

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON KI SAVO - 5759

B'S'D' because we cannot ignore the psychological suffering of the poor. They must be given the dignity of offering a korban of substance to be burnt on the Mizbayach.

To receive this parsha sheet in WP 6.1 file (readable by Word), send e-mail message to cshulman@cahill.com

From: Rabbi Yissocher Frand[SMTP:ryfrand@torah.org]

"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Ki Savo -

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 294, Geirim And Davening: Some Unique Problems. Good Shabbos!

The Torah Displays Sensitivity -- Not Insensitivity -- To Needs of the Poor

This week's Parsha contains the Mitzvah of Bikkurim - the Mitzvah of bringing the first produce from one's crops to Jerusalem. As described in the Mishneh and the Rambam, this was a very elaborate ceremony.

The Talmud [Bava Kama 92a] comments regarding this ceremony that (The rich get richer and) "the poor get poorer". Why? When the wealthy brought their first fruits on silver and golden trays, the Kohanim [Priests] would return the trays to the owners. However, when the poor brought their fruit in reed baskets, the Kohanim would not return the baskets to them. This appears to be one of life's typical inequities -- the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

What is the reason for this? There might be certain political parties that advocate such a philosophy, but that is not the Torah philosophy!

I saw an interpretation from Rav Aharon Boxt (a great genius in pre-war Lithuania). Rav Aharon Boxt said that the Torah was not demonstrating insensitivity to the needs of the poor. Rather, just the opposite -- the Torah was demonstrating tremendous sensitivity. When the wealthy brought their fruits on gold and silver trays, not only was their offering distinguished by the containing vessel, but also by its quantity. The rich had an abundance of "first fruits". When the Kohain would remove the fruits from the basket or tray, the donor would truly have something to be proud of.

But why is the poor person poor? The poor person has a miserable crop. His "first fruits" consist of a few grapes and a couple of other fruits. For the Kohain to remove this little clump of grapes from the basket would have been a humiliating experience for the donor. On top of not having the gold and silver and not having the abundance of fruit in the first place, the removal of the fruit from the basket would entail adding insult to injury by emphasizing his poverty.

The Torah feels that a person's dignity is worth more than a few dollars. Let us keep the fruit in the basket. Let it at least have the appearance of being something significant. Even if it will cost him the price of the basket, let the man walk out with his dignity. A person can always make a little more money. It is much harder to recoup one's dignity.

We find the same idea concerning the korban [sacrifice/offering] of a poor person. Many times a poor person's offering will consist of a bird. The Torah instructs [Vayikra 1:17] that the bird should be burnt on the Mizbayach [Altar] together with all its feathers. Rash"i comments that the odor of burnt feathers is very repulsive. Rash"i asks -- why would the Torah not require that the feathers be removed before burning the bird on the Mizbayach?

Rash"i answers "in order that the Mizbayach be full and beautified with the offering of a poor man." Here too, the idea is the same. The rich man's korban was an ox. He brought the offering and it would roast on the Mizbayach for hours. He would feel real satisfaction with the magnitude of his offering. However, if we remove the feathers from the poor man's korban, the skinny little bird would be totally consumed in 30 seconds. After he waited on line behind the rich man for an hour, the poor man would walk out the door after only 2 minutes! Therefore, the Torah says to ignore the odor

Where Does The Torah Say I Must Be Happy?

In this week's Parsha we have the infamous "tochacha" (curses). We are threatened that if we do not keep the Torah, then all of the horrible things that we have seen in Jewish history would in fact happen. Everything has been predicted and everything has come true!

At the end of the "tochacha" the Torah says that the reason for the curses is "because of the fact that you did not serve the L-rd your G-d with joy and gladness of heart, when you had plenty of everything" [Devorim 28:47].

The apparent reason for the tragedies was not so much that we failed to observe the Torah but that we did not keep the commandments with joy. We were not thrilled to be a Jew; we were not happy to put on our Tefillin; we were not happy to celebrate Pesach. That is the whole crime that brought on the "tochacha".

I once heard a comment from Rav Yochanan Zweig (a Rosh Yeshiva in Florida). Where does it say in the Torah that there is a command to be happy? If all the curses come because we failed to observe the Torah "with joy", observing the Torah with joy must be a fundamental command. What is the source for this? Not one of the enumerators of the 613 commandments included a command called "Be happy".

We only have a limited command of "You shall be most happy" [Devorim 16:15] on the holiday of Succoth. The verse "Serve G-d with joy" is a verse from Psalms [100:2], which cannot be used as the basis for a Biblical command. So where in the Torah does it say to be happy?

Rabbi Zweig suggested the following answer. We know from experience that there are two types of people in the world. Some people are always happy and some people are never happy. What is it that distinguishes these two types? The people who are never happy always feel that they deserve more. "I'm healthy? Of course, I am supposed to be healthy! I'm wealthy? Of course, I am supposed to be wealthy! I have children? That's expected! It is a birthright!" When a person goes through life thinking that everything is coming to him, that he deserves everything, then he is never happy -- because he will never have enough.

The person who is always happy and always satisfied is the type of personality who feels "G-d owes me nothing. Everything is a gift." When a person realizes that everything is a gift, he will always be happy.

This point can be demonstrated by two different possible reasons why a person may receive money. When a person receives repayment of a debt, it does not make him happy -- the debtor owed him the money. However, when someone receives a check as a present, he is happy -- the money was not necessary or expected.

A person who believes that everything -- his health, his wife, his children, his eyesight, everything -- is a gift, will be a person who walks around thrilled.

A person who views everything as the collection of a debt believes that he is the center of the universe. The world revolves around him. That is why the "tochacha" views this phenomenon as a fundamental of the Torah. People living in a world in which they are the center of the universe are not living in a G-d centered world. That is the antithesis to all of Torah and Mitzvos. All of Torah teaches us that this is a G-d centered world. We are his children; we are his servants. He is IT, not us.

That is why the Torah can make the statement "Because you did not serve G-d with joy and gladness of heart." Happiness is a tremendous commentary on a person's perspective of life.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington
twerskyd@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Yerushalayim
dhoffman@torah.org Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the
Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call
(410) 358-0416 for further information. RavFrاند, Copyright (c) 1999 by
Rabbi Y. Frand and Project Genesis, Inc. Project Genesis: Torah on the

Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B
http://www.torah.org/ Baltimore, MD 21208 (410) 602-1350 FAX:
602-1351

From: Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@virtual.co.il] *TORAH WEEKLY *
Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshat Ki Tavo

To The Lifeboat

"All these curses will come upon you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you will not have listened to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, to observe His commandments and decrees that He commanded you." (28:45)

I once asked my Rabbi why it was that I alone among my friends had chosen to return to the faith of our fathers. My friends, almost without exception, had married non-Jews and were busy parenting non-Jewish children.

He replied to me with two words in Hebrew, "zechut avot." The merit of the ancestors. "The Torah must have been very dear to someone in your family" he said. "Someone, your grandfather, your grandmother, prayed very hard that they should have Jewish grandchildren." Imagine you just bought a refrigerator. It turns up in a wooden crate. You take out the fridge and throw away the wood. Imagine you're on a sinking boat with the same refrigerator. You take the wood and throw away the refrigerator. When most of the Jewish World was reaching for a new fridge, someone in my past was hanging on to the wood for dear life.

"It is a tree of life to those who hold on to it, and its supporters are praiseworthy." We say these words from Mishlei (Book of Proverbs) every time we put the Torah back into the Holy Ark. Maybe we say them as we are putting the Torah away and out of sight to remind us what the Torah really means to the Jewish People. It is our plank of wood in a stormy sea. It's not so much that the Jewish People have kept the Torah, rather the Torah has kept us.

In its description of the Holy Ark which housed the Ten Commandments, the Torah tells us that the Ark's carrying staves are never to be separated from the Ark itself: "The staves shall remain in the rings of the Ark, they may not be removed from it." (Shemot 25:15)

These staves represent the financial supporters of Torah. Just as the staves of the Ark may not be removed, so are the Torah's supporters and benefactors inseparable from Torah scholarship. However, the Ark never really needed the staves because, not only did it bear its own weight, but it would lift up those who were "carrying" it.

When Rabbi Eliezer Gordon, the founder of Telshe Yeshiva, got married, his father-in-law, Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Neviezer wanted to support him so that he could devote himself to study and become a great Torah scholar.

As Rabbi Gordon's family began to grow, he became increasingly uncomfortable with the feeling that he was burdening his father-in-law, and frequently asked Reb Avraham to allow him to accept one of the numerous rabbinical positions that were then being offered to him. Despite difficult financial times, Reb Avraham refused to let him accept. He insisted that he carry on studying.

Reb Abraham's wife asked her husband how long he intended to support their daughter and son-in-law. He replied "My dear wife, who knows who is supporting whom..."

When finally Rabbi Gordon was offered the Rabbinate of Eisheshok, his father-in-law felt he could not restrain him from accepting such an important post.

The day after the Gordon family left for Eisheshok, Reb Avraham Yitzchak, Rabbi Gordon's father-in-law, passed away. It then became clear who had been supporting whom. The Ark carries those who "carry" it.

"It is a tree of life to those who hold on to it, and its supporters are praiseworthy." Those who support Torah are certainly praiseworthy, and they will be happy with their support, but for the Torah to be a tree of life that will sustain us and our descendants, the Torah must be to us like a tree

of life. We must hold on to it like a plank of wood in a shipwreck.

The month of Elul is a time when we re-dedicate ourselves to the Torah and its values. We must hold on to it for dear life. For it is our only unsinkable lifeboat.

Sources:

* Rabbi Zev Leff in Shiurei Bina, Rabbi Moshe Newman

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor:
Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Eli Ballon Ohr Somayach
International 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103 Jerusalem 91180,
Israel Tel: 972-2-581-0315 Fax: 972-2-581-2890 E-Mail: info@ohr.org.il
Home Page: http://www.ohr.org.il

From: Rabbi Riskin's Shabbat Shalom List [SMTP:parsha@

ohrtorahstone.org.il] Shabbat Shalom: Ki Tavo By Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel; To what extent is happiness and joy a Jewish value? Is it proper to maintain that walking with one's eyes glued to the ground, one's neck hunched over, one's glance clouded over with sadness and depression, is an anti-Jewish posture, an expression of malaise and perhaps mental illness, but certainly not a legitimate result of religious commitment and sobriety? It is abundantly clear from our Torah portion of Ki Tavo that a Jew is required to serve G d joyfully!

Studying this week's parasha, we note a fascinating repetition. Just as the Ten Commandments that appear in the Book of Exodus are repeated in the Book of Deuteronomy, so too the admonitions ((tochacha) that first appeared in Chapter 26 of Leviticus are reiterated in our portion. What these two sequences have in common - harrowing descriptions of doom and disaster awaiting the nation Israel if we abandon G d's law - is far greater than what sets them apart, but this week I'd like to explore one particular difference that may add a slightly different perception to the Torah's sheer onslaught of admonitions and curses. Our portion is comprised of blessings and curses, and what I hope to demonstrate is that even within the fabric of the curses, the Torah has placed one significant blessing, albeit in disguise.

Approximately half-way through the 53 verses in our portion concentrating on the curses awaiting the Jewish people if they do not act properly, the Torah seems to momentarily step back and present us with a summary of the events up to that point: "All these curses will thus have come upon you, pursuing you and catching you, all because when you had plenty of everything, you did not serve G d your Lord with joyfulness (b'Esimha) and with a glad heart. You will therefore serve your enemies." (Dt. 28:45-47)

Now why is it so important to serve the Almighty in joy? I would maintain that a positive frame of mind is the necessary conclusion of sincere Jewish faith. After all, the Bible begins by establishing a moment of Divine creation, a testimony to the idea that world and history have a structured Creator and Guide, that life is not a mere accidental tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Much to the contrary, the nation Israel is guaranteed eternal life and a leadership role in the eventual millennium of peace and well-being for every human being.

It is this faith in ourselves, our nation, our G d and His world that enabled us to blow the shofar sounds of our Majestic Lord's coronation even while fleeing the Nazis, and to drink the four Passover wine cups of freedom even in Communist Siberia. Never despair, taught Rav Nahman of Bratzlav. Next year in Jerusalem exultantly sang and danced Jewish congregations throughout the world at the conclusion of every Yom Kippur fast and Passover Seder. Hence the Torah admonishes us to serve our G d in joy; conduct which expresses sadness reflects a fundamental lack of faith in the Jewish vision of our historic destiny.

But if joy is so crucial, why is this idea only to be found in the admonitions of Deuteronomy and is absent from the admonitions of Leviticus?

To answer let's first recall the context of the curses in our portion.

Up until the Book of Deuteronomy, the mention of joy (simha) in the

torah is a fairly rare occurrence. We find only one variation of the word in Genesis, no term for joy at all in Exodus, one in Leviticus, one in Numbers; but in the Book of Deuteronomy it appears more than ten times. And what we realize is that the word *שמחה* or joyousness receives its disproportionate representation whenever the Torah speaks of the festivals as they are to be celebrated in Israel, and our state of mind when bringing the second tithes, *תרומה* or the first-fruit offerings (*bikkurim*).

Our portion of Ki Tavo, for example, exquisitely describes the fruits, (*bikkurim*), concluding with the exact words the farmer was required to intone to the priest when he brought his produce to Jerusalem. As we see, the offering of the first fruits is totally identified with the joy of our having come full circle, having moved from the precarious life of a slave to a free human being on our own fertile and fructifying Israeli soil. Understandably, this joy is quite palpable especially since it is the stuff of heroic transformations: the farmer shall set the basket down before G d your Lord. You the Levite, and the proselyte in your midst shall thus rejoice in all the good that G d your Lord has granted you and your family. (Deut. 26:11)

Therefore when two chapters later, in the midst of a litany of curses, the Torah goes out of its way to add the point that serving G d alone is not enough to prevent disaster because, *אם* when you had plenty of everything, you would not serve G d your Lord with joyfulness and with a glad heart, *אם* we cannot fail but to be struck by the symmetry of the aforementioned first-fruit ceremony when we are required to remember *אם* all the good that G d has granted. *אם* Although not identical, the two phrases, *אם* plenty of everything, and G d granting us so much that is good, echo similar ideas.

It would seem, then, that the *אם* curses of our portion are the result of a specific sequence of events. Notwithstanding our compliance to the laws and statutes of the Torah, crucial for us is serving G d with a glad heart, with joy that acknowledges G d's goodness whose source - and this is most significant - is to be found in the ceremony of first-fruits, our own produce from our own land, and this is the key - our own land!

Now we also understand why the admonition of *אם* joy in our portion - an ultimatum that surfaces as a warning and a condition to worship - cannot be assigned a similar function in Leviticus. In that book of the Priests, the first admonitions appear in a context where the actual farming of the land and the intoning of the specially prescribed words to the priest in Jerusalem, when bringing first fruits have not yet emerged. It is the book of Deuteronomy and particularly our portion, which emphasizes our *אם* entrance into our land. Indeed, our portion is called Ki Tavo, and the opening verse reads, *אם* When you come to the land that G d your Lord is giving you as a heritage (Deut. 26:1) Only now, with the narrative of joy on the lips of the farmer still audible, can we introduce this prerequisite of joy as integral to Divine Service.

This will also explain why Rav Moshe Isserles (author of the Ashkenazi gloss to the *Shulchan Aruch* Code of Jewish Law) forbids the Priest-Kohanim from rising to the bima each morning and calling upon G d to issue his blessings outside of the Land of Israel (with the exception of the Festivals); The Divine Presence can only be invoked in an atmosphere of joy, and - except for the Holy-Happy Days of the Holidays - there can be no joy of independence and sense of destiny outside of our own Land.

Wherever the Jew finds himself and no matter how he may be forced to suffer, he ought not fall prey to depression; this would express a lack of faith in the Divine guarantee of our return to Israel and our ultimate redemption. And in Israel the Jew must be so aware of Divine beneficence and the role he plays in realizing our historic destiny that he must continually serve G d in joy; to do any less would express an ingratitude, which could lead, G d forbid, to our serving our enemies in pain.

Shabbat Shalom You can find Rabbi Riskin's parshiot on the web at: www.ohrtorahstone.org.il/parsha/index.htm Ohr Torah Stone Colleges and Graduate Programs Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Dean Rabbi Chaim Brovender, Dean

From: Rabbi Yisroel Ciner [SMTP: ciner@torah.org]

This week we read the parsha of Ki Savo--when you will enter the Land of Israel--which begins with the commandment to bring the first fruits to the Temple in Yerushalayim. This is called the mitzvah of Bikurim. There is a passuk {verse} later on in the parsha, after Bikurim and a number of other commandments, which really hits upon an issue that I think plagues all of us to varying degrees at one point or another.

"Ha'yome ha'zeh Hashem Elokecha m'tzav'cha la'a'sos es ha'chukim v'es ha'mishpatim {On this day Hashem, your G-d, is commanding you to do the laws and judgments} [26:16]."

Why does the passuk say that on this day Hashem is commanding? Hadn't most mitzvos already been given at Sinai?

The Ramban explains that Moshe had now completed his task of teaching Bnei Yisroel all of the commandments. Therefore it was only from that day that Bnei Yisroel were commanded to do all of the laws and judgments.

Rashi, however, takes a different approach. Quoting the Medrash he explains: Every day they must be like new {k'chadashim} in our eyes, as if we had just been commanded.

Unbelievable. Imagine if Hashem would come forth and speak to us, giving us clear instructions as to what actions are in our best interests. Imagine the motivation and determination that we'd have to fulfill those instructions. According to Rashi, the passuk is exhorting us to feel that way every single day--k'chadashim {like new}.

But how can we maintain that freshness and excitement--that k'chadashim? We know that we human beings have a tremendous capacity to adjust to things.

On the first morning of camp, my wife and I were woken by the sounds of birds walking on our ceiling. They were inside the building and were having quite a time on the drop-ceiling of our room. The ceiling kept sagging under their weight and we were petrified that the birds would drop through the drop-ceiling with all of their droppings in tow! I thought to myself that if this is going to be a daily 'Close Encounter of the Fou/wl Kind' I'm never going to get a proper amount of sleep and I simply won't survive the summer. However, on the second day I found it far less annoying. By the third day, even though they seemed to be having quite a party up there, I simply didn't hear it. I had gotten used to it and it no longer moved me.

If that is the nature of man, how can we be commanded to feel as if the Torah was given today--that its words are k'chadashim? How can we feel freshness in our service to Hashem? We've already 'been there done that'. On whatever level of observance we're at, we've done what we do perhaps thousands of times already. How can we reach the level of k'chadashim?

Rav Volbe, in his *Alay Shur*, deals with the cycle of spiritual ups and downs that we are all subjected to. How at times it feels fresh and exciting and at times we feel like robots, mechanically going through the motions. How we can then begin to question ourselves: Is this really me? Where have the feelings gone? If I'm feeling (or not feeling) this way then maybe this really isn't for me...

He quotes from the *Sefer Hayashar* that one must realize right from the start that this is part and parcel of spiritual growth. An intrinsic part of this growth process is the ups and downs--the swings between the feelings of intimacy and the feelings of detachment. Having these feelings is as clear an indication as one can have that this is where you belong. This is for you.

It would be like giving up baseball because you once got a strike while at bat. Well I guess baseball just isn't for me... I'm clearly not cut out to be a basketball player because I missed a foul shot... It's part of the process.

But if that is so, doesn't the passuk become even harder to understand? If the ups and downs are inevitable and intrinsic parts of the spiritual growth process, how can I be commanded and expected to feel as if they are new? I've done it so many times already... I'm feeling distant and detached...

The *Sefer Hayashar* writes further that the factor which will determine if one is feeling intimate in his service to Hashem or detached from Him is *chidush* {newness}. One can make sure that his service doesn't become rote

by constantly searching for new insights and understandings. Finding chidush in oneself and in one's service. The chidush can make everything k'chadashim.

Perhaps, that is the explanation of the commandment that we began with. We seem to be commanded to view the Torah as newly given each day. How can one possibly do that and furthermore, how can we be commanded to do something that seems to be beyond our nature and grasp?

Perhaps the commandment is in fact a very tangible one. Work at finding and infusing freshness into your fulfillment of the mitzvos. Study. Search. Open your eyes. Open your hearts. You'll thereby minimize the downs and maximize the ups--have short bouts of detachment surrounded by extended spells of intimacy.

Find chidush and you'll find the mitzvos to be k'chadashim.

Good Shabbos, Yisroel Ciner

Parsha-Insights, Copyright (c) 1999 by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner and Project Genesis, Inc. Rabbi Yisroel Ciner is a Rebbe [teacher] at Neveh Zion, <http://www.neveh.org/>, located outside of Yerushalayim. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21208 (410) 602-1350

From: Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky[SMTP:rmk@torah.org] Drasha Parshas Ki Savo -- Man's Search for Meaning Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

This week's portion discusses the entry into the land of Israel and the responsibilities that are intrinsically tied with its inheritance. There are countless blessings mentioned that follow a Torah lifestyle and unfortunately myriad curses when those values are abandoned. But after the litany of blessing and curses, Moshe tells the nation, "you have seen everything that Hashem did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and all his servants and to all the land. Your eyes beheld the great signs and wonders, but Hashem did not give you a heart to comprehend, eyes to see, or ears to hear until this day" (Deuteronomy 29:2-3). Moshe was obviously referring to the day that the Jews received a Torah comprehension of events. But it defies logic. After all, what does one need to understand about wonders? Water turning to blood, supernatural invasions of wild animals, locusts, and fire-filled hail need no rocket scientist to fathom G-d's power. Surely the splitting of the sea is as amazing an event that will marvel one's eyes and stir the senses of any people. What then does Moshe mean when he tells the nation that Hashem "did not give you a heart to comprehend, eyes to see, or ears to hear until this day" ?

Rav Noach Weinberg, dean of Aish HaTorah Institutions, tells the story of the young man who came to him in search of spiritual meaning. The young man entered the portals of Yeshiva Aish HaTorah for a few days and then decided to leave the yeshiva in his quest for spiritual meaning across the Land of Israel. The student stopped at synagogues in Meah Shearim, visited the holy sites in Tiberias and Tzefat, and after two weeks of spiritual-hunting returned to Jerusalem and headed straight back to the Yeshiva. "Rabbi Weinberg," he exclaimed. "I spent two weeks in travelling the length and breadth of Israel in search of spirituality, and I want you to know that I found absolutely nothing!" Rabbi Weinberg just nodded. "You say you traveled the entire country and did not find any spirituality?" "Yes sir," came the resounding reply. "None whatsoever!" "Let me ask you," continued the Rabbi, "how did you find the Bafoofsticks?" "Bafoofsticks?" countered the student. What's a Bafoofstick?" "That's not the point," responded the rabbi, "I just want to know how you feel about them." "About what?" "The Bafoofsticks" The young man looked at the rabbi as if he had lost his mind. He tried to be as respectful as he could under the circumstances. "Rabbi!" he exclaimed in frustration, "I'd love to tell you how the Bafoofsticks were. I'd even spend the whole day discussing Bafoofsticks with you, but frankly I have no idea what in the world is a Bafoofstick!" Rabbi Weinberg smiled. He had accomplished his objective. "Tell me," he said softly. "And you know what spirituality is?"

Moshe explains to the nation that it is possible to be mired in miracles

and still not comprehend the greatness that surrounds you. One can experience miraculous revelations but unless he focuses his heart and mind he will continue to lead his life uninspired as before.

In fact, even blessings need to be realized. In offering blessing the Torah tells us, "the blessings will be upon you and they will reach you" (Deuteronomy 28:2). If blessings are upon us of course they reach you! Why the redundancy? Once again the Torah teaches us that it is possible to be surrounded by blessing and not realize it. There are people who are surrounded by health, wealth, and great fortune, but their lives are permeated in misery. They have the blessing, but it has not reached them. We need more than physical or even spiritual blessing. We need more than experiencing miraculous events. It is not enough to see miracles or receive the best of fortune. We must bring them into our lives and into our souls. Then we will be truly blessed. Good Shabbos _ 1999 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Thank You to Mr. Daniel Retter and family for your words of support and encouragement. Good Shabbos Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha, Copyright (c) 1999 by Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and Project Genesis, Inc. Drasha is the e-mail edition of FaxHomily, a Project of the Henry and Myrtle Hirsch Foundation. Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Associate Dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore, <http://www.yoss.org/>. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21208 (410) 602-1350

From: Shlomo Katz[SMTP:skatz@torah.org] Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz Contributing Editor: Daniel Dadusc Ki Tavo Sponsored by Dr. and Mrs. Irving Katz on the yearzeit of father Moshe Aharon ben Menashe Reiss z"l

Customs for Parashat Ki Tavo (From Nit'ai Gavriel: Dinei U'Minchagei Yamim Nora'im, ch.4)

1. Ezra ordained that Ki Tavo should be read before Rosh Hashanah in order to usher out the year's curses. [This parashah contains the tochachah/ Moshe's foretelling of the horrible punishments that would befall our nation if we sin.]
2. One should not be called for the aliyah that contains the tochachah if he hates the ba'al koreh or if the ba'al koreh hates him.
3. It is proper that the one who goes up for the tochachah should think repentant thoughts so that his deeds will not awaken Divine judgment against him.
4. In some places, before the reading of the tochachah, the gabbai calls out the verses from Mishlei (3:11-12): "My son, do not despise Hashem's discipline, and do not despise His reproof, for Hashem admonishes the one He loves, and like a father He mollifies the child."
5. In some places, they do not call out: "Ya'amod"/"Arise, so- and-so the son of so-and-so." Rather, they call out: "Arise, whoever wishes." In some places, the person who is called to the tochachah is paid. In some places, the ba'al koreh himself receives the aliyah, and this was the custom of many tzaddikim (including the rebbes of Sanz, Sighet, Munkacz and Lubavitch). If the ba'al koreh is a kohen, the aliyot may be apportioned so that the tochachah will be an eighth aliyah and may be given to a kohen.
6. In some places, the one who receives the aliyah that contains the tochachah does not recite a berachah either before or after. The preceding aliyah ends just prior to the tochachah and the one who receives that aliyah recites the after-berachah. Some wrote harshly against this custom (including R' Shlomo Kluger z"l, R' Eliezer Dovid Gruenwald z"l and R' Moshe Feinstein z"l).
7. It is customary to read the tochachah quickly and in a soft voice. However, one must be careful not to read so quietly that the congregation does not hear, because then the congregation will not fulfill the mitzvah of hearing the Torah reading. Some have the custom to read in a loud voice--the purpose being to awaken the congregation to repentance.)

8. It is forbidden for the ba'al koreh to have in mind that the tochachah should befall any specific person. Some are careful not to stand directly in front of the ba'al koreh. (The author of the Bnei Yissaschar and his descendants, the Muncaczer Rebbes, insisted that no one stand opposite them when they read the tochachah.) Some also have the custom that the person who received the previous aliyah leaves the bimah before the tochachah is read.

Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway
learn@torah.org 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B <http://www.torah.org/>
Baltimore, MD 21208

From: Yated[SMTP:yated-usa@yated.com]

Peninim Ahl HaTorah: Parshas Ki Sisa

by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

And you shall take of the first of every fruit of the ground. and you shall put it in a basket and you shall come to the Kohen. (26:2,3) The Torah begins the parsha with the details of the Bikkurim offering. The Jew brought the first of his fruits to the Kohen, symbolically stating that he dedicated all that he had to the service of Hashem. In the Mishnah Bikkurim 3:6, Chazal describe the pomp and joy that accompanied this offering. The wealthy would bring their fruits in baskets made of gold; the poor in baskets made of cane. The Kohen took not only the fruits, but also the baskets. The Yerushalmi explains that the basket served an interesting function. In the event the fruits became tamei, ritually unclean, and therefore not edible, at least the basket would remain in the possession of the Kohen. If there were no fruits, the basket served as a replacement, so there would at least be some contribution. A remarkable and timely lesson can be inferred from this concept. Horav Moshe Swift, z"l, observes that while everyone came to the Bais Hamikdash with something different, they all arrived with something to donate. If not the fruit, then at least the basket. There are those who participated with fruits; others offered their labor, their time, or their energy. Some came to Hashem's Sanctuary to offer sacrifices, while others came to study Torah; some gave contributions, while some others contributed services. Everyone, however, gave something. While the nature of every individual's gift was different, each person participated. They recited a special tefillah after they gave the various gifts and tithes. They said Look down from Your Holy Habitation, from Heaven, and bless Your People, Yisrael. Chazal tell us that this prayer implies to Hashem: We have performed our duty. We have brought what is to be brought. We, who have been able to give, have given. We, who have been able to serve, have served. We have done that which is in our power to do. It is now up to Hashem to do that which is in His power. Religion is based upon reciprocity. We do not press buttons and passively watch blessings appear. We do not throw a switch so that gifts are showered down from Heaven. We give, and then we receive in return. He who comes empty-handed should expect to leave in the same state. To paraphrase Horav Swift: We stand before Hashem on Rosh Hashanah and plead: Give us, give us! We ask for parnassah, livelihood; we ask for health and happiness; we ask for nachas. What are we giving in return? Better yet, with what are we coming to the table? Are we willing to heighten our observance, to strengthen our commitment; to bolster our support of communal needs? We must realize that Yiddishkeit, as in every aspect of life, is a give-and-take endeavor. We have no right to demand unless we have participated. We have no right to ask until we have demonstrated our conviction. We have no right to plead if we have not, in some way, merited that right. Let us hope that, as we prepare for Rosh Hashanah, Hashem will magnify our little deeds so that we shall all be worthy of His beneficence.

From: Yated[SMTP:yated-usa@yated.com]

Kortz Un Sharfu Short and Sweet Parsha Vertlach by Shaya Gottlieb

Ohoy Ki Sovo El Hooretz and it shall be when you will come to

the land 26:1 The Sifri comments that the reason the words when you will come are used in the Parsha of Bikkurim is that in the merit of the Bikkurim they will enter Eretz Yisroel. But the Bnei Yisroel were only able to bring Bikkurim after they arrived in Eretz Yisroel! Nevertheless, once Klal Yisroel accepted the mitzva upon themselves in advance, the Echus helped them merit entering Eretz Yisroel. The Malbim

Oniso Omorto Lifnei Hashem Elokecho And you shall answer, and you shall say before Hashem 26:5 Before one begins to praise Hashem, one must first consider one's own lowly status. Oniso comes from the word Anosoto lower oneself, lifnei Hashem Elokecho. Tiferes Shlomo

Arami Oveid Ovi The Arami wanted to destroy my father 26:5 It does not say Ovad Ovi, in the past, but Oveid, in the present. The Rosho did not cease in his destructive work, but is constantly plotting evil schemes. Rav Chaim Sanzer

Vayaraid Mitzrayim Vayogor Shom Bimsay Meot And he went to Mitzrayim, and he lived there with few people 26:5 Why does it say and he lived there before it says with few people? In the Gemora Yerushalmi we learn that when one of the chachomim showed his friend a beautiful shul in chutz laaretz, the chochom said, Vayishkach Yisroel... because outside of Eretz Yisroel we must conduct ourselves modestly. This is the meaning of Vayogor Shom Bimsay Meot. Yaakov lived in Mitzrayim on very modest means, without flaunting his possessions. The Gerrer Rebbe

Eatoh Hinei Hayvaysi Es Rayshis Pri Hoadomo and now I have brought the first fruits of the land 26:10 The Medrash explains that the word Eatoh shows zrius, alacrity. The word hineh is a loшон of simcho, and hayvaysi shows that the fruits were their own. There are three conditions regarding fulfillment of a mitzvo. A. Not to push it off, but do it immediately. B. To do it with simcho and; C. To do mitzvos with the money one currently owns, not to wait until one has ample funds. Klal Yisroel fulfilled all three conditions. Divrei Shaarei Chaim

From: Aish HaTorah[SMTP:aishlist@mail.netvision.net.il] AISH
HATORAH'S Shabbat Shalom Weekly <http://www.aish.edu>

DVAR TORAH: based on Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin
The Torah states, "And you shall rejoice with all the good that the Almighty has given you." Why does the Torah obligate us with a commandment to rejoice when we should automatically be happy when we have good things?

Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, Rosh HaYeshiva of Telse Yeshiva in Cleveland, clarifies with an insight into human nature: "Man's nature is to constantly want more than he presently has. He who has one hundred wants two hundred.' Our moments of joy are mixed with sadness over what we lack -- and this is destructive both physically and spiritually. Therefore, the Torah commands us to feel a joy that is complete -- to focus on and rejoice with what we have."

If you think that you will be happy only when you have more, then you will NEVER be happy. When you finally get what you were hoping for, you will once again focus on getting more and will again feel unhappy. Happiness is dependent upon your state of mind. You can only be happy if you appreciate what you have and what you are presently doing.

In Pirke Avos (chapter 4, first mishna/"teaching") it states, "Who is the rich person? He who is happy with his portion." Regardless of what you have, you are only wealthy if you have mastered the ability to appreciate what you have. (This includes appreciating your children, too!) I often think that there are many Jews who are like multi-millionaires who don't know that they are rich because all of their money is sewn into the mattress and they don't know that it is there. Instead, they complain about sleeping on a lumpy mattress! (By the way, I think of Aish HaTorah as "poking holes in mattresses" so that Jews everywhere can see the beauty,

meaning and values in our heritage.)

One can have eyes, hands, feet, a mind to think with and be depressed -- unless he focuses on taking pleasure in these gifts. Imagine if you were blind and suddenly were given the gift of sight. Would you be "flying high"? You would be beyond yourself in happiness! Why wait to appreciate what you have? Make a list of your gifts and what you are grateful for. It is good preparation for Rosh Hashana!

From: Jonathan Schwartz[SMTP:jschwartz@yml.yu.edu]

Prologue: Among those who set counts of mitzvos, there is a discussion as to the mitzvos that fall within the number 613. When approaching the Berachos and Klalos of Parshas Ki Savo, the overwhelming number of Meforshim do not. Maran HaGadol Harav Hershel Schachter (Shiurei Chumash, 5755) explain that these commentaries assumed that the Berachos and Klalos were a Hora'at Sha'aah which do not have mitzva significance to today. Yet, Rav Yirucham Perlow (Sefer HaMitzvos L'RaSag) quotes Geonim that count the Berachos and Klalos in the number 613. He then asks how this is possible if they were only applicable for the time they were recited? Rav Perlow answered that since key dinim like Arivos (see Sanhedrin, 44) are derived from this period in Jewish history and these possukim, they can be counted among the number 613 as relevant for today.

The Ramban points out that the last of the berachos and klalos refers to the activities of a Melech. He notes that a person who has the ability to influence others l'tov and does not do so, is cursed. Often we are amazed at those who are influenced by simple activities that we take for granted.

Even the Chofetz Chaim reported being amazed and inspired by the achievements of a child who was developmentally delayed. We all have the ability to look to and take inspiration from each other and as a result, the berachos and klalos speak to each of us.

Sometimes we are presented with a challenge which appears so insurmountable that it appears to be a klalla at the moment. After a little time, we can begin to recognize the klalla as the beracha that it really is. Can one make a beracha at the early moment? This is the focus of this week's chaburah entitled: A Blessing in Disguise?: The case of the Mongoloid Child When a child is born, there is tremendous Simcha in the hearts of the parents for themselves and the new child. Hence, the father of a baby girl recites the Beracha of She'he'chianu and the father of a baby boy recites Hatov V'hamativ. However what does one do when the child that is born is a Mongoloid child? There is great distress with such a birth. Should one recite She'hechianu? Hatov V'hamativ or nothing at all? HaRav Yona Metzger shlita (Shut MiYam Halacha I, 33) notes that despite the distress to the parents, the arrival of a new Neshoma on this world is a source of great Simcha for the members of Klal Yisroel. It is assumed that through the arrival of each new Neshoma, we are closer to the coming of Moshiach. This is based upon the Talmudic principle that Moshiach cannot come until all the Neshomos have been emptied. Thus, even when a Neshoma of a Shoteh is brought to this world, it is the source of great Simcha to Klal Yisroel and reason to thank Hashem with a Beracha. The Maharil (Shut Maharil 196) goes one step further and adds that you must be Modeh to Hashem because this child can be counted toward a Minyan. Still, Maran Hagaon Harav Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv shlita (As quoted in Toras HaYoledes 37:9) notes that since the parents are not happy with the birth of the Mongoloid child, it is impossible to make a Beracha following his birth. Rav Metzger quotes two logical positions with which one could disagree with Rav Eliyashiv. First, there is the fact that the birth of this child frees his mother from Yibum. This means that the father has, in effect, been Mikayem Shem (carried on his name). Hence, he can make a Hatov V'Hamativ for his family's Simcha in not being forgotten. However, the reciting of She'hechianu would be inappropriate as that beracha usually marks an emotional state of Simcha. Additionally, the fact that the parents have been Yotzai their obligation of Pru U'rivu through the birth of this child and love the child and accept it into their home despite the extra difficulty involved in raising these children proves the long term

benefit the parents derive from such a child and should recite a beracha upon its birth. So, L'halacha, many poskim disagree with Rav Eliyashiv based upon the sevoros that Rav Metzger quoted and hold one should make a beracha when a Mongoloid child is born. What about reciting the Beracha of Mishaneh Habriyos? Should the father recite such a beracha? The Mishna Berurah (225:29) notes that the beracha of Mishaneh Habriyos is reserved for things that are seriously deformed. A Mongoloid child is not so seriously deformed nor is it so uncommon among society today so the beracha of Mishaneh Habriyos is improper. Rav Metzger adds that since we Paskin that one makes a She'hechianu or Hatov V'hamativ on these births, the reciting of Mishaneh Habriyos would be wrong for this child.

Battala News Mazal tov to the Resnick, Ebbner, Grossman and Blau families upon the engagement of HaRav Eliyahu Akiva to Nechama Siegal Mazal tov to our founder Ronnie Samet and family upon his recent engagement to Aliza Elias

From: TorahFax[SMTP:torahfax@netaxis.qc.ca] Subject: TorahFax - Wednesday, Elul 13, 5759 / August 25, 1999

This Shabbat we read Parshat Ki Tavo. The Parsha begins with the mitzvah of "Bikurim" - offering of the "first fruits". Each year, the first fruits of the "seven kinds" of foods with which the Land of Israel is praised for in the Torah, had to be brought to Jerusalem.

The Torah states: "And it shall be, that when you come to the land the L-rd your G-d will give you for an inheritance, and you will possess it and dwell in it. You shall take of the first of all the fruit of the land which the L-rd your G-d gives you and you shall put them in a basket and go to the place which the L-rd your G-d shall choose to cause His name to dwell there [Jerusalem]." Once in Jerusalem, the basket of fruit was given to the Kohen (priest).

The person bringing the basket of fruit would thank Hashem for taking the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, for all the miracles which Hashem has done for the Jewish people and for bringing them into "this place and giving us this land, a land that flows with milk and honey." The Torah concludes the subject of Bikurim with, "And you shall rejoice in all the good which the L-rd your G-d has given you and to your household. You and the Levite and the stranger that is in your midst."

The mitzvah of Bikurim - bringing the first fruits to the Kohen, teaches us that before we ourselves enjoy the bounty and good which Hashem gives us we must first give back to G-d what belongs to Him. This is accomplished through the giving of Tzedakah and providing for the poor and needy.

The mitzvah of Bikurim also teaches us to be happy and rejoice with whatever Hashem has given us. Only a person who believes and understands that whatever he or she has is a gift from G-d, will not be jealous of others and thus be "truly" satisfied and happy in life.

Once a wealthy man came to visit his Rebbe. The man didn't give much charity. In fact, he was so miserly that he wouldn't even spend money on himself. Every day, he would just eat bread and water.

The Rebbe told the man, "I don't like the way you conduct yourself. From now on, I want you to spend money on yourself and eat three good meals a day. Your meals should include fish, meat, wine, etc."

After the man left, the Chasidim asked the Rebbe, "Why did you instruct him to eat all that food? Didn't you teach us that one should not indulge?" "It is not about what he eats or doesn't eat that I was concerned about," replied the Rebbe.

"I was concerned for the poor. He figures that if he, the rich man, eats only bread and water, the poor should eat rocks... But if he will eat fish, meat and delicacies regularly then he will at least feel that the poor deserve bread..." The above message in the Parsha is that it is important not to take everything we have for granted. We must at all times remember Who provides us with all the good we possess.

This way we will rejoice and thank Hashem for everything He gives us

and at the same time show Him our appreciation by sharing with others so that they may be happy too.

bs"d. Dear TorahFax friend. Shalom. I'm writing you on behalf of our son Leibi (Yehuda Leib ben Chaya Sarah) who asked me to convey to you his feelings of gratitude and thanks for your prayers, Mi Shebeirachs and wonderful e-mails and get-well cards. Leibi was very touched by all of you. You have done a great deal to boost his spirits. Thank G-d Leibi is home now, after two weeks in the hospital, and will be getting his treatments next week as an out-patient. Being that Leibi, in his spare time, is very involved in getting people to perform mitzvot, he asked me to make the following request: If possible, that you perform ONE additional mitzvah and good deed in his merit, with a prayer to Hashem for his complete and speedy recovery. I would be very grateful if you would let Leibi know which mitzvah you chose to do. May Hashem bless you and your family members with the best of health and Nachas & best wishes for a Shana Tova - a happy and healthy new year. Thank you & Shabbat Shalom. Zalmen- Mailing address: TorahFax Box 373 Station Snowdon Montreal, Quebec. H3X 3T6 Canada

From: Kenneth Block[SMTP:kenblock@worldnet.att.net] Subject: NCYI Weekly Divrei Torah -KiTavo Parshat Ki Tavo Rabbi Mordeche Young Young Israel of the Main Line, PA 16 Elul 5759 Daf Yomi: Taanit 21

We are right at the halfway point in a month of introspection, the month of Elul. Two weeks have gone by and there are two weeks left to go. Hopefully, the two weeks that have gone by have stirred us, moved us, awakened us. Hopefully, the two weeks gone by have given us pause to think (as the Mesilas Yesharim says) to wonder about why we were placed in this world, what are we doing here, what does G-d want from us. Hopefully the two weeks gone by have helped us evaluate our behavior, examine our actions and made us look to better ourselves. How can we elevate ourselves and add kedusha to our lives? How can we improve in our midot and derech erez, the way we relate to others? How can we more beautifully fulfill the mitzvot that HaShem has given us to do?

Now, there are only two weeks left. One week from now we (Ashkenazim) begin selichos and a week after that is Rosh HaShanah, the Day of Judgement when each of us kivnei marome, passes in judgement before the Melech Malchei HaMelachim, the King of Kings, a judgement that is so awesomely described by Rabbi Amnon in his prayer, U'nesaneh Tokef. The fate, for this coming year, of each person, of his loved ones, of Klal Yisrael, of all the nations of the world is to be decided. What an awesome realization.

And so we begin scrambling, time is running out. We look for mitzvot to do to add to our merit. We look to strengthen our tefilot to beseech the Al-Mighty. We look to do teshuvah to bring ourselves closer to HaShem. We look to forgive others so that others will forgive us. We feel time is short, time is fleeting. There is so much to do, there is so much at stake. If we are but zoche, deserving, so much blessing will be bestowed upon us and our loved ones. So much goodness will be showered on Klal Yisrael. So much closeness to HaShem will we feel. And if G-d forbid we are not zoche, deserving, how much misery will be awaiting?

This Parsha helps motivate us. It vividly describes bracha and klalla, a blessing and curse, what will be when we fulfill properly the words of HaShem (we will have crops to give the first fruits, the portion of the Kohens and tithes, we will be special to HaShem, we will have Eretz Yisrael, we will have all the blessings specified) and what will be, G-d forbid, if we don't (the curses and the rebuke, the terrible punishments that are mentioned). It tells us in great detail what will happen if we bring ourselves close to HaShem and, G-d forbid, if we take ourselves away from HaShem. This is surely a potent reminder of what is at stake in the judgement of Rosh HaShanah.

A few thoughts from the Medrash on this parsha that can perhaps inspire us: Rabbi Yudan said "He who answers amen in this world will merit to answer amen in the future world." (Such an easy mitzvah - yet it echos unto eternity). Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levy said "He who enters shuls or houses of study in this world will merit entering them in the future world" (going daily to shul can become habit forming - it will form your habit even for the World to Come). "HaShem says not only do you merit to greet the Shechina in the shul but you leave loaded with blessings as it says 'for those who find Me find life, and he brings forth favor from HaShem'" (we ask for life on Rosh Hashanah, this medresh tells us where to find it - in shul. We ask for blessing on Rosh Hashanah and this medrash tells us where to find it - in shul. Look what goodness HaShem put into our shuls, we but have to enter and partake). Rabbi Yehoshua of Sichnin said in the name of Rabbi Levy, "HaShem says if you listen to My commandments I will listen to your prayers" (on Rosh Hashanah we beseech HaShem to hearken to our prayers. This medrash tells us simply if we listen to HaShem, HaShem will listen to us). Rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai said "if B'nai Yisrael were missing even one person [at Har Sinai] the Shechina would not have revealed Itself to them" (see how precious each individual Jew is. Even if one of them, even if the least of them, would not have been there at Har Sinai the Revelation would not have been the same. You see that Jew next to you? It is thanks to him that the Divine presence rests on Klal Yisrael. How careful must we be to respect each and everyone.) Rabbi Shmuel Bar Yitzchok said "when Moshe was approaching his end and they [B'nai Yisrael] didn't plead for mercy for him to enter Eretz Yisrael, Moshe gathered the Jews and began to rebuke them. 'One person [Moshe] was able to redeem 600,000 [B'nai Yisroel] by the sin of the golden calf and yet 600,000 [B'nai Yisroel] weren't able to redeem one person [Moshe]!' (Moshe rebuked B'nai Yisroel for not davening for him to be allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael. On Rosh Hashanah we don't daven just for ourselves. We never daven just for ourselves. We always daven for all of our brethren, all of acheinu b'nai Yisroel. Our tefilot incorporate every single Jew.

Let us take inspiration from any one of these medrashim or hopefully from all of them and use the time left to us to ready ourselves to face the Day of Judgement. I heard many times from my Rebbeim that the Alter of Kelm would call the Days of Awe, Yamim Nechmadim, Beloved Days, for if utilized to their fullest these days can raise us to great heights in service to HaShem, bringing us closer to the Melech Malchei HaMelachim, the King of Kings.

May we together with all of Klal Yisrael be zoche, merit to crown HaKadosh Baruch Hu King over us and over the whole world and be granted a good sweet year, a year of yeshuot and nechamot, salvation and comfort and a year of Shalom al Yisrael, peace upon all of Israel.

A project of the National Council of Young Israel 3 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011 212 929-1525 800 617-NCYI Kenneth Block, Internet Administrator kenblock@youngisrael.org

From: Zomet Institute[SMTP:zomet@virtual.co.il] Shabbat-B'Shabbato - Parshat Ki Tavo "HOPE TO G-D ... AND HOPE TO G-D" [Tehillim 27:14] by Rabbi Yaacov Fisher, Rosh Yeshiva of Neve Shmuel, Efrata

Look how hard a farmer has to work until his fields yield the first fruits. And then, he reaches the end of a long and difficult process, which started with tears of plowing and planting, and which reached its culmination with the joy of the harvest. He has now come to his land, and has separated out "the first of all the fruit of the land" [Devarim 26:2]. He is in a new land, and he has expended a novel type of effort, which has brought him a feeling of satisfaction like none he has ever known before, and he has grown his first fruits. And what could our farmer desire more than to enjoy eating this first fruit? He so wants to show his joy, and to thereby correct his earlier sin, as is also described in this week's Torah portion: "Because you did not worship your G-d with happiness and with a joyous heart" [Devarim 28:47]. And he must remember the commandment of "bikurim," the first fruits, and with this

the end of the verse, which explains that the faulty worship came about "because you have everything" [28:47].

Man is different from all the other animals, in that they are all dangerous when they are hungry, while man is most dangerous when he is satiated, "because you have everything." As is written, "When you are fat and you will kick" [Devarim 32:15]. Because of this dangerous trait, man is not permitted at first to eat his fill or to appreciate full joy. He is required to place "the first fruit of the land" in a basket, and to bring it "to the place which G-d will choose" [Devarim 26:2]. He comes to the Kohen, standing at the Altar before G-d, for this offering of the first fruit has the status of a sacrifice. By this act, he is making a sacrifice of his feeling of ownership and the selfish egoism.

Not only is it required to come to the Temple and to bring an offering, it is also necessary to recite the ritual declaration. According to some of the commentaries, this declaration is a positive mitzva (Rambam, Hilchot Bikurim 3:10, Chinuch, mitzva 606). The farmer is required to remember that he did not always have possession of the land, with its fields and vineyards. He must declare that he remembers an ancestor who was a lost Aramite, and to mention the memories of exile, with poverty and fruitless hard labor. And he finishes with the following: "And now, I have brought the first fruits of the land which you have given me, G-d" [Devarim 26:10]. This is similar to the verse, "For you are the source of everything, and what we have given to you is from your hand. For we are strangers before you, and temporary dwellers as our fathers were, as in our shadowy days on the earth, without hope" [I Divrei Hayamim 29:14-15].

But even after this ritual, full enjoyment is not permitted, and it is forbidden to be too happy. There is yet one more act which must be performed. "And you will bow down before your G-d" [Devarim 26:10]. This is a sign of complete subjugation, a way to counteract the dangers of "having everything." At this point, full joy is permitted, "And you may rejoice with all the good that your G-d has given to you" [26:11]. If you are aware that G-d has given you "all the good," you can rejoice with the feeling that "you have everything."

During the current season, before the beginning of the new year, we bring our primary actions before the Ruler of the Universe, without any sense of pride. We recite the blessing of "Malchiot," as it were enthroning G-d as king, based on our recognition that we have no power without Him. We pray and ask for forgiveness, and we remember the above verse, "as in our shadowy days on the earth, without hope." In spite of this, we still repeat the request for help in the chapter from Tehillim which we recite during Elul, quoted as the title of this article. We are far from despair, and we have hope. "If one has prayed and feels that he has not been answered, he should pray again. As is written, 'Hope to G-d.' Strengthen your heart, and have faith in G-d." [Berachot 32b].

A MITZVA IN THE TORAH PORTION: Offering "Bikurim" and Reciting the Verse by Rabbi Binyamin Tabory

In the Torah portion of Mishpatim, we are commanded to bring to the Temple an offering of the first fruits, from the seven species of produce which serve as the pride of Eretz Yisrael. This week's portion gives more details of the Bikurim ritual, and in addition introduces the mitzva of reading a declaration, starting with "My father was a lost Aramite." [Devarim 26:5].

According to most of the early commentators, women are required to bring Bikurim (see Bikurim 1:5), but they do not recite the declaration. This is because they cannot say the words about the land "which you have given to me" [26:10], since the land was only distributed to the men.

The Sefer Hachinuch, on the other hand, feels that women are not obligated by this mitzva. Later commentators have explained that the Sefer Hachinuch considers Bikurim to be a time-dependent mitzva, since it must be brought by Chanuka at the very latest. His opinion is that the obligation for women mentioned in the Mishna is only a rabbinical command, even though women are usually not obligated by rabbinical mitzvot which are time-dependent. This is similar to the opinion of some commentators about

the Grace after Meals, who feel that it is also only a rabbinical obligation for women and not a Torah mitzva.

It may be that Bikurim and the Grace after Meals have in common that they are both a way to give thanks and to recognize the good that G-d has given us. Thus, even though from a technical point of view women should not be required to perform these mitzvot, the rabbis have insisted that they do them, as a way of giving recognition and thanks.

In the Sefer Hamitzvot, the Rambam writes that we should not only praise G-d but also "ask him to continue with His blessings." While there is no hint of this in this week's Torah portion, the Rambam evidently felt that it is impossible to differentiate between thanking G-d for the past and making a request for the future. The same is true of the blessings recited after a meal. While the verse requires us to "bless your G-d for the good land" [Devarim 8:10], the blessing we recite includes a request that "there will never be a lack of food for us." Just as there should be no request without praise, so there should not be any praise without a request.

From: Mordecai Kornfeld[SMTP:kornfeld@netvision.net.il] Subject: Insights to the Daf: Ta'anis INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim daf@dafyomi.co.il, <http://www.dafyomi.co.il> PLEASE HELP THE DAFYOMI ADVANCEMENT FORUM CONTINUE ITS WORK*** Now is the time to send your tax-deductible contribution to D.A.F., 140-32 69 Avenue, Flushing NY 11367, USA

Taanis 5b YAKOV AVINU DID NOT DIE QUESTION: Rebbi Yitzchak says that Yakov Avinu did not die. Rav Nachman asks how could he not have died, if the people eulogized him, embalmed him, and buried him? Rebbi Yitzchak answers that he is making an inference from the verse which compares Yakov to his children. Just like his children are alive, so, too, he must be alive.

How does Rebbi Yitzchak's response answer Rav Nachman's question? ANSWERS: (a) The CHACHMAS MANO'ACH explains that the Gemara does not mean that Yakov is still alive today. Rather, it means that he was still alive *when he was returned to Eretz Yisrael* for burial at Me'aras ha'Machpelah -- just as his children are alive when they are returned to the land. The people mistakenly thought that he was dead, and thus they eulogized him and embalmed him (just with fragrances, as Rashi points out in Bereishis 50:2) by mistake. He obviously was not buried alive, though. The reason he remained alive until that point is because Hashem promised him that He would take him back to Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, in fulfillment of His promise, Hashem took him back to Eretz Yisrael before his Neshamah left his body. Also, the Gemara (Sotah 13b) says that Yakov and Esav died on the same day. When Chushim ben Dan killed Esav, just before they were about to bury Yakov, Esav's head rolled onto Yakov's lap and Yakov smiled -- showing that he was still alive at the time. (The Gemara in Sotah, though, concludes that they were only buried the same day, and did not die the same day.) (b) The KLI YAKAR (Bereishis 47:29) explains this Gemara based on the statement that "Tzadikim, even in their deaths, are called alive, and Resha'im, even in their lives, are called dead." When the Gemara here says that Yakov "did not die," it means that even though he died, it was considered as though he was still alive, because he was a Tzadik. The Gemara mentions Yakov in particular, and not Avraham or Yitzchak, because besides the fact that he himself was a Tzadik, all of his children were also Tzadikim. Since the children are a continuation of the father, as long as they are alive, it is considered as though the father lives on as well. (See also Rashi Bereishis 18:19, "One who dies but leaves behind a child who is a Tzadik, is considered as though he is still alive.") If one's child, though, is a Rasha, then it is not considered as though the father is living on, because "Resha'im, even in their lives, are called dead." This is the meaning of the Gemara's comparison, "Just as his sons are alive, so too is Yakov alive."

Ta'anis 11 PERSONAL CONDUCT DURING TIMES OF FAMINE
QUESTION: The Gemara says that during a time of famine, marital relations are prohibited, as we learn from the conduct of Yosef during the famine in Mitzrayim. If marital relations are prohibited during a time of famine, how was Yocheved conceived? Yocheved was born to Levi when the family of Yakov descended from Eretz Yisrael and entered Mitzrayim (as Rashi points out in Bereishis 46:26), which was two years into the famine! (TOSFOS)

ANSWERS:

(a) TOSFOS answers that our Gemara is only making a statement of preferable behavior, of Midas Chasidus, and it is not expressing an actual prohibition. Levi and his wife did not practice this Midas Chasidus, although Yosef did. (The RA'AVAD writes in Sha'ar ha'Kedushah that before the Torah was given, the Avos and their children did not observe practices such as Midas Chasidus, but only the actual Mitzvos.) The OR HA'CHAIM (Bereishis 41:50), though, asks that the verse explicitly refers to Levi as "Ish Chasidecha" (Devarim 33:8), implying that he did conduct himself with Midas Chasidus!

(b) The DA'AS ZEKENIM (Bereishis 41:50) quotes RABEINU YEHUDAH HE'CHASID who explains that it is only prohibited when one knows, from the prophecy of a Navi, that the famine will continue. Yosef had heard the prophecy that was expressed in the dream of Pharaoh, and thus he knew that the famine would continue. Levi did not know this, and therefore it was permitted for him to engage in marital relations. It appears that Rabeinu Yehudah he'Chasid understood that the reason for the prohibition so as not to stretch already limited resources by introducing another contender for the food supply. This only applies if the child will be *born* while there is still a famine (since that is the when he, or his mother, will need to need extra food).

© THE MIZRACHI and the OR HA'CHAIM answer that if one does not have any children, marital relations are permitted during a famine, as our Gemara says. The reason is presumably because a person who has no children is obligated to fulfill the Mitzvah of Piryah v'Rivyah. Levi, although he had boys, did not have any girls, and thus he had not yet fulfilled the Mitzvah of Piryah v'Rivyah. Therefore, it was permitted for him during the time of famine. The problem with this answer is that Yosef, too, did not have any daughters! Why, then, did Yosef refrain from marital relations, while Levi did not? (See OR HA'CHAIM.) The DA'AS ZEKENIM, who also gives this answer, explains why Yosef acted differently from Levi even though they both had only boys. Yosef maintained that one fulfills the Mitzvah of Piryah v'Rivyah with two male children. Levi, on the other hand, was of the opinion that one must have at least one boy and one girl to fulfill the Mitzvah (both of these opinions are discussed in Yevamos 62a). Therefore, Yosef held that he did not fall into the category of those who are permitted to engage in marital relations during a famine, while Levi held that he did!

(d) The CHIZKUNI and OR HA'CHAIM further suggest that the reason Levi did not refrain was because his own family was not suffering; they had food during the famine. Only the natives around them were suffering, and there was no obligation to join in their suffering. (Although he did not know whether Yosef did or did not have food, Yosef was only a single person and the entire family should not have to suffer because of a single member's plight.) Yosef, though, did not know that his father and brothers had food and he thought that they were suffering from the famine. Therefore he joined them in their suffering and refrained from marital relations. We may develop this answer further by suggesting that even if Yosef was confident that his family had food because of the great merit of Yakov Avinu (if Yosef merited to have food, certainly Yakov would merit the same), he nevertheless separated from his wife because the natives were suffering. Why, then, did Levi not separate from his wife out of empathy for the natives like Yosef did? The MIZRACHI (beginning of Parshas Vayeshev) explains that when the young Yosef reported to his father that his brothers

were eating Ever Min ha'Chai (limbs from a live animal), that was only his interpretation of their act; they were actually eating from an animal that had been slaughtered properly but was still kicking. An animal in such a state is permitted for a Jew to eat, and is prohibited as Ever Min ha'Chai for a Ben Noach to eat. The brothers maintained that they had a status of Jews, and therefore the animal was permissible to them. Yosef, though, maintained that they were considered Bnei Noach, since the Torah had not yet been given to them, and thus it was forbidden for them to eat the animal. Levi, then, was following his previous reasoning when he did not separate from his wife. He held that he had a status of a Jew, and thus he did not have to share in the suffering of the natives who were Bnei Noach. Yosef, though, maintained that the sons of Yakov, too, were considered Bnei Noach, and therefore he had to be concerned for the feelings of his fellow Bnei Noach (just as Noach did during the Flood, Rashi Bereishis 7:7). That is why Yosef separated from his wife while Levi did not! (M. Kornfeld)

TA'ANIS 16 (11 Elul) - dedicated to the memory of Chana (Birnbbaum) bas Reb Chaim, on the day of her Yartzit.

Ta'anis 16 HAR HA'MORIYAH QUESTION: The Gemara explains the implications of the name "Har ha'Moriyah." Either it means the mountain from which Torah was taught, or the mountain from which fear [to the nations] emanated. RASHI and TOSFOS suggest two possibilities for which mountain this is. Either it is referring to Yerushalayim and the site of the Mikdash, or to Mount Sinai. The verse which discusses "Eretz ha'Moriyah" (Bereishis 22:2, see Rashi) and "Har ha'Moriyah" (Divrei Hayamim II:3:1) are clearly referring to the site of the Mikdash, and not to Mount Sinai, which wasn't in Eretz Yisrael at all. How can Rashi and Tosfos suggest that it is Har Sinai! (Maharsha)

ANSWERS: (a) The KEREN ORAH and others point out that the Yalkut Shimoni on Shir ha'Shirim 4:6, on the verse "I will go to Har ha'Mor," brings the argument of our Gemara. It is not discussing har'Moriyah but ha'Mor, which could indeed be Mount Sinai. Perhaps our Gemara should be emended accordingly. (According to this Girsa, the Gemara only mentions this here because the same Amora'im that argued earlier argue about this as well. It is not brought in because the Mishnah refers to "Avraham on Har ha'Moriyah." In fact, this is what Rashi writes (at the beginning of DH Mai Har -- although the rest of his words clearly show that his Girsa was ha'Moriyah, as it appears in our texts).

(b) The Gemara in Megilah 29a says that Mount Tabor and Mount Carmel came to the desert, to the area of Sinai, at the time the Torah was given. YALKUT RE'UVENI (Parashat Yitro, DH Bish'as) suggests that in the same manner, the Temple Mount temporarily "jumped" to the Sinai desert in order for the Torah to be given upon it!

The *D*AFYOMI *A*DVANCEMENT *F*ORUM, brought to you by Kollel Iyud Hadaf For information on joining the Kollel's free Dafyomi mailing lists, write to info@dafyomi.co.il, or visit us at <http://www.dafyomi.co.il> Tel(IL):02-652-2633 -- Off(IL):02-651-5004 -- Fax(US):603-7375728