

**February 23rd, 2018/8 Adar, 5778**

Dear chevreh,

This Shabbat is called *Shabbat Zachor* — the Sabbath of remembrance. Traditionally we read from Deuteronomy: “*Zachor* — remember what Amalek did to you.” The Amalekites attacked Israel in the desert and have become the symbol of cruelty to the weak.

We are living in scary times. There are people who want to do harm to innocents. Often times those people were harmed themselves -hurt people *hurt* people- but slipped through the cracks without appropriate intervention. *Shabbat Zachor* comes right before Purim, with the idea that Haman descended from the king of the Amalekites. We are not too far away from a time when a modern day Amalek tried to kill our people and succeeded in wiping one third of our people off the earth.

Rabbi Irving Greenberg teaches, “Remembrance is the key to preventing recurrence...Naivete and amnesia always favor the aggressors...One of the classic evasions undergirding naivete is the claim that Amalek is long since gone...The mitzvah of Zachor is a stern reminder that Amalek lives and must be fought.” (The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays, 1988.)

That “fighting” can take the form of being compassionate to an isolated person, fighting hunger, fighting for laws which bring more protection to students and others, fighting for justice, fighting the urge to act out of meanness. Let us fight to end oppression everywhere.

Let's not just remember what Amalek did to us, but *remember* our loved ones who have died, or been murdered. Let's *remember* the Jewish imperatives to do justice, do mitzvot, engage in acts of lovingkindness. *Zachor!*

\*\* Also, a note pertaining to my rabbi's message last week; I appreciate hearing from you when you have comments and questions. I want to emphasize that I believe a multi-pronged approach is necessary in order to solve the problems which manifest in the violence in our country, not just concerting mass shootings but the daily violence in our cities and homes. While access to guns and gun laws are an important part of the equation, many other factors need be addressed. All hands on deck.

Wishing everybody a restful Shabbat. I look forward to see you tonight at 7:30 pm and on Wednesday evening at 6:00 pm for Purim.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Diana