



FINDING THE LIGHT IN THE TUNNEL

פרשת תזריע-מצורע



If we carefully study the topic of *nigei batim*, (*tzaraas* which appears on one's house in Eretz Yisroel), we can discover the merciful "hand" of Hashem.

The Torah tells us in this week's *parsha*, that before the *Kohain* comes to diagnose the deep green or deep red discoloration on the walls of one's home, the owner should remove his possessions. This is done in order to spare the homeowner the loss of property, which may result once the *Kohain* declares the home and consequently its contents, *tamei* - impure. This sensitivity may seem to be unjustified, since, according to the *gemara* (*Erchin 16*) this plague is a punishment for the inhabitant's selfishness in not sharing his possessions with his neighbors. Perhaps he once excused himself by stating that he did not have what his neighbor requested, and now he is forced to show them what he truly owns. The *Yalkut Lekach Tov* explains however, that this sympathy is truly consistent with Hashem's *midah* of *rachamim*. Hashem will demonstrate kindness even when he must mete out retribution, since Hashem is *rachamim b'din* (merciful in judgment).

This thread of kindness continues as we follow the development of this form of *tzaraas*. If, after the home is quarantined for seven days, the discoloration on the stones spreads, the owner must cut them out and reset them with new stone, mortar and plaster. If another week passes, and the *nega* (affliction) reappears, the entire house must be demolished. Where is the "silver lining" in this harsh judgment? *Rashi* explains (14,34) that when the *Cananim* saw that the Jewish people would conquer the land, they hid their valuables in the walls of their houses. Now, "thanks" to this affliction, these treasures would be uncovered for the benefit of its new inhabitants.

Although *Tzaraas* in any of its forms (on the flesh, clothing or home) is not found today, its lessons are forever. And although Hashem does not condone selfish behavior, His justice is tempered with mercy.

Whenever we go through difficult times, we must look to see the light, not at the end of the tunnel, but even in the tunnel.

**DON'T
SEE THE LIGHT AT
THE END OF THE
TUNNEL,
SEE THE LIGHT
IN THE
TUNNEL**

There are certain people who are brought into this world, whose lives may be tragically brief, yet incredibly inspirational. Such was the life of Devora Butler, עליה השלום.

Devora was born in 1976 with an illness that was a medical mystery at that time. From birth her body did not function like the body of a regular infant, and she had a unique condition in that she was lacking tears.

Later medical science would identify this Jewish genetic illness, as Familial Dysautonomia, a disorder of the autonomic nervous system. Her parents, Rabbi and Mrs. Yale Butler stopped at nothing, seeking the best medical care while securing the profound *brochos* of the illustrious Klausenberger Rebbe, Rav Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam זצ"ל. He gave

Devora two prophetic blessings which enriched the lives of the Butlers, and were a source of hope throughout the 33 years of Devora's life. Against all natural rhyme or medical reason, the Klausenberger Rebbe assured the parents not to worry, for Devora would develop tears. Additionally, the Rebbe assured the Butlers that one day they would walk her down to the *chuppa*.

Miraculously, Devora did indeed develop tears. It was said that when she would cry she would smile, recognizing the actualization of the Rebbe's first *brocho*, as she gained optimism that his second one would also materialize one day. Although Devora's life was a continuous medical challenge, she did not let her problems defeat her. Quite to the contrary, she wore her

signature smile proudly, not focusing on herself; always seeing what she could do to help others. Amazingly, she rejoiced at the news that a certain test was being developed to test for carriers of FD, even though she realized full well that had such a screening been around earlier, she would possibly never have been born.

As her principal in high school in Los Angeles, I saw her as an inspiration to students and teachers alike. Despite her unsteady gait, she did not want to be treated differently, and certainly not pitied. She never complained and always responded to an inquiry of how she was feeling with a very deliberate, "*Boruch Hashem*". Those two words did not just roll off her tongue, but were seated deeply in her heart. This refrain became her life-long "theme song". She always responded with a very hearty "*Boruch Hashem*".

The climax of her life came in 2005 when she married Kenny Kamiel. He would refer to Devora as the Rebbe's *brocho*, and she would refer to him as her *brocho*. When they came to our home in Baltimore during *Sheva Brochos*, the happiness which radiated from both their faces was just about tangible.

Devora returned her precious *neshama* to its Maker on *Shabbos, Erev Pesach, 2009*. Throughout her life the merciful Hand of the Al-mighty was extended to her through the *rachamim* of His various messengers, including the Klausenberger Rebbe. Interestingly, at her *levayah* in Pittsburgh we were challenged to limit our tears (due to *Chol Hamoed*) for a young lady who defied the medical experts with her tears.

תהא נפשה צוררה בצרור החיים

Point of Discussion

Why is it so hard to see the light inside the tunnel?