

Reign Over Rain

PARSHA INSIGHTS - KI SAVO (5759)

BLESSINGS THAT REALLY COUNT

“All these blessings will come upon you AND OVERTAKE YOU if you listen to the voice of Hashem your G-d” (28:2). The puzzlement is obvious. What need is there to tell us that Hashem’s bounty will come upon us AND WILL CATCH UP WITH US? Is there some hidden message?

Surely, various approaches can be taken to explain the matter. Rav Zalman Sorotzkin interprets it as follows. It is possible for abundant blessings to arrive on earth, but for humans to gain nothing from them. How so?

Here is what the *Chazal* [Sages] tell us in the *Gemara Rosh Hashana* 17B. In a *pasuk* [verse] in *parshas Aikev* (11:12), the Torah states that Israel is a land which “Hashem your G-d cares for; the eyes of Hashem your G-d are constantly directed to it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year.” The *Gemara* remarks, based on *Rashi*: Sometimes Hashem’s benevolent treatment of the land, in the form of rain at certain intervals, is more “lenient” for *Bnai Yisroel* [the Children of Israel] than what was decreed on *Rosh Hashana*. In other years, numerous blessings ordained on *Rosh Hashana* are modified negatively later in the year. How does this work?

If the actions of the Jews are evil at the time of *Rosh Hashana*, Hashem might plan very little rain in *Eretz Yisroel* [the Land of Israel] that year. What if they repent after *Rosh Hashana*? The decree for lack of rain has already been sealed, so the volume will not be increased. Instead, Hashem brings that little bit of rain in the most beneficial way. It arrives at times favorable for agriculture, on fields, vineyards, and gardens, locations that benefit greatly from precipitation. What about the opposite case? Let us say *Bnai Yisroel* are behaving properly at *Rosh Hashana*, so Hashem decrees loads of blessed rain for the year. If, G-d forbid, their actions deteriorate, Hashem will not alter the original edict. Instead, that same amount of rain falls, but in a very inappropriate manner. It comes at times unfavorable for planting and harvesting, in forests and deserts. Such downpours are of little or no advantage to farmers.

Rav Sorotzkin declares that after seeing this statement of the sages, our *pasuk* is understandable. “All these blessings will come upon you AND OVERTAKE YOU” - you will actually benefit from them! Cloudbursts will not occur over desolate wastelands, rather in your orchards and fields. That is the meaning of “*vihisigucha*” [and overtake you] that Hashem’s bounty will not merely fall to earth in a useless way; it will catch up with you. This is only possible if “you listen to the voice of Hashem”, as our *pasuk* states.

As we approach the new year, may these promises be fulfilled in our very own lives.

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