

Orchos HaAmud

Weekly Presentation Highlighting an Amud of the Week



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BERACHOS 23A BY RABBI AVIGDOR BERENSTEIN

The Gemara (Brochos 23a) analyzes phrase by phrase, the posuk (Koheles 4:17) “Guard your feet when you go to Hashem’s house, closer to hear than fools giving a korban, because they do not know to do evil.”

Rav Shmuel ben Nachmani said in the name of Rav Yonasan, Guard your feet when you go to Hashem’s house – Guard yourself so that you do not sin, and if you do sin, bring Me a korban. Closer to hear – Rava said, Be close to hear the Chachomim’s words, if they sin, they bring a korban and do teshuva. Than fools giving a korban – Do not be like the fools who sin and bring a korban, but do not do teshuva. Because they do not know to do evil – If so, they are tzadikim? Rather it means do not be like the fools who sin and bring a korban, but do not know whether they are bringing it for the good or for the evil. Hakodosh Baruch Hu says, “They do not distinguish between good and evil, yet they bring Me a korban?”

The obvious question on this Gemara is that how can the fools not know whether their korban is for the good or the evil? They bring it because they sinned and they designate it as a korban chatos or a korban oshom, so they must know what it is for!

Rav Shimshon Pincus ztz”l (Tiferes Shimshon Vayikro page 58) explains that of course the fool knows what the korban is for, but he does not realize its significance. He does not grasp the concept of bringing a korban for sinning. He sees it as simply fulfilling an obligation, the same as bringing a korban to thank Hashem for saving him from a dangerous situation. In both cases, he goes to the Beis Hamikdosh with his korban, does what he has to do, and then returns home.

Rav Pincus illustrates this with a vivid example: Imagine a stockbroker who wakes up one morning with the idea that, due to some recent events, a particular stock will soon go up considerably in value. He recontemplates this thought over in his mind several times and concludes that it is a sound idea. He cannot understand how he did not think of it until now, and, before getting dressed, he grabs a pen and paper and writes himself a note to finalize this transaction immediately, so he will not forget. As he turns and sees his clothing, he realizes that it is Shabbos! He feels bad about his mistake, puts the note aside, and returns to his Shabbos routine. On motzoei Shabbos, he completes the transaction, purchasing a huge amount of that stock, and awaits results. Two weeks later, he is gratified to see that the stock’s value has soared, just as he predicted, and he has earned a profit of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Meanwhile, of course, he consulted a Rav and told him of his

mishap. The Rav paskened that he should buy an animal, designate it as a korban chatos, bring it to the Beis Hamikdosh and have it offered there as a korban. He now goes and buys a high-quality korban for several thousand dollars, brings it to the Beis Hamikdosh, says viduy as instructed by the kohein, and heads home. On the way, he mentally reviews the whole business and finds that he earned a tidy sum of hundreds of thousands of dollars, slightly offset by the few thousand dollars that the korban cost him. Certainly, he brought his korban for his sin, but his feeling is that all things considered, he did well overall.

Is this true? Nothing could be farther from the truth! The obligation to bring a korban chatos for chillul Shabbos is, as the Ramban and Rabeinu Bachya (Vayikro 1:9) explain, is that really, one deserves to die for his sin. However, Hakodosh Baruch Hu does him the kindness that when he brings a korban, its blood is poured on the altar, and its body is burned before Hashem, He forgives the person, accepting the animal’s life instead of his. The person is supposed to reflect that he should have been killed and his blood should have been spilled, if not for Hashem’s kindness to him in accepting the animal substitute. This reflection would bring him to do teshuva and his sin would be forgiven. If one were to think along these lines, his perspective would be radically different. He would feel as if he had stepped into a fire, he would keep on worrying whether his korban had achieved its purpose and whether his sin was indeed forgiven. He would certainly not console himself that he had earned a lot of money.

Therefore, the Gemara says regarding that fool that Hakodosh Baruch Hu says, “They do not distinguish between good and evil, yet they bring Me a korban?” The whole benefit of a korban is that the sinner will take to heart how

he sinned and the significance of sin. Thus, he will realize that he is deserving of death. Then Hashem accepts the korban of a brokenhearted soul with its sincere teshuva and regret and atones for his sin. But if one does not grasp the significance of sin and the significance of bringing a korban and brings it with the same thoughts as when he brought a thanks-offering for a favor that Hashem did for him, then his korban has no internal value. How could it possibly atone for his sin?

The Dubna Maggid expresses a similar thought (Ohel Yaakov, introduction to Sefer Vayikro) and applies it to fasting as well. One must fast in order to do teshuva, to improve his ways and thoughts, and to regret his sins. Fasting does not atone for those who fast only to fulfill their obligation. With this idea, he renders the posuk in the Haftarah of Yom Kippur (Yeshayahu 58:3) “Why have we fasted, yet You have not seen, we have afflicted our souls, yet You do not know? Behold, you attribute value to your fast days, and all your problems, you demand.” When Am Yisroel questions why their fast days are ineffective, Hashem answers that they think their fasting has intrinsic value, that their refraining from eating entitles them to have their requests fulfilled. Therefore, they demand of Hashem that all their problems disappear immediately, because they think that fasting itself should free them from all suffering. However, in truth, fasting is only to inspire and guide them to do teshuva. That is what really atones for their sins.

Nowadays, there are no korbanos. Instead, there is davening. All the above is valid regarding davening, which is called “service of the heart”. Its ability to accomplish, to protect, and to atone is only when it opens one’s heart and one is inspired to draw close to Hashem with all his heart.

Amud HaYomi recently began its 1st cycle through Shas with Masechta Brachos! This historic initiative will enable deeper comprehension of Shas. Additionally, there are optional monthly bechinos with stipends, which affords one a much greater opportunity to be koneh Shas through Dirshu’s proven retention and accountability methods.

UPCOMING AMUD HAYOMI LIMUD SCHEDULE

DAF HAYOMI	AMUD HAYOMI	DATE	תאריך	יום
בבא קמא כד	ברכות כב:	11/26/23	יג כסלו	א
בבא קמא כה	ברכות כג.	11/27/23	יד כסלו	ב
בבא קמא כו	ברכות כג:	11/28/23	טו כסלו	ג
בבא קמא כז	ברכות כד.	11/29/23	טז כסלו	ד
בבא קמא כח	ברכות כד:	11/30/23	יז כסלו	ה
בבא קמא כט	ברכות כה.	12/1/23	יח כסלו	ו
בבא קמא ל	ברכות כה:	12/2/23	יט כסלו	שבת
בבא קמא לא	ברכות כו.	12/3/23	כ כסלו	א
בבא קמא לב	ברכות כז:	12/4/23	כא כסלו	ב
בבא קמא לג	ברכות כז.	12/5/23	כב כסלו	ג
בבא קמא לד	ברכות כז:	12/6/23	כג כסלו	ד
בבא קמא לה	ברכות כח.	12/7/23	כד כסלו	ה
בבא קמא לו	ברכות כח:	12/8/23	כה כסלו	ו
בבא קמא לז	ברכות כט.	12/9/23	כו כסלו	שבת