 17 1/2 cubits on the southern side of the Beis HaMikdash. In the Future Beis HaMikdash, by contrast, this courtyard will only be 100 cubits wide, the width of the building of the Beis HaMikdash. The area on the sides of the building of the Beis HaMikdash will be included in the external courtyard, as we wrote with regard to the chambers in sec. 71.

Chapter 37

[1] "The Altar was before the building [of the Beis HaMikdash]." In sec. 26, it was explained that it appears that in this vision, the Altar stood 34 cubits from the eastern wall of the courtyard and there were 34 cubits between it and the Ulam, the vestibule of the building of the Beis HaMikdash. Whether in fact it will be positioned there, in the northern portion of the courtyard, the southern portion or in the middle will be explained in sec. 43, with God's help.

[2] "These are the dimensions of the Altar in cubits, each cubit [measuring] a cubit and a handbreadth." As I explained in the beginning of this work, this applied with the exception of the measures of the foundation, the upper portion of the sovev, and the horns. These were smaller cubits, i.e., each comprising 5 handbreadths, as will be explained.

[3] "From the center of the ground" – i.e., from the ground – "until the lower azarah – i.e., until the upper surface of the first level, the foundation of the Altar, "were two cubits with a width of one cubit."

[4] How was the Altar built? They would bring a square mold made from four beams. Each beam was 32 cubits long and 2 cubits wide. This was the height of the mold. They would fill it with stones, lime, tar and molten lead. It would form into a solid block, 32 cubits by 32 cubits and 2 cubits – small cubits – high.

[5] The foundation did not extend over the entire expanse of 32 cubits by 32 cubits, as stated in Tractate Middos: "The foundation would extend along the entire northern side of the Altar and the entire western side. It would consume one cubit on the south and one cubit on the west." The intent is that when the square mold for the foundation was made, they would place a filler (i.e., wood or some other substance) in the southeast corner so that it would not be filled with the mixture of stone, lime, and molten lead. Afterwards, the filler would be removed, and that corner would remain empty without a foundation. The empty space would run from the southeast corner along the entire eastern side until the last cubit on the north. Similarly, the empty space would run from the southeast corner along the entire southern side until the last corner close to the west.

[6] I elaborated in the description of the design of the foundation because the printers erred in the picture of the Altar that accompanies Rambam's Commentary to the Mishnah, and depicted the foundation as running along the southern and eastern sides, leaving only one square cubit of open space in the southeast corner. This is an error on their part.

Chapter 38

[1] Afterwards, another mold is brought. According to Rashi's commentary, this second mold measured precisely 30 cubits by 30 cubits. The Talmud states in the first chapter of Tractate Eruvin, that the cubit of the Altar's foundation was small. Rashi explains in his summation of the matter there, that the Talmud is referring to the cubits used to measure the height of the mold, i.e., the mold's height was measured using a cubit that equaled 5 handbreadths rather than a cubit equaling 6 handbreadths. However, the width of this mold was measured using a cubit equaling 6 handbreadths. This mold was used to reduce the width of the next level of the Altar, which was one cubit narrower on each side than the 32-cubit wide foundation. Thus, the mold placed on the foundation measured exactly 30 cubits by 30 cubits. Rambam, by contrast, explains that both the height and the width of the mold used to reduce the width of the next level of the Altar was measured in 5-handbreadth cubits. Therefore, Rambam explains that the mold was intended to produce a mass measuring 30 cubits and 2 handbreadths by 30 cubits and 2 handbreadths. Since the width of the mold was only 5 handbreadths, there would remain 30 cubits and 2 handbreadths by 30 cubits and 2 handbreadths inside the mold. Together with the mold, there would be 32 cubits to fill up the space of the foundation. Rambam writes that the mishnah states that the mold measured 30 cubits by 30 cubits because it did not want to detail the handbreadths. The height of this mold was 4 cubits. This is alluded to by the phrase, "From the smaller azarah," i.e., from the upper surface of the lower level, "until the larger azarah," i.e., the upper surface of the block on it, "were 4 cubits." This formed the sovev.

[2] Together, the foundation and the sovev were 6 cubits high. Similarly, in the Second Beis HaMikdash, the foundation and the sovev were 6 cubits high. Their individual dimensions were, however, slightly different from the future dimensions of the foundation and

the sovev for the mishnah states that the foundation was one cubit high and the sovev, five.

[3] This mold was placed on the foundation. It was filled with stones, lime, and molten lead as the first was. The mixture turned into a solid block, 30 cubits by 30 cubits that was attached to the foundation and stood upon it. It was called the sovev because it surrounded and encompassed the entire Altar, in contrast to the foundation, as explained above.

[4] Thus, the foundation would extend a cubit beyond the sovev on all sides. Rashi maintains that this was an oversized cubit, measuring 6 handbreadths, while Rambam maintains it was an ordinary cubit, measuring 5 handbreadths. This is the meaning of the phrase, "its width, a cubit," i.e., the width of the foundation was one cubit and it was set in one cubit.

Chapter 39

[1] Afterwards, when fashioning the Altar, they would bring a third mold, which measured 28 cubits and 2 handbreadths by 28 cubits and 2 handbreadths. All authorities agree that the 1-cubit reduction in width made by the sovev was a 5-handbreadth cubit. The mishnah, however, did not detail the number of handbreadths, and only mentions, "28 cubits by 28 cubits." Similarly, the verse states, "The azarah" – the ⌊next⌋ level – "was 14 in length and 14 in width." This verse should be understood as meaning that the level above the sovev measured 14 cubits in all directions from its center, a total of 28 cubits by 28 cubits. The handbreadths were not counted. This mold was 3 cubits high. Thus, the upper surface of the Altar was 3 cubits high.

[2] Concerning it, the verse states, "The Harel was 4 cubits." The Talmud explains that the word "Harel" is referring to the "domain of the horns," i.e., the place for the blood that is to be presented on the corners of the Altar was from the Ariel, i.e., from the upper surface of the Altar, downward 4 cubits. Wherever the blood was presented within these 4 cubits, it was considered as having been presented on the upper portion of the Altar. The chut hasikra was located in the center of the Altar to make a distinction between the blood to be presented on the lower portion of the Altar and the blood to be presented on the upper portion of the Altar.

[3] It was already explained that together, the foundation and the sovev were 6 cubits high. The Altar was 10 cubits high in its entirety, as will be explained. If so, the chut hasikra – which marked the midpoint of the Altar – was positioned at the last cubit of the sovev. Rambam explains that in the Second Beis HaMikdash, this cubit – i.e., the highest cubit of the sovev – comprised 6 handbreadths. To explain: In the Second Beis HaMikdash, the Altar's foundation was one cubit high. However, this was a 5-handbreadth cubit. The sovev was 5 cubits high, but its cubits were 6-handbreadths cubits. Thus, the foundation and four cubits of the sovev comprised 29 handbreadths. Similarly, the remaining portion – i.e. the final cubit of the sovev, the 3 cubits of the upper surface of the Altar, and the 1 cubit of its horns – also comprised 29 handbreadths. This is because the sovev and the upper surface of the Altar were measured in cubits comprised of 6 handbreadths, and horns were measured in a cubit that was comprised of 5 handbreadths.

[4] There is, however, a difficulty according to Rashi's understanding. Rashi agrees that the cubit used to measure the foundation's height in the Second Beis HaMikdash was equal to 5 handbreadths. The foundation of the Altar in the Future Beis HaMikdash, however, will be 2 cubits high. Thus, the placement of the chut hasikra would change. It is, however, possible that although the foundation in the

Future Beis HaMikdash will be 2 cubits high, only one of these cubits will comprise 5 handbreadths. This can be derived from the phrase, "the foundation, a cubit," that one of the foundation's cubits will be an ordinary 5-handbreadth cubit.

Chapter 40

[1] The upper surface of the Altar was a square, measuring 28 cubits by 28 cubits. It was divided by measuring 12 cubits from its center to each side, producing a square 24 cubits by 24 cubits. This was the area where the Altar's pyres were arranged. This is alluded to by the verse, "The Ariel was 12 ⌊cubits⌋ in length and 12 ⌊cubits⌋ in width."

Chapter 41

[1] There was an area 2 cubits wide on all sides of the 24 cubit square described in the previous section. One cubit of this space was designated as the area where kohanim would walk. It was a totally empty area, to allow the kohanim to walk freely without being burnt or tripping over portions of the sacrificial animals or pieces of wood.

Chapter 42

[1] We now have a square measuring 26 cubits by 26 cubits, comprising the Altar's upper surface. Thus, there was one more cubit of space remaining on each side of the Altar's surface. The kohanim used this remaining cubit on each side when walking atop the Altar, except that some of this outer perimeter was occupied by the Altar's "horns," which were at the 4 corners of the Altar. Each "horn," measured 1 cubit by 1 cubit. The horns were fashioned by placing a mold, measuring 1 cubit by 1 cubit, and 1 cubit high at each of the corners, and filling it with a mixture of stones, lime, and molten lead. There is a difference of opinion among the Rabbis regarding the dimensions of these horns. According to Rashi, both the cubits of the horns' height and width comprised 5 handbreadths. Rambam, by contrast, maintained that the only reduction in the width of the Altar's base was 5 handbreadths. Accordingly, though the cubit used to measure of the horns' height comprised only 5 handbreadths, the cubit used to measure their width and length comprised 6 handbreadths. Including the height of the horns, the Altar was 10 cubits high.

[2] Since the horns obstructed the kohanim's passage around the outer edge of the upper surface of the Altar, it was necessary to provide them with another cubit of space on that surface, on which they could walk freely. Indeed, Tractate Zevachim states: "Did the kohanim walk between the horns? Instead, say that a cubit was designated where the feet of the kohanim would walk." On that statement, Rashi comments that it is impossible to say that the kohanim walked between the horns because the horns would prevent them from making the circuit. The cubit where the kohanim would walk is described in sec. 41, although it is not mentioned in Yechezkel's narrative.

[3] The horns by contrast, are mentioned, as it is written, "From the Ariel upward, there were four horns," and it is written: "And the edge

(g'vul) around it was half a cubit." The latter phrase refers to the horns. This verse should be understood as meaning, when the area at the edge of the Altar is measured from the center of a horn, it is half a cubit to each side. Thus, each horn measured 1 cubit by 1 cubit in total.

[4] One might object to interpreting the term g'vul as referring to the horns, because of the verse referring to the placement of the sacrificial blood on the Altar, "And you shall place it on the corners (karnosav)… and on the edge (g'vul) all around." The word karnosav is referring to the horns. However, if this is so, then what is the word g'vul referring to? It is possible to explain that when the term keren is not mentioned, and g'vul is mentioned, g'vul refers to the horns. When, however, Scripture mentions g'vul and keren together, g'vul has another meaning. To cite a parallel, see Rashi's interpretation of the terms garav and yalefes. Thus, when the term g'vul is mentioned together with the term keren, it refers to the area where the kohanim walk, or the space between the horns, or both of these spaces. Indeed, the Mishnah uses the term g'vul in this manner in Tractate Kilayim, when discussing the g'vul ha'arugah, the area used to walk around a row of produce. Similarly, the Targum Yonason translates the term g'vul as gedanfa, "frame," when it is used alone, but when that term is used together with the word keren, it is translated as techuma, its "area."

Chapter 43

[1] "[One who ascends] its ramps would turn to the east." On this verse, Rashi comments: "The ramp via which one would ascend [to the Altar] was in the south, so that one who ascends on it would be facing east. For whenever one would turn, he would turn to the right. When

the ramp is placed to the south, one who ascends on it and turns to the right, would thus turn to the east." His words are reflected by our Sages' statements in Tractate Zevachim.

[2] In Tractate Middos, the mishnah states: "The ramp was positioned to the south of the Altar. It was 32 cubits long and 16 cubits wide from east to west." The ramp was a slanted walkway, and was inclined at an angle. The kohanim used it to ascend to and descend from the Altar. The kohanim could not ascend to the Altar by steps, because of the prohibition, "Do not ascend My Altar with steps." The ramp was 32 cubits long from the south to the north, i.e., this was the length of its incline, for it extended a cubit over the foundation and a cubit over the sovev. On the ground, however, the ramp only extended 30 cubits. Thus, when the length and width of the Courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash is described in Tractate Middos, the mishnah states, "The ramp and the Altar comprised 62 cubits," i.e., the Altar took up 32, and the ramp took up 30 cubits, as explained.

[3] There was a hairsbreadth of space between the ramp and the Altar, as stated in Tractate Zevachim. The Talmud also states that the gradient of the Altar's large ramp was 3 ½ cubits and 1 1/3 fingerbreadths for each cubit of height. This figure is derived as follows: The Altar (not counting its horns) was 9 cubits high. The length of the ramp's incline was 32 cubits. 9 times 3 cubits equals 27 cubits. 9 times half a cubit equals 4 ½ cubits. Adding the 27 cubits and the 4 1/2 cubits produces a sum of 31 ½ cubits, which is still half a cubit short of the length of the ramp. Since these cubits are equal to 6 handbreadths, half a cubit equals 3 handbreadths. Each handbreadth equals 4 fingerbreadths, so 3 handbreadths equal 12 fingerbreadths. Thus for each of the nine cubits of the Altar's height, there is an additional fingerbreadth and 1/3. Thus the gradient of the Altar was 3 ½ cubits and 1 1/3 fingerbreadths for each cubit of height.

[4] The ramp was built with such a gentle incline to enable the kohanim to ascend while carrying the heavy limbs of the sacrificial animals. A rise of 10 cubits within 4 cubits of length is considered as difficult walking, as Tosafos explains. Hence, the ramp was built in a manner that allowed for a far gentler rise.

[5] Based on the above concepts, it is necessary to contemplate where the Altar will be located in the Future Beis HaMikdash; may it be built speedily, in our days. There is no doubt that its place on Mount Moriah will not change from where it was in the past. As the Talmud states, "It was taught, 'Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov relates: Three prophets ascended with ⌊the Jewish people⌋ from the exile: one gave testimony concerning the Altar and its location.'" The Sages required this testimony to ensure that the Altar's location would not be changed. Rambam and Sefer Mitzvos Gadol also rule in this manner. The question, however, is whether the design of the structure around the Altar will change, while the Altar will remain in its original location. After all, as explained above, the Courtyard in the Future Beis HaMikdash will not resemble the Courtyard in the previous Batei HaMikdash (see secs. 36-37).

[6] In Tractate Yoma, Rabbi Yehudah states that the Altar was situated in the center of the Courtyard. Ten cubits of the Altar's space were opposite the 10 cubits of the entrance to the Sanctuary, and there were 11 cubits on the north side of the Altar and 11 cubits on the south side of the Altar. Thus the Altar was positioned in front of the Sanctuary and its walls. According to this opinion, it can be postulated that, in the [7] Future, the Sanctuary will be built so that its entrance will be opposite the center of the Altar, as it was in the First Beis HaMikdash. This layout will provide for ample space for the Altar and its ramp. To explain: The Courtyard is 100 cubits from north to south and the Altar is 32 cubits wide. If the Altar is placed in the exact center, it will extend 16 cubits to the north. Thus, there will be 66 cubits from the Altar's northern side to the Courtyard's southern wall. As mentioned, the Altar and its ramp will cover only

62 cubits. Thus, there will be an additional 4 cubits between the ramp and the Courtyard's southern wall.

[8] Similarly, there is no difficulty according to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who maintains that the entire Altar was positioned on the northern side of the Sanctuary with exception of its southern foundation. Even according to this opinion, it could still be said that the Altar was positioned "before God," i.e., opposite the entrance to the Sanctuary. According to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, the Altar's ramp was located on the south side, so that the kohanim ascending the Altar could fulfill the charge that one who turns should turn to the east. Since Rabbi Shimon maintains that the entire Altar was positioned in the north, according to his approach there was even more space between the ramp and the southern wall than according to Rabbi Yehudah's approach.

[9] There is, however, a difficulty according to Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov's approach. In Tractates Zevachim and Yoma, et al., he maintains that the entire Altar was in the south. As stated in those sources, it is written that the sacrifices of the most sacred order must be slaughtered "in the north, before God." Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov understands the verse as intimating that the northern portion of the Courtyard must be empty, containing neither sacred vessels, nor the Altar. Toras Kohanim explicitly states: "'In the north, before God,' the northern portion of the Courtyard must be empty," these are the words of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov. ⌊According to him,⌋ the Altar was positioned in front of half the entrance to the Sanctuary, in front of one of the doors, and extended to the south.

[10] Thus, according to Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov, there is a difficulty, for in the Future Beis HaMikdash, the Courtyard will be a square measuring 100 cubits by 100 cubits. Thus, the entire southern portion will only measure 50 cubits. Now, the Altar and its ramp are 62 cubits long, as stated. Thus, there will be at least 12 cubits in the northern portion of the Courtyard, in addition to some space left between the

southern wall and the Altar. After all, it must be possible to walk there without stepping on the ramp. Moreover, the Altar will be positioned in front of the entire entrance to the Sanctuary, since the Altar will extend at least 12 cubits into the northern portion, as stated, and the opening to the Sanctuary only extended 5 cubits to the north.

[11] It is desirable to resolve the issue according to Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov's understanding, for our Sages describe his teachings as, "precise and pure." Moreover, in his redaction of the Mishnah, Rabbeinu HaKadosh, Yoma, ch. 3, states a teaching regarding the Altar based on Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov's understanding, without mentioning him by name. Thus, on the mishnah's words, "to the north of the Altar," the Talmud comments: "To the north of the Altar": From this, one can conclude that the Altar is not located in the north. Whose approach does this follow: Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov's, as it is taught, "'In the north, before God,' i.e., the northern portion of the Courtyard must be entirely empty,' these are the words of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov."

[12] Similarly, Rambam rules in this manner in the third chapter of Hilchos Avodas Yom HaKippurim, as explained by the Kessef Mishneh. Hence, there is a great difficulty regarding his understanding of the Altar's position in the Future Beis HaMikdash.

[13] Tosafos, in their gloss to Zevachim, mentions a further difficulty according to the opinion that the Altar was located entirely in the southern portion of the Courtyard: In the Sanctuary that accompanied the Jews through the desert, the width of the Courtyard from north to south was 50 cubits. Thus, the southern portion of the Courtyard measured 25 cubits. The Altar was 5 cubits wide. This leaves a maximum of 20 cubits for the length of the ramp. Now, according to Rabbi Yossi, the Altar was 10 cubits high. Thus, according to his view, one would have to ascend 10 cubits using a ramp that spanned a maximum length of 20 cubits. This would be a steep incline, which would be considered walking with difficulty. Indeed, our Sages

categorize a mound with an even smaller gradient as a private domain for that reason.

[14] Furthermore, an explanation is also necessary regarding the Altar's position in the Second Beis HaMikdash, according to the opinion that the Altar was located entirely in the southern portion of the Courtyard. [15] The Mishnah in Tractate Middos delineates the 135 cubits of the width of the Courtyard as follows: "The Altar and the ramp occupied 62 cubits. There were 8 cubits between the Altar and the rings (used for slaughter), the area of the rings comprised 24 cubits. There were 4 cubits between the rings and the tables and 4 cubits between the tables and the pillars. There were 8 cubits between the pillars and the ⌊northern⌋ wall of the Courtyard. The remainder comprised the space between the ramp and the ⌊southern⌋ wall and the space of the pillars." Now when the remainder, 25 cubits, is divided in 2 – which is logical, even though it is not explicitly stated – there will be 12 ½ cubits for the pillars and 12 ½ cubits between the southern wall and the ramp. Thus, the space from the southern wall until the end of the Altar will be 74 ½ cubits – 62 cubits for the ramp and the Altar and 12 ½ cubits between the southern wall and the ramp. Now, the southern half of the Courtyard only measured 67 ½ cubits (i.e., 135 ½ cubits divided by 2). Thus, Tosafos states that one must carefully interpret the mishnah in Middos so that it will not present a difficulty to Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov, who maintains that the entire Altar was located in the southern portion of the Courtyard, for in Tractate Yoma, our Sages explain that the mishnah in Middos follows Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov's approach.

[16] In his commentary to Yoma, Rashi explains the above mishnah as teaching that there were only 5 ½ cubits between the ramp and the southern wall. Rashi bases his statement on the following calculation: As mentioned above, the Altar and the ramp occupied 62 cubits. Thus the entire Altar was situated in the southern portion of the Courtyard, which measured 67 ½ cubits. The Altar marked the end of that area.

Thus, there were 5 ½ cubits between the ramp and the southern wall. The remainder of the 25 cubits alluded to by the mishnah in Middos were allocated to the pillars. Thus, these 25 cubits were not divided equally.

[17] Rambam follows a different approach. In his Hilchos Beis HaBechirah, ch. 5, Rambam clearly states that the 25 cubits, were divided equally, half on either side of the Courtyard. Thus, according to Rambam, there were only 60 ½ cubits from the northern wall of the Courtyard until the Altar. It cannot be argued that the opinion presented in this mishnah in Middos presents a fourth opinion, differing with Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov and differing with the other Sages mentioned above, following the conclusion of Rashi in Yoma. For even were one to say that the mishnah in Middos presents another opinion, Rambam's rulings reflect a contradiction: In Hilchos Beis HaBechirah, Rambam follows the opinion of the mishnah in Middos. However, in Hilchos Avodas Yom HaKippurim, Rambam rules according to Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov, quoting the mishnah, which states, "to the north of the Altar," as Kessef Mishneh explains in his gloss to the latter teaching.

[18] For this reason, Kessef Mishneh maintains that an emendation should be made to Rambam's text in ch. 4 of Hilchos Avodas Yom HaKippurim, which states: "His bull would stand between the Ulam and the Altar," maintaining the text should read, "would stand opposite the place of the Ulam and the Altar," without taking into account Rambam's statements in ch. 5 of Hilchos Beis HaBechirah.

[19] There is a further difficulty in Rambam's rulings: Rambam rules that the rectangle in the northern portion of the Courtyard, where sacrifices of the highest degree of sanctity were slaughtered, measured 60 ½ cubits by 76 cubits (the length from the eastern wall until the Ulam). He reiterates this concept at the beginning of Hilchos Maaseh HaKorbanos, ch. 5. A question arises: Why wasn't the entire 67 ½ cubits of the northern portion of the Courtyard included in this

measure? For Rambam follows the ruling of Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi who maintains that even the northern portion of the Courtyard that is in the Courtyard of the Israelites and the Courtyard of the Kohanim, is an acceptable place for the slaughter of these sacrifices. Similarly, in those sources, the Talmud discusses and concludes that Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi adds further space in addition to that mentioned by Rabbi Eliezer ben Shimon, who maintains that it is even acceptable to slaughter these sacrifices in the area between the Ulam and the Altar. Thus, according to Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, it is acceptable to slaughter these sacrificial animals in the entire rectangle of 67 ½ by 76 cubits. Seemingly, this is problematic: Since Rambam accepts Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi's opinion, he should have mentioned this entire area.

[20] Therefore, in conclusion, it appears that Rambam is ruling according to the mishnah at the end of Tractate Middos, and that he views that mishnah as a fourth approach. Therefore, he does not include the entire northern half of the Courtyard in the rectangle defined as "the north." The difficulty mentioned above – that Rambam quotes the wording of the mishnah, "to the north of the Altar," in Hilchos Avodas Yom HaKippurim – should not be understood as proof that he rules according to Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov. True, the Talmud makes such a deduction from an analysis of the wording of the Mishnah. Nevertheless, different principles apply when analyzing the words of the halachists from those which apply when analyzing the wording of the Mishnah. Instead, it can be assumed that Rambam was simply quoting the wording of the mishnah.

Chapter 44

[1] As mentioned above, it was forbidden to ascend the Altar by steps because of the prohibition, "Do not ascend My Altar with steps." If so, the term **ומעלתיהו** in the verse, "Its ramps [would allow one to] turn to the east," should have been singular. Why is it plural?

[2] A resolution can be offered based on our Sages' statement: "Rav Yehudah said: There were two small ramps that emerged from the [main] ramp. On them, [the kohanim] would turn to the foundation and the sovev. [These ramps] were separated from the Altar by a hairs-breadth, because it is written: 'All around.'" In his commentary to the Talmud, Rashi states: "There were two small ramps" – The one which led to the sovev emerged from the east [side] of the [main] ramp to its right. It began its ascent in the midst of the incline of the ramp, continuing to ascend at an angle until it reached the sovev. The one which led to the foundation emerged to the west [side of the main ramp] so that the remainder of the blood of a sin-offering could be taken [to the southern corner of the foundation] where it would be poured out. When he descended from the Altar, he would descend the ramp, before he reached the ground, he would turn to the left on a small ramp. This ramp began from a low portion of the ramp, far from the Altar so that the descent to the foundation would be gentle.

[3] "Because it is written: 'All around'" – Implied is that a complete circuit of the Altar must be possible. If the ramps were joined to the Altar, there would be no complete circuit. A person would not even be able to wind a string around it.

[4] In that source, the Talmud states that the gradient of all the smaller ramps was one cubit over the length of 3 cubits. If so, in the Future Beis HaMikdash, when the foundation will be 2 cubits high, the incline of the smaller ramps will extend over the length of 6 cubits. In contrast, in the Second Beis HaMikdash, the Altar's foundation was

only one cubit high and hence, its ramp extended only 3 cubits. The ramp to the sovev will be the same in the Future Beis HaMikdash as it was in the Second Beis HaMikdash, for the sovev will be 6 cubits high in the Future Beis HaMikdash, just as it was in the Second Beis HaMikdash., as explained in its place. If so, its ramp will extend over a length of 18 cubits.

Chapter 45

[1] The Mishnah states: "The basin was situated between the Ulam and the Altar, positioned towards the south." True, the basin is not mentioned in Yechezkel's vision. Nevertheless, it is frequently mentioned in the Torah conveyed to us by Moshe, and the words of Yechezkel do not, heaven forbid, contradict Moshe Rabbeinu's words. Originally, the basin had only two faucets. Afterwards, one of the Kohanim Gedolim, ben Katin, upgraded the basin so that it had 12 faucets, as stated in the Mishnah in Tractate Yoma. This improvement enabled all the kohanim who would be involved in offering the daily sacrifice to sanctify themselves at the same time. There were twelve kohanim – in addition to the slaughterer. The slaughterer was counted separately, since he did not have to be a kohen. The 12 are enumerated in the Mishnah in Tractate Tamid.

Chapter 46

[1] "And He brought me to the Vestibule (the Ulam) of the House…. There were steps by which one ascended to it." With regard to the

Second Beis HaMikdash, the Mishnah teaches: "There were 22 cubits between the Ulam and the Altar and there were twelve steps there. Each step was 1/2 a cubit high and one cubit wide." Rambam had a different version of the text which stated that the steps were also 1/2 a cubit wide, as stated in sec. 2. As explained in sec. 26-27, it appears that in the Future Beis HaMikdash there will be 34 cubits between the Ulam and the Altar. Consult that section.

Chapter 47

[1] "The length of the Ulam" – from north to south – "was 20 cubits." "The width of the gate was 3 cubits on one side and 3 cubits on the other side." The intent is that the entire entrance to the Ulam in the Future Beis HaMikdash will be 20 cubits wide. There will be 3 cubits at each end that will be closed, leaving 14 cubits of open space.

[2] In the Second Beis HaMikdash, by contrast, the entire 20 cubits of the Ulam was open across its full length in front of the Sanctuary. Thus, when explaining our Sages' prohibition against building an exedra that matches the dimensions of the Ulam, Tosafos states that the Ulam was open entirely on its eastern side. This conception is reinforced by our Sages' statement: "⌊Our⌋ world resembles an exedra; its northern side is not enclosed." It is, nevertheless, referred to as, "the opening of the Ulam," in many places in the Talmud. This resembles the expression, "the opening to the Sanctuary," found in the Torah, and which describes the eastern side of the Sanctuary that was also open entirely. See the explanations in sec. 50 below.

[3] The wall of the Ulam was 5 cubits thick. This is reflected by the phrase, "He measured the doorpost of the Ulam," which covered the wall. "It was 5 cubits on this side and 5 cubits on the other side."

Chapter 48

[1] "There were pillars near the doorposts, one on this side," i.e. on the right, "and one on the other side," i.e. on the left. These paralleled the Yachin and Boaz pillars that were present in the First Beis HaMikdash.

Chapter 49

[1] "The width of the Ulam" – from east to west – "was 11 cubits."

[2] "There were narrowing windows and date palm designs on either side on the flanks of the Ulam," i.e., at each side of the entrance.

Chapter 50

[1] "He measured the length of the building at the front of the structure,… ⌊including⌋ its projections on either side as one hundred cubits." The verse uses the word אתיקיהא, which Targum Yonason translates as, "its projections." Thus, the verse is teaching us that when the angel measured the length of the building, he included the projections on the corners. The projections refer to the structure which the Mishnah in Tractate Middos refers to as the Beis HaChalifos, "the Chamber of the Knives," as it states: "The Ulam was fifteen cubits longer than ⌊the building of the Beis HaMikdash⌋ on either side. ⌊That area⌋ was called Beis HaChalifos."

[2] This wording implies that only the 15 cubit area projecting on each side was called Beis HaChalifos. The entire area in front of the Sanctuary and its walls was called the Ulam, "vestibule." The statement "The length of the Ulam was twenty ⌊cubits⌋" refers to the area in front of the entrance to the Sanctuary, which served as a vestibule to the Sanctuary. Nevertheless, the Ulam itself was wider, extending over the entire area including the walls of the Sanctuary. Rabbeinu Shemayah gives a similar explanation in his commentary to the above mishnah, stating, "In addition to ⌊Beis⌋ HaChalifos, the walls of the Ulam should be extended to the north and the south, opposite the cells."

[3] Although, even in the Second Beis HaMikdash, the entire east side of the Ulam was not open, Tosafos still refers to the Ulam as an exedra, because it was referred to as "the Sanctuary's vestibule," and the area in front of the entrance to the Sanctuary was totally open. Alternately, it can be said that Tosafos maintains that the Ulam was not extended opposite the walls of the Sanctuary, for the entire area opposite the Sanctuary was called Beis HaChalifos. When the Mishnah states that the Beis HaChalifos was 15 cubits on each side, it was not saying that only this area comprised the Beis HaChalifos. Instead, it was merely saying that this portion is included in the area called Beis HaChalifos. Nevertheless, there were also other areas that were called Beis HaChalifos, e.g., the areas opposite the walls of the Sanctuary.

[4] In the Future Beis HaMikdash, the walls of the Sanctuary will extend into the Ulam opposite the 5 cubits of the open space (hamunach). This applies both according to Rambam's conception – with which we agree – and even according to that of Rashi, as will be explained at length in sec. 65. Thus, in the Future Beis HaMikdash the Ulam will only be 20 cubits wide, at least in the area opposite the 5 cubits of the munach.

[5] The 15 cubit projections on either side of the building extended only 10 cubits. This is evident from the statement concerning the building of the Beis HaMikdash, "Its length was one hundred cubits." This verse is teaching us that the length of the building from west to east, until the Beis HaChalifos, is 90 cubits. The entire building including the projections, i.e., Beis HaChalifos, is 100 cubits, as will be explained in sec. 65. Thus from east to west, Beis HaChalifos is only 10 cubits. Rashi offers a similar explanation in his commentary to the verse, "In front of the chambers, there was a passageway of ten cubits."

[6] Of these 10 cubits, 5 were taken by the eastern wall of the Ulam, which was 5 cubits wide, as stated in sec. 47. Therefore this area's empty space did not even measure 5 cubits, because some of the remaining 5 cubits was taken up by the western wall. It is possible that the statement that the width of the Ulam's wall was 5 cubits only applies to the portion in front of the Ulam, and not to the portion in front of Beis HaChalifos. There, the Ulam was not as wide. Alternatively, it is possible to say that the 24 lockers of the 24 priestly watches were embedded into the 5 cubits of the eastern wall, with 12 lockers on either side of the building, as stated in Tractate Sukkah. This appears to be the correct interpretation, and I depicted it in this manner.

[7] The above applies to the Future Beis HaMikdash. However, in the Second Beis HaMikdash, the inner space of Beis HaChalifos may not have been so small because it is possible that the width of this area was more than 10 cubits, for the length of the building from the west until Beis HaChalifos is not explicitly stated in the Mishnah, as it is explicitly stated in Yechezkel's prophecy. Nevertheless, it appears that Beis HaChalifos did not extend over the entire length of the building on both sides. For if it did extend the entire length of the Sanctuary on both sides of the building, how would one explain the mishnah's statement: "The Sanctuary building was broad in its front and narrow in its rear"?

[8] Rambam does not rule in this manner. In Hilchos Beis HaBechirah, he writes that the Sanctuary building measured 100 cubits from north to south. The Ulam's walls were 5 cubits thick, and there were 10 cubits from the wall of the Ulam until the wall of the Sanctuary. Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura offers a similar interpretation stating that the Ulam added 15 cubits to the north of the Sanctuary's building. Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura arrives at this figure because the Ulam's walls were 5 cubits thick, and the Ulam itself measured 10 cubits. The same calculation applies on the south side.

[9] The text, Kaftor VeFerach, ch. 6, follows Rambam's approach, stating: The Ulam was the wall for the gateway for the Sanctuary. Its length was 100 cubits. In its center, there was a gateway 40 cubits high and 20 cubits wide. There were 11 cubits between it and the wall of the Sanctuary. Similarly, at the end of those 100 cubits on all sides, from the Ulam until the western wall of the Sanctuary, there was a space of 10 cubits. This space was called Beis HaChalifos. The thickness of the Ulam's wall on all three sides was 5 cubits, for the Ulam surrounded the Sanctuary on three sides until the western wall.

[10] Kaftor VeFerach also states: One who enters inside the gateway can go around the Sanctuary only from three sides, its entire eastern side, and its entire southern and northern sides. This area, Beis HaChalifos did not exist on the western side at all. For the end of the walls of Beis HaChalifos on the west ⌊side⌋ stand opposite the western wall of the Sanctuary and do not pass beyond it.

[11] Ra'avad, however, takes issue with Rambam, stating in his Hasagos: Avraham states: "All of this is emptiness and fantasy. For the Ulam did not have a wall at all ⌊on those sides⌋. This is a great error, for the Ulam only had an eastern wall in front of Sanctuary. Therefore, ⌊our Sages⌋ said: "The Sanctuary was narrow at its rear and broad in its front." The width of the Ulam is counted in the width of the Sanctuary.

[12] In his Kessef Mishneh, Rav Yosef Caro defends Rambam's approach, stating: The entire reason Ra'avad ascribes an error to Rambam stems from the mishnah's statement that the Sanctuary was narrow its rear and broad in its front, like a lion. This seemingly conflicts with the statement that it [the Sanctuary] was 100 cubits by 100 cubits. Nevertheless, Rambam already clarified that issue in his Commentary to the Mishnah, stating: "The entire Sanctuary was 100 [cubits] by 100 [cubits], but the structure would taper inward, narrowing on its western side. As it proceeded to the east, it would broaden, like a lion whose front is broad, but whose rear is narrow." If so, there is no conflict with the subject under discussion here.

[13] Now, it is true that Rambam does not interpret this mishnah as referring to Beis HaChalifos, but rather explains that in its rear, the walls of the Beis HaMikdash would taper inward, and would become broader toward the front of the building. Nevertheless, an explanation is still required, because Rambam's statements appear to contradict each other. On one hand, Rambam states that the building measured 100 cubits by 100 cubits, seemingly implying that it was of equal dimensions on all sides. Nevertheless, he also states that the wall would taper inward.

[14] For this reason Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura, who follows Rambam's approach regarding the Ulam and the broadening of the building of the Beis HaMikdash, concludes his discussion of the issue by saying: "It has not been explained to me how it is possible for [the building] to be an even 100 cubits on all sides."

[15] I will not withhold a possible resolution of Rambam's approach – that the figure 100 by 100 refers to the foundation of the Beis HaMikdash, i.e., although the walls of the building would narrow, the building's foundation was 100 cubits by 100 cubits. Support for this interpretation can be drawn from the description of the foundation in the verse, "Its size was 6 cubits." In his interpretation of that verse, Rashi states that the foundation was 6 cubits high, including the

portion embedded in the ground. The portion above the ground, however, was only 5 cubits high. See sec. 64, where this concept is explained. A similar statement can be made regarding the width of the building of the Beis HaMikdash. Below the ground, the building was a 100–cubit square; above the ground, the walls would taper.

[16] Although Rambam's statements can be explained regarding the Second Beis HaMikdash, such an explanation will not be valid regarding the Future Beis HaMikdash, as we will explain in sec. 70, when interpreting the verse, "Between the chambers ⌊and the building of the Beis HaMikdash⌋, there was a 20-cubit space."

Chapter 51

[1] "And he brought me into the Sanctuary and he measured the doorposts" that covered the wall that intervened between the Ulam and the Sanctuary. "They were six cubits wide."

[2] "I saw the height of the House, all around." The exact height is not stated in the verse. Tractate Middos states that the Second Beis HaMikdash was 100 cubits high and delineates the details of this height. Nevertheless, the Future Beis HaMikdash may not be this height, for the Beis HaMikdash built by King Shlomoh was 20 cubits taller than the Second Beis HaMikdash, as Scripture states: "It was 120 cubits high."

[3] This raises a question on Rashi's commentary. One of our Sages' interpretation of the verse, "The honor of this later House will be greater than that of the First," is that the Second Beis HaMikdash will be larger than the First Beis HaMikdash. Rashi states that this means that the Second Beis HaMikdash will be taller than the First Beis

HaMikdash. Now, the Second Beis HaMikdash was 100 cubits high, as stated in Tractate Middos. However, the First Beis HaMikdash was 120 cubits high, as stated above. It is possible to resolve this difficulty if we explain that the Sanctuary of the Second Beis HaMikdash was higher than that of the First Beis HaMikdash. For, as will be explained, in the First Beis HaMikdash, the Sanctuary was only 30 cubits high, while in the Second Beis HaMikdash, it was 40 cubits high.

[4] Thus, the height of the Sanctuary itself – not including the other levels above it – differed in the First and Second Batei HaMikdash. In the Second Beis HaMikdash, the Sanctuary was 40 cubits high, while in the Beis HaMikdash built by King Shlomoh, it was 30 cubits high, as Rashi states in his commentary to II Chronicles, and Radak states in his commentary to I Melachim. Therefore, we have no way to determine how high the Sanctuary – or the levels above it – will be in the Third Beis HaMikdash. Fortunate is the one who knows!

[5] Since, as indicated by the verse, the Sanctuary building will be high, thick beams will be placed between the wall of the Sanctuary and the wall of the Ulam to stabilize them. Thus, it is written, "There was a thick wooden beam (וְעָבֹת עֵץ) projecting toward the front of the Ulam from the outside." On that verse, Rashi comments, "Cedar beams were fixed between the wall of the Sanctuary and the wall of the Ulam so that it will not buckle, as stated in Tractate Middos."

[6] In his Kessef Mishneh to Hilchos Beis HaBechirah, Rav Yosef Caro questions this mishnah, for as Rambam states in that source, no protruding wooden beams were found in the Beis HaMikdash as a safeguard against the prohibition, "Do not plant an ashera, any tree, near the altar." Rav Yosef Caro attempts to resolve the issue, explaining that the beams were not permanent parts of the structure. Instead, they were held in place by the pressure of the walls, without being permanently affixed to the structure.

[7] Radak, by contrast, interprets וְעָבֹ֥ת עֵֽץ as referring to a beam, similar to the lintel of a doorframe that was embedded in the outer façade of the Ulam's wall. Our Sages refer to this beam as a morish. In the Beis HaMikdash built by King Shlomoh, such beams are referred to as "cedar beams." It appears to me that the parallel in the Second Beis HaMikdash were the five cedar beams embedded in the façade of the Ulam's wall.

[8] The width of the Sanctuary from north to south was 20 cubits. In the center of its eastern wall, there was an entrance that was 10 cubits wide. This is derived from the verse, "On the flanks of the entrance, there were 5 cubits on one side and 5 cubits on the other." "Its doorpost was rectangular."

[9] "There were two ⌈sets of⌉ doors to the Sanctuary and to the Holy ⌈of Holies⌉. The ⌈sets of⌉ doors ⌈each⌉ comprised two doors; these two doors would revolve ⌈on a hinge⌉. The door ⌈on⌉ one ⌈side⌉ comprised two doors and the other door comprised two doors." Similarly, it was taught in Tractate Middos: "The entrance to the Sanctuary… had four doors, two on the inside and two on the outside." Rashi explains this mishnah in depth in his commentary.

[10] "Engraved on them, on the doors of the Sanctuary, were cherubs and date-palms as they were engraved on the walls," as will be explained in depth in sec. 54.

Chapter 52

[1] "Then he returned me in the direction of the outer gate of the Sanctuary which faces the east." This verse refers to the gate of Sanctuary which was before the Holy of Holies. The narrative

continues, describing the wicket entrance next to this gate, "It was closed. God said to me, 'This gate shall be closed. It will not be opened. Man shall not enter through it, because God, the Lord of Israel, has entered it. It has been closed.'" Our Sages understood this verse as referring to the wicket entrance at the southern side of the gate to the Sanctuary. Thus, the Mishnah states in both Tractate Tamid and Tractate Middos: "The Great Gate had two wicket entrances [at its sides], one in the south and one in the north. No one ever entered the one in the south. The [prophet] Yechez-kel speaks explicitly concerning it: 'This gate shall be closed.'" In his commentary, Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura states that the mishnah is referring to two small entrances that were slightly removed from the gate.

[2] Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel comments on this mishnah: [The Sages'] conception was that the prophet's vision here was identical with [the structure] that was made in the Second Beis HaMikdash. My mind cannot accept this. In the Second Beis HaMikdash, [God's] Glory did not enter via the eastern gate. If that [prophecy] was not yet fulfilled, how can it be said, "This gate shall be closed… because God, the Lord of Israel, has entered it"? The implication is that the closing of the gate will come after [God's] Glory enters the House.

[3] In resolution: We must precisely analyze the words of the mishnah, "The [prophet] Yechezkel speaks explicitly concerning it." The mishnah does not conclude: "And so it will be in the Future," as it does in the mishnah which discusses the unroofed courtyards. With this choice of wording, the Sages prevent the question raised by Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel from arising. Were the mishnah to have said, "And so it will be in the Future," thus equating the wicket entrances in the two Batei HaMikdash, the question could have arisen: How can one say they were similar? In the Future Beis HaMikdash, the wicket will be closed after God's Glory enters, while in the Second Beis HaMikdash, His Glory had not yet entered. For that reason, the mishnah states, "The [prophet] Yechezkel speaks explicitly

concerning it," i.e., in this instance, the wicket was closed in anticipation of the fulfillment of the prophecy to Yechezkel. Thus, the intent is not that the situation will be the same in both Batei HaMikdash, because the motivating rationale is different in each instance. Although the wicket will be closed in both Batei HaMikdah, the reason it will be closed is not the same.

[4] This concept is intimated by the fact that in both Tractates Middos and Tamid, the mishnah does not only quote the verse's conclusion, "It has been closed." Instead, the mishnah also quotes the beginning of the verse, "This gate shall be closed." Seemingly, the verse is redundant. However, the first clause uses the future tense, while the last clause uses the past tense. This implies that the gate was already closed, before this future time. The use of the past tense can apply to Yechezkel's vision, even though the Second Beis HaMikdash had not yet been built, because Yechezkel recorded his prophecy after having been shown the vision of the Future Beis HaMikdash. When the mishnah says, "The ⌊prophet⌋ Yechezkel speaks explicitly concerning it," the mishnah is referring to this final clause, "it has been closed," which refers to the Second Beis HaMikdash. By contrast, the rationale given by the verse, "God, the Lord of Israel, has entered it," does not apply to the closing of the wicket in the Second Beis HaMikdash, but to its closing in the Future Beis HaMikdash. Thus, the question raised by Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel does not apply.

[5] The rationale that the southern wicket was closed in the era of the Second Beis HaMikdash in anticipation of God's Glory entering in the Future is alluded to in the above verse: "This gate shall be closed." The future tense refers to the Ultimate Future, "because God, the Lord of Israel, has entered it." "It has been closed," in expectation of that future time. The wicket's being closed was a sign to those who returning from exile to look to the future, knowing that ultimately, God's Glory would enter through this gate, and that He would cause His presence to dwell in His Beis HaMikdash.

[6] The passage continues, stating: "The nasi will sit within it to partake of food in God's presence." Here, the term nasi, literally, "the uplifted one," refers to the kohen gadol, the High Priest. Since the kohen gadol is more prestigious than the other kohanim, he would not usually eat together with the other kohanim in the various chambers. Instead, he would partake of his portion of the sacrificial offerings while sitting in the entranceway of this wicket.

Chapter 53

[1] "So declares God, the Lord: 'The gate to the Inner Courtyard facing east" – this refers to the wicket at the northern side of the gate to the Sanctuary – "shall be closed during the six days of work; it shall be opened on the Shabbos day and it shall be opened on the day of the New Moon." The Sanctuary is referred to as "the Inner Courtyard," as reflected in Rashi's commentary to the verse, "And it will come to pass when they enter the gates of the Inner Courtyard." Consult that source. "And the Nasi will enter the courtyard from the outside via the vestibule of the gate. He will stand at the doorpost of that gate," i.e., at the northern wicket. "The kohanim will prepare his burnt-offering and his peace-offering. He will prostrate himself on the threshold of the gate and depart, but the gate will not close until the evening. The people of the land will prostrate themselves at the entrance to that gate on Shabbasos and the days of the New Moon before God." "When the Nasi will offer a freewill-offering… they shall open the gate." Previously, in his commentary, Rashi states, "Here, the term Nasi refers to the kohen gadol. This applies whenever the term is mentioned in the passage. [However,] I heard in the name of Rabbi Menachem that it refers to the king."

[2] Concerning this wicket, the mishnah teaches: "He would take the key, open the wicket, and enter the cell. From the cell, he would enter the Sanctuary." Rambam explains that after entering the wicket, "he would proceed between the two walls until he reached a place that opened to the left side of the Sanctuary. He would enter the Sanctuary through it, proceed to the Great Gate, and open it."

Chapter 54

[1] "He measured its length," i.e., the length of the Sanctuary from east to west, "as 40 cubits."

[2] "There were doorposts… and the windows were covered," i.e. wooden frames were made for the windows and the frames "were covered," plated with gold, for the entire Sanctuary was plated with gold, and gold plate cannot be applied to stone. There were large boards that would cover, "to the space above the height of the entrance… on the entire wall, all around," i.e., on all the walls of the Sanctuary, "in the inner [chamber]," i.e., the Holy of Holies, "and in the outer [chamber]," i.e., the Sanctuary. The boards were "carefully measured." Designs were carved on these boards, including "cherubs and date palms; there was a date palm between one cherub and another. Each cherub had two faces, and there was a human face."

Chapter 55

[1] "One span; this was the upper surface of the Altar." Rashi explains that the upper surface of the Golden Altar was measured with an ordinary cubit, i.e., one that equaled 5 handbreadths. The Golden Altar was one cubit long and one cubit wide. Thus, there was a span, i.e., half a cubit, from the center of the Altar to the edge in any direction. With regard to the Outer Altar as well, the measures were made from its center, as stated above.

[2] In Parshas VeAtah Tetzaveh, the Golden Altar is described: "Its height will be two cubits…. It will have four horns and a gold border." The Golden Altar was placed in the Sanctuary exactly halfway between the Table and the Menorah, positioned slightly to the east, as Rashi states in Parshas Terumah. There, Rashi states that all three were placed within the inner half of the Sanctuary.

Chapter 56

[1] "The Altar was made of wood." Here, the term "Altar" refers to the Table for the Showbread, as the verse states later: "And he said to me, 'This is the Table that is before God.'" "It was three cubits high." Thus, the Table in the Batei HaMikdash was twice the height of the Table made in Moshe's time. The Table was "two cubits long"; the narrative does not mention the Table's width. In Moshe's time, "its length was two cubits and its width, one cubit."

[2] Describing the other particulars of the Table will merely lengthen the narrative without contributing to our purpose. Details can be found in the Talmud, in Tractate Menachos, ch. 11.

[3] In his commentary to the Torah, Rashi states that the Table was positioned 2 1/2 cubits from the northern wall. The Sanctuary of that era was 10 cubits wide. Hence, in the Beis HaMikdash, where the Sanctuary was 20 cubits wide, it would seem appropriate for the Table to be positioned 5 cubits from the wall were the same proportions to be maintained.

Chapter 57

[1] Although the prophet does not say explicitly whether or not he saw a Menorah, there is no doubt that it will be present in the Future Beis HaMikdash, for the Future Beis HaMikdash will not lack any of the vessels described in the narrative God communicated to Moshe. Furthermore, Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel interprets the phrase, "Within the holy place, there was a light like a light" as meaning "Inside the Sanctuary ('within the holy place'), the Menorah radiated light" ("there was a light") throughout the entire Beis HaMikdash ("that was like a light", i.e. like the light every person has at home near his table). [This interpretation can be derived from] the Shunamite woman, who says with regard to the prophet Elisha, "Let us place there a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp for him." The word the Shunamite woman uses for lamp, is "menorah."

[2] Therefore, in our depiction of the Sanctuary, we placed the Menorah opposite the Table on the southern side of the Sanctuary, 5 cubits from the wall. As explained above with regard to the Table, this measure is derived from Rashi's commentary regarding the Sanctuary, which states that the Table was positioned 2 1/2 cubits from the wall.

[3] One who desires to know the design of the Menorah as a whole and in detail should study the mishnah in Tractate Menachos, as explained by Rambam.

Chapter 58

[1] "Then he entered before the inner [Sanctuary]," i.e., to the wall that separated between the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies. "He measured the doorpost of the entrance," i.e., the width of the frame that covered the wall, "it was two cubits."

[2] In the Second Beis HaMikdash, this place was occupied by the amah traksin, in which there were two curtains, not a wall, as stated in Tractate Yoma. Similarly, in the Mishkan in the desert, there was a curtain separating the Sanctuary from the Holy of Holies. In the Future Beis HaMikdash, there will be a wall with a doorway between the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies, as it is written: "There were two doors between the Sanctuary and the Holy Chamber."

[3] "The entrance was six cubits" high. "The width of the entrance was seven cubits." "Its doorposts were rectangular" and "it had two doors" that would close one opposite the other, one attached to the northern doorpost, and one to the southern one.

Chapter 59

[1] "He measured its length as 20 cubits and its width as 20 cubits…. He said to me, 'This is the Holy of Holies.'" "There were doorposts, covered windows, and corner structures… Opposite the doorpost, there were wooden boards all around, ⌊from⌋ the earth to the windows – and the windows were covered; to above the entrance, until the inner chamber, all around."

Chapter 60

[1] Although the prophet does not mention the Ark of God, Commander of legions, there is no need to prove that the Ark will return and be present in the Future Beis HaMikdash. For our entire hope and trust is that the Beis HaMikdash will return to its initial eminence. Indeed, "the glory of this later House will surpass" that of the Second Beis HaMikdash in the five matters that were lacking in it, one of them being the Ark.

[2] The Ark was entombed prior to the destruction of the First Beis HaMikdash, because King Yoshiyahu had a prophetic vision that the Beis HaMikdash would be destroyed. The Ark was not present in the Second Beis HaMikdash, because it too was destined to be destroyed because of our sins. There are other Sages who maintain that the Ark was not entombed, but taken in captivity to Babylon. This opinion is based on the prophecy, "Nothing shall remain," i.e., not even the Tablets, as stated in Tractate Yoma. Nevertheless, the Ark was not present in the Second Beis HaMikdash for the same reason stated above. Since the Second Beis HaMikdash would ultimately be

destroyed, God did not want His Ark and the Tablets to be exiled again.

[3] The design of the Ark, its staves that will not be removed from it, and its golden cover with the cherubs on it are described in Parshas Terumah.

Chapter 61

[1] "He measured the wall of the House," i.e., the thickness of the western wall of the Holy of Holies, "it was six cubits." According to Rambam, in the Second Beis Hamikdash the wall was not a solid 6 cubits. Instead, there were two walls with open space between them. The width of the walls and the open space added up to 6 cubits.

[2] It would be possible to give a similar explanation in this instance – that the "wall" referred to by the verse refers to two walls with open space between them. Accordingly, the open space would be one of the 33 side-chambers (צְלָעוֹת), as reflected in the explanations below that follow Rambam's interpretation. We did not offer such an explanation because we want Rambam's interpretation to accord with Targum Yonason, as will be explained in sections 64-65.

Chapter 62

[1] The verse cited previously continues, "The width of the side-chamber (צלע) was 4 cubits." In the Second Beis HaMikdash, the parallel structure was 6 cubits wide.

[2] There was a second side-chamber built on top of this side-chamber, and there was a third side-chamber built on top of the second. These were three of the 33 side-chambers that will be described in sec. 64.

[3] The verse states that the side-chambers, "surrounded the House all around." In sec. 64, these side-chambers will be discussed in detail.

Chapter 63

[1] "The foundations of the side-chambers were a full measuring-rod wide, a space of 6 cubits." The verse uses the word אֲצִילָה, which Targum Yonason explains means "space". Radak offers a similar interpretation, stating that אֲצִילָה reflects "size" or "greatness," as in the phrase, "Against the great ones (אֲצִילֵי) of the Children of Israel." Rashi explains that the verse in Yechezkel's prophecy refers to the foundation of the wall of the side-chamber which was embedded in the ground. Above the ground, however, the wall was 5 cubits wide, as reflected by the following verse:

[2] "The width of the wall of the side-chamber toward the outside was 5 cubits." As mentioned in sec. 61, in the Second Beis HaMikdash, the western wall of the Holy of Holies was comprised of two parallel walls, with a hollow space between them. There was a cell inside the hollow space. Similarly, in the Second Beis HaMikdash this outer wall

was constructed in a similar manner, with a cell inside its hollow space. However, we did not depict the Future Beis HaMikdash according to this interpretation, even according to Rambam's explanation, because we wanted Rambam's interpretation to agree with that of Targum Yonason, as will be explained in sec. 64.

Chapter 64

[1] **SECTIONS 64–69**

[2] "There were side-chambers, one side-chamber on top of another, 33 in number." We have described three of these side-chambers previously. Here, we will explain the thirty others. Since the verse states, "[The side-chambers] became progressively wider. There was a spiral [stairwell]…. From the lowest level, one would ascend to the highest level, via the middle level," it is apparent that there will be three levels of side-chambers.

[3] Similarly, Tractate Middos teaches: There were 38 cells there, 15 on the northern side, 15 on the southern side and 8 on the western side. On the northern and southern sides, there were 5 [cells] on top of 5 [cells], and 5 [cells] on top of them. On the western side, there were 3 [cells] on top of 3 [cells], and 2 [cells] on top of them.

[4] Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura explains this mishnah as follows: Later in the chapter, when [the mishnah] details the 70 cubits [of the width of the Beis HaMikdash] from north to south, it states: "The wall of the winding stairwell was 5 [cubits wide], the winding stairwell was 3 [cubits wide], the wall of the cell, 5, the cell, 6, and the wall of the Sanctuary, 6." It also makes a similar reckoning regarding the southern [side of the Beis HaMikdash]. The intent is not that the wall of the winding stairwell, the wall of the cell, and the wall of the

Sanctuary were that [thick. Instead, these "walls" had empty space and the mishnah] is reckoning [for example,] the thickness of the wall of the Sanctuary, and the space between it and the next wall. Thus, the 5 cubits of the wall of the winding stairwell, the 3 of the winding stairwell, the 5 of the wall of the cell, the 6 of the cell, and the 6 of the wall of the Sanctuary, all contained a [small] chamber, i.e., a cell [and a wall]. Thus, there were five cells on the northern [side of the Sanctuary], and an equal number on the southern [side]. Above these five, there were another five [cells], and five more on top of them, a total of 15 in the north and the same number in the south. Similarly, in the west, later on in the chapter, [the mishnah] states: "The wall of the Sanctuary was 6 [cubits] wide, the cell, 6, and the wall of the cell 5." There was a chamber inside each of these [three]. The wall of the cell was not 6 cubits thick. Instead, the wall together with the cell it contained were 6 [cubits wide]. Similarly, the other cell outside of it [together with its wall] was 6 [cubits wide], and the wall of the other cell outside of them with the cell it contained was 5 [cubits wide]. Thus, there were three chambers. On top of these three were built three other chambers, and two [were built] on top of them. Thus, there were eight chambers in the west.

[5] Rambam's conception is the same, as he writes: Do not err [and think that there is a difficulty] because first, [the mishnah] calls them [by individual names]: the wall of the winding stairwell, the winding stairwell, the wall of the cell, the cell, and the wall of the Sanctuary, and afterwards, calls them all cells, because the space left between the two walls is a cell. Thus, they are all cells. The wall of the winding stairwell, the wall of the cell, and the wall of the Sanctuary were not solid walls. Instead, there were two walls, and there was space between them. Some of these chambers had names. For example, on the lowest level of [these cells], there was the winding stairwell, the chamber for water to descend, and others.

[6] The Future Beis HaMikdash will be built in a similar manner. The lowest level on the northern and southern sides will comprise five

side-chambers that will be located in these five empty spaces. There will be five side-chambers on top of them, and five more on top of those. The side-chambers may have other descriptive names that are not mentioned in the verse.

[7] According to Radak and Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel, the winding stairwell is mentioned explicitly in Scripture. These commentaries interpret the word וְנִסְבָּה, as referring to a winding stairwell. In contrast to this, Rashi and the Targum interpret the word וְנִסְבָּה as meaning a ladder that was used to ascend to the upper levels, as will be explained. Even though we equate the order of the side-chambers mentioned in the narrative here with the order of the cells mentioned in the mishnah, their width will not be the same, as will be explained later on with regard to the phrase, "the width of the western side."

[8] As explained in the previous sections, there will only be three cells on the western side of the Future Beis HaMikdash. They will be built one on top of the other, and will occupy the space between the western wall of the Holy of Holies and the outer western wall of the Beis HaMikdash. The space between these walls is the side-chamber mentioned in the verse.

[9] We did not think that the side-chambers might be located next to each other, with two side-chambers being situated between two additional walls that were not that thick, as we explained with regard to the Second Beis HaMikdash and with regard to the northern and southern sides of the Future Beis HaMikdash. The reason for our choice is that Targum Yonason states that there will be "eleven ⌊side-chambers⌋ in a row." This can be understood as follows. On the western side, the side-chambers were built one on top of other. When the five lowest side-chambers in the north, the five side-chambers in the south, and the lowest side-chamber in the west are viewed as a whole, there will be "eleven ⌊side-chambers⌋ in a row." This concept will also apply regarding the second and third levels. However, if the three levels of chambers in the west are interpreted as being next to

each other, there will be 13 side-chambers in a row, not "eleven ⌊side-chambers⌋ in a row."

10 The supporting beams for the side-chambers "approached the wall of the House ⌊near⌋ the side-chambers all around so that they would be held fast, but they were not attached inside the walls of the House." The intent of this verse is that the beams that supported the higher side-chambers were placed between the lowest chamber and the middle chamber, and between the middle chamber and the highest chamber. The beams would rest on "the wall near the side-chambers," i.e., on the wall that was visible from the inside of the side-chamber. Implied is that the thickness of the wall was progressively reduced, leaving a ledge to support the beams, as will be explained shortly.

11 "They would be held fast, but they were not held fast inside the walls of the House," i.e., the beams were supported by the wall's indentation, but not by the wall itself, for holes were not made in the wall into which the beams would be inserted. Instead, they were supported by the wall's indentations. Radak and Ri offer similar explanations, except according to their opinions, this indentation only existed on the side of the wall adjoining the Sanctuary, and not on the outer side. Their opinion is based on their interpretation of the structure, which accords with that of Rashi, as will be explained shortly.

12 According to our interpretation, which is based on the conception of Rambam and those who follow his conception, the walls were indented to support the beams of the side-chambers on both of their sides. Thus, the walls were indented on either side of the side-chambers to support their beams.

13 "⌊The side-chambers⌋ became wider and the spiral stairwell ascended higher and higher to ⌊the higher level of⌋ the side-chambers, for the House was surrounded by ⌊side-chambers⌋ on higher and

higher levels, all around the House; therefore, the widest level of the structure was the highest." The prophet's use of the words וְרָזֻבָּה and וְנָסְבָה, imply separate concepts. As Rashi explains, the vav preceding each word distinguishes between the two concepts. Accordingly, וְרָזֻבָּה can be explained as Rashi does, that the side-chambers would progressively widen on their higher levels. Therefore, the walls would become narrower as a result of the indentation made to support the side-chambers. Indeed, this is the way high walls are built, somewhat narrower on top, to reduce the weight on the lower levels.

[14] We cannot agree, however, with Rashi's interpretation that the wall was indented a full cubit at each level, for we explained above that the walls were not 5 or 6 cubits thick. Rather, the two parallel walls and the empty space between them encompassed 5 or 6 cubits. According to our understanding, it would be impossible for the wall to be indented a cubit on the middle level and another cubit on the upper level. Rashi, however, understood that the walls were actually 5 or 6 cubits thick, as will be explained below.

[15] The mishnah states: "The lowest level was five ⌊cubits⌋ wide, the surface above it was six, as indicated by the verse, 'for he made recesses in the House all around.'" Rambam and Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura interpret this as meaning that an indentation measuring one cubit was made on all three levels. However, they maintain that this mishnah and this verse are referring to a structure outside the wall of the winding stairwell. On the outside of that wall, there were three balconies, one on top of the other. This structure was called a yetzia in the Beis HaMikdash built by King Shlomoh.

[16] The wall of the winding stairwell would become narrower on the outside as it ascended. When it reached the surface above the lowest level, it would be indented an entire cubit. The beams supporting the balcony were placed on that cubit of space. When the structure reached the surface above the middle story, which served as the floor

of the third story, the thickness of the wall would be further reduced. At that point the wall was indented another cubit, so the ends of the beams could be placed on it. This progressive indentation is alluded to by the phrase, "for he made recesses."

[17] We are thus forced to say that the empty space inside the wall of the winding stairwell was very narrow. Hence, the wall was thick enough that its outside could be indented a cubit on the middle level and a cubit on the upper level. This would enable us to accept Rashi's interpretation that a similar pattern was followed regarding the other walls.

[18] However, it is unnecessary to offer such an interpretation. Rashi offers it because he equates the term וְרָוְזָבָה, which the text uses when discussing the widening of the side-chambers in Yechezkel's prophecy, with the phrase, "for he made recesses in the House," mentioned in connection to the Beis HaMikdash built by Shlomoh. Nevertheless, Rambam understands that the recesses were only made in the wall outside the winding stairwell. Thus, they do not relate to the widening of the side-chambers. Moreover, reducing the thickness of one wall by 2 cubits is feasible because one could also reduce the thickness of the wall on the other side. If, however, one is reducing the wall on both sides by 2 cubits, initially the wall would have to be very thick. This would mean that the inner space on the bottom level would be very narrow.

[19] True, it is possible to explain that the intent when saying that the recesses were one cubit is that they were one cubit in total, i.e., half a cubit on each side, as Ri explains, quoted in Tosafos to Tractate Yoma. Nevertheless, since according to Rambam, these recesses are not related to the side-chambers, but rather are features of the outside of the wall, it is not necessary to employ any of these forced explanations. Instead, the word וְרָוְזָבָה can be interpreted as meaning that the width of the side-chambers expanded the same amount as

the walls of the structure were narrowed, without defining it to a specific figure.

[20] A related understanding is reflected in Targum Yonason, which understands the words וְרָחֲבָה וְנָסְבָה as a single concept. According to this explanation, the vav in וְנָסְבָה is extraneous. This is similar to the vav in the verse, תֵּת וְקָדֵשׁ וְצָבָא מִרְמָס "enabling the holy place and the host to be crushed," where the vav in the word וקדש seems to be unnecessary. Similarly, in the verse, נִרְדָּם וְרֶכֶב וָסוּס, "the chariot and the horse slumbered," the vav in the word ורכב seems to be unnecessary, as Rashi explains in his commentary to those verses. Thus, Targum Yonason translates the verse as, "The spiral stairwell became wider and ascended upward."

[21] According to this interpretation, this phrase is not referring to the later phrases in the verse, and does not mean that the side-chambers became wider, as Rashi explains. Instead, the verse is teaching us that the spiral stairwell became wider as it ascended. As Targum Yonason continues: "The structure [of the steps] was a spiral, [enabling one] to ascend very high, going round and round the structure." Therefore, it was wider because of its height. Targum Yonason adds the word לסלקא, "[enabling one] to ascend," to indicate that the phrase refers to the widening of the stairwell and not to the side-chambers.

[22] Nevertheless, the following phrase, עַל כֵּן רֹחַב לַבַּיִת לְמַעְלָה, must be interpreted as referring to the structure of the side-chambers. It should be interpreted – as Rashi does – as meaning "therefore, the widest level of the structure was the highest." This phrase teaches us that the side-chambers became wider from level to level. The middle level was wider than the lowest level and the highest level was wider than the middle level. The word therefore refers to the phrase, לִהְיוֹת אֲחֻזוֹת, "to be held fast," in the preceding verse.

[23] Radak offers a similar interpretation, stating: "'Therefore' refers to what was stated previously. Since they were 'held fast by the walls

of the House,' 'the widest level of the structure was the highest,' i.e., the highest tier of the side-chambers was wider than all the others." There was, however, no fixed measure for the widening of the side-chambers. Instead, the width of the side-chambers expanded according to the extent that the walls of the structure were narrowed, as explained above.

[24] The height of the side-chambers is not explicitly mentioned in Yechezkel's prophecy. They were evenly divided and each side-chamber and its roof comprised one-third of the height of the Sanctuary. Scripture did not desire to reveal the height of the Sanctuary in the Future, and were it to have informed us of the height of the side-chambers, one would have been able to deduce the height of the Sanctuary. Therefore, their height was not mentioned.

[25] Rashi equates the side-chambers described here with the balconies that existed in the Beis HaMikdash built by King Shlomoh, as will be explained below. Concerning the balconies, it is written: "And he built the balcony… it was five cubits high." Similarly, Rashi comments on the term הַגַּזְרָה, "Targum Yonason translates it as בְּצוֹרְתָּא, 'the tall structure.' I say that this term refers to the tall edifice of the structure. The low cells around it are called בִּנְיָן, 'the building.'" Thus, it is obvious that Rashi does not think that the side-chambers were the same height as the main structure of the Beis HaMikdash.

[26] "The building that was on the outer side of the edifice on its western side." Rashi interprets הַגַּזְרָה as the main edifice of the Beis HaMikdash. Radak – and similarly, Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel, questions this interpretation, noting that shortly thereafter, the narrative states, "the width of the outer side of the House and the גַּזְרָה on the east." According to Rashi, the verse is redundant, because the גַּזְרָה and "the House" are identical.

[27] I do not see the verses as problematic. The phrase, "The building that was on the outer side of the edifice," refers to the side-chambers built on the outer side of the main structure of the Beis HaMikdash. Similarly, the phrase, "the width of the outer side of the House," refers to everything that was built on the outer side of the House, even though it does not specifically say, "and the building," i.e., the side-chambers.

[28] A similar usage is found in a gloss of Tosafos to tractate Yoma. Tosafos cite the verse, "For he made recesses in the House all around," and explain that although the recesses were made in the wall of the cells which were positioned around the main building of the Beis HaMikdash, it is still appropriate to say that they were made, "in the House." In our instance as well, the "outer side of the House" includes what was built on its outer side, i.e., the side-chambers. Afterwards, the verse mentions the גּוֹרָה, i.e., the main edifice of the Beis HaMikdash. It is as if the verse stated that the angel measured what was on the outer side of the House and the House itself, i.e., he measured the width of the side-chambers and the width of the main edifice.

[29] The first verse did not specifically mention the measurement of the width of the House separately because in that verse the angel is narrating as he is standing in the west, and the side-chamber runs across the entire width of the west side of the House. Hence, the angel measured the House and the side-chamber as a single unit. In the second verse, the angel is narrating as he is standing in the east, in front of the House. There were no side-chambers there. Hence, the main edifice is singled out.

[30] As a stylistic technique, the verse varied the terms, using both the term "House" and the term "גּוֹרָה", saying, "the outer side of the House and the גּוֹרָה," instead of saying, "the outer side of the House and the House," or "the outer side of the גּוֹרָה and the גּוֹרָה."

[31] "On its western side, the width [of the building] was 70 cubits." The Mishnah states: There were 70 cubits from the north to the south. The wall of the winding stairwell was 5 cubits, the winding stairwell was three [cubits wide], the wall of the cell - five, the cell - six, and the wall of the Sanctuary - six, its inner space - twenty, the wall of the Sanctuary - six, the cell - six, the wall of the cell - five, the chamber for water to descend - 3 cubits, and [its] wall - 5 cubits.

[32] It was already explained that the walls mentioned were not solid walls, and that the mishnah is mentioning five spaces, i.e., five cells, on both the northern and southern sides. Similarly, in the Future Beis HaMikdash, there will be five cells, referred to as צְלָעוֹת, "side-chambers," one next to the other, on the northern and southern sides. The Holy Sanctuary will be situated in the center, and the width of the entire expanse will be 70 cubits.

[33] In general, the Second Beis HaMikdash and the Future Beis HaMikdash will parallel each other. In particular, however, the width of the side-chambers in the Future Beis HaMikdash will not be the same as the width of the cells – or the other structures – in the Second Beis HaMikdash. Thus, it is written: "The width of the side-chamber was 4 cubits, surrounding the House all around." This verse is referring to the side-chamber on the west, saying that it was 4 cubits wide, and that this side-chamber would extend on the north and south sides of the Beis HaMikdash as well. Thus, in the Future Beis HaMikdash, the side-chambers which the mishnah refers to as cells, will be 4 cubits wide. This conception is followed by Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel, who comments on the above verse: "Every side-chamber was 4 cubits wide. The side-chambers were connected on the outer side of the three walls of the Sanctuary, [i.e.,] on the west, the north, and the south. This is reflected by the phrase, 'surrounding the House all around.'" Similarly, the alternate interpretation presented by Rashi supports Rav Abarbanel's interpretation, even though it is not entirely germane to this subject.

[34] The difference between the width of the side-chambers in Yechezkel's vision and that of the cells in the Second Beis HaMikdash on the northern and southern sides, was 2 cubits, as the mishnah states: "The cell, six" (for, as mentioned above, the cells in Yechezkel's vision were only 4 cubits wide). Therefore, these 2 cubits must be added to the other elements of the structure on the northern and southern sides, to produce the width of 70 cubits mentioned in Yechezkel's prophecy. As will be explained shortly, Rashi compensated for the reduction on the western side by adding to the width of the foundation of its wall. We will follow the same approach and add one cubit to the foundation of the wall of the cell and one cubit to the foundation of the wall of the winding stairwell on the northern and southern sides.

[35] True, the implication of the verse is that the wall of the winding stairwell will be only 5 cubits wide, as the mishnah states, for it is written: "The wall of the building was five cubits wide all around." The implication is that the outer wall of the building, i.e. the wall of the winding stairwell, will be 5 cubits wide "all around," i.e., on the north and the south. The rationale is that the wall of the winding stairwell is a continuation of the outer wall of the building on the western side, which was also 5 cubits wide, as it is written: "The width of the outer wall of the side-chamber was five cubits." Nevertheless, the verse can be interpreted as referring to the portion above the foundation. The foundation, by contrast, was 6 cubits wide.

[36] Similarly, with regard to the western wall, the narrative explicitly states that the foundation was 6 cubits wide, as it is written: "The foundations of the side-chambers were a full measuring rod wide, a space of six cubits." Rashi explains that this verse is referring to the foundation of the outer wall of the side-chambers, as explained in sec. 63. It is also explained later in this section that the phrase, "Its length was ninety cubits," includes the 6 cubits of the foundation as part of the length of the House.

[37] Similarly, it can be said that the foundation of the northern and southern walls – which extended from this wall –was 6 cubits wide, and was included in the width of 70 cubits. Indeed, this is indicated by the wording of the narrative, which refers to "the foundations of the side-chambers." Were that phrase only to be referring to the foundation of the western side-chamber, the verse would have used the singular "side-chamber" instead of the plural "side-chambers."

[38] Moreover, it appears that using a singular form in that verse would have been appropriate even if it was referring not only to the western wall, but to the entire outer wall, i.e., the wall of the winding stairwell on the north and the corresponding wall on the south, in addition to the western wall. Indeed, the narrative already referred to the entire outer wall – including the western, northern, and southern walls – in the singular in the phrase, "the wall of the building was five cubits wide all around." Therefore, it can be said that the phrase, "the foundations of the side-chambers," is written in plural because it includes the foundation of the wall of the cell which was also "a full measuring rod wide." Thus, we have clear support for our thesis that the cubits that will be reduced from the width of the cell will be added to the width of the foundation of the wall of the winding stairwell and to the foundation of the cell. Just like the width of the foundation of the outer, western wall of the cell is counted in the reckoning of the 100 cubits of the length of the Beis HaMikdash, so too, the width of these two foundations mentioned above are included in the reckoning of the 70 cubits of the width of the Beis HaMikdash.

[39] "Its length was 90 cubits. He measured the House as 100 cubits in length." Although the narrative mentions two different measures of length, they are not contradictory. As Rashi states in his commentary to the verse, the measure of 100 cubits refers to the entire building, as detailed by the mishnah in Tractate Middos:

[40] It was 100 cubits from the east to the west: The wall of the Ulam was 5 cubits, ⌊the Ulam was⌋ 11 cubits wide. The wall of the

Sanctuary was six, its length 40. There was the amah traksin (one cubit), the chamber of the Holy of Holies was 20 cubits, a wall - six, the cell - six, and the wall of the cell - five.

[41] Rashi continues: "Above [i.e., in the narrative in Yechezkel], all of these measures are explicitly stated with the exception of the amah traksin." As we explained in sec. 58, in the Future Beis HaMikdash, the amah traksin will be replaced by a wall that will be 2 cubits thick. Compensation for the additional cubit will be made by reducing the width of the cell by one cubit. This can be derived from the mishnah, which states that the cell will be 6 cubits wide and its wall - 5, while in the Future Beis HaMikdash, the side-chamber will be 4 cubits wide and its wall - 6, as reflected by the verse, "The foundations of the side-chambers were a full measuring rod wide," as explained in sec. 63. The width of the foundation is included in the calculation.

[42] The reckoning of 90 cubits only includes the space until Beis HaChalifos – the Chamber of the Knives – which was to the east, and encompassed 10 cubits. In total, the span was 100 cubits, as explained in sec. 50. The verse mentions the two separately, because they were of different width. The main edifice of the Beis HaMikdash (which was 90 cubits long) was only 70 cubits wide. Beis HaChalifos, which was 10 cubits long, was 100 cubits wide. This is also the intent of the mishnah's statement that "the Sanctuary was narrow at its rear and broad in its front." This was discussed sufficiently in sec. 50.

[43] In the edifice that was 90 cubits long, the 5 cubits at the end closest to Beis HaChalifos were left empty. There was space between the side-chambers and Beis HaChalifos, to which the cells opened. This space is alluded to by the phrase, "[There was] an [open space] that was munach [before] the structure of the side-chambers of the House." Targum Yonason also speaks of, "space that was left," i.e., space that was without a structure, which was the same width as the side-chambers, which was left in the corners of the edifice. Thus, it is written: "The width of the place left open (munach) was five cubits

all around." Rashi explains that, "the phrase 'all around' stated with regard to the munach should not be interpreted according to its simple meaning, at all four corners. Instead, it means 'at either side,' on the south and on the north, i.e., at the southeast corner and at the northeast corner."

[44] Rashi also writes regarding the phrase, "an [open space] that was left": There was an open space left at the southeast corner and at the northeast corner, for the side-chambers would not surround the entire House. The entrances to the side-chambers were in those empty spaces in the eastern corner, as it is written: "The entrance to the side-chamber was from the munach. There was one entrance on the north and one on the south." For the side-chambers did not have entrances to either the Courtyard or to the Sanctuary. Only those in the northeast and southeast corner had an entrance in the wall. They opened up to this empty space and [the kohanim] would enter this side-chamber through this entrance. From this side-chamber, they would enter the second one, and the third, surrounding [the Sanctuary]. Thus, the mishnah teaches in Tractate Middos: "Each of the cells had three openings: one to the cell on the right, one to the cell on the left, and one to the cell above it. Similarly, the Targum Yonason renders the words וַאֲשֶׁר מְנֻוָּח, "a place was left."

[45] Similarly, Rabbeinu Shemayah, Rashi's student, writes in his commentary to Tractate Middos: "Also in the building described by Yechezkel, there were 5 cubits left open before the final cell whose space was positioned opposite the thickness of the wall of the Sanctuary, according to the reckoning." With God's help, his words will be cited below at length.

[46] Rashi's statement cited above – that the side-chambers did not open up to the Sanctuary – should not be understood as meaning that none of the side-chambers opened up to the Sanctuary. Rather, Rashi's intent appears to be that the opening of the side-chamber to the Sanctuary was not used to enter and exit the side-chambers, for the

reason to be explained below. Therefore, it was necessary that there be an entrance to the munach that could be used to enter and exit the side-chambers. What compelled me to such an interpretation is that the mishnah states: "[The cell] in the northeast corner had five openings: one to the cell on its right, one to the cell above it, one to the winding stairwell, one towards the wicket, and one to the Sanctuary." Rambam in his Hilchos Beis HaBechirah, explains: "The cell in the northeast corner on the second level had five entrances: one to the cell on its right, one to the cell above it, one to the winding stairwell, one towards the cell with the wicket, and one to the Sanctuary."

[47] Rambam's intent can be understood based on his commentary to the above mishnah: "This cell was on the middle level of the cells. It was above the winding stairwell." Thus, it had five openings: a) one to the cell on its right, which was the wall of the winding stairwell which had empty space in its midst that was called a cell, b) one to the cell above it, because it was on the second level and there was a third level above it, c) one to the winding stairwell below it that enabled one to ascend to it, and d) one to the cell that has the wicket entrance. With regard to the latter opening, in his commentary to the above mishnah, Rambam writes: "The intent is [to refer] to the cell within which was located the northern wicket through which one would enter the Sanctuary. This is the opening that existed on the northern side of the cell that had five openings."

[48] To explain Rambam's words: Rambam confronted a conceptual difficulty because the wicket entrance was near the Sanctuary, i.e., in the wall of the Sanctuary itself. According to Rambam, who understands the cells as being positioned from north to south, a question arises: How is it possible that the cell above the winding stairwell will have an opening to the wicket entrance? There are two other cells – named "the cell" and "the wall of the cell" – between this cell and the wicket entrance. Therefore, Rambam explains that the mishnah's words, "one to the wicket entrance," do not mean to

the wicket entrance itself, but to the cell that was next to the wicket entrance, i.e., to the cell that was named "the cell." It appears to me that the words, "in the northern side of the cell," in Rambam's commentary are an error, and the text should read, "to the southern side."

[49] The mishnah's statement that the fifth opening was "to the Sanctuary" does not mean to the Sanctuary itself, but rather "to the wicket that led to the Sanctuary," for these openings were positioned facing each other. Hence, this opening was also referred to as an opening of the cell over the winding stairwell, even though in truth this cell did not have an opening to the wicket, and certainly not to the Sanctuary, but rather to the open spaces, i.e., the cells, between the wicket and the Sanctuary. This is the explanation of Rambam's words. If they are not, I pray that I be able to understand their interpretation.

[50] Nevertheless, it appears to me that the mishnah should be interpreted differently. The mishnah is referring to the lowest level of cells and the cell referred to as "the cell." The cell referred to as "the cell" had five openings. The mishnah mentions the northeast corner, i.e., in contrast to the southeast corner, for regarding the wicket on the southeast, it is written: "This gate shall be closed. It will not be opened." Hence, it is not appropriate to mention the opening to the wicket and the opening to the Sanctuary from that side. This interpretation also fits according to Rambam. The statement in the mishnah can thus be interpreted: "one to the cell on the right," i.e., to the cell in the wall of this cell, "one to the cell above it, one to the winding stairwell," i.e., via its wall, "one to the cell that has the wicket," i.e., to the cell in the wall of the Sanctuary, "and one to the Sanctuary," i.e., via this wicket.

[51] This interpretation is based on the concept that these two cells – the wall of the cell and the wall of the Sanctuary – are called "walls," although they are empty spaces. These cells are called "walls"

because they were not constructed for their own sake, i.e., because there was a need for cells. Instead, there was a need for walls and, by the way, as it were, the wall was made hollow and, as a result, a cell was made. Accordingly, if there is an entrance that opens from the cell that is unique in that it is called "the cell" to the Sanctuary or to the winding stairwell, the entrance is identified with the cell called "the cell," even though it passes through these hollow walls. True, these walls were hollow and are called cells. Nevertheless, they are identified with the walls, as evidenced by their names, "the wall of the cell," and, "the wall of the Sanctuary," as explained.

[52] For this reason, the mishnah does not mention that this cell had an opening to the empty space in the wall of the winding stairwell. The winding stairwell is a unique and significant entity. Even if the opening from the winding stairwell to the hollow in its wall was positioned opposite the opening leading from "the cell" to the winding stairwell, the opening from the winding stairwell to the cell in its wall would not be identified with "the cell" – i.e., the sixth opening to "the wall of the winding stairwell" would not be mentioned – because the opening is from the winding stairwell and is identified with the winding stairwell (since the winding stairwell is a significant entity). The mishnah does, however, discuss openings from "the cell" to the winding stairwell that is on its side, and to the Sanctuary, even though there are two spaces – "the wall of the cell" and "the wall of the Sanctuary" between "the cell" and the Sanctuary. The rationale is that these two empty spaces were not given an independent name. Therefore, the two openings mentioned above were not identified with them but with the cell given the name "the cell." The mishnah did, nevertheless, count the openings from "the cell" to the empty spaces between the walls because these cavities are referred to as a cell, and there are openings from them to "the cell." This appears to be how the mishnah should be understood.

[53] According to Rambam's interpretation, by contrast, an explanation is required as to why these openings are identified with this cell, for

the explanation given above cannot be employed according to Rambam's understanding. Furthermore, it is necessary to understand why Rambam does not count the opening to the "wall of the cell" – i.e., the empty space within the walls – as he counts the opening to "the wall of the winding stairwell," for it appears that the phrase "the opening to the cell on its right" mentioned by the mishnah refers to the "wall of the cell." One might posit that the phrase "the cell on its right" means the cell on the left side when facing the Holy of Holies, which can be called on its right because it is south of "the cell." In that instance, one can ask the opposite: Why isn't the opening to the wall of the winding stairwell mentioned? A labored explanation can be given that the mishnah cites the opening to the cell called "the wall of the cell" because it focuses on the openings leading to the Sanctuary. Nevertheless, this explanation is not satisfactory in my eyes.

[54] Whatever the explanation is, it is obvious that it is possible to go from the Sanctuary to the cells, for the cells have openings to the Sanctuary. What compelled me to interpret Rashi's statement that they did not open to the Sanctuary as meaning "they did not have an opening used for entering and departing" is that it would be very denigrating if one would not walk to the cells directly, but instead passed through the Sanctuary of the King, blessed be He, using the Sanctuary as a shortcut. Furthermore, one who enters the Sanctuary while not performing an act of service is deserving of lashes, as stated in Tractate Menachos. Indeed, Sefer Mitzvos Gadol states that this applies even when one enters to prostrate himself at a time other than after completing an act of sacrificial service.

[55] Although Rambam's interpretation of this mishnah – and our interpretation – does not fit with Rashi's understanding of the mishnah as will be explained, even Rashi would agree that the cells have an opening to the Sanctuary. Indeed, the aforementioned mishnah explicitly states: "one to the Sanctuary."

[56] In truth, it was not necessary to elaborate in the explanation of the mishnah at all, for the mishnah clearly states that the cells opened to the Sanctuary, and the point we made would have been stated. Nevertheless, through this discussion, other issues were clarified.

[57] The mishnah does not mention if there was a parallel to the munach, the empty space, in the Second Beis HaMikdash and the commentaries do not discuss this point. Only Rabbeinu Shemayah raises this question.

[58] "The width of the outer side of the House and the edifice on the east was one hundred cubits." I have already explained that the term, "the outer side of the House" refers to the side-chambers built on the outer side of the main structure of the Beis HaMikdash, and that the term, "the edifice" refers to the main building of the Beis HaMikdash. The total width on the eastern side was 100 cubits. Even though the width of the western side was 70 cubits, the width of the eastern side was 100, because the Ulam, the vestibule, extended an additional 15 cubits on each side. Adding these 30 cubits to the 70 cubits of the main structure produces a total of 100 cubits, as explained at length in sec. 50. Consult that source.

[59] Based on these explanations, the 30 side-chambers were divided, with 15 on the north side of the Beis HaMikdash and 15 on the south side of the Beis HaMikdash. The 15 side-chambers on the north side were built as follows: The wall of the Sanctuary measured 6 cubits, and was hollow, containing a cell. On its (northern) side was the cell called "the cell," which was 4 cubits wide. Next to the cell was the cell called "the wall of the cell." Its foundation was 6 cubits wide, but it was only 5 cubits wide above the ground, i.e., the wall and the cell it contained were 5 cubits wide. That cell was the third of the five cells on the lowest level of the northern side. To its north was another cell, which measured 3 cubits wide, and which the Mishnah refers to as, "the winding stairwell." The foundation of the wall of the winding stairwell was 6 cubits wide. However above the ground,

the wall and the cell contained in this wall were only 5 cubits wide. This cell which is referred to as "the winding stairwell" was the fifth cell on the lowest level of the northern side.

60 There was a second story on top of these cells, which also contained five cells. There was a third story, which also contained five cells, on top of the second story. Thus, there were 15 cells on the north side of the Beis HaMikdash, the foundation of which was 25 cubits long.

61 There was a parallel structure made up of 15 cells on the southern side. However, the fourth cell on the southern side was not called "the winding stairwell" in the mishnah but rather, "the chamber for water to descend." Thus, the south side of the Beis HaMikdash was also 25 cubits long. In the center was the Holy Sanctuary that was 20 cubits wide and the total width of the Beis HaMikdash was 70 cubits. This was true with the exception of the easternmost 10 cubits. Those 10 cubits included an additional 15 cubits in width on each side. That area was called Beis HaChalifos – the Chamber of the Knives.

62 Thus, only the easternmost 10 cubits in the length of the Beis HaMikdash were 100 cubits wide. The portion of the Beis HaMikdash that was 90 cubits long was only 70 cubits wide. Within this 90-cubit area, there was 5 cubits of open space, which did not have any structure built on it. This open area was called "the munach." It comprised these five cubits and adjoined Beis HaChalifos. All four outer side-chambers (the wall of the winding stairwell, the winding stairwell, the wall of the cell, and the cell, on the north side; and the four on the south, the wall of the chamber for water to descend, the chamber for water to descend, the wall of the cell, and the cell) end at the beginning of the munach. The opening to "the cell" was within this space. From it, one would enter the other cells adjoining "the cell" and above "the cell". Thus, it is written: "The entrance to the side-chamber was from the empty space that was left. There was one entrance on the north and one on the south."

[63] All the above explanations are based on Rambam's statements, and those of Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura, who follows Rambam's interpretation. Rambam and Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura's opinions diverge from that of Rabbeinu Shemayah, Rashi's disciple. It should be noted that this is so even though Rav Ovadiah saw Rabbeinu Shemayah's work, as is evident from his commentary in many places in this tractate and in others. From Ra'avad's comments regarding the order of the cells, it appears that he too accepts the basis of Rambam's approach.

[64] Rashi, in his commentary to Yechezkel and, hence, in his understanding of the mishnah, follows a different conception. Rashi comments on the term, hatzlaos, "the side-chambers": I say that the cells in the north and the south were arranged in the following manner: Each one was 12 cubits long. Thus the five cells comprised 60 cubits. There were five walls, each 5 cubits thick, bringing the total to 85 [cubits]. Together with the 5 cubits of the munach, the 90 cubits of the northern wall have thus been encompassed. The same applies to the south. On the west, there was one cell on top of another, and a third on top of it. They were 20 cubits long, parallel to the Holy of Holies. Thus, there were eleven [cells] in each row. Similarly, Targum Yonason speaks of there being "eleven in a row."

[65] Thus, Rashi understands that the five cells ran along the length of the Beis HaMikdash, one after the other. There is a severe difficulty in Rashi's interpretation. Rashi states that the five cells have five walls. However, for five spaces to be enclosed on both sides, six walls are necessary. According to Rashi's explanation, we would have to say that the outer cell was entirely open on one side. This would be a forced and unnecessary interpretation. After all, why should one wall be removed in order to increase the length of the cells? This question is particularly relevant since it is architectural practice to strengthen the outer part of a structure.

[66] It is difficult to say that in the Second Beis HaMikdash the last cell in the row, i.e., the southwest and the northwest cells, was closed because it was flush with the wall of the courtyard, for we know that in the Second Beis HaMikdash, there were 11 cubits of open space between the Holy of Holies and the wall of the courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash. Furthermore, it is difficult to conceive that in the Third Beis HaMikdash, this space will be eliminated. Moreover, the cell in the west has an outer wall, for that wall is included in the calculation of the 100 cubits that make up the length of the Beis HaMikdash. Thus, if the wall of the courtyard will be flush with the building of the Beis HaMikdash, there would be two walls, one after the other. That is not logical.

[67] The interpretation of Rabbenu Shemayah, Rashi's student, does not present such difficulties. He states: The width of the cell is explicitly stated, "the cell, six." A measure for its length, by contrast, was not stated, neither by the mishnah, nor by Scripture. According to the reckoning in the prophet's words, our revered teacher of blessed memory must allocate 16 cubits for the combined length of each cell and its wall. According to Scripture, there are only 33 cells. One on the west, across the entire span of the Beis HaMikdash, and five on the north and the south. Targum Yonason thus states that there will be "eleven ⌊side-chambers⌋ in a row." There were another eleven ⌊side-chambers⌋ on top of them, and eleven ⌊more⌋ on top of them. My teacher also edited ⌊his commentary⌋ in this manner.

[68] Thus, one can count 5 cubits for the wall of each cell, and 11 cubits for the length of each cell. Five times sixteen equals 80. There were an additional 5 cubits for the munach, and 5 cubits for the sixth wall of the cell, bringing the total to 90 cubits, which is the length of the building of the Beis HaMikdash until Beis HaChalifos. Rabbeinu Shemayah did not specifically mention that wall, just as he did not specifically mention the munach, because his intent was only to mention the length of each cell. He then mentioned the wall of the cell parenthetically, including the cell and its wall in the same figure.

He included the wall of the cell together with the cell, because the wall between each cell was not mentioned in the mishnah. When the mishnah mentions the wall of the cell, and when the Scripture mentions the wall of the side-chamber, they only refer to the outer wall. Accordingly, Rabbeinu Shemayah did not mention the sixth wall of the cells because it was an extension of the outer wall of the cell on the west. Thus, the sixth wall of the cells is included in the outer wall of the cell on the west.

[69] According to these Rabbis, the wall of the Sanctuary was actually six cubits thick and the wall of the cell, five cubits. They did not have a hollow of open space. This is reflected in Rashi's interpretation of the verse, "They approached the wall of the House ⌈near⌋ the side-chambers all around so that they would be held fast, but they were not attached inside the walls of the House":

[70] The beams of the higher stories of the extension: their ends that were on the side of the outer partitions of the side-chambers would approach and be inserted within the inner side of the ⌈outer⌋ wall ⌈of the Beis HaMikdash. This is reflected in the phrase,⌋ "the wall of the House ⌈near⌋ the side-chambers," i.e., ⌈it refers to⌋ the side ⌈of the wall⌋ that was inside the side-chambers. Thus, the verse states, "they would be held fast," in the wall of the House, i.e., strongly affixed. ⌈The words⌋ "they were not attached inside the walls of the House" teaches that the ends of the beams that were on the side of the wall of the Sanctuary did ⌈not⌋ penetrate into the wall. Instead, they would rest on the indentation of the wall of the Sanctuary that would jut into the side-chambers, similar to the description of the Beis HaMikdash built by Shlomoh: "For he made recesses in the outer part of the House all around." "The lowest story of the extension was 5 cubits wide." Its ceiling was 6 cubits, for the wall of the Sanctuary was recessed for a cubit. Thus, the width of the open space in the lowest cell was 5 cubits. "The middle story was 6 cubits wide and the upper story, 7 cubits wide." ⌈The side-chambers in Yechezkel's vision⌋ also followed this pattern.

[71] By saying "they were not attached inside the walls of the House," the verse implies that the beams would not penetrate the walls of the Sanctuary like the ends of other low beams, for which holes are made in the walls and the ends of the beams are inserted in the hole.

[72] Rashi's commentary continues on the beginning of the following verse: "They became wider": The side-chambers became progressively wider as they ascended. The middle story was a cubit wider than the first, and the third story was a cubit wider than the second.

[73] According to Rashi's conception, the wall of the Sanctuary was 6 cubits thick. Hence, even if the wall's thickness was reduced by 2 cubits because of the indents, it would remain substantial. We did not want to offer such an interpretation according to Rambam's understanding, because his conception is that the wall is hollow. Hence, we explained these verses differently above.

[74] Regarding the 70 cubits of the width of the main edifice of the Beis HaMikdash, Rabbeinu Shemayah writes: The winding stairwell and its wall were 8 cubits wide. The chamber for water to descend and its wall were 8 cubits in width. This was the measure ⌈for the Second Beis HaMikdash recorded in⌋ the Mishnah. However, with regard to ⌈Yechezkel's account in⌋ Scripture, these measures must be made 20 cubits wide because the width of the cell on both sides is reduced, for it is written: "The width of the side-chamber was 4 cubits." Thus, he reduced the width of the cells ⌈a total of⌋ 4 cubits, ⌈2 cubits on⌋ either side. To compensate, the winding stairwell and ⌈the chamber for water⌋ to descend were expanded ⌈a total of⌋ 4 cubits to fill the 70 cubits of the width of the Sanctuary at its rear. Our teacher resolved ⌈the matter⌋ in this way to me and my colleagues.

[75] We, however, calculated a width of 70 cubits by proving from the narrative that the foundation of the wall of the cell and the foundation of the wall of the winding stairwell were each 6 cubits

thick. This explanation also agrees with Rashi's commentary. For this reason, in his commentary to Yechezkel, Rashi cited the mishnah without any explanation. Thus, Rashi was able to derive the width of the Future Beis HaMikdash from the mishnah, making the necessary increases or reductions either in the manner explained by his student Rabbeinu Shemayah, or as we explained it according to the verses of the narrative. According to Rashi's understanding, the winding stairwell was not mentioned at all in Yechezkel's narrative, for he does not include the winding stairwell as one of the 30 side-chambers. Nevertheless, the verse: "On the western side, it was 70 cubits wide," compels one to calculate how to reach that width. It appears that it should be reached in the manner described.

[76] Remember that Radak and Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel interpreted the term וְנָסְבָה as referring to the winding stairwell. True, Rashi did not, instead saying that it refers to the steps leading from the lower level to the middle level and the upper level. Nevertheless, we can accept Rashi's interpretation in one place and that of Radak in another.

[77] Since we discussed the mishnah's statement that the cell in the northeast corner had five openings according to our understanding of Rambam's perspective, it is appropriate to offer an explanation according to Rashi's understanding, even though it is not of immediate relevance to the matter at hand.

[78] Rabbeinu Shemayah comments on the mishnah's statements, "He opened the wicket": He opened the wicket on the northern side of the Great Gate, and entered the cell, one of the cells in the northeastern corner of the Sanctuary, the last one in the row. Part of its empty space was parallel to the thickness of the eastern wall of the Sanctuary. They hollowed out the portion of the wall of the Sanctuary that was parallel to the cell and made an opening in the cell through which he could enter the middle of the Sanctuary's wall. There, he could proceed until he reached the northern wicket near the Great Gate. Thus, he could enter the cell from the wicket. In

addition, they made an opening from that cell toward the inner space of the Sanctuary. He would enter the Sanctuary from the cell and open the inner gates of the Sanctuary.

[79] On the following mishnah, Rabbeinu Shemayah states: In the northeast corner, i.e., the cell that was in the northeast corner of the Sanctuary, had five openings. This follows the Sages' understanding. One of the openings led to the wicket, and one ⌊opening led⌋ to the Sanctuary, as explained. One ⌊opening⌋ led to the winding stairwell, as the mishnah states later on, the winding stairwell would ascend from the northeast corner to the northwest corner. Via it, one would ascend to the roofs of the cells. And in Scripture it is written: The side-chamber opened to the munach. It had one entrance to the north and one entrance to the south. I maintain that in the northeast corner of this last side-chamber, they made an opening at the corner's edge. For this side-chamber, which opened to the munach in its front at the east, is slanted to the north, since this corner relates to two dimensions. At its northern side was the bottom of the winding stairwell that proceeded at the side of all the cells, and its bottom ended in the corner of this cell. Thus, they would ascend to the winding stairwell from the opening in the corner. ⌊According to this explanation,⌋ the words of the mishnah and Scripture agree. If there was no munach in the Second Beis HaMikdash, the entire opening can be relegated to the north, i.e., this is the one to the winding stairwell mentioned by the mishnah.

[80] According to his explanation, the mishnah's statement that this cell had five openings can be understood according to its simple meaning, without resorting to the forced explanations we used to resolve Rambam's interpretation or my own interpretation that followed Rambam's basic premise. Similarly, the remainder of Rabbeinu Shemayah's words is self-explanatory.

[81] His statement that, "part of its empty space was opposite the thickness of the eastern wall of the Sanctuary," is also easily

explained: Beis HaChalifos was opposite the 5 cubits on the eastern side of the Ulam, as stated in sec. 50. Behind it, were the 5 cubits of the munach. Thus, there is still another cubit of the width of the Ulam remaining, for the Ulam was 11 cubits wide. That cubit was opposite the cell's outer wall, which was 5 cubits thick like all the other cell walls. Thus, 4 cubits of the cell's wall are opposite the eastern wall of the Sanctuary, which is 6 cubits thick, as explained in sec. 51. It follows that there are 2 cubits from the open space of the cell that are opposite the width of the Sanctuary's eastern wall.

[82] To summarize, according to the words of these Rabbis the thirty cells are arranged in the following manner: The five northern cells are positioned one after the other. The length of each cell and its wall was 16 cubits. There was a sixth wall, since six walls are necessary to create five cells. The sixth wall – like the other walls – was 5 cubits thick. The munach was in front of the cells, and comprised 5 cubits. This entire arrangement was located outside the Sanctuary's wall. That wall itself was 6 cubits thick on the north and on the south.

[83] In the north and in the south, there was a second group of five cells on top of these five cells. There was a third story of cells built on top of the second. The cell's outer wall was 5 cubits thick, and its foundation was 6 cubits thick. This was the wall of all the cells, as is self-evident. The winding stairwell was outside the wall. The winding stairwell was 3 cubits thick. Its outer wall was 5 cubits thick, and its foundation was 6 cubits thick. The outer cell on the northeast and southeast sides had five openings: to the munach, to the winding stairwell, to the cell behind it, to the wicket, and to the Sanctuary.

[84] This reflects the Rashi's primary interpretation in his commentary to Yechezkel 41:9, as explained by his student Rabbeinu Shemayah. The alternate explanation offered there by Rashi is self-evident and need not be cited, with the exception of his interpretation of the words, "⌈The side-chambers⌋ entered the wall… and became

progressively wider," which must be understood as we explained these phrases according to Rambam. We did not cite Rashi's second explanation here, because Rabbeinu Shemayah stated that Rashi, his teacher, edited his text to reflect the primary interpretation. Similarly, Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel explains Rashi's perspective according to the primary interpretation. Also, a manuscript copy of Rashi's commentary does not include the second interpretation. Maybe it was added from comments a student might have written on the margin.

[85] Even though Rashi's commentary accords with both Scripture and the Mishnah, nevertheless, we designed the sketch of the Future Beis HaMikdash that we produced according to Rambam's understanding because the treatment of the subject at large follows his interpretation in his Commentary to the Mishnah. This is reflected in the fact that Rav Ovadiah of Bartenura, who was the last authority who wrote on the subject, saw Rabbeinu Shemayah's interpretation which follows Rashi's understanding and, nevertheless, chose to follow Rambam's perspective. True, Tosafos, in Tractate Yoma and Bava Basra follow Rashi's understanding, but it is possible that they did not see Rambam's words, for his writings had not been widely publicized at that time. In particular, this is true of Rambam's Commentary to the Mishnah, which was translated into the Holy Tongue only in the days of Rashba.

[86] Nevertheless, having explained Rashi's perspective above, it would only be proper to make a picture of these cells from which his understanding of these cells would be apparent.

Chapter 70

[1] "Between the chambers [and the House], there was [a space] twenty cubits around the House to either side." There were chambers built in the outer courtyard to the north and the south of the cells, as will be explained in sec. 71. This verse explains that there was a space of 20 cubits between the cells and those chambers. The words סָבִיב סָבִיב, which literally mean, "all around," is translated as, "to either side," i.e., to the north and to the south, as explained above with regard to the munach.

[2] The chambers (referred to as לִשְׁכוֹת) mentioned here are those mentioned in sec. 71. That term can also be used to refer to the cells, because it is a general term that can refer to all the rooms in the Beis HaMikdash, regardless of their particular nature.

[3] The 20 cubits between the cells and the chambers on each side include: a) 15 cubits equal to the length that the Beis HaChalifos protruded beyond the Sanctuary on the northern and southern sides and b) an additional 5 cubits. This entire space is referred to as "the inner courtyard," as it is written: "Opposite the twenty [cubits] of the inner courtyard."

[4] "And He brought me through the entranceway… to the Holy Chambers… that faced northward. Behold, there was a place at its western flanks. And he said to me, 'This is the place where the kohanim will cook the guilt-offering and the sin-offerings, where they will bake the meal-offering, so as not to bring them out to the Outer Courtyard, [lest] they mingle with the people." Although the verse only mentions the northern side, it is logical to assume that the Twenty Cubit Space on the southern side was consecrated for the same purpose. After all, why should one side be different from the other?

[5] It is, however, possible to explain that meat from the sacrifices of the most sacred order is more often found in the north because these sacrifices must be slaughtered there. It is even possible to say that just as for all time, the north was designated as the place where these sacrifices must be slaughtered, in the Ultimate Future, it will also be designated as the place where they must be eaten.

Chapter 71

[1] "He brought me to the chamber that was opposite the edifice," i.e., the Sanctuary, "and opposite the structure," i.e., the cells, "on the north." These chambers did not exist in the Second Beis HaMikdash. It is possible that to parallel them, they built the Chamber of the Hearth and the four chambers that it contained. Nevertheless, the Chamber of the Hearth was situated in a different place, and was not opposite the Sanctuary. Nor was it on both sides of the Courtyard, only on the north, as stated in Tractates Tamid and Middos.

[2] The place where these chambers were built is called, "the Outer Courtyard," as it is written: "And he led me out to the Outer Courtyard in the direction leading north, and he brought me into the chamber."

[3] "The length," i.e., the measure from north to south, "of the chambers located in the Outer Courtyard was fifty cubits." In this verse, the term "length" refers to the width of the chambers, because the end of the verse discusses the chambers' length: "Behold, in front of the Sanctuary," i.e., the entire span of the Beis HaMikdash from east to west, including the Ulam, the Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, and the cell behind it "was 100 cubits ⌊long⌋."

[4] In front of these chambers was a courtyard 50 cubits wide, as indicated by the verse, "Facing the 100 cubit length at the northern entrance was [a space] 50 cubits wide." Rashi comments: Opposite the entrance to the chamber that faces the north, to the Outer Courtyard, there is a span 50 cubits wide until the northern wall of the Outer Courtyard. The 100 cubit length, i.e., the chambers comprised a length of 100 cubits from the east to the west. Their width from the north to the south was 50 cubits, as stated below. The open space of the Outer Courtyard was 100 cubits in length, as was stated previously, "He measured 100 cubits from one gate to another." Thus, there was an empty space 100 cubits long and 50 cubits wide in front of these chambers.

[5] The verse's statement that the length of the courtyard in front of the chambers measured 100 cubits, only refers to the portion of the courtyard that faced the chambers. The length of the courtyard itself extended far further eastward, continuing past the building of the Beis HaMikdash, the Courtyard of the Israelites, and even further. Similarly, the courtyard extended further to the west, as the Mishnah states in the last chapter of Tractate Middos, "11 cubits behind the Holy of Holies." Similarly, Rashi explains at the end of Parshas Terumah, that in the Sanctuary built by Moshe, 20 cubits of the area encompassed by the lace hangings were to the west, behind the Tent of the Sanctuary. It is befitting to leave this empty space, because it enabled the watchmen to walk around the Beis HaMikdash inside the courtyard. Indeed, Tractate Tamid relates that each morning the kohanim would walk around the courtyard and inspect the sacrificial vessels located there.

[6] "The wall facing the outside, [the space] opposite the chambers, leading to the Outer Courtyard before the chambers, was 50 cubits long." Rashi comments: "The wall facing the outside: [The wall of the chamber] that separated between the chambers and the Outer Courtyard on the eastern side was 50 cubits long from north to south." One may conclude that the corresponding wall of the chamber

on the western side was also 50 cubits long. Rashi only mentions the eastern side because the verse only speaks of one wall, and Rashi thinks that it is referring to the wall that faced the larger portion of the courtyard.

[7] Alternatively, Rashi may have mentioned the wall of the chamber on the eastern side because it was exactly 50 cubits. In contrast, the wall of the chamber on the western side was one cubit longer. To explain: Above, in sec. 70, it was stated that the chambers began 5 cubits from Beis HaChalifos. The wall of the Inner Courtyard was built at the end of those 5 cubits on the east side. This wall separated between the Inner Courtyard and the Outer Courtyard, and was 6 cubits thick. Five of those cubits were opposite the 5 cubits mentioned immediately beforehand, and there was an additional cubit. From this wall outward, the Outer Courtyard extends 100 cubits, as explained in sec. 22. This creates an apparent contradiction between two verses: One verse states that the chambers were 50 cubits wide, while another verse speaks of "⌊a space⌋ 50 cubits wide." This refers to the width of the courtyard in front of the chambers, as we explained above. According to the reckoning above, which calculated that the chambers included 1 cubit that adjoins the wall of the Inner Courtyard, that cubit is not included in the measure mentioned in either verse. Where will it be?

[8] Thus, the verses seem to contradict each other. It is a third verse that resolves this contradiction. By stating, "The wall facing the outside…," it resolved that apparent contradiction. As Rashi explains, this verse is only referring to the wall on the east. That wall was 50 cubits long, and faced the Outer Courtyard. The chambers themselves were 51 cubits wide. On the eastern side, however, the extra cubit did not require a wall, because it was enclosed by the wall of the Inner Courtyard. For that reason, Rashi understands that the verse only mentions one wall, the wall of the eastern chamber. The wall of the western chamber, by contrast, was 51 cubits long, because there was nothing else enclosing it.

[9] "Their entrances [opened] to the north." Thus, the chambers opened toward the Outer Courtyard. This is evident from the fact that the verse specifically mentions the entrances in the north. In his commentary to the verse, "And he brought me through the entranceway." Rashi states that these chambers also had entrances to the Twenty Cubit Space between them and the main edifice of the Beis HaMikdash. This can be concluded from the above verse, that states: "And he brought me through the entranceway… to the chambers," implying that Yechezkel was brought through the entranceway leading to the Twenty Cubit Space, and from there to the chambers. Similarly, in sec. 73, it will be demonstrated that there were entrances to the chambers from the entranceway. See the end of that section.

[10] "The upper chambers were narrowed, because the pillars reduced the structure of these, on their lower and middle stories. For they had three stories; they did not have pillars like the pillars of the courtyards. Therefore, the lower and the middle stories had their floor space reduced." These chambers are described as, "the upper chambers," because they are located on the upper portion of Mount Moriah, opposite the main edifice of the Beis HaMikdash. In contrast, as will be explained in sec. 73, there were other chambers located on the lower portion of the mountain.

[11] The verse emphasizes that some of these chambers were narrowed. Rashi explains that the word יוּכְלוּ in that verse should be understood as similar to the word יֹאכַל, "consume," with the [first] vav replacing the alef [of יֹאכַל], the intent being that the chambers' space was reduced. The verse explains the reason: It was הָאֲתִיקִים, "the pillars," that reduced their space. The word מֵהֵנָּה, "of these," refers to the middle and lower stories. The word בִּנְיָן, "the structure," is the object of the verb "reduced," i.e., the pillars reduced the floor space of the structure. The verse also explains why the reduction was made: Because "they had three stories," and thus, they were high. "They did not have pillars" to support the upper stories "like the pillars of the

courtyards," which projected outward and did not take up any floor space inside. Instead, these pillars took up space both inside and outside. "Therefore, the lower and the middle stories had their floor space reduced." There were no pillars for the third story, because its roof did not require support. This interpretation was found in the works of a great sage.

[12] Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel offers a different explanation of this passage, stating that the term עֹליוֹנוֹת refers to the highest story, i.e., the third story. It was narrower than the others. Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel interprets the term אַתִּיקִים as "chambers," for he understands the verse, אַתִּיק אֶל פְּנֵי אַתִּיק בַּשְּׁלִשִׁים as meaning, "There was one chamber on top of another chamber, three, one on top of each other." The meaning of the word בשלשים in that verse means that there were three stories of chambers. Therefore, when the narrative states, "The upper chambers were narrowed," it is indicating that the highest story was the narrowest of the three. This is the direct opposite of the side-chambers built around the Sanctuary. In that instance, the upper chambers were wider than the lower ones. In this instance, by contrast, the upper ones were narrower than the lower ones. The narrative gives the reason for this, כִּי יוֹכְלוּ אַתִּיקִים מֵהֵנָּה מֵהַתַּזְזְתֹּנוֹת. Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel interprets this as meaning that the inner space of the lower and middle stories took up more of the structure because it was wider below. The narrative gives a further rationale: "For they had three stories; they did not have pillars."

[13] The narrative states "of these" and specifies that it is referring to the lower and middle stories. Like Rashi, Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel explains that in the word יוֹכְלוּ, the first vav takes the place of an alef, and the intent is, "to take up space," as found in the words of our Sages, "How much space did the Tablets take up (אוכלות) in the Ark? Six [handbreadths]. Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel continues: Radak states that he is unable to understand the structure of these chambers, how the lower stories will be wider than the upper ones. Similarly,

neither Rashi nor [Targum] Yonason explained anything about it. Concerning this, Radak states, the prophet Eliyahu will explain this passage.

[14] It is possible to explain that the upper side-chambers [built around the Sanctuary] mentioned earlier, were wider than the lower ones because the wall that supported them was wide at its bottom and narrow at its top. Therefore, the upper chambers took up more space than the lower ones, because the wall was not as thick at that height as it was below. They were also supported by pillars. Therefore, the upper stories could be as wide as possible. There was no fear that they would fall because they were supported by pillars. These chambers, by contrast, were built in three stories, one on top of the other, and thus the wall on one side was not narrower than on the other side, and they did not have pillars. Therefore, it was necessary that the upper chamber be narrower than the lower [ones] out of fear that the upper stories would fall if they would be as wide as the lower stories. No such fear existed with regard to the lower stories, because they were supported by the earth or were close to it. This is intimated by the phrase, עַל כֵּן נֶאֱצַל מֵהַתַּחְתֹּנוֹת וּמֵהַתִּיכֹנוֹת מֵהָאָרֶץ, which means, "for this reason, the upper stories were made shorter (נֶאֱצַל) than those below them." The same root as found in the word נֶאֱצַל is used in the verse: "I will separate (וְאָצַלְתִּי) from the spirit that rests on you…," and "I did not remove (אָצַלְתִּי) from them…." Similarly, Targum Yonason renders the verse in Yechezkel, "For this reason, they were constricted."

[15] There were also chambers on the southern side of the main edifice of the Beis HaMikdash, opposite to and resembling those on the northern side. Their length, their width, their openings, their dimensions, and their entrances are the same as the others'. Thus, it is written: "Between the chambers [and the House], there was [a space of] 20 cubits around the House to either side." By saying, "there was [a space of] 20 cubits around the House to either side," the verse implies that there were chambers on either side of the House, i.e., on

the north and the south, as explained in sec. 70. Similarly, it is written: "And he said to me, 'The chambers on the north and the chambers on the south facing the edifice, they are the holy chambers where the kohanim who draw close to God will eat the sacrifices of the most sacred order… the meal-offerings, the sin-offerings, and the guilt-offerings, because the place is holy.'"

[16] In sections 13 and 14 above, we said that in this section, we would describe the roofless courtyards that are mentioned there. The roofless courtyards were located in interior corners of the courtyard, and not on its exterior corners, as depicted by the composer of the picture of the Second Beis HaMikdash printed in Manitoba. This is implied by the verse, "And He took me out to the Outer Courtyard and caused me to pass by the four corners of the courtyard. Behold there was an enclosure in the corner of the courtyard." This verse was recited after the prophet had proceeded into the Twenty Cubit Space mentioned above. Thus it is explained that he had proceeded into the Outer Courtyard, and found these four smaller courtyards.

[17] This conception is also reflected in the words of Rambam in his text. Rabbeinu Shemayah also offers a similar interpretation, stating: "The Women's Courtyard was…135 cubits by 135 cubits. It was all empty space except for the four corners."

[18] In that commentary, Rabbeinu Shemayah makes a statement that requires explanation. Rabbeinu Shemayah states that the northwest chamber was not sanctified because those afflicted by tzaraas would immerse there on the eighth day of their purification process, when they would come to insert their thumbs into the Courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash so that the sacrificial blood and oil could be placed on them. This immersion was required even though one afflicted by tzaraas had immersed himself on the previous evening, for everyone who entered the Courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash was required to immerse himself. Therefore, Rabbeinu She-mayah maintains that the Chamber of those Afflicted with Tzaraas was not sanctified.

[19] These statements appear unclear to me. The statement that a person may not enter "the Courtyard" until he immerses himself refers to the Courtyard of the Israelites. Although there are two opinions in Tractate Yoma regarding the rationale obligating this immersion, according to both opinions, one is not required to immerse himself until he enters the Courtyard of the Israelites.

[20] To explain: Ben Zoma derives the obligation to immerse through the following kal vechomer, a comparison of a more lenient ruling to a more stringent one: Just as the Kohen Gadol was required to immerse himself when proceeding from one aspect of sacrificial service to another, so too, any person seeking to enter the Courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash from an ordinary place is obligated to immerse himself. Now, the obligation for the Kohen Gadol to immerse himself only applied in the Courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash, where the sacrificial service took place. So too, the obligation for an ordinary person to immerse himself did not apply until he entered that courtyard.

[21] Rabbi Yehudah offers a different rationale for why a person must immerse himself before entering "the Courtyard." Rabbi Yehudah explains that this immersion is, "an extension of ⌊the obligation to⌋ immerse," i.e., it is not a Scriptural obligation, but a Rabbinic safeguard so that, if necessary, a person would recall a long-forgotten impurity and purify himself. Such a safeguard is only necessary in a place where a ritually impure person is forbidden to enter according to Scriptural Law, i.e., from the Courtyard of the Israelites and further inward, as the Talmud states in another source: "Shmuel stated: 'One is liable for ⌊entering the Beis HaMikdash in a state of⌋ ritual impurity only in the area that is 187 cubits long and 135 cubits wide," i.e., the enclosure of the Courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash in the Second Beis HaMikdash. If so, the obligation to immerse applies only when one enters this place. It is not appropriate to say that since there is a Rabbinic decree forbidding a person who is ritually impure because of contact with a human corpse from entering the Women's

Courtyard, our Sages required everyone to immerse before entering this courtyard. Among the explanations for this: Firstly, there is a Talmudic principle: A Rabbinic safeguard is not instituted to protect a Rabbinic safeguard. Furthermore, if there was a need to institute such a safeguard, it should have also been instituted for the chayl, the area outside the Women's Courtyard, for a person who contracted the impurity stemming from a human corpse is forbidden to enter there, as stated in Tractate Keilim. Even were one to postulate that this chamber was not consecrated so that a person could immerse himself there before entering an area sanctified by Rabbinic decree, he would still be unable to enter this chamber, for he would have to pass through the chayl! Therefore, it would be necessary to say that the path to this chamber from the chayl was also not consecrated according to Rabbinic Law.

[22] Furthermore, according to Rabbeinu Shemayah's understanding, why does the mishnah state, "one who enters the Courtyard"? Seemingly, a person who has not immersed himself should also refrain from entering the chayl. In that place as well, this would be desirable so that he might recall any impurity of Rabbinic origin that he contracted, and purify himself from it. One might say that the mishnah does not mention such an immersion because it follows ben Zoma's reasoning. If so, and ben Zoma's reasoning is the opinion mentioned by Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi in the mishnah without associating it with his name, that is a sign that it is accepted as halachah. Why then does the halachah follow the other approach?

[23] Instead, it is preferable to explain that even Rabbi Yehudah would not maintain that this chamber is not sanctified for the reason posited by ben Zoma. Rather, Rabbi Yehudah also maintains that it is not necessary to immerse unless one is entering a place that is consecrated by Scriptural Law. Therefore, all four of these chambers possess all the sanctity associated with the Women's Courtyard. Nevertheless, a person who had been afflicted with tzaraas may immerse there as others may, since he already immersed on the

previous evening, as Rabbeinu She-mayah himself said. Perhaps because of Rabbeinu Shemayah's opinion that this chamber was not sanctified, the illustration of the Beis HaMikdash that accompanied the Manitoba edition of the Mishnah placed these chambers outside the courtyard. This is not correct, as demonstrated above.

[24] Similarly, Tosafos object to diminishing the status of this courtyard, stating: "In Tractate Keilim, it is stated: 'The Women's Courtyard was holier than it, as evidenced by the fact that a person who had immersed that day may not enter there.' Now, the Chamber of those Afflicted by Tzaraas was located in the Women's Courtyard." The status of this chamber will, however, only be that of the Outer Courtyard. Even though this chamber will be positioned opposite the Sanctuary in the Future Beis HaMikdash, it will not be consecrated with the holiness of the Beis HaMikdash itself. This is reflected in its name, "the Outer Courtyard."

[25] There remains a matter that requires analysis: Since all the space included in the Outer Courtyard will not be consecrated with the holiness of the Beis HaMikdash itself, how will the Future Beis HaMikdash contain a consecrated space measuring 187 cubits by 135 cubits, the area of the consecrated space in the Second Beis HaMikdash? True, the Outer Courtyard's length will exceed 187 cubits, for the Inner Courtyard will be 100 cubits long and the building of the Beis HaMikdash itself will be 100 cubits long. However, the Outer Courtyard's width will, in some places, be less than 135 cubits.

[36] There is no difficulty regarding the area opposite the building of the Beis HaMikdash on either side. As explicitly stated, there were 20 cubits between the building of the Beis HaMikdash and the chambers on the complex's north and the south. The chambers themselves were 50 cubits wide. Their entire area was consecrated, and the kohanim would eat the sacrifices of the highest order of holiness inside them. Thus, the accumulated width of the consecrated area was divided as

follows: 100 cubits for the holy chambers, evenly distributed with 50 cubits on each side; 40 cubits between the chambers and the building of the Beis HaMikdash, evenly distributed with 20 cubits on each side; and the width of the Sanctuary and its side-chambers, which measured a total of 70 cubits. This adds up to a total of 210 cubits. Thus it is wider than the 135 cubits of the Second Beis HaMikdash. Nevertheless, the Inner Courtyard, which comprised the space in front of the building of the Beis HaMikdash only measured 100 cubits.

[37] If so, these concepts appear to support the approach of Ra'avad, who objects to Rambam's ruling that the holiness of the Beis HaMikdash and Jerusalem remain in the present age and indeed, will continue in the Ultimate Future. Ra'avad continues: Furthermore, I maintain that even the statement of Rabbi Yossi, "The second consecration sanctified it for the Ultimate Future," applies only to Eretz Yisrael as a whole, but not to Jerusalem and the Beis HaMikdash. For Ezra knew that ⌊the dimensions of⌋ the Beis HaMikdash and Jerusalem would change in the Ultimate Future, and ⌊would⌋ be sanctified again for all time…. This was revealed to me ⌊as⌋ the secrets of God are revealed to those who fear Him. Therefore, one who enters the site of the Beis HaMikdash at present is not liable for kerais.

[38] It appears that the difficulty with Rambam's approach can be resolved as follows: In the Ultimate Future, the cells located near the Southern Gate of the Inner Courtyard will be consecrated with the holiness of the Inner Courtyard. When the 6 cubits of the thickness of the wall of the courtyard, the 6 cubits of the cell, and the 5 cubits of the cell on both the northern and southern sides of the courtyard are added together, a total of 34 cubits will be reached. When we add these 34 cubits to the 100 cubits occupied by the structure of the Beis HaMikdash, there is only one cubit lacking from the 135 mentioned above. This one cubit distance will be made up – and indeed, exceeded – in the following manner: The halachah follows Rabbi Meir, who states: "All of the cubits ⌊mentioned in the measurements⌋

of the Second Beis HaMikdash were ⌊cubits of⌋ average size." In the Future Beis HaMikdash, by contrast, the measurements will be made with the angel's measuring rod, and will thus be oversized cubits, a handbreadth larger than the average-sized cubits. Thus, there will be 134 extra handbreadths for the 134 cubits in the Second Beis HaMikdash. This equals 26 ordinary cubits and 4 handbreadths.

[39] Indeed, according to this reckoning, it would not have been necessary to include the entire area of the cells and their walls in the holiness of the Inner Courtyard. To explain: The Inner Courtyard was itself 100 cubits. In the Future Beis HaMikdash, this area will be measured with oversized cubits. Thus, the Inner Courtyard will measure 600 handbreadths. When that figure is calculated in ordinary 5-handbreadth cubits, it equals 120 cubits. Thus only 15 cubits are missing from the 135 cubits of the Second Beis HaMikdash. When they are divided in half, that measure will extend only a cubit and a half into the cells. Nevertheless, there is an advantage to the previous explanation, because it provides a clear line of demarcation for the end of the consecrated portion. Therefore, we did not desire to exclude even the walls of the cells. To clarify the reason for that: At the end of the cells on the western flank of the gate, there is a four-and-a-half cubit length of wall without cells, as we explained in sec. 21. This area is included in 187 cubits of the courtyard's length. Thus, there is another cubit and a half that the consecrated portion of the Courtyard encompassed. Without including the cells, there would be no clear demarcation for the end of the consecrated portion. Therefore, we stated that the consecrated portion would also include the walls of the cells. Thus, the consecrated area has a clearly marked border, i.e. the outer edge of the walls of the cells. Even though we have added a large portion, there is no difficulty. Indeed, additions have been made in the length and in the width of the area opposite the Sanctuary. This is possible because it is permitted to add to the dimensions of the courtyard, as stated in Tractate Sanhedrin and Tractate Shevuos.

[40] Nevertheless, Rabbi Yehudah differs with Rabbi Meir in Tractate Keilim, and maintains that even in the Second Beis HaMikdash all of the cubits were equal to six handbreadths. Thus according to Rabbi Yehudah, the lack of a cubit in the Future Beis HaMikdash presents a question. It is possible to say that Rabbi Yehudah follows the perspective of Rabbi Eliezer, who maintains that when Ezra consecrated the Second Beis HaMikdash he did not intend to include the Future Beis HaMikdash. Alternatively, it is possible to say that there will be marking posts in the Future Beis HaMikdash compound to make a distinction, as the Mishnah teaches in Tractate Middos with regard to the Chamber of the Hearth: "There were marking posts that separated the consecrated ⌊chambers⌋ from those which were not consecrated." Similarly, later in that tractate, it mentions that there were marking posts in the second story of the building of the Beis HaMikdash to differentiate between the portion above the Sanctuary and that above the Holy of Holies. And the Sage who differs with Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov states that there were marking posts in the Courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash to distinguish between the Courtyard of the Kohanim and the Courtyard of the Israelites.

[41] According to this logic, it is possible to say that even according to Rabbi Meir it is not necessary to add further areas to the consecrated portion of the Courtyard, and there would be marking posts in the cells and outside, in the area where there were no cells. Nevertheless, the first explanation of Rabbi Meir's approach appears preferable.

Chapter 72

[1] "In front of the chambers, there was a passageway ten cubits wide leading to the inner area via a space of one cubit." To explain: it was impossible to enter the Twenty Cubit Space between the chambers

and the cells, via the Inner Courtyard or via the Outer Courtyard. The Inner Courtyard measured 100 cubits by 100 cubits in front of the building of the Beis HaMikdash to the east. Now, it is written: "The width of the House to the east was 100 cubits." Thus, the width of the building matches the width of the Courtyard. The 5 cubits of the Twenty Cubit Space which extended beyond the fifteen cubits of Beis HaChalifos on either side were closed off by the width of the wall – 6 cubits wide – that separated between the Outer Courtyard and the Inner Courtyard when coming from the east to the west. If so, there would not be an entrance to that Twenty Cubit Space unless there was a space for a slanted passageway that entered the wall. This slanted passageway would be located where the wall between the Inner and the Outer Courtyard ended. The passageway would be located in the thickness of the wall, and would be a cubit wide, of sufficient width to enable a person to enter. One would enter the 5-cubit space between the wall of Beis HaChalifos and the chambers, and proceed westward 10 cubits within that space. After 10 cubits, Beis HaChalifos ended. This is the meaning of the phrase, "a passageway 10 cubits wide." From that point on, there was a twenty-cubit space between the chambers and the side-chambers adjacent to the Sanctuary. Why was this passageway described as 10 cubits wide? Seemingly, it would have been more proper to say, "ten cubits long." Nevertheless, the term "wide" was used because the passageway ran from east to west, adjacent to Beis HaChalifos. Beis HaChalifos measured 15 cubits from north to south. Since the distance from north to south was longer than the distance from east to west, the 10 cubits that Beis HaChalifos ran from east to west is described as its width. Similarly, the distance 15-cubit distance from north to south is described as the length because it is a larger distance. This is Rashi's understanding of the verse.

[2] True, it is possible to access the Twenty Cubit Space from the area behind the Holy of Holies. Nevertheless, it was necessary that there be access from the eastern portion of the courtyard, for the overwhelming majority of use of the courtyard was from this

direction. Moreover, according to our explanation in sec. 12, there is no gate through which to enter the courtyard from the west. Therefore, someone wanting to enter the Twenty Cubit Space from the courtyard would have to enter in the east, circle 50 cubits to the side, proceed 100 cubits for the length of the building of the Beis HaMikdash, and then 50 cubits past the chamber until he could enter the Twenty Cubit Space. Therefore, it was necessary that there be a passageway from the east.

[3] For this reason, the entrances from the chambers to the courtyard and to the Twenty Cubit Space described in the previous section are not sufficient. For even were one to use these entrances, he would have to make a circuit, walking the chamber's width to the side, then, half its length, and then traverse the width from entrance to entrance. Moreover, it is not appropriate that these chambers serve as shortcuts providing access to the Twenty Cubit Space. For these chambers should be closed rooms, that are entered only at specific times. In contrast, the Twenty Cubit Space is open space like the remainder of the courtyard. Hence, it should be open like the courtyard allowing one to enter it at all times, in the same manner as he enters the entire courtyard.

Chapter 73

[1] Lower ⌊on the mountain⌋ than these chambers, as one comes from the east, approaching from the Outer Courtyard, along the width of the eastern wall of the courtyard, facing the edifice and the building, there were chambers. There was a passageway before them whose appearance was like the appearance of the chambers on the north, resembling their length, their width, all their exits, their dimensions, and their entrances resembling the entrances of the chambers to the

south. There was an entrance at the beginning of the passageway, the passageway before the platform of the musicians, on the east, as one approaches.

[2] Rashi comments on these verses: "Lower [on the mountain] than these chambers" – I do not know whether [the word mitachas] comes to teach that these chambers had underground passageways below them, or if it comes to teach that there were chambers on the eastern side of the courtyard. Since the mountain would slope downward on the eastern side, the verse describes them as "lower than these chambers," i.e., the aforementioned chambers were on top of the mountain and these [chambers] were on its lower portion. It is as if the verse states, "Lower [on the mountain]…, as one comes from east, approaching from the Outer Courtyard. Along the width… of the courtyard" – [The verse is referring to] one who comes from the eastern portion of the Outer Courtyard, proceeding to the north via the northeast corner of the wall of the Inner Chamber on the outside. As he approaches these chambers on the north, he discovers along the eastern wall of the Inner Courtyard, which is to the west of the Outer Courtyard, facing "the edifice and the building," "chambers" that are next to that wall and located in the Outer Courtyard.

[3] "There was a passageway before them," – i.e., before these chambers, there was a passageway with a width of 50 cubits that resembled the passageway of the chambers on the north[west] described previously "Resembling their length," – i.e., the length of these chambers was the same as those on the north[west], and so too, "their width." [Similarly,] "their dimensions, and their entrances," – were like those of the northern chambers. "Resembling the entrances to the chambers to the south" – were the entrances to the chambers on the east. For in the south[west] as well, there were chambers… near the side-chambers, as explained above.

[4] "There was an entrance at the beginning of the passageway" – The chambers on the east had an entrance at the beginning of the

passageway. This passageway was located before הַגְּדֵרֹת הַגִּינָּה, translated by Targum Yonason as "the platform of the Levites."

[5] The phrase, "along the width of the eastern wall of the courtyard," i.e., next to the eastern wall of the Inner Courtyard, seems to imply that the length of these chambers was built along the wall from north to south, and that their width ran from east to west. In actuality, this was not so. It is impossible that the structure was built in such a manner because there were cells with walls projecting 11 cubits into the Outer Courtyard from the eastern wall. If so, this courtyard will not have 100 cubits of open space, with the width of the chambers being 50 cubits, and with 50 cubits of open space in front of the chambers, like the chambers described previously. Also, it is difficult to understand via which path one would approach the gate of the courtyard. Surely, he would not approach the gate by passing through the chambers. Also, as explained in sec. 20, one of the attractive features of the gate to the Inner Courtyard was that the vestibule would project outward. Were these chambers to be constructed along the walls, the vestibule could not possibly be built in that manner.

[6] Nor is it possible to explain that the chambers' length ran from east to west and their width ran along the wall of the courtyard from north to south, because as mentioned above, there were cells located there. These cells will not leave space for the 100 cubits of the chambers' length. There is another reason why the chambers could not be constructed in this manner, which we will give presently.

[7] Similarly, it does not appear that the chambers are located at the corners of the Inner Courtyard, one at the northeast corner and one at the southeast corner, with their length running from west to east like those described above. For if so, it would not be possible to walk from corner to corner in the Outer Courtyard unless one entered these chambers, for these chambers would take up the entire length of the east side of the Outer Courtyard, that was situated in front of the Inner Courtyard. Furthermore, it is not logical to say that one who

walks from one corner of the Outer Courtyard to the opposite corner would have to pass through the chambers, as explained in the previous section with regard to passing through the upper chambers in order to reach the Twenty Cubit Space.

[8] Therefore, it appears that these chambers begin where the cells at the eastern flank of the northern gate to the Inner Courtyard end, and where the cells at the eastern flank of the southern gate end. The chambers run from east to west, similar to those on the higher portion of the mountain. Thus, there will be a way to proceed from corner to corner in the Outer Courtyard without passing through the chambers. For the space gained from the chambers being positioned to the west, paralleling the end of the Inner Courtyard, and the thickness of its walls, will create ample space between the end of the chambers and the wall of the Outer Courtyard. For the length of the Outer Courtyard to the east is the same as that of the chambers, and the chambers begin some distance before the beginning of the courtyard. In this conception, there is also an open space measuring 50 cubits in front of the chambers, as is true of the upper chambers. The chambers are built at the corner of the eastern wall. Thus, one is on the northeast corner of the Inner Courtyard. Accordingly, the verse mentions coming from the east and turning to the north. Nevertheless, these chambers do not begin exactly at the corner of the courtyard, but rather, are set off slightly from the courtyard's corner.

[9] It was explained that the upper chambers were actually 51 cubits wide – i.e., an extra cubit was added to the width stated in the verse. Such an addition can also be made with regard to these chambers, by including one cubit of the wall of the thickness of the wall of the Inner Courtyard. Thus, at the end of the wall and the chambers, one would be facing the Outer Courtyard. The chambers in the north jut out a cubit southward into the courtyard, and the chambers in south jut out a cubit northward into the courtyard. Thus, the chambers are actually 51 cubits wide. There is a courtyard in front of the chambers

measuring 50 cubits wide, i.e., there are 50 cubits between the chambers on the northern side and the northern wall, and 50 cubits between the chambers on the southern side and the southern wall. Thus, these chambers resemble the chambers positioned higher on the mountain.

[10] On this basis, we can understand Rashi's explanation of the phrase, "facing the edifice and the building." As explained, these chambers are built alongside the wall of the Inner Courtyard, and do not begin at the corner of the courtyard. Instead, the chambers are positioned slightly northward. As stated in sec. 21, there are vestibules built there, on the inside, alongside that wall. Thus, the chambers are built opposite these vestibules. If, however, the chambers began at the corners or before the eastern wall of the Inner Courtyard as was supposed, even though vestibules are also situated there, as explained in that section, the chambers themselves would not be facing the vestibules, only the end of their walls.

[11] Following the conception above, however, a portion of the chambers is opposite "the building," i.e., the vestibules, like the upper chambers that are built facing the building of the Beis HaMikdash. Alternatively, the term "building" can refer to a building in the inner chamber, i.e., the cells, for the chambers begin where the cells end. As we will explain in sec. 74, half a cubit of the wall of the outer cell enters the space of these chambers. Thus, the chambers can be described as being opposite the cells, because part of the cells' area overlaps with the space designated for the chambers. All of this applies according to Rashi's commentary.

[12] Nevertheless, according to my humble understanding, it appears that the phrase, "facing the edifice and the building," is intended to highlight the concept stated above: that these chambers are positioned westward, behind the eastern wall. Their length of 100 cubits does not run entirely parallel to the 100 cubit length of the courtyard in front of the eastern wall. True, they are introduced with

the phrase, "as one comes from east." Nevertheless, they do not begin at the easternmost point of that courtyard, occupying the entire length of that courtyard, but rather are set back a bit. Thus, they are positioned toward "the edifice," i.e., the building of the Beis HaMikdash, and "the structure," i.e. the side-chambers that surround that building, as Rashi explains in his interpretation of the phrase, "the building that was on the outer side of the edifice," as cited in sec. 64. Thus, the intent of the phrase here is that these chambers are positioned westward, toward the outer side of the edifice.

[13] This interpretation of the phrase, "the edifice and the building," is preferable to Rashi's because elsewhere, that phrase is used only to refer to the building of the Beis HaMikdash and the cells. Also, the term "edifice" is not appropriate for the structures in the courtyard. Furthermore, those structures should be described with one term, either "edifice" or "building," but not with both terms, because there was only one type of structure in the courtyard.

[14] The above also enables one to understand the phrase, "There was an entrance at the beginning of the pathway, the pathway before the platform of the musicians." Rashi interprets this phrase as meaning that these chambers had an entrance at the beginning of the pathway before the Duchan, the musicians' platform. The place where the chambers begin is at the place where the cells end. This place is parallel to a point 4½ cubits from the beginning of the Inner Courtyard, as will be explained in sec. 74. The entrance leading from the chamber to the Inner Courtyard opens up at, "the pathway before the platform of the musicians," i.e., the Duchan. The entire area through which the Israelites were allowed to enter leads to the Duchan, which is positioned beyond this area. As explained in sec. 26, there were 17 cubits from the entrance to the Inner Courtyard until the Duchan. Thus, the entrance that was within the first 4½ cubits was, "at the beginning of the pathway" leading to the Duchan.

[15] Nevertheless, there is a difficulty regarding Rashi's interpretation of the phrase: "Resembling the entrances to the chambers to the south" – [These] were the entrances to the chambers on the east. For in the south[west] as well, there were chambers… near the side-chambers, as explained above.

[16] Why did Scripture describe the entrance to these chambers by comparing them to the chambers on south[west], which, unlike those in the north[west], were not discussed previously in the narrative? Indeed, in sec. 71, it was necessary to bring proofs that there were such chambers in the south[west]. Moreover, even when describing these lower chambers, the narrative refers to the northern chambers, stating, "Lower [on the mountain] than these chambers." The southern chambers were not mentioned or even alluded to until this verse. Only in the following verse does the narrative mention these chambers, speaking of "the northern chambers and the southern chambers." Moreover, the fact that there is a courtyard 50 cubits long in front of this chamber is derived from the fact that there was such a space in the north, as the verse states, "There was a passageway before them whose appearance was resembled that of the chambers on the north." Why, then, weren't the entrances also associated with those of the northern chambers?

[17] Therefore, it appears that the verse should be understood according to Targum Yonason's interpretation: "Resembling the gates of the chambers that opened to the pathway on the south." The words "on the south" do not refer to the chambers but to the entrances. The intent is that the chamber's entrances open to the south. Therefore, the chamber to which reference is being made is the northern chamber. It has entrances leading to the Twenty Cubit Space between it and the cells which are to its south, as explained in sec. 71. Similarly, the verse is teaching that the lower chambers also opened to the south. In that direction, they had "an entrance at the beginning of the pathway," leading to the Inner Courtyard. Therefore, the previous mention of the entrances in the narrative is not sufficient,

for the phrase in this verse is teaching that the chamber had an additional entrance at the beginning of the pathway. Thus, the verse is teaching that just as the upper northern chambers had an entrance to the south leading to the Twenty Cubit Space, as we explained, so too, the lower chambers had an entrance to the south. In addition, the lower chambers had another entrance "at the beginning of the pathway."

[18] The narrative begins by stating "Resembling the gates of the chambers that opened to the pathway on the south." These chambers also have an opening to that direction. Moreover, they have another entrance "at the beginning of the pathway." Alternatively, perhaps this is the only entrance these chambers had. Since this entrance also opened to the south, it could be the entrance referred to by the verse's first clause. It is, however, more likely that there were two entrances, both opening to the south - one leading to the Inner Courtyard and one leading to the Outer Courtyard.

[20] It is possible to explain Rashi's reasoning as follows: The entrance of the upper northern chamber to the south opened to the Twenty Cubit Space. Since the opening of the lower northern chamber led to a far more spacious area, it is not comparable to the upper northern chamber. Therefore, Rashi compared it to the southern chambers, for their opening on the south also led to a more spacious area – in contrast to their opening to the north which led to the Twenty Cubit Space.

[21] Nevertheless, the interpretation of Targum Yonason seems more accurate.

Chapter 74

[1] In sec. 71, we stated that the Future Beis HaMikdash will also have empty space behind the Holy of Holies. Tractate Middos states, "There were 11 cubits behind the Holy of Holies." It is possible to say that these 11 cubits correspond to the 11 cubits of the Courtyard of the Israelites, since according to Rambam, Israelites were also permitted to proceed behind the Holy of Holies. Following that logic, one can postulate that in the Future Beis HaMikdash, there will be 17 cubits of empty space behind the Holy of Holies. This will correspond to the 17 cubits of space where Israelites will be allowed to proceed in the future structure's Courtyard, as explained in sec. 26. It is true that the area behind the Holy of Holies in the Future Beis HaMikdash will be much longer than the corresponding area in the Second Beis HaMikdash. The rationale is because the area behind the future structure's Holy of Holies will extend across the entire length of the Outer Courtyard.

[2] Nevertheless, that is not problematic, because the part of this area that is on the northern and southern sides of the Outer Courtyard will be set off, and is thus not included when calculating the area where Israelites will be able to walk.

[3] Even so, it seems that the dimensions of the past and the future complexes will be the same and, in the Ultimate Future, there will only be an 11 cubit space behind the Holy of Holies. The rationale for this statement is that in the Second Beis HaMikdash, the area behind the Holy of Holies is part of the Inner Courtyard which encircled the building of the Beis HaMikdash on its north and south, and behind it.

[4] Therefore, it is appropriate that the area behind the Holy of Holies where the Israelites could walk be equivalent to the area where they could walk at the beginning of this courtyard. In the Future Beis

HaMikdash, by contrast, as can be seen in the diagram that we drew, the area behind the Holy of Holies will be part of the Outer Courtyard. It is not crucial whether or not the area behind the Holy of Holies will be sanctified with the holiness of the Courtyard, for the Twenty-Cubit Space and the chambers will be sanctified. Thus, even without consecrating the area behind the Holy of Holies, there will be more than the 187 cubits of consecrated space that existed in the Second Beis HaMikdash, as explained in sec. 71. Thus, it can be concluded that the area behind the Holy of Holies is part of the outer portion of the Courtyard. If so, it is fitting that there be only 11 cubits behind the Holy of Holies to correspond to the 11 cubits that existed in the former structure. These 11 cubits will parallel the 11 cubits left at the end of the lower chambers in the eastern portion of the Outer Courtyard, as explained at the beginning of the previous section.

[5] As stated previously, the Outer Courtyard in front of the eastern wall of the Inner Courtyard was 100 cubits long. The lower chambers were also 100 cubits long. They were set back along the northern and southern walls of the Inner Courtyard, until the end of the cells on the flanks of the gates. After the end of the cells, there is 4 ½ cubits of empty space before the end of the wall. That figure is derived as follows: As explained in sec. 21, the cells on either side of the gate and the gate, take up 91 cubits. The Courtyard measured 100 cubits by 100 cubits. Thus there are 9 cubits of empty space along the walls. Since the Beis HaMikdash was built symmetrically, the 9 cubits half should be divided in half, leaving 4 ½ cubits on the west and the same amount on the east. As mentioned previously, the Inner Courtyard's wall was 6 cubits thick. If we add these 6 cubits to the 4 1/2 cubits of extra space, the chambers will be built 10 ½ cubits west of the beginning of the Outer Courtyard. Thus, there will be 10 ½ cubits of empty space between the end of the chambers and the wall of the Outer Courtyard. Since the builders of the Second Beis HaMikdash left 11 cubits of open space behind the Holy of Holies, it

is appropriate to say that an equivalent space will be left there in the Future Beis HaMikdash.

[6] Accordingly, there should also be an equivalent space left at the beginning of the Outer Courtyard. That measure can be achieved by having half a cubit of the last cell's wall enter the wall of the chamber. Thus the chamber will be set back 11 cubits from the wall of the Inner Courtyard and there will be an equal amount of space left open at the beginning of the Outer Courtyard. Thus the beginning and end of the Outer Courtyard of the Future Beis HaMikdash will be symmetric. In the Second Beis HaMikdash, it was the beginning and end of the Inner Courtyard that resembled each other. In the Future Beis HaMikdash, this pattern will be followed in the Outer Courtyard.

[7] Based on the above, it is possible to explain the calculation made in sec. 1, that the length of the Outer Courtyard from east to west is 317 cubits. Thus the end of my description of the Future Beis HaMikdash will focus on the same subject as its beginning. To follow is the reckoning of that measure: There are 100 cubits in front of the beginning of the eastern wall of the Inner Courtyard, as explained in sec. 22. That wall is 6 cubits thick, as explained in sec. 23. The Inner Courtyard itself is 100 cubits 1ong, as stated in sec. 36. The building of the Beis HaMikdash was 100 cubits long, as stated in sec. 64. And then, there were these 11 cubits. When these dimensions are added together, a total of 317 cubits is reached.

[8] In His great kindness and goodness until now, God has helped me explain the layout of the Future Beis HaMikdash, its chambers, its structures, its cells, its exits, and its entrances. Everything is thoroughly explained, inspired by the generous hand of God.

[9] We are, however, obligated to complete our explanation of the area known as the Great Terumah, and discuss how its sides exceed the Temple Mount that is located within it, as we began explaining in our introductory words. We hope to present an illustration of the

Great Terumah at the conclusion of our description, along with numbers keyed to these explanations. The value of such a drawing is self-understood, and has been explained in the preface.

[10] Thus, after we have keyed the portions of the drawing of the House until the number 74, we will begin keying the description of the Temple Mount from the number 75, and continue in ascending order until the description is completed.

Chapter 75

[1] "This is the instruction regarding the House: On top of the mountain, its entire border all around shall be most holy. This is the instruction regarding the House." "It was 500 ⌊measuring rods⌋ by 500 ⌊measuring rods⌋, a square all around." We already discussed the circumference of the Temple Mount and its wall in the preface.

[2] Tractate Middos teaches: There were five gates to the Temple Mount: To the south were the two Chuldah Gates; they were used to enter and to depart. To the west was the Kaiphonus Gate; it was used to enter and to depart. The Tadi Gate was to the south; it was not used for any purpose. On the Eastern Gate was the emblem of the capital Shushan. Through it, the kohen who would burn the red heifer, the red heifer, and all those who help in its burning depart to the Mount of Olives.

Chapter 76

[1] "There were 50 cubits of open space around it."

Chapter 77

[1] The remainder of the sanctified area was the strip in the northern part of the Great Terumah. This strip was 25,000 measuring rods long and 10,000 measuring rods wide, and was sanctified as most holy, as we mentioned in the preface to this work. The Temple Mount was located in the center of this portion. The narrative goes on to state that the portion around the Temple Mount will be 12,250 measuring rods to the east, and that same measure to the west. The length of the Temple Mount will be 500 measuring rods. Thus, the entire area will be 25,000 measuring rods long. The area to the north will be 4,750 measuring rods wide, and there will be the same measure to the south. The Temple Mount complex will be 500 measuring rods wide, and will be located in the center of this area. Thus, the area will be 10,000 measuring rods wide. This is Rashi's calculation.

[2] Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel writes, "In addition to all the above, there will be the 50 cubits of the empty space around the city." This does not appear accurate, for if it were so, the three strips of land to be separated from the Great Terumah will not be the same size. Instead, the strip of land designated for the kohanim, in which the Beis HaMikdash is located, will be 50 cubits longer on each of its four sides because of the extra empty space around the Beis HaMikdash. This is problematic because Scripture always describes the three strips as being equal, i.e., the strip for the kohanim and the Levites are of the same width and length, and the strip of the city has the

same length as the other two. Similarly, the narrative later combines all three strips, and describes them as a square when discussing, "the entire Terumah," as will be explained in sec. 83.

[3] The reason Rashi did not subtract these 50 cubits of open space is because they were measured in cubits as stated in the narrative and not with the measuring rod. Indeed, they do not add up to an even number of rods, their total being approximately 8 ½ measuring rods. Since they do not reach a sum of 10 measuring rods, the narrative did not desire to subtract less than ten rods from the reckoning. This understanding is reflected in the commentary of Radak who writes that the 50 cubits of empty space are included in the area that remains outside the Temple Mount, as we explained in the preface. The remaining area was given to the kohanim, the servants of the Sanctuary, who draw close to serve God, providing them with a place for homes.

Chapter 78-79

[1] **SECTIONS 78–79**

[2] "Opposite the border of the kohanim," to the south, was the portion granted to the Levites. Their portion was between the Beis HaMikdash and the city. The city will be to the south, as the verse states, "Near it, there were building[s] resembling a city."

[3] "[An area] 25,000 [measuring rods] long and 10,000 wide was granted to the Levites, the servants of the House, as a heritage; it had twenty chambers." Radak interprets the words, "it had twenty chambers," as meaning that the Levites should make twenty chambers in their portion close to the portion of the kohanim. According to

Radak, these chambers would serve as dwellings for the gatekeepers of the Beis HaMikdash, so that they will be close to the Beis HaMikdash. The Levites will use remainder of the area for their needs and private homes. Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel and Rashi also interpret the verse in that manner.

Chapter 80

[1] "The width of 5000 [measuring rods] that remains over a length of 25,000 [measuring rods shall be… for the city]." The Great Terumah was 25,000 measuring rods long and 25,000 measuring rods wide. From it, on its northern side, two strips, each 10,000 measuring rods wide (from north to south) and 25,000 measuring rods long (from east to west), were given to the kohanim and the Levites respectively. Thus, there remained a strip 5000 measuring rods wide on the southern portion of the Great Terumah. The verse states that this portion "will be ordinary, for a city, for dwellings, and for open space."

[2] The meaning of the phrases, "for a city" and, "for open space" should be understood simply. The phrase, "for dwellings" refers to the dwellings of the city's workers. The narrative proceeds to explain the size of each of these three areas. Since all three are necessary for the city's existence, all three are included in the collective term "city," as in a previous verse, "For the heritage of the city set aside [an area], 5,000 measuring rods wide and 25,000 measuring rods long, facing the sacred portion. It will be for the entire House of Israel."

[3] It is stated, "the city shall be in its midst," i.e., in the center of this strip. "These are its measures: the northern side, 4500 [measuring rods], the southern side, 4500 [measuring rods], the eastern side, 4500

⌊measuring rods⌋, and the western side, 4500 ⌊measuring rods⌋." "The perimeter ⌊of the city⌋ will be 18,000 measuring rods. And the name of the city from that day will be 'God is there.'"

[4] Explanation is seemingly required regarding the following point: Scripture specifies the city's dimensions on all four sides, and also mentions the sum of its perimeter. We do not find this type of redundancy for the other measurements mentioned in the narrative. Similarly, there is no such redundancy for the dimensions of the Great Terumah, nor for any of its sections, nor for the Temple Mount, nor for any other areas of the Beis HaMikdash. To offer a resolution: The text is informing the inhabitants of the exile that the city's perimeter will be 18,000 measuring rods, which is equivalent to the number of worlds through which the Holy One, blessed be He, glides at night. As stated in Tractate Avodah Zarah: "What does He do by night?... It may be said that He rides a light cherub, and glides in 18,000 worlds, as intimated by the verse, 'The chariot of God is twice (שְׁנָאן) 10,000 times 2,000 angels.' Do not read shin'an, 'twice,' ⌊rather⌋ read ⌊it⌋ she'einan, 'that are not' ⌊i.e., twice 10,000 minus 2,000⌋." Thus, by mentioning the dimension 18,000, the verse is alluding to these worlds.

[5] This enables us to understand the deeper meaning of the statement, "And the name of the city from that day will be 'God is there.'" The words, "from that day," imply, "after the day has passed." Thus, the verse should be understood as, "after the day has passed, God is there." The word "day" refers to the era of the Beis HaMikdash, for, as mentioned in the introduction, the Beis HaMikdash resembles the world and its three divisions. This is where God is focused during the day, as our Sages explain, Even when the day has passed, God remains there. This is how this verse should be understood, in my humble opinion.

[6] In the Aggadah in Tractate Sanhedrin, this concluding verse is interpreted as referring to the rows of righteous men surrounding the

Divine presence, as Ravva states, "[The rows of the righteous] who abide before the Holy One, blessed be He, equal 18,000 parsaos, as intimated by the verse, 'The perimeter… will be 18,000.'" Rashi comments on that passage: "The verse at the end of the Book of Yechezkel is referring to Jerusalem in the spiritual realms."

[7] It must be emphasized that when Rashi states that the verse refers to Jerusalem in the spiritual realms, he is not implying that the verse does not refer to the earthly city of Jerusalem. Heaven forbid that Rashi's holy mouth would make such a statement, for a verse should never be taken entirely beyond its simple meaning. Instead, certainly, Yechezkel's prophecy must be understood according to its simple meaning. Indeed, Rashi comments on the above verse in Yechezkel: "The perimeter of the city will be 18,000 measuring rods.This total can be reached by adding the lengths of its sides." Thus, Rashi interprets the verse as referring to the earthly city of Jerusalem in accordance with the simple meaning of the verse. However, the Sages of the Talmud felt the verse had a deeper meaning because the city's perimeter could be reached by adding together the lengths of its sides, which are clearly stated in the text. Furthermore, it is seemingly unnecessary to know the entire perimeter of the city. Therefore, the Sages explained that the text is teaching us that the city's perimeter is equal in number to the rows of the righteous who abide in God's presence. The term פַּרְסֵי used in that passage will be discussed below.

[8] Although Rashi did not clarify the difference between the literal meaning and the Aggadic reading in his commentary to Tractate Sanhedrin, the same teaching of Ravva is cited in Tractate Sukkah. In his commentary to that source, Rashi focuses on this matter, stating: "The perimeter… will be 18,000." The end of the verse is "God is there." Although the verse is speaking of Jerusalem of the Ultimate Future, it is also understood as teaching that in the abode of the Divine presence, there will be 18,000 rows surrounding the Divine presence. This [i.e. the 18,000 rows] refers to the righteous

who are located closer to Him than the ministering angels, as implied by the verses, "At that time, it will be asked of Yaakov and of Israel, 'What has God wrought?'," "Her merchandise will be for those who sit before God," and "Your eyes will behold your Master."

[9] Thus, Rashi clarifies the matter, noting that although the verse is describing Jerusalem of the Future, it also teaches this concept. It is possible that Rashi did not mention this concept in his commentary to Sanhedrin, because he relied on what he had written in his commentary to Sukkah. Sukkah is part of the Order of Moed and thus precedes the Order of Nezikin in which Sanhedrin appears. To explain: Our Sages teach that the Orders of the Mishnah follow the pattern alluded to in the verse, "The faith of your times will provide the strength of your salvation…." In this verse, the phrase "your times" refers to the Order of Moed, and the word, "salvation," refers to the Order of Nezikin. Since the phrase, "your times," precedes the word, "salvation," we know that the Order of Moed precedes the Order of Nezikin. Support for the concept that Rashi relied on his commentary to Sukkah when composing his commentary to Sanhedrin can be drawn from the fact that, in Sanhedrin, he did not cite the verses he cited in Sukkah as prooftexts in Sanhedrin, when explaining that there are righteous men who abide near the Divine presence. Rather than repeating himself, Rashi relied on his previous statements. Similarly, in Sanhedrin, he only mentioned the idea that the verse refers to the Jerusalem Above. Obviously, however, Rashi accepts the general principle that a verse should never be taken entirely beyond its simple meaning.

[10] Moreover, it is possible to say that in Sanhedrin, it is not necessary for Rashi to explain that the verse should be understood according to its simple meaning, as well as according to its Aggadic interpretation, because Ravva's words themselves indicate that the verse should be understood literally.

[11] To explain: The fact that Ravva mentions 18,000 parsaos represents a difficulty, for the verse uses measuring rods as a measure of length, not parsaos. Therefore, Ravva should have mentioned measuring rods, not parsaos. This discrepancy can be resolved by explaining that the wording of the verse alludes to its twofold meaning: According to its literal meaning, the verse is discussing the city's perimeter, stating that it will measure 18,000 measuring rods. Nevertheless, the verse does not explicitly mention measuring rods, enabling its meaning to be expanded to include its Aggadic interpretation: that the city will have a parallel in the spiritual realms, where the 18,000 rows of righteous men surround the Divine presence. These rows are measured in parsaos, and not in measuring rods, for in the spiritual realms, measurements are taken in parsaos, as is obvious from Sefer Heichalos. Measurements are taken in parsaos in the spiritual realms because they are the largest measure of length referred to in Talmudic literature. Thus, when the liturgical hymn for Parshas Shekalim mentions the different measures of length, it begins with parsaos, for they are the largest measure.

[12] On this basis, it can be said that Ravva's statement itself indicates that a distinction can be made between the verse's simple meaning and its Aggadic interpretation, for the verse mentions measuring rods and Ravva mentions parsaos. Therefore, it is not necessary for Rashi to highlight this point. Tractate Sukkah, by contrast, does not quote Ravva as discussing parsaos. The rationale is that, in contrast to the passage in Sanhedrin, the passage in Sukkah is not a collection of Aggadic teachings. Ravva's teaching is only cited there as a basis for a question concerning the lesson preceding it. True, in Sanhedrin, Ravva's statement is also cited as a basis for a question. Nevertheless, that entire passage is of an Aggadic nature, and so the author brought the Aggadic text in full. Since parsaos are not mentioned in Tractate Sukkah, there Rashi felt it necessary to elaborate and explain that the verse's Aggadic interpretation does not contradict its simple meaning.

[13] On this basis, Tosafos' commentary to the passage in Sukkah should be discussed. Tosafos emphasizes that parsaos should not be mentioned in Ravva's teaching, since parsaos are not mentioned in the verse. It would appear that Tosafos' intent is that the term parsaos should not be mentioned in San-hedrin either. Tosafos does not mention this point in Sanhedrin. However, this is not unusual, because there are few glosses from Tosafos for that chapter in Sanhedrin. According to our understanding, however, parsaos should be mentioned in Ravva's teaching even though the verse mentions measuring rods. For Ravva is interpreting the verse in an Aggadic sense, as referring to the rows of the righteous surrounding the Divine presence. As such, we should follow the guidance in Tractate Shevuos, which instructs us to, "Derive insight from one source and apply it in another context." In our context, the insight from the verse can be applied to the rows of angels, where the wording parsaos is appropriate. In Tractate Sukkah, the term parsaos is not appropriate. Accordingly, it is not mentioned there. However, the term parsaos is mentioned in Tractate Sanhedrin, because that tractate is of an Aggadic nature.

[14] According to our first explanation of why Rashi did not mention the simple meaning of the verse in his commentary to Sanhedrin, it seems that the text in Sukkah should also mention parsaos. The rationale is that measurements in the spiritual realms are made in parsaos, as mentioned above. The reason this version is not found in the text of the Talmud, is that the scribe who composed the standard version saw Tosafos' statements and therefore omitted the word parsaos. In Sanhedrin, by contrast, there is no commentary by Tosafos on this passage. Hence, the word was not omitted. In truth, as Tosafos mentioned, the word par-saos was originally found in both passages, and – according to our understanding – belongs in both.

[15] With the above interpretations, we have merited to explain that one should not err when studying Rashi's words, as did some who wished to claim that Yechezkel's prophecy should not be interpreted

according to its simple meaning and sought to support their assertion by citing Rashi's commentary in Sanhedrin, as stated by Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel. Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel, however, refutes their claim, citing Rashi's commentary to Sukkah. We elaborated, and also explained Rashi's use of the term parsaos, and the difference between his commentary in Sanhedrin and in Sukkah. Nevertheless, fundamentally, we both shared the same intent: to emphasize that Yechezkel's prophecy should be interpreted according to its simple meaning, as we explained in great detail. As a reader can see, the verse can be understood according to our interpretation, which is based on the words of the commentaries.

[16] I do not assert that it is necessary to accept my entire explanation. Who knows whether I am correct? I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet. My words do not emanate from wisdom or from a special spirit; they are nothing more than what the God of heaven revealed to me in the understanding of the words of the classic commentaries and, in particularly, the words of Rashi, the foremost among them. Perhaps someone with a discerning heart will understand, comprehend, and conceptualize these ideas better than I do, and offer a different interpretation that will fit the meaning of the words more closely. After all, the three commentaries on whose work our work is based (i.e. Rashi, Radak, and Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel) do not always agree regarding every matter.

[17] Nevertheless, since the commentary given does enable us to understand Yechezkel's prophecy according to its simple meaning, there is no reason to reject it. It is possible that it is true. If, however, someone else will offer a different explanation of the verses that presents their simple meaning more effectively, I will happily bow my head in acceptance of it. However, it is impossible to say that the verses can be understood only in an abstract, metaphoric sense, when there is a way to understand them according to their simple meaning.

[18] There will be three portions of the Terumah Gedolah: a) terumas hakohanim, in which the Beis HaMikdash will be located, b) terumas haleviim, and c) the terumah of the city of Jerusalem. Each area will be a square, measuring 25,000 measuring rods by 25,000 measuring rods. As explained in the preface, the angel's measuring rod was 6 cubits long. Thus, the area of each of these sections will only measure 150,000 cubits by 150,000 cubits. Now, a mil equals 2000 cubits. Thus, these areas will measure 75 mil by 75 mil, as we stated at the outset. Thus, since a parsa is equal to 4 mil, each of the three parts of the Terumah Gedolah will be a square, which is just a bit less than 19 parsaos, as stated in the piyyutim.

[19] This reckoning concurs precisely with the mishnah in Taanis, ch. 1, which states that the prayers for rain were delayed 15 days after the conclusion of the Sukkos festival, to enable the last of the pilgrims to reach his home on the Euphrates River. The Euphrates is in the north of Eretz Yisrael, and serves as a border between Eretz Yisrael and Babylonia, as stated in Kiddushin, and as stated by Rashi in his commentary to the verse in the beginning of Yehoshua: "From the desert… until the great river, the Euphrates." There are seven tribes whose portions are north of the Great Terumah. Thus, a festive pilgrim who sojourns in the city, which is in the southern portion of the Great Terumah, will have to pass through eight portions of land on his journey home. Each of these portions is 75 mil wide. If we round up the amount of parsaos in each area, the pilgrim will have to travel through 8 * 19 parsaos, or 152 parsaos, on his way home. However, as we explained above, each mil only equals 18.75 parsaos. Therefore, we now have to deduct the extra .25 parsaos we added to each mil. If we multiply .25 parsaos by the 8 mil the pilgrim is traveling through, we see that we have to deduct 2 parsaos from the 152 parsaos arrived at above, leaving us with a total of 150 parsaos. Our Sages calculated that a person walks 40 mil, i.e., 10 parsaos, a day. Thus, it will be a 15 day journey from Jerusalem to the Euphrates.

[20] The narrative in Yechezkel states that Jerusalem will occupy a square measuring 4500 measuring rods by 4500 measuring rods (i.e. 27,000 cubits by 27,000 cubits, or 13 ½ mil by 13 ½ mil), a distance that a person could walk in about a third of a day. It is not at all far-fetched to say that the city will be that large. Indeed, Nineveh was, "a three-day walk [wide]." How much more so can this be said of Jerusalem in the time of the Redemption, when many nations will stream to her. Certainly, it could be a ninth of that size. Indeed, Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel states that the city of Egypt was larger than that in his day.

[21] To emphasize that the prophecies should be understood according to their simple meaning, Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel also cites Yirmeyahu's prophecy concerning Jerusalem in the Ultimate Future, saying: "'Behold, days are coming,' says God, 'when the city shall be built… from the Tower of Chananel to the Corner Gate… and the entire Valley of the Corpses… as far as the brook of Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, it shall be consecrated to God.'" Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel asks: The names of these places are well-known landmarks in the surroundings of Jerusalem. Can it be said that the names of these landmarks should be understood in any way other than their simple meaning?

[22] Moreover, in this prophecy, Yechezkel speaks of the order of the sacrifices and how they will be offered, the dedication of the Altar, the service of the kohanim and the Levites, the portion to be given to the Nasi, his offering of his sacrifices, the presents he will give to his sons and servants, the division of the land into tribal portions and the gates of Jerusalem, mentioning them by name. All this clearly indicates that the prophecies are meant to be understood literally. Moreover, many of the matters described here by the prophet existed in the First and Second Batei HaMikdash. If then, those matters existed in a physical sense, why not say that the same applies to the Ultimate Future as well? Why say, that the prophecies must be understood only abstractly and metaphorically? Instead, "we will go

forth in the name of God, our Lord," maintaining the faith that this prophecy is to be understood simply, and that Yechezkel delivered it in anticipation of the Ultimate Future. The above are the words of Rav Yitzchak Abarbanel, who elaborated at even greater length to demonstrate that this prophecy should be understood in simple, physical terms. We have condensed his words.

[23] Since the prophecy can be understood in a simple way, there is no need to seek abstract, spiritual interpretations. Instead, we should believe in its simple meaning. Certainly, the prophecy contains a deeper, spiritual interpretation. Nevertheless, it will unquestionably be fulfilled in a physical sense, like all the other prophecies that were delivered since the beginning of human history. All of these matters have a deeper, spiritual meaning, even though they were also actualized in a physical sense, as the Zohar, states in Parshas Behaaloscha; consult that source. First and foremost, we must understand a verse simply; afterwards, we may contemplate its inner, spiritual meaning.

[24] Look at God's Sanctuary which Moshe fashioned in the desert, and God's Beis HaMikdash which Shlomoh built. Did they not have an inner dimension that paralleled the Sanctuary in the spiritual realms? Our Sages' interpret the verse, "Like a city in which all joined hands," as meaning that Jerusalem is a joined city. Jerusalem above, in the spiritual realms, is linked to its material counterpart, the earthly city of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, when the Torah and the prophets described the city and the Beis HaMikdash, they were focusing on its existence in actual fact, in this material world. The same applies to Yechezkel's prophecy. There will come a time when this prophecy will be fulfilled on the material plane. Since it has not yet happened, we must conclude that it is a prophecy for the future. It cannot be said that Yechezkel's prophecy was fulfilled with the building of the Second Beis HaMikdash, because as we have demonstrated, this prophecy differs from that structure in almost every aspect. Because

of those differences, it cannot be said that this prophecy is describing the Second Beis HaMikdash.

[25] Since this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, and like all the other prophecies, the intent is that it will be fulfilled on the material plane, we are therefore obligated to thank God for the miracles and wonders He wrought for us and our ancestors and trust that, "the vision is yet ⌊intended⌋ for an appointed time; it speaks concerning the end and will not fail to come true; though its ⌊fulfillment⌋ delays, wait for it; because it will surely come." Our city will be rebuilt, our Temple will be constructed, and God will cause His presence to dwell among us eternally. Yechezkel relates in his prophecy, that after the angel departed the Holy Chamber, he measured the Temple Mount from the outside. The prophecy continues:

[26] He led me to the gate that looks towards the east. Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east…. A spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of God filled the house. I heard Him speaking to me from the house…. He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne, and the resting place for the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel forever. The House of Israel will no longer defile My holy name…. by placing their threshold by My thresholds…. Now, let them put away their harlotry… and I will dwell in their midst forever."

[27] Yechezkel is prophesying about a building that was measured, and which he saw with its design, its exits, and its entrances. He related that the word of God came to him and a voice told him: "This is the place of My throne, and the resting place for the soles of My feet." The basis of this translation is that the word es in the phrase es makom kisi, shares the meaning of the term zeh, "this is." This translation is also reflected in the Targum Yonason. Thus, this verse is teaching that the physical Beis HaMikdash is aligned opposite God's throne in the spiritual realms, and that the Beis HaMikdash serves as

His footstool. This is similar to Yeshayahu's statement: "Thus says God, 'The heavens are My throne and the earth, My footstool.'" The Beis HaMikdash is the place where God will dwell among the Jewish people. In that future era, they will no longer desecrate His holy name. Therefore God states, "I will dwell in their midst forever."

[28] Yechezkel relates similar prophecies in ch. 37. I will discuss this matter further in the conclusion of this text.

[29] "The gates of the city will be named after the tribes of Israel. There will be three gates northward; one gate of Reuven, one gate of Yehudah, one gate of Levi. At the east, there will be… three gates; and one gate of Yosef, one gate of Benyamin, one gate of Dan. At the south, there will be… three gates; one gate of Shimon, one gate of Yissachar, one gate of Zevulun. At the west, there will be… three gates; one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naftali."

Chapter 81

[1] "And the open space of the city will be 250 ⌈measuring rods⌋ in the north, 250 ⌈measuring rods⌋ in the south, 250 ⌈measuring rods⌋ in the east, and 250 ⌈measuring rods⌋ in the west." The city itself covers an area of 4500 measuring rods by 5000 measuring rods. With its empty space, the city is a square, 5000 measuring rods by 5000 measuring rods. The open space fills the width of the strip of land in which the city is located.

Chapter 82

[1] "The remainder ⌊of the 25,000 measuring rod⌋ length along the sanctified ⌊portion of⌋ the Terumah..." – of the 25,000 measuring rods of length, the city occupied only 5,000 – "10,000 to the east and 10,000 to the west" – should be used for fields. "Its produce will serve as food for the workers of the city."

Chapter 83

[1] "The entire Terumah 25,000 ⌊measuring rods⌋ by 25,000 ⌊measuring rods⌋ square shall be set aside as a sanctified portion" – for the kohanim, the Levites – "and the property of the city." These areas were already discussed, each in its place. "The remaining portion ⌊of the land⌋ shall be for the Nasi, ⌊his portion being⌋ on either side of the sanctified portion of the Terumah and the property of the city along its width of 25,000 ⌊measuring rods⌋ of the Terumah to the eastern and western borders. ⌊The area⌋ on the western border parallel to the portions ⌊allocated to the tribes⌋ shall be for the Nasi. The consecrated Terumah and the Sanctuary of the House will be in it. The property of the Levites and the property of the city will be in the portion that will be for the Nasi."

[2] The prophet is explaining that the three areas, i.e. the portion of the kohanim, the portion of the Levites, and the portion of the city, will fill the 25,000 measuring rod width of the Great Terumah. However, the Great Terumah runs across the entire width of Eretz Yisrael until the sea. Although these three areas filled the width of Eretz Yisrael, they did not fill its length, as we wrote at the outset. What remains on the eastern and western sides of the consecrated Terumah will be

given to the Nasi. Thus, these three portions will be in the middle of the portion allocated to the Nasi.

[3] This is also reflected in the prophet's previous statements: "The portion to be given to the Nasi will be on either side of the consecrated Terumah and the property of the city, facing the consecrated Terumah and the property of the city, from the western border, extending westward, and from the eastern border, eastward, its length corresponding to one of the portions ⌊allocated to the tribes⌋ from the western border to the eastern border."

[4] עֹה – The Temple Mount is 500 measuring rods by 500 measuring rods. It has five gates: two in the south, one in the west, one in the north, and one gate in the east.

[5] עֹו – The 50 cubits of open space around the city.

[6] עֹז – The portion from the east of the Temple Mount to the eastern border of the consecrated Terumah, an area of 12,250 measuring rods by 10,000 measuring rods. There was a similar portion extending from the west of the Temple Mount to the western border. From the north of the Temple Mount to the northern border of the consecrated Terumah, there were 4,750 measuring rods. There was a similar portion extending from the south of the Temple Mount to the southern border. All of this land was given to the kohanim, the servants of the Sanctuary who draw close to serve God. It is for their homes.

[7] עזז – The portion of the Levites. This area corresponded to that of the kohanim. It occupied a strip of land 10,000 measuring rods wide and 25,000 measuring rods long. It was given to the Levites for their needs and for their homes.

[8] עט – The 20 chambers of the Levites, located next to the kohanim's property. The gatekeepers lived in these chambers.

9 **פ** – The square of the city, 4,500 measuring rods by 4,500 measuring rods. The gates of the city: three to the north, three to the east, three to the south, and three to the west.

10 **פא** – The open space around the city, 250 measuring rods in all four directions.

11 **פב** – The area to the east of the open space around the city until the eastern border of this portion, 10,000 measuring rods by 5,000 measuring rods; a similar area to the west of the open space around the city until the western border of this portion. In it were fields, "whose produce served as food for the workers of the city."

12 **פג** – The Nasi's portion on either side of the consecrated Terumah that was given to the kohanim, the Levites, and designated for the property of the city, from the western border westward and from the eastern border eastward. Its length is equivalent to the length of one of the tribal portions of Eretz Yisrael, from the western border of Eretz Yisrael to the eastern border of Eretz Yisrael.

13 סְלִיקוּ לְהוּ סִימָנֵי הַצּוּרָה

Concluding Statements

[1] "[The portions of] the remaining tribes: From the eastern edge to the western edge, Benyamin…, Shimon…, Yissachar…, Zevulun…, Gad." These tribes were given their portions south of the Great Terumah.

[2] See our opening statements. There it was stated that seven tribes received their ancestral portions north of the Great Terumah. This can possibly clarify the version of the Sifri favored by Rabbi Klonymus, and cited by Rashi in his commentary to Parshas Shoftim:

[3] He (the tribe of Levi) will not receive an ancestral heritage – This refers to the ancestral heritage granted to the five tribes; in the midst of his brethren – This refers to the ancestral heritage granted to the seven tribes." The preceding verse states that the kohanim and the Levites will not receive a portion of Eretz Yisrael like the other tribes. The intent of the Midrash is that this will also apply in the Ultimate Future, when the tribes will receive equal ancestral portions: five [tribes will have their portions] on one side of the Great Terumah and seven [tribes will have their portions] on the other side [of the Great Terumah]. Even in that future time, the kohanim and the Levites will not receive a tribal portion. Instead, "God will be their portion." They will be given the portion in the Terumah to be dedicated to God, as we explained.

[4] "'This is the land that you will allot as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel and these are their divisions,' spoke God, the Lord." The prophecy that the land will be divided equally among the twelve tribes, with each tribe receiving an equal portion, like rows in a vineyard was never realized from the time God's people entered the land onward. Therefore, Yechezkel's prophecy serves as proof that ultimately our people who have been dispersed in exile will return to Eretz Yisrael from the four corners of the earth.

[5] Rabbi Akiva stated that in the Ultimate Future, the Ten Tribes will not return to Eretz Yisrael. This does not contradict the prophecy mentioned above, for as Rashi explains, Rabbi Akiva was only referring to the generation that was exiled: "This does not refer to their children and their descendants, but only to those who were exiled. [The exiled] do not possess a portion [in the land], because they were utterly wicked men. Their children and their coming generations, by contrast, merit a portion in the land, and convey that right [to their descendants]." [The Talmud's continuation of this discussion proves that Rabbi Akiva did not mean that the descendants of the Ten Tribes would not receive a portion in Eretz Yisrael:]

[6] Ravva bar bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Rabbi Akiva departed from his ways of piety, as indicated by the verse, "Go and call out these words to the north, saying, 'Return O straying Israel, says God, and I will not visit My anger upon you, for I am pious, says God, and I will not bear a grudge forever.'"

[7] The Sages of the Talmud did not question Rabbi Akiva's statements based on the passage in Yechezkel, which discusses the division of the land into equal portions among the twelve tribes. Thus, it is evident that all the tribes will return in their entirety. Each tribe will receive an equal portion, taking their place as an independent tribe. It would not be just that only a few of one tribe return, like those of the Ten Tribes who returned on Yirmeyahu's urging, and yet receive an equal portion of the land as a tribe with a large population. Instead, the intent is that all the members of the tribes will return, and each tribe will receive an equal portion of Eretz Yisrael. Nevertheless, the Talmud does not quote Yechezkel's prophecy as proof that the Ten Tribes will return, for [even according to Rabbi Akiva] the prophecy is speaking about righteous men, not those who were exiled. Therefore, the passage cites the verse from Yirmeyahu, "Return O straying Israel," that indicates that even the wayward and wicked among Israel will return.

[8] The words, "I will not have My anger fall upon you, for I am pious," indicate that according to the attribute of judgment, it could be expected that God would have His anger be visited upon the Jews. It is only as a result of His piety that God says, "I will not bear a grudge forever." Instead, after a long exile, the Jews will be returned to Eretz Yisrael. The words, "I will not bear a grudge forever," indicate that God's anger will persist for a long time. It will not, however, last forever, and we can look forward to the time when the prophecy will be fulfilled.

[9] One should not interpret the Talmud as posing a question from the prophecy of Yirmeyahu – who preceded Yechezkel – because Yirmehahu's prophecy was directed to the members of the Ten Tribes who themselves were exiled from the land. However, that is impossible, for Yirmeyahu did not begin his prophecy until many years after the generation that had been exiled passed on. To explain: The Ten Tribes were exiled in the sixth year of King Chizkiyahu's reign. King Chizkiyahu's reign continued for 23 years after the Ten Tribes were exiled. Menashe, Chizkiyahu's son, ruled for 52 years. Menashe's son, Amon, ruled for 2 years. Amon was succeeded by his son, Yoshiyahu. Yirmeyahu's prophecy began in the 13th year of King Yoshiyahu's reign. Thus, there were 90 years between the time the Ten Tribes were exiled and Yirmeyahu's prophecy. Since, "the days of our lifespan are 70 years," it can be assumed that the members of the Ten Tribes who were themselves exiled had already passed on. Moreover, certainly only those members of the Ten Tribes who had reached the age for which they would be considered liable for punishment before they were exiled would not be included in the Resurrection of the Dead. Thus, the Talmud is not using chronological evidence as its argument. Rather, by basing its statement on the phrase, "Return, O straying Israel," the Talmud is inferring that even the wayward and wicked among the Jews will return and, hence, is questioning Rabbi Akiva's statement.

[10] This is also implied by Rashi who, in his commentary to that passage, states that the verse implies that, "all Jews will return." The word "all" implies even the "straying," and certainly, the righteous. Even Rabbi Akiva does not differ. He never entertained the thought that the descendants of the Ten Tribes would not return, for it is not logical to assume that their descendants, who did not sin, will perish because of their ancestors' sins, and not return to their land.

[11] For this reason, the Talmud does not challenge Rabbi Akiva's statements by citing this prophecy, which indicates that the Ten Tribes will return to Eretz Yisrael, or by citing a previous prophecy of Yechezkel: "Behold, I will take the staff of Yosef, that is in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Israel, his companions, and I will place them together with the staff of Yehudah, and I will make them one staff." This prophecy implies that the Ten Tribes will return to the kingdom of Yehudah, and become one with the other tribes. In this verse, the word עֵץ, is translated as "staff," and refers to a staff of leadership. The verse implies that all the people will return, and thus the Jewish nation will be fit to accept the sovereignty of the House of David. This concept is also reflected in a later verse in that same prophecy: "Behold, I will take the Children of Israel from among the nations to which they have sojourned…. I will make them into one nation in the land with one king…. They will no longer be two nations… two kingdoms." This prophecy was not fulfilled in the era of the Second Beis HaMikdash when many rebelled against their rulers and sought the kingship for themselves. True, the Jews were not divided into two nations, but they were divided into many factions.

[12] The prophecy continues: "Nor shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; I will save them… David… shall be king… they will follow My judgments" – i.e., the judgments that they despised previously and exchanged for idol worship – "and perform them," observing the judgments, the statutes of our holy Torah, that

they despised in the days of Yechezkel. This prophecy thus serves as testimony to the eternal nature of the Torah's laws, indicating that they will not change. "They will dwell in the land…, they and their children, and their descendants forever." We were exiled from Eretz Yisrael, and have not yet dwelt in it. Thus, this prophecy has not yet come to fruition. Ultimately, it will. We will return and dwell in our land for all time.

[13] The prophecy continues: "My servant David shall be their prince forever." This prophecy was not fulfilled in the era of the Second Beis HaMikdash, when the kings were the descendants of the Chashmonaim, who were kohanim. True, initially, there was a governor from the tribe of Yehudah, as mentioned in the words of Ezra, Chaggai, and Zechariah, but his rule was not perpetuated.

[14] The prophecy further states: "I will establish a covenant of peace with them; it will be an eternal covenant with them." This is yet to be fulfilled. On the contrary, due to our sins, our people do not enjoy peace. That verse continues, "I will multiply you." This prophecy also has not yet been fulfilled, as we are the smallest among the nations. Yechezkel's prophecy continues with the promises: "I will place My Sanctuary in their midst forever. My presence will rest upon them; I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Similarly, this promise has yet to be fulfilled. On the contrary, in our era we ask, "Why is it said among the nations, 'Where is their God?" Certainly, we are His nation and He is our God, but the point of the prophecy is that the relationship will be obvious, that Divine favor will be manifest upon us to the extent that the nations of the world will recognize that the God of Israel is the true God, and that Israel is His nation, as the prophecy concludes, "The nations shall know that I, God, sanctify Israel, since My sanctuary will be in their midst forever." The implication is that the nations of the world will realize and acknowledge that, "I will be their God." The nations' realization will stem from the awareness that, "My sanctuary will be in their midst forever."

[15] Where is the House of our holiness and glory? Can it be said that this prophecy was fulfilled with the Second Beis HaMikdash? Did the Second Beis HaMikdash last forever? On the contrary, it has been destroyed for more than twice as long as the time when it stood. Instead, this prophecy concerns the Ultimate Future, when God will dwell among us for all eternity, and all the nations will recognize that God is our God and we are His nation.

[16] This prophecy indicates that the Ten Tribes will return, that God will dwell among Israel forever, and that the people of Israel will no longer make God's Sanctuary impure. ⌈The two prophecies are interrelated:⌋ because the people of Israel will no longer make His Sanctuary impure, God will dwell among them forever. In that future era, the land will be divided among all twelve tribes of Israel, as explained in sec. 80 above.

[17] With these words, this holy task has been completed, our explanation of the design of God's new House. As we have merited to arrange it, passage after passage, whether small or large, so too, may we merit to build it. And ⌈may we merit⌋ to sing in it with thanksgiving and praise accompanied by the instruments of David the man of God and we will fill our mouths with song in the service unique to our tribe speedily, in the near future.

Explanations of Problematic Passages in I Melachim

[1] To Fulfill the Promise Made in the Introduction to Explain what is Enigmatic in King Shlomoh's Building

[2] "He built the House of the Forest of Lebanon. It was one hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high, [supported by] four rows of cedar columns." Each row of cedar columns was 100 cubits long, and there were 50 cubits between the first row and the last one, this being the width of the palace. "There were cedar beams (כרתות) above the pillars." The pillars had openings between them like exedras do. Thus, the beams were like lintels over the door posts. These beams also served as support for the boards, the צְּלָעוֹת mentioned in the following verse: "the boards that were on the pillars." [This phrase teaches numerous details about the building's structure.] The boards are described as being, "on the pillars," and not on the beams, because the pillars served as the main supports for the building. The beams merely strengthened the structure by joining one pillar to another so that the structure would be a single entity. The beams lay on their sides and did not stand upright. Thus, the phrase, "the boards that were on the pillars," should be understood as meaning "the boards were on the beams that were on the pillars." The beams were not mentioned in this verse because they were secondary.

[3] Alternatively, it is possible to say that the beams were not positioned above the pillars, and did not lie on the pillars. Instead, they were connected to the tops of the pillars, and were on the same level as the pillars. Rather than serve as a lintel atop a doorpost, the beams were like long planks that joined one pillar to another. They were thick, of the same breadth as the pillars, joining the pillars to create a level surface on top of them. According to this interpretation, the phrase, "the boards that were on the pillars," can be understood simply: The boards rested on the pillars, because the beams were on

the same level as the pillars. If that is true, the phrase "There were cedar beams above the pillars" must be interpreted as "on the higher portion of the pillars" and not as explained above.

4 The צַלְעוֹת, the boards, on top of the pillars, were fashioned from the same wood as were the pillars. Thus, it was as if there were pillars lying on the beams and pillars. This is indicated by the verse, "And pillars and timber on top of them," which Rashi interprets as referring to the wood that served as the boards.

5 The palace had a ceiling made of cedar wood. The ceiling contained 45 cedar planks, which were placed on these boards. This ceiling was divided into three portions for the three spaces between the four rows of pillars. Each of these spaces contained fifteen cedar planks, their length extending over the width of the structure, from one row of pillars to the next. The width of the cedar planks, as they were placed one next to the other, ran across the length of the structure. The fifteen planks were not long enough to extend over the entire 100-cubit length of the structure. Therefore, shorter cedar beams were placed at the end of the structure. These beams were placed lengthwise, along the length of the structure. They were fashioned like a lintel at their ends so that they could be attached to the beams fashioned for them on either side.

6 "This is the craftsmanship of the stands"

7 He made "four copper wheels for each stand." Each stand resembled a large wagon. "Each wheel was one-and-one-half cubits high. The wheels were fashioned like chariot wheels." Each wheel was made up of two wheels, one inside the other, in a crisscross. Thus, the person moving the stand could easily turn it in any direction without having to maneuver it extensively.

8 There were 4 cubits between the wheel on the east and the one on the west, and the wheel on the north and the one on the south. Thus,

the bases of the stands were square, not rectangular like our wagons. This is intimated by the verse, "four cubits was the length of one base and four cubits its breadth."

[9] A long, thick rod was inserted in both of the northern wheels, running from east to west, to serve as the wheels' axle. A similar axle was inserted in the southern wheels. The inner wheels also had an axle inserted in the eastern and western wheels, running from north to south. These axles are referred to as יְדוֹתָם in the narrative.

[10] That narrative also mentions גַּבֵּיהֶם, "their hubs," referring to the center of these wheels. The axles revolved in these hubs. The word גֻּבֵּיהֶם derives from the word govah, which literally means "height." The hubs are referred to as גַּבֵּיהֶם because they are the highest part of a wheel when the wheel lies on the ground. Another reason why the text uses the term גַּבֵּיהֶם to refer to the wheels' hubs is because the center of a circle can be called its height, for all of its sides originate from it.

[11] The verse uses the word זִשְׁקֵיהֶם to refer to the wheels' rims. The rims connect the spokes, which are referred to as זִשְׁרֵיהֶם. The term זִשְׁקֵיהֶם is also used when the Torah discusses the Mishkan: "Their bands (זִשְׁקֵיהֶם) were silver." The rim of a wheel is the part of the wheel that revolves and is in contact with the earth. Usually, wheels have an iron rim. Thus, the mishnah mentions "an iron rim." In this instance, it was not necessary for the wheels to have an iron rim, because the wheel was made entirely of copper.

[12] The verse uses the term וּמִסְגֶּרֶת to refer to the frames that were attached to the axles on all four sides. These frames formed a square, as stated, "Their frames were square, not round." These appendages are called frames because they enclose – or frame – the stand's axles on all four sides.

[13] Copper planks were attached to these frames. Scripture refers to these copper planks as סַרְנֵי נְחֹשֶׁת. The root of the word סַרְנֵי is סרן, which is made up of the same letters as the word נסר, "board." Hence, the commentaries explain that the term סַרְנֵי נְחֹשֶׁת should be understood as meaning "planks of copper." Attached to these planks was a façade, resembling the rungs of a ladder. The rungs were attached to the surface of the planks, and were not suspended above the planks. Between each rung was a frame on which there were forms of oxen, lions, and cherubs. The planks reached above the frames, all the way to the wheels. They ascended on an angle, appearing like a cap, or a covering for wagons, until they reached the level of the wheels. The planks continued to be extended until they covered the wheels. However, the two sides did not meet in the center, and they were not covered from above. There, they had a round hole, a cubit and a half in diameter, over the center of the wheels. This covering was called a כּוֹתֶרֶת, "a coronet." The hole in the coronet was referred to as פִּי כותרת, "the opening of the coronet." Although the word פִּי is normally translated as "mouth", it can also be translated as "opening" as in the phrase, ופיה עגול מעשה כן אמה וחצי האמה, "its opening was round, like the craftsmanship of the stands, a cubit and a half in diameter."

[14] This hole was surrounded by a shield that rose half a cubit high. This is derived from the phrase, "At the top of the stand, there was a round shield half a cubit high." The base would be inserted into this shield. The base was a receptacle in which the basin was held, i.e., the basin would be inserted into the base, which in turn was within the shield above the round hole in the higher portion of the stand. The base would rise a cubit above this shield. This is implied by the phrase, "Its opening extended a cubit from the inside of the coronet."

[15] Thus, each stand was three cubits high: The wheel was a cubit and a half high. The round shield was half a cubit high, and the base itself was a cubit high; it emerged from the shield. The cubit-high base was square, and it had four shafts, one on each of its four corners. This is

reflected by the verse, "There were four shafts to… each stand. The shafts emerged from the stands." The rationale is that the bottoms of the basins narrowed so they could be inserted into the bases. To prevent them from slipping down lower than the desired height, the shafts were constructed around the bases as support.

The Closing Ode

[1] The charm of the original ode lies in how Tosafos Yom Tov skillfully evoked subtle poetic allusions to well-loved Biblical verses and Midrashic phrases, whose pictorial and spiritual associations cannot be conjured up by their equivalents in any other language. In the tradition of the early medieval paytanim, or liturgical poets, our author's contrived verbal riddles challenge the reader to navigate his way by following the above-described clues to his classical sources. Interestingly, the initial Hebrew letters of all the stanzas together spell the author's name. In addition, every line ends with the letter yud – not to signify the first person, but to create a mesmerizing rhyme scheme.

[2] My hands trust Him Who responds when I call upon Him, When I beg and request and plead that He forgive in abundance, For I am abashed by my transgressions: I have sinned, and am guilty of numerous iniquities. Even before I called and opened my lips, He answered me; The God of my father stood by me for my heart's requests; He graced me with understanding, granted me knowledge, and made me wise. A man who loved the Temple Mount stood here and measured its bounds. He shone like copper, and his hand held a flaxen cord and a measuring rod. God called the prophet Yechezkel: "Behold, O venerable one! I have brought you here To measure the bounds of My home and abode, to banish impurity So that I may dwell here forever – here, where they began to fulfill My commands."

[3] The prophet first came to the Gate of Eison and to the twelve stairs, And God showed him the entrance hall and the cells and the pillars and the narrow windows.

[4] Gates were positioned throughout the northern and southern facades.

[5] He measured them, and they were like the one at the first entrance, With thirty chambers rising fifty cubits from the floor. Smoke rose from the courtyard's four corners, where God's sacrifices were prepared, Opposite the inner gates that were located as the prophet had been shown. Before the Divine presence he saw a platform for the conductor of His musical praises, And a high altar, and carving space for the sacrifices that were offered; He saw chambers aloft, and compartments for those who serve in this House.

[6] Facing them, he saw the walkways of the Entrance Hall, with its corridors and two mighty columns: The entire structure of the Sanctuary, with its wicket entrances for the men in charge, engraved like sapphire. Here the High Priest stepped whispering into the Holy of Holies, the chamber of my birth. Its gold-paneled walls were ornamented with cherubs; its doors were engraved with young lions and palm trees. On the three sides of the Sanctuary were side-chambers, affixed in it like the curtains of a tent. And facing them twenty cubits away were chambers; and to the east of the courtyard, Extending to the west, the kohanim prepared the sin-offerings. These sights will always remain my evidence of the Holy Temple Until it is rebuilt and the Divine presence will forever abide in our midst, Hastening the arrival of Mashiach, and of the messenger Eliyahu, who will proclaim our Redemption, with the Resurrection of which the prophet speaks, when the dead bodies will arise.

עַל יְדֵי הַמְזַזּוּק"ק אַבְרָהָם בֵּן לֹא"א מֹהַר"ר מֹשֶׁה שְׁלִיט"א הַיּוֹם יוֹם ה' זֹז' יָמִים בְּזַזּוּד' תְּמוּז שְׁס"ב לְפ"ק.

About the Author



Rabbi Yosef Netanyahu Ben David

The Rosh Yeshiva grew up in San Diego, California and learned in Yeshivat Torah Emet as a talmid of Maran Hagaon Harav Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg zt"l. He received Semichah from Rabbi Aaron Gartner, Rav Yaakev Agavir. For twelve years, he taught and inspired talmidim in various yeshivas who still have a very close connection with him today. Patient and determined, the Rosh Yeshiva always believed in every bochur. He is a sought out speaker worldwide. He is also the Rav at the Kav Halacha Beis Hora'ah, and the author of Ethics of Interpersonal Conduct (Halacha) and The Jewish Halacha Series.

The Rosh Yeshiva devotes his entire life to the success of every bochur, always concerned about their spiritual and physical well-being. Here every bochur is unique and is encouraged to reach his full potential. With constant encouragement, overflowing love, and infinite patience, every bochur is nurtured and developed to be an accomplished ben-Torah. Yeshiva Beit David is a yeshiva designed for post-high school students looking for a focused yet relaxed atmosphere in which to grow. Our warm, down to earth Rebbeim are ready to help you have a productive, enjoyable and inspiring year. The yeshiva aims to give boys an authentic and honest Torah Hashkofa with, exceptionally dedicated rebbeim in an atmosphere that exudes warmth and tremendous simchos hachaim This is handed over not just through exciting and interactive Shmoozen and vaadim but with a living example of the Rosh Yeshiva and Rebbeim. A major part of this enterprise is to encourage a genuine understanding of spirituality which begins with making G-d a real and important part of our lives.

Personal Growth

Each boy is able to grow with his own personality and characteristics without suppression of his traits, interests and most importantly sense of humour. The Yeshiva views each boy's individuality as a blessing to be nurtured. An inquiring, questioning mind is highly regarded in the Yeshiva. Outlets, tiyulim and activities are built into the semester to ensure that each boy remains well-rounded, healthy and productive. Here every bochur is unique and is encouraged to reach his full potential. With an emphasis on retaining a thorough knowledge of every sugya and completing the masechtah, the bochurim are trained to set goals and to reach them at all costs. Character development and interpersonal relationships are a key area in the bochurim's growth as they are carefully molded to be the future leaders and role models of Klal Yisroel.

Hanholo

The qualification for being on the Beit David hanhola is primarily a commitment to care for and nurture a boy as if he were one's own child. As a result the Rebbeim take a very broad and devoted approach to their role providing support and guidance on every possible front. This includes ensuring a boy is settled, happy with accommodation, socially integrated, engaging in his preferred outlets, balanced in his learning. Whether it be on major issues or the finest details in learning or extra-curricular matters. The Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Yosef Netanyahu Ben David makes every effort to give every bochur a loving and caring environment, and gives every bochur a chance to learn with him individually. Through his love and sensitivity for every bochur who enters the yeshiva, he builds every bochurs self-esteem, enables them to make and accomplish goals, and to succeed in Torah and in building exceptional middos.