

"That you shall set the blessing on Har Gerizim and the curse on Har Eival." (11:29)

Why was it necessary to confer blessing and curse on two disparate mountains? Would it not have been just as effective to have used a single mountain for demonstrating both blessing and curse? This same question arises in *Parashas Ki Savo*, when the *Leviim* were told to face *Har Gerizim* for blessing and to face *Har Eival* when they articulated curse. *Horav Tzvi Hirsch z.l.* *M'Vilna* suggests that Hashem teaches us a profound lesson with this distinction between blessing and curse.

This separation is made in order to emphasize that the source of blessing must always be distinguished from the source of curse and evil. Evil and curse can not directly produce blessing. To expose oneself to evil and curse - in the dubious hope that he will succeed in acquiring his portion in *Olam Habbah* by sanctifying Hashem's Name - is wrong. One who does this risks self-destruction. One should distance himself as far as possible from any encounter with the forces of evil and curse.

This is consistent with the words of the *Ramban* in *Sefer Shemos*. The *Midrash* explains that the *Yam Suf* split in deference to the coffin of *Yosef Ha'Tzaddik*. When *Klal Yisrael* came to the sea, Moshe "implored" the sea to "run away" in honor of the "one who ran away." This refers to Yosef who, when tempted by Potiphar's wife, ran out of the house, leaving the garment she had grabbed in her hands.

What was so exemplary about Yosef's actions that contributed to such an auspicious reward? The *Ramban* explains that had Yosef remained with the gentile seductress, he would have risked a confrontation with the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination. This is not the correct manner in which to serve Hashem. One does not engage the *yetzer hora* "head on"! The proper way to serve Hashem is to "run away" and distance oneself as much as possible from the *yetzer hora*. The ability to restrain oneself totally from an encounter with the *yetzer hora* is in its own right a triumph.

A confrontation with the *yetzer hora* is, for the most part, a "no win" situation. In the course of time, any interaction with the *yetzer hora* leaves a harmful residue on the individual's spiritual character.