

## Does Your Schedule Reflect Your Priorities? And Why It Sometimes Doesn't...

### Deut., Ch. 26

1. And it will be, when you come into the land which the L-rd, your G-d, gives you for an inheritance, and you possess it and settle in it, 2. that you shall take of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you will bring from your land, which the L-rd, your G-d, is giving you. And you shall put [them] into a basket and go to the place which the L-rd, your G-d, will choose to have His Name dwell there. 3. And you shall come to the kohen who will be [serving] in those days, and say to him, "I declare this day to the L-rd, your G-d, that I have come to the land which the L-rd swore to our forefathers to give us." 4. And the kohen will take the basket from your hand, laying it before the altar of the L-rd, your G-d." 5. And you shall call out and say before the L-rd, your G-d, "An Aramean [sought to] destroy my forefather, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there with a small number of people, and there, he became a great, mighty, and numerous nation. 6. And the Egyptians treated us cruelly and afflicted us, and they imposed hard labor upon us. 7. So we cried out to the L-rd, G-d of our fathers, and the L-rd heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. 8. And the L-rd brought us out from Egypt with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, with great awe, and with signs and wonders. 9. And He brought us to this place, and He gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. 10. And now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the ground which you, O L-rd, have given to me." Then, you shall lay it before the L-rd, your G-d, and prostrate yourself before the L-rd, your G-d. 11. Then, you shall rejoice with all the good that the L-rd, your G-d, has granted you and your household you, the Levite, and the stranger who is among you.



### פרק כב

א. והיה כי תבוא אל הארץ אשר ה' אלקיך נתן לך נתלה וישתתה וישבת בה: ב. ולקחת מראשית כל פרי האדמה אשר תביא מארצך אשר ה' אלקיך נתן לך ושמרת בטנא והלכת אל המקום אשר יבחר ה' אלקיך לשכן שמו שם: ג. ובאת אל הכהן אשר יהיה בימים ההם ואמרת אליו הגדתי היום לה' אלקיך כי באתי אל הארץ אשר נשבע ה' לאבותינו לתת לנו: ד. ולקח הכהן טנא מידך והניחו לפני מזבח ה' אלקיך: ה. וענית ואמרת לפני ה' אלקיך אבד אבי ונרד מצרומה ויגר שם במתי מעט ויהי שם לגוי גדול עצום ורב...: ט. ויבאנו אל המקום הזה וישתן לנו את הארץ הזאת ארץ זבת חלב ודבש:

*Of the first of all the fruit 26:2*

### Mishnah Bikkurim 3:1

What is the process of taking these fruits? A man goes down into his field and sees a fig that has ripened. He winds a reed around it for a sign and declares: "This is the first fruit (בכורים)." "

### Maimonides

Everything that is for the sake of G-d should be of the best and most beautiful. When one builds a house of prayer, it should be more beautiful than his own dwelling. When one feeds the hungry, he should feed him of the best and sweetest of his table. When one clothes the naked, he should clothe him with the finest of his clothes. Whenever one designates something for a holy purpose, he should sanctify the finest of his possessions; as it is written (Leviticus 3:16), "The choicest to G-d."

### The Lubavitcher Rebbe

The rule, "the choicest to G-d," applies in all areas of life. If one's talents are to be divided between two occupations, one whose primary function is to pay the bills and a second which benefits his fellow man, he should devote his keenest abilities to the latter. In devoting the "first-ripened fruits" of his life to G-d, a person, in effect, is saying: "Here lies the focus of my existence. Quantitatively, this may represent but a small part of what I am and have; but the purpose of everything else I do and possess is to enable this

percentile of spirit to rise above my matter-clogged life.”

*Who will be [serving] in those days 26:3*

### **Rashi**

You have only the kohen in your days, whatever he is and although he may not be as wise or holy as those of previous generations, you are obliged to address him with the respect due to his office as an agent of G-d.

*And say to him...*

### **Rashi**

...That you are not ungrateful [for all that G-d has done for you].

### **Prayer Book**

Modeh Ani Morning Prayers: “I give thanks to You, living and eternal King, for having restored within me my soul, with mercy, great is Your trust.”

### **Talmud, Brachot 35a**

We must acknowledge the soul’s restoration immediately upon awakening since it is forbidden for a person to enjoy anything in Creation without the appropriate blessing.

### **Inyona Shel Torat HaChassidut, ch. 9-11**

The Modeh Ani contains no mention of any of G-d’s holy names because we are forbidden to pronounce any of these names in a state of ritual impurity. The Modeh Ani prayer represents the unassailable unity between G-d and the Jewish people, our inner and unbreakable connection.

That is why it is so important to recite this prayer the moment we wake up. By pronouncing this upon our first moments of consciousness, even with impure hands, we are stating that all the impurities or negativities of the world cannot separate our inner connection with G-d. We are declaring unequivocally that this bond is indispensable, remembered upon our first waking moments, despite any state of impurity or defect. This is the deeper reason why the Modeh Ani prayer does not mention any of the names of G-d. Rather than with a “name” --in a removed, third-person context--we addresses G-d directly and intimately in second person, as “You.”

Since the Modeh Ani originates from the essence of the soul, it is likewise directed intimately to the essence of G-d, which cannot be alluded to by any particular name. This is precisely the uniqueness of the Modeh Ani. While other prayers address G-d through divine names reflecting particular attributes, the Modeh Ani addresses our inner, quintessential and indestructible bond with Him.

## SUMMARY

- In the myriad responsibilities of the “daily grind” the Bikkurim reminds us to give precedence--and devote our strongest, freshest resources--to those people and to those values that we most cherish.
- Realize what’s important in our life and schedule that first.
- Sometimes, we neglect to do what we know is important out of fear of not doing it perfectly. The Modeh Ani teaches that when we show what’s truly valuable to us--when we establish what takes precedence in our first waking moments--it’s all right if we don’t do so perfectly or most eloquently. Our gestures, even if imperfect or defective, can be an indication of what truly matters to us.

