

Alyth



HaKarat HaTov

Yom Kippur Mincha 5785
Rabbi Josh Levy

Milton Steinberg (1903-1950), Yom Kippur Machzor p465

In December 1943, while on a speaking tour of army camps for the Jewish Welfare Board, the American rabbi Milton Steinberg, most famous for the work 'As a Driven Leaf', suffered a major heart attack. After weeks of recuperating in hospital, he was finally permitted to go outside. In his first sermon back in his community, he spoke of the experience.

Let me recount it very briefly, as befits a text. After a long illness, I was permitted for the first time to step out of doors. As I crossed the threshold sunlight greeted me.

This is my experience - all there is to it. And yet, so long as I live, I shall never forget that moment... The sky overhead was very blue, very clear, and very, very high. Not, I thought, the *shamayim*, heaven, but *sh'mei shamayim*, a heaven of heavens. A faint wind blew from off the western plains, cool and yet somehow tinged with warmth... And everywhere in the firmament above me, in the great vault between the earth and sky, on the pavements, the buildings - the golden glow of the sunlight.

It touched me, too, with friendship, with warmth, with blessing. And as I basked in its glory there ran through my mind those wonderful words of the prophet about the sun which someday shall rise with healing on its wings.

In that instant I looked about me to see whether anyone else showed on their face the joy, almost the beatitude, I felt. But no, there they walked - men and women and children, in the glory of the golden flood, and so far as I could detect, there was none to give it heed. And then I remembered how often I, too, had been indifferent to sunlight, how often, preoccupied with petty and sometimes mean concerns, I had disregarded it. And I said to myself, 'How precious is the sunlight but alas, how careless of it are we'. How precious - how careless. This has been a refrain sounding in me ever since.

Alyth D'var Torah - first Shabbat of Covid lockdown, 27 March 2020

... In Hebrew, this idea is known as *HaKarat HaTov* - recognising the good. Acknowledging, being grateful for, the small things in the everyday. Seeing and being present to the things we do not normally see... It is a gift we sometimes squander. Sometimes it takes a shock, a deprivation - the curtailment of freedom, the loss of senses, the imposition of distance - to recognise what we once had.

This week I went to the supermarket for the first time in nearly a fortnight. An act so mundane, and yet one filled with extraordinary significance and blessing..

"I remembered how often, I, too, had been indifferent to sunlight, how often, preoccupied with petty and sometimes mean concerns, I had disregarded it". I know I am lucky to be have had this mundane experience. Many cannot - too unwell or instructed to stay at home.

Nor do I take for granted returning to this Beit Tefillah for the first time in a week - the ability to pray with community in this new and special way. I am filled with gratitude for the messages of love and support of a community over the last week, and for the examples of goodness and care within our community and our lives. I know how lucky we are.

"How precious is the sunlight but alas, how careless of it are we." Not all of us are able to see the sunlight this evening. But I invite those who feel able to join me in the blessing on your supplement sheet - the Talmudic blessing for seeing something extraordinarily beautiful. May we remember to see the beauty that we normally take for granted over these difficult weeks and beyond. Despite it all, may we find within ourselves the ability to see the miraculous within the everyday.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. שְׂפָכָה לּוֹ בְּעוֹלָמוֹ :

Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam she-kacha lo b'olamo

Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign of the universe, who has such as this in Your world.

Israel: Ingrates and the children of ingrates...

Genesis 3: 9-12

וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל-הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אַיֶּכָּה: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־קוֹלִי שָׁמַעְתִּי בְּגֶן וַאֲרֵא כִּי-עִירָם אָנֹכִי וְאֶחָבָא: וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עִירָם אֶתָּה הִמְוִהֶעֶץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לְבַלְתִּי אֶכְלֶמְמֶנּוּ אֶכְלָתָ: וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי הוּא נָתַנְה־לִּי מִן-הָעֵץ וָאֲכַל:

God called out to the Human and said to him, "Where are you?" He replied, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?" The man said, "The woman You gave to me - she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

Rashi on the above

אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי. כָּאֵן כִּפָּר בַּטּוֹבָה

YOU GAVE TO ME – Here he denied the good.

Genesis 11: 4-5

וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֶבֶה הִבָּה נִבְנֶה-לָנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֹאשׁוֹ בַשָּׁמַיִם וְנַעֲשֶׂה-לָנוּ שֵׁם פֶּן-נִפְּוֶץ עַל-פְּנֵי כְלֵהָ-אָרֶץ: וַיֵּרַד יְהוָה לִרְאֹת אֶת-הָעִיר וְאֶת-הַמִּגְדָּל הַמַּגְדָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ בְנֵי הָאָדָם:

And they said, "Come, let us build us a city, and a tower with its top in the sky, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered all over the world." God came down to look at the city and tower which the sons of man had built.

Rashi on the above

בְּנֵי הָאָדָם. אֵלָא בְנֵי מִי? שְׂמָא בְנֵי חֲמוּרִים וּגְמִלִים? אֵלָא בְנֵי אָדָם הָרֵאשׁוֹן שִׁכְפָּה אֶת הַטּוֹבָה וְאָמַר הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּ עִמָּדִי אַף אֵלּוֹ כִּפּוֹ בַּטּוֹבָה לְמַרְדּ בְּמִי שֶׁהִשְׁפִיעָם טוֹבָה, וּמִלְטָם מִן הַמַּבּוּל:

B'NEI HA-ADAM - Whose children could they have been? Perhaps the children of donkeys or of camels?

Rather, it means the children of the first man who denied the good when he said, THE WOMAN YOU GAVE TO ME - SHE GAVE ME OF THE TREE, AND I ATE.

Similarly, these denied the good, to rebel against the One who had showered goodness upon them and had rescued them from the Flood.

Numbers 21: 4-5

וַיִּסְעוּ מֵהַר הָהָר דֶּרֶךְ יַם-סוּף לְסֹבֵב אֶת-אֶרֶץ אֱדוֹם וַתִּקְצַר נַפְשֵׁהֶם בַּדֶּרֶךְ: וַיְדַבֵּר הָעָם בְּאֵלֹהִים וּבַמִּשָּׁה לְמָה הֵעֵלִיתָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם לָמוֹת בַּמִּדְבָּר כִּי אֵין לָהֶם וָאֵין מִיָּם וְנַפְשֵׁנוּ קָצָה בְּלַחֵם הַקָּלָקָל:

They set out from Mount Hor by way of the Sea of Reeds to skirt the land of Edom. But the people grew restive on the journey, and the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why did you make us leave Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread and no water, and our souls have come to loathe this miserable food."

Babylonian Talmud, Avodah Zarah 5a-5b

תְּנו רַבֵּנָן מִי יִתֵּן וְהִיָּה לְבַבְכֶם זֶה לֵהֶם

אָמַר לֵהֶן מִשָּׁה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּפוּיִי טוֹבָה בְּנֵי כְפוּיִי טוֹבָה בְּשַׁעַה שֶׁאָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִי יִתֵּן וְהִיָּה לְבַבְכֶם זֶה לֵהֶם הִיָּה לֵהֶם לֹמַר תֵּן אֶתָּה

כְּפוּיִי טוֹבָה דְכָתִיב וּנְפָשֵׁנוּ קָצָה בְּלַחֵם הַקָּלָקָל

בְּנֵי כְפוּיִי טוֹבָה דְכָתִיב הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי הִיא נָתַתָּה לִּי מִן הָעֵץ וָאֲכַל

The Rabbis taught (in a *baraita*): WHO WOULD GIVE THAT THEY HAVE A HEART SUCH AS THIS ALWAYS [TO BE IN AWE OF ME, AND FOLLOW ALL MY COMMANDMENTS, THAT IT MAY GO WELL FOR THEM, AND FOR THEIR CHILDREN FOREVER (Deut 5:26).

Moses said to Israel, "Deniers of the good, children of deniers of the good!" When the Holy One said to Israel, "Who would give that they have a heart such as this always," they should have said, "You should give us such a heart".

Deniers of the good – as it is written OUR SOULS HAVE COME TO LOATHE THIS MISERABLE FOOD

Children of deniers of the good - as it is written THE WOMAN YOU GAVE TO ME - SHE GAVE ME OF THE TREE, AND I ATE.

Biblical gratitude

Deuteronomy 26: 1-11, The ritual of first fruits

וְהָיָה כִּי־תָבוֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ נַחֲלָה וּיְרִשְׁתָּהּ וַיִּשְׁבְּתָּ בָּהּ: וְלָקַחְתָּ מִרְאשֵׁי תְבִיא מֵאֲרָצְךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ וְשָׂמְתָּ בַטֶּנָא וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם: וּבָאתָ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה בְּיָמֵינוּ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו הַגְּדֹתֵי הַיּוֹם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי־בָאתִי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָשָׁבַע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר: וְשָׂמַחְתָּ בְּכָל־הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּלְבִיתְךָ אַתָּה וְהַלְוִי וְהַגֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ:

When you enter the land that the Eternal your God is giving you as a heritage, and you possess it and settle in it, you shall take some of every first fruit of the soil, which you harvest from the land that the Eternal your God is giving you, put it in a basket and go to the place where the Eternal your God will choose to establish the divine name. You shall go to the priest in charge at that time and say to him, "I acknowledge this day before the Eternal your God that I have entered the land that the Eternal swore to our fathers to assign us."...

And you shall enjoy, together with the Levite and the stranger in your midst, all the bounty that the Eternal your God has bestowed upon you and your household.

Rashi on the above

וּבָאתָ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה בְּיָמֵינוּ הֵהֱם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו. שְׂאִינְךָ כְּפֹי טוֹבָה:

[YOU SHALL GO TO THE PRIEST IN CHARGE AT THAT TIME] AND SAY TO HIM – that you do not deny the good.

B'reishit Rabbah 1:4

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים רַב הוֹנָא בְּשֵׁם רַב מִתְנָה אָמַר, בְּזִכּוֹת שְׁלֵשָׁה דְּבָרִים נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם, בְּזִכּוֹת חֲלָה, וּבְזִכּוֹת מַעֲשָׂרוֹת, וּבְזִכּוֹת בְּכוֹרִים, וּמָה טַעַם, בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים, וְאִין רֵאשִׁית אֶלָּא חֲלָה, שְׁנַאֲמַר רֵאשִׁית עֲרֹסְתִיכֶם, אִין רֵאשִׁית אֶלָּא מַעֲשָׂרוֹת, הִיד דְּאֵת אָמַר רֵאשִׁית דְּגַנָּךְ, וְאִין רֵאשִׁית אֶלָּא בְּכוֹרִים, שְׁנַאֲמַר רֵאשִׁית בְּכוֹרֵי אֲדָמְתְךָ וְגו'.

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED (Genesis 1:1)

Rav Huna said in the name of Rav Matanah: The world was created in the merit of three things: For the merit of challah, of tithes, and of first fruits. What is the reasoning? IN THE BEGINNING – B'REISHIT – GOD CREATED.

Reshit is nothing other than challah, as it is stated THE FIRST – RESHIT – OF YOUR KNEADING BASKET (Numbers 15:20).

Reshit is nothing other than tithes, as it says THE FIRST – RESHIT – OF YOUR GRAIN (Deuteronomy 18:4).

And reshit is nothing other than first fruits, as it is stated THE CHOICEST – RESHIT – FIRST FRUITS OF YOUR LAND (Exodus 23:19).

Gratitude in liturgy

“Jewish prayer is an ongoing seminar in gratitude.”

Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks

Gratitude for waking

מוֹדָה/מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ. מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם. שֶׁחֲזַרְתָּ בִּי נַשְׁמָתִי בְּחַמְלָה. רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ:

I give thanks to You, living and eternal Sovereign, that You have returned my soul to me with compassion - great is Your faithfulness.

Gratitude for the Body

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּחַמְלָה. וּבְרָא בּוֹ נְקִבִים וְנְקִבִים. תְּלוּלִים תְּלוּלִים: גְּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לְפָנֶיךָ כִּסֵּא כְבוֹדְךָ שָׂאם יִפְתַּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם. אוֹ יִסְתֵּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם. אִי אֶפְשֶׁר לְהִתְקַיֵּם וְלַעֲמוֹד לְפָנֶיךָ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה. רוֹפֵא כָּל־בָּשָׂר. וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת:

Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign of the universe, who formed human beings in wisdom, creating within them openings and vessels. It is revealed and known before the throne of Your glory that if one of them is opened or one of them closed it would be impossible to remain alive and stand before You. Blessed are You God, who heals all flesh and performs such wonders.

Modim Anachnu Lach (Siddur Ashkenaz, weekday)

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ שְׂאֵתָהּ הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד צוּר חַיֵּינוּ מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנוּ אַתָּה הוּא לְדוֹר וָדוֹר נוֹדָה לָךְ וְנִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ עַל־חַיֵּינוּ הַמְּסוּרִים בְּיָדְךָ וְעַל נַשְׁמוֹתֵינוּ הַפְּקוּדוֹת לָךְ וְעַל נְסִיךְ שְׂבָבְךָ יוֹם עִמָּנוּ וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ שְׂבָבְךָ עַת עָרַב וּבִקֵּר וְצָהָרִים הַטּוֹב כִּי לֹא כָּלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ וְהִמְרָחֵם כִּי לֹא תִמּוּ חֲסִדֶיךָ מֵעוֹלָם קוּיֵנוּ לָךְ:

We declare with gratitude that You are our God and the God of our ancestors. Rock of our lives, You are the Shield that saves us in every generation. We give thanks to You and recount Your praise, for our lives which are in Your hand, and for our souls which are in Your care, and for Your miracles that are with us every day. At all times - evening, morning and noon - we experience Your wonders and Your goodness. You are goodness itself, for Your mercy has no end, You are mercy itself for Your love has no limit; Forever have we placed our hope in You.

When the *Shaliach Tzibbur* repeats the *Amidah* and says, “returning Your Presence to Zion” (the *chatimah* of the previous blessing) the congregation responds by saying “Amen” and then recites the following, known as *Modim D’Rabbanan*.

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ שְׂאֵתָהּ הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי כָּל בָּשָׂר יוֹצְרֵנוּ יוֹצְרֵנוּ בְּרָאשִׁית בְּרָכוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ עַל שֶׁחַיֵּיתָנוּ וְקִיַּמְתָּנוּ כִּן תַּחֲיֵינוּ וְתַקִּימָנוּ וְתַאֲסוּף גְּלוּיֵינוּ לְחֻצְרוֹת קְדֻשָּׁה לְשִׁמּוֹר חֲקִיךָ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ וְלַעֲבֹדְךָ בְּלִבְּךָ שְׂלָם עַל שֶׁאֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הוֹדָאוֹת:

We declare with gratitude that You are our God and the God of our ancestors. God of all flesh, Our Creator, Creator of the Beginning. Blessings and thanksgivings to Your great and holy Name for keeping us alive, and sustaining us. So may You always keep us alive and sustain us, and gather our exiles to the courtyards of Your Sanctuary to observe Your statutes, and to do Your will, and to serve You with their whole hearts, for we are thankful to You. Blessed is God to Whom all thanks are due.

Thanksgiving after meals

Deuteronomy 8: 10-18

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ: הַשָּׁמֶר לְךָ פְּנֵי־תְשַׁכַּח אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְבַלְתִּי שָׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם: פְּנֵי־תֹאכַל וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבָתִּים טֹבִים תִּבְנֶה וְיִשְׁבַּת: וּבָקָרְךָ וְצֹאֲנֶךָ יִרְבּוּ וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב יִרְבּוּ־לְךָ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־לְךָ יִרְבֶּה: וְרַם לְבָבְךָ וְשָׁכַחְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמּוֹצִיאֲךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים: וְאָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְבְּךָ פָּחִי וְעָצָם יָדִי וְעָצָם לִי אֶת־הַחַיִּל הַזֶּה:

When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to the Eternal your God for the good land given to you. Take care lest you forget the Eternal your God and fail to keep the divine commandments, rules, and laws which I enjoin upon you today. When you have eaten your fill, and have built fine houses to live in, and your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold have increased, and everything you own has prospered, beware lest your heart grow haughty and you forget the Eternal your God who freed you from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage... and you say to yourselves, "My own power and the might of my own hand have won this wealth for me."

First blessings of Thanksgiving after Meals

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. הִזַּן אֶת־הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְטוֹבוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים. הוּא נוֹתֵן לָחֶם לְכָל־בָּשָׂר. כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל תְּמִיד לֹא־חָסַר לָנוּ. וְאֵל יַחְסֹר־לָנוּ מְזוֹן לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד בְּעֶבֶר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל. כִּי הוּא זָן וּמְפָרֵס לְכָל וּמְטִיב לְכָל וּמְכִין מְזוֹן לְכָל־בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה. הִזַּן אֶת הַפֶּל:

Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign of the universe. You feed the whole world through Your goodness, with grace, kindness and mercy. You make it possible for all to have food, for Your love is forever. Through Your great goodness food has never failed us, and may we never fail to share food for the sake of Your great reputation; for You feed and provide for all and do good to all, and make us the agents through whom all Your creatures may have food. Blessed are You God, providing enough food for all.

נוֹדָה לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל שֶׁהִנַּחְתָּ לָאֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֶרֶץ חֲמֻדָּה טוֹבָה וְרַחֲבָה. וְעַל שֶׁהוֹצַאתָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. וּפְדִיתָנוּ מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים. וְעַל בְּרִיתְךָ שֶׁחֻתַּמְתָּ בְּבָשָׂרֵנוּ וּבְלִבָּנוּ. וְעַל תּוֹרַתְךָ שֶׁלְמַדְתָּנוּ. וְעַל חֻקֶיךָ שֶׁהוֹדַעְתָּנוּ. וְעַל חַיִּים חֵן וְחֶסֶד שֶׁחֻנַּנְתָּנוּ. וְעַל אֲכִילַת מְזוֹן שֶׁאַתָּה זָן וּמְפָרֵס אוֹתָנוּ תְּמִיד בְּכָל־יוֹם וּבְכָל־עֵת וּבְכָל־שָׁעָה:

We thank You, our Living God, for giving our ancestors the heritage of a desirable, good and ample land, for bringing us out of the land of Egypt, redeeming us from the camp of slavery, and for Your covenant that You sealed in our flesh and in our hearts, and for Your Torah that You taught us, and for the laws of life You helped us understand, and for the life, grace and love You graciously gave us, and the food that you provide to support us always, everyday, every hour and every moment.

The challenge of HaKarat HaTov and Gratitude – what it asks of us

Mishnah, Avot 4:1

בן זומא אומר, איזהו חכם, הלומד מכל אדם, שנאמר מכל מלמדי השפילתי כי עדותיך שיתק לי.
איזהו גבור, הכובש את יצרו, שנאמר טוב ארך אפים מגבור ומשל ברוחו מלכד עיר.
איזהו עשיר, השמת בחלקו, שנאמר יגיע כפיו כי תאכל אשריך וטוב לך...
איזהו מכבד, המכבד את הבריות, שנאמר (שמואל א ב) כי מכבדי אכבד ובזי יקלו :

Ben Zoma said: Who is wise? The one who learns from every person, as it is said FROM ALL WHO TAUGHT ME I HAVE GAINED UNDERSTANDING (Psalms 119:99).

Who is mighty? The one who subdues their evil inclination, as it is said THE ONE WHO IS SLOW TO ANGER IS BETTER THAN THE MIGHTY; AND THE ONE THAT RULES THEIR SPIRIT THAN THE ONE WHO TAKES A CITY (Proverbs 16:32).

Who is rich? The one who rejoices in their lot, as it is said YOU SHALL ENJOY THE FRUIT OF YOUR LABOURS, YOU SHALL BE HAPPY AND YOU SHALL PROSPER (Psalms 128:2)...

Who is honoured? The one who honours other human beings, as it is said FOR I HONOUR THOSE THAT HONOUR ME, BUT THOSE WHO SPURN ME SHALL BE DISHONoured (I Samuel 2:30).

Genesis 33:9-11

ויאמר מי לך כל-המחנה הזה אשר פגשתי ויאמר למצאתיך בעיני אדני: ויאמר עשו ישלי רב אחי יהי לך אשר-לך: ויאמר יעקב אל-נא אסנא מצאתי חן בעיניך ולקחת מנחתי מידו כי על-כך ראיתי פניך כראת פני אלהים ותרצני: קחנא את-ברכתי אשר הבאת לך כייחנני אלהים וכי ישלי-כל ויפצרו-בו ויקח:

And he asked, "What do you mean by all this company which I have met?" He answered, "To gain my lord's favour." Esau said, "I have much, my brother; let what you have remain yours."

But Jacob said, "No, I pray you; if you would do me this favour, accept from me this gift; for to see your face is like seeing the face of God, and you have received me favourably. Please accept my present which has been brought to you, for God has favoured me and I have everything." And when he urged him, he accepted.

Kli Yakar on Genesis 33:9

Commentary written by Shlomo Ephraim ben Aaron Luntschitz (1550–1619). Served as the Rabbi of Prague from 1604 to 1619.

And Esau said I have much. Meaning much, but not everything, and Jacob said God blessed me and I have everything. Because the wicked, even if they have all the silver and gold in the World, they still feel missing, and they have much, but not all they need, therefore Esau said, 'I have much', but not everything, because still there is something missing. If he has a hundred in his hand, he desires two hundred. The righteous, on the other hand, even if they have little on their hands, they are satisfied and happy with their share, and it looks to them as if they have everything.

Kohelet Rabbah on Kohelet 1:13

הוא ענין רע נתן אלהים לבני האדם לענות בו
רבי בון אומר זו שפוטו של ממוץ.
אמר רבי יודן בשם רבי איבו אין אדם יוצא מן העולם ויחצי תאוותו בידו, אלא אן אית ליה מאה כְּעֵי לְמַעַבְד יתהון תרתין
מאון, ואן אית ליה תרתין מאון כְּעֵי לְמַעַבְד יתהון ארבעה מאה.

AN UNHAPPY BUSINESS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO HUMAN BEINGS IN WHICH TO ENGAGE

Rabbi Bon says: This is the pursuit of property.

Rabbi Yudan said in the name of Rabbi Aivu: A person does not leave the world having achieved even half of his desire; rather, if he has one hundred he wishes to turn them into two hundred. If he has two hundred, he wishes to turn them into four hundred.

Rachel Goldberg Polin, Eulogy for Hersh

I am honest. And I say, it is not that Hersh was perfect. But, he was the perfect son for me.

And I am so grateful to God, and I want to do *hakarot hatov* and thank God right now, for giving me this magnificent present of my Hersh. For 23 years I was privileged to have this most stunning treasure, to be Hersh's Mama. I'll take it and say thank you. I just wish it had been for longer.

The challenge of seeing the good...

Carolita Johnson
New York Times Cartoons

