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A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

העדתי בכם היום את השמים ואת הארץ החיים והמות נתתי לפניך הברכה והקללה ובחרת בחיים למען תחיה וזרעך (ל:יט)

"I call to witness against you this day the heaven and the earth, that the life and death I have set before you, the blessing and the curse; therefore, choose life, that you may live, you and your off-spring." (30:19)

The question that has been raised is why do we need the verse to give us a reason for choosing good? Once stated in the pasuk that choosing evil means "death", why need the latter part of the pasuk that states the reason to choose good, "that you and your children may live"?

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986) in his work Drash Moshe offers an answer that perhaps the pasuk is telling us what kind of "good" we are to choose. We need to choose "good" that is strong enough to have a positive impact on our children that will cause them to want to choose "good" also. The Torah emphasizes that even though some people themselves keep the Torah, they perform in such a way that it turns off their children and discourages others from following in their footsteps. For example, if one gives the impression that he does mitzvot because he is required to; G-d created the universe, and one must follow the Torah without any pleasure, only with struggles, he sends a clear message to his children that the Torah is a heavy burden and acts accordingly. This is obviously not the ideal. Instead, when we project that G-d wants us to study and follow the Torah through joy and enthusiasm this shows our children that it is very worthy that true eternal life can be attained only through Torah. This, therefore, is the true meaning of the Pasuk, "Choose life!"- choose a life of Torah and mitzvot with such motivation and enthusiasm that our children and those who watch us will want to use us as an example of how to live.

- Shabbat Shalom