

A PARASHA THOUGHT

The Fruits of Our Labor

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS
GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

There is a perplexing Midrash in the beginning of this week's *parasha* with regards to the *mitzvah* of *Bikkurim*. The very first *pasuk* clearly states that the *mitzvah* of *Bikkurim* only becomes obligatory after *Klal Yisrael* enters the land of Eretz Yisrael, yet, the *Sifrei* instructs us to perform the *mitzvah* of *Bikkurim* so that we should earn the right to enter the land. The difficulty with the *Sifrei* is obvious: how can a *mitzvah* that is only relevant once we've entered Eretz Yisrael be a catalyst for us to enter the land? Clearly, the *Sifrei* isn't to be taken literally. But what, then, is the "entry" into Eretz Yisrael to which the *Sifrei* is referring?

Rav Shimon Schwab asks another question. When any individual bringing *Bikkurim* arrives at the *Beis Hamikdash* he declares in front of the Kohen: "*ki basi el ha'aretz* – for I have come to the land," regardless of whether he himself entered the land or not. Why would someone whose ancestors came to Eretz Yisrael declare "for I have come"? Rav Schwab suggests that there is an underlying difference between entering any other country and entering Eretz Yisrael. If somebody crosses the border of a country, he has entered that country. Eretz Yisrael, however, isn't just a land with physical borders; it's a land filled with *kedusha* (sanctity) which emanates from Yerushalayim and more specifically from *Har Habayis*. One can cross the borders of Eretz Yisrael and be physically present in the country, but to

truly enter the land, he must tap into the *kedusha* which exists there.

Rav Schwab uses this idea to explain the essence of Moshe *Rabbeinu's* *tefillah* to enter Eretz Yisrael. Moshe pleads with Hashem to cross into Eretz Yisrael to see "the good mountain and the Levanon." Rashi identifies "the good mountain" as *Har Habayis*, and "Levanon" as the *Beis Hamikdash*. Moshe *Rabbeinu* didn't simply want to cross the Jordan and physically set his feet on the holy earth, rather he craved to experience the Divine presence which forever rests on *Har Habayis*. This, says Rav Schwab, is the *Sifrei's* intention. By performing the *mitzvah* of *Bikkurim*, we will merit to truly enter the land and experience its *kedusha*. But what is unique about the *mitzvah* of *Bikkurim* that it should serve as a reason for us to experience the *kedusha* of Eretz Yisrael? Perhaps that which Rambam writes in *Moreh Nevuchim* (Part 3, Ch. 39) to explain a reason for the *mitzvah* of *Bikkurim* will illuminate why it is a catalyst for attaining *kedusha*. Rambam explains that after one has invested hard work in something, it is one's natural tendency to delight in the fruits of his labor. According to Rambam, a purpose of the *mitzvah* of *Bikkurim* is to curb this natural tendency and give these first fruits as a gift to Hashem. This act of self-control is a prerequisite to attaining *kedusha*. Through this self-discipline one can merit to truly enter Eretz Yisrael and revel in its sanctity. 🕍

THE RABBI WAS ASKED
ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH
RABBI DOVID SPETNER

Q: In last week's *parasha*, the process of divorce is described as a man writing and giving to his wife a writ of divorce (*get*) called in Hebrew "*Sefer Krisoos*." Why, then, do we write the *get* in Aramaic and not Hebrew?

A: The truth is that a *get* is written in a mixture of Aramaic and Hebrew. This itself raises a serious *halachic* question, as the *Shulchan Aruch* writes (*EH* 126:1) that a *get* is disqualified if it is written in a mixture of two different languages (the *Rema* writes that there are others that maintain that such a *get* is kosher). The *Rema* answers that Hebrew and Aramaic were both given at Sinai and are like one single language. The *Taz* answers that the language of the *get* is really a new and unique language one could call the "Language of the Talmuds" (a defense perhaps of today's "Yeshivish"), which intersperses Hebrew and Aramaic. This commonly spoken language was used to create the template for the *get* even until today.

A fascinating theory was put forth by Rabbi Menachem Kasher z"l. Towards the end of the *get*, the text reads "and this

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

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[document] shall serve from me to you as *Sefer Tiruchin v'Igeres Shibukin v'Get Piturin.*" These three expressions are different translations of the Torah's term *Sefer Krisoos*. To "cover our bases" we utilize three different Aramaic terms to make sure we are expressing the Torah's term correctly. These three, observes Rabbi Kasher, are the translations of the *Targum* (associated with) Yonasan ben Uziel, Onkelos, and the recently discovered *Targum Yerushalmi*. 🤖

Something always bugged you about the upcoming parasha (or last week's)? Ask! Submit a question on the parasha by Monday at noon by emailing parasha@cincykollel.org. Questions will be selected to address at the discretion of the Rabbi who is answering that week. Questions may be edited for brevity/clarity.



A SHINING EXAMPLE

RABBI EPHRAIM SKOLNIK

Rabbi Dovid Klein was taking his family clothing shopping before Yom Tov in the local Jewish clothing store. Having a large family, it took a while. Finally, they headed to the register to pay for their large purchase. When Rabbi Klein was told the total he was hit with sticker shock and realized he didn't have the money to pay for all of it. He asked the cashier if she could give him a discount. She responded that as an employee she could not but she would call over the owner and he could ask him. When the owner, Mr. Goldbloom, came he asked Rabbi Klein, "What do you do for a living?" "I teach 6th grade boys," responded Rabbi Klein. Mr. Goldbloom asked for the receipt with the total. He then pressed a few buttons and handed him a new receipt that read \$0.00. "You Rabbeim are the princes of *Klal Yisroel*" said Mr. Goldbloom. "This is the least I can do." Our greatest treasure. Our heroes. Our Rabbeim. 🤖

HAFTORAH HAPPENINGS

RABBI YAAKOV MARCHUK

NEW!

In this week's Haftorah, Yeshaya continues on the theme of the glory of the Jewish people at the time of *Moshiach*. In *pasuk* 22 he says, "The smallest shall increase a thousandfold, and the least into a mighty nation." The *meforshim* (commentators) explain that the amount of *kedusha* and spiritual connection we have to Hashem is a drop in the bucket relative to the *kedusha* that the *neshama* of every Jew truly has, and while the *Beis Hamikdash* and all the surrounding *kedusha* existed, the *neshama* of every Jew was able to shine in a much brighter way. When the *Beis Hamikdash* will be rebuilt that level of spiritual connection will catapult every Jew to heights beyond his wildest dreams. 🤖



NEW!

TRACING OUR MINHAGIM

RABBI MORDECHAI BERINSTEIN

In the month of Elul many communities begin adding Chapter 27 of *Tehilim*, "*L'Dovid Hashem...*" to the end of *davening*. The *minhag* is actually surprisingly recent, in that it is not mentioned in either the *Rishonim* or early *Achronim*. The first sources which recommends the recitation are *Kabbalistic*, recording this as being the custom of many of the *Arizal's* students. (See *Piskei Teshuvos* 581/11 footnote 75.) However, the first halachic source to mention the recital of *L'Dovid* is considerably later – the *Mateh Ephraim*, first published in 1834.

Various reasons are provided for reciting *L'Dovid*. The author of the *Mateh Ephraim* (in *Elef L'Mateh-6*) explains its recital as being because the terms "*ohri*" (my light), "*yishi*" (my salvation), and "*sukkah*," all mentioned in *L'Dovid*, are understood by the Midrash as referring to Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos, the *moadim* we begin spiritual preparation for during the month of Elul. Another explanation offered is that the word "*lulei*," at the end of *L'Dovid*, when read backwards, spells "Elul" (See *Baal HaTurim*, *Devarim* 30:6).

Although saying *L'Dovid* was accepted by the majority of Jewish communities, its recital is not universal.

The *Gra* was opposed to the recitation of *L'Dovid* (*Maaseh Rav* 53), perhaps because of his consistent opposition to any addition to the traditional order of *tefillah*. Additionally, many Chassidic dynasties refrain from reciting *L'Dovid*. (See *Piskei Teshuvos* 581/73).

For those who do say *L'Dovid*, the message of spiritual yearning which resonates from its words will hopefully serve as a powerful tool in our preparation for the upcoming *Yomim Noraim*. 🤖

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