



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

OD YOSEF HAI
50 FINCHLEY LANE, NW41DJ
TEL: 020 8203 5701

Thoughts on KI TAVO by Dayan Abraham David

The Parasha speaks in detail about the Mitzvah of Bikurim, the bringing of the first fruit. After conquering and dividing the land among the tribes and individuals, the Bnei Yisrael had the Mitzvah of bringing the offering of the first fruit of their land to the Temple. The Rambam in Halachot Bikurim describes how this Mitzvah was performed with much ceremony and celebration. People gathered together to take their offerings together up to Jerusalem. They decorated their fruits in baskets and marched with song and dance passing slowly through the villages and towns, swelling in numbers until they reached the gates of Jerusalem. They sent messengers into the city to inform of their arrival. Dignitaries and officials were sent out to welcome them and they marched in with great pomp and pageantry. The workers and shopkeepers of the city stood up for them in respect as they passed on their way up to the Temple to hand their baskets to the Cohanim. In the Temple they were allowed to make a great declaration of gratitude citing

the poor beginnings of our forefathers until G-d made them into a great nation and brought their descendants into the Promised Land of milk and honey and here I am with my gift of gratitude. Why the special honour given to those who brought the Bikurim more than by any other Mitzvah, even the giving of Ma'serot which was of greater value and quantity, needs explanation? This Mitzvah went against the natural tendency of a person. A farmer works his field and looks forward to the reward of his toil and labour, anxious to enjoy the first fruit of his labour of what he owns and is his. But he is told to understand and recognise it is G-d who has given you everything, go out and mark the very first fruit and dedicate it to its true owner in gratitude. A further lesson is that the beginnings are important, put your best thoughts forward when you dedicate or lay the foundations for any beginning. There your thoughts and ideas must be pure and exact and for the correct purpose, for our actions follow the beginning Rosh Hashanah is the beginning of the year, and on this day we are judged strictly because our aspirations and intentions must be perfect without

compromise as the foundations of a building must be without any error. If we make that effort then we can look forward to the Mercy of Yom Kippur with Din BeRachamim.

GEMS

The Bene Yisrael were commanded, on entering the land, to have six tribes on *Har Gerizim* and six on *Har Ebal* with the elders of the *Cohanim* and *Levi-im* in the valley below.

The *Cohanim* first turned to *Har Gerizim* and pronounced the Blessing for those who are careful not to be implicated with idolatry and then turned to face *Har Ebal* where they pronounced 'arur', curse, for those who secretly do idolatry. They alternated, with the eleven laws mentioned in the parasha first the *beracha* and then the *kelalah* and the people all answered amen. The eleven laws mentioned here, even though they are forbidden by the Torah and some are punishable by death, are given *arur* for these can be transgressed quite easily in secret and had to be deterred by warnings of a *kelalah*. Why would a person who is willing to sin secretly, even though he knows nothing is hidden from G-d, would be put off by a threat of a curse, *arur*? Yes, people do not always remember that HaShem is everywhere. It slips their minds sometimes, especially when the *Yetzer Harah* overcomes them. But the words of curses by man and a whole community are not easily forgotten and can be a stronger deterrent. Hence, it is incumbent on

a community or groups to take steps using threats of communal punishment such as *Nidui* and *Cherem* to deter the people from transgressions they become lax in. These eleven include someone who degrades the honour of his father, a sin which might not be noticed by others, is given an *arur*. Someone who secretly moves his fence further into his neighbour's land in order to steal it, also not easily noticeable by others, is given an *arur*. Someone who intentionally gives bad advice to another who relies on him is compared to tripping a blind person, and even though he is unlikely to be caught and could pass it off as a genuine mistake gets an *arur*. Someone who bends the judgement against the unprotected such as a widow or an orphan and thinks he can get away with it because there is no one to take up for them gets an *arur*. Consorting with one's father's wife or sister or mother-in-law or an animal, which can be done secretly since they might live in the same house, gets an *arur*. 'Arur make re-ehu beseter', cursed is the one who secretly smites his fellow man, refers to someone who speaks *lashon hara* about another behind his back and thinks he can get away with it, making out he has done nothing even though he could damage the other person completely and even cause his demise, deserves a curse. But the last *arur*, 'Arur asher lo yakim et divrei Torah hazot la-asot otam', needs explanation for it cannot mean simply, someone who does not keep the Torah gets an

arur, for if it was so, what do we need the other ten for, they would all be included by this last one. The Ramban explains that it is not on someone who transgresses a mitzva like eating *chazir*, but on someone who does not believe in the mitzva and denies accepting it would bring upon himself an *arur*. But someone who believes in the truth of the mitzva and his obligation to keep it and that there will be reward or punishment for keeping or transgressing it will get a blessing. The *lo yakim* is referring to the acceptance on himself and his belief.

The *Yerushalmi* gives another explanation as follows. It says that this refers to those who have the power to uphold and support the Torah and not allow it to fall; the leaders, *Dayanim* and *Parnasim* who have influence. Rab Asi goes further, saying, that even a person who has learned Torah and teaches Torah and keeps mitzvot and has the opportunity and ability to support the Torah but does not, goes into the category of *arur*. But if he does, he gets *baruch*. Those who have influence and can stop the desecration of Torah and fight against its detractors and they do not, are included in this *arur*. But someone who supports it and helps others to support it, is given a *baruch*. People who have been blessed by G-d with abilities are expected to do more than others. They must make sure they are fulfilling their obligation to support and enhance Torah. Even a person who lifts up the Torah to show its

letters to the *Tzibbur*, must make sure that he does it properly so that the *kahal*, men women and children, see its letters and give it honour with the words: '*Zot HaTorah asher . . .*'.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

There was excited activity in the Rabbi's home, for the Chofetz Chaim himself was to be a guest in the house during his visit to the city. The Rebbetzin personally prepared her best meal for the honoured guest but in her excitement she forgot to tell the maid that she had already salted the soup. This unsuspecting girl of course added salt to the pot as she always did. When the twice salted soup was brought to the table, the Chofetz Chaim quickly ate his entire bowl without batting an eyelash. But his host grimaced after the first spoonful and shot an astonished glance towards the guest and his empty bowl. The Chofetz Chaim quickly grasped his hand and told him "please eat your soup without a word about it being over-salted. I am certain that the excitement of the mitzvah of *hachnasas orchim* caused the maid to salt the soup an extra time. If she discovers this, she will feel terrible and the Rebbetzin may even scold her and quarrel with her, G-d forbid. Let us keep the whole thing quiet and compliment them on a very tasty soup.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

1. The 13th Attributes of Mercy , the *Yud Gimmel Middot Hashem, Hashem El Rachum* is a prayer given by G-d to Moshe Rabenu which is promised to bring results of mercy and forgiveness hence it is most important to say it with deliberation and thought
2. Since it is a '*dabar shebekedusha*' it has to be said with a minyan of adult men as a prayer. When there is no minyan it should be said as if reading the Torah with the *Ta-amim*.
3. If there is no minyan at the beginning of the Selichot the *Yud Gimmel Middot* should be read with the *Ta-amim* as above, when the minyan gathers they should say 3 pasukim of the Ashre and then say the Kaddish and continue without going back to the *Yud Gimmel Middot*.
4. If one began the '*Vayabor*' with the congregation but they rushed on with the *Yud Gimmel Middot* or if he was slow he can continue saying it as a supplication since he started with them. But if he said the *Viduy* or the *El Melech* with the congregation and they finished saying the *Yud Gimmel Middot* before he started it he can only continue with the *Ta-amim* as a *yahid*.
5. When we say the *Hashem Hashem El Rachum Ve Chanun* we should pause between the two names of Hashem so as not to make it as if addressing to two deities.
6. The supplication of the 13 attributes of mercy are said 5 times during the selichot. Do not miss such as opportunity.

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	7:24 pm
Shabbat terminates	8:29 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat	7:10 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 am
Shabbat :Latest Shema	
Magen Avraham	8:45 am
Shabbat Latest Shema Gra	9:39 am
Shiur by Dayan David	5:50 pm
Mincha Shabbat	6:45 pm
Arvit	8:40 pm

WEEKDAY TIMES

Shacharit	7:00 am
Sundays	8.00 am
Mincha	7:15 pm
followed by Arbit	

SELICHOT

Sundays	7.00 am
Weekdays	6:00 am

We have now opened the ladies section

PLEASE FOLLOW ALL THE GUIDELINES AND WARNINGS CONCERNING COVID-19

PANDEMIC

**U'SHMARTEM MEOD
LE'NAFSHOTEHEM**

VEAHAVTA L'REACHA KAMOCHA