

פרשת אמור

ובקצרכם את קציר ארצכם, לא תכלה פאת שדך בקצרך, ולקט קצירך לא תלקט, לעני ולגר תעזב אתם אני ה' אלקיכם. (פרק כג' כב)

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not remove completely the corners of your field as you reap and you shall not gather the gleanings of your harvest; for the poor and the proselyte you shall leave them; I am Hashem, your G-d.

The Torah's placement of the above mentioned laws of פאה ולקט among the festivals i.e. after Pesach and Shavuos and preceding Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Succos draws much attention. Rashi quotes Medrash Toras Kohanim: Avardimas the son of R' Yose said, "...to teach you that whoever gives (these) properly to a poor person, is considered as if he built the Beis HaMikdash and brought his offerings inside it."

The Meshech Chochma is drawn to the ending of our pasuk, אני ה' אלקיכם and specifically to the words of Medrash P'sikta Rabasi regarding this phrase: "It is as if HKBH is saying, 'I have been your guardian. I have brought wind, rain and dew at their proper times. I have given each and every one of you an **omer** measure of manna. And how do you repay Me? A single Minchas Omer from the entire nation and consisting of barley no less! My compensation will be **אתם ולא תכלה פאת שדך בקצרך, ולקט קצירך לא תלקט, לעני ולגר תעזב אתם**" Rav Meir Simcha explains this using the **גמרא בבא בתרא י'**: R' Yochanan said, "What is meant by that which is written (in משלי ה'), *מלוה ה' חונן דל*, (משלי ה') *He who is gracious to the poor has lent to Hashem?* If the (other) verse (in משלי ה') were not explicitly written, it would be impossible to utter the implication of our pasuk; as if to say, *עבד לווה לאיש מלוה*, *A borrower is a servant to the lender*-Hashem is beholden to one who gives charity." (Maharal explains this concept beautifully: Hashem is "obligated" to complete the world he created and therefore must provide sustenance for those individuals He created poor. Hence, *he who is gracious to the poor* with gifts of charity *has lent to Hashem* in that he has paid Hashem's obligation.) Thus the concluding phrase, אני ה' אלקיכם I am your G-d and I am willing to be paid back from the charity that you give from your fields.

The Meshech Chochma offers another explanation to the order of our pasukim. HKBH, at מתן תורה, gave us all of His mitzvos, even those מצוות שיכליות which society in general adopted on its own-such as giving charity or respecting one's parents. As he puts it: עלול להיות שכל האדם Man's mind can become so depraved as a wild animal, and lead him to behave with a lack of appreciation even to his own parents! Hashem therefore gave us **all of our mitzvos**, even the "common sense" ones, in order to infuse into our most mundane activities a level of קדושה that can (almost) assure adherence. And this is what the Torah is implying by placing **ובקצרכם את קציר ארצכם** right after the Parsha of Shavuos-just as on Shavuos we celebrate Hashem giving us those special Mitzvos that separate us from the rest of the world and make us "His people", so too must we celebrate the notion that as "His people," all of our daily activities must be done within the backdrop of אני ה' אלקיכם. The charity we donate and the honor we give our parents will then have an entirely different flavor to it!

The Meshech Chochma continues and connects our pasuk to the next Parsha, which discusses Rosh Hashana. He begins with תהילים ט' ט' והוא ישפוט תבל בצדק, ידין, where the pasuk writes: *And He will judge the world in righteousness, He will judge the nations with fairness.* In an agricultural society, the winter months, when the fields lay dormant, can be devoted to other pursuits. For the Torah based Jew, this can mean extra time to learn and do mitzvos. For the non-Jew, he may become pre-occupied with other, less worthy activities. During the summer months, when everyone is busy working the land, the Jew can still be involved with mitzvos, especially those associated with crops e.g. the mitzvos of our pasuk, לקט שכחה ופאה. Rav Meir Simcha now takes us to the גמרא בבא בתרא יא. discussing the fate of בנימין הצדיק who was the administrator of communal funds: Once, during years of a famine, a woman came before him and requested assistance. בנימין explained that there was nothing left in the charity fund. She persisted and told him: "My master, if you do not sustain me, a woman and her seven sons will perish!" He rose and provided her sustenance from his own funds. It happened after a time that בנימין took ill and was close to dying. The ministering angels said to Hashem: "Master of the Universe, you have said that one who saves a single Jewish soul has preserved an entire world, and בנימין הצדיק, who saved a mother and her seven sons should die after such few days on earth? Immediately upon hearing this argument the Heavenly Court, in the merit of his charity, tore up בנימין's decree and he was spared. The message of this story, Rav Meir Simcha believes, is that in order for one to be granted a gift of "extra years of life", there must be a מדה כנגד מדה; one must perform acts to others in which sustenance is given with no ulterior motives. With regards to our fields, לקט שכחה ופאה accomplish this. It is charity given to a poor person who is totally anonymous. Unlike giving תרומה ומעשר to the Kohen, this is an act of untainted kindness and the type of sustenance-giving charity that can move someone into the Book of Living. והוא ישפוט תבל in judging a person, it is because of this type of צדקה that makes Hashem rule in favor of a year of Life. to the rest of the world, Hashem will be fair but cannot be as bending for that concept of pure charity is missing. And that is why the parsha of לקט שכחה ופאה is right before Rosh Hashana, to teach us that in order to be worthy of a year of חיים, we must give others חיות-sustenance that is pure and absolutely selfless!

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