

שכל חולה שרואה אותה מיד מתרפא –

For every ill person who sees it, is immediately healed

OVERVIEW

רשב"י explains the meaning of אברהם בכל ו'ה' ברך את אברהם בכל, that there was a precious stone around the neck of אברהם, that any ill person who looked at it, he became healed immediately. Our תוספות explains what is meant by an ill person.

תוספות asks:

ואם תאמר והא בימי אברהם אכתי לא היה חולי בעולם –

And if you will say; but in the times of אברהם there was not yet any sickness in the world -

כדאמרין בהשוכר את הפועלים (בבא מציעא דף פז,א) דעד יעקב לא הוה חולשא¹ –

As the גמרא states in **that until יעקב אבינו there was no weakness** (no one was sick) -

ועד אלישע לא הוה דאיחלש ואיתפח² –

And until אלישע there was no case where one was sick and became healed. The question is how can we say that in the days of אברהם there were חולים?!

תוספות answers:

ומצינן למימר דהכא בחולה של מכה איירי³ –

And we can possibly say; that here we are discussing a sickness from an (external) inflicted wound, which (obviously) occurred even before יעקב, and the גמרא in מ"מ is discussing an internal illness, not caused by obvious external factors.

תוספות offers another resolution:

ורבינו תם ורבינו יצחק מפרשים דעד יעקב לא הוה דאיחלש היינו חולי של מיתה –

And the ר"ה and ר"י explain that until יעקב no one was sick; meaning a deathly sickness (rather they were sick [with a 'manageable' sickness] and were then healed), but there was no terminal illness⁴ -

מכאן ואילך הוה דאיחלש חולי של מיתה ולא הוה דאיתפח עד אלישע:

¹ יעקב was מתפלל that people should be sick before they die so they could set their affairs in order

² ואלישע חלה את חליו אשר ימות בה (מלכים ב יג,יד) פסוק states בה אשר ימות בה, and was healed, for the חליו was sick and he was מתפלל indicating that he had a previous sickness which was not בה אשר ימות בה. See 'Thinking it over' # 1.

³ This חולי של מכה was healed as soon as one looked at the stone.

⁴ Those people who had a 'manageable' illness were immediately healed when they saw the stone and did not have to go through the usual healing process.

From s'יעקב time onward there was sickness; meaning (also) a deathly sickness which could not be healed,⁵ until אלישע, who was able to overcome even a חולי של מיתה.

SUMMARY

We may assume that even before יעקב people were sick from wounds inflicted externally; or we may assume that people were sick with manageable illnesses, but not with terminal illnesses until יעקב. After יעקב until אלישע no one was healed from a 'terminal' illness.

THINKING IT OVER

1. Why was it necessary for תוספות to mention (in the question) that ועד אלישע לא היה דאיחלש ואיתפח;⁶ how is that relevant to the question?
2. What is the basis of the dispute between the ומצינן למימר, who claim that there was (only) a חולי של מכה before יעקב (but not [even] a מיתה של מיתה), and the יעקב before יעקב? who maintain there was (even) a חולי שאינו של מיתה?
3. Why did not אברהם use this אבן to heal himself from the חולי של מכה of the ברית?⁷ מילה?

⁵ Once people contracted this חולי של מיתה, they could not be healed from it, and inevitably died. However, אלישע was able to survive even this חולי של מיתה.

⁶ See footnote # 2.

⁷ See מהרש"א סוד"ה אבל.