

# Shabbat shalom umevorach!

ברוך אתה אדוני א-להינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו להדליק נר של שבת קדש

**Transliteration:** Baruch A-tah A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ha-olam A-sheer Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitz-vo-tav Ve-tzi-va-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Sha-bbat Ko-desh.

**Translation:** Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the light of the holy Shabbat.

## 'Careful, Shmerel, the water in that jacuzzi is really hot.'

'Oh, come on, Berel, don't be such a wimp. This water is lukewarm. Here I go...ouchhh!'

'Oy vey, Shmerel, you've scalded yourself. I'm taking you to the hospital.'

'OK, Berel, but at least I cooled down the water for everyone else!'

On the Shabbat before Purim we read an additional passage in which the Torah enjoins us to remember and never forget what Amalek did to us. This is known as Parashat Zachor. The original narrative appears earlier in the Torah, describing how the Amalekites attacked the Children of Israel soon after they came out of Egypt. At G-d's behest, Moses selected Joshua to engage them in battle. Eventually, Joshua managed to weaken the Amalekites and repel their onslaught, whereupon G-d vowed that he would wipe out Amalek's offspring and any concrete item that might cause us to remember them. Later, in the passage we read for Parashat Zachor, G-d commands us to do the same. The connection to Purim is that Haman, the villain of the Purim story, descended from Amalek.

Why did G-d react so severely to Amalek's attack? Was their act then so terrible that they deserved to be obliterated from existence?

The Midrash clarifies with a parable of a bathtub of boiling water so hot that no-one could enter. One scoundrel decided to take the plunge. Sure, he scalded himself, but he cooled it off for others. Similarly, when G-d took the Jews out of Egypt, no nation dared to touch them. Until Amalek came along. True, they took a sound beating. But they showed everyone that it was possible.

Hence, Amalek represents the force in the world that says, 'I don't care how great and powerful G-d is. He can perform the most wondrous miracles and execute the most mind-blowing Exodus ever known to humankind - I'll still oppose Him by attacking the ones He loves most. Even if it means I have to suffer annihilation in the process. In the words of the Sages, 'He knows his Master and deliberately rebels against Him.' There is no logic here. Amalek's modus operandi is pure insolence and hatred that flies in the face even of rational thought and natural self-preservation, let alone G-dly wisdom.



## Reminiscent of an interview I once heard with the leader

of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The reporter asked him why their rockets keep missing their targets. His frustrated response was although his team has more advanced rockets than ever before, 'their G-d protects them [the Jews].' By his own admission, he sees that G-d exists and, moreover, wants no harm to befall the Jews. You would think that with this in mind he, of all people, would be the last one to try and hurt them. Yet he still insists on doing everything in his power to inflict destruction on them. My only explanation is that he belongs (at least in a spiritual if not biological sense) to the Amalekite tribe.

Amalek is thus the embodiment of pure evil in this world, which can never be transformed into good. Now matter how reasonable your arguments are, no matter how compelling your proofs, you will never convince him to change his wicked ways. Therefore, the only solution is to eradicate him. In the present era, we are unable to fulfill this objective literally for various reasons, but we can always perform it in a spiritual manner within our own souls.

We all have an element of 'knowing our Maker and deliberately rebelling against Him' in our psyches, albeit in a subtle way. One of the starkest manifestations of this problem is when we fail to apply our knowledge of what is good and right to practical deed. A doctor may know all the dangers of smoking and still be addicted to cigarettes. In a sense, we would be better off not having known in the first place, for if we are aware of what should be done and we choose to ignore it, we are to a small extent rebelling against G-d. Annihilating our inner Amalek means making sure that our moral convictions don't remain theoretical or abstract, but fully affect the way we feel and act.

That also explains why the war with Amalek had to happen right after the Exodus from Egypt and was a prerequisite for the Torah to be given. The purpose of the Giving of the Torah was that it should not remain in Heaven, in the spiritual realm, but descend to this Earth and be observed in a physical fashion. And that is what destroying Amalek is all about: ensuring the Torah doesn't become something purely academic, but is applied in actual practice.

May our efforts in eradicating our own personal Amalek serve as a catalyst to hasten the arrival of the era when we can wipe out Amalek in the literal sense, by appointing the King Moshiach who will fight the wars of G-d (including against Amalek) and be victorious. ☆

From Hadar HaTorah's Yirmi Mehlman


## Parsha in a Nutshell Exodus 25:1-27:19

The people of Israel are called upon to contribute **thirteen materials**—gold, silver and copper; **blue**, **purple** and **red**-dyed wool; flax, goat hair, animal skins, wood, olive oil, spices and gems—out of which, G-d says to Moses, “They shall make for Me a Sanctuary, and I shall **dwell** amidst them.”

On the **summit** of Mount Sinai, Moses is given detailed instructions on how to construct this dwelling for G-d so that it could be readily **dismantled, transported and reassembled** as the people journeyed in the desert.

In the Sanctuary's inner chamber, behind an artistically woven curtain, was the **ark** containing the tablets of testimony engraved with the Ten Commandments; on the ark's cover stood two winged **cherubim** hammered out of pure gold. In the outer chamber stood the seven-branched **menorah**, and the table upon which the “**showbread**” was arranged.

The Sanctuary's three walls were fitted together from 48 upright wooden boards, each of which was overlaid with gold and held up by a pair of **silver foundation** sockets. The roof was formed of three layers of coverings: (a) tapestries of multicolored wool and linen; (b) a covering made of goat hair; (c) a covering of ram and tachash **skins**. Across the front of the Sanctuary was an embroidered screen held up by five posts.

Surrounding the Sanctuary and the copper-plated **altar** which fronted it was an enclosure of linen hangings, supported by 60 wooden posts with silver hooks and trimmings, and reinforced by **copper stakes**. 

[https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/1311/jewish/Terumah-in-a-Nutshell.html](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/1311/jewish/Terumah-in-a-Nutshell.html)

## Hayom-yom: 8 Adar I

The Alter Rebbe once summoned a young disciple of the Maggid and said to him in his customary chant: *I have the mitzvah of “teach them to your children.” You have the mitzvah of sustaining and providing for your family. Let us make an exchange. I will give you what you need to fulfill your mitzvah and you will teach my son (who was later the Mittler Rebbe).*

Then the Rebbe explained the method of instruction: *The first thing is to teach the letters, **alef, beit** and so on. What is an **alef**? A dot above, a dot below, and a line between this is an **alef**. A child must know that the **alef** of Torah is a **yud** above, a **yud** below, and a line of faith that joins them.*

Another version: A **yud** above - this is the soul; a **yid** (Jew) below - this is the body; a line of **yir'at Shamayim** (fear of Heaven) in the center.

<https://www.chabad.org/dailystudy/hayom-yom.asp?date=02%2F20%2F2021>



## Sometimes, serving Gd feels overwhelming,

or worse yet, unattainable. For me, it comes from a place of the evil inclination telling me, I'm not good enough, smart enough, working hard enough, etc. But I have to keep in mind it's a trap, an illusion. The testament of the Baal Shem Tov (Tzava'at Harivash) is a sefer I recently purchased reminding me any Jew can serve Gd perfectly, and that Gd helps along the way if he/she just puts in the effort. Take a look at the first two sections on ‘Basic Concepts in Tzava'at Harivash’ to the English version of the book [Tzava'at Harivash: Testament of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, J. Immanuel Schochet]:

“Deveikut The central theme in Tzava'at Harivash, not surprisingly, is the ultimate of Chassidism's religious values: deveikut, attachment or cleaving unto God. It implies constant communion with God, a vivid and overwhelming consciousness of the Omnipresent as the sole true reality. It is an all-comprehensive principle, that relates not only to prayer and Torah-study, but also to man's mundane engagements in the daily life. Its pursuit enables man to achieve the level of equanimity by means of which he transcends worldly thoughts and concerns. Little wonder, then, that it is a recurring theme throughout our text.

“Prayer The most frequently mentioned concept in Tzava'at Harivash is prayer. It is the subject of over 40 of its sections. The predominance of this theme is readily understood in view of the Chassidic emphasis on prayer. For prayer is the most direct and most common occasion for deveikut. It is also universal, relating to the common folks no less than to the saint and scholar. Every individual, without distinction, can and must engage in this form of communion with God. Moreover, R. Isaac Luria, the supreme authority of Jewish mysticism, ruled: in the present era, the period of ikvot Meshichah (lit. “on the heels of Mashiach,” i.e., the period just prior to the Messianic redemption) the primary service of God, and the primary birur (refinement and correction of the world that leads to the Messianic redemption), is expressly through prayer, though Torah-study is in principle superior to worship. Thus we are told that the Baal Shem Tov merited his unique attainment of spiritual perfection and his revelations of supernal matters by virtue of his prayers with great kavanah (devotion), and not by virtue of his extensive study of the Talmud and the codifiers. Tzava'at Harivash is then replete with emphasis on the significance of prayer and guidance for proper prayer and worship: [Continued next column]

**Question:** Is it necessary to wash “mayim achronim” (cleaning fingers after eating bread), with a vessel (i.e. a cup), or is it fine to do so straight from the faucet?

**Answer:** The faucet is fine, as long as the water does not run down the fingers (towards the wrist) as a result.



## “Prayer is union with the Shechinah.

In, and through, prayer, one is to attain the level of deveikut, a deveikut that will then extend beyond the prayers into the daily activities. Thus one must pray with all one's strength to the extent that the words themselves become alight, and it should be with joy and hitlahavut (fervor; ecstasy).

“Proper kavanah is possible only with personal exertion. Initially this may necessitate to pray out loud, bodily movements (swaying), and reading from the prayer-book, to stimulate kavanah. The ideal prayer, though, the prayer that is altogether from within, is inaudible and immobile.

“The focus in prayer is not to be on personal gains, but to serve God and fulfill His Will. This will also avoid being perturbed by alien thoughts in prayer. Unavoidable disturbances from without are Providential, to spur man to greater effort on concentration and devotion.

“The attainment of the proper state requires gradual stages of ascent. Special effort must be made at the very beginning and that at least part of the prayer is in proper fashion. One is not to be discouraged when it seems difficult to concentrate properly: strengthen yourself and make every effort to overcome the barriers, entreat God for His assistance and you will succeed.” ☆

## Yiddish phrase-of-the-week:

In a beautiful apple you sometimes find a worm.

אין אַ שיינעם עפל געפינט מען אַ מאָל אַ וואָרעם.

In a sheynem epl gefint men a mol a vorem.

I hope these words reach your hearts. ~ A message from Hadar HaTorah's Yossi Suarez

## Who are we?

Chief editor Velvel Yehoshua Fishman, editorial staff Yonason Stebbins & Menachem Mendel Rosenbluh

We are students of Hadar Hatorah Yeshiva in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. We have come from various backgrounds and paths to learn more about our heritage and help other Jews learn more about Judaism. Led by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson of Lubavitch, leader of the Chabad Movement, our goal is to bring Moshiach ASAP by making the world a better place and increasing in acts of loving-kindness. We students are using our day-off from classes to inspire the local Jewish community before Shabbat.

For info about Hadar Hatorah, please visit [hadarhatorah.org](http://hadarhatorah.org) /// Contact editor or subscribe: [jfishmanvt@gmail.com](mailto:jfishmanvt@gmail.com)

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