

TEMPLE BETH-EL SHABBAT AM TORAH STUDY 5782
KI TAVO...Deuteronomy 26:1-10

KOSHI:

| Verse | JPS | HEBREW |
|-------|--|--|
| 1 | When you enter the land that your God Adonai is giving you as a heritage, and you possess it and settle in it, | וְהָיָה כִּי־תָבוֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נַחֲלָה וַיְרַשְׁתָּהּ וַיִּשְׁבְּתָהּ בָּהּ: |
| 2 | you shall take some of every first fruit of the soil, which you harvest from the land that your God Adonai is giving you, put it in a basket and go to the place where your God Adonai will choose to establish the divine name. | וְכָל־פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר וּלְקַחְתָּ מֵרֵאשִׁית תָּבִיא מֵאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ וְשָׂמְתָהּ בַטֵּנָא וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁבוֹן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם: |
| 3 | You shall go to the priest in charge at that time and say to him, "I acknowledge this day before your God Adonai that I have entered the land that Adonai swore to our fathers to assign us." | וּבָאתָ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה בְּיָמֵינוּ הָהֵם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו הִגַּדְתִּי הַיּוֹם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי־בָאתִי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לָתֵת לָנוּ: |
| 4 | The priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down in front of the altar of your God Adonai. | לָקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַטֵּנָא מִיָּדְךָ וְהִנִּיחוֹ לִפְנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: |
| 5 | You shall then recite as follows before your God Adonai: "My father was a fugitive Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation. | וַיְהוֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲרָמִי וְעַנִּיתִי וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי אָבִד אָבִי וַיֵּרַד מִצְרָיִם וַיֵּגַר שָׁם בְּמִתִּי מֵעֵט וַיְהִי־שָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל עָצוּם וְרַב: |
| 6 | The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us. | וַיִּרְעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲבֹדוּנוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה: |
| 7 | We cried to Adonai, the God of our ancestors, and Adonai heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression. | וְנִצַּעַק אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קִלְנוּ וַיִּרְא אֶת־עַנְיֵנוּ וְאֶת־עַמְלָנוּ וְאֶת־לַחְצָנוּ: |
| 8 | Adonai freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome power, and by signs and portents, | וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה וּבְמַרְאָא גָּדֹל וּבְאֹתוֹת וּבְמִפְתָּיִם: |
| 9 | bringing us to this place and giving us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. | וַיְבִיאֵנוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וַיִּתֵּן־לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ: |
| 10 | Wherefore I now bring the first fruits of the soil which You, Adonai, have given me." You shall leave it before your God Adonai and bow low before your God Adonai. | וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה הֵבִאתִי אֶת־רֵאשִׁית פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתָּה לִּי יְהוָה וְהִנְחִיתוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: |

REMEZ...The Hint

Searching for clues that give us greater insight into the world of our ancestors

V.2 *you shall take some of every first fruit of the soil, which you harvest from the land that your God Adonai is giving you, put it in a basket and go to the place where your God Adonai will choose to establish the divine name.*

JPS... These prescriptions supplement the earlier laws that deal with these donations. The declarations are the only addresses to God whose wording is prescribed in the Torah for the laity to recite, except for 21:7-9. They indicate the meaning that Deuteronomy sought to have the farmer find in these ceremonies.....each [declaration] is to be recited 'before the Lord your God"; each describes the land as one "flowing with milk and honey"; and each refers to the land as a gift from God in fulfillment of His promise to Israel's ancestors.

RASHI... מראשית *mei reshit*... of the first fruits, but not all the first fruits, for not all fruits are subject to the duty of bringing to the Temple their first-fruits, only the seven chief kinds of products of Palestine alone, for there is mentioned here Eretz, "the land" and it states there (Deuteronomy 8:8) "a land (eretz) of wheat, and barley, etc.", (thus suggesting an analogy — that the fruits of the land referred to here are those enumerated there). What is it that Scripture is speaking of there? Of the seven products through which the land of Israel is distinguished! So, too, here it speaks only of the distinguished products of the land of Israel which are seven species only (Sifrei Devarim 297:4; Menachot 84b).

RAMBAN... *Then thou shall take of the first of all the fruit of all the fruit of the ground which thou shall bring in from thy land....* [The meaning thereof is] that you shall take of the first of all the fruit which you will bring into the house from your Land, which the Eternal your G-d gives you. He commands that one should set aside that fruit in the field and designate it as first-fruit and then bring it into his house and put it in a vessel fit to be taken to the Sanctuary [in Jerusalem]. Now, Scripture did not prescribe an amount for the first fruits, instead, even one grain [or berry] of that species exempts the entire field, similar to the law of *terumah* (the heave-offering) where one grain exempts the whole pile of grain.

SFORNO... *the choicest of each category.* The word *reshit* is not understood as "first." We find the term *reshit* used in this sense in Amos 6:6 "they anoint themselves with the choicest oils." In verse 1 of the same chapter we read, "the ones known as the choicest of the nations." These "choicest" fruit are the seven types of produce for which the Land of Israel is famous, and this is why we have been commanded already in Exodus 23:19 to offer samples of these in the Temple. The gift known as *bikurim* is not literally the first ripe produce of each of these seven species, but the ones that grow on the best soil the farmer has so that it is truly also his choicest. The seven categories of produce have been enumerated in Deut. 8:8-9.

V.3 *You shall go to the priest in charge at that time and say to him, "I acknowledge this day before your God Adonai that I have entered the land that Adonai swore to our fathers to assign us."*

LEIBOWITZ...Since man cannot really reciprocate God's bounty, for the simple reason that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof...it is left to man to perform a symbolic act leaving all before the Lord, and make the declaration known as *mikra bikkurim*, "Recital of the first fruits." Note carefully the phrasing of the declaration and the exact nature of its content: The Israelite farmer who brings the first fruits of his soil does not say: My father *came* to the land which Adonai swore to give to them. Rather he proclaims in every generation, as long as his people dwells in the Land, whenever he brings its first fruits, in thanks to the Almighty: *I am come* to the Land which Adonai swore to our fathers to give to them....Every generation had similarly to regard themselves brought to the Land by the Almighty. It had not to take the country for granted, as something bequeathed by its ancestors. Rather had the Israelites in every generation to behave as if they themselves had just been brought there by the power and grace of their creator.

TALMUD...How do they take up the first fruits to Jerusalem? The men of all the towns that belonged to the Ma'amad, gathered together in the town of the Ma'amad and spent the night in the open place of the town and came into the houses; and early in the morning, the officer said: "Arise and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God" (Jeremiah 31:6). Before them went the ox, its horns overlaid with gold and a wreath of olive-leaves on its head, and the flute was played before them- until they approached Jerusalem. When they approached Jerusalem, they sent messengers before them and adorned their first fruits. The officers and the prefects and the treasurers of the Temple went forth to meet them; according to the honor due to them. And all the craftsmen in Jerusalem would rise up before them and greet them, saying: "Brethren, men of such and such a place, you are welcome!"- The flute was played before them, until they reached the Temple Mount. When they reached the Temple Mount, even Agrippa the king would take his basket on his shoulder and enter. When they reached the Temple Court, the Levites sang the song: "I will exalt Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast raised me up, and hast not suffered mine enemies to rejoice over me" (Psalm 30). While the basket was yet on his shoulder, a man would recite the passage (Deut. 26:3f) "I profess this day until Adonai your God", until he reached the end of the passage.

DRASH...The Interpretation

How do Ancient Truths Impact our Modern Reality?

AKEDAT YITZCHAK...The Jew's gift of his first fruits, or Bikkurim, to the Kohen symbolizes that he dedicates everything he has to the service of God. For a Jew to say that his every accomplishment-no matter how much he invested in it- is a gift from God, is one of the goals of Creation.

ABRAVANEL...the purpose of bringing the first fruits was to humble man's selfish passions. Since the first fruits constitute man's most treasured possession, God commanded man to subdue his nature instincts and not eat therefrom but rather dedicate them to Him on High.

GERRER REBBE...The mitzvah of first fruits was a preparation for Rosh Hashanah, because from the time of Shavuot through Sukkot, the first fruits grew and were brought just prior to the New Year. In this way, by year's end, people would give their best offering, and thus the end would be joined with the beginning...So it is written, "You shall take *Mei Reishit*"...as the opening words of Torah, "*B'reshit barah...in the beginning God created...* So with the first fruit offering, we share with the Holy One in creating anew."

SOD...The Secret

What deeper knowing do we take away from spending time with the Torah text?

R'NATHAN...Bringing first fruits is about intent, about being grateful for what we have, and about recognizing our ability to pledge our commitment to God, even as an ever-evolving connection. As the mystical commentary OrHaTorah explains, “the fruit of a tree is akin to the soul as it is en clothed in the body” ...and so offering new fruits allows us to make good on the covenant by repairing the covenant we have with others. This not only brings us closer to God, but to bringing God’s presence and renewing force closer to us on earth....