

A war against Amalek from generation to generation. (17:16)

Hashem will continue the war against Amalek from generation to generation – literally, forever, until the memory of that evil nation will be expunged. The **Melitzer Rebbe, Shlita**, of Ashdod derives from here the profound difference between the Jewish People and the offspring of Amalek. *Dor l'dor yeshabach maasecha*, “Generation to generation will praise Your deeds” (*Tehillim* 145:4). The very essence of the Jewish People is dependent upon their *mesorah*, tradition transmitted throughout the generations, from father to son. *Dor l'dor*, generation to generation. The *lamed* connects the first *dor*, generation, to the next. There is a filial bond that is essential and intrinsic to their relationship. Judaism, its Torah, *halachah*, lifestyle and culture are all transmitted from yesterday, to today, to tomorrow, via the vehicle of *mesoras av*, the transmission from father to son.

Regarding Amalek, however, it is written *midor dor*, without the *lamed* connecting generation to generation. Concerning our archenemy, every generation stands alone without any relationship to the previous generation. It is brand new evil, brand new hatred. Amalek does not have to look back into history to discover new ways to perform evil, to anger Hashem, to loathe Jews. He is able to devise his own methods, to offer his own originality in creating evil schemes for causing misery and persecution for the Jews. Hatred does not need a *mesorah*. Amalek has it within him.

With the above principle, I think we are now able to understand the irrational hatred that Amalek harbors for the Jewish People. In the spiritual sphere, Amalek represents the essence of irrational, unwarranted hatred. His indifference to what he is inflicting upon himself is nonsensical. Indeed, in the *Midrash*, *Chazal* state: “To what is the incident of Amalek to be compared? To a tub of boiling water which no human being was able to enter. Along came one person and jumped into it. He was severely burned, but he cooled it off for others. Likewise, when *Klal Yisrael* left Egypt and Hashem split the Red Sea before them, followed by the Egyptians drowning in the waters, the fear of the Jews penetrated the hearts of all nations. When Amalek came upon them and challenged them, he was soundly punished, but, at the end of the day, he cooled the awe with which the nations held forth the Jewish people.

Does this make sense? Is it worth committing suicide over one's hatred of the Jews? Whatever arguments one can muster to paint the Jew in the most anti-Semitic manner, when all is said and done, there is no rhyme or reason for anti-Jewish sentiments. Similarly, the fellow that jumps into scalding water is either slightly insane or his hatred is so implacable that it resists even the truth. Amalek represents the fellow who stands back and witnesses the truth in all of its glory – yet ignores it. There is no rationale to Amalek's actions; but then, Amalek needs no reason for his actions. It is not a legacy of hate; he has his own hatred which renews itself without reason on a regular basis.

Amalek is not necessarily an enemy that exists externally. I think there is an Amalek within each of us, an attitude of indifference to what is right and proper; an attitude whereby we say, “I do not

care”; “I could care less”; “I do not have to give a reason for my attitude.” We have all heard it, and some of us have even said it. We act irrationally, knowing fully well that what we are doing is inappropriate. We simply do not care. This is the Amalek syndrome. There are times when we neither challenge nor negate the truth as an excuse to absolve our actions. We simply do not care. We act with smug indifference and disregard of the truth. This is the result of apathy, cynicism, and skepticism.

How does one battle such indifference? How does one triumph over apathy and cynicism? How does one conquer the skeptic? In other words, can reason overwhelm one to whom reason has no validity? The **Baal HaTanya** explains that *emunah*, faith in Hashem, is not something which one attains; rather, faith in G-d is within everyone. It needs to be revealed. Intrinsic to the *neshamah*, soul, which Hashem has given each one of us, is a connection with the Creator. This connection, which is called faith, is woven into the very essence of the *neshamah*. Since its source is spiritual and given to us by Hashem, it is beyond reason. It transcends the rational. Thus, we find Jews throughout the ages who have believed in Hashem and have been willing to die for His Name, at times, when reason did not prevail. Faith relates to the truth which is the essence of Hashem, unlike reason which is limited to what the mind is capable of grasping. We can take this one step further. There are individuals who have lived a life far-removed from the Torah way. Yet, under the duress of *Kiddush Hashem*, Sanctifying Hashem’s Name, their inner-faith which had lain dormant for a lifetime suddenly emerges as truth/faith confronts truth/Hashem. The inner Jew concealed under layers of the mundane, entangled in the morass of life’s vicissitudes, bursts forth and transcends the obstacles before him.

What about maintaining faith after the fact – after one has hoped, prayed, and yearned – and the answer was, ‘no’? How does one pick himself up, “brush off his jacket,” and go on? One must still continue believing. A bitter, unhappy woman once came to the home of the *tzaddik* of Yerushalayim, **Horav Aryeh Levine, zl.** “Let me sit in your house,” she pleaded, “and cry and weep before you.”

“You may surely sit,” Rav Aryeh replied, “and even cry and weep – but not before me. Direct your tears to our Holy Father in Heaven Above, Who listens to weeping and hears the cries of His human beings.”

The woman took a chair, sat herself down and began to lament without pause. She was unable to desist from crying. In between her tears, she sobbed out her tale of woe concerning her husband, who lay mortally ill.

“Do not cry so,” Rav Aryeh said. “Hashem will surely have mercy and grant a cure. Your husband will be fine.” Alas, a few days later, the woman returned to tell him that her husband had succumbed to his illness. He had gone to his eternal rest. The woman now began to cry in earnest – once again.

The *tzaddik* made every attempt to comfort her, seeking words that would touch her heart, ease her pain. It was to no avail. Finally, after much weeping, she took a “break” and said, “*Rebbe*, I will accept your solace and cease my lament – but only if you can tell me what became of the thousands of tears I shed over the *Tehillim*, when I recited its poignant words in supplicating Hashem for my husband’s recovery.”

“Let me explain,” *Rav Aryeh* gently replied. “When your life on earth ends and you come before the Heavenly Tribunal, you will discover how many severe and harsh decrees against the Jewish People were rescinded as a result of those precious, holy tears which you shed for your late husband. Remember – not one teardrop goes to waste. Hashem counts each and every one, like pearls, and treasures them.”

When the woman heard these inspirational words, she immediately burst into tears once again. This time, however, the tears were tears of joy, in the knowledge that all of her suffering and prayer were truly not in vain. Sometime later, she returned to *Rav Aryeh*’s home, “*Rebbe*, tell me again, those beautiful words concerning what happened to those tears that I wept.”

She now understood the value of each tear. Furthermore, she now believed. Her faith had been strengthened. What earlier seemed irrational – now – made all of the sense in the world.