



# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR  
DIRECTOR, TORAH INITIATIVES,  
OU ISRAEL

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.

**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.

Similarly, the **Netivot Shalom, the Slonimer Rebbe zy'a**, explained that *Amalek* represents not solely those who seek to harm us, but rather a personification of all that is evil in existence. Our role in obliterating *Amalek*, is not simply the removal of an existential threat, but also to replace that evil with ultimate goodness.

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...”*

**Rav Yehuda Amital zt'l**, the beloved and revered *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshivat Har Etzion* offered an interesting interpretation of this idea that *Amalek* “*karkha baderekh*”-happened upon the people of Israel. This, explained *Rav Amital*, implies that the attack was random. Whoever *Amalek* ran into, it attacked. According to *Rav Amital*, Jews can fulfill the *mitzva* to blot out *Amalek* by living lives filled with purpose, with goals, direction, and values.

**Rashi**, citing the *Midrash Tanchuma* offers a different and 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 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 to happen, which made us vulnerable and susceptible to harm? A lack of warmth, empathy, and love for one another.

During these incredible days leading up to *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 each of these important teachings and may we merit to be the conduit to bring warmth, goodness and hope to the entire world. *Purim Sameach!* ■

רפואה שלמה

Peleg Shabtai ben Chaviva Leah



This Purim,  
no one should **feel forgotten.**

Delivering mishloach manot  
for gerim across Israel

**JOIN US!**

[www.OhevGer.org/Donate](http://www.OhevGer.org/Donate)

Ohev Ger  
אהב גר  
Caring For Converts  
עוברים לגויים

