

STRIKE WHILE THE IRON IS HOT

by Rabbi Pinchas Avruch

Parshas Ki Savo

Strike While the Iron is Hot

By Rabbi Shlomo Jarcaig

In describing the process of the mitzvah (Divine command) of Bikurim - the bringing of the first blossoming fruits of a year's crop to the Bais Hamikdash (Holy Temple in Jerusalem) and giving them to the Kohen (priest) - the Torah states, "You shall come to the Kohen who will be in those days, and you shall say to him..." (Devarim/Deuteronomy 23:3)

Rashi, noting that the Torah seems to be overstating the obvious, telling us specifically to go to a contemporary Kohen, comments, "You have none but the Kohen in your days, as he is." How has Rashi justified the extra verbiage? What message is Rashi conveying?

Kli Yakar (1) explains that the Talmud (Kesubos 105b) equates giving a gift to a Torah scholar to the fulfillment of the mitzvah of Bikurim. One may misconstrue this maxim to say that if the Kohanim serving in the Bais Hamikdash when one arrives with his Bikurim are not Torah scholars, it would be worthwhile to wait until a new rotation of Kohanim are serving to fulfill the Mitzvah in the most ideal manner. Thus, Rashi told us to give it to the Kohen "in your days as he is." If G-d orchestrated that these are the Kohanim serving when the opportunity to perform the mitzvah presents itself, give to them, do not wait.

At times we find ourselves with a desire to donate funds to charity, or motivated to learn more about our Judaism, to study Torah, to do a mitzvah. One could justifiably delay until he finds the most worthwhile cause or the ideal study partner. Do not tarry when a mitzvah opportunity - a chance to connect with the Divine - presents itself. As Hillel the Elder teaches in Pirkei Avos (Ethics of the Fathers, 2:5), "Do not say, 'When I am free I will study', maybe you will not become free."

Have a Good Shabbos!

(1) Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Lunshitz; c.1550-1619; Rosh Yeshiva/Dean in Lemberg and Rabbi in

Prague; a leader of Polish Jewry

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