



THE שבוע MATTERS

לע"נ ברוך בענדיט וברכה גרוס ע"ה
by Mr. & Mrs. Duvy Gross

שבת קודש פרשת במדבר
מסכת חגיגה דף כ"ז
לרפ"ש אחינו בני ישראל

Insights from our Chaburos

Greeting Guests Atones

From Rabbi Gutterman's insights. For more, visit dafaweek.org or our app at *Daf a Week* under resources

The גמרא says that after חורבן when there is no מזבח a person's table is מכפר for them. It is not clear from the גמרא in what way a person's table is like a מזבח to be מכפר? Both רשי and תוספות say that it is מכפר through אורחים (see the גמרא in נדה דף נ"ה that says it refers to giving food to a poor person). As we all know, the משנה in פ' רקעי אבות פ' משנה ג' פרק ג' says that one who says תורה at their meal is as if he ate from מקום של שלחנו and quotes the same גמרא as our Gemara "זה שלחנו אשר לפני ה'". That משנה seems to be saying our tables are a מזבח due to the Torah learning done there. See the גמרא in עין יעקב who points out that we appear to be learning two different ideas from the same words in the פסוק. How can that be? He explains that both ideas are מכפר as it says "בחסד ואמת יכופר עון" inasmuch as חסד refers to things like charity and אמת refers to Torah learning. There is a third idea which is quoted in ערוך שלחן ערוך which says that one should not eat a meal before salt is brought to the table since a person's table is compared to a מזבח and his אכילה is considered like the קרבן brought on the מזבח and a קרבן needs to be brought with salt. The גמרא explains that when a person eats שמים i.e., to be healthy and strong to serve Hashem their eating is like a קרבן brought on the מזבח/table.

Review & Remember

1. How do we secure atonement without the altar?
2. Is the menorah "wood" or "gold"?
3. What is a salamandra?
4. How do we know that fire will not rule over Jewish sinners?

Stories of the Daf

"My Name is Chagiga..."

"הדרן עלך מסכת חגיגה הדרך עלן..."

A certain pious man had the practice of sequestering himself in a certain place to study Maseches Chagiga, and himself in a certain place to study Maseches Chagiga, and it was his way to review it over and over again. After he knew it well, he committed it to memory. Although the man was not learned in any other tractate, he spent all his days in the study of Chagiga until he had fully mastered it. When the man passed away he was all alone in his home and no one knew of his demise. A strange woman soon arrived on the scene and stood over his body in a posture of grief. She raised her voice in a lament until all the townspeople gathered together to investigate her loud and mournful cries. She called out to the people of the town, "Come, let us eulogize this man and bury him and honor his memory. Let us merit the life of the World-to- Come! For this man honored me all his life long, and saved me from being abandoned and forgotten." Immediately, all of the women came to sit with her, and the town gathered and mourned him with great honor. The men provided shrouds and arranged his burial, and they honored him greatly at the funeral. All the while, the mysterious woman cried and wailed and could not be consoled. Finally, the people of the town asked her, "Who are you?" She said to them, "Who am I? My name is Chagiga." As soon as the pious man was buried, the woman disappeared. All of the townspeople knew that they had been visited by Maseches Chagiga in the form of a woman, who had come to them to ensure the honorable burial of her devoted student. (Medrash Tanchuma HaYoshon, as brought in Menoras HaMaor, Ner 3, VIII:3:5). The Chofetz Chaim, zt"l, would say: "Anyone who does a single mitzvah acquires a heavenly advocate. How much more is this so when a person studies a masechta so many times until he masters it and commits it to memory! Imagine to what extent it petitions on his behalf in the upper world to save him from Gehinnom and from all of the evil forces that pursue one's soul. Imagine to what extent it uplifts him to attain all good, and to be bound eternally together with Hashem!"

Hadran Alach Massechta Chagiga, V'Hadrach Alan!

Parsha Connection

This week's daf discusses the status of the מזבחות with regard to their ability to become Tamai. Rashi states that but for their covering they would be considered a wooden vessel that is made to be stationary. Tosfos on last week's Daf asks why were the Keilim in the Mishkan considered stationary utensils, they were transported through the midbar. See Tosfos for two answers. This week's Parsha discusses the counting of the sons of Levi and the first son to be counted is Kohath, whose job included transporting the altars. Why was Kohath counted first when Gershon was the oldest son of Levi? If we attribute this to the importance of their job, which was carrying the holiest parts of the Mishkan, that itself needs an explanation, why did Kohath get the most important job? The Alshich Hakadosh, offers a beautiful explanation, the Kohath family includes Moshe and Aharon and in their merit the larger Kohath family was rewarded. This is indicated in the verse which says (למשפחותם לבית אבתם) according to their families, according to their fathers' house, the "families" are listed before בית אבתם because of the fact that Moshe and Aharon are included in the family. By contrast, when it talks about Gershon in Parshas Nasso it says "לבית אבותם למשפחותם," mentioning their forefathers before the "families" since the families were not greater than their forefathers!

Halacha Highlight

Leaving a knife on the table for bentsching

ר' יוחנן וריש לקיש דאמרי תרוייהו בזמן שביית המקדש קיים מזבח מכפר על אדם עכשיו שלחנו של אדם מכפר עליו

Rav Yosef Karo¹, the Bais Yosef, cites authorities who maintain that one must cover the knives on the table while reciting Birkas Hamazon. The rationale for this practice is that regarding the altar the Torah states², “You shall not raise iron upon them.” The reason the Torah restricts raising iron on the stones of the altar is that it is inappropriate for something that shortens life, namely iron in the form of weapons, to be used to make something that extends life, namely, the altar. Since according to our Gemara the table stands in the place of the altar it is logical to assume that a similar restriction will apply. Rabbeinu Tzidkiyahu Bar Avrohom the Doctor³, the Shiblei Haleket, cites another rationale for the practice of removing the knife. One time a person was reciting Birkas Hamazon and when he reached the third beracha he became so emotional over the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash that he grabbed the knife and stabbed himself in the stomach. Consequently the practice developed to remove the knives from the table while reciting Birkas Hamazon. There is a practical difference between these two approaches. Rav Avrohom Avli Gombiner⁴, the Magen Avrohom, writes that according to the first reason mentioned by Bais Yosef, there is no reason to cover the knives on Shabbos. Since the altar cannot be built on Shabbos there is no connection between the restriction of using a knife to build the altar and by extension to the table. On the other hand, Bais Yosef⁵ mentions that following the logic of Shiblei Haleket there is no reason to distinguish between Shabbos and a weekday. Later authorities debate which practice should be followed. Shulchan Aruch⁶ writes that the custom is that people do not cover knives on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Magen Avrohom,⁷ however, cites the Levush who writes that we do not distinguish between Shabbos and Yom Tov.

1. בי אורח סי' קפ דה כתב רוקח.

2. דברים כ"ה.

3. שבלי הלכת סי' קנה ומובא דבריו בבי הנל.

4. מגא שם סקד.

5. בי הנל.

6. שוע שם סע' ד.

7. מגא שם.

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Mussar from the Daf

The Table Atones

The Gemorah says that when there is no Bais Hamikdash a person's table brings atonement to the person in the place of the Mizbayach. Rashi says that the Gemara is referring to the Hachnasas Orchim he does at the table by providing them with meals. The Gemorah in Taanis 27, however, states that nowadays it is a person's Tefillah that brings atonement. Which one is it? Perhaps each Chazal is focusing on different aspects of the Karbonos. We know the Machlokes between the Rambam and the Ramban as to the purpose of the karbonos. The Rambam (Moreh Nevuchim 3:46) explained that the purpose behind Karbonos were to remove the concept of Avodah Zarah from the Yidden who were influenced by these false ideas in Egypt. The Ramban (Vayikra, 1, 9) disagrees and learns that the karbonos were meant to inspire a person to do Teshuva. When seeing the karbon slaughtered and burnt on the מזבח the person should envision that as a result of his sins he is that one that really should have been the one slaughtered and it is only through Hashem's kindness that the animal could be substituted in his place. These thoughts should inspire him to do teshuva. We can suggest that the Gemara in Tannis focuses on the Rambam's concept of Korbonos. Through Tefillah one comes to a similar recognition that Hashem is the sole address to turn to. This too uproots the concept of Avodah Zarah. Our Gemorah, however, focuses on the aspect of Korbonos described by the Ramban (i.e., that a Korbon is meant to inspire the person to do Teshuva). How so? The classical Mitzvah of Hachnasas Orchim is providing for a person in need. When one sees such a person at one's table, he should think to himself “Oy, that could have been me. Oy that could have been me. I need to thank Hashem for not allowing me to be poor and in need. I have to work on my Avodah so that I don't become a person in need.” In this way he is inspired to do Teshuva.

Point to Ponder

The last Gemara in Chagiga says that even people who sin will not be consumed by the fire of Ga'henom, just like the wood of the gold altar was not consumed by the fire that burned upon it even though there was only a very thin gold coating protecting it. Rashi says that a miracle took place and the gold protected the wood. Since this was a miracle, why would we assume that sinners will also merit a miracle? (Answer to appear next week)

Response to last week's Point to Ponder

Why isn't a chaver who opens wine during the regel given the same consideration that an הארץ עמ who brings Terumah to a Kohen wine after the pressing is given, i.e., we tell the הארץ עמ that we cannot accept the Terumah now but he can store the Terumah until the next pressing and he can then give it to the Kohen at that time? Although the Rabbis accommodated a non-learned person allowed him to bring back the Terumah at a future pressing, they didn't offer the same to a Chaver. Since we assume that the wine became contaminated over the holiday it would be inappropriate to allow a chaver to sell it as pure in the future once it has been treated as טמא during the interim (See תוס' ריד).

For more points to ponder by Rabbi Yechiel Grunhaus, or insights by Rabbi Gutterman, please visit our website, dafaweek.org, or download the app

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