

פָּרִשָׁת

כִּי תָבוֹא

Parashat Ki Tavo

*Devarim / Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8, Isaiah 60:1-22
Luke 23:26-56*

The gift of God that Enables us to Walk in Righteousness

In this week's Torah portion, we read about the offering of the first fruits (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 26:1-19*), the curses that were to be pronounced on Mount Ebal (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:1-26*), the blessings that were to be pronounced on Mount Gerizim (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:1-14*), the consequences of disobedience to God's commands (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:15-68*), and the covenant at Moab (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:1-8*). The Scriptures we are looking at for this week are from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 27*. Moshe speaks to the Levites and the people saying the following, וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר הַסְכֵּת | וּשְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נְהַיִיתָ לְעַם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: י וּשְׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת-מִצְוֹתוֹ: 27:9 *Then Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying, 'Be silent and listen, O Israel! This day you have become a people for the Lord your God. 27:10 'You shall therefore obey the Lord your God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I command you today.'* (NASB) Moshe says וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-יִשְׂרָאֵל הַסְכֵּת | וּשְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל "be silent and listen Israel" to get their attention, and then said הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נְהַיִיתָ לְעַם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ "this day you

have become the people of the Lord your God.” This is an interesting statement. What has changed that caused Moshe to declare this to the people? Why would Moshe say only now you have become the people of God? Was it due to their going to cross over into the Promised Land? Do the people only become the people of God when living in the Land? Rashi interprets these things saying the following:

Rashi on Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:9 Part 2

לעם הזה נהיית היום *THIS DAY YOU HAVE BECOME THE PEOPLE [OF THE LORD YOUR GOD] — On each day it should appear to you as though it were “to-day” that you have entered the covenant with him (Be-rachot 63b).*

Rashi’s interpretation is that Moshe spoke these words so that they would remember and consider every day as if they had entered into a covenant anew with the Lord. Rashi explains the word נִהְיִיתָ *“you have become”* to say that Moshe was referring to a previous covenant. It was the acceptance of the חוקים (Laws) of the Torah with a solemn oath that caused them to become a nation. The reason this is written in this way was because on that day they accepted upon themselves the blessings and curses that would be said at Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. It is because they have become a nation of people, Moshe describes them as being a faithful people saying, וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת-מִצְוֹתָו וְאֶת-חֻקָּיו אֲשֶׁר אֶנְכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם *“You therefore are to obey / listen to the Lord your God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I command you today.”* It is very important to note the points of order in what Moshe is saying here. The people become a nation under God as His people by their faith and their solemn oath. Once the people have become God’s people, they are then expected to live faithfully before Him. What we note is that the commands (מִצְוֹת) and statutes / laws (חֻקִּים) were give for a faithful people. These were not given so they could earn their way into the family of God or as a people of God. Over and over again the Torah revealed this to us concerning the purpose of the commands. These were given to one who is already a child of a God by faith. This is how and why Paul

argued so vehemently concerning faith and works, that one should trust in God and not in his own works (*Romans 2 and 10*). Similarly we read what it is God expects from His people simply by the way in which the Lord instructs His people to stand on Mount Gerizim and pronounce the curses.

The Scriptures we are looking at for this week's Torah Portion are from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:9-26*.

ספר דברים פרק כז

ט וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר
הַסֵּכֶת | וְשָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נְהַיִיתָ לְעַם לִיהְוֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
י וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת-מִצְוֹתָו וְאֶת-חֻקֵּי
אֲשֶׁר אֶנְכִּי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם: ס [חמישי] יא וַיִּצְוּ מֹשֶׁה
אֶת-הָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: יב אֵלֶּה יַעֲמְדוּ לְבָרֵךְ אֶת-
הָעָם עַל-הַר גְּרִזִים בְּעֵבְרָתְכֶם אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן שְׁמֵעוּן וְלוֹי וַיְהוּדָה
וַיִּשְׁשֹׁכֶר וַיֹּסֵף וּבְנֵימִן: יג וְאֵלֶּה יַעֲמְדוּ עַל-הַקְּלָלָה בְּהַר
עֵיבָל רְאוּבֵן גָּד וְאֲשֶׁר וַזְּבוּלֹן דָּן וְנַפְתָּלִי: יד וְעֲנוּ הַלְוִיִּם
וְאָמְרוּ אֶל-כָּל-אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל קוֹל רֶם: טו אָרוּר הָאִישׁ
אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה פֶסֶל וּמַסֵּכָה תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵי חָרָשׁ וְשָׁם
בִּסְתֵר וְעָנָו כָּל-הָעָם וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: ס טז אָרוּר מִקְלָה
אָבִיו וְאָמוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ס יז אָרוּר מְסִיג גְּבוּל
רֵעֵהוּ וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ס יח אָרוּר מְשַׁגֵּה עוֹר בַּדֶּרֶךְ
וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ס יט אָרוּר מְטֵה מִשְׁפַּט גֵּר-יִתּוֹם
וְאִלְמָנָה וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: כ אָרוּר שֹׂכֵב עִם-אִשְׁתׁ אָבִיו
כִּי גִלָּה כְּנָף אָבִיו וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ס כא אָרוּר שֹׂכֵב
עִם-כָּל-בְּהֵמָה וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ס כב אָרוּר שֹׂכֵב
עִם-אֲחֻתּוֹ בֵּת-אָבִיו אוֹ בֵּת-אָמוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ס
כג אָרוּר שֹׂכֵב עִם-חַתָּנָתּוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ס כד
אָרוּר מְכַה רֵעֵהוּ בִּסְתֵר וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ס כה אָרוּר
לִקַּח שָׂחָד לְהַכּוֹת נַפְשׁ דָּם נָקִי וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ס כו
אָרוּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָקִים אֶת-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה-הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם
וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:9-26

27:9 Then Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying, 'Be silent and listen, O Israel! This day you have become a people for the Lord your God. 27:10 'You shall therefore obey the Lord your God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I command you today.' 27:11 Moses also charged the people on that day, saying, 27:12 'When you cross the Jordan, these shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. 27:13 'For the curse, these shall stand on Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. 27:14 'The Levites shall then answer and say to all the men of Israel with a loud voice, 27:15 'Cursed is the man who makes an idol or a molten image, an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.' And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.' 27:16 'Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' 27:17 'Cursed is he who moves his neighbor's boundary mark.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' 27:18 'Cursed is he who misleads a blind person on the road.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' 27:19 'Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' 27:20 'Cursed is he who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's skirt.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' 27:21 'Cursed is he who lies with any animal.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' 27:22 'Cursed is he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or of his mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' 27:23 'Cursed is he who lies with his mother-in-law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' 27:24 'Cursed is he who strikes his neighbor in secret.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' 27:25 'Cursed is he who accepts a bribe to strike down an innocent person.' And all the people

shall say, 'Amen.' 27:26 'Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' (NASB)

The Lord commanded the people these tribes are to stand on Mount Gerizim, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin and say the following curses:

טו אָרוּר הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה פֶסֶל וּמַסֵּכָה תּוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי חָרָשׁ
וְשֵׁם בְּסֵתֶר וְעָנוּ כָּל-הָעָם וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: ט

Here, we are told how idolatry is an abomination to the Lord (תּוֹעֵבַת (יְהוָה)). It is interesting how Moshe speaks of the intimate nature of idolatry, speaking of the one who וְשֵׁם בְּסֵתֶר “sets it up in secret.” The point is idolatry comes in many forms, even in the most secret place, the heart, and God sees this, it is not possible to hide one’s idolatry from the Lord!

טז אָרוּר מִקְלָה אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ט

The second curse is concerning dishonoring (מִקְלָה) father and mother. This word מִקְלָה means “to become contemptible.” This is interesting as holding contempt for someone occurs within someone, in the heart. Dishonoring begins in the heart which is then lived out in action.

יז אָרוּר מְסִיג גְּבוּל רֵעֵהוּ וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן: ט

The third curse is related to מְסִיג גְּבוּל רֵעֵהוּ “removing boundary stone of neighbor.” The root word מְסִיג means “divert, be disloyal, to turn away.” Here it is translated in the NASB as “remove.” The idea of moving a landmark is like moving a property line in order to steal property from a neighbor. The rabbis connect this to something that is done at night time. This parallels one leading a blind person astray. (Chizkuni on Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:17 Part 1) Rashi states that the word מְסִיג has the same meaning as the verb in (Isaiah 59:14)

“and he is turned backwards (הָסֵב).” (Rashi on Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:17 Part 1) We note how the land is given by God, and the one who violates this command is turning back a command. Could this parallel the idea of turning one from the command as causing a curse to fall upon one’s self?

יח אָרוֹר מְשָׁגָה עוֹר בְּדַרְדָּר וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעַם אָמֵן: ט

The fourth curse draws in the idea of leading the blind in the wrong direction. The root word for מְשָׁגָה means “stray, stagger, do wrong, lead astray, mislead,” and is written in the Hifil verbal form. The Hiphil stem is generally used to express causative action in an active voice. Here the one who violates this command is taking action to harm the blind as opposed to having compassion and mercy to do what is right on the person’s behalf.

יט אָרוֹר מְטָה מְשַׁפֵּט גֵר-יְתוֹם וְאֶלְמָנָה וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעַם אָמֵן:

The fifth curse is related to מְטָה מְשַׁפֵּט “to divert / distort justice.” This verse speaks of the one who subverts the rights of another human being. The rabbis parallel this to the one who has carnal relations with their closest relatives and domestic animals. (Chizkuni on Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:19 Part 1) Note that this also is something that is done בְּסֵתֶר “in secret.” Only two sins are listed as being committed openly which are idolatry and violent behavior against one’s neighbor. Note Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:18 states that idolatry that is set up in secret is an abomination. Idolatry will eventually become discovered, just like the one who is violent with his neighbor. The Torah adds the words וְשָׂם בְּסֵתֶר “and sets it up in secret” as there are courts which are able to take action against such perpetrators. These Scriptures mention the גֵר (stranger), the יְתוֹם (orphan), and the אֶלְמָנָה (widow) because these are those who are most likely not to receive justice. These are who are powerless if injustice comes, and so the idea is one must exercise mercy and compassion towards those who are less fortunate.

כ אָרוֹר שֶׁכֵּב עִם-אִשְׁתּוֹ אָבִיו כִּי גִלָּה כְּנָף אָבִיו וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעַם אָמֵן: ס
 כּא אָרוֹר שֶׁכֵּב עִם-כָּל-בְּהֵמָה וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעַם אָמֵן: ס כב אָרוֹר שֶׁכֵּב
 עִם-אָחִיתוֹ בֵּת-אָבִיו אוֹ בֵּת-אִמּוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעַם אָמֵן: ס כג אָרוֹר שֶׁכֵּב
 עִם-חֲתָנָתוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעַם אָמֵן:

אָרוֹר *Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:20-24* speak of sexual sins saying, אָרוֹר “*cursed is the one who lies with his father’s wife,*” שֶׁכֵּב עִם-אִשְׁתּוֹ אָבִיו “*cursed is he who lays with any beast / animal,*” אָרוֹר שֶׁכֵּב עִם-כָּל-בְּהֵמָה “*Cursed is he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or of his mother,*” אָרוֹר שֶׁכֵּב עִם-אָחִיתוֹ בֵּת-אָבִיו אוֹ בֵּת-אִמּוֹ “*Cursed is he who lies with his mother-in-law.*” These commands are obvious, the one who sins sexually in these ways receives a curse on their lives from God.

ס כד אָרוֹר מִכָּה רֵעֵהוּ בְּסֵתֶר וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעַם אָמֵן: ס

Here we see the command against מִכָּה רֵעֵהוּ בְּסֵתֶר “*striking your neighbor in secret.*” The question is why add the word בְּסֵתֶר “*in secret?*” The idea is if one would hit someone in public would it be permitted?

כה אָרוֹר לִקַּח שֹׁחַד לְהַכּוֹת נַפְשׁ דָּם נָקִי וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעַם אָמֵן: ס

Here we find the curse for לִקַּח שֹׁחַד לְהַכּוֹת נַפְשׁ דָּם נָקִי “*taking a bribe to strike the life/soul blood of the innocent.*” The idea of taking a bribe (לִקַּח שֹׁחַד) is related to making a false witness (*Ibn Ezra on Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:25 Part I*) This is related to perverting justice and the example is given of causing the one who is innocent to be condemned to death by the perjured testimony.

כו אָרוֹר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָקִים אֶת-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה-הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעַם אָמֵן:

The last curse in the list of curses states אָרוֹר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָקִים אֶת-דְּבָרֵי

הַתּוֹרָה-הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם “Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this Torah (law) by doing them.” We note that there are eleven sins that are listed here in the list of curses. This list is not all inclusive. There are a large number of commandments that were not included. This last curse in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 27:26* however is the all inclusive verse stating הַתּוֹרָה-הַזֹּאת דְּבַרֵי הַתּוֹרָה “the words of this Torah.” Note there are twelve curses which include this last one which may correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel.

If we consider what is being said in the list of curses, it is easy to understand the moral intent of the Torah. We note how the nations involved themselves in these ways of immorality and idolatry. The real question for us, if we were to limit ourselves to simply the moral aspects of the commands, we quickly realize our need for mercy from God. On the day of our death, will we trust in our own adherence to the moral commands as our appeal before a perfectly holy and absolutely righteous God? This is a pretty good question right? The point is we need God’s help, His presence in our lives to keep us from sin. In Parashat Beshalach, we read the following according to *Shemot / Exodus 15:26* וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-שׁמֹועַ תִּשְׁמָע לְקוֹלוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִיָּשֶׁר בְּעֵינָיו תַּעֲשֶׂה וְהִאֲזַנְתָּ לְמִצְוֹתָיו וְשָׁמַרְתָּ כָּל-תְּקִיּוֹתַי כְּלִי-הַמַּחֲלָה אֲשֶׁר-שִׁמְתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם תִּשְׁמָע לְקוֹלִי וְהִיָּשֶׁר בְּעֵינָיו תַּעֲשֶׂה וְהִאֲזַנְתָּ לְמִצְוֹתָיו וְשָׁמַרְתָּ כָּל-תְּקִיּוֹתַי כְּלִי-הַמַּחֲלָה אֲשֶׁר-שִׁמְתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם: “If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his decrees, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer.” There are several significant points that are being made according to this verse. Moshe begins saying אֱ-שׁמֹועַ תִּשְׁמָע “if you diligently listen.” The first part is to be careful to listen meaning we are to pay close attention לְקוֹלוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ “to the voice of the Lord your God.” This reminds us of God speaking to Moshe from the midst of the burning bush, or of God speaking to all of Israel at Sinai. In order to hear God’s voice the first thing we must do is humble ourselves before God to listen to what He is saying. The very next thing is וְהִיָּשֶׁר בְּעֵינָיו תַּעֲשֶׂה “do what is right in His eyes.” We note how the word וְהִיָּשֶׁר means “straight, right, correct.” This is how it is said that one is to walk uprightly (*Tehillim / Psalms 25:8*), which are to do acts of charity and justice לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט (*Bereshit / Gene-*

sis 18:19). This is the narrow path that Yeshua spoke about according to *Matthew 7:14*. Those who are upright, who walk the narrow path, who do what is right in the eyes of the Lord, are known by the good fruit they produce in their lives. (*Matthew 7:15-23*)

The verse goes on saying, וְהִאֲזַנְתָּ לְמִצְוֹתָיו “and you are to give ear to His commands” meaning that one is actively listening, actually participating in hearing by paying attention. The reason the giving ear is so important is in what God is revealing to us in His Words, the revealed will of God. We cannot שְׁמָרְנוּ תְּשִׁמְעָנוּ “diligently listen” to the voice of the Lord and thoroughly hear what is being said if we do not live our lives according to His Word! As James wrote saying, הֵיוּ עוֹשֵׂי הַדְּבָר וְלֹא רַק שׁוֹמְעִים, פֶּן תִּרְמוּ אֶת עַצְמְכֶם “be doers of the word and not only listeners, lest you deceive yourself.” The idea is one does not simply hear the word and nothing else. We don’t merely hear the truth of the Word of God, we are to also live it! Keeping God’s decrees (וְשָׂרְיָהוּ) (מִרְתָּ כָּל-תְּהִייוֹ) uses the word khok (חֹק) for laws. This phrase suggests how we are to guard (shamar, שָׁמַר) the decrees of God as something valuable, to keep in the heart with all vigilance. (see *Mishley / Proverbs 4:24*) This verse in *Shemot / Exodus 15:26* concludes saying, כָּל-הַמַּחֲלָה אֲשֶׁר-שָׂמְתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא-אֶשִׂים עָלֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה רֹפֵאֶךָ “all the diseases / illnesses that I placed on the Egyptians, I will not place upon you, because I am the God who heals you.” This describes our finding of healing in the Lord God Almighty, and concludes by honoring God and His Words as leading to our protection and to a personal healing. This comes when we heed the truth of God in our lives! Notice how this verse speaks of acts of obedience (deeds) more than simply reciting a creed. Note the curses listed in this week’s Torah portion are also involving acts of obedience (deeds), cursed is the one who makes an idol, who dishonors his mother and father, who moves a boundary stone, who commits all sorts of sexual immoralities (sexual sins) and who takes bribes and strikes a neighbor. The emphasis again here is to how we are to live our lives based upon our having faith in the one true God and in Yeshua. Yeshua said in *John 13:17*, “If you know these things, happy are you if you do them,” therefore we are to be joyful in our obedience to God. Also note that Yeshua warned us saying, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the

kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'” (Matthew 7:21-23) Obeying God’s word by living it out should be a joy to us! Salvation in the Messiah, and the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit, is the gift of God that enables us to walk in the righteousness of life according to God’s Word!