
א ביסל תורה!

The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

ד' ניסן תשפ"ד-4/12/2024

תזריע

abisltorah.wordpress.com

Childbirth and the טומאה That Comes Along

By Moria Danan

In this week's פרשה, תזריע, פרשה, we delve into the laws concerning childbirth and skin diseases. While these topics might not seem directly relevant to our lives, there is so much wisdom to uncover beneath the surface. One aspect of this parashah that resonates with me, is the idea of טומאה ("impurity") and טהרה ("purity") after childbirth. In ancient times, women were considered "impure" after giving birth, and it took time and specific קרבנות, for them to regain their original state of purity.

רש"י emphasizes the significance of the woman's offering after childbirth. He explains that this offering symbolizes gratitude to ה', for the miraculous gift of childbirth, as well as a means of atonement for any negative thoughts that may have arisen during childbirth. Through this act, the woman is able to acknowledge the divine role in the birth process and reaffirm a stronger connection to the Creator.

רמב"ם provides a broader context, by connecting the laws of childbirth, to the broader theme of purity and impurity in Jewish law. He suggests that the period of impurity following childbirth, serves as a reminder of the spiritual vulnerability associated with bringing new life into the world. Just as physical impurities must be cleansed, so too spiritual impurities must be addressed through introspection and repentance.

רבי יעקב בן אשר, בעל הטורים, offers a unique interpretation regarding the timing of the purification process. He notes that the period of impurity is longer for a woman who gives birth to a daughter, compared to a son. This discrepancy, he suggests, reflects the deeper spiritual significance of the female baby in perpetuating a sacred alliance between ה' and the Jewish people. Thus, the purification process serves as a symbolic reconnection to this sacred relationship.

In essence, these teachings remind us of the profound connection between the miracle of childbirth and our spiritual journey as individuals, particularly as we are busy helping our families cleaning-up the house for פסח, we should make sure to think about the deeper opportunities to clean-up our מידות and actions.

Another key theme in פרשת תזריע, is the treatment of skin diseases, known as צרעת. While these diseases may have physical manifestations, the תורה also teaches us that they can stem from spiritual impurity, such as gossip or slander. We have all heard the classic connections made between צרעת, ethical behavior and interpersonal relationships, as brought down by רש"י and רמב"ם. However, the ספורנו offers a unique connection from a psychological perspective, highlighting the potential of לשון הרע, as a catalyst for introspection and personal growth. He suggests that the isolation mandated for those afflicted with צרעת, provides an opportunity for self-examination and repentance. Through this process of introspection, the individual can identify and rectify their moral and spiritual shortcomings, ultimately achieving a state of greater purity and closeness to the service of ה'!

May we all merit to be able to preserve the essential connections in our service to 'ה and may we continue to strive to become more compassionate, mindful individuals, who seek purity in both our actions and our hearts. בעזרת השם!

ברית מילה

By Eitan Orkaby

Throughout the פרשה, we see various mentions to טומאה and טהרה, but at the beginning, the תורה talks about ברית מילה. "וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יִמּוֹל בְּשָׁר עֶרְלָתוֹ." "And on the 8th day, do a ברית מילה on the foreskin" (ויקרא י"ב:ג).

In מסכת שבת דף קלב, it says that ברית מילה is so important that it takes precedence over שבת. As long as the מצוה is being performed on the eighth day of a boy's life, it takes precedence. This shows how important ברית מילה is, but does not really explain why.

ברכה תוספת ברכה says that before we understand why, we first need to understand שבת. Both שבת and ברית מילה are considered covenants with 'ה. The punishment for violating שבת is death, whereas not performing a ברית מילה makes you, almost, not part of the Jewish people (of course if there is a medical reason to not do a ברית מילה, this doesn't apply). The difference between Jews and non Jews is the ברית מילה. With a ברית מילה, we are obligated to keep שבת, therefore, ברית מילה is the first קדושה that a Jewish boy undertakes, which then leads to more opportunities for קדושה. Since ברית מילה is what makes us obligated on שבת, that is why it takes precedence.

However, why would ברית מילה be any different then לולב and שופר, which can't be done on שבת? Rav Baruch Epstein explains, that חז"ל forbade שופר and לולב because the holidays which we practice the מצוה, falls on the 1st and 15th of תשרי, and it is possible that we have the wrong date of יום טוב, so, as a precaution, the חכמים did not allow anyone to do שופר or לולב, since it could have been שבת, but not also יום טוב. If שופר or לולב were done one שבת that was not a יום טוב, they would have been violating שבת, and therefore liable for the death penalty. ברית מילה, on the other hand, is known exactly which day is the 8th day, therefore, there would be no worry that we are violating שבת when doing the ברית מילה.

From the תורה going out of its way to mention ברית מילה, 'ה is showing us that we always have to strive to do His מצוות. Even when we are bogged down by all of the מצוות that we have to keep, like טומאה and טהרה during the בית המקדש time period, we still have to follow the seemingly small מצוות, as those are just as important as the great מצוות. May we strive to follow all of 'ה's מצוות, and never stop keeping them.

Editors in Chief: Binyamin Orkaby and Ephraim Fischer

Editors: Eitan Orkaby and Avi Abbett

Faculty Advisor: Rabbi Jaffe



Write a Dvar Torah for א ביסל תורה



Receive א ביסל תורה on WhatsApp