



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of maamarim given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Ki Savo 5762

In this week's *parsha* we learned about the *mitzvah* of *bikurim*. My grandfather zy" a often repeated a *peirush* of his ancestor the *Meor Einayim* zy" a explaining a Gemara that relates to *bikurim*. In *Maseches Bava Kama*, (צ"ב:) Rava asked Rabba bar Mari. "What is the source of the saying, בתר עניא אזלא עניותא (after poverty comes poverty). He responded, "In *Maseches Bikurim* (ג"ח) we learn that wealthy people bring *bikurim* in baskets of gold and silver (and the baskets are returned to them). The poor bring *bikurim* in baskets woven from weeds and willows. However, the poor give both the *bikurim* and the baskets to the *kohanim* (who keep both).

Everyone wonders why the *kohanim* return the gold and silver baskets to the wealthy yet keep the inexpensive baskets in which the poor bring their *bikurim*. It seems unfair. A poor farmer labors for months on his small farmstead, eventually harvesting a small quantity of fruit. He selects some of the choicest first fruits and embarks on the arduous journey to Yerushalayim. He presents the *bikurim* to the *kohen* in baskets that he painstakingly wove from reeds or willow twigs. Why should the poor farmer, who already suffers from poverty, also have to suffer the loss of their basket?

The *Meor Einayim* explains that we misunderstand the Gemara. The poor man is enmired in his poverty. The reed baskets which are the only ones he can afford, clearly state that his entire associative world is one of poverty. We find this concept in Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin's *peirush* of a Gemara in *Maseches Brachos* (י"ז:)



[1]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com

“Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav. Every day, a *bas kol* goes out from *Har Horev* and declares, ‘The entire world is sustained because of my son Chanina, and my son Chanina needs only a measure of carobs from one *erev Shabbos* to the next.”

The Rhuzhiner explained that the *bas kol* declared that R. Chanina is the conduit through which sustenance comes to the world. However, since R. Chanina himself needed so little, the *hashpaah* of *parnassah* to the entire world was limited by his conception of how much *parnassah* is needed.

The *Meor Einayim* goes on to explain that in order for the poor man to receive increased *shefa*, his entire mindset needs to change. This is why the *kohanim* took away his reed baskets that were “vessels of poverty”. Their intention was to remove the limitations of poverty in order to open his mind to the possibility of becoming wealthy and bringing next year’s *bikurim* in gold and silver vessels. He explains the saying *אזלא עניותא* to mean that his association with poverty goes away. (*אזל* can also mean “to depart”).

My ancestor Rav David of Tolna zy”a explained the *kohanim*’s retention of the reed baskets with another approach. He said that an incident in his own life enabled him to understand the Mishnah.

“Once, I traveled to a certain town, and the Tolner *chasidim* in that town prepared everything I would need during my stay. There was one poor *chasid* whose heart rejoiced when he heard of my visit. However, the thought of my visit also saddened him, because his poverty prevented him from being able to present me with even the smallest gift. Eventually, he managed to set aside a few coins, so that he wouldn’t come to me empty handed.

In the same town lived a wealthy *chasid* who was unhappy to hear of my impending visit. He knew that everyone would expect him to present the Rebbe with a large donation, and that he would have to give in to that



[2]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא ע"ה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com

social pressure. He presented me with a significant gift, but he gave it with a heavy heart.

I had to take the wealthy man's donation, but I got no pleasure from his gift. On the other hand, the few coins that the poor *chasid* wholeheartedly and joyfully donated, brought me great pleasure.

The same holds true for the *mitzvah* of *bikurim*. A poor man sees that the new fruits begin to ripen, and his heart rejoices. He eagerly begins to anticipate his upcoming journey to Yerushalayim and having the privilege of bringing *bikurim* to the Beis Hamikdash.

However, his excitement is dampened by the realization that he doesn't own a suitable vessel in which to place the *bikurim*. His wife consoles him by reassuring him that she can fashion a beautiful basket out of willow branches. They collect the branches and, with wholehearted love of Hashem and his *mitzvos*, weave them together into a basket. As they weave, they sing, rejoice and thank Hashem for the privilege of bringing *bikurim*.

Therefore, when the poor man presents his *bikurim* in the woven basket, not only the fruit, but the basket itself is accepted as part of the *bikurim*. The basket is imbued with love of Hashem and delight in His *mitzvos*.

The rich man, on the other hand, owns many fields. When his workers report that the new fruits are ripening, he sighs despondently. Now, he will have to travel to Yerushalayim, and give his hard-earned fruits to others. He then recalls that last year, his wealthy neighbor brought *bikurim* in an elegant silver vessel. Therefore, he feels obligated to bring this year's *bikurim* in a unique golden vessel that will be the talk of Yerushalayim.

Since the gold and silver vessels brought by the wealthy were primarily intended to make others jealous, they had no place in the Beis



[3]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא ע"ה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com

Hamikdash. Unlike the reed and willow baskets that were placed on the מזבח לרצון, the gold and silver baskets were returned to their owners.

In Maseches Nedarim (מ"א.), Abayei says, אין עני אלא בדעת (There is no poverty like impoverished understanding). As the *Meor Einayim* explained, one form of impoverished understanding is a person's inability to expand his horizons to accept the possibility that he will receive great *shefa*. That hopeful state of mind, helps create the vessels needed to contain future abundance.

The Arizal taught that Perek 24 of Tehillim (לדוד מזמור לה' הארץ ומלואה) should be recited after *maariv* on the night of Rosh Hashanah. It is a time that is particularly auspicious for *parnassah*, and by reciting that *mizmor* we can derive great *shefa* of *parnassah* for the upcoming year.

Aside from asking for actual income, we can also take advantage of that moment to ask for עשירות בדעת, wealth of understanding. We should ask Hashem to expand our ability to conceptualize, so that we can serve Him with more depth, understanding, and feeling.

Chazal say that when you give someone a gift, you should let them know what you have done. Those moments on the night of Rosh Hashanah are a precious gift. We must be prepared to take advantage of that opportunity, and not *chas v'shalom* to waste it. If we sincerely request the wealth of *daas* that will open our minds and hearts to Hashem's Torah, we will merit great *ashirus* in all areas אכי"ר



[4]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com