

All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you, if you hearken to the voice of Hashem, your G-d. (28:2)

The word *v'he'sigucha*, “will overtake you,” is enigmatic. Are we running from blessing, that it must overtake us? If that is the case, let us stop running! The answer is simple. At times, a person thinks he is chasing blessing, when, in truth, what he is pursuing is far from a blessing. What he thinks is beneficial and fortuitous could actually catalyze his downfall. Thus, the Torah tells us that the blessing, the **real blessing** – the one which **we** mistakenly thought was not a blessing – will overtake us, even though we have done everything to prevent it from reaching us.

Horav Zev Weinberger, Shlita, suggests a practical explanation. The blessings will overtake/reach the person as he is **now**. The blessings will not transform him into a different person – one who is far-removed from the present decent person he is today. Success can often have a harmful effect on a person who is not prepared to deal with the changes that occur. Financial success, and prestige tend to catapult a person into an arena for which he is often ill-prepared. *V'achalta, v'savata... he'shamru la'chem pen yifteh le'vavchem*, “And you will eat, and you will be satisfied... Beware for yourselves, lest your heart be seduced” (*Devarim* 11:15,16). Success and satisfaction can go to a person's head and have an ignominious effect on his personality and lifestyle.

Hashem is telling us that the blessing will reach us – as we are. Blessing will not change us. That alone is a blessing. Likewise, when the Torah issues the curse, “And all these curses will come upon you and overtake you” (*Ibid.* 28:15), Hashem is saying that even when we are cursed, we should not despair. Hashem will not abandon us. The curses will change neither us nor our relationship with Hashem. He will always be there for us.

The *v'he'sigucha* has taken place in our generation – especially with regard to the curses over the centuries, particularly during the recent European Holocaust. It has undergone most of the ninety-eight curses detailed in the *Tochechah*, Rebuke, of *Parashas Ki Savo*. We have seen good, observant Jews who were destroyed physically, emotionally and spiritually as a result of the recent *k'lalos*, curses. They suffered so much; they lost everything. They cannot be blamed in any way. Yet, there are those in whom the *v'he'sigucha* has been active, in full force. They suffered beyond belief, but emerged with even greater faith in the Almighty. He never abandoned them, and they knew it.

A prime example of this type of spiritual super-hero was the *Klausenberger Rebbe, zl*. During the war he was imprisoned in the concentration camps and subjected to cruel and bitter punishment. Yet, despite the misery and pain which he endured, he emerged from the Holocaust a much stronger person. The uncanny devotion forged by his relationship with Hashem was almost beyond description. His adherence to every *mitzvah* of the Torah under the most difficult and life-threatening circumstances has become legend. He did not, however, stop with his own personal spiritual development. He was a man on a mission – one that he accomplished to the best of his

ability.

To fully comprehend the significance of the *Rebbe's* actions fully, during – and especially following – the war, one must understand the emotional state of the survivor. These men, women and children were shattered, body and soul. Hashem's Rebuke was executed on them. These were emotional wounds that would never heal. This was especially true after the war, since during the war, they suppressed all of their emotions and did not allow themselves to think. Following liberation, they were able to sit and think about the members of their families who had fallen victim to Hitler's diabolical persecution. When they began to look at what they once had and the shards to which they were now relegated, they were overcome with helplessness. Hope for a Jew is like air. It defines his Jewishness, because a Jew does not give up hope. What made it worse was the notion that while they lay bleeding and dying on the blood-soaked soil of Europe, an indifferent world chose not to care. Every survivor was affected by this spiritual crisis. They blamed G-d and eschewed His service.

The *Klausenberger* was like the phoenix, a powerful bird, who according to legend supposedly rose from the ashes. The *Rebbe* was everything to his survivors: he was their *Rebbe*, father, mother and sibling. His life following the war was wholly dedicated to reaching out to all Jews. He was a primary example of one who had suffered greatly – yet continued on with his faith in Hashem unabated. A surrogate father to many young orphans who survived the war, bereft of their families, the *Rebbe* was the address for both the many young people who needed a shoulder to cry on, and to those who had become emotionally numb and could no longer cry.

Countless stories abound about his heroic efforts to provide spiritual sustenance to the survivors – but that really is what we expect of a Torah giant. What impressed me and others was the special care and extreme sensitivity, he demonstrated to the young orphans from a **physical** perspective. The *Rebbe* acted as a father and mother to so many emotionally scarred children. Indeed, he worried over “his” orphans as if they were, indeed, his biological children.

One poignant story says it all. Fifty years after the war, following the *Rebbe's* passing, his family was visited during the *shivah*, seven-day period of mourning, by a woman who had been in the Feldafing DP Camp. She related to the family how, as a young girl, she had been so poor that she walked around the DP camp with no socks. Upon seeing her one day, the *Rebbe* took off his own socks in the middle of the street and gave them to her saying, “It is unbecoming/*Es past nischt*, for a Jewish girl to have to walk around this way.”

He was a Torah giant whose concern for the Jewish People emanated from love – fatherly love. He exemplified the Jew who was dealt a curse, but did not allow it to affect him personally. Even when we are cursed, Hashem does not abandon us. We will continue in our commitment, despite the necessary “slap” that we have received – because it is the slap of our Heavenly Father – a slap of love.