

DOVES AND RELATIONSHIPS

by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner

This week we read the double parsha of Tazria-Metzora. Tazria begins with the ritual purity laws that pertain to childbirth. "When a woman gives birth to a male... And if she gives birth to a female... And upon the completion of these days of her purification she will bring a lamb as a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove as an offering. [12:2-6]"

The Baal Haturim points out that when one has an obligation to bring these birds as an offering, the Torah always mentions doves before pigeons. If so, he asks, why does the Torah here mention the dove last?

His answer is incredible. He writes that our situation is unique in that only one bird is being brought. Elsewhere in the Torah, one's obligation is to bring either a pair of doves or a pair of pigeons. By writing dove last, the Torah is teaching us that a single dove should only be brought as a last resort, if a pigeon can't be found. He explains that when a dove loses its mate, it goes into mourning and doesn't take another partner. We must try to avoid causing the dove this pain and if at all possible, bring a pigeon.

If the Torah is so concerned about the feelings and relationship between doves, we can surely understand the seriousness of our being considerate and understanding with our spouses...

When the wife of Rav Isaac Sher, zt"l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Slobodka, was being hospitalized, a very unusual request was made. Rav Sher asked if he could also be admitted to the hospital along with his wife. He explained that he wanted to be there with her at all times to share, as much as possible, what she was going through. Only that way would he be best able to help lighten the pain she was experiencing and the burden she was carrying.

Permission was granted and they were both 'admitted' to the hospital. They remained there together for a number of weeks until the Rebbetzin was ready to be released.

I could only imagine the profound effect that Rav Sher's sorely missed presence must have had on the students at the Yeshiva. The lesson of those weeks of his absence must have equaled years of intense study in caring for a spouse.

Interestingly, as I was preparing to write this week's parsha, I received a phone call from a talmid (student) of mine and his wife. Without going into detail, they were faced with a decision where she felt adamantly about doing something but he was under intense pressure from the parents and in-

laws not to do it. After hearing how strongly she felt about it, I stressed to him how crucial it is that she see that his care and consideration for her needs override all the pressure in the world.

In relationships, we often feel that we really understand our partners. We therefore think that we see their perspective and can honestly judge if they are correct or not. A tremendous tool in being truly considerate for others is the realization that we can never totally understand someone else.

Accepting that the world is seen differently through their eyes allows us to focus on their needs and try to fill them.

Good Shabbos,
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