

The Temple Achsadrah

Shalom everyone,

For the last thirty years my life, my study has centered on researching the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. This generation will experience the rebuilding of the Temple, but there is much yet to be done. Not only does design of the Temple and its courts have to be discovered, but how the Temple functioned needs to be realized. I wanted to share some of the things I have learned so far.

I would like to not only share some of this information but hopefully train others in the methods I use in researching the Temple. Here in this site I would like to have a study work site, not only on the Temple itself but on sites that relate to its functions and similar ceremonies outside of the Temple.

I chose the name Achsadrah for this work site as the Achsadrah in the Temple was a corridor surrounding the Inner Courtyard (known as the Azarah). The kohanim (priests) serving in their rotation of duty in the Temple were required each morning before daylight to inspect the Temple courtyard to make sure the Temple was ready for the day's services. In doing so, they walked in this corridor. This is essentially what we are doing on this site in the most basic form.

He took the key and opened the wicket, and went in from Bet Hamoked (House of the Hearth) to the *azarah*, and they went in after him, with two torches of fire in their hands. And they split up into two groups. These went in the portico (achsadrah) towards the east, and those went in the portico (achsadrah) towards the west. They went on inspecting, until they reached the place of Bet Osei Havitim (Chamber of the Havitim Makers). When these and those arrived, they said: Peace! Everything is at peace! They put the *havitim* (One of the Bread Offerings) makers in place to make *havitim*.

Tamid 1.3

Rules and Guide Lines I Use

- Learn the Layout of the Temple
 - The Original Temple Mount - 500 cubits (amot) by 500 amot
 - The Hasmonean Extension
 - The Herodian Extension

- ⌘ The Royal Stoa (also known as the Baazar of Chanan)
 - ⌘ The eastern, northern and western porticos
 - ⌘ The Gate Structures, cisterns, tunnels and underground structures
 - The Fortress Antonia, its cisterns and underground structures
 - The Pool of Israel (the Birkat Yisrael)
 - The Outer Courtyard – The Rehov
 - ⌘ The Wall around the 500 amot by 500 amot including its gate complexes
 - ⌘ The Mikvaot (immersion Chambers, water source for washing hands and feet, toilets)
 - ⌘ Its cisterns and underground structures
 - The Inner Courtyards
 - ⌘ The Soreg and Cheil
 - ⌘ The Courtyard of the Women (Ezrat haNashim)
 - ❖ Its gates and Stairs
 - ❖ The two chambers outside on the Cheil (the Chamber for the Ashes of the Red Heifer (Parah Adumah) and the Chamber for the Smaller Sanhedrin)
 - ❖ The Balcony
 - ❖ The Four Chambers adjoining the corners of the Ezrat Nashim
 - ⌘ The Azarah (Often known as The Inner Courtyard)
 - ❖ The Court of Israel (Ezrat Yisrael)
 - ❖ TheDukhan (Platform where the Levitical Choir stood)
 - ❖ The Geision Wall
 - ❖ The Court of the Priests (Ezrat Kohanim)
 - ❖ The Altar and the Slaughterhouse (Mizbeiach and Beit haMitbeichayim)
 - ❖ The Temple Building (Beit haMikdash)
 - ❖ The Achsadrah
 - ❖ The Gates and Buildings Surrounding the Azarah
 - ❖ The Cisterns, tunnels, and Underground Structures
- Sites surrounding the Temple that had a bearing on its Operation
 - Various Water Sources
 - ⌘ The Gihon Spring
 - ⌘ The Eitam Spring
 - ⌘ The Shiloach Pool
 - Structures that were directly tied to the operation of the Temple
 - ⌘ The House of Burning

- ⌘ The House of Ashes
- Structures having an importance in relation to the Temple
 - ⌘ The Xystos
 - The Akra
- Sites of Importance to the Temple
 - The Mount of Anointing (Har haMishchah)

It is imperative that you learn the layout of the Temple before entering any serious research on the Temple. I recommend that you use the book we wrote titled [Discovering the Location of the Temple by Joseph Good and Nolan Armstrong](#). It is full of illustrations, charts, glossary and a brief explanation of the items discussed above.

- Only Use Valid Sources for Research

- Jewish Sources
 - Tanach – You want to have a good English/Hebrew translation. These are the two primary ones I use.
 - ❖ Artscroll – Stone Tanach
 - ❖ The Jerusalem Bible (Koren Publishers)
 - The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha – Particular Maccabees from the Apocrypha and The Letter of Aristeas from the Pseudepigrapha.
 - Mishnah
 - ❖ Neusner – 1 volume, my least favorite, only in English. No Hebrew with this volume.
 - ❖ Danby – 1 volume, the weakness is there are no notes, only in English.
 - ❖ Blackman, 6 Volumes, an additional volume as an index (which has some inaccuracies) Hebrew and English, with light notes.
 - ❖ Kehati – My preferred Mishnah. 21 volumes, Hebrew and English with excellent notes.
 - ❖ Artscroll – Extensive volumes. Very halachic, which is good. I use this in conjunction with my Kehati. Hebrew and English. Rather expensive.
 - Tosefta – 2 volumes by Neusner. This is the only English translation that I know of. Major problems with the numbering. There is no Hebrew with this set.
 - Talmud Bavli

- ❖ Neusner – No Hebrew. Major problems with numbering. CD available.
- ❖ Artscroll – Schottenstien – Excellent. Hebrew and English with extensive notes. Very expensive.
- Talmud Yerushalmi
 - ❖ Neusner - No Hebrew. Major problems with numbering. CD available. The only complete set of the Yerushalmi in English.
 - ❖ Artscroll – Schottenstein – Several volumes of Talmud Yerushalmi are now available. They are excellent, but fairly expensive. The real weakness is the entire set is years away from completion.
- Mishneh Torah – Rambam –
 - ❖ Moznaim – This is the set I use. It is still incomplete, but mostly finished. It is both Hebrew and English with excellent notes.
 - ❖ Yale Judaica Series – This is what I use for the volumes that are not yet published by Moznaim. These are English only and have no notes.
- Various commentaries
 - ❖ Artscroll
 - I & II Chronicles
 - Ezra and Nehemiah
 - Vayikra

Note: I recommend that you look at the book [The Concise Guide to the Mishnah and Tosefta](#), by Joseph and Debbie Good. This book will introduce you to the Oral Torah and help to guide you through volumes of information.

- Historical Sources
 - Josephus
 - ❖ The Whiston translation is available in one volume. It has some problems with translation. English only. Light notes. Uses Whiston numbering system. [The New Complete Works of Josephus](#) by [Flavius Josephus](#), [William Whiston](#), and [Paul L. Maier](#) (Hardcover - June 10, 1999). I recommend this one as it uses both numbering systems.
 - ❖ The Loeb Classics Library Edition – I highly recommend this edition as it is far superior to the Whiston translation and is the only one we can use when working with the rabbis of the Temple Institute. Uses the Loeb numbering system. Greek and English. This has a number of volumes and begins to get expensive.

- ❖ Brill – Josephus is going through an extensive new translation. Only a few volumes are now ready. English only. Uses the Loeb numbering system. Excellent notes. Very pricey as all Brill books are.
- Philo – Not used that much but valuable as a source from the pre-Herodian era. [The Works of Philo](#) by [of Alexandria Philo](#), Charles Duke Yonge, and David M. Scholer (Hardcover - Oct. 2006)
- PEF – The Palestine Exploration Fund
 - ℵ This book is a must for any serious student of the Temple. [Below the Temple mount in Jerusalem : a sourcebook on the cisterns, subterranean chambers and conduits of the Haram al-Shariff](#), by [Gibson, Shimon](#) and David Jacobson
 - ℵ Various books by Charles Warren and Charles Wilson.
- Archaeological and Scholastic Organizations
 - ℵ BAS – The Biblical Archaeological Society. I recommend that you join the on line Archive. This costs about \$30.00 a year. Invaluable.
 - ℵ Israel Exploration Society – Excellent articles by Israel’s leading Archaeological and Scholastic experts. I have found their journals extremely helpful.

Note: Be careful to only use books by genuine scholars on these subjects. If you are in doubt, send me a note and I will try to get back with you.

- Do not attempt interpretation of Ceremonies. The last thing you want to do is try to make spiritual applications before you know what you are talking about. Be extremely reserved in this as it is froth with dangers. A child in first grade is not asked to write a paper. He must first learn various building blocks of skill and information which years later will be used in constructing a paper that makes sense.
- Do not ever think that your understanding will not change dramatically as you progress in your understanding. Our layout continues to be revised as we continue to employ new research. This often means major revision of what we previously thought. Always test and retest your work, and revise as needed. Do not be afraid to question anything. Just be diligent and always move forward.

This list will be expanded many times to aid you in your studies. I pray that your study will be as rewarding to you as it has been to me.

Now let's get into some real study. About a week ago a friend of mine called and asked me a question. She wanted to know about "the place of burning" mentioned in the Tractate Yoma of the Mishnah.

He came to the bullock and the goat that were to be burned. He tore them open and took out their sacrificial portions, he put them in a tray and burned them on the Altar. He twisted them around carrying-poles [*mikla'ot*] and took them out to the place of burning. And from when on are the garments rendered unclean? From when he went outside the wall of the Temple Courtyard. Rabbi Shimon says, From when the fire has seized the greater part of them.

Yoma 6.7

I prepared a document for her that I thought I would share with you explaining how I do the majority of my research. First I look at the Hebrew text from the Mishnah and find the Hebrew name for the location in question.

מסכת יומא פרק ו משנה ז

משנה ז

בָּא לוֹ אֶצֶל פֶּר וְשָׁעִיר הַנִּשְׂרָפִין. קָרְעוּ וְהוֹצִיָא אֶת אֲמוּרֵיהֶן, נִתְּנוּ בַּמַּגִּיס וְהִקְטִירוּ עַל גְּבֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. קָלְעוּ בַּמְקֻלְעוֹת וְהוֹצִיָּאוּן לְבֵית הַשְּׂרָפָה. וּמֵאֵימָתִי מְטַמְּאִין בְּגָדִים? מְשִׁי־צֵאוּ חוּץ לְחוֹמַת הָעֶזְרָה. רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן אוֹמֵר: מְשִׁי־צֵאת הָאוֹר בְּרֶבֶן.

The name in Hebrew is Beit haS'raifah which literally translates as "House of Burning."

לְבֵית הַשְּׂרָפָה

I use a program purchased from Torah Educational Software called Tanach Plus. Once I have the Hebrew name, I type this in Hebrew into the search engine of the program. I select from the available Data Bases on the program the following selection: Tanach, Mishnah, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Rambam (Mishneh Torah). I hit the button on it brings up the hits.

In this example only hits were achieved in the Mishnah (16) and Talmud Bavli (3).

There are two lists for each data base. The first list gives the references.

See example below.

1. מסכת זבחים פרק ח משנה ד
2. מסכת זבחים פרק ח משנה ה
3. מסכת זבחים פרק יב משנה ד
4. מסכת זבחים פרק יב משנה ד
5. מסכת יומא פרק ג משנה ב
6. מסכת יומא פרק ו משנה ז
7. מסכת כריתות פרק ו משנה א
8. מסכת כריתות פרק ו משנה ב
9. מסכת מנחות פרק ב משנה ב
10. מסכת עדיות פרק ב משנה ב
11. מסכת עדיות פרק ב משנה ב
12. מסכת פסחים פרק ח משנה ב
13. מסכת פסחים פרק ט משנה ט
14. מסכת פסחים פרק ט משנה ט
15. מסכת פסחים פרק ט משנה ט
16. מסכת שקלים פרק ז משנה ג

The second list gives each individual reference with a part of the text.

1. מסכת זבחים פרק ח משנה ד
רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר: יִתֵּן לְמַעַלָּן; וְרוֹאֶה אֲנִי אֶת בֶּשֶׂר הַחֲטָאת מְלַמְעָלָן כְּאֵלוֹ
הוּא עֲצִים. וְחֻכְמִים אוֹמְרִים: תֵּעֲבֹר צוּרְתָן וַיֵּצֵא לְבֵית הַשְּׂרָפָה.

2. מסכת זבחים פרק ח משנה ה
כִּרְעוּ שֶׁל אֶחָד מֵהֶן - יִקְרְבוּ כָּל הַכֹּרְעִים; וְחֻכְמִים אוֹמְרִים: אֶפְלוּ קִרְבוּ
כָּלֶם, חוּץ מֵאֶחָד מֵהֶן - יֵצֵא לְבֵית הַשְּׂרָפָה.

I only put two examples but you would have a page or more of these depending on how many hits. The next step is to double click on your first selection. It will come up. I then drop the File menu and select copy. I then go to the Print menu and select the button for the clipboard.

I then paste it into my Hebrew/English word processor. I recommend two. Get either DavkaWriter of Dagesh Pro. You can purchase Dagesh Pro through Torah

Educational Software (TES). If you do order software from TES, consider doing it through us as we get a small percentage and it helps pay our expenses.

See the example below.

מסכת זבחים פרק ח משנה ד

משנה ד

אַבְרֵי חֲטָאת שְׁנֵתְעָרְבוּ בְּאַבְרֵי עוֹלָה - רַבִּי אֶלְיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר : יִתֵּן לְמַעַלָּן ;
וְרוֹאֵה אֲנִי אֶת בֶּשֶׂר הַחֲטָאת מִלְּמַעַלָּן כְּאֵלוֹ הוּא עֲצִים. וְחֻכְמִים אוֹמְרִים :
תֵּעָבֵר צוּרְתָן וַיֵּצֵא לְבֵית הַשְּׂרָפָה.

My next step is to add the English. I put the text in my study documents from the Kehati Mishnah.

I always follow an order in my documents (remember these are for my own study and nothing else) of the Tanach, then Mishnah, then Tosefta, then Talmud Bavli, then Talmud Yerushalmi, ending with Mishneh Torah.

The Tanach should always take precedence. I use the Mishnah next as it is the oldest and forms the basis of the Oral Torah. The Tosefta, which is of equal age but not of authority follows. The Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi are from the next Rabbinic age (the Amoraim) and the Gemara from each are commentary on the Mishnah. Rambam must be included as he was a brilliant scholar who organized this material. In addition, the rabbis are always going to pay particular attention to what he had to say. Make sure when working with Rambam that you check the accompanying notes as sometimes diagrams are attributed to him that contradict his own statements.

In this case I only have hits from Mishnah and Talmud Bavli.

I have included the first page from this document for you to see. Let me mention that when copying text from the Talmud Bavli I use the Judaic Classics Library. They have both the English/Hebrew of the Soncino Edition of the Talmud. It is not my favorite translation but is still satisfactory. This is available from Davka.

See below for example from Mishnah with English.

בית השרפה - Beit haS'raifah

Mishnah

Zevachim 8.4

If the limbs of a sin-offering became mixed up with the limbs of a burnt-offering — R. Eliezer says, He must place on the top, and I regard the flesh of the sin-offering on the top as wood. But the Sages say, Let their appearance deteriorate and let it go out to the place of burning.

מסכת זבחים פרק ח משנה ד

משנה ד

אברי חטאת שנתערבו באברי עולה - רבי אליעזר אומר: יתן למעלן; ורואה אני את בשר החטאת מלמעלן כאלו הוא עצים. וחכמים אומרים: תעבר צורתן ויצא לבית השרפה.

Zevachim 8.5

Limbs with limbs of blemished animals — R. Eliezer says, If he offered the head of one of them, let all the heads be offered, the leg of one of them, let all the legs be offered; but the Sages say, Even if all except one were offered — it must go out to the place of burning.

מסכת זבחים פרק ח משנה ה

משנה ה

אברין באברי בעלי מומין - רבי אליעזר אומר: אם קרב ראש אחד מהן - יקרבו כל הראשין, כרעו של אחד מהן - יקרבו כל הכרעים; וחכמים אומרים: אפלו קרבו כלם, חוץ מאחד מהן - יצא לבית השרפה.

Zevachim 12.4

All sacrifices which became invalid before they were flayed — their hides do not belong to the priests; after they were flayed — their hides belong to the priests. R. Haninah Segan Hakohanim said: Never in my life have I seen a hide taken out to the place of burning. R. Akiva said: From his words we learn that if one flays a firstling and it is found *terefah*, the priests may make use of its hide. But the Sages say, "We have not seen" is no proof, rather it is taken out to the place of burning.

מסכת זבחים פרק יב משנה ד

For the Tosefta I also have to use the Judaic Classics Library. I select the Tosefta in Hebrew and enter the Hebrew name of what I'm looking for and hit search. The Judaic Classics Library does not have the English available so I have to use the text from the Neusner Edition. All of Neusner's translations are divided up in alphabetical form similar to an outline. This is used for phrase study. I find this clutters up what my objectives are so I take these out. I used to have a program from TES that had the Tosefta to search but that program only worked on a Windows 98 format. I had a computer that had this program loaded into it, but it was lost when the computer was stolen during a break-in at my office. Too bad. I really liked that program. Let me mention that the ultimate program is the Bar Ilan Resource Software. This is available from TES and has everything. I just can't afford it.

I have included the entire document in PDF format for you to look at. I discovered an alternate spelling of the same place. This spelling is similar with a 'yod' added. It is spelled in this way.

בית השריפה

I follow the same pattern of research as I described before. This time I found an additional thirty-three additional hits from the Talmud Bavli, fifteen hits from the Talmud Yerushalmi, and eighteen hits from Rambam.

I haven't started putting together the new entries with the second spelling. As soon as I do I will post it on this site. Then I will merge the two documents and start to do an analysis of the material. This will be followed by looking at other sources such as Josephus, PEF documents, archaeological papers, etc.

I hope you find this interesting and that you consider joining me in more Temple research. Your feedback of questions and comments would be appreciated. Financial support is also needed and greatly appreciated.

Joseph Good