

Parashat Vayikra-Zachor, 5784, 2024:

*Zachor!*

Rabbi David Etengoff

ה' יעזור וירחם על אחינו כל בני ישראל, בארץ ישראל ובכל חלקי הארץ

This Shabbat we will read Parashat Zachor. According to the *Shulchan Aruch*, the public reading of this *parasha* is a Torah-based *mitzvah*. (*Orech Chaim* 146:2 and 685:7) In addition, it enables us to fulfill two of the three *Taryag Mitzvot* associated with Amalek as determined by the Rambam in his *Sefer HaMitzvot*: “Remember what Amalek did to us,” (Positive Commandment 189) and “We are warned not to forget what ‘the seed’ of Amalek did to us.” (Negative Commandment 59).

One of the essential principles of *parshanut* (Torah exegesis) is the timeless significance of each verse and narrative passage in the Torah. According to Mishnah Yadaim 4:4, however, Sennacherib, the King of Assyria (720-683 BCE approx.), completely destroyed the cohesiveness of all nations and tribes of his time—including Amalek. If this is the case, why does the Torah state three separate, and eternal *mitzvot* regarding a tribal entity that no longer exists?

My rebbi and mentor, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik *zatzal* (1903-1993), addresses this question in his famous essay of 1956, “*Kol Dodi Dofek*,” wherein he presents a seminal idea he learned from his father, Rav Moshe Soloveitchik *zatzal* (1879-1941):

At a Mizrahi convention I cited the view expressed by my father and master (Rabbi Moses Soloveitchik) of blessed memory, that the proclamation, “The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation,” (Exodus 17:16) does not only translate into the communal exercise of waging obligatory war against a specific race but includes as well the obligation to rise up as a community against any people or group that, filled with maniacal hatred, directs its enmity against Knesset Israel. When a people emblazons on its banner, “Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation: that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance,” (Psalms 83:5) it becomes, thereby, Amalek. (Pages 65-66 from the English translation entitled *Fate and Destiny*)

According to this opinion of Rav Moshe Soloveitchik *zatzal*, Amalek is not a tribe or an ethnicity. Instead, it is a mindset with which we are all too familiar. Unfortunately, this version of Amalek has existed for uncountable years, and will continue to exist until destroyed by *Mashiach Tzidkanu*. (Rambam, *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim* 11:4) The Rav underscores this point in the original Hebrew edition of “*Kol Dodi Dofek*”: “...Amalek still exists in the world. Go and see what the Torah says: ‘a war of Hashem with Amalek throughout all of the generations.’ If so, it is impossible that Amalek will be destroyed from this world before the arrival of the messiah.” (Footnote 23) Accordingly, the Rav writes: “In the 1930’s and 1940’s the Nazis, with Hitler at their head, filled this role. They were the Amalekites, the standard-bearers of insane hatred and enmity during the era just past. Today their place has been taken over by the mobs of Nasser and the Mufti.” Sadly, we can easily substitute Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, White Supremacists, and today’s world-wide radicalized university community, for the Nazis, Nasser, and the Mufti of yesteryear.

Make no mistake about it. Amalek’s goal is to destroy each and every one of us so in order to obliterate Hashem’s name, *chas v’shalom*, from the world. Antisemitism, coupled with the rejection of the existence and supremacy of Hashem, are the doctrinal principles by which Amalek lives. The Jewish people, in contrast, are Hashem’s true witnesses. Our very existence belies the specious “beliefs” of all Amalekites for all time. How can we stand up

and join Hashem in His continuous struggle against the forces of ultimate darkness? The Torah gives us the answer in one word: “*Zachor!*” We must not be fooled by the duplicity and disingenuous behaviors of today’s Amalekites, regardless of what the media would like us to believe. “From the River to the Sea,” means one thing and one thing only—the attempt to complete Hitler’s Final Solution in our time.

May we soon witness the coming of the *Mashiach*, when the entire world will stand shoulder to shoulder in recognizing Hashem’s truth and glory, and Amalek’s memory will fade into the past. Then, may the words of Zephaniah the prophet be fulfilled before our eyes: “I will make the peoples pure of speech so that they will all call upon the Name of G-d and serve Him with one purpose.” (3:9) *V’chane yihi ratzon*.

Shabbat Shalom

Past *drashot* may be found at my blog-website: <http://reparashathashavuah.org>.

Please contact me at [rdb718@gmail.com](mailto:rdb718@gmail.com) to be added to my weekly email list.

\*\*\* My audio *shiurim* on the topics of *Tefilah* and *Tanach* may be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/8hsdpvd>

\*\*\* I have posted 164 of Rabbi Soloveitchik’s English language audio *shiurim* (MP3 format) spanning the years 1958-1984. Please click on the highlighted link: [The Rav](#)