

## **Parashat Ki Tavo 5766**

You shall then recite as follows before the Lord your God, "My father was a fugitive Aramean" (Deuteronomy 26:5)

You shall declare before the Lord your God, "I have cleared out the consecrated portion from the house" (26:13)

The term 'aanita' denotes raising one's voice. (Rashi based on a Sotah 32.)

Last week I wrote of the importance of keeping promises. In many ways this d'var torah should have preceded last week's. Making a commitment is a two-step process. First we must make a determination, then we must let it be known. It is the later that strengthens our pledge. For some reason, once you've said the words out loud there is a greater conviction to follow through. Verbalizing something amplifies assurance of achievement.

When we say something, we intensify how we feel about it. This week's parasha reminds us of the importance of prayer. Through Rashi we come to understand that saying something so it can be heard changes the nature of the experience. That is why the Shulchan Arukh (Orech Hayim 61:3) reminds us that there is a requirement when reciting the Shema to say it loud enough so we are able to hear the words in our own ears, you must say it so it can be heard.

For Jews prayer has always been more than just petition. We come to the synagogue and to our own personal spaces to offer prayers of gratitude and of acknowledgement. Not only do we ask for health, wisdom and forgiveness, we also come to thank God for all of the gifts we enjoy. Additionally, this week's reading says that sometimes we just need to tell God what we have done and what we are planning to do. This week's parasha reminds us of the need of recognizing where we come from and where we are right now. To own our accomplishments, sometimes all we need to do is verbalize what we've done and how skilled we are.

I realize touting our achievements can makes us sound egocentric, even self-absorbed. So just keep it between you and God.