

THE HALACHAH SHEET

Compiled by Aryeh Leib Shapiro

Parshas Zachor

Introduction

- After Klal Yisrael's wondrous exit from Mitzrayim, the nations of the world became afraid to start up with them. The nation of Amalek, however, was unimpressed, and didn't take any of the miraculous events to heart. They plunged in to attack Klal Yisrael, which shattered the impression of invincibility and introduced the option to the other nations to do the same. To remember this incident, we have a mitzvah called "*zechiras Amalek*."¹ Remembering what Amalek did is meant to drive us to rid the world and ourselves of the evil that Amalek personifies: the chutzpah to combat Hashem and the Jewish Nation.

Remembering Amalek

The Mitzvah

- **Obligation.** There is a *mitzvah d'Oraisa* to remember what Amalek did to Klal Yisrael, as the *pasuk* says, "*Zachor eis ashar asah lecha Amalek...*"² Chazal interpret "remembering" as reading aloud from a sefer Torah.³ Practically speaking, the *baal korei* reads it, and the *tzibbur* has in mind to be *yotzei* with his reading.
- **Women.** Many *poskim* hold that women are exempt from the mitzvah of *zechiras Amalek*.⁴ Nevertheless, women do make an effort to fulfill this mitzvah.⁵ If a woman can't make it to shul, she should read the *pesukim* at home from a Chumash.
- **When.** Chazal instituted that we fulfill this mitzvah of remembering Amalek once a year, as a year is the amount of time it takes to forget something.⁶ We fulfill this mitzvah specifically the week preceding Purim because Purim is the holiday when we celebrate our miraculous survival from the decree of Haman, who was a descendent of Amalek. Performing the mitzvos of Purim is the way we actively eradicate what Amalek stood for; remembering what they did to us when we left Mitzrayim is a preface to that.⁷

Kavanah

- The complete way to perform the mitzvah is with the following intentions:
 1. **To fulfill the mitzvah.** You're *yotzei* the obligation to read the passage in the Torah and thereby remember Amalek through the halachic mechanism of *shomei'a K'oneh*. This necessitates the *baal korei* to have in mind to exempt the listener, and the listener to intend to be *yotzei* with the *baal korei's* reading.⁸ You should **not** read along with the *baal korei*.⁹
 - **Berachos.** Some also intend for the berachos of the one who receives that *aliyah* to the Torah to serve as the *birchos hamitzvah* of *zechiras mechias Amalek*. They therefore have in mind to be *yotzei* with his berachos.¹⁰

2. **Meaning of the words.** Ideally, you should understand the words of the *pesukim* of *Parshas Zachor*. If a word or phrase has multiple explanations, any one of them is acceptable. *B'dieved*, if you only understood the general idea, you are *yotzei*.¹¹
3. **Hatred for Amalek.** One should try to muster up feelings of hatred toward Amalek while fulfilling this mitzvah.¹²

Explanation (כי תצא: פרק כה)

יז. זכור, את אשר עשה לך עמלק בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים.
Remember what Amalek did to you on the way when you were leaving Mitzrayim.

יח. אשר קרך בדרך ויזנב בך כל הנחשלים אחריו ואתה עיף ויגע ולא ירא אלהים.

That he happened upon you on the way, and he struck those of you who were lagging behind, when you were faint and exhausted; and he didn't fear Hashem.

יט. והיה בהניח יהוה אלהיך לך מכל איביך מסביב בארץ אשר ה' אלהיך נתן לך נחלה לרשתה תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים לא תשכח.

It should be, when Hashem, your G-d, gives you rest from all of your enemies all around, in the land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you as an inheritance to possess it, wipe out the memory of Amalek from under the Heavens, don't forget.

Pronunciation

- **Precision.** Since most *poskim* hold that *Parshas Zachor* is a *mitzvah d'Oraisa*, it must be read carefully and with the correct pronunciation.
- **Nusach.** Ideally, Ashkenazim and Sefardim should hear the reading in their respective *nusach*, as there are slight differences between them.¹³
- **זכור.** There are two differing opinions regarding the pronunciation of the word "זכור" — some say it should be pronounced "*zaicher*" while others opine that it is "*zecher*." Therefore, the *baal korei* customarily reads it both ways.¹⁴

Missed it

- **Words.** If you missed a few words but you heard the general idea (and didn't miss key words such as "זכור" or "תמחה"), you're still *yotzei*.¹⁵
- **Reading.** If you didn't hear *Parshas Zachor* with the *tzibbur*, you should read it on your own from a Chumash (preferably with the *trop*).¹⁶ Additionally, you should have in mind to be *yotzei* your obligation while hearing the *Krias haTorah* on Purim ("*V'yavo Amalek*").¹⁷ You can also have in mind to be *yotzei* when *Parshas Ki Seitzei* is read on Shabbos later in the year.

1. עיין ספר החינוך תרג' 2. שו"ע תרפה (ז): 3. מילגה (יח). 4. ספר החינוך תרג' 5. הובא בהליכות בת ישראל בשם גר"מ פיינשטיין 6. עיין ב"מ (כה): פסחים (נד): 7. מ"ב (תרפה: סק"א) 8. עיין מ"ב (תרפה: סק"ד) 9. בשם גר"י ברקוביץ 10. עיין הגהות חת"ס לס' תרפה 11. גר"ק ע"פ מ"ב (קצא: סק"ה) 12. רמב"ם (ספר המצוות קפט) 13. הליכות שלמה (יח:א) 14. מ"ב (תרפה: סק"יח) 15. הליכות שלמה (יח:ב) 16. רמ"א (תרפה: ז): 17. מ"ב (תרפה: סק"טז)