

# KOL KADIMA

The Voice of the Memphis Jewish High School

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7 Adar 2, 5768

March 14, 2008

Parsha: Vayikra/ Zachor

Candle Lighting 6:49 p.m.

Havdalah 7:50 p.m.

*This week's Kol-Kadima is dedicated in memory of Avraham David Mozes HYD,  
Killed in the Jerusalem Massacre last Thursday.*

## Schedule of Events

March 21<sup>st</sup> 8:00 – 10:00: Special Purim program at the Jewish Home with the residents. We will wear costumes and bring Shalach-Manot with us.

## Past week's events

Our Teamtrek program was great! I'm sure you heard a lot about it and you'll hear some more over the weekend. Pictures will be posted on our website! Thanks to all the students for making it such a wonderful and educational experience.

## Behatslacha

To **Courtney Thomas, Kevin Wender and Jessica Rubin** on their trip to Israel next week.

These 3 students are going on a tour to Israel as part of the 'Shoa and Tekuma' program at Baron-Hirsch. Have a wonderful time, a happy Purim and bring back good memories.

## D'var torah - Parshat Vayikra / Zachor

Every year, on the Shabbat prior to Purim we have a special additional reading to the weekly portion. We read the strict commandment to destroy Amalek. This has a lot to do with the story of Purim.

But who was Amalek? Why are we commanded to destroy them? And what could the relevance be to present day?

Amalek was an ancient Middle Eastern nation that had an inborn hatred towards Israel. The Amalekites took any opportunity to attack Jews for absolutely no reason. There was no land dispute or provocation that caused this hatred - it was an intrinsic pathological need to destroy G-d's people. Such hatred cannot be combated through diplomacy. There was no option to re-educate the Amalekites or review their school curricula. Their hatred was not taught - it was ingrained. As long as an Amalekite walked the earth, no Jew was safe. It was a clear case of kill or be killed. A Jew had to take the command to kill Amalek quite literally - his life depended on it.

In time, the Amalekite nation assimilated into the

people around them. Their inborn hatred became diluted as their national identity dissolved, and the command to kill them became impossible to fulfill. This was no accident of fate. The G-d who authored the Torah is also the Author of history. He decided that the time had come that this command should no longer apply in its literal sense. It was time for the Jewish people to move on.

But this doesn't mean that Amalek has disappeared. Amalek is alive and well today, albeit in a different form. No longer a foreign nation, today's Amalek is an internal enemy. We each have an Amalekite lurking within our very self. The inner Amalek is unholy cynicism. That little voice inside each of us that derides, belittles and attacks truth and goodness; our irrational tendency to mock people who act morally, to be cynical when we see altruism, to doubt our own or other's sincerity - these are the modern day Amalekites. They wage a lethal war with our soul. If we let it, cynicism can kill our every attempt to improve ourselves and smother any move towards refining our character and expressing our soul.

There is only one effective response to Amalek's attacks: Annihilation. Don't argue back, it won't work. The power of cynicism is that it is irrational. The most inspiring, uplifting and profound moment of spiritual awakening can be dismissed in an instant by Amalek's sarcastic taunts. The most logical and sound arguments can be deflected with his quick one-liners -- "Get real!", "Who ya kidding?" or "Hey, you think you're so holy-moly?" There is no answer to such cheap pot-shots. You can't fight cynicism with reason. Just wipe it out. No dialogue. No compromise. Erase it from the face of your soul.

Next time your cynical Amalekite raises his ugly head, stomp on it. Beat him at his own game: Do good things for no good reason. Be kind without an explanation. Love your fellow irrationally. Become the hero of your own inner battle, and free your captured soul--kill an Amalekite today.

### **Thoughts on the Massacre in Jerusalem**

The terrible massacre in the 'Merkaz Harav' yeshiva last Thursday night raised so many thoughts in my mind.

This time, the students actually knew one of the victims, Avraham David Mozes, whose father, Naftali Mozes, gave us a series of distance lectures from Israel recently.

Obviously, there is so much that can be said regarding this tragic event, but I choose to share with you this article by Rabbi Greenberg (Chabad at Stanford University)

March 7, 2008 –

A massacre at a Jerusalem rabbinical seminary: 8 young students dead, many maimed and wounded. Daily shootings and missile attacks on towns and cities within Israel proper, such as Sederot, and this week Ashkelon. This cannot go on. No country can sustain what Israel is sustaining.

Almost two centuries ago, the French tyrant Napoleon Bonaparte was master of Europe. In Spain, an embattled English army under the Duke of Wellington was resisting his advance. One day a young lieutenant came into the British general's tent clutching a map in his trembling hands:

“Look, General the enemy is almost upon us!”

“Young man,” the general replied coolly, “Get larger maps, the enemy won't seem so close.”

For three decades, many Israeli leaders said give the Palestinians land, their own state and then we will have peace. Others argued: They don't want their state; they want OUR state. They claim not just Ramallah but Tel Aviv and Jerusalem as well. If you make territorial concessions in this tiny country, “the enemy will be upon us.”

And those same leaders responded: Don't look at the small map, but rather at the “larger road maps to peace.”

Alas, today the enemy's terror campaign is upon us.

Terror is worse than war. In war, there's a battleground with obvious combatants. In terror, a coffee shop, a bus, a rabbinical seminary become the battleground. In war, there are specific targets; in terror everyone is a target - children, students,

innocent pedestrians. The goal is to make Israeli life intolerable and to force Israel's surrender and ultimate elimination.

### **Israel has a strong army, but it failed to protect its citizens from this terror. Why?**

In Hebrew there are two words for strength: Koach and Gevurah. They mean very different things: Koach is physical strength, the ability to overcome your adversaries. Gevurah is internal, moral strength to live by one's convictions. Defining Gevurah, the sages said, “Who is strong? One who conquers the weakness within himself.”

For many years Israel has shown, with G-d's help, unparalleled Koach. Since its rebirth it has had to fight wars, sometimes against overwhelming odds, merely in order to survive. No other country has been surrounded by states who deny its very existence, its very right to be. It fights impossible wars and wins. But in recent years many of Israel's leaders and thinkers have shown a lack of Gevurah. It took immense weakening of Gevurah for Israel's leaders to entrust the security of the Jewish state into the hands of its sworn enemies, who practice, support, and glorify terrorism.

The Jewish people have not always had “Koach,” but they had Gevurah, which sustained them. The behavior of some Israeli leaders today reversed this winning formula. We have a lot of Koach, but very little Gevurah.

Israel's inner strength atrophied when it began tolerating the murder of its citizens, based on the myth that by restraint, it will bring an end to the ill feelings of its enemies and thus to the terror. In reality, what the last few years have proven is that when you are confronted with neighbors who wish your destruction, any such tolerance encourages more bloodshed.

How much more innocent blood needs to be spilled before we abandon the failed “larger road maps?” How many more young Jews will die before we say this cannot go on?

**May the Omnipresent console the dear families of the 8 victims among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.**

**Shabbat Shalom**