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A convert and *Bikurim*

The first *Mishnah* in *Bikurim* states that there are different categories of people that relate to bringing *bikurim*. These categories depend on two details: Who can bring *bikurim* and of those who can bring *bikurim*, who can read the *parashat bikurim*. In the fourth *Mishnah* we find a list of people that can bring *bikurim* but cannot read the *parashah*:

The people bring but do not read: The convert brings but does not read since he cannot say “[the land] which *Hashem* promised our forefathers to give us.”

The *Mishnah* writes that even though the convert can bring the *bikurim* he cannot read the *parashah* as it has contents that does not appear to apply to him. Since the convert was not part of *Am Yisrael* during the period when they left Egypt, saying these *psukim* would be lying.

The *Gemarah* (*Makkot* 19a) mentions this same ruling in the name of *Rav Ashi*. The *Rambam* however rules in contrast to this *Mishnah* and *Gemarah*. The *Rambam* in the *Mishnah Torah* (*Bikurim* 4:3) writes that a convert can bring *bikurim* and read the *parashat bikurim* since the land, in the first instance, was promised to *Avraham* who was known as ‘the father of many nations’ (*‘av hamon goi’im*) and consequently the father of converts as well.

Another *halachic* ramification that comes out of this analysis is the question of whether a *kohen* and *levi* can read the *parashat bikurim* as they do not technically have a share in the land. The *Rambam* explains that since the land was promised to *Avraham*, the *kohen* and *levi* can also read the *parashah*.

Despite this explanation, one must explain why the *Rambam* appears to rule against the *Mishnah* and *Gemarah*.

There is a famous letter of the *Rambam's* (*Tshuvot HaRambam* 293) written to *R' Ovadya* the convert in which he discusses matters relating to converts and in particular, this issue. In the response, the *Rambam* explains that there is no practical *halachic* difference between a convert and a born Jew. Similarly, when praying, a convert uses the same text and says “our G-d and G-d of our fathers” by virtue of the fact that we are all the sons of *Avraham* who spread the faith in *Hashem* throughout the world.

At the end of the response the *Rambam* cites the *Yerushalmi* (*Bikurim* 1:4) as the source of his ruling:

It was taught in the name of *R' Yehudah*: the convert brings [*bikurim*] and reads [the *parashah*]. Why? [Since it is written] “I have placed you as the father of many nations” – in the past you were the father of *Aram* and from now on are the father of all the nations. *R' Yehoshua ben Levi* said: the *halacha* is according to *R' Yehudah*. A case came before *R' Avahu* and was ruled like *R' Yehudah*.

From this *Gemarah* we see that our *Mishnah* resembles the opinion of *R' Meir*. *R' Yehudah* however argues that there is no difference between a born Jew and a convert. From the *Rambam's* responsa we find a two levelled explanation of his ruling in the *Mishnah Torah*.

1. The source is from the *Yerushalmi*
2. The ruling stems from a philosophic position that there is no difference between a convert and a born Jew.

A different slant is found in the responsa of *Rav Moshe Feinstein* (*Agrot Moshe* 2:112). *Rav Feinstein* explain that when a *goy* purchases land from a Jew in Israel, he does not have the ability to remove the sanctity from that land, i.e. one is still obligated to remove *trumot u'ma'asrot* from its produce. *Rav Feinstein* explains that a *ger* as apposed to a *goy* can perform a complete acquisition such that he can remove the *kedushah*, yet in the process also generates a new *kedushah*. This new *chiyuv* to separate *trumot u'ma'asrot* stems from his acquisition and that he too has a share in the land being from the seed of *Avraham*. Since he has the ability for this full acquisition, he may bring *bikkurim* and read the *parashah*.

Rav Feinstein does not contradict the *Rambam* rather he simply understands that there is a need to explain how the acquisition works. For a born Jew, the source of the *kedushah* stems from the original acquisition of those that entered land (*olei mitzrayim* or *olei bavel*). A convert however generates this *kedushah* himself.

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[Ed. Trans.]

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Revision Questions

ערלה גי: בי- גי-ט

- The *Mishnah* discussed a case where someone dyed a thread using the peel of *orlah* fruit and then wove it into a garment, yet could not identify where this thread was used in the garment. What must be done with the garment? (גי: ב')
- What was the length of the thread that was discussed in the previous question? (גי: ב')
- What other *issurim* share the same ruling (as the first question) for the same minimum length of the thread and which *issurim* have no minimum length? (גי: ג')
- What must be done with food that was cooked with *orlah* peels? (גי: ד')
- What must be done with food that was cooked with *orlah* peels that became mixed up with other cooked foods? (גי: ד')
- What must be done with bread that was baked in an oven in which *orlah* peels were burnt? (גי: ה')
- What must be done with bread that was baked in an oven in which *orlah* peels were burnt that then became mixed up with other bread? (גי: ה')
- What must be done with *tiltan* that had *tiltan kilei kerem* mixed in with it? (גי: ו')
- Explain the reasoning of *R' Meir* and the *Chachamim's* opinions in the above cases. (גי: ז')
- The *Chachamim* listed six things that do not become absolved (גי: ח'); what condition is added on the six things? (גי: ח')
- How is *safek orlah* treated in Israel, *Surya* and outside Israel? (גי: ט')
- Does the *issur* of *chadash* apply to produce outside of Israel? (גי: ט')

ביכורים א': א' – א': ג'

- What are the three cases listed in the first *Mishnah* that are exempt from bringing *bikurim*? (א': א')
- What is the reason for the above ruling and what four cases were added as a result of this reason? (א': ב')
- From which fruit does one bring *bikurim*? (א': ג')
- Before which date is one not allowed to bring *bikurim*? (א': ג')
- According to the *Mishnah*, which six people can bring *bikurim* yet cannot read the *parashat bikurim*? (א': ד'-ה')
- Explain the debates regarding whether one can bring *bikurim* and read when: (א': ו')
 - One purchased two trees in his friend's field.
 - The fruit tree was chopped down.
 - The *bikurim* was brought between *Sukkot* and *Chanukah*.

Local Shiurim

Sunday
Between mincha and ma'ariv
Mizrachi Shul
David Bankier

Monday -Thursday
Between mincha & ma'ariv
Mizrachi Shul
Avigdor Einat

Friday & Shabbat
10 minutes before mincha
Mizrachi Shul
David Bankier

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Next Week's Mishnahyot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
14 th August ט' אב	15 th August י' אב	16 th August יא אב	17 th August יב אב	18 th August יג אב	19 th August יד אב	20 th August טו אב
Bikurim 1: 7-8	Bikurim 1: 9-10	Bikurim 1:11 – 2:1	Bikurim 2: 2-3	Bikurim 2: 4-5	Bikurim 2: 6-7	Bikurim 2: 8-9

