



First Fruits: Finding Holy Soil in Unexpected Places

Parshat Ki Tavo

1. Proclamation to the *Kohen* upon bringing first fruits to the Temple:

Deuteronomy 26:5-10

"My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation.⁶ The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us.⁷ We cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression.⁸ The LORD freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome power, and by signs and portents.⁹ He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.¹⁰ So now, here I have brought the first fruits of the soil which You, LORD, have given me..."

ארמי אבד אבִי וירד מאריהם ונָגַר שָׁם בְּמִתְּנֵה מְאַט וַיַּהֲיֶה שֵׁם לְגוּי גָּדוֹל עֲצָוָם וְרַב: ⁶ נִרְבָּעו אֶתְנוּ הַמִּזְרָים וַיַּעֲשָׂנוּ וַיְתַּבְּנָנוּ עַלְיָה קָשָׁה: ⁷ וַיַּצְחַק אֱלֹהִים אֶלְכִּינוּ אֶתְבָּתִינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת־קְלָנוּ וַיַּרְא אֶת־עֲנָנוּ וְאֶת־עַמְּלָנוּ וְאֶת־לְחָצָנוּ: ⁸ נִזְכָּאָנוּ ה' מִמְּצָרִים בִּין חִזְקָה וּבִנְרִיעָה נְטוּהָ וּבִמְרַא גָּדוֹל וּבְאַתָּה וּבְמִפְתִּים: ⁹ נִבְאָנוּ אֶל־הַמִּקְדָּשׁ כִּי־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶרְץ נִבְתַּח חֶלֶב וּקְבֻשָּׁה: ¹⁰ נִעְתַּח הַגָּהָה הַכְּבָאָתִי אֶת־רְאִישֵׁת פָּרִי הַאֲקָמָה אֲשֶׁר־נִתְמַתֵּה לֵי ה'..."

2. What about produce not grown in the earth?

Babylonian Talmud Menachot 84b

תני חדא שבגד ושבחרובה שבucziz ושבפסינה מביא וקורא ותנייא>IDR מביא ואינו קורא

It is taught in one *baraita**: With regard to produce that grew on a roof, or that grew in a ruin, or that grew in a flowerpot, or that grew on a ship, the owner brings it to the Temple and recites [the accompanying passage of thanks to God]. And it is taught in another *baraita* with regard to such fruits: The owner brings them but does not recite [the accompanying passage].

**baraita*: a rabbinic teaching from the Tannaitic era, between 0-200 CE

- What might be one reason FOR the recitation? What might be one reason AGAINST?

3. Resolution

ucziz העציז לא קשיא כאן בנקובה כאן בשאיינו נקבוה

There is no contradiction between the two *baraitot* rulings regarding the flowerpot. The first *baraita* (stating the passage is recited) is referring to a perforated flowerpot (a situation where the produce is able to draw nourishment from the soil beneath it), whereas the second *baraita* (stating that the passage is not recited), is referring to an unperforated flowerpot.

4. Closing

What are ways you are reaching out your roots to nourishing soil in these times of greater isolation?

What is the soil that nourishes you?