



פרשת כי תצא
Parshat Ki Teitzei

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RABBI RAE L BLUMENTHAL
BECOMING A BA'AL CHESSED

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ELIANA BROIDE ('21)

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YAFFA SHEKHTER ('20)

DONIE ZAK ('21)

Last year, when Rabbi Efraim Wachsman came to Boca, he told a story of a young, newly married couple. The husband was learning in a Kollel in Lakewood.

It had been two years since they got married, and the

husband, going through the young family's finances, came to the conclusion that it was time for him to leave the Kollel and get a job. The money that they had been gifted as a wedding present for him to learn was running out, and as a responsible family man, it was incumbent upon him to make a living.

He came to his wife and told her that next month he was leaving Kollel. She protested. Knowing how important his Talmud Torah was to him and their family, she took off her engagement ring and told him, "If I sell my ring, we can keep you in Kollel for another few months."

He protested. The ring had been given to them from a rel-

ative, and it had sentimental value. But she persisted: "For the sake of Talmud Torah," she said, "I'd gladly give it up." So they went to the diamond district in New York. Imagine the scene -- a young kollel couple selling their engagement ring in New York City.

They walked into a jewelry store, and the Chassid behind the counter asked them, "What brings you here? Why are you selling your ring?"

They explained the story to him, at which point he said: "You know, I don't know enough about diamonds to give a good estimation, but my brother, down the road, he's a real expert, tell him I sent you."

As the couple left the store, the jeweler called his brother and told him: "There's a couple coming in with a ring that isn't worth much. Tell them it's worth five thousand dollars, and I'll give you the money."

Curious, the brother asked for the details and, after hearing the story, told his brother, "let's call it ten thousand, and I'll do the mitzvah with you."

When the couple came in, a few minutes later, the jeweler wrote them a check for ten thousand dollars, and as the couple walked out of the store, he shoved the ring back into the young man's pocket and told him, "Hold onto this girl, she's worth more than diamonds."

Rav Wachsman noted that the greatest part of the story is that everyone here is a tzadik: The kollel guy is ready to give up his learning for his wife to live comfortably. His wife is ready to give up her ring for her husband to learn. The jeweler and his brother are willing to part with their hard earned money to support a young family.

What is chesed? Shlomo HaMelech in Mishlei (3:3) teaches us:

חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת אֵל-יַעֲזְבֶךָ קִשְׁרִים עַל-גְּרָגְרוֹתֶיךָ כִּתְבֵם עַל-
לִיחַ לִבְךָ

“Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them on your neck, write them on the table of your heart.”

Rabbeinu Yonah, in his beautiful commentary on Mishlei, explains the pasuk: “Chesed means that one works and tries to fix (the lives of) his friends, and seeks out their well-being, and that which is good for them.”

Developing the midah of chesed means that we look to see the pain in each other, in our friends and families, and that we work to heal those wounds. Rabbeinu Yonah understands that we cannot always solve the problem, but we can never absolve ourselves from the responsibility to care, to empathize, and to offer emotional support.

The end of our parsha (25:17) describes our obligation to remember Amalek:

זְכוֹר אֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לְךָ עַמְלֵק בְּדַרְךָ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם
“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt.”

The Siach Sarfei Kodesh (in the name of the Chidushei HaRim) asks the obvious grammatical question: Surely the pasuk should have said “לכם”, not “לך”?! We were all attacked, not just an individual.

He explains that in order to fall prey to Amalek, one had to be on the outside of the camp, alone. The Amaleks of the world cannot harm the Jewish people. Evil cannot touch us. Hashem promises us that the Jewish nation will continue against all odds forever, but there is no such guarantee for an individual. If we wish to have a good year, to be sealed for life this Rosh Hashana, we should ensure that we do not stand alone, but that we stand side by side. That we coalesce into a *klal* -- a community. This is true of our community at home, the greater Jewish world, and the entirety of humanity.

Of course, one cannot speak of chesed without mentioning the acute and painful struggle of those in the Bahamas who suffered so much during hurricane Dorian. There are so many needs and so many ways to help. We should consider donating books, clothes, and

money to help those who have lost everything. If we cannot donate, we should consider volunteering. At the very least, we should daven for the people who are suffering. If we look for the opportunity to change lives, Hashem will give us the means and strength. Together we can approach Yom HaDin, not as individuals, but as a *kehillah*.

STAYING ON COURSE

ELIANA BROIDE ('21)

This week's parsha, Ki Teitzei, starts off by saying:

כִּי תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל-אֹיְבֶיךָ

“when you go out to war *on* your enemies” (Devarim 21:10). Why does the Torah intentionally say “on” rather than stating, “when you go to war *against* your enemies”?

The Torah says this to teach us that we should go out to war optimistically, as if we are already on top of the enemy. We need to go in with the attitude that we will achieve greatness and enter the battlefield with positivity. We learn one of the most valuable lessons from this simple line -- the power and importance of having a positive attitude. It is inevitable that we all come across various situations in our daily lives that are upsetting or frustrating. Hashem gave us the incredible gift of our mind, so we have the ability to use that strength to alter any negative situation that comes our way. We should all try taking an extra minute to change our perspective and look at whatever is bothering us, big or small, and remember that Hashem has an incredible individualized plan for each and every one of us. Sometimes we have to watch the “boring trailers” before we are able to get to the “great movie”; we need to strive to have the positive mindset that the great movie is on its way!

The third Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, stated, “think good and it will be good.” This statement cannot be more true. It is undoubtedly not the easiest task since we often get thrown curveballs that are not the easiest to overcome. However, if we start by wearing a simple smile on our face, eventually that will turn into the happiness and positivity that we desire.

As we start the new school year, we may encounter some difficulties with classes, friends, and the general high school environment, but if we stay optimistic, this year has the potential to be amazing. May we all try every day to go into our personal battles just as Bnei Yisrael went into theirs; with the mindset that we are al-

ready on top, and with the attitude that we have already achieved greatness!

WHERE WE LEAST EXPECT IT

NAOMI REICHENBERG ('22)

This week's parsha, Parshat Ki Teitzei, describes the mitzvah שלוח הקן. The pasuk says:

כִּי יִקְרָא קֶן-צִפּוֹר לְפָנֶיךָ בְּדַרְךָ בְּכַל-עֵץ אוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ,
אִם אֶפְרָחִים אוֹ בְּיָצִים, וְהָאִם רִבְצָת עַל-הָאֶפְרָחִים, אוֹ
עַל-הַבְּיָצִים--לֹא-תִקַּח הָאִם, עַל-הַבְּנִים. שְׁלַח תְּשַׁלַּח
אֶת-הָאִם, וְאֶת-הַבְּנִים תִּקַּח-לָהּ, לְמַעַן יִטֹּב לָהּ,
וְהָאֶרֶץ יִמִּים!

“If, along the road, you chance upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs and the mother sitting over the fledglings or on the eggs, do not take the mother together with her young. Let the mother go, and take only the young, in order that you may fare well and have a long life” (Devarim 22:6-7).

This mitzvah seems so easy! Why wouldn't someone want to send away the mother bird and receive the reward of a long life? What is the significance of this seemingly easy mitzvah? The reward is so great and yet it feels like you didn't even put much effort into doing the mitzvah!

The Rambam and the Ramban have a *machloket* about this topic. The Rambam says, we do the mitzvah so we don't hurt the mother bird. We do it so that she will not have to go through the pain of seeing her eggs taken away. However, the Ramban disagrees. He says that we don't shoo away the mother bird for her feelings, rather we send her away to improve our middot. He believes that if we care so much about her feelings while sending her away, how much more so, we should do everything we possibly can to improve our middot with our peers.

The only two mitzvot we know the reward for are sending away the mother bird and honoring our parents, both of which carry the reward of long life. It makes sense that the reward for honoring our parents is long life. This mitzvah can be extremely difficult and therefore worth a big reward. Sending away the mother bird however, does not seem nearly as important. This is exactly what Rambam and Ramban are trying to teach us. Not only must we care about others' feelings, but we also must always be looking for opportunities to im-

prove our middot.

We are in the month of Elul with Rosh Hashana rapidly approaching. We should of course always learn from the machloket between the Rambam and the Ramban, but how much more so with the Yamim Noraim approaching. This mitzvah is a message from Hashem reminding us to reflect on ourselves and our actions before Rosh Hashana. May we all be zoche to constantly be learning, growing, and internalizing the Torah's messages, even in places where we might not expect it.

THE WAR INSIDE

YAFFA SHEKHTER ('20)

This week's parsha continues detailing Moshe's speech to the Jewish people before they leave for Eretz Yisrael. Moshe gives Bnei Yisrael more information on what they need to do when they enter the land, specifically regarding war.

The pasuk states:

כִּי תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל אוֹיְבֶיךָ וְנָתַנּוּ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְיָדְךָ

“When you will go out to war against your enemies, and Hashem, your God, will deliver them into your hand...” (Devarim 21:10).

The pasuk raises the question: why are we supposed to go to war “on our enemies”, and not “with our enemies”?

This pasuk may be alluding to the daily war we have with our yetzer hara. Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller says in her book, *Battle Plans: How to fight the Yetzer Hara*, that the job of the yetzer hara is to bring us down into depressed thoughts, condemning words, and depraved actions. The name “Yisrael” was given to Yaakov by the angel of darkness after a battle. That struggle against evil depicts the life of every Jew. In this world, our greatest battle is not between war and peace, but between victory and defeat.

Hashem is warning us about going to war with the yetzer hara. Hashem has put the Jewish people in situations where they will struggle and not have the open miracles that would remind them that Hashem is with them. They may be tempted to give into their desires, now that Hashem's impact is not so clear and overpowering. Hashem wants us to fight against our enemy, the yetzer hara, and not with it, to ensure that we can successfully eliminate our desires.

This parsha is usually read during the month of Elul, a time when we reflect on the past year and focus on setting personal goals to keep us closer to Hashem. Fighting our yetzer hara is something we can all do to improve as Jewish people and keep our mindsets focused on Torah.

WHAT THE BEN SORER U'MOREH "TEACHES" US

DONIE ZAK ('21)

In this week's parsha, Parshat Ki Teitzei, the Torah discusses the topic of a *ben sorer u'moreh*, a rebellious son. The pasuk says:

וּרְגָמָהוּ כָּל-אֲנָשֵׁי עִירוֹ בְּאֲבָנִים וּמֵת וּבְעֶרְתָּ הָרַע
מִקִּרְבְּךָ וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמְעוּ וְיָרְאוּ

"All the men of his city shall pelt him with stones and he shall die and you shall remove the evil from your midst" (Devarim 21:21). Rashi explains that the reason this person is sentenced to death is, "*al sheim sofo*" -- "because of his end," meaning, because he will eventually use all of his father's money and steal from people and, therefore, the Torah issues his death to pre-empt those sins.

In Parshat Bereishit, Rashi explains that the angels asked Hashem not to perform a miracle for Yishmael after he was exiled from Avraham's house so that he would die and never have the wicked descendants that he later had. Hashem did not listen to the angels and performed the miracle for Yishmael, saying He would only judge him, "*b'asher hu sham*" -- "in his present state," and not based upon his future sins.

Why does Hashem order a *בן סורר ומורה* to be killed in order to prevent the sins he will commit in the future, but refused to do the same for Yishmael? The term "*al sheim sofo*" can be interpreted in two ways. It can either mean, "because of his end," meaning his future actions, or it can mean, "his last name." The *ben sorer u'moreh* has two parts to his name, *sorer*, meaning rebellious and *moreh*, meaning and a teacher. While both Yishmael and the *Ben Sorer U'Moreh* sin in their futures, only the *Ben Sorer U'Moreh* also is a *מורה* who teaches and influences those around him in a negative way and therefore he deserves to be killed, before he can teach his sinful ways to those around him. This should teach us all to always be aware of our actions and the influence they have on those around us, and to always be good role models and leave positive examples for the people in our lives.

Have a Shabbat Shalom!



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