



**Ki Tavo: Take It With You**

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

Moshe continued to inspire and direct the Jewish people towards a beautiful future with his loving and caring words:

*“Now if you give ear to the voice of the Lord your God, and keep with care all these orders which I have given you today, then the Lord your God will put you high over all the nations of the earth: And all these blessings will come on you and overtake you, if your ears are open to the voice of the Lord your God. A blessing will be on you in the town, and a blessing in the field. A blessing will be on the fruit of your body, and on the fruit of your land, on the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herd, and the young of your flock. A blessing will be on your basket and on your bread-basin. You shall be blessed when you come and blessed when you depart (Devorim 28:2-6).”*

What is the meaning of this phrase, “*You shall be blessed when you come and blessed when you depart*”? The ancient commentary, Targum Yonason (Rabbi Yonason ben Uziel) explains, “*You shall be blessed when you enter the Beis Midrash (study hall) and blessed when you go out to conduct business.*” On a simple level, Moshe is telling the people that they will experience both spiritual and material blessing. Perhaps, on a deeper level, Moshe is explaining the need to take your values with you wherever you go. Some live life in a bifurcated state. I wear different personas in different situations. In Shul, I look one way, yet at home I am different person. I have one set of values in the office and another in the *Beis Midrash*. We must work hard to develop and solidify an unwavering code of ethics and morals that defines us, regardless of where we find ourselves. We must create an identity which is steeped in commitment to Torah, Halacha, and Hashem. We must then take this identity with us wherever we go. Whether we are in the business world or within the sacred walls of our Shul, our holiness and personal piety must always accompany us.

The Talmud discusses the importance of refraining from talking while putting on one’s *Tefillin*. Specifically, one must be careful not to speak between the donning of the *Shel Yad* (Tefillin put on the arm) and the *Shel Rosh* (Tefillin placed on the head). In fact, the Talmud explains that speaking between the *Shel Yad* and *Shel Rosh* is of such severity that a soldier who had done so would not go out to war (out of fear that he compromised his personal merits). What could be so terrible about this seemingly minor infraction? Rav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik (1903-1993) explains that the *Shel Yad* represents my actions; the *Shel Rosh* represents my thoughts and beliefs. There cannot be a disconnect between what I believe and what I do. The moment this disconnect occurs is the very moment in which a person is compromised. It is easy to articulate beliefs - our job is to live them. Our ideals, tenets of faith must follow us every were go and be manifest in the way we live life.

Moshe gave us so many blessings during his forty years of leadership, but nothing was as beautiful as the beracha in this week’s Parsha. “*You shall be blessed when you come and blessed when you depart.*” May you, my beloved flock, take your belief, holiness, and greatness with you on every step of the life journey ahead. Do not leave your ideals behind, do not speak between the *Shel Yad* and *Shel Rosh*. Allow your holy belief to inform the way you live and impact every aspect of your life.