



WILL THE REAL AMALEK PLEASE STAND UP?

1. Devarim 25:17-19

Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey, after you left Egypt – how, undeterred by fear of G-d, he surprised you on the march, when you were famished and weary, and cut down all the stragglers in your rear. Therefore, when the L-rd your G-d grants you safety from all your enemies around you, in the land that the L-rd your G-d is giving you as a hereditary portion, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!	זְכוֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְךָ עַמְלֵק בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר קָרַךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ וַיִּזְנֵב בְּךָ כָּל הַנְּחַשְׁלִים אַחֲרֶיךָ וְאֶתָּה עֵיפִי וַיִּגַע וְלֹא יָרָא אֱלֹהִים: וְהָיָה בְּהֵנִיחַ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ מִכָּל אֹיְבֶיךָ מִסָּבִיב בְּאַרְצְךָ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נַחְלָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ תִּמְחָה אֶת זֵכֶר עַמְלֵק מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא תִשְׁכַּח:
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How is this command justified?

2. Devarim 25:16

For everyone who does those things, everyone who deals dishonestly, is abhorrent to the L-rd your G-d.	כִּי תוֹעֵבֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּל עֹשֵׂה אֵלֶּה כָּל עֹשֵׂה עוֹל:
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3. Devarim 20:16, 18

In the towns of the latter peoples, however, which the L-rd your G-d is giving you as a heritage, you shall not let a soul remain alive...lest they lead you into doing all the abhorrent things they have done for their gods and you stand guilty before the L-rd your G-d.	רַק מֵעַרֵי הָעַמִּים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר ה', אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נַחְלָה לֹא תַחֲיֶיהָ כָּל נֶשְׁמָה...לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִלְמְדוּ אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּכֵל תוֹעֵבֹתֵם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם וַחֲטַאתֶם לַה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:
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How is the scope of this commandment lessened?

4. Devarim 24:16

Parents shall not be put to death for children, nor children be put to death for parents: a person should be put to death only for his own crime.	לֹא יוֹמְתוּ אָבוֹת עַל בְּנֵי וּבָנִים לֹא יוֹמְתוּ עַל אָבוֹת אִישׁ בְּחַטָּאוֹ יוֹמְתוֹ:
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5. Sifre Devarim 202 on 20:18

"Lest they lead you into doing abhorrent things" teaches us that if they repent they are not killed.	לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִלְמְדוּ אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת, מִלְּמַד שְׂאֵם עוֹשִׂים תְּשׁוּבָה אִין נְהַרְגִים
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6. Rambam Melachim 5:4

It is a positive commandment to destroy the seven nations...and everybody who encounters one of the seven nations and does not kill them has transgressed a negative commandment...the seven nations' identity has been lost.	מצות עשה להחרים שבעה עממין ... וכל שבא לידו אחד מהן ולא הרגו עובר בלא תעשה שנאמר ... וכבר אבד זכרם.
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7. Rambam Melachim 5:5

And similarly, it is a positive commandment to obliterate the memory of Amalek...	וכן מצות עשה לאבד זכר עמלק...
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8. Rambam Melachim 6:4

This refers to those who did not accept a peace offer.	...אינו מדבר אלא באלו שלא השלימו ...
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What might the command to obliterate Amalek mean to us today?

9. Me'am Loez Ki Tetze 25:17

But you should know that in every generation it is Amalek that rises to destroy us, and each time he clothes himself in a different nation.	אבל עליכם לדעת שבכל דור ודור שעומדים עלינו לכלותנו, הכל הוא מעמלק שמתלבש כל פעם באומה אחרת.
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10. Chullin 139b

Where is Haman alluded to in the Torah? In the verse in Bereishit 3:11, "Hamin ha'etz" (From the tree from which I commanded that you not eat, did you eat?)	המן מן התורה מנין המן העץ
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11. Michael Lerner, Jewish Renewal, pages 33-34

Psychoanalytic and socialist movements face the fact that cruelty and evil are deeply embedded in individual and social structures; they suggest a process of individual and social change that will begin to undo that complex layering. The notion that the past exercises a tyranny over the present, central to the thinking of psychoanalytic theories, suggests that we humans face a long and difficult process of undoing our social and psychological inheritance.



Yet what *is* being denied is this: that he evil is Evil, that the cruelty is Cruelty - that there is anything necessary or ontological or fixed about the shadow. It may take generations to undo the legacy of cruelty, but it is not a fixed and permanent part of what it is to be human. It can be overcome, however slowly and cautiously.

12. Tehilim 97:10

Therefore you who love the L-rd, hate evil...	אוהבי ה' שנאו רע...
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13. R. Samson Raphael Hirsch on Tehilim 96 and 97.

This glimpse into the future of mankind as given in Psalms 96 and 97 is intended to call upon those of every generation who are the friends of G-d's cause even now to hate implacably, not the evil man, but the evil itself, and to rise in open opposition against evil whenever and wherever it may appear. For this brief look into the days to come is meant to assure us that evil cannot last forever in this world, that the future belongs to the righteous, and that with every human act of intervention against evil the kingdom of God, and hence human salvation on earth, is brought one step nearer.

14. Yeshayahu 2:4

...And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not take up sword against nation. They shall never again know war.	...וּכְתַתּוּ חֶרְבוֹתֵם לְאֵתִים, וְחִנְיֹתוֹתֵיהֶם לְמִזְמְרוֹת--לֹא- יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל-גּוֹי חֶרֶב, וְלֹא- יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה .
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Partially based on The Punishment of Amalek in Jewish Tradition: Coping with the Moral Problem by Avi Sagi.

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