

"See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse. The blessing that you listen to the mitzvos of Hashem, your G-d, that I command you today." (11:26,27)

The text of the *pasuk* begs elucidation. Why does the *Torah* begin this *parsha* with the word *vtr*, "see". It could have simply stated, "*I present before you today a blessing and a curse.*" Second, *Rashi* states that the *pasuk* alludes to the blessing and curse that were stated on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival. If this were the case, the *Torah* should have spoken in the future tense; i.e. the blessing that I *will* give to you. Why does the *Torah* speak in the present tense ? Third, why were the tribes split, half of them situated on each mountain ? Why could they not all have been on the same mountain ? Were they able to hear the blessings and curses more clearly because they were on different mountains ?

Horav Eliyahu Schlesinger, Shlita, contends that the *Torah* is communicating to us a valuable and profound message. We are regrettably led to believe that we will experience the ultimate blessing and curse, the reward and punishment, the bounty and misfortune to which the *Torah* alludes, in *Olam Haba*, the World to Come. This is a grave mistake. The blessing and curse are very real phenomena which one experiences *immediately* in this world, in his daily life.

It is true, however, that the rewards and punishment inferred by the *Torah* refer to *chayei Olam Haba*, life in the World to Come. We must nonetheless take note that the simple adherence to *Torah* and *mitzvos* creates a life of blessing. Conversely, one who rejects this lifestyle of blessing, opens himself to various crises which are inherent in contemporary society and the various lifestyles it spawns. One who maintains a *Torah* orientation experiences an existence which is refined and graceful, in which the worries and troubles that plague his counterpart have solutions. This statement is not a hypothesis -- it is virtual reality which one can easily see if he would only open his eyes.

This is what Hashem indicated to *Bnei Yisrael*. This is what He desired that they clearly see. The separation between blessing and curse, between Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival, is an abysmal crevasse, which swallows up those who tragically fall in-between. It was essential that there be an obvious distinction between those who were to represent blessing and those who stood upon the mountain which was synonymous with the curses. The terrain which is the province of one cannot possibly be the same sphere of activity for the other. The lesson was not one only for "*ha'yom*," the present. It is a message for all generations to take heed of what they "see today." The blessing is to listen. The actual listening and adherence to the *Torah* is the source of blessing, while the rejection thereof will result in curse.

Horav Schlesinger cites *Horav Bezalel Zolti, z.l.*, who applied this thesis in explaining the famous dictum of *Tanna D'vei Eliyahu*, "One who reviews *halachos* daily is assured of a place in the World to Come." *Horav Zolti* commented, "In order to distinguish who is a *ben Olam Haba*, worthy of

entrance into the Eternal World, it is essential to consider *D'vei Eliyahu's* statement. To notice who is a *ben Olam Hazei*, an individual who experiences a life of refinement, solitude and bliss, one only has to look around and see the lifestyle of he who has chosen to be "*shoneh halachos b'chol yom*", to study and observe the *Torah* as a part of a daily mode of living. Such is a person who truly lives."