



# Permeating Permeance

The focus of this week's *parashah*, the phenomenon of *tzara'at*, was one of the most wonderous miracles in the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*. The Ramban points out that it was a definitive sign of Hashem's open Presence among *Am Yisrael* to show where they had erred. Further, it is quite telling that *tzara'at* could affect one's home or clothing as well as his body.

We tend to view life with one-dimensional vision. Yet, the physical objects we see as a wall or chair, or coat possess far more dimension than we behold. Rav Chayim Shmuelevitz explains that we find many examples throughout Tanach and Jewish History wherein people were able to infuse physical objects with spiritual strength. For example, Elisha HaNavi tells his trusted servant *Gechazi* to take his walking stick and revive a child. How can a stick bring a person back to life? Clearly, Elisha imbued his stick with holiness from his essence, giving the stick tremendous power. We learn from Chazal how Shmuel

Hanavi's coat grew with him as he grew and ultimately, he was revived by the *ba'alat Ov*, wearing this coat. We know that his mother Chana made the coat for him when he was a young child, infusing it with all her tears, hopes, and love.

Undoubtedly these miracles and Shmuel Hanavi's abundant *mesirut nefesh* for *Am Yisrael* came from the power of this coat. Another example is found in Talmud *Yerushalmi* which describes how an elderly solved a difficult *halachic* problem. When asked how he was able to do this, he responded that he once saw the stick of Rabi Meir. Rabi Meir's stick was infused with incredible potency, so much so that those who merely saw it could achieve greatness in their learning.

The *Chatam Sofer* notes that only homes that had immense *kedushah* were affected by *tzara'at*. We see that when someone comes to the Kohen to report a sighting of *tzara'at* on his walls he says, "*kenega nir-ah li babayit*," it looks to me as if there

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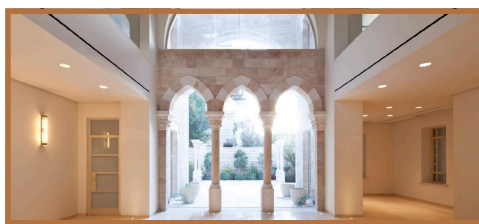
is something like a [tzara'at] mark in the house (*Vayikra 14:35*). He seems to be saying that the affliction is only a possibility since it would be audacious to imply that his righteousness and his home's holiness is worthy of this extraordinary miracle.

We can all infuse our homes and the contents of our homes with holiness by dedicating our thoughts, speech, and actions to serving Hashem. As we approach the *chag* of Pesach, we have a unique opportunity to do so on *Seder* night. Matzah is referred to as "*lechem oni, sheonim alav devarim harbeh*", the bread that we speak or respond much about. Most of *Seder* night we leave the matzah uncovered, allowing our words of Torah and *tefillah* to permeate the matzah. "*Vechol hamarbeh lesaper beyetzit mitzrayim harei zeh meshubach*," one who abounds in telling the story of the Exodus, [it] is more praiseworthy. Rav Schorr in *Halekach Vehalebuv* explains the 'it' as referring to the matzah. The more we invest in telling the story and the more we inculcate *emunah* through the story, the greater the matzah becomes. Matzah is referred to as the "bread of healing." As we see from the lessons of *tzara'at*, one can increase matzah's healing aspects through the very mitzvah of "*sipur yetziat mitzrayim*." ■

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