

Lamplighter

12 Adar
Tetzaveh
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah reading, Tetzaveh, is the only portion in the entire Torah following Moses' birth, in which Moses' name does not appear. (It is also, incidentally, the portion usually read during the week in which the anniversary of Moses' passing, the seventh of Adar, falls.)

Our Sages explain that the reason for this omission was Moses' own request, made of G-d after the Children of Israel sinned with the Golden Calf: "And if not (if You will not forgive them), blot me out, I pray you, from Your book which You have written." The words of a tzadik, a holy and righteous person, are always fulfilled, even if spoken conditionally. Thus, we find that Moses' wish was granted in this week's Torah portion, for his name never appears in the entire portion.

However, when we delve into the text itself, we find an interesting phenomenon: This chapter, which specifically does not mention Moses, begins with a direct address to the very person whose name it omits! "And you shall command (ve'ata tetzave)."

A name is of lesser importance than a person's essential nature. It is a means of identification and a way of being known to others. But one does not really need a name in order to live. A newborn baby exists as an independent being from the moment it is born, and only receives its name after several days. From this we learn that the use of the grammatical second person, "you," expresses an even higher level of relationship than calling a person by his given name, which was only bestowed on him secondarily. If such is the case, then it follows that the omission of Moses' name only serves to underscore the very special essence of Moses, which was even higher than the mention of his name could express.

Moses' whole life was Torah, to the extent that we refer to the Torah as "The Five Books of Moses." But his greatness was best illustrated when the lowest elements among the Children of Israel sinned with the Golden Calf, explicitly expressing their desire to separate themselves from the Torah. Yet, Moses was willing to sacrifice that which he held most dear on their behalf. "Blot out my name from your book," Moses pleaded with G-d, "if you will not forgive them even for this grave sin."

Moses and the Jews formed one entity, each of whose existence was dependent upon the other. The commentator Rashi explains; "Moses is Israel, and Israel is Moses." When even some Jews sinned, Moses suffered a spiritual blow. Even though Moses was up on Mount Sinai when the Golden Calf was actually made, he was still affected by the actions of the others.

It was Moses' self-sacrifice and his desire to forgo that which was most important to him that expresses a unity that is beyond mere names. It is therefore precisely the portion Tetzave, in which Moses is not mentioned, that reveals his strength and his greatness. The willingness to sacrifice oneself for every fellow Jew, even one who sins, is the mark of every true leader of the Jewish People.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Purim Paparazzi

By Israel Rubin

Not long ago my partners and I were apprehended, imprisoned and reprimanded on the prejudiced, presumptuous, preposterous pretext that we upset the proper protocol of the proud British Empire! This prompted me to abandon my previous preoccupation, and put Purim as my primary priority.

Instead of joining an exasperated press probing into prominent people's privacies, I would pursue celebrities like King Ahasuerus, Queen Esther and Vashti of Persia. I will serve a much greater purpose by getting a better picture of the Megillah's principal personalities. It provides me the opportunity to prepare posts on the grand procession of Mordechai, Haman and his sons Parshandatha, Parmashta and Poratha, to name only three. Now, on the path to Purim, I prefer to promote the proper performance of the Purim procedures and its prerequisites.

Perhaps you are perplexed and perturbed why a prestigious publication such as this should make such a big production out of Purim, exaggerating it out of proportion to other projects or programs. Why must we prance and pirouette ourselves into a pretzel with all this perennial Purim propaganda? I propose that this is precisely Purim's Problem. If Purim is not paramount in your mind, it probably needs more and better PR.

Purim premises the primacy of Jewish perseverance under pressure and persecution. A pageantry which transpired in Persia approximately 2,300 years ago, Purim is still part and parcel of the present. Posited the Baal Shem Tov (paraphrasing the Talmud): "One who reads the Megillah backwards has not fulfilled his obligation," for Purim is as current and contemporary as today's newspaper.

Purim is pervaded by Divine Providence, as the Megillah prefaces with the Royal parties, the profaning of the pure priestly vessels, the priceless perfumes, progressing with Mordechai's premonition of peril, the persecution perpetrated by Persia's prejudiced premier, Haman, may he and all his conspirators perish. Esther and the Jews prepare to pre-empt Haman's evil plot, while Mordechai is promoted to prominence, protected by purple and imperial paraphernalia. Purim's profound principles may appear to be pre-empted by the peripheral pranks, puerile provisos, philistine pretences, parodies and parades. Yet paradoxically, prose compares Purim to Yom Kippur, the purest day of the year!

Purim pertains to provider and pauper. It speaks to every person of every profile and persuasion, from the protesting preppie to a presiding provost; from the poorest, perspiring paparazzi to the prim & proper president of Purdue U., or the paradigm of any other prosperous corporation.

Please permit me now to express my paranoia. If this prattling will continue to prevail, I may develop a permanent and perpetual purring like a cat that will stray into perpendicular perspectives way beyond the parameters of this precious piece of PR. But without Purim, all these permutations are nothing but parenthetical presuppositions and superfluous superlatives that serve no purpose.

I will thus stop right now, and leave my impressive PR portfolio to the professionals. For simple paparazzi like me, this is enough, period. May the inspiration of Purim permeate our whole year!

Rather than preach Purim principles in the abstract, we should be particular and specific, for proverbially, practice makes perfect. So here is a paragraph on Purim's five important precepts:

- 1) The Megillah parchment is proclaimed on Purim day, and the preceding night.
- 2) We send our friends and peers, by proxy, a pair of provisions: Hamantashen (poppy or prune), Perrier, Pringles, pirogen, pears, peppermints, or other appropriate foods portions, whether or not they have that persistent PR pronunciation, as long as they are edible.
- 3) It is imperative that we open our purse, and provide to the deprived on Poorim. We should proffer a coin (a least a quarter) each, to two poor persons. It is your prerogative how much to give, but the more plentiful the more proper. If there is a paucity of poor persons in your province, participate by placing the proceeds into a pushka/charity can.
- 4) On Purim we partake in a Party, and pour a L'chaim!
- 5) Pray the appropriate prayers, give praise to the Al-mighty, and sing G-d's praises.
Happy Purim!



Dachau's Purim Shpiel

By Solly Ganor

Arriving from Auschwitz in groups of 20, they looked like walking skeletons; triangular faces with pointed chins and sunken cheeks, lips shrunken to thin blue lines, large eyes with a strange luminous sheen. They were known in concentration camp slang as "Musselman," usually the last stage before death.

Their Yiddish accent sounded strange to us Lithuanian Jews. They came from the ghetto of Lodz through Auschwitz, before they were sent to our camp. Our camp was known as the "Outer camp of Dachau, #10," situated near the picturesque town of Utting by Lake Amersee, in a small forest surrounded by green meadows and beautiful landscapes.

I remember the day we were brought there, I thought to myself, "Can anything bad happen amid all this beauty?" But the beauty was in the landscape only; the Germans were sadistic murderers.

The Lodz people fell into the same deceptive trap. After Auschwitz, our camp looked like paradise. Most of them died soon after arriving, from hard labor, beatings and starvation, but they preferred to die here than in Auschwitz's gas chambers.

It was from them that we heard the horrors of gas chambers and crematoriums, where thousands of our people were killed every day. Some told us that they were standing naked before the gas chambers when they were suddenly ordered to dress and were sent to our camp. The Germans must've been desperate for workers to send these walking skeletons all the way from Poland.

Around March 1945, only a few remained alive. One of them was known as "Chaim the Rabbi." We never found out whether he was actually a rabbi, but he always washed his hands and made a blessing before eating. He knew the Jewish calendar dates, and also knew the prayers by heart. At times when the Germans weren't looking, he would invite us to participate in the evening prayers.

Our Jewish camp commander, Burgin, tried to get him easier jobs. Most people died when they had to carry 100 pound cement sacks on their backs, or other chores of heavy labor. He wouldn't have lasted a day on a job like this. He once told me that if he survived, he would get married and have at least a dozen children.

Around the middle of March, we were given a day off. It was a Sunday. The camp was covered with snow, but spring was in the air. We heard rumours of the American breakthrough into Germany and a glimmer of hope was kindled in our hearts.

After breakfast of a slice of mouldy bread, a tiny piece of margarine, and brown water known as "Ersatz Coffee," we returned to our barrack to get some sleep.

Suddenly we saw "Chaim the Rabbi" standing in the snow and shouting, "Haman to the gallows! Haman to the gallows!"

He had on his head a paper crown made out of a cement sack, and he was draped in a blanket that had cut out stars from the same paper attached to it.

Petrified, we watched this strange apparition, barely able to trust our eyes, as he danced in the snow, singing: "I am Ahasuerus, Ahasuerus, the king of Persia!"

Then he stood still, straightened himself up, chin pointed to the sky, his right arm extended in an imperial gesture and shouted: "Haman to the gallows! Haman to the gallows! And we all know which Haman we are talking about!"

We were sure that he had lost his wits, like others in those times. About 50 of us were gaping at the "rabbi," when he said:

"Yidden vos iz mit aich! Jews, what's the matter with you?! Today is Purim! Let's make a Purim Shpiel (play)!"

Back home, a million years ago, this was the time of the year when children dressed up for Purim, playing and eating hamantashen. The "rabbi" remembered the exact date on the Jewish calendar. We hardly knew what day it was.

Chaim then divided the roles of Queen Esther, Mordechai, Vashti and Haman among the onlookers. I received the role of Mordechai, and we all danced in the snow in our Purim Shpiel in Dachau.

But that was not the end of the story. The "rabbi" said that we will get "Mishloach Manot," our Purim food gifts. That was hardly likely to happen.

But, miracle of miracles, that afternoon, an International Red Cross delegation came to our camp. It was the first time that they bothered about us. Still, we welcomed them, because they brought us the "Mishloach Manot" the "rabbi" had promised.

Each of us received a parcel containing a tin of condensed milk, a bar of chocolate, a box of sugar cubes, and a pack of cigarettes. It is impossible to describe our joy! Here we were starving to death, and suddenly on Purim, we received these heavenly gifts. Since then, we never doubted the "rabbi."

His prediction also came true. Two months later Haman/Hitler went to the gallows and shot himself in Berlin, while those of us still alive were rescued by the American army on May 2, 1945.

I lost track of "Chaim the Rabbi" on our Death March from Dachau to Tyrol, but I hope he survived and had many children as he always wanted.

I recall his Shpiel whenever Purim comes around.

Solly Ganor went to fight in Israel's War for Independence, was honourably discharged in 1949, joined the Merchant Marine, and fulfilled his desire to see the world. After 12 years at sea, he married his wife, Pola. They now divide their time between La Jolla, California and Herzlia, Israel.

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ISSUE 919

MOSHIACH MATTERS

In what respect is Purim greater than all the other festivals? All the festivals are sanctified by Israel, and in the future when the world will be completely redeemed — and all its days will be like Shabbat... the light of Purim, which is greater than the light of other festivals, will shed light even in the Messianic age.
(Book of Our Heritage)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



What is the Secret of our People's Survival?

By the Grace of G-d
7th of Adar, 5713 [1953]
Brooklyn, N.Y.

... The story of Purim, as related in the Book of Esther, gives us a clear analysis of the "Jewish problem."

Being dispersed over 127 provinces and lands, their own still in ruins, the Jews undoubtedly differed from one another in custom, garment and tongue according to the place of their dispersal, very much in the same way as Jews in different lands differ nowadays. Yet, though there were Jews who would conceal their Jewishness, Haman, the enemy of the Jews, recognized the essential qualities and characteristics of the Jews which made all of them, with or without their consent, into "one people," namely, "their laws are different from those of any other people" (Book of Esther 3:8).

Hence, in his wicked desire to annihilate the Jews, Haman seeks to destroy "all the Jews, young and old, children and women." Although there were in those days, too, Jews who strictly adhered to the Torah and Mitzvoth, and Jews whose religious ties with their people were weak, or who sought to assimilate themselves, yet none could escape the classification of belonging to that "one people," and every one was included in Haman's cruel decree.

In all ages there were Hamans, yet we have outlived them, thank G-d. Wherein lies the secret of our survival?

The answer will be evident from the following illustration. When a scientist seeks to ascertain the laws governing a certain phenomenon, or to discover the essential properties of a certain element in nature, he must undertake a series of experiments under the most varied conditions in order to discover those properties or laws which pertain under all conditions alike. No true scientific law can be deduced from a minimum number of experiments, or from experiments under similar or only slightly varied conditions, for the results as to what is essential and what is secondary or quite unimportant would then not be conclusive.

The same principle should be applied to our people. It is one of the oldest in the world, beginning its national history from the Revelation at Mount Sinai, some 3300 years ago. In the course of these long centuries our people has lived under extremely varied conditions, in different times and different places all over the world. If we wish to discover the essential elements making up the cause and very basis of the existence of our people and its unique strength, we must conclude that it is not its peculiar physical or intrinsic mental characteristics, not its tongue, manners and customs (in a wider sense), nor even its racial purity (for there were times in the early history of our people, as well as during the Middle Ages and even recent times, when whole ethnic groups and tribes have become proselytes and part of our people).

The essential element which unites our "dispersed and scattered people" and makes it "one people" throughout its dispersion and regardless of time, is the Torah and Mitzvoth, the Jewish way of life which has remained basically the same throughout the ages and in all places. The conclusion is clear and beyond doubt: It is the Torah and Mitzvoth which made our people indestructible on the world scene in the face of massacres and pogroms aiming at our physical destruction, and in the face of ideological onslaughts of foreign cultures aiming at our spiritual destruction.

Purim teaches us the age-old lesson, which has been verified even most recently, to our sorrow, that no manner of assimilationism, not even such which is extended over several generations, provides an escape from the Hamans and Hitlers; nor can any Jew sever his ties with his people by attempting such an escape.

On the contrary: Our salvation and our existence depend precisely upon the fact that "their laws are different from those of any other people."

Purim reminds us that the strength of our people as a whole, and of each individual Jew and Jewess, lies in a closer adherence to our ancient spiritual heritage which contains the secret of harmonious life, hence of a healthy and happy life. All other things in our spiritual and temporal life must be free from any contradiction to the basis and essence of our existence, and must be attuned accordingly in order to make for the utmost harmony, and add to our physical and spiritual strength, both of which go hand in hand in Jewish life.

With best wishes for a joyous Purim, and may we live to see a world free of Hamans and all types of Amalekites, the enemies of the Jews, of their body, soul and faith,

Cordially yours,
[Signed: Menachem Schneerson]

A WORD from the Director

The Baal Shem Tov's explanation of the Mishna "He who reads the Megila backwards has not fulfilled his obligation" is well known: If someone reads the Megila thinking that it only relates to an historical event and that the miracle is not happening in our own times, he's missing the point. The purpose of reading the Megila on Purim is to teach us how to conduct ourselves today.

At the time of Haman's decree, the Jewish people enjoyed a relatively high standing in Persian society. Mordechai was a much respected personage in the kingdom, and having once saved the king's life, was accorded certain privileges. Esther, the queen, was the most important woman in the realm. In other words, the Jews were politically "connected." It would have been logical to think that once Haman's evil plan became known, the Jews would have capitalized on their "protektziya" and tried to influence Ahaseurus to nullify the decree.

But as the Megila relates, the first thing Mordechai did was "don sackcloth and ashes and go out into the city." Only afterward did he appeal to Esther to intervene with the king. Likewise, Esther requested that the Jews fast on her behalf. Instead of trying to improve her physical appearance to win the king's favor, she fasted and prayed for three days, something which no doubt did little to enhance her looks. Both Mordechai and Esther realized that Haman's decree would not be nullified through the natural order of things, but only through teshuva, a complete and sincere return to G-d.

How is this relevant to us? Whenever a Jew encounters a difficulty or danger and thinks he can solve the problem by acting "logically," he should remember the lesson of the Megila: Working within the natural order is the second step, not the first. The rules that govern our existence are different from other peoples'! The first thing to do is strengthen our connection with G-d, learning His Torah and observing His mitzvot. In that way, salvation and deliverance will surely come.

J. I. Gutnick

Purim

On Purim, we include the V'al Hanissim section in all the day's prayers, as well as in the day's Grace after Meals. This prayer describes the Purim story and thanks G-d for the "miracles, redemptions, mighty deeds, saving acts and wonders" that He wrought for our ancestors on this day many years ago.

On Purim, children, and some adventurous adults masquerade—an allusion to G-d's hand in the Purim miracle: which was disguised by natural events. It is suggested that children are encouraged to dress up as good characters, for example as Mordechai and Esther.

Many communities have the custom of serving kreplach (meat-filled dumplings) during the Purim meal. The "hidden" meat is an allusion to the Purim miracle which, though orchestrated by G-d's hand, was hidden in seemingly natural events.

Even if the meal lasts well into the night, the V'al Hanissim is still recited in the Grace after Meals.

Before the daytime Megillah reading, while the reader recites the Shehecheyanu blessing — which thanks G-d for "granting us life, sustaining and enabling us to reach this occasion" — the reader and congregation have in mind that the blessing also refers to the day's other mitzvot: Mishloach Manot (gifts of 2 foods to a friend), Matanot Le'vyonim (charity given to at least 2 poor people), and the Purim feast.

One who is stuck on Purim without a kosher Megillah, and no synagogue in the vicinity, should nevertheless read the Megillah — from a printed text or on-line — both Purim night and day. The blessings, however, are not recited in such an instance.

CUSTOMS CORNER

It Happened Once...



The bitter cold chilled Ivan's bones and fear made his heart tremble. The rumours of the sadistic Bolsheviks who were nearing the city of Rostov frightened him terribly.

Suddenly he felt powerful hands grabbing him. In the morning the body of the officer was found with the warning: "Beware! The Bolsheviks are coming!"

The Jews were the most shaken by news of the Bolsheviks' approach, as the study of Torah and observance of its precepts was a serious crime to the Bolsheviks. Only in the Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva was the fear of the Bolsheviks not felt.

The Yeshiva students drew their strength from their Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch - the fifth Rebbe of the Chabad dynasty. The Rebbe encouraged them to study and pray as usual, and the yeshiva bustled with life.

The Bolsheviks arrived and Rostov became a city of flames, with the Bolsheviks beating and killing anyone they chanced upon.

Soon the holiday of Purim approached. The Rebbe isolated himself. The students could not make peace with the Rebbe's isolation. They remembered the great joy of Purim, when Jews celebrate the victory over Haman who tried to "destroy, kill and annihilate."

Finally, on Purim, two yeshiva students entered the Rebbe's room. After a few silent moments they heard the Rebbe's voice: "The Bolsheviks are in the city. I cannot exist together with them. But for the sake of Purim, we'll forget about the situation. Go buy plenty of vodka and let there be light for the Jews!"

The news spread and the yeshiva students took their places for the Purim gathering. The Rebbe spoke and all listened. When the Rebbe concluded, an older Chasid began singing a soulful Chasidic niggun (melody). Everyone joined in, singing from the depths of their hearts. Suddenly the door burst open. A Chasid stood there and cried in fear, "The Bolsheviks are coming."

The singing stopped: everyone was gripped with terror. The Rebbe, disregarded the news, and began singing a niggun very softly. The melody touched and calmed the frightened crowd. The Rebbe concluded the melody, and began saying a Chasidic discourse. The room was silent; the only audible sound was the Rebbe's voice.

Suddenly the silence was broken by loud knocking. The Rebbe continued speaking as though nothing was happening. After a few moments one of the members of the Rebbe's family said: "Rebbe, the Bolsheviks are demanding that we let them in; if they see us gathered here it will be our end...G-d forbid." The Rebbe interrupted the discourse and said, "Open the door for them."

Two tall and fearsome looking Bolsheviks came in, they asked, "What is this gathering? What is going on?"

Trembling, one of the Chasidim called out, "This is the Rebbe Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch. He is teaching Torah to his Chasidim; he cannot be bothered." The two soldiers were astounded, but they turned on their heels and departed.

"An open miracle!" the Chasidim exclaimed to one another. They felt protected and sang with greater fervour. Two hours later the Bolsheviks knocked again... "Rebbe, what shall we do?" several frightened Chasidim cried out.

The Rebbe said, "Open for them! I don't fear them." The Chasidim understood that another great miracle was about to occur. The armed Bolsheviks burst through the door. The Rebbe ignored them and said, "We will begin saying some words of Torah." The Rebbe raised his voice and began, "Amalek is first among the nations but his end will be destruction."

The Bolsheviks' faces softened. Their swords returned to their sheaths, and they watched with growing perplexity as the Chasidim listened to the Rebbe. They looked at one another and then, without a word, turned and left.

The Chasidim thanked G-d for miraculously saving them and for giving them their Rebbe in whose presence evil had no power. Everyone was deeply moved, feeling in their hearts without knowing why that this would be their last gathering with the Rebbe. A week after Purim the Rebbe became very weak, and on the second of Nissan his soul departed in holiness and purity.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

...To keep the lamp constantly burning... in the communion tent, outside the curtain (Ex. 27:20-21)

The G-dly light within every Jew has to be present and noticeable not just when one is in the "communion tent" - the synagogue or study hall, and not just at the time that one is involved in prayer, Torah study or other mitzvot; but also "outside of the curtain" - outside, on the street, in one's daily activities and in one's actions between oneself and others. (*Yalkut Eliezer*)

Why was olive oil chosen as the substance with which the Menora in the Holy Temple was lit each day? Olive oil can only be extracted from the olive by crushing the fruit. This contains a practical lesson for every Jew: Torah knowledge and fine character traits are not automatically acquired; a person must invest hard work and much effort to attain them. (*Parparot LaTorah*)

And Aaron shall bear the judgment of the Children of Israel upon his heart, before the L-rd continually (Ex. 28:30)

Aaron, the High Priest, was the "heart" of the Jewish people, keenly sensing the pain and suffering of each individual, and constantly praying to G-d that He alleviate it. (*Be'er Mayim Chaim*)

And I will dwell among the Children of Israel, and I will be their G-d (Elokim) (Ex. 29:45)

Why does the Torah use the Divine Name "Elokim," which indicates G-d's attribute of judgment? When a father loves his child, he expresses that love by protecting him from harm and judging anyone who attempts to hurt him. Similarly, our Father in Heaven uses His attribute of judgment when dealing with the enemies of the Jewish people. (*The Maggid of Mezeritch*)

You must command the Israelites to bring to you (Ex. 27:20)

The Menora was kindled by Aaron, the high priest, whereas the collecting of the oil was the responsibility of Moses. The Menora is a metaphor for the Jewish people and its seven branches allude to the seven distinct categories within the Jewish nation. The lighting of the Menora is the apportioning of energies to each of the categories to assist in their G-dly service. The gathering together of these different factions into one entity, however, is far more difficult. That had to be accomplished by the leader of the generation. (*Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS TETZAVEH 13 ADAR • 27 FEBRUARY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:48 PM
	MINCHA:	7:55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS :	8:25 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LAST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	10:17 AM
	MINCHA:	7:45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:45 PM
	MEGILLAH READING:	9:00 PM
PURIM SUNDAY:	SHACHARIS:	9:15 AM
	MEGILLA READING APPROX:	9:45 AM
	MINCHA:	4:30 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN- FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	7:45 PM
	MAARIV:	8:35 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 26 FEBRUARY 2010



Begins	Ends
7:48	MELBOURNE 8:45
7:40	ADELAIDE 8:36
6:06	BRISBANE 6:58
6:53	DARWIN 7:43
6:03	GOLD COAST 6:56
6:38	PERTH 7:32
7:19	SYDNEY 8:14
7:29	CANBERRA 8:24
7:43	LAUNCESTON 8:42
7:48	AUCKLAND 8:44
7:53	WELLINGTON 8:52

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

זצוקללה"ה נב"מ זי"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.