



S. FLORIDA ZMANIM  
CANDLE LIGHTING  
 7:13 PM  
S'Z KRIAT SHEMA  
 10:10 AM  
SUNSET  
 7:30 PM  
MOTZEI SHABBAT  
 8:06 PM

*"Written by a Multifaceted Student Body, Whose Ambition is to Enrich and Enhance Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion"*

## PARSHAT KI TEITZEI

פרשת כי תצא

~ י"א אלול תשע"א ~

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## PROTECT YOUR HOUSE

RABBI AVI HOCHMAN

Hurricane season can be very stressful. (Especially for someone who has never experienced a hurricane!) The fear and utter panic that occurs when you hear that a hurricane might be coming is overwhelming. The most important thing that a person can do is adequately prepare for whatever may come their way.

In this week's פרשה the תורה tells us, "כי תבנה בית חדש ועשית מעקה לגגך..." - "If you build a new house, you should place a fence around your roof..." From the simple understanding of the פסוק by building a fence you are preventing yourself from having a tragedy occur in your midst. Why does the פסוק stress a בית חדש—a new house? Should it make a difference if it's a new house or an old one?

The Slonimer Rebbe in his ספר, נתיבות שלום, offers a deep insight into this פסוק. When a person is preparing to do תשובה and change their ways, sometimes it is not enough to just stop the negative action. They must also change the path that they are on and start anew. In order for a person to make their "בית חדש" (their "newly founded path") succeed, they must make for themselves a "fence". They must find ways to make sure they do not get stuck in the same situations that have pulled them away in the past.

If a person is trying to start saying ברכות, they will make sure to carry around a סידור or a bencher when eating. If a person is trying to limit the time they spend on the computer, they will set boundaries to control such usage.

As we are currently in the month of אלול and we are preparing to build our "בית חדש" for the new year, Hashem should help us all find the strength and determination to make our "fences" strong so that they last forever.

## MAKING UP OUR MINDS

MATTHEW SILKIN ('14)

Have you ever asked a parent for something? Sure you have! You've asked for many things since you were able to construct a sentence, albeit one riddled with grammar mistakes. Sometimes, though, one parent will respond with the thumbs up while the other motions a thumbs down – and obviously, you're confused.

This week's parsha, deals with the strange case of the *ben sorer umoreh*, the wayward and rebellious son, who steals from his parents, buys lots of meat and alcohol, and stuffs it all down his throat. The Torah commands that this boy be put to death. However, the Torah's description of the boy himself is peculiar; it describes him as “not listening to the voice of his father and the voice of his mother” (21:18). If an English teacher were to edit the Torah, he or she would probably correct that statement by rewriting “not listening to the voice of his parents.” So why does the Torah go the extra mile by listing the mother and father separately?

By specifying the mother and the father, the Torah is implying that the parents are somewhat to blame in the corruption of the child. The boy did not listen to his mother's voice or his father's voice because they were saying two different things. True, the boy had the wrong reaction, but the parents should have tried to agree on a unified answer.

Although we may not be parents, this message still has a strong message for us. There will be contradictions, and yes, they will be unavoidable. But if we can, we should try to work things out and come to an agreement with each other. There are no recorded cases of the *ben sorer umoreh*, and by trying not to contradict and argue with each other, we can help keep it that way.

## LOST TO BE FOUND

CHAIM BITTERMAN ('13)

“You shall not see the ox of your brother or his sheep cast off, and hide yourself from them, you shall surely return them to your brother” (*Devarim* 22:1).

This week's parsha, introduces the mitzvah of returning a lost object to its rightful owner. This mitzvah gives us insight into the value of maintaining a cohesive nation, community, and friendship. The Sefer HaChinuch explains one reason for this mitzvah is to create harmony amongst people. It is a common incident for something to be lost, and when you come across it and return it, a bond of gratitude is formed. *Hashavat aveidah* – returning a lost object – is not always easy; sometimes you may have to go out of your way to care for an item or to get it back to its owner. This mitzvah also teaches us a very important lesson, as it says in *Pirkei Avot*, “Let your fellow's money be as dear to you as your own” (5:26). This highlights not only the great importance of respect for others, but also the respect we must show for others' belongings. When you show respect for your fellow and his belongings a bond of gratitude is formed.

*Continued page 3*

*Chaim Bitterman continued*

It is written in the *pasuk* not to turn a blind eye to the lost object in order to avoid the burden of returning it. This applies to so much more than just returning a lost object, as we see in the very next mitzvah we are commanded, which is to help your fellow unload his overloaded donkey and not turn a blind eye. When it comes to helping your fellow Jew you, should never pretend you do not notice his or her need for help, but rather you should jump at the opportunity to lend a hand.

## **“ZACHOR ET AMALEK”- A FIGHT AGAINST GENOCIDE**

**ZEVI LITWIN (‘13)**

In this week’s parsha, the mitzvah to remember Amalek’s attack on the Jews as they left Egypt, and to wipe out the name of this evil nation, is mentioned for a second time. The Torah commands, “Remember what Amalek did to you, on the way, when you were leaving Egypt. That he happened upon you on the way, and he killed among you, all the weaklings at your rear, when you were faint and exhausted, and he did not fear God” (Devarim 25:17-18). Now there is a very obvious question that we can ask about this mitzvah: We were slaves in Egypt for hundreds of years, yet we don’t have a special obligation to wipe out the Egyptians. What is so bad about what Amalek did to the Jews that we have an obligation to wipe them out?

When a historian studies a war, he first attempts to understand the motive behind the cause of events. What was the reason for that war to occur? What was each of the two sides seeking to gain? One of the main reasons for war is to conquer land, and for this reason the *pasuk* tells us, “That he happened upon you on the way;” the Jews had no land to be conquered! Another possible reason might be to prove your strength, but the *pasuk* states, “And he killed among you, all the weaklings at your rear;” Amalek was not trying to prove its strength, they attacked the weak ones! The last common reason for war is over religion, and therefore the Torah tells us, “And he did not fear God.” *Chazal* understand this verse to refer to the group of Bnei Yisrael that Amalek attacked, and therefore their motives clearly were not religious. Amalek attacked the Jews simply for the sake of killing them, and that is what was so terrible. It was genocide – killing them simply because they were Jewish.

There is a Brisker *vort* that explains what the war against Amalek is really about. It explains that the commandment in Ki Teitzei is to remember and wipe out the nation of Amalek, but the first time the commandment is mentioned in *Beshalach* refers entirely to something else. It says in *Beshalach* that, “Hashem maintains a war against Amalek from generation to generation” (Shemot 17:16). What does it mean that G-d maintains this war against Amalek from “generation to generation”? Nowadays, there is no more nation of Amalek. Rather, this is referring to a war against *Amalekut*, the philosophy of Amalek. This is the philosophy of meaningless war and bloodshed and murder. This is something that has existed throughout Jewish history and continues to infuse our world today. This is what Hitler *yemach sh’mo* attempted to do during the Holocaust, and this is what is happening even now with the terror attacks in Israel. So, let us hope and pray that, as Hashem promised, He will continue to help us fight this war against *Amalekut*, against this genocide, and one day we will be able to return to a peaceful, safe Eretz Yisrael.

## THE BEST PART OF WAKING UP

ELIANA FELDAN ('13)

One of the first things that a Jewish child learns as the words to Modeh Ani: "I offer thanks to You, living and eternal King, for You have restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great." Every morning we thank Hashem for restoring our *neshamot* to our bodies and giving us the gift of another day to perform good deeds. We start our day by thanking Hashem, essentially promising to live up to His standards.

But, if this is the absolute first thing we do in the morning, how much *kavana* can we actually have? We just woke up and are still sleepy! Can we really mean, at that moment, that we are going to commit our day to living according the ways of the Torah and Hashem?

In this week's parsha, we are commanded to "fulfill the utterances of our lips" (Devarim 23:24). We are expected to fulfill our promises to give tzedaka and to do chesed, as well as all of the other mitzvot that we discuss in our tefillah.

It is too easy to just go through the motion of reciting the words from a siddur. Hashem wants us, in fact commands us, to make them more than just words. They need to be requests, feelings, emotions. Every single day we are given a portion of time to converse with Hashem and we need to learn to make the most of that special opportunity.

Children are trained to recite Modeh Ani as soon as they learn to speak in hopes that they learn the value of tefillah, growing accustomed to applying those feelings to their daily lives. We wake up and acknowledge Hashem as our Creator and for returning our *neshamot* to us. May we be able to apply those feelings to our tefillot and make for a more meaningful davening. Shabbat Shalom.

*Adapted from Keeping the Faith by Elisha Greenbaum*

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