

When God described the Ark of the Covenant to Moses on Mount Sinai, included was a description of how God would speak to Moses when the Ark was completed:

וְנוֹעַדְתִּי לְךָ שֶׁם וְדִבְרָתִי אֶתְךָ מִלְּעֵל הַכְּפָרָת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרוּבִים אֲשֶׁר עַל־אַרְון הַעֲדָה אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר
אָצַח אֶתְךָ אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

"There I will meet with you, and I will impart to you—from above the cover, from between the two cherubim that are on top of the Ark of the Pact—all that I will command you concerning the Israelite people."

This verse seems to disagree with a separate verse at the beginning of Vayikra:

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֲלֵיכָו מֵאָהָל מוֹעֵד לְאָמֹר:
The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying...

This verse seems to imply that God spoke to Moses not from the Holy of Holies, but from the main room of the Tabernacle, the Ohel Moed!

The rabbis resolve this contradiction by citing a third verse, this one from the end of Parshat Naso in Bamidbar:

וְבָבָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אָהָל מוֹעֵד לִזְבַּח אֶת־זָבְחָל מִזְבְּחָה אֶלְיוֹן מִלְּעֵל הַכְּפָרָת אֲשֶׁר עַל־אַרְון
הַעֲדָה מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרוּבִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְיוֹן: (פ)

When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he would hear the Voice addressing him from above the cover that was on top of the Ark of the Pact between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.

This verse resolves the contradiction by stating that while Moses was in the Ohel Moed, God spoke from the Ark of the Covenant to Moses.

This all seems simple enough, and possibly even mundane for a Dvar Torah. However, what fascinates me is the tool the rabbis use to derive this explanation: one of Rabbi Yishmael's Thirteen Hermeneutical Principles, as cited at the beginning of Sifra:

(יג) וכן שני כתובין המכחישין זה את זה – עד שיבא הכתוב השלישי וכיריע בינייה.
(13) two verses that contradict each other until a third verse comes and resolves the contradiction.

This is generally understood to be a method of deriving Halacha from the Torah. However, here, it is used to derive a factual event, i.e., how God spoke to Moses from the Tabernacle. This method of understanding Halachah is actually used to understand a non-Halachic part of the Torah.

And from this comes the lesson to learn: the Torah is more than Halacha. And that the Halacha can be used to help us understand the other parts of Torah. As we read in the coming weeks a series of laws about the Tabernacle and the Kohanim, we must remember that while they are important, they are not singular, and that what we are reading is not just a series of laws, but so much more.