



The Cost of Clarity

“יתבררו ויתלבנו ויצרפו רבים והרשיעו רשעים
ולא יבינו כל רשעים והמשכילים יבינו”

Could an obscure possuk in Daniel give clarity to the world's current standing?

There are many riddles and enigmas surrounding the coming of Moshiach and the events that will come to pass in the prelude to those days. The exact date of Moshiach's coming is one of the most intriguing, yet strangely attracting questions that the *chachamim* have alluded to throughout the generations.

The reason for this might very well be because it is a riddle. A riddle found towards the end of chapter 12 of Daniel, in which an angel tells Daniel that Moshiach will come “In a time,

two times and a half.” There is no less clear way to give a calculation of a day than to basically say sometime between now and double now. As he continues, “These words are covered and sealed until the time of the end. They will [then] be clarified and whitened, and many will be purified, and the wicked will pervert [them], and all the wicked will not understand, but the wise will understand.”

This last sentence is quite obviously open to different interpretations. Rashi and most *mefarshim* tie it back to the

prediction of when Moshiach will come. As the generations pass and many people will make calculations for the time of Moshiach's coming, eventually the exact date will be clarified and many will realize that they were wrong. The wicked, on the other hand, will use the set dates to say that Moshiach's time has already passed and he clearly is not coming. But the wise will understand that the prediction has yet to be unsealed.

The simpler way to understand these words, *pshat*, and how the Alter Rebbe also explains it, is as a description of the times of Moshiach. That the people will be clarified and cleansed, the wicked will be perverted, and the wise will understand.

The Rebbe took this second interpretation of the *possuk* and with it explained some of the events in the world at that time. The Cold War was at its height, the world was tottering near an all out nuclear war, which would have led to total obliteration of the planet. Many shocking things were happening in the world; not only on a global scale but also in the smaller sense both in Israel and in New York. Mankind shocked us with the depths to which they can fall, with the words they say, the lies they tell, the accusations they make.

True, good was also emerging in unexpectedly powerful ways. The amount of *tzedaka* people were giving grew disproportionately. In Torah study, new ways of learning had been discovered in the past 100 year, and had recently been expanded into full methodologies. For example, the Rogatchover style of learning was a newly developed way to explain diverse concepts in Torah.

But we see that evil was growing more powerful.

Today this applies just as strongly. The world is in chaos with terrible atrocities taking place in many countries around the world; atrocities

that come from the worst nightmares. Violence, suffering, and people acting from the depths of depravity. How are we supposed to understand this, to make sense of all this emerging evil?

And with this the Rebbe takes that *possuk* from Daniel and flips it on its head. One of the signs of Moshiach's imminent coming is the clarity, the separation of the good and the bad, the righteous and the wicked. That clarity comes not only when the good becomes obvious and clear, but when the bad becomes obvious and clear as well.

As human beings, we can be complex, and it is not always clear what type of person one might be. An individual can spend his day doing many a thing, some will be good, some better, and some worse. Not necessarily will it be clear what type of a person he is; one who is "wicked [and] will not understand," or from the "wise who will understand."

This is not a failing. People are not always required to know where they stand. Even Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai said before he passed away, in reference to going to Gan Eden, "I don't know which way I will go." This is because, while he was aware of his stature and how he acted consciously—never walking four *amos* without learning Torah, educating five students who established much of *Torah Shebaal Peh*—it is possible that deep inside him there was something that needed to be fixed. And this hidden part is so important that it created a question in his mind, if he will be taken to Gan Eden or...

The coming of Moshiach's times means that the time of clarity has arrived. As stated in the *Novi*, at the time of Moshiach, "They will be clarified and whitened." The time when true characters will emerge, people's inner selves will be revealed, and it will become clear who a person really is.

MANY SHOCKING THINGS WERE HAPPENING IN THE WORLD; NOT ONLY ON A GLOBAL SCALE BUT ALSO IN THE SMALLER SENSE

WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH A QUESTION: HOW CAN WE REALLY SAY THAT THE WORLD IS BECOMING A MORE REFINED PLACE, IF THESE INCIDENTS ARE ALLOWED TO TAKE PLACE?

This evil, these terrible actions that we did not expect, is not inconsistent with the imminent arrival of Moshiach. On the contrary, amazingly, this itself is one of the very signs that Moshiach is almost here! For when these people behave in such a way, they are making clear which party they belong to, and are participating in the clarification that takes place at the coming of Moshiach's times.

But what about the people that act this way? Is their only purpose to their actions to be a sign for others?

This is where we see the benefit of clarity, of being aware of the reality. During the time of the *Beis Hamikdash* there was a *korban* for someone that sinned, a *chatas*. And there was a *korban* for someone who wasn't certain, but was pretty sure he sinned, an *asham talui*. Interestingly, a *chatas* only cost one *maah* while the *asham talui* cost two *selaim*, equivalent to 48 *maos*. That's a increase of 4800%. Why?

Rabbeinu Yona explains the difference by describing a basic trait of people—we only regret something that we are sure we did. In the case of the *chatas*, the person bringing the *korban* has full knowledge of his sin, and he regrets committing it. But in the case of the *asham talui*, it is offered to atone for a sin that may or may not have happened. Therefore, the person bringing the *korban*, while feeling bad for having possibly done an *aveira*, he doesn't have that same deep regret. That's why his *korban* is so much more expensive, to impress upon the bringer that the *kappara* he needs is just as serious and therefore needs to be brought with the proper *teshuvah*.

The same applies in our case here. As long as these wicked people are under the impression that they are “regular” people, they will never self-examine, making it impossible for them to improve. However, once their true colors come out and it becomes clear that they are, in fact, wicked, they now have the ability to do *teshuva* and become *tzaddikim*.

Based on the premise outlined by the Rebbe on this subject, perhaps we can shed light on a puzzling issue in our world today:

We constantly say that Moshiach is on his way and point to the many signs of his coming; signs drawn from Gemara, Midrash, and other sources. Yet, there are some times when it looks as if we have, *chas veshalom*, fallen farther from Moshiach. World events, local events, they are all shocking and disconcerting. And this really bothers us. We are confronted with a question: How can we really say that the world is becoming a more refined place, if these incidents are allowed to take place?

But with the above explanation we understand why this is happening. It is actually a part of the process of Moshiach's arrival! By clearly defining evil, we are able to separate the world into those that are good and those that are wicked and need to change. It is part of the clarity that will happen with the coming of Moshiach, and the start of the times of the End of Days. **T**

Based on the Sichos of Chof Av 5746 (Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5746 Vol. 4 p. 255) and Purim 5747 (Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5747 Vol. 2 p. 626)