

Points to Ponder
Re'eh 5777

See, I am placing before you a blessing and a curse (11:26) – The opening of the sedra is the word 're'eh' (see). It is in the singular form, whilst the pasuk continues 'giving before YOU today blessing and curses' - this second you is the 'lachem' form, ie the plural 'you.' Why the change? **The Kotzker Rebbe** remarked that this is because everyone sees what they want to see in life; since they see a reflection of what they are and interpret events the way they see fit in accordance with their outlook on the world. This is why the word re'eh ('see') is in the singular - since everyone has different eyesight as we just said. But when it comes to giving blessings that is in the plural, for giving is done without distinction; everyone gets similarly.

See, I am placing before you a blessing and a curse (11:26) – **Sforno** points out that Hashem wants us not to choose being “middle of the road” complacent. Rather, he sets poles for us – Beracha and Klalla – one is the extreme of success while the other is epic fail. One can achieve either based on our choices. The **Vilna Gaon** points out that if we do not rise upward then we fall downward. **Rav Baruch Mordechai Eizrachi Shlita** added that there is no middle ground – either we harness the powers of growth through Torah and Yiras Shomayim or we fall. There is no opportunity for stagnation.

Just strengthen yourselves not to consume blood because the blood is the soul (12:23) – **Rashi** reminds us that not eating blood seems to be one of the easier Mitzvos to keep since people do not desire it too much. Still the Torah stresses the need to strengthen oneself in order to realize how one needs Chizzuk in Mitzvos. **Rav Nosson Tzvi Wachtfogel Ztl.** explains that the message here is that one needs strength even to do easy Mitzvos. One needs to be passionate and strong even about these lest one's lack of passion lead him to sin.

When a prophet or a dreamer arises and performs a sign (13:2) – **Rav Zevin ztl.** points out that there are 2 primary reasons people sin – mistaken beliefs or desire for the sin. Both have the ability to overpower a person in plain sight. The cheaters would perform an Os (in Shomayim for those with ruined philosophies) or a trick (in physical slight of hand). We need to be careful not to fall prey to both attempts to sway us by watching ourselves – using our mind's eye – to be on guard to falling into traps of the trade.

You are sons to Hashem...Lo Tisgodidu (14:1) – **The Yalkut Shimoni** explains that we should not become separate groups lest it create a gap (a baldness) within us. The **Ksav Sofer** explained that the precondition of being Banim is by not separating ourselves into Agudos. Hashem can forgive challenges to His Kavod but not for his son.

For there will never be no poor within the land (15:11) – If anything, this is a reason NOT to give Tzedaka! Why keep giving Tzedaka if we will never fill the void? The **Abarbanel** explains that the Talmud notes that poverty is a wheel that keeps rolling hitting each in his right time. Abarbanel explains that this reason reminds us that we will need at one time and this obligates us now. **Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that many think this is the reason for all of Mitzvos Bein Adam L'Chaveiro – we will do so that others will do for us. He added that this is part of the Zechus that exists with the giving of Tzedaka in connection to the recitation of Yizkor. We give Tzedaka as a Zechus for those who passed and in its merit someone else will do the same Zechus for us.

And you shall be only happy (16:15) – If one loses a relative before Sukkos, the onset of Sukkos removes the Shiva. Sukkos counts as 7 days removing another 7 days and Shmini Atzeres removes another 7 days. Accordingly, Sukkos removes 21v out of 30 days of a Shloshim. **Rav Nissan Alpert ztl.** explains that this is hinted in the use of the word “Ach” which is the Gematria of 21 – the 21 days of only Simcha even when confronting Shloshim.

Haftorah: And I will make pinnacles of rubies (Yeshayahu 54:11) – What is to be added with these words of consolation? Once Tzion is redeemed what is added by making her stones valuable? **Rav Zechariah Tubi Shlita** noted that the Rabbis differ in the Talmud as to which stones are referred to here (See Bava Basra 75a). The **Maharal** proves that each side of the discussion speaks to a different aspect of spiritual ascent in the rebuilding of Yirushalayim – ignoring the physical involved. In the future it will not be the physical redemption that will be significant but rather the spiritual one – and that will come when all your children will be followers of Hashem – read it not children but builders – the builders on a spiritual plane.