



פרשת כי תבוא

GRATITUDE



This weeks *Parsha* begins with the *Mitzvah* of *Bikurim*- bringing one's first fruits (of the Seven Species) up to Yerushalayim to the *Kohen* in the Bais Hamikdash. After waiting patiently and working hard on his field in Eretz Yisroel, he is now ready to enjoy the fruits of his labor. But he must first express his appreciation to Hashem. Rashi comments "שאינך" "כפוי טובה" - The purpose of this declaration is to demonstrate that he is not ungrateful.

The Torah states that he must recognize "that Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand... and He brought us to this place." The farmer thus recalls the previous difficulties and earlier challenges that his people endured, before he could benefit from the bounty of the land.

Rabeinu Bachya gleans from this a lesson for life: a person, having now triumphed, must remember the valley of despair that he or his ancestors may have gone through, in order for him to have reached his state of success.

Too often we think that the way it is now, is the way it always was. But that's usually not the case. Take Baltimore for example. Our predecessors had to work hard to deepen religious commitment and practice so that we now have a plethora of shuls and schools in our town.

My father-in-law, Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Weinberger זצ"ל was a second and third grade Rebbe in Toras Emes Kaminetz in Boro Park, NY for over 45 years.

He often recalled the difficult days of his youth in Vienna, Austria and how Hashem miraculously saved him from the hands of the Nazis ימ"ש. He told us about the ruthlessness of the Nazis ימ"ש

(even Pre-WWII) and how the Jews were humiliated to scrub the streets on their hands and knees. They ordered the Jews to erase slogans of hate, which the Nazis themselves wrote, in order to frame the Jews. Yidden would be grabbed off the street and forced into a car, never to be seen again. They were forced to wear signs declaring

"Ich bin a shwein" (I am a pig). He never forgot the day of his Bar Mitzvah in 1938, at which time he was directed not to go to the Schiff Shul since it was too dangerous. His Bar Mitzvah was held in the home of the Rov, with only his mother present since his father had died earlier. Little Eliyahu Meir's life was spared through the frum "Kindertransport" (children's train) from Vienna to Cardiff, England in 1938. This was arranged by Mr. Julius Steinfeld ז"ל and Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld ז"ל and his gratitude towards these "giants", who saved his life, never ceased.

On my father-in-laws 76th birthday, he made mention of the many students he had taught Torah to and the many smiles that he had brought to their faces. He said that since Hashem spared his life he felt that he had to "earn his keep"! He did not want to be ungrateful and he therefore dedicated his life to teaching Hashem's Torah to His children.

**When you
enjoy the view
from the top,
Appreciate those
who prepared
that spot.**

Point of Discussion

What "view" are you now enjoying and to whom should you direct your gratitude?