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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

March 2024
Adar II 5784

SHABBAT TIMES

🕒 Parasha - 🕒 Candle Lighting
🕒 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)

15 & 16 March – 6 Adar II

🕒 Pekudei

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 7:36

22 & 23 March – 13 Adar II

🕒 Vayikra (Zachor)

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 6:54

29 & 30 March – 20 Adar II

🕒 Tzav (Parah)

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 6:46

5 & 6 April – 27 Adar II

🕒 Shemini (Hachodesh)

🕒 6:15 – 🕒 6:32

RABBI'S MESSAGE

"And it was the opposite, as the Jews now ruled over their enemies" (Book of Esther 9,1).

The year was 1991 and Operation Desert Storm was at its height. Iraq's ruler of the time had threatened to send deadly missiles towards Israel if the US attacked. The conflict had absolutely nothing to do with the Jewish State. It was actually a coalition of countries, led by the United States, fighting to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion, but as the operation began Saddam Hussein kept his word. Night after night, a barrage

of Scuds made their way towards cities in the Holy Land.

Israelis could not sleep at night, sheltered in their safe rooms. There was fear of a chemical attack and everyone had been instructed to seal a room off for safety. This is where they waited anxiously, with their government issue gas masks nearby, for the all clear to sound.

The World Wide Web did not yet exist, but real-time international news had just landed on our shores, here in South Africa, in the form of CNN. This meant that miles away, we sat with our Tehillim books open, fighting a spiritual war against the Tillim (missiles in Hebrew), unable to go to bed until we too heard the sound of the all clear.

It seemed the conflict would last forever. Then suddenly and unexpectedly, on 27 February, the First Gulf War came to an end, with the defeated Iraqi forces retreating from Kuwait. On the Hebrew calendar, the date was 14 Adar. I nearly

missed hearing the good news, busy as I was with the Purim observances on that day.

It was exactly, as the Book of Esther described, a total reversal. Just like that miracle of Purim 2500 years ago. Instead of the Jews cowering in fear of their enemies, they were now walking around with their heads held high, grateful for their victory.

I am reminiscing as the month of Adar (II) now begins, with Purim a couple of weeks away on Sunday 24th March. It's déjà-vu. Once again Israel is engaged in an awful conflict, with no end in sight. But this is the month that was "transformed from sorrow to joy and from mourning to celebration" (Esther 9,22)

We pray for a miracle... May the current situation permanently and irrevocably be transformed to the exact opposite. Purim Day would be nice, but we won't complain if it happens even sooner.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

I have always told my children that I don't want surprises... I like to know in advance that they are coming to visit. I like to be able to clear my diary. To organize their rooms. To put their favourite foods in the freezer and to enjoy the days of anticipation for their upcoming visit and not just the days that they are here. So with a lot of gratitude, I am now counting the days until Pesach. I am making lists and lists, in my head and on paper and I am following, with great strictness, the dictum to learn about and prepare for the upcoming holiday at least a month in advance.

While I am excitedly preparing, I cannot help thinking of all the people in Eretz Yisrael, especially the families of the hostages, the families of the soldiers, the people who have been displaced from their homes and the days that they are counting, the plans that they are making and the "lists" that they are writing with their prayers, hopes and anticipations.

We must not let their pain fade from our everyday lives. We must think of them in every single thing we do. We must not stop praying for a positive end to this horror.

Have a good month.

Rivky

SERVICE TIMES
SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday & Public Holidays	8:00
Monday & Thursday	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:30

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Friday	6:00
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DVAR TORAH
**IS THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN
DANGER OF EXTINCTION?**

By Gila Ross (aish.com)

According to the Purim story, that is not the right question.

"It's likely that the Jewish people will, in this century, become essentially extinct," writes Marty Nemko in a Psychology Today article about the contribution of the Jewish people. He's not the only one worrying about the continuity of the Jewish people.

With the largest group of Jews being those who do not identify with Judaism, and the threats of antisemitism and assimilation, it's no wonder people are questioning the future of the Jewish people.

It's an understandable question, but it's the wrong question. This question surfaced during the Purim story. Faced with what looked like certain and complete annihilation, Mordechai, the leader of the Jews, turned to his niece Esther. Esther had been chosen by King Achashverosh as his queen, and was strategically positioned to go and beg the king to rescind the decree.

But Esther had a valid objection. Achashverosh had a rule that if someone came to him unannounced and he didn't stretch out his royal sceptre, he could kill them. And this king had quite a track record; he had recently killed his previous wife Vashti! Esther was hesitant about going and risking her life.

It's a pivotal moment in the story, the fate of the Jews is hanging in balance. It seems like Esther is the only hope. Yet Mordechai delivers what is perhaps the worst motivational speech in history. He tells her, "Esther if you don't go, the Jews will be saved from elsewhere, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows, if not for this moment you were chosen to be queen."

If that was me I would have replied, "Fine, if the Jews will be saved anyway, why on earth should I risk my life?"

Yet Esther understood this differently and responded, "I want you and the Jews to fast and pray and I will go to the king. And if I die, I die."

How did she understand Mordechai's message? And how could Mordechai be so certain that the Jews would survive this genocidal threat?

Eternal Covenant

Mordechai reminded Esther that G-d made a promise to the Jewish people that He will never allow them to become extinct. There will always be a Jewish people and a Jewish future. As G-d told Abraham, "I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your G-d and the G-d of your descendants after you" (Genesis, 17:7). The Talmud says, "The Jewish people will never be destroyed. As it is written, 'For I am with you to save you, says the Lord' (Jeremiah 30:11)" (Yoma 86a).

G-d promised that the Jewish people will be an eternal nation. But there is no guarantee for every individual Jew.

So the answer to will there be a Jewish future is a resounding yes, because G-d promised that the Jewish people will be an eternal nation.

So why did Esther agree to risk her life if she knew that there would be a Jewish future? That was in the second part of what Mordechai told her. Yes, we have a promise that there will always be a Jewish people, but there is no promise that each and every individual Jew will remain part of the nation. Mordechai told Esther, if you don't go the Jewish people will be saved, but the question is: will you be part of the Jewish people? Don't think your personal survival is reassured. Perhaps this is your moment to step up to the plate for the Jewish people?"

Indeed, Esther heard the call and she went to the king, choosing to remain with her people. It was the moment that transformed her from the passive niece of Mordechai, who did what he told her to do, to the heroine of the Purim story who brought about the saving of the Jewish people.

"Will there be a Jewish future?" is not the right question. The question each of us needs to ask is: will you, your children and your grandchildren be part of the Jewish future? There is no guarantee; that is up to the choices we make..

THE STORY OF PURIM IN RHYME

(chabad.org)

A royal party like you've never seen

But Vashti refuses to be the dancing queen

A drunken king orders her killed

Leaving a position to be filled

The great beauty pageant begins

And a nice Jewish girl wins

While the Jewish community kvelled

Her religious identity, Esther withheld

Meanwhile Mordechai is the talk of the town

To Haman, the wicked, he won't bow down

Too bad Haman has a short fuse

And decides to kill all of the Jews

Esther is asked to intercede with the king

But who knows what that could bring?

What mood will he be in when she arrives?

This guy has no qualms about killing his wives

So the Jews fast and pray

And Esther prepares a royal buffet

Mordechai is hopeful and is not scared

As Haman is having his gallows prepared

A reversal of fortunes, a twist of fate

Leaves Haman a bit irate

G-d's plan is put into gear

Haman's end is very near

Esther proves to be a queen

Of great spirit and grace

And Haman is hanged in Mordechai's place

The king turns over a new leaf

Mordechai's the new chief

The Jews are empowered to fight for their lives

Justice triumphs and Judaism survives

The thirteenth day of Adar comes

And the Persian army succumbs

Gone was the threat of annihilation

Purim became a day of celebration

So grab a Megillah and some Tequilla

Let the spirit of the day be your guide

There's no greater high than Jewish

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Ina Orlanski on the birth of a granddaughter born to Daniel and Isa Witz
- Gary and Melanie Epstein on the birth of a granddaughter born to Anthony and Sheree Sarak
- Philip and Rilla Jacobson on the birth of a great granddaughter born in Israel to Aaron and Elke Zalchman

- Doris Samson on the birth of a great granddaughter born to Yehudah and Shifra in Jerusalem
- Doris Samson on the birth of a great granddaughter born to Tova and Dan in Sydney

WEDDINGS

- Martin and Sylvia Lewison on the forthcoming marriage of their son, Adam to Tehilla Goodman, on 19th March

BIRTHDAYS

- Clive Strimling on his 75th birthday on the 2nd of March
- Norman Hirschowitz on his 80th birthday on the 3rd of March

REFUAH SHLEIMA

We wish a speedy recovery to:

- Fay Paul

BEREAVEMENTS

We wish long life to

- Carl Bricker and Cheryl Bricker on the death of their sister, Rosalie Solarsh
- Martin Flekser on the death of his sister, Valerie Bieber, in the USA.

May Hashem comfort them and their family among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem and grant them long life.

**FAST OF ESTHER****THURSDAY 21 MARCH**

Fast begins: 5:04 a.m. – Fast ends: 6:35 p.m.

**PURIM****SATURDAY NIGHT 23 MARCH**

Megilah reading: 7:15 p.m. -- Refreshments after Megilah reading

SUNDAY 24 MARCH

Shacharit: 7:45 a.m.; **Megilah Reading: 8:30 a.m. -- Breakfast after the service**

Second Megilah Reading: 10:30 a.m. -- Brunch after the Megilah reading

