



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד **מרדכי מלכא שליט"א**
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
 רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
 ישיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
 Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



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Parashat Ki Tavo

"Only Good And Kindness Will Pursue Me"

Our *parasha* states (28:2), "All of these blessings will come on you [*u'va'u alecha*] and overtake you [*ve'hisigucha*], if you listen to the voice of Hashem, your G-d." Later, the *pasuk* states (ibid. 45), "All of these curses will come on you and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you have not listened to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, to guard the mitzvot and laws that He has commanded you."

Questions:

- 1- The commentators ask that there is an apparent difficulty in the *pasuk*. On one hand, the *pasuk* states *u'va'u alecha*, in the past tense, which implies that the blessings have already been received by the Jews. On the other hand, the *pasuk* states *ve'hisigucha*, which implies that the blessings have not yet arrived.
- 2- There is an additional difficulty: the expression *ve'hisigucha*, "they will overtake you," does not seem to be an appropriate expression regarding blessings. For man chases after blessings, and he does not need them to chase after him. Only when speaking about an enemy who is pursuing out of hatred does it make sense to state that he will "overtake you."

People are in the Habit of Complaining

Let us present two points: First, if you approach anyone in the world and pose the question: "Did you make the most of the opportunities that you were presented with in life?" He will tell you that he hasn't. He will tell you about the golden opportunities that he had in life which he wasted and missed out on. He will relate chances to grow wealthy in business which he squandered, because at the time he did not realize that it was the right move. He lives in bitterness and regret over his lot in life; all the more so, if he sees that someone else grabbed the business opportunity and was indeed successful. This doubles his anguish. On the other hand, you see amazing occurrences in which the exact opposite take place – individuals who never dreamed that a particular choice would lead to so much financial gain, and suddenly the gates of wealth and success are opened wide before them. I know of two individuals who were interested in purchasing a diamond mine in Russia. Each one went to ask his *rav* if it was a worthwhile venture or not. One was advised not to pursue it, the other was advised to invest in the mine. He went, invested, and was enormously successful, growing to become one of the wealthiest men in the world. The other, who was originally wealthier than the other fellow, never grew successful. Similarly, I know of a wealthy individual who wished to purchase a house. It was a house that belonged to a childless man, and it was filled with many old items that the owner was in the habit of collecting and using. When the elderly man passed away, the house was put up for sale. His family did not wish to deal with all of the flotsam in the house. They wanted that whoever would buy the house, would clear out the items as well. For this reason, many individuals did not wish to purchase the home. However, one person decided that despite all of the old items in the house, he would, nevertheless, purchase it. He bought it, and upon clearing out the house, literally found a hidden treasure filled with an enormous amount of cash. The second point: There are individuals whose habit it is to complain over the various people who burden them with either requests, questions, or by asking for assistance – this is a mistake. Here, the Torah wishes to teach us that blessing depends upon the amount of merit that man accrues by following Torah and mitzvot. Indeed, one must **merit** having blessing and success chase after him and having opportunities present themselves without effort



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on his part. Such an individual will also be constantly burdened because of all the matters of Torah, mitzvot, *tzedakah*, and *chessed*, and good deeds that will constantly occupy him, as we will soon explain.

Answer of the Seforno

Now we can explain the *pesukim* mentioned above. The Seforno comments on the *pasuk*, "All of these blessings will come on you [*u'va'u alecha*] and overtake you [*ve'hisigucha*]" – even though you do not exert an effort to obtain them. "If you listen to the voice of Hashem, your G-d" – This will only be when your Torah study is performed on a permanent basis and your work on a temporary basis. Then the blessings will overtake you even without effort on your part.

Explanation of the *Degel Efraim*

The *Degel Efraim* offers an explanation based on the words of David HaMelech (*Tehillim* 23:6), "Only good and kindness will pursue me all the days of my life" – He asks, how is it possible that kindness should chase after someone? He explains that sometimes an individual thinks that something in particular is not good for him, and he therefore does not wish to do that particular thing. Even though he distances himself from it, Hashem nevertheless, gives it to him. Only afterwards does he realize the tremendous blessing that was vested in this item. According to his explanation, *u'va'u alecha* refers to an individual who was presented with an opportunity that he does not wish to take, because he does not feel that it is good for him. Nevertheless, Hashem gives it to him – it overtakes him. Then he ultimately realizes that what he had been given was truly a blessing.

True Story About How Blessing Pursued an Individual

The following story follows the theme mentioned by the *Degel Efraim*: The *Ben Ish Chai* relates a story about a simple man who earned a stable living, but was not wealthy. One day, his wife heard that many fish were brought to sell in the market that day. As it had happened, that day, the fisherman caught many fish in his net. All of them had been the sought after type of fish known in Arabic as *Beini*, which are sold at a cheap cost. She pressured her husband to go to the market and buy a fish. He refused, lazily excusing himself for a number of reasons. After urging him countless times, he was forced to go. Now, all of the fish that the seller in the market had stocked in his store were the popular *Beini* fish. He had only one big fish that was of the breed known as *Goton*, a fish of inferior quality. This seller wanted very much to sell this fish. However, no one agreed to buy it, despite the fact that he said that he would sell it at half-price. "Who would want to buy a fish of inferior quality when there is one of higher quality in front of his eyes?" they asked the seller incredulously. Despite all of his urging, there was not one customer who wished to buy it. When this man approached the seller, the seller noticed that the man was not the shrewd type; he therefore hoped that he could persuade him to buy the fish. He showed him the fish and said, "Buy this fish, for it is very large, and I will sell it to you at half-price." The man did not wish to buy it, thinking, *Now my wife with quarrel with me, saying, 'Why did you buy the inferior Gotten fish, when there was a higher quality fish which everyone is buying?'* To make matters short, after countless attempts to convince him, he finally agreed to buy the fish for a quarter of the price. After he brought the fish back to his house, he thought that if he would give the fish to his wife, she would certainly argue with him, force him to return it, and buy the other fish instead. He therefore entered the kitchen, took a knife and cut the fish into small pieces. This way, his wife would not recognize the fish, and even if she would recognize it, she would not force him to return it since it was already cut. As he was cutting the fish into pieces, he discovered an expensive pearl inside of it. He immediately brought it to a very wealthy man from his city, hoping that he would sell it for him. When the wealthy man saw the pearl, he marveled at it, and asked him, "Where did you get such



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a pearl from?" So the man revealed the entire story to him. The wealthy man therefore responded, "Since you have told me your story, I will tell you where my wealth came from. It is a similar story to yours." He related that his father had not been particularly wealthy. One time he got very sick, but was cured by an expert doctor. After he was healed, the doctor instructed him to go outside the city and set up a tent on a plateau of land situated on the river bank. There the air was crisp and clean, and vital in order for him to strengthen himself and regain his health. Outside the city, there was a large plot of land where rich men pitched their tents two months out of the year, in Iyar and Sivan. They would pay the local government a certain amount of *dinarim* for each tent they occupied. The doctor told him, "You should go there early, in Nissan. Go and pitch a tent in an area that you like, because at that time, there will not be anyone else vying for the place. Whoever gets there first, will get the place that he wants." He continued that his father did not wish to do as the doctor said, and especially not to go there early. Finally, after much persuasion, the doctor got the man to take his tent and set it up in the month of Nissan. Indeed, he saw a large area of land before him, one which he found a pleasing site upon which to erect his tent. However, after he set it up, he changed his mind and decided to pitch it on a different side. He changed his mind three or four times after that. In the last place, as he hammered the final stake into the ground, he noticed something odd. As the stake entered the ground, it formed a gaping hole before him, into which the stake totally sank. When he attempted to pull out the stake, he cleared away the dirt and saw a small dish in front of him. Much to his surprise, he found it full of precious gems and expensive pearls, and he suddenly became enormously wealthy. "This is how my father gained all of his wealth," exclaimed the man, "and I inherited it all from him."

Involvement With Tzedakah and Chessed Saves an Individual From Harsh Decrees

Our Sages state in *Masechet Avot* (3:5), "Rebbi Nechunia ben Hakannah said: If one who accepts the yoke of Torah upon himself, he removes from himself the yoke of the kingdom and of livelihood. And all who remove the yoke of Torah from themselves, they place upon him the yoke of the kingdom and of livelihood." The words of the Tanna can be explained by what our Sages state in *Masechet Sanhedrin* (99b), "Said Rebbi Elazar: Every man was created to toil, as the *pasuk* states, 'Man was created to toil.' But I do not know if he was created to toil in conversation or toil in labor. When the *pasuk* states, '[The working spirit labors for itself,] when its mouth humbles itself to it,' we see that man was created to toil with his mouth. However, I still do not know if he is meant to toil in Torah or worldly conversation. When the *pasuk* states, 'This Torah scroll should not cease from your mouth,' I see that it is talking about toiling in Torah. This is as Rava said: All bodies must toil; praiseworthy is the one whose toil is in Torah." We see from here that it was decreed that each man should have a yoke, for this is why he was created. The question is only which yoke he will bear. Therefore, there are two types of individuals in the world. There is one whose yoke is that of Torah and mitzvot. Then there is another whose yoke are the burdens and troubles of life. Therefore the Torah states that one who merits, accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah and mitzvot, and these become his burdens. This is true blessing. However, one who casts off the yoke of Torah from himself, receives the yoke of worldly troubles that affect his body and property.

Words of Mussar

You now see just how much an individual errs by thinking that all of his success depends on his wisdom and planning. He wonders why his lot turned out the way it did, and why he did not invest in particular investments that would have made him a wealthy man. This is especially true when he sees that his friend **did** succeed. However, the Torah teaches us that the opposite is true. Only by performing Torah and mitzvot can an individual



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merit having blessing pursue him. Only then, will he merit golden business opportunities. Furthermore, sometimes his rest is disturbed at home or at work by various requests for *tzedakah* and *chessed*, requests that ultimately lead him to wish that he would just be left alone. However, the Torah teaches us that it is a merit to have his lot changed from bearing the yoke of earning a livelihood, to the yoke of giving *tzedakah* and performing *chessed*. For every man in the world has his yoke of burdens and problems. The question is only if they are problems related to health, children, one's spouse, employees, property, income-tax, or many other issues. On the other hand, the yoke could be that of *tzedakah* and *chessed*. There is no doubt that everyone would choose the yoke of *tzedakah* and *chessed*. For besides the fact that his body does not suffer from it, he also earns reward for his deeds. Therefore, he must rejoice over every burden and disturbance that comes as a result of Torah and mitzvah responsibilities, for it is in place of the other, mundane yoke. This is especially true in the month of Elul, when it is important to perform much *tzedakah and chessed*. This is as the Arizal teaches that the combination of Hashem's Four Letter Name corresponding to the month of Elul is alluded to in the *pasuk* (*Devarim* 6:25), וַיִּצְדָּקָה תְהִיָּה לָנוּ כִּי־נִשְׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת, ["And it will be righteousness for us, for we guarded all of this mitzvah..."]. This hints to the fact that *tzedakah* is an essential aspect of Elul. By doing so, we will merit seeing a fulfillment of the blessings stated in the Torah, according to all the various explanations. We should all be blessed with a *Ketivah va'Chatimah Tovah*.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka