



דרכים בפרשה

תזריע



וראה הכהן והנה כסתה הצרעת את כל בשרו וטהר את הנגע כלו

הפך לבן טהר הוא (יג:יג)

The Kohen shall look, and behold! - The affliction has covered his entire flesh, then he shall declare the affliction to be pure, having turned completely white, it is pure (13:13)

The *halachos* of *tzora'as* dictate that when a small area of a person's skin turns pure white, it is a sign of severe *tumah*, thus rendering the person a *metzora*. Strangely enough, from our *possuk* we see that if the disease is so advanced that the person's entire body turns white, leaving no area unaffected, the *tzora'as* does not contaminate him at all. It is for this reason that Rabbeinu Bachya likens this *halacha* to that of a *parah adumah*, as a *chok*/decree of the *Torah* that is beyond human comprehension.

Among the *meforshim*, there are different explanations that are given which will hopefully shed light on this paradox.

Rav Schwab z"l (Mayan Beis HaShoeiva) discusses a concept of *tumah*/impurity being unable to exist in a vacuum. As much as *tumah* despises holiness, ironically, it can only exist if it is somehow attached to *kedusha*/holiness. The moment all the *kedusha* is gone, the *tumah* will dissipate. We find a similar concept with truth and falsehood. The only way that people would buy into a lie is if there is a grain of truth mixed in, as seen by the *meraglim*/spies confirming that Eretz Yisroel is a land flowing with milk and honey (Bamidbar 13:27). Therefore, a person that is completely covered with

tzora'as is pronounced *tahor*, because the *tumah* that now lacks a life source will dissipate on its own.

This also explains the words of Rav Yitzchak in *Masechta Sanhedrin* (97a): דא"ר יצחק אין בן דוד בא עד שתתהפך כל המלכות למינות אמר רבא מאי קרא (ויקרא יג, יג) כולו הפך לבן טהור הוא "as R'Yitzchak says: *The son of Dovid will not come until the entire kingdom will be converted to heresy. Rava says: What is the possuk from which this is learned? "It is all turned white; he is pure" (Vayikra 13:13).* [One is a *metzora* and *tamei* only if he has *tzoraas*, however small, but not if his skin is completely covered in *tzoraas*. Similarly, the world will be redeemed only when the *Yidden* reach their lowest point.]

If anything, one would think that the time of total corruption is the most unlikely time for his arrival. But according to our explanation, we understand that when the world becomes totally devoid of all truth and turns heretical, it will crumble by itself and *Moshiach*, the bearer of truth, will emerge.

As a side note, from here we can also learn a method in dealing with our *yeitzer hara*. Any time he tries to attack, bringing *tumah* upon us, we can strengthen ourselves by retorting that the only reason he has any strength is BECAUSE we are holy. This "note to self" can serve as a

reminder of who we are, not allowing him to bring us down.

The Chafetz Chaim (Al HaTorah) offers another idea. He explains that the Torah's main goal in dealing with the *metzora* is to bring him to subdue his heart, thus turning *teshuvah*. The entire process is necessary to get him to that state.

Human nature is that as long as there is an excuse that can be given, it will indeed be given. When the *metzora* first notices the disease in a couple of places, he comes up with an excuse. "Perhaps this is not really *tzoraas*. Maybe this is acne from eating too much chocolate (the guy doesn't even eat chocolate). Or maybe it's an allergic reaction to a cream I was using, etc. etc." But once the person becomes completely covered leaving no room for an excuse, he no longer fights it. He is now willing to subdue himself allowing *teshuvah* to happen, thus coming back to purity.

If we think of *tefillah* and *emunah* in HaShem, it works the same way as well. The story is told about the chassid that came to his rebbe begging for a *bracha* again and again. Each time the rebbe turned him down. After many attempts, the chassid finally broke down crying and said, "*Tatteh in Himmel*, You are the only hope I have left". At that moment the rebbe told him that he will be answered.

When we daven, are we truly asking HaShem, or are we thinking that if HaShem doesn't come through for us, there is a backup plan? אין לנו על מי להשען אלא על אבינו - שבשמים - *We have no one else to rely on*

except for our Father in Heaven. The trick of course is to realize this from the get-go when things are going well, and not wait until *Chas Veshalom* things get difficult.

In a similar explanation, Rav Pinkus z"l writes that אלוקים יבקש את הנרדף - HaShem seeks out the one that is being chased (Koheles 3:15). The midrash comments that even if a *tzaadik* is chasing a *rasha*, HaShem will seek out the one being chased. When a person is feeling trapped, he must know that HaShem is there for him. It is for this reason that it is such a terrible sin to cause pain to a widow or an orphan. As they have no one else to turn to for help, HaShem will take up their plight. Similarly, in times of war, the halacha is (Rambam: Melachim 6:7) כשצריך על עיר לתפשה. אין מקיפין אותה מארבע רוחותיה אלא משלש רוחותיה. ומניחין מקום לבורח ולכל מי שירצה להמלט על נפשו - *When we besiege a city which we want to capture, we do not encircle it from all four sides, but only on three. We leave one side open for them to flee. Anyone who wishes to escape with his life may so do.* We must leave them a way out, once again, for the same reason as we have discussed. So too, when one is completely covered in *tzoraas*, HaShem will look after him and purify him.

We should keep in mind that if this works for *tzoraas*, then it surely works for all of our *tzuress* (and *tzoras tzara!*) as well. Let us always remember that it is HaShem that we must rely on at all times, and just when we think there is no hope left, HaShem is especially right there.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפל



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