

פ' תזריע תשפ"ד

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WAR AND REDEMPTION - THE CURRENT WAR AND CHEVLEI MOSHIACH BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF HARAV MOSHE STERNBUCH SHLITA

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SEGULA FOR SONS, RIGHTEOUS CHILDREN AND WEALTH

And on the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised (12:3)

Rav Sternbuch's father said in the name of a great *rov* that a *sandak* only benefits from the physical blessings associated with being a *sandak* if he pays for the costs of the *seudah*. If he does not do so, he only enjoys the spiritual blessings, the reasoning being that covering the costs of the *seudah* is an integral part of being a "ba'al bris" who enjoys the advantages stated in *chazal* of being a *sandak*.

Moreover, added Rav Sternbuch's father, anyone who pays for the costs of the meal, and all the more so if he is physically involved in preparing it, has the status of a "quasi-sandak", who enjoys part of the benefits associated with being a *sandak*. This is especially so when he pays the costs of the *seudah* to a ben Torah, thereby assisting him in his learning. This is a wonderful *segula* for wealth and righteous children.

We have a tradition that it is also a great *segula* for having sons, since by paying the costs of the meal the person proves his love of the mitzvah of *bris mila*, and how much he yearns to perform it on his own. Hashem therefore rewards him with a son to provide him the opportunity to do so. Rav Sternbuch recalls that in his youth many people were eager to pay for the costs of a *seudas bris*, since people realized what a great *segula* it was, but in the past generation this seems to have receded, and it would be worthwhile to revive this great *mitzvah*.

A *seudas bris mila* is compared to eating a *korbon*, and it is worthwhile to have a proper meal with meat and wine. Women used to have the custom of cooking and baking the meal on their own, and when preparing the meal they should say "leshem *seudas bris mila*", like we say "leshem *Shabbos kodesh*" when preparing *Shabbos* meals.

YEARNING FOR MITZVOS EQUIVALENT OF PERFORMING THEM

In *Sidduro Shel Shabbos* (2:4:2:5) Rav Chaim of Czernowitz writes that Avrohom had an intense yearning to perform the mitzvah of *bris mila* as soon as Yitzchok was born, but did not do so because he had been commanded to wait until the eighth day.

However, Hashem deemed it as if he had actually performed this mitzvah each and every moment of those eight days.

This teaches us a principle that applies to all *mitzvos*: whenever a person yearns to perform a *mitzvah* he receives his reward as if he has performed the actual mitzvah itself.

Rav Sternbuch's mother would complete all her *Shabbos* preparations on Friday about an hour before Shabbos came in. The table would be set, with the wine, *challos* and candles all set in their places. The children would all be dressed in their Shabbos clothes, and Mrs. Sternbuch would wait eagerly for the time that she could already light candles and accept *kedushas Shabbos* on herself. She would say that when a person waits for Shabbos in eager anticipation, that itself accords honor to Shabbos and is a *segula* for meriting righteous children. Accepting Shabbos early is also a sensible way of avoiding the tension and anger prevalent in some households in the final period leading up to Shabbos (although one should not of course light candles before *plag hamincha*).

CREATING CHILDREN

In the beginning of the *parashah*, the Torah talks about a woman giving birth to a "male" and "female", but then it says, "when the days of her purification have been completed, whether for a son or for a daughter . . ." (12:6). Only when a parent follows the path of purity, thereby setting a good example for his offspring, will his children desire to follow that path. Only then may the child be termed a "son" or "daughter" (not merely a "male" or "female") who has a relationship with his parent and is likely to want to continue that relationship for a lifetime.

NO LEAPFROGGING

One as a burnt offering and one as a sin offering (12:8). Rashi: *The Torah places the oloh before the chatos only for the purpose of instructing how they must be read in the Torah . . . but the chatos is brought before the oloh*

Why, in fact, is the *oloh* mentioned before the *chatos* in this *passuk*?

In principle, the *oloh*, which is consumed entirely by the fire on the *Mizbe'ach*, and symbolizes complete subservience to Hashem and abstinence from the vanities of this world, is the superior offering, and is therefore written first. In practice, though, the *chatos* is offered first, because once a person has sinned, his first task is to cleanse himself and atone for his past actions. Only then can he advance to the level of the *oloh*.

In *avodas Hashem*, it is impossible to leapfrog. The only option is to make step-by-step progress based on one's current situation and level.

SPEECH

He shall dwell isolated (13:46)

The main aspect distinguishing man from animals is the power of intelligent speech (*ruach memalelo*). By uttering just a few words a person has the ability to prohibit a certain object throughout the world in the form of a vow. In this week's *parsha* the *kohen's* indispensable verbal declaration of "tome" or "tohor" decides the future status of a *metzoro*.

Rav Yisroel Salanter said that *parashas tazria* follows *parashas shmini*, which deals with forbidden food, in order to emphasize that we must be as careful about the forbidden speech which comes out of our mouths as we are about preventing forbidden food going into it.

Rav Moshe Schneider told Rav Sternbuch that he asked the Chofetz Chaim why he did not emphasize in his *sefer* that the Rambam writes explicitly that someone who habitually speaks *loshon horo* loses his portion in the world to come. The Chofetz Chaim answered that he did not want to drop this "bombshell" on those learning his *sefer*. Rav Schneider explained that such a statement could cause a sinner to become so disheartened as to lose any motivation for improving his ways at all, figuring that he has nothing to lose by continuing in his evil ways. The *Maharsho* in *Bovo Basro* (119a) makes a similar point. He says that *Tzlofchod* desecrated *Shabbos* for the sake of Heaven in order to demonstrate that even after death had been decreed on all males over the age of twenty after the *chet hameraglim*, any future sins were not "swallowed up" by this decree, and any additional transgressions would have to be punished in addition to, and irrespective of, the previously existing punishment.

Rav Schneider added that when one mentions the severity of the sin, one has to emphasize at the same time that repentance for even severe sins such as *avoda zoro* is effective. Repentance may be more difficult in such cases, but where there is a will there is a way.

A person's home is like a miniature *Beis Hamikdosh*, and the words he speaks are absorbed by its atmosphere. Words of Torah and *musar* constantly augment the inherent *kedusho* of a Jewish home, whereas words of *loshon horo* create the form of *tumo'h* known as *tzora'as*. People from previous generations would find it inconceivable that using various previously unknown technological methods a person could make himself heard to his friend at the other end of the world. Similarly, we must realize that our words are not only captured, but also absorbed by the walls of our homes.

In this vein too can we understand the *Chazal* (*Megilla* 29a) that the *botei keneisiyos* and *botei medrash* of Bavel will be transferred to *Eretz Yisroel* in the future. This is not referring to a physical relocation, but rather to the permanent sanctity created there over the generations as a result of the Torah and prayers absorbed in those places, a sanctity reminiscent of *kedushas Eretz Yisroel*, and which will be transferred to *Eretz Yisroel* in the future.

The Vilna Gaon in his famous letter tells the female members of his family that they should rather pray alone at home than go to *shul*, because it would be impossible for them not to hear some *loshon horo* there. Similarly, Rav Dessler told Rav Sternbuch that the women in Kelm never went to *shul*, because it would have been very difficult for them to keep away from women who spoke *loshon horo*. In previous generations the home was sanctified, and only those who left its safe quarters would be exposed to this most serious sin, but nowadays both the atmosphere and the technological means of communications in our homes are very different, so that the only way to be saved from it is to remain strong and teach our families *hilchos loshon horo*, to emphasize the severity of this transgression and the *tumoh* it creates, and the great rewards awaiting those who refrain from it.

EDUCATION

Pesach is the time to educate our children. In the mitzvah of “*vehigadeto lebincho*” we inculcate faith into our children, and this mitzvah should serve as a cue to generally educate our children properly in accordance with Hashem’s will.

Rav Sternbuch heard from Rav Elchonon Wasserman that if someone educates his son to become a “*frummer baal habos*” (a pious working person), he does not fulfill the mitzvah of teaching his son Torah (“*veshinantom levonecho*”). To perform this mitzvah properly, the father has to do his utmost to ensure that his son becomes a major *talmid chochom*. Not every parent will succeed in this endeavor, but all parantes are obligated to do whatever he can to attain this goal. It should also be noted in this context that the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* writes in *Hilchos Talmud Torah* that the main aspect of the mitzvah of *veshinantom levonecho* is to continue to support one’s son even after his marriage so that he can learn Torah and become conversant in the whole of the Torah.

Some of our *gedolim* were very mediocre in their studies as children, and no one would have believed then that they would end up becoming *talmidei chachomim* (out of respect for them, Rav Sternbuch does not want to mention their names). They ended up becoming major *gedolei yisroel* and leaders of their generation. They achieved this by applying themselves endlessly to their studies. It was very difficult for them, but they accepted their challenges willingly, and eventually won the fight.

Every parent has to realize that he can never know his son’s latent capabilities, and parents have to invest a lot of efforts and resources into their childrens’ education. The mother also has to participate in her husband’s educational efforts, and must check how her children are doing.

Sometimes a private teacher has to be hired, so that the child will perform better in class. In this area one must not be stingy, because a person’s welfare in this world and the next depends upon it.