

See – that I have placed before you today the life and the good, and the death and the evil... and you shall choose life. (30:15,19)

Some of us think that once one is born into a *frum*, observant family and educated in a fine Torah-oriented and conducive environment, it is smooth sailing from there. Well – it is not. The choices exist on a daily --almost constant – basis, and one’s commitment must be made anew – everyday. So says *Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl*, in his commentary to the above *pasuk*: “*Hayom* – today – each and every day of our lives, the *yetzer hora*, evil-inclination, attempts to lure us with his guile. Just because he was not successful ‘yesterday,’ it does not prevent him from trying again ‘today.’ The concept of *hayom* is certainly applicable for one who ‘yesterday’ did not triumph over the *yetzer hora*. He must double his efforts today to succeed in quelling his desire for sin.”

We think that once we have taken the path of *frumkeit*, traveled the right road and done well, we are literally on cruise control. Observance does not work that way. We must make the correct choice every day. The flipside is obvious. If yesterday was not a “good” day, it does not mean that today has to follow in yesterday’s footsteps. Every new day presents new and greater opportunity for growth – if one is willing to make positive choices.

This is a powerful lesson, but why does it have to be this way? Why should we be relegated to struggle daily to maintain our *frumkeit* level? Why should our commitment be constantly tested, always in jeopardy of failing? Why should parents live in constant fear that something can go wrong with their “perfect” child? Simply, we could say that this serves as a medium for gaining reward. The greater the pain – the greater the gain. With the increased difficulty comes the greater *schar*, reward. I think, however, that it goes deeper than that. Specifically because religious observance is a daily struggle, man also has a daily opportunity for return. We live in a time when the challenges to *frumkeit*, both to ourselves and to our children, are constant. Sadly – tragically – we are not guaranteed that the exemplary Torah education which we have provided our children – ourselves – will suffice. We can hope. We can pray, and we should; when we see the slightest change, we should immediately intervene, but if we do not succeed, we must remember: we always have a tomorrow. Everything has two sides. There is struggle, and there is opportunity. We aspire to succeed in the struggle, so that we never require the alternative - the opportunity.