



Parshas Ki Teitzei 2019, prospering beyond belief

This week's parsha contains 74 mitzvahs, which is more than any other Torah portion. We begin with the laws and procedures concerning a soldier who wants to marry a female captive of war and the inherent right of a firstborn son to a double portion of his father's inheritance.

Our Parsha contains multitudes of notable commandments. For example, returning a lost object to its owner, the obligation to send away the mother bird before taking her young, the law against wearing shatnez (*any garment that contains a mixture of wool and linen*), and the mitzvah of wearing Tzitzis. The Parsha ends off with the mitzvah to remember what Amalek did to us on our journey through the desert.

A question comes to mind: The Pasuk says, "*You shall not despise an Egyptian, for you were a foreigner in their land.*" (23:8) G-d commands us not to hate the Egyptians, even though they were sadistically persecuting our ancestors! It even says in *Shemos Rabbah* (1:34) that Pharaoh would bathe in the blood of Jewish children! How can we be commanded not to feel hatred towards them just because we were in their land?!

Furthermore, there are two commandments regarding the nation of Amalek in the Torah: one (the last mitzvah of our Parsha) is always to remember what they did to us in the desert, and the second (*Beshlach 17:14*) is to destroy them and remove any trace of them physically. If we were commanded not to feel hatred towards the Egyptians who persecuted us for so long, why did G-d command us to destroy Amalek, who did a lot less?!

The Talmud in Shabbos (31a) relates a story. One day, a non-Jew came before Hillel the Sage and told him that he would convert to Judaism if he could be taught the entire Torah while standing on one foot. Hillel replied to the man, "*That which is hateful to you, do not do to another; this is the entire Torah, and the rest is commentary.*"

This is because love for your fellow is the foundation of a moral, ethical, and spiritual society. G-d created each and every individual uniquely. Therefore, to love G-d, you must also love his creations.

Moshe takes this concept to the next level with the commandant not to hate the Egyptians. He is telling the Jewish people that although they were slaves in the past, they are slaves no more. If they hated the Egyptians, they would still be slaves — if not physically, then mentally. Hatred is detrimental to the development of a moral and ethical society and the growth of one's self.

If they hated the Egyptians, they would be slaves to the past and held captive by the shackles of resentment. They would be incapable of moving forward to build a better society. Moshe is teaching the Jewish nation what it means to be liberated and how to remain so in the future. To be free, you must first let go of hate.

There is a major difference between the nation of Amalek and the Egyptian people. Although the Egyptian's oppression was necessary to turn a family of just seventy people into a great nation, now they are history and a thing of the past. They should not have any bearing on our future.

But Amalek's main focus was to cool down the Jewish people's burning passion for G-d — and the act's damage still affects us today. Amalek has manifested itself in each generation. King Agag in the time of King Shaul to Haman in the Purim story, to the person responsible for killing six million Jews in modern times, H"YD. **That is why we must remember what they did to us on our journey from Egypt — because it will manifest itself in different forms over and over.**

In our daily lives, it is imperative we understand that the Jewish nation must never have a victimhood mentality, for it is an attitude of compromise and concession, an ethos of defeat. To grow, you must release the past, and only then can you build your future.

This concept is prevalent in both your spiritual and physical life and is especially important in the month of *Elul* as we prepare for the new year. We need to leave behind the worries and concerns of our past year in the hopes of a better future and get ready to recrown G-d as our one and only king on *Rosh Hashana*.

"Many times the mountains that you are carrying are those you're only supposed to be climbing."

*Have a great Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*