



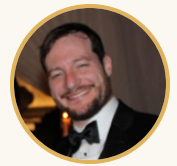
PARSHAS KI SAVO

פרשת כי תבוא



Gematria on the Parshah: The Blessing We Already Have

BY REB MOSHE HERSKOVITS



Parshas Ki Savo is the parsha of blessings and curses. It opens with the mitzvah of Bikkurim, bringing the first fruits to the Beit HaMikdash. Bikur is the same letters as baruch, pointing to the mitzvah's essential theme of gratitude. But why does the Torah specifically ask us to bring fruit to the Temple? What can Bikkurim teach us about recognizing the blessings in our own lives?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FRUIT

We know that fruit carries a deep spiritual significance. Through the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, man first disconnected from Hashem. Through the fruit of Bikkurim, we repair that relationship.

The Shlah HaKodesh shares a shocking insight. The Torah tells us that both the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil were in the center of the Garden of Eden. According to the Shlah they were actually the same tree. What determined whether man experienced it as the Tree of Life or the Tree of Knowledge was his intention and consciousness.

When we disconnect from Hashem, we live with the consciousness of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. We constantly divide life into good and bad, success and failure, blessing and difficulty. But our perspective is often limited.

We can spend years waiting for the next stage of life to bring us happiness, only to look back and realize that the moment we were waiting to escape was itself a blessing.

Bikkurim brings us to the consciousness of the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is not about waiting for something good to happen. It is about opening our eyes and realizing that what we have right now is the blessing.

The gematria of בכורים (first fruits) is 278, the same as אדם + עץ החיים (Adam + the Tree of Life).

This is the consciousness of Bikkurim. We do not need to bring physical fruit to the Beit HaMikdash to live with this consciousness. We simply need to remember that every moment is the true gift.

Our time with our family, our friends, and our ability to perform mitzvot are all limited. When we remember how every experience is limited, we can be present to life's blessings.

KING DAVID'S 100 BLESSINGS

This idea is reflected in the story of King David. During his time, Am Yisrael experienced a plague. He realized that if Am Yisrael would recite one hundred blessings each day, it would have the power to nullify the decree. King David established the practice of saying one hundred blessings each day, constantly recognizing the goodness of Hashem.

However, the deeper lesson is not simply to count our blessings. It is to develop a consciousness of blessing.

When we praise Hashem throughout the day, as King David taught us, we return to the consciousness of Gan Eden. We begin to open our eyes to the blessings Hashem is bestowing upon us, instead of the ones we are searching for.

The gematria of **הודו לה' כי טוב** (Praise Hashem, for He is good) is 124, the same as **עֵדֶן** (Eden).

Perhaps Eden is not only a place we are striving to get to in the distant future, but it's a consciousness we can tap into each day.

For more, check out the Gematria Torah channel on YouTube!

The Fourteen-Year Wait!

BY RABBI AVROHOM JACKS



There was a time when G-d refused to accept our thanks... for fourteen years straight!

At the opening of this week's Parsha, Moses teaches the commandment of the first fruits. As soon as a Jewish farmer's first fruits ripened, he was required to bring them up to the Temple in Jerusalem. There he would hand over the fruits to the kohen and make a declaration of gratitude for the bounty that his orchards and vineyards had produced.

This commandment only took effect once every single Jew had settled into their portion of the land of Israel, a process that stretched over fourteen years. Picture a farmer in year six. His orchard is finally producing. He wants to run to Jerusalem with his basket of fruits to declare his abundant thanks, and Heaven tells him, no, you must wait.

Why would G-d delay the thank-you? Because bringing the first fruits is an expression of complete joy, and complete joy cannot exist if there is another who is hurting. During those fourteen years, somewhere in the Land of Israel, families had not yet come home to their fields, and that absence left a hole in every farmer's celebration. All our souls are limbs of one collective body. When our brother's hand is empty, our own smile is still unfinished.

When our brother's hand is empty, our own smile is still unfinished.

If you know of someone who has not yet received their portion, materially or spiritually, reach out to them. Share what your hands have already harvested, whether that means an open wallet or an open door, because joy is not a solo project. The fastest way to complete your own happiness is to help complete someone else's.

When You Forget How Much You Have

BY REB ADAM KLASNER



There is a line in this week's parsha, Ki Savo, that hits differently when you actually slow down and hear it.

"V'samachta b'chol hatov asher nasan lecha Hashem Elokecha."

You shall rejoice with all the good that Hashem has given you. It sounds beautiful.

But I think there's something uncomfortable about it too.

Because most of us are actually surrounded by good.

And we barely feel it.

We have people who love us. Children who still want our attention. A spouse beside us. Food on the table. A home. A body that carries us through the day. Opportunities our grandparents could only have dreamed about.

And yet somehow, the mind keeps finding what's missing.

The thing that didn't work out.

The money we haven't made yet.

The child we're worried about.

The marriage that isn't exactly where we want it to be.

The person who disappointed us.

The version of ourselves we still haven't become.

And slowly, without realizing it, what's missing becomes louder than what's here.

That might be why Ki Savo begins with Bikkurim.

A Jew finally enters Eretz Yisrael. He plants. He waits. The first fruits finally grow. And what does the Torah ask him to do?

Stop.

Take the first fruits.

Bring them to Hashem.

And remember the entire story that brought you here.

Almost as if Hashem is saying:

Before you run toward the next thing, notice this one.

Gratitude isn't pretending everything is perfect. It's being able to hold what hurts without allowing it to erase everything that doesn't.

Because gratitude isn't pretending everything is perfect.

It's being able to hold what hurts without allowing it to erase everything that doesn't.

You can be worried about one of your children and still be overwhelmed with gratitude that you get to be their father.

You can be working through something painful in your marriage and still look across the room and remember how much this person means to you.

You can be disappointed with where you are financially and still recognize how much Hashem has already given you.

You can even be struggling spiritually and still whisper, Thank You, Hashem, that I still care enough to struggle.

Maybe that's one of the dangers of constantly chasing the next level.

We tell ourselves:

When I finally make enough, I'll relax.

When my marriage gets better, I'll appreciate it.

When my kids get through this stage, I'll enjoy them.

When I become the person I'm trying to become, I'll finally feel okay.

But life keeps moving.

The child you're frustrated with today will grow up.

The house that feels chaotic today will one day be quiet.

The people you assume will always be around will not always be around.

And one day, some of the things we currently complain about may become the things we would give anything to experience one more time.

Ki Savo is asking us to wake up while the blessing is still in our hands.

Not someday.

Now.

Especially as we move deeper into Elul, maybe the question isn't only, "What do I need to change before Rosh Hashanah?"

Maybe there is another question:

"What has Hashem already given me that I have stopped seeing?"

Look around your life this week.

Not at what's missing.

At what's here.

Because sometimes we spend so much of our lives asking Hashem for the next blessing that we forget we are already standing inside the answer to prayers we once begged Him for.

Gratitude Reveals the Source

BY REB YACOV ABOUDI



Ki Savo – the sixth step toward Rosh Hashanah

Over these weeks, the Torah has been leading us toward Rosh Hashanah.

Va'etchanan taught us to recognize the gift. Eikev taught us gratitude rather than entitlement. Re'eh demanded that gratitude become choice. Shoftim taught that our choices require structure. Ki Seitzei warned that Amalek waits בדרך, along the way, to cool our enthusiasm.

Then comes Ki Savo. After recognizing, choosing, building and persevering, something has finally begun to grow.

The Mishnah describes a farmer entering his field and seeing the first ripening fig. He ties a reed around it and declares:

הרי אלו בikkurim

"These are bikkurim" (Mishnah Bikkurim 3:1).

The fruit has not yet been harvested. The blessing is still small and unfinished, but he stops and gives it a name.

We often postpone gratitude until the end of the story. When the illness passes, the child finds his way, the business succeeds or the prayer is answered, then we will say thank You. Until then, we remain too frightened to call something a blessing.

Bikkurim asks us to notice what Hashem is growing while it is still fragile, before we know how the story will end.

But recognition is insufficient. The farmer must bring the fruit to the Beit HaMikdash and speak:

וענית ואמרת לפני ה' אלקיך

"You shall declare and say before Hashem your God" (Devarim 26:5).

Why must he speak? Has he not demonstrated his gratitude by travelling to Yerushalayim and bringing his finest fruit?

The Sifrei explains that he declares היום הגדתי to show:

שאינך כפוי טובה

"That you are not ungrateful for the good" (Sifrei Devarim 301).

The phrase כפוי טובה literally suggests covering over the good. The blessing has not disappeared. We have simply stopped seeing it. What once moved us eventually becomes familiar. What once felt like an answered prayer becomes another ordinary part of life.

The Zera Shimshon deepens the question. He explains that the Kohen waves the basket, an avodah associated with protecting the harvest from destructive winds, rain and dew. The farmer might bring bikkurim while still attributing his success to weather, nature or mazal. Therefore, he must say aloud that everything came from Hashem and acknowledge the Kohen whose tefillah served as its channel (Zera Shimshon, Ki Savo, section 2).

His actions show that he is thankful. His words reveal what he believes.

The Ben Ish Chai takes us into the inner meaning of bikkurim. He teaches that it represents the בירור שבעה מלכים, the refinement of the seven primordial kings described by Kabbalah. Their shattering caused sparks of holiness to become concealed within the physical world. The seven species correspond to these seven spiritual vessels (Ben Ish Chai, Derashot, Ki Savo).

When the farmer takes physical fruit, places it in a vessel, brings it to the Beit HaMikdash and declares that it came from Hashem, he performs a birur. He removes the covering of nature and reconnects the visible blessing to its invisible Source.

Gratitude is therefore more than good manners. It is an act of spiritual repair. An act connecting the results to its true

source.

Fruit appears to be soil, rain and labour. Success appears to be intelligence, planning and effort. A child's growth appears to be time and maturity. A recovery appears to be medicine and treatment. Gratitude does not deny any of these things or the people who made them possible. It allows us to see Hashem flowing through them.

This explains the Midrash's astonishing statement that the world was created in the merit of bikkurim. The purpose of creation is fulfilled whenever a person looks at something physical and discovers that it carries something Divine (Bereishit Rabbah 1:4).

The farmer then recounts Yaakov, Lavan, Egypt, suffering and redemption. He arrives with a small basket but tells a very large story.

Success tempts us to shorten our history: I worked, I planted, I harvested, I succeeded. Bikkurim restores the chapters we quietly edited out. I worked, but Hashem gave me strength. I planted, but Hashem gave me land and rain. I stand here because people carried me when I could not carry myself, prayed for me when I could not find the words and believed in me when I struggled to believe in myself.

Reb Noson of Breslov writes:

צריכין להודות בפה בכל לבו, כי עיקר השמחה היא ההודאה לה' יתברך

"We must thank Hashem verbally, with the whole heart, because the essence of joy is gratitude to Hashem" (Likutei Halachot, Hilchot Birkat HaHoda'ah 2:2).

Gratitude does not merely express joy. It rescues joy from beneath the layers of familiarity, fear and distraction that have covered it. This is why the Torah concludes:

ושמחת בכל הטוב אשר נתן לך ה' אלקיך

"You shall rejoice in all the good that Hashem your God has given you" (Devarim 26:11).

Ki Seitzei taught that Amalek cools us by making miracles feel ordinary. Ki Savo teaches the repair. Identify the fruit, trace its story and reconnect it to its Source.

This is our preparation for Rosh Hashanah. Before asking Hashem for another year, we must acknowledge where the blessings of this year came from. Before declaring Hashem King over the year ahead, we must discover His presence within the year that has passed.

Choose one blessing from this year, even one that is not yet complete. Remember how deeply you once prayed for it. Tell Hashem where it began, who carried you and what has started to grow.

Which blessing in my life has become so familiar that I no longer see Hashem inside it?

Personal Coming

BY REB JOSH HERTZ

There is the famous line of arami oved avi, also mentioned in the Haggadah, which the Rashbam and the Chizkuni take as referring to someone being poor, lacking something.

Interestingly, the discussion on daf tzaddik-ches in Yevamos is exactly parallel with the whole concept of teshuvah and the month of Elul leading into Tishrei.

The similarity is striking: one must recognize – as Pirkei Avos also says – where they are going, and only then will they "come" to the realization that they are indeed poor and lacking, and then need to prepare themselves accordingly.

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REFLECTIVE
QUESTION

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