

THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

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Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Parshas Ki Savo

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A Taste of Torah The Holy Land

by Rabbi Yosef Melamed

"When you come to the Land." The opening verse of this week's parsha tells us when the obligation to bring *bikkurim*, the first of the fruits, to the *Bais Hamikdash* (Temple) begins – when the Jewish Nation enters Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel). There they would present the fruit to the *kohen* (priest), and recite a special recitation of thanks to Hashem for all of Hashem's goodness and kindness. The Medrash (Sifri 297) teaches that Hashem tells the Jewish People, "Bring before Me *bikkurim* so that you will merit entering Eretz Yisrael." This seems very puzzling, because the commandment to bring *bikkurim* only began upon the Jewish Nation's entrance into Eretz Yisrael. How then could the fulfillment of that commandment be the merit with which they would enter the land?

Also puzzling is the statement made by the bringer of the *bikkurim*: "I declare now to Hashem, your G-d, that I have come to the land that G-d promised our fathers to give us." (Ki Savo 26:3) The implication of this is that the speaker has just now entered Eretz Yisrael. This would be an appropriate statement for someone from the generation which entered Eretz Yisrael. For all future generations, however, this statement would seem inaccurate. That generation did not come now into the land of its forefathers. That generation had been living in the land for a long time before. What, then, is the meaning of this statement?

Rabbi Shimon Schwab (1908-1995) offers a novel explanation. We are taught (Tractate Keilim 1:6) that Eretz Yisrael has ten levels of sanctification. The Mishna relates ten different locations in Eretz Yisrael, each one holier than the next. The final location listed is the site of the *Kodesh HaKodashim* (Holy of Holies). Rabbi Schwab explains that there is Eretz Yisrael, and there is Eretz Yisrael. The Land of Israel is only the Land of Israel because of what it contains; that is, the *Bais Hamikdash* and the *Kodesh HaKodashim*, where the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) of Hashem resides. A Land of Israel devoid of that holiness is no different

and no better than any other.

Thus, when the Medrash teaches that Hashem says, "Bring before Me *bikkurim* so that you will merit entering the Land of Israel," they were not referring to the original entrance of the Jews into Eretz Yisrael. That entrance obviously preceded the fulfillment of *bikkurim*. Rather, the Medrash is referring to the entrance of the bringer of the *bikkurim* to the site of the Temple. True, this person may have been living in Eretz Yisrael until now, but only upon arriving at the Temple, the source of the holiness of the Land of Israel, could it be considered that he truly entered Eretz Yisrael. In this light, the statement "I have come to the land promised to my forefathers" is indeed appropriate. The *bikkurim* giver would joyously proclaim, "I have merited to truly enter Eretz Yisrael, by coming to the source of its holiness!"

In a similar vein, the Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan; 1839-1933) explains (see *Chofetz Chaim al Hatorah, Parshas Vayera*) that there are two components to the Jewish Nation: Eretz Yisrael is the *guf*, the physical body of the Nation of Israel. Only there can one fulfill mitzvos which are dependent on the Land of Israel. The Torah, however, is the *neshama*, the soul of the Jewish Nation. Torah is the breath of life which gives Eretz Yisrael, the body of the Jewish Nation, its ability to exist. A Land of Israel without the holiness of the Torah cannot be called the Land of Israel at all.

This serves as a very clear guideline to how we must approach the concept of living in Eretz Yisrael and our yearning to be there. Eretz Yisrael is the land of our nation, but only as long as we are willing to live by the holy Torah, the breath of life of Eretz Yisrael. Yearning for Eretz Yisrael carries great value when that yearning is one for holiness and greater levels of Torah learning and mitzvah fulfillment.

This is a very powerful lesson in regards to our connection with Eretz Yisrael. However, there is an additional lesson that we can learn from the above explanation, which is

Stories for the Soul

Worth Crying About

A famous philanthropist once traveled to Bnai Brak to visit the headquarters of the organization Ezra Lemarpeh, an organization which aids countless Jews in need of medical help, advice and referrals. The philanthropist met with Rabbi Elimelech Firer, the renowned director of Ezra Lemarpeh. After their meeting, the two of them decided to travel to Jerusalem to daven by the Kosel. They arrived after midnight and, as they approached the Kosel, they heard the sound of sobbing coming from the Kosel plaza. As they drew closer, they saw a middle-aged Jew standing, head resting upon the stones, crying unceasingly.

When Rabbi Firer saw this, he was unable to continue, even while in the company of such a prestigious philanthropist. He turned to the man and said, "Hashem didn't arrange that we would be here at this time for no reason; He wanted us to behold the tears of this Jew and help him out. I propose a deal: I'll approach this man, introduce myself and find out what he needs. If he requires medical advice, I will aid him to the best of my ability. If, however, he tells me that he is not in need of medical advice, but in need of financial help, you will enter the picture and offer to assist." The philanthropist agreed to the deal.

Rabbi Firer went ahead and introduced himself to the fellow, asking him if he required any medical assistance. The man replied that no, he was not in need of any such assistance. The philanthropist then approached, asking if the man required financial aid. Again, the man replied that he did not, adding that Hashem had already provided for all his needs.

Confused, Rabbi Firer asked the man why he was crying. "Last night," explained the man, "I married off my youngest son, the last of the twelve children Hashem has given me. I came

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Kollel Happenings

POLICE BRUTALITY THIS WEDNESDAY AT TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Daniel Waitz, former law officer, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for the Denver Community Kollel, as they explore they investigate this difficult subject. September 5th, 12-1:15 p.m. at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$25. RSVP info@denverkollel.org.

THE ROAD BACK TO HASHEM: THE PROGRESSION THROUGH ELUL, ROSH HASHANA, YOM KIPPUR & SUKKOS

Join the Kollel for a special series for women during this special time of year. This Wednesday will feature Kollel Scholar Rabbi Nesanel Kipper speaking on *Sound Carries: The Shofar of Sinai, Rosh Hashana, and Mashiach*. 8 pm at the Meyer home, 9532 E. Grand Pl. Next class from Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher on *Awe & Joy: The Repentance of Yom Kippur & Sukkos*, Sunday, 9/16, 7:45 pm at the Weiss home, 5012 S. Xenia St. Classes sponsored in memory of Alex Wappelhorst, Michel ben Baruch a"h.

LEGAL HOLIDAY LEARNING THIS LABOR DAY

Start your day off on the right foot with Torah study! Join the Kollel for learning at two different locations: At Aish Denver, selichos/shacharis at 7 am followed by breakfast and learning, and at the Kollel West Denver Bais Medrash, selichos/shacharis at 7:45 followed by breakfast and learning. The study session will focus on *Food Fight: The Controversy over Eating before Hearing the Shofar*.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: There is a halacha that a Jew must kindle the fire or perform another major part of the cooking process for cooked food to be kosher. What are the various exceptions to this rule?

A: I. Foods which are edible raw. II. Foods which aren't fit to be served at a royal meal. III. For foods whose primary components aren't subject to these rules, secondary components of the food (e.g., egg mixed into a batter or lightly coated on bread) are exempted as well. IV. Foods which are only

served at a royal meal as an accompaniment to another food (e.g., condiments). V. Foods which are halachically considered bread may not necessitate this procedure. VI. Foods which are cold-smoked are exempt.

Sources: Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 113, 112:6 and OU Kashrus Manual.

This week's question: What category of food is forbidden to be eaten, but an exception is made due to the fact that it is Shabbos?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Moshe Sofer, the Chasam Sofer - Part IX

Rabbi Sofer opened a yeshiva in Pressburg. The yeshiva attracted hundreds of students from the Central European Jewish communities. The only other yeshiva that was comparable to the Pressburg yeshiva was the Volozhin Yeshiva in

Eastern Europe, founded by Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner. While the Volozhin Yeshiva produced numerous great Torah leaders of Lithuanian and Russian Jewry, the Pressburg yeshiva wrought a veritable revolution in the Hungarian Jewish communities.

A Taste of Torah

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relevant to *Chutz La'aretz* (outside of Eretz Yisrael), as well.

Our Sages (Kesubos 115b) tell us that presenting a gift to a Torah scholar is tantamount to having brought *bikkurim*. Rabbi Shimon Schwab explains that the world and presence of a Torah scholar are akin to that of the *Bais Hamikdash*. "From the day that the Temple was destroyed, Hashem only has the four cubits of halacha in this world." (Berachos 8a) The holiness of the *Bais Hamikdash* was rooted in the two Tablets contained in the Holy Ark. Now that there is no Ark or Temple, that sanctity is rooted in the Torah scholar, who has made himself a living house for the Torah. Thus,

one who brings a present to a Torah scholar is regarded as having brought *bikkurim* to the Holy Temple.

There can be many Torah scholars or places of Torah learning in one's locale. We can thus apply the lesson of the Medrash even to our dwelling places in the Exile. It is not enough to get to know these scholars or *batei medrash* (Torah study halls) merely on a superficial level. We must come as close as we can to the *Bais Hamikdash* of our times, the Torah scholar and *bais medrash*. We will thereby merit the coming to the *Bais Hamikdash* that we can access right now, and ultimately the third *Bais Hamikdash*, may it be built speedily in our days!

Stories for the Soul

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tonight to thank Him, the Creator of the world, for the great kindness He has shown me for so many years until I merited to bring my last child under the *chuppah*."

The man explained that just as he had come to the Kosel over the years to plead to Hashem to help him marry off his children, he had now come to the Kosel to thank Him for answering his prayers. The man

concluded, "And is it possible to thank Hashem and praise Him for such great kindness without bursting into tears?!"

In this week's parsha, the Torah gives the mitzvah of *bikkurim*, the first fruits. An integral part of this mitzvah is that one expresses gratitude to Hashem for His goodness to him and the entirety of the Jewish People.