

LUCKY MAN

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

"And He said to him, 'so shall be your offspring'." Beresheet 15:9

Hash-em appeared to Abram and told him to leave his tent and go out into the night. Abram complied and was lifted above the stars.

Hash-em then promised him, "So will be your offspring - the Jewish people will be like the stars". Abram objected. "You have promised me great blessings - a great nation -the land of Israel - and the Torah. But I have checked my astrology and see that I am not destined to have any children at all. What good are the generous blessings if my servant will inherit me?"

Hash-em replied: "Leave your astrology. You are not subject to the natural laws. You will have all that I promise."

The Talmud says: "There is no luck where Israel is concerned". Some may see this as a curse but in truth it is a blessing.

The great sage Shemuel was sitting with a Gentile astrologer named Ablat. They saw a group of men walking to the fields to work.

"That man will be bitten by a poisonous snake and die today", Ablat predicted with brazen confidence.

"If he is a Jew", Shemuel responded, "He will see no harm."

At the end of the day the entire group returned home safely. Ablat became very upset and left the scene in his anger. Shemuel, on the other hand, calmly approached the survivor and asked, "What good deed did you do today?"

"Nothing special", was the modest reply.

"Cannot be", said Shemuel, "something you did saved your life from a poisonous snake. Can't you think of anything?"

"Well", said the farmhand, 'We go to the fields every day and we pool our lunches so that no one goes hungry. One person collects from each worker and then he redistributes equal portions to all. We have one rule. To get a share you must contribute to the pot. Today, I realized that one worker had nothing to give. I made believe that he handed me some food but I really took from my own and

put it in the pot as if it were his. Then when I went around giving out lunch he got an equal share with everyone."

"Sedakah - your charitable act - saved you from death", exclaimed the Sage. He opened the man's knapsack and there was a dead snake inside.

What the Gemara means is that although Hash-em has chosen to allow the stars positions to influence human life - that is - astrology really works - He has made it so that a Jew THROUGH GOOD DEEDS can influence and change his luck. There is no luck for Israel means there is no fixed future that one cannot change for the better through good deeds like charity and kindness.

May we all take this lesson to heart. May Hash-em smile when He sees us treating each other kindly and cancel all bad decrees and turn them to good - Amen

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