



Likkutei Sichos

Volume 21 | Zachor

Beware the Intellectualizer

Translated by Rabbi Kivi Greenbaum

General Editor: Rabbi Eliezer Robbins | Editor: Rabbi Y. Eliezer Danzinger

Content Editor: Rabbi Zalmy Avtzon

© Copyright by Sichos In English 2023 ◦ 5783

A note on the translation: Rounded and square brackets reflect their use in the original *sichah*; curly brackets are interpolations of the translator or editor. The footnotes in curly brackets are those of the translator or editors and do not correspond to the footnotes in the original. Bolded words are italicized in the original text.

Considerable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation, while maintaining readability. As in all translations, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists.

Feedback is valued — please send comments to: info@projectlikkuteisichos.org

1.

WHY IS REMEMBERING AMALEK SO IMPORTANT?

Regarding the rabbinic enactment¹ to read *parshas Zachor*² — we read from the Torah on the Shabbos before Purim the passage that begins,³ “Remember what Amalek did to you” — the *Magen Avraham* asks:⁴

Many mitzvos require one to “remember,” such as the “remembrances”⁵ that must be mentioned⁶ in the blessings of the Shema (and in the Shema itself), namely: *Matan Torah*, the incident of Amalek, the incident of Miriam, Shabbos, and the incident of the Golden Calf. Why was an enactment made to read from the Torah to fulfill the remembrance of Amalek but not for the other remembrances?

Magen Avraham answers:

For {remembering} *Matan Torah*, we have the festival of Shavuot; and similarly for Shabbos {we commemorate Shabbos weekly}. Readings for the incident involving Miriam and for the Golden Calf were not enacted because they were disgraceful for Israel.

Seemingly, this answer is insufficient, because we, in fact, have the holiday of Purim, which is linked with remembering and erasing the memory of Amalek.⁷

¹ As recorded in *Magen Avraham*, sec. 60, sub-par. 2; see *Magen Avraham* sec. 685. Although the reading of *parshas Zachor* is a biblical mandate, the requirement to read it specifically on the Shabbos before Purim is a rabbinic enactment. Similarly, you will find in the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 282, par. 13, that it is “an enactment by the Men of the Great Assembly” (even though he writes (par. 16) that “*parshas Zachor* is a biblical obligation”).

² *Megillah* 30a.

³ End of *parshas Ki Seitzei* (*Devarim* 25:17-19)

⁴ *Magen Avraham*, sec. 60, sub-par. 2.

⁵ Also recorded in the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 282, par. 4; the Alter Rebbe also includes it in his *Siddur* after the morning prayers (“the Six Remembrances”).

⁶ This is in addition to remembering the exodus from Egypt, which is mentioned explicitly in the portion about *tzitzis*.

⁷ See *Sefer HaChinuch*, “*mitzvah* 603”: “The law should be to read (*parshas Zachor*) **on Purim** because Haman, the wicked, was a descendent of *Amalek*.” Rashi on *Megillah* 29a, s.v., “*u’mafsikin*”: “Read about erasing Amalek next to erasing Haman.” See Ramban at the end of *Ki Seitzei*: “This could be seen as a support for there being a biblical obligation to read the *Megillah*”; et al.

In fact, the Torah reading on Purim⁸ is the section describing our battle with Amalek (“Amalek came”).⁹ Moreover, the reason that *parshas Zachor* is read on the Shabbos before Purim is “so observance {of Purim} should not precede remembrance {of Amalek},”¹⁰ which tells us that Purim is the “**observance**” of the remembrance of *parshas Zachor*.

Therefore, why do we need a separate enactment to read about remembering Amalek, and emphasize its importance, in fact, by referring to the Shabbos as “Shabbos *parshas Zachor*”?

Therefore, the implication is that *parshas Zachor* was enacted (not only because there was no {biblically} designated time to read about the incident of Amalek, but) because recollecting the story of Amalek has a unique significance and is more noteworthy than the other remembrances.

We need to clarify: What is so special about remembering the incident of Amalek, and why does it have a special Torah reading?

Seemingly, we might argue the **opposite**. Namely, the other remembrances concern more general events that are more life-changing for Jews in all times and places: Standing at Mount Sinai at *Matan Torah* is the foundation of all Torah and mitzvos. Shabbos is one of the overarching mitzvos,¹¹ affecting (not only the day of Shabbos, but) also all six days of the week.¹² On the other hand, the debacle with the Golden Calf is the antithesis of {the first two commandments}: “I am Hashem, your L-rd” and “You shall have no other gods.” Furthermore {regarding the Golden Calf, Scripture says},¹³ “On a day that I {Hashem} make an accounting, I will bring their sin to account.” This reminds the Jewish people to exercise caution and avoid doing unseemly acts so as not to

⁸ *Mishnah, Megillah* 30b and ***Magen Avraham***, end of sec. 685, who says that the reading about Amalek on Purim fulfills the obligation to read *parshas Zachor*.

⁹ *Shemos* 17:8 ff.

¹⁰ *Megillah* 30a.

¹¹ See *Sefer HaChinuch*, “mitzvah 32.”

¹² See Ramban on *Shemos* 20:8.

¹³ *Shemos* 32:34, and the teachings of our Sages on this verse.

incur {Hashem fulfilling},¹⁴ “I will bring their sin to account.” And this reminder also includes making sure to fulfill the positive mitzvos. Even the incident involving Miriam, which, at first glance, was a personal failing that had no lasting effect on the entire Jewish people, still carries a universal lesson¹⁵ as to how careful a person must be concerning *lashon hara*,¹⁶ one of the most severe sins. As our Sages caution,¹⁷ “{Anyone who speaks *lashon hara*} increases his sins to the degree that they correspond to the three cardinal sins: idolatry, forbidden relations, and bloodshed.” Additionally, it is one of the most difficult sins from which to abstain completely.¹⁸

Remembering Amalek, on the other hand, is a specific mitzvah, and seemingly, does not contain any lesson relevant to every Jew’s behavior, and it certainly does not contain a life lesson.¹⁹

2.

WE CANNOT DESTROY AMALEK TODAY

This question is even stronger:

The purpose of remembering Amalek is to **wipe out** Amalek,²⁰ as the passage continues (after it says, “remember...”): “It shall be that when Hashem, your L-rd, gives you rest from all your enemies... you shall wipe out the memory

¹⁴ {Rashi on *Shemos* 32:34: “Now I have listened to you not to destroy them all at once, but always, whenever I shall make an accounting of their sins, I will bring a bit of this sin to account against them along with the other sins. There is no punishment that befalls Israel which does not have in in some retribution for the sin of the Calf.”}

¹⁵ Which is **always** pertinent, because without the Torah recording this incident, a person would not be spared from {the dust of} *lashon hara every day*, as discussed below in the *sichah*.

¹⁶ See commentaries to *Shemos* 24:9; Ramban, end of *Ki Seitzei*, et al.; *Magen Avraham* and Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, sec. 60, *ibid*.

¹⁷ *Erchin* 15b.

¹⁸ A person is not spared from it **every day**. (*Bava Basra* 164b).

¹⁹ See *Sefer HaChinuch*, “mitzvah 603,” that remembering the story of Amalek **is not** “a fundamental part of Judaism” like remembering the Egyptian exodus (therefore, “it is enough for us to remember it once a year...”). Note that Rambam **does not** count the mitzvah to remember Amalek as one of the **obligatory** mitzvos (*Sefer HaMitzvos*, end of *mitzvos aseï*).

²⁰ See Rabbi Yerucham Fishel Perlow’s explanation of Rav Saadia Gaon’s *Sefer Hamitzvos*, “*mitzvas aseï* 59,” who explains that it is for this reason that the *Baal Halachos Gedolos* does not count “remembering Amalek” as an independent mitzvah because it is included in the mitzvah to wipe out Amalek.

of Amalek....²¹” Regarding this, Rambam explains:²² “We are commanded to remember what Amalek did to us... (and to despise that nation) every moment, and to stir our soul-felt emotions, through narratives, **to wage war against them.**”

Nowadays, it is impossible to fulfill literally the command of wiping out Amalek because: (a) The mitzvah of wiping out Amalek only applies when Jews are in their land²³ (and are at peace — “when Hashem, your L-rd, **gives you rest from all** of your enemies all around, in the land...);²⁴ and, (b) even if these conditions are met, wiping out Amalek is impossible because²⁵ “Sancheriv already came and scrambled the world.²⁶ And {halachically,} any separated item is presumed to have been separated from the majority.”²⁷

It turns out that the command to remember Amalek nowadays is not (so) **relevant in practice**; nonetheless, a special Torah reading has been established, and a special Shabbos designated, specifically for **this** remembrance!

3.

REMEMBERING IS POWERFUL

We can clarify this by first explaining what the mitzvah to remember Amalek is really about. Seemingly:

²¹ *Devarim* 25:19.

²² Rambam’s *Sefer HaMitzvos*, “mitzvas asef 189”; see *Sefer HaChinuch*, “mitzvah 603,” who says that for this reason {“for (only) men wage war”}, women are not obligated to remember Amalek.

²³ Our Sages say (in *Sanhedrin* 20b, and in many other places. Rambam in the beginning of the laws of kings) “Israel was commanded to fulfill three mitzvos upon entering the land... and to cut off the seed of Amalek.”

²⁴ *Devarim* 25:19

²⁵ *Minchas Chinuch* 604. {Sancheriv, the Assyrian king, took over the Middle East by displacing peoples from their native country and moving them to other countries, as he did with the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.}

²⁶ {Through his policy of population transfer, Sancheriv transplanted the Amalekites, mixing them among other populations.}

²⁷ {*Yevamos* 16b. Since Sancheriv displaced the Amalekites and scattered them among the other nations, we consider every individual to belong to the majority, who are non-Amalekites.}

- a) Since the purpose of remembering Amalek is to eliminate them (as mentioned above), why does the obligation to remember them apply also when, **according to the Torah**, wiping out Amalek, in a practical sense, is impossible?
- b) Why do we even need a separate command to “remember what Amalek did to you” in order to stir “our soul-felt emotions, through narratives, to wage war against them”? Why isn’t the command to “wipe out the memory of Amalek” enough?

(This is like the mitzvah,²⁸ “Do not allow any soul to live,” which was said concerning the seven nations. Yet, we don't find a separate command to remember their wicked actions, etc., in order to “stir our soul-felt emotions... to wage war against them.”)

Therefore, we must say that although remembering Amalek is intended to {motivate us to} destroy Amalek, their remembrance accomplishes something **in and of itself**.

Therefore, Rambam (along with other authorities²⁹ who {authored works in which they} enumerate the mitzvos)³⁰ counts³¹ wiping out Amalek and remembering them as **two** separate mitzvos with distinct characteristics. For example, wiping out Amalek is one of the mitzvos whose “obligation falls upon the **congregation**”³² (and according to many opinions,³³ the obligation falls

²⁸ *Devarim* 20:16.

²⁹ *Smag*, “mitzvas aseï 115-116”; et al.

³⁰ {The Talmud (*Makos* 23b) records that Moshe was given 613 mitzvos at Sinai. Neither the Torah nor the Talmud offer a comprehensive listing. Therefore, many of the great Sages of the post-Talmudic period, such as Rambam, Rasag {Rav Saadia Gaon}, and the author of *Sefer HaChinuch* sought to compile exact lists of the mitzvos and their definitions. These authorities argue about several mitzvos whether they are to be included in the count.}

³¹ Rambam’s *Sefer HaMitzvos*, “mitzvas aseï 188-189.”

³² Rambam’s *Sefer Hamitzvos*, end of “mitzvos zsei”; similarly, Rasag enumerates this mitzvah in the **portions** {those mitzvos Rasag grouped together because they are incumbent upon the community} (portion 61); see *Sefer HaChinuch*, “mitzvah 604.”

³³ Ramban, *Bachya*, end of “*Beshalach*”; *Sefer Yereim*, sec. 299 (*Sefer Yereim HaShalem*, sec. 435); see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 16, p. 302 (fn. 31), which explains that perhaps also according to Rambam, this is a mitzvah that applies to the king (see there); see the next fn.

upon the **king** [of the community]],³⁴ and **this** mitzvah has many conditions. (For example, it is only in force after the Jewish people’s entry into Israel, and other conditions also apply).

In contrast, **remembering** Amalek is a mitzvah that is incumbent upon each **individual** separately, and it is a **constant** mitzvah,³⁵ in force everywhere and at all times. What is accomplished by remembering Amalek, in and of itself, is an overarching idea in the Torah, even more than the above-mentioned remembrances (as explained below in Section 7).

4.

AMALEK EQUALS REBELLING

The explanation of the foregoing:

Amalek “knows his Master but deliberately rebels against Him.”³⁶ Therefore, before a Jew can fulfill the command to wipe out Amalek in a literal sense, he first needs to ensure that within **himself**, there is no “Amalek” — one who “knows his Master but deliberately rebels against Him” (not even a subtle manifestation of Amalek, as explained below in Section 6).

This is the purpose of the mitzvah to **remember** Amalek:³⁷ This remembrance is necessary not only to motivate a person to action **at a later time** (to wage war and eliminate Amalek literally) or to caution him to avoid anything harmful (like remembering the story of Miriam — to guard against

³⁴ We could say that the mitzvos of the king (who represents everyone) comprise a unique category within the mitzvos incumbent on the congregation.

³⁵ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Melachim*,” sec. 8, par. 5; see Rambam’s wording in *Sefer Hamitzvos*, and his listing of the mitzvos, beg. of *Mishneh Torah* (“Mitzvah 189”); see the opinions that require one to remember the story of Amalek daily, quoted in *Encyclopedia Talmudis*, “*Zechiras Maaseh Amalek*” (p. 222).

³⁶ This is quoted in many places regarding Amalek (*Sefer HaMamarim 5562*, p. 172; *Sefer HaMamarim 5565*, vol. 1, p. 395; Tzemach Tzedek’s *Sefer Hamitzvos*, “*Mitzvas Zechiras Maaseh Amalek*,” ch. 1 [p. 95a]; **et al.**) This expression is found in *Toras Kohanim*, “*Bechukosai*,” 26:14 (Rashi on *Bamidbar* 26:14, *Bereishis* 10:9, 13:13) but **not** regarding *Amalek*. *Or HaTorah*, “*Zachor*” (p. 1786) connects this with what our Sages said (*Esther Rabbah*, sec. 7, par. 13): “From where did Amalek come? ... He came from the counsel of the wicked Bilaam,” about whom it says (*Bamidbar* 24:16), “He knows the mind of the Most High.”

³⁷ For a lengthier explanation, see *Sefer HaMamaarim 5665*, “*Zachor*,” ch. 8.

lashon hara). Rather, remembering Amalek by itself **wipes out** the Amalek in a person's heart — within his very self.

Just possibly, a Jew has “Amalek” hiding within him,³⁸ and it wants to incite the Jew to rebel against his Master, G-d forbid. But when the person properly fulfills the command to “remember what Amalek did to you,”³⁹ he can eliminate and obliterate the Amalek lurking within.⁴⁰ He can uproot and erase any trace of Amalek who “(knows his Master...) but deliberately rebels against Him.”

Accordingly, it is clear why **this** remembrance specifically is associated with a special **Torah** reading, as Torah is the master over the world's existence (like the well-known teaching of our Sages⁴¹ on the verse,⁴² “Upon Hashem who decides for me”).⁴³ Therefore, by associating the remembrance of Amalek with a Torah reading, it becomes a remembrance that **carries out** the obliteration of the Amalek within a person's own soul.⁴⁴

5.

BIBLICAL VS. RABBINIC

This is also one explanation why the reading of *Zachor* is (according to most halachic authorities)⁴⁵ a positive biblical mitzvah:

One advantage of biblical mitzvos over rabbinic ones is that the former have a stronger effect on (and in) the **world**, as discussed at length by the later

³⁸ See *Torah Or*, “*Tetzaveh*,” s.v., “*zachor*” (end): “The seed of Amalek’ — ‘his seed’ that was implanted in Israel to have this characteristic.”

³⁹ Note *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 19 (p. 223-4) which discusses the explanation of our Sages (*Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer*, ch. 44): “How do they they both exist — this *zachor* (of Amalek) and this *zachor* (of Shabbos)?”

⁴⁰ See also *Panim Yafos*, end of *Ki Seitzei*.

⁴¹ *Jerusalem Talmud*, *Nedarim* 6:8; et al.

⁴² *Tehillim* 57:3.

⁴³ {Our Sages interpret this verse as alluding to the fact that Torah laws can and do cause actual changes in the world.}

⁴⁴ See *Sefer HaMamaarim* 5680 (p. 295): “By reading the Torah portion about wiping out Amalek, the negative force {*kelipah*} of Amalek is nullified; see *Likkutei Torah*, “*Bamidbar*,” 13c.

⁴⁵ See fn. 1.

Rabbis.⁴⁶ In their well-known expositions, they differentiate between biblical prohibitions that forbid the *cheftza*,⁴⁷ whereby an object becomes a repugnant thing, etc., whereas with rabbinic prohibitions, the Sages imposed the prohibition only upon the *gavra*, the person (according to several opinions), but not on {the substance of} the material items.

True, rabbinic mitzvos enjoy an advantage over biblical ones, as our Sages say:⁴⁸ “The words of our Sages are sweeter to me than the words of Torah.” The above dictum was said {however,} concerning the ***gavra*** {the person} primarily, as the mitzvos that the Sages **added** demonstrate the sweetness and longing to be **Hashem’s servant**. Therefore, they {the Rabbis, as representative of the people} initially ask {the King},⁴⁹ “Place upon us edicts.” Then, when they are still dissatisfied, they add even more decrees to the edicts of the King. Alternatively, they add safeguards (to the decrees) to ensure the {King’s} decrees will be fulfilled.

Furthermore, since biblical mitzvos have a more powerful impact on the world, it is not as apparent that a person fulfills these mitzvos purely because of Hashem’s command, since the beneficiary properties of the mitzvos (the positive effect they have in the world) overshadow⁵⁰ the self-subordination that motivates a Jew’s fulfillment of mitzvos (doing a mitzvah because it is Hashem’s **command**):

In contrast, by fulfilling rabbinic mitzvos, which do not make such a powerful impact in the world, a Jew proves his motive for fulfilling mitzvos. He does so (not because he expects to bring about exalted things in the world, but) because he is Hashem’s servant who obeys the will and command of the King.

⁴⁶ {Lit., “*Achronim*.”} See *Responsa of Tzafnas Paneach*, (Jerusalem 5725) sec. 33; see *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 8; see *sichah* delivered on *Acharon Shel Pesach* 5736, and subsequent *farbrengens*, at length.

⁴⁷ {The focus of a mitzvah may be the “*cheftza*, i.e., the “object” of the mitzvah — the item with which the mitzvah is performed, or, in this case, the prohibited item. Sometimes, however, the focus of a mitzvah may be the “*gavra*,” i.e., the person, and the mitzvah obligates the person to perform or desist from performing a given act.}

⁴⁸ See *Avodah Zarah* 35a, and Rashi commentary, loc. cit; *Jerusalem Talmud, Berachos*, ch. 1, halachah 4; et al.

⁴⁹ *Mechilta*, “*Yisro*” 20:3. (In our version of *Mechilta*, it says, “His servants said to him, place decrees **upon them**.” However, in Ramban on the Torah, “*Yisro*” [20:2], and also in his critique on *Sefer Hamitzvos* [negative mitzvah 5], and in *Meiri*, “*Introduction to Avos*” [quoting *Mechilta*], it says, “place decrees **upon us**.” This version is [also] quoted in Chassidus — *Maamar Bereishis Bara* 5703, ch. 26.; et al.)

⁵⁰ As known, intellect conceals will and self-sacrifice (*Sefer HaMamaarim: Yiddish*, p. 5 ff.; *Kuntreisim*, vol. 3, p. 121 ff.; *Sefer HaMamaarim* 5709, p. 119 ff.).

Concerning the “*cheftza*,” however — the effect that mitzvos must bring to bear on the world⁵¹ — it’s the opposite. Biblical mitzvos possess the power of **Torah**⁵² to alter the *cheftza* (the reality) of the world in a way that rabbinic mitzvos cannot, as discussed above.

Therefore, reading *parshas Zachor*⁵³ is a positive mitzvah from the **Torah** that amplifies the force {contained in the mitzvah to remember Amalek} so that the remembrance will **succeed** in eliminating Amalek (in our case — Amalek as found within man).

6.

FIGHTING THE PRACTICAL

Since remembering Amalek is a constant mitzvah, Amalek is clearly a threat that **everyone** needs to guard against constantly in every era.

Although there is clearly no place, G-d forbid, to say that a Jew needs to (constantly) guard against becoming someone who “knows his Master but **deliberately rebels against Him**,”⁵⁴ the Jew has to beware of his “Amalek” constantly, at least as it manifests within him **subtly**. This is especially true since a subtle manifestation could eventually lead him to becoming someone who “knows... and intends to rebel against Him,” G-d forbid.

⁵¹ Which is a fundamental component in fulfilling the mitzvos — see *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 37-38.

⁵² See *Torah Or* (34b, *Derech Mitzvosecha*, 74b) regarding the virtue of the power of biblical mitzvos over rabbinic mitzvos — biblical mitzvos (which flow from Above to below) {are encapsulated by the adage}: “Who can hold back or prevent Hashem, Blessed be His Name, and, ‘Is the hand of Hashem limited?’” (*Bamidbar* 11:23); whereas rabbinic mitzvos {are encapsulated by the adage}: “They draw down to reveal this.”

⁵³ Besides the fact that remembering Amalek is a positive, biblical mitzvah (and thus equivalent to other remembrances mentioned above in Sec. 1), note that *Sefer HaMamaarim* 5680, p. 295, emphasizes that reading *parshas Zachor* is biblically mandated.

⁵⁴ Note *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Geirushin*,” end of ch. 2.

The explanation: On the verse,⁵⁵ “For there is a hand on the throne of **Yud-Hey**,⁵⁶ Hashem will remain at war with Amalek,” our Sages say that “His name is not complete... until the name of Amalek will be wiped out.”⁵⁷ As long as Amalek exists, Hashem’s name is incomplete — it is only **Yud-Hey**. Amalek stands in opposition to the letters *Vav-Hey* of the name *Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey*.

This seems strange. Since Amalek intends to rebel against **Him**, against Hashem, why is it that: (a) Amalek only opposes the **completeness** of Hashem’s name, and not this **name** in its entirety? (b) In opposing the completeness of the name, Amalek does not oppose the **Yud-Hey** of the name, which takes precedence over, and is loftier ⁵⁸ than *Vav-Hey*? (c) In fact, since Amalek does not oppose *Yud-Hey*, Amalek leaves a whole Divine name intact from among the seven⁵⁹ names of Hashem that cannot be erased?⁶⁰

The explanation:⁶¹ The four letters of Hashem’s name as they affect a Jew and as found in the soul of man (who resembles the Supernal One⁶² {as Hashem said,⁶³ “Let us make man} in Our image”) is as follows: “*Yud-Hey*” represents *chochmah* and *binah* (intellect); “*Vav*,” the emotions in the heart and Torah; and “*Hey*,” speech and deeds — mitzvos.⁶⁴

The main objective of Amalek’s battle is to undermine the performance of mitzvos. He is not so antagonistic to intellect — *Yud-Hey*. That a person knows his Creator — that a person (only) has an **understanding** of G-dliness — doesn’t bother Amalek so much. Amalek wants that this knowledge, however,

⁵⁵ *Shemos* 17:16.

⁵⁶ {These two letters form a complete Divine name, but they are also the first two letters of the Tetragrammaton — the four-letter name of Hashem.}

⁵⁷ Rashi on *Shemos* 17:16; *Tanchuma*, end of “*Ki Seitzei*”; *Pesikta DeRav Kahana* and *Pesikta Rabasi*, “*parshas Zachor*”; *Midrash Tehillim*, sec. 9, par. 7.

⁵⁸ See *Maamar* “*Min Hameitzar 5678*”; et al.

⁵⁹ See *Torah Or*, end of “*Noach*” as to the reason for “seven.”

⁶⁰ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*” (sec. 6, par. 2); *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*” (sec. 276, par. 9); see *Biurei HaGra on Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” sec. 276, sub-par. 19.

⁶¹ See *Torah Or*, end of “*Tetzaveh*”; *Sefer Hamamaarim 5565*, vol. 1, “*Zachor*”; *Siddur im Dach*, “*Shaar HaPurim*”; Tzemach Tzedek’s *Sefer HaMitzvos*, “*Mitzvos Zechiras Maaseh Amalek*.”

⁶² {The Hebrew word for man, אדם is etymologically related to the word אֶדְוֶה (אֶדְוֶה אֶתְּנֶה) — I will liken myself (to the Supernal One) [*Yeshayahu* 14:14].} *Asara Maamoros*, “*Eim Kol Chai*,” sec. 2, ch. 33; *Shnei Luchos Habris*, 20b; et al.

⁶³ *Bereishis* 1:26.

⁶⁴ See *Tanya*, “*Iggeres HaTeshuvah*,” end of ch. 4; *Likkutei Torah*, “*Re’eh*”; et al.

shouldn't positively influence the emotions in a person's heart — (in a way that translates to) thought, speech, and action (*Vav-Hey*). Indeed, then the rebellion is a much greater rebellion, as emphasized in the wording of our Sages: “**He knows** his Master.” He has knowledge of his Master, and nevertheless, he “intends to rebel against Him,” because this knowledge has no effect on his emotions, or on his thought, speech, or action.

This aspect of Amalek's character — that a person's knowledge of “his Master” doesn't translate into total submission to his Master, **at least** proportionate to the degree of his knowledge (and accepting the yoke **compels** {a person to observe} Torah and mitzvos, so if his submission to his Master is deficient, he is rebelling (subtly) against his Master) — is something everyone needs to work on, because at every level of service and knowledge of Hashem, there is room to err,⁶⁵ in his manner of accepting the yoke, etc.

7.

ACTION IS THE MAIN THING

On this basis, we can also understand why the war with Amalek took place “on the way, when you were leaving Egypt,”⁶⁶ before *Matan Torah*.

Since everything occurs by Divine providence, clearly, the reason that the actual war with Amalek took place before *Matan Torah* is that Amalek, in a spiritual sense, fights {with the Jewish people} to prevent *Matan Torah* and its fundamental *chiddush*.⁶⁷

After *Matan Torah*, the Torah was not confined to “the heavens.” Torah was no longer found only in the spiritual realm. Rather, Torah descended in our physical world and is now expressed specifically in actual learning and performing physical mitzvos. Indeed, the main point is action.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Note *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 153, ch. 5 ff.

⁶⁶ {*Devarim* 24:9.}

⁶⁷ {A novel idea.}

⁶⁸ *Avos*, ch. 1, mishnah 17.

This was the argument of the angels:⁶⁹ “The hidden treasure... place Your majesty in the **heavens**.” Since the Torah is the most spiritual and lofty commodity, it should be appropriately **placed** “in the heavens,” which is even higher than the **spirituality** of this world (a person’s intellect).

However, after we wipe out what Amalek stands for — when the mind channels this idea into practical action, and thereby restores the complete Divine name (so that it includes *Vav-Hey*) — we then refute the argument of the angels, “Place your majesty in the heavens,” and the Torah is given here in this world.

This also explains the great importance of remembering Amalek, which is more germane than the other remembrances (as discussed in Section 1). Remembering Amalek is an **introduction** to, and a condition for, the **entire** dynamic of the giving of the Torah. Before a Jew can **take hold** of the Torah, he must first destroy Amalek, for Amalek prevents him from turning his intellectual understanding into emotions and action.

By fulfilling the mitzvah of remembering Amalek during exile, by uprooting Amalek from a person’s soul, we hasten the arrival of the time when can fulfill the mitzvah of **wiping out** Amalek literally, and **physically**, in the entire world.

Then, we will fulfill the mitzvah of appointing a king — King Moshiach — who will clarify the identity of Amalek. And afterwards,⁷⁰ “he will fight the war of Hashem,”⁷¹ including the war with Amalek (“Hashem will remain at war with Amalek”).⁷² King Moshiach will emerge victorious, and he will then build the Third Temple,⁷³ speedily in our days, literally.

— Based on talks delivered on Shabbos *parshas Zachor*, 5730 (1970) & 5733 (1973)

⁶⁹ *Shabbos* 88b ff.

⁷⁰ Following the order of the three mitzvos which were commanded to the Jewish people when they entered the land; see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 16, p. 304, fn. 49.

⁷¹ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Melachim*,” ch. 11.

⁷² *Shemos* 17:16.

⁷³ (His house and) His throne will be complete (see beg. of *Torah Or*).