This week's section begins with the splitting of the 'Red' Sea and finishes with:

"He (G-d) said, my hand is raised (in an oath) on the Throne of YH, an eternal war of G-d against Amalek!" (17:16)

Amalek is a race of pure anti-Semites that pops up in every generation to destroy the Jews because they are G-d's people. That is why Moses had to fight Amalek and the battle will continue until the Moshiach will eradicate them.

But at first glance, this makes no sense at all!

If G-d hates Amelek, then why doesn't He just destroy them! Or just STOP CREATING THEM (G-d creates everything constantly)!!??

1) What does it mean G-d raised His hand in an oath? Oaths are for weak people that might change their minds! G-d never changes!

2) What does it mean that G-d took the oath on "The Throne of YH"?

3) Why is this in the same Torah portion as the splitting of the sea? Have they anything to do with one another?

4) And most important, what has all this got to do us today?

To understand this, here is a story about the Baal Shem Tov (Besh't for short) the originator of the 'Chassidic' movement in Judaism.

The Chmelnitzki massacres, the evil false Messiah Shabbatai Tzvi, the 'enlightenment' movement, and the ignorance and poverty of the late sixteen hundreds were beginning to take their toll. At the beginning of the 18th century Judaism was tired and almost bereft of the original vision and excitement that our forefather, Abraham, began it with.

The Jewish people were sharply divided into two groups; the Talmudic scholars and the unscholarly masses. The scholars believed that Judaism was a very serious and ancient business the goal of which was to go to heaven.... and they had no time for the riffraff (Am HaAretzim).

While the lower lacked Torah learning and knowledge of how to serve G-d properly.

The Besh't came to change all this. He taught that Judaism, as serious as it is, must be joyous for its goal is to reveal G-d in THIS world (like it was in the Holy Temple) which is even higher than heaven! He also taught that often the simple Jews contribute even MORE to this goal than the scholars and therefore ordered his pupils to educate the masses.

As you can imagine, this aroused the ire of the 'serious' Jews who declared open war on his ideas, often without even knowing exactly what they were.

One such Jew was a great scholar by the name of Rabbi Zundel (fictitious name) who decided to take matters in his hands. Unlike his companions who distanced themselves and hoped for the Besht's demise, he decided he would travel to the Besh't and try to wean him from his erroneous ways.
He reasoned that 1. It was forbidden to judge a man before hearing his defense. 2. It was very important commandment to try to make sinners repent and. 3. If he succeeded, he would merit a very high place in the world to come!

He arrived at the Besht's modest headquarters, was shown in, sat down and immediately began his mission.

"My friend," he began his plea to the Besh't. "I have come a long way to try to correct you. I understand from what I have heard that you are trying to change the holy Torah and even make up your own ideas. How can you trust yourself to such a degree?! For instance, I have read that you say that G-d is everywhere, not only in the Torah and that every Jew is holy, not only the Torah scholars. This is pure heresy!! I am giving you the opportunity to defend yourself."

The Besh't fell silent for a while and then answered in a clear voice.

"I can only tell you that when I was only five years old my father on his deathbed told me two things; that I must fear ONLY G-d and that I must love every Jew.

"After my father's passing, an inner voice told me to wander in the forests and contemplate. There I came to understand that G-d is much farther and at the same time much closer to us than we can possibly imagine.

"It was there also that I met with hidden mystics who began to teach me the secrets of Torah. They told me I was a special soul and advised me to conceal my greatness from others until the proper time arrived.

"Since then I have experienced much, but those two principles of my father are always before my eyes. I fear only G-d, because He alone creates all being constantly. And I love every Jew, because each and every one of them is an only child of the Creator entrusted with the very exciting and happy job of putting meaning and blessing into this world and benefiting all mankind.

"But I also learned 'Hashgacha Protis': That G-d, in addition to providing for and loving all His creations, sends messages to us through them in order to help us transform ourselves and fulfill the Torah with joy.

"Even a breeze in the night, the chirping of a bird, a word uttered by a gentile, in fact EVERYTHING that happens contains such a message. And one of my jobs is to open the eyes of the Jewish people to understand these messages and take them to heart. Do you understand Rabbi Zundel, to take them to heart!! Understanding, even Torah understanding, means nothing if is not taken to HEART!

"You for instance; you understand all the books, but it hasn't effected your heart. You are cold and dead. For you G-d is still very far away. But the entire creation is screaming messages to you... take them to heart!"

Rav Zundel looked at him like a maniac.

"Do you want to tell me that a tree... Or, or even a GENTILE can teach me? Why that is pure lunacy!! I cannot believe such a thing!! I CANNOT and I WILL NOT!!"

"No" answered the Besh't "It's not that you cannot, it's that you DON'T WANT TO!"

Rav Zundel stormed out of the Besht's room into the street, jumped on his wagon and headed back to his home town. He knew the truth now. The Besht was an incorrigible renegade trying to throw all of Orthodox Judaism into emotional pandemonium!!

About an hour later, still angrily mumbling to himself, he noticed in the distance an overturned wagon with a man standing next to it trying to push it aright. As he neared he saw how the poor
fellow was pushing a tree as a makeshift leaver and was covered with mud from head to toe. When the fellow noticed Rav Zundel's wagon he began yelling and gesturing wildly for him to stop.

But Rav Zundel only slowed down enough to negotiate the now narrow pass and make a getaway.

"Hey! Stop! Stop!" yelled the Gentile, "Come help me!"

"Sorry" the Rabbi yelled over his shoulder while trying to look where he was going, "I can't help!"

"Ahh" said the gentile in contempt, "it's not that you can't.... it's that you DON'T WANT TO! .........IF YOU WANTED TO YOU COULD!!"

It was like a bolt of lightning on a clear day! Suddenly Rav Zundle realized that the gentile was teaching him the lesson of his life!

He stopped the carriage, got out, helped push the wagon back on its wheels and turned his own wagon around. He would become a pupil of the Besh't and learn how to open his heart.

Now we can understand Amelek.

Everything mentioned in the Torah is also inside of our souls and personalities. Every Jew is a small world and the Torah is the blueprint. (In fact, by us properly using the Torah we actually CHANGE G-d's will).

So inside of each of us is an Amelek; a power that hates Judaism and G-d and loves death, separation and coldness. (See Deut 25:17) Something like the Rabbi in our story.

And if we don't fight it, it affects G-d!

In mystical terms G-d has many names each representing his different facets, but His main name is the four letters YHVH. The first two letters represent His hidden upper aspects and the last two the creation. But if we don't unify OUR minds with our hearts the then the first two letters of G-d's name, YH, become separated from the last two VH and the world seems cold, meaningless and G-dless. That is when Amalek strikes.

But G-d made an 'oath' to help us fight Amalek. In every generation G-d provides a Moses or more exactly a Moshiach (Moses was the first and will be the last redeemer) to inspire us. The Baal Shem Tov was one and his pupils... down to the Lubavitcher Rebbe are others.

They help, teach and inspire us to fight coldness, so G-d's YH won't be separated by from His VH.

But it can only happen when we follow our 'Moses' as they did at the splitting of the sea when, 'They believed in G-d and Moses His servant" (14:23).

As the Lubavitcher Rebbe said: we have to want Moshiach; to be excited, alive and warm about Moshiach, to learn about Moshiach and to follow his advice.

Only then will we finally destroy Amalek. Then there will be peace and love between all mankind, and all will dance joyously with...

Moshiach NOW!!

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