



Location of the Aron

Yom Kippur was the only time that the *kohen gadol* entered the *kodesh ha'kodashim*. The *Mishnah* (5:1) teaches that the *kohen* would enter first with the coals and incense, place the shovel between the poles in front of the *aron* and then burn the incense there. The next *Mishnah* (5:2) explains that in the time of the second *Beit HaMikdash* when there was no *aron*, the *kohen gadol* would place the shovel on the stone known as the *even ha'shetya*.

The *Tosfot Yom Tov* cites the *Gemara Megillah* (10) that explains that the *aron* miraculously did not take up any space. Even though the size of the *kodesh ha'kodashim* was twenty by twenty *amot*, there was ten *amot* space on either side of the *aron*. The *Gemara* implies that the *aron* was centred in the *kodesh ha'kodashim*. The *Tosfot Yom Tov* therefore finds the position of the *Rambam* difficult, who rules that the *aron* was set deeper inside the *kodesh ha'kodashim* – westward (*Hilchot Beit HaBechira* 4:1).¹ The *Tosfot Yom Tov* is unsure of the source of this position.²

The *Rashash* (*Bava Batra* 2:9) however directs our attention to the *Rashbam* in *Bava Batra* (99a, s.v. *aron*) who writes that indeed the *aron* stood miraculously. It had ten *amot* space on either side – to the left and right – and before it was twenty *amot*. In other words, *Rashbam* understands that when the *Gemara* explains that *aron* was centred with equal space on either side, it was only referring to the north and south sides. The *Rashbam* however explains like the *Rambam* that he *aron* was indeed set deeper inside towards the west. Why however was it indeed off-centre in one direction?

The *Chasdei David* notes that this *Mishnah* implies, that during the time of the second *Beit HaMikdash* in the absence of the *aron*, the shovel was placed on the *even ha'shetya*. In the previous *Mishnah* however, we learnt that during the time of the first *Beit HaMikdash*, the *kohen gadol* placed the shovel between the poles, which would be in front of the *aron*. Furthermore, the *Gemara* (53b) explains that even during the time of the second *Beit Hamikdash*, the shovel was placed in between where the poles would have been – the same location. Finally, the *Tosefta* (2:12) explains that when they had the *aron* it was placed on top of the *even ha'shetya*. It would seem then that if the shovel was placed on the stone, then it was not placed between where the poles would have been.

The *Chasdei David* however directs our attention to the *Midrash Tanchuma* (*Kedoshim* 10), that explains that the *aron* was in the center of the *heichal*³, and the *even ha'shetya* was before it. The *Chasdei David* therefore understands that the *even ha'shetya* extend out eastward, before the *aron*. Consequently, it was possible for the shovel to be placed both on the *even ha'shetya* and between the poles of the *aron*.

Perhaps we can suggest that according to the *Rambam*, the necessity of offsetting the *aron* further to the West was due to the consideration of the *Chasdei David*. In other words, it was westward so that some of the *even ha'shetya* was exposed between the poles of the *aron*.

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¹ The *Tosfot Yom Tov* similarly finds the *Tosfot* (*Bava Batra* 25a) difficult who explain that the *aron* was placed closer to the east side. This article however will focus on understanding the *Rambam*.

² The *achronim* also attempt to find the source for the *Rambam*. See for example the *Minchat Chinnuch* (95:13).

³ Considering that the *heichal* included both the *kodesh* and *kodesh ha'kodashim*, it is possible that when the *midrash* says the *aron* was in the centre it was only referring to the north-south direction – exactly like the *Rashbam* explained. If it was indeed centred in the east-west direction, it would place the *aron* in the *kodesh* and not the *kodesh ha'hakodashim*. That said, the *Midrash* might not be meant to be understood literally, considering that it also taught that *Beit HaMikdash* was in the centre of *Yerushalaim* and the *heichal* was in the centre of the *Beit HaMikdash*.

⁴ Initially I was tempted to suggest a different understanding of the *Rambam*. The *Rambam* writes, that “There was a stone in the *kodesh hakodashim* to the west, and on it the *aron* was placed.” Reading the *Rambam* this way would indeed place both the *even ha'shetya* and *aron* to the west of the *kodesh ha'kodashim* like the *Rashbam* explained. Alternatively, one could read the *Rambam* as follows: “There was a stone in the *kodesh hakodashim*. To the west and upon it the *aron* was placed.” In other words, the *Rambam* is describing the location of the *aron* relative to its position upon the *even ha'shetya*. There are several difficulties with this suggestion. The first is that this suggestion only works according to those that have the version “and upon it” rather than “that upon it” (see *Minchat Chinnuch* 95:13). Furthermore, if the suggested novel reading was correct, one would have expected to *Rambam* to write “on it and to the west” instead. Finally the term *alav* should have been *aleiha* if it was indeed meant to be read that way.

Revision Questions

יזמא ג' - ז' - ה' :ג'

- Give one example provided by the *Mishnah* for when one goes to do a particular activity on *erev Pesach* and has not yet perform *biur chametz* and the *halacha* is that he: (ג' :ז')
 - Must return if he has time to come back and complete the activity, otherwise can he can simply perform *bitul chametz*.
 - Must only perform *bitul chametz*.
 - Must return home.
- If someone leaves *Yerushalaim* with *kodshim* in his hand, after which point is he not required to return to the *Beit Ha'Mikdash* and can simply burn it where he is? (ג' :ח')
- Regarding the previous two questions, list the opinions regarding the minimum measure of the *chametz* or *kodshim* for which one must return? (ח' :ג')
- Whether one performs *melacha* in the morning of *erev Pesach* depends on the custom of the place. What if a person, coming from a place the does not do *melacha* travels on the morning of *erev Pesach* to a place that does do *melacha*? (ז' :א')
- What law regarding *Shmittah* shares a similar ruling to that of the previous question? (ד' :ב')
- What law regarding animal trade shares a similar ruling to that of the previous question? (ד' :ג')
- Some places have the custom of not eating meat on the night of *Pesach* prepared in which manner? (ד' :ז')
- During which festival is lighting candles dependant on local custom? (ד' :ז')
- Even though whether or not people work on *Tisha B'Av* is dependant on local custom, which people do not work, regardless of their location? (ז' :ה')
- From when does *Beit Shammai* prohibit work on *erev Pesach*? (ז' :ה')
- What is *R' Meir's* opinion regarding the previous question? (ז' :ה')
- Which three professions do the *Chachamim* permit to work till *chatzot* on *erev Pesach* regardless of local custom? (ז' :ה')
- In what manner can one clean an animal's waste from its pen on *erev Pesach*? During *Chol Ha'moed*? (ז' :ה')
- Can one take his utensils to be mended on *erev Pesach* if they are not required for the festival? (ז' :ה')
- What were the three customs of the people of *Yericho* that the *Chachamim* objected to? (ז' :ח')
- What were the three customs of the people of *Yericho* that the *Chachamim* accepted? (ז' :ח')
- What were the three things *Chizkiyah HaMelech* did that the *Chachamim* objected to? (ז' :ט')
- What were the three things *Chizkiyah HaMelech* did that the *Chachamim* accepted? (ז' :ט')
- During the year, when was the afternoon *tamid* offering slaughtered and offered? (ז' :ה')
- On *erev Pesach*, when was the afternoon *tamid* offering slaughtered and offered? (ז' :ה')
- Regarding the previous question, when was the *tamid* offered even earlier? (ז' :ה')
- What are the four processes that must be performed for the purpose of the *korban Pesach*, otherwise it would invalidate the *korban*? (ז' :ב')
- Is the *korban Pesach* valid if it was slaughter (in mind) for the sake of the people that had a share in the *korban* as well as other who did not have a share? (ז' :ג')
- Is the *korban Pesach* valid if it was slaughtered before noon? (ז' :ג')
- Is the *korban Pesach* valid if it was slaughtered before the *korban tamid*? (ז' :ג')

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
11 June כ"ב סיון	12 June כ"ג סיון	13 June כ"ד סיון	14 June כ"ה סיון	15 June כ"ו סיון	16 June כ"ז סיון	17 June כ"ח סיון
Yoma 5:4-5	Yoma 5:6-7	Yoma 6:1-2	Yoma 6:3-4	Yoma 6:5-6	Yoma 6:7-8	Yoma 7:1-2

