

"The blessing: that you listen to the commands of Hashem your G-d ... And the curse if you will not listen to the commands of Hashem your G-d." (11:27-28)

Significantly, in reference to the blessing the *Torah* does not state "if you will listen," but "that you will listen." Hashem does not promise us earthly blessings because we have fulfilled His precepts. On the contrary, He wants us to fulfill His precepts in order that we be motivated towards an even higher level of adherence to *Torah* and *mitzvos*. In fact, greater material abundance strengthens our ability to translate Hashem's laws into concrete practice. Indeed, fulfilling the *mitzvah* of "tzitzis" obviously requires the possessions of a garment, while the *mitzvah* of *mezuzah* requires one to maintain a form of ownership over a dwelling place. Fulfilling the *mitzvah* of "milah" requires a male child, and the Shabbos is the culmination of a work filled week. Likewise, Hashem is prepared to grant us abundant material blessing in order to enable us to appropriately fulfill His *mitzvos* and subjugate our lives to His Divine Will.

Blessing precedes our acts of duty towards Hashem. Our observance of *mitzvos*, in turn, effects increased blessings. Curses, on the other hand, are the result of a life estranged from Hashem. They remind us to realign ourselves with Him. This is the meaning of the *posuk* "that you shall listen." Through His blessings, Hashem enables us to fulfill the demands of His Will. The statement "and the curse if we do not listen" is the converse of this principle. If we fail to listen and accept His voice, Divine curse will be the result. The *Torah*, reinforced by *Chazal*, asserts that ultimate reward is not received in this material world. For an individual to live up to all the demands of the Divine imperative, however, material blessing is inherently necessary. We should be cognizant of our blessings and use them to fulfill the obligations which accompany them.