

# פ' תצוה תשפ"ה

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## PARSHAS ZOCHOR - AMOLEK TODAY

In every generation there are heretics who fight against Hashem and His Torah. Furthermore, Rav Moshe Cordovero wrote almost 500 years ago that the heads of government in the last generation before the coming of Moshiach will be from Amolek. Rav Chaim Brisker writes that the commandment to eradicate Amolek does not necessarily refer to the descendants of Amolek, but to anybody who espouses his atheistic philosophy. We are commanded to fight against them. The heads of government are currently literally continuing the path of Amolek. They are fighting against Hashem and His Torah. They harbour a hatred of religion. Take the recruitment of yeshiva *bochurim*. They have no need for them. On the contrary, they know themselves that they are not worth anything for the army, and would only impede them. They are trying to carry out their plans in cunning ways, by promising financial rewards. This is the real *tumah* of Amolek. Hashem has promised us, "I will blot out the memory of Amolek". We ourselves can nullify their power by strengthening Torah study, as *Chazal* say, "Because they attenuated their Torah study, Amolek came". Therefore, if we strengthen our Torah learning, we will weaken their power. The Zohar says that the future redemption can only occur when Amalek is wiped out. May we witness it speedily.

## SPIRITUAL SELF-SACRIFICE

*And you shall command the Bnei Yisroel" (27:20)*

*Parshas Tezave* is the only *parsha* from the time of his birth in which Moshe *Rabbeinu* is not mentioned. This is in complete contrast to both previous and succeeding *parshiyos* in which his name is mentioned very frequently. The *Baal Haturim* explains in the name of the Zohar that at the time of the *chet hoegel* Moshe had asked Hashem to "blot me out of the book which You have written", and the curse of a *chochom*, even if made conditionally, is fulfilled. That is why Moshe's name was omitted from *parshas Tezave*. However, why should Moshe have received a punishment for his act of self-sacrifice? Moreover, the Zohar itself contrasts Noach's conduct with that of Moshe *Rabbeinu*. When Noach was told that the whole world would be destroyed except for him and his sons, he did not ask Hashem to have mercy, and for that reason the waters of the flood are called by his name. Hence, not only was Moshe's request to have his name blotted out a commendable deed, but had he not done so, he would have exposed himself to punishment, just like Noach. Why, then, was Moshe punished for acting the way Hashem expected him to?

The Chofetz Chaim explains that the phrase *uvechol me'odecho* in *krias shma* means that a person should sacrifice something very dear to him, namely his spirituality, for the sake of his love of Hashem. Each time his name is mentioned in the Torah this

was a great *zechus* for Moshe Rabbeinu, and yet he was willing to forego numerous such *zechuyos* for the greater good of the *klal*.

Hashem did not deem it necessary for Moshe's name to be deleted from the entire Torah, and the omission of his name from *parshas Tezave* was not meant as a punishment, but rather served to praise Moshe *Rabbenu*, demonstrate his greatness, and teach us that we too should not hesitate to be willing to sacrifice our own spiritual growth for the sake of others. Such self-sacrifices on our part, so far from resulting in a decline in our level of *ruchniyus*, will only increase it.

Several decades ago Rav Sternbuch was asked by Rav Yechezkel Abramsky to leave Bnei Brak in order to spread Torah in the adjacent Rosh Ha'ayin. Rav Sternbuch responded that he felt he was learning well where he was, and that if he would leave for Rosh Ha'ayin, this would disturb his learning. Rav Abramsky replied by citing the above explanation of the Chofetz Chaim on *uvechol me'odecho* and also the words of Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, who derives from the Rambam (*Sefer Hamitzvos* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ase) that drawing fellow Jews closer to their Father in Heaven is included within the mitzvah of loving Hashem. Rav Abramsky concluded that Rav Sternbuch was obligated to leave Bnei Brak in order to disseminate Torah, and that is what he did for many years, first in Rosh Ha'ayin, and subsequently in South Africa.

## **SPIRITUAL CHARITY**

Moshe Rabbeinu was upset because he noticed everybody contributing to the *mishkon* and the *bigdei kehuno*, and he asked Hashem what contribution he could make. Hashem responded by telling Moshe that his speech was dearer to Him than everything, and his contribution was to teach *bnei yisroel* the Torah (*Vayikro Rabbo* 1:6). This *medrash* brings home the point that spiritual charity is more important than material charity.

When Rav Sternbuch was learning in Rav Schneider's yeshiva in England, the Rosh Yeshiva had an "*Avodas Hakodesh*" project. Under this program, the older boys in the yeshiva stood around the *bimo* twice a week devoting about two hours of their time to answering any questions from younger boys in the yeshiva. Rav Schneider said that this practice was a key to the spiritual success of these boys, and he noticed that the learning level of everybody who participated in the *Avodas Hakodesh* program improved distinctly. He also noted that in the generation of the *midbor* poverty was non-existent, because there was never any shortage of *mon*, but this meant that there was no possibility of charity in the conventional sense. However, the *yiden* did manage to observe the *mitzvo* of *zedoko* by guiding and teaching others in need of assistance.

## **CLOTHES UPLIFT**

"*You shall make holy garments for your brother Aharon, for honor and glory*" (28:2)

The *Sefer Hachinuch* explains that the *Kohen Godol's* garments had to be "for honor and glory", so that he would be constantly aware that he was standing before and serving Hashem. Additionally, his external appearance would instill awe of Hashem in the

eyes of those visiting the *Beis Hamikdosh*, and remind them of the holiness of the place they were visiting, thus inducing them to repent.

Those who have a teaching position in *yeshivos* should wear special clothes in order to remind themselves of their status and obligation to behave in an elevated manner as befits *bnei Torah*, and also so that their students will feel their superior status, and honor and obey them accordingly. Nowadays, some teachers, wishing to remain humble, avoid wearing honorable clothes, but it would be more desirable for them to stick to the established custom of wearing distinct clothes.

## **BELIEVING IN THE ADVICE OF ZADDIKIM**

*“You shall place the Urim and Tummim into the choshen of judgment” (28:30), Rashi: This refers to the inscription of the explicit Name, which he [Moshe] would place within the folds of the choshen, through which it would light up (meir) its words and perfect (mitamem) its words.*

We see from Rashi that Tummim shares the same root as *temimus*, simple and absolute faith. What is the connection between absolute faith and the *Urim and Tummim*?

Only if a questioner had complete faith that the *Urim and Tummim* were the absolute truth, and he would therefore be willing to accept any answer unquestionably, was he guaranteed of receiving the correct answer. If he only asked a question in order to receive the answer that he wanted to hear, he would not receive a genuine answer.

The same thing applies to a *goral Hagro*. Rav Sternbuch remembers the time at the beginning of the Second World War, when Hitler was threatening to invade England. Everyone was worrying about what would happen, when the British government suddenly announced the possibility of evacuating people to Canada or America on government-chartered boats. Rav Sternbuch’s mother was deliberating whether to send her sons on one of these boats, or whether she should leave them in London. She asked Rav Elya Lopian what to do. He agreed to do a *Goral Hagro*, but he told her that she could only receive an accurate answer using this method if she agreed to unquestionably abide by whatever answer would result from the *goral*, because if she did not agree to that, the *goral* would not work and he would not receive the correct answer.

Mrs. Sternbuch agreed to abide by any result, but in the end, Rav Elyah did not perform the *goral* at all, because it could only work on certain days and the first possible day was after the boat was already due to depart. Despite promptings by relatives and the potential danger of leaving her children in England, and even though it seemed to make sense to send them to the seemingly safer territories on the other side of the Atlantic, Mrs. Sternbuch decided that without the approval of *daas Torah* she could not send her children away. In the end that boat was bombed by the Germans with no survivors on board.

Similarly, when his advice does not achieve the expected result, a *zaddik* may explain that apparently those who came to consult with him did not agree completely to abide by everything they were told, and therefore he did not have the *siyata dishmaya* (divine assistance) to attain the truth.

## **LESSONS OF THE BELL**

*It shall be on Aharon when he performs the service, and its sound shall be heard when he enters the Kodesh before Hashem and when he leaves, so that he will not die (28:35)*

The bell had to be heard when the *Kohen Godol* entered in order to remind him that he was now in a holy location and had to be very careful to avoid any sin in speech or thought. When he departed, the bell served as a reminder not to rest on his laurels, and be satisfied with the fact that he is a *talmid chochom* and *tzaddik*, but rather to give of himself to the nation, so that he will be heard not only when he enters the *Kodesh* but also when he departs.

## PURPOSE OF THE MIKVEH

*And you shall bring Aharon and his sons near the entrance of the Ohel Moed, and you shall bathe them in water (29:4). Rashi: This refers to the immersion of the entire body.*

The Brisker Rov asked what else there was in the courtyard of the *Mishkon* other than the *Mizbe'ach Hachitzon* and the *kiyor*. He answered that we see from the above Rashi that there was also a *mikveh*. If this location was considered the appropriate place for housing the *mikveh*, in which Aharon and his sons would *toivel*, then a *mikveh* must possess a quasi-holy element of purity.

Although it is forbidden to utter (and in part even to think) *divrei kedusha* in certain parts of the *mikveh* and in certain circumstances, thoughts of *teshuvah* are not only permitted, but constitute an essential component of the *mikveh* experience. In any event, some people have the habit of lingering in the *mikveh* to enjoy the warm water or engage in idle chatter, and this should be discouraged, because the sole purpose of the *mikveh* is to *toivel* and become sanctified.

## TZDOKOH UNDER DURESS

*And a bull as a sin offering you shall offer up every day for the atonements, and you shall purify the Mizbe'ach by performing atonement upon it (29:36)*

Rashi (*ibid*) says that the atonement for the *Mizbe'ach* was necessary because perhaps someone had donated a stolen article for the work of the *Mishkan* and the *Mizbe'ach*, but the *Targum Yonasan* (on *Vayikra* 8:15) explains that the objects in question refer to those that had been donated under duress. This shows that charity donated not of one's own volition, but because of embarrassment or fear, is not favorable in Hashem's Eyes. Therefore, *gabbo'im* must be careful not to pressurize people to give charity. *Tzedakah*, like a *korban*, is only desired by Hashem when it is given with joy.

When asking people for donations for *tzedoko*, or for his institutions, the Imrei Emes was very careful not to pressurize them, since that would be tantamount to quasi-theft. Moreover, if he would accept such donations, the sanctity of the Torah and prayers of those who benefited from them would be impaired.

Rav Moshe Schneider was also very careful not to push potential donors too much in case they really did not have the means to help. Rav Schneider also demonstrated his concern for donors in other ways. For example, on one occasion, he asked a regular contributor to the yeshivah to give a donation, but the donor told the *Rosh Yeshivah* that he no longer wanted to make contributions because the yeshivah was producing loafers who did not go out to work. Rav Schneider told him, "It is your right not to give, but I'm asking you not to regret your past donations (*toheh al harishonos*), because otherwise you will lose your reward for what you have given until now" (see *Kiddushin* 40b). Rav Schneider was not satisfied until that person promised that he did not regret his past donations.