

This is the thumb

זה גודל –

OVERVIEW

The גמרא cites (a ברייתא) that each finger has a special purpose in the ביהמ"ק (and therefore the fingers need to be separated). There is a dispute between רש"י and תוספות as to the utility of the thumb.

פירש בקונטרס לענין בהן יד¹ דמצורע -

explained that when the גמרא states זה גודל it is referring to the thumb of the s'מצורע² hand; on which the blood and oil must be placed.

disagrees:

ואין נראה דאם כן הוה ליה למימר זה בהן³ -

And it does not seem correct; for if גודל refers to the יד בהן, the גמרא should have said זה בהן, and not גודל זה –

פרש"י has an additional question on תוספות:

ועוד דאפילו לא מחלק⁴ מצי משוי על בהן שהוא קצר מכולם -

And furthermore if גודל refers to the sprinkling on the בהן, then even if the thumb would not be separate from the other fingers it would be possible to place the blood and the oil on the thumb, since it is shorter than all the other fingers.

תוספות offers his explanation:

ונראה דלענין קמיצה קאמר⁵ כדתנן⁶ (מנחות דף יא,א) מוחק⁷ בגודל מלמעלה –

And it is the view of תוספות that זה גודל was stated in regards to קמיצה, as the ברייתא taught, 'he tamps down with the thumb from above'; therefore the thumb

¹ (מילואים) אהרן of בהן יד also mentions the רש"י.

² By all the other fingers the ברייתא uses the תורה name for the task for which it is used; the זרת to measure the חשן which the תורה states its size is a זרת, the same with the אמה, קמיצה, and אצבע; why is גודל different?

³ The ברייתא of וכו' זה זרת explains to us the reason the fingers are separated so that we can do all these different tasks with each finger. However in order to sprinkle on the thumb it need not be separated. See 'Thinking it over' #1 & 2.

⁴ We cannot call it קמיצה however, since that name refers to the finger near the זרת (and it is merely an ancillary act of קמיצה, not the actual קמיצה).

⁵ This is actually a ברייתא not a משנה; it should read כדתניא.

⁶ The קומץ was part of the מנחה that was removed with the three middle fingers to be offered on the מזבח. However some of the מנחות were baked and then broken into pieces before the קמיצה. Invariably while making the קמיצה some of the pieces stuck out beyond the three fingers (above and below). The thumb and the pinky were used to tamp down the קמיצה so that only three fingers full of מנחה were brought on the מזבח and no more.

⁷ The thumb (here by קמיצה) is referred to as גודל, therefore the ברייתא (also) stated גודל and not בהן.

needs to be separate in order to do this aspect of קמיצה -

אבל⁸ בידו אחרת לא יוכל לעשות דבעינן עבודה בימין:

However he could not do this מחק with his other hand, for the service in the קמיצה is required to be done with the right hand.

SUMMARY

According to רש"י the גודל refers to the בהן regarding applying the דם there, while תוספות maintains that it refers to the מחק of the קמיצה, with the גודל.

THINKING IT OVER

1. תוספות asks that according to רש"י the גודל could be attached.⁹ The same question can be asked concerning the אמה; it too need not be detached since it was (only) needed to measure the אמה (of the כלים), it could be done even if it was attached, since it is longer than all the other fingers!¹⁰

2. תוספות asks that according to רש"י the גודל could be attached. However if the גודל would be attached, the measurement of the זרת would be too small!¹¹

⁸ תוספות explains why the גודל cannot be attached and we will do the מחק with the other (left) hand.

⁹ See footnote # 3.

¹⁰ See רש"י ש.

¹¹ The זרת measurement is the distance from the thumb to the pinky when they are spread out. Therefore the גודל must be detached! See סוכ"ד אות כה ד"ה והנה קושית.