

**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION
ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY

By: Rav Moshe Taragin

**Shiur #2: Sprinkling the Blood in the Kodesh Ha-kodoshim on
Yom Kippur**

When describing the sprinkling of the blood of the par and sair within the Kodesh Ha-kodoshim, the Torah employs two different terms. In Vayikra 16:14 the Torah writes, "He should take the blood of the ox and sprinkle the blood on the kapporet eastward, and in front of the kapporet he should sprinkle 7 times." The first part of this pasuk suggests that the blood was actually sprinkled upon the kapporet, while the latter half indicates that it was sprinkled in the direction of, but not on top of, the kapporet. Adding to the uncertainty, the next pasuk describing the sprinkling of sa'ir blood writes, "He should bring the blood behind the parochet," ignoring the aron/kapporet altogether and emphasizing instead the kodesh Ha-kodoshim ('mibeit laparochet') as the address of the blood.

Based upon this ambiguity, the Gemara claims that the blood within the kodesh Ha-kodoshim was sprinkled 'k'neged ovyah shel kapporet' (literally, alongside, or toward, the width of the kapporet). Rashi interprets this Gemara to mean that the blood never actually touched the aron or kapporet, a statement which is corroborated by Tosafot in Zevachim (9a). The Rambam, in his commentary to the Mishna, writes that the blood was sprinkled 'lifnei ha-aron,' an expression which suggests as well that it did not actually touch the aron. The Yerushalmi, however, cites a machloket amongst the Amora'im as to whether the blood actually touched the kapporet.

This technical dispute might reflect a more fundamental question. Are these sprinklings actually an exercise surrounding the aron, or should we categorize them as essentially 'belonging to the kodesh Ha-kodoshim,' with the aron merely the specific area within the kodesh Ha-kodoshim to which these drops are directed. Generally, all sprinkling of blood belongs to one of the mizbeichot. Yom Kippur is unique in that blood is sprinkled elsewhere. Defining these acts of sprinkling and associating them with a location or 'klei Hamikdash' is essential toward understanding their nature. Certainly, the position which demands that the blood actually touch the aron would consider the sprinkling of blood as belonging to the aron proper. If, however, the blood did not actually touch the aron, should we define this blood as belonging to the kodesh Ha-kodoshim? Or might we still might consider them 'aron haza'ot' but demand they be sprinkled in the direction and in the location of, but not touching, the aron?

The mishna in Yoma (53b) addresses the situation during the second Beit Ha-mikdash (when there was no aron in the kodesh Ha-kodoshim). The Kohen Gadol would then sprinkle the blood upon the 'even hashetiya' (the rock upon which the aron was placed during the first Beit Ha-mikdash). Can we infer from this allowance to sprinkle blood even without an aron that the blood isn't associated with the aron, but rather the kodesh Ha-kodoshim? To be sure, Rav Chayim (in his Chidushim on Shas) claims that even without an actual aron, the site of the aron still retained the halakhic kedusha of aron – especially according to the opinion (in Yoma) that during the second mikdash the Aron was buried underneath the 'even hashetiya.' If the site is still imbued with kedushat makom ha-aron, we might still justify the sprinkling of blood even without an actual aron, EVEN if we deem this blood as 'aron blood.' A statement in the Torat Kohanim, though, seems to explain the sprinkling during the second Mikdash in a manner unrelated to the actual aron. Based upon the pasuk, the Torat Kohanim elaborates, "this renders kodesh without an aron and kapporet similar to kodesh containing these elements." The focus of the Torat Kohanim (and presumably the object of the blood) is the actual kodesh, and the equation between a kodesh possessing an aron and one without an aron certifies that the actual kodesh Ha-kodoshim, and not the aron, is indeed the object of these haza'ot.

An interesting Gemara which addresses a parallel to our issue is cited in Menachot (27b). The Rabanan claim that anyone who enters the kodesh Ha-kodoshim receives the death penalty. According to Rabbi Yehuda, only someone who enters the kodesh Ha-kodoshim in the area of the aron receives mitah. Rabbi Yehuda interprets the phrase 'mibeit la-parochet el pnei ha-kapporet' (a verse appearing in Vayikra 16:2 that prohibits general entry) literally. This position verifies that the kodesh Ha-kodoshim may be divided into two sections: the general area and the specific area of the aron (which presumably possesses higher kedusha). Sprinkling the blood near the aron might just be mandated independent of the actual aron.

The Gemara continues to question the performance of these haza'ot during the second Mikdash where no Aron existed. Particularly according to Rabbi Yehuda, who interprets the term 'el' literally (and therefore issued a death penalty only to someone who entered 'el pnei ha-kapporet - the area facing the kapporet), the blood should not have been sprinkled in the second Mikdash, since the verse 'al hakapporet' (upon the kapporet) could not have been executed without an aron.

To answer this problem, the Gemara cites yet another pasuk (16:16) - "ve-chiper al hakodesh (he should cleanse the kodesh) - which the Gemara elaborates to mean 'makom ha-mekudash le-kodesh (a site dedicated and sanctified to kodesh – namely, the site of the aron). This derasha accounting for the sprinkling during the second mikdash might reflect Rav Chayim's position which recognized a special 'aron' status in the area in which the aron was buried (see especially Rashi in Menachot, s.v. makom).

Having demonstrated that even if we don't require actual contact between the aron and the blood we still might associate the sprinkling with the

aron, we might consider a final question. Must the blood be placed in a particular area near the aron, or anywhere in its general proximity? The Gemara issued an oblique reference that the blood be placed 'k'neged ovyah' – alongside its width. Does this description impose additional requirements as to the placing of the blood? The Rambam in particular (in Hilkhhot Avodat Yom Ha-kippurim 3:5) demands that the blood be placed within a tefach of the aron (though not necessarily touching). Seemingly, he views this sprinkling as belonging to the aron and therefore requires some proximity.

May Hashem grant us all the opportunity to once again witness the Cohen Gadol serving in Beit HaMikdash on Yom Kippur.