

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

The *Torah's* use of the word "*re'eh*", see, is significant. It is important that we clearly understand the relative effects of *mitzvah* and *aveirah*. We should actually see this distinction. We should be able to comprehend blessing as the direct result of a life of *mitzvah*-performance and curse as the product of a sinful lifestyle. All too often we attribute our good fortune to just that - good fortune. On the other hand, we perceive external factors to be the cause of our misfortune. We should open our eyes to perceive the accurate distinction between blessing and curse. Regretably, the *Torah* oriented definitions do not necessarily coincide with currently accepted values. An individual who does not necessarily enjoy material abundance, but rather is blessed with a wonderful family, *nachas*, peace, and happiness, is truly blessed. Conversely, not everyone who society considers to be blessed is really fortunate. Indeed, he might be a prisoner to society's value system -- and actually not blessed at all. The *Torah* instructs us to "*re'eh*", open our eyes and mind in order to see the effect of living a *Torah* life, as well as the effects of contrary lifestyles.

We may also note that *Torah* uses the words "blessing" and "curse," as opposed to good and bad. By definition, "blessing" means that one's entire life will be blessed. He will be lacking nothing. He will be happy in every aspect of his existence. He who is cursed will find that life is missing something. He is always feeling shortchanged. One added note: In order to see this blessing, it is necessary to live a life of *Torah* and *mitzvos*. Nothing is as convincing as the experience itself. One must live the spiritual life -- and experience the joy and serenity that accompanies it -- to sense fully the blessing of *Torah* living.