

Beshalach

“And Moshe said, this is the thing which the L-rd has commanded, fill an omer of it to be kept throughout your generations, in order that they may see the bread which I gave you to eat in the wilderness when I brought you out from the land of Egypt.”¹

Rashi comments that Jeremiah later took out this jar of manna when he rebuked the children of Israel for not engaging in the study of Torah. When they replied that they were compelled to work, he remarked that it was a known fact that G-d sustained their ancestors in the wilderness and could do so now as well. This Parsha clearly shows the importance of intensive Torah study and G-d's ability to provide for us in other ways. Even the generation that witnessed so many miraculous events were still insecure and began to complain about every little discomfort. Thus the Parsha ends off telling us that the battle with Amalek takes place in every generation. The Torah does not waste any words; nevertheless it informs us that Amalek attacked in Rephidim, although it already mentioned earlier that they encamped there. The Talmud² therefore deduces from here that Amalek attacked because the Jews had become weaker in their Torah study. The best insurance for Jewish survival both physically and spiritually is the Torah. It's interesting that the Talmud, rather than stressing that their minds were weaker, for one studies with his head, chooses to state that their hands were weaker. In today's highly technological era, this is readily understandable for it is no longer necessary to employ the head in full concentration in order to understand the Torah, but one can use his hand to push a button and turn on a Torah tape and by constant repetition and pushing of buttons, can become knowledgeable in the Torah. Therefore we are compelled to remember the lesson of Amalek in every generation, so that we constantly strengthen our Torah Study.

The Chofetz Chaim points out in the beginning of this Parsha that G-d chose to lead the Jewish people round about rather than directly through the land of the Philistines, for He did not want

them to come in contact with unclean influences. Even though it would be more difficult to provide for them in this case, nevertheless one should put more emphasis on his spiritualism than on his material welfare and be willing to forego on the latter since ultimately the L-rd will provide for him.

It should be understood that the Jews studied Torah even in Egypt. Yaakov had sent Yehuda there to establish a Yeshiva even before the Jews entered the land. The Talmud³ informs us that they had a Yeshiva in Egypt as well as in the wilderness. Although the Torah was not yet given, they studied the laws pertaining to the mitzvohs received by the Avos. This week's Parsha also alludes to this, for it states, "You have led in Your love the people which You have redeemed, You have guided them in Your strength in our holy habitation,"⁴ upon which the *Yalkut* comments that this refers to the fact that the Jews studied Torah and did kind deeds and so the L-rd reciprocated by doing kindness with them culminating in the redemption. However, superficial study of the Torah is not enough. It requires one's total immersion and concentration. Listening to tapes is a good beginning but one must then proceed to learn from the original sources.

One must realize what is primary and what is secondary. Torah study and observance is the true purpose of one's creations. One should therefore endeavor to carry them out to the best of his ability. The Talmud⁵ deduces from the verse, "This is my G-d and I will glorify Him," that it is not enough to perform Mitzvohs but rather they must be done in the nicest manner. Certainly, when it comes to Torah study it should be done in the best manner and to one's best ability.

FOOTNOTES

1. Shmos 16:32
2. Bechoros 5b
3. Yuma 28b
4. 15:13
5. Shabbos 133b. 15:2