

LAMPLIGHTER

14 Shevat
Beshalach
Shabbos Shira
1071
25 January
5773/2013

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The Jewish nation had to wage war on two separate occasions as it left Egypt and made its way to receive the Torah on Mount Sinai. The first war was against Pharaoh and his soldiers, and the second was the war against the Amalekites. This week's Torah portion, Beshalach, gives us an account of these two battles and illustrates the different reactions the Jews had to these two adversaries.

When the Jews were threatened by Pharaoh, they were commanded, "G-d will fight for you, and you shall be silent." But later, when attacked by Amalek, G-d enjoined them, "Go out and fight Amalek." Why was there a different attitude towards these two enemies?

The two nations posed different threats. Pharaoh presented a physical threat to Jewish existence, whereas Amalek posed a spiritual danger. The Jewish People were instructed to entrust their physical safety to G-d, but it was necessary that they themselves take action against Amalek's spiritual onslaught.

Pharaoh's pursuing army did not directly challenge the Jews' relationship with G-d and their beliefs. In this instance, G-d took their defence upon Himself, saying, "and you shall be silent" - just leave things to Me. G-d proved to the Jews that military might and victory is not what distinguishes Jews from all other nations.

Amalek, however, symbolizes a totally different sort of war. Amalek only dared to attack the Jewish People after they had passed through the Red Sea and were on their way to receive the Torah. It was precisely at that juncture that Amalek tried to intercept them. The Torah uses the words, Amalek "met you ('korcha') on the way" - from the Hebrew word "k'rirut," meaning coldness. Amalek came and cooled off the enthusiasm the Jewish people had for holiness, at a time when they were at the apex of spirituality. Against such a threat the Jews had to retaliate themselves, and immediately.

Whenever anything, anyone, or any power prevents Jews from learning Torah or performing Mitzvot, we cannot wait for G-d to come to our aid. All steps must be taken, including the prospect of waging physical war, to ensure that Jews be able to continue learning and maintain their Jewish way of life without hindrance.

The struggle against Amalek is of such importance that we are reminded of what they did to us every day in our prayers. The lesson we draw from this week's Torah portion is that in the battle against Amalek there can be no compromise. We each have our own personal, internal "Amalek," the evil inclination, which stands ever ready to deter us from the right path by cooling off our ardour, enthusiasm, and the love of G-d that burns within the heart of every Jew. To combat him we must remember how to deal with this old enemy - to take an immediate stand, and to once and for all banish Amalek with any means at our disposal. Only after he is vanquished can we continue on our way to Mount Sinai.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Bitterness Moves

By Chana Kroll

When confronted with pain, we have three choices. We can pretend it isn't there and think about something else -- simple escapism. We can dwell on it without doing anything about it -- which leads to depression. Or we can recognize it as a sign that something isn't what it is supposed to be, and seek to fix it.

The first choice will most likely only result in having to face a much deeper pain later on. The second choice is also a type of escapism -- not from the reality that pain exists, but rather from the hope that things might get better. Denying hope also allows us to deny any personal responsibility in making change happen. Depression doesn't require any energy. It doesn't inspire change or even minimal movement of any kind. It tends more towards creating coach potatoes and other modern-day hermits.

The third choice, recognizing pain, is fundamental in seeking a remedy -- even though that step is often experienced as a sense of bitterness. Particularly when confronting a deep pain, something that touches our core. It isn't something we can just brush past, but it also isn't something we want to stay. So confronting it can lead to either depression or bitterness. Granted, bitterness is a negative emotional reaction, but it is infinitely superior to depression. That's because bitterness, unlike depression, moves. It may not always move us along the most pleasant path, but it moves. It has life.

It has also, somewhere deep within it, hope. A sense that the source of pain is a temporary state of brokenness, something that can and will be healed. A sense that pain is something we are not meant to passively resign ourselves to, but rather something to eradicate at its root.

Miriam carried that idea within her, engraved on her very essence and expressed in her name, a name whose essential root means both "bitter" and "rebellion." From her youth she continued to admonish, advise, comfort, and inspire the Jewish people, from newborn infants to seasoned leaders, through the last, most bitter, difficult years of the exile, and beyond.

This is the secret of why we remember the song that the women sang at the sea, under Miriam's leadership. Our Sages taught that the Song at the Sea, and each of the nine songs of redemption sung prior to the Final Redemption, were sung with the knowledge that the redemption itself was leading, to a future exile -- and that this is why they are all referred to in the feminine, shirah, out of sensitivity that for women, the greatest joys are often accompanied by pain.

Yet that sad knowledge of future exiles carries with it another message. Implicit in that knowledge is the trust in future redemption, since tradition has always taught us that one day redemption will come which will not be followed by further exile.

This is the joy tinged with sorrow which, in itself, is hinting at a greater joy to follow. The idea of an intense pain being a source of great joy -- not merely being followed by joy, but being a process of creating that joy -- is instinctive to a woman's psyche.

Miriam nurtured that instinctive idea, that impulse to rejoice, in the women of her generation, until it matured into an active anticipation of the Exodus from Egypt. The women were a source of strength and hope for their husbands and children precisely because they felt the harshness of the exile and slavery, and yet knew where it was heading. Even while deep in the pain of exile, they prepared to celebrate their nation's birth.

Slice of LIFE

THE BLACK SHOFAR OF SHECHEM

Until the holy site was insanely destroyed by villainous Arab forces, built next to *Kever Yosef* (Yosef's Tomb) in Shechem ("Nablus") was a *kollel/yeshiva* called *Od Yosef Chai*, most recently under the leadership of the renowned American-born Kabbalist, Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh. Among the holy objects in use there were two *shofars*, one the usual beige colour, and the other a black one that issued strikingly clear, sharp notes.

The first day of Rosh HaShanah 5757 [Sept. 1998] fell on a Shabbat, so the *shofar* was not blown. On the second day, after the Morning Prayer and the Torah Reading, the *shofar*-blower for the congregation prepared to perform the *Mitzvah*. He preferred the black *shofar* because it was easy to blow and yielded a strong clear sound. This time, however, he was able to extract only a few weak *tekiah* blasts no matter how hard he blew and despite the numerous attempts he made. Finally, exhausted, he sheepishly passed the *shofar* to me, Yeshaya Ben-Pinchas, that perhaps I could succeed in his place, with G-d's help. I had been blowing the basic ten notes of the *shofar* in the *Kollel* every morning after prayers during the month of Elul, as is traditional during this last month of the year leading up to Rosh HaShanah. I too experienced great difficulty, although the *shofar* was ordinarily so easy to blow, but eventually managed to produce the required one hundred notes. Everyone in the hushed, trembling congregation felt that Heavenly interference was somehow blocking the call of the *shofar*.

A successful *shofar* blowing is considered a propitious omen for a successful year. It was not long until the brave settlers who maintained the holy site and the *yeshiva* found out the significance of the opposite. As you may recall, less than two weeks later, on Erev Sukkot, a gang of PLO criminals laid siege to Yosef's Tomb. They attacked, they burned, they plundered and they destroyed. One of the precious objects stolen was that black *shofar*.

About two and a half years later, on Friday 24 Adar, I went to visit a companion from the Shechem *yeshiva* who at that time was doing his army reserve service in the holy city of Hebron. He was excited to see me, bubbling over that he had something interesting to relate. His eyes shining, he told me that one of the soldiers in his brigade had mentioned to him that his father had somehow acquired the black *shofar* that had disappeared from Yosef's Tomb two and a half years before.

I was so stimulated by this good news! I still remembered that startling Rosh HaShanah of 5757 when it had been so surprisingly difficult to blow the *shofar*. I wrote down the phone number of the man who now had the *shofar* and immediately went to call him. I introduced myself as a student of the *yeshiva* at Yosef's Tomb, and after I explained the whole story to him, he agreed that if I came to see him after Shabbat in Rishon Letzion where he lived, he would entrust the precious *shofar* to me to return it to its rightful place in Shechem.

Immediately after *havdalah* that Saturday night, I travelled as quickly as I could to Rishon. The man graciously turned over the *shofar* to me and then offered to tell me the unusual story about how it had come into his possession and then to me. It

goes without saying that I eagerly accepted.

"My brother has some business involvements with Arabs. About a month ago one of the terrorists who was employed as a Palestine policeman came to him. He gave the *shofar* to my brother as part of a deal, explaining it had been found during a search of the houses of some suspicious characters in Shechem. Presumably, the Arab in whose home it was found had been involved in the destruction and looting of Yosef's Tomb.

"My brother didn't know what to do with the *shofar* so he gave it to me. Three weeks later I encountered the son of an old childhood friend whom I hadn't seen in many years. I told him the story of the *shofar*, which amazed him. He responded that in his current Reserve unit was a student from the *Od Yosef Chai yeshiva* in Shechem."

That student was the friend that I visited. I was so excited that I decided to attempt to return the *shofar* to its rightful home that very night! The bus ride from Rishon to Machaneh Horon passed in the blink of an eye, and with Heaven's help I just managed to catch there the 10:30pm [last bus] to Shechem.

As soon as I got there I ran to the Tomb. Before returning the *shofar* to its place I decided to blow a few *tekiah* blasts. The sounds were powerful and clear on the first try, just like it used to be.

May it be G-d's will that in this time of our redemption we should merit to soon hear the *shofar* of King Mashiach, the scion of the line of David. May the entire Land of Israel, including Kever Yosef (the Tomb of Joseph), be taken from the hands of our enemies and returned to us, and restored to its former glory.

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

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ISSUE 1071

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The righteous women who left Egypt were so confident that G-d would perform miracles for the Jewish people that they took tambourines with them into the desert. So too, with the final Redemption, the righteous women, as well as all Jews, must, and certainly do trust so completely in the immediate Redemption, that they will begin immediately - in these last moments of exile - to play music and dance for the coming of the complete Redemption.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

B"H, 4 Sivan, 5705

Greetings and blessings,

You are certainly aware that our friend Mr. Stulman sent a check for Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch. I would like to take this opportunity to again express our heartfelt thanks for your efforts, trouble, and work in this matter in the past, present, and also, we hope in the future. The fundamental *yasher koach* comes to you from the work itself which is achieved and can continue through this donation.

The first of the Ten Commandments communicated at the time of the Giving of the Torah states: "I am G-d, your L-rd, who took you out of the land of Egypt." The commentaries (e.g., Ibn Ezra) ask: Why doesn't the Torah mention an even greater feat, the creation of heaven and earth? Moreover, not only is the creation of heaven and earth a greater achievement, it is relevant to all generations. The Exodus from Egypt, by contrast, was witnessed only by that generation and was important primarily to them.

Chassidus answers [this question] as follows: The creation of a material entity, making an entity from absolute nothingness was accomplished by the "ray" of G-dliness that relates to the worlds. The Exodus from Egypt, by contrast, was possible only through "signs and wonders" (*Devarim* 4:34), i.e., removing that material entity from the [logical] principles and limitations [which govern] the creation. {This is hinted at by the Hebrew term *Yetzias Mitzrayim* ("the Exodus from Egypt"). For *Mitzrayim*, Egypt, shares the root of the word *meitzarim*, meaning "boundaries and limitations" as in *Eichah* 1:3.} This requires a much higher revelation of G-dliness. Therefore, the Exodus is mentioned in connection with the Giving of the Torah, which transcends the limitations of creation.

We find, to make a distinction, a similar pattern with regard to human conduct. Teaching, either oneself or a colleague, to adopt a new positive behavioural pattern is comparatively easy when compared to changing and remaking [one's] principles. The latter involves going out of the norms that one has established for oneself and which have shown themselves to be valid with regard to one's personal matters, although they create difficulties in a particular situation. This involves an exodus from one's boundaries and limitations. And it is much more difficult.

In this, I hope, my dear Mr. Kavven, you will help Mr. Stulman step beyond his limitations and governing principles and accept *in a complete manner* the directives from my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *Shlita*. Certainly, as has been the pattern until now, you will have success in this endeavour.

With good wishes and with holiday blessings,

Rabbi Menachem Schneerson

Executive Director

CUSTOMS CORNER

Tu B'Shevat, the 15th of Shevat on the Jewish calendar-celebrated this year on Shabbat, January 26, 2013-is the day that marks the beginning of a "New Year for Trees." This is the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle.

Legally, the "New Year for Trees" relates to the various tithes that are separated from produce grown in the Holy Land. These tithes differ from year to year in the seven-year shemittah cycle: the point at which a budding fruit is considered to belong to the next year of the cycle is the 15th of Shevat.

We mark the day of Tu B'Shevat by eating fruit, particularly from the kinds that are singled out by the Torah in its praise of the bounty of the Holy Land: grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. On this day we remember that "man is a tree of the field" (*Deuteronomy* 20:19) and reflect on the lessons we can derive from our botanical analogue.

A WORD

from the Director

Tu B'Shevat is "the Rosh HaShanah of the trees." The connection between this holiday and our service is evident from the phrase: "for a man is like the trees of the field." Our Sages explain that a fruit tree serves as a metaphor for Torah sages and by extension, to the totality of the Jewish people since "all your sons are students of the L-rd."

We find the Jewish people referred to with the metaphor of land as the verse states, "You shall be a desired land". In particular, they share a special connection to the chosen land, Eretz Yisroel, and the seven species of fruit for which Eretz Yisroel is praised in the Torah.

Thus, we find each of these seven species employed as a metaphor for the Jewish people. The Jews are called, "the first of His grain" (referring to wheat and barley). Psalms describes the Jews as "a vine brought forth from Egypt" (grapes). Similarly, we find the metaphors of figs, "the first fruit of the fig tree in its season;" pomegranates, "your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates;" olives, "The L-rd called your name, 'a green olive tree, fair, with goodly fruit;" and a date palm, "Your stature is like a palm tree," and "the righteous will flourish like a palm tree."

Since Tu B'Shevat is the "the Rosh HaShanah of the trees," it generates new life energy for those dimensions of a Jew's service which are compared to trees.

G-d "sowed" Israel, His "produce", so that His glory would be revealed in an increased manner. In a more particular sense, the metaphor of planting or sowing the Jews in exile is relevant on a personal level and relates to the manner in which the soul descends into this world to elevate the body, the animal soul, and its portion in the world at large, making a dwelling for G-d in the lower worlds. Through our fulfilment of Mitzvos (which are also described by the metaphor of sowing), we draw down the revelation of G-dliness into the world.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

A TIMELY LOAN

Although his grandfather -- the saintly Rebbe Shneur Zalman of Liadi -- had passed away many years earlier, the *Tzemach Tzedek* merited envisioning his grandfather often. At times he saw him at night; at times by day. This afforded him the unique opportunity to present his Torah difficulties before his grandfather for solution. After becoming accustomed to these visions, the *Tzemach Tzedek* prepared for them by accumulating his questions in advance.

The *Tzemach Tzedek* was therefore quite distressed when the visitations suddenly ceased. It was 5575 (1815), he was twenty-five years old and his father-in-law, Rabbi DovBer, was the Rebbe in Lubavitch. The *Tzemach Tzedek* had gathered many complex Torah questions for which he could find no solutions. He had always relied on his grandfather for answers and felt greatly anguished at this sudden change.

One morning, as the *Tzemach Tzedek* was walking to synagogue, he passed through the village marketplace, where he was approached by one of the merchants, a Chassid by the name of Reb Mordechai Eliyahu. "Could you lend me five or six rubles just until tonight?" he asked the young scholar. "I expect to make a profit during market hours today."

"Certainly," replied the *Tzemach Tzedek*. "Come to my house after I return from the synagogue and I will lend you whatever you need."

When the *Tzemach Tzedek* arrived at the synagogue, he prepared himself for prayer. He had already taken out his *tallit* and put it over his shoulder in readiness to wrap himself in it, when a sudden thought occurred to him. "Doesn't the Talmud (Bava Batra 10a) say that Rabbi Elazar would give a coin to the poor and pray only afterwards? And doesn't the Talmud (Sukkah 49b) also say that loaning money is greater than charity?"

The *Tzemach Tzedek* immediately regretted his actions. Rather than delaying the good deed, he should have offered Reb Mordechai Eliyahu the loan immediately. In the meantime the Chassid could possibly have earned something. He laid down his *tallit* at once, returned home, and took out the amount of money the merchant needed.

The *Tzemach Tzedek* could hear a loud commotion as he retraced his steps to the marketplace. Dozens of merchants had descended on the market place, each offering various kinds of wares. The hundreds of customers haggled loudly, animals brayed, clucked and mooed, and merchants fought with each other over prospective customers. Finding Mordechai Eliyahu now would be no easy task.

The *Tzemach Tzedek* walked slowly through the bustling marketplace, looking intently at every face. The minutes ticked away as he sought out the needy merchant. Finally, after much effort, the Rebbe located Reb Mordechai Eliyahu and gave the grateful merchant the funds he so desperately needed.

Leaving the busy market behind, the *Tzemach Tzedek* returned to the synagogue to resume his prayers. A pleasant surprise awaited him; no sooner had he donned his *tallit* and *Tefillin* when his grandfather suddenly appeared to him, his face radiating spiritual joy. "Loaning money to a fellow Jew in a wholehearted fashion has great merit," said the Alter Rebbe. "Doing a selfless favour for a fellow Jew without imposing restriction, in accordance with the great precept to love your fellow as yourself, throws the portals of Heaven wide open."

The *Tzemach Tzedek* realized he had merited this divine revelation with the act of loaning charity before even starting his own prayers. He then advanced his complex questions, receiving his grandfather's replies for all his queries.

Decades later, when he related this incident to his youngest son and successor, Rabbi Shmuel, the *Tzemach Tzedek* added the following: "Helping another Jew earn his livelihood - even just to earn a small amount on a calf -- opens the doors of all the Heavenly chambers."

Biographical note:

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn [1789-1866], the third Rebbe of Chabad, was known as the *Tzemach Tzedek*, after his books of Halachic responsa and Talmudic commentary called by that name. He was renowned not only as a Rebbe, but also as a leading scholar in his generation in both the revealed and hidden aspects of Torah.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

They believed in G-d and in Moses His servant (14:31)

One who believes in Moses, believes in G-d. (*Mechilta*)

Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances (15:20)

How did the Israelites have tambourines in the desert? But the righteous women of that generation were certain that G-d would perform miracles for them, and they prepared tambourines and dances while still in Egypt. (*Mechilta; Rashi*)

All the diseases which I have brought upon Egypt, I shall not bring upon you, for I am G-d your healer (15:26)

I shall never afflict you with the intent to merely punish, as I did the Egyptians. Rather, "I am G-d your healer" -- if I do cause you suffering, it is only to a positive end, like a doctor who may, at times, cause pain to his patient in order to heal him. (*Malbim*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 25 JANUARY 2013

BEGINS		ENDS
8:22	MELBOURNE	9:23
8:10	ADELAIDE	9:10
6:28	BRISBANE	7:23
7:02	DARWIN	7:54
6:27	GOLD COAST	7:23
7:05	PERTH	8:03
7:48	SYDNEY	8:46
7:59	CANBERRA	8:59
8:22	LAUNCESTON	9:27
8:20	AUCKLAND	9:21
8:31	WELLINGTON	9:36
8:25	HOBART	9:31
7:28	BYRON BAY	8:24



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BESHALACH
14 SHVAT • 25 JANUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:22 PM
	MINCHA:	8:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	9:05 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:::	9:23 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	2:03 PM
	MAARIV:	8:25 PM
		9:15 PM
		9:30 PM