

Dvar Torah by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

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This Dvar Torah is written in memory of Mr. Charles Corman z"l who passed away this week and was always a personal inspiration to me for his passion and erudition in scholarly works of the Torah. We, at Beit Yisrael, will miss his insights dearly and will always cherish his memory. A noble and virtuous individual.

This week's parsha begins with the bringing of the first fruit - BIKURIM.

"And you shall come to the Kohen in those days, and you shall say to him: I have said today Hashem your G-d that I have come to the land that Hashem has sworn to our fathers to give us" (26:3).

Rashi gives deeper understanding to the words V'AMARTA EILAV - and you shall say to him, to imply "that you are not ungrateful". This implies, according to Rabbi Dr. Reuven Bulka z"l, that the essential reason for bringing the Bikurim is to show thanks to G-d.

One may ask, why would anyone presume that we are ungrateful to G-d and need to recite a special text to affirm our gratefulness? We are going out of our way every year, making the journey to Jerusalem to bring our first fruits, who would

contemplate that we are lacking gratefulness to G-d? Furthermore, it is peculiar why Rashi chose to make this comment specifically on the words "and you shall tell them", rather than on the text itself that he recites.

The great Netziv, Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin (1816-1893) in his epic work, HaAmek Davar, gives a tremendous interpretation. He emphasizes the words used HASHEM ELOKECHA as opposed to HASHEM ELOKEINU, that we are referring to G-d as the G-d of the Kohen rather than "our" G-d. The Bikurim ceremony takes place through the Kohen to show our gratitude to the righteousness of the kohen in fulfilling his role in an exemplary fashion. It is through his role that we merit the blessings bestowed upon us by the Providence including entering the Land of Israel.

Similarly, Rashi is not insinuating that we are ungrateful to G-d. Rather, we are going out of our way to show that we are not ungrateful to the kohen who is serving the spiritual needs of the Jewish people unselfishly. V'AMARTA EILAV, we are talking to the kohen. The kohen is not just a happenstance but rather an essential role helping us to spiritual heights, getting closer to G-d. we honor and respect his role.