

Insights from the Meshech Chochma

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הַשְּׁמֵר לָךְ פֶּן תַּעֲלֶה עֲלֵי־תִיבָה בְּכֹל מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה. (פרק יבי יג)
(Moshe Rabbeinu tells Klal Yisrael:) *“Beware for yourself lest you bring up your elevation offerings in any place that you see.”*

Our pasuk is part of the Parsha which deals with the prohibition of individuals erecting private altars to present certain sacrifices *after* the Nation’s conquering and dividing *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Meir Simcha refers us to an esoteric Midrash Sifrei which says the following: "הַשְּׁמֵר לָךְ פֶּן תַּעֲלֶה עֲלֵי־תִיבָה-but not the burnt offerings of gentiles. These are the words of R’ Shimon. R’ Yehudah says, ‘and not the burnt offerings of gentiles that were dedicated outside of Eretz Yisrael.’” According to R’ Shimon, a gentile may offer an *עֲלֶה* on a private altar i.e., the *issur* of *שְׁחוּטֵי חוּץ*, presenting a *korban* outside of the Temple grounds, does not apply to a non-Jew’s offering. R’ Yehudah qualifies this by saying that it may only be presented *outside* of *Eretz Yisrael*. Inside the Land, the *issur* of *שְׁחוּטֵי חוּץ* applies to both a Jewish and non-Jewish *korban*.

Rav Meir Simcha next takes us to *זבחים מה*. where the Mishna tells us that offerings consecrated by gentiles... one who slaughters them outside the Temple courtyard is exempt; this is the statement of R’ Shimon. And R’ Yosi deems him liable. Of note, the Gemara there offers no Biblical derivation for R’ Shimon’s opinion. (Several Mefarshim do offer sources.) He next takes us to *מנחות קט*: which relates a story regarding Chonio, the son of Shimon HaTzadik, who lived in Alexandria and built a temple where sacrifices were offered on its altar. R’ Yehuda explains that it was *not* a temple of idol worship, but that in fact Chonio’s intention was *לְשֵׁם שְׁמִימִים*. Tosafos asks that regardless of his purpose, “how did Chonio avoid the *issur* of *שְׁחוּטֵי חוּץ*?” Tosafos answers that *דלבני נח* and as Rav Meir Simcha understands Tosafos, he was presenting these offerings for gentiles there. Rav Meir Simcha tells us “to see what the *בְּרֵכַת הַזֶּבֶחַ* (Rav Shmuel Kaidanover, 1614-1676) has to say about this.” Rav Shmuel asks that Tosafos is contrary to the opinion of R’ Yosi in *זבחים מה*. who told us that *שְׁחוּטֵי חוּץ* *does apply* to a gentile’s *korban*? Rav Meir Simcha also wants us to check out an answer to the *בְּרֵכַת הַזֶּבֶחַ* given by the *קְדוּשִׁים* (Rav Chaim Kitsee Schlesinger, 1772-1849) who says that the gentiles presented the offerings and Chonio taught them the rules-this would not fall into the proscription of *שְׁחוּטֵי חוּץ*.

Rav Meir Simcha, utilizing “his” Sifrei, opens for us an entirely new understanding of the saga of Chonio. He begins by telling us that sometimes, **דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה עֲנִיִּים בְּמִקְוֵן וְעֲשִׂירִים** **בְּמִקְוֵן אַחַר** **בְּמִקְוֵן אַחַר**—the words of the Torah may be meager/inadequate in one place, but rich/lush in another. R’ Shimon’s biblically “source-less” statement in **מה. one who slaughters a gentile’s *korban* outside the Temple courtyard is exempt—is the same R’ Shimon of the Sifrei who expounded **פֶּן תַּעֲלֶה לָּךְ מִן הַשְּׁמֶר לָךְ** as *but not* the burnt offerings of gentiles. R’ Yehudah, who was his “antagonist” in that Sifrei i.e., only inside *Eretz Yisrael* does the *issur* of **חֹוץ שְׁחוּטֵי חוּץ** apply to a non-Jewish *korban* is the same R’ Yehudah who told us that Chonio’s actions were **לְנִשְׁם נְשָׁמִים**. One more point: Rav Meir Simcha believes that R’ Yosi, who in **מה. argued with R’ Shimon and told us that *issur* does apply to a non-Jewish *korban*, agrees with R’ Yehudah that the *issur* is only in *Eretz Yisrael*. Putting all this together, he answers Tosafos’ **תִּימָה** of how did Chonio, even if his intentions were noble, avoid the *issur* of **חֹוץ שְׁחוּטֵי חוּץ** by saying that Chonio was in Egypt, outside of *Eretz Yisrael*, where the *issur* was not in effect!****

He makes one last point: Later, in **זבחים קטז:** we read that R’ Yaakov bar Acha says that R’ Asi has told us: “Although it is permitted for gentiles to sacrifice offerings outside the Temple courtyard, it is **אָסוּר** for a Jew to assist them or **לַעֲשׂוֹת שְׁלִיחוּתן**, to fulfill their agency in this matter.” Tosafos asks that according to R’ Yosi who told us that a Jew is liable for **חֹוץ שְׁחוּטֵי חוּץ** when bringing a non-Jew’s *korban* on an altar, why did R’ Yaakov bar Acha say that it is **אָסוּר** for a Jew to assist them or **לַעֲשׂוֹת שְׁלִיחוּתן**, we are dealing with **חֹוץ שְׁחוּטֵי חוּץ** where there is a punishment of **חֵיִב-כָּרַת** אֶלָּא **אָסוּר**? Tosafos answers that there are some *korban* services that if done outside of the Temple are not Biblically but only Rabbinically prohibited, and this is what R’ Yaakov bar Acha is referring to. Hence **אָסוּר** and not **חֵיִב**. Once again, according to Rav Meir Simcha, we could answer Tosafos by saying that R’ Yaakov bar Acha is referring to where the gentile is bringing his *korban* outside of *Eretz Yisrael* where, according to Rav Meir Simcha’s understanding of R’ Yosi, there is no Biblical prohibition. R’ Yaakov bar Acha feels that **הַזֵּז״ל** would still prohibit any Jewish participation in the non-Jew’s *korban* for fear that they may do this in *Eretz Yisrael* proper, where it would be Biblically prohibited.

Truly, as Rav Meir Simcha told us, **דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה עֲנִיִּים בְּמִקְוֵן וְעֲשִׂירִים בְּמִקְוֵן אַחַר**—one need only know where to find those “riches”!

לזכר נשמת אבי מורי ר' ישראל מנחם בן ר' שלום ז"ל
לזכר נשמת אמי מורתי רחל בת ר' אלחנן אביגדור ע"ה
לזכר נשמת חמי מורי ר' יעקב נתן בן ר' ישראל שלמה ז"ל
ולזכר נשמת הרב יהודה בן ר' אברהם שמחה (קופרמן) זצ"ל
מחבר הגהות על ספר משך חכמה