

לעילוי נשמת  
 מרת עקא עדנה  
 צפורה ע"ה  
 בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



# עילוי נשמת

## ALIEI DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"a of Gur

## Raise a Hand – Destroy Amalek

These days we don't really have the opportunity to actually wipe out Amalek. The *Minchas Chinuch*<sup>1</sup> even writes that after Sancheriv mixed up the entire world (*Berachos* 28a) we cannot know who is Amalek, and we therefore don't have the mitzvah today. Even if we knew for certain that someone is from Amalek, we wouldn't do anything to them because of the law of the land. Well, some people think they can

*Kedushas Levi* explains<sup>2</sup> that Amalek is the *yetzer hara* within our hearts. Eradicating Amalek today takes place in each person's internal battles with his own inclinations. The *pasuk* talks to us in the singular: זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק – *remember what Amalek did to you*. And just as Amalek hides the glory of Hashem in this world,<sup>3</sup> the *yetzer hara* within a person blocks the glory of Hashem from permeating the heart of a Yid.

There is a mitzvah of *semichah* before the *shechitah* of a *korban*; it is performed by placing both hands on the head of the *korban* and pushing down with full force. The *pesukim* in this week's *parshah* which mention this mitzvah all speak of leaning with one hand; וסמך ידו, in the singular. The Gemara (*Menachos* 93b) derives from a *pasuk* in *Acharei Mos* (16:21) that the *semichah* of all *korbanos* is performed with two hands.

The *Sfas Emes*<sup>4</sup> offers an additional source for this that יד – *his hand* (singular) can refer to both hands. In the first battle with Amalek, the Torah describes Moshe Rabbeinu sitting on

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## Sitting City Safek

Cities that were walled in the days of Yehoshua bin Nun read the Megillah on the fifteenth of Adar, the same day they read it in Shushan. All other cities read the Megillah on the fourteenth.

The *Ran*<sup>12</sup> records the opinion of the Geonim that in a city where we are uncertain whether it was walled in the days of Yehoshua bin Nun, we read the Megillah on the same day as most other cities: the fourteenth of Adar. This is because most cities are not walled since antiquity, and majority decides.

*Shaar Hamelech*<sup>13</sup> cites the sefer *Mikra'ei Kodesh*<sup>14</sup> that usually the majority only rules when the *safek* is mobile. When the *safek* is stationary, the halachah generally considers all things equal; כל קבוע כמחצה; על מחצה דמי (*Kesubos* 15a). Why, then, do we decide the status of this stationary city based on the majority of cities which read the Megillah on the fourteenth? The *safek* should remain undecided.

*Leshon Limudim*<sup>15</sup> answers that the rule of *kavua* comes into play when a *safek* appears before us and we know that it came from one of a few places, though we are unsure which one. For example, a piece of meat was found in a town where

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12 Megillah 2a (*Rif*) s.v. ולענין.

13 Hilchos Megillah 1:11.

14 R. Chaim Abulafia of Izmir, Hilchos Megillah p. 83a.

15 R. Barzilai Yaavetz, O.C. 243, cited by *Shaar Hamelech* loc. cit.

The truth is a tzaddik can fall and get up, and fall and get up again. Even if he starts with just one hand raised upwards, he can overcome Amalek.

perform the mitzvah on other Yidden whom they believe act like Amalek, and try to be *mekayem* this mitzvah on them...

1 604.

2 Zachor, cited in *Sfas Emes* Zachor 5647.

3 See *Tanchuma* Seitzei 11.

4 *Menachos*, ad loc.

# Raise a Hand – Destroy Amalek

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top of the mountain. והיה כאשר ירים משה ידו וגבר עמלק – *when Moshe would raise his hand Yisrael would triumph, and when Moshe would let his hand down Amalek would triumph* (Shemos 17:11). The *pesukim* appear to be speaking of one hand. Yet a few *pesukim* later the Torah writes that Aharon and Chur supported both of Moshe's hands, on either side, and that both of his hands were kept raised. We see, says the Sfas Emes, that the word ידו can refer to both hands as well.<sup>5</sup>

Why does the Torah use the word ידו, as if it were only one hand that Moshe raised? We can learn a tremendous lesson from this. When we go to battle with the Amalek in our hearts, we need to know that letting down even one hand, even the slightest allowance, which we might not even notice at first, וכאשר יניח משה ידו – וגבר עמלק. That small breach can be exploited by Amalek, by the *yetzer hara*, to triumph over you.

And מדה טובה מרובה – the forces of the positive are always much greater than those of the negative.<sup>6</sup> With one hand raised, ידו, כאשר ירים משה ידו, with a small elevation, one can triumph over Amalek. The Imrei Emes<sup>7</sup> notes the characterization of Amalek in Bilam's prophesy (Bamidbar 24:20): ראשית גוים עמלק, וכאשר ירים משה ידו – וגבר עמלק. That small breach can be exploited by Amalek, by the *yetzer hara*, to triumph over you.

*falls seven times, yet arises* (Mishlei 24:16). ואחריתו עדי אובד – Amalek stands at the bottom of the slide when the tzaddik falls and tells him that his life is destroyed, that there is no turning back. But that is Amalek's point of view. The truth is a tzaddik can fall and get up, and fall and get up again. Even if he starts with just one hand raised upwards, he can overcome Amalek.

The Imrei Emes<sup>8</sup> explained that the א of the word ויקרא is small, because this *parshah* discusses *korbanos*, the remedy for one who sinned. A person must always know that even if he is very small, although he may have had serious slips and setbacks, he has an א. The א represents a fresh start: one can start off very small, very limited in the scope of his level of *ruchniyus* at the moment, but that one hand raised can bring him success. A person with one hand raised sets himself on the right path – even if he raises only one finger – through starting out, he will succeed, and defeat Amalek.<sup>9</sup>

The nature of the battle with Amalek is that it is perpetual, it doesn't stop, and it won't stop until the end of days. Shaul Hamelech was sent with the words, לך והחרמתה את החטאים את עמלק, ונלחמת בו – *go and destroy the sinners Amalek, wage war with [them] until you eradicate them* (Shmuel I, 15:18). The beginning of the pasuk speaks to Shaul in the singular: ונלחמתה, ונלחמת; but then with עד כלותם, the pasuk changes to the

plural. Radak translates, “until the Bnei Yisrael defeat them.”

We see that vanquishing Amalek will only come at the end of times. מלחמה לה' – *a war for Hashem against Amalek through generations* (Shemos 17:16) — the battle is ongoing. Shmuel said to Shaul, “The battle is ongoing, and you won't vanquish them yourself. But you must do what you can. The כלותם is the job of Bnei Yisrael until the end of days, but that doesn't exempt you from והחרמתה, ונלחמת.”

The time for wiping out Amalek is Shabbos, as the Sfas Emes<sup>10</sup> explains, expounding the pasuk והיה בהניח ה' אלקיך את זכר עמלק – *and it will come to pass, when Hashem, your G-d, grants you respite... — eradicate all trace of Amalek* (Devarim 25:19). The *Chachamim* instituted the public reading of Parshas Zachor on Shabbos specifically (Megillah 29a); why? Shabbos is the time of *menuchah*, of respite. On Shabbos one can successfully wipe out Amalek by taking the time to elevate oneself with yearning and thoughts of *teshuvah*.<sup>11</sup> Even if we cannot wipe them out entirely, every person needs to do their part. Raise a hand; do what you can to effect the eradication of Amalek. May Hashem help us return to Him *b'teshuvah sheleimah*, and rout out Amalek, and with that may we be *zocheh* to see the *yeshuah*.

(פרשת זכור ויקרא תשפ"ב ס"ג)

5 See there where he suggests that although the Gemara concludes that ידו refers to two hands only with regard to *semichah*, perhaps since these *pesukim* are in the same *parshah*, the latter pasuk reveals that the earlier one referenced both hands.

6 Sotah 11a, Sanhedrin 100b.

7 Ki Seitzei 5666.

8 See Vayikra 5692 and 5693.

9 Moshe Rabbeinu himself raised both hands, but the Torah hints to this lesson for the rest of us who are sometimes incapable of raising both hands.

10 Zachor 5634, 5637, 5662 et al.

11 See also *Chashavah Letovah* from the holy handwriting of the Sfas Emes, quoting R. Henech of Alexander.

## Sitting City Safek

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the majority of butchers are kosher. We cannot decide based on the majority, because the butchers, which are the subject of the uncertainty, are stationary. Whereas in the case of cities, the cities did not come from a stationary place; the cities themselves are stationary. They are not mixed together with the other cities, and there is nothing that connects them to the walled cities that would induce us to take those into account as an equal *safek*. In this case, we would certainly decide based on the majority of cities. He says this can be compared to finding meat in the market, where the majority is the deciding factor (Kesubos 15a).

There is a compelling question posed by the Rishonim<sup>16</sup> on the halachah of *kavua*: according to this rule, every single patch of land in Eretz Yisrael should be prohibited from plowing. Since we don't know which lands were prohibited by an *eglah arufah* decapitation, every place that is stationary should be considered an equal *safek*; maybe this place is a prohibited area.

According to the *Leshon Limudim*, this is not a question, because the lands are stationary, and the lands themselves did not come from a place of *safek*. Since there is no connection between this specific land and a place which was forbidden to plow after an *eglah arufah* decapitation, we would not take those few places into account and consider it an equal *safek*. The decision would be made based on the majority.

The *Shaar Hamelech* brings this as a proof *against* the *Leshon Limudim*, as apparently the Rishonim did not exclude such an instance from the rule of *kavua*.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, reading the *Leshon Limudim* and

understanding it as the *Shaar Hamelech* quotes it, this may be a proof. But if we look at the way the *Baruch Taam*<sup>18</sup> explains the logic of the *Leshon Limudim*, we will discern a significant difference between the two cases, and we will see that the proof of the *Shaar Hamelech* against the *Leshon Limudim* will be no proof at all.

The *Baruch Taam* explains that with regard to a questionable city, the reason why we decide based on the majority (as per the Geonim), and we do not apply the rule of *kavua*, is because the question has nothing to do with the other cities of the world. The *safek* is whether or not this city had a wall at the time of Yehoshua bin Nun. The reason we have this *safek* is not because some cities did and some cities didn't. We have this *safek* because we have reason to suspect that this city did. For example, we see an ancient wall but we are not sure of its exact age.

We apply the rule of *kavua* when the *safek* is created because of the other possibilities. There are many stores that the meat may have come from, and we don't know which one. Likewise, an area which became forbidden to plow because of an *eglah arufah*: There are many areas around, of which some are forbidden and most are not; the *safek* is which of the two is this particular tract of land. But the *safek* is based on the existence of the other possibilities, which are all stationary. Therefore, *kavua* is applied. Here, the *safek* is evident without outside possibilities to influence the question. Therefore, we decide based on the majority, and we do not consider it an equal *safek*.

(ליל ש"ק צו – ט"ז אדר ב' תשפ"ב)

## Divrei Torah for Purim

### – ונשמע כתגם המלך – Even in Galus

The Baal HaTurim in Parshas Tetzaveh notes a *mesorah* that the word ונשמע appears three times in Tanach. One appearance comes in Parshas Tetzaveh (28:35), regarding the bells on the *Me'il* of the *kohen gadol*: ונשמע קולו בבואו אל הקודש – *its sound will be heard when he enters the Kodesh etc.* The second is in Parshas Mishpatim (24:7), in the celebrated phrase נעשה ונשמע. The third is in Megillas Esther (1:20), ונשמע כתגם המלך אשר יעשה בכל, מלכותו – *the word of the king will be heard throughout his kingdom.* The Baal HaTurim draws a connection between the three (as he frequently does), and it's worth a look. Many others have offered their own approaches, including my father.<sup>19</sup>

I would like to draw another line of connection. The first pasuk says ונשמע קולו בבואו אל הקודש וגו' ובצאתו – such as Shabbos, or Purim, and he is elevated and inspired – ונשמע קולו. But the trick is to keep the voice of truth alive after the holy time has passed; ובצאתו. How can we hold onto those feelings of *kedushah* and *hisorerus*? We must make it concrete – נעשה, take on a firm, practical resolution, and don't leave it as just an intangible feeling. Then, ונשמע – we will hear. What will we hear? כתגם המלך אשר יעשה בכל מלכותו. The term כתגם is Aramaic. Whenever a foreign word is used in Tanach it alludes to *galus*, when *lashon hakodesh* is not our primary tongue.<sup>20</sup>

By taking on a firm resolution, the *kedushah* will remain with us on

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16 R. Shimshon of Kinon in *Sefer Hakerisos*.

17 See *Ohr Samei'ach* on Rambam Avodah Zarah 7:6.

18 Glosses to *Shaar Hamelech*.

19 See *Pnei Menachem* Bamidbar p. 12 and p. 22, and Parah p. 226.

20 See *Ibra Dedasha* vol. I p. 424.

# Divrei Torah for Purim

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the way out, when we go into *galus*, and we will hear the word of the King; we will remember Hashem even within the darkness of *galus*, for He is everywhere.

(פרשת צו – ס"ז אדר ב' תשפ"ב – ליל ש"ק)

## King for a Day

When Achashverosh asked Haman what to do for “someone whom the king wishes to honor,” Haman assumed that he was the one. Haman suggested יָבִיאוּ לְבוּשׁ מַלְכוּת אֲשֶׁר לְבוּשׁ בּוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְסוֹס אֲשֶׁר רָכַב עָלָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְאֲשֶׁר נָתַן כְּתָר מַלְכוּת בְּרִאשׁוֹ. וְנָתַן לָהֶם – *Let them bring royal clothing, that the king has worn; a horse that the king once rode; and that the royal crown be placed on his head. Let the clothing and horse be conveyed to an officer...* (Esther 6:8-9).

Rashi notes that in the second *pasuk* Haman omitted mention of the crown. Chazal explained that Haman noticed that Achashverosh was indignant at the suggestion that a subject would wear the royal crown, and so he astutely left it out.

Haman was a sharp guy, and he knew the king was prone to impulsivity. Why did he risk it? Achashverosh could have easily killed him for such an offense!

The answer can be found in an ancient saying repeated by the *Tanna* R. Elazar ben Azarya. The Gemara (Berachos 27b) relates that when R. Elazar ben Azarya was offered the position of *Nasi* after R. Gamliel was deposed, R. Elazar answered that he must first confer with his wife. He went home וַיִּמְלִיךְ בְּדַבְרֵיהוּ – *he consulted*

*with his wife*. She said, “Maybe they will demote you (and return the post to R. Gamliel).” He answered, “A person should use a delicate crystal goblet (כֶּסֶף דְּמוֹקְרָא), even though he knows that tomorrow it will break.” Rashi explains that this was a popular adage meaning “It is worthwhile to gain a position of prestige for one day, even if he knows he will lose it the next.”

Haman understood the same thing. He might be killed trying, but wearing the crown was worth the gamble. But there’s a big difference between the way a Yid understands this adage and the way Haman understood it.

Rav Shaul Wahl was famously appointed king of Poland for one day. What did he do with his position? He grabbed the opportunity to annul decrees against the Jews. The Jewish perspective is to use the opportunity of a short reign to effect change that will endure. A Yid can be a king for one day, on Purim, and use the opportunity to be *mevatel gezeiros ra’os*, and effect his entire year.

On Purim a Yid can reign over his *taavos*, can be in control. This is hinted in the words of the Gemara about R. Elazar ben Azarya, וַיִּמְלִיךְ בְּדַבְרֵיהוּ, which can be read as ‘and he ruled over his wife;’ an allusion to *taavas nashim*.<sup>21</sup> Another *remez* can be found in the *gematria* of the words ‘מֶלֶךְ כֶּסֶף דְּמוֹקְרָא’ which is equal to that of ‘מֶלֶךְ בְּפוֹרִים’ – *a king on Purim!* If one rules over his physicality on Purim, he can break the chain that binds him to the lowliness of this world.

(פורים תשפ"ב, סעודת ליל פורים, מאמר ו)

## Speaking His Language

Haman requests, and is granted, that the edict be issued: להיות כל איש שורר – *that every man rule in his house, and speak his nation's language*. Rashi explains that the decree was that husbands can force their wives to communicate in the language of the husband. The question is, why doesn't the decree state ומדברת in the feminine?

One answer is, that since the husband rules and speaks his language, and the wife doesn't know the language, she will just need to keep quiet...

Another answer is based on the Yiddish saying, ‘א איד זאגט, א גוי שלאגט’ – ‘*A Yid speaks, an areil hits*,’ the *pasuk* is intimating a different kind of ‘talk’ – מדבר – כּלִשׁוֹן עַמּוֹ. The story is told of R. Nachum Velvel of Kelm, that a certain peasant would take a shortcut through his yard. R. Nachum Velvel was a strong man, and he took the trespasser and bodily removed him from his yard. He was asked how is it that a son of the Alter of Kelm acts so. “Why didn't you ask him respectfully not to go through your yard?” R. Nachum Velvel said, “You didn't ask why I didn't address him in *lashon hakodesh*, because he doesn't understand that language. Well, this is the language he understands: היידיש די עשיו.<sup>22</sup>”

(פורים תשפ"ב, סעודת ליל פורים, מאמר ג)

21 See *Shulei Hagilyon (Pnei Menachem)* Berachos ad loc.

22 See Kesubos 77a, בדברים לא יוסר עבד.