

LAMPLIGHTER

13 Elul
Ki Teitzei
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Ki Teitzei, closes with the following verses: "Remember what Amalek did to you on your way out of Egypt. When they encountered you on the way, and you were tired and exhausted, they cut off those lagging behind... Therefore, you must obliterate the memory of Amalek from under the heavens. You must not forget."

The command to wipe out Amalek is read not only when the Torah portion of Ki Teitzei is read. It is recited every day, at the end of the morning prayers, as one of the "Six Remembrances."

Who was Amalek and why are Jews - described by the Torah as "compassionate" - commanded to destroy the people of Amalek?

The destruction of Amalek is symbolic of the nullification of a specific negative trait which can manifest itself within each one of us.

When a person is inspired and wants to go out of "Egypt," from boundaries and limitations of a corporeal nature, "Amalek" comes along and tries to prevent him from doing so.

How does Amalek accomplish this? The phrase "When they encountered you" in Hebrew is "karcha." "Kar" means "cold." The foremost Torah commentator, Rashi, explains that Amalek attempted to stop the Jewish people by making them cold.

Holiness thrives on warmth and excitement. Amalek cools down a person's inclination to G-dliness, and numbs him from being excited about anything holy, by planting seeds of doubt. In fact, the numerical value (gematria) of the Hebrew letters in the word "Amalek" is the same as "safek" - doubt.

The antidote to Amalek is "remember." A person must always have Torah thoughts engraved in his mind and memory, so that he may meditate on them at any time and in any place. Through this a person can nullify the evil of Amalek.

But how was Amalek able to hurt the Jews? Weren't they protected in the desert from enemy attacks by the Divine clouds that accompanied them throughout their sojourn there? Amalek attacked those who were "tired and exhausted." Rashi explains that the Cloud cast out some of the Jews due to their sins. They had "no strength" to overcome their desire to sin.

Amalek attacked only those Jews who had transgressed and whom the Cloud had thrown out of the camp. Yet, it was to save these very Jews from Amalek that the entire Jewish people left the protection of the Cloud to go to war.

When the need arises, we too, must go out of the comfort and safety of our own "clouds" in order to help another Jew, no matter who he is, where he is, or what he has done in the past.

(Adapted from the works of the Rebbe)

Where is the Reward?

By Tali Loewenthal

A basic principle of Jewish belief is that G d rewards us when we carry out His commands. This week's Torah reading tells us that G d will "do good to you, and give you length of days" if we perform one of the commands. But does it always work like this?

The command in question is the law of sending away the mother bird when taking eggs from her nest. We are allowed to take the eggs for our own use, but rather than cause pain to the mother bird by taking them in front of her, we are commanded to send her away.

"Honour your father and mother" is another command in the Torah about which we are told that through keeping it we will be rewarded with length of days.

However, the Talmud tells us of an occasion when someone carried out both these commands at once and instead of being rewarded, he came to grief. A father told his son to climb a tree or a building and get eggs from a nest. The son did so, and also carried out the command of sending away the mother bird. The boy then fell and was killed.

This event was seen by Elisha ben Abuya, a scholar who lived after the destruction of the Temple. He was horrified, and the effect of this experience, together with other factors, was that he abandoned Jewish observance.

Elisha's daughters were cared for by the community, and his grandson Rabbi Jacob became a noted scholar. He too also saw a similar event. However, he had a quite different response. He said: "Where is this person's length of days, and where is the good promised him? In the World to Come..." He interpreted tragedy in this world as signifying an emphasis on the importance of belief in the World to Come and the Revival of the Dead. There we receive the reward for our service of G d, not in this world.

But the Torah tells us in many places that if we obey its laws, then, as it says in the second paragraph of the Shema: "I will give you rain in its season... and you will gather in your crops." Isn't this telling us that we should expect a reward in this world?

One way of understanding this is to see the difference between physical benefits and a reward. G d grants each person the wherewithal to keep the Torah, just as a master gives his servant the tools with which to carry out his job. Peace, good health and material comfort help in the study and observance of Torah, and in maintaining a Jewish lifestyle. Yet sometimes too, G d wants the person to keep Torah in the face of great difficulty or oppression: in order to bring out a deeper quality of dedication to Judaism. Why should this person be picked for this tremendous task? We do not know. Why should that person's soul leave the world at that particular moment? We do not know the Divine plan, and what each person was intended to achieve in life, and how and when.

At this stage of history, what happens in this finite, confusing world often remains a riddle. By contrast, the reward for our efforts is without limit: it cannot be squeezed into the limitations of our physical world. The reward for the commandments, and for the pain and self-sacrifice for Judaism, is in the World to Come. There the infinite radiance of the Divine is revealed to the Soul, with boundless joy.

Slice of LIFE

What Wedding?

Thousands of Jews were crowded into the huge synagogue of the Chabad Chassidim in Brooklyn New York to hear the Lubavitcher Rebbe speak. And although it was Shabbat and he didn't use a microphone somehow every single person heard every word he said. Not only religious Chassidim but all sorts of Jews were there and even those who didn't understand a word of Yiddish were hypnotized by the awesomeness of the man. It was said that he could do miracles and even tell the future.

Mr. Dovid Asulin came to see for himself and, although he didn't exactly believe all the stories, he was glad he came. He had been born in Morocco. There everyone believed in Tzadikim (truly righteous men). So all this wasn't completely new to him. In fact since he moved to France twenty years ago he had almost forgotten about the Tzadikim and now he felt at home.

This was his first visit to America, he was going for business, and his friends told him that if he wanted an unforgettable experience he had to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe. And it was just as they said.

After about two hours of listening, with ten minute pauses between topics people began to stand up and form lines to the Rebbe which eventually became one line and when they reached him he would give each one a bottle of vodka.

Mr. Asulin didn't understand that the bottles were only for those people that were making special events throughout the world, he thought that everyone was entitled to a bottle. So he got in line as well!

When it came his turn and he was face to face with the Rebbe, the Rebbe smiled, gave him a large bottle and said in French "This is for the wedding."

He was amazed; how did the Rebbe

know he spoke French! That was astounding, it just verified all the other stories he had heard. The Rebbe certainly had uncanny powers!

But one thing for sure...it also proved he wasn't infallible. Dovid had been happily married for years! What he said about the wedding was clearly wrong.

A week later he returned to France, unpacked, and when he showed his wife the bottle they had a good laugh over what the Rebbe said.

But when he visited his local Chabad house (Rabbi Chiam Malul in Cartel France) the Rabbi didn't agree with Dovid's conclusion and assured him that in time he would see that it was no mistake.

"The Rabbi is certainly a bit brainwashed." David jested to himself, "But he is a nice man, very dedicated. So what if the Rebbe made a little mistake." and forgot the entire incident.

Months later he happened to open the cabinet where he had put the bottle and it reminded him of his experience in Brooklyn. "You know" he said to his wife, "It's a shame that this should just remain unused. Let's make a party, invite all our friends and family and give them all to drink a L'chiam. It will be fun for everyone and a blessing as well. And I'm sure they will all come."

They began making plans. At first they thought of making the party at their home but at the last moment decided it would be less trouble to move it to the small wedding hall of the local synagogue (in Rancee near Paris) and to have it catered by a local kosher restaurant.

The day of the party arrived and the guests began arriving in good spirits. A small band played happy music and people were exchanging greetings and handshakes. But as they were sitting down to begin the meal the Rabbi of the synagogue entered the room with a smile, looked around for Dovid and when he found him took him aside and whispered something in his ear.

Dovid turned to the crowd and said: "The Rabbi needs nine men to join him to make a minyan. It will only take a few minutes, who wants to come? I'm going to

go."

In no time he had the required number following the Rabbi to the next room for what they thought would be prayer (Jews are supposed to pray in groups of at least ten adult males) but they were in for a surprise.

In the room stood a bride and groom alone; it was a wedding!

In fifteen minutes the entire ceremony was over. Dovid and the other men shook the groom's hand, wished the newlyweds 'Mazal Tov' and gingerly asked where the wedding meal would be (they also were wondering why there were no guests but were ashamed to ask).

When the groom answered that no meal had been arranged Dovid joyously announced that they were invited to his. Dovid's informal party suddenly became a real wedding.

The band played merrily and the men began to dance on one side of the room with the groom and the women on the other with his new wife and when the dancing finished they all sat down to eat.

Then in the middle of the meal Dovid stood, held up the Rebbe's bottle, cleared his throat for silence and told the story of the Rebbe saying it was "For the Wedding!". Now he understood that the Rebbe wasn't mistaken at all.

"What!" exclaimed the bride. "That bottle is from the Lubavitcher Rebbe for my wedding?" and she burst into tears; she was weeping from sheer joy.

When she calmed down she explained. This was her second marriage. Her first ended in a bitter divorce that, coupled with the fact that she decided to be an observant Jew, resulted in a major rift in her family and none of her relatives showed up. No one came from her husband's side either but his reason was more simple. He converted to Judaism and simply had no family.

She felt so uncertain and alone that she felt she was going out of her mind. Then someone suggested she write a letter to the Rebbe. And a few weeks ago she did it and in the letter she asked for some sign that the marriage would succeed. "And here you are with the Rebbe's blessing!!"

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ISSUE 1060

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In this week's Torah portion we read, "But you shall surely let the mother go, and the young you may take for yourself" (Deut. 22:7). This is the mitzva (commandment) to drive away the mother bird before taking the eggs or young birds from her nest. What is the reward for observing this mitzva? If you have no children, G-d declares, I will grant you offspring. Furthermore, observing this commandment hastens the coming of Moshiach and the arrival of Elijah the Prophet. (*Midrash Rabba*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

18th of Tammuz, 5714 [1954]

I have received your letter of June 13th, in which, after a brief biographical outline of yourself, you present your problem, namely, that you recently became aware of a feeling of apathy and indifference to the religious rites and practices, due to a perplexing doubt to the authenticity of the Jewish tradition, by which you undoubtedly mean the Torah and mitzvot, and you wonder how this may be logically proved.

I hope that this is indeed your only difficulty which has weakened your observance of the mitzvot maasiyot [mitzvot involving actual deeds] in daily life; in most cases the true reason is the desire to make it easy for oneself and avoiding a "burden" and then seeking to "justify" this attitude on philosophical grounds. In the latter case the problem is more complicated.

In the hope that you belong to the minority, I will briefly state here the logical basis for the truth that the Torah and mitzvot have been given to us Jews by Divine Revelation.

This is not very difficult to prove, since the proof is the same as all other evidence that we have of historic events, in past generations, only much more forcefully and convincingly.

By way of illustration; if you are asked, how do you know there existed such a person as Rambam [Rabbi Moses Maimonides] (whom you mentioned in your letter) author of Hayad Hachazaka, Sefer Hamitzvot, etc., or the like, you would surely reply that you are certain about his existence from the books he had written, and although the Rambam lived some 800 years ago, his works now in print have been reprinted from earlier editions, and those from earlier ones still, uninterruptedly, going back to the very manuscript which the Rambam wrote in his own hand. This is considered sufficient proof, but efforts are made to reconcile them in the certainty that both have been written by the same author.

The same kind of proof substantiates any historic past, which we ourselves have not witnessed, and all normal people accept them without question, except those who for some reason are interested in falsification.

In many cases the authenticity of a historic event is based on the evidence of a limited group of people, even where there is room to suspect that the witnesses were not, perhaps, quite disinterested; but because there is nothing to compel one to be suspicious, and especially if we can check the evidence and counter-check it, it is accepted as a fact.

From the above point of view, any doubts you may have about the authenticity of the Jewish tradition should be quickly dispelled.

....At any rate, millions of Jews knew and still do know that G-d is the Author of the Torah Shebiktav [Written Torah] and the Torah Shebaal Peh [Oral Torah], which He gave to His people Israel not only to study but to observe in practice in daily life, and make it a condition of the existence and welfare of our people as a whole, and of the true happiness of every individual Jewish man and Jewish Woman.

How do these millions of Jews know, and how did they know in the past that the Torah is true? Simply because they have it on the evidence of their parents, millions of Jews that preceded them, and these in turn from their parents, and so on, uninterruptedly back to the millions of Jews (if we include women and children and those above and below the age range of the 600,000 male adults) who witnessed the Divine Revelation at Sinai.

Throughout all those generations the very same content has been traditionally handed down, not by a single group, but by a people of many millions, of different mentalities, walks of life, interests, under the most varying circumstances, places and times, etc., etc. Such evidence cannot be disputed.

It is difficult, even in the course of a letter, to elaborate, but I am sure even the above should dispel any of your doubts, if indeed, you had any serious doubts, as to the authenticity of our tradition, and that you will from now on not permit anything to weaken your observance of the mitzvot, the observance of which itself illumines the mind and soul more than any philosophical book can ever do. I shall be glad to hear good news from you. I wish you success.

CUSTOMS CORNER

It is forbidden to wear *shatnez*-a mixture of wool and linen. (Deuteronomy 22:11.)

Shatnez is forbidden whether the mixture of wool and linen occurred in this garment (even if it's just soft curtains, tablecloths and towels) at the stage of combing, spinning or weaving. Even if linen threads were used to sew buttons onto a wool suit, or to reinforce shoulder pads, this is forbidden as *shatnez*.

If purchasing a suit that contains either wool or linen, you should have the garment inspected by a Jewish *shatnez* expert, to establish that it does not contain *shatnez* (even if the label says that the garment is 100% wool, it may possibly contain 2% of other materials). These experts take appropriate samples from the garment (without ruining the garment) and send the samples to a *shatnez* laboratory, where it is examined under a low-powered microscope, and the materials are identified.

One may try on a suit to see if it fits, despite the fact that it may contain *shatnez*.

A WORD

from the Director

This coming Wednesday is Chai Elul, the 18th of Elul. Chai Elul was the date of birth of two great luminaries - the Baal Shem Tov, founder of general Chasidut and Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad Chasidut.

The Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, described Chai Elul by saying that it introduces chayot - life energy - into the service of the month of Elul.

The service of Elul includes Torah study, prayer and mitzvot (commandments) as well as teshuva (repentance) and redemption.

The Baal Shem Tov taught that at each moment, creation is renewed.

When G-d created the world from total nothingness, the first moment of existence that He created included within it every moment that would follow.

Similarly, at every moment, as G-d totally recreates the world anew, every moment includes all previous and all subsequent moments, just as the first moment of creation included all time.

This concept helps us understand teshuva - return and repentance. It is explained that in one moment of true repentance a person can compensate for inadequacies in his behaviour over many years.

Indeed, with one turn of sincere teshuva, one can compensate for all the past transgression, even those committed in previous incarnations.

How is that possible?

Because each moment contains within it the totality of time and can thus alter the nature of the events that occurred previously.

This concept, although true at all times, receives greater emphasis during the month of Elul. And Chai Elul contributes the dimension of chayot - life energy - to all of this.

On this basis, we can understand the uniqueness of Chai Elul.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED

Once...

The Loan

By Yerachmiel Tilles

Rabbi Shmuel Strashun (1794-1872) was revered not only for his brilliance in Torah scholarship but also for his devotion to the Jewish community. Among his many public activities, he managed a free-loan fund for the people of Vilna.

Rabbi Shmuel was very careful in keeping the accounts of this fund. He also made certain that people repaid their loans as soon as they were due, else there would not be any money available for other people to borrow.

A simple Jew once borrowed one hundred rubles for four months, promising to return it on the appointed day. Four months later, when the loan was due, he went to Rabbi Shmuel in the study hall and found Rabbi Shmuel deeply engrossed in a complex subject in the Talmud. The man laid the money in front of him. Rabbi Shmuel looked up, nodded, and went back to his studying. Certain that the rabbi had acknowledged his receipt of the money, the man went his way.

But Rabbi Shmuel had only nodded reflexively; his mind was totally concentrated on his study. He pored over the talmudic tome for a long time, turning pages back and forth. When he finished, he shut it and put it back on its shelf, oblivious of the money pressed between its pages.

When Rabbi Shmuel went over the account books and noticed that the loan was still outstanding. He summoned him and asked that he repay the one hundred rubles.

"But I already paid you!"

"You did not. It is written here that you still owe the money."

"I put the money on the table right in front of you!" the man insisted.

Rabbi Shmuel did not remember anything of the sort; he continued to demand payment. The man kept refusing, insisting that he had already paid. Finally, Rabbi Shmuel summoned him to the rabbinical court.

The hearing took place. Both sides were heard, and the court ruled in favour of the poor man. It was one man's word against another's—there were no witnesses to the loan or the alleged repayment—and according to Torah rule, in order to obligate a person to pay money, absolute proof of the obligation is required. The poor person was only instructed to take an oath that he had repaid the loan.

But the poor man had no sympathizers in all of Vilna. He was considered a thief and a stubborn fool. His good name was ruined. People stopped talking to him. His son could not bear the disgrace and left Vilna altogether. Finally the man was even dismissed from his job. Still, he continued to insist that he had paid back his debt.

Time passed and Rabbi Shmuel needed to research the same tractate. He pulled the volume down from the shelf and opened it up, and discovered a sum of money—one hundred rubles. For a moment he was puzzled, wondering how such a large sum could have been misplaced there. Suddenly, it all came back to him. This was the missing money which the defendant had insisted he had repaid.

Rabbi Shmuel felt terrible. He had wronged a Jew. He had accused him falsely! Shaken to his core, he quickly summoned the man and said, "How can I possibly make amends for the anguish I caused you? I am prepared to make a public confession to clear your name. What else can I do to compensate you for your suffering?!"

The man stood before the rabbi. His face was gaunt, lined with the ravages of his ordeal. He said sadly: "My good name is already ruined. Even if you declare my innocence, people will not forget that I had once been accused of such a terrible thing. They might even think that you simply had pity on me and therefore decided to clear my name—despite my guilt. Besides, it would not bring my son back. He left Vilna out of shame."

Rabbi Shmuel was thoughtful for a long time. How could he help the broken man before him, the man whose reputation he himself had ruined? Suddenly, he had an idea. "Tell your son to return to Vilna, and I will take him as a husband for my daughter! This will certainly restore your good name!"

The man was overwhelmed. He had never dreamed of such a wonderful thing. That his son should marry the revered rabbi's daughter!

The engagement took place several days later. The cream of Vilna society took part in the affair. People could not stop talking about the amazing turn of events. "It must have been decreed from birth," everyone decided, "that this ordinary man's son was to marry the great rabbi's daughter. It came to be only through the mistake about the loan. How amazing are the ways of heaven!"

Thoughts THAT COUNT

When you go forth to war against your enemies...and you shall take him captive (Deut. 21:10)

In the war against the Evil Inclination, it is insufficient to merely conquer and subdue it; one must also "take him captive" and utilize one's negative impulses to serve G-d. In truth, there is much to learn from the Evil Inclination, whose G-d-given role is to constantly attempt to cause man to sin. We would be well advised to emulate its dedication in fulfilling G-d's will. (*The Baal Shem Tov*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 31 AUGUST 2012

BEGINS	ENDS
5:40MELBOURNE	6:38
5:38ADELAIDE	6:34
5:16BRISBANE	6:09
6:25DARWIN	7:15
5:14GOLD COAST	6:08
5:41PERTH	6:36
5:18SYDNEY	6:14
5:26CANBERRA	6:22
5:28LAUNCESTON	6:28
5:42AUCKLAND	6:39
5:37WELLINGTON	6:37
5:26HOBART	6:27
5:13BYRON BAY	6:07



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS KI TETZEI
14 ELUL • 1 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:40 PM
	MINCHA:	5:50 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:20 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:30 AM
	MINCHA:	5:40 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:38 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS MON-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:50 PM
	MAARIV:	6:35 PM