

LAMPLIGHTER

13 Elul
Parshas Ki Seitzei
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Ki Teitzei, seems to contain a grammatical error. "When you go forth to war against your enemies," it begins, "and the L-rd your G-d will deliver him into your hands." Why does the Torah begin the verse with the plural - enemies - and continue in the singular?

Every word in the Torah is exact, every letter conveying a multitude of meanings that teach countless lessons. This verse, which seemingly deals with the subject of conventional warfare, alludes to a different type of war, a spiritual war that is waged by every individual. A Jew may face two types of enemies: one that threatens his physical existence, and one that threatens his special holiness as a member of the Jewish people - his Jewish soul.

The Torah uses the word "enemies" to refer to both of these threats, for the body and soul of the Jew work in tandem, united in their service of G-d. Whatever imperils one's physical well-being threatens one's spiritual equilibrium, and vice versa.

The Torah tells us how to emerge victorious over both types of enemy: "When you will go forth." A person must gird himself with the strength that comes from absolute faith in G-d, even before encountering the enemy. Next, one's approach must be that of ascendancy - "against (literally, 'over') your enemies." Know that G-d Himself stands beside you and assists you in your struggle. Armed in such a manner, victory is assured, not only against conventional enemies, but against the root of all evil - the Evil Inclination, equated in the Talmud with "the Satan (enemy of the soul), and the angel of death (enemy of the physical body)."

When a Jew goes out to "war" fortified with the knowledge that there is no force in the world able to stand in the face of goodness and holiness, not only are external manifestations of evil vanquished, but its spiritual source is defeated as well. The Torah therefore uses the singular - enemy - to allude to the Evil Inclination, the origin and prototype of all misfortune.

The verse concludes with the words, "and you shall take captives of them." If a Jew is not careful and falls prey to the Evil Inclination, all of his higher faculties, given to him by G-d to be utilized for good, also fall into its snare. The Torah teaches that sincere repentance has the power to redeem these captive prisoners, elevating them until even "wilful transgressions are considered as merits." Such warfare brings Moshiach and the Final Redemption closer, when the Evil Inclination will be totally vanquished and the victory over sin will be permanent.

DIY Destiny

By Yossy Goldman

We read in Deuteronomy 22:8: "When you build a new house, you must place a guard-rail around your roof so that you will not bring blood upon your house should any man fall from the unenclosed roof." The Hebrew wording for "should any man fall" is "ki yipol hanofel," which literally means "should the one who falls fall." The commentators say that this unusual phrasing implies that this individual—known as "the one who falls"—was actually destined to fall off a roof and lose his life.

So the question is, if that person was in fact pre-ordained to fall, why am I at fault just because it happened in my house? Why am I responsible for the fulfillment of his destiny? Why should his blood be on my hands?

Jewish philosophers answer this question by saying that although we definitely believe in destiny—that whatever happens is part of the Almighty's vast eternal plan—nonetheless, every individual has an obligation to do his or her best to take precautions and prevent tragedy. Although we believe in miracles we are not permitted to rely upon them.

There is a Yiddish proverb that "the man destined to drown will drown even in a glass of water." But that doesn't mean that you have to be the one to dunk his head into the glass. In short, we believe in the concept of bashert, but we mustn't live by it.

One may ask, is it not an expression of faith to leave it all to G-d? To put our trust implicitly in Him that He will provide? That He will protect and guard us from accidents? In the Grace after Meals we say that G-d is "the feeder and provider for all." So if G-d is supporting me, I might ask, why must I shlepp off to work? The answer is that it is a Jewish belief that "G-d helps those who help themselves." That's why it is a commandment of the Torah to safeguard our health. Likewise, we are not to live dangerously by leaving roofs unenclosed, swimming pools unfenced or our doors unlocked.

A few chapters before the command to erect fences on roofs, the Torah states that "The L-rd, your G-d, shall bless you in all that you do." Meaning that to succeed in any endeavour, we need G-d's blessing, but He blesses us in all that we do. In order to merit His blessing, we must first lay the groundwork and create the opportunity for G-d's blessings to be realized.

This is the approach of the farmer who knows that the success of his crop depends on G-d granting rain, but that the blessing of rain will only help after he has tilled, ploughed and planted.

There is the story of the shlemiel who kept praying to G-d that He make him win the lottery and solve all his financial problems. Day after day he implored the Almighty to grant him his personal salvation via the lottery. When the lottery was drawn, unfortunately our shlemiel was not the winner. So he went back to the synagogue the next day and cried out to G-d bitterly, "L-rd, you let me down. I prayed so hard. Why didn't I win the lottery?"

And a deep, booming voice rang out from the heavens saying, "Because you never bought a ticket!"

The concept of playing a role in shaping our destinies applies to every area of life. As the famous golfer Gary Player said, "The more I practice, the luckier I get." If you want to be mazaldig, don't depend on mazal alone. If you want to have nachas from your children, don't rely on the luck of the draw that they will marry the right person. Parents have to plough and plant (and pray very hard) for nachas to happen.

In the Psalmist's words, which we say before the Grace after Meals on holidays in Shir Hamaalot (Psalm 126), "He who sows with tears, will reap in joy."

Slice of LIFE

Every Action Counts

by Mordechai Kaler

I am a 16-year-old student at the Yeshiva of Greater Washington in Maryland. This past summer I decided to volunteer at the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Greater Washington. In the beginning I wasn't very comfortable about spending my days in a nursing home. But that would all soon change.

One of the volunteers' jobs is to ask the residents if they would like to go to the daily services. Most residents are receptive; even those who choose not to attend are generally pleasant about it.

There was one man, however, who would get very angry when asked. One time he even cursed one of the volunteers. The volunteer was extremely upset so I decided to speak with the resident.

"The volunteers are only here to help and there is no reason to curse at them," I told the man firmly but respectfully. The resident asked me to wheel him to his room and when we arrived there he told me to sit down. "I want to tell you a story," he said. He had grown up in a prominent religious family. Everyone had been murdered by the Nazis except for him and his father. In the concentration camp that they were in, someone had smuggled in tefilin shel rosh-tefilin worn on the head. Every morning the men would sneak a chance to put on the tefilin, even if for just a second.

"The day before my Bar Mitzva, my father had heard that a man had a whole pair of tefilin (the tefilin worn on the head and the tefilin worn on the arm). That evening, the man who had smuggled in the tefilin was killed by the Nazis. My father," the resident continued, "after hearing of the man's death, went to the man's bunk to get the tefilin so that I would be able to put on a complete pair of tefilin for my Bar Mitzva. On his way back to his bunk,

my father was seen by a Nazi and shot, right in front of me. Somehow, I managed to take the tefilin and hide them."

The resident paused and then said to me, "How can you pray to this G-d, a G-d that would kill a boy's father right in front of him. The father who went to get tefilin so that I could pray to Him?" The man then turned to me and said "Go to my dresser and open the drawer." I did as I was told and I saw an old, worn black bag. The man told me to bring him the bag. I brought it to him and he opened it and showed me the contents. It was the pair of tefilin that his father had died for. "I keep these to show people that this is what my father died for, these dirty black boxes and straps. They were the last thing my father ever gave me," he said.

I left a few minutes later, totally speechless. I went home. I didn't eat supper and barely slept that night. But when I woke up the next morning I put on my tefilin, prayed and then went to the Hebrew Home.

When it was time to bring the residents to services I totally avoided that man's floor. I was then notified that we were one short of a minyan and one of the residents needed to say "Kaddish." I approached all the residents but none would attend. I had no other choice but to ask the man.

The man was in his room. I asked him if he would attend services as there was a man who needed to say Kaddish. I expected him to say "no," but instead he asked, "If I come will you leave me alone?" His reply took me by surprise. I said, "If you come I will leave you alone."

I don't know what made me ask him this question, but then I asked him if he would like to bring his tefilin. I was ready to apologize when he said, "If I bring them will you leave me alone?" I told him, "yes." The man took his tefilin and I took him down to the synagogue. He asked me to wheel him to the back so that it would be easy for someone to wheel him out as soon as the services were over. I did as he requested and showed him how to put on his tefilin. Then I left to do some other work.

When services were over I returned to help bring residents back to their rooms. I walked into the synagogue. The only person left in the entire room was the resident I had brought in, still sitting in the back in his wheelchair with his tefilin on. Tears were pouring down his cheeks.

"Should I get a nurse or a doctor?" I asked him. He did not respond. Instead, he said over and over again, "Tatti (Father), Tatti, it feels so right." He was staring down at the tefilin on his arm.

After he calmed down I brought him back to his room. He told me that during that hour he felt as if his father was back with him.

Every morning after that, when I got off the elevator on his floor, he was waiting, holding his tefilin, ready to go down to services. One day I got off the elevator and he wasn't there. I asked one of the nurses where he was. She told me gently that he had been taken to the hospital and they had just received word that he had died. I was taken aback and asked her to repeat what she had just said.

Time passed and I was notified that I would be given an award by the Jewish Home for my work as a volunteer. After the ceremony a woman came up to me and said, "Thank you, you saved my father's life."

I had no idea who this woman was. "I'm sorry, but I must have forgotten who you are," I told her.

"We never met, but you knew my father," she said. She told me her father's name and I immediately recognized her as the resident's daughter. She told me that before her father passed away, he asked his daughter to bring him his tefilin. He said he knew he would soon be passing on and he wanted to put on his tefilin and pray one last time. Soon after that he went into a coma. His daughter told me, "You truly saved him and made his last moments comfortable." The man died with his tefilin on as he was reunited with his father.

We never know what kind of an effect we will have on another person. But we do know that every little thing we do counts.

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ISSUE 1261

MOSHIACH MATTERS

"When you go out to wage war... G-d will deliver them into your hands and you will take captives." (Deut. 21:10) The word in this verse for "captives" is "shivyo." The literal meaning of shivyo is "his captives." "His" implies that the Jewish people will regain that which the enemy captured from us. One of the tasks of Moshiach, in the words of Maimonides, "He will wage the battles of G-d and succeed." At the end of the battles, the Jewish people will find restored all the precious spoils that were taken by the nations during the exile, foremost among them the Holy Temple.
(The Rebbe, Shabbat Parshat Teitzei, 5750-1990)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Freely translated and adapted
Chai - 18 - Elul, 5712 [1952]
To All My Brethren, Wherever You Are,

G-d Bless You All, Sholom u'Brocho:

I send you herewith my prayerful wishes for a happy and pleasant New Year, may it bring blessings to us all.

At the end of this Shemittah (Sabbatical) Year, and on the threshold of the New Year, we are reminded of the great commandment, which is "a strong pillar and a great credit to our religion" (Sefer Hachinuch) - the commandment of Hakhel, when all the people, men, women, and children, gathered during the Festival of Succoth at the holy place in Jerusalem - may it be rebuilt by our righteous Moshiach, speedily in our time-to hear selected portions of the Torah, portions inspiring to piety, love and appreciation of the Torah, the observance of the Mitzvoth [commandments], particularly the Mitzvah of charity.

Although at all times we are commanded to bring up our children in the way of the Torah and Mitzvoth, the Mitzvah of Hakhel, coinciding with this season, impresses upon us our duties towards the children with especial force and timeliness.

Therefore, let every Jewish father and mother, every rabbi and leader, every communal worker and person of influence, heed the call of the Mitzvah of Hakhel: to gather the masses of Jewish children and bring them to... Torah-true educational institutions and ensure their existence and growth; in order that all Jewish children, boys and girls, be brought up in the spirit of piety and love for G-d, love for the Torah and Mitzvoth, love for one another.

In the merit of this, the Alm-ghty will favour us and enable us very soon to fulfil the Mitzvah of Hakhel in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, rebuilt by our Righteous Moshiach, Amen. With blessings to you and from you for a Happy and Pleasant Year,
Ksivah Vachasimah Toivo [you should be written and sealed for good],

15 Elul, 5739 (1979)

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to be informed of the forthcoming Concert on the eve of the 18th of Elul. The date is particularly significant and auspicious for the occasion. For the month of Elul is dedicated to teshuvah - return to the roots and sources of Torah and mitzvos [commandments] which are bound up with the real essence of every Jew.

It is well known that very often the heart strings can be touched more readily and effectively by an inspiring melody than by a word of admonishment.

The Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman], founder of Chabad, explains in Tanya that the essential aspect of teshuvah is in the sincerity of the heart, since it entails profound feelings of regret for past failures and the strongest resolve and commitment for the future. And it is well known that very often the heart strings can be touched more readily and effectively by an inspiring Niggun [Chasidic melody] than by a word of admonishment. Moreover, the concert is taking place on Chai [the 18th of] Elul ("Chai" for "life") - the birthday of the two great luminaries, the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe, who brought new life and inspiration to our Jewish people.

May the concert event be a great success in every respect, a source of lasting inspiration to all of you, and stimulating the activities of Chabad Lubavitch to strengthen Torah-true Yiddishkeit [Judaism] in the community at large
Wishing you a kesivo vachasimo tova for a good and sweet New Year,

A WORD

from the Director

This Wednesday is Chai (the 18th of) Elul, the "birthday" of the greater Chasidic movement and of Chabad Chasidus in particular.

The Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the path of Chasidus, was born on Chai Elul. On that date 26 years later, Achiya Hashiloni began to teach him Torah "as it is studied in Gan Eden." Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the founder of Chabad Chasidus, was also born on Chai Elul.

As the Previous Rebbe explained, Chai Elul introduces an element of chayut, vitality, to our Divine service during Elul, the month in which we correct and make amends for past misdeeds. In the merit of our repentance, G-d grants us a good and sweet year. By infusing our service with vitality, Chai Elul helps us do teshuva with enthusiasm, not just by rote or out of habit.

Superficially, vitality and teshuva may seem contradictory. Vitality is associated with joy, whereas repentance is associated with bitterness, regretting past actions and resolving to do better. Those these seem to be opposite emotions, in Elul we feel both, and at the same time!

Every mitzva we do should be performed with joy, for by observing that mitzva, we fulfil the will of G-d. As teshuva is a mitzva like any other, we experience joy for having been given the privilege.

However, Chasidus gives us another reason to be happy while doing teshuva, by explaining how bitterness and joy can exist simultaneously.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman describes this in the Tanya as "weeping on one side of the heart, and joy on the other side." When we do teshuva, we rage against our Evil Inclination and of failure to withstand temptation. Yet at the same time we are happy, for we know that we are becoming closer to G-d.

Chai Elul (and by extension, Chasidus) thus transforms the entire month of Elul into a labour of love and joy.

J. I. Gutnick

CUSTOMS CORNER

TASHLICH

We go to a lake, river or to the sea and recite the Tashlich prayers, where we symbolically cast our sins into the water, in evocation of the verse, "And You shall cast their sins into the depths of the sea." We leave our old shortcomings behind us, thus starting the New Year with a clean slate.

IT HAPPENED



Many years ago in a small village a Jewish boy was orphaned. A fellow villager took pity on him and took him into his own home. The child attended the local yeshiva but try as he might, he just couldn't grasp even the most rudimentary subjects.

Finally, the boy's guardian decided to apprentice him to a tarr-maker. No sooner did his master teach him some element of the work than he could perform it faultlessly. After half a year his master said, "You don't need me any longer. You are competent enough to go into business for yourself."

The boy, now a young man, opened his own business in a neighbouring village. He quickly established himself amongst the villagers, for both Jews and non-Jews alike were drawn to his cheerful manner and absolute honesty. His business thrived and he married the daughter of a local tradesman. He was soon able to support not only his family, but to give charity generously to the local yeshivas and other needy causes in the town. He even had built a special guest house to feed and maintained travellers at his expense.

His only regret in life was his ignorance of Torah. His father-in-law tried to soothe him, assuring him that the charity he provided to Torah scholars was counted to him as if he himself had studied, but to no avail. One day in his guest house he noticed a certain visitor who was suffering from sores all over his body. "How did this happen to you?" he inquired.

"I was proficient in learning Torah," the man replied, "but the study of the commentaries was very hard for me. I decided to torment my body in order that G-d would help to open my mind to my learning. With G-d's help, I succeeded and reached my goal. With His help these sores will also heal."

The young man had never heard of such practices, but he was overjoyed to learn that he still had a chance. And so every day he would go into the woods, sit in a spot where there were biting gnats and flies, and there he would expose his skin to the creatures until it bled and itched unbearably.

One day, as he sat on a tree stump with flies buzzing all about him, a stranger approached and asked, "Why are you doing this?"

The young man explained about his great desire to learn Torah. "It is totally unnecessary for you to do this. I will make a deal with you. If you will give me all of your worldly possessions, I promise you to teach you Torah."

"Of course, I am willing, but I must discuss it with my wife, for it affects her as well. I will meet you tomorrow, and I will tell you our final decision."

The man returned home and related the incident to his wife. "This is what you have always wanted. Of course, you should do it without delay," was her reply. But the man was still wary. After all, he had always been a responsible person. He went to his father-in-law and asked his opinion.

"What! To sign away all your possessions to an utter stranger in return for some foggy promise that you will learn Torah! Your charity is equivalent to the learning of a great scholar!"

The young man left in confusion. But his wife told him: "It seems to me that you aren't sure of what you want. You always professed the strongest desire to learn Torah, but now when you have the chance, you balk!"

The following day the stranger, who was none other than the Baal Shem Tov, came to the same spot in the forest, and the two men proceeded together to the young man's home. When they entered a tantalizing aroma greeted them, and they were astounded to see the table set for a lavish banquet.

"What is this?" asked the Baal Shem Tov.

The wife explained, "This is the last time we will be able to fulfil the holy mitzva of entertaining guests, and I wanted to perform the mitzva as beautifully as possible. In addition, we have reason to celebrate, for now my husband will be able to achieve his life's ambition. But I had one other consideration: There are many ways in which G-d is able to take away a person's fortune. We have the privilege of giving away all in order to 'buy' Torah learning. This is also a great cause for celebration."

After they had eaten, the Baal Shem Tov asked the young man, "What have you decided?" The young man seemed unsure but a look in the direction of his wife, gave the young man the courage to make the decision. He took a quill and signed all of his worldly goods over to the Baal Shem Tov. In accordance with their agreement, the couple was permitted use of the house and its garden as well as flour to bake bread. And in return, the would-be scholar travelled with the Baal Shem Tov to a place of Torah, where his eyes were illuminated.

True to his promise, the young man eventually became a great scholar and a tzadik. Years later, the Baal Shem Tov was heard to say about the young man's wife who sacrificed everything for Torah, that which was uttered about Rabbi Akiva's wife, Rachel, "Everything he has achieved belongs to her".

Thoughts THAT COUNT

You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep driven away and hide yourself from them; surely you shall bring them back to your brother (Deut. 22:1)

G-d has implanted within us a wonderful character trait: a willingness and urge to be kind to another Jew that is even stronger than the desire to be kind to ourselves. We can always find reasons why we deserve our own suffering, G-d forbid, but when it comes to another's distress, it is absolutely impossible.

(Hayom Yom)

You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen down by the way and hide yourself from them; you shall surely lift them up again (Deut. 22:4)

It is forbidden to make believe one cannot recognize his fellow Jew's material needs, symbolized by the "donkey" and the "ox." For when you help another, you too will surely be "lifted up" and elevated spiritually.

(Tiferet Shlomo)

When a person helps his fellow Jew, he himself is thereby elevated. Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the Alter Rebbe, wrote that when one does a spiritual favour for another, "his mind and heart are purified one thousand-fold"; his grandson, the Tzemach Tzedek, added that this is no exaggeration!

Remember what Amalek did to you

(Deut. 25:17)

CANDLE LIGHTING



BEGINS:	SEPTEMBER 16, 2016	ENDS:
5:54	MELBOURNE	6:51
5:50	ADELAIDE	6:46
5:23	BRISBANE	6:16
6:25	DARWIN	7:14
5:22	GOLD COAST	6:15
5:51	PERTH	6:46
5:29	SYDNEY	6:25
5:38	CANBERRA	6:34
5:44	LAUNCESTON	6:44
5:55	AUCKLAND	6:52
5:53	WELLINGTON	6:53
5:43	HOBART	6:44
5:21	BYRON BAY	6:14

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS KI SEITZEI • 13 ELUL • 16 SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:54 PM
	MINCHA:	6:00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	6:25 PM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:14 AM
WEEKDAYS	MINCHA:	5:50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:51 PM
	SHACHARIS:	8:00 AM/9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	6:00 PM
	MAARIV:	6:50 PM