

SCHEDULE

שבת קודש

Mincha Erev Shabbos	7:14 PM
Shacharis- Followed by Kiddush	8:30 AM
Sof Zman K'S- גר"א 9:16 < 9:52 גר"א	
Pirkei Avot Shiur	6:35 PM
Mincha- Followed by Shalosh Seudos	7:10 PM
Maariv	8:21 PM

Sunday

Shacharis	8:30 AM
<i>Followed by Shiur</i>	
Mincha / Maariv	7:15 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Shacharis

Monday 	8:30 AM
Thursday	6:40 AM & 8:10 AM
Tues, Wed, Fri.	6:45 AM & 8:10 AM
Mincha (Mon-Thur)	1:45 PM
Mincha / Maariv (Sunday-Th)	7:15 PM
Shiur Sefer Da Es Atzmecha (M-Th)	9:30 PM
Maariv (Mon-Thur)	9:45 PM

Thursday Night Shiur by Rabbi Teichman after Maariv

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Kiddush

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אהל משה



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Issue #106

Basket!

Every year as we approach the conclusion of the year, חז"ל instituted the tradition to read the portion of **כי תבא** which records the **תוכחה**; the "admonition" that forebodes terrible punishment for having spurned G-d. This is intended as an omen "to be finished with the year and its curses" so we can start the year anew filled with hope for great blessings in the future.

The reading of **כי תבא** begins however, with the **מצוה** of bringing **בכורים**. The "First Fruits" to have ripened are brought with much fanfare to the Temple and presented to the **כהן** with a emotional declaration of gratitude to G-d for his role in the history of the Jewish people and in the life of the presenter.

בכורים is referred to as **פרי** כל **ראשית**, the "first" of every fruit, similar to **ראש השנה** which too is called **ראשית השנה**, the "beginning of the year"! Indeed, the **שפת אמת** suggests that the majority of **בכורים** was brought by **ראש השנה**. Is this merely a coincidence or is there some deeper correlation between the two?

There is an unusual aspect unique to the **מצוה** of **בכורים**. The **תורה** requires that the fruits be brought and presented specifically in a "basket". **וּשְׂמַת בַּטֵּנָה**, and you shall place in a basket, and **וּלְקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַטֵּנָה מִיָּדְךָ**, and the Kohen shall take the basket from your hand. The word for basket, **טֵנָה**, appears in all of **תנייך** solely in our **פרשה** and four times at that! The other instances are in the "blessings and curses" enumerated later on where the Torah speaks of the **ברוך טֵנָאךְ**, *blessed will be your fruit baskets* and **אָרוּר טֵנָאךְ**, *accursed will be your fruit baskets*. Why the emphasis on the vehicle and not the subject of **מצוה** and success? Is the "basket" blessed and accursed or rather the fruit?

The **ספרי** reveals to us an even more fascinating anomaly. The verse that states **וּלְקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַטֵּנָה**, the Kohen "takes" the basket, according to **ספרי**, teaches us that the **כהן** keeps the basket. The **ספרי** qualifies that is only true of the basket of an **עני**, a poor man, however the silver and gold vessels the rich transport their **בכורים** in are to be returned! The reason for this is to show regard for the effort and sincerity that went into the simple woven baskets made from "עֵרְבֵה קְלוּפָה", peeled willow branches. Their baskets become an integral part of the **בכורים**. What secret lies beneath the surface here?

The performance of **מצוות** are not solely for the purpose of the intended act but rather to elevate and bring ourselves closer to Hashem through the **מצוה**. The effort, the emotion and the precision in the doing of **מצוות** are often more indicative of the level we become a "sanctified vessel" in the service of Hashem, than the magnificence and beauty of the article and container of **מצוה**.

Often a **מצוה** can simply be an opportunity to achieve honor, pride or self satisfaction or expression. The poor man's simple basket constructed and brought lovingly is the most beautiful "first fruits" one can offer.

This is why the **טֵנָה** is so integral to this special **מצוה**, since it is symbolic of the essence of what observing **מצוות** is all about. **טֵנָה** is the numerical equivalent of "כלי"=60. We are all "כלים" through which **מצוות** are performed, thus imbuing us with holiness, **אשר קדשו** במצותיו!

In the **סליחה** entitled **עקידה** in the **סליחות** of the fourth day of **עשיית** we recite, *a basket of fruits you granted him at a hundred years of age, then desired him for a pleasant scented sacrifice.* **יצחק** is born to **אברהם** and is called a "טֵנָה בכורים".

יצחק's ultimate sacrifice displayed for all posterity, and ingrained within us, this sense that we are merely the "vehicle" to fulfill the will of Hashem. He offered the **טֵנָה**!

The Holy **Baal Shem Tov** taught that **טֵנָה** is an acronym for **אותיות**, **נקודות**, **טעמים**, **טעמים**, cantillation signs, vocalization symbols and letters. We all seek to be the expression of **רצון השם** in all that we do. The "words" are valueless unless they possess feeling as expressed in the **טעמים**, purposeful movement symbolized through the **נקודות** and the precision of vision characterized in the **אותיות**.

As we stand just two weeks away from **ראש השנה** we feel so poor in **תורה** and **מצוות** and wonder how can we possibly merit a favorable judgment. The **בכורים** wove baskets out of the "עֵרְבֵה" branch. The **עֵרְבֵה** has no taste nor smell symbolizing those who are impoverished in both **תורה** and **מצוות**. Nevertheless, the **טֵנָה** meager as it is was imbued with their enthusiasm, effort and purpose in expressing their appreciation to Hashem, and thus became the **בכורים** itself.

If we put a bit more exuberance in even the small **מצוות** we do with a little more energy and slightly more focus we can succeed in portraying before our Creator that we truly yearn to be a **כלי** to contain and reflect His greatness and be deserving of a favorable outcome in being dispensed a life filled with opportunity to serve Him!

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Mazel Tov to
Miriam & Aryeh Dickstein
on the birth of a

Baby Girl!