



# TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Teruma

February 19, 2021

## A Taste of Torah

### Hungry for War

by Rabbi Yosef Melamed

As Purim approaches and the excitement over this special holiday grows, this week's parsha is supplemented with Parshas Zachor, the second of the four special supplement *parshios* of this time of the year. Parshas Zachor features the Torah commandment to remember the evil that the nation of Amalek perpetrated against the fledgling Jewish Nation.

The commentators explain that reading this parsha is an appropriate forerunner to Purim because Haman, the antagonist of the Purim story, was a direct descendent of Amalek who continued his nation's tradition of evil. As Hashem enabled the Jews to defeat Amalek in the times of Moshe, Hashem saved the Jews from Haman's evil decree as well.

We find another parallel between the narrative of Amalek's defeat in the times of Moshe and in the time of the Purim story. The Torah (Shemos 17:10) relates that Moshe, Aharon, and Chur led the war against Amalek from atop of a hill. Rashi (ibid.) cites the Mechilta that explains that the Jews were fasting during the battle, and it was therefore necessary for three people to lead the Jewish Nation in war, similar to the three people who would lead the congregation in prayer on a fast day decreed due to a public calamity. This is paralleled in the Purim story, where Esther urges Mordechai to gather the Jews and to have them fast for three days and nights in order to garner Heavenly assistance for her success in entreatng Achashveirosh on behalf of the Jewish Nation. Furthermore, the custom is to fast the day before Purim, the thirteenth of Adar, a fast known as Taanis Esther. The commentators (see Levush 686:1) explain that this fast is not to commemorate the aforementioned fast of three days and nights, as that fast (and the subsequent downfall of Haman) took place right before and on Pesach. Rather, the lesson learned from the Jews' fasting while fighting Amalek is that during a war, Jews fast as a means of penance. That being the case, it can be assumed that in the days of Mordechai and Esther, the Jews fasted on the thirteenth of Adar, as well, as part of the battle against their enemies which preceded the Purim celebration of

the fourteenth of Adar. Taanis Esther thus commemorates the fast of the day of battle against the enemies of the Jewish People.

Having established the origins of the fast, we must now explore why fasting is important while fighting a war, specifically a war against Amalek.

Rabbi Gedalya Schorr (1910-1979) offers the following enlightening explanation: The evil of Amalek and its power stems from the ideology that the world is run randomly through nature and is not subject to any Divine plan or supervision. Rashi teaches that Amalek attacked the Jewish People on their way out of Egypt following their expression of doubt, "Is Hashem among us or not?" (Shemos 17:7) Rabbi Schorr explains that this does not mean that the Jews ignored the miraculous events of the Exodus of Egypt and the Splitting of the Sea that they had just experienced. Rather, the Jews were expressing their lack of awareness that Hashem is constantly among us and overseeing all of the world and nature from the greatest miracles of Creation down to the seemingly mundane, minor, day-to-day occurrences and happenings. This lack of awareness allows Amalek to attack, because the Jews themselves, having given credence to Amalek's ideology of a lack of Divine order, are now subject to that very ideology and thus lack Hashem's usual protection.

The Rambam (Hilchos Taanis 1:2) teaches that the point of a fast day is the introspection and *teshuva* (repentance) that is supposed to come through abstaining from the physical. The Rambam (ibid.:2,3) further teaches that fasting and *teshuva* are especially appropriate for a time of danger or misfortune. This is because engaging in repentance as a response to misfortune acknowledges that when something bad occurs, it does not point to a world of randomness and a life left to the elements. Rather, the world is indeed run by an omnipotent and beneficent Creator and Master Orchestrator Who saw fit to cause this particular misfortune as a means of atonement and to engender repentance for those sins.

Thus, explains Rabbi Schorr, when fighting a war, which is certainly a time of adversity,

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## Stories for the Soul

### Take to Give

Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821), the founder and head of the Volozhin Yeshiva, once travelled to Minsk to raise desperately-needed funds to keep the yeshiva afloat. In Minsk lived two men, Reb Baruch Zeldowitz and Reb Dober Pines, who served as *gabbaim* (representatives) to collect money for the yeshiva. Rav Chaim visited Rabbi Zeldowitz and informed him of the dire financial straits in which the yeshiva found itself, specifying the large sum of money that was needed to stabilize the situation. Reb Baruch assured Rav Chaim that he would endeavor to obtain the funds. Thus assured, Rav Chaim went to his place of lodging in Minsk and studied Torah as he awaited further news.

Some time later, Rav Chaim inquired from Reb Baruch where things were holding. Reb Baruch responded that, thank G-d, he had raised half the money; Rav Chaim was pleased and returned to his learning. After nearly a month had passed since Rav Chaim's arrival, Rabbi Zeldowitz joyously informed Rav Chaim that he had secured the entire sum needed. Rav Chaim thanked Reb Baruch profusely and returned to Volozhin with the money in hand.

Shortly after his return to Volozhin, two men appeared before Rav Chaim for a *din Torah* (court case): Reb Baruch Zeldowitz and Reb Dober Pines, the yeshiva's *gabbaim* from Minsk. Reb Dober made his case before Rav Chaim: He and Reb Baruch were equal partners in matters relating to the Volozhin Yeshiva, but Reb Baruch had donated the entire sum necessary to save the Volozhin Yeshiva from his own pocket, without allowing Reb Dober to have a share in this great venture!

Rav Chaim was taken aback at the revelation that the money had not been collected, but had come from Reb Baruch's own estate. He also had a question for Reb Baruch: "If you gave all the money, why did you make me remain in Minsk for nearly a month, and why did you give the

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## Kollel Happenings

### KOLLEL 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION VIRTUAL EVENT ON MARCH 10

The Kollel will hold its 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Celebration, *The Journey*, on Wednesday, March 10 at 7 pm. The event will feature *A Journey of a Thousand Miles: The Sperber & Aragon Story*, and *A Never Ending Journey: The History of the Kollel Movement*. org. Reserve by February 25 and receive a gift bag and a special book. For details and to reserve, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org) or email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### ETHICS OF SHORT SELLING AT MARCH 3 T4T

Join Andrew M. Kark, CPA/PFS, CFP, Partner/Advisor at M.Z. Kark & Associates, and Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher, Senior Educator for Denver Community Kollel, for an intriguing discussion on the ethics of short selling in the wake of the GameStop stock market frenzy. Wed., 3.3., 8-9 pm via Zoom. Visit [denverkollel.org](http://denverkollel.org) for further details.

### KOLLEL CLASSES CONTINUE VIA ZOOM MEETING

The Kollel is continuing many of its classes and offering new classes via Zoom Meeting. You can tune in to live classes online or call in on a phone. For a full schedule and the links and phone numbers to access this treasure trove of Torah, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org) or email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

## Halacha Riddles

**Last week we asked:** Two identical fruit pies were made, yet one seemingly minor difference between them changes the *bracha* to be made upon them. What is this difference?

**Answer:** It depends whether the crust and filling were baked together or not. Although the filling is more important than the crust, the crust, having been made from one of the five types of grain (wheat, barley, spelt, rye, oats), is regarded as significant. If the crust and filling

were baked together, they are regarded as one unit and the crust is considered more significant and the food requires a *mezonos*. If, however, the filling was not baked together with the crust, then each item is viewed independently and each requires its own blessing (see Mishna Berura 168:45).

**This week's question:** How can two containers of identical peanut butter, eaten under identical circumstances, require two different blessings?

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Saadia Gaon - Part XVII

Rabbi Saadia was also forced to leave Sura due to the persecution from the *Raish Galusa*, and he settled in Baghdad. While he suffered from

the dispute, he also now had more time to focus on other things. It was during this period that he wrote his most famous work, *Emunos Vide'os*.

## A Taste of Torah

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fasting is a necessary part of the war strategy, as it brings about the repentance necessary to negate the need for the adversity in the first place. This was especially true when Amalek fought the Jewish People after the Exodus, as the attack was generated by the Jews' lack of awareness of Hashem's guiding hand. Fasting was therefore an essential part of the fight, as it served to display that the world is not left to natural forces, and the sin that brought on the attack in the first place was thus rectified. Similarly, in the Purim story, the Talmud teaches that the Jews sinned by attending King Achashveirosh's party, an act that seemed logical as a diplomatic necessity in their relationship with the king. However, Mordechai declared that it was forbidden to attend the party, and so going was, in effect, denying the power of Hashem to ensure the security of the Jews and exchanging that power for dependence on the natural course of diplomacy.

Fortunately, the Jews realized their mistake and engaged in fasting and prayer, thus acknowledging their error and once again putting their faith in Hashem, not in nature or man. They did so during the initial three-day fast requested by Esther, and they did so again on the day they fought the battle against Amalek and its evil belief that the world is not run by Hashem.

Thus, reading Parshas Zachor and its lesson of belief in Hashem's control over every part and aspect of nature is truly an appropriate way of preparing for Purim and its theme of Divine Providence being present, albeit often hidden, in every situation.

Let us take the lesson of reading Parshas Zachor to heart and put our faith in Hashem, not in other ineffective means and reliances. In that way, we will surely merit Hashem's protection and assistance in serving Him properly!

## Stories for the Soul

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money in two installments? Couldn't you have immediately given me the entire sum and sent me on my way?"

Reb Baruch replied, "Do you think it's a small matter to simply give such a large amount of money away? I spent many days and weeks working on myself until I was ready to give the money. At first, I was ready to give half, and then, a few weeks later, the second half!"

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin used this story to explain a verse at the start of this week's parsha. Hashem tells Moshe to command the Bnai Yisrael, "And they shall take for Me a separation." Wouldn't the appropriate term have been "and they shall take for Me"? But, explained Rabbi Sorotzkin, this story illustrates that giving often involves first taking from oneself.

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