

"Then you shall call out and say before Hashem, your G-d, 'An Aramean tried to destroy my forefather. He descended to Egypt and sojourned there." (26:5)

The *parsha* of the declaration of *Bikkurim* includes in it the story of the Egyptian bondage. *Horav Mordechai Ilan, z.l.*, explains the need for integrating our past afflictions into the essence of our gratitude to Hashem as we bring forth the first fruits of our labor. The time of "*reishis*," beginning, is a special one for a person. It is the moment of ultimate fruition and success. Such a heightened moment should be consecrated to Hashem.

When a person celebrates the first harvest, he recounts the entire process of the creation of the fruit, as it progressed from a mere seed into a fully ripened fruit. He records all of the work and toil, the blood, sweat and tears that he expended until he reached the first harvest. At this auspicious moment, filled with tremendous emotion, he expresses his overwhelming gratitude to Hashem.

Similarly, as *Klal Yisrael* bring their first fruits, they remember the various trials and the constant suffering they have endured in order to reach this land and prepare the soil for planting and the ultimate harvest. This is the essence of *cuyv kfc jnau*, "And you should be glad with all the goodness" (26:11). When one relives the positive and negative experiences which have led to the moment of gratitude, he realizes the true value of the good. Thus, he is able to rejoice in "all the goodness."

The time for bringing the *Bikkurim* begins with *Shavuot*, the *Zman Matan Torasainu*, the time when we received the *Torah*. At this time, *Klal Yisrael* became the *Am Ha'Torah*, the *Torah* nation. We were no longer a group of wandering slaves; we had become a nation by virtue of the *Torah* which unified us. It would, therefore, be appropriate at this sublime time of "beginning" for us to offer our "first" fruits.