

# THE GENEROUS OF SPIRIT HE WILL BE BLESSED

*by Rabbi Yissocher Frand*

## Parshas Ki Sisa

### The Generous of Spirit He will be Blessed

*These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 716, Shliach Mitzvah: Is He Always Safe? Good Shabbos!*

The verse [pasuk] in Mishlei [Proverbs] says, "A person with generosity of spirit (Tov Ayin) he will be blessed" [Mishlei 22:9]. The Yalkut identifies the subject of the pasuk as Moshe Rabbeinu. As support for the idea that Moshe was a "Tov Ayin," the Yalkut notes that the Torah was originally destined to be given only to Moshe and his descendants after him (as it is written "Write for yourself;" "Carve out for yourself" [Shemos 34:1,27]). However, Moshe treated it with a generosity of spirit (nahag bah ayin tova) and gave the Torah to all of Israel (as it is written, "Moshe commanded us the Torah, an inheritance for the Congregation of Jacob" [Devorim 33:4]).

The Yalkut cites a second support for the idea that Moshe was the person alluded to by the term "tov ayin" in the pasuk from Mishlei. When Moshe granted "Semicha" to his disciple Yehoshua, the pasuk says "He placed (both) his hands upon him" [Bamidbar 27:23] even though G-d only told Moshe to place his (single) hand upon Yehoshua [Bamidbar 27:18]. The Yalkut compares this to a generous emissary of a King who the king told to reward a certain subject by giving him one measure of wheat and he instead gave him a double portion of wheat.

Rav Berel Pavarski wonders how these actions indicate generosity of spirit on Moshe's part. If someone asks me to give \$100 to a charity and I give \$200 instead, it represents generosity of spirit. Now I am \$200 poorer than I was before I wrote the check. But Moshe Rabbeinu receiving the Torah and also giving it to Klal Yisrael does not leave him any "poorer". Moshe still has the Torah. The fact that he gave it to the Jewish people as well does not diminish what Moshe has. How is that "Tov Ayin"? Likewise, what is the difference if Moshe gave Semicha to Yehoshua with one hand or two hands? Giving with both hands certainly does not take anything more away from Moshe than had he given it with one hand (nor does it give anything extra to Yehoshua). How does that demonstrate that Moshe is "Tov Ayin"? This is reminiscent of the old parable of the candle - lighting an additional

candle does not take any light away from the first candle.

Rav Pavarski says that we see from here a reality of life: I may be a generous person and I may want my friend to have good things as well, but I do not want my friend to have it AS good as I have it. If a person is blessed with wonderful children, he no doubt hopes for his next-door neighbor to also have wonderful children. However, deep down he is hoping that they just should not be as good as his children. This is human nature.

When a bochur becomes engaged, he thinks his Kallah is wonderful. He is sure that she is the greatest girl in the world. He hopes his roommate will soon also become engaged and find a great kallah - just not as good as his own. This is human nature.

"Tov Ayin" represents that uncommon quality of being able to want his friend and neighbor to have children and brides that are just as good as his own children and just as great as his own bride. He hopes for total parity for his friends and neighbors with himself.

When Moshe Rabbeinu gave the Torah to Klal Yisrael rather than keeping it for himself, it represented 'Tov Ayin' because he had a monopoly on the most precious commodity in the world. He was willing to share, not just a little of it, not just most of it - but all of it, totally relinquishing his "bragging rights" over any special unique claim he had to Torah.

Likewise, Moshe gave his disciple Semicha with "both hands", representing a hope that Yehoshua would become a totally equivalent leader to himself, just as great, just as historic a figure.

This is Tov Ayin. It is not simple to achieve because it runs against human nature. Rav Matisyahu Solomon comments on the silent recitation of the Kohanim after blessing the people with the Priestly Benediction. They say, "Master of the World, we have done that which you decreed upon us (asher gazarta aleinu)." The term "gazarta" sounds harsh - as if the requirement to bless the Jewish people was a harsh decree, forced upon the Kohanim - an edict! Why should that be the case? If anything, the Priestly Blessing is a perk. They get to have their hands washed, they get to stand on a platform above the entire congregation, they get to sing and show off their voices -- it is a good deal for them. In what sense is it a "gezeirah"?

Rav Matisyahu notes the flowery language of the blessing - invoking Divine Providence and prosperity for the Jewish people. They bestow all kinds of superlative blessings on the Jewish people. This is hard to do. To wish a peer that he should have "just as good as me" is not so simple.

Rav Matisyahu also quotes an inference of Rabbeinu Yona on the Mishne in Pirkei Avos [5:19] which lists the 3 attributes identifying a person as a "disciple of our Patriarch Avraham". The first of those attributes is "Ayin Tova." (The other two are "ruach nemucha" and "nefesh shefeilah.") Rabbeinu Yona identifies "Ayin Tova" with a spirit of generosity and cites the pasuk "and he took a young cow, tender and good" (to give to his Angelic guests) [Bereishis 18:7] as the proof that Avraham had a generous spirit. Of all the acts of kindness Avraham did in his lifetime - how is this the proof that Avraham was

a man of generous spirit?

Why did Avraham give each guest a tongue of his own? Tongue is the most expensive part of the cow because there is a lot more meat on the cow than there is tongue. Tongue is a great delicacy. Avraham wanted each guest to have the very best - a tongue. Tongues are huge. One tongue can feed 20 people, yet he gave each guest a tongue of his own.

This is not an easy attribute to acquire. At best, we can only aspire to be disciples of Avraham and work on ourselves to try to emulate this characteristic of his. One who reaches this level of becoming a conduit for bestowing blessings upon other people will himself be showered with blessings from the Almighty as it is written "Tov Ayin - he will be blessed." [Mishlei 22:9]

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This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics covered in this series for Parshas Ki Sisa are provided below:

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