

This issue is dedicated by Mr. & Mrs. Ovadia and Luda Shulman L'iluy Nishmas  
his father, **Shimon ben Naftali z"l** (Yahrzeit 28 Menachem Av)

## Parshas Re'eh

by **Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim**  
Rosh Yeshiva

### Floors and Ceilings

This week is the first anniversary of Danny and Laura Carr's marriage. Danny was part of PTI's "Young Professional" initiative. The chuppah took place entirely outside. It was a beautiful summer's day, but the sun was beating down directly on the crowd. It was hot. All of a sudden, big thick dark clouds came rolling across the sky and covered the sun, giving everyone blessed shade and relief. Yet the darkening clouds were threatening a torrential downpour! Well, the rain held off, the chuppah concluded, and we danced Danny and Laura back inside. Minutes later, there was a loud thunderous "boom!" and down came the torrential rain.

It says in the Shulchan Aruch<sup>1</sup> that a Jewish wedding should take place under an open sky, as it is a sign of bracha. In most Jewish wedding halls, the chuppah room has a skylight over the chuppah that's open during the ceremony. During my wedding, it started to rain during the chuppah. Luckily, the canopy over the chuppah diverted the rain.

Rav Aharon Kotler<sup>2</sup> says that Parshas Re'eh contains one of the most important concepts in the Torah: "*Banim atem laHashem* - You are children of Hashem."<sup>3</sup> Rav Kotler explains that it is a very fundamental concept to know and feel that Hashem believes in your success, just as a parent believes in his child's success.

Indeed, it's natural for parents to cheer on their child. Even if the child isn't the greatest, the parents believe in him. Often, it's the cheering and general support of the parents that bring the child to success.

Rav Yitzchak Hutner said seventy years ago that the greatest challenge we have is to overcome our lack of belief in our abilities. Last week, I was speaking to someone who was very self-deprecating. I told him that you can't talk that way about yourself. He said, "But it's true." I told him, "It doesn't matter; you need to be positive about yourself in order to be successful."

Rav Kotler brings the following Gemara that illustrates the essential element of feeling one's self worth. The Gemara<sup>4</sup> says that a person who eats in the marketplace is disqualified from being a witness. How does eating in a marketplace disqualify an honest person from being accepted as a witness? The Rambam<sup>5</sup> says it's because the person is acting in a manner which degrades himself.

Rav Kotler elaborates that this person could well be a G-d fearing and honest person, but since he doesn't conduct himself with self-respect, there is no guarantee he will only tell the truth. The main factor that causes a person to be truthful is that it's beneath his dignity to say something false.

Most people place an unconscious ceiling for themselves on their capabilities and don't aspire for more. However, they often don't place a threshold on what kind of behavior is beneath them. The Torah tells us the opposite should be true. Hashem loves us and believes in us, just like a parent believes in his child, discouraging negative behavior and encouraging him to succeed and have big dreams for future successes.

We need to live with and encourage this mindset, creating a clear, solid understanding of what behavior is beneath us in order to prevent us from crossing into a no-go zone. Conversely, we need to leave the sky open for us to soar without capping our goals for accomplishments!

People wonder why yeshiva bochurim walk around wearing a jacket even on a hot summer's day. Why not wear a polo shirt and a pair of shorts? They dress that way because it's a uniform that identifies them as a Ben Torah and helps them hold themselves to the standard of a Ben Torah. When we present ourselves in a respectable manner, this helps to hold ourselves to a higher standard.

Rabbi Avigdor Miller would often tell people that they should say to themselves ten times a day, "Hashem loves me. Hashem thinks I am great. I think I am great." Because if no one cheers you on, you need to cheer yourself on.

Typically, a chuppah takes place on a raised platform. I would like to suggest that the floor beneath the platform signifies that the couple should mark off actions that are beneath them. And the open sky above them is a sign of blessing, signifying that there is no ceiling to what they can accomplish together as a couple.

We need to keep what's below us out of sight and out of mind, and let our tremendous potential cause us to soar towards the sky. After all, Hashem – the Creator of the world – believes in us!!

1 Rema Even HaEzer 61:1  
2 Mishnas Rabbi Aharon  
3 Re'eh 14:1  
4 Kiddushin 40b  
5 Hilchos Eidus 11:5

Last week, we discussed the *Gemara*<sup>1</sup> that provides some of the various texts for *ברכה אחת מעין שלש*, the *bracha* that is recited after eating שבעת המינים fruits (grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates), and indicates that *חוץ לארץ*, outside of *Eretz Yisrael*, the *bracha* concludes ועל הארץ ועל פירותיה, *for the Land and for the fruits*, while in *Eretz Yisrael* it concludes על הארץ ועל פירותיה, *for the Land and for its fruits*. *Levush*<sup>2</sup> explains that *על הארץ*, *for the Land*, refers to *Eretz Yisrael* and is said regardless of where we are or what we are eating as we must praise *Hashem* for giving us *Eretz Yisrael*. If we are in *Eretz Yisrael* (and eating its fruits) we say ועל פירותיה, *and for its fruits* – the fruits of the Land (*Eretz Yisrael*) that was just mentioned. However, if we are in *חוץ לארץ*, eating the fruits of *חוץ לארץ*, we can't say "its fruits" because the fruits being consumed are not the fruits of the Land that was just mentioned. We therefore say ועל הארץ ועל פירותיה, *for the Land* (of *Eretz Yisrael*) and *for the* (unrelated) fruits (that were eaten).

Yet, while it is evident from the *Gemara* that fruits that grow in *Eretz Yisrael* which are eaten in *Eretz Yisrael* warrant the special *Eretz Yisrael* text and fruits that grow outside of *Eretz Yisrael* and are eaten there do not, it is not apparent which text is used for fruits that grow in *Eretz Yisrael* but are consumed in *חוץ לארץ* or fruits that grow in *חוץ לארץ* but are eaten in *Eretz Yisrael*:

*Rashba*<sup>3</sup> writes that we can infer from the *Gemara* itself that על הארץ ועל פירותיה is said on *Eretz Yisrael* produce even if eaten in *חוץ לארץ*. After all, the *Gemara* indicates that in *חוץ לארץ* we do not say ועל פירותיה because, as the *Gemara* reasons, איננו מברכין *they in Eretz Yisrael eat* (the fruits of the Land) and we (in *Bavel*) should praise *Hashem* for those fruits?! *Rashba* deduces that if in *Bavel* they would eat the fruits of *Eretz Yisrael* it would indeed be appropriate to say על הארץ ועל פירותיה on those fruits, and that is what should be said when *Eretz Yisrael* produce is eaten anywhere in *חוץ לארץ*. Although *Beis Yosef*<sup>4</sup> seems to understand that *Rabbeinu Yonah*<sup>5</sup> is doubtful as to which version should be said in such a circumstance and concludes to use the standard text of על הארץ ועל פירותיה, *Bach*<sup>6</sup> and *Prisha*<sup>7</sup> understand that *Rabbeinu Yonah*'s comments only relate to a situation where there is a doubt whether the fruits came from *Eretz Yisrael*, in which case, he rules that the standard text of ועל פירותיה should be recited. However, they maintain, even *Rabbeinu Yonah* agrees to the *Rashba*'s opinion that if the fruits are certain to have come from *Eretz Yisrael*, ועל פירותיה is said, and so rules *Beis Yosef* as well in *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>8</sup>.

However, it is not clear how *Shulchan Aruch* would rule regarding fruits from *חוץ לארץ* that are eaten in *Eretz Yisrael*:

*Elyah Rabbah*<sup>9</sup> writes that according to a variant text (as is found in our standard *Gemara*), the above-mentioned comments of *Rabbeinu Yonah* do indeed address a situation in which fruits are brought from *חוץ לארץ* to *Eretz Yisrael*, regarding which he rules that the standard text of ועל פירותיה should be used. *Elyah Rabbah* rules accordingly.

Similarly, *Birkei Yosef*<sup>10</sup> simply writes that ועל פירותיה should be said in such a circumstance based on the above-mentioned *Levush*. He reasons that since the fruits that were consumed are from *חוץ לארץ*, one cannot say ועל פירותיה, *for the Land and for its* (the Land's) fruits, because the fruits are not the fruits of the Land (of *Eretz Yisrael*).

However, *Birkei Yosef* writes that this is a matter of dispute amongst the *poskim*. In fact, Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank<sup>11</sup> quotes Rav Ya'akov Emden<sup>12</sup> who writes that since *Shulchan Aruch* rules that produce of *Eretz Yisrael* that is brought to *חוץ לארץ* warrants the special *Eretz Yisrael* wording, certainly the *bracha* on produce that is brought to *Eretz Yisrael* should deserve that wording. He reasons that while the *Mishnah*<sup>13</sup> records a dispute regarding whether grain from *Eretz Yisrael* that is brought to *חוץ לארץ* and kneaded into dough there retains its status and is biblically obligated in the *mitzvah* of הפרשת חלה, the ritual separation of a portion of dough, all agree that grain from *חוץ לארץ* becomes biblically obligated in the *mitzvah* when brought to *Eretz Yisrael* and kneaded there. Apparently, it is more likely for *חוץ לארץ* produce to achieve the elevated status of *Eretz Yisrael* produce when brought to *Eretz Yisrael* than it is for *Eretz Yisrael* produce to maintain its status when brought outside of *Eretz Yisrael*. If so, he reasons, since *Shulchan Aruch* rules that *Eretz Yisrael* produce maintains its stature regarding the text of ועל פירותיה even when brought to *חוץ לארץ*, certainly *חוץ לארץ* produce that is brought to *Eretz Yisrael* should be elevated in stature and warrant the special *Eretz Yisrael* text. Although, he does acknowledge that one may distinguish between the two *halachos*. Perhaps the difference is that in the case of הפרשת חלה the kneading of the dough in *Eretz Yisrael* generates the biblical obligation while in our case there is no action of *halachik* significance that would trigger the change of status.

Notwithstanding, *Mishnah Berurah*<sup>14</sup> quotes the opinion of *Elyah Rabbah* that ועל פירותיה should be said in such an instance. Hence, the wording of the *bracha* depends solely on the origin of the fruits regardless of where they are consumed, and so rule *Aruch Hashulchan*<sup>15</sup>, Rav Chaim Naeh<sup>16</sup>, and, as we indicated last week, Rav Ovadia Yosef<sup>17</sup>.

1 ברכות מ"ד ע"א  
2 לבוש מלכות או"ח סי' ר"ח אות י  
3 ח' הרשב"א ברכות מ"ד ע"א  
4 בית יוסף או"ח סי' ר"ח  
5 רבינו יונה ברכות ל"ב ע"א בדפי הרי"ף ד"ה ולא  
6 בית חדש או"ח סי' ר"ח  
7 פרישה או"ח סי' ר"ח אות ט"ו  
8 שלחן ערוך או"ח סי' ר"ח סעי' י

9 אליה רבה או"ח סי' ר"ח אות י"א  
10 ברכי יוסף או"ח סי' ר"ח אות י"ח  
11 שו"ת הר צבי או"ח ח"א סי' ק"ח  
12 ספר מור וקציעה או"ח סי' ר"ח  
13 משנה חלה ב:א  
14 משנה ברורה סי' ר"ח ס"ק נ"ב  
15 ערוך השלחן או"ח סי' ר"ח סעי' ו  
16 קצות השלחן סי' ס סעי' ב  
17 שו"ת יביע אומר ח"ז חאו"ח סי' ל

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