

## GUARD YOURSELVES\*

הִשְׁמְרוּ לְכֶם פִּן־יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם  
וְסַרְתֶּם וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים  
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם:

Guard yourselves, lest your heart be open (to be seduced),  
and you turn aside and serve other gods  
and bow down to them.

*Guard yourselves, lest your heart be open (to be seduced)*—Be prepared in the excess of gifts you are given to find that “your heart be lifted up and you forget Adonai your God” (8:14) is their source, because when satiated you will be seduced into thinking that it is your own power that gives rise to the life and wealth you enjoy. *And you turn aside and serve other gods*—You shall be tempted to “separate yourselves from Torah” and in its place make into gods “no gods . . . the work of men’s hands, wood and stone” (Isaiah 37:19), which are called “other gods” because “every day men create new deities . . .” (Sifre). *And bow down to them*—When we worship these “no gods” we destroy the Jewish people by dismantling its foundation of “moral behavior,” because the well-being of the people depends upon our being united in a Torah vision and purpose (S.R. Hirsch).

\* Deuteronomy 11:16 (in Ekev)