



**SoulSpa 3.26 • P. Tazria-Metzora**  
**April 18, 2026 • 1 Iyyar 5786**  
**16th Day of the Omer • Gevurah sheba'Tiferet**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

*Barukh Atah Adonai  
eloheinu melekh ha'olam  
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav  
v'tzivanu la'asok b'divrei Torah.*

Blessed are You, YHVH, our God,  
eternal sovereign, who sanctified us  
in God's *mitzvot* and commanded us  
to busy ourselves in words of Torah.

**Orientation to the Book of Leviticus**

ט.ה.ר (t-h-r) pure > *uncharged*

ק.ר.ב (k-r-v) proximity, inwardness > *sacrifice*

ט.מ.א (t-m-) impure > *charged*

ע.ל.ה ('-l-h) ascent > *burnt offering (olah)*

ח.ט.א (h-t-) sin > *"sin" offering (hatat)*

**Seeds**

The natural inclination  
is to seek harmony, to find balance.  
Many things mix us up and leave us unsettled.

Finding balance, seeking harmony, is a practice.  
Listen to the body. Notice what it is telling you.  
What is the body communicating? ...

Tradition teaches that when we listen to the body  
we realize that there are times for us to be outwardly engaged,  
and times for us to focus inward ...

The body can help us discern what it is true for us to do.

– R. Yael Levy on Tazria

**Leviticus 11:41-47**

וְכָל-הַשֹּׁרֵץ הַשֹּׁרֵץ עַל-הָאָרֶץ שֶׁקָּץ  
 הוּא לֹא יֵאָכֵל: כָּל הַחַיָּה עַל-גַּחְוֹן  
 וְכָל הַחַיָּה עַל-אַרְבַּע עַד כָּל-מַרְבֵּה  
 רַגְלַיִם לְכָל-הַשֹּׁרֵץ הַשֹּׁרֵץ עַל-  
 הָאָרֶץ לֹא תֹאכְלוּם כִּי-שֶׁקָּץ הֵם:  
 אֲלֵ-תִשְׁקָצוּ אֶת-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם בְּכָל-  
 הַשֹּׁרֵץ הַשֹּׁרֵץ וְלֹא תִטְמְאוּ בָהֶם  
 וְנִטְמַתֶּם בָּם: כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְהִתְקַדְשְׁתֶּם וְהִיִּיתֶם  
 קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי וְלֹא  
 תִטְמְאוּ אֶת-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם בְּכָל-  
 הַשֹּׁרֵץ הַרְמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: כִּי אֲנִי  
 יְהוָה הַמַּעֲלֶה אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ  
 מִצְרַיִם לְהִיֵּית לְכֶם לֵאלֹהִים  
 וְהִיִּיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי:  
 זֹאת תּוֹרַת הַבְּהֵמָה וְהָעוֹף וְכָל-  
 נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה הַרְמֵשֶׁת בַּמַּיִם וְלְכָל-  
 נֶפֶשׁ הַשֹּׁרֶצֶת עַל-הָאָרֶץ: לְהַבְדִּיל  
 בֵּין הַטְּמֵא וּבֵין הַטְּהוֹר וּבֵין  
 הַחַיָּה הַנֹּאכְלֶת וּבֵין הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר  
 לֹא תֹאכֵל:

And every creeping thing that creeps on the earth will be an abomination: it will not be eaten. Whatever goes on its belly, whatever goes on all four, and whatever has more feet among all creeping things that creep on the earth, those you will not eat, for they are an abomination. You will not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps, nor will you make yourselves *tamei* with them, that you should be *tamei*-ified by them. For I am YHVH your God, and you will sanctify yourselves and you will be holy, for I am holy – and you will not *tamei*-ify yourselves by any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. For I am YHVH who brings you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: you will be holy because I am holy. This is the Torah of the beasts, birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and every creature that creeps on the earth – to separate between *tamei* and *tahor*, and between animals to be eaten and animals not to be eaten.

... or, NOT PUNITIVE - she gets a 'break' both physically and emotionally-spiritually, needs more time to recover because

**Leviticus 12:1-8**

**MAN MADE?!  
 Why would the  
 holy say this?**

- why is female child purification duration double that of a male?
- sounds punitive: birth already ain't easy, and now this?
- why are blood and sex "tamei"? do men have issues with feminine body process?
- 'family purity' laws encourage sex at time of ovulation.
- do male boys need their moms "less"?

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:  
 דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר  
 אִשָּׁה כִּי תִזְרִיעַ וְיָלְדָה זָכָר  
 וְטִמְאָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כִּימֵי נְדַת  
 דֹּוֹתֶיהָ תִטְמָא:  
 (note gender binarism)  
 וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יְמוּל בָּשָׂר  
 עָרְלָתוֹ: וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם וּשְׁלֹשֶׁת  
 יָמִים תֵּשֵׁב בְּדָמֵי טְהָרָה בְּכָל-  
 קֹדֶשׁ לֹא-תִגַּע וְאֶל-הַמִּקְדָּשׁ לֹא  
 תָבֹא עַד-מְלֵאת יָמֵי טְהָרָה:  
 וְאִם-נִקְבָּה תֵלְד וְטִמְאָה  
 שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כְּנִדְתָּהּ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם  
 וּשְׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּשֵׁב עַל-דָּמֵי  
 טְהָרָה: וּבְמֵלֵאת יָמֵי טְהָרָה  
 לְבֹן אוֹ לְבַת תָּבִיא כֶּבֶשׂ בֶּן-  
 שָׁנָתוֹ לְעֹלָה וּבֶן-יוֹנָה אוֹ-תֹרֶה  
 לְחַטָּאת אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל-מוֹעֵד  
 אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן:  
 וְהַקְרִיבוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְכִפֶּר  
 עָלֶיהָ וְטְהָרָהּ מִמִּקְדָּשׁ דָּמֶיהָ  
 זֹאת תּוֹרַת הַיִּלְדוֹת לְזָכָר אוֹ  
 לְנִקְבָּה: וְאִם-לֹא תִמְצָא יָדָהּ דִּי  
 שָׁה וְלִקְחָהּ שְׁתֵּי-תֹרִים אוֹ שְׁנֵי  
 בָּנֵי יוֹנָה אֶחָד לְעֹלָה וְאֶחָד  
 לְחַטָּאת וְכִפֶּר עָלֶיהָ הַכֹּהֵן  
 וְטְהָרָה:

1-2. YHVH spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the Israelite people thus: When a woman at childbirth bears a male, she shall be *tamei* seven days; she shall be *tamei* like the days of her menstrual separation.  
 33 = LaG (ל"ג) baOmer - END of semi-mourning time for R. Akiva's students  
 3-4. On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. She will remain in a state of blood (purification) *taharah* for 33 days: she will not touch any consecrated thing or enter the Mikdash until her *taharah* days are completed.  
 > "double" time for female child = for \*her\* future potential motherhood(?)  
 5-6. If she bears a female, she shall be *tamei* two weeks as during her menstruation, and she will remain in a state of blood (purification) *taharah* for 66 days. On the completion of her period of *taharah*, for either son or daughter, she will bring to the *Kohein*, at the opening of the Tent of Witnessing, a yearling lamb as an *olah*, and a pigeon or dove as a *chatat* offering.  
 (not so much with the vegetarianism) (sin)  
 7-8. He will *korban*-ify it before YHVH and make expiation for her, and then she will be *tahor* from her place of blood: this is the Torah of the woman who bears a child, male or female. And if her means do not suffice for a sheep, she will take two doves or two pigeons, one for an *olah* offering and the other for a *chatat* offering. The *Kohein* will make expiation for her, and she will be *tahor*.

takes more time for other 'parts' of soul to enter...

## WHY IS THIS HERE?

### Vayikra Rabbah 14:1

(Genesis 1)

אמר רבי שמלאי, כָּשֶׁם שֶׁיִצְיָרְתוּ  
שֶׁל אָדָם אַחַר בְּהֵמָה חַיָּה וְעוֹף, כִּד  
תּוֹרָתוֹ אַחַר בְּהֵמָה חַיָּה וְעוֹף  
הִדָּא הוּא דְכָתִיב: זֹאת תּוֹרַת  
הַבְּהֵמָה, וְאַחַר כֵּן אֵשֶׁה כִּי תִזְרִיעַ

R. Simlai said: People were created after animals, and the laws for people [purification] also come after the laws for animals. That's why it says "This is the Torah of the beasts" (Lev 11:46), and only afterwards, "When a woman at childbirth" (Lev. 12:2).

### Ibn Ezra on Lev. 12:1

(Not so much with the modern science)

אשה כי תזריע. אחר שהשלים  
תורת הטהור והטמא בנאכלין  
הזכיר טמא אדם והחל מן האשה  
היולדת כי הלידה היא תחלה  
ורבים אמרו שהאשה מזרעת תחלה  
יולדת זכר על כן וילדה זכר ... והנה  
פירוש תזריע תתן זרע כי היא כמו  
הארץ

*When a woman at childbirth* – After Torah concludes the law of *tahor* and *tamei* food, it deals with human *tunn'ah*. The Torah starts with the woman who gives birth, because human life begins at birth. **Many say that if the woman produces the seed first, then she gives birth to a male.** Torah therefore continues, *bears a male.... Tazri'a* (be delivered) means "will give seed," for a woman is like the ground.

### Sherrill Cropper, 2026

this divinity-  
fractal \*as\*  
taharah

NB: not all  
fractals are  
about taharah.

*Do not eat of the creeping things with this or that many legs. Do not take them into you lest you become tamei. ... Be aware and constantly mindful of those around us. [Be aware of] anyone who has lost their way.... We must not be swayed by word or deed of those creeping in the dark through the world regardless of how much influence they may wield. Let nothing and no one move you into a state of tunn'ah. Keep yourself always as tahor with a heart and soul always focused on the purity of YHVH. Make your aim to live a righteous life with every breath and with every mouthful.*

## ONE MONTH, OR TWO?

### R. Adin Steinsaltz

ואם נקבה תלד, וטמאה שבעים  
כַּנְדָּתָהּ, כַּדִּין רִיחֻקָּהּ בִּימֵי הַנִּידוּת  
מִבְּעֵלָה וּמִכֹּל דָּבָר שֶׁהִיא עֹלֹלָה  
לְטָמָא. וְשֵׁשִׁים יוֹם וְשֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים  
תֵּשֵׁב עַל דְּמֵי טְהָרָה. יְמֵי הַטּוֹמָאָה  
וְיְמֵי הַטְּהָרָה מִן הַטּוֹמָאָה בְּלִידַת  
בֵּת כְּפוֹלִים מֵאֵלֶּה שֶׁל הַבֵּן

If she bears a female child, then she shall be *tamei* two weeks as during her menstruation. And sixty days and six days she shall abide in the blood of *taharah*. The days of *tunn'ah* and *taharah* that follow the birth of a female are double the amount of days that come after the birth of a male.

### Susan Philips, 2026

As a woman who has given birth to a son, I have experienced the **charged**, altered state of **electrified consciousness** filled with wonder delight, and awe at the miracle of birth. It is difficult through a contemporary lens to understand why the time for the purification process and bonding period is twice as long for a daughter as a son, as both experiences are so highly **charged**...

Torah doesn't 'judge' or 'explain' why → but it lands on us...  
and we do the judging and explaining based on where/how we  
are, where/how we want to be, what we see in the world...  
= such are the purposes of midrash itself.

## The Women's Torah Commentary

Some have suggested that the prolonged **impurity** of the baby girl's mother reflects the social inferiority of females (a judgment not stated in the biblical text). Others counter that the greater potential for **defilement** does not indicate social status; after all, the handling of a human corpse **defiles** to a far greater degree than touching a dead lizard (compare 11:29–31 and Num. 19), yet the status of the human is higher than that of a reptile.

### Marcia Salter, 2026

When a woman is pregnant with a female fetus, she is carrying three generations simultaneously: herself, her unborn daughter, and the immature egg cells already forming within her daughter's ovaries. A female fetus develops all the eggs she will ever carry while still in her mother's womb. **The woman who has just given birth to a girl is charged up because she is a link to Eternity.** every birthing woman gives birth to her potential grandchildren

### R. Jonathan Sacks on Tazria

There is a *halachic* principle: "One who is engaged in a *mitzvah* is exempt from other *mitzvot*." It is as if God were saying to the mother: for forty days in the case of a boy, and doubly so in the case of a girl... I exempt you from coming before Me in the place of holiness because you are fully engaged in one of the holiest acts of all, nurturing and caring for your child. Unlike others you do not need to visit the Temple to be attached to life in all its sacred splendour. You are experiencing it yourself, directly and with every fibre of your being. Days, weeks, from now you will come and give thanks before Me (together with offerings for having come through a moment of danger). But for now, look upon your child with wonder. For you have been given a glimpse of the great secret, otherwise known only to God. Childbirth exempts the new mother from attendance at the Temple because her bedside replicates the experience of the Temple.

### Iris Barten, 2026

The 33 days for a son and 66 days for a daughter are not because a daughter is more **tamei**. Rather, the additional 33 days respect the new baby's womb. Her potential to give birth later in life is a gift. The time for mother and baby is nurturing, loving **Rachamim**.  
= womb-ness (literally, two-wombs)

In Judaism, we set apart what is holy. This setting apart is honoring the holiness. This is sacred time, honoring mother and baby girl. Their potential receives G-d's grace and offers grace. Blessings are seeded, **germinate**, bud, and blossom. The holiness brings forth *tov*, and *tov* brings forth holiness...as lush leaves opening on the **eternal branches of the Tree of Life**.

## A WHAT OFFERING?!

### Ibn Ezra on Lev. 12:6

ויש אומרים שטעם הכבש לעולה  
שמה עלתה שום מחשבה על רוחה  
בשעת לדתה מרוב הצער. חטאת  
שמה דברה בפיה

Some say that the reason a woman who gives birth brings a lamb for an *olah* offering is that she may have had some unseemly thought because of her pain when giving birth. She brings a *hatat* offering because she might have uttered some unseemly thing with her lips.

### Ellen Frankel, The Five Books of Miriam

OUR DAUGHTERS ASK: Why is the woman who's given birth required to bring two sacrifices: a sin offering (*hatat*), either a pigeon or a turtledove; and a burnt offering (*olah*), a yearling lamb, or, if she can't afford that, a second pigeon or dove? Why a sin offering? What's she done wrong?

LEAH THE NAMER ANSWERS: "Sin" is a mistranslation of the Hebrew *hatat*. It's more accurately translated as "purification."

HULDAH THE PREACHER ELABORATES: The purpose of this offering is not to atone for any wrongdoing but rather to "decontaminate" the woman from the ritual impurity that threatens to endanger others. Only <sup>after</sup> she brings these to the priest will she be declared "pure" enough to reenter the community.

MIRIAM THE PROPHET ADDS: The Torah calls the blood that flows during this time a source or fountain (*mekor*), a classical feminine image for the many fluids – milk, menstrual and birth blood, tears of joy and sympathy – that flow from women's bodies and sustain others.

### B.T. Niddah 31b

שאלו תלמידיו את רבי שמעון בן  
יוחאי: מפני מה אמרה תורה יולדת  
מביאה קרבן? אמר להן: בשעה  
שכורעת לילד, קופצת ונשבעת שלא  
תזקק לבעלה, לפיכך אמרה תורה  
תביא קרבן. מתקיף לה רב יוסף:  
וקא מזידה היא, ובתרתה תליא  
מילתא! ועוד – קרבן שבועה (בעי  
[בעינא] איתווי! ומפני מה אמרה  
תורה זכר לשבעה ונקבה לארבעה  
עשר? זכר, שהכל שמחים בו –  
מתחרטת לשבעה. נקבה, שהכל  
עצבים בה – מתחרטת לארבעה  
עשר

R. Shimon ben Yohai's students asked: Why does Torah say a woman after childbirth brings a *korban*? He said to them: At the time she crouches to give birth, she impulsively takes an oath that she will not engage in intercourse with her husband again. Thus, Torah says she must bring a *korban* [to atone in advance for violating that oath]. R. Yosef objects: But isn't she an intentional violator of her oath, and dissolving an oath [halakhically] turns on regret. One brings [this] *korban* for violating an oath only if the transgression is unwitting....

Why does Torah say that one who births a male is *tamei* for seven days, but one who births a female is *tamei* for 14? R. Shimon ben Yohai answered: When a woman gives birth to a male, over which everyone is happy, she regrets her oath (to forswear her husband) seven days later. After giving birth to a female, over which everyone is unhappy, she regrets her oath 14 days later.

### B.T. K'ritot 26a

וּלְרַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יוּחַי, דְּאָמַר יוֹלְדֵת  
חוֹטְאֵת הִיא, מַאי אֵיכָא לְמִימַר?  
יוֹלְדֵת כִּי קָא מִיִּיתֵי קָרְבָּן -  
לְאִישְׁתְּרוּיִי בְּאִכִּילַת קֳדָשִׁים הוּא,  
וְלֹא לְכַפֶּרָה מִתְּנָא

But according to the opinion of R. Shimon b. Youhai, who says: "A woman who gave birth is a sinner," what is there to say? When a woman who gave birth brings a *korban*, she brings it to permit her to eat sanctified food, not for atonement [=there is nothing to atone for].

### R. Aviva Richman, Birth, Visibility, and Justice

A *hatat* is usually brought for an unintentional sin, and early rabbinic sages struggled to pinpoint what sin a woman would have committed in birth to warrant such a sacrifice. But not all interpreters understand this particular sacrifice as a response to sin. According to the medieval scholar Ramban, the *hatat* brought after birth has nothing to do with sin; it is for healing.<sup>2</sup> The process of birth is a physical trauma. The *korban* acknowledges that trauma. It is a *kofer nefesh* – a redemption for one's life – offered to God. In Ramban's words, it expresses the desire to be healed by God who "heals all flesh and acts wondrously."

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 12:7 תביא כופר נפשה שיעמוד מקורה ושתטהר, כי השם יתעלה רופא כל בשר ומפליא לעשות..

### TAHARAH AND TUM'AH

#### Rachel Adler, Tum'ah and Taharah: Ends and Beginnings, 1972

Our consciousness tells us that we are created beings and so are mortal. Our soul tells us that we are the image of the Creator and so cannot be mortal. Our knowledge of ourselves, then, is paradoxical. How do we reconcile it and make ourselves whole? Jews solve the paradox with the ritual cycle of *tum'ah* and *taharah*, in which we act out our death and resurrection. *Tum'ah* is the result of our confrontation with the fact of our own mortality. It is the going down into darkness. *Taharah* is the result of our reaffirmation of our own immortality. It is the re-entry into light. *Tum'ah* is evil or frightening only when there is no further life. Otherwise, *tum'ah* is simply part of the human cycle. To be *tamei* is not wrong or bad. Often it is necessary and sometimes it is mandatory.

#### R. Rachel Adler, In Your Blood, Live: Re-visions of a Theology of Purity, 1993

In the mind of God, according to a midrash, is a Torah of black fire written on white fire. In the hands of Jews is a Torah written in gall on the skins of dead animals. And the miracle is that the fire of God's Torah flickers through our scroll. I continue to learn the **purity** texts, hoping for some yet unglimped spark, but that is not enough. I must learn what **purity** can mean in my own world and in the most human world I can envision. **For if ours is a Torah of and for human beings, it may be perfected only in the way that we perfect ourselves.** We do not become more God-like by becoming less human, but by becoming more deeply, more broadly, more comprehensively human... **Purity** and **impurity** do not constitute a cycle through which all members of society pass, as I argued in my [1972] essay. Instead, **impurity** and **purity** define a **class system in which the most impure people are women.**

### Adin Even-Israel, “The Inner Rhythm of Tumah”

The creation of *tum'ah* resembles the production of a magnetic field. A magnetic field is produced when a drastic change occurs in an electric field. One of the ways this can happen is when an electric current that is moving through metal suddenly stops, in which case magnetization occurs. The new phenomenon is produced at the point of change, whether it is change from one extreme to the other or a more limited change. Similarly, *tum'ah* is produced when the complete current of life within an entity is stopped, whether in its entirety or in only one respect. Take, for example, the *tum'ah* of a corpse. This *tum'ah* occurs not because the corpse is not alive, nor because it used to be alive, but because it used to be alive and then this condition suddenly stopped.

Regarding *tum'ah* following childbirth, the Kotzker Rebbe said as follows: According to the Talmud, three keys remain in G-d's hand alone and were not entrusted to any emissaries: the key of rain, the key of childbirth, and the key of the revival of the dead. **Since the key of childbirth is in G-d's hand, then apparently God's spirit is present during the birth, after which it immediately departs – and this is the source of the tension that generates *tum'ah*.** The *tum'ah* is generated not because the birth is something inherently *tamei* – on the contrary, it is a time when new life comes into the world – but because the birth involves a gulf between a high and a subsequent low, evoking the gulf between life and death.

### Nina Rubin and R. Hillel Katzir, *Tahor and Tamei*

Unfortunately, these terms have long been interpreted as ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ in a moral sense, leading to misunderstanding and resentment. If we understand *tahor* and *tamei*, instead, as ‘spiritually whole’ and ‘**spiritually vulnerable**,’ the resentment goes away, and we begin to understand that they speak to times in our lives when we may need spiritual protection, or time to recover from our spiritual vulnerability...

The Jewish tradition has labeled *tahor* as the desirable state, and *tamei* as undesirable. But the things that make us *tamei* are often connected with intimacy: sex, giving birth, assisting others, loss... [**Intimacy** brings] the possibility of being spiritually vulnerable. ***Tamei* is not a negative state, because it is actually a goal for many people to open their hearts, which can lead to intimate and spiritual experiences.** But intimate encounters leave us in a vulnerable state, so we can't stay there. We sometimes need to move toward a state of *tahor* as a preparation for more intimacy; but intimacy diminishes when boundaried, so we wouldn't want to stay there, either...

### R. Shai Held, “Living on the Boundary”

One of the crucial boundaries in Leviticus—arguably the most crucial one—is the line between life and death. Corpses, for example, having just crossed the boundary between life and death, are considered **impure** and extremely contagious to those who touch them (Num. 19:1-22). In light of this, maternal **impurity** after childbirth comes into clearer focus. The mother's **impurity** implies no moral judgment whatsoever; she is considered ritually **impure**, not morally **impure**. Childbirth takes place at—and to some degree unsettles—the boundaries between life and death.

### **Rabbi Shefa Gold, Tazria**

Tazria begins by discussing the condition of a woman immediately after childbirth. She is blessed with a time of separation and then given a path for returning. I understand this condition not only in the context of childbirth, but in regards to the creative process. During a time of intense creative output, as with childbirth, a person steps outside the boundaries of time and space. She touches the realm between the worlds where *ayin* (“nothing”) gives birth to *yesh* (“existence”).

In that place between worlds she is completely taken up by the process of birth. The artist lives inside the poem, painting, or song, and the rest of the world, for a time falls away. The blessing of *Tazria* is in knowing that there will again be a way of returning to the community, to normal life. The time of alienation, which is necessary for the creative process to unfold, is also finite. The artist may return and bring with her the riches that she has mined and be re-integrated, welcomed back, and appreciated by her community.

### **APPENDIX: CLASS MIDRASHIM IN FULL**

#### **Iris Barten**

As we agree, the spiritual sense and metaphors of *tamei* and *tahor* offer deeper meaning in relationship with YHVH, oneself, and the community.

*Tazria*, “she conceives or seeds” is inspirational for the parasha. This creational beginning conveys the aspirational and essentially fulfilling aspects of being in community, as well as for life.

In the context of connection and a sense of belonging in the community, the practice of observing time away after childbirth to recoup and regroup acknowledges the need for renewal. This promotes healing, bonding, growing, and resilience. Time away is not a stigma, as being weak. Rather, it supports the new mother in her process of integration. Embodying her experience during and after childbirth is as essential as her being in the moment throughout her pregnancy.

Her baby daughter is also honored, following her nine month journey in the womb. Her light as a human being created in the image of G-d is seen and felt. She has time to grow in her soulfulness.

This loving energy infuses the process of becoming.

This is life affirming. The natural process cultivates qualities including independence, interdependence, compassion, strength, and love. It is nurturing for the mother and the baby, sharing a way of being.

The 33 days for a son and 66 days for a daughter are not because a daughter is more tamei. Rather, the additional 33 days respect the new baby's womb. Her potential to give birth later in life is a gift. The time for mother and baby is nurturing, loving Rachamim.

As in Judaism, we set apart what is holy. This setting apart is honoring the holiness.

This is sacred time, honoring the mother and baby girl. Their potential receives G-d's grace and offers grace. Blessings are seeded, germinate, bud, and blossom. The holiness brings forth tov, and tov brings forth holiness...as lush leaves opening on the eternal branches of the Tree of Life.

L'dor vador. L'dor vadorness.

### **Sherril Cropper**

And so it is said, do not eat of the creeping things with this or that many legs. Do not take them into you lest you become tamei. Is this to mean if we are starving we should not take any sustenance available to us so that we may live and continue to honor and emulate YHVH? No, we must live and cherish life above all things. We must help and serve and take care of ourselves and the stranger; this is the ultimate mitzvot. So what is meant here by do not eat of the creeping things etc.? We are to be aware and constantly mindful of those around us. We must not let anyone who has lost their way or never learned of a moral and ethical philosophy. We must not be swayed by word or deed by those creeping in the dark through the world regardless of how much influence they may yield. Let nothing and no one move you into a state of tamei. Keep yourself always as tahor with a heart and soul always focused on the purity of YHVH. Make your aim to live a righteous life with every breath and with every mouthful.

### **Susan Philips**

As a woman who has given birth to a son, I have experienced the charged, altered state of electrified consciousness filled with wonder delight, and awe at the miracle of birth. It is difficult through a contemporary lens to understand why the time for the purification process and bonding period is twice as long for a daughter as a son, as both experiences are so highly charged.

In bearing a female, perhaps it seems as if the mother is identifying with the consciousness that her daughter will at some point be menstruating and has the potential to give birth. The mother appears to be developing a mystical, sacred bond that she is projecting onto sharing with her daughter when she becomes of age, formed and foreseen through the coming years. The awe and miracle of this shared bond is very powerful.

## Delilah Rosel

Small note but interested that after don't eat things that crawl on their belly it says don't eat things on all fours. We eat a lot of things on all fours - cows, sheep etc.

Just repeating a midrash about what a blessing it is for a girl child to get extra attention from the moms, and for moms to have extra time for themselves.

## Marcia Salter

Bringing Life into the world is a profound and mysterious experience. Separating a woman who has given birth allows her time to recover, bond with the new baby and be taken care of by other women who understand the process. The difference in times of tamei for giving birth to boys and girls may stem from this. When a woman is pregnant with a female fetus, she is carrying three generations simultaneously: herself, her unborn daughter, and the immature egg cells already forming within her daughter's ovaries. This occurs because a female fetus develops all the eggs she will ever carry while still in her mother's womb. The woman who has just given birth to a girl is charged up because she is a link to Eternity. La dor va dor.

## MORE BONUS MATERIALS

### Rabbeinu Bahya

ושלשים יום ושלושת ימים. ע"ד הפשט היו ימי טוהר שלשים ושלושת כדי שיהו עם שבעת ימי הטומאה ארבעים יום כמספר הימים אשר הזכר נגמר בבטן אמו. וע"ד הקבלה נתנו לאשה שלשה ושלושים ימי טוהר כנגד הכלה שבשיר השירים הכלולה מהחכמה שבה שלשים ושתיים נתיבות, ועמה יהיה התחברות ועל כן היו שלשים ושלושה ימים ולא שלשים ושנים לרמוז על הכלה המתחברת אל החכמה שהיא נושאת אותן שלשים ושנים ונחשבת עמהן.

*"and for the thirty-three days following, etc."* According to the plain meaning of the text the 33 days of **taharah** were decreed to combine with the seven days of **tum'ah** in order to complete a cycle of forty days. The fetus required forty days to become something in its own right.

A kabbalistic approach: The thirty-three days given to the woman (during which she cannot halachically become a menstruant) were given to her as corresponding to the bride in Song of Songs who is viewed as possessing the thirty-two paths of wisdom. She is presumed to join these thirty-two paths thus making a total of thirty-three [the concept of אחותי כלה "the bride is my sister," (Song of Songs 4:10) means in kabbalistic terms that "wisdom is my sister," i.e. the כלה is perceived as "carrying," supporting these thirty-two paths of wisdom.]

### Vayikra Rabbah 14:3

אִשָּׁה כִּי תִזְרִיעַ וַיֵּלֶדָה זָכָר, הַדָּא הוּא דְכַתִּיב (איוב י, יב): חַיִּים וְחֶסֶד עֲשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי וּפְקַדְתָּדָּ שְׁמֵרָה רִוּחִי, רַבִּי אֲבָא בַר כְּהֵנָא אָמַר תֵּלַת, בְּנֵהָג שְׁבַעוֹלָם אִם נוֹטֵל אֶדָם אֲרַנְקִי שְׁל מַעוֹת וְנוֹתֵן הֶפֶה לְמַטָּה, אִין

*When a woman conceives and bears a male child – that is what is written: "You granted me life and grace, and Your command preserved my spirit" (Job 10:12). R. Abba bar Kahana said three [things, the first of which is]: The way of the world is that if a person takes a purse of coins and places the opening facing*

המעוות מתפזרות, והנולד שרוי  
במעלי אמו והקדוש ברוך הוא  
משמר ששלא יפל וימות, אין זה  
שבח, הוי: חיים וחסד עשית עמדי.  
רבי אבא בר כהנא אמר אחר, בנהג  
שבעולם בהמה זו מהלכת  
רבוצה והנולד נתון בתוך מעיה כמין  
שק, והאשה זו מהלכת זקופה  
והנולד נתון בתוך מעיה והקדוש  
ברוך הוא משמר ששלא יפל וימות,  
הוי: חיים וחסד עשית עמדי. רבי  
אבא בר כהנא אמר אחר, בנהג  
שבעולם בהמה זו ודיה במקום  
רחמה, והנולד יונק במקום בשפה,  
והאשה זו ודיה במקום נאה,  
והנולד יונק במקום כבוד, ואין זה  
חיים וחסד, הוי: חיים וחסד עשית  
עמדי. אמר רבי אלעזר אם לשה  
אדם בחמין שעה אחת אינו מת,  
ומעיה של אשה מרתחין והנולד  
נתון בתוך מעיה והקדוש ברוך הוא  
משמר ששלא יעשה שפיר ושלא  
יעשה שלגא ושלא יעשה סנדל, ואין  
זה חיים וחסד, הוי: חיים וחסד  
עשית עמדי. אמר רבי תחליפא  
דקסרנא אם אכל אדם פרוסה אחת  
פרוסה לא שניה דוחה את  
הראשונה, האשה היא כמה מאכל  
היא אוכלת וכמה משקים היא  
שותה ואינו דוחה הנולד, אין זה  
חיים וחסד. אמר רבי סימון מעיה  
של אשה עשויה קינין קינין, פיקין  
פיקין, חבילין חבילין, בשעה  
שהיא יושבת על המשבר אינה  
משליכתו בבת אחת, במתלא אמר  
אשתרי חד חבל אשתרי תרין  
חבלין. אמר רבי מאיר כל תשעה  
חדשים שאין האשה רואה דם בדין  
הוא שתהא רואה, מה הקדוש ברוך  
הוא עושה מסלקו למעלה לדדיה  
ועושהו חלב, כדי שיצא הנולד  
ויהיה לו מזון לאכל, וביותר אם  
היה זכר, שנאמר: אשה כי תזריע  
ולדה זכר

downward, do the coins not scatter? But the fetus is situated in his mother's womb and the Holy One blessed be God protects it so that it will not fall out and die. Is this not praise? That is, "You granted me life and grace."  
R. Abba bar Kahana said another: The way of the world is that the animal walks with its body horizontal and the fetus is situated inside its womb like a sack, but the woman walks erect and the fetus is situated inside her womb and the Holy One blessed be God protects it so that it will not fall out and die. That is, "You granted me life and grace."  
R. Abba bar Kahana said another: The way of the world is that the teats of an animal are in a place [near the entrance to] its womb, and the offspring suckles in the place of its shame. But the woman, her breasts are in a place of beauty, and the baby suckles in the place of her glory. Is that not life and grace? That is, "You granted me life and grace."  
R. Elazar said: If a person were to remain in hot water for a short while, would he not die? Yet the innards of a woman are boiling and the fetus is situated in her womb, and the Holy One blessed be God protects it so that it will not become a fetal sac, it will not become a placenta, and it will not become a sandal. Is that not life and grace? That is, "You granted me life and grace."  
Rav Tahlifa of Caesarea said: If a person eats slice after slice, does the second not force the first downward? The woman, how much food does she eat, how many drinks does she drink, but it does not force the fetus downward. Is that not life and grace?  
R. Simon said: A woman's womb is constructed compartments upon compartments, rings upon rings, bands upon bands. When she sits on the birthing stool, she does not cast it out all at once. In the parable it is said: One band is loosened, two bands are loosened.  
R. Meir said: All nine months that the woman does not see blood, by right she should see. What does the Holy One blessed be God do? God diverts it upward to her breasts and transforms it into milk so that when the offspring emerges, he will have food to eat. This is especially if he is a male, as it is stated: "When a woman conceives and bears a male child."