

בס"ד



Parashat Ki Tavo

מתוך "ליקוטי שמואל"

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הגיליון מופיע באתר 'לדעת' וכן ניתן לקבלו לאימייל מדי שבוע על ידי
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Three Interpretations of “V’heeseegucha” From Three Chassidic Masters

Parshas **Ki Savo**

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

One of the classic ideas the *meforshim* (commentaries) focus on in Parshas Ki Savo are the words of the *pasuk* “And all these blessings will come upon you, **v’heeseegucha** (and will reach you) when you listen to the voice of *Hashem* your G-d.” (Devorim 28:2). The *meforshim* all want to know the meaning of the word “**v’heeseegucha**.” What does this word add to the earlier statement of the *pasuk*, that the *bracha* (blessing) will come upon you? There are a variety of interpretations. I will not share all of them but merely go through a smattering of different *meforshim*: The *sefer* Degel Machane Ephraim (Moshe Chaim Ephraim of Sudilkov (1748-1800), grandson of the Baal Shem Tov) explains it based on a very famous *pasuk* (Tehillim 23:6) from Dovid Hamelech, which we say in *Mizmor l’Dovid Hashem ro’ee lo echsor*: “*Ach tov v’chessed yirdefooni kol yemei chayai...*” (Only good and

kindness **will chase after me** all the days of my life). The question is that kindness and goodness do not necessarily need to “chase after” someone. A person readily accepts kindness and goodness. He doesn’t flee from them, such that they need to pursue him. The explanation that is given is that many times, a person runs away from something that he does not think is good for him – but ultimately it is **very** good for him. We often don’t know what is good for us and what is not good for us. There are certain situations in life – whether it is *shiduchim*, whether it is partnerships, whether it is business deals, whatever it may be – when we don’t think something is good for us. As a result, we run away. This is what Dovid Hamelech is asking: If I am not wise enough to understand that something is good for me, let it chase after me.

A famous story is told about Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev. He once saw a person running down the street and asked him, “Where are you running?” The person answered, “I am running to make *parnassa* (a livelihood).” Reb Levi Yitzchak then asked, “How do you know that your *parnassa* is in this direction? Maybe your *parnassa* is in the opposite direction, and you should be running there!” The point is that we don’t necessarily know when something is good and when it is not good.

That could, in fact, be the meaning of this *pasuk*: All the *bracha* will come upon you and reach you. Even when you run away from something that is a *bracha*, the *bracha* will chase after you and catch up with you! This is why we say in Rosh Chodesh *benching*: May *Hashem* fulfill the desires of our heart **for the good**. So often, we don’t know what “*tova*” is. The *Ribono shel Olam* knows what “*tova*” is. We pray that *Hashem* gives us the “*tova*,” regardless of whether or not that is what we have been hoping for.

I saw a second interpretation of this *pasuk* in the name of Rav Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin (1823-1900), who in turn quotes it in the name of Reb Simcha Bunim of P'shischa (1765-1827).

"V'heeseegucha" means that the *brachos* (blessings) should reach you in the place where you are right now. So many times, wild financial or political success changes a person. He becomes a different person and moves away from the place where he was and the person who he was. The *nisayon* (test) of wealth, power, prestige, and fame sometimes has a deleterious effect on a person. The *bracha* of **"V'heeseegucha"** is that the *brachos* should reach you in the place where you are and that you should remain in that place.

By Yitzchak Avinu the *pasuk* says, *"Vayigdal ha'ish"* (and the man grew (wealthy)). I once saw it explained that the *pasuk* does not say *"Vayigdal Yitzchak"* (and Yitzchak grew (wealthy)). Why not? This hints at the idea that Yitzchak remained the same person. He didn't change because he now became wealthy.

The third interpretation of this *pasuk* is an observation from Rav Yisrael (Taub) of Modzitz (1849-1920, the first Modzitzer Rebbe) that is brought in the *sefer Imrei Baruch*. The Modzitzer Rebbe understands the word **"v'heeseegucha"** to mean that you should have the *ha'sagos* (understanding) of what to do with your successes. Many times, people achieve great financial or other types of success, and they don't know how to handle it. They don't know what to do with their newly acquired power. They don't know what to do with all that money. This is common among athletes and movie stars. They have all this money, and they don't know what to do with it. They buy a car, a boat, jewelry, and furs. They don't know what to do with all of it. They get to be 35 years old, and they are bankrupt. A person needs to have the right *ha'sagos*, the right concepts, and the right outlook on how to

use their *brachos*. The *bracha* of **v'heeseegucha** is that you have the perspective and *hasagos* it takes to handle the tremendous *brachos* that you are given.

The Gain is Proportional to the Pain

Parshas [Ki Savo](#)

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Parshas Ki Savo begins with the chapter of 'Mikra Bikurim' (reciting the declaration of the first fruits). As soon as the crops began to bud, each farmer marked the first fruits with a string or a ribbon so that when they were fully ripened, he would be able to recognize them and bring them as his 'First Fruits' to the Bais HaMikdash in Yerushalayim. The Mishna in Tractate Bikkurim describes the great pomp and circumstance surrounding the journey to Yerushalayim by the farmers with their first fruits. This was done on an annual basis. The farmers would bring the first fruits to the Kohanim and would read the chapter of 'Mikra Bikurim' [Devorim 26:1-11].

The Medrash Yalkut Shimoni [Chapter 27] states that when a person would bring his first fruits to the Kohen, a Heavenly Voice (Bas Kol) would come forth and miraculously announce, "Next year you will merit to perform this ritual again."

The Sefas Emes, in the Likutim of Parshas Ki Savo, asks a very interesting question: How did anyone ever die in the time of "Mikra Bikurim"? If every year the farmer was given a Heavenly Guarantee that "next year again" – how could such an annual blessing ever fail to come true?

The Sefas Emes answers his question based on the principle of "I'fum tza'ara agra" – the harder it is to do a mitzvah, the greater the reward. Two people can do the same mitzvah, but one person

will get a greater reward for the mitzvah than the other by virtue of the fact that there was more trouble and effort involved on his part to accomplish this mitzvah. One person can hear shofar because he has a shul down the block from where he is. A second person lives in a small town and has to pack up his family and stay in a Holiday Inn with makeshift eating arrangements over Rosh Hashanah so that he can be at a minyan where shofar is blown. The latter fellow will get a greater reward for the same mitzvah than the former fellow.

The Sefas Emes writes that the blessing of the Bas Kol "May you do this again next year" was because the mitzvah of bringing the First Fruits to Yerushalayim involved significant effort. Unlike the Second Tithe, where it was not necessary to transport the produce to Yerushalayim (a person could redeem it for cash and take the money to Yerushalayim for the purchase of food there), a person had to carry the heavy baskets of fruits all the way. For this very reason, the Rabbis introduced the pomp and ceremony to encourage people to make the effort – recognizing that indeed "it is a big deal!"

But, says the Sefas Emes, the year after a person received a Bracha, it was not such an effort. The blessing in effect "put winds in a person's sails" and made the effort much easier to accomplish. So, the Sefas Emes writes, the blessing of the Bas Kol did not come every year – it only came every OTHER year. The next year when you brought the Bikkurim without a blessing, it was harder, so you needed a bracha to encourage you to accomplish it the following year. And so, it went – the blessings were only given on alternate years. Consequently, writes the Sefas Emes, the farmer could only die in the alternate year following the time he did not receive the blessing of "may you accomplish this once again next year!"

This is a cute 'chap', but the real lesson here is the lesson of "the reward is according to the effort". Some people can open a page of Talmud and can go through it like someone reads an article in the newspaper. Some people have to look up the meaning of every Aramaic word, and it becomes very difficult and frustrating. Two people can learn the same page of Gemara; for one it will take 20 minutes, and for one it will take 1 hour and 20 minutes, but *l'fum tza'ara agra* and that is the way it is with every mitzvah. Let us remember this when we sometimes find it difficult to accomplish certain mitzvot: The gain is proportional to the pain.

The Gratitude Attitude

Written by Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

That you shall take of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you will bring from your land. . . And you shall call out and say before Hashem, your God, "An Aramean [sought to] destroy my forefather . . ." (Devarim 26:2-5)

The mitzvah of bringing the *bikkurim*, *first fruits of the seven species*, was done with great fanfare. It was specifically brought in the lead up to Succos, a time designated to serving Hashem with joy;[1] the Leviim would sing, and it would be a time of great thanksgiving.[2] Yet, among this ostentatious moment of gratitude, the person bringing the fruits would need to raise his voice and declare: "An Arami (Lavan) sought to destroy my forefather (Yaakov)."[3] What is the significance of mentioning that Lavan tried to kill Yaakov, specifically at this time of thanksgiving?

In a discourse about the importance of gratitude, Rav Wolbe cautioned that human nature is to subconsciously reject feelings of appreciation to others so as not to feel beholden to them.[4] In this vein, the Chassam Sofer was known to have questioned why a member of his community had begun to

pursue him so ruthlessly, considering that the Chassam Sofer had no recollection of doing any favor for this man!

The person who represents the opposite of gratitude is Lavan. The Medrash says that before Yaakov came to Lavan, he only had daughters and limited means, but as soon as Yaakov came, Lavan began to have sons and was immediately blessed with tremendous prosperity.[5] Yet, in all of that time, he treated Yaakov without care[6] , and when Yaakov finally left, Lavan came with his sons — the same sons who were only given to Lavan in Yaakov's merit — to kill him.[7] Thus, the Alshich refers to Lavan as the epitome of an ingrate.[8]

Perhaps then, the reason why Lavan's ingratitude is recalled specifically at the time of thanksgiving is to distance those offering thanks from negative feelings towards their Benefactor. Perhaps, too, this is the reason why this mitzvah was orchestrated with such joy — to imbue the importance of gratitude that one must have and counteract the evil nature of being ungrateful.[9]

Although we do not have the *Bikkurim* today, this should not prevent us from learning the message that accompanied them: to give thanks to those who have provided us a benefit and be particularly weary of the natural inclination to look for excuses to look badly at those who have sought our wellbeing. This applies to our relationship with Hashem as much as it does to our family, our friends and even ourselves.[10]

How can we keep EVERY mitzvah?

Written by Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

Cursed is he who will not uphold the words of this Torah — to perform them; and all the People will say Amen (27:26)

According to the simple understanding of this verse, one who does not perform every single mitzvah in the Torah is cursed. However, we cannot take this statement at face value because there are many mitzvos in the Torah which only certain people are able to perform. For example, only a person who owns

a field in Eretz Yisroel can perform certain mitzvos relevant to his land. Similarly, there are mitzvos unique to women and mitzvos unique. The Ohr Hachaim therefore explains that the verse is not telling us that one is cursed for not performing *every* mitzvah; rather, the curse is referring to one who is not willing to perform a mitzvah that may come his way in the future. As the Ohr HaChaim explains, one must accept upon himself to fulfill all of the mitzvos in his heart so that if he were to ever encounter them, he would be unhesitant in fulfilling them.

The message is that whether or not we are currently faced with an opportunity to perform a mitzvah, we must engender within ourselves the desire to take every mitzvah-opportunity that may come our way. In essence, we are being told to live for mitzvos, which is only achieved by conditioning ourselves to appreciate the opportunity that they give us to follow Hashem's will.

An incredible example of this in practice was demonstrated by Rav Elyashiv, who had hired an electrician to upgrade the electricity performance in his home. The work was finished just before Rav Elyashiv was informed that his daughter, Rebbetzen Zilberstein, had passed away. Rav Elyashiv immediately prepared for the funeral but asked his grandson to request the electrician return to his home. By the time the electrician arrived, everyone was waiting to leave, but Rav Elyashiv insisted on waiting so that he could pay the electrician for his work in order to fulfil the mitzvah of paying one's worker on the day he completes his job.^[1] Only once he had done that, he agreed to leave for his daughter's funeral.^[2]

[1] Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 339:1

[2] Rav Elyashiv, Artscroll. Page 220.

Short Vort for Sheva Brachos in Ki Savo

Written by Anonymous

In this week's parsha, Ki Savo, the passuk (26:16) says Hayom hazeh Hashem Elokecho me'tzavcho.... and Rashi says that this is the mokor for

the famous expression bechol yom yi'hyu be'einecho ke'chadoshim. The Netziv, on the other hand, says that pshuto shel mikro, the literal meaning of the passuk, is that it refers to that very day, the day that Hashem told them he was making a covenant with them, the covenant called the Bris of Arvos Mo'av. But Eilu ve'Eilu—Both are true. It is easy to be enthusiastic and confident on the day that you sign a covenant. But as years pass, people change, and the enthusiasm wears off, and one day, people decide that the iron-clad covenant needs to be renegotiated. The point of the passuk is that you, Klal Yisroel, know how excited you feel today. You are sure you are doing the right thing; you are determined and have no doubt. I want you to remember how you feel today, and hold on to that feeling, so that twenty years from now you will remember it and remind yourselves about the permanence and eternity of the covenant. In fact, Rashi repeats this idea later in the Parsha, and emphasizes just this point. In 27:9, the Passuk says “Hayom hazeh ni'hyeisa le'om....” Rashi says “Bechol yom yi'hyu be'einecho ke'ilu hayom basa imo bi'vris.” Every day let it be in your eyes as if it were today that you entered into the covenant with Him.” We, Klal Yisroel, benefited from this as well. Many years later, the Ribono Shel Olom said, Koh omar Hashem, zocharti loch chesed ne'urai'yich, ahavas keluloso'yich. I remember the day that you said na'aseh ve'nishma, that you followed me into the desert with love and faith, and when I, Hashem, remember that moment, I am filled with love for you, Klal Yisroel. Every chosson and kallah have a magical moment. Sometimes, the chosson needs to be dragged to the chuppah, and his (or her) tears are not from awe and holiness but instead from holy terror and panic. But then he puts the ring on the kallah's finger, and there it is, the magical moment. For some people, it's the badehken. For some people, it's when they're in the yichud room, and the Chosson gives the kallah something to eat before he takes a bite. Whatever that moment is, it needs to be remembered forever. The love that a couple has at the beginning of their marriage is a resource that must be tapped throughout their relationship, and when hard times come, they need to remember and rekindle their romance.

This is the bracha of “va’eirastich li le’olam,” which we say every morning when we wrap the tefillin around our finger, like a ring on the finger of a Kallah. Eirusin is the temporary precursor to Nisu’in, and certainly does not last forever. But if a person is zocheh, the perfect joy and shleimus of eirusin, of the moment the Chassan puts the ring on the finger of the Kallah, can last forever, le’olam. We give the chosson and the kalloh a brochah that “bechol yom yihyu be’einecho ke’chadoshim,” that you should always remember chesed ne’urayich, and ahavas ke’lulosoyich.

Humor

Heshy and the Penguin named Cholent

Old Heshy Himmelman was getting a little lonely living by himself after his wife passed away so he decided to buy himself a pet. Heshy was always a little different, and apparently so was his choice in pets. He got himself a penguin. He named him Cholent.

Soon after he got Cholent the penguin, Heshy was driving in town one day with Cholent sitting on the front seat next to him.

A policeman notices Cholent in the car and motions for Heshy to pull over.

The officer says, "What are you doing with that penguin?"

Heshy replies, "We are just going for an afternoon drive."

The officer says, "I want you to take that penguin to the zoo right away, or you will be in big trouble."

Heshy replies, "No problem, I can do that," and the policeman lets them go on their way. Two days later, Heshy and Cholent are going for

a drive again with Cholent sitting in the front seat. This time the penguin has on dark sunglasses. When they pass through town, the same policeman spots Cholent in the car. He furiously motions for Heshy to pull over. As soon as the car stops, he marches right up to Heshy and demands, "You are the same guy I saw two days ago with a penguin. What are you trying to do now? Don't you think that I can still recognize a penguin even if it has sunglasses on? I thought I told you to take that penguin to the zoo right away?" Heshy replies, "Yes officer you did. I took him to the zoo yesterday. We had so much fun at the zoo that today I thought we would go to the beach today!"

High Holiday Seating

High Holiday SEATING REQUEST FORM

During the last holiday season, many individuals expressed concern over the seating arrangements in the synagogue. In order for us to place you in a seat which will best suit you, we ask you to complete the following questionnaire and return it to the synagogue office as soon as possible.

1. I would prefer to sit in the... (Check one:)

☐ Talking section

☐ No talking section

2. If talking, which category do you prefer? (Indicate order of interest:)

☐ Stock market

☐ Sports

☐ Medicine

☐ General gossip

___ Specific gossip (choose:)

___ The rabbi

___ The cantor

___ The cantor's voice

___ Fashion news

___ What others are wearing

___ Why they look awful

___ Your neighbors

___ Your relatives

___ Your neighbors' relatives

___ Presidential Election

___ Other:_____

3. Which of the following would you like to be near for free professional advice?

___ Doctor

___ Dentist

___ Nutritionist

___ Psychiatrist

___ Child psychiatrist

___ Podiatrist

___ Chiropractor

- ☐ Stockbroker
- ☐ Accountant
- ☐ Lawyer
- ☐ Criminal
- ☐ Civil
- ☐ Real estate agent
- ☐ Architect
- ☐ Plumber
- ☐ Golf pro [tentative; we're still trying to find a Jewish One]
- ☐ Other: _____

4. I want a seat located (Indicate order of priority:)

- ☐ On the aisle
- ☐ Near the exit
- ☐ Near the window
- ☐ In Aruba
- ☐ Near the bathroom
- ☐ Near my in-laws
- ☐ As far away from my in-laws as possible
- ☐ As far away from my ex-in-laws as possible
- ☐ Near the pulpit
- ☐ Near the Kiddush table

☐ Where no one on the bimah can see/hear me talking during services

☐ Where no one will notice me sleeping during services

☐ Where I can sleep during the rabbi's sermon [additional charge]

5. I would like a seat where:

☐ I can see my spouse over the mechitza

☐ I cannot see my spouse over the mechitza

6. Please do not place me anywhere near the following people:

(Limit of six; if you require more space, you may wish to consider joining another congregation.)

Your name: _____

Building fund pledge: \$ _____

Holy Night

Moishe and John are sitting on a bench and talking. John begins, "Moishe, you Jews are so unfortunate. My religion has so many holidays while yours has so few."

"Actually," Moishe counters, "I am sorry to say it, but we have far more holidays than you."

On the spot, John rattles off 15 holidays that he celebrates. "Beat that ,Jew!"

Moishe begins to count on his fingers, "Okay, well let's see we have *Shabbos*, and we have *Shabbos*, and *Shabbos*....."

I'm a Zadie!

Mendy and Mushkie were Chabad emissaries in Okinawa, Japan, and they were expecting their first baby. When the good news came, they called their parents immediately. Mendy's father Avraham went to shul that morning with a broad smile on his face.

"I get a mazal tov!" Avraham declared. "I'm a Zadie! Baby boy weighs eight pounds!"

"Mazal tov! When was he born?" someone asked.

Recalling the date Avraham's son told him, he stopped and looked at the calendar on his phone and said in amazement, "Tomorrow!"

