

Chukas 2017

Why don't we have prophecy nowadays?

"We cried out to Hashem and He heard our voice; He sent an emissary and took us out of Egypt. Now behold! We are in Kadesh, a city at the edge of your border." (20, 16)

"ונצעק אל יקוק וישמע קלנו וישלח מלאך ויצאנו ממצרים והנה אנחנו בקדש עיר קצה גבולך."

Rashi explains that this angel is referring to Moshe. We can derive from this that prophets are called angels. (מלאך זה משה. מכאן שהנביאים קרויים מלאכים.) With this we can discuss why we don't have prophets now a days.

Why don't we have prophets now a days who will encourage us to perform mitzvos, rebuke us and who will daven for us? The Chafetz Chaim (al hatorah 207-208) explains that the Jews needed to spend a certain amount of time in Egypt before being redeemed. The slavery was very difficult. When Moshe saw them being afflicted, he did whatever he could to help them. For example, if a Jew needed help carrying bricks, he would help him. Moshe also intervened and assisted the Jew who was being beaten up by the Egyptian. Moshe also davened for their redemption. Hashem knew that the exile was beneficial for the Jews. **Not having prophets hastened the redemption from Egypt and hastens the redemption from our current exile as well. How? If we would have prophets now a days then he would daven for the exile to be easier. This would consequently prolong the exile. The more difficult the exile is, the quicker the redemption will come.**

Another answer is as follows. Rabbi Gedalyahu Shor (Or Gedalyahu chalek beis page 192) explains that even though it is difficult for us to understand the concept of people having a desire to worship idols, nevertheless, they used to have a yeitzer hara to worship idols. How can we explain the yeitzer hara for idolatry which used to exist? The Pasuk in Koheles (7, 14) says "God has made the one as well as the other." "את זה לעמת זה עשה האלהים." Since we attained such a high level of holiness, we needed an equal power on the tummah (impure) side, idols. The Gra (seder olam perek 30) quotes the Gemara in Yuma (69b) that says **after the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash Anshei Kenesas Hagedolah (Men of the great assembly) decided that there cannot be a yeitzer hara for idolatry any more. Once there was no desire to worship idols, they weren't able to prophesize as well.** They knew what destruction had been caused by the passion for idolatry before the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash. If the Jews would be subject to the same desire, the potential danger would be too great to contemplate. The sages therefore prayed for Hashem to remove the yeitzer hara for idolatry and were successful. The fact that it is so difficult for us to fathom how they had such a yeitzer hara is a proof that their prayers worked.

If the appeal of good is compelling beyond doubt and evil is foolish beyond temptation, then man's choice of good is no freer than is the choice between drinking fresh water and rancid poison. (See end of intro to art scroll to sefer Yehoshua.) Rabbi Shor (Or Gedalyahu moadim page 46) elaborates and says when the Gemara says that the ability to prophesize was canceled, this doesn't mean that it was canceled completely. The Gemara in Baba Basra (12a) says even though the prophets were unable to prophesy, nevertheless the chachamim were still able to prophesize. (מיום שחרב בית המקדש, אף על פי שניטלה מן הנביאים, מן החכמים לא ניטלה.) The Ramban

(Chidushei Ramban al Shas) explains that there are different types of prophecy. Prophets receive their prophecy when they dream. Chachamim differ in this regard. Their Torah knowledge allows them to know the truth.

The Chasam Sofer (al shas) explains that after the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash, we aren't able to receive prophecy by Hashem speaking to us. There is a second type of prophecy; one that comes from wisdom. How does one attain such wisdom? It is attained by learning Torah shebeal peh (oral Torah).

Why are there no sorcerers, demons or spirits that can enter into our bodies and control us nowadays? Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky zasa"l (Emes L'Yaakov pages 263-264) says **when prophets prophesized, witchcraft, sorcery, demons and spirits were able to exist and function. Conversely, when prophets stopped prophesizing then witchcraft, sorcery, demons and spirits were unable to exist and function.** For example, when we were able to hear a bas kol, a heavenly voice, sorcery existed. The Rambam (payrush Mishnayos to Mesechas Avoda Zara perek four) says that demons are all false and they never really existed. Many argue on this opinion of the Rambam, including the Gra (Biur Hagra yora daya siman 179) who says that we do find the concept of demons in several Gemaras. Rabbi Kamenetsky explains that at the time of the Gemara, Amoraim had the ability to resurrect the dead and even create certain beings. The Pasuk in Koheles (7, 14) says "את זה לעמת זה עשה האלהים." "God has made the one as well as the other." Since we attained such a high level of holiness, we needed an equal power on the tummah (impure) side. Nowadays, since these spiritual strengths no longer exist, the ability to create impure beings also disappeared. Rav Elhanan Wassermann said the last time we heard of a dybbuk (spirit that enters into the body) was in the time of the Chofetz Chaim. The Gemara as well relates the concept of yeridas hadoros (decrease in generations). Nowadays, since we don't have this immensely high level of kedusha (holiness), we therefore don't have witchcraft and the like.

What is the reason that level of tummah depends on the level of Kedusha? Rabbi Kamenetsky (Emes L'Yaakov Brachos (6a)) explains that Hashem created this world with free will. We can choose kedusha over tummah or the opposite. If we did not have an equal level of both, then we wouldn't have the concept of free choice. Meaning, if kedusha would be so obvious and strong then it would be considered as if we didn't have a choice to choose bad/tumma. Therefore, at the time of the Gemara, when there was a high level of holiness, Hashem allowed a very high level of impurity. This enabled us to have free choice and thereby enable us to choose holiness and grant us reward. The Ben Yehoyadah (ibid) discusses this as well and explains that nowadays we don't have demons and the like because we don't have the high level of kedusha corresponding to it.

2.

Para Aduma

The Keli Yakar (19, 21) offers a novel explanation on how the para aduma makes those who are pure impure. It is easy to understand how the para aduma purifies those who are impure. It is difficult to understand however how the para aduma simultaneously makes those who are pure impure. Food only becomes susceptible to receive tummah by means of water. How does water cause something to become susceptible to receive tummah? Doesn't water usually cause people or items to become pure? We immerse ourselves or utensils or vessels into a mikvah and it then

becomes pure. How then does water also cause something to become impure? This is precisely the point. Regarding nature, many times something cannot become activated unless it has something opposite. (People say opposites attract.) The greater a person is, the stronger his yeitzer hara is as stated in mesechas Suka (52a). One of the explanations for this is based on what we just said; opposites. Meaning, since he is a great person, he therefore needs the opposite to the extreme; a big yeitzer hara. The darkest time at night is right before the morning. Right before dawn, when it starts getting light, is the darkest time. The reason for this is, there must be opposites. Right before it gets light it must be very dark. The same applies to the para aduma; it must have opposites.