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Rosh Kollel

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Parshat Tazria-2022

Our parsha mentions a very important Mitzvah, seemingly in a passing manner, *U'vayom HaShemini Yimol Besar Or'lato*, (12:3), On the Eighth Day, the Mitzvah of *Brit Milah*; (Circumcision) Should be Performed. While many halachot of *milah* are learned from parshat Lech Lecha, it is precisely from our parsha that *Chazal* derive that classic chiddush that *milah* is done even on Shabbat (Shabbat 132a).

In parshat Lech Lecha circumcision is not only called a *brit* but an **OT BRIT**, a sign of a covenant (Bereishit 17:11). Shabbat is also referred to as an **OT**, *Beini U'Vein Bnei Yisrael OT Hee Le'olam*, Between Me and the Children of Israel it is a sign forever (Shemot 31:17). Then there is a third mitzvah that is called **OT**, and that is the mitzvah of *Tefillin*, as it is written, "*Ve'haya Lecha L'OT Al Ya'decha, U'letotafot Bein Einecha*" (Shemot 13:9) And It Will Be For You a Sign On Your Arm, and A Reminder Between Your Eyes. The common denominator between these three Mitzvot is that one who observes these Mitzvot is demonstrating his total dedication and belief in HaKadosh Baruch Hu. No one would submit himself or his son to a *Brit Milah* if he was not absolutely convinced that we are totally connected to HaShem. Likewise, no one would observe all the stringencies of Shabbat, or put on *Tefillin* every morning if he was lacking in *Emunah*. It is not coincidental that these three Mitzvot are designated with an **OT**.

The mitzvah of *Tefillin* does not apply on Shabbat and Yom Tov. According to Rabbi Akiva (Menachot 36a) this is derived from the fact that *Tefillin* are called an **OT** and since Shabbat and Yom Tov have their own **OT** there is no need for the **OT** of *tefillin*. Rabbeinu Bechaya explains that between the three signs, the *milah*, the Shabbat and the *Tefillin*, a person should always be connected to **two** of them, for they are testimony to the oneness of HaShem and the basis of *Emunah*, and testimony is to be comprised of two witnesses. Therefore, on Shabbat and Yom Tov *Tefillin* are unnecessary, and therefore not desirable, for it would indicate that the existing two witnesses are for some reason defective or insufficient. On Shabbat, it is correct to enter the infant into the *brit* and attach the **OT** specifically onto the *Kedusha* of Shabbat, so that from this point on he will always be in possession of the two signs when Shabbat arrives.

The Tzitz Eliezer (14:4) uses this concept to explain why the *minhag* in some circles is for the father at a *brit* to have his *Tefillin* on when it falls during the week. Without the **OT** of Shabbat it is appropriate for the *milah* to be done with another **OT** present. The Shach in Yoreh Dei'a (265:24) says that all men present should keep their *tefillin* on during the entire *milah* when it is done right after *Shacharit*. The rationale is that in this way all assembled join with the father in connecting the two **OTOT**. (I am grateful to Rav Yosef Carmel for sharing some of these thoughts with me.)

We look forward to the day that just as the great majority of our people are connected and careful to perform the mitzvah of *milah* so will they, in the near future, attach themselves to the other two **OTOT**, that of *Tefillin* and Shabbat.

Shabbat Shalom –from Yerusalyim
Rabbi Aharon and Libby Ziegler

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT TAZRIA

1-There are two laws pertaining to Brit Milah that we learn from this parasha that we would not have known from the story of Avraham in Bereishit 17:10-14. Do you know one or both?

2-What types of garments are susceptible to Tzaraat? [13:47-48]

3-The Torah does not give us reasons for the Mitzvot [most of the times], but the Rabbis often do. What reason does R' Shimon be Yochai suggest for the Mitzvah of Brit Milah being on the 8th day? [Gemara Nidda 31b]

4-According to the Torah, a woman after childbirth is regarded Temei'ah [ritually impure] for 7 days after birth of a son and she is Temei'ah 14 days after birth of a daughter. Can you think of any reason why this should be so? Any logical reason, even your own thoughts are acceptable.

5-This parasha consists of 67 pessukim [verses]. Can you think of any connection between that number and the parasha?