



REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES

FACULTY, OU ISRAEL CENTER

Potent Prayer

“*Tamei hu badad yeishev mi’chutz lamachaneh moshavo*—He is unclean; he shall dwell isolated; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.” (*Vayikra*13;46) The *metzora* must call out “*Tamei tamei*—Unclean! Unclean!” to anyone who passes by. The Gemara Shabbat explains that this declaration was meant to inform people of his condition so that they could pray for him and his recovery. We can learn two primary lessons here, one that pertains to the leper, and one that is meant for those who are called upon to pray for him.

Rav Moshe Scheinerman in *Ohel Moshe* asks why is the tefillah of others so important here? Usually, we find that the tefillah of a sick person is preferable. Would it not be sufficient for the *metzora* to pray for himself? His answer is based on the *Zohar Hakadosh* that translates *metzora* as *mesugar*—closed off; his tefillot are closed, i.e., they are prevented from ascending upwards. As a result, the *metzora* is in need of the tefillot of others; he is not only distanced from others, but also from Above.

Rav Shimshon Pincus zt”l in *Tiferet Shimshon* emphasizes the importance of davening for other people. He notes that it is a natural reaction when seeing another in pain or in need of help to do what he can to ease his distress. Even if we don’t have the financial wherewithal to help others, we can always daven to Hashem on behalf of another. The Gemara teaches that one can ask for mercy on behalf

of his friend, and of he does not, he is called a sinner. This is so because either one doesn’t believe in the power of tefillah, or he is callous towards his friends. Rav Pincus notes that if one ever sees or hears a message of someone who is sick, it is appropriate to say a chapter of Tehillim even if the person is unknown to him.

We find an example that illustrates the power of tefillah in the case of the *Ir Miklat*. A person who accidentally kills another must dwell in the city of refuge until the Kohen Gadol dies. The *Levush* explains the reasoning behind this. Those living in this city will most likely pray for the Kohen Gadol’s death so they can go free. The Kohen Gadol is deserving of such tefillot against him, since he did not sufficiently pray that accidental murders would not take place. This mandate to daven for the Klal is placed on all those who are responsible for the welfare of others.

Rav Pincus adds that when one sees a handicapped person, or any other person who is in need it is appropriate to say a prayer for them. This includes those who need spiritual salvation as well.

The call of the *metzora* is a timeless one, reverberating throughout and awakening us to feel the pain of another. We can each respond to that pain by imploring Hashem for their salvation and do our part to ease the suffering and anguish of another. ■

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