

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION
ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY

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Shiur #4: Hazaya - Sprinkling the Blood on Yom Kippur

The Torah describes the sprinkling of blood during Yom Kippur upon the Aron Ha-kodesh as follows: He [the Kohen Gadol] should sprinkle with his finger "on the face of the kapporet (al penei ha-kapporet)." Subsequently the Torah describes the parallel sprinkling of the goat's blood: "He should sprinkle it upon the Kapporet (al ha-kapporet)." Even though the pasuk implies that the blood is sprinkled on the kapporet, this issue is not absolutely clear from the gemara's analysis.

The Yerushalmi (Yoma 5:4) cites two positions as to whether the blood was actually sprinkled on the Aron or just near the Aron in the Kodosh Ha-kodoshim. The Bavli issues a vague statement (55a): "when he sprinkles, he doesn't sprinkle UPON the kapporet, but alongside the thickness of the kapporet." Rashi interprets this statement to mean that the blood wasn't sprinkled on the roof of the kapporet, but alongside its thickness (ostensibly falling to the floor). Similarly, Tosafot in Zevachim (9a) claim that the blood never touched the kapporet. This technical question might reflect a more fundamental issue regarding the definition of this sprinkling: is the sprinkling intended specifically for the Aron, or for the kodosh ha-kodoshim? According to the opinion that the blood actually touched the Aron, we would be inclined to deem this sprinkling as an 'Aron' sprinkling. Assuming, though, that the blood never touched the Aron (as Rashi claimed), we might be more likely to define the blood as 'kodosh ha-kodoshim' sprinkling. Interestingly, the Rambam, in his commentary to the Mishna, writes that the Kohen Gadol sprinkled the blood 'in front' of the Aron – suggesting that the blood is indeed deemed as Aron-related.

An interesting offshoot of this question might be the sprinkling in the days of the second Beit Ha-mikdash. The Mishna (53b) claims that in the second Mikdash (after the Aron had already been buried) the Kohen would sprinkle the blood on the 'even ha-shetiya' located in the kodosh ha-kodoshim. Would this practice not suggest that indeed the blood is unrelated to the Aron, and rather a 'halakha' of kodosh ha-kodoshim? This indeed is the impression given by the

derasha in Torat Kohanim allowing such sprinkling: "the extra word ha-kodesh implies that a kodesh ha-kodoshim without an Aron and kapporet is equal to kodesh kodoshim with Aron and kapporet." This emphasis upon kodesh ha-kodoshim suggests that the sprinkling is related to kodesh ha-kodoshim and therefore relevant even in the absence of the Aron.

Alternatively, Rav Chayim (in the chidushim to the gemara) claimed that even after the Aron was buried the location still maintained the unique kedusha of the Aron. This view would still allow us to define the sprinkling as Aron-related; even though no physical Aron existed, the location was still imbued with the unique status of Aron.

Even if we claim (as Rashi and Tosafot did) that the blood never actually touched the Aron, we might still define the blood as fundamentally Aron related. Despite its not touching, it is still seen as sprinkled in the general area of the Aron. In fact, we might impose some conditions about its location in order to ensure that it will be affiliated with the Aron. For example, Rabenu Chananel (55a) explains that the blood – though not physically sprinkled upon the Aron – was nonetheless sprinkled within a tefach of the Aron. Similarly, the Rambam (Hilkhot Avodat Yom Hakippurim 3:5) maintains that the blood was placed 'close to the Aron within a tefach.' If the blood relates to the kodesh ha-kodoshim in general, it seems illogical that it is placed in such close proximity to the Aron. Evidently, these rishonim viewed the blood as relating primarily to the Aron; even though physical contact is unnecessary, proximity is required.

Conversely, if we claim that the blood never touched the Aron and was indeed kodesh ha-kodoshim blood, we might question both the syntax of the pasuk as well as the halakha itself. Why does the Torah demand the blood be placed "on the kapporet" when indeed it is only meant to be placed in the kodesh ha-kodoshim; why can't the blood be sprinkled anywhere in the kodesh ha-kodoshim? Evidently, our answer to this question lies in differentiating between two distinct sections of the kodesh ha-kodoshim - the general area and the concentrated area in front of the Aron. Indeed, the blood is related to the kodesh ha-kodoshim and not the Aron – but only a specific subsection of the kodesh ha-kodoshim. An interesting analogy can be traced in the gemara in Menachot (27b), which quotes a debate between Rabbi Yehuda and the Rabanan as to whether one who enters the kodesh ha-kodoshim in general without invading the space of the Aron receives capital punishment for unlawful entry. Rabbi Yehuda, who rules that mita is only administered for entering the Aron-area of the kodesh ha-kodoshim, evidently subdivides the area into these two distinct sections.