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After office hours

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When Dr. James Simpson began to use anesthesia in child-birth in 1846, a religious furor arose against its use. For many people, including many physicians, Genesis chapter 3, verse 16, implied that childbirth had to be a painful process. In 1849, the editors of one of Canada's medical journals asked Abraham De Sola, Canada's first rabbi, to give his interpretation of Genesis 3:16 for the benefit of their readers, which he did in a three-part article. Using Hebrew biblical scholars as his source, he wrote that the correct interpretation of this passage was that with toil or labor shall women bring forth children, rather than with pain. Therefore, by using anesthesia in childbirth, physicians were not going against the scriptures or the word of God.

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