

## **When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male. (12:2)**

Many people travel the road of life, remaining clueless about what is happening around them. We do not stop to think, to ask ourselves: What just happened? Why did it occur? What does it have to do with me? If nothing actually “bad” happens to us, we continue in our life with business as usual. *Isha ki sazria – v’yalda zachar*. We take so many things for granted. *Chazal* quote the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* 139:5, *Achor vakedem tzartani*, “Back and front, You have formed me.” This *pasuk* refers to the initial creation of man as an androgynous being, as male and female in one body. **Vayedabeir Moshe**, quoted by **Horav Shlomo Levinstein, Shlita**, suggests a practical explanation.

The Jewish calendar is different from the secular calendar in that our day begins with the previous night, unlike theirs in which the night is the end of the previous day. *Vayedabeir Moshe* quotes the *pasuk* in *Iyov* 8:7, *V’hayah reishischa mitzar v’acharischa yisgeh meod*, “Then, though your beginning was insignificant, your end will flourish exceedingly.” In the *Talmud Kiddushin* 40b, *Chazal* explain that Hashem brings adversity on the righteous while they are in this world, so that when they come “home” to their eternal rest in *Olam Habba*, the World to Come, they will reap incredible reward. Not so the nations of the world, who make this world their home. They live a life of abandon, reaping the rewards of a life without obedience, without self-control, without purpose. Ultimately, they will be reimbursed in *Gehinnom*, Purgatory. Therefore, we precede the “night,” the pain and troubles associated with the darkness of this world, so that when the day dawns, we will receive our reward. The nations of the world, however, count the night as part of the previous day. Having enjoyed their *Olam Habba* in this world, they must now prepare for what is in store for them at “night.”

*Rav* Levinstein notes that the troubles that plague us in this world are linked to *zeriah*, planting. When one plants a seed, he knows that it will rot in the ground and then germinate. This process produces the roots of the plant which will grow into maturity. In the beginning [as the seed rots away,] it appears as if it is all a waste, until, a few days later, we see a metamorphosis. *Hazorim b’dimah b’rinah yiktzoru*, “Those who sow with tears will reap with joy” (*Tehillim* 126:5). Likewise, man atones for his sins in this world, so that in the Eternal World he can rest assured, with bountiful reward.

This is why the Torah begins the *parsha*, *Isha ki tazria*. A woman who yearns to give birth to a healthy male child must prepare herself to accept the *tazria* period, the adversity, to accept the pain, the challenges, the issues. Thus, *David Hamelech* says, *Achor vakedem tzartani*, “The *kedem*, the fruit, representing the finished child, is the result of undergoing the *achor*, adversity which preceded it.

Likewise, the **Chasam Sofer** writes concerning the births of Yitzchak *Avinu* and Yishmael. Avraham *Avinu* married Hagar, and she immediately conceived Yishmael. Avraham married Sarah *Imeinu*, and she had to undergo seventy years of infertility. Why? Indeed, people began to talk:

Hagar is more righteous than Sarah; Hagar conceived immediately, yet Sarah has yet to conceive!

Veritably, explains the *Chasam Sofer*, to have a son like Yishmael did not require much *zeriah*. To produce a son like Yitzchak, who was to be the next link in the Patriarchal chain of our People, required seventy years of tears, prayer and pain! Sarah sustained seventy years of adversity to produce a Yitzchak, not just anyone – Yitzchak! This is how we view life – *Hazorim b'dimah – b'rinah yiktzoru*.