



# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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Each year on *Shabbat Zachor*, we read of the biblical mandate to remember how the tribe of *Amalek* attacked the Jewish People as we departed from Egypt, and the obligation to wipe out any semblance of the evil that *Amalek* represents.

One Purim, the ***Bnai Yissascher, Reb Zvi Elimelech of Dinov, zy'a***, stood up at his *seudah* and announced- *Rabosai*- lets go to our horses and carriages and blot out *Amalek!* The *Chasidim* were shocked- had the Rebbe become so intoxicated that he intended to commit an act of violence?

So the Rebbe and his *chasidim*, boarded their carriages, and rode to the next town, where they arrived at a local tavern full of Polish peasants, who like *Amalek* of ancient times, certainly had no great love for the Jewish People. As the Rebbe and the *chasidim* entered the tavern, the music suddenly ceased, and all eyes turned toward the Rebbe. The room was suddenly silent.

The Rebbe extended his hand to one of the peasants, who slowly, reluctantly took the Rebbe's hand, and together they slowly began to dance. The musicians began to play once again, and within minutes all those assembled, *chasidim* and peasants alike had joined hands to dance with one another.

What can this story come to teach us about the *mitzvah* to destroy *Amalek*? How do we understand this story of building unity, of breaking down stereotypes as somehow being representative of the *mitzvah* of blotting out *Amalek* from the world.

***Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, the Kedushat Levi, zy'a***, explains based on the teaching from the *Zohar*, that each and every human being is an *Olam Katan* microcosmic world. Whatever exists in the physical world, explains the Rebbe, also exists metaphysically within the inner microcosmic world of each of us as human beings. If there is a *metziut* of *Amalek*, of evil which we must work to wipe out in the physical world, so too we must strive to overcome the *yetzer hara*- the proverbial *metziut* of *Amalek* which exists within each one of us.

This idea can be further understood by taking a closer look at the *pesukim*:

*“Zachor-Remember what Amalek did unto you, as you were en route of departure from Egypt. Asher Karcha BaDerech-How they came upon you on your way, and struck the back of your encampment, all that were enfeebled in the rear of the camp, when you were faint and weary; they did not fear G-d. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord your G-d has given you rest from all your enemies, in the land which the Lord your G-d has given you as an inheritance to possess it, that thou shall blot out all remembrance of Amalek from under heaven, lo tishkach- you shall not forget...”*

**Rashi**, citing the *Midrash Tanchuma* offers an interesting insight regarding the words *Asher Karcha BaDerech-How they came upon you on your way*.

*Asher Karcha BaDerech, this is connected in meaning with the phrase קור וחום “cold and heat” and it means: he made you cold and luke-warm after the boiling heat you had before. For*

all the nations were afraid to war against you and this one came and began to point out the way to others. A parable! It may be compared to a boiling hot bath into which no living creature could descend. A good-for-nothing came, and sprang down into it; although he scalded himself he made it appear cold to others...

Rashi suggests that *Amalek* somehow represents the Jewish People, being cooled off, becoming vulnerable once again to our enemies, and the powers of evil.

The **Piasieczna Rebbe, the Aish Kodesh zy'a**, offers an interesting explanation of this *midrash* cited by Rashi. The Jewish People, having just witnessed the miracles of the ten plagues and incredible redemption from Egyptian servitude, were literally on fire with a burning faith and trust in *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. *Amalek* comes and cools us in our *derech*, they cool off our religious passion, they represent foreign ideas which come to knock *Klal Yisrael* off of our proper *derech*, they cause us to be cooled off, in terms of our commitment and passion in *Avodat Hashem* making us to be susceptible and in danger not only spiritually, but physically.

The great Chasidic Master, the **Maor VeShemesh, zy'a** offers a beautiful insight to explain this idea of *Amalek* cooling off the



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Jewish People and becoming vulnerable.

*Amalek cooled the Jewish People, they caused the Jewish People to be cold toward one another; they cooled off their burning good hearted kindness for one another.*

What was it that *Amalek* caused that made us vulnerable and susceptible to harm? A lack of warmth, empathy, and love for one another.

During these days of *Adar* and especially on the sacred day of *Purim*, we are reminded of the sacred task of breaking down barriers, of coming together as one, of repairing relationships, and bringing *simcha* and *achdut* to the world.

As we prepare ourselves for *Shabbat Zachor*, let us work to internalize this powerful short teaching from the *Maor VeShemesh, zy'a* and may we recognize the power and protection that *achdut*- unity- provides for *Klal Yisrael*. ■

Now that Purim is near one thing is clear,  
the poor and needy won't fear, to help them we are here...



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