

Farewell Remarks to Rabbi Jason Strauss – Dr. Jesse Hefter

June 29, 2025 – Kadimah-Toras Moshe, Brighton, MA

In Parashat Ki Tavo, the Torah presents a set of berachot, the final one of which is Baruch Ata B'tzetecha – You are to be blessed when you leave.

What is the Torah referring to here?

The answer is that this set of Berachot refers to the life and activities of the farmer of the land of Israel. That is, when the farmer enters his or her field, they should be blessed in the sense that they enter their work with positivity, purpose, and energy – Baruch ata Bivoecha. For what is bracha or blessing if not the sense that what each of us does in this world has a positive purpose and that we have, thank G-d, the resources, both physical and spiritual, to accomplish the goals we set before us.

The farmers tend to their fields with care, intention, and sensitivity. After all, the soil tilled has no voice – if the farmer treats the land without care, the productivity of the land suffers.

And the produce provided by the land, after nurturing by the farmer, will be of a quality that correlates with the care provided by the farmer. So, when the farmer leaves their field, after a day's work or at the end of the season after the harvest, they look back at the harvested field and forward at the collected produce, realizing that they are also blessed when they leave the field.

Rabbi Strauss and his family served as the spiritual farmers of the field called KTM. Over the Rabbi's tenure, he served our shul with positivity, purpose, and energy. He utilized the Beracha he received from the Ribbono Shel Olam to cultivate relationships between himself and his congregants, but more importantly, to deepen relationships between his congregants and HKBH. He channeled the Bracha he received when he arrived in Brighton to those around him.

Now, as he and his family prepare for the next adventure in their lives, he leaves Brighton with a Beracha as well. As he looks behind him, he sees the fruits of his many efforts in the shul and community, and as he looks forward, he sees the opportunities that lie ahead. Baruch Ata Bivoecha uBaruch Ata B'Tzaytecha.

We extend to the Rabbi, Kimberly, and their family today our collective Beracha that you always feel enveloped by the Kanfei HaShechinah -the wings of the Divine Presence, that HKBH is always with you, and that you know that your time with us here mattered in so many wonderful ways.