

פרשת פנחס

[כה,יז] Hashem commanded משה to oppress and wage war against מדין. The actual battle, however, did not take place until later as mentioned in פ' מטות. Why, then, did Hashem command משה about a war now, when it wasn't relevant yet? Another point that needs clarification is, why does the תורה repeat itself by saying צרור והכיתם, oppress and fight, it would have been sufficient to simply tell them to fight. What is the תורה trying to convey with the word צרור?

The אור החיים הק' explains, that this ציווי from Hashem was not for the actual מלחמה; that would come when it was time for them to wage war. Rather this was a מצוה that pertained to בני ישראל right now. When someone does an עבירה, it's very hard to break away completely from it. There lingers within him the enjoyment and pleasure that he derived from the עבירה. This provides a connection to the עבירה, and makes it easier for him to transgress a second time. To properly do תשובה, one must eradicate all vestiges of pleasure that he may have remaining inside. Klal Yisrael had just sinned with בעל פעור and בנות מואב. Those that succumbed to the temptation, were dying in an epidemic. They needed a way to get a full כפרה for what they did. Thus, Hashem told them צרור את המדינים, they should oppress מדין, and constantly consider them their enemy for what they did. This will bring them to detest the immorality and עבודה זרה that מדין represents, and will break any connection they might still have with the עבירה.

This מצוה, although a מצוה לשעה, given to בני ישראל in the מדבר, is relevant to us as well. We all strive to have יראת שמים, fear and awe of heaven, which strengthens us in our מצוה performance, and helps us refrain from transgression. But there is another level called יראת חטא, fear of sin, where a person understands the devastation of sin so strongly, that he won't allow himself to get even close. We have to consider עבירות our enemy, as something that is trying to pull us away from reaching our goal of becoming close to Hashem, and עולם הבא. If we have this attitude, we will surely be זוכה to attain a high level of closeness to Hashem.

Have a good Shabbos.

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