

Torah Weekly

ת"ב

August 23-29, 2020
3-9 Elul, 5780

Torah: Ki Teitzei:
Deuteronomy 21:10 - 25:19
Haftorah: Isaiah 54:1-10

PARSHAT KI TEITZEI

Calendars

We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

Family Programs

Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

Grape Juice & Matzah

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzah for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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No One Forgotten.

Embrace Your Inner Ice

Ice. Cold. Benumbed. Arctic. Inflexible, rigid, and unyielding. On the human plane, ice represents apathy, emotional frigidity, imperviousness to change, and resistance to inspiration. It should come as no surprise then that our nation's archenemy, the nation of Amalek, is associated with coldness. "Remember that which Amalek did to you, on the way, when you went out of Egypt. How he encountered you on the way..." (Deuteronomy 25:17) The Hebrew word for "encountered you" is *kar'cha*—which can also be translated as "cooled you."

After experiencing the miraculous Exodus, the even more spectacular Splitting of the Sea, and then being treated daily to manna from heaven—it is understandable that our ancestors were enjoying a spiritual heat wave. Warm, excited, inspired, on the highest of highs. Their heat, and their aura of invincibility, radiated outwards, and no nation dared to confront them. No nation, that is, besides one. Amalek was unaffected by the heat, and brazenly came forth to attack the Israelites and apply a cold compress to their burning enthusiasm. Miracles shmiraes... They tried to cool our passion—and we are enjoined to never forget their chilling stab, and to utterly eliminate them from the face of the earth. And on a personal level, there is an Amalek lurking within every one of us. It is the icy voice that attempts to inculcate us with apathy and immunize us against passion and

inspiration. This Amalek, too, must be destroyed.

But how? Well, the most obvious antidote to ice is heat. With enough heat you could melt a glacier.

But there's another way...

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In terms of spiritual service, ice represents absolute and unshakable commitment to G-d. Not a commitment based on emotions (warmth), not one that rests on a foundation of love and awe for the Creator or an appreciation of the beauty and importance of serving Him. For ultimately, any such relationship is based on a feeling of self: I love, I fear, I feel, I like, I appreciate, I understand... And when the service depends on my warmth and excitement, it will fluctuate from day to day, even minute to minute. Some days will be sunny and warm; others will be overcast and chilly. But if the commitment isn't driven by warmth and passion, by what I want and feel, but by what is wanted of me—then it's steady and constant, and not subject to vacillations and swings. Because what I'm wanted and needed for doesn't change. In Ezekiel's depiction of the supernal chariot, he describes the "awesome ice" that stands above the holy *Chayot* (Ezekiel 1:22). The *Chayot* are angels who, as we say in our daily morning prayers, serve their Master with a "mighty tumult." Their excitement at singing G-d's praises and proclaiming His holiness defies description. But there's something above their heads, a service superior

to theirs. Ice. And don't mistake the person who serves G-d with icy resolve for a wimp. Don't think that his lack of ego or personal agenda renders him a pushover. Much to the contrary, his icy determination isn't mitigated by considerations of ego and pride. He stands his ground no matter what may come his way. His determination can sink ships that are deemed to be unsinkable. So if you want to melt your inner ice, go right ahead. But I recommend that you fight ice with ice. *Based on a talk by the Rebbe, Parshat Vayishlach (14th of Kislev) 5745 (1984). Published in Hitvaduyot 5745 (vol. 2) pg. 806-808.*

By Rabbi Naftali Silberberg

Respecting the Earth, and Our Part in It

We live in a world where eating clean, living green, recycling and biotechnology have become commonplace jargon and practices. The majority of people have come to understand that only so many resources in this world are available for human consumption. To keep these resources feasible and viable, we need to support, cultivate and protect them. Well before environmental spokespeople were echoing a call for greater towards the planet, G-d had formulated the concept in Parshat Ki Teitzei. Here, we read of a most curious situation. When we see a mother bird hovering over a nest that contains chicks or eggs, and we wish to eat them, we must send the mother bird away first. The mother bird must not be part of our bountiful catch. There are several beautiful explanations for this, one of which is the

following: People have the right to take and consume the eggs in this scenario, but they cannot kill an entire species. And even though they are not actually doing that in this example, it is as if they are, for they are extinguishing two generations of birds. There is something cruel about killing a mother together with her children—something that sounds a lot like over-consumption. Indeed, there is something ethically corrupt in pursuing practices that may lead to extinction (Deuteronomy 22:6-7) Here, not only do we see a touching sensitivity towards animals, but we hear language that sounds like the forerunner to some basic environmental principles!

Does it not sound like the Torah is advocating for the concept of sustainability?

Sustainability, in the modern sense of the word, means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Or, in simpler language, don't take more than your fair share.

The Torah was an environmental trailblazer, way ahead of its time. It teaches us that in order to perpetuate the fragile balance of our ecosystem, we cannot exploit it, and we shouldn't take more than we need.

When we capture animals faster than they can reproduce, we endure too many losses to maintain a healthy population. That over-killing can drive a species to extinction. Ultimately, this can collapse the ecosystems that we depend on.

More than that, the act of sending away the mother bird—like all acts of compassion—teaches deep lessons. A person can only be compassionate by shelving self-centeredness and considering the entire situation he or she is part before acting. When we send away the mother bird, we are being sensitive to her needs, to the earth's need and to the greater future needs of humanity.

G-d gave us the right to eat and not deplete. We have a right to the eggs, but not a right to the mother.

To be attuned to the needs of the mother bird is to be attuned to something larger than ourselves; in doing so, we elevate all that is part of this most delicate, timely and universal message.

By Karen Wolfers-Rapaport

Sunday, August 23, 2020 --- 3 Elul, 5780

Rabbi A. I. Kook (1935)

Elul 3 is the yahrtzeit of the first Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi (in modern times) of the Religious Zionist Jewish community in the Holy Land, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, who assumed his position upon the formation of the British Mandate in 1920. A leading philosopher and mystic, Rabbi Kook authored many books and letters, and is a founding father of the "Religious Zionist" movement.

Monday, August 24, 2020 --- 4 Elul, 5780

Passing of R. Meir Simchah Hakohen (1926)

R. Meir Simchah Hakohen served as rabbi of Dvinsk (now Daugavpils), Latvia, for nearly forty years. He authored *Or Same'ach*, on Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, and *Meshech Chachmah*, on the Pentateuch.

Ezekiel Envisions Jerusalem's Downfall (428 BCE)

On the fifth of Elul, Ezekiel was sitting in his home in Babylonia, with the elders of Judah seated before him. Suddenly, the hand of G-d fell upon him, and he experienced a vision in which he was transported to Jerusalem and shown all the abominations taking place there. He was then informed about Jerusalem's impending destruction, which indeed took place less than five years later. Ezekiel's prophecy of that day ended on a positive note: So said the L-rd G-d...although I have scattered them among the lands, I will be a minor sanctuary for them in the lands where they have come...I will gather you from the nations, and I will assemble you from the lands where you have been scattered, and I shall give you the Land of Israel...I shall place a new spirit within you, and I shall remove the heart of stone from their flesh, and I shall give them a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 11:16-19)

Read the prophecy: Ezekiel chs. 8-11

Wednesday, August 26, 2020 --- 6 Elul, 5780

Passing of R. Yom Tov Lipman Heller, the "Tosfot Yom Tov" (1654)

R. Yom Tov was a preeminent Torah scholar who served as rabbi in many distinguished communities in Austria and Poland. He is most famous for his Mishnah commentary, called *Tosfot Yom Tov*, which appears in most large editions of the Mishnah and is an indispensable tool for obtaining a thorough understanding of the text. He authored numerous other works as well, including a commentary on the halachic work of R. Asher ben Yechiel (the Rosh), and *Tzurat Habayit*, clarifying the future layout of the third Holy Temple.

In his autobiographical work *Megilat Eivah*, R. Yom Tov describes how, when serving as rabbi of Prague, his enemies slandered him to the Austrian Emperor, resulting in his imprisonment and a death sentence. Thankfully, the verdict was later mitigated to a monetary fine and a prohibition against serving as rabbi in Prague.

Thursday, August 27, 2020 --- 7 Elul, 5780

Moses' parents remarry (1394 BCE)

Amram and Jocheved had separated because of Pharaoh's decree that all male Jewish babies be killed. Prompted by their six-year-old daughter Miriam's rebuke ("Pharaoh decreed against the males; you decreed against the males and the females") they remarried on the 7th of Elul of the year 2367 from creation (1394 BCE). Moses was born six months and one day later on Adar 7, 2368 (Talmud, Sotah 12b).

Spies die (1312 BCE)

The Spies who slandered the Land of Israel died in the desert (Talmud, Sotah 35a; see Numbers 13-14)

Shabbat, August 29, 2020 --- 9 Elul, 5780

Nachmanides Renews Jerusalem community (1267)

Nachmanides (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, 1194-1270) arrived in Jerusalem, after being forced to flee his native Spain and renewed its Jewish community there. The synagogue he established is functional today, having been restored following the liberation of the Old City during the Six-Day War in 1967.

Birth of Dan (1566 BCE)

Dan, the son of Jacob and Bilhah, fifth of the Twelve Tribes, was born on 9 Elul in Haran. He lived to the age of 125. (*Yalkut Shimoni*, *Shemot*, *remez* 162)

Passing of R. Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin (1900)

R. Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin was one of the most famous chassidic leaders in the second half of the nineteenth century. An original thinker and prolific author, his many works span the gamut of Jewish literature and beyond, addressing topics as diverse as Jewish law, mysticism, chassidic thought, biblical interpretation, and even a collection of scholarly interpretations revealed to him in dreams.