

Bnei Yisrael raised their eyes and behold! Egypt was journeying after them. (14:10)

Two nations reared their ugly heads against us. Two nations demonstrated their unmitigated, venomous hatred against our ancestors: Egypt and Amalek. Yet, a great difference exists between the hatred manifest by Egypt and the animus that has characterized Amalek throughout the millennia. *Horav Yaakov Shteinhouse, Shlita (Ram, Kol Torah)*, observes that, concerning Egypt's incursion against us, the Torah writes, *Hashem yilachem lachem v'atem tacharishun*, "Hashem shall make war for you, and you shall remain silent" (*Shemos 14:14*). On the other hand, concerning the battle with Amalek, Hashem instructed Moshe *Rabbeinu* to lead the men in battle against Amalek. Wherein lies the difference between these nations, and hence, the discrepant approaches to engaging them in battle?

Indeed, we find that Hashem said that His Holy Throne will not be complete until *Bnei Yisrael* eradicate Amalek's name. His is the only nation from whom we will not accept converts. On the other hand, we note a conciliatory attitude toward Egypt. The Torah commands us not to loathe an Egyptian. We were able to accept converts after three generations. When *Klal Yisrael* stood at the banks of the Red Sea, the Heavenly Angels asked Hashem what made the Jews more worthy than the Egyptians for Him to spare. The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that it is all based upon the reason for the hatred manifest by these nations against us. Egypt wanted us back. We were a good thing for them. They had free slave labor. They also most certainly made use of the Jewish mind to their benefit. They fought to have the Jews return. Thus, Hashem responded with His personal involvement in battling them. Theirs was not a war against the Jew, per se, or what he represented. For them, it was pure economics. The Jews were vital to their nation's bottom line.

Amalek, however, went to war against the Almighty. He claimed that G-d did not exist, and he would prove it. Amalek had no reason whatsoever to attack the Jews – other than that they were Hashem's representatives in this world. When someone impugns the integrity of Hashem as Divine Creator and Ruler of the world, it becomes *Klal Yisrael's* obligation to battle against the miscreant. Every nation of the world heard how Hashem took us out of Egypt and split the Red Sea for us. Every nation trembled in fear and awe – everyone but Amalek.

Amalek's minions are not exclusive to hereditary descendants. Every person, regardless of nationality, whose goal it is to battle against Hashem – or His people because they represent Him, are considered Amalekim. *Zera Amalek*, the seed of Amalek, is not only biological seed, but refers to anyone who manifests Amalekean hatred against Hashem. Throughout the generations, we have had our share of detractors whose animus was reflected in how much they fought against Torah and its establishment in communities throughout the world. Certain evil people in Russia had their life goal to close down the *yeshivos*. They were the forebears of those who fought against the establishment of *yeshivos* in the Holy Land. Their hatred was manifest in the manner in which they treated the young orphans saved from the Holocaust, doing everything to wipe any

vestige of *Yiddishkeit* from their minds. One need not be of Amalekean descent to be *mi'zera Amalek*. As long as his actions manifest his animus toward Hashem, he is of the seed of Amalek. Hashem's Throne will not be complete until these usurpers are exposed and their harmful activities quashed. The focus of one's hatred defines who he really is -- and how he should be treated.