

LAMPLIGHTER

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Parshas Ki Tisa
Shushan Purim
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In this week's Torah portion, Ki Tisa, we read that when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the Tablets of the Law he saw the Jewish people sinning with the Golden Calf. With everyone watching, he threw the holy Tablets down and broke them. The Midrash relates that Moses later regretted what he had done. G-d said to him, "Do not be aggrieved. The first Tablets contained only the Ten Commandments, but the second Tablets I will give you will have much more! For together with the second Tablets the Jewish people will receive *Halachot* (laws), *Midrashim* and *Agadot* (homiletic interpretations), together with the entire Oral Torah!"

Why didn't G-d include these things when He gave the first set of Tablets?

To explain: In order to receive G-d's Torah, a person must be humble. Only through humility does he become an appropriate vessel to contain it.

This is what we say in our prayers: "And may my soul be like dust to all; open my heart to Your Torah." When we feel ourselves to be as lowly and humble as the dust, our hearts are opened to accept the Torah.

At Mount Sinai, G-d chose the Jewish people from among all the nations of the world, "lifting us up above all tongues." Thus the Jewish people felt themselves exalted; they were filled with self-importance and lacked the modesty and humility which is necessary to receive the Torah.

When Moses broke the Tablets before their eyes the spirit of the Jewish people was also broken. Profoundly humiliated, their hearts became filled with a sense of their own lowliness; they became "like the dust of the earth."

At that moment the Jews became worthy of receiving the entire Torah - not only the Ten Commandments, but all of the Torah's various aspects and levels!

In fact, as Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator, notes, G-d praised Moses for what he had done. "More power to you for having broken them!" G-d declared. G-d thanked Moses for having broken the first Tablets. For Moses' action caused the Jewish people to be humbled, and as a direct result, worthy of receiving the entire Torah.

In this light we can better understand the Talmud's statement that the fragments of the first Tablets were kept inside the Ark in the Holy Temple together with the intact second set.

Why were the broken fragments included? To remind us that we cannot receive G-d's Torah without humility. Arrogance and pride are emotions that preclude a person from being a proper vessel. When Jews bear this in mind, our hearts are opened, and we can receive G-d's Torah.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe, Volume 26

Picking Up the Pieces

By Yossy Goldman

It's too late. I'm too far gone. It'll never be the same. How many times have we heard those words? Or, worse still, said them?

This week's Parsha tells the story of the Golden Calf, the worst national sin in the history of the Jewish people. Frankly, if I were the editor of the Bible I'd have left that part out. How humiliating to the Jews! Just weeks after the greatest revelation of all time, when they saw and heard G-d up front and personal; they go and bow down to a cow?! How fickle can you get? But the Torah is unflinchingly honest and records this most unflattering moment of ours in all its gory detail.

Why?

Perhaps the very important lessons we need to draw from this embarrassing episode are, firstly, that people do sin, human beings do make mistakes, and even inspired Jews who saw the divine with their own eyes can mess up -- badly. And, secondly, that even afterwards there is still hope, no matter what.

In the very same Parsha we read how G-d tells Moses to carve a second set of tablets, to replace the first set he smashed when he came down the mountain and was shocked by what the Jews were up to. (Sort of "You broke them, you fix them" -- like the guy who fell asleep during the rabbi's sermon and the rabbi tells the *shamash* [sexton] to go and wake the fellow up. The *shamash* says, "Rabbi, you put him to sleep, you wake him up!") The Torah does not intend to diminish our respect for that generation, but rather to help us understand human frailty, our moral weakness and the reality of relationships, spiritual or otherwise.

G-d gave us a perfect Torah. The tablets were hand-made by G-d, pure and sacred, and then we messed up. So is it all over? Is there really no hope now? Are we beyond redemption? After all, what could possibly be worse than idolatry? We broke the first two commandments and the tablets were shattered into smithereens because we were no longer worthy to have them. It was the ultimate infidelity.

So Torah teaches that all is not lost. As bad as it was -- and it was bad -- it is possible for man to repair the damage. Moses will make new tablets. They won't be quite the same as G-d's, but there will be Tablets nonetheless. We can pick up the pieces.

I once heard a colleague speak about the significance of breaking the glass under the *chupah* (wedding canopy). Besides never forgetting Jerusalem and praying for her full restoration, this ceremony teaches a very important lesson about life to a bride and groom who are about to embark on their own new path in life. What happens immediately after the groom breaks the glass? Everyone shouts "Mazel Tov!" The message is clear. Something broke? Nu, it's not the end of the world. We can even laugh about it and still be happy. *Nisht gefערlich. Lo nora* [not a big deal]. This too shall pass. A very practical, peace-keeping tip for the new couple.

There are most definitely second chances in life.

It is possible to pick up the pieces in life. Whether it's our relationships with G-d, our marriage partners, our kids or our colleagues, we can make amends and repair the damage.

If the Jews could recover from the Golden Calf, our own challenges are small indeed.

Slice of LIFE

In years gone by, it was not unusual for Chasidim to spend extended periods of time in their Rebbe's presence, where they would fine-tune their own character traits and learn a path of spiritual service which would become the basis for their own spiritual endeavours.

Once, Rebbe Michel of Zlotchov sent one of his Chasidim to another town to learn from a simple, unlearned Jew the attribute of trust in G-d. The Chasid remained in that town for many weeks, observing that individual and learning from his behaviour how to perfect his own trust in the Creator.

Finally, when the time came to leave the Chasid made his way home, pondering the lessons he had learned. He was walking down the road lost in thought, when he was shaken by the anguished screams of women and children.

The Chasid looked up to see two Jewish women, bound in chains, being dragged down the road by two large, muscular gentile guards. He ran after the party and asked the women, "What has happened to you?"

The weeping women replied to him, "Our husbands leased the inn which belongs to the master of the village and they owe him a lot of rent. When they couldn't pay the rent, the master took us and he says he will kill us!"

The Chasid told the guards, "I will go to your master and I will pay the entire debt." They all went to the house of the master of the village, but instead of finding him; they found the manager of the estate. When the Chasid explained his intention to repay the debt, the manager was very willing to make the deal.

"Here are 150 rubles and I will sign a note for the balance," the Chasid said. "You don't know my master," said the manager. "He's not the type to settle for

less than the whole amount. He's waited a long time for these Jews to pay up! Either you produce the whole amount, or the deal is off!"

The Chasid had no choice but to comply, for the fate of two Jewish families was at stake. He laid all his money on the table, but was still short. Then he went and pawned whatever possessions he had to amass the entire sum of money. The manager took the money and released the women.

The Chasid continued on his journey home, giving thanks to the Creator for having given him the privilege of performing the exalted commandment of *pidyon shevuyim* / redeeming captives.

Before dark, the Chasid stopped at an inn to rest for the night. He soon fell into conversation with another Jewish traveller who, by the look of his clothing, was a wealthy merchant. The wealthy Jew asked him many questions, and so they passed some time in pleasant conversation.

The next morning the Chasid mentioned to his new acquaintance the names of the towns he intended to pass through on his trip home.

"You know," the merchant interrupted excitedly, "I have a relative living in the town of R--, not far from the road you will be taking. For some time I have been looking for a trustworthy messenger with whom I could send him inheritance money. Perhaps you would agree to perform this favour for me?"

The Chasid agreed at once. He wouldn't have to go far out of his way, and he was happy to be able to do yet another favour for a fellow Jew. He took the money and carefully sewed it into the lining of his jacket. The wealthy merchant thanked him warmly and offered to compensate him for his trouble, but the Chasid refused, saying, "It is really no trouble for me to make a short detour, and I'm glad to be able to help you out."

But the merchant persisted, saying, "I promise you that your mitzvah will stand intact, even though you accept this small

gift from me." Then the Chasid agreed to take the money, for indeed, he had not even enough to pay for his night's stay at the inn. The two men shook hands and went their separate ways.

The Chasid finally came to the little town and asked around for the man, but no one recognized the name or the description. He was puzzled, for the merchant had entrusted him with an enormous sum of money. He certainly must have known that his relative lived in that town. Perhaps he was a recluse, or lived on the outskirts of the town. The Chasid decided to spend a few days in the town in the hope that he would discover the whereabouts of the lost relative, but all his searching was in vain.

It was a very downhearted man who returned to Zlotchov, to the court of Rebbe Michel. The Chasid went into the room of his Rebbe and related to him all he had learned about his service to the Almighty; how he had learned to put his trust entirely in his Creator with a pure and simple belief. He also told the Rebbe about his encounter with the two women and how he had ransomed them from their cruel captors.

Finally, he told the Tzadik about his meeting with the wealthy merchant who had entrusted him to deliver the inheritance to the relative who could not be found.

"Rebbe," said the man, sadly, "In this last mission which was entrusted to me I regret that I have failed, and now, I have a great sum of money which I cannot deliver to its rightful owner."

Reb Michel beamed a big smile at him and replied, "Let me explain to you what you experienced. In the merit of the great mitzvah of redeeming the two captive Jewish women, angels were created as your advocates in the Heavenly Court. The man you took for a wealthy merchant was really one of those angels and the money he entrusted you is for you to make use of with a happy and peaceful heart."

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ISSUE 1181

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In the beginning of the month of Nissan, Moses came to the Jews and said, "This month you will be redeemed." The people objected: "But G-d said we would be in exile for 400 years, and we have been in Egypt only 210 years!" Moses answered, "Since G-d wants to redeem you, He is skipping all these years." So too when the time comes for redemption, Moshiach will tell us, "This month you will be redeemed!" The Jewish people will object: "But G-d said we first must be enslaved by 70 nations!" Moshiach will answer, "Since we have been spread out in many countries, it is as if all the Jewish people went there. Therefore, we have fulfilled G-d's condition and this month we will be redeemed!" (*Pesikta Raboti, Parshat Hachodesh 7*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

7 Adar II, 5741 [1981]

One of the most inspiring lessons of Purim is the extraordinary courage of Mordechai the Jew, who "would not kneel or bow down," despite the physical vulnerability of our people being "spread and scattered among the nations" - a tiny minority against an overwhelming majority.

Yet, it is this uncompromising stance that brought triumph over all adversaries, so that "for the Jews there was light, joy, gladness and honour," and the awesome respect of their detractors.

The teachings of our Torah, like the Torah itself, are of course eternal, including the lessons of Purim; particularly since we are still "spread and scattered among the nations," including our brethren in the Holy Land, for they, too, are surrounded and besieged by numerically overwhelming hostile nations.

But Purim teaches us that the strength of our Jewish people, as of every Jew individually, is in our G-d-given capacity of "not kneeling or bowing down" to any force that is contrary to our Jewish essence, which is rooted in the Torah and mitzvot [commandments].

Indeed, yielding to any influence that is alien to our Jewish spirit and way of life, far from winning good will and respect, must necessarily bring forth contempt, be it overtly or covertly. For what is one to think of a cringing Jew who is willing to compromise his true Jewish identity and noble traditions going back to the time when the world was steeped in barbarism?

Needless to say, the true Jewish spirit, as exemplified by Mordechai and Esther, must not remain in the abstract, but must be translated into concrete behavior in everyday life, in keeping with the basic principle of our Torah that "action is the essential thing."

Certainly this is to be expected of young people, who are generally blessed with a greater sense of urgency and doing. Especially young couples who start out on their own, establish a home on the foundations of Torah and mitzvot, raise a family in the true Torah tradition, and build "an everlasting edifice" in the fullest sense.

And here, of course, a great deal depends on the *akeres habayis* [the pillar of the home], in whose hands G-d has entrusted major responsibilities for the character and actual conduct of the home, such as *kashruth*, Shabbos observance, Family Purity, raising the children, and so forth.

This in no way diminishes the husband's full share of responsibility in this Divinely-blessed partnership, and they must consistently encourage each other to upgrade all things of goodness and holiness, Torah and mitzvot; but there is no getting away from the fact that it is the young wife and mother who bears the noble calling of *akeres habayis*.

It should be noted, in conclusion, that there is no greater emphasis on the historic role of the Jewish woman in Jewish life than in the events that brought about the miracle of Purim, as related in the Megillah, which is named not after Mordechai, nor Mordechai and Esther jointly, but solely after Esther!...

CUSTOMS CORNER

Groggers and noisemakers during the Megilla reading on Purim

Originally flat stones or wooden paddles on which the word "Haman" was inscribed were pounded together on Purim. Within a short time, the name was erased, in conjunction with the Biblical verse: "For I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek," Haman's ancestors being Amalekites. Modern-day noisemakers are based on this ancient custom and are specifically sounded when Haman's name is mentioned to blot out his name.

A WORD

from the Director

The total triumph of the Jewish people over the evil Haman, which we celebrate on Purim, transforms the entire month - not just the day of Purim - into a day of joy and happiness.

Why is the Purim victory so amazing that it has the power to actually transform the entire month?

Haman (may his name be erased) was a descendant of Amalek, the nation that had the chutzpa to attack the Jewish people after their miraculous exodus from Egypt.

All of the nations of the world trembled at the thought of battling with the Jewish nation, except for Amalek. The Torah explains that Amalek "met" the Jewish nation during its journey. But our commentators explain that the Hebrew word for "met" - "karcha" can also mean "made you cold."

Amalek, in his insidious way, wanted to "cool off" the Jewish people from their fiery faith in G-d and Moses after all the miracles and Divine revelations they had merited.

The very name "Amalek" has the same numerical value as the Hebrew word "safek" meaning "doubt." Amalek's main goal was not to win a military victory over the Jews, but to pierce their perfect faith and strong belief by bringing in "doubts."

So you see, when, generations later, the Jews at the time of Purim were victorious over Haman the Amalekite, the ultimate victory was not over the man but over all that he stood for - coldness, doubt, scepticism, and the like.

Thus, the entire month of Adar is permeated with the joy and happiness of the Purim holiday, because the stakes were so terribly high.

May we all be victorious over our personal Amalek's this Purim until we merit the ultimate victory over Amalek at the time of the Redemption.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED

Once...

The town of Harki belonged to a branch of the Polish aristocratic Radzivil family. The owner spent most of his time in France and was rarely seen on his vast estates.

One of the young noblemen of the family, Benedict by name, had a very close friend in France named Pierre Louis, a young man from an assimilated Jewish family. Indeed, he was so alienated from his Jewish roots that he had no remaining Jewish ties at all.

When Benedict married, he settled on the estates of his wife's family in Russia. His good friend, Pierre Louis, also married into a wealthy family, and settled nearby. The two lived a life of luxury and pleasure and were constantly in each other's company.

After many years had passed, Pierre Louis was widowed. Left with no anchor in life, he immersed himself totally in a life of debauchery in the company of the Russian and Polish aristocrats who were his companions.

Once, when the Chasid Rabbi Nissan went to visit the Baal Shem Tov, the Baal Shem Tov explained to him at great length the meaning of the verse in Psalms 107, "Those who go down to the sea in ships and do work in raging waters": * The phrase "those who go down to the sea" refers to the souls that come down and enter the bodies, comparable to the seas which cover everything, as the body covers the Divine soul within it.

"But there are two kinds of descent: in one, souls descend into the sea of life - i.e. when one finds oneself within a circle of Torah. In the other, the souls descend into the midst of a raging sea without any ship in which to take refuge. Those Jews, who descend into the physical body, but live in an atmosphere devoid of the light of Torah, flounder as if in a raging sea.

"Therefore," concluded the Baal Shem Tov, "it is the duty of other Jewish souls who 'do their work in raging waters,' to save them, as they would a drowning man."

The Baal Shem Tov made it clear to Rabbi Nissan that he was referring precisely to the friend of Benedict, Pierre Louis, who was, in actuality, a Jew named Pesach Tzvi.

"This winter, Benedict will go hunting with his friend Pierre Louis and they will both visit Harki. At that time, I want you to read this letter that I am giving you, and then carry out all the instructions in it."

Rabbi Nissan was to inform Pierre Louis that he was a Jew, named Pesach Tzvi, and that he must return to his people. Even if Pierre Louis didn't want to listen, Reb Nissan must repeat to him exactly what the Baal Shem Tov had said. The Baal Shem Tov assured him that he would be successful.

When Rabbi Nissan returned to Harki the town was buzzing with anticipation of the aristocracy's hunting season who habitually visited the area.

Benedict and Pierre Louis were staying, as they always did, at the home of the local priest. But this time, as Benedict entered the house, he tripped over the threshold and fell. The pistol he was carrying in his pocket discharged, and a bullet lodged in his stomach.

Pandemonium reigned as a doctor tried in vain to staunch the flow of

blood. Riders were dispatched to neighbouring towns to bring other doctors, but the patient's condition deteriorated steadily.

As news of the accident spread throughout the town, the Jews were distressed to hear that Benedict, who had always been friendly toward them, was in grave danger. Rabbi Nissan opened the letter of the Baal Shem Tov, and to his astonishment, it contained a prescription for treating Benedict's wound. In addition, the letter said that if anyone inquired how Rabbi Nissan came to know this cure, he should say that he learned it from Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov.

On the second day after the accident Rabbi Nissan arrived at the house, saying he had a cure for Benedict. The desperate doctor allowed the Jew to be admitted. The rabbi spread an ointment on the wound and also put some medicine down the wounded man's throat. To the amazement and relief of all, the cure took effect within an hour.

Only then did Rabbi Nissan approach Pierre Louis and ask to speak to him in private. He related all the words of the Baal Shem Tov, telling him that he was a Jew, and must return to his people, but Pierre Louis was too shocked to respond.

It was months later, in the spring, that Pierre Louis arrived in Harki and came to Rabbi Nissan. He said he could not rest since the day they had spoken, and now he finally resolved to return to his people. Over the next year he studied and made great progress.

Benedict was quite sympathetic to his friend's return to Judaism, and as a gift he gave him an estate outside Harki. As an additional display of good will, Benedict presented to the local Jews the land on which their houses were built. In this manner the existence of the Baal Shem Tov and his circle of mystics became known in Harki.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

When you will take the sum (lit., the head) of the Children of Israel... then they will give every man a ransom for his soul (Ex. 30:12)

When the time will come for you to appoint a "head" - a leader of the Jewish people - make sure it is one who is willing to give up his very soul on behalf of his brethren; only one such as this is worthy. (*Alshich*)

Half a shekel, after the shekel of the Sanctuary (Ex. 30:13)

A Jew is only "half" an entity in two senses, attaining completion and wholeness by uniting with G-d, or alternately, with another Jew. Yet these explanations are interrelated, for when a person helps his fellow Jew and unites with him, he simultaneously merits G-d's blessing and draws closer to Him at the same time. (*Likutei Sichot, Vol. 3*)

The Children of Israel shall keep-veshamru-the Shabbat (Ex. 31:16)

Keeping Shabbat means much more than just refraining from certain kinds of work; the Hebrew root shin-mem-reish also implies waiting in anticipation and looking forward to something. The Torah teaches that rather than being considered a burden, Shabbat should be eagerly awaited and longed for each day of the week. (*Ohr HaChaim*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 6 MARCH 2015

BEGINS	ENDS
7:36MELBOURNE	8:32
7:30ADELAIDE	8:25
5:58BRISBANE	6:50
6:49DARWIN	7:38
5:56GOLD COAST	6:49
6:29PERTH	7:22
7:09SYDNEY	8:03
7:18CANBERRA	8:13
7:31LAUNCESTON	8:29
7:37AUCKLAND	8:32
7:40WELLINGTON	8:38
7:31HOBART	8:30
6:56BYRON BAY	7:48
7:01SINGAPORE	7:50



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS KI SISA

15 ADAR • 6 FEBRUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:36 PM
	MINCHA:	7:45 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:15 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:20 AM
	MINCHA:	7:30 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:32 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 8:00 PM
	MINCHA:	7:35 PM
	MAARIV:	8:25 PM