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The House of Chonyo

Our *Mishnah* tells us that if one were to make a *neder* to bring a *korban* and then bring it in *Beit Chonyo*, the obligation has not been fulfilled, and (according to the *Bartenura*) the prohibition on bringing a *korban* outside of the *Beit Ha'Mikdash* has been violated. Two questions arise from the *Mishnah*: what is *Beit Chonyo* and why would we have thought that a *korban* can be brought there when it seems obvious that it could not?

The first question is easily answered from a *Beraita* brought in the *Gemara* (109b). *Chonyo* was the second son of *Shimon Hatzadik*, but he knew more of the *halachot* of the service in the temple than his elder brother *Shim'i* (according to the *Tosafot* he had great awe of heaven) and as a result his father passed over *Shim'i* to be the next *kohen gadol* in favour of *Chonyo*. *Chonyo* nevertheless gave his brother the position, however, he became jealous and sought to have *Shim'i* killed by the other *kohanim* by dressing him as a woman. When the other *kohanim* learned of the plot, they tried to kill *Chonyo*, so he ran to Alexandria where he built another temple and offered burnt offerings there to *Hashem*.

This story however, is extremely problematic in of itself. How is it that someone who was righteous enough that one of the most righteous men of the entire second temple period felt he should be the next *kohen gadol*, would commit such a grave sin as to try to have his own brother killed out of jealousy? Also, how is it that he did not obey the prohibition against offering sacrifices outside Jerusalem?

To answer the first question, we could say either that *Shimon Hatzadik* was blinded by his love for his son, or alternatively that indeed *Chonyo* was very righteous but momentarily failed to restrain himself (we know from the *Gemara* in *Sukah* 52a that a *tzaddik* has greater *yetzer hara* than others). However, the second question about *Chonyo* is more difficult to answer. One possible answer given by the *Tosafot*, is that he only brought sacrifices made by non-Jews.

The *Beit Ha'Mikdash* similar status to the *Mishkan* and *Hashem* had the *Mishkan* built so as to dwell among *Am Yisrael* (see *Exodus* 25:8). If so, it can be assumed that the sacrifices brought there were also intended to bring God closer to us, to facilitate the closeness, for otherwise there

would be no reason to prohibit sacrifices made outside the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*. The *Sefer HaChinnuch* states that the reason for the prohibition is to prevent us from making a sacrifice in a place where we will not be suitably humble before *Hashem*. Because *Hashem* chose the place for us to bring *korbanot*, he instilled in that place a spirit which allows us to gain greater repentance there than in other places. To prevent us from losing this benefit, he prohibited us from bringing sacrifices elsewhere. Non-Jews can bring sacrifices as we see in the *pasuk*: "Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon Mine altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (*Yishayahu* 56:7) Nevertheless, they do not have a requirement to do so because their sacrifices are not a necessary part of their connection to *Hashem*. If so, according to the reason for the prohibition as brought in the *Sefer HaChinnuch*, because their sacrifices are an extra observance, the *Torah* was less strict with them with regard to the special humility one must have at the time of bringing a *korban*. It is also possible that because the *Mishkan* and *Mikdash* were built in part to facilitate the relationship of *Am Yisrael* with *Hashem*, they do not have the same effect on people not part of that relationship.

This allows us to answer the second question we asked of the *Mishna* at the beginning. We might have thought that the *neder*, a sacrifice which is inherently optional, would also not require the same level of humility as an ordinary sacrifice, and as such would not be covered by the prohibition, however the *Torah* chose not to differentiate, perhaps because we would still want to reach the highest level of service to *Hashem* that we can. Non-Jews, on the other hand, who do not have any such imperative to serve *Hashem* at the highest level possible, and in any case, possibly obtain no benefit from bringing their sacrifices to Jerusalem, and as a result, have no prohibition on bringing sacrifices elsewhere.

Alternatively, it may be that because *Yeshayahu* predicted the rise of the temple in Egypt ("In that day shall there be an altar to the L-rd in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the L-rd." *Yeshayahu* 19:19), it might have been assumed that the temple there had divine sanction as a place of worship.

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Revision Questions

מנחות י"ב:ב' – י"ג:י'

- If someone articulated that he wished to bring a *mincha machavat* and brought instead a *mincha marcheshet* when is that offering valid and when is it invalid? (י"ב:ב')
- What other case is brought similar to the one in the previous question? (י"ב:ב')
- What is the law if one volunteered to bring an *mincha* offering made of barley? (י"ב:ג')
- What is the law if one volunteered to bring an *mincha* offering from one and half *esronim* of fine flour? (י"ב:ג')
- Who argues with the previous two laws? (י"ב:ג')
- What is the maximum size of a *mincha* offering that can be brought in one utensil? (י"ב:ד')
- What are the two reasons giving for this limit? (י"ב:ד')
- What volumes of wine is one not able to volunteer as *nesachim*? (י"ב:ד')
- Explain the debate regarding whether one can volunteer oil (י"ב:ה')
- What restriction to the volunteering of a *mincha* offering does not apply to any other offerings? (י"ב:ה')
- What is the law regarding one that volunteered to bring a *mincha* offering but:
 - Does not remember the size he specified?
 - Did not specify which type? (Provide both opinions.) (י"ג:א')
 - Does not remember which type specified? (י"ג:ב')
- What is the law regarding one that volunteered to bring “*menachot*”? (י"ג:ב')
- What is the minimum that one must bring if he volunteer to bring:
 - Wood? Frankincense? (י"ג:ג')
 - Gold? Silver? Copper? (י"ג:ד')
 - Wine? Oil? (י"ג:ה')
- What are the “five *kematzim*”? (י"ג:ג')
- What is the law if one volunteered to bring a specific amount of gold but did not remember the amount? (י"ג:ד')
- What other case shares the same law? (י"ג:ה')
- What must one bring if they volunteered to bring a *korban olah*? (י"ג:ו')
- Regarding the previous question, what must he bring he specified the type, but forgot? (י"ג:ו')
- If someone volunteered to bring a *korban shlamim* what would have occurred if he is required to bring four different animals? Eight different animals? (י"ג:ז')
- What must one bring if they volunteered to bring a calf worth five *sla'im*? (י"ג:ח')
- Explain the debate regarding whether one has fulfilled his obligation if he volunteered to bring a small ox and brought a large one? (י"ג:ח')
- When is there a debate regarding what can be done with two oxen that were volunteered to be offered as an *olah* and both developed blemishes? (י"ג:ט')
- What other debate is similar to the previous one? (י"ג:ט')
- Explain the debate regarding *nedarim* involving *beit chonyo*? (List the cases.) (י"ג:י')
- Can *kohanim* that served in *beit chonyo* serve in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*? (י"ג:י')
- To what other *kohanim* are they compared? (י"ג:י')

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
3 rd August ב' אב	4 th August ג' אב	5 th August ד' אב	6 th August ה' אב	7 th August ו' אב	8 th August ז' אב	9 th August ח' אב
Menachot 13:11 Chulin 1:1	Chulin 1:2-3	Chulin 1:4-5	Chulin 1:6-7	Chulin 2:1-2	Chulin 2:3-4	Chulin 2:5-6

