This week we learn about two awesome battles. The first and most famous was G-d versus the Egyptians at Yam Suf (Reed Sea). And the second, found at the end of this week's Torah portion, was between the Jews and Amelek.

At first glance it is not so clear why G-d did not fight both battles; after all the Jews are His people. Why did he leave them to fight the second one on their own? If they lost (G-d forbid) then the entire story of the Exodus would have been for naught!!

Why didn't G-d just decimate Amelek?

To understand this, here is a story (HaGeula leaflet #391)

They had plenty of reason to be depressed. They were supposed to be in another town helping in a seminar on Judaism and now they were stuck a hundred miles away with almost nothing to eat.

It happened like this. Rabbi Akiva Wagner, a well known educator and Torah scholar arranged a small Shabbat seminar for Jews who wanted to know more about the Chassidic approach to Judaism.

Several people signed up and in order to make sure that everything ran smoothly he picked five young men from the student body of his Yeshiva (Torah academy) to help out.

The seminar was to be in a resort hotel in the mountains some two hour’s drive from the city and because the place was not careful about the laws of kosher food Rabbi Wagner would have to bring it all from a caterer in Brooklyn.

So, six hours before Shabbat he loaded up his car with the catered food and drove out to the resort to get ready. The plan was that his pupils would load up a rented car with paper dishes and other sundry items and drive up two hours afterward to join him.

So they set out four hours before Shabbat with clear directions. But something went wrong.

Although they left with plenty of time before them, the young man driving, a fellow by the name of Mendy Chanin, somehow missed a turnoff and by the time he realized what happened there was only a half hour left before Shabbat! (Religious Jews do not drive on Shabbat).

He turned off the highway at the first public phone, called Rabbi Wagner for bearings and realized he was hopelessly lost. They had crossed the border into New Jersey and there was no chance they would make it to him before Shabbat.

The Rabbi told Mendy not to worry, he would manage without them and advised him to call his parents and ask them to search the phone book for the nearest Chabad House.

So Mendy did as he was told but the answer wasn’t good; the nearest Chabad House was almost an hour's drive away.

So, with no choice and not wanting to spend the Shabbat in the car they jumped back in, sped off down the highway and turned off at a sign that said 'Almochi', which turned out to be an unknown village with a population of a few hundred in the middle of nowhere. But there was no time and they thanked G-d that they found something.
Their luck finally began to kick in; they immediately located a cheap hotel room and it had a miniscule food market next door! Two of them booked the room and carried the things in and the others went shopping. Miracle of miracles they even found some kosher food: Six cans of sardines, three bags of soup almonds and a bottle of vodka... and, don't forget, they already had PLENTY of paper dishes!

They raced back to the hotel with their goods, asked the man at the desk if there were any Jews or synagogues in the area... negative... and made it up to their room just in time to open the sardine cans, change clothes and pray the first prayer of the holy Shabbat.

Determined to keep positive they tried to forget where they were, where they were supposed to be (the seminar was probably limping without them) and pray with ... joy! They even started singing and clapping their hands! "Lecha Dodi, Likras Kala!"

Suddenly the room started shaking! Someone was pounding on their door so hard that the pictures on the walls were swinging back and forth and a booming voice screamed through the door, "What's goin on in there?! What do you think this is??! Keep it down or I'll call the cops!"

They didn't dare open up. They just meekly finished the prayer, made Kiddush on vodka, ate their meager cold meal and went to sleep.

The next morning their enthusiasm was running on empty. Stark reality hit them; they were losers! They had missed the turnoff, the seminar, praying with a congregation, hearing the Torah read, eating a normal meal... they couldn't even sing or be happy! Who knows, maybe the town was filled with anti-Semites and they couldn't even leave their room!

But Mendy announced that it COULDN'T be an accident.....there is no such thing as accidents!! And they weren't losers either: The Rebbe of Lubavitch said: A Chassid MAKES the environment and is not made by it.

G-d is the King of the Universe. It must be that He put them to be there for a REASON.... A HAPPY Reason and they had an obligation to find it.

So after they finished their prayers and morning meal they decided to go out, split up and search for something. The others went in pairs but Mendy decided to go on his own.

He was walking aimlessly down some side street when suddenly a car came screeching to a halt next to him and a woman yelled out from her open window .... In YIDDISH

"Vas tut a yid in Almuchi in Shabbas (What is a Jew doing here on Shabbos?)."

Mendy was completely startled but smiled and yelled back,

"The Baal Shem Tov says that nothing happens by accident. I was sent here to give you the message of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the leader of our generation, that Moshiach is here and the redemption will occur any second. Every good deed we do, every commandment, every word of Torah, will bring it sooner."

The woman hesitated for a few seconds as though digesting what she heard. Then yelled out "Nu, would you like a ride?" And without waiting for an answer put the pedal to the floor and screeched away.

Shabbat ended, they paid for the hotel room and drove silently home in the night. No one said a word for the entire ride, none of them had any idea why HaShem wanted them to spend such a grey Shabbat and the entire episode was forgotten.... Almost.

A year later Mendy Chanin met a friend from Sidney Australia that he hadn't seen for several years by the name of Yossi Kanikov and they began to talk about the past, present and future.
Suddenly from nowhere Yossi said, "Listen, Mendy, here's a story! About a half a year ago some fellow from the U.S.A. came off the street to our Yeshiva in Sidney and started asking about Moshiach. He was completely not religious; in fact he didn't know anything about Judaism... but the only thing that bothered him was Moshiach.

Anyway he started coming to classes and in just a few months completely transformed to a different person, took on commandments and became serious about learning Torah and now he's one of the regular students.

So one day I had a conversation with him and asked him why he asked about Moshiach and he told me that one day his Mother met a Chassid in some weird town in New Jersey called Almochi and he told her about Moshiach.

Believe it or not!

This answers our question. The Torah is not just a history book. Egypt and Amalek are not only nations that once existed; they are living forces working against Judaism in every generation and in each and every Jew!

Egypt represents the physical world; success, pleasure, power, fear etc. The way to defeat these things is to ignore them. Just to fulfill our responsibilities according to the Torah; be honest, industrious, positive etc. and let G-d take care of the rest. (Or in other words; the present is our responsibility and the future; the results, are in G-d's hands).

But Amalek is a much more dangerous and formidable enemy. Amalek is coldness, indifference and doubt.

And the only way to defeat him is to fight the battle ourselves as the young men in our story did.

We must deepen our attachment to the Moses of each generation, in this case the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and reach unexplored levels of enthusiasm and optimism. As the Jews did back then in order to defeat Amalek

Or as the previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, said in his last public discourse (Today, the 10th of Shvat is the date of his passing 58 years ago) we must have 'Shtus d'kdusha' to be 'crazy for Judaism'.

This is the job of Moshiach (only he will completely defeat the Amalek within and without) and of Chassidut (the teachings of) Chabad which is called Torat HaMoshiach (the study of Moshiach).

To inspire each and EVERY Jew to new levels of excitement and certainty that just one more deed, word or even thought will certainly bring...

**Moshiach NOW!!**

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