

Moshe said to Yehoshua, “Choose people for us and go do battle with Amalek; tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill”. (17:9)

In the *Talmud Yoma* 52b, *Chazal* say that the word *machar*, tomorrow, which is found in the above *pasuk*, can be interpreted as belonging to the previous phrase: “Choose people for us and go to do battle with

Amalek tomorrow.” Alternatively, it can refer to the second half of the *pasuk*: “Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill.” We wonder what is the significance of the word, “tomorrow”? What message regarding the war with Amalek is being taught to us via the word “tomorrow”?

Horav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, z.l., explains that the concept of “tomorrow” plays a crucial role in Amalek’s fight against *Klal Yisrael*. Amalek denotes evil. He represents the forces of evil within a human being – the *yetzer hara*, evil inclination, whose function it is to ensnare a person and lead him to sin. Outright incitement does not work. The *yetzer hara* has to use guile to convince a person that the sin is really not so bad; in fact, it might even be the right thing to do. It is very sinister in its methods to convince a person to renege against the Torah, to abrogate *mitzvah* observance and to perform outright transgressions.

In order for the *yetzer hara* to convince an observant Jew to act against the *Torah*, it must apply patience and discretion. One of its most potent tools is that of “tomorrow.” It assures its victim, “Yes, of course, you should act appropriately. Very definitely, you must perform this *mitzvah*. Do not do it today, however, start tomorrow. Study *Torah* – tomorrow. Give *zedakah* – tomorrow. Do whatever good you plan on doing, but do it tomorrow. Thus, the *yetzer hara* grabs hold of a person and leads him to neglect the *mitzvos* and eventually to become a full-fledged *baal aveirah*, sinner.

This is the disease called “Amaleikism” that the *Torah* instructs us to expunge from our midst. When the opportunity to perform a *mitzvah* presents itself, one should not dawdle, but he should take immediate action and carry out his responsibility. One who slacks off in the area of positive *mitzvah* performance, will soon end up taking the initiative in a sinful manner.

This, says *Rav Yosef Chaim*, is the idea behind *Moshe Rabbeinu*’s “lifting his hands,” an action that catalyzed *Klal Yisrael*’s victory, as opposed to his lowering his hands, which gave strength to Amalek. Raising his hands symbolizes action, our way of defeating the *yetzer hara* and its personification in this world – Amalek. Allowing our hands to drop sustains the evil of Amalek, who takes his strength from our weakness.