

Ki Sitzei -Amalek and Mistaken Mitzvos from Toras Chaim of Kossov

By Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

At the end of Parshas Ki Seitzei we are told to remember how Amalek attacked us when we came out of Mitzrayim. By attacking us, they made it possible for the world to believe that Amalek could be attacked. When we are settled in our land, we have to eradicate Amalek and their memory but we, ourselves, must never forget.

The Toras Chaim of Kossov asks what the meaning of 'being settled in the land' is. The Torah states, 'And it will come to be when Hashem will put you at rest from all your enemies'. Is not Amalek one of those enemies? Many Kabbalistic and Chassidic sources tell us that Amalek is different from our other enemies. Our other enemies are physical enemies. Amalek, on the other hand, is the personification of the yetzer hara, the evil impulse. He is always lying in wait to cause us to sin whether by actual violation of Hashem's commandments or by failure to fulfill them fully. The Toras Chaim states further that even when a person has a rest from forbidden physical pleasures, the yetzer hara still tries to convince the person that sins are mitzvos. Indeed part of the battle against Amalek is manifested in the very failure of King Shaul to kill all of Amalek, man, women and children as well as sheep and cattle. King Shaul believed that the sheep could be used for korbonos. This is one prime example of Amalek trying to convince us that sins are mitzvos. Remembering Amalek means remembering to be on guard as to what is and what is not the will of Hashem. We must always follow the guidance of the Torah and the gedolim to know what Hashem's will is for us in any given time and place.