



Volume 1. Issue 46.

Bikurim of Reuven and Gad

The article last week discussed whether a convert can read the *parashat bikurim* when he brings his *bikurim*. The opinion brought in the *Mishnah* held that a convert was unable to read the *parasha* as the portion that read “the land that you promised to our fathers” was not applicable to him.¹ The *Rambam* was also quoted last week who, based on another *Tanaic* opinion in the *Yerushalmi*, ruled that there was no difference between a convert and born Jew. He reasoned that *Avraham* was known as the ‘father of many nations’, which would include the convert.

This week other cases were raised relating to people that were unable to read the *parashat bikurim*. *R’ Yosi Ha’Glili* (1:8) appears to argue against *Chachamim* maintaining that those living in the trans-Jordan area cannot even bring *bikurim*. This area was conquered from *Sichon* and *Og* and given to the tribes of *Reuven*, *Gad* and half of the tribe of *Menashe*, before *Bnei Israel* entered the land. He reasoned as follows: The *parasha* contains the following verse:

He brought us to this area, giving us this land,
a land flowing with milk and honey (*Devarim*
26:8)

Since however, the trans-Jordan is not an area “flowing with milk and honey” the area is excluded from the laws of *bikurim*.

The *Yerushalmi* brings another *Tanaic* opinion who gives a different reason why those living in the trans-Jordan cannot bring *bikurim*. The *parasha* contains reference to the land “which You gave me” implying that it only refers to land which was given. *Reuven* and *Gad*, explains the *Yerushalmi*, took the land of their own accord. They are consequently unable to bring *bikurim*.

One may ask what difference does it make where the exclusion is derived? The *Yerushalmi* explains that the

difference between the opinion in the *Mishnah* and the stated in the *Yerushalmi* affects those from the tribe of *Menashe* living in the trans-Jordan. According to *R’ Yosi Ha’Glili* they would also be excluded. The reason being is that the derivation excludes the entire region as it is not “a land flowing with milk and honey.” According to the opinion quoted in the *Yerushalmi*, the entire tribe of *Menashe* would still be able to bring *bikurim*. The derivation excluded the area of those people that took land – the area of the tribes of *Reuven* and *Gad*. Half the tribe of *Menashe* however, did not take that share; *Moshe* gave it to them.

Ha’Emek Davar (*Bamidbar* 32:33; *Devarim* 3:16) explains further: The tribe of *Menashe* did not request any land on the trans-Jordan like *Reuven* and *Gad*. *Moshe* recognised that if the region was inhabited by *Reuven* and *Gad* alone, it would be significantly weak in *Torah*. He therefore recognised the need to plant amongst them *Torah* giants to enlighten them. He therefore requested that half of the tribe of *Menashe* would live in the area, and gave them that land. *Ha’Emek Davar* explains that this presented an enduring lesson for *Am Israel* of the importance of living a place of *Torah* for Jewish survival.

The *Rambam* (*Hilchot Bikurim* 2:1) rules that requirement to bring *bikurim* from the trans-Jordan is rabbinic. Two important points come from this ruling. The first is that the exclusion (on a biblical level) applies to the entire region. This appears to follow the opinion of our *Mishnah*. The second point, raised by *Kesef Mishnah* is that ordinarily the *halacha* would have accorded with the opinion of the *Chachamim*. Consequently, the *Rambam* understood that the apparent debate between the *Chachamim* and *R’ Yosi Ha’Glili* was on a rabbinic level and that all agree that the residents of the trans-Jordan are exempt from bringing *bikurim*.

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¹ This only excludes them from reading the *parasha*. The convert can still bring *bikurim* as they have been included from the following *pasuk* : “And you will rejoice in all the good that

Hashem has given you... you, the *levi*, the convert in your midst.” (*Devarim* 26:11)

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Revision Questions

ביכורים א': ז' – ב': ט'

- If someone separates *bikurim* then sold his field, who brings *bikurim* and can they read the *parshat bikurim*? (א': ז')
- What should one do if they separate *bikurim* and they were stolen or lost prior to being brought to *Yerushalaim*? (ח': א')
- What should one do if they brought their *bikurim* to *Yerushalaim* and they became impure? (ח': א')
- If someone brought *bikurim* from one type and then returned to *Yerushalaim* with *bikurim* from another type, what is different about the way it is brought? (א': ט')
- In what case does one bring *bikurim* and read the *parshat bikurim*? (י': א')
- Does a *choker* or *aris* bring *bikurim* and read the *parshat bikurim*? (א': י"א)
- What laws are shared by *bikurim* and *trumah*, but not shared with *ma'aser sheni*? (ב': א')
- What laws are shared by *bikurim* and *ma'aser sheni*, but not shared with *trumah*? (ב': ב')
- What laws are shared by *trumah* and *ma'aser sheni*, but not shared by *bikurim*? (ב': ג')
- What laws are specific to *bikurim* and not shared with *trumah* or *ma'aser sheni*? (ב': ד')
- Explain how *trumah ma'aser* is similar to *bikurim* in two ways, and similar to *trumah gedolah* in two ways. (ב': ה')
- *Rabban Gamliel* held that an *etrog* is similar to a fruit in three way and similar to a vegetable in one way – explain. (ב': ו')
- In what way is human blood similar to animal blood, and in what why is it similar to *dam sheretz*? (ב': ז')
- What is a *koi* and how is it similar to a *behema*; and how is it similar to a *chaya*? (ב': ח' – ט')

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Time: סעודת שלישיית – After *mincha*

Location: Mizrachi Shul – Goldberger Hall

For more details contact David Bankier – 9528-2235

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Sunday

Between *mincha* and *ma'ariv*
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Monday -Thursday

Between *mincha* & *ma'ariv*
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
21 st August ט"ז אב	22 nd August י"ז אב	23 rd August י"ח אב	24 th August י"ט אב	25 th August כ' אב	26 th August כ"א אב	27 th August כ"ב אב
Bikurim 2: 10-11	Bikurim 3: 1-2	Bikurim 3: 3-4	Bikurim 3: 5-6	Bikurim 3: 7-8	Bikurim 3: 9-10	Bikurim 3: 11-12

