

## Re'ay

"See, I put before you this day a blessing..." It would seem from the introductory words of this Parsha that it is not sufficient to receive a Divine blessing; one must see it, recognize the nature of the blessing, for the blessing to be complete. The Torah continues, "the blessing if you will listen..."

Neither wealth nor poverty have the same effect upon different individuals. Wealth may have positive spiritual effect, "and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless the L-rd your G-d."<sup>1</sup> Some people recognize the source of their blessing as being Divine in origin and react by "blessing." As David Hamelech says in Tehillim, "What shall I answer the L-rd for all his bountiful dealings with me?"<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand poverty will bring remorse. The Gemora says, "Poverty deranges the mind of a person, even from his master (G-d)."<sup>3</sup> Of the Israelites it is written, "and they did not listen to Moshe for their shortness of breath and hard work."<sup>4</sup> Moshe's talk of a G-d Redeemer fell upon deaf ears because of the Egyptian oppression.

Yet none of this is universal; there are those who react in a completely opposite manner. The Torah itself fortells "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked, he grew thick and did become gross and he forgot, forsook the L-rd who made him."<sup>5</sup>

The reaction of some is not to recognize the source of their bounty and blessing as being from G-d but rather to say that "my strength and my might have made for me all this bounty."<sup>6</sup> In fact in our own experiences we might sooner meet up with this latter reaction than the former one.

Poverty too can elicit a different response. Does not David Hamelech say in Tehillim, "A prayer of a pauper, before G-d he pours out his conversation."<sup>7</sup> This reaction to poverty in contrast with the previous one is to beseech G-d, to draw closer

to Him. Of this prayer we are told, "a broken and downtrodden heart will not be shamed by G-d."<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps this is what the "Pasuk" means in concluding "the blessing (is) if you will listen to the voice of G-d."<sup>9</sup> True blessing is not riches or the acquisition of comforts rather, "if you will listen." It is how one reacts to wealth that can make it either a source of good or the root of all evil.

First there must be a recognition as to the nature and source of the wealth, and an understanding of its purpose, only then is the blessing complete.

Thus we are first admonished—See—recognize whence your "*Bracha*"—blessing comes and finally—"listen". If your ears and heart are open to the voice of G-d, to the ways of Torah, then you will indeed be the recipient of blessing in the fullest measure.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Devorim 8:10
2. Psalms 116:12
3. Eiruvin 41b
4. Shmos 6:9
5. Devorim 32:15
6. *ibid* 8:17
7. Psalms 102:1
8. *ibid* 51:19
9. Devorim 11:27