

Erasing the Memory of Amalek

Parsha Beshalach

Exodus 17:14-16

14. The Lord said to Moses, Inscribe this [as] a memorial in the book, and recite it into Joshua's ears, that I will surely obliterate the remembrance of Amalek from beneath the heavens

י.ד. וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה כְּתֹב זֹאת
זְכוֹרֹן בְּסֵפֶר וְשִׂים בְּאָזְנֵי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כִּי
מָחָה אֶמְחָה אֶת זְכוֹר עַמְלֵק מִתַּחַת
הַשָּׁמַיִם:

15. Then Moses built an altar, and he named it The Lord is my miracle

טו. וַיִּבֶן מֹשֶׁה מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ
יְהוָה | נִסִּי:

16. And he said, For there is a hand on the throne of the Eternal, [that there shall be] a war for the Lord against Amalek from generation to generation.

טז. וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי יָד עַל כִּסֵּי יְהוָה מְלַחֵמָה
לְיְהוָה בְּעַמְלֵק מִדֹּר דָּר:

Maimonides: Positive Commandment # 188a

The 188th mitzvah is that we are commanded to wipe out — from among all the descendants of *Esav* — the descendants of *Amalek*, male and female, young and old.

The source of this commandment is G-d's statement (exalted be He), "Wipe out the memory of *Amalek*."

We have mentioned previously the statement of our Sages, "The Jewish people were commanded three *mitzvos* upon entering the Land of Israel: to appoint a king, to build the *Beis HaMikdash*, and to destroy the descendants of *Amalek*."

Waging war against *Amalek* is also a *milchemes mitzvah* [obligatory war].

The details of this *mitzvah* are explained in the eighth chapter of tractate *Sotah*.

Maimonides: Positive Commandment # 189

The 189th mitzvah is that we are commanded to constantly remember what *Amalek* did to us, i.e. to be the first to attack us [after we were redeemed from Egypt]; and to speak of it constantly; to arouse people to wage war against them and hate them, in order that it not be forgotten or the hatred towards them lessened with the passage of time.

The source of this commandment is G-d's statement (exalted be He), "Remember what *Amalek* did to you. [Do not forget.]"

Maimonides: Positive Commandment # 59

The 59th prohibition is that we are forbidden from forgetting what the descendants of *Amalek* did to us, i.e. to be the first to attack us [after we were redeemed from Egypt].

In P189 we explained that remembering what the descendants of *Amalek* did to us and constantly renewing our hatred towards them is a positive commandment. Similarly, we are forbidden from ignoring it and forgetting about it, and it is an actual prohibition.

The source of this prohibition is G-d's statement, "Do not forget."

The *Sifri* says, " 'Remember,' means verbally. 'Do not forget,' means in one's heart." This means that you should not ignore hating him, nor remove it from your heart.