

Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein 5778 Parashat Ki Tavo / פרשת כי-תבוא

## The Joy of the Earth

Bikkurim is a joyous mitzvah. The Torah itself relates that after bringing the first fruits to the Beit HaMikdash and declaring one's thanks to Hashem, the farmer is able to "Then, you shall rejoice with all the good that the Lord, your God, has granted you..."<sup>1</sup> Chazal highlight this association of Bikkurim and joy and derive practical halachot from it. For example, the Talmud teaches that the farmer can only perform the entire ritual and recite his statement if he brings the Bikkurim before the end of Sukkot, the time of joy.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, elsewhere, the Talmud derives from this joy of Bikkurim that the process must be accompanied by song.<sup>3</sup>

Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook<sup>4</sup> noted that this joy is also hinted to in the opening words of the parsha:

And it will be (*VeHayah*), when you come into the land which the Lord, your God, gives you for an inheritance, and you possess it and settle in it.

The Talmud teaches that any section of the Torah prefaced with the word "and it will be" (*VeHayah*) is a section of joy.<sup>5</sup>

Taking this idea one step further, Rav Tzvi Yehuda argued that the source of the joy is in the continuation of this verse: "when you come into the land." Bikkurim celebrates God gifting his

<sup>1</sup> Devarim 26:11 (translation from Chabad.org).

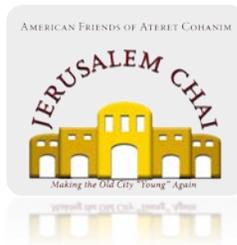
<sup>2</sup> Pesachim 36b.

<sup>3</sup> Erchin 11a.

<sup>4</sup> Available at

[https://www.toraland.org.il/%D7%9E%D7%90%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D/%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%95%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%AA%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%A5/%D7%9E%D7%AA%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%9B%D7%94%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%94-%D7%95%D7%A2%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%99%D7%9D/%D7%91%D7%99%D7%9B%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D/%D7%91%D7%99%D7%9B%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%95%D7%94%D7%99%D7%94-%D7%9B%D7%99-%D7%AA%D7%91%D7%95%D7%90-%D7%90%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%A5/.](https://www.toraland.org.il/%D7%9E%D7%90%D7%9E%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D/%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%95%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%AA%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%A5/%D7%9E%D7%AA%D7%A0%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%9B%D7%94%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%94-%D7%95%D7%A2%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%99%D7%9D/%D7%91%D7%99%D7%9B%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D/%D7%91%D7%99%D7%9B%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%95%D7%94%D7%99%D7%94-%D7%9B%D7%99-%D7%AA%D7%91%D7%95%D7%90-%D7%90%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%A5/)

<sup>5</sup> Megilah 10a.



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people with the Land of Israel and it is this deep connection between people and land that gives its inhabitants joy. However, the climax of Bikkurim cannot occur anywhere within the confines of the land. Rather, it is specifically in Yerushalayim “the place which the Lord, your God, will choose to have His Name dwell there” that the joy of Bikkurim is fully realized.

This connection between Yerushalayim and joy transcends the specific context of Bikkurim. Megilat Eicha refers to Yerushalayim as “the joy of the entire world.”<sup>6</sup> It is in Yerushalayim that the ideal joy of a Chag is experienced.

In this context, Rav Tzvi Yehuda cited a powerful midrash that highlights this theme. After describing Yerushalayim as thriving business center, the midrash records:<sup>7</sup>

There was a table of calculations outside of Yerushalayim and anyone who wanted to calculate things would go there. And why? So that they should not make their calculations in Yerushalayim and become distressed, as it is called “the joy of the entire world.”

The joy of Yerushalayim is so comprehensive that the ordinary losses that it is not proper for businessmen to feel the emotional toll of their losses within the walls of the city.

May we soon experience the true joy of bringing Bikkurim in Yerushalayim!

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<sup>6</sup> Eicha 2:15.

<sup>7</sup> Shemot Rabbah 52:5