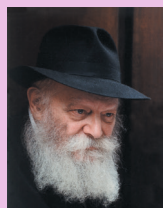


L'Chaim



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe
on the Torah portion

This week we read the Torah portion of *Tetzaveh*. We also read an additional portion known as *Zachor*—"Remember." It is always read on the Shabbat before Purim. In it, we hear about what Amalek did to the fledgling Jewish nation when they were wandering in the Sinai desert.

The Haftora is about the war against Amalek and its king, Agag, waged by King Saul. The obvious connection to Purim is that in the Purim story, Haman (a descendant of Agag) sought to annihilate the Jewish people. But we were miraculously saved through Mordechai and Esther, descendants of King Saul.

Are there other connections in the Haftora to *Zachor* and to Purim? And what lessons can be learned from this Haftora?

The Haftora begins with Samuel the prophet repeating G-d's command to Saul to utterly wipe out Amalek. "So says G-d..., 'I remember what Amalek did to Israel..., when they were going up from Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek and destroy all that they have....'" What is interesting about this verse is how it varies from the verse in *Zachor*, "Remember what Amalek did to you..., when you were going out of Egypt." In *Zachor* it says, "going out" from Egypt, and in the Haftora it says, "going up." Going out and going up express two different purposes in leaving Egypt.

Going out refers to getting away from the negative influence of Egypt. Going up refers to the positive purpose of going out of Egypt, receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, and becoming G-d's nation.

The main idea of receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, was that we were raised above nature, connecting with G-d, and that G-d would bring himself into the physical, allowing the world to be infused with G-dliness, through our study of Torah and observance of *mitzvot* (commandments).

The Haftora brings to the fore the nature of Amalek. When does Amalek attack? When we are on the way up, when we are reaching to be who we are meant to be, above the natural and one with G-d. This is what Amalek can't stand, this is where their hatred lies.

This is the war we wage against Amalek every day. When we are inspired to rise above, to be Jewish, above the natural, inevitably an Amalek comes to cool down our inspiration and fervor.

The war against Amalek coming out of Egypt was necessary. Overcoming Amalek was part of what set the stage for receiving the Torah. And the same is true today. We should not see our battle with our personal Amalek as a negative, but rather, as a necessary struggle, that prepares us to rise above.

Through taking our service to this higher level we will once again merit great miracles, like the miracles of Purim, with the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon.

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

Purim Revisited

Purim is a holiday for children and the children at heart.

And why shouldn't it be?

According to Jewish teachings, it was because of the Jewish children that the miraculous rescue of the entire Jewish people took place.

Let's back track a little in the Purim story, though, to get the whole picture. Haman had managed to get King Ahasuerus to agree to his evil plan of totally annihilating the Jewish people. He even had in his hand the decree with the royal stamp on it, rendering the ruling irrevocable. At this point, Haman once again encountered Mordechai, who was teaching Torah to a group of thousands of children.

As before, this time too, Mordechai did not bow or in any way humble himself to Haman. Feeling himself at the apex of his political power and prowess, Haman was more enraged than ever before. He vowed that the children would be the first to die.

The mothers of the children begged them to leave Mordechai, but they refused. They urged their children to break their fast – a fast which, at Esther's request, Mordechai had required of the entire Jewish people. The children, once more, refused. They would remain with Mordechai, studying Torah and praying to G-d with the firm belief that He would hear their sincere and pure prayers and redeem them from this catastrophe.

What was it that gave these children such faith, and more to the point, such hope, despite the seemingly helpless situation?

The children had been studying with Mordechai laws concerning the Holy Temple. Though the First Temple had already been destroyed and the Second Temple had not yet been built, Mordechai taught the children about the Holy Temple. These teachings instilled within the children a strong belief, longing and hope that at any moment the Holy Temple could and would be rebuilt.

The children's prayers, their tears and cries, persuaded G-d to revoke the Divine Decree (thereby nullifying the earthly decree of Haman and King Ahasuerus). And what made their prayers so powerful, was that they had been educated by Mordechai to believe in the rebuilding of the Holy Temple, the ingathering of the exiles back to Israel, and the Redemption.

Today, the entire Jewish people does not face an existential threat as they did in the days of Mordechai and Esther. Yet, there are personal, communal, national and global issues that we would like to see rectified. All of us, on various levels, dream of a perfect world.

When the long-awaited Redemption commences, all of humankind will experience this perfect world. And the way to properly direct our prayers and actions to hasten the Redemption, is through studying Torah, specifically Torah that inspires hope, faith and longing for the Redemption.

Happy Purim, and may we celebrate it together as one, united people, in Jerusalem with the revelation of Moshiach, NOW!

SLICE OF LIFE

Operation Purim

As told by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Gurewitz



This story is from Here's My Story and is presented with permission from JEM's My Encounter with the Rebbe oral history project, which is dedicated to recording first-person testimonies documenting the life and guidance of the Rebbe. MyEncounterblog.com.

When I was a young man, I was dispatched by the Rebbe to Israel, along with a group of other yeshiva students from New York. We were to study during the day at the Tzemach Tzedek Chabad synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem and, during the evenings, at the Toras Emes yeshiva in central Jerusalem. And we were also to do outreach work in various locations in Israel.

Before we left for Israel in the spring of 1976, the Rebbe repeatedly spoke about our mission and even said that he was taking personal responsibility for our welfare.

So we set off with great excitement, particularly because we would be in Israel for Purim, and we would get to distribute holiday food packages – *mishloach manot* – to the soldiers on army bases. We had heard the Rebbe speak many times about the merit of the soldiers who defend the Holy Land with their lives, and therefore we waited impatiently for this opportunity to bring them joy. The packages to the soldiers were funded by the Rebbe personally, so it was a special honor to deliver them.

When Purim came, I was dispatched with three other chasidim from Israel in the back of a military

vehicle to an IDF base near the Arab city of Nablus, known to Jews as Shechem. We were about two kilometers from our destination when suddenly the car stopped. We didn't understand what was going on because we couldn't see from the back of the vehicle; we just heard yelling. After a few minutes, the driver came around to tell us that we couldn't go forward because about 20 meters up ahead was a blockade of stones and burning tires. Also, up on the hill, over a hundred Arab youths were gathering armed with stones, which they started to hurl at us though they were too far away to cause any harm.

The driver would not take responsibility for bringing us across the blockade and putting us in danger. I tried to convince him that we had no choice; we had to move forward because we were on a mission from the Rebbe.

"It's too big a risk," the driver insisted, "anything could happen if the Arabs riot."

I was not very fluent in Hebrew then, so to make my point clear, I got out of the car and announced, "I'm staying. You can go back, but I'm going ahead regardless."

"Do you understand what's going on here?" the driver retorted. "They will attack you!"

"Before we left America, the Rebbe assured everyone in my group that he was taking personal responsibility for our welfare," I said, "so I know that I have nothing to fear, and I'm going ahead."

"That might be well and good for you chasidim," he responded, "but I am a soldier, and the Rebbe never guaranteed my welfare."

"I am sure that his guarantee extends to you also since we are all part of one group."

"You have that much confidence in your Rebbe?" he asked.

"Yes!"

"Then let's go."

I was overjoyed that I managed to persuade him. It was dangerous, I knew that, although it was not as dangerous back then as it became later during the Intifadas. He hit the gas and sped towards the blockade. It was made up of a heap of stones, but the military vehicle was able to climb over it though it swayed from side to side, tossing us around.

After we got over the blockade, the Arab youths were near enough to hit the car with stones. In fact, they managed to throw one stone into the car, but thank G-d, it didn't hurt anyone. The soldiers shot into the air but that didn't intimidate them or stop

them. Nonetheless, we managed to get through safely and drive on.

When we reached the IDF base, the commander was standing at the gate, and I heard him ask the driver, "How did you have the guts to go through that road block?"

The driver pointed at me and said, "It's his fault!" And then he related the whole story.

The commander said to me, "I want to gather all the soldiers together so they can hear this as well."

There were about 300 soldiers on this base, and I told them how the Rebbe gave me the courage to move forward and not turn back. They responded with great excitement, and we all danced together, and then we distributed the Purim food packages from the Rebbe.

When I returned to Jerusalem, I reported what had happened to Rabbi Binyamin Klein, the Rebbe's secretary. He asked for all the details.

Then at 4:00 a.m. Israel time, we tuned in via a live telephone hook-up to the Rebbe's Purim farbrengen which was then taking place in New York. As I listened, I heard the Rebbe say at one point:

Every once in a while, an extraordinary event reminds us that we should not be afraid of the darkness of exile ... This is so in the life of every individual. Everyone can find miracles in their private life, which are also lessons for the future. I would like to relate something that just happened, which shows us that when a Jew adheres to Judaism, he has nothing to fear, and he will succeed.

The Rebbe went on to give a detailed account of what happened to us, emphasizing that no one in our group, nor even among those throwing stones at us, was injured. He concluded:

These Arabs saw that a Jew, who resides in the Holy Land, wishes to follow what our holy Torah instructs him. He doesn't want to fight with them but when Purim comes ... it is clear that festivities must take place in Shechem, and it is clear that nobody can stop this. And not only will it bring no harm, but it will be done peacefully and have only positive results.

I must say that hearing the Rebbe praise something that happened with me personally was very humbling, and I thought to myself, "If only I would always be able to fulfill what the Rebbe asks of me and always make him proud."

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Gurewitz serves as the spiritual mentor of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Migdal HaEmek, Israel.

From A to Z

"My trip is canceled – I'm staying in town. The snow is stunning, but it's making me frown. Join me and together we'll see, From A to Z, it's meant to be!" This rhyming children's book written by Sara Blau, and illustrated by Arti Kukreja is about seeing the hand of the creator in everything that happens! Published by The Rabbi Manis Friedman Children's Book Series

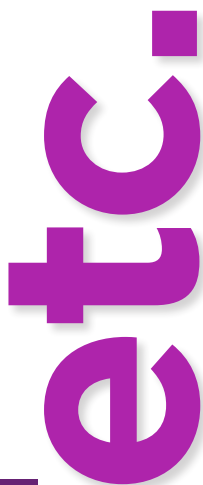


Truth: The Rebbe on Torah and Science

The Rebbe on Torah and Science is a compilation of the Rebbe's answers to questions about Torah and science, subject by subject, synthesizing his many letters on these topics. Every attempt is used to present his original words. Topics relating to the creation of the universe and life on Earth are addressed, as well as the Rebbe's approach to questions about Torah and science. The fundamental principle guiding the Rebbe's answers is that science cannot contradict religion. Religion/Torah is true, and science is true. Compiled by Daniel Friedmann.

Hakhel–Unite

The objective of the Hakhel assembly was to strengthen the foundations of Jewish education and observance. We should assemble whatever groups of people we can in order to influence as many people as possible to enhance their commitment to the Torah's values and lifestyle, as based on the love and awe of G-d. Fulfilling this commandment to the greatest extent possible will elicit G-d's reciprocal response, and He will enable us to finally fulfill it in its optimal fashion, in the rebuilt holy Temple, as we listen to the Torah read to us by the ultimate Jewish king, Moshiach. (*Likutei Sichot*) Learn more at hakhelnation.com



Visit www.moshiach.com or call (718) 953 6100



IT HAPPENED ONCE

The bitter cold chilled the officer's bones and fear made his heart tremble. Ivan was not a coward, but the rumors of the sadistic Bolsheviks who were nearing the city of Rostov frightened him terribly. He paced the streets, waiting anxiously for the light of day. He was oblivious to the two men following at his heels, not making a sound.

Suddenly he felt powerful hands grabbing him. He screamed a loud and bitter scream, but the two held him. In the morning the body of the officer was found with the warning: "Beware! The Bolsheviks are coming!"

The Jews were the most shaken by news of the Bolsheviks' approach, as the study of Torah and observance of its precepts was a serious crime to the Bolsheviks. There was only one part of the city where life went on as usual, where fear of the Bolsheviks was not felt: in the Chabad Yeshiva.

The yeshiva students continued their studies without disruption. They drew their strength from the Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch – the fifth Chabad Rebbe. The Rebbe encouraged them to study and pray as usual, and the yeshiva bustled with life.

It was Zundel the Beggar who brought the news: "The Bolsheviks are on their way into the city!" Soon Rostov became a city of flames and the Bolsheviks beat and killed anyone they chanced upon.

Thus passed several weeks. The holiday of Purim was approaching. The Rebbe isolated himself and didn't speak to anyone. The students could not make peace with the Rebbe's isolation. They remembered the great joy of Purim, when Jews celebrate the victory over Haman who tried to "destroy, kill and annihilate."

And then it was Purim. Not a soul smiled. Finally, two yeshiva students who could no longer bear the thought of Purim passing in such a manner, summoned up their courage and entered the Rebbe's room. After a few silent moments they heard the Rebbe's voice: "The Bolsheviks are in the city. I cannot exist together with them. But for the sake of Purim, we'll forget about the situation. Go buy plenty of vodka and let there be light for the Jews!"

The good news spread through the city and the yeshiva students took their places for the Purim gathering. The Rebbe spoke and all listened. When the Rebbe concluded, an older Chasid began singing a soulful Chasidic *niggun* (melody). Everyone joined in, singing from the depths of their hearts. Suddenly the door burst open. At the entrance stood a Chasid. "The Bolsheviks are coming," the Chasid cried out in fear.

The singing stopped at once; everyone was gripped with terror. The Rebbe, however, disregarded the news, and began singing a niggun very softly. The melody touched and calmed the frightened crowd. Having concluded the melody, the Rebbe began saying a Chasidic discourse. The room was silent; the only audible sound was the Rebbe's voice.

Suddenly the silence was broken by loud knocking. The Rebbe continued speaking as though nothing was happening. After a few moments one of the members of the Rebbe's family said: "Rebbe, the Bolsheviks are demanding that we let them in. If they see us gathered here it will be our end...G-d forbid." The Rebbe interrupted the discourse and said, "Open the door for them."

In the doorway stood two tall and fearsome looking Bolsheviks, their eyes darting all about, hungry for prey. "What is this gathering? What is going on?"

Trembling, one of the Chasidim called out, "This is the Rebbe Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch. He is teaching Torah to his Chasidim. The Rebbe is busy with his talk and he cannot be bothered." He could hardly believe the words that came from his mouth. The two soldiers were astounded at the Chasid's nerve, and they turned on their heels and departed.

“An open miracle!” the Chasidim exclaimed to one another. They felt protected and sang with greater fervor. Thus passed two hours. So immersed were they in their joy, that they did not hear the Bolsheviks knocking again... “Rebbe, what shall we do?” several frightened Chasidim cried out.

The Rebbe freed himself from his thoughts and said, "Open for them! I don't fear them." The Chasidim understood that another great miracle was about to occur. The Bolsheviks burst through the door, their weapons in hand. The Rebbe ignored their threatening presence and said, "We will begin saying some words of Torah." The Rebbe raised his voice and began, "Amalek is first among the nations but his end will be destruction."

The Bolsheviks' faces softened. Their swords returned to their sheaths, and they watched with growing perplexity as the Chasidim listened to the Rebbe. They looked at one another and then, without a word, turned and left.

The Chasidim thanked G-d for miraculously saving them and for giving them their Rebbe in whose presence evil had no power. Everyone was deeply moved, feeling in their hearts without knowing why that this would be their last gathering with the Rebbe. Painful tears flowed from their eyes, tears of parting. A week after Purim the Rebbe became very weak, and on the second of Nissan his soul departed in holiness and purity.

THOUGHTS
THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

You shall command the Children of Israel that they bring to you pure olive oil, pounded, for the lighting (Ex 27:20)

Why was it necessary for the oil to be brought to Moses if Aaron was the one who would be kindling the menorah? Oil alludes to the inner goodness hidden within every Jew, even the most simple. To arouse this inner quality, the Jew must connect himself to "Moses" – to the leader of the Jewish people in every generation -- who, in turn, elevates it to the higher level of "pounded, for the lighting...a light to burn always." (*Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim*)

The Egyptian exile, with its backbreaking labor, was the crucible of fire that refined the Jewish people, transforming them into a proper vessel to contain the revelation of Torah on Mount Sinai. So it is with our present era, when we find ourselves “pounded” by the harshness of the exile. But it is precisely this “pounding” that will bring us to the “light” – of the Messianic Era, as our Sages said, “It is only when the olive is crushed that the oil can emerge.” At Mount Sinai, it was primarily the revealed part of Torah that was given by G-d. Our present exile, however, prepares us for the revelation of the inner dimension of Torah that will be taught by Moshiach. (*Peninei HaGeula*)

His sound shall be heard when he goes into the holy place" (Ex. 28:35)

According to the signs given to us by our Sages, we are the last generation before Moshiach. In fact, our generation is termed “the heels of Moshiach,” and likened to the “hem of the (priest’s) robe.” The hem of the priest’s robe was adorned with bells and pomegranates, symbolic of Jews who do not study Torah or observe its commandments. Yet, when the priest approached “the holy place,” the bells and pomegranates made a “great noise... and its sound was heard.” From this we learn that spreading of Judaism in our generation should be done with the greatest publicity and “noise.” (*Likutei Sichot*)



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10 Adar/March 3

Torah Portion *Tetzaveh*

Shabbat Zachor

Shabbat ends 6:31 PM

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