

THE ONLY REASON I HAVE EYES IS FOR YOU!

by Rabbi Label Lam

See I place before you today blessing and curse. The blessing that you listen to the commandments of HASHEM your G-d that I command you today, and the curse if you do not listen to the commandments of HASHEM your G-d and you turn away from the path that I command you today to go after other gods that you did not know. (Devarim 11:26-2)

Why is that we are asked to see the blessing and the curse? Why don't we just focus on the positive? Let us all just put on rosy glasses and seek only the good. Why must we study both the blessing and the curse? I think the answer is easy and complex.

It seems the entire goal of the Torah from creation to the end, (and by implication the ideal of teaching) is to impress the eyes, and change the way we see things, the way we perceive reality.

It is no coincidence that the conclusion of the entire Torah is "...and all the great awe, which Moshe performed before the eyes of all Israel. (Devarim 34:10-12) Rashi chimes in here: before the eyes of all Israel: This expression alludes to the incident where his heart stirred him to smash the Tablets before their eyes, as it is said, "and I shattered them before your eyes" (Devarim 9:17). And the Holy One Blessed is He gave His approval, as Scripture states, "[the Tablets] which you shattered" (Shemos 34:1); G-d said to Moshe, "Well done for shattering them!" Moshe is actually congratulated for having done a noble deed by smashing the holy Tablets. Why is he deserving of praise? before the eyes of all Israel: [This expression alludes to the incident where] his heart stirred him up to smash the tablets before their eyes, as it is said, "and I shattered them before your eyes" (Deut. 9:17). - [Sifrei 33:41] And [regarding Moses shattering the Tablets,] the Holy One Blessed is He gave His approval, as Scripture states, "[the first Tablets] which you shattered" (Exod. 34:1); [God said to Moses:] "Well done for shattering them!" before the eyes of all Israel: [This expression alludes to the incident where] his heart stirred him up to smash the tablets before their eyes, as it is said, "and I shattered them before your eyes" (Deut. 9:17). - [Sifrei 33:41] And [regarding Moses shattering the Tablets,] the Holy One Blessed is He gave His approval, as Scripture states, "[the first Tablets] which you shattered" (Exod. 34:1); [God said to Moses:] "Well done for shattering them!"

It's also no mistake that the concluding verses that celebrate Moshe for having smashed the Tablets are also a farewell tribute to Moshe. Who was more valuable in the universe than Moshe!? What was more valuable in the world than the Tablets!?

Why is it that Moshe's burial place purposefully obscured? Why is he is not mentioned but once in

the Haggadah of Pesach, and even then he is referred to as "servant of HASHEM"?!

There is a little big weakness in the human spirit seeks to rear its ugly head. It is a tendency for idolizing the symbolic value over substance. It's an appetite for a spiritual security that leads us to institutionalize objects, and even ideas, like all styles "isms".

One of my great Rebbeim once told me pithily more than 30 years ago when we learning Musar together, "The problem with the "Musar Movement" is that it became a movement!" It's hard, neigh impossible, to bottle and preserve fear of Heaven.

Just as a nation can fall prey to attaching itself to a Golden Calf, it will likely attach over importance to the Holy Tablets and worship them as well. People will want to cleave to Moshe, even after his death, like a charm or a god if his burial place is known.

Moshe forever impressed the eyes of a nation with his shocking demonstration. Attention was diverted from the less important Tablets and turned back to the real and ultimate value HASHEM! In that first slight deviation, the path that swerves to curse is paved. That clear contrast; defining blessing and curse, right vs. wrong, true or false cannot be blurred with uncertainty. Only then can our focus be responsibly trained on the promise of blessing.

Pardon me for referring to an oldies tune with worthy words. "I only have eyes for you". Simply, one says to his beloved, "I use my eyes to appreciate you alone!" Nice! The deeper- Chassidic approach is that to HASHEM we acknowledge *"the only reason I have eyes is for You!"* DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and Torah.org.