

KOLLEL AGUDATH ACHIM

Rosh Kollel

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My father in law is currently recuperating at home. Please daven for Aharon ben Yita to have a complete recovery..

Moshe Teller

Parshiyot NITZAVIM- VA'YELECH- 2023

פרשה נצבים - וילך 5783

Following the Tochacha and curses of Parashat Ki Tavo, the Torah now tells us (30:1) “And it will be when all these things come upon you-the **blessing** and the **curse** that I have presented before you-that you will take it to your heart...and you will return to HaShem, your G-d, and listen to His voice, according to everything that I command you today”. In other words, you will internalize all the terrible things that happen to you and it will shake you up, causing you to do Teshuva (repent).

What is strange about the pasuk is that included in the things that will cause you to repent are both the BLESSING and the curses. Why were blessings included in this formulation? Usually, blessings are NOT an incentive to do Teshuva! People turn to religion in foxholes, in hospitals and in houses of mourning, when experiencing troublesome times. They begin to ask, “Why are these things happening to me?” Sickneses and problems are motivations that bring people to examine their ways and perhaps change them. But it seems difficult to understand that Blessings should be a factor in bringing us to Teshuva.

Rav Soloveitchik suggested that indeed, Blessings could and should inspire us to Teshuva. An honest person must ask himself: “Why are things going so well with me? Is it because I am such a righteous person? I have B”H *parnasa*, (livelihood), relatively good health, *Nachat* from my family, yet am I so much better in my observance of Mitzvot than people around me? They seem to have so many more difficulties in life and problems to cope with, yet they seem no less righteous than I, so why am I more blessed than they?

King David expressed this idea in Hallel, (Tehilim 116:12) when he wrote, “*Ma Ashiv La’Hashem, Kol Tagmulohi Alai*” “How can I repay Hashem for all His kindness to me?” All that I have accomplished does not compare to what I have received. So too must we acknowledge that HaShem’s *Chesed* towards us far surpasses our level of observances to Him and His Torah. Suddenly, a frightening thought occurs to us, that if we are indeed not deserving of the Blessings we have, then who knows what tomorrow **will bring? That’s exactly what the Torah tell us (28:2) “All these Blessings will come upon you VE’HISIGUCHA**, they will overtake you,” meaning, they will catch up to you, and they will expose you, if you are not truly deserving of them.

Thus, even Blessings can shatter our tranquility and feelings of security. Again in Hallel, after reciting Psalms 113-118 praising HaShem with a feeling of euphoria for the miracles of Yetzi’at Mitzrayim, from slavery to freedom and independence, what do we say next: “*Ana HaShem Hoshi’a Na, Ana HaShem Hatzlichah Na*”, G-d, “Please save us now, Please bring success now”. Why this prayer at end of Hallel? Answer is, because we may not be fully deserving of HaShem’s Blessing. Something for us to think about as we approach the Yamim Nora’im.

Shabbat Shalom from our home in Yerushalayim, and our sincerest wishes to each one, a

“**Ketivah Vachatimah Tova**, a year of good health, Parnasa and Nachat.”

Aharon and Libby Ziegler