



# חומש דברים

# THE TORAH

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

***The Lubavitcher Rebbe***

***Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson***

וצוקללה"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 וְהָיָה כִּי־תָבֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ נַחֲלָה וִירֶשְׁתָּהּ וַיִּשְׁבַּת בָּהּ: 2 וְלָקַחְתָּ מֵרֵאשִׁית אֶבֶר מֵאֶרֶץ דִּי תַעֲלֵ מֵאֶרֶץ דִּי אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִהְיֶה וְהָיָה נָתַן לָךְ וַיִּשְׁבַּת בְּטָנָא וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁכְנֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם:

RASHI

יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֶף כָּאֵן שְׁבַח אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׁהוּן שְׁבָעָה מִיָּנִין: זֵית שְׁמֹן. זֵית אֲגוּרִי, שְׁשִׁמְנוֹ אֲגוּר בְּתוֹכוֹ: וְדָבַשׁ. הוּא דָּבַשׁ תְּמָרִים: מֵרֵאשִׁית. אֲדָם יוֹרֵד לְתוֹךְ שְׂדֵהוּ וְרוֹאֶה תֵּאֱנָה שְׁבָכָהּ, כּוֹרֵץ עָלֶיהָ גְּמִי לְסִימָן, וְאוֹמֵר: הֲרִי זֶה בְּכוֹרִים:

1 וְהָיָה כִּי תָבֹא וגו' וִירֶשְׁתָּהּ וַיִּשְׁבַּת בָּהּ. מְגִיד שֶׁלֹּא נִתְחַיְבוּ בְּבִכּוּרִים עַד שֶׁכָּבְשׁוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְחִלְקוּהָ: 2 מֵרֵאשִׁית. וְלֹא כָּל רֵאשִׁית, שְׁאִין כָּל הַפְּרוֹת חַיִּבִּין בְּבִכּוּרִים אֲלָא שְׁבַעַת הַמִּיָּנִין בְּלֶבֶד, נֶאֱמַר כָּאֵן: "אֶרֶץ", וְנֶאֱמַר לְהִלֹךְ: "אֶרֶץ חֹטָה וְשֹׁעֲרָה" וגו', מֵה לְהִלֵּךְ מִשְׁבַּעַת הַמִּיָּנִין שֶׁנִּשְׁתַּבַּח בָּהֶן אֶרֶץ

1. דברים ח, ט.

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 spiritual 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 "location" on the rung of spirituality. But in the course of fulfilling its mission in the physical world, it acquires 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 בְּהֵנָּה דִּי יְהִי בְיוֹמָא  
הַגָּדוֹל וְתִימֵר לֵה תִיתִי יוֹמָא דִּין  
קָדָם יִי אֱלֹהֵךְ אָרִי עֲלִית לְאָרְעָא  
דִּי קָיִים יִי לְאַבְהֵתָנָא לְמִתָּן  
לָנָא: 4 וְיִסֵּב בְּהֵנָּה סִלָּא מִיֶּדֶךְ  
וְיִחַתְנָה קָדָם מִדְּבָחָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵי:  
5 וְתִתִּיב וְתִימֵר קָדָם יִי אֱלֹהֵךְ  
לָכֵן אֲרַמָּאָה בְּעָא לְאוֹבְדָא יִת  
אָבָא וְנַחַת לְמַצְרִים וְדָר תִּמָּן בְּעָם  
זְעִיר וְדָהָה תִּמָּן לְעָם רַב תִּקְוִי  
וְסָגִי: 6 וְאַבְאִישׁוּ לָנָא מִצְרָאִי  
וְעִנְיֹנָא וְיִהְיֹב עֲלָנָא פִּלְחָנָא  
קִשְׂיָא: 7 וְצִלְיָנָא קָדָם יִי אֱלֹהֵהָ  
דְּאַבְהֵתָנָא וְקַבֵּל יִי צְלוֹתָנָא  
וְגָלִי קְדֻמוֹהִי עֲמֻלָּא וְלֹאוֹתָנָא  
וְדִוְחָקָנָא: 8 וְאַפְקָנָא יִי מִמַּצְרִים  
בִּידָא תִּקְיָא וּבְדָרְעָא מִרְמָמָא  
וּבְחֻזָּנָא רַבָּא וּבְאֵתִין וּבְמוֹפְתִין:

3 וּבֹאֵת אֶל־הַכְּהֹן אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וְאָמְרָת אֵלָיו  
הִגְדַּתִּי הַיּוֹם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי־בֹאֲתִי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר  
נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְתֵּינוּ לָתֵת לָנוּ: 4 וְלָקַח הַכְּהֹן הַטָּמֵא  
מִיָּדְךָ וְהִנִּיחוֹ לִפְנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: 5 וְעָנִיתָ וְאָמְרָתָ  
לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲרָמִי אֲבִד אָבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרָיִמָּה וַיִּגְר  
שָׁם בְּמִתֵּי מַעֲט וַיְהִי־שָׁם לִגְוִי גָדוֹל עַצּוֹם וְרַב: 6 וַיִּרְעוּ  
אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרָיִם וַיַּעֲנֹנוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה: 7 וַנִּצְעֵק  
אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קִלְלָנוּ וַיֵּרָא  
אֶת־עֲנָנּוֹ וְאֶת־עֲמֻלָּנוּ וְאֶת־לִחְצָנוּ: 8 וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְהוָה  
מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיָד חֲזָקָה וּבִזְרֹעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְכֹמָא גָדֹל וּבְאֹתוֹת  
וּבְמִפְתִּים:

RASHI

— לָכֵן בִּקֵּשׁ לַעֲקֹר אֶת הַכֹּל בְּשִׂרְדָּף אַחֵר יַעֲקֹב, וּבִשְׁבִיל שִׁחָשֵׁב לַעֲשׂוֹת חֹשֶׁב לֹא הַמְקוֹם בָּאֵלֹו עֲשָׂה, שְׁאֵמוֹת הָעוֹלָם חוֹשֵׁב לָהֶם הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מִחֲשָׁבָה [רַעְיָה] כְּמַעֲשֵׂה: וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרָיִמָּה. וְעוֹד אַחֲרִים בָּאוּ עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתָנוּ, שְׁאֲחָרֵי זֹאת יָרַד יַעֲקֹב לְמִצְרַיִם: בְּמִתֵּי מַעֲט. בְּשַׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ:

3 אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם. אֵין לָהּ אֵלָא כְּהֹן שְׂכִימִיךָ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא: וְאָמְרָת אֵלָיו. שְׁאֵינְךָ כְּפוּי טוֹבָה: הִגְדַּתִּי הַיּוֹם. פַּעַם אַחַת בְּשָׁנָה, וְלֹא שְׁתֵּי פַעַמִּים: 4 וְלָקַח הַכְּהֹן הַטָּמֵא מִיָּדְךָ. לְהִנִּיף אוֹתוֹ, כְּהֹן מִנִּיחַ יָדוֹ תַּחַת יָד הַבְּעָלִים וּמִנִּיף: 5 וְעָנִיתָ. לְשׁוֹן הִרְמַת קוֹל: אֲרָמִי אֲבִד אָבִי. מִזְכִּיר חֲסִידֵי הַמְקוֹם: "אֲרָמִי אֲבִד אָבִי"

### 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 Tevienah*. 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 איתיתי ית  
ריש אבא דארעא דיהבת לי יי  
ותצנענה קדם יי אלהך ותסגוד  
קדם יי אלהך: 11 ותחדי בכל  
טבתא די יהב לך יי אלהך ולאנש  
ביתך את ולואה וגיורא די בינך:  
12 ארי תשצי לעשרא ית כל  
מעשר עללתך בשתא תליתא  
שנת מעשרא ותמן ללואה  
לגיורא ליתמא ולארמלתא  
וייכלון בקרויך וישבעו:

9 ויבאנו אל 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 ושמת  
בכל השוב אשר נתן לך יהוה אלהיך ולביתך אתה  
והלוי והגר אשר בקרבך: 12

שני 12 כי תכלה לעשר את כל מעשר תבואתך  
בשנה השלישית שנת המעשר ונתתה ללוי לגר ליתום  
ולאלמנה ואכלו בשעריך ושבעו:

RASHI

השלישית — רגל שהמעשרות כלין בו, וזהו פסח,  
שהרבה אילנות יש שנלקטין 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 שלפניה, ששנה  
ראשונה של שמיטה 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 ושבעו.** 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 השוב. מכאן אמרו: אין קורין מקרא  
בבורים אלא בזמן שמחה, מעצרת ועד החג, שאדם  
מלקט תבואתו ופרותיו ויינו ושמןו. אבל מהחג  
ואילך, מביא ואינו קורא: **אתה והלוי.** אף הלוי חיב  
בבורים, 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.

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**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 your 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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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 וְתִמְרָא קָדָם יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ פְּלִיטִי קָדָשׁ מַעֲשֵׂא מִן בֵּיתָא וְאִתְּיָהֲבָתָה לְלִוְיָא וְלִגְיֻרָא לְיִתְמָא וְלֵאמֹר מִלְּפָנֶיךָ דִּי פְּקֻדָּתִי לֹא עֲבִירְתָּ מִפְּקֻדֶּיךָ וְלֹא אֶתְנִשִּׁיתִי: 14 לֹא אֶבְלִית בְּאֶבְלֵי מִנְהָ וְלֹא פְלִיתִי מִנְהָ בְּדַמְסָאָב וְלֹא יִהְיִית מִנְהָ לְמִית קְבִלִית לְמִמְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵי עֲבָדִית כְּכֹל דִּי פְּקֻדָּתִי: 15 אִסְתָּכִי מִמְדֹּר קְדֻשָּׁא מִן שְׁמַיָא וּבִרְךָ יְיָ עַמְּךָ יִתְיַשְׂרָאֵל וְיִתְּ אַרְעָא דִּי יִהְיֶה לְנָא כְּמָא דִּי קִימַת לְאַבְהֶתְנָא אַרְעָא עֲבָדָא חֵלֶב וְדָבָשׁ:

13 וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּעֶרְתִּי הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִן־הַבַּיִת וְגַם נִתְּתִיו לְלֵוִי וְלִגְרֹ לִיתָם וְלֹא־לְמִנְהָ כָּכֹל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִנִי לֹא־עֲבַרְתִּי מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ וְלֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי: 14 לֹא־אֶבְלִיתִי בְּאֶנִּי מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא־בְעֶרְתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ בְּטִמְאָה וְלֹא־נִתְּתִי מִמֶּנּוּ לְמִית שְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי עֲשִׂיתִי כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִנִי: 15 הִשְׁקִיפָה מִמַּעַן קֹדֶשְׁךָ מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבִרְךָ אֶת־עַמְּךָ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לָנוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתֵּינוּ אֶרֶץ זָבֶת חֵלֶב וְדָבָשׁ:

RASHI

מִכָּאן שְׁאִסּוּר לֹאֲוֹנִן: וְלֹא בְעֶרְתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ בְּטִמְאָה. בֵּין שְׁאֲנִי טִמָּא וְהוּא טְהוֹר, בֵּין שְׁאֲנִי טְהוֹר וְהוּא טִמָּא. וְהִכֵּן הִזְהָר עַל כָּךְ? "לֹא תוּכַל לֶאֱכֹל בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ" — זֶה אֲכִילַת טִמְאָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁנֵאמַר בְּפִסּוּלֵי הַמִּקְדָּשִׁים: "בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ תֹאכְלוּ, הַטִּמָּא וְהַטְהוֹר" וְגו', אֲבָל זֶה "לֹא תוּכַל לֶאֱכֹל" דֶּרֶךְ אֲכִילַת "שַׁעְרֶיךָ" הָאֲמֹר בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר: וְלֹא נִתְּתִי מִמֶּנּוּ לְמִית. לְעֲשׂוֹת לוֹ אֲרוֹן וְתַכְרִיכִין: שְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹל ה' אֱלֹהֵי. הִבִּיאֹתִיו לְבֵית הַבְּחִירָה: עֲשִׂיתִי כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִנִי. שְׁמַחְתִּי וְשִׂמְחַתִּי בּוֹ: 15 הִשְׁקִיפָה מִמַּעַן קֹדֶשְׁךָ. עֲשִׂינוּ מַה שְּׁגִזְרְתָּ עֲלֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה אֵתָּה מַה שְּׁעָלֶיךָ לְעֲשׂוֹת, שְׁאִמְרָתִי: "אִם בְּחֻקֹּתַי תֵּלְכוּ וְנִתְּתִי גִשְׁמִיכֶם בְּעֵתָם": אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לָנוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתֵּינוּ. לָתֵת לָנוּ, וְקִימַת — "אֶרֶץ זָבֶת חֵלֶב וְדָבָשׁ":

13 וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ. הַתּוֹדָה שְׁנֵתָה מִעֲשֻׁרוֹתֶיךָ: בְּעֶרְתִּי הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִן הַבַּיִת. זֶה מַעֲשֵׂר שְׁנִי וְנֹסֶע רֶבְעִי, וְלִמְדָךְ שְׁאֵם שֶׁהָא מִעֲשֻׁרוֹתֶיךָ שֶׁל שְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים וְלֹא הָעֵלֶם לִירוּשָׁלַיִם, שְׁצִרְךָ לְהַעֲלוֹתָם עִכְשָׁו: וְגַם נִתְּתִיו לְלֵוִי. זֶה מַעֲשֵׂר רִאשׁוֹן. "וְגַם" — לְרִבּוֹת תְּרוּמָה וּבְכוּרִים: לִגְר לִיתָם וְלֹא־לְמִנְהָ. זֶה מַעֲשֵׂר עֲנִי: כָּכֹל מִצְוֹתֶיךָ. נִתְּתִים כְּסֻדְרָן, וְלֹא הַקְדַּמְתִּי תְּרוּמָה לְבְכוּרִים, וְלֹא מַעֲשֵׂר לְתְּרוּמָה, וְלֹא שְׁנִי לְרִאשׁוֹן. שֶׁהַתְּרוּמָה קְרוּיָה "רִאשִׁית", שְׁהִיא רִאשׁוֹנָה מִשְׁנַעֲשֵׂה דָגָן, וּבְתִיבָה: "מִלֶּאֱתֶיךָ וְדִמְעָךָ לֹא תֵאָחֵר" — לֹא תִשְׁנֶה אֶת הַסֹּדֶר: לֹא עֲבִירְתִּי מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ. לֹא הִפְרַשְׁתִּי מִמֶּיִן עַל שְׁאִינוּ מִינּוּ, וּמִן הַקֹּדֶשׁ עַל הַיֶּשֶׁן: וְלֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי. מִלְּכִרְכֶּךָ עַל הַפְּרִשְׁת מִעֲשֻׁרוֹת: 14 לֹא אֶבְלִיתִי בְּאֶנִּי 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.

— ONKELOS —

16 יומא דין? אלהיך מפקדך  
למעבד ית קמיא האלין וית  
דינא ותטר ותעבד יתוון בכל  
לך ובכל נפשך: 17 ית? חטבת  
יומא דין למחוי לך לאלה ולמחוי  
בארון דתקנן קדמוהי ולמטר  
קדמוהי ופקודוהי ודינוהי ולקבלא  
למימרה: 18 וי? חטבך יומא דין  
למחוי לה לעם חביב כמא די  
מליל לך ולמטר כל פקודוהי:  
19 ולמתנה עלאה על כל עממיא  
די עבד לתשכחא ולשום ולרבו  
ולמחוי 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 מצוה לעשות את-  
החקים האלה ואת-המשפטים ושמרת ועשית אותם  
בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך: 17 את-הזה האמרת היום  
להיות לך לאלהים וללכת בדרךיו ולשמר חקיו  
ומצותיו ומשפטייו ולשמע בקלו: 18 ויהיה האמירה  
היום להיות לו לעם סגלה כאשר דבר-לך ולשמר  
כל-מצותיו: 19 ולתתך עליון על כל-הגוים אשר עשה  
לתהלה ולשם ולתפארת ולחיותך עם-קדש ליהיה  
אלהיך כאשר דבר: פ

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

— RASHI —

לא להם", והוא הפרישה אלין מעמי הארץ "להיות  
לו לעם סגלה". ומצאתי להם עד, והוא לשון  
תפארת, כמו: "ותאמרו כל פעלי און": 18 כאשר  
דבר לך. "והייתם לי סגלה": 19 ולחיותך עם קדש  
וגו' כאשר דבר. "והייתם לי קדשים": 1 שמר את  
כל המצוה. לשון הורה, גרדנ"ט בלעז:

16 היום הזה ה' אלהיך מצוה. 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 הנכר "להיות לך

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

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

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

2 והיה ביום אשר תעברו את הירדן אל הארץ אשר יהיה 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 יהיה 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 ושמחת לפני יהוה אלהיך: 8 וכתבת על האבנים את כל דברי התורה הזאת באר היטב: 9

9 וידבר משה וכהנים 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. בתרגומו: היום הזה נהיית לעם. בכל יום יהיו בעיניך כאלו היום באת עמו בברית:

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 משה 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  
דעיכל ראובן גד ואשר וזבולן דן  
ונפתלי: 14 ויתיבון לואי וימרון  
לכל אנש ישראל קלא רמא:  
15 ליט גברא די יעבד צלם  
ומתכא מרחקא קדם יי עובד ידי  
אמן וישוי בסתר ויתיבון כל  
עמא וימרון אמן: 16 ליט דיכלי  
אבויה ואמה וימר כל עמא אמן:  
17 ליט דישיני תחומא דחברה  
וימר כל עמא אמן:

◆ חמישי 11 ויצו משה את־העם ביום ההוא לאמר:  
12 אלה יעמדו לברך את־העם על־הר גרזים בעברכם  
את־הירדן שמעון ולוי ויהודה ויששכר ויוסף ובנימין:  
13 ואלה יעמדו על־הקללה בחר עיכל ראובן גד ואשר  
וזבולן דן ונפתלי: 14 וענו הלויים ואמרו אל־כל־איש  
ישראל קול רם: ׀  
15 ארור האיש אשר יעשה פסל ומסכה תועבת יהוה  
מעשה ידי חרש ושם בפתר וענו כל־העם ואמרו  
אמן: ׀  
16 ארור מקלה אביו ואמו ואמר כל־העם אמן: ׀  
17 ארור מסיג גבול רעהו ואמר כל־העם אמן: ׀

RASHI

הר עיכל, ופתחו בקללה ואומרים: "ארור האיש  
אשר יעשה פסל" וגו', וכן כלם עד "ארור אשר  
לא יקים": 16 מקלה אביו. מולול, לשון "ונקלה  
אחירך"<sup>83</sup>: 17 מסיג גבול. מחזירו לאחוריו וגונב את  
הקרע, לשון "והסג אחור"<sup>84</sup>:

12 לברך את העם. בדיאתא במסכת סוטה<sup>85</sup>: ששה  
שבטים עלו לראש הר גרזים, וששה לראש הר  
עיכל, והכהנים והלויים והארון למטה באמצע.  
הפכו ליום פניהם כלפי הר גרזים, ופתחו בברכה:  
"ברוך האיש אשר לא יעשה פסל ומסכה" וגו',  
ואלו ואלו עונים: "אמן". חורו 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 לִיט דִּינְטֵעִי עוֹרֵא בְּאַרְחָא וַיִּמָּר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 19 לִיט דִּינְטֵעִי דִּין דִּיר יִתְנָא וְאַרְמְלָתָא וַיִּמָּר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 20 לִיט דִּישְׁכּוּב עִם אֶתָּת אַבּוּדִי אָרִי גְלִי כִנְפָא דְאַבּוּדִי וַיִּמָּר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 21 לִיט דִּישְׁכּוּב עִם כָּל בְּעִירָא וַיִּמָּר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 22 לִיט דִּישְׁכּוּב עִם אֶחָתָה בֵּת אַבּוּדִי אוּ בֵּת אִמָּה וַיִּמָּר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 23 לִיט דִּישְׁכּוּב עִם חֲמוּתָה וַיִּמָּר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 24 לִיט דִּימְחִי לְחִבְרָה בְּסִתְרָא וַיִּמָּר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 25 לִיט דִּמְקַבֵּל שׁוּחָדָא לְמַקְטֵל נַפֶּשׁ דָּם זָכִי וַיִּמָּר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן: 26 לִיט דִּי לֹא יִקִּים יֵת פְּתֻגְמִי אוּרִיתָא הָדָא לְמַעַבְדּוֹ יִתְהוֹן וַיִּמָּר כָּל עַמָּא אָמֵן:

18 אָרוֹר מִשְׁגָּה עוֹר בְּדִרְךָ וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ׀  
19 אָרוֹר מִפְּטָה מִשְׁפָּט גִּר־יָתוֹם וְאִלְמָנָה וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: 20 אָרוֹר שֹׁכֵב עִם־אִשְׁתּוֹ אָבִיו כִּי גִלָּה כְּנָף אָבִיו וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ׀  
21 אָרוֹר שֹׁכֵב עִם־כָּל־בְּהֵמָה וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ׀  
22 אָרוֹר שֹׁכֵב עִם־אֶחָתוֹ בֵּת־אָבִיו אוּ בֵּת־אִמּוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ׀  
23 אָרוֹר שֹׁכֵב עִם־חֲתָנָתּוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ׀  
24 אָרוֹר מִכָּה רַעְהוּ בְּסִתֵּר וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ׀  
25 אָרוֹר לִקְחָ שׁוּחַד לְהַכּוֹת נַפֶּשׁ דָּם נָקִי וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: ׀  
26 אָרוֹר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקִּים אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה־הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: פ

— RASHI —

שְׁמַעוֹן לֹא כָתַב "אָרוֹר", לְפִי שְׁלֹא הָיָה בְּלָבוֹ לְכַרְכוֹ לְפָנָי מוֹתוֹ כְּשֶׁבִרְךְ שָׂאֵר הַשְּׁבָטִים, לְכַף לֹא רָצָה לְקַלְלוֹ: 26 אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִקִּים. כָּאֵן כָּלֵל אֶת כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כְּלָה, וְקִבְלוּהָ עֲלֵיהֶם בְּאֵלָה וּבִשְׁבוּעָה:

18 מִשְׁגָּה עוֹר. הַסּוּמָא בְּדָכָר, וּמִשְׁיָאוֹ עֶצֶה רָעָה: 24 מִכָּה רַעְהוּ בְּסִתֵּר. עַל לְשׁוֹן הָרַע הוּא אוֹמֵר. רִאִיתִי בִּיסוּדוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי מִשָּׁה הִדְרִשֵּׁן: אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר אָרוּרִים יֵשׁ כָּאֵן, כְּנֶגֶד אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר שְׁבָטִים, וּכְנֶגֶד

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 שמוע תשמע בקול יהוה אלהיך לשמו  
לעשות את כל מצותיו אשר אנכי מצוה היום ונתנו  
יהוה אלהיך עליון על כל גווי הארץ: 2 ובאו עליך  
כל הברכות האלה והשיגך כי 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 אביך 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 יקימך  
יהוה לו לעם קדוש באשר נשבע לך כי תשמר את  
מצות יהוה אלהיך והלכת בדרךיו: 10 וראו כל עמי  
הארץ כי שם יהוה נקרא עליך ויראו ממך: 11 והותרך  
יהוה לטובה בפרי בטנך ובפרי בהמתך ובפרי אדמתך  
על האדמה אשר נשבע יהוה לאבותיך לתת לך:

— RASHI —

“טנאך” — דבר לח שאתה מסנן 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 הנבדלים לברות מתפוזרים לכל צד:

4 שגר אלפיד. ולדות בקרך שהבהמה משגרת  
ממעיה: ועשתרות צאנך. כתר גומו. ורבותינו<sup>108</sup>  
אמרו: למה נקרא שמן “עשתרות”? שמעשירות  
את בעליהן, ומחזיקות אותן בעשתרות הללו שהן  
סלעים חזקים: 5 ברוך טנאך. פרותיך. 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 ותוזף לעממין סגיאין ואת  
לא תוזף: 13 ויתנגך יי לתקיף ולא  
לחלש ותהי ברם לעלא ולא תהי  
לתחמא ארי תקבל לפקודיא דיי  
אלהך די אנא מפקדך יומא דין  
למטר ולמעבד: 14 ולא תסטון  
מכל פתגמאי די אנא מפקד יתכון  
יומא דין ימינא ושמאלא למחך  
בתר טעות עממיא למפלחהון:  
15 ויהי אם לא תקבל למימרא  
דיי אלהך למטר למעבד ית כל  
פקודיהי וקיימוהי די אנא מפקדך  
יומא דין ויתון עלך כל לטיא  
האלין וידבקך: 16 לית את  
בקרמא וליט את בחקלא: 17 לית  
סלך ואצותך: 18 לית ולדא דמעך  
ואבא דארעך בקרי תוריד ועדרי  
עך: 19 לית את במעלך וליט  
את במפקך: 20 יגרי יי כך ית  
מארמא וית שגושיא וית מזופיתא  
בכל אושטות ידך די תעבד עד  
דתשצי ועד דתיבד בפריע מן  
קדם בישות עובדיך דשבת  
דחלתי: 21 ידבק יי כך ית מותא  
עד דישצי יתך מעל ארעא די את  
עלל לתמן למירתה: 22 ימתך יי  
בשחפתא ובקדחתא ובדלקתא  
ובחרחורא ובכרפא ובשדפונא  
ובירקוןא וירדפון עד דתיבד:

12 יפתח יהוה אֶת־אוֹצְרוֹ הַטּוֹב אֶת־הַשְּׁמַיִם לַתַּת־  
מִטְר־אַרְצֶךָ בְּעֵתוֹ וּלְבִרְכָּךָ אֶת כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ וְהַלּוֹיֹת  
גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וְאַתָּה לֹא תִזְוֶה: 13 וְנִתְּנָךְ יְהוָה לְרֹאשׁ וְלֹא  
לְזָנָב וְהִיִּיתָ רֶק לְמַעַלָּה וְלֹא תִהְיֶה לְמַטָּה בִּי־תִשְׁמַע  
אֶל־מִצְוֹתַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם לִשְׁמֹר  
וּלַעֲשׂוֹת: 14 וְלֹא תִסּוֹר מִכָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה  
אֲתֶכֶם הַיּוֹם יָמִין וּשְׂמָאוֹל לְלֶכֶת אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים  
לְעִבְדָּם: פ

15 וְהָיָה אִם־לֹא תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לִשְׁמֹר  
לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי וְחִקְתִּיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם  
וּבָאוּ עָלֶיךָ כָּל־הַקְּלָלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְהִשְׁיגוּךָ: 16 אַרְוֹר  
אֲתָה בָּעִיר וְאַרְוֹר אֲתָה בַּשָּׂדֶה: 17 אַרְוֹר מִנְּאֶךְ  
וּמִשְׁאַרְתֶּךָ: 18 אַרְוֹר פְּרִי־בִטְנְךָ וּפְרִי אֲדָמְתְּךָ שָׁגַר  
אֶלְפִיךָ וְעִשְׂתֶּרֶת צִאֲנֶךָ: 19 אַרְוֹר אֲתָה בְּבֹאֶךָ וְאַרְוֹר  
אֲתָה בְּצֵאתְךָ: 20 יִשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת־הַמֶּאֱרָה אֶת־  
הַמְּהוּמָה וְאֶת־הַמַּגְעֵרָת בְּכָל־מִשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה  
עַד הַשְּׁמֹדֶךָ וְעַד־אֲבֹדְךָ מִיָּד מִפְּנֵי רָע מַעַלְלֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר  
עֲזַבְתָּנִי: 21 יִדְבֶּק יְהוָה בְּךָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר עַד כִּלְתּוֹ אֹתְךָ  
מֵעַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־אֲתָה בָּא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: 22 יִכְבֶּה  
יְהוָה בִּשְׂחֻפָּת וּבִקְנִיחַת וּבִדְלָקַת וּבְחִרְחֹל וּבְחֶרֶב  
וּבְשִׁדְפוֹן וּבִירְקוֹן וּרְדִפוֹן עַד אֲבֹדְךָ:

RASHI

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

20 המארה. חסרון, כמו:21, "צרעת ממארת";  
המהומה. שגשג, קול פהלות: 22 בשחפת. שבשרו  
נשחף ונפוח: ובקדחת. לשון "כי אש קדחה באפיי"22,  
והיא אש של חולים, מלווי"ד בלעז:23, שהיא חמה  
מאד: ובדלקת. חמה יותר מקדחת. ומיני חלאים  
הם: ובחרחור. חלי המוקדמו תוף הגוף, וצמא תמיד  
למים, ובלעז אישרדימינ"ט:24, 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 ויהיו שְׁמִיךְ אֲשֶׁר עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת וְהָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־  
תַּחְתֵּיךְ בְּרוֹזָל: 24 יִתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת־מָטֶר אֶרְצֶךָ אֲבָק וְעָפָר  
מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם יֵרֵד עָלֶיךָ עַד הַשְׁמָדָה: 25 וְתִנָּה יְהוָה  
נֶגֶף לִפְנֵי אֵיכִיד בְּדֶרֶךְ אַחַד תֵּצֵא אֵלָיו וּבִשְׁבַעַה  
דְּרָכִים תִּנּוּם לִפְנֵי וְהָיִיתָ לְזַעוּה לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ:  
26 וְהָיִיתָ נִבְלָתָה לְמֵאֵכֶל לְכָל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְבִהְמַת  
הָאָרֶץ וְאִין מַחֲרִיד: 27 יִכְכֶּה יְהוָה בְּשָׁחִין מִצָּרִים  
וּבַעֲפָלִים {וּבִשְׁחָרִים} וּבִנְגָרָב וּבַחֲרָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תוּכַל  
לְהִרְפָּא: 28 יִכְכֶּה יְהוָה בְּשִׁנְעוֹן וּבַעֲגוֹרָן וּבַתְּמָהוּן  
לֵבָב: 29 וְהָיִיתָ מִמִּשְׁשׁ בַּצָּהָרִים כַּאֲשֶׁר יִמְשֹׁשׁ הָעוֹר  
בְּאַפְלָה וְלֹא תִצְלִית אֶת־דְּרָכֶיךָ וְהָיִיתָ אֶךְ עֲשׂוֹק וְגִזּוּל  
כְּלִי־הַיָּמִים וְאִין מוֹשִׁיעַ: 30 אִשָּׁה תֹאדָשׁ וְאִישׁ אַחֵר  
יִשְׁגַּלְנָה {וְיִשְׁכַּבְנָה} בֵּית תִּבְנָה וְלֹא־תֵשֵׁב בּוֹ כָּרֶם תִּטֵּעַ  
וְלֹא תַחלֶּלְנֻה: 31 שׁוֹרְךָ טְבוּחַ לַעֲיִנֶיךָ וְלֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ  
חֲמֹרְךָ גִּזּוּל מִלִּפְנֵיךָ וְלֹא יָשׁוּב לָךְ צֹאנְךָ נִתְּנוֹת לְאֵיכִיד  
וְאִין לָךְ מוֹשִׁיעַ:

— 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 הדרעים 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 שקא על אלו: 27 בשחין מצרים. רע היה מאד, לח מבחוץ ויבש מבפנים, כדאיתא בבכורות: גרב. שחין לח: חרס. שחין יבש כחרס: 28 ובתמהון לבב. אטם הלב, אישטורדישו"ן בלעז: 29 עשוק. בכל מעשיך יהיה ערעור: 30 ישגלנה. לשון "שגל" — פילגש, והכתוב כנהו לשבח — "ישכבנה", ותקון סופרים הוא זה: תחללנו. בשנה הרביעית, לאכל פריה.

23 ויהיו שְׁמִיךְ אֲשֶׁר עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת. 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"<sup>30</sup>, "ידבק ה' בך"<sup>31</sup>, "יכבה ה'"<sup>32</sup>, הקל משה בקללותיו לאמרן בלשון יחיד. וגם בן בקללה זו הקל, שבראשונות הוא אומר: "את שמייכם כפרזל ואת ארצכם כנחשה" — 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: שְׁמִיךְ נחשת וארץ ברוזל — שיהיו שמים מזיעין, אף על פי שלא יריקו מטר, מכל מקום לא יהיה חרב של אבדון בעולם, והארץ לא תהיה מזיעה בדרך שאין הכרזל מזיע, ואין הפרות מרקבין. ומכל מקום קללה היא, בין שהיא כנחשת בין שהיא כפרזל, לא תוציא

29. ויקרא כו, יד-כא. 30. פסוק טו. 31. פסוק כב. 32. ויקרא כו, יט. 33. מא, א. 34. עילפון, קלם, מבוך.

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 בְּנִיךָ וּבְנֵיךָ מִסִּירִין לַעֲמֹא  
 אַחֲרוֹ וְעֵינֶיךָ חֲזוֹן וְסוּפֹן בְּגִלְלָחוֹן  
 כָּל יוֹמָא וְלִית חִילָא בִידֶךָ:  
 33 אַבָּא דְאַרְעָךָ וְכָל לְאוּתְךָ יִיכּוֹל  
 עִם דִּי לֹא יִדְעָת וְתַהִי בְרַם עֲשִׂיק  
 וְרַעִיעַ כָּל יוֹמָיָא: 34 וְתַהִי מִשְׁתַּטִּי  
 מַחֲזוֹ עֵינֶיךָ דִּי תַחֲזִי: 35 יִמְחַנֵּךְ יִי  
 בְּשַׁחֲנָא בִישָׁא עַל רִכְבִּיא וְעַל  
 שְׂקִיא דִּי לֹא תִבּוֹל לֹא תִסְתָּא  
 מִפְּרִסַת רִגְלֶךָ וְעַד מוֹחֶךָ: 36 יִגְלִי  
 יִי יִתֵּר וְיִת מִלְכֶּךָ דִּי תָקִים עֲלֶךָ  
 לַעֲמֵם דִּי לֹא יִדְעָת אַתָּה וְאַבְהֶתְךָ  
 וְתַפְלַח תַּמָּן לַעֲמֻמָּיָא פְּלַחִי  
 טַעֲוִתָא אַעָא וְאַבְנָא: 37 וְתַהִי  
 לְצִדּוֹ לְמַתֵּל וּלְשׁוּעִי בְּכָל עַמֻּמָּיָא  
 דִּי יִדְבָּרְךָ יִי תַלְמִן: 38 בֵּר יִרַע  
 סָגִי תַפֵּק לְחַקְלָא וְזַעַר תִּכְנוֹשׁ אַרִי  
 יִחְסַלְנָה גּוֹבָא: 39 כְּרָמִין תִּצּוּב  
 וְתַפְלַח וְחִמְרָא לֹא תִשְׁתִּי וְלֹא  
 תִכְנוֹשׁ אַרִי תִיכְלֹנָה תוֹלַעְתָּא:  
 40 וְיִתִּין יְהוֹן לָךְ בְּכָל תַּחֲוֹמֶךָ  
 וּמִשְׁחָא לֹא תִסּוּךְ אַרִי יִתְרוֹן וְיִתֵּר:  
 41 בְּנִין וּבָנִין תּוֹלִיד וְלֹא יְהוֹן לָךְ  
 אַרִי יִהְיוּ בְּשִׁבְיָא: 42 כָּל אֵילָנֶךָ  
 וְאַבָּא דְאַרְעָךָ יִחְסַנְנָה סָקָה:  
 43 תּוֹתֵב עַרְל דִּי בִינֶךָ יְהִי סָלִיק  
 עֵיל מִנֶּךָ לַעֲלָא לַעֲלָא וְאַתָּה תַהִי  
 נַחַת לְתַחְתָּא לְתַחְתָּא: 44 הוּא  
 יוֹפְנֶךָ וְאַתָּה לֹא תוֹפְנָה הוּא יְהִי  
 לְתַקִּיף וְאַתָּה תַהִי לְחַלֵּשׁ: 45 וְיִתְּנוּ  
 עֲלֶךָ כָּל לוֹטִיא הָאֵלִין וְיִרְדָּפְנָךְ  
 וְיִדְבָּקְנָךְ עַד דְּתִשְׁתַּצִּי אַרִי לֹא  
 קִבְּלָתָא לְמִימְרָא דִּי אֵלֶיךָ  
 לְמִשְׁר פְּקוּדוֹהִי וְקִמּוּהִי דִּי פִקְדֶךָ:  
 46 וְיִהוֹן כָּךְ לֵאמֹר וְלִמּוּפַת וּבְנֵיךָ  
 עַד עֲלָם:

32 בְּנִיךָ וּבְנֵיךָ נִתְּנִים לָעֵם אַחֲרָיִךְ וְעֵינֶיךָ רְאוּת וְכָלּוֹת  
 אֲלֵיהֶם כְּלֵהִיּוֹם וְאִין לֹאֵל יִדְךָ: 33 פְּרִי אֲדָמְתְּךָ  
 וְכָל־יִגְיַעְךָ יֹאכֵל עִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִדְעָתָהּ וְהִיִּיתָ רַק עֲשׂוּק  
 וְרָצוֹן כְּלֵה־יָמִים: 34 וְהִיִּיתָ מִשְׁנַע מִמֶּרְאָה עֵינֶיךָ  
 אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה: 35 יִכְכֶּה יְהוָה בְּשַׁחֲוִין רָע עַל־הַבְּרָכִים  
 וְעַל־הַשְׂקִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תוּכַל לְהִרְפָּא מִכָּף רִגְלֶךָ וְעַד  
 קִדְמוֹתֶיךָ: 36 יוֹלֵךְ יְהוָה אֹתְךָ וְאֶת־מִלְכְּךָ אֲשֶׁר תָּקִים  
 עֲלֶיךָ אֶל־גּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִדְעָתָהּ אַתָּה וְאַבְהֶיךָ וְעַבְדָּתָהּ  
 שֵׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עֵץ וְאֶבֶן: 37 וְהִיִּיתָ לְשִׂמְחָה לְמִשְׁלַל  
 וְלִשְׂנִינָה בְּכָל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר־יִנְחָנֶךָ יְהוָה שְׂמָה: 38 וְרַע  
 רַב תּוֹצִיא הַשָּׂדֶה וּמַעֲט תֵּאֻסֵּף כִּי יִחְסַלְנָה הָאֲרָבֹה:  
 39 כְּרָמִים תִּפְטַע וְעַבְדָּתָהּ וְיִין לֹא־תִשְׁתַּהֲלֶה וְלֹא תִאֲגַר כִּי  
 תִּאֲכַלְנָה הַתִּלְעָת: 40 זִיתִּים יִהְיוּ לָךְ בְּכָל־גְּבוּלְךָ וְשִׁמּוֹן  
 לֹא תִסּוּךְ כִּי יִשָּׁל זִיתְךָ: 41 בְּנִים וּבָנוֹת תּוֹלִיד וְלֹא־  
 יִהְיוּ לָךְ כִּי יִלְכוּ בְּשִׁבְיָא: 42 כָּל־עֵצֶךָ וּפְרִי אֲדָמְתְּךָ יִירֶשׁ  
 הַצִּלְצֵל: 43 הִגֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ יַעֲלֶה עֲלֶיךָ מַעֲלָה מַעֲלָה  
 וְאַתָּה תִּרְדַּ מְטָה מְטָה: 44 הוּא יִלְוֶךָ וְאַתָּה לֹא תִלְוֶנּוּ  
 הוּא יִהְיֶה לְרֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה לְזָנָב: 45 וּבָאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל־  
 הַקָּלָלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְרִדְפוּךָ וְהִשְׁיגוּךָ עַד הַשְׁמֹדֶךָ כִּי־לֹא  
 שְׂמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמּוֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֵּיהֶם אֲשֶׁר  
 צִוָּךָ: 46 וְהָיוּ בָךְ לְאוֹת וּלְמוֹפֶת וּבְזוֹרְעֶךָ עַד־עוֹלָם:

— RASHI —

נקרא "חסיל", שמכילה את הכל: 40 כי 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 היה לו לכתב "יירש", ולא לשון הורשה וגרושין,  
 שאם כן היה לו לכתב "יורש":

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

36. עלמון, 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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<sup>117</sup>. Above, 4:28; Rashi *ad loc.*

ONKELOS

47 חָלַף דִּי לֹא פִלְחָת קָדָם יי  
אֱלֹהֵךְ בְּחִדּוֹא וּבְשִׁפְיוֹת לְבָא  
מִסְגִּי כָלָא: 48 וְתַפְלַח יֵת בְּעָלִי  
דְּבָבָךְ דִּי יִגְרַנָּה יי בָּךְ בְּכַפְנָא  
וּבְצִחוֹתָא וּבְעִרְטִילוֹתָא וּבְחִסְרוֹת  
כָּלָא וְיִתֵּן נִיר פְּרוֹזְלָא עַל צוֹרֵךְ  
עַד דִּישְׁצִי יְתָה: 49 יִיְיָ יי עֲלֵךְ  
עִם מִרְחִיק מִסִּיפֵי אֶרֶצָא כְּמָא דִּי  
מִשְׁתַּדִּי נִשְׂרָא עֲמָא דִּי לֹא תִשְׁמַע  
לְשִׁנָּה: 50 עִם תִּקְוֵי אִפִּין דִּי לֹא  
יִסֵּב אִפִּין לְסָבָא וְעַל יִנְקָא לֹא  
מִרְחָם: 51 וְיִכּוּל וּלְדָא דְּבַעֲרִיךְ  
וְאָבָא דְּאֶרֶץ עַד דְּתִשְׁתַּמֵּצִי דִּי לֹא  
יִשְׂאֵר לָךְ עֲבוּרָא חֲמָרָא וּמִשְׁחָא  
בְּקָרִי תוֹרִיךְ וְעִדְרֵי עֲנָךְ עַד דִּיּוֹבֵד  
יְתָה: 52 וְיַעַק לֹךְ בְּכָל קְרוֹיֵךְ עַד  
דִּיכִבֵּשׁ שׁוּרִיךְ רִמְיָא וּכְרִיכֵיכָא  
דִּי אַתְּ רַחֲמִין לֹאשְׁתַּזְבָּא בְּהוֹן  
בְּכָל אֶרֶץ וְיַעַק לֹךְ בְּכָל קְרוֹיֵךְ  
בְּכָל אֶרֶץ דִּי יִהְיֶה יי אֱלֹהֵךְ לָךְ:  
53 וְיִכּוּל וּלְדָא דְּמַעַךְ בִּשְׂרָא בְּנִיךְ  
וּבְנִתִיךְ דִּי יִהְיֶה לָךְ יי אֱלֹהֵךְ בְּצִירָא  
וּבְעֵקֶתָא דִּי יַעַק לָךְ סְנָאָךְ: 54 גִּבְרָא  
דְּרִכִּיךְ בָּךְ וְדִמְפְנָךְ לְחִדָּא תִבְאֵשׁ  
עֵינָהּ בְּאֶחָדָא וּבְאֶתָּה קִמְיָה  
וּבִשְׂרָא בְּגוּדֵי דִּי יִשְׂאֵר: 55 מִלְּמַתָּן  
לְחִדָּא מִנְהוֹן מִבְּשָׂר בְּגוּדֵי דִּי יִכּוּל  
מִדְּלָא אֲשֶׁתָּאֵר לָהּ כָּלָא בְּצִירָא  
וּבְעֵקֶתָא דִּי יַעַק לָךְ סְנָאָךְ בְּכָל  
קְרוֹיֵךְ:

47 תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה  
וּבְטוֹב לֵבָב מְרֹב כָּל: 48 וְעֲבַדְתָּ אֶת-אֱיִבֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר  
יִשְׁלַחְנוּ יְהוָה בְּךָ בָּרָעַב וּבְצָמָא וּבְעִירָם וּבְחֶסֶר כָּל וְנָתַן  
עַל בְּרוֹל עַל-צוּאֲרֶךְ עַד הַשְּׁמִידוֹ אֹתָךְ: 49 יֵשָׁא יְהוָה  
עֲלֶיךָ גּוֹי מִרְחֹק מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵדְאָה הַגִּשָּׁר גּוֹי  
אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִשְׁמַע לְשִׁנּוֹ: 50 גּוֹי עִז פָּנִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִשְׂאֵא  
פָּנִים לְזִמּוֹן וְנָעַר לֹא יָחוּן: 51 וְאָכַל פְּרִי בְּהֵמָתְךָ וּפְרִי-  
אֲדָמָתְךָ עַד הַשְּׁמִידוֹ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִשְׂאֵר לָךְ דָּגָן תִּירוֹשׁ  
וְיִצְהָר שֹׁגֵר אֲלֶפֶיךָ וְעִשְׂתַּנְרַת צֹאנֶךָ עַד הַאֲבִידוֹ אֹתָךְ:  
52 וְהִצֵּר לָךְ בְּכָל-שְׁעָרֶיךָ עַד רֶדֶת חֲמַתֶּיךָ הַגְּבֻהֹת  
וְהַבְּצֻרוֹת אֲשֶׁר אֹתָהּ בִּטַּח בָּהֶן בְּכָל-אֶרֶצְךָ וְהִצֵּר לָךְ  
בְּכָל-שְׁעָרֶיךָ בְּכָל-אֶרֶצְךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לָךְ:  
53 וְאִכַּלְתָּ פְּרִי-בִטְנֶךָ בִּשְׂרָא בְּנִיךָ וּבְנִתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן  
לָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּמִצּוֹר וּבְמִצּוֹק אֲשֶׁר-יֵצִיק לָךְ אֵיבֶךָ:  
54 הָאִישׁ הָרֹךְ בָּךְ וְהָעֶנְג מְאֹד תִּרַע עֵינָיו בְּאֶחָיו וּבְאִשְׁתּוֹ  
חִיקוֹ וּבְיִתְּוֹ בְּנָיו אֲשֶׁר יוֹתִיר: 55 מִתַּת | לְאֶחָד מֵהֶם  
מִבִּשָּׂר בְּנִיו אֲשֶׁר יֹאכַל מִבְּלִי הַשְּׂאִיר-לוֹ כָּל בְּמִצּוֹר  
וּבְמִצּוֹק אֲשֶׁר יֵצִיק לָךְ אֵיבֶךָ בְּכָל-שְׁעָרֶיךָ:

RASHI

פְּנוּק, ו"מִהֲתַעֲנַג וּמִרֶךְ" מוֹכִיחַ עֲלֵיהֶם שֶׁשְׁנִיֵּיהֶם אֶחָד  
— אֵף עַל פִּי שְׂהוּא מִפְּנֵי וְדַעְתּוֹ קֶצֶה בְּדָבָר מֵאוֹס,  
יִמָּתֵק לוֹ לְרַעְבוֹנוֹ בִּשְׂרָא בְּנִיו וּבְנִתָיו, עַד כִּי תִרַע  
עֵינָיו בְּבָנָיו הַנוֹתָרִים מִתַּת לְאֶחָד מֵהֶם מִבִּשָּׂר בְּנִיו  
אֲחֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר יֹאכַל. דְּבָר אַחֵר: "הָרֹךְ בָּךְ", הִרְחַמְנִי  
וְרַךְ הַלֵּכְב, מֵרַב רַעֲבָתָנוֹת יִתְאָכְזְרוּ וְלֹא יִתְּנוּ מִבִּשָּׂר  
בְּנִיָּהֶם הַשְּׁחוּטִים לְבְנֵיהֶם הַנוֹתָרִים:

47 מֵרַב כָּל. בְּעוֹד שֶׁהָיָה לָךְ כָּל טוֹב: 49 כַּאֲשֶׁר  
יֵדְאָה הַגִּשָּׁר. פְּתָאוֹס, וְדָרֶךְ מִצְלַחַת, וְיִקְלֹוּ סוּסִיו: לֹא  
תִשְׁמַע לְשׁוֹנוֹ. לֹא תִפִּיר לְשׁוֹנוֹ, וְכֹן: "תִּשְׁמַע חֲלוֹם  
לְפָתֵר אֹתוֹ", וְכֹן: "כִּי שָׁמַע יוֹסֵף", אִינְטִינֵדֵר"י  
בְּלַעֲזָה: 52 עַד רֶדֶת חֲמַתֶּיךָ. לְשׁוֹן רִדּוֹי וְכַבוֹשׁ:  
53 וְאִכַּלְתָּ פְּרִי בִטְנֶךָ בִּשְׂרָא בְּנִיךָ וּבְנִתֶיךָ. מִחֲמַת  
שִׁדְיוֹ צָרִים עַל הָעִיר, וְיִהְיֶה שֵׁם "מִצּוֹק", עֲקַת  
רַעְבוֹן: 54 הָרֹךְ בָּךְ וְהָעֶנְג. הוּא הָרֹךְ הוּא הָעֶנְג, לְשׁוֹן

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

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

gratified and the Divine attribute of justice is neu-  
tralized. 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.

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∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

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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

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<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 דְּרִיכָא בְּךָ וְדִמְפָּקָא דִּי לֹא נְסִיאת פִּרְסַת רְגִלָּה לֹאחָתָא עַל אֶרֶץ מִמְפָּקוֹ וּמִרְכִּיבֹה תִּבְאֵשׁ עֵינָה בְּגִבֵּר קִימָה וּבְבִרְתָּה: 57 וּבִזְעָר בְּנָהָא דִּיפְקֹן מִנָּה וּבְבִנְיָה דִּי תְלִיד אָרִי תִיכְלֹנוֹן בְּחִסְרוֹת כֻּלָּא בְּסִתְרָא בְּצִירָא וּבְעֻקְתָּא דִּי יַעַק לֹךְ סָנְאָר בְּקִרְוִיָּה: 58 אִם לֹא תִשָּׁר לְמַעַבְדָּא יֵת כָּל פְּתָגְמֵי אֲוִרִיתָא הָדָא דְּכִתְבִּין בְּסִפְרָא הָדִין לְמַדְחַל יֵת שְׁמָא יִקְרָא וְדִחִילָא הָדִין יֵת יֵת אֱלֹהִי: 59 וְיִפְרֹשׁ יֵת יֵת מִחֻקֵּי וְיֵת קִמָּחַ בְּנִיךְ מִחוֹן רִבְרָבִין וּמִהִימָנוֹן וּמִכְתָּשִׁין בִּישִׁין וּמִהִימָנוֹן: 60 וְיִתֵּב בְּךָ יֵת כָּל מִכְתָּשִׁי מִצְרַיִם דִּי דְחִלַּת מִקְדָּמִיהוֹן וְיִדְבָּקוֹן בְּךָ: 61 אִף כָּל מִרְעָ וְכָל מִחָא דִּי לֹא כְּתִיבִין בְּסִפְרָא דְּאֲוִרִיתָא הָדָא יִתְנֹנוֹן יֵת עֲלֵךְ עַד דְּתִשְׁתַּיְצִי: 62 וְתִשְׁתַּאֲרוֹן בְּעַם זֶעַר חֲלָף דִּי הִוִּיתוֹן כְּכֹכְבֵי שְׁמִיָּא לְמִסְגֵּי אָרִי לֹא קִבְלַת לְמִימְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהִי: 63 וְיִהִי כְּמָא דְּחָדִי יֵת עֲלִיכוֹן לְאוֹטְבָא יִתְכוֹן וּלְאִסְנָאָה יִתְכוֹן כֹּן יִחְדִּי יֵת עֲלִיכוֹן לְאוֹבְדָא יִתְכוֹן וּלְשַׁצָּאָה יִתְכוֹן וְתִשְׁלַטְלוֹן מִעַל אֶרֶץ דָּאָת עֲלִל לְתַמְנוֹן לְמִירְתָּה: 64 וּבְדִרְגָּה יֵת בְּכָל עֲמֻמָּא מִסִּפֵּי אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ וְעַד סִפֵּי אֶרֶץ וְתִפְלַח תַּמְנוֹן לְעֲמֻמָּא פְּלַחִי טַעֲוִתָּא דִּי לֹא יִדְעָתָא אֶת וְאַבְהֶתֶר אֶעָא וְאַבְנָא: 65 וּבְעֲמֻמָּא הָאֲנוֹן לֹא תִנּוֹן וְלֹא יִהִי מִנָּח לְפִרְסַת רְגִלָּה וְיִתְנוֹן יֵת לֹךְ תַּמְנוֹן לֵב דְּחַל וְחֻשְׁכַּת עֵינִין וּמִפְּתַח נֶפֶשׁ:

56 הִרְפָּה בְּךָ וְהִעֲנָנָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נִסְתָּה כִּי־רִגְלָהּ הִצֵּג עַל־הָאָרֶץ מִהִתְעַנֵּג וּמִרְדָּ תִרַע עֵינָהּ בְּאִישׁ חִיקָהּ וּבִבְנֵיהּ וּבִבְתָּהּ: 57 וּבְשִׁלְיָתָהּ הִיוֹצֵאת מִבֵּין רִגְלֶיהָ וּבִבְנֵיהָ אֲשֶׁר תִּלְד תִּלְד בִּי־תֹאכְלִם בְּחִסְר־כָּל בְּסִתֵּר בְּמִצּוֹר וּבְמִצּוֹק אֲשֶׁר יֵצִיק לָךְ אֵיבֶךָ בְּשַׁעֲרֶיהָ: 58 אִם־לֹא תִשָּׁר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת הַכְּתוּבִים בְּסִפְרָ הַזֶּה לִירְאָה אֶת־ה'שֵׁם הַנִּכְבָּד וְהַנּוֹרָא הַזֶּה אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: 59 וְהִפְלֵא יְהוָה אֶת־מִכְתָּרְךָ וְאֶת מִכּוֹת זִרְעֶךָ מִכּוֹת גְּדֻלַּת וְנֹאמָנוֹת וְחָלִים רָעִים וְנֹאמָנִים: 60 וְהִשִּׁיב בְּךָ אֶת כָּל־מַדּוּה מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִגְרֶת מִפְּנֵיהֶם וּדְבָקוּ בְּךָ: 61 גַּם כָּל־חֲלִי וְכָל־מַכָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא כְתוּב בְּסִפְרָ הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת יַעֲלֶם יְהוָה עָלֶיךָ עַד הַשְׁמָדֶךָ: 62 וְנִשְׁאֲרֶתְךָ בְּמַתִּי מַעֲט תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר הֵייתָם כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לָרֹב כִּי־לֹא שְׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: 63 וְהָיָה כְּאֲשֶׁר־שֵׁשׁ יְהוָה עָלֵיכֶם לְהִיטִיב אֶתְכֶם וּלְהַרְבּוֹת אֶתְכֶם כֹּן יִשְׁיֵשׁ יְהוָה עָלֵיכֶם לְהַאֲבִיד אֶתְכֶם וּלְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם וְנִסְחַתְתֶּם מֵעַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם בְּא־שְׁמָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: 64 וְהִפְצִיעַ יְהוָה בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ וְעַד־קְצֵה הָאָרֶץ וְעַבְדְּךָ שֵׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִדְעָתָא אֶתָּה וְאַבְתִּיד עֵין וְאַבִּין: 65 וּבְגוֹיִם הָהֵם לֹא תִרְגִּיעַ וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה מְנוּחַ לְכִי־רִגְלְךָ וְנָתַן יְהוָה לָךְ שֵׁם לֵב רָגִז וּכְלִיזִין עֵינַיִם וְדֹאבּוֹן נֶפֶשׁ:

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שֵׁלֹא יָבוֹאוּ גַם עָלֵיהֶם. תִּדְעַ, שְׁכֹן כְּתוּב: "אִם שְׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמַע וְגו' כָּל הַמַּחְלָה אֲשֶׁר שְׁמַתִּי בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא אֲשִׁים עָלֶיךָ", אֵינוֹ מִרְאִין אֶת הָאָדָם אֲלֹא בְּדָבָר שֶׁהוּא יְגוֹר מִמֶּנּוּ: 61 יַעֲלֶם: לְשׁוֹן עָלֶיהָ: 62 וְנִשְׁאֲרֶתְךָ בְּמַתִּי מַעֲט תַּחַת וְגו'. מוֹעֲטִין חֲלוּף מְרִבִּין: 63 כֹּן יִשְׁיֵשׁ ה'. אֶת אוֹיְבֵיכֶם "עָלֵיכֶם" לְהַאֲבִיד" וְגו': וְנִסְחַתְתֶּם. לְשׁוֹן עֲקִירָה, וְכָן: "בֵּית

56 תִּרַע עֵינָהּ בְּאִישׁ חִיקָהּ וּבִבְנֵיהּ וּבִבְתָּהּ. הַגְדוּלִים: 57 וּבְשִׁלְיָתָהּ. בְּנִיָּהּ הַקְטָנִים. בְּכָלִן תִּהְיֶה עֵינָהּ צָרָה כְּשֶׁתֹּאכַל אֶת הָאָחִיר, מִלִּפְתָּן לְאֲשֶׁר אֲצִלָּהּ מִן הַבֶּשֶׂר: 59 וְהִפְלֵא ה' אֶת מִכּוֹתֶיךָ. מִפְּלִאוֹת וּמִבְדָּלוֹת מִשְׁאֵר מִכּוֹת: וְנֹאמָנוֹת. לִי־סֶרֶךְ לְקִנִּים שְׁלִיחוֹתָם: 60 אֲשֶׁר יִגְרֶת מִפְּנֵיהֶם. מִפְּנֵי הַמִּכּוֹת. כְּשֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל רוֹאִים מִכּוֹת מִשְׁנוֹת הַבָּאוֹת עַל מִצְרַיִם, הָיוּ יִרְאִים מִהֶם

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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גִּאִים יִסַּח ה': 64 וְעִבְדֶתֶם שֵׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים. כְּתִרְגֹּמוֹ, לֹא עֲבוֹדַת אֱלֹהִים מִמֶּשׁ, אֲלֵא מַעֲלִים מִסּ וְגִלְגָּלִיּוֹת לְכַמְרֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה: 65 לֹא תִרְגִּיעַ. לֹא תִנוּחַ, כְּמוֹ: "וְזֹאת הַמְרָגָעָה": לֵב רָגֹז. לֵב חָרָד,

כְּתִרְגֹּמוֹ: "דָּחַל", כְּמוֹ: "שָׂאוֹל מִתַּחַת רֶגְזָה לָךְ". שְׂמָעוּ עַמִּים יִרְגֹּזוּן<sup>46</sup>. "מוֹסְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם יִרְגֹּזוּ"<sup>47</sup>: וּכְלִיזוֹן עֵינַיִם. מִצָּפָה לִישׁוּעָה וְלֹא תָבֵא:

44. ישעיה כח, יב. 45. ישעיה יד, ט. 46. שמות טו, יד. 47. שמואל ב, ח.

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

— ONKELOS —  
 66 ויהיו חייך תלך לך מקבל ותהי  
 תוה ליליא ויממא ולא תהימין  
 בחיך: 67 בצפרא תימר מאן  
 יתן רמשא ובדמשא תימר מאן  
 יתן צפרא מתוהות לבך די תהי  
 תוה ומחזו עיניך די תהי חזי:  
 68 וייתבנך ?? למצרים בספינן  
 בארשא די אמרית לך לא תוסף  
 עוד למחזיה ותודבנון תמן  
 לבעלי דבביון לעבדיו ולאמהן  
 ולית דקני: 69 אלין פתגמי קימא  
 די פקיד ?? ית משה למגור עם  
 בני ישראל בארשא דמואב בר  
 מקימא די גור עמהון בחרב:

66 והיו חייך תלך לך מנגד ופחדת לילה ויום  
 ולא תאמין בחיך: 67 בבקר תאמר מייתן ערב  
 ובערב תאמר מייתן בקר מפחד לבבך אשר תפחד  
 ומפראה עיניך אשר תראה: 68 והשיבך יהוה | מצרים  
 באניות בדרךך אשר אמרתי לך לא תסיף עוד לראותה  
 והתמפרתם שם לאיביך לעבדים ולשפחות ואין  
 קנה: 69 אלה דברי הברית אשר צוה יהוה את משה לכת  
 את בני ישראל בארץ מואב מלבד הברית אשר כרת  
 אתם בחרב: פ

— RASHI —  
 נמקרים להם לעבדים ולשפחות: ואין קנה. כי יגורו  
 עליהם הרג וכליון: והתמפרתם. בלעז אי פורונידרייץ  
 ור"ש<sup>49</sup>. ולא יתכן לפרש "והתמפרתם" בלשון  
 "ונמפרתם" על ידי מוכרים אחרים, מפני שנאמר  
 אחריו: "ואין קונה": 69 לכת את בני ישראל.  
 שיקבלו עליהם את התורה באלה ובשבועה: מלבד  
 הברית. קללות שבתורת כהנים שנאמרו בסיני:

66 חייך תלך 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 בחיך.  
 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 ab-  
 sorbed 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 it exists before it enters the body knows  
 nothing of this intense yearning and pining for re-  
 lease; 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 allegori-  
 cally 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 ויקרא 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 יחב יי לכון לבא למדע ועינין למחוי ואדנין למשמע עד יומא הדין: 4 ודברית יתכון ארבעין שנין במדברא לא בליאת כסותכון מנכון ומסגר לא עדו מעל רגליך: 5 לחמא לא אכלתון וחמר חדרת ועתיק לא שתיתון בדיל דתדעון ארי אגא יי אלהכון: 6 ואיתתון לאתרא הדין ונפק סיחון מלכא דחשבון ועוג מלכא דמותגן לקדמותגא לאגאחא קרבא ומחניגון: 7 ונסיבנא ית ארעהו ויהבנה לאחסנא לשבטא דראובן ולשבטא דגד ולפלגות שבטא דמנשה: 8 ותשרון ית פתגמי קימא הדין ותעבדון יתהון בדיל דתצלחון ית כל די תעבדון:

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

◆ **מפטיר 6 ותבאו אל-המקום הזה ויצא סיחון 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 תעשיו:**

קכ"ב פסוקים. לעבדי"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 וחכמת 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<sup>50</sup>: "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<sup>51</sup>: "היום הנה נהיית לעם" וגו' — היום הזה הבנתי שאתם דבקים וחסדים

50. דברים לא, ט. 51. דברים כז, 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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### — CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

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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

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131. Leviticus 26:3-46. 132. 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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134. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, pp. 259-260. 135. *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**

