

Subsequently, R' Moshe sent a copy of this newspaper article to the camp supervisor, with whom he remained in close contact for many years after the war, and he had no choice then but to admit that the *Torah's* knowledge is greater than his own.

TORAH GEMS

ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה וגוי (יא-כו)
Many people believe that the only reward for observing *Torah* and *mitzvos* is in the World-to-Come. It is true that *Chazal* have said, "*There is no reward for mitzvos in this world.*" Nevertheless, the *posuk* teaches us that "*the blessing and the curse*" exist "*today*" as well. How can this be so?

R' Eliyohu Schlesinger Shlit'a answers in the following manner: Keeping the *Torah* is itself a blessing, while living a life of תפוקות - *unbridled freedom*, is a curse. Living a true *Torah* life causes a person to be careful and deliberate, not only in his relationship with G-d, but in his relationships and interactions with men. This is not true of a person who sees himself as free to do whatever he wishes.

We read in this *parsha* that *Hashem* divided *Bnei Yisroel* into two groups, each of which would stand on one mountain - *Har Gerizim* or *Har Eival*. The *Levi'im* were to stand in between the two mountains and recite certain blessings while facing *Har Gerizim*, and curses while facing *Har Eival*. This was to demonstrate the vast gulf which exists between one whose life is a "blessing" and one whose life is a "curse." These two people cannot stand in the same place.

The *medrash* says: "*Not only have I shown you that there are two ways before you, I have done you a favor and told you, 'Choose life.'*" *Hashem* revealed to us that the path we choose affects not only our place in the World-to-Come, it is a choice which can give us life in this world as well.

השומר לך פן תנקט אחריהם אחרי השומרים וכי (יב-ל)
When the Jewish People enter the Land of Israel, they must not emulate any of the practices of the

nations that are there, whether it be idol-worship or abominations, because these are all acts "אשר שנא" - "*That (Hashem) hates.*" The *posuk* then goes on and elaborates further, specifically pointing out one of these terrible acts: "*Even their sons and daughters they burn in the fire to their gods.*" Why was this last explicit elaboration necessary?

R' Yaakov Kamenetzky ZT"L explains: The *gemara* (סנהדרין פט) tells us that when *Avrohom Avinu* was on his way to perform the *Akeidah*, the *Satan* tried every which way to stop him. As a last resort, he appealed to him. "Aren't you the one who spends every minute of the day drawing people closer to G-d? You constantly espouse His tremendous kindness and mercy. Yet, here you are, willing to sacrifice your only son on His charge. What will the people say? How will they follow you and believe that G-d is truly kind and righteous?" *Avrohom* simply answered, "I do what I am told." In other words, logically, the *Satan* may be right, but *Avrohom's* trust is in *Hashem*, that He has His reasons for everything and no harm or desecration will come about from following His orders.

Similarly, when Moshe warns the Jews against idolatry, he adds an extra nuance. Of course, *Bnei Yisroel* are a holy nation and will not fall prey to the evils of the world. Yet, it is all too possible for one to see something relevant or even pleasant in their ways that will draw one over and capture the mind and heart. But this, says Moshe, cannot possibly happen since nothing in their acts of idolatry can remotely be pleasant. See for yourselves; these are the same people who have no qualms about serving their sons and daughters to the fire for their god. Can one emulate anything these wicked people do?

מאין הוא בא, והלא בא מחמת שהיה לו עשר זחובים או עשרה מדות תבואה, ונמצא אלו העשר זחובים או העשרה מדות כולם נכנסין במצוה זו, כי מחמת שיש לו לאדם עשר זחובים או עשרה מדות גורן אחד זהב או מדה אחת, ובהו זוכה לשנה הבאה שיתן עשר זחובים ועשרה מדות מעשר, דהיינו, שיהיה לו מאה זחובים ומאה מדות תבואה. ונמצא שכל התבואה שהיה לו בפעם הראשון - דהיינו, עשרה מדות שממנו נתן מדה

אחת מעשר, על ידי זה זוכה בשבועה הבאה יזכה שיתן ממאה מעשר - דהיינו, שיהיה לו מאה מדות. והטעם לזה כיין שכולם נכנסים במצוה זו. וזהו מדבתי "עשר תעשר" - כלומר, כשתתן מעשר, תעשר את כל תבואת זרעך. לשנה הבאה תזכה שכפי התבואה שהיה לך בשנה העבר, יהיה עתה כל התבואה מעשר כנ"ל. וזהו הרמז במה דאמרז"ל עשר בשביל שתתעשר.

מעשה אבות....סימן לבנים

ואת הארונת ואת השפן כי מעלה גרה המה ופרסה לא הפריטו טמאים המה לכם וגוי (יד-ז)

When **R' Moshe Soloveitchik ZT"L** escaped to Switzerland during World War II, he found himself walking around as a free man for only a short period of time. Instead, he was swiftly detained by Swiss police agents and placed in an internment camp. Although it may have seemed harsh to him at the time, in truth, this was the standard procedure for all refugees; they were interned until their papers were processed and it was determined that they were law-abiding civilians who could be trusted that they were not secretly working for the enemy.

R' Moshe was an exceptional personality who clearly was above suspicion. Thus, within a short time, he struck up a friendship with some of the officers in the camp and eventually became quite friendly with the camp supervisor, a strict Swiss authoritarian who respected the Talmudic and Bible scholar for his vast knowledge in many areas, and his brilliant mind.

One day the supervisor made a special effort to seek out R' Moshe. He remarked, "I must ask you a question, Rabbi, which has been bothering me for some time. I am a scholar like yourself and I am quite familiar with the Bible. I believe that I understand everything that is stated in it, aside from one thing that has been troubling me: I have been making a study of rabbits, and I have discovered that rabbits do not chew their cud. Now, I have done extensive research in this area and I have no choice but to conclude in the manner that I did," the supervisor stated matter-of-factly. "The Bible, however, states explicitly that rabbits do chew their cud - even though I am sure it cannot be. How do you explain this?"

R' Moshe replied that he was aware of the question; some of the Bible commentators mention this apparent discrepancy without conclusive proof and as a result, they explain that the Hebrew word in the *Torah* which is commonly translated as ארנבת - *hare* or שפן - *rabbit*; may actually refer to an entirely different animal altogether. This answer did little to satisfy the camp supervisor's quest for understanding and he maintained for a long time afterwards that the *Torah* was in fact incorrect.

Many years later, after R' Moshe had left the camp and settled down in Switzerland, he saw an article in a Swiss newspaper quoting a report from a zoological department on the study of rabbits. After thorough research, it stated, it was confirmed that rabbits do indeed chew their cud, but only when they are unobserved by other animals or humans. R' Moshe exulted in this report saying, "This provides clear proof of the truth of the *Torah*. *Hashem* wanted us to understand why the rabbit and the hare are categorized as cud-chewing animals, and thus inspired the head of the zoological department to make a detailed study of these animals, and then brought it to my attention!"