



זאת תורת עמלק: Hating Amalek in Our Time

שיחה given by Rav Blachman in KBY 5775

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Purim is very complicated יום טוב. We need to do an honest appraisal of what the עבודה for this day demands of us. What is יום של יום?

When I see people hearing the name המן, I see them, sometimes, going into a frenzy. Who are they angry at, venting out all of their frustrations at? Do you know him? What did he do to you? If anyone today said "I'm angry at המן" I doubt if he is telling the truth. We have to understand. What exactly are we doing.

We seem to really not like המן and his family. In the מגילה it says that אסתר requested of אחשוורוש one more day of fighting in שושן to hang another 500 men. "And they hanged another 500 men." It sounds like the wild west! ובביזה לא שלחו את ידם. We didn't take the money, but we killed a a lot of men! Why are you celebrating this? Does this make you happy? People are dying. Does hanging and death make you excited? How do we understand this?

Every year, by around this time, if we are honest with ourselves, we face a real moral quandary. We read פרשת זכור. How do we honestly live with the idea of עמלק? I want to describe the מצוה in order to appreciate the question being raised.

The רמב"ם writes:

והמצוה הקפ"ח היא שציוונו להכרית זרע עמלק לבד משאר זרע עשו, זכרים ונקבות קטנים וגדולים. והוא אמרו יתעלה (ס"פ תצא) תמחה את זכר עמלק. וכבר קדם לנו (מ' כ וקעז) אמרם שלש מצות נצטוו ישראל בשעת כניסתן לארץ למנות להם מלך ולבנות להם בית הבחירה ולהכרית זרעו שלעמלק. ומלחמת עמלק היא מלחמת מצוה גם כן וכבר התבאר משפטיה בפרק שמיני מסוטה:

Imagine reading this like a western person and how it would appear in the newspaper. שציוונו להכרית זרע עמלק. In English, we would call this genocide. You are commanded to kill man, women and even child. Even a one day old. That's the מצוה. According to the חינוך, it a מצוה incumbent upon each and every one of us, independent of the appointment of the מלך. If you find an עמלקי in the street, you must kill him. Are you good with this מצוה? Do you want this מצוה? Are you not happy that it's not available today? If I would show you a one day old child of עמלק and tell you to kill him, what would you do? I don't want to know the answer. But I'm hoping you would have a major dilemma. Then you'd say I'm doing it because it's גזירת העליון, I have to do it. But how would it feel? Terrible. It's a מצוה but not like מצה rather like מרור bitter but commanded.

Culturally, it's painful to talk about.

Today, there is no עמלק. Thankfully, they're not around. We're פטור. Right now, everything is calm. Then comes the next מצוה.

והמצוה הקפ"ט היא שצונו לזכור מה שעשה לנו עמלק מהקדימו להרע לנו ושנאמר זה בכל עת ועת ונעורר הנפשות במאמרים להלחם בו ונזרו העם לשנוא אותו עד שלא תשכח המצוה ולא תחלש שנאתו ותחסר מן הנפשות עם אורך הזמן. והוא אמרו יתעלה (שם) זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק. ולשון סיפרי זכור את אשר עשה לך בפה לא תשכח בלב [על"ת נט]. כלומר אמור מאמרים בפיך שיחייבו בני אדם שלא תסור שנאתו מהלבבות. ולשון ספרא (ר"פ בחקתי) זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק יכול בלבבך כשהוא אומר לא תשכח הרי שכחת הלב אמורה הא מה אני מקיים זכור שתהא שונה בפיך. הלא תראה שמואל הנביא כשהתחיל לעשות המצוה הזאת איך עשה שהוא זכר תחלה מעשהו הרע ואחרי כן צוה להרגם והוא אמרו יתעלה (ש"א טו) פקדתי את אשר עשה עמלק לישראל אשר שם לו בדרך בעלותו ממצרים:

The reading of the פרשה is a means towards a certain end. The goal is to basically hate these people, on a daily basis. There is no דין you have to read this once a year. That's a מנהג. In truth, the מצוה is constant memory. עמלק was the first nation which came up to fight us after leaving Egypt. We have a lot of enemies, but they were there first. Obviously, this is supposed to arouse a certain image. Then you will hate them. Constantly. I was once talking to someone and he told me that he doesn't actually know what the emotion is. Does anyone actually hate someone else? I know vengeance, anger and violence. But hate. That's different. Hate to the extent that when I see you I want to kill you? I encountered hate once in my life. I was a young בחור, walking in Crown Heights, and suddenly, I heard someone call me and I found my face meeting his fist. He floored me. I started crying, but not out of pain. It was so confused. Why did he do that? I didn't do anything! I was so bewildered at what he did. I was full of frustration. I felt helpless.

That is the way I'm commanded to hate עמלק. I'm commanded to hate עמלק to the extent that when I see him, I naturally will kill him. Does anyone have that? Who are you hating? An ancient tribe, who lived in the Transjordan area, who wanted to kill your ancient ancestors when they left Egypt? Is that why you hate them? This is the only place in the תורה where there is a חיוב of שנאה. There is not other place. There might be a היתר to hate רשעים but not a commandment. But even there, you have to hate the sins committed not the sinner. When you find him on the side of the road, you have to help him with וטעינה. פריקה. But here, you have to hate him to the extent you actually will kill him.

How is someone supposed to do this? How can you learn to hate? We have to start with defining our terms. What is hate? Who am I supposed to hate? I don't know if they're here anymore? The רמב"ם writes that we are commanded to read this section of the תורה to arouse this emotion. It was like a pep talk before a big game with the football coach saying to his players: "Kill 'em."

ונזרו העם לשנוא אותו עד שלא תשכח המצוה ולא תחלש שנאתו ותחסר מן הנפשות עם אורך הזמן.

We are commanded to fan the fires of hate in order maintain that hatred enough to have the

passion to kill the עמלקי. That is the point of the קריאת התורה. That's the goal of what we're doing. The מצוה is to hate them and we haven't even started! I don't care if you hate them in Hebrew, French, or Spanish. Just hate them! But I never hated anyone. What are we supposed to do about it?

When discussing the לאו of destroying עמלק, the רמב"ם writes this with more force:

והמצוה הנ"ט היא שהזהירנו משכוח מה שעשה לנו זרע עמלק והקדימם להזיק לנו. וכבר בארנו במצות קפ"ט ממצות עשה לזכור מה שעשה לנו עמלק ולחדש שנאתו מצות עשה. וכן אנחנו מוזהרים מהשליך זה מלבנו ומשכוח אותו והיא מצות לא תעשה והוא אמרו יתעלה (ס"פ תצא) לא תשכח. ובספרי זכור בפה לא תשכח בלב. כלומר לא תשליך שנאתו ולא תסירנה מנפשך:

We're not allowed to forget the שנאה of עמלק. But I don't have that שנאה? That's the problem. If we could say that nowadays this is not בזמן הזמן, that would be nice. But it doesn't. על כרחך, there is a קיום which still applies which each one of us can do.

There is another מצוה which is very hard to fulfill. בכל דור ודור חייב אדם להראות את עצמו כאילו. הוא יצא ממצרים. How do you do that exactly? Don't even know what slavery means! I would recommend you read Alex Haley's Roots. It's not just pain. It's much more. You have to read this to appreciate it. This is not annihilation. Slavery is something else. There are הלכות which demand a certain sensitivity and awareness, using our imaginations to conjure and identify with ideas which we don't experience in our lives. You need tools to get these images in your mind. This מצוה is no different. As רמב"ם tells us, זכור demands of us בפנינו שנאתו. Now we have to work.

So, what do we do? It's interesting that the רמב"ם in the end of המצוות, ספר, gives us a list of how many of the תרי"ג we can fulfill today. There aren't so many; at most, there are around 60. What about the rest? The בעל העקידה tells us there is a way to still fulfill them. He writes that we need to understand the טעמי המצוות and apply those values, namely, what the מצוות represent, living those values throughout our lives. That's the פשט of the phrase כאילו הקריבם. It's not just saying that learning about העוף הטאת is as if you offered it. It means that when you learn about הטאת העוף, and understand what הטאת העוף is supposed to be doing to you, then it's as if you performed them. Just read the פרשת תרומה in חינוך. He explains how קרבנות create a context for the הכנעה לפני הקב"ה. That הכנעה can be experienced בכל עת.

The עקידה expands the משמעות of תורת העולה to all the מצוות because it really is applicable to כל התורה כולה. There are many מצוות which we can't do, but they teach us how to live. You can't be מקיים the פשט, but you can fulfill their רמז וסוד, their values and ideas. As the רמב"ם and רמב"ן explain, the point of מצוות is twofold: making both you a better person and the world a better place. I'm not talking about the metaphysical realm right now. The מצוות help you too. All these מצוות, are means to a life of G-d awareness. As the זוהר writes, the תרי"ג מצוות are in essence תרי"ג עצות. Life has within it millions and millions of junctions. Not much is clear. Very little is explicit. Now you have to figure out what G-d wants from you at this junction. If you've

internalized the system and cleaned your antennas by performing your מצוות תרי"ג, you'll know what to do. This is the how the רמב"ן explains ועשית את הישר ואת הטוב. Learn תורה, distill its laws into a value system and then develop a personality and sensitivities. This includes brushing your teeth and not yelling in the street.

This idea is seen in as well in the אגרות הרמח"ל. He was asked a question, and I'm going to elaborate on it. הקב"ה punishes. גלות is a punishment. But we understand that when we think of punishment, we think of something nasty, like a boss venting at the associate. But הקב"ה doesn't do that. משפט הקב"ה אמת. When you experience יסורן you need to start examining your actions. We understand that יסורן are there to exact מדה כנגד מדה and therefore you fix the problems areas based on how you were effected. It's an educational experience which will lead to an improved lifestyle. This makes sense. But how is it possible that there are יסורן which don't allow you to fulfill מצוות? There were times in our history when Jews couldn't do מצוות even if they wanted to. Look at the Inquisition. Look at the Cantonist laws. Look at the Holocaust. What's the תועלת in that? I can't fix myself. I can't do any מצוות! G-d isn't even allowing me to do anything! Where's the כבוד שמים in all this?

This was the question. The רמח"ל answers with a very sharp insight. He writes that אותו דור, referring to the Inquisition, were עובדי ע"ז בלב. They were very practically, religious. They kept kashrus. They went to Shul. But inside, they were assimilated. They had no persona of religion. It was orthopraxy. It was all external and outside of themselves. You would need the prophet of יחזקאל to wake up the dry bones of their existence. Understand that personal relationships can go stale. They must constantly be nurtured. If you're married, you buy flowers for your wife. You give her jewelry, spend quality time together etc.

But if you don't nurture and develop the relationship, though on the outside everything looks great, on the inside it may be quite stale and empty. Religion is the same thing. ישעיהו tells the people בשפתיים כבודוני ולבם בל עמי. They talk the talk, but they don't feel anything. You are just doing things by rote. You've been programed in the right schools, know the right thing to say at the right time but It ends up with you expressing a beautiful externality but in truth it's all a façade. It's empty. When בית המקדש, הקב"ה טיטוס destroyed the קמחא טחנא טחנתא בית המקדש, בית המקדש was already destroyed. The building was merely a shell. No One was inside. There was a reason there were so many כהני גדולים in בית שני. Hellenism and assimilation was in trend. The פרושים were not running the government.

There are relationships which end up becoming hollow. But what can we do to rejuvenate the bond? As an educator, I would say the first thing to do is to create enormous havoc in the mind. Create a terrible question which forces them to not feel comfortable about themselves. Make them start searching for something which will make themselves feel good. When the thirst is strong, then you appreciate. It's what we term "distance makes the heart grow fonder." When you don't have the capability of external expression of the externalities of a relationship, you start to go back to the inner workings of a relationship and figure out again why you got married.

אין דברי תורה נבקעים עד שבעליהם נאספים חז"ל is only after the רבי passes on. Why? It's a סברה פשוטה. When people are alive, there is a certain connection with that person which is superficial. There is a היצוניות there. Most of the time, you don't even realize it. You don't realize how much that person means to you and how much it he impacted you, making who you are today. It's only after the person passed on and not here anyone do you start realizing what the person meant to you. You start missing him. When going through a full year as an אבל, I kept thinking to myself what does my father ע"ה mean to me? I realized, he gave me so much. But I didn't appreciate it while he was alive. He's here. It's good to be with him. But once it's not taken for granted and he's not here, you ask "what was it?" By understanding the person better and refining the answer to what that person meant for you, you actually keep his legacy going. You become deeply attached to the person, much more than when he was alive. It's one of the amazing ironies of the human condition.

G-d takes away the externalities in order for you to reconnect to the inner dimension. That's what happened during the era of the Inquisition. People were so culturally assimilated; religion was a hollow shell. It reminds me of us and the world we live in. The תורה didn't internalize into their thoughts and world outlook. They were governed by the *weltanschauung* of the culture and thought of the time. G-d wasn't part of it. That's why there were *Marranos* in Spain. They stayed and didn't leave. They *couldn't* leave. Their identity was in Spain and its culture. They externally were Jewish, but when the church takes that away from them, they discovered that they were someone else, and it shook them. It shook them to the extent that they keep their Jewish identity, to whatever extent, underground. It was then did they start realizing that they were different from their Christian neighbors. This was something they didn't have before. The יסוד is that when הקב"ה takes away the externalities, He's telling you to start examining the inside.

There is no use of having this מצוה of עמלק if you can't do anything with it. But הקב"ה is teaching us an incredible lesson. There is no עמלק today. But the תורת עמלק is still there. He took away the עמלק so that we can start understanding what עמלק is and means to us, like He did by קרבנות. It's all part of the education process. This what the רמח"ל teaches me. So, the only קיום I have of this מצוה is a "זאת תורה".

What's the "זאת תורת" of עמלק which I want to hate and destroy? There is famous book written by Adolf Hitler ימ"ש called *Mein Kampf*. He writes that his vendetta with the Jews was because they polluted the natural order of existence introducing ideas of morals and ethics. Suddenly, the bad and strong feel bad about hurting the meek. They changed the natural order of reality. It was the Jews, the people who embodied Sinai and its implications, who did it and they must be destroyed. Destroy them means you destroy the story. Whether they are religious or not is not the question. Their *story*, which they represent, is that of the Bible. Don't be fooled. The next on the list was the church. He wanted to go to back to the morals of the black forest. It

was an ideological war and he understood that the existence of this story was embodied in the Jewish people.

The רמב"ן writes this idea in (דברים לב:כו-כז) on the words "אָמַרְתִּי אֶפְאַיֶּקֶם" on the words "אֲשִׁבִּיתָהּ מֵאַנּוּשׁ זָכָרָם לִי לִי כַעַס אוֹיֵב אֲגוּר פֶּן יִנְכָרוּ צָרִימוּ פֶּן יֹאמְרוּ יִדְנּוּ רָמָה וְלֹא יִקְנֶק פֶּעַל כָּל זֹאת". He explains G-d wants the world to be introduced to the morals and ethics and the story of Sinai. I need the nation to be living and kicking for this to work because if there is no nation, Sinai will become nothing more than mythology in which no one will take it seriously. Myths kill truths. To keep the story alive, there must be a nation which is walking, talking, and sleeping around it. They need to be the living testament of the story of Sinai. For this reason, G-d tells us that He כּבִּיכּוּל needs us. It's שְׂמוּ הַגְּדוּל. We really didn't deserve it, but we, our mere existence as the הַנְּבַחֵר functions to teach the world about the הַקְּבִ"ה, justifying our existence. That's what you mean when you say וְסִלַּחְתִּי כְּדַבְרֶיךָ. You're not requesting for forgiveness because you deserve it. You still didn't change., You're asking G-d to keep you and the nation alive though we are still sinning because through simply being present in this world, we declare הַקְּבִ"ה's presence. We represent these ideals. We enlighten the world. He יִמְ"ש recognized this truth and, precisely because of it, wanted us to be removed.

It would seem to be that עֲמֶלֶק was the same thing. עֲמֶלֶק declared war with us מִלְּמַעְלָה. I want to explain this. Rashi in פְּרֻשַׁת בְּשַׁלַּח on the פְּסוּק of כֹּס יְהוָה explains something fascinating. הַקְּבִ"ה tells us עֲמֶלֶק את זִכְרָא אֶמְחָה. We aren't just going to war with עֲמֶלֶק, Himself, as if it were, is at war with עֲמֶלֶק. What is He worried about? There were a lot of people who were nasty. Why is עֲמֶלֶק the *only* nation G-d can't stand? It's the *only* nation which will be erased. There is not redeemable factor in עֲמֶלֶק. What is this עֲמֶלֶק? Rashi explains that כֹּס and יְהוָה are both חֶסֶד. The first two letters of the שֵׁם הַמְּפֻרָשׁ are cut off from the last two letters. The מְדַרְשׁ explains אֵיךְ הַכֹּסָא שְׁלָם וְאֵיךְ הַשֵּׁם שְׁלָם עַד שִׁימְחָה זִרְעוֹ שֶׁל עֲמֶלֶק. What does this mean?

The פְּסוּק says וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ. What did he hear? The פְּסוּק says in (כא:יא) "בְּעִנְשׁ לִץ יִחְכֵּם, מִשְׁלִי (כא:יא)". The לִץ gets hit and the fool gets wise. The מְדַרְשׁ explains that this means עֲמֶלֶק got hit and יִתְרוֹ, after hearing this, became wise. We see that the nation of עֲמֶלֶק is defined as a לִץ. A לִץ doesn't mean a clown. You know what a לִץ is? It's a cynic. It means a person who is חֲשִׁיבוּת. He tells everyone sarcastically, "Ya...Ya..." He's מְזִלְזֵל.

But why does this defining trait of עֲמֶלֶק demand of its destruction? Let me explain this. The name of הַקְּבִ"ה has four letters: י-ק-ו-ק. The י is the smallest letter in the alphabet. It represents a small dot, equivalent to the mathematical point. It's the theoretical beginnings of all lines, but it actually doesn't exist for every matter is in essence already a line, albeit a small one. In the world of math, there is a point prior to the line. It's a theoretical reality. This is י. It's the beginning of all ideas. In חֲסִידוּת, this is called חֲכָמָה. Then you have to give that idea flesh and dimension. If you don't you risk losing it. That second stage, giving it form, is called ה. It's called בִּינָה. You understand things. it's דְּבַר מִתּוֹךְ דְּבַר. You've taken the י and added a ה, giving the point a certain context and framework. Inspired thought and human understanding. Then there

is another stage. The aforementioned is what we'll call cerebral knowledge. For cerebral knowledge, to become part of your life, it needs to integrate into emotional intelligence. You have to internalize this knowledge so that it become part of your perspective. It's how you see things. At that stage, you react to it. Now, you can have emotions, express your מדות towards it. You have to take that information in your head and bring it down. It has to become tangible, vivid and real. It's like the smoker who knows it's not healthy to smoke but continues anyway. It's only after he sees the x-rays of his lungs does he finally go cold turkey. Why? Because before the knowledge was abstract. Once you give him the hard, cold reality, he experiences a paradigm shift. He doesn't want to die. He's frightened. So, he stops. This is דעת.

You have the idea of לנגדי תמיד, but for goodness sake, it has not internalized into how you live your life! It has not become your perspective and therefore you will do things before הקב"ה which you wouldn't do before anyone else! That's called a person with חכמה ובינה but he lacks דעת. דעת is the line which connects ideas in your head to your heart. It's the ו. It's the וי, taking the י and ה and bringing it down into your persona. Once it's come down then you can realize it again via מחשבה דיבור מעשה, the last ה. This is חכמה בינה דעת מעשה. It's מלכות, the total realization of it all.

אין השם שלם means we have a religious crisis. We have these people who are stuffed with so much G-d knowledge. The greatest challenge is that none of it becomes real. Therefore, their world is not governed by that knowledge. Emotions are not governed by that knowledge, and we continue to be loyal citizens of the west and the G-D knowledge just doesn't come down. We are like ET. We have big heads, small necks and miniature bodies. ב"ה we have see so much תורה being studied. The amount of תורה around today is unbelievable. But the throats are so thin and nothing's coming down. Our bodies are so small! This is the reality and the question is why is that happening? What is holding me back from allowing me to get where I want to go? For those who take their religion seriously, it's quite frustrating. Years of hard work and study, but nothing to show for. Now, I'm not angry at G-d. I don't have the right to be. But what is it in my world which doesn't let me move forward? It's something, and that something is causing all these frustrations. Is it the pollution of my life? Yes. Do I want that thing to cease to exist? Yes. I want it to not exist. I hate it with a passion! I hate the thing which is not allowing to me to get where I want. It really eats me up, and the more I think about it the more, the more intense the feeling. Sometimes we want to feel, just for one day, a taste of what it would feel like to have this thing off our shoulders. I want just one day to dream about freedom.

So, what is this thing in our world which is holding us back? What is cutting the י-ה from ו-ה. What is not allowing תורה to become my essence? When you pray for the כסא ה' to be restored, it doesn't mean that there will be a throne. The throne is obviously a metaphor for royalty. What's does it mean to be a part of the מלכות ה'? It means He embodies your cultural identity. Go to Windsor castle, Hampton Court. The nation's identity is found there. So, praying for כסא הקב"ה means that you want G-d to become your cultural identity. It's not the "Mosaic

code of the ancient Israelites” and its “Babylonian extrapolations.” No! That is *me*. I have to live in western society as a גר תושב. I can use the culture to enhance my religious experience. That’s great. But that’s it. They should be the maidservants which serve the master. But I am עובד את ה' באהבה וביראה. My ethos must be אין עוד בלבדו. Everything else just adds spice.

You know what עמלק is? The דעת טומאה writes it’s standing by your neck, cutting your head from your body. לץ call this a לץ. In our modern era, society has walked away from religion. It doesn’t take it seriously, at best used to make you feel good. It’s sweet, but come one, it’s not the real thing. We are very cynical that religion can transform us into different people. We don’t even have faith in ourselves to try. We think the most we can be is likened to the monkey, mimicking the externalities, but lacking anything internal. We don’t think religion can make us into different people. We are very cynical about G-d. You are living in a world which brushes all this aside. They’ll tell you with that subtle sarcasm, “Oh, so you flipped out.” That’s cynicism is so frustrating. It says to us you will never transcend. You can’t. You’re nothing. Everything you’re doing is futile and fake. That’s the world I’m living in and I wish it never existed.

We have all experienced these ideologies. You’re in the mud. So, at least make the mud comfortable. But you’ll always be in the mud. If you think you are out, you’re probably faking it. And if you actually get out, you threaten the comfort zone of 99% of society. So, they’ll call you different names because your existence threatens theirs. It’s quite simple. That’s what it means when we say in אנא בכח, נא גיבור דורשי ייחודיך כבבת שמרם. The men who follow You, giving direction to those in society, protect them because they are in danger. They are a threat to the comfort zones of so many people. This person is unique, empowering humanity by telling them that they can actually be real. Yet he’s endangering everyone around him. You can’t tell me that I can change and walk out of the mud. I like this mud. This cynicism of not believing in man and not believing in themselves is because they don’t believe in religion. “It can’t really do all that, right?” That’s a לץ. That’s a cynic. “Of course,” they tell you. They cut שם ה' into two. This is עמלק. עמלק is the דעת דקליפה. It’s a world of externalities. A קליפה is a husk. You live reality just looking and working with the shell, but you fail to crack the nut open to eat the meat. Doing *just* the externalities, even in religion is destructive. It’s all from עמלק.

Why do you think עמלק wanted to attack us first? There was a dispute as to the direction of the world. עשו wanted the ברכות אברהם because he wanted to lead the world towards monotheism. רבקה decided that יעקב would do it. If you are familiar with לישונות הז"ל, the name עשו embodies the Christian church. The dispute was how to teach monotheism. Will we accept One G-d but have absolutely no faith in mankind to follow or change, or do we empower humanity to give him the responsibility of following G-d? That was the fundamental question raised by these two figures, these two perspectives. יעקב won. But עמלק swore vengeance. He grew up hating the *Yaakovian* religion. When the Jews were in Egypt, they were happy because Judaism was dead; they were essentially assimilated. They were no threat to their philosophy. All of a sudden, Israel comes out and is planning to go to Sinai. עמלק uproots and plans an attack.

They couldn't stand having the ה-י with the ה-ו. They couldn't stand the idea of monotheism of Yaakov which can be internalized into reality. That was the war. And this tension was maintained until the time of דוד. But, for whatever reason, עמלק reappeared on stage. המן tells אהשוורוש that the Jews are different. They are not like us at all. המן maintained the same philosophy as his ancestors. It was עמלק. It's for this reason חז"ל incorporated ספר מגילה into כתבי קודש, as it was a זיכרון לעמלק.

There is no nation called עמלק today. What's left is the תורת עמלק. It's threatening the bond between the ה-י and the ה-ו. That threat is in my world. They squeezed your neck. פורים is an attempt to open up the neck. On פורים, I've seen great people who've done this. They were able to release their constrictions and you can see the frustrations in their עבודה come out. It was important to see. It's to see the innards of a person who is striving for greatness. It's the experience which pushes you to give it your all. It's a cry to stop living an external, superficial life and start getting real. It's an incredible day. It's looking at the past and confronting this cynicism in the face. It's a day which has so much potential for growth as a יום תשובה. This is זאת תורת of עמלק. It starts from the day you become בר מצוה. People ask me how long did you prepare for ראש השנה? For you, if you're 20, you took 7 years to get to this point. From your בר מצוה you were preparing for this. The same thing is true for פורים. You really need to start thinking seriously, "how will I perform עבודת הפורים?" It can be a day of great growth and חשבון הנפש, looking for internal truths. As the גר"א writes, this is the other half of יום כיפורים. On יום כיפורים we fasted our bodies and on פורים, we focus on our self, our soul identity. Do your best to somehow get close to it.