

LAMPLIGHTER

13 Elul
Parshas
Ki Setzei
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

In the Torah portion of Ki Setzei we learn: "When you build a new home, you must place a guard-rail around your roof." The purpose of the guard-rail, as the Torah itself goes on to say, is to protect people from falling off an un-enclosed roof.

In a spiritual context, the meaning of this commandment is as follows:

At times, man's body is referred to as his "home." In terms of man's spiritual service, this alludes to the general service of "birurim", wherein man seeks to purify and elevate his physical body and his portion in the physical world.

The service of purifying and elevating one's physical body is denoted as a "new home," for prior to the soul's descent into this world it has no conception of the physical world and the spiritual service which it entails.

Furthermore, the service of purifying and uplifting this physical world and transforming it into spirituality is truly something novel and new. When a Jew serves G-d in this manner the world itself becomes a home and an abode for G-d.

Understandably, building such important new edifices has a tremendous impact upon their builder, the person himself. He, too, is refined and uplifted in a "new" and infinitely greater manner - to a point which is much higher even than the lofty state of existence the soul enjoyed prior to its descent within a body.

Through self-nullification the person creates a vessel which allows him to serve as a receptacle to this new level. For the only way one can attain a degree of infinite elevation is to totally nullify oneself before G-d, thereby freeing oneself from the limitations of one's previous degree and level.

This, then, is the inner meaning of a guard-rail. The protective and preventative measures that a person undertakes in the course of his spiritual service are an expression of his self-abnegation and acceptance of the heavenly Yoke. Thus, they form a "guard-rail" which ensures his spiritual ascent, and enables him to be a fit vessel - the "new home."

There is a practical lesson in this for us all: A person should not shut himself off from the rest of the world; he must build a "home," a dwelling place, for G-d in this nethermost world. For, it is only through the descent within this world that the ultimate and truly new ascent is accomplished both Above as well as below.

On the other hand, one must know that in order to transform the physical into a vessel for G-dliness the person must make a guard-rail - he must remain apart from the physical world's grossness and corporeality. While it is true that he must busy himself with physical things, nevertheless, in and of themselves, they should remain insignificant to him; he knows and feels that the only reason he occupies himself with corporeality is in order to fulfil the Divine intent of transforming this world into a new home for G-d.

Adapted from a talk of the Lubavitcher Rebbe by Rabbi S.B. Weinberg in "From the Wellsprings of Chasidus."

Our Enemies, Our Selves

By Yanki Tauber

"When you go out to war on your enemies and G-d will place him in your hands..." No, that's not a typo. The sentence you just read is a direct translation of Deuteronomy 21:10, the opening verse of this week's Torah reading of *Ki Setzei*.

The wording of the Written Torah is extremely precise. When a grammatical anomaly appears--such as plural "enemies" who turn mid-sentence into a singular "him"--the Midrashim and commentaries will immediately step in to unearth the story behind the story and reveal the hidden lesson.

The Egyptians, the Amalekites, the Babylonians, the Romans, the Church, the Almohades, the Nazis, the Soviets... we've had no shortage of enemies in our 4,000-year history. Generally speaking, they can be divided into two groups: spiritual enemies and physical enemies.

The classic prototypes are the Syrian-Greek emperor Antiochus, who tried to forcefully Hellenise the Jews (his failure is celebrated each year on Chanukah), and Haman the Aggagite, who secured a royal decree to slaughter every Jewish man, woman and child on the face of the earth (whose downfall gave us Purim). Closer to our day, we have the 70-year campaign to uproot the beliefs and practices of Judaism from the souls and lives of the Jews under Soviet domain, and the ongoing terror war waged by militant Islamists, who just want us dead.

Yet the two enemies of Israel are intrinsically one. Time and again, Jewish history tells the story of how the weakening of our spiritual identity invariably leads to physical decline. An enemy of the Jewish soul is an enemy of the Jewish body, just as an enemy of the Jewish body is obviously an enemy of the Jewish soul.

This is the lesson implicit in the opening verse of our *Parshah*: Our first line of defence in the war for Jewish survival is the realization that our plural "enemies" are, in truth, a singular "him." That the physical and spiritual fate of our people are inexorably intertwined. That we must regard each physical attack against a Jew as an attack against the eternal spirit of Israel, and treat every spiritual danger as a threat to our physical survival.

What must we do to win the war? How is the battle to be waged so that "G-d will place him in your hands"? The answer lies enfolded in another grammatical curio in *Ki Setzei*'s opening verse:

"When you go to war on your enemies..."

We focus now on the word "on" in this line -- *al* in the Hebrew. The Hebrew word *al*, like its English equivalent, can mean, in this context, "against." In the simple meaning of the verse, going to war "on your enemies" means going to war against your enemies. But the word can also be understood in the sense of "above": don't go to war against them, go to war above them.

We have seen this so often in our experience as a people that we really shouldn't need a grammatical twist of a Torah verse to inform us of it. When we went to war above our enemies, confident of our moral and spiritual superiority and unapologetic of the righteousness of our cause, we always triumphed in the end, no matter how outnumbered we might have been in quantity of men and arms. But when we begin to doubt our own goodness, when we begin to regard decadent murderers as our moral equals, we are doomed to lose ground, even when, on the physical plane, we hold the military and strategic advantage.

A lesson as simple as it is profound: When you go out to war on your enemies, G-d will place him in your hands.

Slice of LIFE

A Butterfly and Divine Providence

In the fall of 2012, Rabbi Yehoshua and Gitty Appell, directors of the Malchus Centre at Ohr Chaya in Jerusalem, Israel, were returning to Israel after a visit to New York. When they landed in Ben Gurion Airport, they approached the dispatcher for a company that provides shared rides from the airport to Jerusalem. The airport was quiet at the early hour and the dispatcher directed them to a minivan that was slowly filling with passengers. The driver told them that he would not be going to the area of Jerusalem where they lived. Not wishing to create a scene, the Appells returned to the dispatcher but he insisted that they should go in the van and the driver would have no choice but to take them where they wanted to go.

The very next passenger to board was a young Israeli by the name of Yoav who had just arrived from Barcelona. He was now returning for four days to visit his parents, since his father had fallen ill.

Before the young man even sat down he turned eagerly to Rabbi Appell and said, "Rabbi, tell me a Torah thought."

A rabbi can never refuse such a request, and since they had both just landed in Israel, the first topic that came to mind was to explain the higher level of Divine Providence that G-d exercises with regard to the Holy Land. The Torah describes Israel as "the land over which the eyes of G-d are watching from the beginning of the year until its end." This meant, said Rabbi Appell that G-d watches over Israel far more directly than over the city and country from which he had now come.

The young man listened carefully but hastened to express his

disagreement. "Statistically at least as many people are hurt in attacks in Israel as in other lands, probably many times more," he protested. "In fact my best friend was killed in a terrorist attack. Where was the Divine Providence there?"

The rabbi explained patiently that not every time can we see the reasoning behind G-d's ways, but we could be sure that it was all part of G-d's plan. Rabbi Appell then quickly thought of a story that would illustrate his point and related the following story to Yoav. "Ten years ago two of my wife's friends, Mrs. Wishnefsky and Mrs. Kaplan went to visit a family that had at that time lost a son in a terror attack on the Number 14 bus in Jerusalem. During their visit they met the younger brother of the victim, Guy, and had heard from him an amazing account.

Guy told them that on the day his brother had been killed, he had been on a bus on a school trip in the north of Israel. He had dozed off in his seat and had a dream. In his dream he saw his brother Roi clothed in white. Roi told him that he was leaving this world now and that he wanted Guy to be a support to their mother and grandmother who would take the news very badly. Roi told his sibling where to find some valuable items that he had hidden away and then he said he would be visiting his family home during Shiva (the week of mourning) in the form of a butterfly.

Guy awoke from his dream in a state of confusion. Just then one of his friends on the bus asked the driver to turn on the radio to listen to music and exactly at that moment regular programming was interrupted to report a terrorist attack in Jerusalem. By the time Guy reached his mother, she was already on her way to the hospital after the police had called her.

At the beginning of the week of Shiva, a butterfly flew into the house and rested on a family portrait. The butterfly stayed in that spot the entire week. When the Shiva ended, the

butterfly flew up to the third floor of the house and rested for a moment on Roi's bed before leaving the house, never to be seen again.

A little while later, the family went to a kabbalist to ask him to help them understand what had happened. The kabbalist told the family who are descendants of the Chida, Rabbi Yosef David Azulai (1724-1806), that Roi was a reincarnation of the Chida's father. Roi's life had been short because the soul of the Chida's father only had a few corrections it needed to make in this incarnation.

The kabbalist also showed the family how each family member was mentioned by name in Psalm 23. (Roi was 22 years old when he died, i.e. in his twenty-third year. It is customary to recite daily the chapter of Psalms corresponding to the years of one's life.)

Rabbi Appell concluded the story to his travelling companion by highlighting that often we can see the hand of Divine Providence at work even at a time of devastating loss which we cannot begin to fathom. Yoav, who had originally doubted the possibility that G-d could be active at a time of loss, suddenly seemed overcome and shaken by the story he just heard. He kept saying again and again "I'm in shock!" Rabbi Appell thought perhaps Yoav just needed a few minutes to digest what he had heard. Now it was Yoav's turn to speak, haltingly.

"The victim of that attack, Roi, was my good friend," he said. "It was his loss I had referred to when I challenged your belief earlier. This is the first time I am hearing all the details."

Now the two had much more Divine Providence to reflect upon: The choice of the reluctant driver for their trip; Yoav's request for a Torah thought, Rabbi Appell's choice of topic, and the choice of that one story from many to illustrate his point - in the land that G-d's eyes are upon constantly!

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Editor: Isaac Hilel
P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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MOSHIACH MATTERS

And the firstborn son is hers who was hated (Deut. 21:15). The "firstborn son" is an allusion to Moshiach and his ultimate sovereignty in the Messianic era, as it states in Psalms, "I have found David My servant...also I will make him my firstborn," while "hers who was hated" refers to Leah, the mother of Judah, from whom Moshiach is descended: "When G-d saw that Leah was hated, He opened her womb." (*Ohr HaTorah*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

11 Teves, 5719 (1959)

In reply to your letter of 12/13 in which you describe the various circumstances that you and your husband have experienced: You reach the conclusion that things were always not well and now things are also not fine, etc. - from which we can easily discern what your view is about what the future holds in store for you:

I am astonished by your conclusions, when you yourself write that from the entire family you were among the few survivors; you also write about the various maladies and ailments that you survived; you also write about your husband that one could never imagine ... and he nevertheless occupied himself [and succeeded] in matters; that you both find yourselves in a house, etc.

Recognizing all the above, being cognizant of all that transpired not only externally but in the house as well, how is it possible to conclude in the manner that you write?!

Of course one should ask G-d that things become better and better, for G-d is the "Essence of Goodness" and "It is the nature of he who is good to do good." However, one should not ignore the many kindnesses of G-d that one has already experienced - particularly as you write that you perceived openly revealed kindnesses and miracles.

I wish to reiterate: My intent is not to minimize the importance of being aware of one's needs, and I also don't mean to imply that you are not lacking necessities. I merely wish to accentuate the goodness - indeed the very large amount of goodness - which you and your husband perceived with your physical eyes.

Another point (and this is of equal importance):

Our holy Torah explains that the measure of G-d's blessings depends to a considerable extent on the [appreciative] manner in which the person receives these blessings, and that his conduct is in consonance with and in recognition of these kindnesses. This form of behavior enlarges the receptacles and vessels that allow one to receive His kindnesses in the immediate future, as well as in the future in general.

6 Adar I, 5717 (1957)

I was astounded to read in the letter that I received from you that your husband's spirits are very low.

How can this possibly be after the two of you have personally witnessed and experienced G-d's wonders and kindnesses. This [experience] should rouse you to great joy, for "In the shining countenance of a king" - the King of kings, blessed G-d - "there is life."

And yet, notwithstanding the above, to find oneself in a depressed state?! Surely this is nothing but the machinations of the evil inclination. It is my strong hope that this [down mood] is but a temporary phenomenon, and that it has already passed.

Moreover, we have been promised and assured by our sacred Torah, the Torah of Life, that whenever one has been shown kindness and goodness from Above, it is for many long and good years.

Surely this promise will be fulfilled with regard to you and your husband as well. I await very speedily glad tidings with regard to the above.

From Healthy in Body, Mind and Spirit, Vol III, compiled by Rabbi Sholom B. Wineberg, published by Sichos in English

CUSTOMS CORNER

Selichot

Selichot - penitential poems and prayers, said in the period leading up to the High Holidays, and on Fast Days. God's Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are a central theme throughout these prayers.

The Chabad custom (as well as the Ashkenazic) is to start saying Selichot from the Sunday (early morning) before Rosh Hashana unless Rosh Hashana falls out on Monday or Tuesday, in which case, Ashkenazim start from two Sundays before Rosh Hashana. There are no Selichot on Shabbat.

The Sephardic custom is to say Selichot from the day after Rosh Chodesh Elul.

A WORD

from the Director

This coming Wednesday, Sept 2 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 Chasidus and Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, founder of Chabad Chasidus.

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. Guttentag

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Once a Chasid travelled to Rabbi Dov Ber (known as the Mittlerer Rebbe) with a dire problem. He was renting an inn from the local poretz (landowner), and was about to be evicted because he was unable to pay his debts. The poretz was unwilling to wait any longer, and the Jew was in danger not only of losing his livelihood, but his home as well.

The Chasid entered the Rebbe's room for a private audience and told him the predicament. He requested that the Rebbe write a letter for him to a wealthy businessman named Moshe M. This man was a personal friend of the poretz and therefore a good potential intermediary.

The Rebbe agreed and wrote the letter for him. The Chasid left in good humour, letter in hand, sure that his situation would shortly change. However, when he left the Rebbe and read the letter, he had a shock, for the letter was addressed to the wrong person. Instead of being addressed to the wealthy Moshe M., the letter was addressed to Moshe A. who was as poor as the Chasid, himself. Oy, thought the Chasid, the Rebbe must have made a mistake and for what could Moshe A. possibly do for me?

The Chasid turned around and went right back to the Rebbe's residence and said to the Rebbe's attendant, "I must go back in to speak with the Rebbe. He gave me the letter, but he made a mistake in it, and I need him to change it."

"I'm sorry," replied the gabbai (sexton). "You cannot see the Rebbe again so soon. There are many others waiting to be received."

"But, you don't understand," the Chasid protested. "This is a matter of the greatest importance, and it can't wait, even a day. I won't take much of his time. The Rebbe just has to change a few words. You see, he addressed it to the wrong person."

The conversation was overheard by the Rebbe's son, who turned and commented, "A Rebbe doesn't make mistakes."

Seeing he wasn't going to get anywhere with the gabbai, the Chasid turned and left, meditating on the words he had just heard, "A Rebbe doesn't make mistakes." He took this to heart and resolved to go the next day to see Moshe A. and give him the Rebbe's letter.

When he arrived at Moshe A.'s humble cottage he told him about his audience with the Rebbe and showed him the letter. Moshe A. was confounded by the request that he intercede. "I would be very glad to help you, but what can I possibly do? I have nothing whatsoever to do with the poretz." But the Chasid, who had become convinced that the Rebbe must have had something in mind, was persistent. Finally, Moshe A. agreed, although, one couldn't say that he knew what he was agreeing to do. He arranged to set out the following morning to visit the poretz and try to help his fellow Chasid, as it seemed that the Rebbe had requested him to do.

In the middle of the night there was a pounding on the door. Moshe A. roused himself and went to the door. "Who is there?" he asked.

"Open, please, it is I, the count," came the reply. Moshe A. opened the door, and to his astonishment, there stood the poretz, the very man he planned to visit the following day, soaked and shivering with cold.

"Please, come in Your Honour," he said, and within an hour the poretz had changed into dry clothing, eaten and drunk, and was feeling back to himself. He explained that he loved hunting, and that that evening he was deep in the forest when he had been caught in an unexpected storm. This house had been the first one he had encountered when he left the forest, and that is how he came to be the grateful guest of Moshe A.

Now, Moshe A. saw the Divine Providence in the unusual situation, and when they all went to bed for the night, he retired in a state of high anticipation as to how events would play themselves out. The next morning the poretz arose fit as fiddle and readied himself to go home. Turning to his host, he said, "I am very grateful for everything you have done for me, and I would like to repay your kindness. What can I do for you?"

Moshe A. answered, "Please, Sir, just having had the honour of helping you is all the payment I need."

The poretz wouldn't take no for an answer, and repeated his request to repay the Jew. When the offer was made a third time, Moshe spoke up: "Sir, I have a brother who rents one of the inns on Your Honour's property. Due to financial hardships of the past few years, he has been unable to pay his rent, and he is due to lose his lease on the inn. Might I ask Your Honour to reconsider his case?"

The poretz was immediately receptive to the request. "My friend, you are such a good fellow, I am sure that your brother is just like you. I will not only renew his lease, but I will also forgive his past rent. And you know, it is very lucky that you are speaking to me about it today. Why, I was planning to give the lease to the relative of a good friend of mine. My friend Moshe M. spoke to me recently about his relative that needed a position, and tomorrow I was planning to take care of the matter."

Later, when the two Chasidim met, they discussed the workings of Divine Providence as foreseen by the Mittlerer Rebbe. For had the letter been addressed to the "right" rather than the "wrong" Moshe, the situation would have come to a very different and unhappy end for the Chasid. They saw that indeed, "A Rebbe doesn't make a mistake."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

When you go forth to war against your enemies...and have taken them captive (Deut. 21:10)

In the spiritual "war" against the Evil Inclination, it isn't enough to merely subdue it; it must also be "taken captive" and utilized in our Divine service. There are many lessons to be derived from the Evil Inclination, among them alacrity and devotion. In the same way the Evil Inclination is completely dedicated to fulfilling its mission to cause us to sin, so too should we show the same commitment and enthusiasm in serving G-d. (*The Baal Shem Tov*)

But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated as the firstborn, by giving him a double portion (Deut. 21:17)

The "son of the beloved" is symbolic of the first Tablets of the Ten Commandments, which G-d gave to Moses before the Jewish people sinned with the Golden Calf. The "son of the hated" refers to the second set of Tablets, which were given after the Jews repented and became Ba'alei Teshuva. The first set of Tablets contained only the Ten Commandments, but the second set contained a "double portion" - not only the Ten Commandments, but all of the minutiae of Halachah (Jewish law), Midrash and Aggadah. (*Ohr HaTorah*)

You shall not watch your brother's ox or his sheep go astray... you shall surely help him to lift them up again (Deut. 22:1-4)

When a person helps his neighbour and returns something the other has lost (either physical or spiritual) the benefit is mutual, as our Sages stated: "The advantage extended to the benefactor by the poor man is greater than the advantage extended to the poor man by the benefactor. (*Sefat Emet*)"

CANDLE LIGHTING: 28 AUGUST 2015

BEGINS	ENDS
5.37MELBOURNE	6.35
5.35ADELAIDE	6.32
5.14BRISBANE	6.08
6.25DARWIN	7.15
5.13GOLD COAST	6.06
5.39PERTH	6.35
5.16SYDNEY	6.12
5.23CANBERRA	6.20
5.24LAUNCESTON	6.25
5.39AUCKLAND	6.26
5.34WELLINGTON	6.34
5.22HOBART	6.23
5.11BYRON BAY	6.05
6.52SINGAPORE	7.41



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS KI SEITZEI • 13 ELUL • 28 AUGUST

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5.37 PM
	MINCHA:	5.45 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6.15 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.34 AM
	MINCHA:	5.35 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6.35 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	
	SUN-FRI:	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	5.45 PM
	MAARIV:	6.30 PM / 9.00 PM