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The Cursed Amalek

According to the Sefer HaChinuch (603, 604, 605), there are three biblical mitzvos concerning the cursed nation of Amalek.

The first two are nearly mirror images of each other: the positive mitzvah "to remember" that Amalek attacked us first, before any other nation would have dared to do so; and the negative prohibition "to never forget" that they attacked us first, before any other nation.

The Sefer HaChinuch (603) explains that the positive mitzvah of "remembering" is not fulfilled through thought alone. Rather, "remembering" means remembering verbally. By merely thinking about the cursed Amalek, one does not fulfill this obligation. He adds that this verbal commandment may be the source for the annual reading of Parashas Zachor right before the Yom Tov of Purim.

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

As for the negative prohibition of "not forgetting," it can be fulfilled through thought. As soon as one thinks about the cursed Amalek, he has not forgotten.

The Minchas Chinuch (603:4) points out that if one never thinks about Amalek at all, he has violated both obligations. However, if one thinks about Amalek but does not verbalize it, he has fulfilled the obligation of "not forgetting," but has not fulfilled the commandment of "remembering."

THE TIMING

What exactly is the timing of "remembering" and "not forgetting"?

The Sefer HaChinuch (603) reminds us that we have a similar obligation to verbally remember the story of Mitzrayim, and that obligation is a daily one. Should we therefore assume that remembering the story of Amalek is also a daily obligation?

He explains that the reason for the daily obligation to verbalize the story of Mitzrayim is that the Exodus is the foundation of our entire faith. Therefore, it must be reinforced every day. However, the purpose of verbally remembering Amalek is to keep our hatred of Amalek alive. For that purpose, he writes that remembering it "once in a year or two or three years" should be sufficient.

The Sefer HaChinuch concludes that if one never verbalizes or even thinks about Amalek during his entire lifetime, he has violated these commandments.

We read Parashas Zachor (from this week's parashah, Ki Seitzei) once each year before Purim to fulfill this mitzvah.

LEAP YEAR

The Maharam Shik (605:2) quotes his rebbi, the Chasam Sofer, who taught that the timing of remembering is connected to the timing of forgetting. Since we know from the laws of mourning and the laws of returning a lost object that things are forgotten after twelve months, one should remember the story of Amalek at least every twelve months.

Therefore, before a leap year, the Chasam Sofer would have in mind during the Torah reading at the end of Parashas Ki Seitzei to fulfill this mitzvah, since the interval between the previous year's Parashas Zachor and the upcoming one would be thirteen months. For example, from Parashas Zachor of 5786 to Parashas Zachor of 5787 is a span of thirteen months.

ר' יואל טייטלבוים

R' Yoel Teitelbaum, (1887-26 Av 1979) was a son of the Kedushas Yom Yov and a grandson of the Yetev Lev. R' Yoel served as Rav of Orsheva and Krula before taking on the mantle of Satmar in 1934. R' Yoel survived the war by escaping with the famous Kzsner train, and went to Eretz Yisrael after the war for a short time before coming to America and building up the Satmar Chassidus. He had three daughters who pre-deceased him. Esther passed away in her youth (12 Elul 1921); Rachel shortly after she married (2 Nisan 1931) and Chaya Roisa (15 Cheshvon 1953).

OTHER THOUGHTS

Although the Maharam Shik's testimony cannot simply be dismissed, many authorities opposed making this practice public. They point out that the Chasam Sofer himself (*EH* 1:119) writes that even though there is a thirteen-month gap between readings of Parashas Zachor in a leap year, there is no need to institute an additional reading.

The reason twelve months is significant regarding memory is that during the course of twelve months a person experiences the full annual cycle of events, causing memories from the previous year to fade. In a leap year, however, it actually takes thirteen months to complete that cycle. Only after an entire yearly cycle does the normal human tendency to forget begin to take effect.

Additionally, some point out that one fulfills the prohibition of "not forgetting" through thought alone, and the Sefer HaChinuch himself writes that remembering "once in a year or two or three years" should suffice.

The *Divrei Yoel* (*OC* 1:33) raises several questions.

1. Why would Chazal institute a reading once a year when approximately every third year the interval would be thirteen months, seemingly preventing fulfillment of the obligation? Furthermore, why did they never publicly instruct people to have this mitzvah in mind during the reading of Parashas Ki Seitzei before a leap year?

2. He questions whether listening to the summer reading can fulfill the obligation. He adds that this stringency could actually lead to a leniency, because according to

those who maintain that there is a biblical obligation to read Parashas Zachor on the Shabbos before Purim, people might rely on the summer reading and fail to attend shul before Purim.

3. The comparison to the laws of lost objects is unclear, since lost objects are not automatically forgotten after twelve months. They are announced during the Shelosh Regalim, and sometimes the period from before Pesach until after Sukkos is only seven months.

4. Even the proof from the laws of mourning is questionable, because mourning concerns accepting the reality that one will no longer see the deceased. Here, however, there is an obligation to continue remembering Amalek. Since one is not trying to move on, perhaps the twelve-month concept does not apply.

5. Who says that the obligation to remember is dependent upon the twelve-month standard associated with the timeline of forgetting?

He explains that the reading of Parashas Zachor is meant to take place during the month of Adar and likely did so even before the story of Purim. He suggests that this may have been a tradition given at Sinai and transmitted through the leaders of each generation.

He concludes that the annual obligation should indeed be fulfilled immediately before Purim during the month of Adar, even in a leap year. Regarding the negative prohibition against forgetting, it remains a constant obligation. If we will be zocheh to see the destruction of the nation Amalek, and Hashem's Name and Glory returned.



On the 4th of Elul, eighty-nine years ago (1937), Yoni Halperen was born in Bardiyov. Yoni was proud to be a "Bardiyover."

Reb Shayale of Kerestir was born nearby in 1851. In 1889, the Keren L'Dovid married the daughter of R'

Yaakov Rapaport, who lived in Bardiyov. He remained there learning for five years and opened a yeshivah. Rav Moshe Halberstam, son of the Gerlitser, served as Rav until his passing in 1903 and was succeeded by his son, R' Yechiel Nosson, who passed away in 1934. He was succeeded by R' Avigdor Tzvi Halberstam Hy"d, and after the war, R' Avigdor Tzvi's brother, R' Yekusiel Yehudah, became Rav there.

After the Nazi invasion, as their regular hiding place became too dangerous, Yoni's father, together with the help of others, built a bunker in the woods. Since the Germans could not take vehicles into the mountains, it was considered a safer location. They remained underground for several months in early 1945.

When the Turka Rebbe, R' Weinberger, dressed in a Russian Army uniform, knocked on the bunker door, the people hesitated to let him in because food was scarce and space was limited. Fortunately for Yoni and his sister, they did. The Rebbe taught them Torah, sang with them, and lifted everyone's spirits. They were liberated by the Russians at the end of March 1945, about two weeks before Pesach.

When they returned to Bardiyov, they were in for a shock. Non-Jews were living in their home. The Chief of Police, Bumba, who had been a family friend, came to the house with a gun and ordered the occupants to leave by the following morning—and they did.

Pesach that year was unusual. There was no shochet, so there was no meat or chicken. Fortunately, the bakery had not been bombed, enabling the community to bake matzah in the communal oven. Their food consisted mainly of potatoes, eggs, and milk. R' Yekusiel Yehudah, together with the Bobover Rebbe, ruled that milk could be used for the Four Cups at that first Seder in 1945.

In 1949, Communism came to Czechoslovakia. The authorities permitted peasants to move into Jewish homes, telling the Jewish families, "You have three rooms, and you only need one." When the smell of pork cooking filled the kitchen, they decided to leave, joining many other Jews who emigrated to America.

The police chief was rewarded for his help, and the family sent him ten dollars every month.

Yoni attended Torah Vodaas and learned and remained lifelong friends with Rav Yeruchem Kaplan (R' Zvi's father).

Yoni frequently spoke about his wartime experiences. Although he never married, he was beloved by the younger generation who came to know him, many through those public speeches about his experiences. He was a member of Young Israel Beth El of Boro Park for over fifty years.

He passed away on 3 Av.