

7

by Bobbi Lurie

7

My son has toxic epidermal necrolysis and the nurses who come in from the burn unit, 7 of them, the number 7 don't you see the number 7 has meaning for numbers have meaning for everything has meaning and I sat in that sacred space in the ICU where my son's body was healing truly it was and Frankie, his nurse, looked at me while they washed his wounds and she said, "Isn't this the most beautiful example of cooperation you have ever seen?" and I thought of my correspondent who spoke of beauty and I thought I had to tell him that THIS is beauty: the nurses were looking at my son's wounds and just might have been seeing something of beauty or else they might simply be touching him for they must touch him, knowing every touch, each slight touch upon his skin causes excruciating pain for him and yet they courageously do what few ever do: they do the unthinkable: they do the unthankable. They do the thankless. And I cried at the sight of such beauty and I cried as I wrote these words then I stopped writing and I said to the man who had been washing my son's wounds who I noticed looked down at the ground and did not smile or converse with others so I spoke to him and saw there was great sadness in his eyes when his eyes met mine and I said to him, "This is holy work you are doing. this is beautiful work." He stopped what he was doing and stood very still. The others had already left to see their next patient but he was waiting for me to continue to speak so I continued from the deepest part of what was left of my broken heart, "You know that you are entering a place of great pain when you approach my son. You know you must touch him and he will hurt from your touch, no matter how soft your touch might be. You know that and yet you proceed with such courage. You are willing to hurt him to help him. I know you must go to sleep each night a happy man, a man who knows he does

work to heal others so you I feel you must sleep each night in peace.” We looked intensely at one another for a very long moment. Then he left.

Only later did I notice how the burn team really handled my son with great force and not the least bit of tenderness for their goal was to remove the dead skin so that new skin could grow in.

Weeks after that, when my son was moved out of ICU, I had lost my sense of the religious due to the loss of being surrounded by the dedication of the ICU team of nurses and therapists and doctors who attended to my son with such constant dedication, I realized that leaving the ICU was like leaving a haven of mercy. My son's wounds improved and he was moved to the sixth floor. It was there that I realized this man I spoke to about my son's wounds, found me annoying.

The distance between numbers, the distance between floors...as my son, Noah, faces the harsh aftereffects of this syndrome including the need to remain out of the sun for as much as a year, the fear of blindness on top of him if he does not take care with drops and other preventative measures, the dangers which exist for a lifetime in regards to the tongue and palate and the eating apparatus and as he fights anorexia with the complications of OCD and autism, I pray for the number 7 even though I do not know how to pray.

* * *

I) The root of the name of the Number Seven means Perfect, Complete, or Satisfied.

II) Thammim means perfect, and its numeric weight is 70×7 , which is the number the Lord used to describe the perfection of forgiveness.

III) Thammim first occurs in conjunction with the seventh occurrence of the name Noah

