



דרכים בפרשה

ראה

ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה

See that I am giving before you today blessing and curse.

Shabbos Mevorchim of Chodesh Elul is once again here. With thoughts of another *Yomim Noraim* creeping into our minds, the question arises once again: Are our choices aligned with what the Torah asks of us? The parsha begins with HaShem telling us that we will be rewarded with bracha if we keep the Torah, but on the other hand, there will be *klala* if we do not.

The opening word of the parsha is ראה-see, which does not seem to be the correct word for the discussion at hand. Moshe Rabbeinu was informing Klal Yisroel of the positive and negative consequences of their decisions. Wouldn't the more commonly used word שמע-*listen* be more appropriate?

Shlomo Hamelech tells us (Koheles 2:14) החכם עיניו בראשו - *the wise person has his eyes in his head*. The Mishna in Avos (2:9) teaches us, איזהו חכם? הרואה את הנולד, - a wise person is one who sees the future. So we now have two sources that connect wisdom with some sort of eyesight. Looking clearly at this Mishna, it does not say that a wise person is smart because of his knowledge but rather because of his ability to look at the future and adapt to it by making decisions today. Knowledge alone is worthless if it is not coupled with visualization, because one will not feel compelled to take action and make the proper adjustments.

Along these lines, Rav Gifter zt"l makes an interesting observation (Pirkei Torah, Parshas Ki Seitzei, quoting Rav E.M. Bloch) on the possuk - לא יוכל לבקר את בן השנואה *He is unable to give the right of the firstborn to the son of the beloved one ahead of the son of the hated one who is the firstborn*. (The Rosh HaYeshiva also quotes a few more pesukim that have the words לא יוכל). The Ramban explains that the Torah uses such terminology in order to impress upon us the prohibition involved so that we will not come to transgress it.

By way of a mashul, he explained as follows: Imagine bringing someone to the edge of a roof and telling him to jump off. The typical response is not, "I don't want to", but rather, "I can't do it". But one second here; is he really unable to do it? Does he not have this ability to just jump off the roof? Of course he does, but in this case, because he sees in his mind the end result of his leap as "jumping to a conclusion", his mind already tells him that he cannot do it. When an idea is viewed as a fact, it becomes a reality. Similarly, with all mitzvos of the Torah, when viewing them as absolute realities, i.e. "I am unable to do it"; there will never be any consideration of transgressing them.

By using the word ראה-see, HaShem is telling us that it is not enough just to listen to



the concept of the mitzvos, but to actually see them in front of us and absorb them, making them real in our minds and our heads. In this manner one will make the right choices.

There is another thought here to keep in mind. The possuk says **ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום** - *See that I am giving before you today*. We can suggest that if while visualizing the mitzvos in our minds, we think about the "אנכי", as in "אנכי ה' אלוקיך", the mitzvos will take on a whole new meaning. This is really the foundation of the entire Torah, and of being a *Yid*. **ראה אנכי** - to always keep in our mind-sight that HaShem is the Giver of the Torah, and these are His mitzvos. In such a manner, the mitzvos will take on a whole new meaning and will be performed in the very best manner possible. This *yesod* is really learned from the possuk (Tehillim 16:8) **שוייתי ה' לנגדי תמיד** - *I have set HaShem before me always*. The Rama begins his commentary of Shulchan Aruch with the following words: **"שוייתי ה' לנגדי תמיד"**, הוא כלל גדול בתורה ובמעלות הצדיקים אשר הולכים לפני האלקים. כי אין ישיבת האדם ותנועותיו ועסקיו והוא לבדו בביתו, כישיבתו ותנועותיו ועסקיו והוא לפני מלך גדול - *This is a major principle in the Torah and amongst the virtues of the tzadikim who walk before Hashem. For a person's way of sitting, his movements and his dealings while he is alone in his house are not like his way of sitting, his movements and his dealings when he is before a great king.*

On the concept of **שוייתי ה' לנגדי תמיד**, the Baal Shem Tov so beautifully explained that the word **שוייתי** can be derived from

equal. The possuk can now be read as follows: **שוייתי** - *I have made all things even and equal*. When I look at the events of my life, whether they are good or bad, I can come to fully appreciate them. Why? Because **שוייתי ה' לנגדי תמיד** - *HaShem is before me always*. In every single occurrence I clearly see *yad HaShem*, who without a doubt always does what is best for me, even though I may not always see why. Therefore, all things are equally for the best.

According to this p'shat we can explain our pessukim as follows: **ראה אנכי** - make sure to see the **אנכי**. Therefore, even if that which is given in front of you today seems to look like blessing *and* curse, the way to receive it only as a blessing is **את הברכה אשר תשמעו אל מצות ה'** - by performing the mitzvos in the manner which we mentioned, i.e. visualizing HaShem. Once we start thinking of HaShem, automatically we think of **שוייתי ה' לנגדי תמיד** - which causes us to remember that blessing and curse are all equal because ultimately HaShem is doing what is best for us.

May we be zoche to always see HaShem in our lives, thus making the right choices, choosing bracha every time.

מרדכי אפפעל, Good Shabbos,



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