

Torah Portion Ki Teitzei

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Ki Teitzei, “when you go out” gives instructions for dealing with others in public as well as personal settings. Memories often accompany these instructions. Remember what God did to Miriam (gave her a skin disease for plotting against Moses). Remember being a slave in Egypt. But the oddest is the instruction to remember what Amalek did to you (killing the weak and stragglers at the rear of the march out of Egypt) while blotting out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

What can it mean to remember to blot out a memory? Literature is replete with multi-generational sagas of revenge. Just two parshahs later, the song of Moses teaches us that God will avenge evil deeds done to Israel. Not having to harbor hatred of evildoers or plot vengeance against them is one of the great beauties of Judaic thought. Remember the evil but blot out memory of the evildoer. God will take revenge for His servants. Ki Teitzei told our ancestors how to treat each other with justice and kindness. Those virtues change in form as humanity’s capabilities develop but learning them will keep us from the destruction that is the ultimate destiny of evildoers. Rabbi Meeka’s Friday night sermons often teach justice and kindness in today’s world.