



Parshas Ki Tsavo 2019, an attitude of gratitude

Our Parsha begins with laws for when the Jewish people will settle in the land of Israel. The first mitzvah is Bikurim, the requirement to bring the first fruits to the Beis Hamikdash. This only applies to fruits and produce that are among the seven crops that Israel is known for: *wheat, barley, dates, figs, grapes, pomegranates, and olives*.

However, a question comes to mind: The mitzvah of Bikurim took a very long time to actually be put into effect, for it is only applicable once they conquer and settle in the land. However, during that time, many other mitzvahs could be carried out. So why is Bikurim the first mitzvah that the Jewish people are commanded to do when they inhabit the land?

Furthermore, the prayer that is recited when the Bikurim is offered includes the story of the years that Yakkov Avinu spent working for his father-in-law and their journey as a small family to the land of Egypt. What is the connection between the story of Yakkov Avinu's time spent by Lavan and his trip to Egypt to the mitzvah of Bikurim?!

The Mishnah in Bikurim (*Chapter 3*) details how the mitzvah was done in a grand and magnificent manner. It would start with just a small group of people and their fruit, but it would grow larger with each city they passed through. People from each town would join their convoy with musical instruments and offerings.

There would be continuous singing and dancing until they reached Yerushalayim, and with overflowing happiness and excitement, they would fulfill the mitzvah of Bikurim. The Mishnah explains that the reason for the passion and enthusiasm was to show gratitude to Hashem for the blessings that He bestowed upon them.

This is the same reason Moshe singles out this mitzvah for when they enter the land, even though it will be long before it can be fulfilled. He is teaching the Jewish people that they must be grateful for all the blessings that they have in their lives.

We mention the story of Yakkov and his journey to Egypt to show us the power of gratitude and recognizing the source of our success. Yakkov came to Lavan as a poor man, but with the blessings of G-d, he left with a large family and a great deal of wealth.

We also mention his journey to Egypt to remind us of Hashem's power — He took a family of just seventy people and turned them into a great and prosperous nation! It reminds us that He chose us to be His people, and we are forever grateful to Him.

One of the many ways we can show Hikaras Hatov to Hashem for all the blessings that He bestowed upon us is by saying Modeh Ani in the morning or making a Bracha (*a blessing*) before we eat or drink.

By doing this, we show G-d that we recognize all the good we have in our life is solely from Him. We express our hope that He will continue to bless us with revealed good and rebuild the Third Beis Hamikdash, where we can finally once again fulfill the mitzvah of Bikurim.

In our daily life, we must understand that gratitude is one of the most underestimated methods we can use to enrich our lives. The feeling of appreciation and thankfulness for the good that we receive in our life will make us feel happier, more fulfilled, and more satisfied with our life. As a result, it opens up more channels for goodness to enter into our lives.

The best part about being grateful is that you do not have to wait for people to do good to you. Instead, be the first one to act and express your appreciation towards your fellow. You will see the drastic positive changes you have on their lives and the world as a whole.

"If you are thankful for what you have, you will end up having more. However, if you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never have enough".

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*