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Finding of Zachariah Baumel's Remains Alluded to in Tanach!
By **Rabbi Yair Hoffman** for 5tjt.com

The Zohar (Vol. II 183b) tells us that Matzah is called "michlah d'mehenmusah – food that increases emunah." There is also a minhag mentioned in Shulchan Aruch to ensure that every member of the community have kimcha d'pische – flour for Pesach in order to have Matzah. Putting these two notions together, the Nesivos Shalom explains that one should help ensure that each member of the community build their emunah.

For many years, there was, rachmana litzlan, a Yiddisha neshama whose guf never received a burial. His body was being held by terrorists – who for 37 years refused to allow his body to be returned for burial.

Six days into the first Lebanon War, Sergeant Zechariah (Zachary) Baumel was one of three Israeli soldiers captured by Syrian armed forces during a battle at Sultan Yacoub in 1982.

Over the years, much hishtadlus was made to determine his condition and fate, along with two other soldiers captured in the battle, Tzvi Feldman and Yehudah Katz. Later, the hishtadlus would focus on trying to recover their bodies. Sfter some assistance from Russian president Putin – there have been results.

On Wednesday, this past 27th of Adar, Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Conricus of the IDF Spokespersons Unit confirmed that, after 37 years, the remains of Zechariah Baumel, were returned for Kvurah in Eretz Yisroel. The operation was called, Operation Bittersweet Song." It is a bittersweet nechama – bittersweet because the loss is now permanent but, nonetheless, a nechama. His body is finally home.

This nechama was perhaps alluded to, long ago, during the time of the second to last king of Yehudah, Yehoyachin.

In Malachim II (25:27), there is a fascinating pasuk:

“And it was in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Yehoyachin king of Yehudah, in the twelfth month (Adar), on the twenty-seventh day of the month, that Ehvil-Merodach, king of Bavel, in the year of his coronation, lifted up the head of Yehoyachin, king of Yehudah and released him from prison.”

The Hakdama to the Otzer HaMidrashim (Rav Naftali Greenbaum Vol. VII), citing bothe the Yerushalmi and a sefer called Be'er Mose, explains this verse as follows:

והוא רמז לישראל שעוד יקויים בהם ג"כ מקים מעפר דל וגו' ובקרוב ישמחנו ה' אלוקיננו באליהו הנביא עבדו ובמלכות בית דוד משיחו במהרה הוא ויגל לבנו על כסאו לא ישב זר ולא ינהלו עור אחרים את כבודו כי בשם קדשך נשבעת לו שלא יכבה נרו לעולם ועד אכי"ר

It is a hint to the nation of Israel – that the verse “and He will bring up the poor from the dust..” and shortly, Hashem will cause us to rejoice with his servant Eliyahu HaNavi and with the kingdom of Dovid HaMelech His anointed one, and will cause us to be happy and no stranger will sit in his throne..and his light shall not be extinguished forever on. Amain, so may it be His will.

It seems that this applies to us and our generation as well. May this be a sign that Moshiach is just around the corner and that Klal Yisroel will have nechamos and yeshuos. Amain, so may it be His Will.

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from: Project Genesis <genesis@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: weekly-halacha@torah.org date: Apr 4, 2019, 12:20 PM subject: Weekly Halacha - Childbirth On Shabbo

Weekly Halacha
By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt
Parshas Tazria
Childbirth On Shabbos

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

PREPARATIONS for a SHABBOS(1) DELIVERY

A woman giving birth is halachically considered to be a dangerously ill person, and it is PERMITTED, indeed it is a MITZVAH, to DESECRATE the Shabbos on her behalf. Once a woman is in labor, she, her husband, or anyone else who is in a position to do so, must do everything they can to ensure the SAFETY of mother and baby.

Nevertheless, whatever can be done before Shabbos to minimize the desecration of Shabbos, should be done in advance(2). Indeed, an early authority(3) mentions that a person should pray that his wife not give birth on Shabbos. Accordingly, a woman who enters the early stages of labor before Shabbos, although she would normally delay going to the hospital for as long as possible, should travel to the hospital before Shabbos begins so that she will not have to travel on Shabbos(4).

From a halachic standpoint, there are two basic methods of transporting a woman to the hospital on Shabbos: a) a non-Jewish driver, e.g. a neighbor, ambulance or taxi service may bring her; b) a Jewish driver, e.g., her husband or a neighbor may drive her.

If a woman can be driven to the hospital by a non-Jew WITHOUT compromising her safety or peace of mind, the Halachah requires her to arrange – before Shabbos – for a non-Jew to drive her on Shabbos regardless of the expenses entailed.

As stated earlier, once Shabbos begins, we must do everything in our power to ensure the baby's SAFE delivery. Still, whatever we can do in advance to avoid or lessen the desecration of Shabbos must be done. The following can and should be done before Shabbos begins: The phone number of the doctor and of a non-Jewish neighbor, ambulance or taxi service should be noted in an easily accessible, non-muktzeh location. When

possible, payment should be pre-arranged. Whatever house or garage lights that would be needed to facilitate leaving for the hospital in the middle of the night, should be turned on before Shabbos(5).

Personal items the woman will need at the hospital should be packed in a bag before Shabbos.

Arrangements for a baby-sitter to stay with other children should be made before Shabbos.

If the hospital is outside the techum Shabbos (approx. 4000 feet from the last house in the city), some poskim recommend that one should be mafkir (renounce possession of) all the items that are being taken along to the hospital(6). Other poskim are not particular about this(7).

TRAVELING to the HOSPITAL on SHABBOS with a NON-JEW

As soon as a woman experiences steady contractions, even though she is quite sure that she is far from giving birth, she (or any other person) may call the doctor or the designated driver to take her to the hospital. She should not wait for the latter stages of labor before going to the hospital(8).

When making the phone call(9) on Shabbos to the doctor or the non-Jewish driver, the receiver should be lifted off its cradle in an unusual manner, e.g., with one's elbow or teeth(10) – time permitting. The conversation should be limited to a bare minimum, although it is permitted to say "hello" and "thank you", etc.(11) After the conversation is over, the receiver may not be returned to the cradle unless the phone line is needed for the sake of the patient, or if not hanging up will tie up the doctor's line. Then, too, the receiver should be hung up in an unusual manner, as described above(12).

Any item which the woman will need on Shabbos may be taken along, even if there is no eiruv or if the item is muktzeh. If time allows, the non-Jew should be asked to carry the woman's bag to the vehicle. [Unless an eiruv exists, a sefer Tehillim should not be taken to the hospital on Shabbos, for the merit of keeping Shabbos is greater than saying Tehillim. This should be explained to the woman(13).]

If, during the drive, labor stopped and the woman feels that she does not need to go to the hospital, it is permitted to tell the non-Jew to take her and her companion back home if they cannot return safely and comfortably on foot -which is almost always the case.

If it is the expectant mother's wish and it would help to relax her, her husband or another person may accompany her to the hospital, even if their assistance is not medically warranted(14). The person going along may also bring with him basic food necessities that will be required on Shabbos(15). The non-Jew should be asked to carry the items into the vehicle and from the vehicle into the hospital.

When time allows it, the door to the vehicle should be opened and closed by the non-Jew.

If no baby-sitter for the other children can be found, it is permitted to ask the non-Jewish driver to drive the children to another person's home(16).

TRAVELING to the HOSPITAL on SHABBOS with a JEW

In the absence of any other alternative or when arrangements were not made in advance, it is PERMITTED for a Jew [the husband or any other person(17)] to DRIVE the woman to the hospital himself. A couple who is aware before Shabbos that the driver may be a Jew, should prepare before Shabbos for that eventuality. Therefore:

The shortest possible route to the hospital must be checked and planned. Exact change for any possible tolls should be prepared and placed in the car.

The car which will be driven must not be blocked by other cars or other obstructions.

The dome light bulb in the car should be loosened or removed before Shabbos; the air conditioner, radio and tape recorder should be on the "off" position.

Driver's license, registration, and other papers that are required for driving or that will be needed at the hospital should be placed in the car before Shabbos.

Where there is no eiruv, clothing, food, and other items that will be needed at the hospital should be placed in the car before Shabbos. If the hospital is out of the techum Shabbos, any belongings which are in the car [especially those that do not belong to them(18)] that are not necessary for the woman (car seat, tapes, etc.) should be removed from the car(19). If this is difficult to do, then those items [which are theirs] should be pronounced hefker.

One who failed to properly prepare himself or the car as outlined above, must nevertheless proceed to the hospital in the safest(20), quickest way he can(21). If he did not unscrew or remove the dome light bulb before Shabbos, then while the door is still open and the light is on, the control knob should be turned [in an unusual manner] so that the light will remain on after the door closes. If he forgot to do that, he should [in an unusual manner] loosen the light bulb, so that the light does not turn on again when the door is opened(22).

One may drive to any hospital that he prefers, as long as the preference is not determined by the desire to save money.

Once he arrives at the hospital emergency room, the car may be placed in the "park" position, but the ignition and the lights may not be turned off (23). [If he failed to loosen the dome light bulb or to follow one of the other options outlined above, then the door may not be closed upon leaving the car, since closing the door will cause the light to be turned off.] He may ask a non-Jew to take the car(24), park it, and return the keys to him after Shabbos.

FOOTNOTES: 1 Almost all of the following halachos pertain to Yom Tov as well. 2 Mishnah Berurah 330:1. 3 Sefer Chasidim 793, based on the Talmud, Niddah 38a. 4 Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 36:7 quoting Ketzos ha-Shulchan. See similar ruling in Igros Moshe O.C. 1:131 concerning a doctor who may be needed for Shabbos duty. 5 Kaf ha-Chayim 330:1. 6 Advice offered by Harav C. Kanievsky (quoted in Toras ha-Yoledes, pg. 25) based on O.C. 401:1. 7 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Minchas Shelomo 1:15; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 40:65). See also Minchas Yitzchak 9:37. 8 Mishnah Berurah 330:9. 9 When possible, the phone call should be made by a non-Jew or a minor. When using a minor, it is better not to use one's own child; see Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 334:54.

10 When these options are not workable, the next best method is to use the telephone with two hands or to have two people dial. See Nishmas Avraham 5, pg. 44-45 for an explanation. 11 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 32:111). 12 It is important to stress, though, that all of the halachos that pertain to making the phone call, hanging up, driving on Shabbos, etc., are to be followed only when time allows. Once heavy labor is under way, everything should be done in the speediest, safest manner, as if the labor is taking place on a weekday. 13 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Toras ha-Yoledes, pg. 94). If the woman insists on taking a sefer Tehillim or any other sefer along, she is permitted to do so. 14 Igros Chazon Ish 1:141; Igros Moshe O.C. 1:132. 15 Minchas Yitzchak 8:30-1. It is questionable, though, if one may take along a siddur, etc. 16 This is permitted both for the safety of the children who will fear staying alone (see Mishnah Berurah 328:38) and for the peace of mind of the mother. 17 Some poskim say that it is preferable to use an observant Jew rather than a non-observant Jew; see Toras ha-Yoledes, pg. 81. 18 See Minchas Shelomo 15. 19 Toras ha-Yoledes, pg. 20, 25, 101. 20 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Nishmas Avraham 5, pg. 176) advises that in order to avoid possible accidents, normal driving procedures should be followed. 21 If time allows, any carrying that needs to be done should be done with a shinui, such as carrying the required papers under his clothing or hat, etc. 22 Some cars are equipped with a switch that does not allow the dome light to go on when the door opens. This is a better option than loosening the bulb, since loosening the bulb may involve the prohibition of soser (demolition). 23 Whenever possible, one should explore before Shabbos the available choices for parking and figure out the best solution for his particular case. 24 Hinting is preferred to asking directly; see O.C. 307:19.

from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org> reply-to: shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org date: Apr 4, 2019, 8:22 PM

The Sacrifices of Childbirth **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

At the start of this parsha is a cluster of laws that challenged and puzzled the commentators. They concern a woman who has just given birth. If she gives birth to a son, she is “unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period.” She must then wait for a further thirty-three days before coming into contact with holy objects or appearing at the Temple. If she gives birth to a girl, both time periods are doubled: she is unclean for two weeks and must wait a further sixty-six days. She then has to bring two offerings:

When her purification period for a son or a daughter is complete, she shall bring to the Priest, to the Communion Tent entrance, a yearling sheep for a burnt offering, and a young common dove, or a turtle dove for a sin offering. [The priest] shall offer [the sacrifice] before God and atone for [the woman], thus cleansing her of the blood coming from her womb. This law applies whether a woman gives birth to a boy or to a girl. (Lev. 12:6–7)

The problems are obvious. Why does she need to bring a sacrifice? We could understand if she had to bring a thanksgiving offering, giving thanks for her recovery and for her child. But that is not what she is commanded. Instead she must bring a burnt offering – normally brought for a serious offence – together with a sin offering. What, though, is her offence? What is her sin? She has just fulfilled the first command in the Torah, to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28). She has done nothing wrong. Why does she need atonement? Here are some of the suggestions of the commentators:

Rabbenu Bahya and Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim ben Aaron Luntschitz (Kli Yakar, 1550–1619) both suggest that the offerings recall the sin of Eve in Eden and her punishment from God that “I will make your pain in childbearing very severe; with pain you will give birth to children” (Gen. 3:16).[1] Ibn Ezra, following a suggestion in the Talmud, says that the woman during the anguish of labour may have thought or expressed ideas that were sinful or that she now regrets (such as vowing not to have future relations with her husband).[2] Nahmanides says that the sacrifices are a kind of “ransom” or relief offering for having survived the dangers of childbirth, as well as a form of prayer for a full recovery.[3] Sforno says that the woman has been intensely focused on the physical processes accompanying childbirth. She needs both time and the bringing of an offering to rededicate her thoughts to God and matters of the spirit.[4] Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk says that the burnt offering is like an *olat re’iya*, an offering brought when appearing at the Temple on festivals, following the injunction, “Do not appear before Me empty-handed” (Ex. 23:15). The woman celebrates her ability to appear before God at the Temple.[5] Without displacing any of these ideas, we might however suggest another set of perspectives. The first is about the fundamental concepts that dominate this section of Leviticus, the words *tamei* and *tahor*, normally translated as (ritually) “unclean/clean,” or “defiled/pure.” It is important to note that these words do not have the kind of resonance they bear in English. *Tamei* does not mean impure or defiled. It is a technical term meaning that one is in a condition that prevents him from entering the Tabernacle or Temple. *Tahor* means the opposite, that he may enter.

How are we to understand this? The Tabernacle, and at a later date, the Temple, were symbols of the presence of God within the human domain – at the heart of the camp during the wilderness years and at the centre of the nation during the years of the monarchy.

But they were only symbols, because in monotheism God is everywhere equally. The very concepts of place and time in relation to God are metaphorical. It is not that God is here rather than elsewhere but that we, as humans, feel His presence here rather than elsewhere. It was essential

therefore that, from a human perspective, the experience of being in the domain of the holy was an experience of pure transcendence.

God is eternal. God is spiritual. We and the universe are physical and whatever is physical is subject to birth, growth, decline, decay, and death. It is these things that must be excluded from the Sanctuary if we are to have the experience of standing in the presence of eternity.

What therefore bars us from entering the holy is anything that reminds us or others of our mortality: the fact that we are born and will one day die. Contact with death or even birth has this effect. Both therefore debar the person who has had such contact from the domain of the holy. Special, though different, processes of purification had to be undergone both by those who had come into contact with the dead (Num. 19:1–22) and by a mother who had given birth.

The same is true of anything that draws attention to our physicality. That is why, for example, people who suffered from the skin disease called *tzar’aat* (“leprosy”), or the flow of menstrual blood or a seminal discharge, also had to undergo a rite of purification. Likewise, a priest with a physical blemish was disqualified from serving in the priesthood (Lev. 21:16–23) and was precluded from approaching the altar to offer the fire-offerings.[6]

The woman who had just given birth was therefore *teme’a*, not because of the sin of Eve but because birth, like death, is a signal of mortality, which has no place in the Temple, the space set aside for consciousness of eternity and spirituality.

As for the burnt offering, this is a reminder of the binding of Isaac, and of the animal sacrificed as a burnt offering in his place (Gen. 22:13).

I have argued elsewhere[7] that the binding of Isaac was intended as a protest against the absolute power parents had over children in the ancient world – *patria potestas*, as it was called in Roman law. Essentially, the child was regarded as the property of his parents. A father had total legal power over a child, even to the extent of life and death. That was one reason why child sacrifice was so widely practised in the ancient world.[8]

The Torah makes an implicit comment on this in its account of the name given to the first human child. Eve called him Cain – from the Hebrew meaning “ownership” – saying, “I have acquired a child through God” (Gen. 4:1). Treat your child as a possession and you may turn him into a murderer: that is what the text implies.

The narrative of the binding of Isaac is a statement for all time that parents do not own their children. The whole story of the birth of Isaac points in that direction. He was born when Sarah was already postmenopausal (Gen. 18:11), incapable of having a child naturally. Isaac was clearly the special gift of God. As the first Jewish child, he became the precedent for all subsequent generations. The binding was intended to establish that children belong to God. Parents are merely their guardians.

That, in relation to the firstborn, was also the message of the tenth plague in Egypt. All firstborn were to have been priests in the service of God. Only after the sin of the Golden Calf did this role devolve on the tribe of Levi. The same idea lies behind the ritual of the redemption of the firstborn. Hannah dedicated her child, Samuel, to God, as did the wife of Manoah, mother of Samson. A mother brought a burnt offering, as did Abraham, in lieu of the child. By so doing she acknowledged that she was not the owner of the child, merely its guardian. In bringing the offering it was as if she had said: “God, I know I should dedicate this child entirely to Your service. Please accept this offering in his place.”

As for the sin offering, there is a fascinating rabbinic passage that sheds light on it. It describes a conversation between God and the angels prior to the creation of man:

When the Holy One, Blessed Be He, came to create man, He created a group of ministering angels and asked them, “Do you agree that we should make man in Our image?”

They replied, “Sovereign of the universe, what will be his deeds?”
God showed them the history of mankind.

The angels replied, "What is man that You are mindful of him?" [Let man not be created]. God destroyed the angels.

He created a second group, and asked them the same question, and they gave the same answer. God destroyed them.

He created a third group of angels, and they replied, "Sovereign of the Universe, the first and second group of angels told You not to create man, and it did not avail them. You did not listen. What then can we say but this: The universe is Yours. Do with it as You wish." And God created man.

But when it came to the generation of the Flood, and then to the generation of those who built the Tower of Babel, the angels said to God, "Were not the first angels right? See how great is the corruption of mankind."

And God replied [Is. 46:4], "Even to old age I will not change, and even to grey hair, I will still be patient." [9]

The angels were opposed to the creation of man because they knew in advance that of all life forms, humans alone were capable of sinning and thus threatening the work of the Creator. The passage implies that God knew that humans would sin and yet persisted in creating humanity. This may explain the sin offering brought on the birth of a child.

The child will one day sin: "There is none on earth so righteous as to do only good and never sin," says Ecclesiastes (7:20). So a mother brings a sin offering in advance to atone, as it were, for any sin the child may commit while still a child, as if to say: "God, you knew humans would sin, yet still You created them and commanded us to bring new lives into the world. Therefore, please accept this sin offering in advance for any wrong my child may do."

Parents are responsible in Jewish law for sins their children commit. That is why, when a child becomes bar or bat mitzvah, a parent makes the blessing thanking God "for making me exempt from the punishment that might have accrued to me through this one." [10]

Thus the sacrifices a woman brings on the birth of a child, and the period during which she is unable to enter the Temple, have nothing to do with any sin she may have committed or any "defilement" she may have undergone. They are, rather, to do with the basic fact of human mortality, together with the responsibility a parent undertakes for the conduct of a child, and an acknowledgement that every new life is the gift of God.

Shabbat shalom

[1] Rabbenu Bachya and Kli Yakar, Commentary to Leviticus 12:6. [2] Niddah 31b; Ibn Ezra, Commentary to Leviticus 12:6. [3] Nahmanides, Commentary to Leviticus 12:7. [4] Sforno, Commentary to Leviticus 12:8. [5] Meshekh Hokhma, Commentary to Leviticus 12:6. [6] Maimonides makes the interesting observation that the prohibition against a priest with a physical blemish serving in the Temple had nothing to do with holiness per se, but was due to popular perception: "For the multitude does not estimate man by his true form but by the perfection of his bodily limbs and the beauty of his garments, and the Temple was to be held in great reverence by all." The Guide for the Perplexed, III:45. [7] Jonathan Sacks, The Great Partnership: God, Science and the Search for Meaning (London: Hodder, 2011), 177–181. [8] On child sacrifice, see Jon D. Levenson, The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995). [9] Sanhedrin 38b. [10] Genesis Rabbah 63:10.

from: torahweb@torahweb.org to: weeklydt@torahweb.org date: Apr 4, 2019, 9:26 PM subject: **Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg - The Freedom to Choose**

Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg The Freedom to Choose "If a man (adam) will have on his flesh...a tzara'as affliction...he shall be brought to Aaron the Kohen or to one of his sons the Kohanim" (Tazria 13:2.) Why does the Torah begin its discussion of the laws of tzara'as with the word adam? It should have used the more common word ish.

Chazal (Arachin 16a) identify seven different aveiros that can cause tzara'as, the most famous of which is lashon hara. Why does a person speak lashon hara if he knows that it is forbidden? Sometimes he simply loses control. Before he realizes, the words just tumble out of his mouth. Perhaps that is why the Torah begins its discussion of tzara'as with the term adam because adam is often used in contrast to beheimah (animal), as in "Adam u'beheimah toshiya, Hashem - Hashem, You save man and animal" (Tehillim 36:7.) When a person speaks lashon hara, he acts instinctively and impulsively like an animal. By not exercising control over himself, he loses his special quality of adam and lowers himself to the level of beheimah. The Torah uses the term adam to indicate that to be cured of tzara'as, a person must act like an adam once again, to make the right choices in his actions and his speech.

The importance of acting like an adam and making the right choices in life is the very first message Hashem gives to Klal Yisrael in Mitzrayim. "Hachodesh hazeh lachem rosh chodoshim, rishon hu lachem l'chadshai hashana - this month (of Nissan) is for you the first of all months, the first of all the months of the year" (Shemos 12:2.) The Seforno explains that Hashem was saying, "From now on the months will be yours, to do with them as you choose. This is the first of all the months of the year because in this month you begin your bechirah (free will) existence." Hashem was telling Klal Yisrael, "Now that you are no longer slaves, you are not beholden to anyone. You have the free will to choose your direction in life! Use your freedom properly, to elevate yourself, not to satisfy every whim and desire of your heart."

This is what Chazal meant when they said, "Ein lecha ben chorin ela mi she'oseik b'Torah, v'chol mi she'oseik b'Torah mis'aleh - a person is not truly free unless he engages in Torah study, and whoever engages in Torah study becomes elevated" (Avos 6:2.) One who pursues his Torah study with dedication, and whose life is shaped and guided by a Torah perspective, is a true ben chorin because he understands that the ultimate purpose of freedom is to elevate himself through the choices that he makes.

While non-Jews can certainly elevate themselves by fulfilling the seven mitzvos of the bnei Noach, only Klal Yisrael have the ability to achieve the highest level of freedom by engaging in talmud Torah and observing all 613 mitzvos. Perhaps this is why only Klal Yisrael are subject to the rules of tumas tzara'as (Negaim 3:1, 12:1). The Tosafos Yom Tov (ibid) and the Ohr Hachayim (Tazria 13:2) explain this halacha based on the statement of Reb Shimon that only Klal Yisrael are referred to as adam in the context of tumas ohel. "Atem kruyim adam - only you are called adam" (Bava Metzia 114b.) Since the Torah also uses the term adam regarding tumas tzara'as, that halacha as well must be limited to Klal Yisrael.

This does not mean that non-Jews are never called adam. The fact is the Mishna (Avos 3:14) declares "Chaviv adam she'nivra b'tzelem - man is beloved because he was created in the image of G-d." The Tosafos Yom Tov and the Tiferes Yisrael both explain that even non-Jews are called adamin this context because they also have mitzvos. But Klal Yisrael have an elevated status of adam because they have a larger group of mitzvos to fulfill, and consequently they have the potential to rise to an even higher spiritual level.

Yet that privilege does not come without responsibility. If a Jew chooses to develop his neshama, to perfect his middos, to dedicate his life to talmud Torah and spiritual pursuits, he can rise to the highest levels. But if he fails to live up to his spiritual potential, and he allows his physical side to dictate his actions and his speech, then he falls to an even lower level than a non-Jew, and he is subject to the laws of tumas tzara'as.

The yom tov of Pesach, zman cheiruseinu, is a time to rediscover the essence of true freedom. When we liberate our neshamos from their physical limitations, and we allow them to express themselves through mitzvos and ma'asim tovim, we infuse our lives with meaning and purpose, and we become truly worthy of being called adam in the fullest sense of the word.

More divrei Torah from Rabbi Koenigsberg

from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Apr 5, 2019, 12:59 AM subject: Rav Frand - Metzora Brings Himself to the Kohen / Talmud in Seoul?

The Metzora Brings Himself to the Kohen The pasuk in Parshas Tazria says, "If a person (Adam) will have on the skin of his flesh a s'eis or a sapachas, or a baheres, and it will become a tzaraas affliction on the skin of his flesh; he shall be brought to Aaron the Kohen..." [Vayikra 13:2] The majority of Parshas Tazria (and for that matter Parshas Metzora as well) deals with the laws of Tzaraas.

The Netziv in his Ha'Amek Davar Chumash commentary quotes a Zohar that notes four different ways the Torah refers to human beings. The highest and most complementary of those terms is the term Adam.

If that is the case, it is somewhat strange that the Torah begins the section dealing with the laws of Tzaraas using the terminology of Adam. A person who receives Tzaraas as a punishment has not been behaving 100% properly. The Talmud [Eruchin 15b] lists all the sins that can cause these skin blemishes (negaim). The primary sin that causes Tzaraas is slander (lashon ha'rah). In fact, the Hebrew term Metzora (someone who has Tzaraas) is a contraction of the words Motzi Rah [he speaks evil]. The Talmud there also links the word Tzaraas with the term Tzaar Ayin [stingy] and says that gasus ha'ruach [haughtiness] is also a cause of Tzaraas. It is for this reason that the atonement ritual for one who has been stricken with Tzaraas is to bring a cedar tree and a moss (Etz Erez v' Eizov), to blend that which was so tall and majestic with that which is so lowly. Birds are also part of the Metzora's sin offering, since birds are constantly chirping, (indicating to him that he too has been constantly using his mouth more than is appropriate).

Therefore, we are not dealing here with a Tzadik Yesod Olam [righteous person who represents the foundation of the world]. Out of all the expressions for a human being, we would have expected a less prestigious term than Adam. The Torah could have used the words Ish or Gever. Adam refers to "the glorious man," yet the person who is smitten with Tzaraas is "inglorious man."

Rav Nissan Alpert, in his sefer Limudei Nissan, offers a beautiful thought on this question: The difference between an Adam Chashuv [a distinguished person] and a non-Adam Chashuv [a non-distinguished person] is not whether from time to time he slips and commits sins. A person can be an "Adam" and he can be a distinguished individual who the Torah considers "Adam" despite the fact that he may be guilty of slander, haughtiness, and stinginess. Rather, the difference that distinguishes the "Adam" from the "Ish" [the less distinguished individual] is the willingness on his part to admit that he has made a mistake and that he is willing to improve.

The Torah speaks of the person who has been stricken with Tzaraas and says "v'huuva el Aharon HaKohen" [he shall be brought to Aharon the Priest]. The word "huuva" utilizes the Pual conjugation – meaning, "He is brought..." Who is bringing him? Is he not bringing himself? The answer is that he does not really want to go, but he knows that he needs to go.

We can compare this to someone who is not feeling well. He knows he needs to go to the doctor, but he is afraid to go to the doctor. The doctor will tell him he is overweight and stressed out and his cholesterol is too high. The doctor will read him the riot act for his unhealthy behaviors and life style. The doctor will put him on a diet, and he will not be able to eat his favorite deserts. He does not want to go. This is a fact of life. Many people are afraid to go to the doctor. They do not want to hear what the doctor is going to say. The same is true for someone who has a toothache. He is afraid to go to the dentist.

The pasuk is talking about a person who realizes that he is not feeling well and that he needs to do something about it. "It is difficult, but I am going to

go to the doctor!" Similarly, "Adam" – yes, he has fallen; he has sinned; he has sinned seriously; but he wants to get better. He knows he is sick and wants to do something about it. That distinguished the "Adam" from the "non-Adam." Even though it is difficult for someone to admit he is wrong and needs improvement, he is brought to Aharon the priest. You know who brings him? He brings himself! Because of that, the Torah affords him the special title of Adam.

Do Koreans Have Talmud in Their Seoul? In the beginning of Parshas Tazria, Rabbeinu Bachaye has a lengthy discussion on the life of the embryo in the mother's womb. It is a most unique existence during which the embryo sees from one end of the universe until the other. One of the facets of that existence is something the Talmud says in Tractate Niddah [30b] namely, that the fetus is taught the entire Torah in utero. The Gemara there says that when the baby is about to be born, an Angel appears, slaps the baby on the mouth, and he forgets all his Torah.

This would then seem like an exercise in futility. The commentary of Rav Bezalel Ronsburg asks that very question on that Gemara: Why did Hashem see fit to teach a child the entire Torah before he comes into the world, only to make him forget everything right before he is about to be born? The Ribono shel Olam did us all a great favor. Before we come down to this world of physicality, we learn all the Torah, because were it not for that experience of having learned Torah at a prior time, we would have no chance to relate to Torah in this world when we would again be exposed to it. It is because we already had Torah implanted within us, and because our brain waves have been hard-wired to grasp Torah thought processes, that we can hope to relate to and appreciate Torah when we again come into contact with it.

It is essential to have been inculcated with Torah prior to in any way becoming corrupted by the physicality and coarseness of this world, so that our pristine souls may absorb the spiritual nature of supernal Torah studies and make them suitable receptacles for its later reabsorption after our coming into contact with the impurities of this world.

Our purest existence is those nine months in our mother's wombs. There we are saturated with all of Torah's depth, beauty and holiness. Later, when we learn Torah in this world, the soul will remember what it once learned in that pristine state of being.

When we sit down today – as an adult or a child – and study Torah, we can have the sensation "Hey, I learnt this already!" Therefore, I can now understand it, because I already learned it. People remember something they already learned previously better than something that is brand new.

He beautifully uses this idea to interpret the statement in Tractate Megillah [6b] "If you have studied diligently and find, believe" (ya'gaata u'matzata – ta'amin) – meaning if you persevere and study Torah over and over, you will eventually certainly gain understanding of it. We refer to something we once had and we lost as a "metziah". If we persevere in our quest of Torah, we can always get it back.

I say this over because recently someone sent me an article that said the Koreans decided to teach Talmud to all the children in the country. The article specifically mentions that they will be learning the Gemara at the beginning of Tractate Beitza regarding an egg laid on Yom Tov. The Koreans took note of the fact that there are so many smart Jews and there are so many Jewish Nobel Prize Laureates! The Koreans tried to figure out what the Jews do that makes them intelligent. They concluded that it must be because the Jews learn Gemara. Now mothers in Korea, according to this article, are teaching their young children Talmud.

I am trying to picture this in my head: A Korean mother sits down with her toddler and teaches "Beitzah shenoldah b'Yom Tov..." Maybe they will know what an egg is, but what is Yom Tov? At the time, I e-mailed Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz, Z"l the publisher of Art Scroll. I told him – this is a dedication opportunity for Art Scroll! The Hyundai Edition of Talmud Bavli. Now you are talking serious money.

I could not fathom – how could they teach it? Then I saw this teaching of Rav Bezalel Ronsburg. The only way a person can understand Torah is because he had it while yet in his mother's womb. I am very very doubtful that the Angel teaches the Nations of the World Torah. We can get Torah because the Malach taught it to us while we were yet in our mothers' wombs.

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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion.

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Daily Halacha <return@email.dailyhalacha.com> Thu, Apr 4, 2019 at 12:28 PM Reply-To: mail@dailyhalacha.com To: "C. Shulman" <internetparshasheet@gmail.com> Weekly Parasha Insights by Rabbi Eli Mansour

Description: Parashat Tazria: Eliyahu Ha'nabi and the Berit Mila "Redemption"

Parashat Tazria begins with the law of "Tum'at Yoledet" – the state of impurity that descends upon a woman after she delivers a child. The Torah establishes that the woman is impure for either seven or fourteen days – depending on whether she delivers a boy or a girl – and she is later required to offer a special sacrifice to regain her status of purity.

This Halacha seems, at first glance, very difficult to understand. The very first Misva that G-d commanded after creating the first human beings is "Peru U'rebu" – the obligation to procreate. Having a child is something precious and beautiful. It is one of our most sacred duties. Why, then, would childbirth bring upon a woman a state of Tum'a (impurity)? In fact, the Gemara tells that Hashem has a "container" in the heavens containing all the souls destined to come down into our world, and once this container is empty, Mashiah will come. As such, every time a woman delivers a child, she brings the world closer to its state of redemption. For what reason, then, does she become impure?

Another seemingly peculiar aspect of the Torah's discussion of "Tum'at Yoledet" is the mention of the Misva of Berit Mila in this context. As it discusses the case of the birth of a boy, the Torah found it necessary to reiterate the command to circumcise the child on his eighth day. Why is this Misva repeated here? Of what relevance is Berit Mila to the Halacha of "Tum'at Yoledet"?

The answer lies in an understanding of the concept of Tum'a. This word does not, as many people mistakenly believe, refer to "contamination," or any sort of filth. Rather, as the Zohar teaches, Tum'ah is the result of lost sanctity. When something is filled with Kedusha, and then that Kedusha is lost, the forces of impurity fill the vacuum that is created. A number of sources draw a comparison to two jars – one that contained honey, and another that contained vinegar, which were emptied. Not soon afterward, insects and flies descended upon the empty honey jar to consume the sweet drops of honey that remain, but no insects go to the vinegar jar. Similarly, as long as a soul is in the body, the Kedusha of the soul keeps the "insects" – the forces of Tum'a – away, but once the body is "emptied," the vacuum is filled by these forces that seek to feed off the "sweetness" of the residual Kedusha which remains. These forces go only to where there was "honey" – Kedusha – but not to where there was "vinegar." They are attracted to the "sweetness" of Kedusha, and are able to descend upon a holy place once the Kedusha is no longer present.

In other words, Tum'a is what happens when Kedusha departs.

This, then, explains the concept of "Tum'at Yoledet," the state of impurity that befalls a woman after childbirth. The Gemara famously tells us that during pregnancy, an angel sits with the fetus and teaches the child the entire Torah. Remarkably, a woman during pregnancy is a "mobile yeshiva," with Torah being studied inside her. There is great Kedusha inside the woman during those months. Once the child is born, this Kedusha is lost, and the void is filled by the forces of impurity.

Extending this notion further, we can explain why the period of Tum'a is longer after the birth of a girl than after the birth of a boy.

The primary difference between the birth of a girl and the birth of a boy is that after the birth of a boy, there is a Berit Mila – and the Berit Mila has the effect of eliminating the woman's state of Tum'a.

Tradition teaches that Eliyahu Ha'nabi attends every Berit performed on a Jewish child. And, as we know, Eliyahu is going to be sent to us before the arrival of Mashiah in order to prepare us for redemption. He will inspire, motivate and guide us to repent, to eliminate all our "impurities," and draw closer to Hashem so we will be ready to greet Mashiah. Eliyahu attends a Berit because a Berit is what we might call a "miniature redemption." A Berit Mila is a moment of immense Kedusha, an occasion that brings a level of purity and holiness to all those who are in attendance – resembling, in small measure, the purity and holiness that Eliyahu will help us achieve when he will arrive to prepare us for the final redemption.

Naturally, then, the period of Tum'a that follows childbirth ends after seven days – because at that point, the child is circumcised, and Eliyahu arrives and eliminates the impurity. And this is why the Torah mentions Berit Mila in this context – because it is the reason why the period of Tum'a after the birth of a boy ends after only seven days. The Torah is indicating to us that the occasion of a Berit has a profound spiritual impact which rids the woman of her state of Tum'a – giving us a glimpse of the spiritual elevation that we will experience in the future, when Eliyahu comes to prepare us for Mashiah, speedily and in our days, Amen.

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Weekly Parsha TAZRIA

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

The opening portion of the Torah reading of this week deals with childbearing. Jewish tradition has to a great extent always been child centered. Bringing children into the world is one of the basic positive commandments of Judaism. Having children demonstrates a belief in the future and an optimistic view of life generally.

Everyone knows that raising children constitutes a great responsibility and enormous sacrifice on the part of parents. Nevertheless, the thrust in Judaism is always to create a family and be privileged to see generations. Seeing grandchildren and certainly great-grandchildren allows one to live, in an imaginative way, even beyond the grave. Judaism is a generational religion. It is not a religion that is self-centered but points to a higher purpose, a nobler life and through generations, it acquires a whiff of eternity.

The rabbis of the Talmud taught us long ago that one should not be deterred from creating a family lest the descendants of that family be people of disappointing behavior and immoral values. Having children and building a family is always risky business. There are no guarantees given even to the most righteous and pious of parents. The biblical narratives of the great men and women of Israel testify to the difficulties of rearing proper generations. Nevertheless, the Torah does not allow us to desist from bringing children into the world and raising families. Creation is a divine attribute and procreation is the basic act of human purpose.

As part of the disastrous course that sections of Western civilization have taken in our time, we are witness to the complete denigration of having children and even of the very lives of infants. Children are a burden to one's career advancement, to the checkbook and to the leisure and freedom desired by many. In other sections of society, children are viewed only as to what they can contribute to the general society itself. If they are deemed to be unable to make such a contribution, then they are certainly worthless. We are witness to a return to the values of ancient Sparta where infants and small children who were weak or still physically underdeveloped, were simply taken out into the forests and allowed to die without sustenance or protection.

The abortion clinics are a major industry in Western society and their reach now touches even infants in the process of being born or even those having been born. If the mother somehow does not want the child, then it has become perfectly acceptable that that child should be done away with since it is a burden to all concerned.

This type of legalized murder is only a step away from genocide and murder that can be justified so to speak, by ideals, policies and economic theories. The Western world finds itself on a very slippery slope. God forbid, that it slips completely over the precipice.

Shabbat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

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Tazria: A Return to Ritual Purity
Rav Kook Torah

These Torah readings discuss at length topics that are among the most challenging for us to relate to. What relevance do the laws of ritual purity and impurity - after childbirth, for lepers and for various types of male and female discharges - hold for us? Why does the Torah place such emphasis on these matters? Why do we feel so far removed from them?

The Taharah Axiom

In his book *Orot*, Rav Kook posited the following principle: "The degree of purity required is a function of the comprehensiveness of the spiritual framework." The more inclusive a framework is, encompassing more aspects of life, the more rigorous are the requirements for taharah, ritual purity.

The Temple and its service are a classic example. The Temple projected an ethical and holy influence on a wide range of life's aspects - from the noble heights of divine inspiration and prophecy, through the powers of imagination and the emotions (the outbursts of joy and awe in the Temple service), all the way down to the physical level of flesh and blood (the actual sacrifices). Because its impact reached even the lowest levels of physical existence - which are nonetheless integrally connected to all other aspects of life in an organic whole - the Temple and its service required an exact and precise purity.

By contrast, a spiritual and moral influence that is directed only towards the intellect does not require such a refined degree of physical purity. Thus, the Sages taught, Torah may be studied even when impure.

"Is not My word like fire? says the Lord' (Jer. 23:29) - Just as fire does not become impure, so too, words of Torah cannot become impure." (Berachot 22a)

Changes throughout History

As the Jewish people returned from exile in Babylonia and rebuilt the Temple, it was necessary to revive the Temple's strict requirements of taharah. For this reason, Ezra enacted a series of enactments stressing the need for greater ritual purity during this period.

The long exile that followed the Second Temple period, however, greatly weakened the emotive and imaginative abilities of the people. The intensity

and aesthetic quality of spiritual life became impoverished, and the corresponding need for a rigorous degree of purity was accordingly diminished. Thus we find that one of the six orders of the Mishnah (compiled in the Land of Israel) is Taharot, dealing exclusively with matters of ritual purity. Of the 37 tractates of the Talmud (composed in the Babylonian exile), however, only one belongs to this order. Similarly, the Talmud repealed Ezra's decree obligating immersion before Torah study. What remained for the Jewish people in exile? Only the Torah and its intellectual influence. It still involved the physical realm through the practical observance of mitzvot, but the intermediate stages of imagination and feeling were bypassed. In exile, we lament, 'Nothing remains but this Torah' (from the Selichot prayers).

In the long centuries of exile, meticulousness in matters of ritual purity lost its obligatory nature. It became associated with idealistic longings, the province of the pious few.

A Return to Taharah

The Hasidic movement of the 1700s aspired to restore the concepts of physical purity to the masses. Hasidism places a greater emphasis on the imaginative and emotional faculties - particularly through prayer and song - than the intellectual. As a result, it awakened a greater need for personal and physical purity. This objective certainly contains a healthy kernel, although it needs additional direction and refinement.

Especially now, with the national renaissance of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, these aspirations for physical taharah should be renewed and expanded. Our national renewal complements the renewed yearning for spirituality; and the healthy desire to restore the nation and heal its national soul applies to all aspects of life, including physical purity.

It is precisely in the camps of the Jewish army that the Torah demands a high level of purity:

"For the Lord your God makes His presence known in your camp, so as to deliver you and grant you victory over your enemy. Your camp must therefore be holy." (Deut. 23:15)

Together with the renewal of our national strength and vitality, there must be a corresponding reinforcement of emotive and physical purity. This will help prepare the basis for an integrated national life that encompasses a complete rebirth of the people: from the highest intellectual pursuits, to the simple joy in life and living.

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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim
From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva
Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample:
Nusach of the Davening in the Rambam

Q: Can one use the Nusach of the Davening as printed in the Rambam to decide Halachah?

A: Yes (The Brisker Rav also held this way. See *Peninei Rabbenu Ha-Griz* pp. 52-53. Ha-Rav Avigdor Nevenzal holds, however, that the Nusach of the Davening printed in the Rambam was not written by the Rambam himself. *Mikraei Kodesh* of Ha-Rav Moshe Harari, *Hilchot Arba'at Ha-Minim*, p. 143 Note #15).

Learning Halachah or Emunah

Q: Which is preferable to learn - Halachah or Emunah?

A: One needs both, just as the question: which is preferable - eating or breathing?

Coins in Fountain

Q: There are people who throw coins into fountains. Is it permissible to take the money?

A: Yes. It is abandoned. This is a stupid custom.

Charedi Rav in Zionist Yeshiva

Q: Is it permissible to allow a Charedi Rav to give a class in a Zionist Yeshiva?

A: Certainly.

Q: But the opposite does not occur.

A: This is a mistake. But we should not say that if there is a mistake, we should add another mistake.

Accidentally Ate Milchigs

Q: Is it true that if I accidentally ate Milchigs after meat, I am Milchig and it is permissible to continue eating dairy?

A: Incorrect.

Father Who Wears Techelet

Q: If my father wears Techelet on his Tzitzit, am I obligated to do so?

A: No. Obviously, you should not insult your father.

Halachic Ruling Like Maran Ha-Rav Kook

Q: As students of Maran Ha-Rav Kook, do we always follow his halachic opinions, or do we only follow his Hashkafah?

A: 1. We also follow his halachic opinions.. There are obviously exceptions, just as Abaye said: I always follow the rulings of Rav except in three cases I follow Shmuel. Shabbat 23a. B. There are no rulings in matters of Hashkafah, rather it is proper Emunah.

Blessing Over a Kiss

Q: Why isn't there a blessing when I kiss my children? I have much more enjoyment doing so than eating a cookie!

A: Our Sages did not establish a blessing for every act. You can take a glass of juice and have intention to say the blessing on the juice and giving your children a kiss. See Piskei Teshuvot 240 note #18.

Harmony in Birkat Cohanim

Q: Is it permissible for a Cohain to sing harmony in Birkat Cohanim?

A: No. One must recite the blessing with awe and not transform it into a choir performance.

Shiduch with Smoker

Q: Can I suggest a smoker as a Shiduch to a woman without informing her that he smokes?

A: No, since most women are particular about this. Therefore, doing so would be "Genivat Da'at" (deception).

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Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Tazria

For the week ending 6 April 2019 / 1 Nisan 5779

Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

Insights

Clarity and Connection

"And upon the completion of her days of purity" (12:6)

The greatest political blunder of the Feminist movement was its failure to allow men to have babies.

Nothing sorts out the ladies from the men more than nine months of gut-churning (literally) physicality.

Nothing is as physical in this world as the gestation and delivery of another life; from morning-sickness to afternoon sickness to plain-ol' sickness; from the repulsion to all green vegetables and the craving for waffles drowning in maple syrup to the wholesale hijacking of the human body into a Mothership ferrying a precious cargo to a safe touch-down. Nothing compares with childbirth.

Take it from me. I've never done it.

In the Torah, the concept of tumah (spiritual impurity) is most often connected with death. The greatest source of tumah in the world is a cadaver and contact with it. Why then does a woman become tameh (spiritually impure) when she gives birth? Isn't birth the polar antithesis of the granddaddy of all tumah — i.e., death?

Another question: Why does death frighten us so much? A Jew knows that this life is but a brief candle, and, when it is snuffed out, G-d reveals a great palace of eternal light beyond it.

But it sure doesn't look that way when we are confronted by a lifeless corpse. It looks like "THE END".

The reason that death is the greatest source of tumah in the world is that a dead body shakes to the core our belief in the resurrection of the dead.

In Hebrew, the word tumah is connected to the word meaning sealed — satum (sealed). The elevation of the soul to its place on High is sealed from us. All we are left with is the frightening physical reality. The opposite of tumah is taharah. Taharah is connected to the word Zohar — shining transparency. The ability to see through the barrier to a life beyond. The most exposed part of the Holy Altar was called the Tohorah Hamizbe'ach.

The brightest part of the day is called Tzohora'im. Everything is clear.

Giving birth is almost as physical as dying. Maybe even more so.

Just as contact with death can cause a great disconnect with the spiritual reality of our elevation to another world, so too can nine months of total involvement with the body, hormones, fluids, tests, scans and all the other physical features of childbirth, lead to a very large disconnect with the spiritual reality of G-d's bringing another soul to the world.

It is for this reason that the tumah of disconnection requires a mother to bring a korban — an atonement offering — as part of the process of returning to the world of taharah — of clarity and connection.

· Sources: based on the Sforno; thanks to Rabbi Mordechai Perlman
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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha - Parshas Tazria

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Kohen... Kohen... GONE!

Parshas Tazria deals primarily with the physio-spiritual plague that affects gossips and rumor mongers with the plague of tzora'as. Tzora'as appears as a white lesion on various parts of the body, and the status of the afflicted depends on its shade of white, its size, and its development. The afflicted does not go to a medical clinic nor does he enter a hospital. If afflicted he is quarantined and then reevaluated; if condemned he is sent out of the Jewish camp until he heals, a sign that he has repented his slanderous ways. A physician or medical expert does not evaluate him. In fact, the entire ordeal is evaluated, reevaluated, determined, and executed by non-other than the Kohen. Moreover, the Torah does not keep that detail a secret. In the 47 verses that discuss bodily affliction of tzora'as, the Kohen is mentioned no less than 45 times! "He shall be brought to the Kohen," "The Kohen shall look", "The Kohen shall declare him contaminated," "The Kohen shall quarantine him," "The Kohen shall declare him pure" (Leviticus 13:1-47). Why must the Torah include the Kohen's involvement in every aspect of the process? More so, why does the Torah mention the Kohen's involvement in almost every verse? Would it not been well enough to have one encompassing edict: "The entire process is supervised and executed according to the advice of the Kohen."

The parents of a retarded child entered the study of Rabbi Shlomo Auerbach. They decided to place their child in a special school in which he would live; the question was which one.

"Have you asked the boy where he would like to go?" asked the sage. The parents were dumbfounded.

“Our child cannot be involved in the process! He hasn’t the capacity to understand,” explained the father.

Reb Shlomo Zalman was not moved. “You are sinning against your child. You are removing him from his home, placing him in a foreign environment, and you don’t even consult with the child? He will feel helpless and betrayed – I’d like to talk to him.”

The couple quickly went home and brought the boy to the Torah sage.

“My name is Shlomo Zalman,” smiled the venerable scholar. “What’s yours?”

“Akiva.”

“Akiva,” exclaimed Rabbi Auerbach, “I am one of the leading Torah sages in the world and many people discuss their problems with me. Now, I need your help.

“You are about to enter a special school, and I need a representative to look after all the religious matters in the school. I would like to give you semicha, making you my official Rabbinical representative. You can freely discuss any issue with me whenever you want.”

Reb Shlomo Zalman gave the boy a warm handshake and hug. The boy entered the school and flourished. In fact, with the great feeling of responsibility, he rarely wanted to leave the school, even for a weekend; after all, who would take care of any questions that would arise?

Part of the metzorah’s (leper’s) healing process is dismissal from the Jewish camp. However, it is a delicate ordeal, one wrought with trauma, pain, and emotional distress. The Kohen, a man of peace, love, and compassion must be there for every part of the process. He must be there to guide him through the tense incubation period as well as his dismissal. Moreover, he is there again to ease him back into society.

The Torah teaches us, perhaps more than 50 times, that every traumatic decision needs spiritual guidance. It can turn a cold-hearted punishment into a process of spiritual redemption. It can turn a tough, seemingly dispassionate decision into a beautiful experience.

For when the Kohen holds your hand, even if it is a stricken one, even if you may be leaving for somewhere outside the camp, you are definitely not gone.

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Good Shabbos*

In memory of Joseph Fertig by Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Fertig

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D’var Torah for parashat Tazria.

When a baby is born, we already look forward to the wedding!

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

This week the Chief Rabbi explains that ‘kindness begins at home’...

When Jewish people are born we are already looking forward to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the wedding.

The actual mitzvah to perform a brit, is given in the parasha of Tazria. And once we have performed this mitzvah and we have given a name to the baby, we say a prayer, “k’sheim shenichnas la’brit”, in the same way that this child has entered into the covenant with Hashem, “ken yikanes l’torah l’chupah ul’ma’asim tovim”, so too, may he come to Torah – which is Bar Mitzvah, Chupah – stand under the chupah as a married man, and engage in ‘ma’asim tovim’ – acts of kindness. And for girls, we have a similar prayer.

I think we can all understand this. We live for simchas. God forbid, on sad occasions we greet people by saying ‘please God, we should meet on simchas’, how much more so on happy occasions! Once we are blessed with

a child, we look forward to the next stage and the stage after that, to always celebrate important milestones in their lives.

But I have a question. Isn’t the order wrong? Torah, which is Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Chupah – wedding, and only afterwards ‘ma’asim tovim’. Surely the ‘ma’asim tovim’, the good deeds should come right at the beginning, because we want this child to grow up, immersed in a world of loving kindness, from the word ‘go’.

Of course that is the case. But this particular order adds another dimension to ‘ma’asim tovim’, to acts of kindness. It tells us that it is when one is married that one is provided with the thrilling experience of a partner to perform acts of loving kindness alongside. Within one’s home, one can generate so much hospitality and so much chessed (acts of kindness) to the world.

Then there is a further lesson. ‘Ma’asim tovim’ relates specifically to those who have stood beneath a chupah because once married, they need to dedicate themselves to kind deeds towards their spouse and members of their family. Hence two of the Ten Commandments which relate to infidelity; not to covet the spouse of another person, and not to commit adultery. On the tablets, the ‘issur’, the prohibition of adultery comes alongside idolatry, indicating that when one is unfaithful towards one’s spouse, it’s analogous to being unfaithful to the Almighty.

Therefore, at the very earliest moments of a child’s life, we bless them: may God bless and protect you to enable you to lead a life full of Torah and mitzvot, to stand one day under a chupah and always to be an outstanding individual full of ‘ma’asim tovim’ (kind deeds) for all. But let’s start at home – with that loyalty and kindness to the members of one’s family – to be faithful and loyal to those who are part of your mishpacha.

Shabbat Shalom.

חדשות ערוץ 7

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Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parshas Tazria פרשת תזריע השלש

אשה כי תזריע וילדה זכר

When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male. (12:2)

The *Midrash Rabbah* (*Vayikra Rabbah* 14) quotes the *pasuk* in *Sefer Tehillim* (139:5), *Achor va’kedem tzartani*, “You have created me behind and before.” Rabbi Yochanan said, “If man merits, he inherits two worlds, This World and The World to Come (*Olam Habba*). This is what is meant by, “You have created me behind and before” (referring to This World and The World to Come), and, if not (if he does not merit), he comes to give a *din v’cheshbon*, judgment/justification and a reckoning. The terms *din v’cheshbon* have been immortalized in *Pirkei Avos* 3:1, *Akavya ben Mehallel* says, “Consider three things, and you will not come into the grips of sin: Know from whence you came; where you will ultimately go, and before Whom you will give *din v’cheshbon*, justification and reckoning.” Formally, *cheshbon*, accounting, precedes the final judgment. Yet, here we see that *din* precedes *cheshbon*. Why?

This would be true with regard to human-centered judgment. In Heaven, however, judgment comes first. The *sefer, Eid Yaaleh*, explains that Heavenly judgment takes a different course concerning adjudication. Man/the sinner is granted the opportunity to render judgment on a person who committed the very same transgression for which he was found guilty. If he is able to find merit in his behavior, or a reason to absolve him of his sin, then he will be judged similarly by Heaven. If, however, he comes down with the gavel and declares, “Guilty,” showing no compassion, he will likewise be found guilty. Thus, the *din*, judgment, which he applies to someone else will precede his own *cheshbon*, accounting. This is what took place when Nosson *HaNavi* presented the “case” of the lamb that belonged

to the poor person. David *HaMelech* rendered his *din*, judgment, unaware that he was actually rendering judgment against himself.

The *Ben Ish Chai* explains that when one looks at the actions perpetrated by a stranger, his perspective remains untainted by subjectivity. He sees the truth in its unblemished form. Otherwise, when one looks at his own actions, he looks with rose-colored glasses through lenses of vested interests. One sees the truth in others – rarely in himself. Thus, Heaven tests him with *din* before It renders its *cheshbon*.

In *Niflaosecha Asichah*, *Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita*, relates the story of a Jew who acted nefariously toward his co-religionists. He would inform on them to the gentile authorities and generally make life miserable for them at every juncture. To put it simply: he was not the most beloved Jew in the community. Indeed, he had no friends who cared about him. When he passed away, the community did not seem broken up by it. Every Jew, regardless of religious belief or reputation receives a *taharah*, body purification, through the services of the volunteers of the *Chevrah Kaddisha*, Jewish Sacred Burial Society. The deceased was no different, except that during the *taharah*, one of the *misaskim*, volunteers who were washing the body, slapped the deceased lightly on the back. When the rest of the group looked at him incredulously, actually shocked by his action, he said, “He deserved it.”

That night, the deceased appeared to the young man/volunteer (who was a devout, decent *ben Torah* who was carried away with righteous indignation) and said, “You humiliated me in front of the other members of the *Chevrah Kaddisha*. I am summoning you to a *din Torah* in front of the Heavenly Court to adjudicate my embarrassment. Obviously, the young man was at first quite shaken up from his dream, but it did not last very long. He comforted himself with the notion that dreams are unrealistic, nothing more than a figment of his imagination. They are meaningless and should be disregarded. When the apparition kept on appearing nightly with the same claim and declaration, however, the young man became frightened.

He related the dream to his friends. He became morose and stopped eating. Soon, he was relegated to bed, because he had no strength, having not eaten in days. After two weeks of misery, the young man hovered near death. His friends finally spoke up, suggesting that he go to the *Maharsha*, *Horav Shmuel Eliezer HaLevi Eldels, zl*, the premier *gadol*, Torah giant of his generation, an individual who was as holy as he was erudite. He was also wise in the ways of the world. He would know how to address this problem. The young man demurred, claiming that he feared the *Maharsha*’s reaction to what he had done. After another week of physical deprivation, as the young man hovered near death, he relented and allowed his friends to consult with the *Maharsha*.

The *Maharsha* listened and told the young man’s friends to have him brought to his house. The young man lay down to sleep, knowing that tonight would be no different than the other nights – the soul of the man whom he had humiliated would return to make him miserable. He was right. This time, however, the *Maharsha* was waiting to speak with him. “Who are you?” the *Maharsha* asked. “I am the soul of so and so who was humiliated by this fellow. He slapped me and referred to me as a *rasha*, wicked person.”

“What is the issue? Everybody was aware that you were wicked. You never covered up your nefarious activities, and, even if he shamed you, since when does the Heavenly Tribunal punish a person who calls his fellow Jew a *rasha*?”

When the soul heard this, he became disconcerted. This was one thing he was not expecting. “You obviously are unaware of the eminent welcome I received when I arrived in the World of Truth. At first, all of the punishing angels were lined up to strike me, but I was protected by the angels that were created through my *mitzvos*.”

“What *mitzvos* did you perform that granted you such esteem?” the *Maharsha* asked.

“Once when I was walking along the banks of a river, a Torah scholar fell in and was drowning. I quickly jumped in and rescued him. I

carried him to his home and instructed his wife in his care. Her response was very negative, ‘What can I give him? We have no money and no means of support.’ When I heard this, I opened my wallet and gave her money. I agreed to support them until her husband had completely recuperated. This was my source of merit. (In other words, I am not such a bad person after all.)”

The *Maharsha* told him, “Listen to what you are saying. Due to the merit of saving and sustaining one life, all of your past sins have been erased. I think, however, that it is all a sham. Whatever you did was because you happened to be in the right place at the right time. Your motivation was not for the sake of Heaven. It just happened to fall into your lap and you took advantage of the opportunity. Otherwise, you do not deserve to be saved from *Gehinnom*, Purgatory! The Heavenly Tribunal decided to test you: ‘Were you sincere? Did you really, out of the goodness of your heart, save the Torah scholar, or was it by chance that you decided once in your life to be good?’ They wanted to see how you were acting towards another Torah scholar. Unfortunately, the manner in which you are acting towards this young man indicates that you really do not care about Torah scholars. You care only about yourself. Thus, you deserve your rightful punishment!”

When the soul of the deceased heard this, he immediately left the young man alone. He was never heard from again. *Din v’cheshbon*: We determine our own judgment by virtue of the manner in which we judge others.

ובמלאת ימי טהרה לבן או לבת תביא כבש... וכפר עליה הכהן וטהרה

Upon the completion of the days of her purity for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring a sheep... And the Kohen shall provide atonement for her, and she shall become purified. (12:6,8)

The *Talmud (Niddah 31b)* explains that when the *yoledes*, new mother, offers a *korban* as she is about to give birth, with the accompanying pain of childbirth she might take a personal vow not to have any more children. Obviously, this vow is short-lived. Thus, she brings a *korban* to atone for her impetuosity. *Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl*, offers a practical reason for the *korban* – one to which we can all relate– childbirth or not. In the course of life we confront challenges – some overwhelming, others only in our minds. Regardless of the adversity that we face, we are anxious, some more so than others, but everyone goes through a moment of introspection during which we review our lives and promise that if this challenge ends on a positive note, we will do just about anything. There is no question concerning our sincerity. The issue is its duration: what do we do – or not do – once salvation has arrived.

Plagued by human nature, most people will not live up to follow through on their pledge once the period of adversity has become history. We forget that we made this pledge to Hashem. He carried out His part of the accord. Now it is time for the beneficiary to keep his/her commitment.

The new mother experienced a difficult and painful childbirth, during which she made all kinds of promises, pledges and declarations. Now that it is over, she feels fine as she holds her newborn close to her, marveling at her healthy child. She has forgotten her pledge or has put it on the back burner. In order to circumvent this problem, the Torah instructs her to bring a *korban*. Thus, she will address and receive her atonement via the medium of the *korban*.

Keeping our promises is not simply a matter of integrity. When we break our word, we defile the aspect of human creation which elevates us above and distinguishes us from the world of the animal. When the Torah writes, *Vayipach b’apav nishmas chaim*, “And He blew into his nostrils the soul of life” (*Bereishis 2:7*), *Targum Onkeles* interprets it: *V’ahavas b’adam l’ruach memaleha*, “And he was made into a speaking spirit.” The power of speech is a uniquely Divine gift which Hashem Himself blew into man’s nostrils. To squander or deviate from this gift’s purpose represents the nadir of ingratitude. The following vignette demonstrates how far a *gadol*, Torah giant, went to keep his word.

Horav Dov Berish Weidenfeld, zl, the *Tchebiner Rav*, was an extraordinary Torah scholar, whose encyclopedic knowledge of all areas of Torah was matched only by his outstanding *middos tovos*, refined character traits. He believed in supporting himself through his business commitments, and he steadfastly refused to accept a rabbinical position. He finally relented when, at the age of forty, his business failed, forcing him to accept the position of *Rav* of Tchebin, Galicia. His fame spread throughout Europe. Later, when Hitler's hordes began ravaging the Jewish communities of Europe, the Nazi Party's newspaper, *Der Sturmer*, portrayed *Rav Weidenfeld* as the greatest *Talmudist* in the world. This portrayal earned him a "position" on top of the wanted blacklist of *rabbanim* to be apprehended and executed. The *Tchebiner Rav* was forced to flee to Lvov/Lemberg, which was then under Soviet control. He stayed in the home of the Husyatiner Rebbe.

The *Tchebiner Rav* did not have much time to enjoy his new home before the dread Soviet police arrested him as an illegal alien. He was soon exiled with his family to the frozen forests of Sverdlovsk in Siberia, where the *Rav* was forced to endure backbreaking labor in the bitter cold. Despite the brutal deprivation, he secretly studied with his son-in-law, *Horav Baruch Shimon Schneerson, zl*, recording his novellae on scraps of paper and wood. At the age of 65, he was finally able to leave Russia for *Eretz Yisrael*, together with the remaining members of his family.

When the *Rav* arrived there, he discovered that his enviable reputation had preceded him. Indeed, a certain scholar in Yerushalayim asked to be his *shamash*, attendant. This man hardly left the *Tchebiner's* presence, seeking to imbibe from the saintly scholar the Torah erudition and unusual *middos tovos* that he exemplified. One day, as the *Rav* was about to leave the house, the attendant noticed that a button on his long frock was loose and would likely fall off. "Please wait a moment, *Rebbe*. I will sew the button on. A Torah scholar of note should not go in public with anything on his garment being out of order. *Est past nisht*, it is inappropriate for a scholar of such repute to appear in public sloppily attired."

The attendant sewed the button on while the *Rav* was wearing the frock, and, as would happen in such instances, the attendant unwittingly pricked the *Rav's* skin. Filled with dread, the attendant began to tremble, and he broke out in a cold sweat. He was literally shaking. The *Tchebiner* said to him, "Calm down. Nothing happened. I hardly felt it." The attendant was inconsolable. "Why are you so afraid?" asked the *Rav*. "It is nothing." The attendant responded, "My sin is too much to bear. Only the flames of *Gehinnom*, Purgatory, will atone for my sin."

The *Tchebiner Rav* looked at his attendant and, in his signature warm demeanor, said, "Do not be frightened. Even if you enter *Gehinnom*, I will personally take you out of there." When the attendant heard these words, he began to calm down.

The *Tchebiner's* fame spread throughout *Eretz Yisrael* and the world. He moved to the *Shaarei Chesed* neighborhood and reestablished his *yeshivah*, *Kochav M'Yaakov*, which he guided together with his son-in-law. Years passed, and the *Tchebiner* aged gracefully. Shortly before his passing, he summoned his attendant who was by now an old man, "Do you remember years ago when I promised to extricate you from *Gehinnom*?" It took the attendant a minute to recall the incident, but he remembered with shock and awe. The *Tchebiner* was one of the preeminent *gedolei ha'dor*. Did he have nothing else with which to occupy himself than some long-forgotten words spoken years earlier?

"Yes, *Rebbe*, I remember," replied the attendant in almost a whisper. The *Tchebiner* looked at his close attendant, the man who had devoted himself to him night and day for years, and said, "I will keep my promise to you. This is one thing that should not worry you. I ask, however, that you grant me a great kindness. Please do not make the task too difficult for me."

This is how a *gadol b'Yisrael* kept his word. This was an incident that took place between the *gadol* and another human being. Can one imagine how they kept their word to Hashem? David *HaMelech* declares,

Nedarei laHashem ashalem, "My vows to Hashem, I will pay" (*Tehillim* 116:18). He took his own word seriously, because Hashem took his word seriously.

וְרָאָהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וְטָמֵא אֹתוֹ

The *Kohen* shall look at it and declare it contaminated. (13:3)

There are various ways to view an occurrence, especially if it takes place following sinful behavior. The common perspective is that if the event follows a sin, especially if this event is accompanied with physical and emotional pain, it is a punishment for the preceding transgression. Someone with a penetrating cognitive gaze might see beyond what appears to be a punishment and define it as restorative and purifying. This is how we should look at the *tumah* of *tzaraas*.

The Torah decreed that the *tumah* of *tzaraas* (spiritual leprosy,) as well as its purification, be declared by the *Kohen*. One of the primary causes of *tzaraas* is speaking *lashon hora*, evil/slandering speech. The *Kohanim*, as descendants of Aharon *HaKohen*, inherited their saintly forebear's character trait of *ohev shalom v'rodeif shalom*, loving peace and pursuing peace. They were granted the merit to serve as healers, to heal the *metzora* from his impurity. A man slandered his fellows, causing a rift in a relationship, in a community. The *Kohanim* were there to purify him, a healing that is facilitated through an individual whose love for the community in general, and for each individual Jew in particular, knew no bounds. All this was understood. Cure and purification was brought about by the person who cares the most. Why then is this same "loving" *Kohen* the one who originally declared the *tumah*, rendering the *metzora* impure?

The *Sfas Emes* explains that *tzaraas* itself was not a disease; rather, it was a cure. The *metzora* stands for *motzi ra*, brings out/publicizes evil. It also means, remove the evil. In the latter interpretation, the affliction of the skin which is concealed within the skin of the person emerges and is revealed, allowing for him to be cured. We all have to deal with our personal issues, evil demons (whatever term is most comfortable for one to accept). The bottom line is: The ability to see and come to terms with one's own lowliness/evil is the first step toward *teshuvah*, repentance and reconciliation. The *Kohen's* judgment did not cause the *tumah*; rather, it drew the internal flaw/blemish to the exterior, to a place where it could be treated effectively, resulting in a cure.

וְהַצְרוּעַ אֲשֶׁר בוֹ הִנֵּגַע בְּגָדָיו יִהְיוּ פְרָמִים וְרֵאשׁוֹ יִהְיֶה פְרוּעַ וְעַל שֵׁפֶם יֵעָתָה וְטָמֵא טָמֵא יִקְרָא

And the person with *tzaraas* in whom there is the affliction, his garments shall be rent, the hair of his head shall be unshorn, and he shall cloak himself up to his lips; he is to call out, "Contaminated, contaminated!" (13:45)

The *Yalkut Shemoni* explains that the *metzora* calls out to others: "*Tamei*, impure! *Tamei*, impure!" so that his pain will be publicized to others. Thus, they will *daven* for his cure. *Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita*, says that having other Jews *daven* for their friend in need is not simply a laudable practice, but the designated purpose in Creation. He quotes the *Abarbanel* who explains why the Torah commences its introduction to the Creation of the world in the third person (*Bereishis bara Elokim*; In the beginning of G-d's creation...), rather than Hashem speaking in first person (*Ani barasi*, I created...). This is so that human beings will glean the critical importance of humility. A person should never think, "It is all about me." One should live a life of sharing with others, caring about others, doing for others. Life is a partnership, a coalescence of people working with one another for one another. We find that Hashem *Yisborach* "consulted" with the Heavenly Angels prior to creating Adam *HaRishon*, Primordial Man. This is recorded in the Torah: *Naaseh Adam*, "Let 'us' make man" (*Bereishis* 1:26).

Despite what the heretics might say in support of their heresy ("us" implies that Hashem required/had assistance, when this is certainly untrue) the

Almighty countered that the heretics will preach heresy. Regardless of the venue/audience, the lack of integrity notwithstanding, they will do theirs. The people who read the account of Creation will become acutely aware that the *Gadol*, Great One, leader, manager, boss, one in charge, should always be willing to take/accept counsel from the smaller, younger, less-experienced novice. It is all about humility, and learning to share and care with/about others. This is the underlying motif/intention of *V'ahavta l'reicha kamocho*, "Love your fellow as (you love) yourself."

Rav Zilberstein suggests that this idea is supported by the fact that all of us are not created equal: some are wealthy, some are not; some are brilliant, some are not; some are in good health, some are not. The list of disparities goes on. The purpose is so that we should be aware and reiterate in our minds that our life's focus should not be directed on ourselves, but on others. We should think of others: What does my fellow need? How can I help? What can I do? To paraphrase the immortal words of *Horav Chaim Volozhiner*, *zl* (preface to *Nefesh HaChaim*), "Man is created *l'ho'il l'acharinei*, to assist others."

One of the most satisfying feelings in life is the act of giving. It creates a positive energy that seems to gravitate to others. Giving and helping are so meaningful, so special, especially in the manner that they influence others to follow suit. I think that we can take this one step further. There are individuals who give, and there are individuals who are giving persons. One who gives does not necessarily give of himself/herself. They give something which usually belongs to them. A giving person shares himself with the beneficiary. I recently saw a quote (anonymous attribution), "Life is not (only) about making others happy. Life is about sharing your happiness with others." In other words: I will be happy to give, to contribute, to assist, but what is mine is mine. I enjoy seeing that you are happy, and I am happy that in some measure I have played a role in facilitating your happiness, but my happiness is my happiness. I give – I do not necessarily want to open up my personal celebrations to others. That is the difference between one who gives and one who is a giving person. When one gives, he still remains distinct, even distant from the beneficiary. When one is a giving person, he bonds and builds a unified relationship with the beneficiary.

Va'ani Tefillah

ובנה אותה בקרוב בימינו בנין עולם – *U'vnei osah b'karov b'yameinu binyan olam*. And build it very soon... an everlasting building.

While the First and Second Temples were constructed with human and earthly materials, the Third Temple will be built with *chomas eish*, walls of fire. As *Horav Yitzchak Kirzner*, *zl*, explains, this fire is comprised not only of Heavenly Fire, but also the fires within the Jewish People. The spiritual plateau achieved by *Klal Yisrael* in the period of *Moshiach Tziddkeinu* will be all-consuming, created from a burning desire to draw close to Hashem. This devotion to, and love for, Hashem will be so intense that it will have the ability to create a *Bais HaMikdash* that will be impervious to physical destruction.

With this thought in mind, perhaps we can now understand the concept of each Jew creating his personal brick that will be included in the *Bais HaMikdash HaShlishi*. A brick is a simile for a spiritual force that remains impervious to physical harm. The bricks that we make are bricks of fire which are the product of our intensity in the process of coming closer to Hashem. Thus, we share in its ultimate construction.

In memory of our beloved parents

Rabbi Dr. Avrohom Yitzchok Wolf & Rebbetzin Anna Moses

Sruly and Chaya Wolf and Family Ari and Rivky Wolf and Family

Abba and Sarah Spero and Family Pesach and Esther Ostroy and Family

Sruly and Chaya Wolf and Family

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