

# DIVINE PROVIDENCE

*by Rabbi Pinchas Winston*

*God told Moshe and Aharon, "When a person has a blotch, a discoloration, or spot on his skin like the curse of leprosy, then he should be brought to Aharon the priest, or to one of his descendants." (Vayikra 13:1-2)*

More than this week's parshah is about Bris Milah and leprosy, it is about Divine signs. It is specifically about personal Hashgochah Pratis -Divine Providence-and how to deal with it, and what happens when one chooses to ignore what is clearly a message from Heaven to change one's path in life.

That being the case, I am going to use this week's parshah as an excuse to point out some important Divine signs being sent our way at this very time. I suspect that most people will just brush them off as extreme, or take them seriously only enough to be amused, but not inspired to do something about them. Why should this generation be any different than the one before the Holocaust or the Spanish Inquisition?

And don't say because we have historical precedent. Apparently, that counts for absolutely nothing once the masses take root in a foreign country, and materialism enters the picture. This is why the Torah specifically gave the following mitzvah:

Remember the days of old, understand the many generations that have passed. Ask your father, and he will tell you; your elders, and they will say it to you. (Devarim 32:7)

Whatever. I still feel an obligation to point out what I believe to be important warning signs for the nation as they occur, and leave it up to the individual to decide what to do with them. It seems that, for the most part, only God can take the Jew out of exile and exile out of the Jew.

There are those of us who have been suspicious of President Obama from the start. Many are American themselves and gentile, but they just don't like the man's past, his unusual rise to power, and what he stands for. President Obama represents a new America, and these people still like the old one.

We have also taken special note of his mercurial rise to power against the odds, and his attitude towards his job that smacks of a lack of sense of respect for who he is supposed to be and what he is supposed to represent. And, because this is occurring at a very precarious time in Jewish and world history, all of this seems to take on added significance, especially with a third war of Gog and Magog looming somewhere in the future.

So far, nothing new. However, what is new is the way many people of reputation have started using the word "war" with respect to Obama's attitude towards and dealings with Israel. They see, as we do, a new presidential stance with respect to peace in the Middle East, and the importance of Israeli sovereignty and security in that process. They see, as everyone should, a tremendous favoring of the Islamic world and demeaning of the Jewish one.

This is definitely new, as far as American presidents go. And though there were some who wanted to make George Bush Jr. into Gog (though his father was better suited), because of the pressure he applied to Israel to make concessions, and because of his name, in truth, he was about as sympathetic to Israel and her concerns as could be expected from a President of the United States of America at this stage of history.

And, even though some wanted to make George Bush appear inept at his job, still, there was something Presidential about him, something he shared in common with his predecessors going back in history. The only recent exception, perhaps, was Bill Clinton, whose rise to power was also shady and too quick, and seemingly in response to the dislike of the present Commander-in-Chief.

One thing is for certain: no one ever felt that George W. Bush was at war with Israel, and though his father may have wanted to be, the times did not permit it. Like Nixon before him, it was still historically advantageous to be a beneficent ally to Israel, especially since the Arabs had not yet figured how to use diplomacy, propaganda, and terror, to draw the West away from Israel to their side.

One of the amazing things about the Metzora in this week's parshah is how he ends up with tzara'as on his body. It is not as if he wasn't warned that his loshon hara had caught the attention of Heaven and that he was in line for some Divine chastisement. For, tzara'as on the body came only after tzara'as on the house, and then on the clothing, failed to be taken as Divine signs to mend one's way.

Tzara'as on the house and the clothing is between God and the Metzora. Few people have to know about it, which gives the sinner a chance to wake up early and to do teshuvah before he has to suffer public humiliation. Heaven does not want to embarrass anyone, and does its best to inspire teshuvah while it is still a private matter.

Question: Why did 4/5ths of the Jews die in the Plague of Darkness? Answer: Because they were stuck in de-Nile.

Not funny, right? Right. But then again, it is not really a joke, though it may be a play on the word denial. For, that is the true answer to the question: the 4/5ths were in denial regarding the upcoming redemption and refused to pay attention to the Divine signs regarding what to do next. By the time the ninth plague rolled around, they just had the wrong attitude.

Likewise, should a person take for granted God's mercy by inflicting his house and clothing with

tzara'as before his actual body, then what choice does Heaven have? If the only way to get the Jew to leave denial is by making his reality inescapable, then that is what Heaven will do, and has done countless times throughout Jewish history. And, that is what Heaven is poised to do once again, as we, the Jewish people find ourselves in one of our historically favorite places: denial.

That is why the Metzora was not allowed to decide his status for himself. Rather, he had to consult a kohen, who had to come and check out the Divine signs, to see if what he had was simply some kind of mold, or actual tzara'as. For, when it comes to Hashgochah Pratis, especially regarding Divine decrees, human logic takes a backseat to Divine signs, which can only be recognized, understood, and interpreted based upon Torah tradition.

"It will never happen here in America."

"Obama will never do that."

"We'll always be able to get out."

"It will always be safe for American Jews, Canadian Jews, English Jews, etc."

Who says? Human logic says. Well, according to human logic, the assassination of Duke Ferdinand should not have resulted in World War I. And, according to human logic, Prime Minister Chamberlain should have seen from the start that Hitler, y"s, could not be trusted and wanted to conquer all of Europe.

And, according to human logic, even though Hitler y"s wrote Mein Kempf, and many other discourses that revealed his extreme hatred of the Jewish people, he should still not have been able to pull off a Holocaust, not nearly to the extent that he did. Even in retrospect, even after the fact, it just doesn't make sense. But it happened anyhow.

The Leshem says the following remarkable, and chilling, idea:

There is a very deep matter here. For, sometimes, it is His will, may His Name be blessed, to bring about a specific decree as a function of Kavshei d'Rachmana, the hidden thoughts of God. As a result, He may remove free-will and put fear in their hearts until it is impossible to strengthen their trait of bitachon, in order to fulfill the decree, Rachmana Litzlan, as HaGaon Rav Ya'akov from Lisa wrote in the name of the Ramban in his commentary on Megillas Esther, on the verse, "Mordechai would not bend or bow" (Esther 3:2); see there. (Sha'arei Leshem, p. 115)

Kavshei d'Rachmana is a term that denotes Divine Providence for which we have no logical explanation (Brochos 10a). Elsewhere the Leshem explains that the more primordial and sublime something is in terms of its fulfillment of the mandate of Creation, the higher up it is in the sefiros and the less accessible the light is to the minds of men.

The Leshem is referring to righteous people whose trust in God is often strong enough to ward off evil decrees against their generation. However, explains the Leshem, sometimes a decree must occur anyhow, and to make sure that it does, God removes the possibility of bitachon from the heart of the righteous people of the generation, so that history can run its intended course, as terrible as it may be.

The righteous people, of course, are credited for the bitachon they would have had, had Heaven not interfered with it, and maybe even spared the suffering of others as well. But the rest of the people they would have wanted to protect are not so fortunate, as history has shown over and over again. It may not be logical to us, but given the big picture of history and the master plan of Creation, it is certainly logical to Heaven.

In fact, the biggest trap of history has been our own logic, which has its place for sure, but which can so often be misplaced. In fact, it only really works well within the framework of Torah tradition and Talmudic interpretation. First you have to see what God is thinking, and then use your logic to sync with His approach to history. That is the entire point of learning Torah, and the entire point of human intelligence and free-will.

And, when it comes to reading the Divine signs of history, certain sections of Torah are more specific than others. True, if you are really astute and clever, you can figure out what is happening today from the laws of damages between neighbors, or from the laws of Shabbos or Kashrus. But, the chances of being wrong are great, and what would be the point since one can look at specific seforim that discuss the issue specifically?

This may be one of the reasons why the parshah begins with Bris Milah, which seems somewhat out of place. It is Bris Milah that sums up the entire meaning of a Jew in a single mitzvah, which is about far more than simply removing the foreskin. It is about being committed to truth on all levels, even when personal desire tries to interfere with our perception of it, which amounts to being real with Divine Providence no matter what it tells us.

The orlah represents spiritual blindness, and an innate inability to properly or fully relate to God, mostly due to powerful drives that make the acknowledgment of truth difficult. The removal of the orlah represents the removal of spiritual blinders, opening up a Jew's capacity to see the hand of God in his life, so that he can work with it, and not against it.

As history winds down, and the Jewish people become increasingly threatened, such a vision of Divine Providence can help a Jew to remain an asset as opposed to a liability. For, Jews who remain stubborn and refuse to read the hand of God into history in order to properly interpret the events of today will end up interfering with what Israel needs to do to survive.

For, as Israel and her allies move apart from each other, how much longer will the Western Jew be able to span the gap as it becomes increasingly wider? At some point, critical decisions will have to be made by Jews around the world that will affect their status amongst the nations. Seventy-eight

percent of American Jewry voted Obama, and still stand behind him even at this point.  
For how much longer can they be a friend of President Obama and the Israeli people?

---

Text

Copyright © by [Rabbi Pinchas Winston](#) and Project Genesis, Inc.

Rabbi Winston has authored many books on Jewish philosophy (Hashkofa). If you enjoy Rabbi Winston's Perceptions on the Parsha, you may enjoy his books. Visit Rabbi Winston's [online book store](#) for more details! [www.thirtysix.org](http://www.thirtysix.org)