



Ironworks in the *Beit HaMikdash*

The *Mishnah* (3:4) discusses the quarrying of the stone that was used for the construction of the *mizbeach* (altar) and *kevesh* (ramp). The stone was sourced, but not hewn from the valley of *Beit Kerem*. They would dig virgin soil and remove the stones whole – it was necessary that it was uncut. The *Mishnah* highlights two important issues regarding stone cutting. The first is that iron must not touch any of the stones. The second is that any notch or defect would invalidate the use of that stone.

The *Mishnah* explains that the reason that iron cannot even touch the *mizbeach* is that their prime functions are in conflict. Iron was created to shorten man's life while the *mizbeach* was created to extend it. The *Tifferet Yisrael* explains that even though iron has many uses, the term for war is *cherev* (sword) stressing the prime association. Furthermore, different to other materials, even a small amount of iron is particularly effective is murder.

It is not simply that the themes are in conflict. The *Sefer HaChinuch* (40) adds that a person is impacted upon and influenced by his actions. Consequently the message conveyed by the *mizbeach* of forgiveness, blessing and peace must not be distorted in anyway by the messages of the sword.

The prohibition is based on the *pasuk* (*Shemot* 20:22): "And when you make for Me an Altar of stones, do not build them hewn, for you will have raised your sword over it and desecrated it." A sword per se is not specifically the issue, since it teaches in a later *pasuk* (*Devarim* 27:5-6): "There you shall build an altar for *Hashem* your G-d, an altar of stones; you shall not raise iron upon them. Whole stones shall you build the altar..."

The *Ramban* cites a number of reasons for the *mitzvah*. After mentioning our *Mishnah*, he quotes the *Ibn Ezra* that explains that there is a concern that some of the off-cuts will end up in rubbish heap – a slight on the other half used in the altar. Alternatively the off-cuts might be used by idol worship to construct their altars in the hope that the stone's origins might provide them with success.

He also quotes the *Rambam* that explains that the prohibition against any cutting is distance one from the fashioning of stones in the context of worship. The concern is that one might come to transgress the prohibition of creating an *even maskit* used in the practice of idol worship (*Vayikra* 26:1).

The *Ramban* however explain that it is because iron is *cherev* (sword) and it is the cause for destruction (*machriv*) of the world. The *cherev* was the inheritance of *eisav* (*Bereishit* 27:40). It is the source of his strength in the heavens and on earth and through which his might is displayed through wars and bloodshed. By raising any iron implement in the *Beit HaMikdash*, "you 'raised over it the sword' which slays and make corpses (*chalalim*) and have thus desecrated (*chilalta*) it."

The *Ramban* continues that iron was not used anywhere in the *mishkan*; even the pegs were made of copper instead. Similarly, in the *Beit HaMikdash* only the knives used for *shechita* were made of iron. They took exception since, as he explains, *shechita* is not an *avodah*. Cutting per se is not the issue. The *shamir* worm or silver was used to cut stone when necessary. The issue was with raising iron. This fact, he contents, stands as difficulties for both the *Ibn Ezra* and the *Rambam*.

Revision Questions

מידות בי: בי: די: א:

- Describe how people must enter *Har Ha'Bait*? (בי: בי)
- Who would enter in a different manner? (בי: בי)
- What was the name of the small fence that was just inside the fence of *Har Ha'Bait*? (בי: ג)
- How tall was that fence? (גי: ג)
- How many breaches did the *Yavanim* make in that fence and why is it important? (גי: ג)
- How many steps were there after this small fence and what was the space till those steps? (גי: בי)
- What were the dimensions of all the steps in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash* and which steps were the exceptions? (גי: בי)
- Which was the only entrance that did not have a door? (גי: בי)
- Which was the only gate that did not have a cross-beam? (גי: ג)
- Which was the only gate not made of gold? (גי: בי)
- Which wall was smaller than all the others and why? (די: בי)
- What were the dimensions of the *Ezrat Nashim*? (הי: בי)
- What were the four chambers at each corner of the *Ezrat Nashim* and what were they used for? (הי: בי)
- What was different about these chambers? (הי: בי)
- How many steps were there from the *Ezrat Nashim* to the *Ezrat Yisrael*? (הי: בי)
- What were the chambers underneath the *Ezrat Yisrael* used for? (הי: בי)
- What divided the *Ezrat Yisrael* and the *Ezrat Kohanim*? (הי: בי)
- What were the dimensions of the *Azarah*? (הי: בי)
- List all the gates of the *Azarah*? (הי: בי)
- Describe the outer *mizbeach*? (גי: א)
- What was the *chut ha'sikrah* and what was it used for? (גי: א)
- How many pipes were there on the bottom south-west corner of the *mizbeach* and what were they used for? (גי: בי)
- What else was near that corner? (גי: ג)
- What were the dimensions of the ramp of the *mizbeach*? (גי: ג)
- From where were the stones for the *mizbeach* taken? (גי: די)
- What would cause these stones to become invalid for use in the construction of the *mizbeach* and why? (גי: די)
- According to *R' Akiva* what would they do to the stones every *erev Shabbat*? (גי: די)
- How many "rings" were in front of the *mizbeach* and what were they used for? (גי: די)
- What was to the north of the rings? (גי: די)
- Where was the basin located? (גי: די)
- What was the distance between the *ulam* and *mizbeach*? (גי: די)
- What were the dimensions of the steps leading up to the *ulam*? (גי: די)
- What were the dimensions of the entrance to the *ulam*? (גי: די)
- What was above the entrance? (גי: די)
- What was between the walls of the *ulam* and *heichal*? (גי: די)
- What was above the entrance to the *heichal*? (גי: די)
- Describe the entrance to the *heichal*? (גי: די)
- What are the two opinions about how the doors opened to the *heichal*? (גי: די)

Local Shiurim

Melbourne, Australia

Sunday -Thursday

10 minutes before *Mincha*
Mizrachi Shul
Melbourne, Australia

Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before *Mincha*
Beit Ha'Roeh
Melbourne, Australia

Efrat, Israel

Shiur in English

Sunday -Thursday

Rabbi Mordechai Scharf
9:00am
Kollel Magen Avraham
Reemon Neighbourhood

ONLINE SHIURIM

Rabbi Chaim Brown
www.shemayisrael.com/mishna/

Rav Meir Pogrow
613.org/mishnah.html

Rabbi E. Kornfeld
Rabbi C. Brown
<http://www.dafyomi.co.il/calendars/myomi/myomi-thisweek.htm>

SHIUR ON KOL HALOSHON

Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss
In US dial: 718 906 6400
Then select: 1 – 2 – 4

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
2 nd November ט' חשוון	3 rd November י' חשוון	4 th November י"א חשוון	5 th November י"ב חשוון	6 th November י"ג חשוון	7 th November י"ד חשוון	8 th November ט"ו חשוון
Midot 4:2-3	Midot 4:4-5	Midot 4:6-7	Midot 5:1-2	Midot 5:3-4	Kinim 1:1-2	Kinim 1:3-4

