

# אור פני משה

שיחות מוסר על התורה  
מאת הרה"ג ר' משה אליעזר  
רבינוביץ זצ"ל

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*Shmuessen from  
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**פרשת תזריע - מצורע**

*Volume 8 Issue # 21*

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שיחות מוסר על התורה מאת הרה"ג ר' משה אליעזר רבינוביץ זצוק"ל

פרשת תזריע – מצורע

## פרשת תזריע – מצורע

וְהִבְגֵּד פִּי יִהְיֶה בּוֹ נֹגַע צָרְעַת בְּבִגְד צֹמֵר אוֹ בְּבִגְד פְּשֻׁתִּים

(ויקרא י"ג מ"ז)

*If there will be tzaraas on a garment, in a woolen garment or in a linen garment.*

### **Klal Yisrael the Purpose of Creation**

#### **Tzaraas was Entirely Supernatural**

The Torah tells us of three types of *tzaraas*. *Tzaraas* can appear on one's clothing, or on his house, or on his skin.

The *Seforno* explains that the appearance of these *negaim* was entirely a supernatural phenomenon, and they were clearly intended as a call to teshuva. As an example, he writes that in regard to *negaim* on clothing, we would only consider it real *tzaraas* if the article of clothing was white. Only then, since there could be no natural explanation for the appearance of the spot, was it considered to be *tzaraas*. However, if the article of clothing was colored, then the appearance of the spot could be explained as a natural phenomenon; i.e. the dye may have faded in that area, etc. Thus, since the spot could be explained in a natural way, it was clearly not *tzaraas*.

The *Seforno* elaborates further on this point, and he writes that being that *tzaraas* was an entirely supernatural occurrence which was intended as a call for teshuva, it was therefore reserved specially for *Klal Yisrael*. *Tzaraas* never appeared on the clothing or the houses of *goyim*.

Continuing this theme, the *Seforno* writes that the three types of *tzaraas* were three calls from Hashem urging the recipient to do teshuva. At first the *tzaraas* would appear on one's clothing. If he did not do teshuva, then it would progress and he would find *tzaraas* on

his house. If he still did not do teshuva, then the *tzaraas* would progress further to his own skin.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rav Rabinowitz added here the following point. Nowadays, when we do not have *tzaraas*, it would seem that we have lost the opportunity to hear these messages from Hashem. However, perhaps if we look closely, we can identify this thread even today.

All the problems which we face in our lives are really messages from Hashem, urging us to improve. Perhaps we can say that Hashem uses the same formula today as He used when we had *tzaraas*. Just as *tzaraas* began in the clothing, and progressed onto the house, and then further onto one's own skin, so too our problems today may work through the same sequence.

At first Hashem will send a message through one's 'clothing' which represent our monetary acquisitions. A person may begin to lose money in his business, or perhaps he will be forced to pay for unexpected expenses. These blows to his financial stability are meant as a message from Hashem. In the times of the Beis Hamikdash when one saw *tzaraas* on his clothing he understood that it was a direct message from Hashem and he immediately went to a *Kohen*. The same holds true today, if one loses money, he should understand that Hashem is talking to him, and he should make a *cheshbon hanefesh* to see where he needs improvement.

If this message doesn't have the desired effect, and the recipient does not improve, the problems will progress further to his 'house'. This represents the members of his household. Perhaps one's child will fall ill (*lo aleinu*), or perhaps he will begin to struggle with *shalom bayis* etc. If he hears the message and he makes a change then the problems will sort themselves out. If however, he still does not heed the message, and he does not improve, the problems will progress further.

The last venue through which Hashem will send His message is one's own body. The person himself will contract an illness, or the like.

These are all messages from Hashem urging us to do teshuva. It is so important not to be stubborn and miss these messages. If the motor in one's car becomes ruined it is a call from Hashem. He should not simply say: "If only I had changed the oil more often this could have been avoided!" To say that is to totally miss the point! Hashem will then need to send another 'message'! We need to wake up and hear the deeper implications of these occurrences, and not to stubbornly attribute them to natural causes.

## **Humans are the Focal Point of Creation**

Elaborating on this idea, the *Seforno* explains why Hashem goes to these lengths to exhort us to teshuva.

The focal point of the entire universe is the human. This is demonstrated by the fact that of all creations, we are the most similar to Hashem. The *posuk* in Bereishis says, “נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו” (בראשית, א: כו) *Let us make man in our form and in our likeness.* The *Seforno* explains that the word צלם refers to the human brain, and the word דמות refers to our free-will. Humans are the most similar to Hashem from all the creations as demonstrated by our thought processes and our free-will.

It is our task to further deepen this likeness, by emulating Hashem and following in His ways. This is achieved by thinking deeply about the existence of Hashem, and about His greatness and goodness. The *Seforno* writes that once a person achieves this awareness and he does his utmost to emulate Hashem and to act as Hashem does, he is undoubtedly the most similar to Hashem from all other creations, and he has fulfilled the purpose of creation.

## **Klal Yisrael is Destined to Fulfill the Purpose of Creation**

Of all humans, Hashem chose *Klal Yisrael* as His nation because He saw that we were the most suited to follow in His ways and to carry out His plan. We were destined to be the ones that would become the most similar to Hashem.

*It was three days after his Bris Milah, Avraham Avinu was unwell, and Hashem came to be mevaker choleh. During this meeting Avraham saw three wanderers and he runs to greet them. He says to Hashem, “אל נא תעבור מעל עבדיך” - Please wait here while I tend to these guests.”*

How do we understand this? Hashem Himself was there visiting Avraham! How could Avraham say, ‘Wait I have more important business to tend to’? The answer is that as great being with Hashem is, being *like* Hashem is even greater. The *hachnasas orchim* of Avraham Avinu was the greatest level of connection to Hashem because he was acting as Hashem acts. Emulating Hashem fulfills the

very purpose of creation, and it therefore takes precedence over everything else.

Because *Klal Yisrael* has these genes, and it is through us that the purpose of creation is to be fulfilled, Hashem therefore takes a special interest in guiding us on the right path, and that is why he sends the messages of *tzaraas* to prevail on us to do teshuva.

### **Based on the Above We Can Understand the Ohr Hachaim**

This *Seforno* teaches us a very powerful lesson. If a person follows in the ways of Hashem and he seeks to emulate Him as much as he can, he is actually considered similar to Hashem! His actions and thought processes when coming from purity of heart can be considered like Hashem's own actions and thoughts!

Based on this idea we can explain an intriguing, almost mysterious Ohr Hachaim in Parshas Metzorah. The Ohr Hachaim (פרק ז) writes that at times we find that the Torah will write an extra word to teach a *halacha* that should have been obvious because someone may have wrongly thought otherwise. The Torah will therefore go out of its way to teach this person the otherwise obvious *halacha*.

As an example, we find two seemingly contradictory *midrashim* regarding Sukkos and Pesach. One *midrash* writes, regarding matzah on Pesach, that there is the extra word *hazeh*, which teaches that we only need to eat matzah on Pesach and not on Sukkos. The *midrash* explains that had the *possuk* not told us this, I might have made the following *kal v'chomer*: If on Pesach, during which we are not required to sit in the sukkah, we are still required to eat matzah, on Sukkos, during which we are required to sit in the sukkah, surely we should be required to eat matzah! Therefore we need a special *possuk* to teach that matzah is only required on Pesach.

There is another *midrash* which seems to imply the exact opposite. It says that there is an extra word *hazeh* regarding Sukkos which teaches that we are only required to sit in the sukkah on Sukkos and not on Pesach. Without this extra word I would have made a *kal v'chomer*: If on Sukkos, which does not require us to eat matzah, we are still required to sit in the sukkah, on Pesach, which does require

that we eat matzah, surely we should be required to sit in the sukkah! We therefore need a special *possuk* to teach us that a sukkah is only a requirement of Sukkos.

How do we understand this? We can only apply the rule of *Kal V'chomer* if we can first determine which is more stringent and which is more lenient. In that case we could say that if a stringency applies to the more lenient item, then it surely applies to the more stringent item. However, if it is unclear which is more lenient and which is more stringent then the entire basis for the *kal v'chomer* is flawed.

*One could say: "If a cup of water fits into Bottle 'A' which is small, then surely it will fit into Bottle 'B' which is bigger." However, if it is unclear which of the two bottles is bigger, then the fact that the water fits in Bottle 'A' tells me nothing about if it will fit in Bottle 'B'.*

It is unclear which is more stringent Sukkos or Pesach because they each have a stringency and a leniency which the other doesn't have. Being as such, the basis for the *kal v'chomer* seems flawed.

### **The Torah Recognizes Varying Perspectives**

To answer this question the Ohr Hachaim says a fascinating thing. Every person who learns the Torah needs to establish his own logic. Thus, there could be varying perspectives on a single item, and one person may think it is stringent while someone else might think it is lenient.

In our example of Sukkos and Pesach, the Ohr Hachaim explains two possible, yet opposite perspectives. On the one hand Sukkos carries weight which Pesach does not because the *mitzvah* of Sukkah seems to be a greater deviation from natural life than that of matzah. (People often eat matzah even during the rest of the year.) Therefore, from this perspective one could have said, 'If the Torah requires such a drastic departure from normalcy as sitting in the sukkah in order to publicize the miracle of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, surely we must also perform the less drastic *mitzvah* of eating matzah'.

On the other hand, one could say that since Pesach is celebrated on the same date as the actual *Yetzias Mitzrayim* it is inherently a greater publication of the miracle than that of Sukkos. From this perspective one could say, 'If the Torah requires that we publicize the miracle on this day, surely we should do it in the greatest way possible and it should be eaten in the sukkah'.

Because these two perspectives are valid, the Torah therefore adds two extra words to teach that neither is correct; there is no obligation to sit in the sukkah on Pesach, and we do not need to eat matzah on Sukkos.

This is astounding! How can both perspectives be correct? Even if logically each one has a valid point, there can only be one which is truly correct. Either Pesach is more stringent, or Sukkos is. It cannot be both. If so, how can the Torah recognize both perspectives? The answer, writes the Ohr Hachaim, is that the Torah comes to teach every person even the one whose perspective is incorrect!

How do we understand this? How could it be that the Torah which is the ultimate wisdom, could recognize an incorrect perspective?

### **The Perspective of a *Talmid Chacham* Is Torah**

We can explain this based on the *Seforno* which we mentioned earlier. The *Seforno* teaches that the thought processes of humans are the representation of our *Tzelem Elokim*. When a *yid* seeks to emulate Hashem and to act as Hashem acts, he has fulfilled the purpose of creation which is to deepen the similarity between him and Hashem. He has fine-tuned his *Tzelem Elokim*, and his thought processes have become even more similar to Hashem's.

As such, the thought process of a *talmid chacham* itself is Torah. His thought process is like Hashem's thought process! It doesn't matter if his particular perspective is right or wrong, what matters is that he thought it and it is therefore as if Hashem thought it!

This is the meaning of the famous *Gemara*, 'אלו ואלו דברי אלקים (:ו) גיטין', *These and these are the words of Hashem*'. The fact that

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practically, the *halacha* does not follow one view, does not in any way mean that the perspective is false. The very fact that a *talmid chacham* views the Torah from this perspective automatically validates it, and it thus has the status of Hashem's Torah.

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