

Was Haman a descendant of Amalek?

The Ethical Questions of Parshat Zachor & the Megilla

For Torah in Motion class #17/ by Menachem Leibtag -

I. How do we know Haman was from Amalek?

II. Had he not tried to kill us, would we have been commanded to kill him?

III. Key questions when studying Amalek

A. Paternal lineage, or Maternal, or both?

B. Where is there land located?

C. What if generations later they are not evil?

D. What does the mitzva have to do with the King?

E. Why only when we have 'rest from all our enemies'?

F. Who decides if someone is Amalek?

& who is commanded to execute them?

G. Why is taking the booty forbidden

H. How can it be an eternal commandment,

If once they are wiped out, none left?

IV. In the Megilla,

Why do we not take from the booty of the war?

V. Biblical sources:

A. RAMBAM -Laws of Kings, Chapter 1,

1. The people of Israel were commanded to do THREE things upon conquest of the Land of Israel:

- a) to Appoint a King...(Deut. 17:15)
- b) to destroy Amalek...(Deut. 25:19)
- c) to build the Temple...(Deut. 12:5)

5:5 : We are commandment is to wipe out their memory AND to remember their terrible deeds, to kindle our hatred of that behavior...

6:1 - When going to war, even against the Seven Nations or Amalek - the people of Israel must first offer the option of peace...

B. Amalek & the events at Refidim

Shmot Chapter 17

1 And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin...and encamped in Rephidim; and there was no water for the people to drink.. 4 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying: 'What shall I do unto this people? they are almost ready to stone me.'

5 And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, **and go.** 6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.' And Moses did so...

8 Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9 And Moses said unto Joshua: 'Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek; tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.'... .

14 And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Write this for a memorial in the book... for I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.'

15 And Moses built an altar... 16 And he said: 'The hand upon the throne of the LORD: the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.'

A. הלכות מלכים פרק א

RAMBAM, א שלוש מצוות נצטוו

ישראל בשעת כניסתן לארץ

1 -למנות להם מלך

2 ולהכרית זרעו של עמלק

3 ולבנות להם בית הבחירה

ה,ה וכן מצות עשה לאבד זרע עמלק, שנאמר "תמחה את זכר עמלק" (דברים כה, יט); ומצות עשה לזכור תמיד מעשיו הרעים ואריבתו, כדי לעורר איבתו--שנאמר "זכור, את אשר עשה לך עמלק" (דברים כה, יז)...

ו,א אין עושין מלחמה עם אדם בעולם, עד שקוראין לו לשלום--

B. The events at Refidim

שמות פרק יז א ויסעו כל-עדת בני-

ישראל ממדבר-סין, למסעיהם--על-פי ה'; ויחגו, ברפיידים, ואין מים, לשפת העם... ד

ויצעק משה אל-ה' לאמר, מה אעשה לעם הזה... ה ויאמר ה' אל-משה, עבר לפני

העם, וקח אתך, מזקני ישראל; ומטך,

אשר הכית בו את-היאר--קח בידך,

והלכת. ו הנני עמד לפניך שם על-הצור

בחרב, והכית בצור ויצאו ממנו מים,

ושתה העם; ויעש בן משה...

ח ויבא, עמלק וילחם עם-ישראל

ברפיידים.

ט ויאמר משה אל-יהושע בחר-לנו

אנשים, וצא הלחם בעמלק; מחר, אנכי

נצב על-ראש הגבעה...

C . The commandment to Remember Amalek in Devarim Chapter 25

13 Thou shalt not have in your pocket a stone and a stone, big or small. **14** Thou shalt not have in thy house a diverse dry-measures, a great and a small.

15 Rather, a perfect and just weight shalt thou have; a perfect and just measure shalt thou have; that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. **16** For all that do such things, even all that do unrighteously, are an **abomination unto Hashem**.

17 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt; **18** how he met thee by the way, **and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were enfeebled in thy rear**, when thou wast faint and weary; **and HE DID NOT FEAR ELOKIM**

19 Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, **thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek** from under heaven; **thou shalt not forget**.

D. 'Yirat Elokim' - in Chumash Breishit Chapter 20 - Avraham & Avimelech

9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him: 'What hast thou done unto us? and wherein have I sinned against thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin...' 'What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?' **11** And Abraham said: 'Because I thought: **there is no FEAR OF ELOKIM in this place**; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.

Breishit chapter 42 - Yosef & his brothers
16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be bound, that your words may be proved, whether there be truth in you; or else, as Pharaoh liveth, surely ye are spies.' **17** And he put them all together into ward three days. **18** And Joseph said unto them the third day. 'This do, and live; **FOR I FEAR ELOKIM**: **19** if ye be upright men, let one of your brethren be bound in your prison-house; but go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses...

C. The commandment in Devarim

דברים פרק כה יג לא-יהיה לך בכיסך, אבן ואבן: גדולה, וקטנה. יד לא-יהיה לך בביתך, איפה ואיפה: גדולה, וקטנה. טו אבן שלמה וצדק יהיה-לך, איפה שלמה וצדק יהיה-לך--למען, יאריכו ימיה, על האדמה טז כי תועבת ה' אלהיך, כל-עשה אלה: כל, עשה עול.

יז זכור, את אשר-עשה לך עמלק, בדרך, בצאתכם ממצרים. יח אשר קרך בדרך, ויזנב בך כל-הנחשלים אחריך--ואתה, עיף ויגע; ולא ירא, אלהים. יט והיה בהניח ה' אלהיך לך מכל-איביך מסביב, בארץ...--תמחה את-זכר עמלק, מתחת השמים; לא תשכח.

D. 'Yirat Elokim' - in Chumash Breishit Chapter 20 -

ט ויקרא אבימלך לאברהם... י ויאמר אבימלך, אל-אברהם: מה ראית, כי עשית את-הדבר הזה. יא ויאמר, אברהם, כי אמרתי רק אין-יראת אלהים, במקום הזה; והרגוני, על-דבר אשתי.

Breishit chapter 42 - Yosef & his brothers
טז שלחו מכם אחד, ויקח את-אחיכם, ואתם האסרו... יז ויאסף אתם אל-משמר, שלשת ימים. יח ויאמר אלהם יוסף ביום השלישי, זאת עשו וחיו; את-האלהים, אני ירא. יט אם-בנים אתם--אחיכם אחד

E. The forsaken lad -abandoned by Amalek
I SAMUEL - Chapter 30

11 And they found an Egyptian lad in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they gave him water to drink; **12** and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins; and when he had eaten, his spirit came back to him; for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.

13 And David said unto him: 'To whom belondest thou? and whence art thou?' And he said: 'I am a young Egyptian, **servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.**

14 We made a raid upon the South ... and we burned Ziklag with fire.'

15 And David said to him: 'Wilt thou bring me down to this troop?' And he said: 'Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, **nor deliver me up into the hands of my master,** and I will bring thee down to this troop.'

F. Shaul fighting Amalek
[Haftara for Shabbat Zachor]

I SAMUEL - Chapter 15

1 And Samuel said unto Saul: 'The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over His people, over Israel; now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts: I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, **how he set himself against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt.** **3** Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; **but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'**

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, **to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.'**

32 Then said Samuel: 'Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites.' And Agag came unto him in chains. And Agag said: 'Surely the bitterness of death is at hand.' **33** And Samuel said: **As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women.** And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal..

E. David chases Amalek

שמואל א פרק ל

יא וַיִּמְצְאוּ אִישׁ-מִצְרֵי בְשֻׁדָּה, וַיִּקְחוּ אֹתוֹ
אֶל-דָּוִד; וַיִּתְּנוּ-לוֹ לֶחֶם וַיֹּאכַל, וַיִּשְׁקֶהוּ
מֵיִם.

יב וַיִּתְּנוּ-לוֹ פֶּלֶח דְּבַלָּה וּשְׁנֵי צִמְקִים, וַיֹּאכַל,
וַתֵּשֶׁב רוּחוֹ, אֵלָיו: **כִּי לֹא-אָכַל לֶחֶם, וְלֹא-
שָׁתָה מַיִם, שְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים, וּשְׁלֹשָׁה לַיְלוֹת.**
יג וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ דָּוִד לְמִי-אַתָּה, וְאֵי מֵזָה אַתָּה;
וַיֹּאמֶר **נַעַר מִצְרֵי אֲנֹכִי, עֶבֶד לְאִישׁ עַמְלִקִּי,**
וַיַּעֲזֹבֵנִי אֲדֹנָי כִּי חָלִיתִי, הַיּוֹם שְׁלֹשָׁה
טו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו דָּוִד, הֲתוֹרַדְנִי אֶל-הַגְּדוּד הַזֶּה;
וַיֹּאמֶר הַשִּׁבְעָה לִּי בְּאֵלֵהֶם אִם-תְּמִיתָנִי, וְאִם-
תִּסְגְּרֵנִי בְּיַד-אֲדֹנָי,

F. Shaul fighting Amalek

שמואל א פרק טו

א וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל, אֶל-שָׁאוּל, אֲתִי שָׁלַח ה'
לְמַשְׁחָךְ לְמִלְחָה, עַל-עַמּוֹ עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל; וְעַתָּה שְׁמַע,
לְקוֹל דְּבָרֵי ה'. **ב** כֹּה אָמַר, ה' צְבָאוֹת,
פָּקֵדֹתַי, אֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה עִמָּלֶךְ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל...
ג עַתָּה לֵךְ וְהַכִּיתָה אֶת-עַמְלִק, וְהַחֲרַמְתָּם
אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ, וְלֹא תַחֲמַל, עָלָיו; וְהִמַּתָּה
מֵאִישׁ עַד-אִשָּׁה, מֵעֵלִיל וְעַד-יוֹנֵק, מִשׁוֹר
וְעַד-שָׂה, מִגְּמֹל וְעַד-חֲמוֹר.. **כא** וַיִּקַּח הָעָם
מִהַשְּׁלָל... לְזִבְחַ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם, בְּגִלְגָּל.
לג וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל--**כַּאֲשֶׁר שִׁכְּלָה נָשִׁים
תַּרְבֵּד, כִּן-תִּשְׁכַּל מְנַשִּׁים אִמָּד;** וַיִּשְׁפֹּר
שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת-אַגָּג לְפָנָיו ה', בְּגִלְגָּל. [

