SUMMARY OF KI TABO

GRATITUDE

The first thing that our Parasha mentions is the commandment of the Bikurim, that is, bringing the first fruits that are harvested, to the Temple in Jerusalem. This act of thanksgiving to God for the land and its products applies to the seven fruits and products that characterize the land of Israel: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. When the farmer arrives at the Temple, he recites a prayer of gratitude to God and presents the fruits to the priests. In our days, when we do not have the Temple anymore, one of the ways to thank God for what He grants us is by reciting the blessings for food. For example, there are six blessings that we say *before* eating. Each of these blessings refers to a particular type of food: 1. There is a specific blessing for bread (*hamotsi lechem min haarets*). 2. Another blessing, exclusively for wine (*boré perí haguefen*), 3. For the fruits of the land (*boré perí ha-adama* vegetables, vegetables, legumes, etc.). 4. For tree fruits (*boré perí haets*). 5. The blessing for products made with flour (*boré miné mezonot*), and finally 6. For all other types of food (*sheakol nihyiá bidbaró*, water, candy, ice cream, etc.). In this way, through these blessings, we continue to thank God for the privilege of having what to eat, as we did with the Bikkurim.

SHARING

The Tora mentions the tithes, like a 10% tax, which Jewish farmers were required to separate from their produce. The produce was not given to the State for redistribution, like US taxes, but was distributed directly from the farmer to the Priests, the Levites and the poor. During some harvest years, one of the tithes was taken to Jerusalem to be consumed by its owners there. All these rules for the farmer conclude with the

declaration that all the duties of the tithes had been fulfilled, and with a beautiful prayer in which the Jewish farmer implores God to continue blessing the people of Israel and their land: …□□□□ □□□ □□□□□ □□□ □□□□□ □□ □□□ □□ □□□□ *"O God, bless from heaven – Your holy abode – Your people Israel and the land You have given us, just as You promised our ancestors [that you will grant us] a land flowing with milk and honey."*

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COVENANT

Moshe reminds the people to observe God's commandments, the covenant Israel made with God: Israel chose Israel to be his God, and God has chosen them to be His holy and protected nation. As a testimony to the covenant, Moshe instructs the leaders to take some large stones when crossing the Jordan River and to engrave the entire Tora on these stones. Another set of stones with the Torah engraved on them should also be erected on Mount Ebal. Moshe indicates that upon entering the land they have to proclaim the blessings and the curses (or warnings, *tokhachot*) on Mounts Gerizim and Ebal. The blessings will be granted to everyone who observes the Tora, and the curses will befall those who abandon it and do not behave properly with God and with their neighbor. The elders of the tribe of Levi will stand between the two mountains, and representatives of six tribes will stand on each mountain. The Levites and the Priests will then proclaim the blessings and warnings to the people.

BREACH OF THE COVENANT

Then the Tora dedicates a long text describing the hardships and suffering that will befall the Jews if they neglect the observance of the Covenant (in Hebrew: *berit*). The logic of this idea is as follows: as we previously saw, God is committed to protecting Israel as long as Israel behaves as God's people. If the nation of Israel abandons the Covenant and walks away from God, is automatically moving away from

Divine Protection, exposing itself to the mercy of its implacable enemies, who have no compassion for Israel. These tragic circumstances that vulnerable Israel will have to live, will begin with exile, when the Promised Land would organically “expel” its Jewish inhabitants, and would continue with the nations that receive the Jewish refugees. Many times these nations exploit their talents, and then abuse them, taking away their possessions and then their lives. In these circumstances, Divine protection is limited to the promise of collective survival, in other words, that God will never allow for the Jewish nation to disappear from the face of the Earth. God will receive the Jews back when they will reconsider and return to God [*teshuba*]. All these tragic warnings were already experienced by the Jewish people throughout its tragic history and especially during the Shoah.

To conclude and to illustrate the blessing of the Divine supervision of Israel, Moshe reminds the people of all the miracles that God has done for them, protecting them from the moment of their departure from Egypt until that very day.