



5781 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Tazria-Metzora/פרשת תזריע-מצורע

Seeing the Hand of God

In this week's parsha we learn about the mysterious affliction of tzara'at. The Talmud teaches that though it manifests as a form of leprosy on the body, in reality, tzara'at is caused by specific sins.¹ The most basic lesson of tza'arat, then, is the severity of these sins and to heal/repent from them.

The Sefer HaChinuch² teaches us, though, that in addition to this local lesson we need to take a step back and appreciate a broader point that is conveyed through the phenomenon of tzara'at:

Tzara'at is to set into our hearts God's providence even on individual people, and that His eyes are open regarding everything they do...

In other words, tzara'at is a lesson regarding faith in God. When it existed, it was a constant reminder of God's presence and involvement in this world. How can a person deny these principles of faith if they see a person speak slanderously and then receive tzara'at afterwards?

In our day we do not have tzara'at on to reinforce our faith in God's providence over the individual person. But we have national events that are arguably just as strong proofs to the existence of God and His involvement in this world. I am referring to the events celebrated this time of year on the Jewish/Israeli calendar – Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim.

The ancient world was inhabited by all sorts of prophets making all sorts of prophecies. Most of these predictions have fallen into the dustbin of history, completely incorrect and forgotten. Similar fates have befallen the great empires of Assyria, Greece and Rome. In the entirety of human history there are but a single set of prophecies that are being fulfilled over three thousand years after

¹ Erchin 15b.

² Mitzvah 169.



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their initial delivery. In the entirety of human history there is only a single people that were stateless and landless for close to two thousand years but have returned to create a nation in their ancestral land. There is but a single nation to pray towards a city from the distance of thousands of miles for thousands of years and then to finally return to it.

What is the explanation of all this? How can there be so many anomalies in the history of the Jewish people and in particular regarding the events of the 20th century? While in theory one can conjure up several explanations, is not the most likely that God is guiding history to fulfill these ancient prophecies? Is this not the hand of God, expressed as clearly as possible, ensuring the realization of an ancient love between God and the Jewish people? This should reinforce our faith in God no less than the tzara'at of yesteryears.

For example, When sitting in the parks of Yerushalayim how can one not connect the dots to the iconic prophecy of Zecharya:

Thus said the LORD of Hosts: There shall yet be old men and women in the squares of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. And the squares of the city shall be crowded with boys and girls playing in the squares.³

Playing with one's children in the parks of Yerushalayim, as prosaic as it seems, is the fulfillment of prophecies reaching out across the mists of time. It is up to us to learn the lesson of tzara'at and see the clear hand of God in our lives.

³ Zecharya 4:8-9. Translation from sefaria.org.il.