

See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse. (11:26)

One would think that since Moshe *Rabbeinu* is conveying Hashem's message to the nation, he would say: "See, Hashem presents before you today a blessing and a curse." Why does he say "I"? He is merely Hashem's agent. *Horav Tzvi Hirsch Ferber, zl*, cites *Chazal (Berachos 33b)* concerning the *pasuk* in *Devarim 10:12*, "Now, O *Yisrael*, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem." All Hashem wants of us is fear. It seems like a simple request. Perhaps for Moshe it was simple, but it is not simple for the rest of the Jewish People. The commentators explain that, indeed, for Moshe, fearing Hashem was a *milsa zutressa*, simple expectation. This is the expected answer, but it does not resolve the problem. How could Moshe present *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, as being simple – just because it was simple for him? Moshe was a unique, extraordinary individual who maintained an unparalleled relationship with Hashem – something to which no ordinary Jew can aspire.

Veritably, this question applies to outreach in general. Imagine, a distinguished lecturer stands before us and presents all of the right reasons for repenting and changing our secular, materialistic lifestyle. He explains that all of the worldly pleasures most people dream about are nothing more than fantasies, facades of reality. Nothing is of such value in this ephemeral world that it is worth giving up *chayei olam*, a life of eternity, *Olam Habba*, the World to Come, for it. It sounds good to an audience. It appears great when presented on paper, but does the speaker know what he is talking about? For all the audience knows, this man lives in poverty, in a small one - bedroom apartment, no state of the art electrical amenities – and he is telling us that a materialistic lifestyle is of no value! Let him first have and enjoy it, and then let him talk!

The flipside is the individual who expounds about the beauty and serenity of the spiritual life. He describes the satisfaction of a life surrounded by the glory of the *Shechinah*, of the pure joy inherent in being in the presence of the Eternal. Has the speaker even been "there"? To the best of my knowledge, no one who has been to *Olam Habba* has returned with a description of a "day in the World to Come." Who is this speaker to denigrate the evils of this world, the sheer waste of anything materialistic, yet laud the splendor and glory of the World to Come? It is easy to talk the talk if one has not walked the walk.

One person, however, does fit the bill; one person has enjoyed the ultimate pleasures of this world and has, likewise, experienced the beauty of *Olam Habba*: Moshe *Rabbeinu*. He grew up in Pharaoh's palace, amid untold wealth, physical/material splendor and opulence. He had it all, yet he realized that is of no true, enduring value in comparison to the eternal life. He saw it all, and he experienced everything. He could get up there and declare unequivocally: "It is not worth it!" Yes, for Moshe, *yiraas Shomayim* was a simple decision, a no brainer, because he had seen everything. He knew the tremendous chasm that separates materialism from spirituality, the real from the unreal. He was the perfect person to encourage *Klal Yisrael* to choose life – a life of the spirit, a life

of reality, a life of eternity. He had been there and had experienced both sides of the coin.