



A collection of
Torah thoughts
produced by the
Kollel

מזל טוב

Mazal Tov to our Rosh Hakollel, Rabbi and Mrs Yonason Johnson, on the birth of their son.

May they raise him to Torah, Chuppah and Maasim Tovim with much nachas.

Mazal Tov to the grandparents Dr and Mrs Gerald Johnson and Mr and Mrs Dovid Deitz.

Mazal Tov to the great grandparents Mr and Mrs David Ainsworth and Mrs Mimi Deitz.

מזל טוב

Mazal Tov to Rabbi and Mrs Shlomo Barber, former member of the Kollel, on the birth of their daughter Chava Gitel.

May they raise her to Torah, Chuppah and Maasim Tovim.

Mazal Tov to the grandparents Mr Yankel and Beila Rapp and Mrs Toni Rapp. Mr and Mrs Moshe Barber.

AVOS UBONIM

Avos Ubonim continues this Motzai Shabbos at 7:30pm. All fathers and sons are invited to our weekly learning program.

Come and see why over 50 boys keep coming back week after week.

To sponsor a week of Avos Ubonim and share the zechus of the Torah learning of young children, contact Rabbi Johnson or Rabbi Centner



In this issue

Korach, Ketores & Bris Milah **P.1**

Getting the Baby to the Bris **P.2**

Korach, Ketores and the Bris Milah

On Erev Shabbos we were zoche to bring our son Shneur Zalman into the Bris of Avraham Avinu. Below are a few thoughts which were shared at the Seudas Mitzvah.

It is customary not to honour the same person to serve as the Sandek at more than one Bris of one's children. This ruling is brought by the Ram"o in Shulchan Oruch Yoreh Deah.

The Ram"o's ruling is based on the Mahari"l who likens the Sandek to a Kohen who offers Ketores on the incense Altar in the Beis Hamikdash. The Ketores was a lofty Mitzvah and was a *segulah* for wealth, prompting the Kohanim to make a system by which a Kohen would not be able to offer Ketores more than once. When they would make the daily *Goirol* to determine who would offer the Ketores, they would announce **חדשים לקטורת באו**, only those who are 'new' to the Ketores should participate.

So too, being Sandek at a Bris is a *segulah* for wealth and like the Kohen offering Ketores is limited to once per family.

But why is bringing a baby to the Bris likened to offering Ketores? There must be a deeper connection between the Bris Milah and Ketores which causes us to equate them.

To understand the power of Ketores, let's first take a look at the Parsha. After Korach and his cohorts are punished for their rebellion, Bnei Yisroel complained that Moshe and Aharon were responsible for killing the nation of Hashem. As a result Hashem sends a plague to punish the Jewish people.

Moshe tells Aharon to offer Ketores to atone for the Jewish people. When Moshe was on Har Sinai to receive the Torah, each of the *Malochim* presented Moshe with a gift. Even the *Malach Hamaves* gave Moshe a gift, teaching Moshe the secret that Ketores has the ability to stop a plague. Aharon burns the Ketores amongst the Jewish people, halting the *Malach Hamaves* in his tracks, bringing the plague to its end.

What is the unique power of Ketores that it can stop a plague, even when the Jewish people seemingly deserved to be punished?

Chassidus explains that Ketores represents a very deep relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people. Unlike a Korban which comes from the word **קרב**, suggesting an external closeness with Hashem, the word Ketores is related to the Aramaic *Ketar* - meaning a knot, suggesting a state of absolute oneness.

Ketores represents the innermost connection which a Jew has with Hashem. This connection exists at the very core of our Neshoma - the *Yechidah*, which is a part of Hashem. This connection is deeper than the connection to Hashem which is forged through keeping Torah and Mitzvos. It is like the love of a parent to a child which cannot be tainted by the child's behavior, no matter what they do.

This was the secret of the *Malach Hamoves*! Ketores arouses this deep love and causes Hashem to shower this deep love on the Jewish people, no matter what they have done.

This is why the central Avodah in the Beis Hamikdash on Yom Kippur was the offering of Ketores in Kodosh Hakodoshim. As the day of atonement, our short-fallings in keeping the Mitzvos are erased when this deepest connection to Hashem is revealed.

Back to the Bris. The Alter Rebbe in the Maamer traditionally recited at the Bris, writes extensively on theme of how the Bris Milah is even greater than Torah. Through Torah we relate to Hashem on the level of intellect - the Torah coming from the attribute of Chochmah. A Bris represents a relationship with Hashem which is deeper and higher than intellect.

The Alter Rebbe presents a parable of two friends who make a pact (Bris) to retain their love for one another. Even when logic and circumstance may be reason for their love to dissipate, the Bris between them binds them together beyond logic and reason.

The Bris Milah, like the Ketores, represents our essential bond with Hashem. Like the power of Ketores, the merit of the Bris Milah saves a person from Gehenom.

May our Shneur Zalman grow to Torah Chuppah and Maasim Tovim and always feel and express the oneness with Hashem that was forged on this special day.



WINTER LEARNING

The annual Kollel Winter Learning Program was a great success.

Over 300 different people participated across the 2 morning sessions and 2 evening sessions.

The program presented a wide selection of Torah topics from a talented line-up of local Rabbis, including the Kollel Rabbis.

On the first day, Rabbi Johnson addressed the Torah's perspective of chinuch in contrast to the 1-2-3 Magic parenting methodology.

The remaining feature lectures were presented by guest scholar Rabbi Ari Shishler. His account of climbing the second tallest mountain in Africa and the spiritual lessons which he learned along the way was spellbinding.

Monday night's relationships discussion drew a packed house. Addressing the theme of bridging the divide between men and women, Rabbi Shishler with a good dose of humour spoke about the importance of feeling understood by one another.

The evening was complimented with a refreshments buffet of sushi, salads and samosas.

Recordings of the sessions are available at www.jml.org.au

Kollel Menachem remains committed to offering the community the highest-quality Torah learning opportunities and bringing out world-class speakers to our community.

TIKKUN LEIL

Kollel went through the night offering back-to-back shiurim.

The Beis Medrash was full all night as the speakers, including our very own Kollel Yungeleit addressed topics such as Mechtzah, Chukas Hagoy, Superstitious practices and more.

The shiurim were of a very high quality and were thoroughly enjoyed.



A Bris Milah when performed on the eighth day overrides Shabbos. Our sages derive this from the verse *וביום השמיני ימול בשר ערלתו*, on the eighth day you shall circumcise the flesh of his foreskin - on the eighth day even if it coincides with Shabbos. The more specific conditions of when a Bris can be made on Shabbos are found in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim Siman 331.

This derivation only applies to the actual Bris itself and related matters of *Pikuach Nefesh*. Activities which are defined as *Machshirei Milah*, preparatory activities, are not included. Shabbos may not be desecrated for a preparatory activity, even if it will result in pushing off the Bris and even if it would only involve a Rabbinic prohibition. The Rabbis have the ability and authority to enforce their Rabbinic enactments even if it supersedes a Biblical Mitzvah carrying the punishment of *Kareis* such as the Bris Milah.

An example of *Machshirei Milah* would be the Mohel fixing his scalpel. Similarly bringing the knife to the house where the Bris is taking place would be *Machshirei Milah*. A Jew would not be permitted to sharpen or transport the knife on Shabbos (if there is no Eiruv).

What about asking a non-Jew to do these activities? The halachos of *Amirah Lenocho* are complex. But a simple rule underlies this topic: Generally one cannot ask a non-Jew to do anything on Shabbos which we ourselves may not do. This is a Rabbinic prohibition enacted to protect the sanctity of Shabbos. There are cases where under certain conditions *Amirah Lenocho* may be permissible. An example would be for the sake of a Mitzvah:

Even in the case of a Mitzvah, if the *Melocho* involved is a Biblical action, one may not ask a non-Jew to do it.

If the forbidden activity is only Rabbinic, we apply the rule *שבות דשבות*

Getting the Baby to the Bris

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

במקום מצוה; Since the activity itself is only Rabbinically forbidden and asking a non-Jew to do something forbidden on Shabbos is also only Rabbinically forbidden, in the case of a Mitzvah one can be lenient.

Therefore, in our examples above: One could not ask the non-Jew to sharpen the blade since this would involve a Biblical prohibition. One would also not be allowed to ask a non-Jew to transport the knife through a *Reshus HaRabim*. However one could instruct a non-Jew to transport the knife through a *Karmelis* (An area where carrying is only Rabbinically forbidden e.g. a public domain where there are not 600,000 passers-by).

What about bringing the baby to Shule to perform the Bris?

Logic would dictate that this should be clearly permissible nowadays when there is no real *Reshus HaRabim*. However the Magen Avraham rules that one may not do so. True it is a *שבות דשבות*, however the 'Mitzvah' status is questionable because one could make the Bris at home, as its often done in the cold. Since there is no Mitzvah necessity for the Bris to take place in Shule, we cannot rely on the double *דרבנן* to allow a non-Jew to push the baby.

This ruling is brought by the Alter Rebbe in the Shulchan Aruch and also by the Mishna Berura and Aruch Hashulchan in Siman 331.

There is a dissenting opinion which permits transporting the baby to perform the Bris in Shule, since this will enhance the Mitzvah enabling it to be fulfilled with more participants - *ברוב עם הדרת מלך*. Additionally there are those who write that it is always preferable to make a Bris in the Shule rather than at home.

Nishmas HaShabbos writes that even those who are lenient should only do so to make the Bris in a Shule, as opposed to a hall or other home, unless no minyan would otherwise be available for the Bris.

Note all of the discussion above is only about pushing the baby for the sake of a Bris, and even then most

Poskim are stringent. When there is no Mitzvah, all authorities would agree that one cannot ask a non-Jew to transport a baby where there is no Eiruv, even if it is only a *Karmelis*.

The Acharonim are left perplexed by a ruling of the Mishna Berura (OC 308:154) which seems to suggest that one *could* ask a non-Jew to transport a baby on Shabbos even if it is not for the sake of a Mitzvah, since we no longer have a *Reshus HaRabim*.

The Mishna Berura quotes his ruling from the Pri Megadim (Eishel Avraham 308:71). The Pri Megadim however is merely quoting the ruling of the Magen Avraham (discussed above) concerning a Bris. This case is one of a Mitzvah and follows the normative laws of *דשבות במקום מצוה*. How can we extrapolate from this to non-Mitzvah situations? Why should we deviate from the normative rules of *Amirah Lenocho*?

It also contradicts the Mishna Berura's own ruling in the laws of Bris Milah on Shabbos as discussed above which does not even encourage transporting a baby by a non-Jew for his Bris.

Shu"t Az Nidberu (8:31) writes that the Mishna Berura must be discussing a case where the child is crying and refusing to move. This would be considered a *Tzorech Gadol*, and like in the case of a Mitzvah one could ask a non-Jew to transport the child. However he remains perplexed why the Mishna Berura did not explain the full details.

Therefore, whilst Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasa suggests that this there is grounds to be lenient based on the Mishna Berura, it is questionable whether this is in fact the intent of the Mishna Berura. It also goes against the rulings of the Magen Avraham, Pri Megadim, Shulchan Aruch Harav and Aruch Hashulchan.

Bnei Torah and those who consider themselves as having *Ruach HaTorah* and certainly those who follow the rulings of the Alter Rebbe should be machmir.