

“See, I present before you today a Bracha (blessing) and a curse”. (11:26), are the opening words of this parasha. Moshe Rabbeinu is telling us to “see”, that by merely looking and seeing with open eyes and minds we will clearly understand the Bracha of HaShem.

Moshe had that power of “seeing”. In Parashat Pinchas (27:12) Moshe is commanded to go up to Har Ha-Avarim and take a look at Eretz Yisrael before he died. [The Vilna Gaon comments that studying the geography of Eretz Yisrael is part of the Mitzvah of Talmud Torah. Moshe Rabbeinu was studying the geography of Eretz Yisrael in order to complete his Torah knowledge]. The Zohar connects the fact that Moshe looked at Eretz Yisrael only from a distance, to the episode in parashat Chukat, when Bnei Yisrael were being bitten by snakes (21:6). There, Moshe was commanded to place a copper figure of a snake on a tall pole, and all those who were bitten “looked” at this and were healed. Normally, for one to be cured by medication, it must be applied to the body, either internally or externally. But at no time did we ever hear of a medication that heals simply by “looking” at it. The Zohar comments that only because Moshe had such depth in his power of “looking” was it possible for him to heal the sick simply by their “looking” at this figure of a snake. Similarly, unlike the rest of the Nation, who needed to perform the agricultural Mitzvot in Eretz Yisrael in order to reap the harvest of spiritual gain, Moshe was able to do so by merely looking at the land from a distance. Regarding us, just as medication doesn’t heal from a distance, Eretz Yisrael does not affect us from a distance.

Chazal had a tradition that Eretz Yisrael was endowed with proprieties of Kaparah (forgiveness). Those who are buried there gain atonement, and those that live there, or even visit and walk there gain an even higher degree of Kaparah (Kesuvot 111a). For those who live or visit they can actually “see” the Land and the Brachot it offers. Conversely, the Land is “looking” for us and rejoices when it “sees” us. The Torah tell us that when the Yovel (Jubilee) year comes, “You shall proclaim liberty throughout the Land and to all its inhabitants”(Vayikra 25:10). The Rabbis (Erachin 32b) understood, that the law of Yovel only applies when the Land “sees” all (or at least a majority) of the Jewish people are located in Eretz Yisrael. The presence of Klal Yisrael enhances the sanctity of the Land.

Not only the presence of the entire Klal Yisrael has an effect on Eretz Yisrael, but the presence of each and every Jew has an effect as well. Rambam (Shemita Veyovel 10:2), writes that only when each and every individual Jew knows the exact location of his own personal plot of land (as divided by Yehoshua) will the Kedusha of the Land be completed. But until then, our physical being there counts towards establishing the total Kedusha of the Land. We must “see” this and realize the Bracha that Moshe Rabbeinu presents to us in the opening of our parasha.