



## Ki-Savo - Who's on First?

### **That's why we Daven 3 times a day?!?**

This week's Parsha opens up with the Mitzva of "Bikurim" - bringing the first of all the seven species that the land of Israel is praised for. impartial say Cove. The Midrash Tanchuma says that Moshe Foresaw with Ruach HaKodesh that the Beis HaMikdash will be destroyed and bringing "Bikurim" would stop. **Therefore, he instituted davening 3 times a day!** Because of a lack of a once-a-year event we now have to daven 3 times a day every day?!? What is the connection between "Bikurim" and prayer?

### **Amalek vs Bikurim?**

The Baal HaTurim comments on the fact that last week's Parsha ends off with the command to obliterate Amalek and this week's Parsha opens up with "**When you will come to the land.....**(to bring "Bikurim"). He says that the connection is obvious. The command to obliterate Amalek goes into effect when the Jewish people enter the land of Israel. Therefore, Amalek **throughout history** wants to obstruct the Jews coming to land of Israel. **It was Amalek** that informed Pharaoh that the Jews escaped Egypt (shemos 14:5) and **it was Amalek** that informed Lavan that Yaakov ran away [to begin the destiny of the Jewish people who would eventually inherit the land of Israel] (Bereishis 31:22). **That is why Lavan's intent to harm Yaakov and his family is mentioned in the pesukim recited when bringing "Bikurim!** This Baal HaTurim need explanation: There are many sections in the Torah that open with the words "when you come to the land.."! Why is the Parsha of "Bikurim" in particular associated with Amalek, so much so that we mention his first act against the Jewish people in the days of

Yaakov in the pesukim read when bringing "Bikurim"?

### **The "First Factor"**

There is a common 'reference point' to "Bikurim", the Jewish people, and their arch enemy Amalek. **All three are referred to as "Reishis"- the first!** "Bikurim" is referred to as "**Reishis pri ha'adama**"-the first of the fruits of the Earth. the Jewish people are called "Reishis"- the first as it says, "Holy is Israel to Hashem [they are] "**Reishis**"- the first of His Harvest" (Yirmiyahu 2:3). That pasuk calling the Jewish people the first is alluded to in the very first word in the Torah "**B'Reishis**"- **for the first – for the sake of the Jewish people who are called "Reishis"-first.** Bilaam refers to Amalek as "**Reishis goyim**" -the first of Nations (Bamidbar 24:20). What does it mean to be the "first"? How does this term apply to evil Amalek and also to the Holy Jewish people and "Bikurim"?

### **Series**

What does it mean to be "first"? "First" implies that there will be a second, fourth and so on. The 1<sup>st</sup> is the beginning of a **series.** **The first will determine the nature of the series because if the second and third (and so on) in no way resemble the first that they would not be counted together in the same set!** In other words: **The first sets the precedent of what is to follow, that's why the root of first in Hebrew: "Reishis"/"Rishon" is "Rosh"-Head/Leader. Any set or series will always follow the lead of the first.** If a person is enjoying a single abundant harvest, all the fruits of that harvest are a part of that set. "Bikurim" is the first of the harvest of the seven fruits that the land of Israel

is praised for. All the other fruits will follow **the lead of the first** of that Harvest. If the “Reishis” of that harvest is “Connected to Hashem” by recognizing that it came from Him and being grateful, that recognition and gratitude will continue to all the other fruits that are part of that series. **This once a year event sets the tone for the rest of the fruits that follow because they’re all part of the same series!**

### **Eretz Yisroel**

This is the special level of cognizance that were supposed to have **constantly** in the land of Israel which is called “**constantly** the ‘Eyes of Hashem’ (Divine providence) are in it “**M’Reishis HaShana**”- from the beginning of the year until the end of the year”. We have to be constantly that the land of Israel is under Divine supervision **and that’s why in the land of Israel we are commanded to give the “first” back to Hashem**. All the later characters in the series follow the lead of the first. If the first is associated with Hashem, all the rest that belongs to that series **for the rest of the year** will also be associated with Hashem.

### **Bikurim vs Prayer – Set vs single characters**

In the absence of “Bikurim” how will we always remember that our sustenance is from Hashem and be grateful? With prayer! We recognize He is the source, we ask Him for all we need, and we Thank Him (“Kavod”, “Bakasha”, “Hoda’a”). **One prayer a year will not ‘cut it’ because every day is a new (=separate) day**. Even within a single day there are separate and distinct time periods: night day and afternoon. **Theses separate times are not characters of a set like the rest of the fruits of the same harvest!** Acknowledging Hashem in the morning will not help for the afternoon and it certainly won't hope for the next day. **That's why Moshe instituted that we daven in everyday 3 times a day! The disjointed times are not a single Continuum of a of a series like all the fruits of the same harvest.**

### **When First is Second**

How does offering the “Bikurim” to Hashem accomplish the year-round cognizance and put blessing in our land and lives? Because we are actually linking the “first” of the series to Hashem thus (as if) making Hashem part of the series. The word “Bikurim” has the same root as “Bechor”-first born, which are the letters “Beis” “chaf” & “Reish”. Let's analyze that word that means “first” as in first fruit or firstborn: **The letters are actually second letters!** “Beis” is the second letter of all the letters of the alef - beis that have the numerical value of single digits up to 9 (Alef-Tes). “Chaf” has a numerical value of 20 and is the second letter of the letters that have values of ten (Yud – Tzadi). “Reish” has a numerical value of 200 and it's the second letter of the letters that have numerical values in the hundreds (Kuf-Tav). This word that means “first” born or “first” fruit is comprised of 2<sup>nd</sup> letters! The idea is that it is 2<sup>nd</sup> relative to whatever came before it. Even though it is the **first of its set**, it is looking towards what is above it. The ‘first born’ is the **first of the second generation!** That's why there is a unique sanctity and bond between the first born and his parents. They have an obligation to redeem him and he gets a double portion in his father's estate. There is the sanctity of all first-born males of oxen, sheep, goats, and donkeys. The first of a set can make connection to the cause of above it and that id “Kedusha”-Holiness. “Kedusha” literally means ‘beyond’. ‘Holiness’ is from the Beyond. **The first of a set has the ability to be aware that there is something higher than the set that he starts – hence he is second to the set above**. When he attains the position of “Second to the beyond” he gets “Kedusha”- sanctified from the beyond

### **Yisroel – Hashem’s “Bechor”**

When Moshe is sent to Pharaoh he is instructed say in the name of Hashem “...”Bechori”-my first born Yisroel” (shemos 4:22). We are the first of created reality - Hashem’s “Bechor” -firstborn, but second to Hashem. Hashem is our source,

our leader, and father. Hashem is in a league onto His own, and for that He is called “Echad”- One and Only. He is also a part of our set as our father and leader, and for that we call him “Rishon”- the first. It is the Jewish people that recognize that Hashem is the “Rishon” by seeing themselves only as the “first of the second”- the created reality. This is clearly alluded to in the very first word of the Torah which is “B-Reishis” - for the 1<sup>st</sup> . it alludes to the Jewish people who are called the first, but it starts with “Beis” meaning second – Meaning: **We are the first of the second (=created reality) the “absolute first” is Hashem!**

### Amalek

Amalek wants to be absolute first. He wants to believe that the “Set of reality” starts with him and to forget about Hashem. Looking at physical reality alone he seemingly is first, even before the Jewish people. The pasuk says “...these are the Kings that reigned in the land of Edom (where Amalek originated) from before there reigned a king for the children of Israel” (Bereishis 36:31). We're taught that the Jewish people are “light” and refinement for the world. what came first light or the darkness? The darkness came first! What came first chaos or refinement? The world was “tohu va’vohu”- chaos and the refinement set in later. It is a simple historical truth that the Jewish people were born as a nation later than all the other nations. The nations were born at the time of the dispersal by the Tower of Bavel and Amalek was a well-established Nation by the time the Jews were had their national birth by The Exodus from Egypt.

### Where is First?

Looking at physical reality alone they have a claim of being the first and reject the Jewish people’s role since there cannot be two firsts. That is why there is this mutually exclusive adversity between Yisroel and Amalek. The Jewish people don't view themselves as the first, they view themselves as second, Hashem is

the first as their father and King. They follow Hashem like the rest of the characters follow the first in the series. **Our connection to Hashem crowns us with first place in reality.** On a deeper level: Chazal say: “Hashem's thoughts envisioning the Jewish people was first before anything!” (Bereishis Rabbah 1:4) We have to “find our place in His thoughts” by following him and being the people, He wanted. **If we follow his Cosmic plan we justify our position as the nation that he envisioned before anything.**

### Israel Bikurim & Mechiyas Amalek

Hashem’s dominion, that He is leader- “Rosh”, is revealed in Eretz Yisroel. That’s why entering Eretz Yisroel goes hand-in-hand with the with the command of obliterating Amalek. “Bikurim” is to connect the first of the set to what’s above the set – declaring Hashem as “absolute first” which stands against Amalek declaring himself “absolute first”. That’s why the land of Israel in general and “Bikurim” in particular are mentioned right after obliterating Amalek.

### Rosh Hashana

Rosh Hashanah is rapidly approaching. The Challenge on Rosh Hashanah is to declare Hashem our King - our leader **who we follow.** The relationship of “King to nation” is like “the first to the rest of the set”. **Rosh Hashanah is like “Bikrum”. By coronating Hashem at the “Reishis” of the year we bring down blessing for the whole year.** We successfully renew reality for another year uniting everything under Hashem’s being the “Rosh”. We give the new year a definite beginning so that the rest of the year is a part of “The set of the kingdom of Heaven”.

