

# THE THREAT OF AMALEK AND HOW WE CAN FIGHT BACK-PART 2

RABBI AVROHOM SHMIDMAN YUD ALEF ADAR/MARCH 8 2017

The shiur that Rabbi Shmidman gave was taken from the Pachad Yitzchok-Rav Hutner.

There are 3 questions that relate to how we are to combat Amalek in our time. The questions are all connected.

The first question which is the most obvious is: Why do we have the mitzva of remembering, **zechor**, what Amalek did to us? We know we have the mitzvah of Mechias Amalek, obliterating them, but what is the point of remembering them? And we learned last week, remembering is not just in our hearts, our minds, our souls, but we need to articulate it, which we do in Parshas Zechor, which is a Mitzvah D'Araso.

Why do we bring up the bad? By doing so, we make them center stage? Rabbi Shmidman mentioned that his father was a Rav of a large shul, 1200 families, most Holocaust survivors. And they never wanted to remember what the Nazis had done to them.

2. We know that the Chachomim arranged the Parshios that we read on Shabbos in a certain order. And we see that every year around Purim, we read about the Mishkan, the Kalim, the Bidkei Kehuna. Now, we know that nothing is co-incidence as Amalek would have us believe, so why are the Sidros arranged as they are?

We also see that when the Torah explains how the Keruvim, the Cherubs should be built, the Torah is very specific as to how they should be built. The torah tells us:

'And thou shalt make an ark-cover of pure gold... And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work shalt thou make them, at the two ends of the ark-cover. Make one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end; of one piece with the ark-cover shall you make the cherubim of the two ends thereof. And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high, screening the ark-cover with their wings, with their faces one to another; toward the ark-cover shall the faces of the cherubim be ..'

Keruvim had to be made from 2 ends of the same piece of beaten gold. This was quite unusual. How was this possible to do? The Netziv makes a remarkable observation in his sefer, Emek Dovor, that the language of the Torah seems out of place. He explains that in order to built the Keruvim the way the Torah wants it done, it had to be made by 2 people at each end of the beaten gold, working at the same time and they had to finish it at exactly the same time.

So the question is why?

3. Bnei Yisroel saw the 10 makkos, they saw the spectacular Kriyas Yam Suf, they are in the desert now, and Amalek comes to attack them. What does Moshe Rabbeinu tell his loyal servant Yehoshua about how to prepare for war? He says: Bechor **lonu**. Choose for **us**. Moshe Rabbeinu was the 'av l'niviim' the father of all prophets. He was the only one who could start a conversation with Hashem, rather than wait

for Hashem to talk to him. He says to Yehoshua, 'Choose men, Li V'loch for me and for you.' Moshe Rabbeinu made himself equal to Yehoshua. And the Medrash learns from here, an important principle, "The honor of your student has to be as important to you as your own honor.' This is important, but why does the Torah choose to teach us this important principle in Klal Yisroel's fight with Amalek?

Rabbi Shmidman explained that there is a concept in the Torah, that if you want to understand a word or concept in the Torah find the first time, this concept is mentioned and that will give you clarity.

When is golus, exile and geula, redemption first mentioned in the Torah? The first golus is in Mitzraim and the first redemption is Yitzi'as Mitzraim. And the first time we read about these events is years before they occurred in Bris haBrisorim. We find that when the Torah describes what will happen, there is a linguistic change.

As far as the golus is concerned, Hashem says, "yaana yosem arba maos shono' Hashem will afflict the Yidden for 400 years. About the redemption it says; V'dor Rivie Yohuvu Hano" in the 4<sup>th</sup> generation they will return to Eretz Yisroel.

So golus is spoken to in terms of years. Redemption is spoken about in terms of generations.

Rav Hutner has a fascinating explanation for this: In Parshas B'Shalach, Amalek fights with the Yidden. The Medrash tell us that Hashem has an eternal struggle with Amalek: Milchama La'Hashem im Amalek dor dor' it is a war for Hashem with amelek generation generation. This is not grammatically correct. The Medrash should have said, 'dor l'dor' generation to generation. The 'to' has been left out.

This 'to' is the evil of Amalek. Amalek is not foolish. They know we have our Torah and we also have our customs and our mesora. They know that these are the 3 pillars Yidden need to survive. Today, we are a 'Google Dor' a generation that if we need a piece of Torah we can google it and we think we have the answer to our question. There is a lot of Torah knowledge on the Internet, a lot of Torah knowledge at our fingertips. But that knowledge, does not make a Yid. We need our rabbonim, we need to learn the how our questions were answered for hundreds of years before.

Amalek knows the power we have in preserving our Torah through our mesora. And so what do they want to do? They are not looking to wipe us out chas v'shalom in one shot. No, all they want to do is make a pin size hole in our dyke and a little water will seep out. With time, more water will seep out and make the hole bigger and bigger until the whole thing sinks.

Amalek fights its fight 'dor dor' in between generations. Amalek thinks it can assert itself 'asher korcho b'derech' in the middle of the way. When we least expect it. In the middle of our transmitting our mesorah, they try to make the hole.

So says, Rabbi Shmidman, we have to be so careful, we have to make sure we can hold on to our mesora.

And we see, how now 2000 years after the story of Purim happened, that Yidden are still keeping the yom tov, k'das u'chdin. In spite of all the craziness around us, we are all preparing our sholoch manos, costumes for our children, our delicious sedudas. Even the children are obligated to hear the story of the Megilla-the essence of fighting Amalek is by sharing the story of Purim to the next generation.

We learn this principle from the war with Amelek at Refidim. Klal Yisroel were minding their own business and from 400 miles away, Amalek comes to fight them. An army has to be mobilized, Moshe Rabbeinu says, gather the men, 'li v'loch for me and for you. 'It doesn't matter that I am a bigger prophet than you. Each of us are the same, we each have the same obligation and connection to Hashem.

Why did the Keruvim have to be built at the exact same time, from the same piece of gold? On one side was a face of a child, and on the other side a face of an adult. This is to come to show the Yidden the importance of the transmittance of the mesora 'ma dor l'dor' from one generation to the next. We need people on each end building to show there is no gap between the generations. One generation flows into another.

There was a minhag in Klal Yisroel for hundreds of years to write Haman's name on a stone and then blott it out, or to write his name on the bottom of a shoe and as the person walks, Haman's name is blotted out. The Vilna Gaon explains that from this minhag we get the minhag to make noise when Haman's name is mentioned when we are reading the megillah. And the Vilan Gaon says, we cannot change this minhag. This has now become our mesora, to make noise at the mention of Haman's name.

We find in the gemara that the Yidden were very nervous if they would win over Haman. Once Mordechai met young children leaving their cheder and he asked them what they were learning. When they told him what they were learning, he felt relieved and knew that Hashem was saving them.

The 3 posukim they told Mordechai were what we say after Oleinu,

אל תירא מפחד פתאם ומשאת רשעים כי תבא. עזו עיצה ותפר דברו דבר ולא יקום כי עמנו קל.  
ועד זקנה אני הוא.  
ועד שיבה אני אסבל, אני עשיתי ואני אשא ואני אסבל ואמלט

Do not be afraid of a sudden fear, and do be afraid from the Holocaust of the wicked when it comes. They will make plans and talk and nothing will materialize from their plans because I am Hashem. I created you and I will protect you, Ki Imonu Kale-because Hashem protects us even from Amalek.

"When Klal Yisrael daven to be saved from particular nations, they were saved, and the Amalekim knew this, so they decided 'We will dress up as Kna'anim, the Israelites will daven to be saved from the Kna'anim they think we are, and since we're actually Amalek, it won't work for them!' " In this instance, the Israelites noticed that the language and facial features of their enemy were not those of Kna'anim, though they didn't clearly identify them as Amalekim, so they changed their tefillah from "save us from these Kn'a'anim" to "save us from this enemy" and of course Klal Yisrael was victorious!

So Hashem says **עזו עיצה ותפר**

Not to worry, I thwarted their ideas and saved you. They can plan anything but will not be successful in annihilating the Yidden.

Haman knew about the strength of Hashem and how Hashem protects the Yidden, but he said, when Nevuchadnazzar came, he was successful in destroying the Bais HaMikdtach and exiling the Yidden. For

sure the G-d of the Jews is old already, Haman told himself and is no longer able to protect them. The 3<sup>rd</sup> posuk the children said, proved to Mordechai that Hashem was with his people.

ועד זקנה אני הוא. ועד שיבה אני אסבל even when I am old, I will rescue you.

And so, it is important for us to hold on to our mesora and pass it on to our children. It is important to teach our children that there is nitzichus in Klal Yisroel.

Rabbi Shmidman concluded with the posuk

**בזכות נשים צדקוניות נגאלו אבותינו במצרים ועתיד להגאל**

'our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt in the merit of the Jewish women and in the future (the final redemption) they will also be redeemed in the merit of the Jewish women.'

The keruvim that are forever and are the light of Bnei Yisroel symbolize the Jewish women. It is she, says Rabbi Shmidman, the Jewish mother who teach the children to say Moda Ani, to make brochos, to bentsch, to behave like mentshin and much more who ensure the continuation of Klal Yisroel. There is tremendous power in the Jewish women.

The Medrash tells us that when Klal Yisroel were building the Mishkan in the desert, Moshe Rabbeinu asked for contributions of gold and silver. The men brought more than was necessary. The women felt left out and also wanted to make a contribution. They brought their copper mirrors.

What were these mirrors? In Egypt, the men had felt despondent and had given up hope of ever being redeemed. They definitely did not want to bring children into this world. For what? to die. The Jewish women instinctively understood that this was not true. They knew that Hashem was with them and they would be saved and we had to have Jewish children to continue to build the Jewish nation. So, what did they do? They beautified themselves and after a hard day of work, they would meet their husbands in the fields and bring them delicious food. As they ate, the women would take their mirrors and look into it with their husbands and tell them to see how beautiful they were.

When the women came with these mirrors to Moshe Rabbeinu and told him they want to donate this to the Mishkan, Moshe was disgusted. The women had used them to beautify themselves and he didn't want to accept them.

But Hashem, of course, understood, that were it not for these copper mirrors, Klal Yisroel might have ceased to exist. It was with these mirrors, that the Jewish women got their husbands to agree to procreate.

And what did Hashem tell Moshe Rabbeinu. Not only do I want you to accept these copper mirrors, I know exactly what you should do with them, as the posuk says:

*"And the washbasin was made from copper, and its base was made from copper from the mirrors of the masses who amassed at the door of the meeting tent." (Exodus 38:8)*

They were used to make the kinor-the wash basin. This was the first thing the Kohanim used when they entered the Mishkan to wash their hands to prepare themselves for their important avoda of the day. This was a lesson in mesora. Everyone knew what the kinor was made from. Hashem is telling us, don't forget your mesora.

This says Rabbi Shmidman should be a lesson we should always remember. The importance of passing on our legacy, our mesora generation to generation. Amalek wants nothing else but to stop us from doing that.

And this answers the first question that we started with: why do we have to orally remember what Amalek did to us?

Because it is important as **נספר זה לבנינו ולדורתינו ללמד אותם**

We say it orally because it is imperative that we give over the mesora to our children and to the coming generations. Amalek wants to kill us. Haman wants to kill us, but Hashem guards us.

This giving over the mesora to every generation ensures our continuity. Boruch Hashem, says Rabbi Shmidman we are beginning to see that we are in the ends of days, the geula is approaching. We need to hold onto this knowledge and as Jewish women continue to work on passing on the mesora. We need to be every vigilant that Amalek does not make that pin-hole cut in our transmission.

Rabbi Shmidman ended with a beautiful story. On an erev Shabbos, a frum man was looking for a mikva. He was not in one of the major cities in Eretz yisroel. He found the mikva and a man obviously not religious was also using the mikva.

Of course, they entered into a conversation because it is unusual for such an occurrence to take place. And the irreligious man told the frum man the following story:

'I don't keep Shabbos, I don't keep a lot of mitzvos but let me tell you why I am going to the mikva today. I was a little boy, about 6 years old. My father took me to Rav Yisroel of Vishnitz for a Purim tisch. It was very crowded, so the young children would go under the table where the Rebbe sat. My father sent me there to sit as well. The Rebbe was mindful that there were children under him and he would pass them food from time to time. The Rebbe started his dvar Torah. Of course, we children did not understand one word of his holy words.

He said, we should know the say of the Yetzer Hora is the following: When a person does a mitzva and feels good about himself, the Yetzer Hora will say, 'please, don't think you are so great, remember what you did yesterday, remember the loshon hora you spoke last week. You are not such tsaddik, get over it.' At that point the Rebbe put his hand on my head and he said, 'Don't forget that no matter where you are, no matter what you are doing, you can still strive for a moment of connection to Hashem.'

And says this non-frum Yid to the frum yid, I am going to the mikva now, because right now I am looking for a moment of connection to Hashem.'

Rav Solovetchik spoke about the mother of the Toliner Rebbe. He said his father taught him all the halochos of Shabbos, gemaras, Rambans etc but he said, the beauty of Shabbos I learned from my mother. When I watched my mother light the Shabbos candles, there was a kedusha, a holiness that permeated my house'

We women, says Rabbi Shmidman have the power to break through from the darkness of Amalek that engulfs the world. Through our ability to transmit the mesora to our children we ensure the continuation of Klal Yisroel and in this merit. It is we, the noshim tzidkanious who can teach our children-never forget to make that connection with Hashem. Hashem is already accepting.

In the merit of all we do, may we be zocha to bring the final geula just as our fore mothers did in Mitzraim.

