

LAMPLIGHTER

13 Elul
Parshas
Ki Teitzei
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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 "willful 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.

Who Needs Anti-Semites?

By Yossy Goldman

It has been called "the world's longest hatred." It continues to rear its ugly head across countries and continents. Whether it manifests in the crude bigotry of the lower class or the snide subtleties of the upper crust, anti-Semitism is a fact of life.

Of course, we all wish it would finally go away. We even had reason to hope that after Auschwitz, it really would. Who among us doesn't want to feel accepted and appreciated? But there is a strong argument to suggest that, in a perverse sort of way, anti-Semitism has been good for the Jews. The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre made that point in his book *Anti-Semite & Jew*. Without the constant reminders and threats to our existence, we Jews would have been lulled into a peaceful and passive state of national amnesia. Secure in our comfort zones, we might have lost much of our unique identity.

History records that under regimes that persecuted us, we remained steadfastly Jewish; whereas under more enlightened, liberal forms of government, we gradually embraced a welcoming but dominant culture, forfeiting much of our own.

Back in the '70s, when I was working with Jewish university students, we were struggling to break through a wall of icy indifference towards Judaism. It was so frustrating that my colleagues and I even considered going onto campus in the dead of night to paint a few swastikas on the Student Union building, in the hope that this would jolt them out of their apathy. Of course, we never actually did it, but I confess to having been very tempted.

Towards the end of this week's Parshah we read of the commandment to remember the unprovoked attack by the nation of Amalek against the Israelites when they left Egypt. The command comes in the form of the word *zachor*—"Remember"—at the beginning of the section. The final words are *lo tishkach*—"you shall not forget." But why the need for both expressions? And what difference is there between "remembering" and "not forgetting"? Surely one is superfluous?

Commentaries suggest that "remember" is a command to the Jewish people, while "do not forget" would seem to be a more of a prediction—i.e., they will not let you forget! Should you ever lapse into a false sense of security and forget your Jewishness, the anti-Semites of the world will be there to remind you who you are—"a people that dwells alone".

Everything has a purpose in creation. There is nothing superfluous in G-d's world. So what is the purpose of an anti-Semite? Just that—to remind Jews that they are Jewish!

But why wait for the Amalekites of this world to remind us? Do we want or need their taunting? Rather, let us be proactively Jewish, positively Jewish and Jewishly positive. You can sing the old Yiddish song one of two ways. Either it is *Oy, es iz gut tzu zein a yid* ("Oh, it is good to be a Jew . . .") or *Oy, es iz shver tzu zein a yid* ("Oy, it is hard to be a Jew . . ."). There are a million good reasons, positive reasons, to be proudly Jewish. If seventy years ago being Jewish carried a death sentence, today it is a life sentence, promising a meaningful and blessed life. And when we decide to live proud, committed Jewish lives, we make a fascinating discovery: when we respect ourselves, the world respects us too. And that applies across the board, from the individual Jew to the collective Jewish community.

Judaism is a boon, not a burden. We should be staunch about our heritage. It is a badge of honor to wear with noble pride. If you don't know why, go and study—but that's another sermon.

Slice of LIFE

The Old Man in the English Village

By Menachem Posner

Yitzchak, a chassidic Jew from London's Stamford Hill neighborhood, took frequent business trips to the countryside in northern England. No matter how far he traveled, he was particular to always return home in time for Shabbat—except for one Friday...

It was on a Friday morning in the 1950s or '60s, when engine trouble forced Yitzchak off the road as he was returning home for Shabbat. In the service station waiting for his car to be repaired, he glanced at his watch frequently, wishing that the watch's hands would move just a little bit slower and the mechanic's hands would move just a little bit faster.

After several hours Yitzchak's car was up and running, but it was clear that he would not have time to return to London for Shabbat.

With little time to spare, Yitzchak drove to the nearest village, checked into a local hotel and made inquiries about the closest synagogue. To his delight, there was an old synagogue in town.

The building had been constructed in grand style, but now it had a neglected appearance. As the sun sunk in the west, a handful of worshippers trickled into the building. They were mostly middle-aged men who seemed to have just a rudimentary Jewish education.

Suddenly, as if out of nowhere, Yitzchak was approached by an elderly gentleman. Sporting a full beard and speaking a fluent Yiddish, the elderly man seemed strangely out of place in this forgotten hamlet.

"Would you be so kind as to be my Shabbat guest?" asked the older man with a sense of urgency in his voice. Upon hearing Yitzchak's positive reply, the man broke into a broad grin.

As they walked home together in the chilly darkness, Yitzchak asked his host's name and learned that it was Yaakov Frankinowitz, but that everyone knew him by the more familiar "Yankel."

They walked in silence until they reached the old man's home—a crumbling old house, with a faint light emanating through the grimy windows of one of the rooms.

As Yankel ascended the stairs to his home, he started wheezing and coughing incessantly. But the old man dismissed his younger guest's concern. "Don't be alarmed," he said in Yiddish, "It's just a bit of asthma. It happens to me all the time."

As they entered the dining room, Yitzchak was surprised to see that the table was set for two. "How did he know that I would be coming?"

he wondered.

As if he read Yitzchak's thoughts, Yankel said: "I'm always ready for a guest to join me for Shabbat, and I set an extra setting just in case."

The food was under-seasoned and overcooked, but the atmosphere at that Shabbat meal was outstanding. The conversation flowed easily as the two men discussed the finer points of the week's Torah portion and sang traditional Shabbat tunes late into the night.

At one point, Yitzchak noticed his host's well-worn but still-beautiful Chumash [Five Books of Moses] from which he was reading and translating the weekly Torah portion.

"Ah yes," said the old man with delight. "It belonged to my grandfather, as did the siddur [prayer book] that I use in synagogue. It has endured decades of heavy use, but it's still as good as new, if not better!"

Long after midnight had come and gone, Yitzchak excused himself and prepared for his walk back to his hotel.

"Please stay here," urged the kind host. "It's not often that I have the opportunity to fulfill the mitzvah of hachnasat orchim [hospitality], so please do not deprive me of this honor."

As Yitzchak lay on the lumpy mattress that smelled faintly of mold, he listened to his host coughing fitfully in the other room. The wind blew in freely through the cracked window panes, and he feared that it was too cold for his newfound friend.

The following morning was even colder, and Yitzchak begged Yankel to stay home, rather than walk the long way to and from synagogue. But the old man would hear none of it.

Between their long walks and even longer meals, the two men developed a deep and fast friendship. Yitzchak was inspired by Yankel's sincere faith and determination to serve G-d to the best of his ability.

Finally, during the third and final Shabbat meal, Yankel shared his story.

"I was born in Russia and still remember those terrible times—the pogroms, the hunger and the fear.

"When I was seven, we left for England and settled here. My parents passed away not long after, and my grandparents took me in. They were the pillars of the community, and it was due to their strength and inspiration that a synagogue was built here. Jewish life blossomed, and others came here as well.

"My grandparents were exceptionally generous, never sending away a poor man empty handed and always hosting travelers in their home. They never took a penny for their services, happy to provide fellow Jews with kosher food and a warm bed.

"The younger generation grew up and moved away, attracted by the opportunities that the bigger cities like Manchester and London offered them. Those who stayed tended to be less Jewishly involved, and I was somewhat alone here.

"Like everyone else, I considered leaving town, but my grandfather would hear none of it. He understood that without our family, the community would soon dissolve into nothingness, and so I stayed.

"The Jewish community continued to dwindle, and my wife and I wanted to move to a town where there would be other Jews like us, who valued Torah and mitzvah observance, but Grandfather was adamant. We were needed here.

"Before he passed away, Grandfather again asked me to remain here. 'There will come a time,' he told me, 'that a Jewish traveler will come through town needing a place to eat. Then you will know why you are so needed here. Who would be there to serve them if not you?'

"And so I remained here for the Jewish traveler who may be in need of a kosher home," the man concluded simply.

Yitzchak then understood that he was the guest for whom his host had waited for decades.

As the old man broke into another coughing fit, Yitzchak's eyes glazed over with pitying tears.

After regaining his breath, the old man continued. "Please don't feel bad for me. Your visit has given me so much pleasure; it has given meaning to all the years of waiting, proving my grandfather's words to be true. The circle is now complete."

They shook hands warmly before Yitzchak drove off into the night. Yitzchak promised that he'd return, claiming that he had more business in the area. The truth was that he wanted to come back with a gift for the old man who had taught him so much about patience and faith.

When he came back to the sleepy hamlet later that week, Yitzchak climbed the steps to Yankel's old home and knocked on the door. Once, twice, three times—silence. Fearing the worst, he sped off to the synagogue, where he was informed that Mr. Frankinowitz had passed away on Sunday morning.

"He came to services as usual, started coughing, and then he was gone," said the caretaker.

"Wait a minute," continued the caretaker. "Are you the guest who was here on Shabbat? Mr. Frankinowitz left you something. I found it on his table when I went to his house to put his belongings in order."

It was a neatly wrapped package with a note. Written in Yiddish, it expressed Yankel's gratitude at being able to finally fulfill the mitzvah of hosting guests, and it stated that the enclosed Chumash and siddur were a token of his appreciation and an expression of his hope that Yitzchak would raise his children in the spirit of Torah and mitzvah observance."

Upon learning that the old man left no relatives, Yitzchak took it upon himself to say kaddish for him.

And from then on, Yitzchak's family adopted the peculiar custom of always setting an extra seat at the Shabbat table, ready to be used by anyone in need of a warm meal.

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WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

An Analogy about College (con. from last week)

With regard to my attitude toward Jewish boys attending college, I need only adduce your own reasoning in support of my position. You illustrate your point by saying that when a person contracts a contagious disease, there must be someone ready to take the risk of trying to heal him, rather than leaving him entirely to his fate. I will use this same analogy in my answer to you. Indeed, as is customary among Jews, I will answer your question with a question of my own: Have you ever met a mother who tried to persuade her son to choose for his career the field of infectious diseases, ruling out everything else, when he himself wished to choose some other means of parnassah, one that would not be quite so fraught with danger? To make my point even stronger, what would you think of a mother who, pressing her son to pursue that dangerous career, insists upon his getting started right away, by having him mix and come into daily contact with people who have already come down with various infectious diseases, on the assumption that he will somehow stumble upon the measures necessary to protect himself from infection, and in this way develop into a specialist in the field, one able to bring relief and cure to the unfortunate sufferer? I believe that in such a case no mother would fail to realize that whereas the danger is certain and immediate, the chances of her son becoming a specialist are, at best, years away. The analogy is obvious.

With blessing,

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

How to Change a Daughter-in-Law

Question: My son just got engaged to a wonderful Jewish girl, thank G-d. We love and adore her—she is so good to him. But there is one issue: She has zero interest in Judaism. She thinks it's "mostly rubbish," but I know this is out of ignorance. I go to classes at my synagogue and ask her if she wants to join, but she never does. She eats ham and cheese sandwiches! How can I show her, involve her, embrace her, without being the revolting jam-it-down-your-throat type? I want to explain to her how easy keeping kosher is, how wonderful it is to keep a Jewish home, how it adds to your life and does not detract, etc. What do you think I can say to turn her around?

Answer: Here is the best thing you can say to her: nothing.

Don't mention Judaism. Don't tell her about the great Jewish book you have been reading. Don't explain to her why you braid the challah. Don't invite her to come to classes with you, and don't give her a rundown afterwards of what she missed.

Just do your thing. Be an example of a Jewish woman whose life is enriched by Torah. Be good to her, nice to her, accepting of her. Embrace her as she is right now. This will speak louder than any lecture you could give.

If one day she asks you a question about Judaism, give her an honest and meaningful answer. But wait for the interest to arise from within her.

In time she may come to it herself, in her own way. You have to let her travel her own path. This may not come naturally to you, but it will be better in the end. Pushing her will only push her away, from Judaism and from you.

Many people turn to religion when they witness an open miracle. Well, you can perform a miracle right now. When she sees her passionate and outspoken mother-in-law letting her be, she will have to concede that indeed there must be a G-d.

A WORD

from the Director

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

The Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the path of Chasidut, 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 Chasidut, 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 fulfill the will of G-d. As teshuva is a mitzva like any other, we experience joy for having been given the privilege.

However, Chasidut 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, Chasidut) thus transforms the entire month of Elul into a labor of love and joy.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED



After Thirty-Three Years of Childlessness

By Yerachmiel Tilles

Reb Moshe-Chaim and his wife, Miriam, had been married for 33 years. They were simple but very generous people. What greatly upset them was the fact that they had no children. One night, Reb Moshe-Chaim was sitting in a corner of the shul listening to a discussion about the Baal Shem Tov.

The people spoke about how a childless couple, already advanced in years, had come to the Baal Shem Tov and begged him to bless them with a child. The Baal Shem Tov gave them the blessing and, with G-d's help, a son was born to them.

A few days later, Moshe-Chaim told his wife about the story. Miriam had heard similar stories from Bashe, a righteous woman who was the wife of the famous chasid, Reb Gedalia-Boruch the Shoemaker. Miriam and Bashe worked together in providing medical care and nourishment for mothers who had just given birth, and in dowering brides and supporting orphans. Miriam was overjoyed to hear her husband was considering a trip to the Baal Shem Tov.

Months passed, though, and still Moshe-Chaim and Miriam had not made the journey. In the middle of Passover, Moshe-Chaim heard that a group of people led by Reb Gedalia-Boruch were planning to visit the Baal Shem Tov seven weeks later for the festival of Shavuot. After discussing it between themselves, Moshe-Chaim and Miriam decided to join the group.

On the second day of the Hebrew month of Iyar, they set out on their journey. Moshe-Chaim and Miriam came to the Baal Shem Tov and, weeping profusely, poured out their hearts to him. The Baal Shem Tov, however, did not give them the blessing they hoped for. They entered his room again a few days later and then a third time, but the Baal Shem Tov gave them no reply.

Reb Gedalia-Boruch, knowing that the Baal Shem Tov always acted toward his visitors with intense ahavat Yisrael (love of one's fellow Jew), was deeply upset at the bitter lot of the couple. As he was one of the Baal Shem Tov's earliest disciples, he sought the advice of his veteran colleagues about the case. They decided that ten men should gather to fast, pray, and plead for the couple for three consecutive days, and then they would see what the Baal Shem Tov would say.

Reb Gedalia-Boruch and his colleagues carried out their plan with true selfless love. They were careful to avoid uttering any words that were not for a holy purpose and poured out their hearts pleading for Divine mercy for Moshe-Chaim and Miriam. No one else was aware of what they were doing. On the evening of the third day, when they were still in the middle of the

evening prayer service, the Baal Shem Tov's attendant came and told them that the Baal Shem Tov was inviting them to a celebratory meal.

The meal took place with the participation of the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples and all the guests then visiting the holy Rebbe. The Baal Shem Tov was highly elated and expounded on new Torah insights and on the verses, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," and "How good and pleasant it is for brothers dwelling together." He also told them various stories on the subject of ahavat Yisrael and how dear Jews are to G-d. The Baal Shem Tov explained the tremendous effect that brotherly love can have and how, when friends plead for Divine mercy for a comrade in distress, they can even annul a heavenly decree of 70 years duration and transfer "the curse to blessing, and death to long life."

Reb Gedalia-Boruch and his colleagues realized that the reason for the celebration was what they had done and that their plan had worked. They immediately urged Moshe-Chaim and Miriam to press their plea. When the couple approached the Baal Shem Tov, he gave them his blessing to have a child who would live a long and happy life.

G-d fulfilled the Baal Shem Tov's blessing and on the second day of Iyar the following year, Miriam bore a son. They named him Shlomo. At about the same time, Bashe, Reb Gedalia-Boruch's wife, bore a daughter whom they named Yocheved. When Shlomo and Yocheved were 17, the parents arranged a match between them. Shlomo became known as Shlomo Bashe's after his wife's mother, a great woman who was known for her deed of kindness and charity.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Seventy-four of the Torah's 613 commandments (mitzvot) are in the Parshah of Ki Teitzei. These include the laws of the beautiful captive, the inheritance rights of the firstborn, the wayward and rebellious son, burial and dignity of the dead, returning a lost object, sending away the mother bird before taking her young, the duty to erect a safety fence around the roof of one's home, and the various forms of kilayim (forbidden plant and animal hybrids).

Also recounted are the judicial procedures and penalties for adultery, for the rape or seduction of an unmarried girl, and for a husband who falsely accuses his wife of infidelity. The following cannot marry a person of Jewish lineage: a mamzer (someone born from an adulterous or incestuous relationship); a male of Moabite or Ammonite descent; a first- or second-generation Edomite or Egyptian.

Our Parshah also includes laws governing the purity of the military camp; the prohibition against turning in an escaped slave; the duty to pay a worker on time, and to allow anyone working for you—man or animal—to "eat on the job"; the proper treatment of a debtor, and the prohibition against charging interest on a loan; the laws of divorce (from which are also derived many of the laws of marriage); the penalty of thirty-nine lashes for transgression of a Torah prohibition; and the procedures for yibbum ("levirate marriage") of the wife of a deceased childless brother, or chalitzah ("removing of the shoe") in the case that the brother-in-law does not wish to marry her.

Ki Teitzei concludes with the obligation to remember "what Amalek did to you on the road, on your way out of Egypt."

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 24 - 25 August	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:34	6:32
Adelaide	5:33	6:30
Brisbane	5:13	6:06
Darwin	6:25	7:15
Gold Coast	5:11	6:04
Perth	5:37	6:32
Sydney	5:13	6:10
Canberra	5:20	6:17
Launceston	5:21	6:21
Auckland	5:36	6:34
Wellington	5:30	6:31
Hobart	5:18	6:20
Byron Bay	5:09	6:03

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS KI TEITZEI • 13 ELUL • 24 AUGUST

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING	5.17 PM
	MINCHA	5.40 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	6.05 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.35 AM
	SHACHARIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	5.30 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	5.40 PM
	MAARIV	6.30 PM