

# Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Ki Savo 5777

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פרק ג'

פרשת כי תבא תשע"ז

## *Bikurim is to show appreciation to Serving Hashem*

וְלִקְחֶתָּהּ מִרְאשֵׁית כָּל־פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּבְנֶה מֵאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ וְשָׂמֶתָ בַסֵּבֶל וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמְּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׂבֹן שְׂמוֹ שָׁם: וּבָאתָ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בַיָּמִים הַהֵם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו הַגְּדַתִּי הַיּוֹם לַה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי בָאתִי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע ה' לְאֲבוֹתַי לֵאמֹר לְנֹכַח וְלִקַּח הַכֹּהֵן הַסֵּבֶל מִיָּדְךָ וְהָנִיחוּ לִפְנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ: (כ"ב-ד)

*You shall take the first of all fruit that is produced by your land... put it in a basket ("Teneh"), and go to the place where Hashem will choose to have His Name dwell [the Beis Hamikdash]. You shall come to the Kohen who is serving there at the time and say to him, "I declare thanks on this day before Hashem, your God, for bringing me to the land that Hashem swore to... give us." Then the Kohen shall take the basket from your hand and put it down before the altar of Hashem, your God.* (Devarim 26:2-4) The Mishna (Bikurim 3:1) states: How does one designate his Bikurim (first fruits)? He goes into his field, and when he sees a cluster of grapes or a pomegranate that is beginning to grow, he ties a string around it, and declares, "These are hereby Bikurim!" In (3:6) the Mishna says: The Mitzvah of Bikurim applies only to the *שבעת המינים* seven species which the land of Eretz Yisrael was praised with (Devarim 8:8) -- wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. We learn from these Mishnayos how Bikurim is designated and how it is performed. Yet we do not find in the Torah the amount as to how much one must bring. The Mishna (Bikurim 2:3) states that bringing even one fruit will fulfill his obligation. The Rambam (Bikurim 2:4) is of the opinion that one may give his entire field as Bikurim. [In the mitzvah of Peah one is not allowed to give the entire field as Peah] The question is why doesn't the Torah place a set amount for Bikurim. The answer lies in Rashi: *and say to him: that you are not ungrateful [for all that God has done for you].* The Michtav Sofer, Hagaon Rav Shimon Sofer, Rav in Krakow, son of Rav Moshe, the Chasam Sofer, states a powerful message based on this Rashi. A person toils in his field and invests so much time and effort to reap these fruits. After all his hard work, he reaps his fruit and benefits. The tendency would be to pat himself on the back as to his hard work paying off *בְּהִי וְעוֹצֵם יָדַי*. But he forgets that without Hashem helping him and watching that the crops grow, nothing will grow. Therefore, when the person approaches the Kohen and says I am grateful to Hashem, his Bikurim gift will show how much recognition he has of the Real Provider, Hashem. This is the purpose of the gift to

thank and appreciate what Hashem did for him. Hence, if he only has a small crop and gives only one fruit, it is just as precious to Hashem as one who gives a larger quantity. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

## **You shall be blessed when you come to Shul to Daven.**

*בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּבֹאֶיךָ וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּצֵאתְךָ: (כ"ח"ו)*

*"You shall be blessed in your coming and you shall be blessed when you depart"* There are many interpretations in the meaning of coming and departing. Many commentaries quote "Your coming and departing from this world" However there is a Midrash Tanchuma that interprets this as follows: Be blessed in your coming to Shul and you shall be blessed in your departing Shul". The Great Gaon Harav Yosef Tzvi Dushinky Z"l gives a wonderful mussar insight to this Midrash. We all know that the reason of coming to Shul is to Daven and praise Hashem. Then after we accomplished this great Mitzvah, we leave Shul. However if throughout Davening one is immersed in his business and other thoughts and then leaves, he is not leaving Shul, he is leaving his business. This is what the Midrash means "Blessed when you come and depart Shul.

## *Serving Hashem with Simcha*

*תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵב מְרֹב כָּל: (כ"ח מ"ז)*  
*Because you did not serve the Lord, your God, with happiness and with gladness of heart, when [you had an] abundance of everything. (28:47)* Rabbeinu Bachya explains that this is because the mitzvahs must be done with joy and complete devotion. When the mitzvahs are done without joyfulness, they are lacking in their effect, and this can be part of the spiral downward. The Rambam (הל' לולב פ"ה הט"ו) says about Simcha *השמחה שישמחה אדם בעשיית המצוה ובאהבת ה' היא - ל שצוה בהן עבודה גדולה היא, וכל המונע עצמו משמחה זו ראוי להפיר ממנו, "A person's joy in doing the mitzvah and the love of Hashem who commanded them is a great avoda (service). Anyone who is arrogant and ascribes to himself honor in these situations [and thereby refrains from expressing joy in service of Hashem] is a sinner..* The heilige Maharal comments: When a man is joyous his soul (nefesh) is complete and whole (beshleimut) . . . Only when his joy is that of a mitzva it is Divine wholeness and praiseworthy. Otherwise it is physical and cannot be considered complete and is therefore not praiseworthy. This is the Key to serving Hashem with simcha as this is *shleimut / wholeness.*

## ***Yahrtzeit* ב"ה לול The Zlotchover Maggid**

The 25th of Elul is the Yahrtzeit of Rav Yechiel Michel the Magid of Zlotchov. His father Rav Yitzchok of Drohobitch,

initially a *Misnaged*/an opponent of Chassidus, became an ardent admirer of the Ba'al Shem Tov. Young Yechiel Michel

received instruction from the Ba'al Shem Tov, becoming one of his most prominent talmidim. After the Ba'al Shem Tov's passing, Rav Yechiel Michel became a talmid of the Maggid of Mezritch. A master of homiletics - art of preparing sermons and preaching- and a spellbinding orator, he was a highly sought-after lecturer. The Zlotchover Maggid was largely responsible for introducing Chassidus to the Yidden in Galicia, Poland. He suffered a lot from the Misnagdim who opposed the "new sect", judging it dangerous and heretical. In the wake of excommunication and book burnings directed against Chassidim, he was forced to move from town to town, serving

as Maggid in the Galician communities of Brody, Alesk and Zlotchov, finally finding refuge in Yampole in Volhyn, the cradle of Chassidus not far from Meziboz. Rav Yechiel Michel had one daughter and five sons, all eminent Torah scholars. Chassidim call them the Maggid's five Chumoshim. Although he did not write any seforim himself, his thoughts and perspectives have been compiled into a work entitled Mayim Rabim. He founded a strong dynasty and had many prestigious talmidim, foremost among them Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heshel of Apta, also known as the Ohev Yisrael, and Rav Mordechai of Neshchiz, known as the Rishpei Eish.

## **STORY OF THE WEEK** (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick) **The great Tzaddik didn't understand how one can sin**

Rav Yechiel Michel, in his youth, lived in a certain town, where he sat all day in the *Bais Medrash* /study hall and shul, and pursued his Torah studies. In that town there lived a simple Jew who earned his livelihood by transporting travelers and merchandise in his wagon. One day, the wagon driver came to the shul looking for the Rav and was in a state of great distress. "Help me, Rebbe!" he wept. "I have committed a terrible sin. I have desecrated the holy Shabbos. How can I atone for my transgression?"

"Tell me what happened?" asked the Rav. "Last Friday," the man explained, "I was returning from the marketplace with a wagonload of merchandise when I lost my way in the forest. By the time I found my way to the outskirts of the city, the sun had already set. So preoccupied was I with my worry over the merchandise, that I failed to realize that Shabbos had arrived until it was too late" Seeing how broken-hearted the man was, the Rav comforted him and said: "My dear son, the gates of repentance are never closed. Donate a pound of candles to the shul and your transgression will be forgiven." The young Rav Michel, overheard this exchange, and was displeased by the Rav's approach. "A pound of candles to atone for violating the Shabbos?" he thought to himself. "The Shabbos is one of the most important mitzvos of the Torah. Why is the Rav treating the matter so lightly? I won't allow this to happen!"

That Friday afternoon, the wagon driver brought the candles to the shul. Rav Michel watched disapprovingly from his table. He placed them on the *Amud* for the Shamash of the shul to light in honor of the Shabbos. But this was not to be. Before the Shamash arrived, a stray dog carried off the candles and ate them. The distraught repentant Yid ran off to report the incident to the Rav. "Woe is me!" he wept. "My repentance has been rejected in Heaven! What shall I do?!"

"You're making too much of the matter," the Rav reassured him. "These things happen -- there's no reason to deduce that Hashem is rejecting your repentance. Bring another pound of candles to the shul next week, and everything will

be all right." But behold when the Shamash lit the candles on the following Friday afternoon, they inexplicably melted down, so that by the time Shabbos commenced, nothing was left of them. The third week the Yid upon his third attempt of bringing the candles to be lit, out of nowhere a strong wind suddenly blew out the candles just when Shabbos began and it was not possible to relight them.

By now the Rav, too, began to realize, that something was wrong and a spiritual strength is behind this amiss. The Rav advised the wagon driver to seek the counsel of the great Chassidic master, Rav Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov. "Hmm..." said the Ba'al Shem Tov, upon hearing the man's story. "It seems that a certain young scholar, Rav Michel, sitting and studying in the shul in your town finds fault with the path to repentance that the Rav has prescribed for you.

Never mind. Next week, donate another pound of candles to the shul. This time, I promise you that everything will be alright. But go tell that Rav Michel that I would be honored if he could trouble himself to come visit me." Rav Michel wasted no time in abiding by the Ba'al Shem Tov's request. But no sooner had he and his coachman set out that all sorts of troubles beset their journey. First, the wagon tumbled into a ditch. Then, an axle broke many miles from the nearest town, after which they lost their way altogether. When they finally found the road to Mezhibuzh, it was late Friday afternoon and the sun was about to set. They were forced to abandon the wagon and continue on foot. Rav Michel arrived at the Ba'al Shem Tov's door an hour into Shabbos, weary and traumatized by his near violation of Shabbos. "Good Shabbos, Rav Michel," the Ba'al Shem Tov greeted him, "come in and warm yourself by the fire. You, Rav Michel, have never tasted sin, so you do not comprehend the remorse a Yid feels at having transgressed the will of Hashem. I trust that you now understand something of the agony that our friend experienced. Believe me, his remorse alone more than atoned for his unwitting transgression." Rav Michel thanked the Rebbe for this valuable lesson.

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