



## *Parshas Tazria & Metzora 2023, the 8th day*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the immediate and speedy recovery of Daniel Aaron Moshe Ben Ruth. And in loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.*

Our Parshas discuss some of the complex laws about *Tumah V'Taharah* - *ritual purity and impurity*. We begin with the purification process that a woman must undergo after childbirth. This involves immersing herself in a Mikvah and bringing a sacrifice in the Beis Hamikdash.

The Torah then explains the intricate laws of Tzara'as, a skin discoloration. Since it is a physical reaction to spiritual transgression, the person who receives it is ritually impure.

A Cohen must see a person who thinks they have the symptoms of Tzara'as. He examines it, and judging by the various signs (such as an increase in size after seven days), he will pronounce it pure or impure.

A person diagnosed with Tzara'as must dwell alone outside of the city limits until it is healed. Once the prescribed time has passed, they must undergo a rigorous purification process to return to their city and community.

However, a question comes to mind: The second Mitzvah in Parshas Tazria is Bris Milah, the obligation of circumcising a baby boy at just 8 days old. Similarly, the first step in healing Tzara'as is waiting 7 days after the Tzara'as stops increasing.

On the 8th day, they can begin the purification process to reenter society again. Additionally, last week's Torah portion was on the 8th day from the inauguration of the Mishkan, Parshas Shemini. Why is the number 8 a core component of many Mitzvahs? What is unique and special about this number that it is overrepresented in the spiritual realm?!

The Chizkuni, Rav Chezekiah ben Manoah, gives a simple answer. He quotes the Talmud in Shabbos (130a) and explains why a Bris Milah is on the 8th day. According to Rabbi Eliezer, the 8th day signifies that you can do a Bris Milah on Shabbos because it's a greater Mitzvah. Hence, a Bris Milah can even be done on the year's holiest day, Yom Kippur, if it's the baby's 8th day.

The Chizkuni explains that the 8th day indicates an important obligation requiring additional focus and emphasis. Bris Milah, Tzara'as or the 8th day of a holiday, like Shemini Ateres, calls for extra significance and regard.

However, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, Rav Chaim Ben Attar, gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that the number 8 is no coincidence but indicative of so much more. He quotes the Zohar on our Parsha that details the meaning behind the number 8, superseding and surpassing nature.

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh explains that nature is represented in the number 7, **7 days of creation, 7 days of the week, 7 laws of Noach, and 7 days of mourning.** But the number 8 represents the combination of all physical and spiritual energy and transcending human consciousness. Going far beyond even the most intangible notions and connecting with G-d above time and space. Accordingly, the number 8 is connected with significant commandments and transformative concepts. The previous Torah portion, Parshas Shemini - **8** in Hebrew, **is about a physical home in a materialistic world for a non-physical G-d.**

A Bris Milah is on the 8th day, for it surpasses time and binds us in the same covenant as Avraham Avinu. It takes eight days to begin the purification process because Tzara'as is a spiritual ailment embodied in a physical disease.

The number eight is all around us to signify a profound lesson: physicality is not the all-important element of our existence; it is just a minor portion of it.

The Ohr Hachaim continues that our world reflects a deeper spiritual reality, not simply a collection of random, meaningless events. We are the expression and manifestation of G-d's thoughts and desires. With every Mitzvah we do and the moment we learn, we get closer to our source, our Creator and Father in Heaven.

The Talmud in Sukkos (55b) summarizes the 70 bulls sacrificed in Beis Hamikdash during the Sukkos holiday. They were offered in honor of the 70 nations of the world and included in the blessings for the new year. The great sage, Rabbi Elazar, explains that on the 8th day, Shemini Ateres, only one bull was sacrificed, **for only one nation exists far beyond the reality of this world, the Jewish people.**

This profound lesson is even more relevant as it was just Yom HaShoah - Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day. A day when we remember the horrific tragedies of the past, the senseless murder of millions of our brothers and sisters. But also a day that we **vow never to forget**, never let go of their legacy but thrive in the face of adversity. To live, exist and flourish in our innate condition, above nature and on the 8th day, **in G-d's holy and divine reality.**

In our daily life, it is imperative that we realize that we can accomplish far more than what we think is possible. We are only limited to the capacity of our imagination and creativity. But through listening and learning, we enable our soul to sing its Divine song, to share its G-dly light with the world.

**“The affirmation of Jewish life after the Holocaust it itself is a testimony that the covenant survives and that the voice of G-d continues to be heard, however obliquely by the contemporary heirs of those who stood at Sinai.”**

- Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*