

דרכים בפרשה תזריע

R' Mordechai Appel,
an alumnus of
Yeshivas Mir
Yerushalayim, is the
author of DERCHIM
BEPARSHA.



וראה הכהן והנה כסתה הצרעת את כל בשרו וטרה 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 Ramban points out that the various laws of *tzoraas* apply only to *Bnei Yisroel*. Furthermore, *nigei battim* only applies in *Eretz Yisroel*. This demonstrates that *tzoraas* is not just a health issue, but rather a physical manifestation of a spiritual malaise; otherwise, it would present itself outside of *Eretz Yisroel* as well. It is for this reason that a *kohen* and not a doctor is the one that checks to see if the afflicted person is in a state of *tumah* or not.

Upon looking at our *passuk*, we can ask: what is the need for the apparent redundancy in stating twice that the *kohen* shall look at it. What is seen the second time that was not previously seen?

One approach may be based on the *halacha* that when the *kohen* looks at the *nega*, he must first look at the circumstances of the individual. For example, if the person is a *chas-san* during his *sheva brochos*, the *kohen* must abstain from *paskening* and rendering him *to-mai*, so as not to ruin the *simcha* of the *chas-san*. This proves that the Torah is more concerned with the well-being of the afflicted than the *nega* itself. This again demonstrates very clearly that the *nega* of *tzoraas* is not physical but spiritual.

The Yeshuas Malko (Rabbi Yehoshua of Kutno) answers that when the *kohen* looks at a person, he should see not only his *chisronos*, the places where he has been afflicted, but

should view him as a whole person, with all his good points taken into account. Thus, although the *kohen* must first examine the affliction, as it is his duty to do, he must afterwards look at the man as a whole person and see his strengths as well, and only then make a full assessment of the person.

People make mistakes. When we look at them, we must endeavor to see the good points in them, not only focusing on the harm that they may have caused. Upon focusing on the good, suddenly the bad points are no longer as significant. Shlomo HaMelech writes in *Sefer Mishlai* **על כל פשעים תכסה אהבה** – all sins must be covered over with love. Just as we are slow to notice blemishes in our own children, similarly, we must approach every Yid in the very same manner.

Perhaps, we can take it a step deeper than our previous example of looking at our own children. The Baal Shem Tov suggested that we use a mirror as our litmus test. When looking at one's self in the mirror, sure we see things that we like and things that we may not like, but on the whole we nod our head in approval and give a passing grade, willing to overlook the bad, the worse, and even the ugly. This, says the Baal Shem Tov, should be the way we approach others as well.

In the words of the holy *tefilla* of the Rebbe R' Elimelech of Lizhensk, **אדרבא תן בלבנו שנראה כל אחד מעלות חברינו ולא חסרונם ושנדבר כל אחד את חברו בדרך הישר והרצוי לפניך ואל יעלה בליבנו שום שנאה מאחד על חברו לפניך ואל יעלה בליבנו שום שנאה מאחד על חברו לפניך ואל יעלה בליבנו שום שנאה מאחד על חברו לפניך ואל יעלה בליבנו שום שנאה מאחד על חברו לפניך ואל יעלה בליבנו שום שנאה מאחד על חברו לפניך** - חלילה ... *On the contrary, place in our hearts the ability to see only the good in our friends and not their shortcomings! May we speak to each other in a way that is straight and desirable in Your eyes. May there be no hatred between friends, Heaven forbid. Amein kein yehi ratzon!*

מרדכי אפפעל, Good Shabbos,