

CHIZUK & IDUD

*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

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Ramat Shiloh, Beit Shemesh

VAYIKRa

There is much discussion concerning the Rambam's view in Moreh Nevuchim 3:46 that the purpose of the Korbanot was to wean the Jews away from the idolatrous practices that they had been inculcated with in Egypt. Ramban vehemently disagrees, and points to the historical precedents which pre-date Sefer Vayikra by many years. No'ach sacrificed animals upon emerging from the Ark and even earlier, it was Kayin and Hevel who were the original ones to bring offerings. We thus see that Korbanot are not brought as a result of sin (idolatry), but rather, sin followed the ideal bringing of offerings.

The second sentence in our Parsha is phrased in a problematic manner. It reads: ADAM KI YAKRIV MIKEM, "When one offers a sacrifice of YOU", rather than saying: ADAM MIKEM KI YAKRIV, "When one of you offers a sacrifice". The Baal HaTanya explains that when bringing a sacrifice what is really being offered is ourselves; our energies, our thoughts, our hearts. The sacrifice is but an external manifestation of the true inner

offering. The real sacrifice is MIKEM, "of you". We give to G-d something of ourselves.

This idea is also true regarding Aliyah. We come knowing that we are bringing ourselves, not giving something of our possessions. Each Oleh bring his or her self. This brings to mind the late President John F. Kennedy's famous exhortation, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." These words tapped into the idealism of the American people. Today, we need leaders and Rabbis who can do the same for the Jewish people, igniting within us all the spark of altruism, of selfless giving for the betterment of our country and its people.

The talk of Z'chuyot, of the Oleh's "rights" and benefits upon arrival in Israel, is an unfortunate emphasis on the TAFEIL (non-essential), while ignoring the IKAR (essential).

We must refocus on ADAM KI YAKRIV MIKEM - on the willingness to give of ourselves when making Aliyah, and not be preoccupied with the question of what we can get from it.

The Talmud (Pesachim 8b) makes a similar point explaining why Jerusalem was not blessed with the delicious fruits of Ginnosar or the hot springs of Tiberias? Were these attractions to be found in Jerusalem, the Talmud replies, the Oleh Regel

might remark that the pilgrimage was worth it (dayeinu) for these experiences alone. Such a person, concludes the Talmud, would be OLEH SHELO LISHMA, lacking the appropriate intentions.

Aliyah too , must be done LISHMA. Not for material benefits, but rather for the benefit of being here. Once we return home, it will surely be for our benefit! 📖👉

These weekly words of Torah wisdom can be found in my recently published book "Eretz Yisrael and Aliyah in the weekly Parsha". It can be ordered by calling 052-336-0553 or by ordering it on Amazon