



Table Talk Parshat Vayikra/Shabbat Zachor

דברים כ"ה:י"ז-י"ט

זָכוֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לְךָ עַמְלֵק בְּדַרְךָ בְּצֵאתְךָ מִמִּצְרָיִם:
אֲשֶׁר קָרָךְ בְּדַרְךָ וַיִּזְנֹב בְּךָ כָּל-הַנִּחְשָׁלִים אֲחֵרֶיךָ וְאַתָּה
עָנִף וַיִּגָּע וְלֹא יָרָא אֱלֹהִים: וְהָיָה בְּהֵגִים ה' אֲלֶיךָ וְלֹךְ
מִכָּל-אֵיכָרְךָ מִסָּבִיב בְּאַרְצֵי אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה-אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ
נִחְלָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ תִּמְחָה אֶת-יִזְכָּר עַמְלֵק מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא
תִשְׁכַּח: (פ)

Deuteronomy 25:17-19

Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey, after you left Egypt— how, undeterred by fear of God, he surprised you on the march, when you were famished and weary, and cut down all the stragglers in your rear. Therefore, when the LORD your God grants you safety from all your enemies around you, in the land that the LORD your God is giving you as a hereditary portion, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!

חזקוני, דברים כ"ה:י"ח-א'-ב'

ויזנב בך רדף אחר אותם שהיו בזנב החיל.
הנחשלים הנחלשים מתיבות הפוכות כמו
כשבים כבשים.

Chizkuni, Deuteronomy 25:18:1-2

ויזנב בך, "and attacked the hindmost of you." Amalek chased after the Jewish people until he caught up with the slowest moving ones. (Ibn Ezra) [The people had not yet been organised into army groups, etc., as we learned in the Book of Numbers. Ed.] הנחשלים, as if spelled הנחלשים, "the weakest of them."

"We are commanded not to hate Egypt, but never to forget Amalek. Why the difference? The simplest answer is to recall the rabbis' statement in The Ethics of the Fathers: "If love depends on a specific cause, when the cause ends, so does the love. If love does not depend on a specific cause, then it never ends." [2] The same applies to hate. When hate depends on a specific cause, it ends once the cause disappears. Causeless, baseless hate lasts forever. The Egyptians oppressed the Israelites because, in Pharaoh's words, "The Israelites are becoming too numerous and strong for us" (Ex. 1:9). Their hate, in other words, came from fear. It was not irrational. The Egyptians had been attacked and conquered before by a foreign group known as the Hyksos, and the memory of that period was still acute and painful. The Amalekites, however, were not being threatened by the Israelites. They attacked a people who were "weary and worn out," specifically those who were "lagging behind." In short: the Egyptians feared the Israelites because they were strong. The Amalekites attacked the Israelites because they were weak."

- The Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Let's Talk!

How is Amalek more evil than the Egyptians?

Why must we always remember what Amalek did?

Why is it especially mean to attack people when they are weak?

How should we treat people who are weaker than us?

Is there anyone who is weak in your life? How can you show them empathy?



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