



DELVING DEEPER

Of Birds and Words

RABBI MICHOEL SOROKA



...He should take, for the man being purified, two live, clean (*t'horos*) birds, cedar wood, red wool thread, and hyssop. (14:4)

He will be unclean (*tamei*) all the days that the disease is on him; he is unclean. He must live alone; his residence must be outside of the camp. (13:46)

HASHEM PUNISHES SINNERS MIDDAH K'NEGGED middah, measure for measure. On a simple level, the reason for this is to help a person repent for his sin—his punishment is a constant reminder of what he did.

Someone who speaks *lashon hara* (slander), and becomes a *metzora* through the affliction of *tzara'as*, must bring a sacrifice of birds, after separating himself from society. How are these measure for measure?

First, let's look at the birds. Rashi explains (based on the Gemara, Arachin 17) that this person "tweeted" (pun intended)

about someone else; therefore, he brings birds, which also constantly tweet.

How about the isolation (and letting his hair grow, which may also cause people to distance themselves from him)—where is the measure for measure in that?

Speech is a uniquely human gift that allows us to connect with one another. It is also what allows us to connect with Hashem, through prayer and learning Torah. This is the reason why someone should enunciate the words of Torah when he learns. (There is even a discussion about whether one can or should recite *Birchos haTorah*, the blessings before learning Torah, if he will just "think in learning.") The Gemara says the Divine Presence resides with someone who learns together with a study partner, as opposed to learning alone.

When someone speaks *lashon hara*, he is misusing his speech. He is causing a

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A HALACHA FROM THE PARASHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

B'ris Milah On Shabbos

Performing a *b'ris milah* (ritual circumcision) on Shabbos would seem to violate a Biblical prohibition—either *chaburah*, causing bleeding (Rabbeinu Chananel); *gozeiz*, shearing (*Shita M'kubetzes*); or *makkeh b'patish*, finishing an object (literally, striking the final hammer blow) (*Kilkeles Shabbos*).

However, the Talmud derives from Vayikra 12:3—"And on the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin should be circumcised"—that the act of *milah* at its proper time (on the eighth day from birth) supersedes the Shabbos and Festivals.

A *b'ris* which is delayed, for any reason, cannot be rescheduled for a Shabbos or Festival. The provision for a "Shabbos *b'ris*" also does not apply to a child born by Caesarean section, or to circumci-

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A RIDDLE FOR YOU

Hashem spoke to five people in Tanach in question form. Who are they?

The answer will appear next week..

PRE-PESACH RIDDLE:

Q Three people, throughout Tanach, died "*b'seiva tova*—at a good old age." Who are they?

- A 1) Avraham (B'reishis 25:8)
 2) Gid'on (Shof'tim 8:32)
 3) King David
 (Divrei haYamim I 29:28) 🕊

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A HALACHA FROM THE PARASHA

(CONTINUED)

sion for the purpose of conversion. (Y.D. 266:10 & O.C. 331:5) Likewise, *hatafas dam b'ris*, the drawing of a small drop of blood as a token circumcision, can never be done on Shabbos. (M.B. 331:15)

This provision also doesn't apply if one is uncertain whether Shabbos is or isn't the eighth day from birth. To explain: A Jewish date begins in the evening. If a child is born *bein hash'mashos*—during twilight, between sunset and nightfall—his date of birth is uncertain. That also means we don't know exactly which day is his eighth. *Milah* done before the eighth day is invalid, so the *b'ris* would usually be postponed to the day which is either his eighth or ninth. A child born on Friday evening (or the evening eight days before a Festival), cannot have his *milah* on Shabbos (or Yom Tov). Instead, it is pushed off to Sunday (or the day after Yom Tov). (O.C. 331:6 & M.B. 331:14)

On Shabbos and Yom Kippur, a baby may not be carried to the synagogue—by a Jew or by a gentile—unless there is an *eruv*. (M.B. 331:20)

The "*Av haRachamim*" prayer which usually precedes the Shabbos *Mussaf* service is omitted in the presence of the *Sandak* (who holds the baby during the circumcision), the *Mohel*, or the father of a baby whose *b'ris* will take place on that Shabbos (O.C. 284:7), except during the days of *S'firas ha'Omer*, when "*Av haRachamim*" is recited. (M.B. 284:18)

If a *b'ris* takes place before Kiddush, the blessing recited over the cup of wine can be reckoned as Kiddush, as well. The person who recites the blessing (as well as those would also like this to be their Kiddush) should have a piece of cake or wash for the meal right after he has tasted the wine, to fulfill the mitzvah of making Kiddush in the same location as a meal. (O.C. 273:5 & M.B. 273:25) 🥂

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Of Birds and Words CONTINUED

breakdown of relationships and connections between people. The natural consequence is that he must separate himself and stay in isolation.

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe writes that this is why *t'shuva*, repentance, requires a verbal confession. Sin causes a breakdown in the relationship between Hashem and us. We must use our speech to rebuild that connection—which reflects the primary reason why speech exists. This is why the Midrash

(Vayikra Rabba) compares *Viduy* (confession) to soldering two pieces of a broken rod back together.

Keeping this privilege and responsibility in mind, let us use our speech to build and connect! 🥂

GREAT ACTS OF SIMPLE PEOPLE

SARAH KAHN OF NEW YORK CITY WAS IN LABOR, and her husband, Daniel, was rushing her to Mt. Sinai Hospital in Manhattan.

Unfortunately, they hit rush-hour traffic. Seeing the endless lines of cars outside the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, Daniel turned illegally into the bus lane, and continued to speed through the tunnel, bypassing the toll.

A policeman stopped the car on the other side and, realizing the situation, became their police escort. The Kahns made it the hospital on time for delivery.

When Daniel returned that night, he handed an extra token to the toll collector.

Before Daniel could explain, the man in the booth exclaimed, "Congratulations! What did your wife have?"

Daniel was astounded that the toll collector knew.

"Of course," the man said, "They told us a guy like you would come back to pay." 🥂

THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On 2 Iyar, 5680 (1920), at the San Remo Peace Conference, the Allied Supreme Council recognized the Balfour Declaration and proclaimed Palestine a territory under British administration. Previously, under the Balfour Declaration of 1917, the British government had favorably recognized the establishment of a "Jewish national home in Palestine," while at the same time avoiding any action "which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." This San Remo Resolution, while giving the British control over then Palestine, charged the British with carrying out what they had declared in the Balfour Declaration. Interestingly, the German response to the Balfour Declaration had been to promise that they would influence the Turkish government to fulfill the wishes of the Jews in Palestine once the war had ended. 🥂