

## Remembering Amalek

### Saturday, February 28, 2026

**I. Introduction** to what it means to remember what Amalek did, not to forget, and to blot out the remembrance of Amalek. Highlight the contradiction between blotting out the memory of Amalek and remembering Amalek. Let's look at other mitzvot of remembering in the Torah.

### II. What are we commanded to remember?

1. **Remember** what Amalek did to you on the way when you came out of Egypt, how he fell upon you on the way and cut down all the stragglers, with you famished and exhausted, and he did not fear God. And it shall be, when the Lord your God grants you respite from all your enemies around in the land that the Lord your God is about to give you in estate to take hold of it, **you shall wipe out the remembrance** of Amalek from under the heavens, **do not forget**. (Deuteronomy 25:17-19)
2. You shall not fear them (Canaanite nations). You shall surely **remember** what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh, and to all Egypt, the great trials that your own eyes saw, the signs and the portents and the strong hand and the outstretched arm with which the Lord your God brought you out. So will the Lord your God do to all the peoples whom you fear. (Deuteronomy 7:17-18)
3. **Remember** this day on which you went out of Egypt, from the house of slaves, for the strength of hand the Lord brought you out from here, and hametz shall not be eaten (Exodus 13:3)
4. Seven days you shall eat matzah, the bread of affliction (poverty), for in haste you did go out from the land of Egypt; **so that you will remember the day of your going out of Egypt** all the days of your life. (Deuteronomy 16:3)
5. **Remember** the Sabbath day to keep it holy. (Exodus 20:8)
6. **You shall remember** that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought you out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore did the Lord charge you to make the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:15)
7. You shall not skew the case of a stranger or an orphan, and you shall not take as pawn a widow's garment. **And you shall remember** that you were a slave in Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. There do I command you to this thing. (Deuteronomy 24:17-18; see also Deuteronomy 15:15 and 24:22)
8. **Remember** what the Lord your God did to Miriam on the way when you came out of Egypt (Deuteronomy 24:9)
9. **You shall remember** all the way on which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to afflict you, to test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. (Deuteronomy 8:2)
10. **You will remember** the Lord your God, for He it is Who gives you power to make wealth, in order to fulfill the covenant that He swore to your fathers as on this day. (Deuteronomy 8:18)
11. **Remember**, do not forget, that you infuriated the Lord your God in the wilderness from the very day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord. (Deuteronomy 9:7)

### III. We remember in order not to be tempted to transgress.

- a) Temptation not to do what is commanded:
- b) Not to fear Canaanites

- c) Not to Remember Egypt, especially our afflictions
- d) Not to Observe Shabbat-because it is demanding, there are many rules.
- e) Not to remember being a slave: slavery is a humiliation in addition to causing great suffering.
- f) Not to remember what Miriam did: we like to think of our leaders as blameless, not susceptible to losing discipline or being controlled by their feelings of jealousy.
- g) Not to remember the 40 years in the wilderness: Not our best moments: Golden Calf, the numerous rebellions, being ungrateful, not trusting God
- h) We don't like to see ourselves as being rebellious, unfaithful, or ungrateful.

II. By not remembering we become vulnerable to doing to others what was done to us. We eat Matzah and avoid hametz to remember how terrible it was to be a slave. The moral upshot of this remembering is not to be cruel to the slaves we may own.

III. We remember Miriam because if a leader can succumb to the temptation of slander all the more so we may succumb to such a temptation.

IV. It is so easy to succumb to the temptation of being the total master of our destiny. God has nothing to do with our success for we see the world only through our eyes instead of God's eyes.

V. That is why Shabbat is so important. Shabbat is about God creating the world which is a spiritual and ethical act. Think about the 168 hours you spent this week as a pie chart. A certain percentage of your time would go to working, to sleeping and eating, to family, to recreation and exercise and a relatively small percentage would be devoted to God. Maybe 3 to 10 percent of our time is devoted to God. But when we affirm that God created the world, then we are asked to see the 168 hours of the week through God's perspective. Our pie chart is all about us with a relatively small percentage of time devoted to God. God's pie chart is about the whole world with a very small percentage of time devoted to any one of us. Shabbat is about giving us that perspective of what our place should be in the world.

VI. With this in mind, let's look at the mitzvah of remembering Amalek. What is the temptation in forgetting Amalek? Why are we asked to remember Amalek as we are asked to remember the Exodus, slavery, Shabbat, or God? One temptation could be to forget that we have enemies in the world who want to destroy us and the values we have upheld over the centuries. But the other temptation is to forget that we all have the potential to be Amalek. No one is immune from becoming Amalek. Under the right circumstances and pressures, I believe we all might do terrible things.

So we are commanded to wipe out the Amalek from our souls, just as we are told not to forget that Amalek lurks in the world, ready to wipe out the innocent and our own people. We have to do both: blot out and remember. Blot out Amalek from our souls and remember what Amalek did to us.

Of course, they are related. Because Amalek attacked us, many of us infused our souls with the spirit of Amalek. We chose not to pay attention to those who want to make peace with us; instead, we focused only on those who want to destroy us. How difficult it is to be a holy people!! Remember and then blot out. It is living on a knife's edge; so easy to fall off; so easy for revenge to overcome us. Being a holy people is to do both: remember and blot out.