

Parsha Ponders

Ki Savo | September 11, 2025 | 19 Elul 5785

Audible declarations¹

וענית ואמרת לפני יקוק אלקיך ארמי אבד אבי וגו'

You shall respond and say before Hashem your G-d: "An Aramean (Lavan) [tried to] destroy my father (Yaakov)"²

The *parsha* begins with the *mitzvah* of *bikkurim*, bringing one's first fruits to the Temple. There is a whole declaration that is made upon bringing these fruits. The Torah says that we should "respond and say". Rashi explains³ that the intent is that we are to say this out loud, for all to hear. The question is, why does Rashi feel the need for us to know this? Is this such an important detail to add? What's bothering him?

Our Sages tell us there's a problem with making our prayers audible to others⁴. Doing so shows that we're lacking in our faith. We think Hashem can't hear us if we whisper our prayers to Him, or that He doesn't understand the thoughts of our hearts. As such, we raise our voice to the point that others can hear us. This is obviously not so, and therefore raising our voices in prayer is to be avoided.

However, according to this reasoning, we can find a case where one may pray out loud. If someone says something that makes it obvious that he knows that Hashem can read our thoughts and hear our whispers, seemingly then there should be no problem. The whole issue is avoided in this case.

When reciting the *bikkurim* declaration, we say that an Aramean, referring to Lavan, tried to destroy our forefather Yaakov. His intent was to destroy not only Yaakov, but to prevent the entire Jewish people from existing. We say this to express our thanks to Hashem for saving Yaakov, thus ensuring our survival. Hashem knew Lavan's thoughts, and stopped them from manifesting.

Since this is so, it makes sense that it should be permissible to say this speech out loud. This declaration can be seen as a form of prayer, so perhaps we might think it should be said in a whisper. Since this declaration about Lavan announces that Hashem knows the thoughts of Man, it negates any appearance of lacking faith. Rashi is thus teaching us that in this instance, it is permissible to say it out loud.

Good Shabbos

¹ Based on Chanukas HaTorah to Deuteronomy 26:5

² Deuteronomy *loc. cit.*

³ *Ad. loc.*

⁴ Berachos 24b tells us that קולו המשמיע when praying are small in faith, and קולו המגביה when praying is like the false prophets, who screamed at their idols to help them. The Chanukas HaTorah quotes the *gemarra* differently that קולו המגביה are those lacking in faith