

BEHA'ALOTEKHA 1 - THE DIVINE COUNTENANCE - ITS BLEMISH AND TIKUN

The formula of Birkat Kohanim includes a plea that Hashem bestow on Israel his Divine Countenance. May YHVH shine (the lights of) his face towards you..May YHVH elevate (the lights of) his face towards you. 1 We also find references to this supernal illumination in other places in Tanakh such as that found in Tehillim "Hashem, by the illumination of your countenance they walk". 2 It appears as if there are seven celestial apertures through which this light is sent forth. These seven - parallel the seven Nerot that Aharon was to raise up to illuminate the face of the Menorah. 3 This relationship between the seven apertures of the Divine Face and the Menorah is realized in the 67th chapter of Tehillim which is often depicted in the form of the seven branches of the Menorah. 4 The second verse of that chapter reads "May he illuminate us with his countenance." 5 It was these Divine lights that had illuminated the face of Moshe as he descended Sinai with the second set of Luchos. The verse in Ki Tisa reads, "The skin of Moshe's face was shining with a brilliant light." 6 It was also these same lights which had been reflected through his face that were to become blemished as a result of the improper speech of Miryam and Aharon. The verse towards the end of our parasha reads "Miryam and Aharon began speaking against Moshe." 7 This blemish necessitated a Tikun in the form of a prayer by Moshe to heal Miryam of Sara'at as well as a Tikun of a seven day waiting period to re-open the seven apertures of the Divine Countenance that had been forced closed.

BLEMISH OF THE DIVINE APERTURES

Miryam and Aharon complained against Moshe concerning his relationship with his wife Siporah. Hashem descends and summons them to listen carefully. He proceeds to detail the unique prophetic level attained by Moshe 8 and how he had perfected and reflected physically in his own face the seven apertures of the Divine Countenance and the Nerot of the Menorah. They would also be informed how their slander had caused a cessation of these lights which would manifest as Sara'at. This being a disease translated by the Zohar as a closure of the spiritual illumination. 9 Likute Moharan explains that this defamation of Moshe's glory is a blemish in the Divine influx and the seven Nerot. He continues and expounds on the conversation between Hashem and the siblings of Moshe in terms of the seven apertures of the Divine Face perfected by their brother. 10 Spiritually speaking there are two of the nose, two of the ears, one of the mouth and the two eyes. In verse three - that describes Moshe as the humblest of all men , Rashi comments that he was patient and self effacing. This describes his ability to refrain from anger even when instigated against. This is the perfection of the apertures of the nose which is associated with anger. In verse seven Moshe is described by Hashem as a trusted servant in my home. Sefer Parparot LeChochma on Likute Moharan cites a Zohar which describes the trait of trustworthiness - as the ability to hear secrets and keep them concealed. No doubt this is based on verse from Mishle that reads "A trustworthy spirit conceals the matter." 11 This is the perfection of his ears. In verse eight, Moshe is described as one with whom YHVH speaks mouth to mouth. Finally later on in the verse Moshe is described as one who sees a true picture of God. A perfection respectively of the mouth and of the final two apertures of the eyes. The slander of Miryam and Aharon closed for themselves the Countenance of the Divine which had been revealed via the physical face of their brother. Moshe had previously succeeded into transforming himself in a manner where his body was not a hindrance to his reception of the Divine Countenance. In fact, he had perfected himself to such an extent that he transformed himself into a unique receptacle of the seven Nerot and the seven apertures of the Divine Face.

FIRST PART OF THE TIKUN - PRAYER TO HEAL

The slander directed towards Moshe had its spiritual ramifications. It caused a concealment of the light revealed earlier through the seven Nerot of the Menorah. This is synonymous with the Light of Wisdom - in the secret of the Talmudic advice given by R. Yishak. Namely, if one desires Wisdom he should direct his thoughts southwards towards the Menorah. 12 To be specific Moshe would focus his prayer to heal her by evoking the divine grade of wisdom to descend once again to enlighten the Divine Countenance. **אל נא רפא נא לה** - El is the light of the face or the **אור הפנים** which stems from Wisdom. This is what Shelomo HaMelekh had in mind when he wrote in Kohelet "A man's wisdom causes his face to light up." 13 When the Divine attribute **א-ל** spelled out **אלף** - **למד** it is numerically 185 synonymous with that of **הפנים** - So the light of wisdom will once again come forth thru the apertures of the divine face which had been sealed due to the slander. This would result in the removal of the **צרעת** (which connotes a closure or cessation of the divine light) of Miryam as the spiritual blemish would no longer exist.

SECOND TIKUN - EMBARRASSED FOR SEVEN DAYS

Subsequent to Moshe's plea that Miryam be healed, Hashem advises him that a prayer to return the light **הפנים** - is not sufficient to effectuate complete Tikun. After Moshe's prayer the Torah records the divine requirement for a second stage in the Tikun process. "If her father had spit in her face, would she not have been embarrassed **תכלם** for seven days. 14 Likute Moharan explains that the reference here is to the sister in law - the Yevama who spits towards the face of her brother in law who refuses to rectify through **יבום** the soul of his brother. Hashem says that just as the Yavam refused to rectify the light of the face of his brother - so has Miryam blemished the light of the face of her brother. The rectification requires them both to be shamed and discolored. 15 The Talmud teaches regarding one who is embarrassed - "The redness (of his face) disappears and is replaced with whiteness". 16 - Or I have seen how the red coloring leaves (the face of an embarrassed person) and his face turns white. Tosafot comments that first the blood gathers than drains from the face (leaving it white). 17 For seven days she will be embarrassed until the illumination "whiteness" is transferred and restored completely to the divine countenance. It will take seven days to restore the seven blemished lights of the divine countenance.

THOUGHTS ON GETTING EMBARRASSED

When one is embarrassed whether or not deservedly so - he is given an opportunity to restore the divine countenance back into the world. This is especially so as the Talmud teaches "Be as the embarrassed ones and not as those who embarrass others". 18 If he does not respond - it has been said that his prayer at that time will be extremely effective. It appears from what we said above - that his acceptance of embarrassment in silence - assists in restoring the divine face back into the world. This is likely the meaning of the verse in Tehillim "Because for your sake I have borne disgrace **כלמה פני** - humiliation on my face." 19 The language here is almost identical with Gods statement that Miriam be as one who is spit in the face and **תכלם** - being humiliated. King David than makes a reference later on in the chapter of the intended benefit of his humiliation. "Hide not your face from your servant". 20 Obviously a request thereby that as a benefit of embarrassment -the Divine face can now and should now be revealed.

Shabbat Shalom

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