

THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel

Parshas Ki Seitzei

September 13, 2019

A Taste of Torah Heeding Headlines

by Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky

Unfortunately, it's not a rarity to hear a daily report in the news of individuals who have murdered innocent people. And it's not limited to murder; there are people who are committing armed robberies and many other serious crimes.

Our tendency is to view these perpetrators as completely unconnected to us. We don't picture ourselves as individuals who are faced with the constant temptation to kill or steal. Our temptations are far more refined than this.

What is the Torah's position on how to view these types of events?

In this week's Torah portion, we are commanded to remember what Amalek did to the Jewish People when we were leaving Egypt. We have to remember that they struck when the Jewish People were weak and exhausted. There is an obligation to wipe out the memory of Amalek from the face of the earth.

Most halachic authorities agree that the physical eradication of Amalek is not meant to be fulfilled while we are in exile. It can only be fulfilled when the monarchy has been returned to the Jewish People. Until then, even if one would know with clarity that an individual is from Amalek, there would be no mitzvah to harm him. If so, how do we fulfill the commandment today? In what way are we supposed to be remembering Amalek on a day-to-day basis?

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986) explains that Amalek attacked the Jewish People at a time when Hashem had openly revealed Himself to the world. Our Sages compare

Amalek to someone who jumps into a boiling hot bath. While the person is burned, he cools the water so that others can now enter. To ignore Hashem's presence at that point in history was completely ludicrous. Nevertheless, Amalek did it, jumping right in, paving the way for others to attack the Jewish People.

Amalek taught us that it's possible for a human being to act in such a terrible fashion. A person can know with absolute clarity that a certain act is evil and despicable, and nevertheless do it anyway.

The nature of the Evil Inclination is that he can convince a person, slowly but surely, to act improperly, eventually bringing the person to depths which he had never dreamed he could possibly descend.

The lesson for all of us is that if we are not constantly working on perfecting and elevating ourselves, we can slip, step by step, until a point where even murder is not an impossibility!

The legendary mashgiach of the Mir Yeshiva, Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz (1873-1936), was once informed that a student of his had committed a certain terribly immoral act. When Rav Yerucham heard this, he shuddered and exclaimed, "We are not so far from this!"

The great and holy mashgiach was constantly aware that if he was not careful with himself, he personally was not beyond committing such an act!

The commandment to remember what Amalek did means to remember how low a human being can fall if he is not carefully guarding himself. A

continued on back

Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Stories for the Soul

No Seats Available

Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievski (1899-1985), known as the Steipler, published an outstanding Torah work while still a young, single man. Rabbi Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz, better known as the Chazon Ish, was so impressed with the young scholar that he made a match between his sister Miriam and Rabbi Kanievski. When the couple met for the first time, Rabbi Kanievski dozed off in middle of the meeting, leaving Miriam perturbed.

She reported the incident to her brother, who, after some investigation, discovered the source of the young scholar's exhaustion. To meet Miriam, Rabbi Kanievski had to take a long train ride. Knowing that he'd have a difficult time studying Torah properly on the train, Rabbi Kanievski stayed up the entire night before studying, planning to sleep during the lengthy train ride.

However, upon boarding the train, he realized that the seats on the train posed a serious question of *shatnez*, the forbidden mixture of wool and linen. He therefore stood for the entire trip, and failed to catch up on his sleep!

The incident did not hinder the proposed match, and Rabbi Kanievski and Miriam married and established a great Torah family; Rabbi Chaim Kanievski, one of the greatest Torah Sages of our time, is among their children.

Among the many mitzvos in this

continued on back

Kollel Happenings

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD LUNCH & LEARN PROGRAM

The M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Program is a division of the Denver Community Kollel dedicated to bringing Torah study to seniors in the community. Don't miss a great Lunch and Learn class on the weekly parsha at Edos, 198 S. Holly St. at 12:00 pm. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! For more information, contact rmf@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

HELP BUILD THE FUTURE OF TORAH IN DENVER

Claim your part in building the future of Torah in Denver! The Kollel is in the midst of a capital campaign to build a three-story, state-of-the-art Torah Center that will serve the entire Denver Jewish community. To contribute, or for dedication opportunities and details on the building, visit denverkollel.org or email info@denverkollel.org.

TORAH BY THE MOON

A night out for couples to engage in Torah learning! Men join Rabbi Shmuel Halpern for Tractate Brachos in Halacha and Aggada. Women attend Chassidus in Real Life with Rabbi Moshe Heyman. Mondays, 8-9 pm at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 4902 S. Xenia St. For more info visit denverkollel.org or email Rabbi Heyman, rmh@denverkollel.org.

Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) King's brother | 4) No overeating |
| 2) Unprepared | 5) No child testimony |
| 3) Worse than murder | 6) No second chances |

Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Eliezer Silver Part XIX

Initially, Morgenthau insisted he could not use his position to influence governmental policies, stating that, as a Jew, there would be a perception of dual loyalty that would imperil his position in Roosevelt's government.

Rabbi Kotler responded emphatically in Yiddish, "If you cannot help rescue you fellow Jews at this time, then your position is worth nothing, because one Jewish life is worth more than all the positions in Washington!"

Mr. Bunim gave a diplomatic interpretation of Rabbi Kotler's statement. Rabbi Kotler realized that Bunim had watered down his words, and he insisted that his message be translated precisely. Bunim, having no choice, did so.

Morgenthau put his head down on his desk. Finally, Morgenthau looked up and looked directly at Rabbi Kotler. "I am a Jew," Morgenthau said. "I am willing to give up my life - not just my position - for my people." Thus did Mr. Morgenthau become involved in the creation of the War Refugee Board.

Following the end of World War II, Rabbi Silver travelled as a US military chaplain to Europe, visiting survivors of the Holocaust in the DP (displaced persons) camps where they were staying as they tried to emigrate to other countries as well as in other parts of Europe. (There is a well-known picture of Rabbi Silver, taken during this trip, wearing a US military uniform.)

A Taste of Torah

continued from front

person has to realize that nothing is beyond him, both for good and for bad. He can strive for greatness and reach elevated heights. But as soon

as he relaxes his efforts and relies on his previous track record, that person can start slipping a slow descent to the very bottom.

Stories for the Soul

continued from front

week's parsha is the prohibition of *shatnez*. While we may not need to avoid sitting down on most chairs

today, we must certainly ensure that our clothing is free of any *shatnez*.

- 6) No second chances 25:19 s.v. *asher*
 5) No child testimony 24:16 s.v. *lo yunsu*
 4) No overeating 23:25 s.v. *saechta*

- 3) Worse than murder 23:9 s.v. *bunim*
 2) Unprepared 22:6 s.v. *ki*
 1) King's brother 21:23 s.v. *ki*

Parsha Quizzers - Answers