

PARSHAS KI SAVO

CHASSIDIC INSIGHTS, HIGHLIGHTS AND HAPPENINGS

פרשת כי תבוא
י"ד אלול תשפ"ג / August 31, 2023



MONTH OF ELUL

Not for Himself

The month of Elul is designated for Teshuvah. During the month of אלול one should be "לא לו" – not for himself." One shouldn't consider his comforts, just consider his friend's needs. Because the more one draws away from his comforts, the easier it is to do teshuvah.

It's Too Late by מן המצור

During the month of Elul, Maran Reb Yissocher Dov of Belz zt"l once asked of his meshamesh Reb Shmiel Betzalels z'l, when is the moment he is aroused to do teshuvah. Reb Shmiel answered, "When the Rebbe says מן המצור during תקיעת שופר, that's when I'm aroused to do teshuvah." Maran replied, "Shmiel, by מן המצור (which also means distressed) is already a little too late!"

If Not for Hashem's Help

Teshuvah during the month of Elul needs to come out of love to Hashem. "לולא הקב"ה עזרו" – If not for Hashem's help" The letters of the word לולא stand for the word אלול – that during the month of Elul, there's an extra Siyatta Dishmaya that Hashem helps us to תשובה מאהבה – out of love to Hashem.

Blessings for A Good Year

The month of אלול is the acronym for blessings for a whole year:

אמן ולא לקללה – For blessings and not for cursings.

אמן ולא לחיים – To life and not to death.

אמן ולא לשובע – For satiety and not for leanness.

EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD STORY, ESPECIALLY A CHASSIDISHE STORY...

ושמחת בכל הטוב אשר נתן לך ה' אלקיך (כי תבא כו'יא)
You shall rejoice with all the goodness that Hashem, your G-d, has given you...

The talmidim of the Mezritcher Maggid zt"l once asked for an explanation for "חייב אדם לברך על הרעה כשם" – a person is supposed to thank Hashem for the bad just as he thanks for the good. How is it possible? When the Mezritcher Maggid heard their question, he sent them to Rebbe, Reb Zisha of Anipoli zt"l.

They found the Rebbe Reb Zisha learning in Beis Medrash, wearing tattered clothes, poor, and without owning any possessions. They shared their question with the Rebbe Reb Zisha, and he responded that he didn't understand why the Maggid sent them to him, saying, "Since I never experienced anything bad in my life, therefore, I don't know how it feels to thank Hashem for something bad."

When the talmidim heard his simple reply, despite his dire situation, they understood the answer to their question.

ועתה הנה הבאתי את ראשית פרי האדמה... (דברים כי תבא כו'י)
And now, behold! I have brought the first fruit of the ground...



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Everyone loves a good story, especially a chassidishe story...
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Harav HaKodesh Reb Aharon of Benedkovitz zt"l (a brother from the Imrei Yosef of Spinka zt"l) once visited Maran Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz zt"l and noticed a basket full of big and beautiful garlic on the table. Maran Rebbe Yehoshua picked up a head of garlic, fondly held it in his hand, and placed it back in the basket, and repeated it with other heads of garlic.

Maran Reb Yehoshua noticed Reb Aharon's bewilderment and said, "Before you came here, a Hungarian Yid brought me this beautiful basket of garlic, and the Yid surely thought he was bringing me Bikurim (the first fruit that grows.) Since he thought it was Bikurim, this garlic is truly worthy and should be prominently displayed on my table." Maran then inquired about Hungarian garlic's worthiness and added, "Although Bikurim are the first fruits from the Shivas Haminim, however, since the Yid thought he is bringing me Bikurim, then it doesn't matter to me what he brings as Bikurim, even garlic."

When Reb Aharon left Maran's home, he searched for the Hungarian Yid and asked why he specifically brought garlic? The Yid answered, "I own many orchards in Hungary, but when I come to Belz, I always bring the nicest fruit from my crop. Since the Gemara says (כתובות קה), 'one who brings a gift to a Talmid Chacham it's as if he has brought Bikurim.' And since the garlic grew the nicest this year, I brought it as Bikurim to Maran."

Reb Aharon asked him if he had told Maran that it was Bikurim. The Yid replied, "When I gave Maran the garlic, I didn't say anything; I just thought to myself that it's considered Bikurim."

לתת מטר ארצך בעיתו (חי תבא כחיב)
To provide rain for your land in its time...

It was a few years after the Holocaust that Yidden settled in Eretz Yisroel, fertilized the land, and grew produce. During one winter, no rain fell, and the agriculturist predicted that all the fields would be destroyed.

A Yid who owned many farms and cattle came to Maran Rebbe Aharon of Belz zt"l to spend a Shabbos in Tel Aviv. On Motzei Shabbos, he handed Maran a kvittel, stating that if it doesn't rain shortly, people will chas v'shalom die from hunger. He added that since Maran is the tzaddik of this generation, he won't leave the room until Maran declares a fast day. The Yid pleaded and cried and even threw himself to the floor, but Maran said that he wouldn't advise a fast day.

The Yid continued crying, saying he was not asking for himself, but Maran answered again, "I will not declare a fast day!" And so, the argument went back and forth until Maran exclaimed, "Who says we need to declare a fast day? Hashem can help without fasting!"

Less than twelve hours later it started pouring, and the danger passed the Land.

THIS WEEK'S VORT – פרשת כי תבא

ושמחת בכל הטוב אשר נתן לך ה' אלקיך (כי תבא כחיב)
You shall rejoice with all the goodness that Hashem, your G-d, has given you...

Harav HaKodosh Reb Shea Mushkat of Prague zt"l said that the greatest Simcha is when a Yid recognizes that all the good things he has in this world are from Hashem. – *ושמחת* – The real Simcha is when *אשר נתן לך ה' אלקיך* – you recognize it's all from Hashem.

ולקחת מראשית כל פרי האדמה... (כי תבא כחיב)
And you shall take from the first of every fruit on the ground...

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This week's vort – פרשת כי תבא
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When one plants seeds in the earth, the seed rots before sprouting fruit. ולקחת מראשית כל פרי האדמה – a person is likened to fruit seeds. A person needs to be humble at first to reach loftier heights.

ארמי אובד אבי וירד מצרימה... (כי תבא כוהה)
An Aramean tried to destroy my forefather. He descended to Egypt...

Why does the pasuk mention Lavan and Yetzias Mitzrayim when bringing Bikkurim? To teach us that one must remember the hard times he endured when now, when everything is going well. To acknowledge the good Hashem does with him and to thank Him.

לא עברתי ממתותיך ולא שכחתי (חי תבא כו: יג)
I have not transgressed any of Your commandments, and I have not forgotten.

The Midrash says: "Whoever doesn't give Maaser (a pittance from his earnings), mice will eat his wheat. The Gemara says (הוריות יג) that if one eats food that mice ate, he will forget his learning. The pasuk says, לא עברתי ממתותיך, I gave Maaser, so mice didn't eat from my wheat, and therefore, ולא שכחתי, I didn't forget what I learned.

פרקי אבות - פרק ג'

הוי מתפלל בשלומה של מלכות (אבות ג:ב)
Pray for the peace of the kingdom.

For the final redemption, one should daven for the completeness of מלכות שמים – for the final redemption – for then, Hashem's name will be whole.

הוי מתפלל בשלומה של מלכות (אבות ג:ב)
Pray for the peace of the kingdom.

One needs to daven for the happiness of Hashem because it says, "בכל צרתם לוי צר" – through all your pain, Hashem is joined in your pain." The Shechina has not rested in galus – exile. If we daven that the Shechina shall be at peace, we will find peace and happiness.

כל שרוח הבריות נוחה הימנו (אבות ג:י)
All those whom people are pleased with him...

People value those who act in a refined manner. As Chazal says, when one behaves and is refined, everyone says, "Blessed are the parents who raised this child." Such a child brings nachas to his parents and to Hashem.

פרקי אבות - פרק ד'

הוי רץ למצוה... ובורח מן העבירה (אבות ד:ב)
One should run to perform a mitzvah and run away from doing an aveirah.

Reb Chaim Volozitzer zt'l said, הוי רץ למצוה – The actual running to do a mitzvah is considered as a mitzvah, and the reward for running to perform a mitzvah is that you will merit fulfilling the mitzvah. But if you won't run to do the mitzvah, then the Yetzer Hara has an opportunity to reign over you and keep you back from doing the mitzvah. The

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פרקי אבות - פרק ד'
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same applies when running away from an aveirah. The act of running away is considered a mitzvah. And in the merit of the mitzvah of running away from an aveirah, you will be protected from doing the aveirah.

ומורא רבך כמורא שמים (אבות ד:יב)
And the fear of your Rebbe should be like the fear of Heaven.

The Galanter Rav, Reb Yehoshua Buxbaum zt"l, told his talmidim fondly - מורא רבך - You shall fear your Rebbe כמורא שמים - like your Rebbe fears Hashem.

INCREASING TZEDAKAH DURING THE MONTH OF ELUL

Each Jewish month parallels a different shevet (tribe). The month of Elul is Shevat Gad. The name ג"ד stands for גומל דלים - sustaining the poor, to teach us that the month of Elul is destined to give tzedakah and do chessed for the poor.