

“והיה בהניח ה' אלקיך לך מכל אויבך”

Amalek Exhausts Us with a Nonstop Battle against the Yetzer The Solution Is to Find Respite in Torah Study and Shabbas Observance

Next Shabbas, which approaches auspiciously, is referred to as Shabbas Zachor. This appellation reflects the fact that our blessed sages instituted the reading of the passage in parshas Ki Seitzei (Devarim 25, 17) containing the command to always remember the heinous actions of Amalek, on the Shabbas immediately preceding Purim: “זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק”-- **“Remember what Amalek did to you!”**

The Gemara (Megillah 30a) explains that by connecting this mitzvah with the Shabbas preceding Purim, we fulfill that which is written in the Megillah (Esther 9, 28): “והימים—**and these days should be remembered and celebrated.** “Remembered” alludes to the mitzvah of “zechiras (remembering) Amalek”; **“and celebrated”** alludes to the festival of Purim. For, on Purim we celebrate the miraculous extermination of Haman, who was a descendant of Amalek. Let us review the pesukim pertinent to the mitzvah of “zechiras Amalek” (Devarim 25, 17):

“זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים, אשר קרך בדרך ויזנב בך כל הנחשלים אחריך ואתה עיף ויגע ולא ירא אלקים, והיה בהניח ה' אלקיך לך מכל אויבך מסביב בארץ אשר ה' אלקיך נתן לך נחלה לרשתה, תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים לא תשכח.”

Remember what Amalek did to you while you were departing from Egypt, how he happened upon you on the way, and he attacked at your rear, all the weaklings that straggled behind — while you were tired and exhausted; and he did not fear G-d. It shall be that when Hashem, your G-d, allows you to rest from all of your enemies that surround you, in the land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you as an inheritance, you shall eradicate the memory of Amalek from beneath the heaven — you shall not forget!

We must endeavor to understand the practical significance of this mitzvah to each and every one of us. After all, in this day and age, the identity of Amalek is unknown to us. Furthermore, even if we could identify Amalek, it is not within our power to combat them, seeing as we are mired in galut. As the Torah teaches us: **“It shall be that when Hashem, your G-d, allows you to rest from all of your enemies that surround you . . . you shall eradicate the memory of Amalek from beneath the heaven.”** That being the case, what lesson can we learn regarding the service of Hashem from remembering Amalek during our times of exile? Additionally, it is worthwhile examining why Chazal instituted the Torah reading concerning the mitzvah of wiping out (“mechias”) Amalek specifically on Shabbas.

Amalek Exhausts Yisrae with Its Constant Skirmishes

We will begin to shed some light on the matter with a precious introduction from the immaculate teachings of the Sefas Emes (Purim 5646). He examines and attempts to reconcile a curiosity regarding the festival of Purim. Mordechai, with the approval of the other sages of the Sanhedrin in that generation, decided that Purim should be celebrated in the unwalled cities on the fourteenth of Adar and in the cities surrounded by walls on the fifteenth of Adar—in other words, on days when they already rested from battling their enemies, the descendants of Amalek, as it is written (Esther 9, 20):

“ויכתוב מרדכי את הדברים האלה וישלח ספרים אל כל היהודים אשר בכל מדינות המלך אחשוורוש הקרובים והרחוקים, לקיים עליהם להיות עשים את יום

ארבעה עשר לחדש אדר ואת יום חמשה עשר בו בכל שנה ושנה, כימים אשר נחו בהם היהודים מאויביהם והחודש אשר נהפך להם מגיון לשמחה ומאבל ליום טוב, לעשות אותם ימי משתה ושמחה ומשלוח מנות איש לרעהו ומתנות לאביונים”.

Mordechai recorded these events and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Achashveirosh, the near ones and the distant ones, to accept upon themselves the annual observance of the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and its fifteenth day, as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and the month which had been turned about for them from one of sorrow to gladness, and from mourning to festival; to observe them as days of feasting and gladness, and sending delicacies to one another, and gifts to the poor.

At first glance, this is extremely baffling. What prompted them to establish the festival of Purim on these two days—when they had already rested from the battle and on which no miraculous events transpired? Why didn't they set the festival on the two days on which the Jews waged their historic battle against their enemies—the unwalled cities on the thirteenth of Adar and the walled cities on the fourteenth? For, it was on those days that HKB”H miraculously orchestrated Yisrael’s military victory over their enemies, the descendants of Amalek.

As a loyal servant in the presence of the master, I would like to elaborate delightfully on the incredible explanation of the Sefas Emet. He teaches us a valuable and wonderful fundamental principle that is relevant to every generation, but is especially relevant to our generation—those living in the “footsteps of the Mashiach.” He helps us better understand the battle tactics employed by Amalek, who is none other than the yetzer hara.

We will begin by presenting the comments of the Alshich hakadosh in parshas Beshalach (Shemos 17, 8). He explains that the ministering angel of Amalek is the “samech-mem”—the yetzer hara. This fact is expressed by the Gemara as follows (B.B. 16a): “הוא שטן, הוא יצר הרע, הוא מלאך המות” -- **he is the “satan”; he is the yetzer hara; he is the “malach hamaves.”** It is known that HKB”H does not fell a nation below before he fells its ministering angel above. Hence, it was first necessary to bring about the downfall of the yetzer hara above, in order to pave the way for the defeat of Amalek down below.

However, every time Yisrael is persuaded by the yetzer hara to transgress, the yetzer hara—Amalek’s ministering angel—gains momentum and strength. Therefore, it is difficult

to subdue Amalek down below, seeing as its ministering angel above gains strength from Yisrael’s transgressions and wrongdoings. Thus, the matter is solely dependent upon “teshuvah sheleimah”—sincere and complete repentance. We must overcome the yetzer hara, so that HKB”H will arrange for the downfall of Amalek’s ministering angel in the heavens. Then, He will eliminate all memory of Amalek down on earth.

We find support for the Alshich’s notion in the Megaleh Amukos on Vaeschanan (42). He addresses the pesukim related to the battle with Amalek shortly after the exodus from Mitzrayim (Shemos 17, 9): “ויאמר משה אל יהושע בחר לנו --אנשים וצא הלחם בעמלק, מחר אנכי נצב על ראש הגבעה ומטה האלקים בידך” **Moshe said to Yehoshua, “Choose men for us, and go out to do battle with Amalek; tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of G-d in my hand.”** Moshe Rabeinu assigned Yehoshua and his army to engage Amalek in battle down below. Meanwhile, Moshe himself climbed to the top of the hill in order to battle the ministering angel of Amalek—the “samech-mem” – up above.

This then is the interpretation of the pesukim (ibid. 10): “וייעש --יהושע כאשר אמר לו משה להילחם בעמלק” **Joshua did as Moshe said to him, to do battle with Amalek – down below;** “ומשה אהרן -- וחור עלו ראש הגבעה” **and Moshe Aharon and Chur ascended to the top of the hill – to battle the ministering angel of Amalek above;** “וזהיה כאשר ירים משה ידו” -- **it happened that when Moshe would raise his hand – to defeat the ministering angel of Amalek above;** “וגבר ישראל” -- **Yisrael prevailed – over Amalek down below;** “וכאשר יניח ידו” -- **and when he lowered his hand – indicating that he was incapable of defeating Amalek up above;** “וגבר עמלק” -- **Amalek prevailed –down below.**

The Yetzer HaRa’s Goal Is to Exhaust Us with Skirmishes

Now, let us examine how the physical, military tactics employed by Amalek against Yisrael down below, parallel amazingly the tactics employed by its ministering angel—the yetzer hara—in its spiritual battle against Yisrael. Let us refer to what we have learned in the Gemara (Succah 52a):

“אמר רבי יצחק, יצרו של אדם מתגבר עליו בכל יום, שנאמר (בראשית ו-ה) רק רע כל היום. אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש, יצרו של אדם מתגבר עליו בכל יום ומבקש להמיתו, שנאמר (תהלים לז-לב) צופה רשע לצדיק ומבקש להמיתו, ואלמלא הקב”ה שעוזר לו אינו יכול לו, שנאמר (שם לג) ה’ לא יעזבנו בידו ולא ירשיענו בהשפטו”

Rabbi Yitzchak said: A man's yetzer overwhelms him every day, as it says: "Only evil the entire day." Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: A man's yetzer overwhelms him every day and seeks to kill him, as it says: "The wicked one watches for the tzaddik and seeks to slay him." And if not for HKB"H, Who aids him, he would be unable to withstand it, as it says: "Hashem will not forsake him to his hand, nor let him be condemned when he is judged."

Let us explain based on a fundamental principle employed in military strategy. The rest periods of soldiers engaged in war is inseparable from the war itself. For, even great heroes who fight like brave, mighty lions require periodic rest periods to replenish and renew their energies and capacity to fight on. This is how HKB"H created man; he requires rest periods to refresh his strengths. Without rest, it is impossible that he will not become fatigued and will not fall in the course of the battle.

With this understanding, we can comprehend the military tactics employed by the yetzer hara, who overwhelms us on a daily basis with new battles and challenges. In the words of Rabbi Yitzchak: **"A man's yetzer overwhelms him every day."** Or else according to the version that appears elsewhere in the Gemara (Kiddushin 30b): **"A man's yetzer renews its efforts against him every day."** For, even if it sees that it failed to bring a man down the first or second time, it is relentless; it continues to assail him daily with new ploys. For, it knows that if it continues to attack a person without pausing, eventually the person will grow exhausted and will fall into its trap; after all, the person is only human.

This begs the following question. Our blessed sages attest to the fact that this is the nature of the yetzer hara. It assaults a person and renews its battle plans on a daily basis, in order to exhaust the person to the point that he can no longer continue to resist. As a result, the person ultimately succumbs and falls prey to the yetzer. So, what is a person to do, seeing as he cannot continue to battle the yetzer on a nonstop basis?

If You Encounter This Degenerate Drag Him into the Beis Midrash

It appears to me that Chazal themselves provide us with an explicit answer to this bothersome question. After presenting the statements of Rabbi Yitzchak and Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, they present the following statement:

"תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל, אם פגע בך מנוול זה משכחו לבית המדרש, אם אבן הוא נימוח, אם ברזל הוא מתפוצץ, אם אבן הוא נימוח, דכתיב (ישעיה נה-א) הוי כל צמא לכו למים, וכתיב (איוב יד-ט) אבנים שחקו מים, אם ברזל הוא מתפוצץ, דכתיב (ירמיה כג-כט) הלא כה דברי כאש נאום ה' וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע."

A Baraisa of the Academy of Rabbi Yishmael taught the following: If this despicable character engages you, draw him into the Beis Midrash; if he is like a stone, he will dissolve; if he is like iron, he will shatter. If he is a stone, he will dissolve, as it is written: "Ho! All who are thirsty, get you to water." And it is written: "Water wears down stones." If he is iron, he will shatter, as it is written: "Are not my words like fire, says Hashem, and like a hammer that shatters a rock?!"

If we reflect on this passage, we find that the Academy of Rabbi Yishmael is providing us with sound advice. It is not only teaching us how to defeat the yetzer hara, but also how to find some relief and sanctuary from the incessant war with the yetzer. There, a person can replenish his forces and engage the yetzer hara anew—even when he has to leave the Beis Midrash in order to earn a livelihood. We can understand this based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Kiddushin 30b):

"תנו רבנן (דברים יא-יח) ושמתם [את דברי אלה על לבבכם] - סם תם [רפואה שלמה], נמשלה תורה כסם חיים. משל לאדם שהכה את בנו מכה גדולה, והניח לו רטיה על מכתו, ואמר לו, בני כל זמן שהרטיה זו על מכתך, אכול מה שהנאתך, ושתה מה שהנאתך, ורחוץ בין בחמין בין בצונן, ואין אתה מתיירא, ואם אתה מעבירה הרי היא מעלה נומי [מוגלה]. כך הקב"ה אמר להם לישראל, בני בראתי יצר הרע ובראתי לו תורה תבלין, ואם אתם עוסקים בתורה אין אתם נמסרים בידו."

The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: "V'samtem"—Torah is compared to a life-giving elixir. An analogy can be drawn to a man that dealt his son a great blow and then placed a compress upon his wound, saying to him, "My son, so long as this compress remains upon your wound, you may eat what you desire, drink what you desire, and bathe in either hot or cold water and you need not fear (the consequences). But if you remove it, your wound will surely give rise to boils." Thus has HKB"H said to Yisrael, "My son, I have created the yetzer hara, and I have created Torah as its antidote. If you engage in Torah-study, you will not be delivered into its hand."

With this Baraisa, our blessed sages teach us that so long as a person engages in Torah-study—the antidote to the yetzer hara—he is compared to a person who has a bandage with a salve wrapped over his wound—and need not be concerned

about the yetzer hara. If this is the case for any person engaging in Torah-study, then it applies all the more so when this person enters the Beis Midrash. For, the Beis Midrash is a holy place, where many people engage in Torah-study. In the merit of its kedushah, combined with the Torah-study taking place there, a person is assured that he will not only be spared from the yetzer hara but he will find a respite from the battle itself. For, the yetzer hara has no jurisdiction or power in the Beis Midrash. This respite will enable a person to draw fresh powers and energies, so that he will be prepared to resume his battle against the yetzer hara like a hero, when he returns to his everyday activities.

This in fact is the lesson taught by the Academy of Rabbi Yishmael: “אם פגע בך מנוול זה”—the yetzer hara is referred to as a revolting, despicable character, because it harasses a Jew relentlessly. Even if it sees that a person is trying his best to resist and to overcome its assaults, it seeks new ploys to extend and continue the battle. For, its goal is to drive the person to exhaustion, so that he can no longer keep up the fight. For that reason, an amazing strategy is suggested: **“Draw him into the Beis Midrash; if he is like a stone, he will dissolve; if he is like iron, he will shatter.”** There it has no jurisdiction and cannot even continue its assault; as a result, a person will be able to engage in Torah-study in peace.

“He saw a resting place, that it was good” A Respite from the War with the Yetzer

This notion provides us with a nice understanding and interpretation of the praise Yaakov Avinu addresses to Yissachar, the pillar of Torah (Bereishis 49, 13): **“יששכר חמור גרם: רובץ בין המשפתים, וירא מנוחה כי טוב ואת הארץ כי נעמה, ויט שכמו לסבול—Yissachar is a strong-boned donkey; he rests between the boundaries. And he saw a resting place, that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and he bent his shoulder to bear and he became an indentured laborer.** Rashi explains that like a strong-boned donkey, he bears a heavy burden, namely the yoke of Torah. He is like a donkey that walks by day and by night, and has no indoor lodging. When it wants to rest, it lies down between the limits of the cities, to which it transports merchandise.

Based on our current discussion, let us suggest an explanation. Yissachar is the pillar of Torah. As such, he goes from city to city sharing his Torah with Yisrael. When he wants

to rest from the battle with the yetzer, he seeks refuge between the boundaries of the cities, namely in the study halls. They represent cities of refuge, where he can rest from the never-ending battle with the yetzer. Regarding this fact, he says: **“He saw a resting place, that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant.”** For, in the Beis Midrash, he replenishes his forces to engage the yetzer hara in battle anew. As a consequence, even when he leaves the Beis Midrash: **“וית שכמו לסבול”—he lowers his shoulder and is prepared to confront the yetzer; ויהי למס—“עובד—serving Hashem like a valiant soldier in the war against the yetzer hara.**

With this concept we can begin to understand Chazal’s revelation that Yisrael were subjected to the war with Amalek as a punishment for “bitul Torah”—neglect of Torah-study. We find the following elucidation in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 106a) regarding the passuk depicting Amalek’s attack on Yisrael (Shemos 17, 8): **“ויבוא עמלק וילחם עם ישראל ברפידים, מאי—“Amalek came and they battled Yisrael in Rephidim.” What is the meaning of “Rephidim”? Rabbi Eliezer says: It is the name of the place. Rabbi Yehoshua says: It indicates that they were remiss regarding the study of Torah.** Rashi provides the following clarification: **“רפידים, רביון ידים הוא, כלומר מפני שרפו—“Rephidim” implies a lax attitude; in other words, because they were lax in their attitude toward the Torah, Amalek attacked them. [Translator’s note: The name “Rephidim” is interpreted by some as a contraction of the two words “rifyon yadayim,” meaning a weakening of the hands, i.e. being lax.]**

Let us provide an explanation based on what we have learned. Had Yisrael occupied themselves with Torah-study, the yetzer hara—Amalek’s ministering angel—would have had no power over them. Consequently, Amalek down on earth would also not have had any power over them. Yet, since they were lax in their attitude toward Torah—the incredible antidote against the yetzer hara—the power of the yetzer hara, Amalek’s ministering angel above, was enhanced. As a result, the ramifications were also felt down below: **“Amalek came and they battled Yisrael in Rephidim”** due to the sin of being lax in their attitude toward Torah.

With this enlightenment, let us return to the magnificent insight of the Sefas Emet. Mordechai and the other sages of the Sanhedrin established the two days of Purim – for the unwallled

and walled cities – on the respective days that Yisrael rested from their fighting with their enemies. For, the rest from the battle is an integral part of the mitzvah of “mechias Amalek.” As we have learned, Amalek and the yetzer hara combat Yisrael by not allowing them any rest. Hence, the essence of the victory over Amalek occurs when we are able to find a respite from their skirmishes by means of our devotion to Hashem’s Torah.

We can add a valuable point based on what our blessed sages teach us in the Gemara (Shabbas 88a). During the times of Achashveirosh, Yisrael accepted and fulfilled the Torah out of “ahavah.” For, at the ordeal of Matan Torah, they only accepted the Torah under duress—when the mountain was held imposingly over their heads. This fact is derived from an elucidation of the passuk in the Megillah (Esther 9, 27): **“קימו”** **“The Jews confirmed and accepted upon themselves”—they confirmed that which they had already accepted.**

Accordingly, the cities not surrounded by walls were victorious on the thirteenth of Adar; therefore, they confirmed their acceptance of the Torah out of “ahavah” on the following day, the fourteenth of Adar. Thus, they demonstrated their love and appreciation of the miracle. As a result, they found respite from the battle with Amalek. In Shushan, however, the battle did not end until the next day; their victory over the enemy was not realized until the fourteenth of Adar; therefore, they did not confirm their acceptance of the Torah out of “ahavah” until the fifteenth of Adar. That is when they found respite from the battle with Amalek, due to the power of the kedushah of the Torah. Precisely for this reason, the sages established the two days of Purim on the respective days that the Jews rested from encountering the enemy. On the respective day that they accepted the Torah out of “ahavah,” they found peace in the sense of: **“וירא מנוחה כי טוב”-- he saw a resting place, that it was good.**

Shabbas Is a Day of Rest from Fighting the Yetzer HaRa

Now, let us discuss another wonderful remedy. HKB”H, in His infinite mercy and kindness, set aside for us a special day to rest from our incessant battle with the yetzer hara—namely, Shabbas Kodesh. Let us introduce the beautiful words the great Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kasov, zy”a, writes in Ahavas Shalom (Beshalach):

“לבאר כוונת החרוז בזמירות נפש כי נאנחה, בא שבת בא מנוחה. פירוש, הדנה איתא בזוהר הקדוש (ח”ג קעו.) כי שבת נקרא שבת שלום... והיינו כי בו ימי המעשה צריך למלחמת היצר... אבל בשבת קודש אין צריך למלחמת היצר כנודע. וזהו מאמר הכתוב (שמות לא-טו) ששת ימים יעשה מלאכה, היינו מלחמת היצר, כי מלחמת היצר היא מלאכה גדולה, וכיום השביעי שבת, לשון שביתא ונייחא, ולא תעשה מלאכה, כי בשבת קודש אינו צריך למלחמת היצר... וזהו נפש כי נאנחה, פירוש, שבששת ימי המעשה יש אנחה בנפש ממלחמת היצר, בא שבת שלום, בא מנוחה, היינו מנוחת היצר.”

He focuses on a line we sing in our zemirot on Erev Shabbas. In the song “Yom Shabbas Kodesh Hu,” we recite: **“For the soul that sighs, Shabbas arrives and with it comes rest.”** He refers to a teaching in the Zohar hakadosh (Part 3, 176a) that Shabbas is called “Shabbas Shalom” . . . Because throughout the six days of the week, we must battle the yetzer . . . on Shabbas Kodesh, however, it is not necessary to combat the yetzer, as we know. This is the meaning of the passuk (Shemos 31, 15): **“For six days, work will be done,”** referring to the war with the yetzer; because battling the yetzer is demanding work. **“But on the seventh day, it is Shabbas,”** signifying refraining and resting. Work is not done, because one does not have to combat the yetzer on Shabbas Kodesh . . . This is the implication of the words: **“The soul sighs.”** During the six weekdays, the soul sighs and moans due to the war with the yetzer; but when Shabbas Shalom arrives, a respite arrives, for there is relief from the yetzer.

Based on this notion, he goes on to explain the significance of Rashi’s comment regarding the passuk (Bereishis 2, 2): **“ויכל”** **אלקים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה - מה היה העולם חסר מנוחה, באת שבת Elokim completed on the seventh day His work that He had done . . . what was the world lacking at that point? Rest. Shabbas came, rest came.** Because during the six weekdays, one must fight a war to the bitter end against the yetzer hara. Thus, we find that creation lacked a day of rest on which to recover from the war with the yetzer. Therefore: **“Shabbas came, rest came.”** This concludes his remarkable insight.

This provides us with a very nice interpretation of the elucidation in the Gemara (Shabbas 10a) regarding HKB”H’s statement to Moshe (Shemos 31, 13): **“ואתה דבר אל בני ישראל לאמר, אך את שבתותי תשמורו כי אות היא ביני וביניכם לדורותיכם, לדעת כי אני ה’ מקדשכם - אמר לו הקב”ה למשה, מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גנזי ושבת שמה, ואני HKB”H informs Moshe that he has a special gift in his treasure-house for Yisrael; it is called Shabbas. Based on our current discussion, the special gift HKB”H gave us is a**

day of rest, so that we can take a break from the strenuous, never-ending battle with the yetzer hara.

Thus, we have learned that we have two key strategies with which to find respite from the war with the yetzer. Firstly, we should study Torah, in particular in the Beis Midrash. Secondly, we should observe Shabbas properly; for it is a day of rest from the never-ending war with the yetzer.

“It shall be that when Hashem, your G-d, allows you to rest”-- Torah-study and Shabbas Kodesh

This enlightens us as to the deeper significance of the mitzvah of “zechiras Amalek”—remembering the physical battle Amalek waged against Yisrael down below and the spiritual battle that his ministering angel, the yetzer hara, waged up above: “זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים”—recall how Amalek attacked you when you were tired and weary from the demanding journey; “אשר קרך בדרך ויזנב בך כל הנחשלים אחריו” -- knowing that you no longer had the strength to confront him; “ואתה עיף ויגע ולא ירא אלקים”—due to the yetzer hara’s relentless assaults and the new ploys it concocts on a daily basis, you are battle-weary and no longer fear G-d.

Addressing this point, the Torah states: “והיה בהניח ה' אלקיך” **“it shall be that when Hashem, your G-d, allows you to rest from all of your enemies that surround you**—this refers to Shabbas Kodesh, when HKB”H provides you with a respite from the war with the yetzer. Then the Torah alludes to another option HKB”H affords us to find sanctuary from the yetzer: “בארץ אשר ה' אלקיך נותן לך נחלה לרשתה”-- **in the land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you as an inheritance**—this is an allusion to the study of Torah in the Beis Midrash, which possesses the kedushah of Eretz Yisrael. The Gemara teaches us (Berachos 8a):

“אמרו ליה לרבי יוחנן, איכא סבי בבבל, תמה ואמור, (דברים יא-כא) למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה כתיב, אבל בחוצה לארץ לא, כיון דאמרי ליה מקדמי ומחשכי לבי כנישתא, אמר היינו דאהני להו, כדאמור רבי יהושע בן לוי לבניה, קדימו וחשיכו ועיילו לבי כנישתא כי היכי דתורכו חיי.”

They said to Rabbi Yochanan: There are elderly people in Bavel. He responded in amazement: It is written: “In order to prolong your days and the days of your children upon the land (referring to Eretz Yisrael) . . .” implying that this does not hold true outside of Eretz Yisrael. Upon telling him (Rabbi Yochanan) that the elders of Bavel arise early to attend synagogue and stay there until late, he said: That is the merit that benefitted them (granting them long life). As Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said to his sons, “Arise early and stay late when going to the synagogue, so that your days should be prolonged.” The Maharsha provides the following clarification. Synagogues and study halls (Batei Midrash) possess the kedushah of Eretz Yisrael, as taught in the Gemara (Megillah 29a): “עתידין בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות שבבבל שיקבעו: “בארץ ישראל—**in the future, the synagogues and study halls of Bavel will be established in Eretz Yisrael.**

To summarize, Amalek’s sole ambition and objective is to inundate us with a constant war against the yetzer. Therefore, the passuk above begins with allusions to Shabbas and Torah-study in the Beis Midrash, which provide us with the critical respite that is an integral part of and is essential to the annihilation of Amalek. Thus, the passuk concludes: **תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים לא תשכח**.

We can now appreciate why our blessed sages instituted that we fulfill the mitzvah of “zechiras Amalek” by means of the Torah-reading on Shabbas Kodesh. For, the amazing combination of Shabbas Kodesh and the reading from the Torah affords a Jew respite from the war with Amalek. This hiatus provides us the opportunity to refuel with kedushah, so that we can continue to combat them throughout the year. In truth, this is the purpose of the mitzvah of “zechiras Amalek.” It is imperative that we remember that even in galut, we can achieve something akin to what we will enjoy at the time of the future geulah, as described by the passuk: **והיה בהניח ה' אלקיך לך מכל אויביך מסביב... תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים לא תשכח—“and it shall be that when Hashem, your G-d, allows you to rest from all of your enemies that surround you . . . you shall eradicate the memory of Amalek from beneath the heaven — you shall not forget!**

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