

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

The *Daas Zekeinim m'Baalei Tosfos* offer a novel interpretation of the word *reeh*, see, focusing on what it was the nation was to look at. Moshe *Rabbeinu* said to *Klal Yisrael*: “See – look at me. I chose the *derech tov*, the path which leads to blessing. As a result, I look different.” This is reference to the *karnei or*, rays of Divine light, which emanated from Moshe, causing his countenance to radiate.

Horav Eliyahu Svei, zl, observes that, although Moshe presented the people with a choice of two divergent paths, one, which leads to blessing, and the other, which leads to curse, it was insufficient motivation to elicit a commitment. It was necessary for Moshe to concretize the necessity to make a clear choice with a statement: “Look at me!” The only way to achieve such radiance is by making the correct choice, the choice which leads to blessing. It was necessary for the people to see a manifestation of this blessing, to see the reality of Heavenly blessing and how it transforms a person. Awareness, however cogent, will not necessarily effect change. It does not always “do the trick.” Seeing is believing. They must see blessing in action before they are ready to undertake to traverse the path that leads to it.

Horav Moshe Aharon Stern, zl, *Mashgiach* of *Yeshivas Kaminetz*, *Yerushalayim*, was very close with his *rebbe*, the venerable **Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl**. Very often, he would converse with his *rebbe* after *davening*, discussing various questions and issues that arose in his daily life and endeavor. One *Shabbos*, following *davening*, the then young *Rav* Moshe Aharon Stern was speaking with *Rav Elya*, while his young children waited for him to go home. Seeing that their father was immersed in conversation, they began to play with some pebbles on the ground. These makeshift marbles provided a “game” for children with imagination. Seeing this, *Rav* Moshe Aharon told his children to stop playing with the pebbles, since they are *muktzah* on *Shabbos* (objects that are reserved for weekday use are not to be handled or moved on *Shabbos*). The children stopped momentarily, but soon returned to their play. Once again, they were exhorted to stop playing with the pebbles. They stopped for a few minutes, only to start up again shortly thereafter. Upon seeing this happen over and over again, *Rav Elya* said to his young protégée, “They are young children and do not understand the concept of *muktzah* (especially when expressed in the context of quick admonishment without explanation). This is something that should be taught at home, by the *Shabbos* table, with the holiness of *Shabbos* as the backdrop for the conversation and the father in full *Shabbos* mode. When children see their father’s personal *Shabbos* observance in full swing, then they will understand and accept the laws of *muktzah* (as they relate to *Shabbos*).”

We may add that this idea applies to everything that we teach to our children and expect them to accept. The meme of liberal hypocrisy: “Do as I say – not as I do” is a very difficult concept, hardly serving as a deterrent for the intelligent child. We cannot expect our children to do and act in a manner to which we personally do not ascribe. Instructing our children not to speak during

davening – when we do not adhere to our own advice; admonishing our children to learn – when we do not seem to find the time to follow suit; and the list goes on. We must show them what it means, and what the advantages are of such living, if we expect them to listen and follow.