



**PhiloTorah D'var Torah**

## **ZACHOR - Ponder this!**

This Shabbat is Parshat Zachor. Many of the details of Zachor are reviewed in the CALnotes.

But a very important element of our fulfillment of the mitzva of Zachor is presented here. Details are important, but here might be the heart of the mitzva.

I first saw this in the sefer ADAR UFURIM by Rav Yoel Schwartz z"l

He quotes the Sefer Chareidim, written by Rabbi Elazar ben Moshe Azikri (1533–1600), a kabbalist, poet (he wrote YEDID NEFESH and the idea for BILVAVI), and writer.

He writes that an important feature of ZACHOR is to ponder what we did - or didn't do - to make us vulnerable to attack by Amalek.

Yes, we must remember and never forget what Amalek did, but we also must realize and contemplate why we were able to be attacked.

He continues by focusing on the name of the place we had camped at, and its hidden meaning.

REFIDIM is not just a location; it is

also a description of the low level of our commitment to G-d. Refidim, in this sense, says RAFU Y'DEIHEM, our hands - read, our commitment - was weak.

Allow me to add to the above...

There are two parshiyot in the Torah about Amalek:

The last nine p'sukim of Parshat B'shalach (Sh'mot 17:8-16) - which make up the Torah reading of Purim morning, and this year, the Maftir of Shabbat-Purim in Yerushalayim;

And the last three p'sukim of Parshat Ki Teitzei (D'varim 25:17-19), which are the reading of the Maftir for Shabbat Zachor.

Now let's look at the p'sukim that precede each of the Amalek portions.

In B'shalach, from the beginning of perek 17, the Torah tells us that we traveled and arrived at Refidim, and there was no water to drink. The people argued with Moshe and demanded water to drink. Understandable, so far. Then they added "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill me and my children and my animals by thirst. Bad and getting worse. After they miraculously were given water, the Torah tells us that the place (Refidim) was called MASA UM'RIVA because of the people's challenge to G-d, saying: Is G-d in our midst or not. Very bad. The people had witnessed G-d's miracles in

Egypt and at the Sea - where the Torah proclaims that the people believed in G-d and in Moshe His servant... but apparently, that belief and faith was very weak.

And what are the very next words in the Torah?

VAYAVO AMALEK... and Amalek came and fought with Israel in Refidim.

Now let's look at the portion that precedes ZACHOR in Ki Teitzei -

To keep it short, the Torah is prohibiting even the possession of false weights and measures and finishes that portion with the statement that cheating in business is an abomination to G-d.

Next words - ZACHOR EIT ASHER ASA L'CHA AMALEK...

Taken together, we find both defects of BEIN ADAM LAMAKOM and BEIN ADAM LACHAVEIRO - failings between us and G-d and us and our fellows. That makes us vulnerable to Amalek and its ilk. And that is what we should ponder the Shabbat - and always.

And do something about it! **PTDT**