

# Zera Shimshon

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## Chapter L: Ki Tavo (Deut. 26:1–29:8)

### Essay 8. The blessing of easy money

"**יִפְתַּח** ה' לך את־אוצרו הטוב את־השמים לַמַּטְר־אֲרָצְךָ בְּעֵתוֹ וּלְבָרְךָ אֶת כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶךָ", וְאָמְרוּ ז"ל בַּמִּדְרָשׁ וּבַגְּמָרָא מֵאֵי "וּלְבָרְךָ" וְכו' שְׁאֵפִילוּ פְרוּטָה שְׁבַפִּיס מִתְבָּרְכַת בּו'. קִשָּׁה מֵה קֹשֶׁר וְעִנְיָן "מִטְר־אֲרָצְךָ" עִם פְּרוּטָה שְׁבַכִּיס, אִם כְּמוֹ שְׁפִירְשׁוֹ הַמְּפָרְשִׁים שְׂאֵם יִתֵּן מִטֵּר בְּעֵתוֹ תִּהְיֶה הַתְּבוּאָה בְּזוּל וּבְזָה תֵּבֵא הַבְּרָכָה עַל הַפְּרוּטָה שְׁבַכִּיס, קִשָּׁה דְלִשְׁתּוֹק קָרָא מִיָּנִיָּה שְׁנִרְאָה כְּאִילוֹ הֵם שְׁתֵּי בְּרָכוֹת וְאִינָה אֶלָּא אַחַת.

**“The L-rd will open for you His bounteous store, the heavens, to provide rain for your land in season and to bless all your undertakings”** (Deut. 8:12). The [rabbis], of blessed memory, say in a midrash and in the Gemara, **“Why does it say ‘and to bless [all your undertakings]’? Rabbi Yitzchak said: The day of the rains is great, as even a *peruta*<sup>1</sup> in [one’s] pocket is blessed on it.”** (Ta’anit page 8b). **It is difficult [to understand] the connection between “rain for you land” and a *peruta* in one’s pocket. The commentators explained that if He will give rain in its season, the grain will be inexpensive and through this the blessing will come upon the *peruta* in one’s pocket, as it will have more buying power. If that is the case, then a question is that Scripture could have omitted [the phrase], as it appears as though [the verse is giving] two blessings and it’s really only one.** I.e., even if the verse had omitted “and to bless all your undertakings,” rain for our land in the right season would lead to a greater grain supply and lower price, and thus a greater buying power for the money in our pocket.

וַיִּוְבֵן שְׁפִיר בְּמֵאֵי דְאִמְרִינָן בְּבִתְרָא פֶּרְקָה ה' אָמַר רַבָּה בַר בַּר חֲנָה אָמַר ר' יוֹחָנָן לֹא שָׁנוּ אֶלָּא מְעוֹת בְּזוּל וּפִירוֹת בְּיוֹקָר, אֲבָל מְעוֹת בְּיוֹקָר אֵפִילוּ עִמְדוּ אַרְבַּע סָאִין בְּסֻלַּע יוֹצְאִין מִהָאֲרָץ לְחוּץ לְאֲרָץ ע"כ.

**This is well understood by what is said in tractate Bava Batra, the fifth chapter (91b): “ Rabba bar bar Chana said that Rabbi Yochanan said: They taught [that it is prohibited to leave Eretz Yisrael] only if money is cheap [i.e., not excessively difficult to obtain] and produce is expensive [similar to the case in a *Baraita* where two *se’a* of wheat are sold for a *sela*]. But when money is expensive [i.e., it is difficult to earn money for sustenance], even [if the price of] four *se’a* [of grain] stood at a *sela*, one [may] leave from the Land of Israel to outside the Land [in order to survive].”**

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<sup>1</sup> A small coin.

וְאִם כֵּן אִם הַקֵּב"ה הָיָה נוֹתֵן הַמָּטָר בְּעֵתוֹ וְהַתְּבוּאָה תִּהְיֶה בְּזוּל זֶה אֵינָה בְּרִכָּה גְּמוּרָה שְׁאֵפְשָׁר שְׁהִמְעוֹת יִהְיוּ בְּיוֹקֵר.  
וְאָמַר ר' יוֹחָנָן נְהִירָנָא כַּד הָווּ קְזִימִין אַרְבַּע סָאִין בְּסַלְעַ נְהוּוּ נְפִישֵׁי נְפִישֵׁי כְּפִן בְּטָבְרִיא מְדָלִית אִיסָר, וּמְשׁוּם הָכִי קָאָמַר  
"וּלְבָרְךָ אֵת כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְדָד" הֵינּוּ הַפְּרוּטָה שְׁבָכִים שְׁהִמְעוֹת יִהְיוּ בְּזוּל.

**If so, even if the Holy One, Blessed be He, gives the rain in its season and the produce will be inexpensive, this [alone] is not a complete blessing, as it's possible that the money will be expensive [i.e., it is difficult to earn money for sustenance]. And Rabbi Yochanan said: I remember when four *se'a* [of produce] were [sold] for [one] *sela*,<sup>2</sup> and [yet] there were many swollen from hunger in Tiberias, as they did not have [even one] *issar*<sup>3</sup> [coin with which to purchase food].**

Therefore, it is not necessarily a given that just because grain will be inexpensive, people will have enough money to purchase it. **Because of this, as it is said, "and to bless all your undertakings," which is that the coin in your pocket, that the money will be cheap, i.e., easy to obtain.**

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<sup>2</sup> A silver coin.

<sup>3</sup> A small bronze coin.