

## See! I place before you today a blessing and a curse. (11:26)

Noticeably, the Torah begins with the word *Reeh*, see, in the singular, and concludes with *nosein lifneichem*, “(I) give before you,” in the plural. Why is this? The **Kotzker Rebbe, zl**, explains that each and every person has his own unique perspective and individual understanding of Torah which coincides with his spiritual level. Thus, it says, “See,” to the individual. The Torah, however, was given to all Jews collectively, which is alluded to by the words *lifneichem*, before you, in the plural.

**Horav Yitzchak, zl, m’Vorka**, traveled together with *Horav Avraham Moshe, zl, m’Peshischa* to visit a certain *tzaddik*, holy, righteous, person, whose identity was covert and known only to a unique few. The *Vorkever* commented on the *parsha* of the week (*Reeh*), “Moshe presented *Klal Yisrael* with two paths: blessing and curse, prefixing his words with *Reeh*, “See!” When a young child refuses to go to *cheder*, he is “encouraged” with a reward of some sort, usually a sweet treat. When he has entered the classroom and then refuses to learn, the *rebbe* will point to the stick in the corner, which serves as the symbol (and often more than a symbol) of the corporal punishment that might be administered if the child will not take his lessons seriously. When the child has matured, he no longer requires a symbol of punishment to convey the message that school is a place of learning. It is neither a place to visit for a vacation, nor is it a place for fun and games. The student understands all of this, since with maturity comes a deeper understanding of life in general, thus negating the need for punishment/reminder.

*Moshe Rabbeinu* was telling the people: “See! What I placed before you today – reward/blessing and punishment/curse.” Even after forty years of miracles and constant exposure to Divine guidance and protection, you still lack the spiritual maturity to understand on your own (without motivation and reminder) that you must choose the path of blessing. I should not have to encourage you to observe the *mitzvos*. By this time it should be a given. The fact that it is not is the reason that I must reiterate the possibility of curse for non-observance.

Perhaps we suggest another reason for the use of *Reeh*, in the singular. Each and every Jew is exhorted to look at himself – first. We all want to save the world, to point out the faults of others, and to urge them to change their ways. Often we do so without first taking a close introspective view of ourselves. Are we perfect? Have we personally chosen the path of blessing? Do we have the right to admonish others before seeing to it that our lives are in order? *Reeh* – see yourself; then look at others.