

Maftir to Maftir

[maftir] ¹⁴“Adonai said to Moses, ‘Write this for a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in the hearing of Joshua, for I will utterly blot out the memory of the Amalekites from under heaven.’ ¹⁵Then Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Adonai-Nissi [Adonai is my miracle, standard or banner]. ¹⁶Then he said, ‘By the hand upon the throne of Adonai, Adonai will have war with Amalek from generation to generation’ (Ex. 17:14-16) {Parashat Beshalach maftir}

[maftir] ¹⁷“Remember what Amalek did to you along the way as you came out from Egypt—¹⁸how he happened upon you along the way and attacked those among you in the rear, all the stragglers behind you, when you were tired and weary—he did not fear God. ¹⁹Now when Adonai your God grants you rest from all the enemies surrounding you in the land Adonai your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, you are to blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heavens. Do not forget!” (Deut. 25:17-19) {Parashat Ki Tetze maftir}

Traditionally, a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is required to read, as a minimum, the *maftir portion* of the appropriate *Torah Reading* for the *Shabbat* of their celebration of becoming a *Son/Daughter of the Commandments*. The *maftir* is the *last word* of that particular *Parshah*. *Adonai's* last word to us in today's reading is to remember that He is in total opposition (a war) to *Amalek* and to all that *Amalek* stands for. A recurring last word is that *Adonai* will eradicate *Amalek* but also wants *us* to completely eradicate (blot out) the memory of *Amalek* from our lives. With a similar *maftir* in the middle of Exodus and near the end of Deuteronomy, there should be no doubt left in our minds that we are to have ZERO involvement with *Amalek* in our lives, no, not even a memory.

We have just experienced a two-year period of great fear and with it an accompanying questioning of whether or not *Adonai* is with us. *Adonai* has indeed provided the ultimate victory in *Messiah Yeshua* over notions of abandonment and chance (happenstance): “*And remember! {lo, Hinei}, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*” (Matt. 28:20). Therefore, there should be no doubts about His Presence in our lives – He is always with us! If we forget then we doubt and we then verbalize that doubt.

Amalek is a descendant of Esau and represents **falsehood** (see Breslov.org) and **happenstance** (“*how he [Amalek] happened (karcha) upon you...*”). *Amalek* is the false notion that everything that happens to us is happenstance or chance. We are to uproot complacency and doubt from our lives, and especially apathy (e.g., *Adonai* is not attentive with the details of our daily lives). In Jewish writings: “*The inner Amalek is unholy cynicism. That little voice inside each of us that derides, belittles and attacks truth and goodness; our irrational tendency to mock people who act morally, to be cynical when we see altruism, to doubt our own or other's sincerity - these are the modern day Amalekites. They wage a lethal war with our soul. If we let it, cynicism can kill our every attempt to improve ourselves and smother any move towards refining our character and expressing our soul.*” We are prone to flirting with ideas, philosophies, worldly concerns, and our own free will: *We know what to do*, we say; *I have it all under control*, or even such things as *I do not give the Lord what He wants, but what I think He should get (or deserve)*. We flirt with *Amalek*, so his memory is not eradicated. We compromise and disobey. Why is that? Maybe it is because *Amalek* is pleasant to our senses. We believe we are an enlightened society, we have greater education, we have better ideas, **I** cannot learn from *your* experience, **I** must experience it myself, and **I** will succeed where you failed. All this can ultimately lead to the complete rejection of His instructions with the ultimate consequence that we (ourselves) become rejected.

Let us in *Kol Simcha* strive to remove (blot out) completely the false notions of happenstance and chance instead these things being the consequences of disobedience. Eradicate all notions of **complacency, doubt, compromise, apathy**, and having an **alternative and better** idea than what He has already said to us. I know we can overcome “*by the Blood of the Lamb, the words of our testimony (about that Blood), and loving our own lives (loving our own way) unto the death*” (Rev. 12:11). This is the better way. *Shabbat Shalom!*