



Parshas Ki Savo thoughts from The Whitefield Community Kollel

YAAKOV HIBBERT

presents:

*Action
speak louder than
words*

This week's Parshah opens with the Mitzvah of Bikurim - the bringing of the first-fruits up to Yerushalayim. We are told how upon arrival in the Temple the farmer would present his first-fruits. The verse reads, "You shall come to the Cohen... and you shall say to him, **"I declare today** to Hashem, your G-d, that I have come to the Land that Hashem swore to our forefathers to give to us".

The grammatically accurate translation though is really **"I have declared to you today"** in the past tense. The Seforno [1475-1550] picks up on this and is obviously bothered, since when previously has it been said that only because of the promise to our forefathers have we been gifted Eretz Yisroel; these words are his opening words?

Answers the Seforno: the very act of bringing the First-fruits up to Yerushalayim are considered to be words of gratitude, declaring 'thanks' to Hashem for giving us the Land of Israel. All the pomp and festivities that surround the pilgrimage as described in the Mishnah are actions that speak louder than any other words proclaiming the gratitude that was felt towards Hashem.



Another such example is found with Dovid Hamelech. First the background: King Dovid's mighty army has just defeated Avshalom's, although Avshalom himself, Dovid's rebellious son was killed. Yoav, nephew of Dovid and captain of his army, comes to a very distraught King Dovid and says, **"for you (Dovid) have declared today that you do not have officers or servants, for today I know that were Avshalom alive and all of us dead, it would be preferable in your eyes"**.

Dovid's actions of mourning spoke louder than the evidence in front of him. His army and servants were meaningless when put in perspective. When faced with death, the death of a son - even one who stood up kill his father - all materialistic things just melt away. Dovid didn't have to verbalise this, it was loud and clear for all to hear!

One very practical lesson that we can glean from this concept is in the realm of child rearing. Allow me to explain by way of a true story that happened with me.

When I was young boy, perhaps twelve, I remember going to Shul with my father. I remember how daddy would gently coax me after having being slumped

in my chair for the duration of most of davening to stand up for "Modim" (When we thank Hashem for life!) during the Chazzan's repetition. At best I would shift in my chair and do the minimal bending of the back. This went on for quite a while, but his words were just falling on deaf ears! That was until one day when it came to "Modim" my father pointed across Shul to the old and frail man - R' Joey Grosskopf. R' Joey couldn't possibly manage to stand for pretty much of any of the davening, but he exerted himself tremendously so he could stand up just for the "modim" prayer in which we give thanks to Hashem for the beautiful life He bestowed upon us.

Boy, did I feel stupid! Daddy **spoke**, but R' Joey's **actions spoke** volumes, and to this day when I can't be bothered to properly stand up for any part of davening I recall the frail R' Joey putting in that effort and struggling to stand up properly just for "Modim".

Let me finish with another example where one's actions speak.

R' Dovid Orlofsky told me this story about himself. R' Dovid spends much of his time lecturing and trying to touch the souls of those who are not so close to Yiddishkeit, but this story highlighted how sometimes no words are needed.

R' Dovid was eating out at a restaurant. He did nothing special, he said no lecture but his actions during the meal to his wife and to the waitress were a pleasure to behold. The waitress was touched by the "droshah" of his actions throughout the evening - and told him so. Reb Dovid, before he left the restaurant, tore off a piece of the place mat and wrote his number on it, and asked her to come for a Shabbos meal.

*She never came! But several years later she did contact him, now very committed to her Jewish heritage, wishing to thank him for his great seminar that he gave that night in the restaurant, which started her on a path back to real authentic heritage. **Our lives are the only thing some people will ever read - this is a really scary example of how careful we must be! We carry the name of Hashem on your shoulders when we call ourselves a 'JEW'!***

Good Shabbos, Yaakov