

# TORAH WEEKLY



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## One Path, Two Destinations

By: Rabbi Yossi Kaplan (Originally Published 2013)

It's a paradox. How can the sun heal and destroy at the same time? Yet, we read in this week's Haftorah, "...a sun of righteousness will shine forth with healing... for behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven..." (Malachi 3:20/19) The Gemara (Nedarim 8b) explains these verses to mean that the sun will heal the righteous and punish the wicked. So how can one sun destroy and heal simultaneously?!

Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai was about to leave this world. And he was crying. No, it wasn't the loss of his possessions that he lamented. He was afraid. Afraid of the day of judgment. He didn't know if he was on the path to eternal reward, or if he was on the way to Gehinnom (Purgatory). This is Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai, great Torah leader of his generation. Yet he was afraid he was a sinner! Such are the ways of the righteous.

The newspapers are full of great deeds of great people. Yet some of them are anything but; people riding on a path to doom in a golden chariot. They parade about as the most righteous of men, but they're like a rotted tooth painted white.

Now imagine for a moment an x-ray that can clearly portray man's thoughts and intentions. What will the righteous see? What will the wicked see?

The sun on that day to come, will shine with the clarity of an x-ray, says Rabbi Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky (1899-1985). Realization will dawn for us when all masks are pulled away, and a light, clear as day, gives us a glimpse of who we really are. That will be the greatest reward for the righteous, and simultaneously, the greatest punishment for the wicked.

The righteous will finally see that their worry was for naught. The ecstasy upon experiencing that the path they've chosen was proper before G-d will be their greatest reward. The shock and dismay, however, experienced by the wicked at the moment of realization will destroy them. That's how one sun can heal and destroy simultaneously.

So are we held in suspense until that great day? Do we grope through life blindfolded, guessing and hoping the path we've chosen is correct? No, says Rabbi Shachne Sommers, Dean of the Denver Community Kollel. True, there's a certain sense of confidence that must be felt regarding the path we've chosen. But leave that door open. Are we too sure we can't do better? Just let in a tiny seed of doubt. A doubt that will hopefully lead us down a better path in life, until that day when it all becomes clear.

## Alumni Focus

Rabbi Yossi Kaplan

PAST



Rabbi Kaplan, teaching at Fathers and Sons, 2013

**2012-2015**

Years as a Denver  
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Rabbi Kaplan, Agudah CO, 2023

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