



# The Path To Follow

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## GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

### Place Your Trust in Hashem

The best way to conduct ourselves with our enemies, with those who are jealous of us and seek our harm, is to place our trust in the Creator and tolerate everything they do to us without trying to get even. On the contrary, we should do as much good for them as possible. We should remember in our hearts that their usefulness and the harm they cause are completely in the Creator's hands. If Hashem uses them as a means to harm us, we must judge them favorably and question ourselves and our own actions, for we have done wrong in G-d's eyes and we must beseech Him to forgive our sins. When we conduct ourselves in this way, our enemies will become our friends, as King Solomon said: "When the L-RD favors a man's way, even his enemies will make peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7).

## HUMILITY TRANSFORMS CURSES INTO BLESSINGS

(BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

**I**t is written, "See, I set before you today a blessing and a curse. The blessing, that you hearken...and the curse, if you do not hearken" (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).

There are several things that we need to understand about this passage: (1) Why does the Torah expand upon the concept of "a blessing and a curse"? It would have been enough to say, "See, I set before you today a blessing." As such, we would have automatically understood that if we do not heed Hashem's mitzvot, we would receive a curse. (2) Why does the passage state "a blessing and a curse" together, since these seem to be two separate things? Why are they not mentioned separately? (3) Furthermore, why does the Torah use different expressions for describing the blessing and the curse? For the blessing it states, "The blessing, that you hearken," yet for the curse it states, "The curse, if you do not hearken."

The explanation seems to be that a person must realize that the primary light that emerges from his heart appears precisely when he embodies the concept of eikev, meaning when he annuls his pride before Hashem. In fact a person generally loves to speak about himself, saying such thing as "I did this" and "I was able to acquire all these things on my own." He forgets that everything comes to him from Hashem, and that only He can say "I" or "Mine" – "For all the earth is Mine" (Exodus 19:5). Thus it is written, "See, I" (Deuteronomy 11:26). This means that if a person wants to merit the light by the expression re'eh ("see"), he must ensure that the essential thing – his study of Torah (the Torah being called light, as the Sages have said: "The Torah is light") – is characterized by self-annulment. Only the Holy One, blessed be He, is called "I," for He is the One Who gave the Torah on Mount Sinai, where He said: "I am the L-RD your G-d." Hence when a person annuls himself before G-d and studies the Torah in humility – when he renounces pride and constantly senses this infinite light, constantly embodying the concept of eikev (heel) – he will even accept curses (not just blessings and goodness) with love. He will accept trials with love as well, and just as he says a blessing for the good, he will also say a blessing for the bad. This is a very significant lesson, which is why the Torah mentions the blessing and the curse together. The way to achieve a complete annulment of pride and the "I" is to reflect upon the greatness of the Creator, as it is written: "When I behold Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars that You have established, what is man, that You are mindful of him, and the son of man, that You visit him?" (Psalms 8:4-5). It is also written, "How many are Your works, O L-RD. You have made them all with wisdom" (Psalms 104:24). A person will then be able to annul all his desires before Hashem, constantly recalling the day in which the Torah was given to us. He will see the glory of the King, so elevated that He alone can say "I." In this way he will take upon himself both the blessings and curses without protest, without saying: "What did I do to deserve this?"

Obviously, such a person clearly realizes the responsibility that he has to study Torah. He senses that without the Torah, the world would be unable to exist, as it is actually stated: "If not for My covenant, I would not have appointed days and nights, the decrees of heaven and earth" (Jeremiah 33:25). He is therefore obligated to not turn away from the study of Torah, either to the right or to the left.

We therefore read, "The blessing, that you hearken," not "if you hearken." This teaches us that when a person reaches a

great level of annulling his own pride, he will automatically feel an obligation to constantly study Torah, without the possibility or the desire to neglect it. Although a person has free will, he has the possibility to renounce it by realizing his tremendous lowliness, as well as by considering the greatness of the Creator. The result is that he will feel obligated to constantly study Torah with humility, as it is written: "Words of Torah endure only with him who is humble" (Taaniith 7a).

The Torah also states, "The curse, if you do not hearken," meaning that if a person fails to obey Hashem's voice, that in itself will bring about a curse. Why is a person punished so greatly despite having a choice? In any case, Hashem warns man that his goal in this world is to obey His mitzvot. This is the objective behind man's creation, for the Sages tell us that before a person is sent into this world, he must take an oath to be righteous, never wicked (Niddah 30b). Before he comes into this world, man has no choice at all. The entire issue of free will only begins once he arrives in this world, where the Satan waits for him, as it is written: "Sin is crouching at the door" (Genesis 4:7).

When a person recalls the giving of the Torah on Sinai and what his eyes saw, this obligates him to annul his will before Hashem, as it is written: "Annul your will before His will" (Pirkei Avoth 2:4), and to obey Hashem's word. There is another way to answer our previous question, namely why "a blessing and a curse" are mentioned together, since they seem to be two entirely different things. We know that a person will sometimes think that a blessing he has received from Heaven is really a curse (suffering and exile, for example). In reality, he must realize that it is only for his good, for no evil can emerge from the mouth of the Most High. It was given to him in order to improve his future. It is for this reason that the passage mentions them together ("a blessing and a curse"), for Hashem is telling us: "Realize that I have actually given you a blessing, and it only appears like a curse to you. It is really a blessing, for suffering atones for the sins of man."

Similarly, people think that when the Holy One, blessed be He, provides them with riches, it is for their good, and when they lose them it is to their detriment. People must realize that this is an error on their part. When something is taken away from a person, it is certainly for his good. It is meant to awaken him so that he becomes aware of some deficiency on his part. In fact he has not fulfilled in himself what is mentioned in the verse, "the blessing, that you hearken." This means that when you hearken, you will consider all things to be a blessing. We find something similar to this later in the parsha, where it is written: "If there is among you a poor man, one of your brothers within any of your gates in your land...you will not harden your heart or shut your hand from your poor brother. But you will open your hand wide to him, and you will surely lend him enough for his needs" (Deuteronomy 15:7-8). Here the Torah actually uses double expressions such as "opening you shall open," meaning that we must not think that this commandment will harm us or that we will be losing out by giving, for this is precisely for our good. Likewise it is written "giving you shall give," meaning that we should not think that we will lack money because we have given. We must realize that the opposite is true, that this donation will be the reason for our success, as it is written: "For in return for this matter, the L-RD your G-d will bless you in all your deeds and in your every undertaking" (v.10).

# MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

## Like Children or Servants?

*It is written, “You are the children of the L-RD your G-d; you shall not cut yourselves” (Deuteronomy 14:1).*

The Torah defines the status of the Children of Israel as follows: “You are the children of the L-RD your G-d” and “My firstborn is Israel” (Exodus 4:22). This lofty status brings much, but it also demands much in return. The thing that is most likely to limit a person is the realization of his own status. A person who is constantly infused with the thought of being the king’s son will avoid every kind of behavior that does not befit such a lofty status. Rabbi Moshe of Kobrin used to say, “If a simple soldier forgets his role, he has committed a serious error. How much more serious is it when an officer or commander forgets his role. Yet the worst is when the king’s own son forgets his role! That is the worse kind of mistake possible.”

The Torah not only tells us that we enjoy the greatest status possible as the children of the King, but the distinctive title of “You are the children of the L-RD your G-d” appears in a negative mitzvah: “You shall not cut yourselves or make a bald spot between your eyes for the dead” (Deuteronomy 14:1). Sforno explains: “It is not appropriate to make the deceased person the ultimate object of your concern and pain so long as another, more honored relative remains alive. Therefore [remember] that you are the children of G-d. He, your Father, will exist forever, so you should not make any deceased person the ultimate object of concern or pain.” Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra states, “Once you realize that you are the children of Hashem and that He loves you more than a father loves his child, you should not cut yourselves for anything that He does, for whatever He does is for your good.” The Torah therefore requires us to act according to the realization that we are the children of G-d.

Here we must discern an additional allusion. Just as the holy Torah addresses a person’s innermost feelings during the most difficult time in life, when a relative dies, and just as it commands him to strengthen himself by the realization that he is Hashem’s child, the same applies to the most difficult times that a person experiences in his spiritual life. Even if he fails to overcome a trial and sinks into sin, and even if he feels that the world has become a dark place and he has lost his share of both worlds, even then he must find strength in the realization that he is a child of Hashem his G-d. As Rabbi Meir said, whether the Children of Israel do G-d’s will or not, in both cases they are called G-d’s sons (Kiddushin 36a). Furthermore, the Rashba in his responsa states that the Halachah follows Rabbi Meir. This sentiment must encourage a person, helping him to find enough strength to repent and shake the dust off himself.

– Netivot Shalom

## A Pearl From the Rav: The Fear of Heaven Amid Joy and Unity

*It is written, “You shall certainly tithe the entire crop of your planting...and you shall eat before the L-RD your G-d, in the place that He will choose to place His Name, the tithe of your grain... so that you will learn to fear the L-RD your G-d always” (Deuteronomy 14:22-23).*

We need to understand how it is possible to attain the fear of Heaven amid abundance, amid eating and drinking.

The answer is that this is precisely what the Holy One, blessed be He, wants us to learn – to fear Him amid joy and abundance, not suffering – as it is written: “Because you did not serve the L-RD your G-d amid gladness and goodness of heart, when everything was abundant” (ibid. 28:47). This means that it is precisely amid joy that we must serve Hashem and also learn Torah; these we must do precisely in joy, not in pain. As a result, when a man went to the Temple to eat, drink, and enjoy his abundance, he had to do so with joy, for in this way he would attain the fear of Heaven on his

own. In fact the Sages have said, “Everything is in the hands of Heaven except the fear of Heaven.” We must work for the fear of Heaven, for we cannot attain it without effort.

## Giving Ma’aser to Become Rich

*It is written, “You shall certainly tithe [asser te’asser]” (Deuteronomy 14:22).*

Concerning why tzeddakah is a segula for becoming rich, the gaon Rabbi Shimon Shkop said that all abundance, material or spiritual, which descends upon the world is actually given to the Jewish people as a whole, whereas the individual recipient is but a treasurer who is responsible for using his part for the needs of the community. A government treasurer, once he has faithfully carried out his duties with a small amount, is given a more important role and entrusted with greater funds, even if his other skills are not exemplary. The opposite is also true, for if such a person proves to be dishonest, all his other skills will be meaningless and he will be fired. The same applies to the wealth that Heaven bestows upon a person: If he faithfully fulfills his role as a treasurer and tithes his money as he should, he will be given a promotion in the form of greater wealth. He will also be made responsible for an even greater treasure so he can continue to do the Creator’s will and benefit the community. According to this explanation, we can understand the tragedy that occurred to Nachum Ish Gamzu, who believed that he had failed to properly fulfill the mitzvah of tzeddakah. He therefore exclaimed that he should become blind and his hands and feet should be cut off, and his words were fulfilled (Taanith 21a). Honorable government ministers normally resign their positions when they feel that they have not properly fulfilled their duties. Nachum Ish Gamzu acted in the same way. Because he knew that his strength was not really his, since he was only a treasurer, he condemned his bodily members to resign their positions because they had failed in the performance of their duties.

This principle also applies to the acquisition of wisdom and knowledge, Rabbi Shimon Shkop added. Man is but a treasurer of his specific talents and strengths. He must therefore devote his time by using his abilities and wisdom for the community, teaching Torah to those who are worthy of learning and thereby elevating himself to an even higher position. According to this explanation, the expression “[I learned most] from my students,” other than the natural segula that exists here, also carries the power of spiritual tzeddakah and ma’aser. Just as the ma’aser of money enriches the giver, the poor being the cause, likewise spiritual ma’aser spiritually enriches the giver, in whom the teaching “[I learned most] from my students” is fulfilled.

– Sha’arei Yosher

A student of Rabbi Shimon Shkop Zatzal recounted that he and his friend Rabbi Leib Malion were once in the home of Rabbi Shimon, and they were discussing Torah with him. After a considerable time, they felt the need to excuse themselves for having stolen his precious time by lingering in his home, thereby preventing him from working on his Torah commentaries and preparing his lectures. He then explained the above idea to them, the idea of Asser Te’asser – give a tithe to become rich. He said that it not only applies to money, but also to spirituality. That being the case, a Rosh Yeshiva who teaches Torah to his students and gives his time to them will lose nothing. On the contrary, he will grow richer! If carefully preparing a lecture would normally take him a long time, as a reward for having given of his time, he will grow rich in time. This means that he will be able to write his Torah commentaries more easily and prepare his lectures more quickly.

– Peninim MiShulchan Gavoha

## Poor and Riding Upon a Donkey

*It is written, “Only may there be no poor among you” (Deuteronomy 15:4).*

This verse alludes to something special among the people, something that we wait and hope for: The coming of King Mashiach, who is poor,

## REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

### False Messiahs

and to whom the poor alludes. Thus we read, “Poor and riding upon a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9) and also “among you” which means because of you, for our sins delay his arrival. In fact he is poor and waits to come and save us. When Mashiach heard and saw that the Children of Israel were awaiting his arrival, he burst into tears. This is alluded to by “one of your brothers” (Deuteronomy 15:7), which designates the most important of your brothers; “within any of your gates” (ibid.) shows us that he is the greatest in the Sanhedrin and that there is no greater teacher than him, as it is written: “He shall not judge by what his eyes see, nor decide by what his ears hear” (Isaiah 11:3). It is also written, “in your land” (Deuteronomy 15:7), for he will be conceived and born in the Holy Land, in Eretz Israel. “Within any of your gates” because he yearns for this, and it will fill him with joy. It is said “in your land,” for the place he desires is the Holy Land, which Hashem your G-d gives to you, and which he hopes to see visited by Hashem. Hashem has commanded all Israel and every Jew to strengthen himself as much as possible to fulfill the desire of this unique and special man, for by the deeds of men, especially the mitzvah of tzedakah, Mashiach’s arrival is prepared.

– Ohr HaChaim

### Overview of the Parsha

Parsha Re’eh begins a new section in the book of Deuteronomy. Whereas the preceding parshiot reviewed the people’s experiences in the desert and the lessons to be drawn from them, Parsha Re’eh deals with settling in Eretz Israel and the laws that apply there, both in general and with regards to idols, as opposed to the Sanctuary of Hashem in His chosen place. The parsha begins with the blessings and curses that are to be pronounced over the observance of mitzvot when the people arrive in the plains of Moreh. Next, the people receive the order to serve Hashem in the area chosen as the central place of worship, once all idols in the land have been destroyed. They are not to follow various instigators who would make them sin by turning them from Hashem to idolatry. The body must be sanctified outwardly and with regards to food, for “you are a holy people.” The people are to observe the laws regarding the ma’aser and Shmita year for their harvests, as well as donating money and showing kindness to the poor, and the release of the slave, who regains his freedom or has his ear pierced. At the end of the parsha, a simpler service in the Sanctuary is described, one regarding the firstborn of a clean, unblemished animal. Also mentioned are the festival offerings, which are to be made in the place chosen by Hashem.

## EISHET CHAYIL

### Obtaining Gan Eden by Her Merit

One day the gaon Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld said to his wife, “You’re the reason why I too will merit Gan Eden.” When she asked him how, he said: “When you appear before the Heavenly court and they ask you, ‘What good deeds did you accomplish on earth,’ you should obviously reply: ‘I helped my husband become a talmid chacham.’ An objection will then be raised: ‘Is he what you call a talmid chacham?’ At that point you must reply, ‘I am a woman. I’m simple and innocent, and I don’t know how to determine who is a talmid chacham. I heard what people said about my husband, and I served and honored him accordingly.’ Naturally, your explanation will be accepted and you’ll be given a place in Gan Eden. As for me, how will I be able to justify myself before the Heavenly court? You must return and help me by saying, ‘What kind of Gan Eden is it when my husband is suffering in Gehinnom?’”

– HaIsh al HaChoma

It is written, “If there should stand up in your midst a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he will produce a sign or wonder for you, and the sign or the wonder comes about, of which he spoke to you, saying: ‘Let us follow gods of others, which you did not know, and we shall worship them’ – do not hearken to that prophet or dreamer of dreams, for the L-RD your G-d is testing you to know whether you love the L-RD your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 13:2-5). He Who perceives the future warns against such a possibility, one that has often occurred throughout history, the consequences of which have sometimes been tragic for the life of the Jewish people. In the name of prophecy, people have done everything to turn Jews away from their G-d. These are not delusions, in which falsehood can clearly be seen, but incidents in which “he will produce a sign or wonder.” The Ramban explains this to mean, “Something novel which the prophet does before us, making some change in the natural order of the world.” The Rambam states, “He will perform signs and wonders in order to fulfill a prophecy, wonders that we have never heard of” (Shemoneh Perakim).

The Torah tells us why a false prophesy can be accompanied by signs and wonders before the eyes of everyone. The reason is because: “The L-RD your G-d is testing you to know whether you love the L-RD your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul.” We need to understand why this test is supposed to reflect the intensity of our love for Hashem. Does this test deal with love? It deals with faith! Even a person who has strayed and allowed himself to be led away by false prophesy may still love Hashem, though he is mistaken when it comes to Hashem. The prophet spoke in the name of the truth. True, the person who heard it may have been a man of weak character. He may be a simple individual, someone who believes in just about anything. Yet to go from there and say “to know whether you love the L-RD your G-d”? Is this not going too far? The Sforno responds by saying, “The L-RD your G-d is putting you to the test, for when you consider a person who speaks against G-d as being your enemy, your love for Him is being tested.” This test consists of determining just how much love for Hashem you hold in your heart.

A mother can never be deceived into abandoning the child she loves and taking a stranger into her heart instead. Why not? It is because a mother always remains a mother, and the bond between her and her child is part of her soul. The same applies to one who loves Hashem: He can never be deceived and convinced to go and worship a foreign god by undermining all the principles of faith. How must this instinct manifest itself? A profound hatred against the person uttering such a prophesy must instinctively arise in him. What impact can signs and wonders have, regardless of their magnitude, when an internal connection to Hashem eliminates every possibility of betrayal? When you consider one who speaks against G-d as your enemy, you are being tested before Him, for this demonstrates your love for Him! The intellect may be deceived, but not one’s love for Hashem, which is found in the heart. A person who loves Him will feel hatred rising in his heart against such repugnant suggestions of betrayal.

– Ouva HaLevi

## IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTARAH

### Not Governed by Nature

*It is written, “O afflicted, storm-tossed one, who has not been consoled. Behold, I will set down gems as your stones and lay your foundation with sapphires. I will set your window with ruby and your gates of carbuncle stones.... All your children will be students of the L-RD, and great will be the peace of your children” (Isaiah 54:11-13).*

The situation of the Jewish people in every era, whether they find themselves at the summit of good or the opposite, is not governed by nature. Generally speaking, there are two prevailing conditions for man in this world: Poverty and wealth. The same applies to nations and states, for there are rich nations and poor nations. Each condition has a positive and negative side. There are nations whose land is poor and devoid of minerals, meaning that they must import all they require, and its citizens are always poor and destitute. This condition, however, enables them to rejoice in peace and security. As long as they are poor, they have no reason to fear that another nation will declare war and try to conquer them. Who could be jealous of them and want to take their impoverished land? On the other hand, there are wealthy nations that possess an abundance of possessions, be it food, minerals, or other precious commodities. People around the world infuse money into such nations by purchasing things from them, and their citizens grow rich through commerce and their lands become filled with wealth. On the other hand, they are always afraid of war, afraid that other nations will become jealous and declare war against them in order to conquer their land. This is what the prophet Isaiah told the Children of Israel: “O afflicted, storm-tossed one” – although you are completely poor, and although the nations should turn their attention away from you and not mention you at all; nevertheless you are “storm-tossed” – agitated by waves, for all the nations have their eye on you and want to possess your land. You have “not been consoled,” for you enjoy no peace of mind. You are both poor and devoid of all worldly possessions, and yet you constantly fear for your very existence.

– Be'er Yosef

## YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

### Rabbi Gedalia Hayun

Unique among the great figures of Israel was the holy gaon and pious Kabbalist Rabbi Gedalia Hayun Zatzal, who exerted every ounce of strength to build a world of hidden Torah, a world of Kabbalah, in the holy city of Jerusalem, where he established the holy Beit El yeshiva.

In his book *Shem HaGedolim*, the Chida states: “The holy Rabbi Gedalia Hayun was born in Constantinople. He was the disciple of the great Rav Haim Alfandri Zatzal, and he moved to the holy city of Jerusalem. He was sent on a mission to the holy city without any money. He entered the holy city and constantly added to his sanctity, exerting all his strength to study the wisdom of the truth and the kavanot of our teacher the Arizal. He carried out all these kavanot in mitzvot in prayer, without omitting a single one, doing everything in holiness, isolation, and under austere conditions. In our generation, he was exceptionally pious. He prayed for the sick, and it happened that someone was told in a dream that he has been saved by the prayer of the pious one.”

Once, during the wintertime, there was a lack of rain and all the wells and sources of water were drying up. All the people began praying and beseeching Hashem for rain, multiplying their fasts and almsgiving, but there was no answer. Everyone assembled at the synagogue with their children and babies, and from there they went to the Rav's home and asked him to pray on their behalf for Hashem to send abundant rain upon the earth. The children were chanting, “Father, give us rain!” He too was shaking as he shed abundant tears, saying: “Master of the universe, act for these ones, those who do not know the difference between a father who gives rain and a father who does not give rain” (according to what the Sages say in tractate Taanith). Immediately the sky became filled with clouds and a very heavy rain began to fall. The people then gave thanks to Hashem.

## THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

### Rabbi Mattia ben Cheresch

Rabbi Mattia ben Cheresch was sitting in the Beit Midrash learning Torah. His face resembled the sun and the ministering angels, for he had never lifted his eyes upon a woman in his entire life. One day the Satan came and was jealous of him. The Satan said, “Is it possible that a man like this has never sinned?” He said before the Holy One, blessed be He: “Master of the universe, Rabbi Mattia ben Cheresch – what is he before You?” He replied, “He is perfectly righteous.” The Satan said, “Allow me to tempt him.” Hashem replied, “You cannot defeat him.” He said, “Nevertheless, allow me!” Hence the Satan came to Rabbi Mattia ben Cheresch in the form of a woman, one more beautiful than anyone since Naaman the sister of Tuval Cain, over whom the ministering angels erred, as it is written: “The sons of G-d saw the daughters of man” (Genesis 6:2). The Satan stood before Rabbi Mattia ben Cheresch, who turned his face the other way. He stood to his left, and he turned to the right. He stood to his right, and he turned to the left. He then began standing all around him, until finally Rabbi Mattia ben Cheresch thought: “I'm afraid that the evil inclination will overcome me and I will sin.” What did this tzaddik do? He summoned a student and said, “Bring me a flame and some nails.” He brought him some burning nails, which Mattia ben Cheresch used to gouge out his own eyes. When the Satan saw this, he was stunned and fell backwards. At the same time, Hashem summoned the angel Raphael and said, “Go heal Mattia ben Cheresch.” The angel stood before Mattia ben Cheresch, who asked: “Who are you?” He replied, “I am Raphael. Hashem has sent me to heal you.” He said, “Leave me be. What is done is done.” The angel returned to Hashem and said, “Master of the universe, this is what Mattia told me.” Hashem replied, “Tell him that I will ensure that the evil inclination will never control him.” The angel then healed him. From here the Sages say that a man who never looks upon a woman, especially the wife of his fellow, will never be overcome by the evil inclination. – Yalkut Shimoni, Vayechi 161

## A TRUE STORY

### Take Words With You

*It is written, “For the poor shall never cease from the land. Therefore I command you, saying: ‘You shall surely open your hand to your brother’ ” (Deuteronomy 15:11).*

One day the gaon Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky Zatzal, the author of *Chazon Yechezkel*, came to visit Rabbi Israel Alter Zatzal, the Gerer Rebbe and author of *Beit Israel*. He found him studying the weekly parsha, which was Parsha Re'eh. Rabbi Yechezkel said to him, “I don't understand the meaning of the verse, ‘Therefore I command you, saying: “You shall surely open your hand to your brother.”’ What is the significance of the double expression, ‘I command you, saying’? The word ‘saying’ seems redundant.” The Rebbe replied, “I have an answer, but I'm afraid to give it to you.” “Why?” Rabbi Yechezkel asked in amazement. “Because it is a typically Chassidic teaching,” the Rebbe said with a smile. Rabbi Yechezkel replied, “If it's the truth, I will accept it regardless of the source.”

The Rebbe stated, “I've heard it said in the name of Rabbi Yitzchak of Vorki Zatzal that the Sages state: ‘One who gives a penny to the poor receives six blessings, and one who says a good word to the poor receives 11 blessings.’ Due to the pain that the poor experience in having to rely on others, it is a special mitzvah to say a few good words when offering them tzedakah. Hence this is the meaning of the verse: ‘I command you’ – Hashem orders us; ‘saying’ – that you say to the poor when you give him tzedakah: ‘You shall surely open your hand’ – that your heart does not suffer as a result, for the day will come when you yourself will become rich, and you will need to open your hand and give to others.”