

After יחזקאל pursues נאמן to accept the gifts which Elisha refused, Elisha says to יחזקאל in verse 27: וְיָרֵם בְּךָ וּבְסֻרְעֶיךָ דְּעִוְלָה. Why does Elisha specify נאמן, the leprosy of Naaman?

In this chapter, there is a complete switch of Naaman's personality -- from pagan to monotheist; from leprosy to purity. יחזקאל, by his action, shows that he is Naaman #1, i.e., the Naaman as he behaved before his switch of personality. Since he has assumed Naaman's personality, he must also have his leprosy.

How, through his act, has יחזקאל become the personification of Naaman #1? We have seen in the beginning of the chapter, that Naaman was a man who lived a life of duplicity. Publicly, he was an איש צדק and a גבור חיל, and as a result, a נשיא בנים. However, Naaman alone knew that he was an איש צדק only לפני אבניו. He was a גבור חיל, but - ומלך. True, he was the one who killed אחאב. But Naaman knew that he did not deserve the credit for it. He knew it was only an accidental feat (see מכשול). He suffered a schism in every aspect of his life. As a cover-up to this inferiority, he became arrogant and supercilious. His leprosy revealed the foulness of his personality.

When he is מכשול, the duplicity in his life is turned "inside out." Inwardly, he believes in one God, but publicly he will have to act as a heathen. He is now good and pure inside, but appears bad on the outside, whereas before this change of personality, the situation was vice versa.

יחזקאל was at first outwardly respectable. As Elisha's messenger, he was an important man. Thus -- he is one of the הנביאים; he apparently was popular and knew many people so that in chapter 4, Elisha had to warn him not to greet people in rushing to the dead child. However, inwardly he knew that he is only a נער, a שני, that he really has no power, no charisma.

יחזקאל expressed this inner frustration by reducing himself to chase after Naaman for the gifts. This act, which was an expression of his inner frustration, proved that his personality was identical with that of Naaman's as he was before his "conversion" -- Naaman, too, expressed his inferiority by being aggressive. Therefore, יחזקאל deserved to have the very leprosy from which Naaman had just been cured.

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FOR SHABBAT HAGADOL OR SHABBAT TESHUVAH:

1. Use the attached for Shabbat Hagadol: It is extremely rare that one's inner life and outer life are identical. As long as we live in society and abide by its conventions -- which is inevitable -- there must be some dis-junctiveness between one's inner life and his outer life. This is not hypocritical, it is merely a question of psychological and social fact. Thus, the word "personality" comes from the Latin persona which means a mask, because we wear different masks for different occasions.

True freedom, in its spiritual sense, occurs when man can elevate his inner life over his outer life, when he is able to experience a more elevated kind of living despite the fact that the externals of his life do not suggest such a concealed wealth. (This is the reverse of political freedom, where the concern is only for externals and where the internal experiences are ignored.)

Thus, the Rabbis said: *אדם חופשי ופניו חופשי*. Man is free to express his inner sublimity. However, when he reverses this order, and his external life seems to be on a higher level than his internal one, when the impression he makes upon society and man is not attained by the reality of his inner existence, then he is spiritually leprous, and this is the opposite of freedom, for he is then hemmed in, separated, suffering from an inner vacuum. Thus, the expression in this chapter of *אדם חופשי ופניו חופשי* is explained by Rashi as referring to the isolation of the leper and his subsequent "gathering in" or receiving back by society.

2. FOR SHABBAT TESHUVAH -- Every personality suffers fissure, as above. Teshuvah is the effort to invert the order of discrepancy, from a more valuable exterior to a more valuable interior...