The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

Tazri'a

There is an insightful D'var Torah from R. Yaakov Neuberger which contains a uniquely thoughtful message. Here it is in part along with my own few additions.

The Parsha of Tazria opens with a discussion of child birth and the obligation of the woman to bring - among other sacrifices - a Sin Offering. Why? Wherein lies the sin?

In his commentary on Chumash, Ramban (13:7) first suggests the following answer. He quotes Chazal (Nida 31b) who suggest that every woman, in the throes of childbirth, swears against another pregnancy. Then, perhaps not completely satisfied with this solution, Ramban prefers another approach.

Sometimes a sin offering is brought to highlight the spiritual drop that one may endure even if it comes naturally and necessarily. Giving birth also imposes a similar occasion on every mother. One moment, this woman is at the height of creativity and undergoes a singular Gd-like moment, and the very next instant, her womb is empty. This uncleanliness (TUM'A) imposed on her stems from the loss of being a physical source of life. That being so, in the Sin Offering she brings, we can discern and ought to acknowledge an important reality in the human condition. To wit: that the intense spiritual highs we often experience (e.g., the Kol Nidrei night, the birth of a child, etc.) cannot and are not meant to over extend - to last indefinitely. They simply cannot. Eventually, real life rushes back in and we must return to our daily routine in order to function successfully.

However - and this cannot be emphasized enough - when we do return to the normality of our lives, we are and ought not be the same person as before. Each of these Gd-like moments transforms us ever so slightly so that, in sum, over time, we experience a rhythm of spiritual growth and consolidation of that growth into our lives. Hopefully, we become better and stronger.

In the secular world, I guess this might be called smart living. In our religious world, it is GREAT living! 👋