

Suffering Actuaries

By Elisha Greenbaum (chabad.org)



Two of the seemingly least-related concepts are found side by side in this week's Torah reading.

First comes the *tochachah* (rebuke): 32 verses of pure fear, which detail the punishments and pain that await the Jewish people if we deviate from G-d's way. Every time we read the *tochachah*, I am struck anew with the sheer inventiveness of the threats described, and the range and scope of the consequences. The only thing more terrifying than reading the text is reflecting on the fact that all this suffering and more has actually happened to the Jews over time.

Right after the *tochachah* is the section dealing with *erchin*: Were a Jew to pledge the value of another person as a donation to the Temple, there is a sliding scale, almost like an actuarial table, by which that value could be calculated. It's a relatively obscure topic, and seems somewhat lacking in human interest.

But perhaps the Torah is teaching us a crucial lesson by placing these seemingly disparate topics together. One could imagine that after experiencing a *tochachah*, a period of pain, the weary survivor could be left wondering about his value in the greater scheme of life, and whether G-d really cares about him at all.

Many victims or survivors of natural disasters find it difficult to restart their lives, because their entire sense of self-worth, as well as their sense of place in the world, has been subsumed in the suffering they have just been through. They find it difficult to go on, because they are no longer confident in who they are.

By placing the section of *erchin* directly after the *tochachah*, the Torah is reassuring us that no matter what we have been through, we still count. Every person has an innate value, every person is intrinsically valuable, and G-d cherishes and appreciates us all.

Wit

Latest inventions from Chelm

- Glow-in-the-dark sunglasses
- A book called 'how to read'
- Water-proof tea bags
- A pedal-powered wheel chair

Wisdom

I no longer see a table, a chair, a lamp... only the letters of the Divine utterances them their existence
 - Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi shortly before his passing on 24 Teves, 5583(1812)

Next Week in Jewish History

Sunday - Plague among R. Akiva's Disciples Ends

In the weeks between Passover and Shavuot, a plague decimated 24,000 students of the great sage Rabbi Akiva--a result, says the Talmud, of the fact that they "did not respect one another." The plague's cessation on Iyar 18--the 33rd day of the Omer Count or "Lag BaOmer"--is one of the reasons that the day is celebrated each year

Times

Parshas Bechukosai

16/17 Iyar, 5774 - 16/17 May 2014

Friday Night

Mincha: 7:30pm

Our Shuls Candle Lighting Time: 8:00pm

Shabbat Dinner: 8:30pm

Shabbat Day

(Latest Shema: 9:00am)

Chassidus Shiur with

Rabbi Gershon Overlander: 9:30am

Shacharis: 10:00am

Kiddush / Farbrengen: approx. 12:15pm

Mincha: 8:20pm

Seudah Shlishit: Following Mincha

Shabbos ends / Maariv: 9:51pm

Video Presentation: Following Maariv

Lag B'omer Barbeque



Sunday
 18th May 2014
 5:00pm

Adults: £12
 Children: £5

Chabad Invites you to our annual Lag B'omer BBQ in celebration of the Yahrzeit of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai

- Shishkebabs, Burgers and Beer
- Jumping Castle
- Open Buffet
- Music & More!

At the home of Family Rubinoff,
 5 Cedars Close, Hendon NW4
 Bookings: chabadlive.com

Evening for Women



Monday,
 May 26th
 Admission: £10
 Advance online
 bookings: £8
 Book at
 chabadlive.com

Chabad Hendon in association with N'shei Chabad of Northwest London present:

Soul Connection

Meeting Your Needs,
 Meeting Your Spouse's Needs
 with relationship expert and lecturer, Sarah Karmely
 -Dessert Reception: 8:00pm
 -Speaker: 8:30pm

Mazel Tov / Kiddush



This weeks Kiddush is kindly sponsored by Colev and Lisa Frickers on the birth of a daughter. We wish them much Nachas and Brochos! Mazel Tov!

