

זכור this year coincides with פרשת תצוה. פרשה תצוה is a unique פרשה, as we all know, because it is the only פרשה after משה רבינו is born in which his name is not mentioned. This connects to המן, פטירה משה רבינו's פטירה, because המן was pleased that his פור fell in אדר, the month of משה רבינו's פטירה. This is among other reasons why פרשת תצוה does not mention משה רבינו's name.

However, זכור [which is a מצוה דאורייתא, and in our shul, the רב leins it. In many other shuls, they have a skilled בעל קריאה, or the רב leins it] is a very intriguing מצוה.

משה, in his ספר קול רם, discusses this מצוה at length and arrives at a striking conclusion - one that we may or may not have considered ourselves. First, it is an annual מצוה which we observe year after year for thousands of years.

Second, who is עמלק? We don't know. Even if we did, we could not take any direct action against עמלק because we live in גלות, and any such action would endanger כלל ישראל's survival.

Third, the תורה tells us (ויקרא י"ט:י"ח) - לא תקם ולא תטור (do not take revenge or bear a grudge. How, then, are we commanded to hold onto our enmity toward עמלק for all these generations?

משה offers an insightful answer. He explains that the focus of this מצוה is not external but internal. The תורה is calling on us to be vigilant, to guard ourselves. One of our greatest challenges is overestimating our own צדקות, believing that our יצר הטוב is so strong that we are immune to failure. Many of us think, "I have so many מצוות to my name - I go to shul, I daven, I learn יומי, I honor my parents [for those fortunate enough to have that opportunity]." However, we must never become overconfident. Consider the well-known story of יהונן כהן גדול, who served in the בית המקדש with the highest level of קדושה for many years - only to eventually become a צדוקי. עמלק, the ultimate symbol of רשעות, beheld the ניסים of יציאת מצרים and קריעת ים סוף, yet remained unchanged. Instead of recognizing הקדוש ברוך הוא's hand, they attacked כלל ישראל. Other people followed עמלק as well, to attack כלל ישראל, and what the חכמים always say is, if someone jumps into a boiling bath and gets scalded, but at least he cooled off the bath a little bit. And we continue to see this reality today - anti-Semitism has not disappeared. [As an aside, anti-Semitism will never be eradicated except through one method: תשובה. When we do תשובה, anti-Semitism vanishes. The כוח of רשעות, of evil, and all the negative forces in the world, stem from the כוח of our עבירות, the כוח of טומאה. If we do תשובה, it will resolve all our problems. Let's start now - even a little bit.]

Yet רשעות and the יצר הרע blind people to the truth. The תורה illustrates this vividly with יעקב and עשו, not מלאכים sent actual מלאכים (בראשית ל"ב:ד') וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכִים - עשו that deter עשו? Not for a moment. משה רב points out that עשו knew they were מלאכים, yet he still set out to harm יעקב.

The same applies to לבן. לבן Himself warned לבן, yet לבן still declared, "If Hashem hadn't spoken to me, I would have harmed you. Now, I can barely hold myself back."

These stark, black-and-white cases demonstrate the overpowering force of the יצר הרע. It is relentless, blinding people even when the truth is unmistakable. If that is the case, then we, who strive to be good, who wish to fulfill רצון הקדוש ברוך הוא, have to remain on guard constantly, never to be misled. As הלל teaches in (בי:ד') - אַל תִּצְמִין בְּעֶצְמְךָ עַד יוֹם מוֹתְךָ: פרקי אבות (בי:ד') - even to the last



minute of our lives, we have to be on guard from that יצר הרע. I'm sure I've told you this story before: An elderly זקן was on his deathbed. Someone leaned over and whispered to him, "Do you still have a יצר הרע?"

"Yes," the old man replied.

"What is he telling you?"

"He's telling me, 'Put on a good show. Say a powerful שמע ישראל so that people will think you died as a צדיק.'"

Even at the final moment of life, the יצר הרע does not let up.

That is the lesson of פרשת זכור. זָכַר and זָכַר - two לשונות. We must be doubly careful to remember what עמלק is, what עמלק does, and what our own יצר הרע is capable of.

In this זכות, may we be זוכה to have a ניצחון over the יצר הרע, and cause כלל ישראל a תשועה גדולה, in all aspects, and משיח should come! במהרה! Good Shabbos!

