



THE SHALOM BAYIT JOURNAL



Parashat Re'eh

A Blessed Perspective

Understanding the Torah and the Human Experience

One of the hardest parts of being a therapist is sitting across from someone who is suffering, knowing there may be very little I can do to change their circumstances. I can't make their decisions for them or remove the challenges waiting for them outside my office.

An important part of therapy is helping people see their circumstances from a healthier perspective. When someone becomes trapped in one way of seeing their circumstances, a small shift in perspective can begin to change the way those same circumstances are experienced.

Many people come into counseling because of a challenge they cannot seem to move past, and often the first thing that changes is not the situation itself, but the way they see it. Before anything around them changes, they begin to see things differently, and as their perspective changes, life often begins to feel a little easier.

Parashat Re'eh opens with the words:

רְאֵה אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְפָנֶיכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּרָכָה וּקְלָלָה

"See, I place before you today blessing and curse."

(Devarim 11:26)

The Abarbanel explains that this pasuk is not primarily about reward and punishment, as some of the other commentaries understand it. Rather, when the pasuk speaks of blessing and curse, it is referring to the mitzvot themselves. He writes:

כִּי הַמִּצְוֹת טוֹבוֹת בְּעַצְמָן, וְהֵנָּה כְּפִי הַמִּקְבָּלִים

פְּעָמִים יֵהְיוּ בְּרָכָה וּפְעָמִים יֵהְיוּ קְלָלָה

"The mitzvot are good by themselves; however, according to those who receive them, they can sometimes be a blessing and other times a curse."

The Abarbanel writes that the mitzvot themselves are inherently good. Whether they become a good path or a stumbling block depends on the perspective of the person performing the mitzvah.





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Two people can keep the very same mitzvah, yet experience it very differently. One sees it as a burden, while the other embraces it with simchah. The difference often lies in how they choose to see it.

*The blessing or the curse
depends on how we see the mitzvot.*

Chazal teach:

רָצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְזַכּוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְפִיכָךְ
הִרְבֵּה לָהֶם תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת

"The Holy One, blessed be He, desired to bestow merit upon Israel; therefore He gave them an abundance of Torah and mitzvot."

It's important to remember that Boreh Olam did not give us mitzvot to make life more difficult, but because He wanted to give us countless opportunities to grow closer to Him and earn merit.

When we lose sight of that, it becomes easy to experience the Torah as a burden rather than the blessing it was always meant to be.

Perhaps this is why the parashah begins with the word רָאָה — "See."

Moshe Rabbeinu invites each individual Jew to see that the Torah and the mitzvot are inherently good, and to choose how they will approach them. Whether we experience them as a blessing or a curse begins with the way we choose to see them.



About The Shalom Bayit Journal

The Shalom Bayit Journal explores the intersection of Torah, psychology, relationships, and the human experience. Through thoughtful essays and practical reflection, the Journal seeks to make timeless wisdom meaningful and accessible for everyday life.

