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## The Universal Temple

The God who is *our* God now, but is not recognized by the other nations, He is destined to be the *One* God, as it is said, "For then will I change the nations [to speak] a clear language, so that they may all call out in the Name of HaShem, to serve Him with one consent" (Zephaniah 3:9). And further, "On that day, HaShem shall be King over all the Earth; in that day HaShem shall be One, and His Name One" (Zechariah 14:9).

— Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), commenting on Deut. 6:4 (the "Shema")

### 1. Introduction.

Judaism is grounded on the profoundly monotheistic principle that there is the "One God",<sup>1</sup> not only for the Jewish people, but for the entire world. It is possible to view Judaism as a highly particularistic, national religion because of its focus on the biblical history of the Jewish people. Yet Judaism always contained an underlying universal ideal that is most tangibly expressed in its prophetic writings, nevertheless, deeply rooted in Talmudic passages and *halachah*. Throughout Tanach (Bible), Midrash<sup>2</sup> and Talmud<sup>3</sup>, the grand prophetic vision of the End of Days describes the universal acknowledgment, by all peoples, of the One God. The hope, echoed throughout the Jewish sources, of the universal knowledge of the One God is seen as the culmination and fulfillment of the entire human endeavor through historical time and space. Indeed, this is the aspiration of the Jewish Faith succinctly delineated by Rashi's above-quoted commentary on the *Shema*.

Key passages from Jewish sources express a parallel declaration that the Jewish Temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem was always meant to manifest the presence of the One God to the entire world, not just to Jews. In the *Midrash*,<sup>4</sup> there is a discussion of various possible Hebraic roots of the word "Moriah", the name of the land, the holy mount where Abraham is told by God to take and bind his son Isaac.<sup>5</sup> The Midrash understands "Moriah" to mean the place where instruction (*hora'ah*), religious fear or awe (*yir'ah*) and light (*orah*) went forth to the whole world. This provides a first inkling that the religious acts associated with Mount Moriah and the Temples to eventually be built there would have universal meaning for all mankind.

This is the core message of King Solomon's powerful prayer at the First Temple's consecration, and this message was restated in later generations in the prophecies of Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Zachariah among others, and recounted and debated throughout the

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<sup>1</sup> One God not simply as in One Supreme Deity, but rather that there is One source, One manifestation in which no item lacks significance—an ultimate One reality where everything is interconnected.

<sup>2</sup> Early rabbinic literature elaborating the themes found in Scripture.

<sup>3</sup> The Mishnah and Gemara are collectively referred to as the Talmud. The Mishnah was completed around 200 C.E. and the Talmud at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The Talmud is the great, compendious repository of discussions and debates on *halachah* (see footnote 4), *aggadah* (traditional, non-halachic, more free-flowing narratives describing a spiritual, poetic or socio-historic reality), scriptural exegesis, and general commentary addressing virtually all issues of life as seen through the Jewish Mind.

<sup>4</sup> *Midrash Tanchuma, Bereshit, Parashat VaEera #45*. A Midrash is a compilation of rabbinic discussions of themes following, generally, the order of one of the books of *Bereishit* (Genesis)

<sup>5</sup> Gen. 22:2.

Talmud, all as reviewed in detail below. Non-Jews were allowed a special place on the Temple Mount, and, in fact, were even allowed to offer sacrifices on the altar. This does not mean gentile access without any restriction, as will be discussed, within what is, after all, a Temple built according to the Jewish *halachah*.<sup>6</sup> Yet it is surprising how clear and imperative is the role of gentiles in the worship of the One God in the Temple.

As a preface to this issue, it is necessary to mention that the Temple was an essential element of daily Jewish life, especially in Jerusalem, which emerged as both the spiritual and political capital of ancient Israel in the Hebrew Bible and the Second Temple Era. Roman historians and others depicted the Jews as "a nation settled around its Temple."<sup>7</sup> The Temple unified various religious and national functions, first and foremost as the House of God, in which God's transcendent presence could be manifested in this world,<sup>8</sup> the nexus of ritual where a Jew could offer a *korban*<sup>9</sup> or sacrifice to obtain atonement and blessing. Additionally, the Temple complex on Mount Moriah was the meeting place of the *Sanhedrin* (Jewish High Court) and served as a national gathering place during holidays (primarily, for the Three Pilgrimage Festivals—*shalosh regalim*) and other occasions (e.g. the *hakhel* ceremony, held once in the seven year *shmittah* cycle). The Temple's sanctity was vigilantly protected by the Jewish people, and the readiness of Jews to risk their lives for the Temple is documented in many historical sources.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Gentiles and the Temple.

The role of the Temple as a place of worship for the entire world, including gentiles, is powerfully depicted in King Solomon's words at the consecration of the First Temple. After the priests, followed by the people, carried the Ark of the Covenant up from the City of Jerusalem (the City of David which was located in a small dense area to the south of Temple Mount) to the Temple on Mount Moriah, King Solomon gave his consecration address, in which he first states the inherent paradox of building a house for God: "heaven and the highest of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built."<sup>11</sup> He prays for God's divine protection, mercy and forgiveness, so that the Temple will become a place where true justice can be found and sincere prayer can be heard.

Addressing the people of Israel, whom he calls "God's nation," King Solomon notes the crucial role of the Temple for other nations as well: "Moreover concerning the foreigner that is not of Thy people Israel, when he comes from a far country for Thy name's sake . . . when he shall come and pray toward this house; hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and do according to all which the foreigner called to Thee for . . . that all the peoples of the earth may know Thy name and fear Thee . . . and that they may know that Thy name is called upon

<sup>6</sup> These entrance restrictions also applied to Jews forbidden to enter defined areas of the Temple Complex, depending on issues as their Levitical status and on their level of ritual purity-impurity.

<sup>7</sup> Polybius, quoted by Josephus in *Antiquities of the Jews*, 12, 3:3 (hereinafter Josephus, *Antiquities*. [www.ccel.org/j/josephus/JOSEPHUS.HTM](http://www.ccel.org/j/josephus/JOSEPHUS.HTM))

<sup>8</sup> The Torah's command to build a specific sanctuary for God, even though "the whole Earth is full of His glory," (Isaiah 6:3) is obviously not meant to contain God's presence, but in fact intended for the benefit of the people, as a constant reminder of the *shechinah* (heavenly presence) and divine imperatives. This notion is embodied in the unique language of the command itself "And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell *among them*." (Ex. 25:8).

<sup>9</sup> The myriad animal and food offerings made in Temple ceremonies is described, in general, in Hebrew as *korban*, which did not mean "sacrifice", but rather was derived from the word *kirvah*, or closeness. The Temple was where a Jew could most tangibly, through action, come closer to God.

<sup>10</sup> e.g. Josephus, *The Jewish Wars*, 2, 10:4 (hereinafter, Josephus, *Wars*. From [www.daat.ac.il](http://www.daat.ac.il))

<sup>11</sup> Kings 1, 8:27.

this house which I have built."<sup>12</sup> Thus, from its very inception, the Temple was not designated for the people of Israel alone, but rather was open to anyone who acknowledged the God of Israel. King Solomon attributed great importance to gentiles participating in the holy worship of the Temple, and beseeches God to heed the prayer of foreigners as a divine acceptance of the willingness of the gentiles to acknowledge the One True God.

The universal role of the Temple is also depicted in prophecies regarding the End of Days. According to these prophecies, at that time there will be an all-encompassing recognition of the God of Israel as the One God.<sup>13</sup> The pagan nations will dispose of their idols<sup>14</sup> and the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem will become the center of holy service and worship towards the One God for the whole world.<sup>15</sup> The Temple itself will be built with the help of gentiles—"and aliens shall build up thy walls . . ." And together with Jews they will offer sacrifices—"their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon Mine altar."<sup>16</sup>

This prophetic vision of the Temple in the End of Days, to which "all nations will stream,"<sup>17</sup> includes the gentiles as an integral part. Again, in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The aliens that join themselves to the Lord, to minister unto Him . . . . Even those will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer . . . for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."<sup>18</sup> Under such a scenario, Jerusalem will be inundated with people from all over the world, yet, amazingly, the "most esteemed people of the gentiles will be the assistants for the priests," as commented by the Radak.<sup>19</sup>

The Malbim<sup>20</sup> states that active participation of the gentiles in the future Temple will be evident in the increased size of the Temple Mount. The area of the Third Temple, as depicted in Ezekiel,<sup>21</sup> will be 36 times greater than the Second Temple.<sup>22</sup> The number 36 is not arbitrary; an additional 35 spaces will be added for the 70 symbolic nations, two of which will share each one of these spaces on the expanded Temple Mount. The prophet Isaiah also speaks vividly of the active universal participation of gentiles in core Judaic divine service in the Temple in the End of Days: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh<sup>23</sup> come to worship before Me [at the Temple<sup>24</sup>], says the Lord."<sup>25</sup>

### 3. Temple Sacrifices Offered by Gentiles.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 41-43.

<sup>13</sup> e.g. Isaiah 11:9, 66:19, Zechariah 8:23, 14:9, Zephaniah 3:9.

<sup>14</sup> e.g. Isaiah 17:8, Jeremiah 16:19-20.

<sup>15</sup> Isaiah, chapter 60, Zechariah 2:15, 14:16.

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 56:7, see also Ibid., 60:7.

<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 2:2, Micah 4:1.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 56:6-7.

<sup>19</sup> Radak's commentary on Zachariah 14:21, see also Isaiah 66:21.

<sup>20</sup> On Ezekiel 42:20. See Gur, A. "Ezekiel's Temple", *Tehumin* (9), Jerusalem 1989.

<sup>21</sup> Ezekiel 40 – 42.

<sup>22</sup> The Second Temple's was 500 X 500 cubits and the future Temple area will be 3000 X 3000 cubits according to Ezekiel's prophecy. This is equal to 500 X 6 X 500 X 6 = 500 X 500 X **36**. See Gur, A. "Ezekiel's Temple", *Tehumin* (9), Jerusalem 1989.

<sup>23</sup> "Including other nations". Radak, on Isaiah 66:23.

<sup>24</sup> Metsudat David Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Isaiah 66:23.

The ritual of offering *korban* or sacrifice, one of the main functions of the Temple,<sup>26</sup> was open, according to the *halachah*, to gentiles as well as to Jews. This is learned from the verse: "A man, a man [whosoever] he be of the House of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that brings his offering, whether it be of any of their vows, or any of their freewill-offerings, which are brought unto the Lord for a burnt-offering."<sup>27</sup> The Talmud explains the repetition of the word "man" in the verse as "to include gentiles, that they may bring either votive or freewill-offerings like an Israelite."<sup>28</sup> Thus, basic rules of offering *korban* apply to both gentiles and Jews."<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, throughout the Jewish sources, there are accounts of gentiles who offered animal sacrifices to God prior to the establishment of the Jewish Temple service. For example, The Book of *Shemot* (Exodus) describes Jethro, the High Priest of Midian, who joined himself to the people of Israel in the desert "And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God . . . ."<sup>30</sup> In the Talmud, there is a debate concerning the types of sacrifices gentiles can perform and the differences in the *halachah* regarding the sacrifices made by Jews and gentiles.<sup>31</sup> The propriety and permission of gentile *korban* is evident throughout both the Mishnah and Gemara (The Talmud), thereby acknowledging the potential of gentiles participating as an integral part of the divine service in the Temple.<sup>32</sup> In short, the basic right of gentiles to perform sacrifices in the Temple is firmly established.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, it should be noted that the altar in the Temple became a symbol for peaceful relations and reciprocity between the Jewish nation and the nations of the world. Not only could gentiles offer sacrifices there, but also animal sacrifices as part of the Jewish annual religious cycle were offered on behalf of the nations. For example, in the Festival of *Sukkot* (Booths or Tabernacles), the Torah commands a sacrifice of 70 bulls. According to the Talmud,<sup>34</sup> this is atonement<sup>35</sup> for all nations as 70 is the traditional number of gentile nations established by God.<sup>36</sup> In response to the destruction of the Second Temple, the Talmud adds the following—"Rabbi Johanan observed, Woe to the idolaters, for they had a loss and do not know what they have lost.<sup>37</sup> When the Temple was in existence the altar atoned for them, but now who shall atone for them?"

#### 4. Laws of Sacrifice for Jews and Gentiles.

<sup>26</sup> To the extent that sometimes the Temple is referred to as Altar and vice versa. See Rashi's commentary on Isaiah 29:1.

<sup>27</sup> Lev. 22:17.

<sup>28</sup> Menachot 73b. The quotes from the Talmud are from Rabbi Dr. I. Epstein (Translator), *The Babylonian Talmud*, The Soncino Press, London 1960.

<sup>29</sup> See Rashi on Lev. 22:25.

<sup>30</sup> Ex.18:12. See Talmud Zebachim 116a for other examples. Interestingly, Jethro's journey to the "wilderness", according to Jewish traditions, reflects his internal journey from a priest of idolatry to a belief in the One God. *Midrash Shemot Rabbah* 1.

<sup>31</sup> e.g. Avodah Zarah 23a, Zevachim 116a, Menachot 73b.

<sup>32</sup> e.g. Mishnah Shekalim 7:6, Mishnah Zebachim 4:5.

<sup>33</sup> The few Midrashim with legendary nature that reject gentiles sacrifice (e.g. Psikta Rabati, parasha alef) are not accepted in the *halachah*, which overwhelmingly accepts gentile sacrifice in the Temple. See Kanohel, J. "Accepting Sacrifice from Foreigners", *Tarbits* (48), 1979, and the response to this article by Gilat, I.D. "A remark on accepting sacrifice from foreigners", *Tarbits*, 49(4) 1980.

<sup>34</sup> Sukkah 55b.

<sup>35</sup> Rashi explains that the purpose of this atonement was to bring forth the blessing of rain that year.

<sup>36</sup> "Rabbi Eleazar stated, To what do those seventy bullocks correspond? To the seventy nations."

<sup>37</sup> By their destruction of the Temple

As stated, there are differences between gentile and Jewish sacrifice. We shall examine a few of them:

1. Sacrifice in a High Place (*bamma*): Jews cannot make sacrifice in a place other than the Temple; however, gentiles are permitted to perform sacrifice either in the Temple or on a high place.<sup>38</sup>
2. Quality of the Sacrifice: According to the *halachah*, the sacrificial animal must be without blemish. If any blemish is detected, the animal cannot be sacrificed on the Temple's altar. This rule applies to both Jews and gentiles; however, gentiles can sacrifice an imperfect animal on a High Place (but for sacrifices in the Temple, they must bring an animal without blemish).<sup>39</sup>
3. Accepting a Sacrifice from an Idol Worshipper in the Temple: It is forbidden to accept a sacrifice from a Jew who practices idolatry;<sup>40</sup> however, it is permitted to accept a sacrifice from a gentile who is an idolater.<sup>41</sup>

These differences indicate that the Jewish sources regulated and thereby encouraged the sacrificial offerings of gentiles and their active worship of the One God, both in high places away from the Temple and in the Temple itself. As the majority of gentiles, of course, do not live in the vicinity of Jerusalem, the *halachah* does not restrict them to sacrifice only at the Temple Mount, as is required for the Jewish nation. Jews were also permitted to teach gentiles how to perform sacrifices on High Places, although Jewish sacrifice there was restricted.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, permission is given to an idolatrous gentile to perform a sacrifice in the Temple. As stated above, the *halachah* forbids receiving sacrifices from an idolatrous Jew, as such a situation is viewed as direct contradiction to the worship of the One True God. Why then should it be permitted to accept sacrifices from an idolatrous gentile?

The reason for this distinction is deep and basic: the altar was built to serve the world and this is *an all-inclusive unconditional right*. The Talmud states this explicitly—"among you [Israelites] [God] differentiated,<sup>43</sup> *but not among the nations* [of the world]."<sup>44</sup> However, an idolatrous Jew, as he is acting against his spiritual mandate of promulgating the monotheistic message, will not be allowed to make sacrifice on the altar, as concludes Rabbi Simshon Raphael Hirsch.<sup>45</sup>

Rabbi Hirsch notes, expanding upon the above Talmudic passage and Rashi's commentary there,<sup>46</sup> that the usage of the word "*adam*" (a human being) at the opening of *Vayikra* (Leviticus 1:2), the Book of Priesthood and Sacrifice, was to make it possible for anyone to make sacrifice and "to open a gate to all" with no restriction.<sup>47</sup> The verse—"Speak to the Israelites and tell them, when an *adam* (human being) among you presents an offering to the Lord . . . ." demonstrates, according to Rabbi Hirsch, that not just the "advanced enlightened spirit of [King] Solomon expanded the limited horizons of Moses' religion [concerning the concept of the Temple] with a broad cosmopolite overview" as scholars at

<sup>38</sup> Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Ma'aseh HaKorbanot*, 19:16.

<sup>39</sup> See Rashi on Lev. 22:25.

<sup>40</sup> Maimonides, *Ibid.*, 3:4.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:2.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 19:16.

<sup>43</sup> Idolatrous Jews cannot offer *korban*.

<sup>44</sup> Chulin 5a.

<sup>45</sup> See his commentary on Lev. 1:2.

<sup>46</sup> Talmud Chulin 5a.

<sup>47</sup> Rashi comments that the use of the word *adam* was to include all humanity.

that time held, but this all-inclusive approach that grants "the Temple its universal destination" is evident even from "the opening of the laws of sacrifice given by Moses."

"In one word [*adam*]," reiterates Rabbi Hirsch, the Torah "brings to fruition what was said by Isaiah regarding foreigners: 'Even them [the gentile] 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 (Isaiah 56:7).'"

Furthermore, sacrificing on the Temple's altar was an opportunity for gentiles to learn more about monotheistic belief.<sup>48</sup> This is the way to reach that promised day when "God will be One and His Name One" and thus it is crucially important to bring closer to God those who want to take part in the Temple worship rituals and not put undue obstacles in their way. Therefore, the *halachah* teaches to accept the sacrifices of gentiles even if they are idol worshippers, as their wish to make sacrifice testifies to the fact that they are walking in the right path towards a deeper understanding of monotheistic belief.<sup>49</sup>

### 5. Temple Areas Open to Gentiles.

The Mishnah<sup>50</sup> outlines the regulations governing entry into the Temple and the Temple Mount and counts ten separate levels of sanctity in the Land of Israel. The Temple Mount is ranked third, holier than Jerusalem. Within the Temple Mount area, there are additional and increasing levels of sanctity to which access was increasingly restricted. Entrance to the Holy of Holies, the most sacred place on the Mount, was restricted to only the High priest once a year on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

This Mishnah also teaches that gentiles could enter the Temple Mount but could not enter the *chel* (the rampart) that was enclosed with a low wall (the *sorag*).<sup>51</sup> It must be noted that hierarchical dictates did not impose restrictions only on the gentiles. Different areas of the Temple Complex were for the use of different subgroups—Jews were permitted to enter a nearer court than gentiles could, but only priests could enter the Temple proper.

It is significant that Sages made a unique exception regarding gentiles, whom they generally considered, concerning other issues of ritual purity-impurity according to Jewish ritual law, to have the same impurity level of *Zavim*<sup>52</sup> (Jews who are temporarily impure). If this was the case concerning the entrance of gentiles to the area of the Temple Mount, they would not have been permitted entrance (as is written in the Mishnah: "The Temple Mount is holier, for neither *Zavim* nor *Zavahs* . . . may enter it."). However, regarding only one issue gentiles are not considered as having the status of *Zavim*—entering the Temple Mount! Although a *Zav* cannot enter the Temple Mount because of his impurity, a gentile can.

The Ram"ah from Pano adds—"The Temple Mount is sacred and therefore neither *Zavim* nor *Zavahs* . . . may enter it. Nevertheless, although the gentiles are considered to be *Zavim*, the Sages allowed the 'stranger . . . when he shall come out of a far country' [from King

<sup>48</sup> See Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's commentary on Lev. 1:2.

<sup>49</sup> "A pagan that sent a sacrifice to the Temple—it is obvious that his heart is devoted to heaven, because if it wasn't so he would not send a sacrifice to our Temple." Responsa *Yehudah Ya'ale* vol.1, Yore De'ah 23.

<sup>50</sup> Kelim 1:6-9

<sup>51</sup> See Mishnah Midot 2:3.

<sup>52</sup> Talmud Nidah 34a.

Solomon's prayer<sup>53</sup>] in order to pray, to enter the Temple Mount; however not inside the *chel*, but they will stand [on the Temple Mount] and see the holy place so they will be able to concentrate on their devotion to God."<sup>54</sup>

Rabbis explained that this special permission was given to gentiles as "the Temple is a 'house of prayer for all people' (Isaiah 56:7), the Sages could not prohibit gentiles from entering the area of the Temple Mount as this will be contradictory to an explicit verse... and the Sages cannot prohibit anything that the Torah explicitly allowed. and that is why the Sages allowed the gentiles to enter the *chel*, although in general they are considered as *Zavim*. . . ."<sup>55</sup>

## 6. Historical Sources.

Along with the Biblical and Talmudic sources that point out the universal role of the Temple as a place of prayer and sacrifice for gentiles as well as Jews, there are also historical and archeological sources that confirm this all-inclusive approach, manifesting the integral role of gentiles in Temple's functions.

There is little historical evidence as to what actually transpired in the First Temple built by King Solomon. King Solomon's prayer called upon non-Jews to come and pray in the Temple, but we do not know if this was actually put into practice. The historical evidence of gentile participation comes much later in the time of the Second Temple. Most of the references about this come primarily from Josephus, who describes the sacrifices made by emperors and officials. One example out of many<sup>56</sup> is the sacrifices made by Ptolemy III (Ptolemy Euergetes, 246-222 B.C.E.) after he conquered Syria—"he came to Jerusalem, and according to our own laws offered many sacrifices to God and dedicated to him such gifts as were suitable to such a victory."<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, Josephus's words reveal a widespread phenomenon of gentile's sacrifice, while describing the altar "which was venerable among all men, both Greeks and barbarians."<sup>58</sup>

In addition to sacrifices, there are many examples of gifts and donations given by gentiles to the Temple. Donations were considered as confirmations of close and important relations in ancient custom, and such donations to the Temple were documented by historians such as Josephus,<sup>59</sup> Philo,<sup>60</sup> and Tertolianus.<sup>61</sup> In this regard, it should be noted that the Temple was an important crossroad in the reciprocal relations between Jews and gentiles. In addition to gentiles' sacrifices, we find historical evidence, including Talmudic sources,<sup>62</sup> which mention sacrifices made by Jews to the Welfare of the Emperors.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Kings 1, 8:41.

<sup>54</sup> Responsa Ram"a from Pano #98.

<sup>55</sup> Gank, M. "Gentile's Entrance to the Place of the Temple". *Tehumin* (19), Jerusalem 1999.

<sup>56</sup> e.g. Josephus, *Antiquities* 16, 2:1, *Ibid.*, 18, 4:3, Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius*, 157, from Daniel-Nataf, S. (Editor), *Philo of Alexandria – writings*, The Bialik Institute and The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Jerusalem 1986 (hereinafter, Philo, *Embassy*.)

<sup>57</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion* 2:5.

<sup>58</sup> Josephus, *Wars* 5, 1:3.

<sup>59</sup> e.g. Josephus, *Antiquities* 14, 16:4.

<sup>60</sup> Philo, *On the Embassy to Gaius*, 156, 317.

<sup>61</sup> *Epologeticum* 26, 3.

<sup>62</sup> Talmud *Gittin* 56 describes that the cancellation of the regular sacrifice on behalf of the emperor was the official rebellion declaration that started the Jewish war against the Romans in the year 66 C.E. Compare to Josephus, *Wars* 2, 17:2.

<sup>63</sup> Josephus, *Wars* 2, 10:4. Josephus, *Against Apion* 2, 76. Philo, *Embassy to*, 356.

The historical sources that depict gentiles offering sacrifices in the Jewish Temple<sup>64</sup> were questioned some years ago by Schwartz.<sup>65</sup> His basic assumption is that, although among pagans it is custom to participate in the rituals of another, this cannot be the normative case in Judaism, according to the "logic of monotheism." How could the Temple priests, writes Schwartz, allow a pagan gentile, who normally worships pagan deities, to "use the altar of the One God of the universe?"<sup>66</sup> Therefore, he is skeptical of the historical sources that confirm this act.

However, other historians regard the bulk of historic and Talmudic sources as reliable and therefore conclude that this custom of gentile sacrifice was common and that the priests did fully accept the sacrifice.<sup>67</sup> Emil Schürer<sup>68</sup> states that "despite the rigid barrier erected between Jews and gentiles in regard to religious matters, gentiles participated in Temple worship at Jerusalem." Not only did the great mass of proselytes make sacrifices, he writes, but also "real gentiles" who wanted to express their belief in the Jewish God at the Temple—"in a sense . . . even the exclusive Temple of Jerusalem became cosmopolitan; in common with the renowned sanctuaries of the gentiles, it received the homage of the whole world."

Schwartz's basic assumption should be examined further. As stated, Schwartz points out an intrinsic paradox in pagan sacrifice at the Jewish Temple that is not compatible with the "logic of monotheism." However, he disregards a cardinal differentiation in *halachah* between Jews and gentiles regarding idol worship. Idol worshipping Jews cannot make sacrifice on the altar while idol worshipping gentiles *can*.<sup>69</sup> This halachic rule, which is expressed in the Talmud and in various sources, stems from the Second Temple Era, perhaps earlier, and from the ongoing ambition of Judaism to spread the monotheistic belief to the world.

Judaism acknowledged gentile pagans who desired to perform sacrificial ceremonies on the altar in the Temple, viewing their close proximity to the Temple as a first step towards acknowledging the existence of the One God. In other words, although sacrifice by idol worshipers is in disagreement with the "logic of monotheism," it is in accordance with its *way* of teaching. In opposition to Schwartz's argument, the priests were permitted to accept sacrifices from gentiles *because* of their religious principles, and, furthermore, viewed this act as a realization of the prophetic vision of the Temple as a "house of prayer for all people."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> There is a consensus concerning the validity of the sources that describe gifts given by gentiles to the Temple and sacrifices that were made by Jews for gentiles.

<sup>65</sup> Schwartz, D. R. "On Sacrifice by Gentiles in the Temple of Jerusalem." *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity*, (1992), 102 ff. According to him, Biblical and Talmudic sources are ambiguous regarding whether it is permissible for gentiles to make sacrifices, and Josephus's description of gentile sacrifice is inaccurate because he "tries to be as universalistic as possible."

<sup>66</sup> Schwartz suggests that gentiles, for the most part, presented gifts to the Temple, and when a sacrifice was offered, the priests would consider it only as a gift to the Temple and not actually offer it on the altar as *korban*, and so, in fact, no sacrifice made by an idolatrous gentile would be put directly on the "monotheistic" altar.

<sup>67</sup> Barbutis, D. *The Temple – its status and mission according to Josephus*, (thesis submitted for the degree Doctor of philosophy), Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1994 in the 6<sup>th</sup> appendix—"Gentile Sacrifice in the Temple".

<sup>68</sup> Schürer, E. *The History of the Jewish People in the age of Jesus Christ* (Vol. 2), Clark LTD, Edinburgh 1979 (English Edition), 309-313.

<sup>69</sup> See Talmud Chulin 5a and Rashi therein.

<sup>70</sup> Shmuel Safrai describes the multinational reality in Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period. There were many proselytes at the time, even kings and highly ranked people and also "many gentiles that were only slightly connected to Judaism and were influenced from its thought and laws. These gentiles came to Jerusalem as sacrifices were received from them. In a sense, the prophecy of Isaiah was substantially realized in the time of the Second Temple—"their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall



Other historical sources documenting gentile access to the Temple Mount further illustrate the Biblical and Talmudic passages, as related above, that granted explicit authorization for gentiles to participate in Temple rituals. As stated above, entry regulations were implemented in certain sections of the Temple, as is common in most holy sanctuaries of all creeds. These rules were strictly observed and were recognized by foreign rulers.<sup>71</sup> Even King Herod, who rebuilt the Second Temple, was not allowed to enter the inner courts as he was not a priest.<sup>72</sup>

As noted earlier, following their interpretation of key passages in Tanach, the Rabbis were compelled to allow gentiles to enter certain outer areas of the Temple Mount that were considered holy and restricted. Josephus writes that this permission was kept: "Into the first court [Temple Mount] everybody was allowed to go, even foreigners . . ."<sup>73</sup> There were signs "in Greek, and some in Roman letters,"<sup>74</sup> that told the foreigners not to enter further inside, but only up to "the outer areas [of the Temple] that permit the entrance of all,"<sup>75</sup> so they could take part in the holy worship of the Temple.

The longest surviving hard archaeological evidence that affirms the presence of gentiles on the Temple Mount originates from 1871, when Clermont-Ganneau discovered one of the signs that were on the *sorag*, the low wall on the Temple Mount, which prohibited gentiles to go beyond that point.<sup>76</sup> Also, some archaeologists suggest that one of the gates on the Temple Mount, the "Barkley Gate,"<sup>77</sup> was specially used by gentiles. "It could be the gate that was used by foreigners to ascend to the areas in the Temple Mount they were permitted to approach. It cannot be assumed that this gate was for the Jewish population as we cannot find proof of a tradition and system that allowed entering in one gate and exiting through another."<sup>78</sup>

## 8. Conclusion.

A complex picture emerges from the wealth of Jewish sources on this issue. On the one hand, there is evidence of a clear and solid inclination to maintain the particularistic nature of the Temple and its link to the Jewish nation. However, the desire to create a place for gentiles to come as near as possible to God via the Temple is also clearly evident. The desire to safeguard the Jewish identity of the Temple stemmed from the urgent demands of the times: The Jewish nation was a small oasis of monotheistic belief surrounded by a desert of idolatry. On the other hand, the open welcoming of gentiles to the Temple Mount stemmed

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be acceptable upon Mine altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." Safrai, S. "The Second Temple", *Iyunim* (28), Jerusalem 1959.

<sup>71</sup> See Talmud Pesachim 3b. Josephus, *Wars* 6, 2:4, *Antiquities* 12, 3:4.

<sup>72</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities* 15, 11:5.

<sup>73</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion* 2:8.

<sup>74</sup> Josephus, *Wars* 5, 5:2.

<sup>75</sup> Philo, *Embassy*, pg. 212-213.

<sup>76</sup> Later on, another piece of a different sign was found. Today, the complete inscription is displayed in Istanbul and the second one is in Jerusalem at the Rockefeller Museum.

<sup>77</sup> Known as the Kiponus gate in the Mishnah.

<sup>78</sup> Ben-Dov, M. *Temple Mount Excavations*, Keter, Jerusalem 1982, pg. 141-142. The main Jewish entrance was from the City of David (ancient Jerusalem) in the south, also evident from the large number of *mikvehot* (ritual baths) there. The assumption is that the tunnels there (leading from the Chulda Gates) reached the Temple's inner courts, and therefore were "used by those [Jews] who entered the sacred area directly." (Levin, I. L. *Jerusalem in its glory—Jerusalem in the Time of the Second Temple*. Modan, Tel Aviv 1998.) It is suggested, therefore, that non-Jewish populations used other entrances of the Temple Mount. See also Ben-Dov, M. Naor, M. Aner, Z. *Ha'Kotel*, Ministry of Defence, Tel Aviv 1981, pg. 42.

from a vision of the future and the dream that one day the self-evident truth about the One God would be fully revealed. The proximity to the Temple of gentiles who spread monotheism was a significant step towards this much-desired future.

However, in simple terms, the Jewish people, who brought the world the idea that there is One God for all, built a Temple for the whole world. Thus, all were welcomed in the Temple, gentiles as Jews, and the sacrificial offerings of both was accepted in the Temple, as is established in halachic and historical sources reviewed. This notion explains the unique exceptions from the usual purity-impurity laws that were undertaken so that gentiles would be able to ascend the Temple Mount. This was not merely a polite welcoming to foreigners expressed by the Jewish nation, but rather a fundamental idea that the Temple, built by Jews, was a place for all to worship the One God. It is this great principle that appears time and again in the Bible, from King Solomon's prayer in the dedication ceremony of the First Temple to the words of Isaiah the Prophet: "Even them [the gentiles] 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*."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Isaiah 56:6-7.