



Parshas Ki Tsavo 2020, humility and greatness

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim and Shlomo Ben Edward. As well as in honor of the Refuah Shlema of Shaul Ben Berta, Sasson Bezalel Ben Batia, Chana Bas Ester & Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Tova Basha.

Our Parsha begins with Moshe Rabbeinu teaching the laws applicable once the Jewish nation settles down in Israel. The first commandment is Bikurim, the Mitzvah to bring the first fruits of each year's harvest to the Beis Hamikdash. This Mitzvah only applies to seven fruits and produce that Israel is known for wheat, barley, dates, figs, grapes, pomegranates, and olives.

Moshe then reminds the Jewish nation of the blessings that they will receive for following G-d's commandments or the opposite, heaven forbid. He continues with detailed instructions on how to proclaim these blessings and curses on Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Eival. Moshe points out that we were selected by G-d to be His nation, and therefore, it is incumbent upon us to act like we are G-d's chosen people.

However, a question comes to mind: When the farmer brings the Bikurim to the Beis Hamikdash, the Torah explains that he must give it to the Cohen and say a small prayer. As the Pasuk says, (26:4-5) *"An Aramean sought to destroy my forefather, and he went down to Egypt and lived there with a small number of people, and there, he became a great, mighty, and numerous nation."* Why did Moshe say two very similar words, *"Ve'anisa Ve'amarta- you shall answer, and you shall say"* when teaching the Mitzvah of Bikurim?

The Malbim writes that Moshe Rabbeinu said both of these words because they have two separate meanings. The term *"Ve'anisa"* does not mean you shall answer. Instead, it implies that you proclaim this prayer passionately and enthusiastically.

As we see with Miriam, Moshe's older sister, when she gathered the Jewish women to sing praise to G-d after crossing the Sea of Reeds. (*Shemos 15: 20-21*)
*“Miriam the prophetess, Aaron’s sister, took the drum in her hand, and all the women followed her dancing with drums in their hands. **Miriam led them passionately, sing to G-d for His great victory, horse and rider He cast in the sea.**”*

However, the Or Hachaim Hakadosh gives a more in-depth and more profound explanation. He explains that the words *“Ve’anisa Ve’amarta”* do not only mean *“and you proclaim this passion.”* But instead, it means, **“you shall humble yourself and then say.”** As we see when Iyov cried out to Hashem (*Iyov 3:2*) *“And Iyov humbled himself and said.”* Just as a person humbles themselves before a King, **we must humble ourselves before we pray to the King of Kings, Hakodesh Baruch Hu.**

The Or Hachaim continues that this is why, throughout such a joyous occasion of bringing Bikurim, we repeat the painful history of the Jewish people in Egypt during the prayer. As the next Pasuk says (*26:6*) *“The Egyptians were cruel to us, making us suffer; they imposed harsh labor upon us”.*

We must never forget our lowly and modest beginnings when our forefather Ya'akov was just a worker for Laven, who tried to destroy him. Yet, he was the father of a large and influential family. When the Jewish nation was subjugated and held captive in Egypt, but G-d, in His great kindness and mercy, took us out of Egypt with strength and glory.

As we quickly approach the high holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the lesson of the Or Hachaim Hakadosh is even more significant. Before we can ask Hashem to stamp us for a year of health, success, and happiness, we must humbly recognize His kingship and oneness, His greatness and glory.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we understand that humility is the most common character trait of our greatest leaders. From our forefathers to Moshe Rabbeinu and David Hamelech, it is clear that humility and modesty is the common denominator. Therefore, it would be wise and sensible for us to learn from them and become leaders in our personal lives.

***“There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man;
true nobility is being superior to your former self.”***

Have a meaningful Shabbos, Rabbi Sholom Yemini