

LAMPLIGHTER

19 Adar
Ki Sisa
Parshas Parah
1076
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Ki Sisa, Moshe descends from Mount Sinai holding the Tablets containing the Ten Commandments he received from G-d. "The Tablets were the work of G-d, and the writing was the writing of G-d, inscribed on both their sides."

Written on two magnificent stones of sapphire were the Ten Commandments, miraculously visible from both sides. Yet they were not to last for long.

"And Moshe became angry...and he broke them at the foot of the mountain... And G-d said to Moshe, 'Hew yourself tablets of stone like the first.'"

In connection to the Tablets, the Torah speaks of three distinct stages:

The original Tablets: Moshe descends from Mount Sinai, where he had spent the previous forty days and forty nights, with the Tablets in hand;

The breaking of the Tablets: Moshe witnesses the sin of the Children of Israel with the Golden Calf and breaks the Tablets in anger;

The second Tablets: The Jews repent of their sin. Moshe goes back up the mountain for an additional forty days and nights, to return with a second set of Tablets.

The first and second sets of Tablets were not identical. The first set was written by G-d; the second set was inscribed by Moshe under G-d's direction.

Yet curiously, the second set of Tablets was superior to the first in one important respect, as explained in Chasidic philosophy.

The breaking of the Tablets and their subsequent replacement is an example of "a descent for the sake of an ascent."

Every descent, every failure, can lead the individual to an even higher spiritual level.

According to this principle, the second set of Tablets was clearly superior to the first, for it came after the Jews' descent into idolatry and their ensuing return to G-d.

Symbolically, the three stages of the Tablets parallel the annals of the Jewish people and their progression throughout history:

The first stage (the original Tablets) spans the years between the revelation on Mount Sinai until the destruction of the Second Holy Temple.

The second stage (the breaking of the Tablets) refers to the forced exile of the Jews from their land and the spiritual degradation endured for almost 2,000 years.

The third and final stage, the era on whose threshold we now stand, is the Messianic Era, at which time the spirituality of the entire world will be elevated to unprecedented heights, an ascent made possible only by the bitter darkness of the exile.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

G-d's Back

By Zalman Shneur

The question, "Where was G-d when this happened?" has intrigued philosophers throughout the ages.

For me, it began when I received a phone call from Rabbi Yosef Kantor, director of Chabad activities in Southeast Asia. He was looking for someone to head Chabad's relief effort in Thailand's ravaged south-western coast. Having just completed my rabbinic ordination, I jumped at the offer. I teamed up with Yossi Zaklos, an old school pal. Two days later we landed in Bangkok.

We set up headquarters on Phuket Island. What was once an island filled with life and dreams had in a few short moments turned into a nightmare of death. We got to work right away burying the dead and helping the wounded. As time progressed, the relief effort shifted to giving humanitarian aid to the survivors. We helped in any way could. Our motto was, "Anything that can help them get their lives back on track, we'll bring it."

After weeks in Thailand trying to be a source of cheer and comfort to the victims, the visions and experiences caught up with me. I sat down on a fallen tree and wept.

I cried for those who died, and for those who lived. I cried for the children who were killed, for the parents, the orphans, the survivors. How, I pondered, had so many lives been lost, and scores more shattered, in such a few moments? G-d, I cried, where were you on that ominous Sunday morning? Why have you forsaken us? How can we understand such an event--is there any reason for this? Could there be an explanation?

That night I lay in bed, the day's events still vivid in my mind. I remembered a verse in which Moshe realized that G-d was in a very merciful mode. He mustered the courage to ask the Al-mighty: "Show me Your glory." G-d responded, "You cannot see My face." However, G-d continued in the next verse, "you will see My back."

The commentaries explain: Moshe looked in to the future and envisioned the tragedies his people would experience. He asked G-d, "Why do you hide yourself in our most difficult moments? Show me your glory! Reveal the meaning of all this." G-d responded: You cannot see my face. You cannot see me revealed in the horror. However, "You will see my back"--you will see me there in hindsight. When you look back and reflect on the past events, you will find me.

Two weeks later, sitting on the runway in the Bangkok airport, I found myself reflecting on my trip to Thailand. I thought about the wonderful people I had met, the relief workers that came from all over the world, parents who left their jobs behind to do something that would make a difference. I thought about all the people around the world who contributed so generously to the global relief effort. Everyone was thinking the same thing, "How can I sit where I am and go on with my life while so many people are suffering?" I thought about the Thai people who suffered so much and lost everything they owned yet when we came to visit their camps, how kind and selfless they were, sharing with us their meagre possessions and the little food they had.

There is no explanation for why it happened and for why so many people suffered. But in hindsight, looking back, I saw G-d's back. I was able to say: "G-d, You pushed us to our limit – but we responded. I found you – in us."

Slice of LIFE

Bentzi (short for Ben-Tzion) was 32 years old and he hadn't been an observant Jew most of his life, nor had his parents. He received a 'normal' Israeli education like all the other children but several years ago his brother began to take Judaism seriously which did something to him and he began to do the same.

So for the last few years he had been what is popularly known as a 'Baal Tshuva'; a Jew 'Returning' to his hidden Jewish identity; constantly improving his actions, speech and thought to be more spiritually and positively oriented in tune to the Torah.

For instance, as the holiday of Passover approached he made it a point to learn more about its mystical content and be more enthusiastic about its laws and customs. So when his brother suggested that he buy special, handmade Matzot (Unleavened bread) from a place called Kollel Chabad in Jerusalem he immediately took a bus from his home in a town called Maale Adumim and went there.

It took him a bit of searching through the winding streets of old Jerusalem but when he arrived at the building he was in for an unpleasant surprise. There was no one in the room except one respectable-looking white-bearded Chassid but when Bentzi asked if this is where they sell Matzot the Chassid turned to him and replied, 'Looking to buy Matzot? There aren't any here! Sold out!'

"Sold out?" Bentzi said incredulously. "But there's still a week before the holiday! How could it be?"

He thought a few seconds and asked. "Well, maybe tell me where I can buy Matzot?"

"Go to the bookstore called HaMayfitz. There is a Rabbi called Gerson Henich Cohen. He'll sell you Matzot. But you should hurry!"

Bentzi thanked the man and rushed out of the room as he yelled over his shoulder, "Have a Kosher and happy Passover!"

As he was running he couldn't help thinking to himself that the whole thing seemed very strange. How could it be that there were no Matzot in the Matza store? Especially a week from the holiday? That means that hundreds of families would suffer! Maybe even more! Where would they get Matzot?"

Suddenly he realized that he must have taken a wrong turn, he looked around for a few seconds to figure out where he was but he didn't exactly recognize the area. He was standing near the bottom of a steeply inclined side street that emptied into a busy main street.

He looked up to see if there was anyone around to ask directions to when suddenly he heard something rattling in the distance and what he saw made his heart skip a beat; it was a baby carriage barrelling down the street in his direction from the top of the hill. It was approaching going fast and in seconds it would run into the busy street if he didn't move fast to stop it if there was a baby in that carriage it would be a sure catastrophe! For a second he froze as the sound of the carriage wheels whistled louder and louder; louder than the noise of the cars in the street behind him. He ran as fast as possible, lunged and caught it!

He looked inside the carriage. There was a baby there! He had saved a life!

Bentzi looked up the street and saw in the distance a man and his wife looking in a store window and discussing something. He pushed the carriage up toward them and asked if it was theirs. "Why yes!" They both said in an almost in unison not understanding what he was doing and how it got in his hands. When he explained what happened they were ashamed, happy, grateful and confused at once.

Bentzi was as confused as they were, 'Good thing that Kollel Chabad ran out of Matzot!!' He thought to himself.

But what about his Matzot?! He had almost forgotten! He said a quick good

bye, wished them a happy holiday and hurried away from the couple.

After asking a few people for directions to the 'HaMayfitz' book store he finally found it, entered and asked for hand-made Chabad Matzot.

"Matzot?" The owner replied "We don't sell Matzot here. Never did. If you want to buy a good book, or maybe a pair of Tefillin or a Mezuzah, yes. But Matzot, sorry! If you want Matzot go to Kollel Chabad. Kollel Chabad has Matzot."

"But I was just there!" Bentzi tried to protest. "How could it be? They told me to come here! They said they ran out of Matzot and said I should go to HaMayfitz. This is HaMayfitz right?"

"Listen." The man behind the counter said. "I'm glad you came here, yes, this is HaMayfitz and you can come every day if you want but we don't sell Matzot. Never did! And I don't believe that Kollel Chabad ran out. Can't be. Why, there's still a week before Pesach! Any case, here we certainly don't have any."

Bentzi knew the way and in just ten minutes he was entering the Kollel Chabad building. This time when he entered their Matza shop someone else was standing at the counter. "Tell me," Bentzi said. "Have you got Matzot here? I was here a half hour ago and they told me you ran out. Are there Matzot or not?"

"Ran out of Matzot?" The man said incredulously. "Here, come here." He motioned to Bentzi to step behind the counter then turned around, opened a door behind him and told Bentzi to have a look. It was a room filled from floor to ceiling with large cartons of Matzot! Hundreds of them! "How many cartons do you want?"

Bentzi told the story to many people since then and the usual comment is; "That Chassid who sent you from Kollel Chabad must have been Elijah the Prophet. (Elijah who lived some 2700 years ago, never died and appears regularly in this world to help people.) Hashem must have sent him to send you to save that baby."

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ISSUE 1076

MOSHIACH MATTERS

It is an unquestioned principle in Torah law that the saving of a life overrules all the commandments of the Torah (except for three). Now, we are going through the most extreme exile, when the very survival of the spiritual life of Jews is constantly threatened by intermarriage, assimilation, etc. Accordingly, G-d must liberate his people from this exile, without detaining them for one moment longer -- for spiritually, this is a life-saving emergency!



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Rosh Chodesh Adar II, 5738 (1978)

As you surely know, the special additional Torah portion, Parshat Zachor, which is read on the Shabbat before Purim, contains the commandments to remember what Amalek, the arch enemy of our Jewish people, did to our people when they were on their way to receive the Torah at Sinai.

Amalek's unprovoked and stealthy attack was calculated to shake their belief in G-d and dampen their enthusiasm for His Torah and Mitzvot.

Haman, a direct descendant of Amalek, was driven by hatred of the Jews, because "their laws were different from those of any other people," as the Megilla states. Likewise did all subsequent Amalekites and Hamans of all ages hate the Jews.

But "Amalek" -- in a wider sense -- represents all obstacles and hindrances which a Jew encounters on his, or her, way to receive and observe the Torah and Mitzvot with enthusiasm and joy in the everyday life.

And so Parshat Zachor comes to remind us, and never forget, that "Amalekites" exist in every generation and in every day and age, and that we must not allow ourselves to be deterred or discouraged by any Amalekite in any shape or form.

If the question be asked, "Why has G-d done thus?" Why should a Jew be confronted with such trials and difficulties? The answer is that every Jew has been given the necessary powers to overcome all such "Amalekites," and he is expected to use them, in order to demonstrate to himself and others that nothing will deter him, nor dampen his fervor, in the observance of the Torah and Mitzvot in accordance with G-d's Will.

And once he recognizes that whatever difficulty he encounters is really a test of his faith in G-d, and resolves firmly to meet the challenge, he will soon see that no "Amalek" of any kind is a match for the Divine powers of the Jewish soul.

Indeed, far from being insurmountable obstructions, they turn out to be helpers and catalysts for ever greater achievements, having been instrumental in mobilizing those inner powers which would have otherwise remained dormant.

This is also forcefully brought out in the Megilla, in the example of Mordechai the Jew, who "would not bend his knee nor bow down" before Haman.

As a result of this indomitable stance, not only was Haman's power totally broken, but many enemies became friends, as the Megilla tells us that "many of the peoples of the land were becoming 'Jewish,' for the fear of Mordechai fell upon them!"

May G-d grant that each and all of you should go from strength to strength in emulating Mordechai the Jew, advancing in all matters of Judaism, Torah and mitzvot, with joy and gladness of heart, and may you all be blessed with a full measure of "light, joy, gladness, and honour," both in the plain sense as well as in the inner meaning of these terms in accordance with the interpretation of our Sages -- "Light -- this is the Torah... Honour -- this is Tefillin" -- since the Torah and mitzvot, though a "must" for their own sake, are the channels and vessels to receive and enjoy G-d's blessings in all needs, materially and spiritually.

Wishing each and all of you a happy Purim, and may its inspiration be with you every day throughout the year.

CUSTOMS CORNER

"Jewish" Clothes

The Midrash relates that one of the practices in the merit of which the Jews were redeemed from slavery in Egypt was the retention of their Jewish style of clothing. Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Rimanov often said that Jews dressing like gentiles actually invites anti-Semitism.

When purchasing clothes and wearing them for the first time, one should recite the blessing of *Shehecheyanu*. This blessing is recited only for significant clothing, not for underwear, socks, shoes or the like. The prevailing Chabad custom is not to recite this blessing for new clothes, because wearing a new garment is no longer considered a joyous event, as it was in the past. When purchasing a particularly expensive item of clothing, however, one may still recite this blessing. If one forgot to recite the blessing while donning the clothing, he may still say it as long as he has not yet taken it off.

One should also have new clothing inspected for *shatnez*, to ensure that there is no improper mixing of wool and linen.

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbos we read Parshas Parah, which discusses the red heifer and ritual impurity; it is also the Shabbos that follows the holiday of Purim, the twentieth of Adar. These elements and their concurrence in one Shabbos teach us many lessons. These lessons are not limited to this year alone, but are also relevant in every other year.

Parshas Parah emphasizes Torah. It begins "this is the decree of the Torah." On the surface, "this is the decree of the Red Heifer" would be a more appropriate choice of words. However, the Torah uses the former expression because the Red Heifer is a general decree, pertaining to the entire Torah. Hence, the reading of Parshas Parah stresses the importance of Torah.

The lesson which we can learn from the twentieth of Adar is as follows. On the twentieth of Adar, Choni HaMagel prayed for rain. The Mishnah explains that there was a severe drought and the people came to Choni HaMagel and asked him to pray for rain. He prayed and no rain descended. He drew a circle in the ground, stood within, and declared "Master of the universe... I swear by Your Great Name that I will not move from here until You have mercy on upon Your children." From this story we see that the twentieth of Adar stresses the quality of, and the need for an emphasis on, prayer. This is connected with the above-mentioned emphasis on Torah study, for the purpose of studying Torah is to bring one to the level of "fear of G-d," a level related to prayer.

A practical lesson results from the above: We must increase our study of Torah and our service of prayer. Even though it is after the redemption of Purim, we are still in exile. On the other hand, although we are still vulnerable to the impurity caused by touching a dead body which is purified by the Red Heifer, we can still become fully involved in Torah study and prayer. We have the power to be conscious of the "Giver of Torah" in the midst of our study; similarly we can come to the level of "fear of G-d" which is established through prayer. When we decide to do so, we will succeed. This success will hasten the coming of Moshiach who will redeem us, and lead us upright to our land.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

It was the Baba Sali's, Rabbi Yisrael Abuchatzera's [1890 - 4 Shvat 1984], custom to regularly travel to other Jewish communities to strengthen, bless, advise and inspire them.

Once he travelled to a distant city and, as usual, when the all the Jews there heard of his arrival, they all rushed to greet him, hear him speak and bask in his presence.

He was then ceremoniously ushered to the largest synagogue in town where, after the evening prayer, he spoke words of Torah.

He held the crowd spellbound for several hours with everything from simple and practical ideas to deep and even mystical concepts and when he finished the entire crowd stood on their feet beaming with joy and awe and crowded around to shake his hand and thank him.

The head elder of the congregation was the first in line and he requested the honour and blessing of having the Tzadik spend the evening in his home.

But the Baba Sali didn't move. Rather he cleared his throat for attention and when everyone fell silent he announced; "Despite my fatigue from the journey I would like to first request that I be taken to see your Mikva."

The town elders began turning colours in shame nervously clearing their throats and shooting desperate, sheepish looks at one another. Until finally one of them stepped forward, hung his head and explained.

"Well, you see, that is.... Errrrr... rain doesn't fall very often here and, well. Well, the Mikva is dry and..."

The Baba Sali replied "Where is the Mikva?"

"But it's empty" someone else meekly protested, "and it's filthy. I mean, it hasn't been used for at least fifteen years"

But the Tzadik wanted to see the Mikva. So in ten minutes they were standing before the dilapidated Mikva building in the dirt and weeds.

The Baba Sali opened the door and entered and in a few moments came out, removed his fine linen outer robe rolled up his sleeves and entered to begin cleaning.

In just seconds all the men in the town were at work clearing the room and even the grounds outside. Five hours later the place was spotless and sparking clean.

"But what about the rain water?"

The Baba Sali put on his coat, stood before the Mikva building, raised his hands to heaven and cried out:

"Creator of the Universe! We have done all we can. Now You do what only You can... your children need rain!!"

In just moments, as though from nowhere, the sky darkened, a cold wind blew furiously and rain began pouring in such torrents that everyone ran for cover in fear of the awesome miracle.

In no time the Mikva was full to the brim and the rain stopped. Some of the younger men even began dancing for joy in the puddles that filled the road.

But the Tzadik didn't look happy. He held up his hands for quiet and everyone gathered round him again.

"Empty the water from the Mikva!" He announced grimly to a shocked audience.

Someone whimpered, "But we never have rain here, and after so long... when will it rain again?!"

"Empty the water!" He repeated. I have just discovered that the rain water ran to the Mikva through metal pipes. And according to the opinion of the Bait Yehuda; the great Tzadik Rabbi Yehuda Ayish, this is not kosher."

The crowd couldn't believe their ears but with no other choice they dispersed, each one brought a bucket from his home and in no time the precious Mikva was, sadly, empty again.

The Baba Sali then directed the men to remove the metal pipes and replace them with wood and as soon as the work was done he stood just as before, raised his hands to heaven and declared:

"Rabbi Yehuda Ayish! We have just disqualified and corrected this Mikva to comply with your interpretation of the holy Torah. Please pray to the Creator of the Universe that rain should again descend for Your children to do Your will!"

And so it was, the skies again darkened and in just ten minutes torrents of rain again descended and filled the Mikva.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

This they shall give... half a shekel (30:13)

Why not a complete coin? To teach us that no man is a complete entity unto himself. Only by joining with another can a person become a "whole thing". (*The Chassidic Masters*)

And He gave to Moses, when He had concluded (31:18)

Just as a bride comes to her groom beautiful, bejewelled and perfumed, so does the Shabbat come to the people of Israel... Just as the groom dresses in his finest raiment to receive his bride, so does the Jew receive the Shabbat. Just as a groom is pampered and absolved from working all his nuptial days, so is the Jew on Shabbat. (*Midrash*)

Engraved (charut) on the Tablets (32:16)

Had the First Tablets not been broken, no nation or people could have subjugated the Jewish people, as it is written, "Charut on the Tablet." Do not read charut (engraved), but cheirut (free); on account of these Tablets, Israel would have remained ever free. (*Talmud and Rashi, Eruvin 54a*)

Rabbi Judah says: [They would have been] free from the pain of exile. Rabbi Nechemiah says: [They would have been] free from the angel of death. (*Midrash Rabbah*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 1 MARCH 2013



BEGINS		ENDS
7:44	MELBOURNE	8:40
7:36	ADELAIDE	8:31
6:03	BRISBANE	6:55
6:52	DARWIN	7:41
6:02	GOLD COAST	6:54
6:35	PERTH	7:29
7:15	SYDNEY	8:10
7:25	CANBERRA	8:20
7:39	LAUNCESTON	8:37
7:44	AUCKLAND	8:40
7:48	WELLINGTON	8:47
7:39	HOBART	8:39
7:01	BYRON BAY	7:54

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS PARAH
19 ADAR • 1 MARCH

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING: MINCHA: KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	7:44 PM 7:55 PM 8:25 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS: LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: MINCHA: SHABBOS ENDS::	10:00 AM 10:18 AM 7:40 PM 8:40 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI: MINCHA: MAARIV:	9:15 AM 2:03 PM 7:40 PM 8:30 PM 9:30 PM