Class # 16 - **Parshat Beshalach -Special Forces Warriors**

Advanced Fellowship Parsha Class - Sponsored in memory of Alice Toby Barbanel Z”l

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American Sniper - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqcthD64Srs>

1. What does a soldier have to do to be effective in warfare?
2. How does the brutality of war transform the “normal” behavior of a  soldier?
3. What are the effects on the psyche of the soldier?

**Amalek’s War**

17:8 Amalek arrived and attacked Israel there in Rephidim. 17:9 Moses said to Joshua, 'Choose men for us, and prepare for battle against Amalek. Tomorrow, I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.' 17:10 Joshua did as Moses had told him, engaging Amalek in battle. Moses, Aaron and Chur went up to the top of the hill. 17:11 As long as Moses held his hands up, Israel would be winning, but as soon as he let his hands down, the battle would go in Amalek's favor. 17:12 When Moses' hands became weary, they took a stone and placed it under him, so that he would be able to sit on it. Aaron and Chur then held his hands, one on each side, and his hands remained steady until sunset. 17:13 Joshua was thus able to break the ranks of Amalek and his allies with the sword.

Divine Vengeance

17:14 God said to Moses, 'Write this as a reminder in the Book and repeat it carefully to Joshua. I will totally obliterate the memory of Amalek from under the heavens.' 17:15 Moses built an altar, and he named it God-is-my-Banner. 17:16 He said, 'The Hand is on God's Throne. God shall be at war with Amalek for all generations.

**Rashi’s comments:**

'**Pick men for us:** Heb. אִנָשִׁים, mighty men, and God-fearing [men] so that their merit will help us (Mechilta d’Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer ch. 44, Yalkut Shimoni, Jonathan)

**and Moses, Aaron, and Hur:** From here [we deduce] that on a fast day, three people are required to go before the ark [to lead the prayers], for they were fasting. — [from Mechilta] Hur: He was the son of Miriam, and Caleb, her husband. — [from Sotah 11b]

**Talmud - Rosh Hashana 29a:**

**“And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed;** and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed” ([Exodus 17:11](https://www.sefaria.org/Exodus.17.11)). It may be asked: **Did the hands of Moses make war** when he raised them **or break war** when he lowered them? **Rather,** the verse comes **to tell you** that **as long as the Jewish people turned their eyes upward and subjected their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they prevailed, but if not, they fell.**

**Rashi’s comments:**

**So he was with his hands were steady:** And Moses was with his hands steady, spread out toward heaven in a faithful and proper prayer.

**Devarim Chapter 25 - Remembering Amalek**

25:17 Remember what [Amalek](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=25#C4308) did to you on your way out of Egypt. 25:18 When they encountered you on the way, and you were tired and exhausted, they cut off those lagging to your rear, and they did not fear God. 25:19 Therefore, when God gives you peace from all the enemies around you in the land that God your Lord is giving you to occupy as a heritage, [you must obliterate](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=25#C4309) the memory of Amalek from under the heavens. You must not forget.

**Laws of Kings and their wars - Ch. 5:1**

War, neither a milchemet hareshut or a milchemet mitzvah, should not be waged against anyone [even Amalek] until they are offered the opportunity of peace as [Deuteronomy 20:10](http://www.chabad.org/9984#v10) states: 'When you approach a city to wage war against it, you should propose a peaceful settlement.'

If the enemy accepts the offer of peace and commits itself to the fulfillment of the seven mitzvot that were commanded to Noah's descendents, none of them should be killed. Rather, they should be subjugated as ibid.:11 states: 'They shall be your subjects and serve you.'