

ראה

ראה אנכי נותן לפיכם היום ברכה וקללה [יא, כו] explains that ברכה וקללה in the פסוק is referring to those mentioned at הר עיבל and הר גריזים. The Sforno explains ברכה וקללה with its simple meaning. ברכה, a blessing and a curse, are two extremes. ברכה refers to success more than average and קללה indicates misfortune and lack of success that results in failure. The תורה is saying ראה, see to it that you conduct yourself both spiritually and ethically on a higher standard than all the other nations. The other nations are content with being average and mediocre, but כלל ישראל, who represent Hashem, are required to be on a higher level. They can attain these two extremes, ברכה וקללה, either great success or great failure. Should they serve Hashem to the best of their capabilities, they will achieve ברכה. But if they don't live up to what is expected of them, then they will receive קללה ח"ו. Throughout the ages this has proven to be true. כלל ישראל is either very successful and excels above all the other nations, or if ח"ו they don't keep the mitzvos, are persecuted more than any other nation.

The פסוק starts with ראה, in the singular, but continues with לפניכם, in the plural. The Meforshim explain that the Torah is addressing כלל ישראל as a whole, that all of כלל ישראל as one harmonious people should choose between ברכה and קללה. The Torah is also talking to each and every individual as well. Each person needs to realize his potential and maximize it to their fullest and not be satisfied with just getting by. The הלכות תשובה in רמב"ם writes that every person has the ability to be like משה רבינו! This means that when an individual utilizes one's potential to their fullest, then they are also like משה רבינו who utilized his exceptional abilities and talents to the fullest.

May this attitude help all of us reach the great ברכה mentioned in the beginning of this week's Parshah.

Have a good Shabbos.

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