

Eve's Curse and the Gaza Dilemma

Like most rabbis, or for that matter, like most Jewish people around the world, I have been asked many questions over the past few months as people try to understand the current war in Israel (Please remember that the Gaza Strip is still within the borders of Israel). Some have asked me about the history of Israel. Some have asked me about the history of the Arab/Israeli conflict. But the most recent question I have been asked is why Israel would be willing to release three convicted terrorists for each single Israeli hostage. My answer might surprise you because the reason goes back to one of the first chapters and one of the most mistranslated verses in the Bible.

In order to understand why Israel would be willing to trade three terrorists for one hostage, we must understand what G-D said to Eve in the first half of Genesis 3:16:

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children”; ” (Gen. 3:16, ASV).

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The above translation comes from the ASV, but almost every other translation available uses very similar wording. Many people have heard and even called these words that were spoken by G-D to Eve after she ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the curse of Eve. Most Bible teachers, when teaching about this verse, say something like, “Because of Eve’s sin, G-D punished her by making childbearing/childbirth painful””; however, that is not what

this verse actually says.

Because I don't have space in this article to do a complete word study, I strongly encourage you to study the words of this verse on your own. But in order for you to understand the intent of the wording of this verse and how it not only affects all women, but also explains why Israel would be willing to trade one Israeli hostage for three terrorists, or as in the case of Gilad Shalit, one soldier for 1,000 terrorists, we must understand the truth about this verse.

The first word we want to look at is the word translated as "pain." This Hebrew word doesn't mean pain, and the same word is used in verse 17 of this same chapter and is translated as "toil" when speaking to Adam. This same root word is used a second time in verse 16, where it is also translated as "pain." However, when we dig deeper into this Hebrew word, we find it is used also to mean "heartache" or "heartbreak," as we see in Genesis 6:6.

"So Adonai regretted that He made humankind on the earth, and His heart was deeply pained". " (Gen. 6:6, TLV).

With this understanding and with the understanding of the context of what we are reading in Genesis 3, what if we translated this verse this way: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy heartbreak and thy conception; in heartbreak thou shalt bring forth children"?

Please stick with me as I explain. When Eve and Adam ate the forbidden fruit, sickness and death came into the world. Heartbreak as women tried to conceive also came. Think about Sarah and Rebekah, Rachel and Hannah. The Scriptures describe each of them as heartbroken because they could not conceive.

So we can now understand the increased heartbreak of conception. But what about heartbreak in bringing forth children, and what does this have to do with the war in Israel today?

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Please remember that up until this moment in time no one had died. Death didn't exist until that moment and because of that, Eve never knew the heartbreak of the death of a child, something she experiences as we read in Genesis 4. So we see that G-D is not cursing Eve with painful childbirth. G-D is revealing to Eve the reality of what death means to a mother.

In that one verse, G-D instilled in the heart of every mother the tragic understanding that because of the presence of sickness and death, there would be heartbreak in conceiving children, and even more heartbreak in that mothers would experience the pain of losing children.

It is because of this biblical truth that Israeli mothers are pressing the government of Israel to do whatever it takes and make whatever deal they have to make to bring home their children. None of them want to experience the heartbreak that Eve did when she lost her son to violence.

It is with this biblical truth in mind that we understand what Golda Meir famously said: "Peace will come when the Arabs will love their children more than they hate us."

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