

Danielle ***Danielle bat David v'Yulia***
Parashat Ki Tavo

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<https://www.sefaria.org/Deuteronomy.26.1-11?lang=bi&aliyot=1>

<https://mirowitztorahreading.weebly.com/ki-tavo.html>

The Torah portion this week is *Ki Tavo*, and we are reading from *Sefer Devarim*, the Book of Deuteronomy. Today I will read chapter 26, verses 1-3.

Moshe and the Israelites are still in the desert preparing to enter the Promised Land. This week Moshe continues his very long speech to the Israelites before they enter the Promised Land, focusing on many more of the rules that they should observe when they enter and live there. One rule is that they should present the first fruits of their harvest to the Kohen, the priest, as a way of giving thanks. The farmer presenting these first fruits then told a story familiar to us from the Passover Haggadah.

Later in the *parasha* the Israelites are taught that once they cross the Jordan to enter the land, they are responsible for putting up stone pillars coated with plaster that are inscribed with the laws of Torah. The Israelites are reminded, once again, to be faithful to God's *mitzvot* so that the nation will experience blessing not curse.

Questions

1) The verses I just read begin to describe what the Israelites are supposed to do with the first vegetables and fruits they harvest after entering the Promised Land. Everyone is told to bring their very first fruit and veggies to the Temple in Jerusalem in a basket and to give that basket to a *kohen*--one of the priests in the Temple. The *kohen* then puts the basket on the altar of the Temple. Why do you think the Israelites were told to bring their first fruits when it's time for the fruit harvest instead of just bringing some of the things that they own or have brought with them from Egypt that might connect them with their parents and grandparents? <<Pick 3>>

Bringing the first fruits and vegetables of the harvest shows that the Israelites are taking care of the land and farming according to the rules that G!d has given them. They are showing appropriate respect for the land.

2) Why do you think *all* people have to bring first fruits rather than just one person or a few? <<Pick 3>>

I think that having all people bring their harvest is a way of respecting the work of each farmer, not just one or two of them.

3) After everyone brings their first fruits to the *kohen*, each farmer then tells the *kohen* a story. One thing that is interesting about the story is that it *starts* with the ending. First the farmer tells the *kohen* that they know that they have settled in the land that G!d gave them. Then the farmer goes back and tells a story about their parents and grandparents being slaves in Egypt and G!d taking them out of Egypt to bring them to the Promised Land. Once the farmer has given the *kohen* the basket of veggies and told him this whole story, the farmer then goes out of the Temple to share a festive meal with two groups of people who do not own land--so they cannot plant or harvest....the tribe of Levi and the strangers who live with the Israelites in the Promised Land. Why do you think the farmers are supposed to have a party with other people rather than just celebrating with their own families? <<Pick 3>>

I think that they celebrated together because even though the Tribe of Levi and the strangers who live with the Israelites didn't own the land, the people who farmed and harvested had them come to the party to show that they are all important parts of the same community.