



Ki Teitzei

Remembering and Never Forgetting?

In Parshat Ki Teitzei, the Torah gives us a crucial imperative: we must remember, and we must never forget. This instruction might seem redundant—after all, if you're remembering, you're not forgetting, and if you're not forgetting, it's because you're remembering. Yet, the Torah emphasizes this dual command: *Zachor*—remember what the Amalekites did to you, and *Lo tishkach*—do not forget!

To grasp the significance of this dual imperative, let's look back at the book of Bereshit. There, we find Yosef imprisoned in Egypt. Although Pharaoh's chief butler knew about Yosef's plight, the Torah tells us *Velo zachar sar hammashkim et Yosef*—Pharaoh's chief butler did not remember Yosef. *Vayyishkachehu*—and he forgot him.

This teaches us an important lesson: when someone asks you to do something and you forget, it often means it wasn't important enough for you to remember. In Yosef's case, the suffering of an innocent Hebrew in a dungeon did not seem significant enough for Pharaoh's butler to make an effort to remember.

Consequently, Yosef was forgotten. Thus, the term *Zachor* in the Torah signifies more than just remembering; it implies action. This understanding helps us appreciate the fourth of the Ten Commandments: *Zachor*—remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

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The Talmud explains that we fulfil this commandment—*Zacherehu al hayyayin*—by making Kiddush, singing *Zmirot*, and infusing the Sabbath with spirituality. By transforming a regular Saturday into a Shabbat.

Similarly, in the third paragraph of the Shema, the mitzvah of wearing *Tzitzit* is explained as *Lema'an tizkeru*, which means "so that you shall remember to perform my commandments." This act of wearing *Tzitzit* serves as a physical reminder to keep the commandments alive and present in our lives.

Returning to Parshat Ki Teitzei, the imperative *Zachor* underscores the importance of addressing the wrongs of the past. To ensure that the evil acts of history are not repeated, we must take proactive measures: build museums, observe a Shabbat *Zachor*, give speeches, and educate others. We must understand why it took place, in order that, *Lo Tishkach*. Never again will it transpire as a result of us not forgetting.

Shabbat Shalom.

This is a transcript of a video, which is available to view via chiefrabbi.org/dvar-torah