

# חומש דברים

# THE TORAH

*With an Interpolated English Translation  
and Commentary Based on the Works of*

*The Lubavitcher Rebbe*

*Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson*

זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

**Chumash Devarim**

*The Book of Deuteronomy*

**Parshat Tavo**



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**THE TORAH - CHUMASH DEVARIM**

WITH AN INTERPOLATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION  
AND COMMENTARY BASED ON THE WORKS OF  
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

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# 50 תבוא Tavo

## Overview

The first three *parashiot* of the Book of Deuteronomy—*Devarim*, *Va'etchanan*, and *Eikev*—constitute the first section of Moses' farewell address to his people, in which he chiefly exhorts them to continue to observe the Torah's commandments after they cross into the Promised Land. The next three *parashiot*—*Re'eh*, *Shoftim*, and *Teitzei*—are for the most part devoted to the second section of Moses' farewell address: his exposition of certain portions of the Torah's legal corpus that were either already presented in the preceding books of the Torah or that became relevant only at this point, on the eve of the people's entry into the Promised Land, and whose presentation was therefore deferred until now. The present *parashah*—*Tavo*—marks both the conclusion of this second section of Moses' farewell address as well as the beginning of the third and final section, his review of the covenantal bond between God and the Jewish people. This review will continue through the ensuing four *parashiot*, to the end of the Book of Deuteronomy.

The first part of *parashat Tavo*, the conclusion of Moses' exposition of the Torah's legal corpus, focuses on one, single commandment: the obligation to bring the first fruits of the harvest to the Temple in Jerusalem.

The question that naturally arises, then, is: Would it not have been more logical to place this lone commandment at the end of the preceding *parashah*, having it conclude the second, legal section of Moses' farewell address, and then begin this *parashah* with the final section? Clearly, there must be some reason the last commandment to be discussed in Moses' legal review is prefaced to his exposition of the covenantal bond between God and the Jewish people, as if it was chosen to set the tone for the entire exposition, and thus effectively for the rest of the book.



Bringing the first fruits to the Temple is an expression of thanksgiving to God for His beneficence. In this regard, it is no different from the many other ways in which we give thanks to God for His bounty. Thanksgiving to God forms both a large part of the daily liturgy as well as many of the blessings we recite throughout the day. What distinguishes the commandment of the first fruits is that it is not only a declaration but also an *act*: we actually bring something to God.

By so doing, we demonstrate that everything in the world—even that which we have

produced by our own efforts and which we should therefore rightfully be entitled to call our own—actually belongs to its Creator. Whatever “belongs” to us is really only entrusted into our care in order to enable us to fulfill our mission on earth: to make the world into God’s home.

Allegorically, the Jewish people are God’s first fruits,<sup>1</sup> since the rest of creation was brought into being merely in order to function as the setting in which the Jewish people could fulfill their Divine imperative. Inasmuch as the Jewish soul is pure Divine consciousness, it is the epitome of the “home for God” that creation was intended to be, the model for the rest of creation.

Just as the first fruits must be brought to the Temple, so is the Temple every Jew’s natural home, by virtue of his natural, intrinsic God-consciousness; every Jew’s natural environment is proximity to God.

This consciousness should ideally pervade all aspects of our lives. Even when we are not actively engaged in overtly “religious” pursuits, we should remember that we are “first fruits” and live every moment in intimacy with God.

Thus, the commandment to bring the first fruits is a tangible expression of our true relationship with God. In this sense, it expresses much more than our thanksgiving to God or the acknowledgement that He is the master of all creation; it demonstrates how we ourselves are essentially one with Him and belong together with Him at all times.

It is thus clear why the commandment to bring the first fruits is postured as an introduction to Moses’ exposition of the covenant between God and the Jewish people. It articulates the true depth of this covenant and indeed sets the tone for all that is to follow.



Furthermore, the commandment to bring the first fruits teaches us that our bond with God, in essence, transcends even the Torah itself. True, under normal circumstances our relationship with God is defined by the Torah and operates through the Torah’s directives concerning how we live our lives. But there are times when our covenant with God “overrides” the Torah. For example, when a Jew violates part of the Torah, or, through no fault of his or her own, has not been properly exposed to the Torah and therefore has yet to accept it as their guide in life, he or she remains a Jew nonetheless, and his or her covenantal bond with God is as intact as that of any other Jew: such individuals are God’s first fruits and belong in the Temple. It is just that this inner essence has been hidden by circumstances.

The text that is recited when we bring the first fruits reflects this very concept. “An Aramean [Laban] tried to destroy my father [Jacob]; he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and became there a great, strong, and populous nation. The Egyptians mistreated and afflicted us, and made us work hard. But we cried out to *God*, God of our fathers, and God...took us out of Egypt...and brought us to this place [the Temple]....” What is articulated here is God’s love for His people *before* the Torah was given, before we entered into a contractual relationship with Him. We invoke here God’s relationship to us that transcends the Torah.

This intrinsic relationship forms the basis of the covenant that we will study in detail in the course of the rest of the Book of Deuteronomy.

It is also therefore apt that this *parashah* is named *Tavo*, “you enter [the land].” Entering the land would seem to be nothing more than a prerequisite to living in the land and to

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1. Hosea 9:10; Jeremiah 2:3.

fulfilling the commandments we can perform only in the land. But the essential lesson of this *parashah* is that everything about us belongs to God, that even seemingly ancillary and preparatory aspects of our lives are part of our relationship with Him and should be permeated with the same intensity of Divine consciousness and emotion that should permeate the more overtly “religious” aspects of our lives.

A further lesson: The fact that the name of this *parashah*—which is devoted to the covenantal bond between God and the Jewish people that pervades all aspects of life—is “you enter,” indicates that whatever we do, we should enter into it with our full heart and soul. Even if we are only preparing to serve God, we should put our all into this preparation, since at that moment, that is the essence of our service to God. As such, it both includes and sets the tone for the ongoing relationship with God that we will consummate presently.

And finally, the Torah does not state “if you enter” but “when you enter.” This teaches us that we should at all times be aware that we stand at the threshold of the Promised Land, that the true and final Redemption is only a breath away, and that if we only put ourselves fully into our present relationship with God, we are assured of the consummation of this relationship that will accompany the complete and final Redemption.<sup>2</sup>

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2. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 29, pp. 280-282, *Sefer HaSichot 5751*, pp. 811 ff.

— ONKELOS —  
 26:1 ויהי ארי תעול לארעא די  
 ?? אלהך יחב לך אחסנא ותירתה  
 ותיחב בה: 2 ותסב מריש כל  
 אבא דארעא די תעל מארעך  
 די ?? אלהך יחב לך ותשני בסלא  
 ותהך לאתרא די יתרעי ?? אלהך  
 לאשראה שכינתה תמן:

26:1 וְהָיָה כִּי־תָבֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן  
 לְךָ נַחֲלָה וּירְשָׁתָה וַיִּשְׁבַּת בָּהּ: 2 וְלָקַחְתָּ מֵרֵאשִׁית |  
 כָּל־פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּבְיֵא מֵאֲרָצְךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ וַיִּשְׁמַת בַּפִּנֵּא וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמְּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר  
 יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁבְן שָׁמוֹ שָׁם:

— RASHI —

ישראל, אף כּאן שׁבּח ארץ ישראל, שׁהן שׁבּעה  
 מינין: זית שׁמן. זית אגורי, שׁשמנו אגור בתוכו:  
 ודבש. הוא דבש תמרים: מראשית. אדם יורד לתוף  
 שׁדהו ורואה תאנה שבכרה, כורף עליה גמי לסימן,  
 ואומר: הרי זו בכורים:

1 וְהָיָה כִּי תָבֹא וגו' וירשׁתה וישׁבת בה. מגיד שלא  
 נתייבו בבכורים עד שׁכבשו את הארץ וחלקוה:  
 2 מראשית. ולא כל ראשית, שאין כל הפרות  
 חזיבין בבכורים אלא שבעת המינין בלבד, נאמר  
 כאן: "ארץ", ונאמר להלן: "ארץ חטה ושערה"  
 וגו', מה להלן משבעת המינין שנשׁתבחה בהן ארץ

1. דברים ת, ח.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

in the guise of natural cause-and-effect to bring us  
 where we are (we thought we went there for the  
 sake of some material need), so fulfilling the spiri-  
 tual purpose of our being there will bring God's  
 beneficence into the natural process that worked to  
 bring us there.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, if we integrate our Divine inspiration into  
 our daily lives, remaining constantly aware that our  
 footsteps are guided by God, then we will ipso facto  
 disseminate Divine awareness wherever we go.<sup>9</sup>

1-2 **When you enter the land that God, your God, is giving you:** Allegorically, the notion of "coming into the land" alludes to the descent of the soul into the body. This descent is quite drastic in that the soul forsakes its spiritual abode only to find itself challenged by a physicality so overwhelming that it totally obscures Divinity. Yet, this descent is still, ultimately, a joyous event, a veritable gift "that God, your God, is giving you," because the soul before its descent into the body can only experiencing the

grade of Divine consciousness endemic to its "locati-  
 on" on the rung of spirituality. But in the course  
 of fulfilling its mission in the physical world, it ac-  
 quires the ability to experience much higher levels  
 of Divine consciousness. Thus, its descent into this  
 world results in an ascent after it leaves the world to  
 a level higher of Divine revelation than it had ever  
 known.<sup>10</sup>

2 **Until you, as a nation, conquer the land completely:** There were certainly individual Israelites who received their portion of the land and settled it before the entire land was conquered, divided up, and settled, for, as can be seen in the Book of Joshua, this process took a full 14 years. Nonetheless, until the conquest and settlement was complete, no one became obligated to bring their first fruits annually to the Temple.

The reason for this is because the ritual of the first fruits expresses our thankfulness for God's complete goodness, and as long as there remains even

~ INNER DIMENSIONS ~

[2] **put these fruits into a basket:** In the terminology of Kabbalah: the fact that we are commanded to bring the choicest fruits from the choicest places in the Holy Land alludes to God's wish that we express the highest, choicest "lights" in "vessels." But inasmuch as the highest lights are infinite, they therefore cannot being contained (i.e., expressed) in vessels, which are by definition finite. How, then, can we do this? Only by

evoking the power of God's essence, which transcends the dichotomy of finite and infinite, and for whom everything is possible.

This is alluded to by the phrase, "put it in a basket...the place that God, your God, will choose." True free choice is possible only for God's essence, for only God Himself can truly do anything.<sup>11</sup>

8. Likutei Sichot, vol. 9, p. 339. 9. Likutei Sichot, vol. 24, pp.183-186. 10. Sichot Kodesh 5720, pp. 403-404. 11. Likutei Sichot, vol. 9, p. 357.



## Conquering the Land

26:1 Moses continued, “As you have been taught,<sup>1</sup> **when you enter the land that God, your God, is giving you as an inheritance, you must take possession of it by conquering it from its present inhabitants and then divide it among your tribes and settle in it.**

### First Fruits

2 As you have also been taught,<sup>2</sup> once you enter the land, every landowner among you must bring the first fruits of the seven species previously mentioned as distinguishing the Land of Israel<sup>3</sup> to the Temple (or, until the Temple is built, to the Tabernacle—and so in all further references to the Temple) as an offering. This obligation will not take effect, however, until you, as a nation, conquer the land completely from its previous inhabitants, divide it among your tribes, and settle in it.<sup>4</sup> **You must take the first specimen you see of each of these seven species, of all the fruit of the earth, which you must then bring as an offering from your land that God, your God, is giving you.** Every year, when the first fruit of each species begins to ripen, designate it verbally as the first fruit, and tie a marker around it so you will be able to recognize it later. (The olives that are subject to this obligation are specifically those of the *aguri* species, whose oil is collected inside it, separate from its flesh.<sup>5</sup>) **You must place these fruits into a basket and, taking it with you, go to the place on which God, your God, will choose to rest His Name, i.e., the Temple.**

#### ∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

**1-2 When you enter the land:** The word for “land” in Hebrew (*eretz*) is related etymologically to the word for “will” (*ratzon*).<sup>6</sup> Based on this, the Ba’al Shem Tov expounded this verse as follows:

*When you enter the land:* When you succeed in aligning your will with God’s will—

*That God is giving you for an inheritance:* this ability being a Divine gift innate to your Divine soul—

*You must take possession of it:* your challenge is to integrate this newfound will into your daily life, so that rather than divorcing you from reality, it enables you to work within reality in order to rectify it.

*Take...the...fruit...and put it into a basket:* In order to properly rectify reality, ensure that your heightened consciousness (the “fruit”) is vested in the appropriate means of expression (a “basket”).

*Go to the place that God, your God, will choose:* In the context of working to rectify reality, be aware that when you travel from place to place, you are not doing so on your own; rather, Divine providence is arranging your movements in order that you dis-

seminate Divine consciousness wherever Divine providence leads you.

Later, the Ba’al Shem Tov expanded on this idea, uncovering an additional layer of meaning in this verse:

*When you enter the land:* In order to align your will with God’s will—

*Go to the place on which God, your God, will choose to rest His Name:* Devote yourself selflessly to disseminating Divine awareness wherever you are. And how is this done? By even the simplest of means, such as reciting a blessing over food or reciting a verse from Psalms.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, we should not allow our intellects to convince us that we are incapable of influencing our environment. The fact that we are where we are indicates that God has both placed us there and has given us the spiritual wherewithal to disseminate Divine awareness.

Furthermore, fulfilling our Divine mission in consort with God’s providential cues will bring us material blessings as well: Divine providence works

1. Numbers 33:50-56; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 34, pp. 145-147. 2. Exodus 23:19, 34:26; Numbers 18:13. 3. Above, 8:8. 4. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 9, pp. 152-155. 5. *Berachot* 39a; Rashi *ad loc.*, s.v. *Agur BeTocho*. 6. *Bereishit Rabbah* 5:8: “Why is the Land of Israel called ‘the land’ [eretz]? Because it acquiesced [ratzah] to the will [ratzon] of its Owner.” 7. *HaYom Yom*, 18 Elul; *Sefer HaSichot* 5696-5700, p. 191; *Keter Shem Tov*, addendum 3.

— ONKELOS —

3 וְתִיתִי לֹת כְּהֵנָּה דִּי יְהִי בְיוֹמָא  
הַגָּדוֹן וְתִימֵר לֵה תִיִּיתִי יוֹמָא דִּין  
קָדָם יי אֱלֹהִי אָרִי עֲלִית לְאַרְעָא  
דִּי קִיִּים יי לְאַבְהֵתְנָא לְמִתָּן  
לְנָא: 4 וְיֹסֵב כְּהֵנָּה סִלָּא מִיֶּדֶךָ  
וְיִחְתַּנֵּה קָדָם מְדַבְּחָא דִּי אֱלֹהִי:  
5 וְתִיִּיב וְתִימֵר קָדָם יי אֱלֹהִי  
לְכֹן אֲרַמְיָא בְּעָא לְאוֹבְדָא יֵת  
אָבָא וְנַחַת לְמַצְרַיִם וְדַר תַּמָּן בְּעַם  
זְעִיר וְדָהָה תַּמָּן לְעַם רַב תַּקְוִי  
וְסָגִי: 6 וְאַבְיָאִישׁוּ לְנָא מִצְרָאִי  
וְעִנְיֹנָא וְיִהְיֹו עֲלֵנָּא פִּלְחָנָא  
קִשְׂיָא: 7 וְצִלְיָנָא קָדָם יי אֱלֹהִי  
דְאַבְהֵתְנָא וְקַבֵּל יי צְלוֹתְנָא  
וְגַלִּי קְדֻמוֹהִי עֲמֵלְנָא וְלֹאוֹתְנָא  
וְדוֹחֵקְנָא: 8 וְאַפְקֵנָא יי מִמַּצְרַיִם  
בִּידָא תַקִּיפָא וּבְדַרְעָא מְרַמְמָא  
וּבְחֻזְנָא רַבָּא וּבְאַתִּין וּבְמוֹפְתִין:

3 וּבָאתְ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יְהִיָּה בַיָּמִים הָהֵם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו  
הַגְּדִתִּי הַיּוֹם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי־בָאתִי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר  
נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְתֵּינִי לָתֵת לָנוּ: 4 וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַטָּהוֹר  
מִיָּדְךָ וְהִנִּיחוֹ לִפְנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: 5 וְעֲנִיתְ וְאָמַרְתָּ  
לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲרַמְלִי אֲבִד אֲבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִמָה וַיִּגְר  
שָׁם בְּמַתֵּי מַעֲט וַיְהִי־שָׁם לְגֹי גָדוֹל עַצוֹם וְרַב: 6 וַיִּרְעוּ  
אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה: 7 וַנִּצְלַעַק  
אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קִלְנוּ וַיֵּרָא  
אֶת־עֲנִינוּ וְאֶת־עַמְלָנוּ וְאֶת־לַחֲצֵנוּ: 8 וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְהוָה  
מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֹרַע נְטוּיָה וּבְכֹמֶר אֶדְל וּבְאֹתוֹת  
וּבְמִפְתֵּיִם:

— RASHI —

— לְכֹן בְּקִשׁ לְעִקּוֹר אֵת הַכֹּל בְּשִׂרְדֵי אַחַר יַעֲקֹב,  
וּבְשִׁבִיל שְׂחֻשׁב לְעִשׂוֹת חֻשׁב לוֹ הַמְּקוֹם כְּאֵלוֹ  
עֲשָׂה, שְׂאֵמוֹת הָעוֹלָם חוֹשֵׁב לָהֶם הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ  
הוּא מִחֻשְׁבָּה [רְעָה] כְּמַעֲשֵׂה: וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִמָה. וְעוֹד  
אַחֲרֵים כָּאוּ עֲלֵינוּ לְכֹלוֹתָנוּ, שְׂאֲחָרֵי זֹאת יֵרֵד יַעֲקֹב  
לְמִצְרַיִם: בְּמַתֵּי מַעֲט. בְּשִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ:

3 אֲשֶׁר יְהִיָּה בַיָּמִים הָהֵם. אֵין לָךְ אֵלָא כְּהֵן שְׂבִימִיךָ,  
כְּמוֹ שְׂהוּא: וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו. שְׂאֵינְךָ כְּפִיו טוֹבָה: הַגְּדִתִּי  
הַיּוֹם. פַּעַם אַחַת בְּשָׁנָה, וְלֹא שְׁתֵּי פַעַמִּים: 4 וְלָקַח  
הַכֹּהֵן הַטָּהוֹר מִיָּדְךָ. לְהִנִּיף אוֹתוֹ, כְּהֵן מְנִיחַ יָדוֹ תַּחַת  
יַד הַבְּעָלִים וּמְנִיף: 5 וְעֲנִיתְ. לְשׁוֹן הִרְמַת קוֹל: אֲרַמְלִי  
אֲבִד אֲבִי. מִזְכִּיר חֲסִדֵי הַמְּקוֹם: "אֲרַמְלִי אֲבִד אֲבִי"

~ A CLOSER LOOK ~

[5] **Intentions and Merits:** The Talmud<sup>24</sup> derives from Scripture that God credits even unfulfilled good intentions to one's merit, but does not count unfulfilled evil intentions to one's demerit. It then qualifies this principle—again, based on Scripture—as applying only to Jews, and states that the reverse applies to gentiles. The classic ethicist Rabbi Yeshayahu Horowitz, poses the obvious question:<sup>25</sup> Is God then partial? This would be inconsistent with His attribute of pure justice. He answers: Yes, God is biased, but justifiably so. Inasmuch as Jews possess a Divine soul that impels them incessantly to do good, it may be presumed that they will eventually fulfill their good intentions unless prevented from doing so by circumstances beyond their control. Similarly, their Divine soul also constantly en-

courages them to reconsider any evil intentions they may have been harboring, so it may likewise be presumed that they probably will *not* implement any such evil intentions.

In contrast, as we have seen,<sup>26</sup> non-Jews are not created by God with this Divine soul, but solely with the basic, human soul that compels all human beings to seek survival and comfort—ambitions that are inherently neutral but which can easily degenerate into destructive pursuits unless the non-Jew consciously decides to accept the Noahide code and become a force for good in the world. Therefore, at least until the majority of non-Jews accept the Noahide code, it cannot be assumed as a matter of course that they will eventually fulfill their good intentions or reconsider their evil ones.

24. Y. Peah 1:5; Tosefot on Kidushin 39b, s.v. Macheshavah. 25. Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Asarah Ma'amarot 9:4. 26. On Exodus 19:5.

3 Once you enter the precincts of the Temple mount, place the basket on your shoulder and enter the Forecourt of the Temple (which corresponds to the Courtyard of the Tabernacle).<sup>12</sup> **You must then approach one of the priests who will be in office in those days<sup>13</sup> and say to him, 'I am not ungrateful to God. I declare today'—since you may only perform this ceremony once a year—'to God, your God, that I have come to the land that God swore to our forefathers to give us.'** Having said, this, take the basket off your shoulder and hold it by its edge.

4 The priest must then place his hands under the basket, supporting it from underneath while you hold on to its edge.<sup>14</sup> **The priest will thus take the basket from the sole support<sup>15</sup> of your hands, and move it, together with you, in the four lateral directions and then up and down,<sup>16</sup> before the altar of God, your God.** The priest must then remove his hands from under the basket, leaving you to hold it by yourself.

5 **You must then raise your voice** as you recount God's kindnesses, contrasting our previous periods of settlement, which proved precarious, with our present, secure settlement in our land.<sup>17</sup> Specifically, **you must pronounce** the following declaration **before God, your God: 'An Aramean was the destroyer of my forefather,'<sup>18</sup>** referring to how Jacob, after living for 20 years in Aram, had to flee from Laban,<sup>19</sup> who intended to kill him and his whole family but was prevented by God from doing so. (Even though Laban did not in fact destroy Jacob, God nevertheless refers to him as if he had, because He counts the evil intentions of the gentiles to their demerit even if they are prevented from carrying them out.<sup>20</sup>) Still referring to Jacob, continue: **'He went down to Egypt and sojourned there with his family, which was then only a small number of people, and he became a great, mighty, and numerous nation there.**

6 Yet, although we lived in their land for 210 years, **the Egyptians treated us cruelly, afflicted us, and imposed hard labor upon us.**

7 **So we cried out to God, God of our fathers, and God heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression.**

8 **And God brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great awe, and with signs and marvels,**

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— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

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one Jew who has not yet received his portion in the land, the rest of us should not be able to experience complete joy and thanksgiving.<sup>21</sup>

5 **An Aramean was the destroyer of my forefather:** The two historical events we mention when we bring the first fruits are how Laban tried to kill Jacob<sup>22</sup> and how the Egyptians mistreated us. There are, of course, many other good things that God did both for us and for the patriarchs; why are these two singled out for special mention?

The answer is that in bringing the first fruits, we thank God both for giving us the Land of Israel and for settling us in it permanently—for providing us with a home. This is underscored by the fact that we were not obligated to perform this commandment until we had not only entered the land but also conquered it and settled it.<sup>23</sup> In thanking God, we therefore mention the two prior times in our history when we had a semblance of permanence somewhere and God protected us. Jacob lived with Laban for 20 years, and the Jewish people lived in Egypt for 210 years.

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12. *Bikurim* 3:4, 6; *Mishneh Torah, Bikurim* 3:12. 13. See 17:9 and 19:17, above. 14. Rashi on *Sukah* 47b, s.v. *Tachat Yad Ba'alim; Bikurim* 3:6. 15. Mizrahi on *Leviticus* 7:30, s.v. *Yadav Tevianah*. 16. Rashi on *Makot* 18b, s.v. *Vehinachto*. 17. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, pp. 93-96. 18. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, p. 93, note 3. 19. *Genesis* 31:22-24. 20. Cf. *Exodus* 12:28. 21. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 9, pp. 155-156. 22. *Genesis* 31:29-30. 23. Rashi on 26:1.

— ONKELOS —  
 9 ואיתנא לאתרא הדין ויהב לנא  
 ית ארעא הדיא ארעא עבדא חלב  
 ודבש: 10 וכען הא אייתי ית  
 ריש אבא דארעא דיהבת לי י?  
 ותצענה קדם י? אלהך ותסגוד  
 קדם י? אלהך: 11 ותחדי בכל  
 טבתא די יהב לך י? אלהך ולאנש  
 ביתך את ולואה וגיורא די בינך:  
 12 ארי תשצי לעשרא ית כל  
 מעשר עללתך בשמא תליתמא  
 שנת מעשרא ותמן ללואה  
 לגיורא ליתמא ולארמלתא  
 וייכלון בקרויך וישבעו:

9 ויבאנו אליהם המקום הזה ויתן לנו את הארץ הזאת  
 ארץ זבת חלב ודבש: 10 ועתה הנה הבאתי את  
 ראשית פרי האדמה אשר נתתה לי יהוה והנחתו לפני  
 יהוה אלהיך והשתחוית לפני יהוה אלהיך: 11 ושמתה  
 בכל הטוב אשר נתן לך יהוה אלהיך ולביתך אתה  
 והלוי והגר אשר בקרבך: 12  
 שני כי תכלה לעשר את כל מעשר תבואתך  
 בשנה השלישית שנת המעשר ונתתה ללוי לגר ליתום  
 ולאלמנה ואכלו בשעריך וישבעו:

— RASHI —

השלישית — רגל שהמעשרות כלין בו, וזהו פסח,  
 שהרבה אילנות יש שנקלטים אחר הסכות, נמצאו  
 מעשרות של שלישית כלין בפסח של רביעית. וכל מי  
 ששהה מעשרותיו, הצריכו הכתוב לבערן מן הבית:  
 שנת המעשר. שנה שאין נוהג בה אלא מעשר אחד  
 משני מעשרות שנהגו בשתי שנים שלפניו, שנה  
 ראשונה של שמטה נוהג בה מעשר ראשון, כמו  
 שנאמר: "כי תקחו מאת בני ישראל את המעשר",  
 ומעשר שני, שנאמר: "ואכלת לפני ה' אלהיך  
 מעשר דגנך תירשך ויצהרך", הרי שני מעשרות.  
 ובא ולמדך כאן בשנה השלישית, שאין נוהג מאותן  
 שני מעשרות אלא האחד, ואי זה? זה מעשר ראשון,  
 ותחת מעשר שני יתן מעשר עני, שנאמר כאן:  
 "ונתתה ללוי" — את אשר לו, הרי מעשר ראשון.  
 "לגר ליתום ולאלמנה" — זה מעשר עני: ואכלו  
 בשעריך וישבעו. תן להם כדי שבעו, מכאן אמרו:  
 אין פוחתין לעני בגרן, פחות מחצי קב חטים וכו':

9 אל המקום הזה. זה בית המקדש: ויתן לנו את  
 הארץ. כמשמעו: 10 והנחתו. מגיד שנוטלו אחר  
 הנחת הכהן, ואוחזו בידו כשהוא קורא, וחוזר ומניף:  
 11 ושמתה בכל הטוב. מכאן אמרו: אין קורין מקרא  
 בכורים אלא בזמן שמחה, מעצרת ועד הקג, שאדם  
 מלקט תבואתו ופרותיו ויינו ושמנו. אבל מהקג  
 ואילף, מביא ואינו קורא: אתה והלוי. אף הלוי חיב  
 בכבורים, אם נטעו בתוך עריהם: והגר אשר בקרבך.  
 מביא ואינו קורא, שאינו יכול לומר "לאבותינו":  
 12 כי תכלה לעשר את כל מעשר תבואתך בשנה  
 השלישית. כשתגמר להפריש מעשרות של שנה  
 השלישית, קבע זמן הבעור והודוי בערב הפסח  
 של שנה הרביעית, שנאמר: "מקצה שלש שנים  
 תוציא וגו', נאמר כאן "מקץ", ונאמר להלן: "מקץ  
 שבע שנים" לענין הקהל, מה להלן רגל אף כאן  
 רגל. אי מה להלן חג הסכות, אף כאן חג הסכות?  
 תלמוד לומר: "כי תכלה לעשר" מעשרות של שנה

2. פסחים לו, ב. 3. דברים יד, כח. 4. לא, י. 5. במדבר יח, כו. 6. דברים יד, כג. 7. פאה ת, ה.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

**10 You will then give the fruits to the priest:** The first fruits are not to be sacrificed on the altar but given to a priest to eat. Although portions of the sacrifices are also eaten or used by the priests, the first fruits are unique in that no part of them what-

soever is consumed by the altar. Even though the priest places them in front of the altar for a short time and they are considered to have been given to God, they are enjoyed entirely by people.

The reason for this is that while all other sacrifices

— A CLOSER LOOK —

**[11] A descendant of Jacob:** Even if a convert happens to be a blood-descendant of Jacob, the fact that he was not Jewish in the interim means

that for all legal intents (inheritance, marital ties, etc.) he is considered not to be of Jewish ancestry.<sup>37</sup>

37. Cf. Yevamot 22a, 48b, 62a, etc. Mishneh Torah, Isurei Biah 14:11.

9 **and He brought us to this place'**—referring to the Temple to which you have now come in order to show your appreciation to God for having given it to us<sup>27</sup>—**'and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and date- and fig-honey.'**

10 Addressing God directly, continue: **'Now, behold,** in recognition of Your kindness in giving us this land,<sup>28</sup> **I have brought the first of the fruit of the soil that You, O God, have given to me.'** After you finish reciting this declaration, **you must move** the basket in the four lateral directions and then up and down **before God, your God**—this time by yourself—**and then prostrate yourself before God, your God.** You must then give the fruits to the priest, and they will be his to eat.<sup>29</sup>

In reciprocal recognition of your having declared your appreciation to God in a loud voice when you brought your first fruits to the Temple,<sup>30</sup> a heavenly voice will then announce: "In reward for having brought your first fruits today, you will merit to bring first fruits from your coming year's crop!"<sup>31</sup> True reciprocity would require that God articulate this promise with His own voice, but since you told Him that you are afraid to hear His voice,<sup>32</sup> He will make use of an angelic, heavenly voice instead.<sup>33</sup>

11 The obligation to recite this declaration applies only when you bring your first fruits to the Temple between *Shavuot* and *Sukot*, for since that is the harvest season, **you will then be rejoicing with all the good that God, your God, has granted you and your household.** If, however, you bring you first fruits later, you should simply move the basket as prescribed and give it to the priest without reciting the declaration. The obligation to bring first fruits applies equally to **you; to the Levite,** should he plant the relevant crops in his designated cities; **and to the convert who is among you,** but a convert—no matter when he brings his first fruits—does not recite the declaration, since he is not a descendant of Jacob.

### **Deadlines for Fulfilling the Duty to Give Agricultural Gifts**

- ◆ **Second Reading 12** As you have been taught,<sup>34</sup> you must take two types of tithes from your produce every year. **By the time you have finished taking all the tithes of your produce** that had grown **in the third year** of the seven-year cycle culminating in the sabbatical year—this third year being **the year in which** you are required to give **the first tithe** as usual, but in place of the second tithe you must give the tithe for the poor—it will be the middle of the fourth year. For fruits ripen only in the first half of the year after they bud, so fruit that budded in the third year is only harvested in the first half of the fourth year. Thus, only by Nisan of the fourth year **will you have been able to give** all of the third year's first tithe **to the Levite** and all of the third year's tithe for the poor **to the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow,** taking care to give each one enough<sup>35</sup> **so that they can eat to satiation in your cities.**

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#### ∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

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This explains as well why this liturgy of thanks includes mention of God's past protection altogether. The quasi-permanent situations we lived in before entering our own land were amongst hostile hosts.

We therefore thank God for providing us with a land of our own, where we can live life and devote ourselves to fulfilling our Divine mission under our own self-rule.<sup>36</sup>

27. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 230. 28. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 230. 29. Numbers 18:13. 30. Above, v. 5. 31. Rashi on v. 16, below. 32. Above, 5:20-24. 33. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, pp. 230-231. 34. Exodus 22:28; Leviticus 27:30-31; Numbers 18:21, 24; Above, 12:17, 14:22, 28-29. 35. Above, 14:29. 36. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, pp. 93-96.

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13 וְתִמְרָה קָדָם יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ פְּלִיטֵי קָדֶשׁ מֵעֵשְׂרָא מִן בֵּיתָא וְאִי יִהְיֶה לְלֹאֵה וְלִגְיֹרָא לִיתְמָא וְלֵאֲרַמְלֵתָא כְּכֹל תְּפַקְדָּתְךָ דִּי פְקֻדָּתֵי לֹא עֲבָרִית מִפְּקוּדֶיךָ וְלֹא אֲתִישִׁיתִי: 14 לֹא אֲכַלִּית בְּאֶבְלֵי מִנְהָ וְלֹא פְלִיטֵי מִנְהָ בְּדַמְסָאָב וְלֹא יִהְיֶה מִנְהָ לְמִית קְבִלִית לְמִימְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵי עֲבָדִית כְּכֹל דִּי פְקֻדָּתֵי: 15 אֲסִתְכִי מִמְדוּר קָדֶשׁ מִן שְׁמַיָא וּבִרְךָ יְיָ עַמְּךָ יִתְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִתְ אַרְעָא דִּי יִהְיֶה לְנָא כְּמָא דִּי קִימַת לְאַבְהֶתְנָא אַרְעָא עֲבָדָא חֵלֶב וּדְבָשׁ:

13 וְאָמַרְתָּ לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּעֶרְתִּי הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִן־הַבַּיִת וְגַם נִתְּתִיו לְלוֹי וְלֵזֶר לִיתוֹם וְלֹא־לְמִנְהָ כְּכֹל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִנִּי לֹא־עֲבַרְתִּי מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ וְלֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי: 14 לֹא־אֲכַלְתִּי בְּאֵנִי מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא־בְעֶרְתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ בְּטִמְאָה וְלֹא־נִתְּתִי מִמֶּנּוּ לְמַת שְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי עֲשִׂיתִי כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִנִּי: 15 הִשְׁקִיפָה מִמְּעוֹן קֹדֶשְׁךָ מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבִרְךָ אֶת־עַמְּךָ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לָנוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתֵּינוּ אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֵלֶב וּדְבָשׁ: ס

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מִכָּאן שְׂאֵסוּר לְאוּגוֹן: וְלֹא בְעֶרְתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ בְּטִמְאָה. בֵּין שְׂאֵנֵי טִמְאָה וְהוּא טְהוֹר, בֵּין שְׂאֵנֵי טְהוֹר וְהוּא טִמְאָה. וְהִיכֵן הוֹדָר עַל כֵּךָ? "לֹא תוּכַל לֶאֱכֹל בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ" — זֶה אֲכִילַת טִמְאָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁנֵאֲמַר בְּפִסּוּלֵי הַמִּקְדָּשִׁים: "בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ תֹאכְלֶנּוּ, הַטִּמְאָה וְהַטְהוֹר" וְגו', אֲבָל זֶה "לֹא תוּכַל לֶאֱכֹל" דֶּרֶךְ אֲכִילַת "שַׁעְרֶיךָ" הָאֲמוּר בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר: וְלֹא נִתְּתִי מִמֶּנּוּ לְמַת. לְעֵשׂוֹת לוֹ אֶרֶץ וְתַכְרִיכִין: שְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹל ה' אֱלֹהֵי. הִבִּיאֹתִיו לְבַיִת הַבְּחִירָה: עֲשִׂיתִי כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִנִּי. שְׁמַחְתִּי וְשְׂמֻחַתִּי בּו: 15 הִשְׁקִיפָה מִמְּעוֹן קֹדֶשְׁךָ. עֲשִׂינוּ מַה שְׁגִדְרָתְךָ עֲלֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה אֵתָּה מַה שְׁעֲלֶיךָ לְעֵשׂוֹת, שְׂאֲמַרְתָּ: "אִם בְּחֻקֵּי תִלְכוּ וְנִתְּתִי גִשְׁמִיכֶם בְּעֵתְכֶם": אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לָנוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְוֹתֵינוּ. לָתֵת לָנוּ, וְקִימַת — "אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֵלֶב וּדְבָשׁ":

13 וְאָמַרְתָּ לְפָנַי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ. הַתּוֹדָה שְׁנֵתָתָּ מֵעֵשְׂרֹתֶיךָ: בְּעֶרְתִּי הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִן הַבַּיִת. זֶה מֵעֵשֶׂר שְׁנֵי וְנֹטֵעַ רְבָעִי, וְלִמְדָךְ שְׂאֵם שֶׁהָאֵם מֵעֵשְׂרֹתֶיךָ שֶׁל שְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים וְלֹא הָעֵלֶם לִירוּשָׁלַיִם, שְׁצָרֶיךָ לְהַעֲלוֹתָם עִכְשָׁו: וְגַם נִתְּתִיו לְלוֹי. זֶה מֵעֵשֶׂר רֵאשׁוֹן. "וְגַם" — לְרַבּוֹת תְּרוּמָה וּבְכּוֹרִים: לֵזֶר לִיתוֹם וְלֹא־לְמִנְהָ. זֶה מֵעֵשֶׂר עֲנִי: כְּכֹל מִצְוֹתֶיךָ. נִתְּתִים כְּסֻדְרָן, וְלֹא הַקְדַּמְתִּי תְרוּמָה לְבְכוֹרִים, וְלֹא מֵעֵשֶׂר לְתְרוּמָה, וְלֹא שְׁנֵי לְרֵאשׁוֹן. שֶׁהַתְרוּמָה קְרוּיָה "רֵאשִׁית", שְׁהִיא רֵאשׁוֹנָה מִשְׁנַעֲשֵׂה דָגָן, וּבְחִיבָה: "מִלְאָתְךָ וְדַמְעָךָ לֹא תֵאָחֵר" — לֹא תִשְׁנֶה אֶת הַסֻּדָר: לֹא עֲבָרְתִי מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ. לֹא הִפְרַשְׁתִּי מִמֶּיִן עַל שְׂאֵינוּ מִינּוּ, וּמִן הַחֹדֶשׁ עַל הִישָׁן: וְלֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי. מִלְכָּרְכֶךָ עַל הַפְרַשַׁת מֵעֵשְׂרֹת: 14 לֹא אֲכַלְתִּי בְּאֵנִי מִמֶּנּוּ.

8. שמות כב, כח. 9. דברים יב, יז. 10. דברים טו, כב. 11. ויקרא כו, גד.

fourth year, that you have fulfilled your obligations regarding the produce of the first three years, so must you declare in the Temple, on the seventh day of Passover of the seventh year, that you have fulfilled your obligations regarding the produce of the second three years.

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express how we strive to become closer to God is some way (this being the meaning of the Hebrew word for "sacrifice," *korban*), the first fruits express the attitude we are intended to have toward our involvement in the physical world. We are not to destroy physicality but to elevate it, so that its inherent holiness is revealed even while it retains its physical state.

This notion extends as well to the fruits that are not given to the priest. The Torah tells us to take "some of" our first fruits. This indicates that there are "first fruits" that are not given to the priest but remain at home. They, too, must be elevated to holiness such that it is evident to all that this produce was fit to be given to God.<sup>51</sup>

51. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 9, p. 358.

13 God has therefore fixed the day before Passover of the fourth year as the deadline for fulfilling your obligations vis-à-vis the tithes of produce of the third year. If you neglected to fulfill your obligations vis-à-vis the tithes of the first and second year, as described above,<sup>38</sup> this same deadline will apply for fulfilling these obligations, as well. After completing all these obligations by that date, **you must** then, on the seventh day of Passover,<sup>39</sup> **declare before God, your God: 'I have removed from my house the second tithe and the fourth-year fruit,**<sup>40</sup> both of which are considered **holy** because they must be eaten in the holy Temple city; **and I have also given the first tithe to the Levite, the *terumah*<sup>41</sup> and first fruits<sup>42</sup> to the priest, and the tithe for the poor to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow, in accordance with all Your commandments that You commanded me** regarding the precise order in which to give the gifts due from my produce:<sup>43</sup> first the first fruits, then *terumah*, then the first tithe, and finally the second tithe<sup>44</sup> (or tithe for the poor, depending on the year). **I have not transgressed any of Your commandments,** either by substituting one species of fruit for the gift due from another species or by substituting the produce of one year for the gift due from the produce of another year. Furthermore, **I have not forgotten** to thank You for granting me the opportunity to tithe my produce.

14 **I did not consume any of the second tithe while in my grief,** i.e., on the day one of my close relatives died, for this is forbidden.<sup>45</sup> **Nor did I consume any of it while I<sup>46</sup> or the tithed produce was ritually defiled; neither did I use any of it to make a coffin or shrouds for the dead,** for this, too, is forbidden. **I have obeyed God, my God,** by bringing it to the Temple city;<sup>47</sup> **I have acted in accordance with all that You commanded me** regarding rejoicing myself and gladdening others.<sup>48</sup>

15 Being that we have exceeded the requirements of the law, therefore, You, too, bless us beyond the limitations of nature, as You promised You would.<sup>49</sup> Even if we are guilty of any misdeeds on account of which we have forfeited Your blessings, may the merit of the gifts we have given the poor compensate for them,<sup>50</sup> so that You **look down favorably upon us from Your holy dwelling, from the heavens, and bless Your people Israel and the land that You have given to us as You swore to our forefathers—a land flowing with milk and date- and fig-honey.'**

The same rules and procedures just described for tithing the produce of the first three years of each sabbatical-year cycle apply to tithing the produce of the second three years of each cycle. Thus, just as you must fulfill your obligations with regard to tithing the produce of the first three years by the day before Passover of the fourth year, so must you similarly fulfill your obligations with regard to the produce of the second three years by the day before Passover of the seventh year; and just as you must declare in the Temple, on the seventh day of Passover of the

38. Above, 14:28. 39. *Ma'aser Sheini* 5:10. 40. Leviticus 19:24. 41. Exodus 22:28; Numbers 18:12; above, 18:4. 42. Exodus 23:19, 34:26; above, vv. 1-11. 43. Exodus 22:28. 44. Leviticus 27:30-31; above, 12:17, 14:23-26. 45. See Leviticus 19:28. 46. As prohibited above, 12:17. 47. Above, 12:11, 17-18, 14:23-26. 48. Above, 12:6-7, 18, 14:26. 49. Leviticus 26:3-13. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, pp. 117-118. 50. Rashi on Genesis 18:16.

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16 יומא קדין ? אלהיך מפקדך למעבד ית קימאי האליו וית דינאי ותטר ותעבד יתהון בכל לך ובכל נפשך: 17 ית ? חטבת יומא דין למחוי לך לאלה ולמחוי בארון דתקנו קדמוהי ולמטר קדמוהי ופקודיהי ודיניהי ולקבלא למימרה: 18 ו? חטבך יומא דין למחוי לה לעם חביב כמא די מליל לך ולמטר כל פקודיהי: 19 ולמתנה עלאה על כל עממיא די עבד לתשבחא ולשום ולרבו ולמחונך עם קדיש קדם ? אלהיך כמא די מליל: 27 ופקיד משה וסבי ישראל ית עמא למימר טר ית כל תפקדתא די אנא מפקד יתכון יומא דין:

◆ שלישי 16 היום הזה יהיה אלהיך מצונך לעשות את החקים האלה ואת המשפטים ושמרת ועשית אותם בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך: 17 את יהוה האמרת היום להיות לך לאלהים וללכת בדרךיו ולשמר חקיו ומצותיו ומשפטייו ולשמע בקלו: 18 ויהוה האמירך היום להיות לו לעם סגלה כאשר דבר לך ולשמר כל מצותיו: 19 ולתתך עליון על כל הגוים אשר עשה לתהלה ולשם ולתפארת ולהיתך עם קדוש ליהוה אלהיך כאשר דבר: פ

◆ רביעי 27:1 ויצו משה וזכני ישראל את העם לאמר שמר את כל המצוה אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום:

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לאלהים, והוא הפרישה אליו מעמי הארץ "להיות לו לעם סגלה". ומצאתי להם ער, והוא לשון תפארת, כמו: "ותאמרו כל פעלי אנו". 18 כאשר דבר לך. "והייתם לי סגלה": 19 ולהיתך עם קדוש וגו' כאשר דבר. "והייתם לי קדשים": 1 שמר את כל המצוה. לשון הוזה, גרדנט בלעז:

16 היום הזה ה' אלהיך מצונך. בכל יום יהיו בעיניך קדשים, כאלו בו ביום נצטוית עליהם: ושמרת ועשית אותם. בת קול מברכתו: הבאת בפורים היום, תשנה לשנה הבאה: 17 האמרת. האמירה. אין להם עד מוכיח במקרא. ולי נראה שהוא לשון הפרשה והבדלה — הבדלתו לך מאלהי הגוים "להיות לך

12. תהלים צד, ד. 13. שמות יט, ה. 14. על פי ויקרא כ, כו. 15. בשמך.

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**18 He has set you apart:** According to Rashi, the expression "set apart" (להאמיר) connotes separation and distinction on the one hand, and glory—in the sense of one's glory being his prize possession, so to speak—on the other. The proof text he cites for the latter meaning is: "All transgressors glorify themselves (יתאמרו)."<sup>59</sup>

As an idiom of "separation and distinction," this expression refers to our essential Divine nature and true inner reality, by virtue of which we are completely divorced from any notion of evil and are therefore "separate and distinct" from wrongdoing. As an expression of "glory," this expression refers to that fact that even when we do sin and are involved in actions that distance us from God, we have the ability to return to Him. We are taught that *teshuvah* motivated by ardent love of God trans-

forms even deliberate wrongdoings into merits,<sup>60</sup> which means that we are blessed not only with the ability to forsake negative behavior and habits at any instant (thereby defying the natural forces of inertia and habituation); we can even convert our past negative actions into motivations for positive behavior. Thus, what was formerly negative is now something glorious and meritorious. This process increases God's glory in the world, inasmuch as it demonstrates how He can be revealed not only in elements of reality that are a priori holy (or neutral but receptive to holiness) but also in elements of reality that are a priori antithetical to holiness.

In this context, the deeper meaning of the verse that Rashi quotes is that through the act of *teshuvah*, the transgressor can increase the glory of God in the world.<sup>61</sup>

59. Psalms 94:4. 60. *Bava Metzia* 33b. 61. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 9, p. 173.



## The Ever-New Covenant

- ◆ *Third Reading 16* As you have been taught,<sup>52</sup> whenever you are studying the Torah or performing God's commandments, you should feel as if God is forging His relationship with you anew every day. In addition, you should feel this way even when you are not studying the Torah or performing any specific commandment. For example, even though you will only fulfill the commandment to bring your first fruits to the Temple once a year, you should relate to this commandment every day of your life with the enthusiasm intrinsic to a new experience, as if **this very day, God, your God, is commanding you to fulfill these rules and ordinances** regarding your first fruits. In return, God promises you that **you will** be privileged to **safeguard** these rules and ordinances—by constantly studying the Torah's instructions regarding how to perform them—**and do them with all your heart and with all your soul.**<sup>53</sup>

17 Similarly, you should live every day of your life as if **today**—i.e., that very day—you **have singled out God** from all other deities **to be your God**, meaning that you have undertaken **to walk in His ways; to safeguard His rules, commandments, and ordinances** by studying how to perform them; **and to obey Him.**

18 If you behave in this manner, **God** will reciprocally<sup>54</sup> behave toward you each day as if He **has set you apart today**—i.e., that very day—from all other nations **to be His treasured people, just as He spoke concerning you;**<sup>55</sup> **to safeguard all His commandments** by studying how to perform them;

19 **to make you supreme above all the other nations that He made**, so they will accord you **praise, a distinguished name, and glory; and for you to be a holy people**, dedicated and devoted solely **to God, your God, just as He spoke**, commanding you to be.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, you will be glorifying God every day by committing yourselves to being His people, and He will be glorifying you by making you His treasured people, as He promised."<sup>57</sup>

With this Moses concluded his review of the Torah's laws. He now turned to expounding the particulars of the special relationship between God and the Jewish people, exhorting the people to uphold their part of this covenant.

## Reaffirming the Covenant

- ◆ *Fourth Reading 27:1* **Moses, together with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying, "You must unceasingly safeguard<sup>58</sup> all the commandments that I am commanding you this day** by assiduously studying how to properly perform them.

52. Exodus 19:1; above, 6:6, 11:13. 53. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 233, note 48; vol. 24, pp. 192-193. 54. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 230. 55. Exodus 19:5. 56. Leviticus 20:26. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 24, pp. 157-160. 57. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 9, pp. 162-169. 58. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, pp. 135-140.

— ONKELOS —

2 ויהי ביזמא די תעברון ית ירדנא לארעא דיי אלקה יחב לך ותקים לך אבנין רבנן ותסוד יתהו בסידא: 3 ותכתוב עליהן ית כל פתגמי אורייתא הדא במעברך בדיל די תעול לארעא דיי אלקה יחב לך ארעא עבדא חלב ודבש כמא די מליל יי אלקהא דאבהתך לך: 4 ויהי במעברכון ית ירדנא תקימון ית אבניא האלין די אנא מפקד יתכון יומא דין בטורא דעיבל ותסוד יתהו בסידא: 5 ותבני תמן מדבחא קדם יי אלקה מדבח אבנין לא תרים עליהו פרזלא: 6 אבנין שלמן תבני ית מדבחא דיי אלקה ותסק עלוהי עלון קדם יי אלקה: 7 ותכוס נכסת קדשין ותיכול תמן ותחדי קדם יי אלקה: 8 ותכתב על אבניא ית כל פתגמי אורייתא הדא פרש יאות: 9 ומליל משה וכהניא לנאי לכל ישראל למימר אצית ושמע ישראל יומא דדין הוית לעם קדם יי אלקה: 10 ותקבל למימרא דיי אלקה ותעבד ית פקודוהי וית קימוהי די אנא מפקדך יומא דין:

2 והיה ביום אשר תעברו את הירדן אל הארץ אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך והקמת לך אבנים גדולות ושדת אתם בשיר: 3 וכתבת עליהן את כל דברי התורה הזאת בעברך למען אשר תבא אל הארץ אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך ארץ זבת חלב ודבש כאשר דבר יהוה אלהי אבותיך לך: 4 והיה בעברכם את הירדן תקימו את האבנים האלה אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום בהר עיבל ושדת אותם בשיר: 5 ובנית שם מזבח ליהוה אלהיך מזבח אבנים לא תניף עליהם ברזל: 6 אבנים שלמות תבנה את מזבח יהוה אלהיך והעלית עליו עולת ליהוה אלהיך: 7 וזבחת שלמים ואכלת שם ושמת לפני יהוה אלהיך: 8 וכתבת על האבנים את כל דברי התורה הזאת באר היטב: 9 וידבר משה והכהנים הלויים אל כל ישראל לאמר הסבת ושמע ישראל היום הזה נהיית לעם ליהוה אלהיך: 10 ושמעת בקול יהוה אלהיך ועשית את מצותו (מצותיו) ואת חקיו אשר אנכי מצוה היום: 8

— RASHI —

2 והקמת לך. בירדן, ואחר כך תוציא משם אחרות, ותבנה מהן מזבח בהר עיבל. נמצאת אתה אומר: שלשה מיני אבנים היו, שתיים עשרה בירדן, וכנגדן בגלגל, וכנגדן בהר עיבל, כדאיתא במסכת סוטה<sup>75</sup>: 8 באר היטב. בשבעים לשון: 9 הסבת. פתרגומו: היום הזה נהיית לעם. בכל יום יהיו בעיניך כאלו היום באת עמו בבירת:

16. לה, ב.

9 After describing this ceremony, Moses and the Levitic priests spoke to all Israel, saying, “Pay special attention and listen, O Israel! See how important it is to God that you be impressed with the eternal vitality of your covenant with Him! Every day, you must live as if **this day**—i.e., that very day<sup>75</sup>—**you have become a people covenantally bound to God, your God.**

10 **You must therefore obey God, your God, and fulfill His commandments and His rules concerning which I command you today.”**

75. Likutei Sichot, vol. 19, p. 233, note 48.

2 In order to reinforce the covenant between you and God, as well as to reinforce your commitment to maintaining it by studying the Torah, your first order of business when you enter the land will be to ceremoniously reaffirm this covenant, as follows:

First, you must erect a monument commemorating your miraculous crossing of the Jordan River. As you approach the eastern bank of the river, it will stop flowing, allowing you to cross it on dry ground. As you have been taught,<sup>62</sup> you must then cross the river with the intention of driving out the nations currently occupying the land. While you are crossing, Joshua must gather twelve boulders from the riverbed into a pile<sup>63</sup> tall enough to remain visible above the surface of the water after the river resumes flowing, as a memorial to your miraculous crossing.<sup>64</sup>

Next, **on the same day you cross the Jordan River in order to enter the land that God, your God, is giving you, you must, at your first encampment, set up for yourself a pile of twelve other boulders, which you must take from the Jordan River bed.<sup>65</sup> You must later plaster them with lime, and**

**3 write upon them all the words of this Torah, as will be described presently. All this is an essential part of your crossing into the land to possess it, and is required in order for you to enter the land that God, your God, is giving you—a land flowing with milk and date- and fig-honey—as God, God of your forefathers, has spoken to you.**

4 Finally, **after you have crossed the Jordan, you must, on that same day,<sup>66</sup> proceed directly to Shechem, between Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival,<sup>67</sup> taking the second set of twelve boulders with you, and perform the ceremony of blessings and curses that will be described presently.<sup>68</sup> After that,<sup>69</sup> you must set up these stones, regarding which I command you this day, on Mount Eival, as an altar. You must then plaster them with lime.**

**5 You will thus build there an altar to God, your God; this altar will be constructed out of these stones. You must not wield any iron tool upon them to cut them to size; rather,**

**6 you must build the altar of God, your God, out of whole stones. You must then offer up ascent-offerings on it to God, your God.**

7 After this, **you must slaughter animals as peace-offerings, and you must eat your portions of these peace-offerings there. In this manner you must rejoice before God, your God.<sup>70</sup>**

8 But before you sacrifice on this ad hoc altar, **you must first write upon the plastered<sup>71</sup> stones all the words of this Torah, translated very clearly into the world's seventy archetypal languages.<sup>72</sup> After this, still on the same day, you must scrape the plaster off the altar,<sup>73</sup> dismantle it, and return—bringing the twelve stones with you—to your initial encampment, and erect a memorial there out of these stones."<sup>74</sup>**

62. Numbers 33:51-52. 63. Joshua 4:9. 64. *Me'am Lo'ez*, quoting *Chesed LeAvraham*. 65. Joshua 4:1-8, 20-23. 66. Rashi on Joshua 4:3 and 8:30; *Sotah* 36a. 67. Above, 11:26-32. 68. Vv. 11-26, below. 69. *Sotah* 7:5. 70. Joshua 8:31. 71. *Sotah* 36a. 72. Joshua 8:32. 73. Rashi on Joshua 8:32. 74. Rashi on Joshua 4:3; *Sotah* 35b-36a.

— ONKELOS —

11 ופקיד מלשה ית עמא בימרא  
ההוא למימר: 12 אלין יקומון  
לברכא ית עמא על טורא דגרוזים  
במעברכון ית ירדנא שמעון ולוי  
ויהודה ויששכר ויוסף ובנימין:  
13 ואלין יקומון על לוטיא בטורא  
דעיבל ראובן גד ואשר וזבולן דן  
ונפתלי: 14 ויתיבון לזאי וימרון  
לכל אנש ישראל קלא רמא:  
15 ליט גברא די יעבד צלם  
ומתקא מרחקא קדם יי עובד ידי  
אמן וישוי בתרא ויתיבון כל  
עמא וימרון אמן: 16 ליט דינקלי  
אבויה ואמה וימר כל עמא אמן:  
17 ליט דישני תחומא דחברה  
וימר כל עמא אמן:

◆ חמישי 11 ויצו משה את־העם ביום ההוא לאמר:  
12 אלה יעמדו לברך את־העם על־הר גרוזים בעברכם  
את־הירדן שמעון ולוי ויהודה ויששכר ויוסף ובנימין:  
13 ואלה יעמדו על־הקללה בהר עיבל ראובן גד ואשר  
וזבולן דן ונפתלי: 14 וענו הלויים ואמרו אל־כל־איש  
ישראל קול רם: ם

15 ארור האיש אשר יעשה פסל ומסכה תועבת יהוה  
מעשה ידי חרש ושם בפתר וענו כל־העם ואמרו  
אמן: ם

16 ארור מקלה אביו ואמו ואמר כל־העם אמן: ם

17 ארור מסיג גבול רעהו ואמר כל־העם אמן: ם

— RASHI —

הר עיבל, ופתחו בקללה ואומרים: "ארור האיש  
אשר יעשה פסל" וגו', וכן כלם עד "ארור אשר  
לא יקים": 16 מקלה אביו. מולול, לשון "ונקלה  
אחיר"<sup>88</sup>: 17 מסיג גבול. מחזירו לאחוריו וגונב את  
הקרקע, לשון "והסג אחור"<sup>89</sup>:

12 לברך את העם. כדאיתא במסכת סוטה<sup>90</sup>: ששה  
שבטים עלו לראש הר גרוזים, וששה לראש הר  
עיבל, והכהנים והלויים והארון למטה באמצע.  
הפכו לויים פניהם כלפי הר גרוזים, ופתחו בברכה:  
"ברוך האיש אשר לא יעשה פסל ומסכה" וגו',  
ואלו ואלו עונין: "אמן". חרו והפכו פניהם כלפי

17. לב, א. 18. דברים כה, ג. 19. ישעיה נט, יד.

~ A CLOSER LOOK ~

[continued...] We may associate the 11 curses with the 11 tribes as follows:<sup>83</sup>

1. *Who makes any graven or molten image:* This refers to the tribe of Dan, since Abraham foresaw that they would set up a public idol in competition with the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>84</sup>
2. *Who degrades his father and mother:* This refers to the tribe of Asher, whose territory will be blessed with material abundance,<sup>85</sup> which in turn can lead a child to rebel against his parents.<sup>86</sup>
3. *Who pushes back his neighbor's landmark:* This refers to Issachar, who is likened to a donkey who rests between towns,<sup>87</sup> where the possibility exists for falsifying borders.
4. *Who figuratively misguides a "blind person" on the way:* This refers to Benjamin, whose descendants succumbed to the misguided counsel of those who advised returning to
5. *Who perverts the judgment:* This refers to Judah, whose descendants will be scholars and judges, and therefore must be careful not to pervert justice.<sup>89</sup>
6. *Who fornicates with his father's wife:* This refers to Reuben, who was implicated in meddling in his father's marital affairs.<sup>90</sup>
7. *Who engages in carnal relations with any animal:* This refers to the tribe of Gad, who possessed an abundance of cattle, and therefore was particularly exposed to this possibility.<sup>91</sup>
8. *Who fornicates with his sister:* This refers to Naphtali, since the very name of the progenitor of this tribe alludes to close ties between siblings,<sup>92</sup> which although commendable, also expose them to this possibility.
9. *Who fornicates with his mother-in-law:* This re-

83. Cf. *Maskil LeDavid*. 84. Genesis 14:14. 85. Genesis 49:20. 86. Above, 21:18-21. 87. Genesis 49:14. 88. Numbers 21:4, 26:39; Rashi on Numbers 26:13. 89. Genesis 49:10. 90. Genesis 35:22. 91. Numbers 32:1. 92. Genesis 30:8.

◆ **Fifth Reading 11** Moses commanded the people on that day, saying,

12 “As I have just mentioned, on the same day **that you cross the Jordan River**, you must perform a ceremony of blessings and curses. This is how you must do it: The priests and Levites will station themselves in the valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival, together with the Ark of the Covenant. **The following tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim**, and the priests and Levites will face them **in order to bless the people: Simeon, Levi** (that is, those Levites too young or too old to serve in the Tabernacle<sup>76</sup>), **Judah, Issachar, Joseph** (i.e., Manasseh and Ephraim), **and Benjamin.**

13 **The following tribes will stand on Mount Eival** so the priests and Levites can turn and face them **for the purpose of pronouncing the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.**<sup>77</sup>

14 Once everyone is in position, **the priests and Levites will speak up, saying** the following pronouncements **to every individual of Israel**—even though they will only be facing half the people at a time—**in a loud voice.** They will first couch each pronouncement as a blessing, facing Mount Gerizim, and then as a curse, facing Mount Eival. These pronouncements chiefly concern behavior that can go undetected and therefore uncorrected.<sup>78</sup>

15 First, facing Mount Gerizim, they will say, ‘Blessed be the man who does not make any sculpted or molten image, which is an abomination to God—being the handiwork of a craftsman—and does not set it up in secret!’<sup>79</sup> All the people will respond, saying, ‘Amen!’

Then, facing Mount Eival, the priests and Levites will say, ‘**Cursed be the man who makes any sculpted or molten image, which is an abomination to God—being the handiwork of a craftsman—and sets it up in secret!**’ All the people will respond, saying, ‘Amen!’

16 Again facing Mount Gerizim, the priests and Levites will say, ‘Blessed be he who does not degrade his father and mother!’<sup>80</sup> All the people will respond, saying, ‘Amen!’

Again facing Mount Eival, the priests and Levites will say, ‘**Cursed be he who degrades his father and mother!**’ All the people will say, ‘Amen!’

17 Again facing Mount Gerizim, the priests and Levites will say, ‘Blessed be he who does not push back his neighbor’s landmark!’<sup>81</sup> All the people will respond, saying, ‘Amen!’

Again facing Mount Eival, the priests and Levites will say, ‘**Cursed be he who pushes back his neighbor’s landmark!**’ All the people will say, ‘Amen!’

∞ A CLOSER LOOK ∞

[14] **The Levites must speak up, saying to every individual of Israel:** There are eleven specific curses here. Rashi explains this number as corresponding to all 12 tribes except Simeon, whom

Moses did not want to curse explicitly because he was planning not to bless him explicitly when he blessed all the tribes, either.<sup>82</sup> [continues...]

76. *Sotah* 37a. 77. Joshua 8:33. 78. Ibn Ezra here; Rabbi Shlomo ben Meir on v. 15. 79. Exodus 20:4. 80. Cf. *Chulin* 110b; *Mishneh Torah, Mamrim* 5:15. 81. Above, 19:14. 82. Below, 33:7.

— ONKELOS —  
 18 לֵיט דִּיטְעִי עוֹרָא בְּאַרְחָא וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 19 לֵיט דִּיִּצְלִי דִּין דִּיִּר יִתְמָא וְאַרְמִלְתָּא וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 20 לֵיט דִּישְׁכּוּב עִם אִתַּת אַבּוּהִי אָרִי גְלִי כִּנְפָא דְאַבּוּהִי וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 21 לֵיט דִּישְׁכּוּב עִם כָּל בְּעִירָא וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 22 לֵיט דִּישְׁכּוּב עִם אִחְתָּהּ בֵּת אַבּוּהִי אוּ בֵּת אִמָּה וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 23 לֵיט דִּישְׁכּוּב עִם חַמּוּתָהּ וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 24 לֵיט דִּימַחִי לְחַבְרָה בְּסִתְרָא וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 25 לֵיט דִּמְקַבֵּל שׁוּחָדָא לְמַקְטֵל נַפְשׁ דָּם זָכִי וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 26 לֵיט דִּי לֹא יִקְיַם יֵת פְּתֻגְמֵי אוּרִיתָא הָדָא לְמַעַבְדַּי יִתְהוּן וַיִּימַר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן:

18 אָרוּר מִשְׁגָּה עוֹר בְּדָרְדָר וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ם  
 19 אָרוּר מִטָּה מוֹשֶׁפֶט גְּרִי־תוֹם וְאִלְמָנָה וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: 20 אָרוּר שֹׁכֵב עִם־אִשְׁתּוֹ אָבִיו כִּי גָלָה כִּנְף אָבִיו וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ם  
 21 אָרוּר שֹׁכֵב עִם־כָּל־בְּהֵמָה וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ם  
 22 אָרוּר שֹׁכֵב עִם־אִחְתּוֹ בֵּת־אָבִיו אוּ בֵּת־אִמּוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ם  
 23 אָרוּר שֹׁכֵב עִם־חַמּוּתָהּ וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ם  
 24 אָרוּר מִכָּה רַעְהוּ בְּסִתֵּר וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ם  
 25 אָרוּר לְקַח שׁוּחַד לְהַכּוֹת נַפְשׁ דָּם נָקִי וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ם  
 26 אָרוּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְיָם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה־הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: פ

— RASHI —

שמעון לא כתב "ארור", לפי שלא היה בלבו לברכו לפני מותו כשברך שאר השבטים, לכך לא רצה לקללו: 26 אשר לא יקום. כאן כלל את כל התורה כלה, וקבלוה עליהם באלה ובשבועה:

18 משגה עור. הסומא בדבר, ומשיאו עצה רעה: 24 מכה רעהו בסתר. על לשון הרע הוא אומר. ראיתי ביסודו של רבי משה הדרשן: אחד עשר ארורים יש כאן, כנגד אחד עשר שבטים, וכנגד

Again facing Mount Eival, the priests and Levites will say, ‘Cursed be he who takes a bribe to put an innocent person to death!’ All the people will say, ‘Amen!’

26 The priests and Levites will then utter a general blessing and curse that apply to the entire legal corpus of the Torah: Facing Mount Gerizim for the final time, they will say, ‘Blessed be he who upholds all the words of this Torah by fulfilling them!’ All the people will respond, saying, ‘Amen!’

Facing Mount Eival for the final time, the priests and Levites will say, ‘Cursed be he who does not uphold all the words of this Torah by fulfilling them!’ All the people will say, ‘Amen!’ This will conclude the ceremony.

~ A CLOSER LOOK ~

[continued...] fers to Joseph, who was tested by the seduction of Potiphar’s wife,<sup>101</sup> who later became his mother-in-law when he married her daughter Asnat.<sup>102</sup>

10. Who strikes his fellow in secret: This refers to Levi, who attacked the city of Shechem to-

gether with his brother Simeon.<sup>103</sup>

11. Who takes a bribe: This refers to the tribe of Zebulun, who were destined to be merchants,<sup>104</sup> and therefore particularly exposed to this possibility.<sup>105</sup>

101. Genesis 31:7-19. 102. Genesis 41:45. 103. Genesis 34. 104. Genesis 49:13. 105. *Sichot Kodesh* 5733, vol. 2, pp. 371-376; *Sichot Kodesh* 5734, vol. 1, pp. 8-14.

18 Again facing Mount Gerizim, the priests and Levites will say, 'Blessed be he who does not, figuratively speaking, misguide a "blind person" on the way—i.e., who does not give detrimental advice to someone who is uninformed regarding a particular matter!'<sup>93</sup> All the people will respond, saying, 'Amen!'

Again facing Mount Eival, the priests and Levites will say, '**Cursed be he who figuratively misguides a "blind person" on the way!** All the people will say, 'Amen!'

19 Again facing Mount Gerizim, the priests and Levites will say, 'Blessed be he who does not pervert the judgment of the convert, the orphan, or the widow!'<sup>94</sup> All the people will respond, saying, 'Amen!'

Again facing Mount Eival, the Levites will say, '**Cursed be he who perverts the judgment of the convert, the orphan, or the widow!** All the people will say, 'Amen!'

20 Again facing Mount Gerizim, the Levites will say, 'Blessed be he who does not fornicate with his father's wife,<sup>95</sup> thus figuratively uncovering the corner of his father's garment!' All the people will respond, saying, 'Amen!'

Again facing Mount Eival, the Levites priests and will say, '**Cursed be he who fornicates with his father's wife, thus figuratively uncovering the corner of his father's garment!** All the people will say, 'Amen!'

21 Again facing Mount Gerizim, the Levites priests and will say, 'Blessed be he who does not engage in carnal relations with any animal!'<sup>96</sup> All the people will respond, saying, 'Amen!'

Again facing Mount Eival, the Levites priests and will say, '**Cursed be he who engages in carnal relations with any animal!** All the people will say, 'Amen!'

22 Again facing Mount Gerizim, the priests and Levites will say, 'Blessed be he who does not fornicate with his sister, whether she be the daughter of his father or of his mother!'<sup>97</sup> All the people will respond, saying, 'Amen!'

Again facing Mount Eival, the priests and Levites will say, '**Cursed be he who fornicates with his sister, whether she be the daughter of his father or of his mother!** All the people will say, 'Amen!'

23 Again facing Mount Gerizim, the priests and Levites will say, 'Blessed be he who does not fornicate with his mother-in-law!'<sup>98</sup> All the people will respond, saying, 'Amen!'

Again facing Mount Eival, the priests and Levites will say, '**Cursed be he who fornicates with his mother-in-law!** All the people will say, 'Amen!'

24 Again facing Mount Gerizim, the priests and Levites will say, 'Blessed be he who does not "strike his fellow" in secret, by engaging in injurious gossip against him!'<sup>99</sup> All the people will respond, saying, 'Amen!'

Again facing Mount Eival, the priests and Levites will say, '**Cursed be he who "strikes his fellow" in secret!** All the people will say, 'Amen!'

25 Again facing Mount Gerizim, the priests and Levites will say, 'Blessed be he who, when officiating as a judge, does not take a bribe to put an innocent person to death!'<sup>100</sup> All the people will respond, saying, 'Amen!'

93. Leviticus 19:14. 94. Above, 24:17. 95. Leviticus 18:7-8. 96. Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 18:23. 97. Leviticus 18:9. 98. Leviticus 18:17, 20:14. 99. Leviticus 19:16. 100. Exodus 23:8; above, 18:19.

— ONKELOS —

28:1 ויהי אם קבלת את המצוות אשר אנכי מצוה היום ונתנתן יהוה אלהיך עליון על כל הברכות האלה והשיגך פי תשמע בקול יהוה אלהיך: 3 ברוך אתה בעיר וברוך אתה בשדה: 4 ברוך פרי-בטנך ופרי אדמתך ופרי בהמתך שגר אלפיד ועשתרות צאנך: 5 ברוך טנאך ומשארתך: 6 ברוך אתה בבאך וברוך אתה בצאתך: 7 יתן יהוה את-איביך הקמים עליך נגפים לפניך בדרך אחד יצאו אליך ובשבעה דרכים ינוסו לפניך: 8 יצו יהוה אתך את-הברכה באסמך ובכל משלח ידך וברכך בארץ אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך: 9 יקומך יהוה לו לעם קדוש כאשר נשבע-לך כי תשמר את-מצוות יהוה אלהיך והלכת בדרךיו: 10 וראו כל-עמי הארץ כי שם יהוה נקרא עליך ויראו מך: 11 והותרך יהוה לטובה בפרי בטנך ובפרי בהמתך ובפרי אדמתך על האדמה אשר נשבע יהוה לאבתך לתת לך:

28:1 ויהי אם קבלת את המצוות אשר אנכי מצוה היום ונתנתן יהוה אלהיך עליון על כל הברכות האלה והשיגך פי תשמע בקול יהוה אלהיך: 3 ברוך אתה בעיר וברוך אתה בשדה: 4 ברוך פרי-בטנך ופרי אדמתך ופרי בהמתך שגר אלפיד ועשתרות צאנך: 5 ברוך טנאך ומשארתך: 6 ברוך אתה בבאך וברוך אתה בצאתך:

ששי 7 יתן יהוה את-איביך הקמים עליך נגפים לפניך בדרך אחד יצאו אליך ובשבעה דרכים ינוסו לפניך: 8 יצו יהוה אתך את-הברכה באסמך ובכל משלח ידך וברכך בארץ אשר יהוה אלהיך נתן לך: 9 יקומך יהוה לו לעם קדוש כאשר נשבע-לך כי תשמר את-מצוות יהוה אלהיך והלכת בדרךיו: 10 וראו כל-עמי הארץ כי שם יהוה נקרא עליך ויראו מך: 11 והותרך יהוה לטובה בפרי בטנך ובפרי בהמתך ובפרי אדמתך על האדמה אשר נשבע יהוה לאבתך לתת לך:

— RASHI —

”טנאך” — דבר לח שאתה מסגן בסלים: ומשארתך. דבר יבש שנשאך בכלי ואינו זב: 6 ברוך אתה בבואך וברוך אתה בצאתך. שתהא יציאתך מן העולם בלא חטא, כביאתך לעולם: 7 ובשבעה דרכים ינוסו לפניך. כן דרך הנבהלים לברוח, מתפזרים לכל צד:

4 שגר אלפיד. ולדות בקרך שהבהמה משגרת ממעיה: ועשתרות צאנך. כתרנגומו. ורבותינו אמרו: למה נקרא שמן “עשתרות”? שמעשירות את בעליהן, ומחזיקות אותן בעשתרות הללו שהן סלעים חזקים: 5 ברוך טנאך. פרותיה. דבר אחר:

20. חולין פד, ב.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

prayer and devotion to God is necessary; this is the purpose of our daily prayers.

This is why the Torah speaks first of blessings “pursuing us” and then “overtaking us.”<sup>108</sup>

**Will pursue you and overtake you:** This implies that even if we are foolish enough to flee from God’s blessings, they will overtake us, and we will receive them even against our will!<sup>109</sup>

**7 They will flee from you:** They will not be killed;

they will simply be prevented from harming us. From this we see that when the Jewish people follow the Torah’s instructions as to how to live life, it not only elicits Divine blessing for them but for the whole world—even their enemies, who are allowed to live peacefully and securely in their land (albeit inhibited from harming us in any way).<sup>110</sup>

**9 And walk in His ways:** Following the path of Torah enables the soul to “walk.” Before the soul descends into the body, it experiences Godliness in a

108. Or HaTorah, Devarim, p. 1089. 109. Hitva’aduyot 5742, vol. 4, p. 2158. 110. Likutei Sichot, vol. 29, p. 307.



## Blessings and Curses

28:1 As you know, God blessed you and cursed you when we were at Mount Sinai.<sup>106</sup> I will now add my own blessings and curses to His. My curses, however, will be milder, both in intensity and in scope, since I will convey them to you in the singular, as individuals, rather than in the plural, to the whole people as a collective entity.<sup>107</sup>

**If you obey God, your God, being sure to safeguard His commandments by studying the Torah's instructions regarding how to properly perform all His commandments that I am commanding you to perform today, then God, your God, will place you supreme above all the nations of the earth.**

**2 You will not have to pursue prosperity; rather, all the following blessings will pursue you and overtake you if you obey God, your God:**

**3 You will be blessed both in the city and in the field.**

**4 Blessed will be your children, the fruit of your womb; your crops, the fruit of your soil; your animals, the fruit of your livestock: the offspring of your cattle and the choice of your flocks.**

**5 Blessed will be your food basket and your kneading bowl.**

**6 Just as you are blessed when you enter the world, being free of sin, so will you be similarly blessed when you depart the world.**

◆ **Sixth Reading 7 God will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be beaten by you. They will attack you from one direction, but you will overcome them and terrify them so much that they will flee from you, retreating in seven directions.**

**8 God will command the blessing of success to accompany you in your granaries and in all your endeavors. He will bless you in the land that God, your God, is giving you.**

**9 God will establish you as His holy people, as He swore to you, if you safeguard the commandments of God, your God, by studying how to perform them properly, and walk in His ways.**

**10 Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the name of God is associated only with you, as His chosen people, and they will fear you.**

**11 God will make you superior to them with regard to children, the fruit of your womb; with regard to your cattle, the fruit of your livestock; and with regard to your produce, the fruit of your soil, on the land that God swore to your forefathers to give you.**

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∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

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**2 All the following blessings will pursue you and overtake you:** On *Rosh HaShanah*, our livelihood and health are decreed for the coming year. And yet, we pray every day for health, sustenance, and many other Divine blessings. Is this daily prayer not superfluous, in that all has already been decreed on *Rosh HaShanah*?

The apparent redundancy of the second half of this verse provides the answer to this question. On *Rosh HaShanah*, all the different blessings necessary for their respective purposes descend to a certain level of reality where they wait in store to be drawn down further into the physical world. In order to bring them down into the physical world, further

<sup>106</sup>. Leviticus 26:3-46. <sup>107</sup>. Rashi on v. 23, below.

— ONKELOS —

12 יפתח יי לך ית אוצרה טבא ית שמיא למתן מטר ארעך בעדנה ולברכא ית כל עובדי ידך ותוזה לעממין סגיאין ואת לא תוזה: 13 ויתנגך יי לתקיף ולא לחלש ותהי ברם לעלא ולא תהי לתחמא ארי תקבל לפקודיא די? אלהך די אנא מפקדך יומא דין למטר ולמעבד: 14 ולא תסטון מכל פתגמאי די אנא מפקד יתכון יומא דין ימינא ושמאלא למחך בתר טעות עממאי למפלחון: 15 ויהי אם לא תקבל למימרא די? אלהך למטר למעבד ית כל פקודיה וקיימוהי די אנא מפקדך יומא דין ויתון עלך כל לטיאי האלין וידבקך: 16 ליט את בקרתא וליט את בחקלא: 17 ליט סלך ואצותך: 18 ליט ולדא דמעך ואבא דארעך בקרי תוריד ועדרי ענה: 19 ליט את במעלה וליט את במפקד: 20 יגרי יי קך ית מארתא וית שגושיא וית מזופיתא בכל אושטות ידך די תעבד עד דתשתצי ועד דתיבד בפריע מן קדם בישות עובדיך דשבת קדם דחלתי: 21 ידבק יי קך ית מותא עד דישצי יתך מעל ארעא די את עלל לתמן למירתה: 22 ימחנה יי בשחפתא ובקדחתא ובדלקתא ובחחרורא ובחרבא ובשדפונא ובירקונא וירדפנה עד דתיבד:

12 יפתח יהוה א' לך את אוצרו הטוב את השמים לתת מטרארעך בעתו ולברך את כל מעשה ידך והלוי'ת גוים רבים ואתה לא תלוה: 13 ונתנך יהוה לראש ולא לזנב והיית רק למעלה ולא תהיה למטה פיתשמע אל מצות | יהוה אלהיך אשר אנכי מצוה היום לשמר ולעשות: 14 ולא תסור מפלחיה ברים אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום ימין ושמאל ללכת אחרי אלהים אחרים לעבדם: פ

15 והיה אם לא תשמע בקול יהוה אלהיך לשמר לעשות את כל מצותיו וחקתיו אשר אנכי מצוה היום ובאו עליך כל הקללות האלה והשיגוך: 16 ארור אתה בעיר וארור אתה בשדה: 17 ארור טנאך ומשאתך: 18 ארור פרי בטנה ופרי אדמתך שגר אלפיך ועשתרת צאנך: 19 ארור אתה בבאך וארור אתה בצאתך: 20 ישלח יהוה א' בך את המארה את המהומה ואת המגערת בכל משלח ידך אשר תעשה עד השמדך ועד אבדך מהר מפני רע מעלליך אשר עזבתני: 21 ידבק יהוה בך את הדבר עד פלתו אתך מעל האדמה אשר אתה בא שמה לרשתה: 22 יכבה יהוה בשחפת ובקדחת ובדלקת ובחחרל ובחרב ובשדפון ובירקון וירדפנה עד אבדך:

— RASHI —

מני חרב<sup>25</sup>, "נחר מפח מאש"<sup>26</sup>, ובחרב. יביא עליך גיסות: שדפון וירקון. מפת תבואה שבשדות: שדפון. רוח קדים. השל"א בלעז<sup>27</sup>: ירקון. יבש, ופני התבואה מכסיפין ונהפכין לירקון. קמ"א בלעז<sup>28</sup>: עד אבדך. תרגום: "עד דתיבד". כלומר, עד אבוד אותך, שתכלה מאליך:

20 המארה. חסרון, כמו<sup>21</sup>: "צרעת ממארת"; המהומה. שגשג, קול בקלות: 22 בשחפת. שבשוו נשחף ונפוח: ובקדחת. לשון "כי אש קדחה באפיי"<sup>22</sup>, והיא אש של חולים, מלוויד בלעז<sup>23</sup>, שהיא חמה מאד: ובדלקת. חמה יותר מקדחת. ומיני חלאים הם: ובחחרר. חלי הממחמו תוף הגוף, וצמא תמיד למים, ובלעז אישרדימיני<sup>24</sup>, לשון "ועצמי קרה

21. ויקרא יג, נא. 22. דברים לב, כב. 23. מחושים, כלומר קדחת. 24. התחממות, התגבשות. 25. איוב ל, ל. 26. ירמיהו, כט. 27. חום. 28. פרסום.

**12** God will open up His good treasury— heaven— for you, in order to give your land its rain in its right time and thereby bless everything you do. You will be so wealthy that you will lend to many nations, but you will not need to borrow.

**13** God will place you at the head of the world, and not at the tail; and you will be only at the top, and not at the bottom, if you obey the commandments of God, your God, regarding which I am commanding you today to safeguard them by studying how to perform them, and to do them.

**14** You must not veer right or left from all of the matters about which I am commanding you today, by following other deities and worshipping them.

**15** If, on the other hand, you do not obey God, your God, neglecting to safeguard His commandments by studying the Torah's instructions regarding how to properly perform all His commandments and rules that I am commanding you to perform today, then all the following 98 curses will pursue you and overtake you:

**16** [1] You will be cursed both in the city [2] and in the field.

**17** [3] Cursed will be your food basket [4] and your kneading bowl.

**18** [5] Cursed will be your children, the fruit of your womb; [6] your crops, the fruit of your soil; [7] your animals, the fruit of your livestock: the offspring of your cattle and the choice of your flocks.

**19** [8] You will be cursed when you come into your home<sup>111</sup> [9] and you will be cursed when you leave it.

**20** [10] God will send against you shortages, [11] pandemonium, [12] and self-rebuke in all of your endeavors that you undertake, until you are [13] destroyed [14] and quickly vanish, because," Moses said in God's name, "of the evil you did in forsaking Me."

**21** [15] Speaking again of God in the third person, Moses continued: "God will infect you with a disease that will spread as an epidemic and that will persist until it has eradicated you from the land that you are entering in order to possess.

**22** [16] God will strike you with diseases accompanied by consumption and blisters, [17] regular fever, [18] high fever, [19] and unquenchable thirst; [20] with the sword of invading armies [21] and with a crop-destroying east wind and with drought; [22] and they all will pursue you until you perish.

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∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

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relatively static fashion. Although it can experience some notion of elevation and movement, any new level reached can always be understood in the context of its previous level of spiritual understanding. This is a limited, step-by-step progress. In contrast, once the soul has entered the body and is able to study the Torah and perform the commandments, it is able to move towards God with quantum leaps. This ability enables the individual to "walk," to truly progress in his relationship with God.<sup>112</sup>

**15-68** All the following curses will pursue you: As we explained with regard to the curses in *parashat Bechukotai*,<sup>113</sup> all these curses are in fact blessings in disguise.

*Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi would himself serve as the reader of the Torah in the public worship services. It happened once that he was not in Liozna, where he lived, on the Sabbath of parashat Tavo, and someone else took his place as reader. When his young son, DovBer, heard the*

<sup>111</sup>. *Gur Aryeh*. <sup>112</sup>. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 4, p. 1132. <sup>113</sup>. See on Leviticus 26:14.

— ONKELOS —

23 ויהו שמיך אשר על ראשך נחשת והארץ אשר תחתיך ברזל: 24 יתן יהוה את מטר ארצה אבק ועפר מן השמים ירד עליך עד השמרך: 25 ותנך יהוה נגף לפני איביך בדרך אחד תצא אליו ובשבעה דרכים תנום לפניו והיית לזעוה לכל ממלכות הארץ: 26 והייתה נבלתך למאכל לכל עוף השמים ולבהמת הארץ ואין מחריד: 27 יככה יהוה בשחין מצרים ובעפלים (ובמחלים) ובנגרב ובחרס אשר לא תוכל להרפא: 28 יככה יהוה בשגעון ובעגרון ובתמהון לבב: 29 והיית ממשש בצהרים פאשר ימשש העור באפלה ולא תצליח את דרכיך והיית אך עשוק וגזול כל הימים ואין מושיע: 30 אשה תארש ואיש אחר ישגלנה (וישכבנה) בית תכנה ולא תשב בו פרם תטע ולא תחללנו: 31 שורך טבות לעיניך ולא תאכל ממנו חמרך גזול מלפניך ולא ישוב לך צאנך נתנות לאיביך ואין לך מושיע:

— RASHI —

פרות, וכן השמים לא יריקו מטר: 24 מטר ארץ אבק ועפר. זיקא דבתר מטרא — מטר יורד ולא כל צרכו, ואין בו כדי להרביץ את העפר, והרוח באה ומעלה את האבק, ומכסה את עשב הירעים שהן לחים מן המים, ונדבק בהם ונעשה טיט ומתיבש, ומרקיבין: 25 לזעוה. לאימה ולזיע, שזועו כל שומעי מכותיה ממך, ויאמרו: אוי לנו שלא יבא עלינו בדרך שבא על אלו: 27 בשחין מצרים. רע היתה מאד, לח מבחוץ ויבש מבפנים, כדאיתא בבכורות: גרב. שחין לח: חרס. שחין יבש בחרס: 28 ובתמהון לבב. אטם הלב, אישטורדישון בלעז: 29 עשוק. בכל מעשיך יהיה ערעור: 30 ישגלנה. לשון "שגל" — פילגש, והכתוב כנהו לשבח — "ישכבנה", ותקון סופרים הוא זה: תחללנו. בשנה הרביעית, לאכל פרוי.

23 והיו שמיך אשר על ראשך נחשת. קללות הללו משה מפי עצמו אמרן, ושבהר סיני מפי הקדוש ברוך הוא אמרן כמשמען, וכן נאמר: "ואם לא תשמעו לי, ואם תלכו עמי קרי". וכאן הוא אומר: "לקול ה' אלהיך", "ידבק ה' בך", "יככה ה'", הקל משה בקללותיו לאמרן בלשון יחיד. וגם פן בקללה זו הקל, שבראשונות הוא אומר: "את שמיכם כפרזל ואת ארצכם כנחשת" — שלא יהיו השמים מזיעין בדרך שאין הכרזל מזיע, ומתוך כך יהא חרב בעולם, והארץ תהא מזיעה בדרך שהנחשת מזיע, והיא מרקבת פרותיה. וכאן הוא אומר: שמיך נחשת וארץך ברזל — שיהיו שמים מזיעין, אף על פי שלא יריקו מטר, מפל מקום לא יהיה חרב של אבדון בעולם, והארץ לא תהיה מזיעה בדרך שאין הכרזל מזיע ואין הפרות מרקיבין. ומפל מקום קללה היא, בין שהיא כנחשת בין שהיא ככרזל, לא תוציא

29. ויקרא כו, יד-כא. 30. פסוק טו. 31. פסוק כא. 32. פסוק כב. 33. ויקרא כו, יט. 34. מא, א. 35. עלפון, הלם, מבוכה.

23 As you recall, among God's curses at Mount Sinai was His threat to 'make your skies (dry) like iron (which does not sweat, so there will be no rain to water new crops) and your land (moist) like copper (which does sweat, so any existing produce will rot).'<sup>114</sup> In contrast, my curse to you is that [23] **your skies above you will be moist like copper**, so even though they will only be moist but not dripping wet with rain, and thus you will not be able to grow all the food you need, there will at least be some moisture for crops; [24] **and the earth below you will be dry like iron**, so at least it will not rot the produce.

24 [25] **God will turn the rain of your land into a cause of dust and mud:** not being sufficient to grow any crops, as just stated, it will also not be sufficient to weigh down the soil, so the wind will blow the wet dust onto the vegetation, encrusting the leaves so they cannot breathe, thus killing the plants. [26] The rain **will rain down upon you from the sky** in this detrimental manner **until you are destroyed** for lack of food.

25 [27] **God will cause you to be beaten by your enemy: you will attack them from one direction, but they will overcome you and terrify you so much that you will flee from them, dispersing in seven directions.** [28] **You**, as an example of what can happen to a nation, **will become a source of terror for all the kingdoms on earth.**

26 [29] **Your corpse will be food for all the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth, [30] and no one will frighten them** away from eating your corpse.

27 [31] **God will strike you with the horrible boils of Egypt**, which are wet inside and dry outside; [32] **with hemorrhoids; [33] with oozing boils; [34] and with dry boils, from all of which you will be unable to be healed.**

28 **God will strike you with [35] insanity, [36] blindness, [37] and bewilderment.**

29 [38] **You will grope at midday as the blind man gropes in the dark, [39] and you will be unsuccessful in your undertakings. [40] You will be nothing but constantly contested in whatever you do [41] and robbed, [42] and there will be no one who will rescue you.**

30 [43] **You will betroth a woman, but another man will fornicate with her. [44] You will build a house, but you will not live in it. [45] You will plant a vineyard, but you will not redeem its fourth-year fruits, the first that may be eaten.**<sup>115</sup>

31 [46] **Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes, but you will not eat from it. [47] Your donkey will be robbed from you right in front of you, and it will not return to you. [48] Your flock will be given over to your enemies, [49] and there will be no one who will rescue it for you.**

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— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

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*curses in this parashah, the distress he felt caused him such pain in his heart that on Yom Kippur, a few weeks later, Rabbi Shneur Zalman was still not sure if the boy would be able to fast.*

*When the young DovBer was asked, "You hear this parashah read every year. Why did you become distressed only this time?" he replied, "When my father reads, it doesn't sound like curses."<sup>116</sup>*

<sup>114</sup>. Leviticus 26:19. <sup>115</sup>. Leviticus 19:24-25. <sup>116</sup>. *HaYom Yom*, 17 Elul.

— ONKELOS —

32 בניך ובנתיך מסירין לעמא  
 אחרו ועיניך חזון ויסופן בגללהון  
 כל יומא ולית חילא בידך:  
 33 אבא דארעך וכל לאותך ייכול  
 עם די לא ידעת ותהי ברם עשיק  
 ורעיע כל יומיא: 34 ותהי משתטי  
 מחזו עיניך די תחזי: 35 ימחנך ??  
 בשחנא בישא על רכביא ועל  
 שקיא די לא תכול לאתסאה  
 מפרסת רגלך ועד מוקך: 36 יגלי  
 ?? יתר וית מלכך די תקים עלך  
 לעם די לא ידעת את ואבהתך  
 ותפלח תמן לעממיא פלחי  
 טעותא אעא ואבנא: 37 ותהי  
 לצדו למתל ולשועי בכל עממיא  
 די ידברוך ?? לתמן: 38 בר ירע  
 סגי תפק לחקלא וזער תכנוש ארי  
 יחסלנה גובא: 39 פרמין תצוב  
 ותפלח וחמרא לא תשתי ולא  
 תכנוש ארי תיכלנה תולעתא:  
 40 ויתין יהון לך בכל תחומך  
 ומשחא לא תסוך ארי יתרון ויתך:  
 41 בנין ובני תוליד ולא יהון לך  
 ארי יחבון בשביא: 42 כל אילנך  
 ואבא דארעך יחסנה סקאה:  
 43 תותב ערל די בינך יהי סליק  
 עיל מנך לעלא לעלא ואת תהי  
 נחת לתחתא לתחתא: 44 הוא  
 יזופך ואת לא תזופנה הוא יהי  
 לתקוף ואת תהי לחלש: 45 ויתון  
 עלך כל לוטיא האלין וירדפך  
 וירדפך עד דתשתצי ארי לא  
 קבלתא למימרא די אלהך  
 למשר פקודהי וקמוהי די פקדך:  
 46 ויהון כך לאת ולמופת ובבניך  
 עד עלם:

32 בְּנִיךָ וּבְנֵי־יָדְךָ נִתְּנִים לְעַם אַחֵר וְעֵינֶיךָ רְאוּת וְכָלֹת  
 אֲלֵיהֶם כְּלֵי־הַיּוֹם וְאִין לְאֵל יָדְךָ: 33 פְּרִי אֲדָמְתְּךָ  
 וְכֹל־יְגִיעֶךָ יֹאכֵל עִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יְדַעֶתָ וְהָיִיתָ רֶק עֹשׂוֹק  
 וְרֵצוֹן כְּלֵי־הַיּוֹם: 34 וְהָיִיתָ מְשֻׁעַ מִמְּרֹאֵה עֵינֶיךָ  
 אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה: 35 וְכִכָּה יִהְיֶה בְּשָׁחִין רָע עַל־הַבְּרִיִּים  
 וְעַל־הַשֹּׁקִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִוְכַל לְהַרְפֹּא מִכָּף רִגְלְךָ וְעַד  
 קַדְמֹךָ: 36 יוֹלֵךְ יִהְיֶה אֹתְךָ וְאֶת־מַלְכְּךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּקִּים  
 עֲלֶיךָ אֶל־גּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יְדַעֶתָ אֶתְּךָ וְאֶבְרַתָּ  
 שֵׁם אֱלֹהִים אַחֵרִים עֵץ וְאָבֶן: 37 וְהָיִיתָ לְשִׁמָּה לְמִשָּׁל  
 וְלִשְׁנִינָה בְּכָל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר־יִנְחֶנְךָ יִהְיֶה שְׁמָה: 38 וְרַע  
 רַב תּוֹצִיא הַשָּׂדֶה וּמַעֲט תֵּאֱסֹף כִּי יִחְסְלֶנּוּ הָאֲרָבָה:  
 39 כְּרָמִים תִּטְעַע וְעִבְדָּתָ וְיִזֵּן לֹא־תִשְׁתַּח וְלֹא תֵאֱגַר כִּי  
 תֵאכְלֶנּוּ הַתְּלַעֲת: 40 זֵיתִים יִהְיוּ לְךָ בְּכָל־גְּבוּלְךָ וְשִׁמֹן  
 לֹא תִסּוֹךְ כִּי יִשָּׁל זֵיתְךָ: 41 בְּנִים וּבָנוֹת תִּוְלִיד וְלֹא־  
 יִהְיוּ לְךָ כִּי יִלְכוּ בְּשִׁבִי: 42 כָּל־עֵצֶךָ וּפְרִי אֲדָמְתְּךָ יִירֶשׁ  
 הַצִּלְצַל: 43 הַגֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ יַעֲלֶה עֲלֶיךָ מֵעֵלָה מֵעֵלָה  
 וְאֶתְּךָ תִרְדַּ מִּטָּה מִטָּה: 44 הוּא יִלְוֶךָ וְאֶתְּךָ לֹא תִלְוֶנּוּ  
 הוּא יִהְיֶה לְרֹאשׁ וְאֶתְּךָ תִּהְיֶה לְזָנָב: 45 וּכְאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל־  
 הַקְּלָלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְרַדְפוּךָ וְהִשְׁיִגוּךָ עַד הַשְּׂמֹךְ כִּי־לֹא  
 שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמּוֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו אֲשֶׁר  
 צִוָּךָ: 46 וְהָיוּ בָּךְ לְאוֹת וּלְמוֹפֵת וּבְזִרְעֶךָ עַד־עוֹלָם:

— RASHI —

נקרא "חסיל", שמכלה את הכל: 40 פי ישל. ישיר  
 פרוחיו, לשון "ונשל הברזל": 42 יירש הצלצל.  
 יעשנו הארבה רש מן הפרי: יירש. יעני: הצלצל. מין  
 ארבה. ואי אפשר לפרש "יירש" לשון ירשה, שאם  
 כן הנה לו לכתב "יירש", ולא לשון הורשה וגרושין,  
 שאם כן הנה לו לכתב "יירש":

32 וכלות אליהם. מצפות אליהם שישבו ואינם  
 שבים. כל תוחלת שאינה באה, קרויה "כליון"  
 עינים: 37 לשמה. אישטורדישוין, כל הרואה  
 אותך ישום עליך: למשל. כשתבא מכה רעה על  
 אדם, יאמרו: זו דומה למכת פלוני: ולשנינה. לשון  
 "ישננתם", ידברו בך. וכן תרגומו: "ולשועי", לשון  
 ספור "ואשתעו": 38 יחסלנו. יכלנו, ועל שם כך

36. עלפון, הלם, מבוכה. 37. דברים ו, 38. דברים יט, ה.

32 [50] **Your sons and daughters will be given over to another people as your own eyes see it happen; you will long for them all day long, but be powerless to do anything about it.**

33 [51] **A people unknown to you will eat up the fruit of your soil and the result of all your toil. [52] You will be nothing but constantly contested in whatever you do, and crushed.**

34 [53] **You will go insane from the vision that you will behold before your eyes.**

35 [54] **GOD will strike you on the knees and on the legs with a terrible skin eruption, from which you will be unable to be healed; it will eventually cover your entire body, from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.**

36 [55] **GOD will lead you and your king, whom you will have appointed over yourself, to a nation unknown to you or your fathers; [56] there, as exiled slaves, you will serve idol-worshipping masters, so it will be as if<sup>117</sup> you yourselves will serve other deities made of wood and stone.**

37 [57] **You will become an object of astonishment, [58] an archetype of extraordinary misfortune, [59] and a topic of discussion among all the peoples to whose lands GOD will lead you.**

38 [60] **You will take out a great deal of seed to sow in the field, yet you will gather in little produce, for the locusts will finish it off.**

39 [61] **You will plant vineyards and work them, but you will neither drink their wine nor gather their grapes, for the worms will devour them.**

40 [62] **You will have olive trees throughout all your boundaries, but you will not anoint yourself with their oil, for your olive tree will drop all its fruit before it ripens.**

41 [63] **You will bear sons and daughters, but they will not remain yours, for they will go into captivity.**

42 [64] **The locust will make all your trees and all the fruit of your soil barren.**

43 [65] **The resident alien who lives among you will rise higher and higher in wealth and stature above you, while you descend lower and lower.**

44 [66] **He will lend to you, but you will not lend to him. [67] He will be at the head, while you will be at the tail.**

45 **All these curses will befall you, pursuing you and overtaking you until they destroy you, because you did not obey GOD, your God, neglecting to safeguard His commandments and rules concerning which He commanded you, by studying the Torah's instructions regarding how to properly perform them.**

46 **These curses will serve as a sign and a marvel for you and your descendants forever.**

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117. Above, 4:28; Rashi *ad loc.*

ONKELOS

47 חלף די לא פלחת קדם יי אלהך בחדוא ובשפירות לבא מסגי כלא: 48 ותפלח ית בעלי דבבך די יגרוה יי בך בכפנא ובצחוקא ובגרטילותא ובחסירות כלא ויתן ניר פרזלא על צורך עד די שצי יתה: 49 יתי יי עלך עם מרחיק מספי ארעא כמא די משתדי נשרא עמא די לא תשמע לשנה: 50 עם תקיף אפין די לא יסב אפין לסבא ועל ינקא לא מרחם: 51 ויכול ולדא דבעיך ואבא דארעך עד דתשמצי די לא ישאר לך עבורא חמרא ומשחא בקרי תוריך ועדרי ענך עד דיובד יתה: 52 ויעק לך בכל קרויך עד דיקבש שוריך רמיא וכריכיא די את רחיץ לאשתובא בהון בכל ארעך ויעק לך בכל קרויך בכל ארעך די יחב יי אלהך לך: 53 ותיכול ולדא דמעך בשר בניך ובנתיך די יחב לך יי אלהך בצירא ובקתא דיעק לך סנאך: 54 וגברא דרכיך בך ודמפנך לחדא תבאש עינה באחויי ובאתת קימה ובשאר בנודי די ישאר: 55 מלמתן לחד מנהון מבשר בנודי די ייכול מדלא אשתאר לה כלא בצירא ובקתא די יעק לך סנאך בכל קרויך:

47 תחת אשר לא עבדת את יהוה אלהיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרב כל: 48 ועבדת את איביך אשר ישלחנו יהוה בך ברעב ובצמא ובעירם ובחסר כל ונתן על פרזל על צוארך עד השמידו אתך: 49 ישא יהוה עליך גוי מרחק מקצה הארץ כאשר ידאה הנגשר גוי אשר לא תשמע לשנו: 50 גוי עז פנים אשר לא ישא פנים לזקן ונער לא יחן: 51 ואכל פרי בהמתך ופרי אדמתך עד השמדך אשר לא ישאיר לך דגן תירוש ויצהר שגר אלפיה ועשתרת צאנה עד האבדו אתך: 52 והצר לך בכל שערך עד רדת המתיך הנבהות והבצרות אשר אתה ביטח בהן בכל ארצך והצר לך בכל שערך בכל ארצך אשר נתן יהוה אלהיך לך: 53 ואכלת פרי בטנה בשר בניך ובנתיך אשר נתן לך יהוה אלהיך במצור ובמצוק אשר יציק לך איבה: 54 האיש הרך בך והענג מאד תרע עינו באחיו ובאשת חיקו וביתר פניו אשר יותיר: 55 מתת ל לאחד מהם מבשר בניו אשר יאכל מבלי השאיר לו כל במצור ובמצוק אשר יציק לך איבה בכל שערך:

RASHI

פנוק, ו"מהתענג ומרף" מוכיח עליהם ששניהם אחד — אף על פי שהוא מפנק ודעתו קצה בדבר מאוס, ימתק לו לרעבוננו בשר בניו ובנותיו, עד פי תרע עינו בבניו הנותרים מתת לאחד מהם מבשר בניו אחיהם אשר יאכל. דבר אחר: "הרף בך", הרחמני ורף הלכב, מרב רעבתנות ותאכזרו ולא יתנו מבשר בנייהם השחוטים לבניהם הנותרים:

47 מרב כל. בעוד שהיה לך כל טוב: 49 כאשר ידאה הנגשר. פתאום, ודרך מצלחת, ויקלו סוקיו: לא תשמע לשונו. לא תפיר לשונו, וכו'. "תשמע חלום לפתר אתו", וכו': "כי שמע יוסף", אינטינדר"י בלעז: 52 עד רדת המתיך. לשון רדוי וכבוש: 53 ואכלת פרי בטנה בשר בניך וגו' במצור. מחמת שיהיו צרים על העיר, ויהיה שם "מצוק", עקת רעבון: 54 הרף בך והענג. הוא הרף הוא הענג, לשון

39. בראשית מא, טו. 40. בראשית מב, כג. 41. להבין.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

gratified and the Divine attribute of justice is neutralized. Even though we deserve punishment, our

joy in God's service inspires God, so to speak, to overlook this.<sup>120</sup>

120. Likutei Torah 2:20c; Sefer HaMa'amarim 5717, pp. 131-132.



**47 Since you did not serve God, your God, with joy and with heartfelt gladness when you had an abundance of everything—**

**48 [68] you will instead serve your enemies, whom God will send against you, when you are [69] in hunger, [70] thirst, [71] nakedness, [72] and lacking everything. [73] Your enemy will place an iron yoke upon your neck, working you until he has destroyed you.**

**49 [74] God will bring upon you a nation from afar, from the end of the earth, who will conquer you unexpectedly, successfully, and quickly, the way the eagle swoops down upon its prey. It will be a nation whose language you will not understand,**

**50 a brazen nation who neither respects the elderly nor shows favor to the young.**

**51 [75] They will devour your animals, the fruit of your livestock, [76] and your produce, the fruit of your soil, [77] until they destroy you through starvation. [78] They will be a nation who will not leave you any grain, wine, oil, the offspring of your cattle, or the choice of your flocks, until they annihilate you through starvation.**

**52 [79] They will besiege you in all your cities, until your high and fortified walls in which you trust are overcome throughout all your land. They will besiege you in all your cities of the land that God, your God, has given you.**

**53 [80] You will eat your children, the fruit of your womb, the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom God, your God, gave you, on account of the siege and the oppression of famine to which your enemies will subject you.**

**54 The most tender and delicate man among you, who would ordinarily be revolted at the thought of eating human flesh, will be so famished that he will relish the taste of the flesh of his own children, and will therefore begrudge his own brother, the wife of his embrace, and the rest of his children who will remain,**

**55 of giving any one of them any of the flesh of his children that he is eating, because nothing will remain for him, on account of the siege and the oppression of famine to which your enemies will subject you in all your cities.** Even if his hunger does not derange him to the point that he enjoys the taste of his children's flesh, it will nevertheless make him so cruel that he will not want to share his children's flesh with his wife and remaining children.

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

**47-48 When you had an abundance of everything:** Because we did not serve God in joy when we had "an abundance of everything," He sent us into exile, forcing us to serve our enemies in poverty.

The implication here is that we had indeed been serving God, but not with joy, and for this reason we were sent into exile.<sup>118</sup> But if this is so, why such

dire punishment for merely lacking joy?

The answer is that even someone committed to serving God cannot escape committing at least minor sins, as it is written, "there is no one on earth so righteous that he [always] does good and never sins."<sup>119</sup> But if we serve God with joy, indicating that we are happy about being God's servants, God is

<sup>118</sup> Rashi on this verse; *Mishneh Torah, Lulav* 8:15; *Reishit Chochmah, Sha'ar HaAhavah* 10 (85c); *Tanya*, chapter 26 (33a) (quoting R. Yitzchak Luria); *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*, introduction. <sup>119</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:20.

— ONKELOS —

56 דְּרִיבִיכָא בְּךָ וּדְמִפְנֵיקָא דִּי לֹא נְסִיאת פִּרְסַת רְגֵלָה לֹאחֲתָא עַל אֲרָעָא מִמִּפְנֵיקוּ וּמְרִיבִיכוּ תְּבֹאֵשׁ עֵינָה בְּגִבְרָא קִימָה וּבְבִרְתָּהּ: 57 וּבְזַעַר בְּנֵהָא דִּיפְקֹון מִנָּה וּבְבִנְהָא דִּי תְּלִיד אַרְי תִּיכְלֹנוּן בְּחִסְרוֹת כִּלְא בְּסִתְרָא בְּצִירָא וּבְעֻקְתָּא דִּי יַעַק לֶךְ סְנַאֲךָ בְּקִרְוִיךָ: 58 אִם לֹא תִשֶׁר לְמַעַבְדַּי יֵת כֹּל פִּתְגָמֵי אֹרִיתָא הָדָא דְּכִתְבִין בְּסִפְרָא הָדִין לְמַדְחַל יֵת שְׁמָא יִקְרָא וְדַחֲלֵא הָדִין יֵת יֵת אֲלֵהֶךָ: 59 וַיִּפְרֹשׁ יֵת יֵת מִחֲתָךְ וַיֵּת קִמַּחַת בְּנִיךְ מִחוּן רַבְרָבִין וּמִהִמְנוּן וּמִכְתָּשִׁין בִּישִׁין וּמִדִּימְנוּן: 60 וַיִּתֵּב בְּךָ יֵת כֹּל מִכְתָּשֵׁי מִצְרַיִם דִּי דַחֲלַת מִקְדֻמֵּיהוֹן וַיִּדְבְּקוּן בְּךָ: 61 אִף כֹּל מִרְעָ וְכֹל מִחָא דִּי לֹא כְּתִיבִין בְּסִפְרָא דְּאוּרִיתָא הָדָא יִתְנֹון יֵת עֲלֶךָ עַד דְּתִשְׁתִּיעִי: 62 וְתִשְׁתַּאֲרוּן בְּעַם זַעַר חֲלָף דִּי הוּיִתוּן כְּכֹכְבֵי שְׁמֵיָא לְמִסְגֵי אַרְי לֹא קִבְלַת לְמִימְרָא דִּי אֲלֵהֶךָ: 63 וַיְהִי כִּמְאֵ דַחְדִּי יֵת עֲלִיכוּן לְאוּטְבָא יִתְכוּן וּלְאִסְנָאָה יִתְכוּן כֹּן יִחְדִּי יֵת עֲלִיכוּן לְאוּבְרָא יִתְכוּן וּלְשַׁצָּאָה יִתְכוּן וְתִשְׁלַטְלוּן מִעַל אֲרָעָא דְּאֵת עֲלַל לְתַמְוִן לְמִירְתָּהּ: 64 וַיְבַדְּרֶךָ יֵת בְּכָל עַמְמֵיָא מִסְפִּי אֲרָעָא וְעַד סִיפֵי אֲרָעָא וְתִפְלַח תַּמְוִן לְעַמְמֵיָא פְּלַחֵי טַעֲוִתָא דִּי לֹא יִדְעַת אֵת וְאַבְהִתְךָ אֲעָא וְאַבְנָא: 65 וּבְעַמְמֵיָא הָאֲנוּן לֹא תִנּוּן וְלֹא יֵהָא מִנַּח לְפִרְסַת רְגֵלָךְ וַיִּתֵּן יֵת לֶךְ תַּמְוִן לֵב דַּחֲלֵי וְחֻשְׁתָּ עֵינִין וּמִפְּחַת נָפֶשׁ:

56 הַרְפֵּה בְךָ וְהִעַנְנָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נִסְתָּה כִּפְרִי־רֵגְלָהּ הַצֵּג עַל־הָאָרֶץ מִהִתְעַנֵּן וּמִרְךָ תִּרַע עֵינָה בְּאִישׁ חִיקָהּ וּבְבִנְיָהּ וּבְבִתָּהּ: 57 וּבְשִׁלְיֹתָהּ הַיּוֹצֵאת | מִבֵּין רְגְלֶיהָ וּבְבִנְיָהּ אֲשֶׁר תִּלְדַּת בֵּי־תֵאֵכֶלֶם בְּחִסְר־כָּל בְּסִתֵּר בְּמִצּוֹר וּבְמִצּוֹק אֲשֶׁר יֵצִיק לָךְ אִיבְךָ בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ: 58 אִם־לֹא תִשְׁמְרֵם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת הַכְּתוּבִים בְּסֵפֶר הַזֶּה לְיִרְאָה אֶת־ה'שֵׁם הַנִּכְבֵּד וְהַנּוֹרָא הַזֶּה אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: 59 וְהִפְלֵא יְהוָה אֶת־מִכְתָּבְךָ וְאֵת מִכּוֹת זְרַעְךָ מִכּוֹת גְּדֹלַת וּנְאֻמָּנוֹת וְחָלִים רָעִים וּנְאֻמָּנִים: 60 וְהִשִּׁיב בְּךָ אֵת כָּל־מְדוּנָה מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יָנְרַת מִפְּנֵיהֶם וּדְבַקוּ בְּךָ: 61 גַּם כָּל־חֲלִי וְכָל־מַכָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא כְּתוּב בְּסֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת יַעֲלֶם יְהוָה עֲלֶיךָ עַד הַשְּׂמֹדֶךָ: 62 וְנִשְׁאֲרֹתֶם בְּמַתִּי מַעֲטַת תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר הֵייתֶם כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לָרֹב כִּי־לֹא שְׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: 63 וְהָיָה כִּבְאֲשֶׁר־שֵׁשׁ יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם לְהִיטִיב אֶתְכֶם וּלְהַרְבּוֹת אֶתְכֶם כֹּן יִשִּׁישׁ יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם לְהַאֲבִיד אֶתְכֶם וּלְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם וּנְסַחְתֶּם מִעַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־אֵתָהּ בְּא־שְׁמָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: 64 וְהִפְעִיעַךְ יְהוָה בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ וְעַד־קְצֵה הָאָרֶץ וְעַבְדְּתָ שָׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִדְעַת אֵתָהּ וְאַבְתִּיד עֵין וְאַבְוִן: 65 וּבְנוֹגִים הָהֵם לֹא תִרְגִּיעַ וְלֹא־יְהִיָּה מְנוּחַ לְכִפְר־רְגְלְךָ וְנָתַן יְהוָה לָךְ שָׁם לֵב רָגִז וּכְלִיזוֹן עֵינַיִם וְדֹאבוֹן נַפְשׁ:

— RASHI —

שֶׁלֹא יָבוֹאוּ גַם עֲלֵיהֶם. תִּדַע, שֶׁכֵּן כְּתוּב: "אִם שְׂמוּעַ תִּשְׁמַע וְגו' כֹּל הַמְּחַלָּה אֲשֶׁר שְׂמַתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא אֲשִׁים עֲלֵיךְ", אִינוּ מְרַאֲיוֹן אֵת הָאָדָם אֲלֹא בְּדָבָר שֶׁהוּא יְגוּר מִמּוֹנוֹ: 61 יַעֲלֵם. לְשׁוֹן עֲלָיָהּ: 62 וְנִשְׁאֲרֹתֶם בְּמַתִּי מַעֲטַת תַּחַת וְגו'. מוֹעֲטִין חֲלוּף מְרַבִּין: 63 כֹּן יִשִּׁישׁ ה'. אֵת אוֹיְבֵיכֶם "עֲלֵיכֶם לְהַאֲבִיד" וְגו': וְנִסְחָתֶם. לְשׁוֹן עֲקִירָה, וְכֹן: "בֵּית

56 תִּרַע עֵינָה בְּאִישׁ חִיקָהּ וּבְבִנְיָהּ וּבְבִתָּהּ. הַגְּדוּלִים: 57 וּבְשִׁלְיֹתָהּ. בְּנִיָּהּ הַקְּטָנִים. בְּכָלֵן תְּהֵא עֵינָה צָרָה כְּשִׁתְּאֵכֵל אֵת הָאָחִי, מִלְּתֵן לְאֲשֶׁר אֲצַלָּה מִן הַבֶּשֶׂר: 59 וְהִפְלֵא ה' אֵת מִכּוֹתֶךָ. מִפְּלֵאוֹת וּמִבְּדִלוֹת מִשְׁאֵר מִכּוֹת: וְנְאֻמָּנוֹת. לְיִסְרָךְ לְקִנִּים שְׁלִיחוֹתֶם: 60 אֲשֶׁר יָנְרַת מִפְּנֵיהֶם. מִפְּנֵי הַמִּכּוֹת. כְּשֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל רוֹאִים מִכּוֹת מְשֻׁנוֹת הַבָּאוֹת עַל מִצְרַיִם, הָיוּ יִרְאִים מִהֶם

42. שמות טו, כו. 43. משלי טו, כה.

56 Similarly, the most tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set her foot upon the ground out of delicateness and tenderness, will begrudge the husband of her embrace, her own grown son and grown daughter, 57 the newborn infants who emerge from between her legs, and her own small children whom she will bear, for out of utter destitution she will eat some of them in secret, hiding them from the others who are left, on account of the siege and the oppression of famine to which your enemies will subject you in your cities.

58 If you do not safeguard God's commandments by studying the Torah's instructions regarding how to fulfill all the words of this Torah, which are written in this scroll, thereby learning how to revere this glorious and awesome Name, i.e., that of God, your God,

59 then [81] God will intensify the plagues that He will bring upon you and upon your offspring beyond other plagues, afflicting you with worse, terrible, unyielding plagues [82] and evil, unyielding sicknesses.

60 [83] He will bring back upon you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded when you were in Egypt,<sup>121</sup> and they will cling to you.

61 [84] In addition, God will bring upon you every disease and plague that is not written in the scroll of this Torah—that is, in this frightening section of curses<sup>122</sup>—in order to destroy you.

62 [85] You will remain few in number instead of being how you once were—as numerous as the stars of the heavens—because you did not obey God, your God.

63 [86] Just as God rejoiced over you to do good for you and to increase you, so will God make your enemies rejoice over you as they proceed to annihilate you and destroy you. [87] You will be uprooted from the land that you are entering in order to possess.

64 [88] God will scatter you among all the nations, from one end of the earth to the other, and there [89] you will serve these nations, who serve other deities that were unknown to you or your forefathers—deities of wood and stone—by paying tribute and poll taxes to pagan priests.

65 [90] You will find no respite among those nations, [91] nor will your foot find any rest. [92] There, God will give you a frightened, trembling heart, [93] dashed hopes, [94] and a depressed soul.

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RASHI

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בְּתַרְגּוּמוֹ: "דָּחַל", כְּמוֹ<sup>45</sup>: "שָׂאוֹל מִתַּחַת רַגְזָה לָךְ".  
"שָׂמְעוּ עַמִּים יִרְגְּזוּ"<sup>46</sup>. "מוֹסְדוֹת הַשְּׂמִים יִרְגְּזוּ"<sup>47</sup>:  
וּכְלִיזוֹן עֵינַיִם. מִצְפָּה לִישׁוּעָה וְלֹא תָבֵא:

גָּאִים יִסַּח ה'": 64 וְעַבְדְּתֶם שָׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים. בְּתַרְגּוּמוֹ, לֹא עֲבוֹדַת אֱלֹהוֹת מִמֶּשׁ, אֲלֵא מֵעֲלִים מִסּוּ וּגְלָגְלִיּוֹת לְכַמְרֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה: 65 לֹא תִרְגִּיעַ. לֹא תִנוּחַ, כְּמוֹ<sup>44</sup>: "וְזֹאת הַמְרַגְעָה": לֵב רָגֹז. לֵב הָרָר,

<sup>44</sup>. ישעיה כח, יב. <sup>45</sup>. ישעיה יד, ט. <sup>46</sup>. שמות טו, יד. <sup>47</sup>. שמואלב כב, ח.

121. See Exodus 15:26; above, 7:15. 122. Rashi on 29:20, below; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, pp. 108-111.

— ONKELOS —  
 66 ויהוון חזיר תלן לך מקבל ותהי  
 תוה ליליא ויממא ולא תהימין  
 בחזירי: 67 בצפרא תימר מאן  
 יתן רמשא וברמשא תימר מאן  
 יתן צפרא מתוהות לבך די תהי  
 תוה ומחזו עיניך די תהי חזי:  
 68 ויתיבנך ?? למצרים בספינן  
 בארשא די אמרית לך לא תוסף  
 עוד למחזיה ותודבגון תמן  
 לבעלי דבבוכן לעבדין ולאמהן  
 ולית דקני: 69 אלץ פתגמי קימא  
 די פקיד ?? ית משה למגור עם  
 בני ישראל בארשא דמואב בר  
 מקימא די גזר עמהון בחרב:

66 והיו חזיר תלאים לך מנגד ופחדת לילה ויומם  
 ולא תאמין בחזירי: 67 בבקר תאמר מייתן ערב  
 ובערב תאמר מייתן בקר מפחד לבבך אשר תפחד  
 ומפראה עיניך אשר תראה: 68 והשיבך יהוה | מצרים  
 באניות בדרך אשר אמרתי לך לא תסיף עוד לראתה  
 והתמפרתם שם לאיביך לעברים ולשפחות ואין  
 קנה: 69 אלה דברי הברית אשר צוה יהוה את משה לכרת  
 את בני ישראל בארץ מואב מלבד הברית אשר כרת  
 אתם בחרב: פ

— RASHI —

נמכרים להם לעבדים ולשפחות: ואין קנה. פי יגורו  
 עליך הרג וכליון: והתמפרתם. בלעז אי פורוינדרוי"ץ  
 וו"ש<sup>49</sup>. ולא יתכן לפרש "והתמפרתם" בלשון  
 "ונמפרתם" על ידי מוכרים אחרים, מפני שנאמר  
 אחריו: "ואין קונה": 69 לכרת את בני ישראל.  
 שיקבלו עליהם את התורה באלה ובשבועה: מלבד  
 הברית. קללות שבתורת כהנים שנאמרו בסיני:

66 חזיר תלאים לך. על הספק. כל ספק קרוי "תלוי",  
 שמה אמות היום בחרב הבאה עלינו. ורבותינו<sup>48</sup>  
 דרשו: זה הלוקח תבואה מן השוק: ולא תאמין בחזירי.  
 זה הסומך על הפלטר: 67 בבקר תאמר מי יתן ערב.  
 ויהיה הערב של אמש: ובערב תאמר מי יתן בקר. של  
 שחרית. שהצרות מתחזקות תמיד, וכל שעה מרבה  
 קללתה משלפניה: 68 באניות. בספינות בשביה:  
 והתמפרתם שם לאיביך. אתם מבקשים להיות

48. מנחות קג, ב. 49. ותמקרו את עצמכם.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

that it causes transcendent Divine nothingness to  
 "acquire" us as its own.

*Sentencing you to death and annihilation:* Repentance  
 kills our lust for materiality, ultimately leading to  
 the annihilation of our sense of self within our over-  
 whelming awareness of God. This surrender of the  
 self as it willingly allows itself to be rapturously absorbed  
 in its overwhelming consciousness of God can only be  
 achieved against the backdrop of the soul's life in the  
 body, in response to the distance from God that it  
 feels when it is forced to contend with the distractions  
 of God-denying materiality in general and of God-  
 affronting sin in particular. The soul as is exists  
 before it enters the body knows nothing of this  
 intense yearning and pining for release; it is this  
 intensity that makes its journey into life worthwhile,  
 elevating it in the afterlife to level

after level of Divine consciousness infinitely higher  
 than its original station before life in the body.

Because of the advantages acquired only through  
 the repentance occasioned by the descent into the  
 body in general and into forbidden realms in partic-  
 ular, God "forces" us, so to speak, into these realms  
 into which He Himself has forbidden us to venture  
 on our own. We have seen this dynamic at work in  
 the incidents of the Tree of Knowledge<sup>128</sup> and the  
 Golden Calf;<sup>129</sup> this verse expresses this notion with  
 regard to life in general. "God will bring you back  
 to Egypt in slave-ships": The word for "Egypt" (מצ)  
 means "limitations"; thus, this phrase allegorically  
 means that "against your will God will force you  
 into the world of limitations, which will require you  
 to repent."<sup>130</sup>

128. See on Genesis 2:17. 129. See on Exodus 32:6. 130. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, pp. 239-243.

66 [95] **Your life will hang in suspense before you:**<sup>123</sup> you will live in daily fear both for your very life and for your livelihood, for you will be dependent on the availability of food in an unstable market. [96] **You will be afraid night and day,** [97] **and** since you will be dependent on bakeries for bread, which will in turn rely on an unreliable economy, **you will not believe in the reliability of your own life.**

67 Inasmuch as your situation will constantly worsen, **you will say in the morning, 'If only it were yesterday evening!' and you will say in the evening, 'If only it were this morning!' because of the fear in your heart that you will experience over the future and because of the sights that you will behold.**

68 [98] **God will bring you back to Egypt,** which in itself will be traumatic since your worst memories are of your captivity in Egypt, but in addition—for as much of the journey as possible—you will return there as captives **in slave-ships,** in which captives suffer greater subjugation to their captors than they do when transported overland. For the rest of the journey, which cannot be made by sea, you will return overland **via** the route you took leaving Egypt: through the huge and awesome desert filled with snakes, vipers, and scorpions, plagued by drought and devoid of water.<sup>124</sup> This is **the path about which I promised you and said to you, 'You will never see it again'**<sup>125</sup> because you were so traumatized by its memory. **There,** your slavery will be so insufferable that **you will beg your captors to let you offer yourselves for sale to your other enemies as slaves and bondwomen** rather than serve them, in the hope that your other enemies will not treat you as badly as your captors; **but there will be no buyer** among your other enemies, for your original captors will have already sentenced you to death and annihilation."<sup>126</sup>

69 **These are the words that constitute the covenant that God commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in Moab,** in which they accepted their obligation to fulfill His commandments subject to the penalties enumerated in these curses. This covenant was **in addition to the covenant** of blessings and curses **that He made with them at Mount Horeb, i.e., Sinai.**<sup>127</sup>

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— ❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧ —

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68 **God will bring you back to Egypt:** The inner meaning of this curse, according to which it is a blessing, is as follows:

*God will bring you back:* God will inspire you to repent.

*There, you will offer yourselves to sale to your enemies:* "There" refers to the realm outside the realm of holiness. "Your enemies" refers to the elements of creation forbidden to us by the Torah. Someone who has indulged in forbidden acts and then repents thereby elevates the life-force inherent in these forbidden elements of creation. In contrast, someone who never sins can at most elevate the neutral as-

pects of creation, by using them for holy purposes.

*As slaves and bondwomen:* Repentance makes us into God's servants. People who have never sinned relate to God as children do to their parents: they naturally desire to please Him. Those who have sinned, in contrast, have temporarily obscured this natural desire to please, and must consciously submit themselves ("offer themselves for sale") to God's will.

*But there will be no buyer:* This phrase may be read: "nothingness will acquire," implying that repentance reveals such a deep, inner bond with God

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<sup>123</sup> *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, p. 4, note 32. <sup>124</sup> Above, 8:15. <sup>125</sup> See above, 17:16; Exodus 14:13. <sup>126</sup> *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, pp. 235-239. <sup>127</sup> Leviticus 26:3-46. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 17, p. 282, note 33\*.

— ONKELOS —

29:1 וקרא משה לכל ישראל ואמר להון אתון חזיתון ית כל די עבד יי לעיניכם בארעא דמצרים לפרעה ולכל עבדוהי ולכל ארעה: 2 נסי רברביא די חוזה עיניך אתיא ומופתיא רברביא האנו: 3 ולא יתב יי לכוון לבא למדע ועינין למחוי ואדין למשמע עד יומא הדין: 4 ודברית יתכוון ארבעין שנין במדברא לא בליאת כסותכוון מנכוון ומסנך לא עדו מעל רגליך: 5 לחמא לא אכלתון וחמר חדרת ועתיק לא שתיתון בדיל דתדעון ארי אגא יי אלהכוון: 6 ואתיתון לאתרא הדין ונפק סיוחן מלכא דחשבון ועוג מלכא דמתגן לקדמונתא לאגאחא קרבא ומחנינון: 7 ונסיבנא ית ארעהון ויהבנה לאחסנא לשבטא דראובן ולשבטא דגד ולפלגות שבטא דמנשה: 8 ותשרון ית פתגמי קמא הדין ותעבדון יתהון בדיל דתצלחון ית כל די תעבדון:

◆ שביעי 29:1 ויקרא משה אל-כל-ישראל ויאמר אלהם אתם ראיתם את כל-אשר עשה יהוה לעיניכם בארץ מצרים לפרעה ולכל-עבדיו ולכל-ארצו: 2 המסות הגדלת אשר ראו עיניך האתת והמפתים הגדלים ההם: 3 ולא-נתן יהוה לכם לב לדעת ועינים לראות ואזנים לשמע עד היום הזה: 4 ואולך אתכם ארבעים שנה במדבר לא-בלו שלמתיכם מעליכם ונעלך לא-בלתה מעל רגליך: 5 לחם לא אכלתם ויין ושכר לא שתייתם למען תדעו כי אני יהוה אלהיכם:

◆ מפטיר 6 ותבאו אל-המקום הזה ויצא סיוחן מלך-חשבון ועוג מלך-הבשן לקראתנו למלחמה ונבם: 7 ונקח את-ארצם ונתנה לנחלה לראובני ולגדי ולחצי שבט המנשי: 8 ושמרתם את-דברי הברית הזאת ועשיתם אתם למען תשכילו את כל-אשר תעשון:

קכ"ב פסוקים. לעברדי"ו סימן.

— RASHI —

במקום: 6 ותבאו אל המקום הזה. עתה אתם רואים עצמכם בגדלה וכבוד, אל תבעטו במקום, ואל ירום לבבכם, ושמרתם את דברי הברית הזאת. דבר אחר: "ולא נתן ה' לכם לב לדעת" — שאין אדם עומד על סוף דעתו של רבו וחקמת משנתו עד ארבעים שנה, ולפיכך לא הקפיד עליכם המקום עד היום הזה, אבל מכאן ואילך יקפיד, ולפיכך — "ושמרתם את דברי הברית הזאת" וגו':

חסלת פרשת כי תבוא

3 ולא נתן ה' לכם לב לדעת. להכיר את חסדי הקדוש ברוך הוא, ולדבק בו: עד היום הזה. שמעתי שאותו היום שנתן משה ספר התורה לבני לוי, כמו שכתוב: "ויתנה אל הכהנים בני לוי", באו כל ישראל לפני משה ואמרו לו: משה רבנו! אף אנו עמדנו בסיני וקבלנו את התורה ונתנה לנו, ומה אתה משליט את בני שבטך עליה, ויאמרו לנו יום מקר: לא לכם נתנה, לנו נתנה. ושמח משה על הדבר, ועל זאת אמר להם: "היום הנה נהיית לעם" וגו' — היום הנה הבנתי שאתם דבקים וחפצים

50. דברים לא, ט. 51. דברים כו, ט.

## INNER DIMENSIONS

[3] A heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear: These three aspects of perception correspond to the three components of the intellect, derived from the first three *sefirot*:

"A heart to know" refers to *da'at* ("know-

ledge") "Eyes to see" refers to *chochmah* ("insight" or "wisdom"), as echoed in the sages' statement: "Who is wise [i.e., possesses *chochmah*]? He who sees what is to come."<sup>133</sup>

"Ears to hear" refers to *binah* [continued...]

## Reassurances

- ◆ **Seventh Reading 29:1** After the people heard Moses' 98 curses and recalled the 48 curses God had threatened them with earlier,<sup>131</sup> they became frightened, doubting if they could endure such suffering. **Moses** therefore **summoned all of Israel** in order to reassure them of God's love for them, **and said to them,**<sup>132</sup> **"You have seen before your very eyes all that God did in Egypt, to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to his entire land:**

**2 the great trials that you saw with your own eyes and those great signs and marvels.** You have indeed appreciated these miracles, and they have taught you to believe in God's omnipotence and to respect His word.

**3** But this is not enough. You must also learn to appreciate God's kindnesses. However, **until this day, God did not give you a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear**—that is, with which to appreciate—His great kindnesses, specifically, how—"

**4** and here Moses continued in God's name, **"I led you through the desert for forty years, during which time your garments did not wear out and fall off of you, nor did your shoes wear out and fall off your feet.**

**5** **You neither ate bread nor drank new wine or old wine,** but instead ate the miraculous manna and drank the miraculous water from the well—all this **in order that you would know that I am God, your God."**

- ◆ **Maftir 6** Continuing in his own name, Moses said, **"Furthermore, you came to this place, the territory east of the Jordan River, and King Sichon of Cheshbon and King Og of Bashan came out towards us in battle, but we smote them.**

**7** **We took their land, and we gave it as an inheritance to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to the half-tribe of Manasseh.**

**8** So you see that God truly loves you. In order that you be sufficiently impressed by God's kindness, **you must safeguard the words that constitute this covenant** by studying them diligently, **and fulfill them, in order that you succeed in all you do."**

Moses' words of reassurance continue into the first verse of the next *parashah*: [9] "Look around; you see that, despite having angered God on numerous occasions already, **you are all still standing firm.** Just like **the day,** which is overtaken by the night but overcomes it in turn, you have enjoyed periods of tranquility in the past and so will enjoy more in the future, despite whatever suffering you may endure in between. And it is precisely the dark periods of life that will strengthen

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### ס CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ס

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**8 In order that you succeed:** The word for "that you succeed" in Hebrew (תשכילו) can also be translated as "that you comprehend." This allows us to interpret this verse as follows:

*You must safeguard the words that constitute this covenant:* This refers to the fulfillment of the Torah's

commandments.

*In order that you comprehend all that you [should] do:* There are many aspects of life in which we struggle to determine how to act in the most spiritually positive fashion. By living in accordance with the Torah's instructions, we become sensitive to the will of

<sup>131</sup> Leviticus 26:3-46. <sup>132</sup> Rashi on v. 12, below; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 262.

as you prepare to enter the land, that you cling to God, for once you embark on a more natural existence, you will be at greater risk of ascribing your achievements to your own prowess instead of God's kindness. This false sense of self-reliance can lead you to eventually rebel against God. You have already begun to confront this challenge: [6] **You came to this place**, the territory east of the Jordan River, **and King Sichon of Cheshbon and King Og of Bashan came out towards us in battle, but we smote them.** [7] **We took their land, and we gave it as an inheritance to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to the half-tribe of Manasseh.** So you may understandably feel somewhat proud of your accomplishments and flattered by the reputation you have made for yourselves among the neighboring nations. Therefore, both in order that you be sufficiently impressed by God's kindnesses that you are inspired to cling to Him out of love and in order that you not become vain, [8] **you must safeguard the words that constitute this covenant** by studying them diligently, **and fulfill them, in order that you succeed in all you do.**

Furthermore, since it is known that it takes 40 years for a student to fully understand his teacher's instruction, God has been lenient with you until now. But now that it is almost 40 years since you received the Torah, God will begin to hold you to the terms of this covenant, so take care to learn the Torah well and follow all its teachings."<sup>137</sup>

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Tavo* is on p. 250.



### INNER DIMENSIONS

[continued...] ("understanding").

The difference between *chochmah* and *binah* is frequently described as the difference between sight and hearing. Sight is a more direct perception, whereas hearing is more indirect. Similarly, *chochmah* is direct, virtually supra-intellectual

insight, whereas *binah* is the intellectual process of analysis, which takes the direct insight of *chochmah* and experiences it indirectly in order to integrate it into the individual's existing mode of thought.<sup>138</sup>

136. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, pp. 99-105. 137. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 34, pp. 164-166. 138. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 8, pp. 337-338, vol. 14, p. 106.



you, enabling you to endure forever.”

### **Clinging to God; Avoiding Conceit**

The final eight verses of this *parashah* also contain Moses' words to the people when he assembled them again on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Adar, which he knew would be the day he would die, for his third, final address, and constitute his introduction to the new covenant with God that he will have them enter:<sup>134</sup> [1] On this day, **Moses summoned all of Israel and said to them, “You have seen before your very eyes all that God did in Egypt, to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to his entire land: [2] the great trials that you saw with your own eyes and those great signs and marvels.** You have indeed appreciated these miracles, and they have taught you to believe in God's omnipotence and to respect His word. But this is not enough. You must also learn to appreciate God's kindnesses so thoroughly that you are inspired to cling to Him out of love. [3] However, **until this day, God did not give you a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear**—that is, with which to appreciate—His great kindnesses, specifically,” (and here Moses continued in God's name) [4] “**how I led you through the desert for forty years, during which time your garments did not wear out and fall off of you, nor did your shoes wear out and fall off your feet.** [5] And how you **neither ate bread nor drank new wine or old wine,** but instead ate the miraculous manna and drank the miraculous water from the well, **in order that you would know that I am God, your God.** Since these miracles occurred repeatedly, they became second nature to you and you began to take them for granted. You have therefore not been inspired to cling to Me out of love.” Continuing in his own name, Moses said, “It is especially important now,

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— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

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God. This, in turn, aids us in comprehending how to act in accordance with God's will in the context of those areas of life not directly governed by specific commandments.<sup>135</sup>

**It takes 40 years:** Clearly, Moses did not mean that it takes us 40 years to understand the import of any specific lesson we have heard from our teacher, for (a) he included the victories over Sichon and Og in the list of miracles he asked us to take to heart, and these occurred only a short time before Moses' address to the people; (b) a full 40 years had not elapsed since the people had heard many of the Torah's teachings, since not all were communicated to them at Mount Sinai—in fact, many of them they had only heard quite recently, as part of Moses' farewell address; (c) in any case, understanding a lesson is a function of each student's individual abilities and the effort he or she invests in studying.

Rather, Moses meant that it takes time for the student to internalize the teacher's methodology and analytical approach to knowledge. Only after observing how the teacher tackles subject after subject, challenge after challenge, will the teacher's methods crystallize into a coherent methodology in the student's mind. Once the student has grasped and acquired the teacher's thinking process, he or she will be able to apply it to any new subject matter that presents itself.

Thus, Moses here meant that now that 40 years had elapsed since the people had first been exposed to the Torah and the worldview it ensconces, and they had had the opportunity to observe God's ways for all these intervening years, they were now “mature” enough to be expected to live their lives in full accordance with the Torah's intentions and to be held responsible for their actions.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134.</sup> *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, pp. 259-260. <sup>135.</sup> *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, p. 106.





*Dedicated in honor of our children*

**Nathan, Yitzchok,  
Moshe Lev,  
and Gilana**

*May you continue to grow in the ways  
of our holy Torah*

**Yuri and Deana Pikover**

