

## **See, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse. (11:26)**

Life presents us with one of two extreme situations: We either evoke blessing, so that everyone looks up to us, respects our word, and reveres our religion; or, we symbolize curse, dust of the earth, to be stepped upon and trampled. **The Vilna Gaon, zl**, notes that the word "*Re'eh*" is written in the singular. He explains that the *Torah* speaks to each individual. Man is not judged by the deeds of society as a whole. Rather, Hashem judges each individual according to his own actions. Do not see yourself reflected in the world. Avraham preached to an entire world. He represented one world view, while the rest of the world had another perspective. Hashem says, "While you seem to think that you are alone, it is not true." "*Anochi*" - I - Hashem is with you when you make the decision. Moreover, it is presented to us "*hayom*," today. It is never too late to choose between right and wrong, between blessing and curse. It is presented, "*lifneicham*," before you. We have the choice to do good - or bad. The choice stands in front of us. We have to decide on which path to travel.

In an alternative exposition, *Horav Moshe Swift, zl*, notes that the *pasuk* begins by admonishing the individual and concludes by speaking to the whole Jewish community. A Jew should realize that the success or failure of a community is determined by the individual. It is like a factory in which each individual is but a single component in the success or failure of a product. If one link is broken, the entire chain will fall apart. The Jewish community is similar, it all depends upon the individual's perspective and involvement.

Last, we suggest that the *Torah* emphasizes *Re'eh*, see, look around you at those people who raised their children in the way of blessing and triumphed, and those who either thought they knew better, or knew they knew better, or simply did not care. If you really look, the answer will be quite apparent.

*Horav David Feinstein, Shlita*, questions the use of the word, *Re'eh*, See. The *Torah* could simply have stated, "I am placing before you a blessing and a curse." Furthermore, why does the *Torah* speak to individuals in the singular? The *Torah* intends the message for everyone! He explains that each person has developed his own idea of what constitutes a blessing and a curse. One might view a sickness to be spiritually therapeutic, since it catalyzes the individual to examine his life. Others might consider good health to be a blessing, while others might feel that children or wealth is the blessing.

Hashem says, "*Re'eh*" - See! - in the singular, to tell us that each individual will receive his own individual blessing. Sometimes, however, what one wants does not necessarily comprise blessing. Wealth can expose the individual to undue trial and temptation, or he may become a target for criminals. Furthermore, what one thinks constitutes a curse may not turn out that way.

Hashem says "*Re'eh*" - each individual will be able to see clearly the curse and the blessing. It will be apparent to everyone. Not only will we be given blessings, but we will understand that they are

blessings, even though others may disagree. The individual will see the blessing and the curse, so that his decision will be an informed one.