

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Mincha Erev Shabbos → 7:00 PM

~COMING SOON: ON-TIME SHABBOS~

~Starting Shabbos Mevorchim Sivan (5/19)~

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman 7:30 AM

Shacharis-Followed by Kiddush 8:30 AM

-Sof Zman K'S- גר"א 9:29 < 8:53

Pirkei Avos - 7:00 PM

Mincha - Followed by Shalosh Seudos 7:55 PM

Maariv - 9:02 PM

Weekday Minyanim & Shiurim

Sunday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman 7:30 AM

Shacharis 8:30 AM

Mincha / Maariv 8:05 PM

Monday - Friday

Daf Yomi- By R' Teichman 5:45 AM

Shacharis

Monday, Thursday 6:40 AM

Tues, Wed., Fri. 6:45 AM

Mincha (Mon-Thur) 1:45 PM

Mincha/Maariv 8:05 PM

Maariv (Mon-Thur) 9:45 PM

Rabbi Teichman's Thursday Night
Shiur After Maariv

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Issue#233

RABBI'S MESSAGE

A Yiddische Momma

When King David seeking to express before God his profound despair and frustration in the face of all those who betrayed his friendship, he describes it (תהלים לה ט) **קדר שחתי** (תהלים לה ט) *like one who mourns for his mother, I am bent over in gloom.*

The Radak points out that King David chose the metaphor of grief over the loss of a mother rather than over a father, "because one is in greater pain over the death of the mother that he was formed from in her womb, who nursed and nurtured him through childhood until his becoming an adult and even afterward continued to provide for his physical and emotional needs."

This is the proverbial "Yiddische Momma", as conveyed in that soulfully mourning old yiddish song:

Oy vey tzis bisser ven zie fehlt, How bitter it is when she's missing,

Vie shayn und lichtig tzis in Hois, Ven die mama's du, How beautiful and radiant it is in the home, when mother is here,

Vie traurig finster tzert, Ven Gott nehmt ihr oyf Oylum habu, How darkly sad it becomes when God takes her to the World to Come.

The Radak categorizes the three aspects of a Yiddische Momma's role.

She forms from her very essence and self a child within her womb, fondly tending to her baby's needs after birth and maintaining a loving involvement throughout her child's entire life.

In this week's portion the Torah attests, in reverse order, to the vital and critical role a mother plays in our lives.

A Kohen who suffers a loss of those relatives closest to him, must participate in the funeral despite the fact that a Kohen is otherwise prohibited from contact with the dead.

כי אם לשאר הקרב אליו לאמו ולאביו... כי אם לשאר הקרב אליו לאמו ולאביו... כי אם לשאר הקרב אליו לאמו ולאביו... *Except for the relative closest to him (his wife), to his mother and to his father... shall he contaminate himself.*

A Kohen who has devoted his life as a "proxy" for God and his fellow man, serving both in his capacity as a priest in the Temple, must nevertheless give deserving honor to his beloved ones.

The Torah starts by enumerating the one "closest" to him, his wife, one whom the Torah describes that closeness of relationship as (כד) *one flesh*, an integrated unit of one.

In a departure from the norm, it then speaks of the death of a mother first, to accentuate the next "closest" relationship, that to his mother, whom he is indeed closer to than a father, as the Radak revealed.

This depiction of the Kohen mourning over his mother reflects on the culmination of a life of loving devotion, admiration, support and warmth he received from his mother, that he now comes to grieve and pay respect to.

Later on the Torah affirms the instinct within the nature of all animate life for a mother to foster and care for its young.

שור או כשב ועו כי יולד והיה שבעת ימים תחת אמו וביום השמיני והלאה ירצה לקרבן... (ויקרא כב כ) *When an ox or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall remain under its mother for seven days; and from the eighth day on, it is acceptable for an offering...*

An animal must be allowed to bond with its child for seven days before the offspring can be offered on the Altar.

The Midrash informs us that the Torah seeks to affirm that instinctive connection by requiring of us to refrain from denying that impulse, thereby demonstrating an adherence to the principle of "חמצינו על כל" (ויקרא כב כ) *and His mercies are on all his works*, training ourselves to be sensitive in our feeling towards all creatures.

It is for this reason too, the Midrash continues, that a child remains in his mother's embrace developing for an additional seven days prior to being fit for his *Bris Milah* on the eighth day. (פסיקתא רבתי הוסיפה א פירוש א)

This reflects on the second aspect of a mother's significance in the early formative years of a child.

Finally the Torah describes the nameless blasphemer at the end of our portion only through the identity of his mother.

והשם אמו של שלמיס בת דברי ויקרא כד יג, *and the name of his mother was Shelomis the daughter of Dvri.*

Rashi tells us that his flawed character was attributed to his mother being a chattering, indicated in her name *דברי*, rooted in the word *דברי*, speech. He too, spoke unwisely, blaspheming God in the process.

The Torah reveals for us the spiritual DNA a child inherits from the one in whom's womb he was formed.

This then is the first component of a woman's role in the development of a child the Radak discussed.

The great Amora, Rava upon hearing a brilliant insight that the saintly Tanna, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai had presented, exclaimed, "דיילידא אפמה כרבי שמעון תיליד", which Rashi explains to mean, "every mother should pray to give birth to a child like Rabbi Shimon."

What was this cryptic wish that we find solely by the likes of Rabbi Shimon?

Certainly there were many other holy sages we would wish our children be like.

The Talmud reports a discussion that took place between Rabbi Shimon and his students.

The students queried, "Why is circumcision on the eighth day, (and not immediately when the child is born)?"

Rabbi Shimon responded, "It would not be proper that all are happy celebrating and the parents are sad (because after the birth of a son they are yet forbidden to each other for seven days, first becoming permitted to return to family life on the eighth day)." (דעה לה ט)

It seems so strange that the Holy Tanna would suggest such a base reason for a Bris to be celebrated on

the eighth day lest their joy be impaired by their physical separation.

Since the sin of Adam the process of death, pain and impurity entered the world.

Prior to this sin man and woman would procreate each day free from selfish temptation and lust. There would be no barriers of defilement that would ever separate them. (ספרנו ועד בראשית ג טו)

The distance that began with man's first act of ingratitude to God for the טוב, the epitome of good, that God granted man by presenting him a wife, when Adam pointed an accusatory finger towards her, blaming her for having instigated the sin, is what we are challenged with in overcoming until such time as the Moshiach will come.

Initially, man, his wife and child were one seamless unit, with no animosity or division between them. Subsequent to the curse man would now "rule" over her and be distracted with the need to exert much effort to provide. She would be challenged by the pain of physical deterioration and impurity as well with much pain in the process of birth and raising of children, that will create additional tension between them.

Rabbeinu Bachya (ויקרא יב ז) states that the sin-offering a woman who gives birth must bring is for the sin of the אם, the mother of all living, Chava, who initiated the sin that had as its consequences the challenge of holding together the family unit and not allowing it to "come apart" at its seams.

Rabbi Shimon was educating his students that it wasn't the need for physical affection that stifled the joy of a couple at their son's Bris. It was the deeper consciousness that in our striving to achieve that unity of purpose, we face the struggle of overcoming the desire for pleasure and selfish indulgence that prevents us from creating an integrated wholesome entity. That reality, that the obstacles we face in the family relationship is what distorts our ability to meld into one, is what prevents an unadulterated celebration.

The role of a mother is termed in Sifrei Chassidus as the attribute of *מלכות*, Kingdom, also referred to as *אמא תתאה*, the lower mother.

In its simplest sense, it is the point through where the Divine Presence encounters and infuses the lower worlds with sanctity. The "King" is one who's task is to serve his people reflecting with absolute selflessness, God. It has been compared to a highly polished mirror that reflects exactly that which appears before it. (שבת מלכות) The more free the mirror is from "dirt", the more accurate of an image it presents.

A Yiddische Momma emulates that Godly power to bring things into existence. She literally develops a piece of herself seeing in it not herself, but another, a child.

She is called a *אם* comprised of an *א* representing "one" and a *ימי*, numerically equivalent to 40, the number of days a child gestates until it forms. At that stage well before the child is born, she is already a mother.

It is her selfless devotion, that emulates the selflessness of God, that embles her in this great mission. It is evident from the moment of conception and continues through a lifetime of inspired dedication to her children.

Only one who is capable of reducing one's self through quiet introspection, independent of a need for validation from others, can bring forth healthy fruit.

Shelomis sought external recognition. Constantly chattering seeking to gain the social favor and attention of those around her. It took a toll on her progeny who as a result was insecure in himself, striking out with frustration at God Himself.

A true *אם*, speaks with the softness of *אמיירה*, thoughtful and kind words, not the harshness of *אמירה*, strong statements of self expression. It is the difference between making yourself understood or merely making sure that your heard.

We sing in that magnificent composition *עשה אדם נאמר בעבורך* (the statement by God), "We will make Man", was said about you.

Rabbi Shimon exemplified the greatest character traits he saw in Rabbi Akiva. He had achieved a level of perfection that ascended towards that remarkable appellation. "אדם".

We can be certain his greatness began from the moment he started his journey in his mother's womb. Tradition tells us that indeed his mother's heartfelt tears in her quest to bring into this world, one who would enlighten and reflect in his brilliance the beauty of the *Shechinah* itself, is what brought out such pure fruit, that continues to inspire us all, in allowing us to reach well beyond our physical limitations in sensing the splendor and depth of the hidden Torah.

No wonder she became the paradigm for all mothers to merit such children. Indeed we state in *בר יוחאי*, *אשרי יולדתך*, *praiseworthy is the one who gave birth to you.*

It is that quintessential *Yiddische Momma* that has held it together through our long history of struggle and survival. In her hands lies our hope that we can restore the glory of our past.

That famed *yiddische lieder* concludes: *In vasser und fayer, through fire and water, volt ihr gelofin fur ihr kind, would she run for her child, Nisht halten ihr tayer, Not holding her dear, doss is giviss der greste zind, is for sure the greatest sin, Oy vie gluklach und raych is der mentsh vus hut, Oh how fortunate and enriched is the man who has, az, a za tayere mattuna geschenkent funn Gott, such a beautiful gift sent from God...*

A Yiddische Maama!

May we take a moment to reflect on, and thank, that most precious person, our mother, who we are so fortunate to have come from!

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צבי טייכמאן

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