



דרכים בפרשה

מצורע



כי תבאו אל ארץ כנען אשר אני נתן לכם לאחזה ונתתי נגע צרעת בבית ארץ

אחזתכם (יד:לד)

“When you will come into the land of Canaan that I will give to you for a possession, and I shall put the nega of tzora’as in the house of the land of your possession.” (14:34)

The Rambam in the end of *Hilchos Tumas Tzora’as* (16:10) explains at length the order of events in which *tzora’as* occurs: הצרעת הוא שם האמור בשתפות כולל ענינים הרבה וכו'. אינו ממנהגו של עולם אלא אות ופלא היה בישראל כדי להזהירן מלשון הרע. שהמספר בלשון הרע משתנות קירות ביתו. אם חזר בו יטהר הבית. אם עמד ברשעו עד שהתץ הבית משתנין כלי העור שבביתו שהוא יושב ושוכב עליהן. אם חזר בו יטהרו. ואם עמד ברשעו עד שישרפו משתנין הבגדים שעליו. אם חזר בו יטהרו ואם עמד ברשעו עד שישרפו משתנה עורו ויצטרע ויהיה מבדל ומפרסם לבדו עד שלא יתעסק בשיחת הרשעים שהוא הליצנות ולשון הרע. *Tzora’as is a collective term including many afflictions, etc. This change that affects clothes and houses which the Torah described with the general term of tzora’as is not a natural occurrence. Instead, it is a sign and a wonder prevalent among the Jewish people to warn them against lashon hara. When a person speaks lashon hara, the walls of his house change color. If he repents, the house will be purified. If, however, he persists in his wickedness until the house is destroyed, the leather items in his house upon which he sits and lies change color. If he repents, they will be purified. If he persists in his wickedness until they are burnt, the clothes he wears change color. If he repents, they will be purified. If he persists in his wickedness until they are burnt, his skin undergoes changes and he develops tzora’as. This causes him to be isolated and for it to be made known that he must remain alone so that he will not be involved in the talk of the wicked which is leitzanus and lashon hora.*

The Rambam tells us that the manner in which Hashem deals with the one that speaks *lashon hara* is nothing short of miraculous. Although this

person is digging in his heels and does not seem to learn his lesson – still, Hashem deals with him in a miraculous manner. This teaches us even during times of punishment, Hashem holds us dearly, giving us a special *hashgacha*.

The Gemara (Kesubos 66:2) tells a story that after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, R’ Yochanan Ben Zakkai was riding on a donkey outside of the city of Yerushalayim, his students following closely behind him. R’ Yochanan saw a young woman collecting barley kernels from the dung of the neighboring Arabs’ animals. When she saw R’ Yochanan, she asked him for financial assistance. R’ Yochanan asked her who she was, and she replied that she was the daughter of Nakdimen Ben Gurion (one of the three wealthiest men in Klal Yisroel before the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed). R’ Yochanan told his students that he remembered that when he signed her Kesubah, the dowry that her father provided was one million gold coins. בכה רבן יוחנן He then started crying and said: “How fortunate is the nation of Yisrael! When they do the will of Hashem, no nation can rule over them, and when they do not do the will of Hashem, He hands them over to the other nations – and not just to the nations themselves, but to their animals.”

Rav Elya Lopian (Lev Eliyahu, Parshas Devarim) brings the question of the *meforshim* (Maharal, Ba’al Akeida and others): It is well understood why he would say אשריכם regarding the times that Klal Yisroel performs the will of Hashem; but how is it befitting to say אשריכם on the second part of the statement? How is it a form of praise

to point out that Hashem rejects us from His loving embrace when we stray from His Torah, and casts us into the hands of the most degraded of people – and their livestock?

The Gemara in Brachos (7b) tells us that when Dovid Hamelech saw that it was his very own son Avshalom that was tormenting, chasing, and trying to kill him, he was happy – and he proclaimed *מזמור לדוד בברחו מפני אבשלום בנו* - *A mizmor of Dovid when he fled from his son Avshalom*. How could this realization have been a cause for joy? After all, if it was decreed upon him to endure this ridicule and flight, it could have been carried out at the hands of a slave or a *mamzer*; but instead, it was his own son! Never mind the fact that it is very clear from the *pesukim* (Shmuel 2:16-17) that Avshalom wanted to kill his own father, but still, the Gemara is telling us that for some reason, Dovid was happy.

The Ya'aros Devash (Rav Yonasan Eibishetz) explains that when one experiences retributions *b'derech hateva* – through the normal and natural channels – this is actually not a good thing at all. This can mean that Hashem has removed His *hashgacha* from this person, and he is now left to the regular course of the natural world. However, When Dovid saw that his own son was trying to kill him, he said to himself, “This is not normal.” A son never behaves in this manner! Dovid realized that for something so anomalous to occur, it must have been Hashem orchestrating the events with extreme precision. At that very moment, during his time of anguish and perceived distance from Hashem’s protective shield, Dovid knew that the *hashgacha* of Hashem was there; he actually felt the Eibishter’s embrace as strong as ever.

Similarly, when R' Yochanan Ben Zakai saw how the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in the world was able to fall so low that she needed to collect undigested barley from animals, *shelo k'derech hateva*, he said *אשריכם!* Praiseworthy is the nation that even when they fall so low, the Eibishter is right there with them,

predetermining their struggles in a perfectly curated manner for their ultimate benefit!

Rav Mordechai Druk *zt"l* writes that we can now understand as well that when a person is punished for speaking *lashon hara* – which is called by the Rambam as *אות ופלא*, a sign and a wonder – there is cause for joy in the knowledge that the *hashgacha* is still there, as opposed to the people who Hashem simply relegates to the jurisdiction of the *derech hateva*.

This *limud* needs to be applied to our own lives as well. Whenever we feel like we are experiencing a deep and dejecting level of *hester panim*, we must realize that at that very moment, we are receiving a very warm and congenial hug from Hashem (*k'viyachol*).

The recent tragic events of Simchas Torah in Eretz Yisroel have definitely shaken every Yid to the core. The total breakdown of the mighty Israeli Defense Force and the gruesome manner in which the attacks were waged were without a question *shelo k'derech hateva*. As *maaminim bnei maaminim*, we believe *באמונה שלימה* that we are in a situation of unprecedented *hashgacha elyona* from the Eibishter. May Hashem continue to hold us tight, finally delivering us from our enemies, giving protection, *refuos* and *yeshuos*, bringing Moshiach Tzidkeinu, *במהרה בימינו אמן*.

מרדכי אפפעל, Good Shabbos,



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