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Protection From Illness

Unique Healing To The Jewish People

The blessing of *Refoeinu* concludes with, "רופא חולי עמו ישראל", "(Blessed are you, Hashem), Who heals the sick of His nation Yisrael."

We emphasize here the fact that Hashem heals the Jewish people from their sicknesses; this implies to us that even though Hashem heals the entire world, He heals the Jewish people with a special kind of healing. He gives special healing to "His" nation, Yisrael.

A non-Jew is healed in a different way than a Jew is healed. A non-Jew is at the mercy of doctors - as Chazal say, "Permission is given to the doctor to heal." The *Chasam Sofer*^[1] stated that we cannot bring any medical proof from a non-Jew's body to how we heal a Jew's body, because since a Jew has a higher soul than a non-Jew, the healing is not the same.

The *Chasam Sofer* revealed to us a very novel concept - not only is a Jew's soul vastly different than a non-Jew's soul, but even their physical bodies are different.

Meriting Hashem's Healing

Even more so, if a Jew would never be influenced by a non-Jew, he would never even get sick! Yaakov Avinu only got sick when he came to Egypt. This was not a coincidence. As soon as he entered the impure surroundings of Egypt, he was able to get sick.

Hashem says, "*I will separate you from the nations.*" This is the key we need in order to merit the promise that Hashem made to us: "*Any illness which I placed upon Egypt, I will not place upon you, for I am Hashem, your healer.*" That is how we are truly healed - when we are separated from the nations. But when we are influenced by the nations, we are susceptible to their various sicknesses which Hashem brings upon them.

The more a person reveals his "Yisrael" from within - the more he identifies himself as being of the Jewish nation - the more he is of "His nation, Yisrael", and he gains special healing from Hashem.

Egypt was the root of all the exiles. When we left Egypt, Hashem said, "*Any illness which I placed upon Egypt, I will not place upon you.*" The meaning of this is, as much as **you** leave Egypt's influences - to that extent, I will not place any sicknesses on you that the other nations have.

When the Jewish people were in the desert, they complained, and they wished to return to Egypt. They missed certain foods they used to have there. What happened? There was a plague, and they got sick. Because they reconnected themselves to Egypt, they became susceptible to sickness.

We were all in Egypt; our souls were there. When we were in Egypt, although we were mixed with them, we did not change our style of dress, speech and names. This shows us that we have the power to remain uninfluenced by the nations even as we are mixed among them.

Every day we make a beracha, "*Shelo asani goy*"; we thank Hashem that He did not make us a non-Jew.

Exile Outside Eretz Yisrael, and Exile Inside Eretz Yisrael

However, sometimes it can happen that a Jew wishes to return to 'Egypt'. This is due to the influence of the "*Erev Rav*" in our nation. But either way, it is possible for a Jew to yearn to return to his root exile - Egypt.

It appears in the physical sense that we have left the exiles of Egypt, Bavel, Persia-Media, and Edom. But there are other exiles which we are still in. The Greek exile did not really end; it continues even as we are in Eretz Yisrael, in which we are in the exile of Edom and Yishmael.^[2] Right now we are in the deepest kind of exile, and it contains elements of all the exiles.

One kind of exile affects those who don't live in Eretz Yisrael. These are the Jews who live in countries outside of Eretz Yisrael, and they live a very enjoyable kind of life. It seems to them that everything is fine, even though they are mixed with other nations and influenced by them. That's one kind of exile - the fact that they are not in Eretz Yisrael, and exiled among the nations instead.

Although Jews in other countries are influenced by their non-Jewish neighbors, at least they are somewhat aware that they are in exile, though.

But there is another kind of exile going on, and it takes place in Eretz Yisrael. It is no less of an exile than the exile to Jews in other countries. It is the exile of the *Erev Rav* - the fact that we are exiled among people who wish to uproot religion and Torah.

It is not as obvious, because Jews here think that we are not found together with non-Jews, while in reality, we are.

The Exile In Eretz Yisrael

Most people in Israel are not even Jews - simply speaking. Most of Israel are people from other nations who have come here, and they claim to be Jews, but they are not, from a purely Halachic perspective. In addition, there even people who are *Halachically* Jews, but they are really not, because they are from the *Erev Rav*. These are "Jews" who get worse and worse, bringing down others with them in their influences.

How many Jews are there really in Eretz Yisrael? In reality, very few.

If a Jew lives in another country, like if he lives in Africa, it's clear to him that he's living in exile. But if a Jew lives in Eretz Yisrael and he thinks that he lives among Jews, he is mistaken, because most of Eretz Yisrael is not Jews. Most of the "Jews" here are souls from the *Erev Rav*! That is the depth of the exile in Eretz Yisrael, and it is caused by the *Erev Rav* themselves. The *Erev Rav* are so mixed with us that it is hard for a Jew to think that he is really mixed with them.

Most of the Jews in Eretz Yisrael are not even Jews in the *Halachic* sense; they are people from other nations who have come to live here and mix with us. And even those who are “Jews” here are mostly from *Erev Rav*.

This is yet only the outer layer to our exile – the fact that there aren’t even so many Jews in Israel.

But there is a deeper aspect to the exile here. A Jew who lives outside Eretz Yisrael is clearly in exile. A Jew who lives in Israel is also in exile, but in a more subtle and deeper way. The exile of the *Erev Rav* in Eretz Yisrael is a subtle kind of exile, because it’s harder to notice. It’s an exile within an exile – and this is due to the influences that keep creeping into Torah society.

The Food We Eat

For example, as soon as something new comes out in the non-Jewish world, there is immediately a thought amongst Jews: How can we manufacture this in a kosher way to the Jewish world? There are new foods that come out all the time in the world, and immediately there are Jews who seek to introduce it to the Jewish world – with a *hechsher* of course, and finding *Rabbonim* to back them. When people seek to make non-Jewish foods kosher, what is the intention? Giving in to physical desires, making money from it, and to get honored for introducing them to our society...

The Clothing We Wear

New styles of clothing that become acceptable in frum society are being introduced by non-Jews. Most of the clothing we have today is designed by a non-Jew – that is their source.

The Books We Read

Even *sefarim* today that come out are authored by many people who borrow non-Jewish ideas. And they even get *Rabbonim* to give them approbations. The whole spirit of the author is often taken from a non-Jew’s ideas about life.

Reflecting

If a person is truthful, he sees that the exile surrounds us from every possible angle.

We are very influenced by them – sometimes willingly, and sometimes it is because there is nothing we can do about it, but either way, we are still influenced by them, and we must be aware of this. A Jew needs to ask himself each morning if he truly feels grateful to Hashem that he was not made a non-Jew, “*Shelo asani goy.*”

If a person never reflects about this, he doesn’t see the problem. He thinks, “What’s the big fuss about? The main thing is to learn Torah, keep the mitzvos, and dress modestly.”

If anyone reflects, he will discover that most of the things we make use of are coming from non-Jews. We are not only exiled in a *place* in which there are non-Jews. The main part of our exile is that we *ourselves* have been influenced by them. We are influenced by them in so many aspects – in our food, in our clothing, in our vacations, and in many other areas.

One should first become aware of this, at least intellectually, and then he should proceed to feel this in his heart: We are among non-Jewish influences, and we are very affected by them. We must yearn to separate from all of the influences that are upon us (knowingly and unknowingly), because we are supposed to be separate from the nations.

In Conclusion

There are all kinds of illnesses going around the world today. There are many reasons, but one of the reasons for this is because when a Jew doesn't wish to be of Yisrael and he would rather connect to non-Jewish influences, he separates himself from the nation of Yisrael, and then he does not gain the special healing which Hashem gives to the Jewish people, as we say in the *Refoeinu* blessing.

Hashem said, *"Any of the illnesses I placed on Egypt, I will not place upon you, for I am Hashem, Your healer."* In order for us to have healing coming from our true Doctor, Hashem – we need to separate ourselves from "Egypt", from non-Jewish influences of the exile.

In everything we come across, we must trace its source. Is it coming from holiness, from the Torah – or is it coming from a non-Jewish source...?

We can't change the world. There is no single Jew who can come and change the world. But, what we can do, is that each of us can separate ourselves, on a personal level, from the non-Jewish influences – and instead identify ourselves as being of Hashem's people, Yisrael. Whereupon we can then merit to gain special protection from Hashem from sicknesses – to merit the exclusive healing of what we say in the end of the *Refoeinu* blessing: *"The Healer of His nation, Yisrael."*

[1] *Chiddushei Chasam Sofer, Shabbos 86b*

[2] See the shiur of Chanukah #048 (and Tefillah #0103), "Greek Influence Today".