

# The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

Ki Tavo 5783

There is an unusual and curious phraseology in a verse in our Parsha which begs for a clarification. Here it is: "And all these blessings will come upon you and they will reach you - V'HISIGUCHA. What can this last phrase actually mean as it certainly appears redundant?

The Admor MiModzitz understands V'HISIGUCHA to mean that all too often, a person may be the beneficiary of blessings, but sadly he has no idea - no HASAGA, that they are actually blessings. The ultimate bracha is not only to be the recipient of material and spiritual gifts, but to consciously realize that they are indeed blessings. How common is it for HaShem to shower us with all sorts of good things - health, family, wealth, etc. - and yet, if a person cannot recognize the blessings for what they are, he will never truly be happy.

The verse in Vayikra (26:5) states, "And you will eat your bread and be satisfied..." Midrash (Sifra, B'chukotai 1:7) elaborates and explains that one will eat a little and yet psychologically feel satiated even though he has physically consumed a small amount. As Rabbi Yochanan Zweig elaborates, a person can be impoverished - he

eats just a little - but if he is satisfied with what he has, he has everything. On the other hand, a person can have fortunes and success, but if he cannot internalize those benefits as a bracha, he is a poor man indeed.

Rabbi Zweig quotes Rav Schlesinger's Beis Av to explain the addition of the word, RATZON - with [HaShem's] will - in the famous pasuk we recite thrice daily in the Ashrei (T'hilim 145:16) POTEI'ACH ET YADECHA... You open Your Hand and satisfy every living thing [with] RATZON." RATZON is our praise of HaShem for ensuring that we will not only be satisfied and happy with His physical largesse, but that He will also instill within us the RATZON to appreciate these gifts as true blessings from HaShem Himself.

With this explanation, Rav Schlesinger also interprets the parallel usage of this word, V'HISIGUCHA as it appears later in the Parsha (28:15), among the terrible Tochacha curses. "... and all the K'LALOT (curses) will come upon you, and they will reach you." Sometimes a person can experience incidents of hardship and misfortune and be totally oblivious to their negativity. He may be in denial; he may refuse to acknowledge how far he has fallen. Even the dark maledictions do not shock him - wake him up to his unfortunate reality. In a word, he just doesn't get it; he completely misses the stark message

of the curses. In this context then, V'HISIGUCHA means that eventually, the curses will catch up to you with dire consequences.

The message should be abundantly clear. With the Yamim Nora'im just weeks away, it behooves us to reflect upon our lives over the past year. Now is the time to pray that HaShem help us recognize and appreciate the blessings He has bestowed upon us, which means to enlighten us to properly appraise their value not in terms of their quantity and measure, but rather in terms of their qualitative impact upon us. The blessing of a simple compliment by a stranger, the unexpected and genuine smile of a neighbor, the surprising phone call from a lost friend, the small gift, the welcoming favor, and more - are all powerful blessings that can be life-changing. Have we experienced any of them during the past year? I'm sure we have, and if we haven't as yet appreciated them, now's the time to "let them reach us - V'HISIGUCHA!"

In the Mishna (Avot 3:12), we read: "[R. Akiva] used to say: Beloved is man for he was created in Gd's image. But it was an act of special greater love that it was made known to him that he was [thus] created in Gd's image." Maharal explains (Derech Chayim, ad loc) that there is no greater love by Gd to man than when HaShem discloses to man his unique

and singular distinction as partaking of His Own very image.

How does HaShem do this? In the small kind gestures He bestows upon us daily. If we can only cultivate the spiritual antennae to pick up these sparks of chesed, these "signals of transcendence", in Peter Berger's striking phrase, our lives can be immeasurably enriched and elevated.

What better way to prepare for the coming New Year. 🙏