

Rejection – The Birth of Amalek

פרשת וישלח

At the end of this week's Parsha the Torah lists the lineage of Eisav. The Pasuk says (36:1), "And Timna was the concubine of Elifaz, Eisav's son, and Elifaz gave birth to Amalek." The Gemara in Sanhedrin (99a) shares with us the background story behind the birth of Amalek. The Gemara says, "Timna was a daughter of Kings, and she wanted to convert. She came to Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, and they rejected her. She then went and became a concubine to Elifaz. Timna said, 'I would rather be a maidservant to this nation (Rashi- That are the children of Avrohom and Yitzchak who are G-d fearing), than royalty to another nation.' This relationship gave birth to Amalek, the persecutors of the Jewish people. What is the reason for this suffering at the hand of Amalek? It is because the Avos should not have distanced her." (Rashi- From under the wings of the Shechinah, rather they should have accepted her).

Throughout Jewish history we have endured horrific suffering from Amalek, both directly and indirectly. Directly, we have suffered through the Holocaust and Haman's plan to destroy the Jewish people. Indirectly, our Sages tell us that if not for Amalek attacking us after leaving Egypt, no nation would have dared to rise up against us. Therefore any suffering we have endured throughout our history, at the hands of other nations, can be traced back to Amalek.

"Since they rejected her based on a small miscalculation, this resulted in a history of persecution at the hands of the nations of the world."

If one reflects on the magnitude of our suffering throughout history, it is quite perplexing that this was all due to the failure of the Avos to embrace Timna. The Avos were Kiruv giants who made it their life's mission to bring people closer to Hashem. We can therefore assume that their rejection of Timna was due to careful deliberation that deemed her unworthy. However, the Gemara tells us that they made some ever so slight miscalculation, and they should have converted her. Since they did not bring her close to Hashem, and rejected her based on a small miscalculation, this resulted in a history of suffering

and persecution at the hands of the nations of the world.

We see from here how careful we have to be when distancing someone from Judaism. Any small miscalculation can have devastating effects. A common miscalculation that occurs is when a student is asked to leave Yeshivah because they are hurting others. Rabbi Elyashiv ZT"l Paskened, that if asking the student to leave would result in this student's spiritual or physical death, the Yeshiva may not ask him to leave, as one may not kill someone in order to protect others from damage. However, if the student is killing others spiritually or physically, one may kill someone to prevent him from killing others. We see from this Psak, how careful we need to be when distancing someone, as we are literally dealing with life and death.

The Klausenberger Rebbi used to quote the Chofetz Chaim as saying, "Leon Trotsky's Rebbi is responsible not only for Leon Trotsky's lack of religious observance, but for all the millions of Jews he hurt both spiritually and physically. If his Rebbi would have applied himself more seriously to Trotsky's education, much evil could have been averted. If distancing someone from Yiddishkeit can have such far reaching negative ramifications, then bringing people close to Yiddishkeit can have an even greater positive ramifications, as מדה טובה מרובה ממדת פורעניות.

BASED ON THE WEEKLY SHMUSS GIVEN BY HARAV SHAYA COHEN, ROSH HAYESHIVA ZICHRON ARYEH

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