

# Coming Clean

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April 3, 2019



Jerry pays his boss a short visit and says, “We’re doing some major Passover housecleaning tomorrow and my wife needs me around to take care of the heavy hauling.”

“I’m so sorry, Jerry, we’re kind of short-handed right now and I just can’t afford to have you take the day off,” his boss answers.

“Thanks, Boss, Jerry replies. “I knew I could count on you!”

Have you begun cleaning for Pesach yet? I’m sure you have. When this time of year rolls around, “Pesach cleaning fever” is sure to set in. But while we may be so worried and exasperated trying to detect and obliterate every little morsel of *chametz*, have we stopped to consider the value of the little bits of goodness that we each possess? While we shine the candlelight into the dark corners of our rooms trying to spot any traces of *chametz*, do we also peer deeply into our souls to discover our inherent Godliness and spiritual potential?

People often make a wrong assumption. They feel that if they've fallen or erred spiritually, they become "impure" and are "unfit" for further serious spiritual devotion. This happens all the time. For example, if someone feels guilty because of a misdeed and then a mitzvah comes his way a moment later, he may feel "disqualified" and not take advantage of the opportunity. Or he may do the mitzvah, but without joy and proper intention.

Every moment of life is an opportunity for connection with God. Just as there are an infinite number of rungs on the ladder of spiritual heights, God is present on all the lower rungs as well. There is no place in the entire world where one cannot find God and experience a close bond with Him.

Our *parashah* describes the laws of the *metzora* (loosely translated as "leper"). In the days of the Holy Temple, if someone discovered a mark of *tzara'at* on his body, he had to be brought before the Kohen. If the Kohen validated the mark, the person underwent a purification process. But what if the person discovered that his entire body, from head to toe, was covered with *tzara'at*? Then the Kohen pronounced him to be pure and he was free to go. How could this be? If a person who has one mark must undergo an entire process of purification, shouldn't he require at least as much purification if his entire body was affected?

We learn from this an incredible lesson in God's ways. Often, even if a person has hit rock bottom and he might be entertaining thoughts of utter failure, precisely at that moment, God is compassionate and sends him purity and a helping hand from Above. All is never lost! We must learn to abandon our so-called rational thought processes and stop "playing God." It's not our role to judge ourselves and others negatively. Our job is to learn about God's true nature and become attuned to the way He truly operates.

Our *parashah* also speaks about the first mitzvah commanded to

us, proclaiming the new moon. We celebrate Rosh Chodesh at the darkest time of the month, when the moon is barely visible. But this is also the time of its renewal: though it can hardly be seen, it has just started a new cycle. This is the key to each of our lives. There are always rough patches and desperate challenges, but the darkest moment comes right before the time of true redemption. Never give up!

*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Hilkhos Shiluach HaKen 4*