

# BOOMERANG

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

*"You shall come to whomever will be the Kohen in those days, 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". [Debarim 26, verse 3]*

Every year the farmers of the Land of Israel were required to bring a portion of the first fruits as an offering of thanks to G-d for the bounty He provided. This small token of appreciation was brought to the Temple and given to the Kohen. Then the person who brought his Bikurim [first fruits] was required to make a special declaration of thanks to the Almighty beginning with our Patriarch Yaakov's sojourn with the wicked Laban and chronicling all the kindnesses of G-d showered upon us including the Exodus from Egypt and the conquering of the Holland.

This declaration provided untold benefit to the one who brought his basket of fruit to the Kohen. A parable crystallizes the effect of this Misvah on the one performing the deed.

Once there was a man who had 2 sons. He loved to spoil them with gifts and treats. One son always kissed his father and thanked him for the presents he received. When the father saw the child's appreciative reaction he was filled with a warm feeling of love and was prompted to give more and more to the child.

The other son reacted differently to the gifts. Whenever his father gave him something new the child would ask for the "better one like my friends have" or would take it and run off without acknowledging appreciation to his generous loving father. The father of course was disappointed. He was not at all anxious to give more to the child.

The blessings we receive from our Creator are the treats the children received from their loving parent. The wise individual who realizes that G-d has no obligation to His creations and that everything that one receives is a true gift of kindness on His part. Therefore, the wise person responds to his bounty with praises and thanks to his benefactor.

The declaration that accompanies the Bikurim begins with the horrible situation that our Patriarch Yaakov had to suffer while living with his father-in-law Laban. We complete the declaration with thanks for granting us ownership of the Land of Israel. When a person contrasts the suffering with

the pleasure the feelings of thanks that result are heartfelt and joyous. When Hashem sees the sincere complete thanks that spring forth from the Jews' heart, He is prompted [so to speak] to give more and more to His loving child. The verses continue, "You shall be glad with all the goodness that Hashem, your G-d, has given you..." The boomerang takes effect --one sends thanks and G-d sends more for which to be thankful. May we all see clearly all the good with which we are blessed and thank our Heavenly Father in a sincere manner that will prompt His loving generosity.

*Shabbat Shalom*

**DID YOU KNOW THAT** if the one blowing the Shofar cannot successfully complete the required sounds others may complete the blowing for him? The additional blowers do not repeat the blessings said by the first blower so long as they were present when the blessings were said. Even if the person who said the blessings cannot successfully blow any of the required sounds the substitutes continue without saying the blessings and his blessing is not considered a "blessing said in vain [beracha l' batala] [Source Shulhan Aruch siman 585 paragraph 3]

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