

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

TESAVEH/PURIM

FEBRUARY 22-23, 2013

13 ADAR 5773

DEDICATIONS: In memory of Leah Bat Esther – Lillian Bibi Grossman - 16 Adar

SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION OF LONG BEACH SCHEDULE

Candle Lighting - 5:20pm / Mincha / Kabbalat Shabbat - 5:20pm

We look forward to having Rabbi Dr. Meyer Abittan and his family with us this Shabbat

Shacharit Shabbat Morning - 9:00am Shabbat Zachor.

According to most Poskim, the reading of Parashat Zachor is a Torah obligation. Since the Halacha is well-known that "Mitzvot require intention", one must take care while listening to Parashat Zachor to have in mind to fulfill the Torah obligation of remembering the actions of Amalek and obligation to annihilate them. Similarly, the one reading from the Torah must have in mind that the entire congregation will be fulfilling their obligation by listening to his reading. The overall opinion is that women are not obligated, but for those women (and men) who come late, we will B'H take out the Torah before Mincha (after lunch) at about 12:15 and read it a second time.

Kiddush this week sponsored by Hindy and Matthew Mizrahi in honor of Bobby's Birthday 7 adar. abal 120.

Kiddush also sponsored by Maria Samailov to commemorate the yehrtzeit of her Mother.

Kids dessert sponsored by the Shetrit's in honor of Moshe's birthday

Mincha Shabbat Day - 12:20 – Amidah after 12:36pm

Shabbat Ends - 6:20pm –

Please do not eat until after Megilah and Havdalah

We will return for Arbit and Megilah at 7:15

The custom of "Zecher La'mahasit Ha'shekel" requires donating the value of nine grams of silver, which this year (2013) amounts to approximately \$12. Some have the custom to give the value of (1) one Ma'hasit Ha'shekel for each family member in their household. Others have the custom to give the value of (3) three Ma'Hasit Has'shekels per person. We will have Silver Coins and B'H, replicas of the Half Shekel from Temple times to symbolically do this Misvah

We will also be collecting Matanot LaEvyonim, for The Rambam writes: It is better to give more gifts to the poor than to (spend more) on one's Purim seuda or on sending gifts to one's friends, for there is no great and glorious joy like the joy of gladdening the hearts of poor people, widows, and orphans... One who gladdens the hearts of these unfortunate people is comparable to the Divine presence. We see from this Rambam that the primary concern one must have on Purim is to create simcha among those who are less fortunate.

Dairy dinner following the reading of the megila.

Lots of fun for the kids with face painting, purim skit, and arts and crafts.

\$100 Amazon gift certificate or cash for the best costume – child or adult! –

\$25 for each of four runner ups!

The children have been re memorizing the 613 mitzvot and we are up to #17!. We are going to have a sort of mitzvah bee contest for the kids who remember the most mitzvot. Show them your support

The top 5 winners get \$20 each and the next five get \$10 each.

This Sunday morning is Purim – Shacharit at 7:30 AM

Followed by Megilah at 8AM

This will give us time to complete Shacharit with sufficient time to drive up towards Great Neck for the Brit Milah - Mazal Tov to Debbie and Richard Soleymanzadeh, to Gitty and Joe and all the family on the birth of twins. A baby boy and a girl. B'H the Brit Milah and Baby-Naming will take place on: Sunday, February 24, at 10:00am, ceremony to be performed "sharply" at 10:30. Temple Torah of Little Neck - 5427 Little Neck Pkwy.

PLEASE SEE ADDITIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS BELOW

**Daily Services - Shacharit
Monday thru Friday - 7:00am SHARP**

Class with Rabbi Yenay Monday night at 7PM –

Mazal Tov to Abie and Rachel Abittan on the birth of a granddaughter to their children Aliza and Ben Portal. Mazal Tov to the entire family.

Our Sisterhood dinner this year will be held this Wednesday February 27th at Chosen Island and our Guest of Honor will be---Lisa Gaon!! Reserve the date and invite your friends - Remember this dinner is for men too!

Next Saturday night, March 2, 2013, The Sephardic Congregation Of Long Beach will host a talk by Dr. Reeva Simon entitled "Jews and Islam: An Inconsistent Relationship. From the Golden Age to Modern Times." Dr. Simon is a former Associate Director of The Middle East Institute at Columbia University and professor of Middle East history at Columbia and Yeshiva Universities and the author of a number of books on the topic

Dr. Simon's talk will begin at 8pm, with a reception to follow. Suggested donation is \$10.

For those who wish to be added to the new Synagogue announcement newsletter, send an email to rabbi@benaisher.org requesting that you be added to the new list and we will forward your request. Thanks to those who responded already. You can also email directly to News@SephardicNews.com

Last year we had a most amazing Pesach in the Synagogue with two of the most extraordinary Seders I've ever attended. Although our family typically goes to Florida each Pesach, we stayed in New York the past two years. This year we really want to spend the holiday with our family so we'll be in Miami.

We have received a number of inquiries from people who would love to attend a communal Seder again at the Synagogue. Many are still not back to normal at home. To have the Sedarim at the Synagogue, we need a committee of volunteers. Rebecca and Herman have volunteered to chair this. I know Roni and Sam offered to help. We will need help raising funds, doing errands, setting up and cleaning up. Let Rebecca know what you can do. Rabbi Colish will lead the Seder this year and we'll try to teach the kids "the who knows one" in Arabic.

The cost will be \$75/ adult, \$50/child. All reservations and monies must be in by March 10...NO EXCEPTIONS! Please respond by email to Rebecca at uft183@yahoo.com or by calling her at home at 432-5690. We must stress the need for volunteers. We also need sponsors for those who may need a reduced rate or who cannot pay. We are all obligated to have guests for Pesach – perhaps each family can sponsor, one or two people or an entire family for one or both nights, we wont need to turn anyone away.

If you wish to sponsor a family for both nights \$700, one night \$350, a couple for both nights \$300, or person for both nights, \$150 or give any other amount, please let us know. We would like to sponsor 10 families at a cost of \$7000, please reply to this e-mail

Lisa Gaon suggested we post the following:

Only \$100 for a 96-Piece Kitchen Set for Meat, Dairy, & Pareve from The Israeli Source (\$285 Value), Plus FREE Shipping!

<http://www.jdeal.com/deal/30078/the-israel-source-kitchenware/new-york>

Lisa also sent this note: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: Red Cross Move In-Assistance Program - The Red Cross will provide financial assistance to clients moving from transitional to long-term accommodations. They will fund expenses such as first month's rent, security deposits, broker's fees, and moving costs. Call 877.733.2767.

To subscribe or to unsubscribe, please reply to ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com

Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 5PM – NEW TIME TIL WE CHANGE THE CLOCK. We need help, Please join us! 212-289-2100

A great engagement, shower or wedding gift:
Cooking lessons with a trained professional chef.
Email: MikhaylaBB@gmail.com.

Editors Notes

Pressure

The momentary action of Achashevrosch handing his ring to Haman did more to motivate the Jewish people's return to Hashem than the pleading of 48 prophets.

A few weeks back, we read in Shemot Chapter 16, the chapter of the Maan. A friend came up to me at the conclusion of the Aliyah and asked me to explain why the chapter concludes with the verse "And the omer is one tenth of an ephah." That verse should have come earlier when the Maan is described and really has no place as a concluding verse.

If we look to Rashi we find that his comment based on Eruvin 38b explains what an Omer measurement is: one tenth of an ephah: The ephah equals three se'ahs, and the se'ah equals six kavs, and the kav equals four logs, and the log equals six eggs, etc ...

But he does not explain why the verse comes where it comes. Others comment that the obligation to bring the Omer offering will come when the daily maan comes to an end. Still I wasn't satisfied until I went to Rabbeynu Bachya.

We see that the chapter that follows and concludes the book of Vayishlach is a complaint followed by the attack of Amalek. And this leaves us with another question. How does the verse describing an Omer connect us to an attack from Amalek?

Although an Omer is not a huge amount, it seems it satisfied the people and very quickly, although the falling Maan was miraculous, the people took it for granted. And as soon as we take Hashem and his gifts for granted, as soon as it all becomes nature or happenstance, the master of happenstance Amalek comes in to attack.

The Rabbi's tell us that even at the sea when the waters split, they split only after Nachshon stepped in and the waters reached his mouth and then it

continued to split in front of them as if it might crash down on them at any moment.

Pressure keeps us focused. Need keeps us connected.

My father always taught us that we should pray each day that Hashem will provide for that day, just like the Maan. We should have faith that as a mother provides for her baby, Hashem will each day provide for us. But we shouldn't take it for granted and whatever he does give us that day we need to share with others.

Moses warns us time and again that when we become comfortable, we will forget.

Anytime we pass the Lotto sign on the highway or by a store, who doesn't pray that they win the Lotto? Who doesn't pray that he can strike it rich and never worry about struggling tomorrow? Who doesn't want to have enough on the side to comfortably face that rainy day? Treasure; the ultimate blessing we dream of.

Yet if our goal is to be connected to G-d and focus on our relationship with him, then maybe there is a real silver lining in our daily struggle.

Human nature dictates that for most of us, the only time we really pray, the only time our thoughts can truly focus on heaven is when we have a need. The soldier in the foxhole surely has Kavanah.

Rabbi Abittan would elaborate on this when he explained that nothing is granted without tefillah. And that prayer that originates from the inner chambers of one's heart has great power.

He would tell of the Koehn Gadol who enter into the holiest place on earth, the Kodosh HaKadoshim on Yom Kippur. In his short prayer, the Kohen Gadol asks Hashem not to permit the prayers of travelers to impede the prayers of the nation. When the nations pray for rain, they express an important national necessity. No rain; no food. While rain is essential for those who are home, the traveler would benefit greatly from good weather. Rain causes great difficulty for the traveler.

This seems mind boggling. The entire nation is praying daily for rain and we are worried that a few isolated travelers who are inconvenienced by this rain have the ability to prevent the rain from falling? ! Is this not incredible? How can the prayers of a few mitigate the prayers of a nation? True, these

individuals might be vexed by the rain, but the nation needs the rain in order to survive!

It seems though that walking on the rain, with their wagons and horses and seeing the wheels stick into the mud and their wares potentially becoming ruined forces this desperate traveler to turn to heaven. His lack of comfort, his need and his fears become a tool which connects him to G-d and makes his prayer very real.

In the last few months while the rest of the world goes on, we in the flood zones were filled with need. If not for ourselves then for our friends and neighbors. On the one hand, it's a terrible tragedy. On the other though it has become a tool which binds us to Heaven and to each other.

So keep in mind when the pressure starts to mount, that it's not all bad. Let's use that pressure as a tool and bind us to Hashem. Let's remember that the crux of entire story of Purim occurs over a 72 hour period. Mordechai puts on his sack cloth on erev Pesach. The people begin to fast. And by the time the second Seder is over, Haman is being led to the tree and his ring has been given to Mordechai. It's the pressure that takes us from sack cloth to *La'yehudim hayta orah v'simcha v'sason v'ikar*. It what connects to G-d and brings light and joy, happiness and honor.

May it be so in our days.

Shabbat Shalom and Happy Purim
David Bibi

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: The Parsha opens with the commandment to use pure olive oil in lighting the Menorah. Aharon and his four sons were selected to be the Kohanim. The basic garments of a Kohain consisted of a turban, shirt, pants, and belt. The Kohain Gadol wore four additional garments: the Me'ill - a long outer robe; the Ayphod - a quilted vest or bibbed apron; the Choshen - jeweled breastplate; and the Tzitz - engraved, golden, forehead plate. The quilted vest is described in this Aliya along with the two Shoham stones. These were engraved with the names of the 12 Tribes and set on the shoulders of the Kohain Gadol.

2nd Aliya: The cloth settings for the Shoham stones are described along with the jeweled breastplate. The method of fastening the breastplate to the quilted vest is explained. The breastplate was a quilted garment set with 12 stones, each engraved with the name of a Tribe.

3rd Aliya: The long outer robe is described. The hem of this garment was edged with small bells intended to announce the presence of the Kohain Gadol as he walked through the Bais Hamikdash. (From this the Gemara derives that a husband, prior to entering the door of his own home, out of respect for his wife, should announce his arrival by knocking on the door.) The engraved, golden forehead plate and the Kohain Gadol's turban are described, along with the four basic garments worn by all Kohanim. All the garments were hand made of the finest white linen. The special vestments of the Kohain Gadol were woven from a special thread spun from five different colored threads, including a thread made of pure gold.

4th, 5th, & 6th Aliyot: The seven day ceremony consecrating the Kohanim into their priestly service is detailed along with the consecration of the Mizbeach - Altar.

7th Aliya: The last vessel to be described is the inner, golden Altar, used to burn the daily incense offering. This offering, as well as the daily preparation for the lighting of the Menorah, could only be performed by the Kohain Gadol. The special mixture of incense called the Kitores, could only be formulated for this purpose. (The renowned biblical archeologist, Vendell Jones, claims to have unearthed a hidden cache containing 600 kilos of the Kitores, buried before the 1st Bais Hamikdash was destroyed.)

On Shabbat Zachor, we read the additional Parsha found in Devarim, 25:17. As a nation, we were commanded to destroy the nation of Amalek. This nation came into existence at the same time as we did. Esav's son Elifaz had a son Amalek. Esav and Elifaz's legacy to Amalek was an undying hatred against the children of Yakov.

At the time of the exodus from Egypt, Amalek traveled hundreds of miles to ambush the newly freed nation in the hope of destroying them. We, as a nation, did not pose any threat to their sovereignty. They lived to the east of Canaan and were not among the Seven Nations occupying Eretz Yisroel. Nevertheless, their irrational hatred against Hashem and us compelled them to attack a harmless and seemingly defenseless nation. In the aftermath of their attack we were commanded to always remember the evil that is Amalek. It is the reading of this Parsha that is the fulfillment of this Biblical commandment. This mitzvah, according to most authorities, is not restricted by time and must be fulfilled by men and woman.

The Rabbi's selected the Shabbos before Purim for the fulfillment of this Mitzvah because Haman was a direct descendent of Amalek, and Mordecai was a direct descendent of King Saul. The entire story of Purim is directly linked to this Mitzvah and the missed opportunity of King Saul that we read about in the Haftorah.

This week's Haftorah takes place 2,873 years ago. In the year 2883 - 878 b.c.e. King Shaul was sent by G-d to destroy the nation of Amalek. Agag was their king, and it was a singular moment in history when every member of Amalek was in one place at the same time. Shaul, as per Shmuel Hanavi's instructions, was successful in destroying Amalek. However, as the Haftorah clearly states, Shaul had mercy and allowed the king, Agag, to remain alive, as well as the captured cattle. The commentaries state that in the interim, Agag was able to impregnate a maidservant, from which the nation of Amalek would survive. Hashem told Shmuel that Shaul's neglect of His command to totally destroy Amalek must result in Shaul losing the right to be king. Despite Shmuel's prayers for mercy, Hashem didn't relent, and Shmuel went to tell Shaul of G-d's punishment.

The connection to Purim is well documented. Haman is called, "the Agagi". He was a direct descendent of Agag. In ascertaining Hashem's mercy and justice, we are forced to acknowledge our limited understanding. The notion of killing men woman and children is thankfully foreign and abhorrent to us. Nevertheless, Shaul was commanded to eradicate the entire nation.

The Haftorah identifies Shaul's sin in not fulfilling G-d's commandment as misplaced mercy. Had he known that, 521 years later, his merciful act would result in the potential extermination of the entire Jewish people, Shaul would not have had mercy on Agag and the cattle. It is the responsibility of a king to think beyond the immediate and do what has to be done to guarantee the future of his nation. Being that no single human can ever guarantee the future, he has no choice but to listen to Hashem's commandments and do as he is told. That insures the future.

The message of Purim is the story of our Haftorah. Hashem works His miracles through the normal passage of time. Actions done today set in motion ripples in time that radiate far into the future.

May today's celebration of Purim set in motion the redemption of tomorrow!

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

**"And sending portions, each man to his friend."
(Esther 9:22)**

Purim is the happiest time of the year. Many of us are busy with mishloah manot, food gifts, to our friends. Rabbi Dani Staum offers a novel reason for the misvah of giving mishloah manot on Purim.

The Gemara (Megillah 12a) says that Haman's decree was punishment for the Jews' bowing to the idol of Nebuchadnetzar. The reason they were ultimately saved was that their bowing was only external. They bowed because they feared Nebuchadnetzar, but in their hearts they remained loyal believers in Hashem. So too the decree of Haman was only an "external" factor, which catapulted them to complete teshubah.

Thus each person knew that his bowing was insincere for in his heart he was still faithful. However he had no way of knowing that his friend, whom he saw bowing to the idol, felt the same way. Therefore every Jew suspected his "friend" of disloyalty. On Purim, we offer each other gifts to demonstrate that we are indeed all friends. Our celebration attests to the fact that not only do we believe in Hashem, but we also believe on the genuineness and inherent faith of all of our fellow Jews.

The Ohev Yisrael of Apt once quipped that there is a hint to the misvah of loving your fellow Jew in every perashah of the Torah. One of his students asked where there is a hint in Parashat Balak. The Rabbi replied that the very name of the perashah was a rashe tevot (acrostic for the words) of Ve'ahavta l'reacha kamocho (love your fellow man as yourself). The student replied that the spelling doesn't work out! Balak begins with a "bet" while Ve'ahavta starts with a "vav." And the last letter is a "kuf" while kamocho starts with a "kaf." The Rabbi smiled and replied, "With such particularity you'll never be able to truly love your fellow man." Rabbi Reuven Semah

The Gemara tells us that the Jewish people accepted the Torah under duress in the wilderness, and at the time of Purim, they re-accepted it willingly. How do we reconcile this with the fact that the Jews said, "gnabu vagb - We will do and we will listen," which symbolizes an acceptance of the Torah which is purely voluntary, without coercion?

The Midrash answers by saying that indeed the Jewish nation willingly accepted the Written

Torah, but the Oral Torah was not accepted wholeheartedly until the story of Purim. The reason is fairly simple. If it says in the Torah that I have to do this, fine, that's the law. But if the Rabbis tell me this is good for me and this isn't, this I may do and this I cannot do, this is difficult to swallow. Who says the Sages know everything? Who says that I have to follow them? When the Jewish people saw that Mordechai was right for not bowing down to Haman, and he was also right when he said not to go to the party years back, they realized that Hashem was teaching a fundamental lesson. The salvation came through Mordechai and Esther because they are our spiritual leaders and listening to them is listening to Hashem. As we celebrate Purim, let us rededicate ourselves to the acceptance of the Oral Law and the guidance of our Sages so that we may merit salvation and redemption. Happy Holiday. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

IT AIN'T OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER

Sports fans develop a certain irrational optimism that cannot be explained. No matter what the score, and no matter how late in the game, they cling to the slightest hope that their hometown favorite team will somehow, miraculously, pull off a last-minute win. As the popular saying goes, "It ain't over 'til it's over!"

This is not a bad attitude to adopt in life. In business, the one who is tough and doesn't give up – even when it appears that bankruptcy is unavoidable – may save the business; persistence pays. No matter how bad the situation looks, don't give up.

Life is the biggest test and the most important game you will ever face. Your *yeser hara* (evil inclination) would like for you to give up. He tries to get you to feel that your past mistakes have put you in a position where losing "the game" is a certainty. Our Sages, on the other hand, teach that a person has the opportunity to make amends – *teshubah* – and wipe the slate clean even in the last minute of life. The only problem is that nobody knows when the clock will run out! Immediate action is therefore required to avoid running out of time before you manage to score the winning points.

When you start to feel that you are losing the spiritual game of life, restore your resolve. "It ain't over!" Get going and "score" with *teshubah*, *misvot*, and good deeds. Your revived positive energy will bring you the victory in the championship game. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR
 Visit DailyHalacha.com, DailyGemara.com,
MishnaBerura.com, LearnTorah.com

Our Protection from Amalek

On Shabbat Zachor, we read the final three verses in Parashat Ki-Teseh which command us to remember the unprovoked attack launched against our ancestors when they left Egypt by the nation of Amalek. This attack occurred in a place called Refidim, and the Sages teach us that this location was so named because while Beneh Yisrael were there, "Rafu Yedehem Min Ha'Torah" – they became lax in their engagement in Torah study. It was on account of this laxity, we are taught, that G-d brought upon us the vicious attack of Amalek.

In commanding us to remember this incident, G-d instructs, "Remember what Amalek did to you." Despite the fact that this unfortunate incident was our own doing, a result of our failure to properly devote ourselves to Torah, G-d nevertheless describes the war as something brought upon us by Amalek, rather than something we brought upon ourselves. One Rabbi compared this to a king who had a close friend whom he trusted and regarded very highly. The friend, however, proved unworthy of this trust, and one night tried to break into the palace. The guard dogs immediately began to bark loudly, chasing the man away. The king heard about the incident, and summoned his friend to the palace.

"I'm really sorry about those dogs," he said. "It's terrible the way they frightened you. They should never have done that."

Although it was obviously the man's fault that the dogs attacked him, the king, out of his unconditional love for his friend, focused on the dogs' aggressiveness rather than the friend's grave breach of trust.

Similarly, Amalek's assault Beneh Yisrael was because of our "breach," due to our failure to properly devote ourselves to Torah. Yet, in speaking about this incident G-d begins by focusing not on our failure, but on the brutality of Amalek. This expresses just how much G-d loves and cares for His people, how even in our times of failure He wishes for our wellbeing and looks angrily upon those who oppress us.

In the next verse, however, G-d indeed draws our attention to the cause of Amalek's attack. He describes how at the time of this attack Beneh Yisrael were "tired and weary, and not G-d-fearing." Rashi explains the phrase "and not G-d-fearing" as referring

to Amalek, but according to the Or Ha'haim, it refers to Beneh Yisrael's condition at that time. Because they were "tired and weary" – lax and apathetic toward Torah study – their Yir'at Shamaim declined. Torah study is what keeps us alert and sensitive to our religious duties, and thus when our devotion to learning is lacking, so is our overall devotion to G-d. And when this happens, we become vulnerable to "Amalek," to the many adversaries that threaten us and seek to perpetrate evil against us.

This is the fundamental message of Shabbat Zachor – the importance of Torah learning as our source of protection against Amalek and our other foes. As long as we remain committed and dedicated to Torah study, our enemies are powerless against us. As we recite at the Seder, "Ve'hi She'ameda La'abotenu" – it, the Torah, is what has stood in protection of our people throughout the generations.

Particularly in our day and age, when enemies of the Jewish people pose such a grave threat to our existence both in Israel and around the world, we must heed the reminder of "Zachor," the warning of "Rafu Yedechem Min Ha'Torah." When we are "tired and weary," when we do not approach Torah study with the vigor and intensity it demands, then we become vulnerable, as we lose our single most important source of protection and defense.

Rabbi Wein

The current spate of anti-Semitic media cartoons, op-eds and boycott movements serve to remind us that Amalek is alive and thriving as usual. There was a short period of time a few decades ago when many Jews were lulled into thinking that all of this baseless hatred and nastiness was a thing of the past. Even the most naive among us today realize that this is unfortunately not the case. Therefore, remembering Amalek is a relatively easy commandment to fulfill today - one need only read the newspaper or listen to the radio or TV or view the internet to meet Amalek face to face, live and in person.

How to counteract and deal with Amalek has been a continuing and never ending problem throughout Jewish history. Apparently, no satisfactory and permanent solution to the problem has ever been found. Perhaps that in itself is the basic lesson of the commandment of remembering Amalek. We have to remember that the problem is constant and continuing and that it has remained insoluble for millennia.

We should not be surprised or even overly discouraged by its sinister presence in our lives and world today. We must do everything possible to combat it but we should always remember that it is not given to pat solutions or wishful thinking. It is apparently part of the Jewish condition - our very terms of existence.

The story of Purim is the story of Amalek contained, but not completely defeated and destroyed. Haman is hydra-headed and has always had disciples and followers. Haman and his sons were thwarted and hanged but that did not prove to be much of a deterrent to all of the Hamans that have followed throughout history.

In terms of the destruction of Jews, Hitler was far more successful than was Haman having killed six million Jews in five years of hate and terror. Yet Hitler destroyed Germany completely as well, with far more Germans than Jews being killed in that terrible and tragic war.

So again, one would think that the lesson of Amalek would have been learned by now. But the reality of Amalek is that it defies logic, self-interest and history and its lessons. Purim is our only hope in containing Amalek. Purim is always hidden, unpredictable, surprising and unexpected. Yet it is also a constant in Jewish life and history.

The survival of the Jewish people remains as the miracle of all history and that miracle is omnipresent in our current world. The existence and accomplishments of the State of Israel is an offshoot of this constant and continuing miracle. Israel and its achievements give us a sense of Purim every day of the year. The miracle may not be superficially visible but it is certainly present and alive.

The Talmud's statement about the inability to distinguish between Haman and Mordechai is indicative of the mystery of Purim. Purim is not always what it appears to be at first glance. It is the hidden part of Purim that fascinates and confuses us. Our salvation is always unexpected and many times defies any form of human wisdom and expertise.

Purim tells us never to despair or lose hope regarding our current difficulties and uncertain future. It is easy to fall into a funk when viewing all of the difficulties that surround us. Purim preaches to us that such a dark attitude is inconsistent with Jewish faith and Torah values. That is why the rabbis stated that only Purim is the only eternal holiday on the Jewish calendar.

We will always need Purim and its message to continue to function and achieve. For without Purim present and operative, we fall into fearing that Amalek may yet, God forbid, triumph. So let us rejoice in the knowledge that Purim is here with us and all will yet be well for the nation and people of Mordechai and Esther.

Sir Jonathan Sacks
Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations
of the Commonwealth

Prophet and Priest

The sedra of Tetsaveh, as commentators have noted, has one unusual feature: it is the only sedra from the beginning of Shemot to the end of Devarim that does not contain the name of Moses. Several interpretations have been offered:

The Vilna Gaon suggests that it is related to the fact that in most years it is read during the week in which the seventh of Adar falls: the day of Moses' death. During this week we sense the loss of the greatest leader in Jewish history - and his absence from Tetsaveh expresses that loss.

The Baal HaTurim relates it to Moses' plea, in next week's sedra, for G-d to forgive Israel. "If not," says Moses, "blot me out of the book you have written" (32: 32). There is a principle that "The curse of a sage comes true, even if it was conditional" (Makkot 11a). Thus for one week his name was "blotted out" from the Torah.

The Paneach Raza relates it to another principle: "There is no anger that does not leave an impression" When Moses, for the last time, declined G-d's invitation to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt, saying "Please send someone else", G-d "became angry with Moses" (Ex. 4: 13-14) and told him that his brother Aaron would accompany him. For that reason Moses forfeited the role he might otherwise have had, of becoming the first of Israel's priests, a role that went instead to Aaron. That is why he is missing from the sedra of Tetsaveh which is dedicated to the role of the Cohen.

All three explanations focus on an absence.

However, perhaps the simplest explanation is that Tetsaveh is dedicated to a presence, one that had a decisive influence on Judaism and Jewish history. Judaism is unusual in that it recognises not one form of religious leadership but two: the navi and Cohen, the prophet and the priest. The figure of the prophet has always captured the imagination. He (or she) is a person of drama, "speaking truth to power", unafraid to challenge kings and courts or society as a whole in the name of high, even utopian ideals. No other type of religious personality has had the impact as the

prophets of Israel, of whom the greatest was Moses. The priests, by contrast, were for the most part quieter figures, a-political, who served in the sanctuary rather than in the spotlight of political debate. Yet they, no less than the prophets, sustained Israel as a holy nation. Indeed, though Israel were summoned to become "a kingdom of priests" they were never called on to be a people of prophets (Moses said, "Would that all G-d's people were prophets", but this was a wish, not a reality). Let us therefore consider some of the differences between a prophet and a priest:

- The role of priest was dynastic. It passed from father to son. The role of prophet was not dynastic. Moses' own sons did not succeed him; Joshua, his disciple did.
- The task of the priest was related to his office. It was not inherently personal or charismatic. The prophets, by contrast, each imparted their own personality. "No two prophets had the same style" (This, incidentally, is why there were prophetesses but no priestesses: this corresponds to the difference between formal office and personal authority. See R. Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, Responsa Binyan Av, I: 65).
- The priests wore a special uniform; the prophets did not.
- There are rules of kavod (honour) due to a Cohen. There are no corresponding rules for the honour due to a prophet. A prophet is honoured by being listened to, not by formal protocols of respect.
- The priests were removed from the people. They served in the Temple. They were not allowed to become defiled. There were restrictions on whom they might marry. The prophet, by contrast, was usually part of the people. He might be a shepherd like Moses or Amos, or a farmer like Elisha. Until the word or vision came, there was nothing special in his work or social class.
- The priest offered up sacrifices in silence. The prophet served G-d through the word.
- They lived in two different modes of time. The priest functioned in cyclical time - the day (or week or month) that is like yesterday or tomorrow. The prophet lived in covenantal (sometimes inaccurately called linear) time - the today that is radically unlike yesterday or tomorrow. The service of the priest never changed; that of the prophet was constantly changing. Another way of putting it is to say that the priest worked to sanctify nature, the prophet to respond to history.
- Thus the priest represents the principle of structure in Jewish life, while the prophet represents spontaneity. The key words in the vocabulary of the Cohen are kodesh and chol, tahor and tamei, sacred, secular, pure and impure. The key words in the vocabulary of the prophets are tzedek and mishpat, chessed and

rachamim, righteousness and justice, kindness and compassion.

The key verbs of priesthood are lehorot and lehavdil, to instruct and distinguish. The key activity of the prophet is to proclaim "the word of the Lord" The distinction between priestly and prophetic consciousness (torat cohanim and torat nevi'im) is fundamental to Judaism, and is reflected in the differences between law and narrative, halakhah and aggadah, creation and redemption. The priest speaks the word of G-d for all time, the prophet, the word of G-d for this time. Without the prophet, Judaism would not be a religion of history and destiny. But without the priest, the children of Israel would not have become the people of eternity. This is beautifully summed up in the opening verses of Tetsaveh: Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives, to keep the lamp constantly burning in the tent of meeting, outside the curtain that is in front of the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep the lamps burning before the Lord from evening to morning. This is to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites for the generations to come.

Moses the prophet dominates four of the five books that bear his name. But in Tetsaveh for once it is Aaron, the first of the priests, who holds centre-stage, undiminished by the rival presence of his brother. For whereas Moses lit the fire in the souls of the Jewish people, Aaron tended the flame and turned it into "an eternal light".

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

Purim is a day of Simha. On מירופ we find החמש and our תדובע ה' becomes תבהא ה'. Let's all say together ה' תא בהוא ינא. I love You Hashem. Say it again! ה' says "My children love Me" and He loves us even more. By saying you love ה', you'll come to feel it. So on מירופ when you're dancing or drinking have in mind 'you love ה'. We love you ה' and we're waiting to see You in the next world' (we don't have to hurry). We have a lot of תוצמ to do here. We have to bring up our children, we have to learn the whole ס"ש yet, there's a lot of work to be done in this world. But we're looking forward to it.

The תומלש of מירופ is תבהא ה'. Loving Hashem. Now I'll tell you one of the easier ways of fulfilling והערל שיא תונמ חלשמ we have מירופ חן. ה' תבהא. והער is a time of מירופ. You have to recognize the friendship of your fellow Jews. It says in the תריש מיה: 'with Your mighty strength, You overcame those who rose up against You' [the בר translated loosely]. Now, הערפ didn't rise up against ה'; rather he rose up against the ינב לארשי. The אתלכמ explains that anyone who is rising against the ינב לארשי is coming

against ה'. This is a big שודיה. And likewise, anyone that does something for the ינב לארשי is doing something that ה' wants. Therefore, if you love the ינב לארשי, then you love ה'. It's easy to love them. Therefore, one of the easy ways to be מייקמ ה' is to love your fellow Jew. Just as ה' is ומע בהוא ה' we have to do the same. Not merely that we don't mind them. Rather, we have to fall in love with them, with a fiery love. Here's an observant Jew – ah! "I love that man". Practice it. Of course you don't mean it. Do it anyway. This is what ה' wants. That's the purpose of תונמ חלשמ. So now we have two ways of substitution for the difficult task of תבהא ה'.

1. החמש רותמ – we thank ה' and love Him for:
 - a. For the fact that we have clothes, shoes, a home.
 - b. Your wife is a good cook; she prepared good things to eat for the תדועס...
2. – לארשי ומע בהוא. Embrace your neighbors. Do it right now. Everybody – put your arms around your neighbor's shoulders. Don't care who he is. This is a very big ווקית. Don't think it's a small thing. Moshe our Teacher, לא אצי, יוחא he went out to his brothers. That's the first thing that made him chosen by ה'. The ארמג says היה לארשי בהוא וניבר השמ. We're just doing it but we hope a little bit will come into our hearts because of our actions. The whole ר"נת סע is only talking about the לארשי - ה' רמא סכתא יתבהא. ה' loves us so why shouldn't we love us? When we dance around the table holding hands it's not because you don't want to break the circle but rather it's because ומע בהוא / We Love our Jewish Nation.