

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klimick
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Parshas Ki Savo 5776

[year 6] 277

שבת סליחות

פרשת כי תבא תשע"ז

As always, gratitude is the core Jewish character trait

ובאת אל-הכהן .. ולקח הכהן הטנא מידך .. וענית ואמרת לפני ה' אלקיך ארמו אבך אבי וירד מצרימה .. וירעו אתנו המצרים ויענונו ויתנו עלינו (כו-ג-ה) *And you shall come to the kohen ..., and say to him, "I declare this day ..., that I have come to the land which Hashem swore to our forefathers to give us." And the kohen will take the basket from your hand, ... And you shall call out and say before Hashem, your G-d, "An Aramean [sought to] destroy my forefather, and he went down to Egypt ...,and he became a great, mighty, and numerous nation. And the Egyptians treated us cruelly and afflicted us, and they imposed hard labor upon us.(26:3-6)* The context is the offering of the First Fruits to the Kohen, brought in the ritual basket. But how is this precept linked to the fact that Yaakov Avinu descended to Mitzrayim after Lavan (the Aramean) sought to destroy him? And even though Rashi (posuk 5) explains that the declarer thereby acknowledges Hashem's kindness to Klal Yisroel (מזכיר חסדי), still the question remains why this expression of gratitude is triggered specifically by the First Fruits ceremony. -- ? -- Recall that Lavan had been blessed through Yaakov's good offices, and not because of any intrinsic merit of his own. Lavan himself admitted that it was because of [Yaakov] (בראשית ל כז) *נחשתי ויברכני ה' בגללך..(בראשית ל כז) I have divined, and the Lord has blessed me for your sake."* Flying in the face of this beneficence, Lavan cheated Yaakov countless times, culminating in the deception over Leah and Rachel, even trying afterwards to abscond with their children. Could there be more egregious and outrageous ingratitude (כפוי טובה) than that? But why stop there? Mitzrayim "raised the bar" when it came to base ingratitude to the Yidden. Had not Yosef rescued the country from hunger? And was the Nile River not blessed because of Yaakov? Yet the Egyptians strove with all their might and shrewdness to exacerbate the plight of the Yidden -- כפוי טובה -- unsurpassed in history. So against this background, our posuk comes into sharp focus. *The Egyptians treated us cruelly...* Both Lavan and the Egyptians defined the ultimate standard of base ingratitude. Offering Bikkurim/First Fruits was the Yidden's golden opportunity to prove that they were NOT possessed by that evil character trait. On the contrary, Bikkurim was their fitting expression of GRATITUDE for Hashem's beneficence, which is the embodiment of תפוחי כפוי טובה, the polar opposite of מכיר טובה (שמח זבולון). We are now in a position to connect (as we often try to do) the ending of Parshas Ki Seitzei (annihilating Amalek) with the opening of Ki Savo. Last week's gilyon (Ki Seitzei 5776) expounded on the shocking כפוי טובה /ingratitude displayed by Amalek. This week, the beautiful Bikkurim ceremony gives proof positive that the Yidden were not afflicted by that base trait, but rather exemplified its opposite: מכיר טובה. *Mi keamcha Yisroel!* The contrasting middos on either side of the inter-Parshah boundary are what link the parshiyos together.

The spelling of "our voice" has a lot to teach

ונצעק אל ה' אלקי אבותינו ונשמע ה' את קולנו וירא את ענינו: (כו ז) *So we cried out to Hashem, G-d of our fathers, and Hashem heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression.(26:7)*

We can learn something heart-rending about the "voice" which the Yidden used to beseech Hashem in the midst of their agony-- the way it is spelled. It has only one "vav" and that flags a teaching. Rav Meir Premishlaner explains it through his gripping insight on an earlier posuk in Shemos, from the core narrative of Yetzias Mitzrayim: *ויהי ביום הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן ה' ויהי ביום הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן ה' Now it came to pass in those many days that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed from the labor, and they cried out, and their cry ascended to God from the labor.(Shemos 2:23)* What did the king's death have to do with the Yiddens' sighing? Would one not have thought that moaning and lamenting is a common component throughout a life of bitter servitude? But the Egyptians were so brutally cruel that they forced the Yidden to suppress any full-throated groans, whose voicing could have eased their pain ever so slightly. Unvarnished, agonized crying was *verboten!* But the picture changed suddenly when the king died. That event provided an opening for the Yidden to give vent to their cries, which were drowned out by the Egyptians' lamenting their sovereign's death. The posuk from Shemos indicates this: *the children of Israel sighed from the labour* -- and NOT because of the king's death. Any earlier "krechtz" had to be internal, and found no voicing. So our "voice" was only audible to the Oibershter. Since it was not a full-throated voice, the word for it in the posuk is spelled lacking a letter. (תפוחי חיים – פאנעט קארלסבורג)

Mitzvos: freshly baked and tasty every day!

היום הזה ה' אלקיך מצוה לעשות את החקים האלה ואת המשפטים ושמרת ועשית אותם בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך: (כו-ט"ז) *This day, the Lord, your God, is commanding you to fulfill these statutes and ordinances, and you will observe and fulfill them with all your heart and with all your soul.(26:16)* Rashi's comment: *בכל יום* "Every day the mitzvos should be as fresh and new as if Hashem had just then revealed them." This attitude conforms well with Dovid HaMelech's entreaty, (תהלים עא ט) *Do not cast me away at the time of old age.* Dovid is begging "Let my Divine Service not become old and tired, a piece of worn out "yesterday's news". This is precisely what the opening words of our posuk teaches: The present day -- **today** "mamash" -- is when Hashem is transmitting all the mitzvos (both transrational *chukim* and the logical *mishpatim*). As a result, any sincere and believing Jew -- [who truly sees himself as a child to the Creator[DPR]] -- will fulfill them with a freshness and a palpable delight, a "geshmak", as said in Yiddish. An additional word in the same posuk ושמרת recalls Yaakov Avinu's stance of "watchful waiting" regarding Yosef's dreams, וראינו שמר את הדבר. For us, the freshness makes us wait with baited breath for the chance to perform a mitzvah, with whole-hearted energy and drive. [We recall how Rav Levi Yitzchak would stay awake like a watchman the first night of Sukkos, peering out for the first ray of dawn, so that he could bench lulav and esrog at the very first allowable moment. [DPR]] (אזור אליהו בשם הבעש"ט)

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Bless us in line with our paltry merits and our natural order of the world

הַשְׁקִיפָה מִמַּעַן קִדְשׁךָ מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבִרְךְךָ אֶת-עַמְּךָ אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לָּנוּ בְּאֶשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתָּיִנוּ אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ: (כ"ז ט"ו)
Look down from Your holy dwelling, from the heavens, and bless Your people Israel, and the earth which You have given to us, as You swore to our forefathers a land flowing with milk and honey. (26:15)

Why does the posuk mention blessing the *earth*? And would it not be sufficient to thank Hashem "as [He] swore to our forebears" without specifying "a land flowing with milk and honey"? There are three links in a logical chain which meld together to yield a firm understanding of these issues. Let us see: 1. The Gemara (Shabbos 53b) tells of a case where a widower was able to nurse his infant son, clearly outside the laws of nature., and therefore praises him "כמה גדול אדם זה שנעשה לו נס כזה" One needs to have out-of-the-ordinary merits to benefit from an extra-natural miracle like that. He would have to be a person of high standing, whereas to benefit from a miracle *within* the framework of nature's laws, he would not need to have special merits. 2. Recall Yitzchak Avinu's experience: וַיִּזְרַע יִצְחָק בְּאֶרֶץ הַחַוּוֹת וַיִּמְצָא בַשָּׁנָה הַהִוא מֵאָה שָׁעָרִים וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ ה' (בראשית כ"ז י"ב) *Yitzchak sowed in that land, and he found in that year a hundred fold, and Hashem blessed him.* (Bereishis 26:12)

Rashi: "the land was hard [to plant] and the year was a hard one." Nonetheless, our posuk informs us that a miracle of a superabundant yield took place. Why does the posuk itself not state that this miracle did not follow natural laws? The reason is that the land of Eretz Yisroel itself transcends natural laws: it flows intrinsically with milk and honey! Hence, extraordinary merits are not required to reap fruits which transcend the usual laws of nature. So we view the blessing conferred upon Yitzchak as a miracle, but one very much in keeping with the prevailing laws of nature -- those pertaining to Eretz Yisroel, and hence one not having unusual merits as a prerequisite.

3. Only now can we appreciate the impact of the entreaty expressed in our posuk: Look down from on high and bless the earth which flows milk and honey as a matter of its natural course. And although we, small Jews, lack special merits, still, בְּאֶשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתָּיִנוּ, as you promised to our fathers, as to Yitzchak, for whom You made a miracle based on his earth's being of flowing milk and honey, we beg you, perform miracles for us conforming with *our* natural order, for which one need not display merits out of the ordinary. (מהר"ם סופר)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick and translated by Duvid Pinchas Rose)

*****Rav Shaya'le Keristirer redefines hachnosas orchim without concern for his own kovod*****

The chosid Reb Moshe Rosenfeld (known informally as Moshe Tetcher, from the Hungarian town Tetch of his origin) lived in Khust, Ukraine. He was in the wholesale lumber business, starting from the forest where his crews harvested trees, then cut them into marketable logs, which, after being joined together, could float down the local river Danube on its way to Vienna. For years on end, he sold his wares in Vienna for handsome profits and became very wealthy from the trade. One day, he invested a large sum in a new forest property which had very desirable trees. The harvest proceeded smoothly, but calamity struck during the transport to Vienna. A freak storm made the river uncharacteristically turbulent; the bundles of logs broke apart and the logs scattered hither and yon. But Moshe, a staunch chosid, did not let his *emuna* and *bitachon* waver for even a minute. He dispatched a crew of lumbermen in a small boat downriver, hoping that they would come upon the dispersed logs, wherever they had come to rest. Boruch Hashem, the men spied Moshe's lumber (which had his distinctive trademark burned into their ends), all bunched up against the riverbank in the town of Kerestir. Through much exertion, the team salvaged the load, re-tied and inventoried them, all without losing a single piece. The only true hardship which mattered to Moshe was that it happened to be Tisha b'Av that day, and Moshe was of course fasting. The job lasted until almost nighttime and Moshe felt the effects of the fast bearing down on him. He was near to fainting and thought only of going into Kerestir to find a *kretschma* (a country inn) to break his fast and recover from the backbreaking toil. He asked the first Jew he met where he could get something to eat. The man pointed the way to Rav Shaya'le's house. Moshe had not the slightest inkling about the famed Reb Shaya'le, so he went in to find a long table filled with men feasting away. He assumed that this was the *kretschma* and took the only empty seat -- that of Reb Shaya'la himself! Reb Shaya noticed him and assumed he was a new guest from out of town. After giving

"Sholom", he asked what the man would like to eat. "Kreplach!" was the answer. "Really? What kind: potato or kasha? And how many could you eat now?" "Four kreplach would be great -- two of each kind," said Moshe to his "waiter." The Rav told him to wash for a bread meal, set down an appetizer and headed for the kitchen to make the kreplach for Moshe, just as he "ordered." While the meal was cooking, Reb Shaya asked Moshe the stranger all about his hometown and what had brought him to Kerestir that day. Moshe related all the details of that exhausting day, by which time the kreplach were ready. Reb Shaya put down the food in front of him, to the great amusement of the locals, who giggled uncontrollably at Moshe's occupying the Rav's chair. Rav Shaya made sure Moshe was satisfied and hovered over him until he finished bentching. Moshe asked innocently, "Whom do I pay for this tasty meal?" "Here, people don't pay," replied Reb Shaya'la. "You already bentsched nicely, and that was your payment!" Moshe suspected that things were not as he had thought, so he asked a man quietly the name of the "*kretschma*" and who his "waiter" was. He soon became aware that this was actually the house of the Rav of the town, and that the Rav himself had served him. Of course, Moshe was mortified and begged the Rav to forgive him for unknowingly abusing his Rabbinical honour. "Don't talk like that, Moshe. I know that you are utterly exhausted from the day's work and what you need now is a decent bed, not a discussion about my kovod." Without further ado, Reb Shaya showed Moshe a cozy bed and he fell into a deep sleep. In the morning, thoroughly refreshed, after davening Moshe took his leave of his benefactor Rav Shaya'la Kerestirer. He continued on to Vienna with his load of lumber and consummated his business there, to good profit. But the monetary gain faded in importance compared to the insight he gained into how far Jewish hospitality extends. How privileged he was to have the tzaddik Rav Shaya'la as his teacher.

In zchus of Reb Shaya Kerestir we are giving away Leshaim Mitzvah fresh Sunrise formula Just call Rebetzin Klitnick 9-9 718 435 4725 located in Boro Park

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