

לעילוי נשמת  
מרת עקא עדנה  
צפורה ע"ה  
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



# עילוי נשמת

## ALAI DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"za of Gur

### Bountiful Blessing

יצו ה' אתה את הברכה באסמיה

*Hashem will command with you the blessing in your storehouses* (Devarim 28:8)

Why does the Torah use the word אתה, *with you*, and not לך, *for you*?

The Gemara (Taanis 8a) learns from our pasuk that "*brachah* rests only on what

We need Hashem to help us attain יצו ה' אתה, to remember Him even when our cup is full

is hidden from the eye." The Maharsha explains that this is derived from the word אתה. Only what is *with you*, away from public sight, can be a recipient of יצו ה' את הברכה.

We may suggest another approach. The word אתה can belong to both phrases within these words. It can be read both

as אתה את הברכה and as ה' אתה. When Hashem has *commanded the blessing in your storehouses*, you must remember that *Hashem is with you*. As *tzaddikim* taught,<sup>1</sup> when a person is in need and cries out to Hashem with the desperate entreaty of a pauper, — תפילה לעני it isn't hard for him to believe with conviction that everything depends on Hashem, and to feel a connection to Him. But when a person receives a share of bounty, it is easy to lose this feeling. It takes special *siyatta d'Shmaya* to continue feeling like a pauper before Hashem.

עיני ה' אלקיה ביה מרשית השנה ועד אחרית השנה – *The eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are always upon [Eretz Yisrael], from the beginning of the year to year's end* (11:12). Why at the year's start is it referred to as השנה, the year, and at the year's end as השנה, year?

The calendar begins with Rosh Hashanah, when everybody knows they must beseech Hashem for a sweet new year. It is השנה, the most pivotal and encompassing part of the year. But as the months go by, one may begin to feel

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### Count Your Blessings

In Parshas Bechukosai, after the dire warnings of the *tochachah*, the Torah offers words of comfort: וְאִךְ גַּם זֹאת בְּהִיּוֹתֵם בְּאֶרֶץ אֲיִבֵיָהֶם, לֹא מֵאֲסִתִּים וְלֹא גְעֻלֹתִים לְכַלְתֵּם לְהַפְרֹא אֲיִבֵיָהֶם, כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיָהֶם – *But despite all this, while they are in the land of their enemies, I will not be revolted by them nor will I reject them to destroy them, to annul My covenant with them – for I am Hashem, their G-d* (Vayikra 26:44). In Parshas Ki Savo, there is no such comfort offered after the *tochachah*. It seems as if there are only curses. However, *tzaddikim* showed that within the *klalos* themselves lie the *brachos*.

In this manner, the *Degel Machaneh Ephraim* explains the pasuk (28:66) וְהָיוּ חַיֵּיךָ תְּלָאִים לָךְ מִנְּגַד, וּפְחַדְתָּ לַיְלָה וְיוֹמָם, וְלֹא תֵאֶמְרִין בְּחַיֵּיךָ – *Your life will hang before you, and you will be frightened night and day, and you will not be sure of your life*.

The *Degel Machaneh Ephraim* connects שְׁוִיתִי ה' לְנִגְדִי תָמִיד to the pasuk ה' אֱלֹקֵיךָ תְּלָאִים לָךְ מִנְּגַד – *I set Hashem before me always* (Tehillim 16:8).

The Rema<sup>3</sup> says that maintaining a mindset of שְׁוִיתִי ה' לְנִגְדִי תָמִיד is "a great principle of the Torah and of the greatness of *tzaddikim*." He adds that one who does so will "immediately come to awe and humility from the fear of Hashem." The blessing of

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1 See *Sifsei Tzaddik*, no. 35, citing the Chiddushei HaRim

### ברכת מזל טוב

לידידנו הנכבד הרה"ח ר' יהודה לייב אברהם גוטמן לאו"ט מתומכי מכון "עלי דשא" לרגל נישואי הבת שתחי' בשעתומ"צ  
עב"ג החתן המופלג מרדכי שטיינברג הי"ו, מפארי ישיבה גדולה 'פני מנחם' בעיה"ק ירושלים  
בן ידידנו הנכבד הרה"ח ר' חיים שמואל לאו"ט  
זכו לדורות ישרים מבורכים בבני עדי עד, נחת ושמחה, ברכה והצלחה, מתוך שלווה והרחבה וכט"ו  
בהערכה רבה ובידידות  
יצחק רוזנטל - ישראל יוסף רוטנברג

# Bountiful Blessing

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that whatever was decreed is already underway, and the abundance is already in his hands. The Torah is conveying that עֵינֵי ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ בְּהַמְרִשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרֵית הַשָּׁנָה – the same Hashem Whom you feared in Tishrei, at the apex of the year, remains present, attentive, and in control throughout the year.

We need Hashem to help us attain אֶת הַאֲהָבָה, to remember Him even when our cup is full. One who achieves this will merit enduring blessing – אֶת הַבְּרָכָה – בְּאִסְמִיָּה.

Remembering Hashem does not only mean keeping in mind that our blessings come from Him.<sup>2</sup> It means remembering that there is a Hashem and living with Him, in every aspect of our lives.

וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, כִּי הוּא הֵנְתֵן לְךָ כֹּחַ לַעֲשׂוֹת חַיִּיל – You shall remember Hashem, your G-d: that it is He Who gives you strength to achieve success (8:18). Why doesn't the Torah say simply, וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, you shall remember that it is Hashem, your G-d, Who gives you strength to achieve success? The Torah means that first and foremost, we must remember Hashem, our G-d. The yetzer hara's primary tactic is to try and make us forget about Hashem, so that he can drag us to the lowest of places. Only once we are cognizant of Hashem can we begin to remember that it is He Who gives us strength to achieve success, to feel grateful for the blessings He bestows upon us. And then, our expressions of gratitude won't be mere scripted words; they will be an outpouring of true, overwhelming thankfulness to the One Who grants us all we have.

(כי תבא - סליחות תשפ"ב - ס"ג מאמר א)

# Bikkurim Bunch

וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַטָּהוֹר אֶת הַבָּרֶכֶת מִיָּדְךָ

*The kohen shall take the basket from your hand (Devarim 26:4)*

The Gemara (Bava Kama 92a) states: "Rava said to Rabbah bar Mari, 'What is the source of the saying, בָּתֵּר עֵינֵי אִזְלָא, עֵינֵי תָּמָר, poverty follows a poor man?' He replied, 'It is the Mishnah (Bikkurim 3:8) which teaches that the wealthy would bring their bikkurim in gold and silver baskets [and would take the baskets home afterwards], and the poor would bring theirs in baskets woven of willow branches. These woven baskets would be given to the kohen together with the bikkurim.'"<sup>5</sup> While the wealthy would keep their baskets, the poor needed to leave theirs with the kohen.

My father pointed to a statement by Rashi<sup>6</sup> that even though burning feathers have an unpleasant smell, the Torah commands that a poor man's bird-korban be burned with its wings, so that the mizbe'ach should be satisfied by his korban. Obviously, it is a great zechus to give a bit more of one's possessions to the avodah of the Beis Hamikdash.

If so – my father asked – how could giving one's basket to the kohen be called poverty? On the contrary, it is an enormous zechus!

My father explained that when a wealthy man took home his golden basket after bringing bikkurim, he wouldn't use it for his personal needs; after all, it had been used in the service of Hashem. Instead, he would place it on display in a prominent place, as a constant reminder of his sublime experience bringing bikkurim. A poor man didn't have this opportunity; he had

no tangible reminder of his encounter in Yerushalayim, of the deep and exalted longing he had experienced then. This is poverty, indeed.

We may suggest another approach. As the poor man stood in the Beis Hamikdash and saw how his basket was taken away by the kohen while the wealthy man's basket was not, he might have felt a slight twinge: *My poor mazal, once again. Just look at the rich guy; as always, he does well.*

Such an unbecoming thought, inside the Beis Hamikdash? At the very moment he is presenting his bikkurim and thanking Hashem for everything he has – how could he harbor any feeling of grievance against Hashem? This is true poverty.

Let us now take a closer look at the Gemara's words, בָּתֵּר עֵינֵי אִזְלָא, עֵינֵי תָּמָר, after a poor man goes poverty. After a poor man – the letters following those of עֵינֵי – are עֵינֵי (rearranged). Kesef alludes to kissufin, longing. A person who is constantly desirous of material things is truly poor. Even if he has a lot of money – if he desires what he doesn't have, he is poverty-stricken. On the other hand, one who has only little, but is happy with his lot, is wealthy. As Chazal teach us (Avos 4:1) – *Who is rich? One who is satisfied with his lot.*

בָּתֵּר עֵינֵי אִזְלָא, עֵינֵי תָּמָר means that poverty is found at the letters עֵינֵי, which follow עֵינֵי, because the person who desires what he doesn't have is the real pauper.



The Mishnah (Bikkurim 1:8) states that if one's bikkurim become tamei before

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2 See Rashi, Devarim 26:3

5 See Tosefos Yom Tov, that the Sifri learns this from our pasuk.

6 Vayikra 1:17, citing Chazal.



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this great *madreigah* is hidden within our pasuk.

We may add that this curse and its accompanying blessing are really two sides of one coin. Rashi applies *Your life will hang before you* to a person who must purchase grain from the market because he has no farmland of his own. He feels insecure, never certain if he will find grain to buy in the future. *And you will not be*

A Yid must always be aware that we are not permanent citizens of this world; we are here temporarily, on a limited basis

*sure of your life* refers to one who must buy his bread from the baker; he cannot even obtain grain of his own, and feels unsure of his sustenance.

This punishment is a consequence of neglecting תמידי תמידי — forgetting that it is Hashem Who provides our provisions. Such a person must be reminded that there is no one else who can be relied upon. One who does have this שויתי mindset will not need such an awakening.

This connection is highlighted more specifically by the word תלואים, which means hanging or dependent. The Gemara (Chullin 84b) says, “A man’s wife and children depend on him, and he depends on the Creator of the world.” The curse of וְהָיוּ חַיֵּיךָ לְךָ מְנַגֵּד תלואים is in place only for those who do not feel dependent, תלוי, on Hashem — who do not exercise תמידי תמידי. Those who do feel dependent on Him are תלוי, suspended high above ground, above the physical nature of this world, and receive their sustenance from Hashem.

The *Degel Machaneh Ephraim* concludes that וּפְחָדָה לַיְלָה וְיוֹמָם, and you will be frightened night and day, represents a great blessing for the one who cultivates תמידי תמידי — the blessing of *yiras Shamayim*, true fear of Heaven.

Perhaps, on this note, *night and day* is a reference to *krias Shema*, recited morning and evening, by which we accept Hashem’s kingship — the first step to *yiras Shamayim*.

What is the inherent *brachah* of וְלֹא תִאֲמַיִן בְּחַיֵּיךָ, and you will not be sure of your life?

The *Zohar hakadosh* states,<sup>4</sup> “A person goes about this world thinking that the world is his forever, that he will inhabit it for all generations.” A person’s sense of aliveness is so strong that he feels he will live forever. וְלֹא תִאֲמַיִן בְּחַיֵּיךָ in this context

reads: *You will be blessed to retain the awareness that life is not forever; that each day is a gift from Above.* By this *brachah*, a person will maintain his feeling of dependence on Hashem, and will lead a life of connection.

Another pasuk in the *tochachah* states, הַגֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ יַעֲלֶה עֲלֶיךָ מֵעֵלָה מְעֵלָה, וְאַתָּה תֵרֵד מִמָּטָה מִמָּטָה — *The stranger who is among you will ascend above you higher and higher, while you will descend lower and lower* (28:43). What is the blessing in this?

The Torah says (Vayikra 25:23), כִּי גֵרִים, וְתוֹשְׁבִים אִתְּם עִמּוֹדֵי — *For you are sojourners and residents with Me.* A Yid must always be aware that we are not permanent citizens of this world; we are here temporarily, on a limited basis.

Perhaps this is the blessing of the pasuk. *The stranger who is among you* — the recognition that you are a stranger in this world — *will ascend above you higher and higher* — will become a strong, dominant presence in your consciousness. And conversely, *you* — your feelings of self-importance — *will descend lower and lower.*

We must work hard and daven to Hashem to attain these *madreigos*. When we do, we will be truly worthy of beseeching Hashem for forgiveness in a manner of כדלים וכרשים דפקנו דלתיך — *As destitute paupers we knock on Your door.*

(כי תבא - סליחות תשפ"ב - סי"ג מאמר א)

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being brought into the Beis Hamikdash, he must replace them with other fruits. But if they were already inside when they became *tamei*, he must shake the fruits out of the basket. The Yerushalmi<sup>7</sup> adds that the empty basket is then given to the *kohen*. The Yerushalmi derives this from the pasuk וְלִקַּח הַכֹּהֵן הַטְּנָא מִיָּדְךָ – *The kohen shall take the basket from your hand* (Devarim 26:4), which implies a scenario where the *kohen* will take only the basket and not the fruit.

This is difficult to understand. Although the wealthy brought gold and silver baskets, which a *kohen* could benefit from, most people brought simple baskets of woven branches.<sup>8</sup> The *kohen* doubtlessly had enough of these. What is the purpose of this *din* to leave the empty basket with the *kohen*?

In the *viduy* of Yom Kippur, we say, הָרִי, אָנִי לִפְנֵיךָ כִּכְלִי מְלֵא בֹשֶׁת וְכִלְיָמָה – *I am before You like a vessel full of embarrassment and shame*.<sup>9</sup> Certainly, we are to stand before Hashem on Yom Kippur full of shame and embarrassment; but what is meant by *like a vessel*? A vessel is meant to store goods or to transport them from place to place. What does that have to do with *viduy*?

As a Yid stands humbled before Hashem, he says, *Ribbono shel Olam*,

*although in the past I failed to obey Your commandments, I am at least a kli, a vessel. I am ready and eager to be filled up, to grow and improve.*

When a man is reduced to giving the *kohen* his empty basket, he ponders his situation. *Although I no longer have fruits to give as bikkurim, at least I have a kli. I am ready to fill up my vessel with mitzvos, going forward.*

As we approach Rosh Hashanah, we must seek to instill this mindset into ourselves – one of shame and regret coupled with an eagerness to fill our vessel with positive action.



וַיְבִאֵנוּ אֶל הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הַזֶּה וַיִּתֵּן לָנוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת

*He brought us to this place, and He gave us this land* (26:9)

Rashi explains that “this place” refers to the Beis Hamikdash, and “this land” refers to Eretz Yisrael.

In that case, the *mefarshim* point out, the wording seems out of order, since Klal Yisrael entered Eretz Yisrael first, and only centuries later built the Beis Hamikdash.

The Imrei Emes explains<sup>10</sup> based on Chazal’s teaching that on the night of Pesach, as Bnei Yisrael prepared to leave Mitzrayim, they were lifted by the *ananei*

*hakavod* and transported to the place of the Beis Hamikdash. If so, Bnei Yisrael were indeed brought to the Beis Hamikdash before they were given Eretz Yisrael.

We may explain as well, according to Chazal’s statement<sup>11</sup> that the fertile lands of Yericho were initially not given to any *shevet*; instead, they were reserved for whichever *shevet* would have the Beis Hamikdash built in its portion. We see, then, that Eretz Yisrael in its entirety was only divided and assigned once the Beis Hamikdash was built.

In another approach, the purpose of Eretz Yisrael was specifically for the Beis Hamikdash to be built, so that Klal Yisrael could serve Hashem properly. That is why our pasuk lists the Beis Hamikdash before Eretz Yisrael.

A bit deeper, as a person brought *bikkurim* and came to recognize that everything he has is from Hashem, and that that recognition is the highest achievement possible – he would thank Hashem first and foremost for the Beis Hamikdash, where reaching this *madreigah* is possible. Afterwards, he would thank Hashem for Eretz Yisrael too, since after all, that is necessary for a Beis Hamikdash.

(בנאות דשא – כי תבא – סליחות תשפ"ב)

7 1:7  
8 Moreover, there is an opinion that the wealthy did not need to leave their gold and silver baskets with the *kohen* if their *bikkurim* became *tamei*; see *Derech Emunah, Bikkurim* 4:71.  
9 The source for this is Yoma 87b. In Brachos 17a, it is related that Rava would say this every day.  
10 See *Likutei Yehudah*  
11 Sifri, cited by Rashi, Bamidbar 10:32