

The Weekly Daf



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Zevachim 51-57

Week of 6-12 Adar 5756 / 26 February - 3 March 1996
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Cornering the Altar

The Mishna:	The olah (the burnt offering) is a sacrifice of the kodshei kodashim (the most sanctified category). Its blood is sprinkled upon the altar in two applications which are like four.
The Method:	One opinion of the Sages is that the blood was sprinkled from the sacred vessel receiving it from the slaughtered sacrifice against the northeast and southwest corners of the altar so that it would spread to a portion of all four sides. Rabbi Yishmael, however, derives from the similarity of the term used by the Torah regarding both the olah and the chatass (sin offering) that the former must have four applications made just as is explicitly required in the case of the latter. These four applications of the olah differ from those of the chatass in that they are applied only to the two aforementioned corners rather than to all four as is the blood of the chatass.
The Reason:	Why don't we make the comparison a complete one and require application of the olah blood to all four corners? An earlier Gemara (Zevachim 51a) of this week's section establishes that the olah's blood can only be applied to a corner of the altar which has a base extending beneath it. Since there was no base at the southeast corner of the altar we must conclude that the Torah's requirement for sprinkling the blood "around the altar" refers to the four walls covered by applying the blood to diagonally opposite corners rather than to all four corners.
The Explanation:	Why was there no base at the southeast corner? Yakov Avinu blessed his son Binyamin that the altar would be located in his inheritance. The entire altar, except for the southeast corner, was indeed in the Tribe of Binyamin's territory and therefore had a base. The southeast corner was missing this dimension because it was in the territory of the Tribe of Yehuda. The saintly Binyamin, note our Sages, so longed for the entire altar to be in his domain that he was rewarded with Heaven situating all of the Sanctuaries preceding and including the Beis Hamikdash in the territory of the Tribe of Binyamin.

Zevachim 53b

A Bite In Time

The Mishna:	The olah (the burnt offering) is a sacrifice of the kodshei kodashim (the most sanctified category). Its blood is sprinkled upon the altar in two applications which are like four.
The Method:	The korban pesach (paschal lamb sacrifice eaten on the eve of Pesach in the time of the Beis Hamikdash) may be eaten only at night (not on the day it is slaughtered as is the case in regard to all other sacrifices) and only until midnight.
The Halacha:	This mishna is cited as a support for establishing the halacha according to the view of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, whose position is that the korban pesach can only be eaten until midnight and not like the position of Rabbi Akiva that it can be eaten by Torah Law until dawn.
The Application:	Even though we have no korban pesach today this ruling affects us in regard to the schedule of our Pesach Seder. The Sage Rava states (Pesachim 120b) that since the Torah links the mitzvah of eating matzah to that of korban pesach, one must eat matzah — which is a mitzvah even when there is no korban — before midnight according to Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah in order to fulfill the mitzvah.
Other Ramifications:	Both Tosefos and Rabbeinu Nissim extend this midnight deadline to the eating of the afikoman as well since it is eaten as a remembrance of the korban pesach. In regard to the recital of Hallel after the afikoman, however, there is a difference of opinion. Rabbeinu Nissim in Mesechta Megillah quotes a Tosefist opinion that it too should be recited before midnight. But the Tosefos in Megillah 21a notes that since Hallel is only a rabbinic obligation one need not be so stringent about saying it before midnight. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 477:1) rules that the afikoman should be eaten before midnight but makes no mention of Hallel. The Rama, however, adds that one should conduct the Seder early enough to allow for reciting Hallel before midnight. Based on the aforementioned sources we can well understand why the Mishna Berurah points out that an effort should be made in regard to Hallel before midnight but that is not as serious a requirement as the afikoman.

Zevachim 57b

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