

## SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

SAV /ZACHOR/ PURIM  
Haftarah: Shemuel I 15:1-34  
MARCH 15, 2014 13 ADAR II 5774

This Thursday March 13<sup>th</sup> is taanit Esther – Fast begins at 6AM and Ends at 7:20  
Please join us for Mincha with Torah and Arbit at 6:40

Purim is Saturday Night and Sunday

DEDICATIONS: In memory of Lillian Bibi Grossman

Candle lighting this Friday evening is at 6:44 p.m. Mincha at 6:45  
SHABBAT 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 9:27AM  
Welcome to Dr Rabbi Meyer and Debbie Abittan and family

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30  
Ages 0-5 - in the Playroom  
Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library  
Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Kiddush sponsored by Jack and Patti Azizo in honor  
of Sam Shetrit, for all the time and effort he contributes to the synagogue

Following Kiddush we have a class on the Megillah  
Mincha at 1:20

Shabbat Ends – 7:44 PM  
Return for Arbit and Megillah – 8:30 PM  
Please note one should not eat after 7:02 PM until one hears Havdalah and the Megillah

### Family Purim Bash

Come in costume and ready to celebrate Purim Saturday Night March 15th. Arvit and Megilla followed by a delicious feast sponsored by the Sisterhood. Don't miss out on an awesome evening of Face Painting Fun, Costume Contest, Scavenger Hunt and Stump the Rabbi

### Sunday is Purim

Shaharit at 8AM with Megillah at about 8:30 or so  
Remember Men and Women must hear the Megillah both at night and during the day

### WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00, Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)  
Please note that Thursday is Taanit Esther – see notes in newsletter

### WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday Night Class with Rabba Yenai – 7:30 PM –  
Rabbi Yenai is changing his time for Monday class with the clock change. Class will start at 7:30 with prayers before.  
People should come at 7 for service but at 7:30 for class.

Daily class with Rabbi Colish at 6:30AM

Jeff Metviner is giving a defensive driving class on Sunday, April 6 from 10 AM to 4 PM. Flyer will follow. Cost \$50.

If there is enough interest in doing a communal Seder, David (Rabbi) will stay with us on Pesach and conduct the Seders together with Rabbi Colish and Sam Shetrit. It was an amazing experience when we did it together year before last. Cost will be \$50 per night per adult and \$25 per night per child under 12. We will try to subsidize anyone who needs it. Its important that we know who may want to come from now. We will try to limit to the first 80 people for each night. Please let us know right away if you would like to join us for both nights or for Monday or Tuesday.

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**Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame. Mincha at 4PM through October 30<sup>th</sup> – Please join us! 212-289-2100**

## Editors Notes

### Hidden But Clearly Visible

I'm going to tell you a story. It's a story that if you haven't heard yet, will amaze you. It's a story that will be repeated countless times. It's an amazing story of life. It's a story of a man saved or rather plucked from tragedy. It's a story that some may say is just a coincidence. Others will call it a shard of luck. Many of us will see in this story a miracle. And the story is documented in an email exchange that we have.

This Shabbat is called Shabbat Zachor, the Shabbat of remembrance. We are commanded to recall what Amalek did to us when they attacked us in the desert.

As Jews remembering is crucial. I often think we represent the world's collective memory. The command to remember extends far beyond Amalek. In our siddurim there are ten items we remember every day, but in most others siddurim we find six.

This morning following the Brit Milah of my brother Victor's grandson Sammy Ralph Cohen, may Hashem bless him and raise him to Torah, Chupah and Good Deeds, my cousin Morris drove me into the city along with Rabbi Abraham Dahan, The Rosh Yeshiva of The Rabbinical College for Dayanim (Judges) Kol Raphael in Netivot.

We were discussing these first six remembrances. ( I am reprinting the list by Rabbi Jack Abramowitz from the OU Website with my own comments based on what I learned from Rabbi Abittan and once heard from Rabbi Tauber)

#### 1. *The Exodus from Egypt*

*Remember the day when you left Egypt all the days of your life. (Deuteronomy 16:3) Hashem's redeeming us from slavery in Egypt was the pivotal moment in Jewish history, when He took us from being Pharaoh's servants to serving Him. Through the plagues and our eventual Exodus we were*

witness to the fact that G-d runs the world. In leaving Egypt we were granted the power to leave any restrictions that hold us back in life.

#### 2. *Receiving the Torah at Sinai*

*Be careful and guard yourself so that you do not forget the things that your eyes have seen, so that they will not leave your hearts all the days of your life. Teach them to your children and your children's children: the day you stood before Hashem your God in Horeb (Sinai). (Deuteronomy 4:9-10) The giving of the Torah is the pinnacle of human history, the reason for which Hashem created the world. Recognizing that the Torah was given by God Himself is an integral part of its observance. According to the Kuzari, the revelation at Sinai brings us all to the level of Moses. Rabbi Luzzato goes further suggesting that at that moment we were in fact Adam before the sin. What an amazing level to achieve.*

#### 3. *Amalek's Evil Attack*

*Remember what Amalek did to you on the journey when you left Egypt. They met you on the way and ambushed those who were lagging behind. You were tired and exhausted, but they did not fear God. Therefore, when Hashem your God relieves you from your enemies in the land that He will give you to possess, you must erase the memory of Amalek from beneath heaven. Do not forget. (Devarim 25:17-19) Amalek cooled us off. We were on a spiritual high and Amalek attacked "the weak". Some suggest that Amalek was empowered by G-d to neutralize the spiritual high we attained after the Exodus. It was Amalek's doubt that counterbalanced our connection and in a way returned free choice to the people. But this attack brought us down from our high and clouded our spiritually pure eye.*

#### 4. *Testing and Angering G-d in the Desert*

*Remember and do not forget how you angered Hashem your God in the desert. (Deuteronomy 9:7) After the lofty events at Sinai, when the Jews proclaimed "na'aseh v'nishmah" ("we unconditionally accept God's commandments"), the Jews committed a grievous sin by building an idol in a misguided attempt to serve Hashem. This was one of ten wrongs we committed to G-d while he housed, fed and protected us. Imagine that those same people who witnessed all the miracles first hand could still rebel. This was the power of Amalek and the disease of doubt that he managed to infect us with.*

#### 5. *Miriam's Punishment*

*Remember what Hashem your God did to Miriam on the journey when you left Egypt. (Deuteronomy 24:9) Miriam was a great and holy woman, who saved Moshe as a baby and led the Jewish women in songs of praise to Hashem at the Red Sea. She loved her brother Moshe and spoke against him for what she thought was a constructive purpose. Nevertheless, she failed to judge her brother favorably and was punished by Hashem. We can see how far the infection of Amalek spread when Miriam herself does what we think would be unthinkable for someone of her stature.*

## 6. Shabbat

*Remember Shabbat (the Sabbath) to make it holy. (Exodus 20:8) Shabbat is the ultimate destiny. We leave behind the physical and dwell in the spiritual where even the physical comforts of food, drink and sleep take on a spiritual dimension.*

I suggested to Rabbi Dahan that the first two represent the height of our potential. The third which is Amalek drags us down from that height to where we sin and even Miriam can mess up. Yet there is a solution to bring us back; a solution to counter our fall. That is Shabbat. Shabbat's faith represents the antidote to Amalek's doubt.

I wondered if Amalek today may be seen in Adam's apple, in physical desires, in money and gold when they are transformed from a means, to an end of their own. It's Shabbat where we cease, where we stop, where we take a step back that protects us from that end.

And now to the story courtesy of DANSDEALS.com

The whole world's eyes are on the Far East, wondering how a Boeing 777 can just disappear without a trace. Malaysia Air Flight 370 took off from Kuala Lumpur at 12:43am this past Saturday morning and has yet to be located. Flying is the safest mode of transportation that exists today, so the disappearance of an airplane like this is really sobering.

Dan writes: "I heard the following story firsthand from the travel agent involved. He is an avid Dans Deals follower that I'm friends with. He sent me the unedited exchange that follows and I made the necessary edits to protect the privacy of the parties involved.

"The saying goes, "More than the Jews have kept the Shabbos (Sabbath), the Shabbos has kept the Jews." When I think of that saying, I picture my life if I were constantly wired 7 days a week. As it is, I feel like a

slave to my digital devices, but the knowledge that Shabbos is right around the corner keeps me going. From sundown Friday evening until when the stars come out on Saturday night it's 25 hours spent completely offline and it's blissful. It's 25 hours spent praying to G-d and consuming obscene amounts of calories eating scrumptious meals with family and friends. It's perfect. Sure anyone can always disconnect, but there's something awesome about the forced routine that can't be properly explained to one who hasn't experienced it.

But the saying goes much deeper than that in this story.

On 01/13/14 Andy emailed his travel agent his desired itinerary:

*FROM: Andrew*

*TO: AGENT*

*RE: ASIA TRIP*

*Hi*

*Hope all is well.*

*Greeting from Hyatt Regency Boston, thanks for booking up. It is a pretty nice place. Let me know if there any changes to my flight back to Sydney tomorrow. Need to do the following trip in March:*

*March 1 Sydney to Hong Kong*

*March 3 Hong Kong to Kuala*

*March 8 Kuala to Beijing*

*March 12 Vietnam to Melbourne*

*Please note 2 things:*

- 1. Number one. I have a conference in thing Shannon China at 3 PM on Saturday so I need a flight that gets in early morning so I can make the drive.*
- 2. To the return is to Melbourne and not Sydney.*
- 3. I don't know yet about the last internal Beijing to Vietnam. If I'm doing Hanoi or a Ho Chi Minh, I will probably book this online while there.*

*Please get back to me soonest as I'm waiting to confirm with the guys in Beijing. If you need anything, SKYPE me or WHATSAPP me.*

*Thanks*

*Andy.*

The travel agent, an Orthodox Jew, proposed the following business class itinerary, slightly altering the Kuala Lumpur-Beijing flight from Saturday to Friday.

*From travel agent*

*To Andy*

*Subject Asia trip*

*Date Monday, January 13*

*Andy,*

*Thank you for your inquiry and your continuous business. I know you're a fan of direct flights. Here's the most direct option I could offer you. The price will probably be \$3890.*

**The email details the exact itinerary with the change**

Andy loved the price, but again requested the Saturday morning flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing:

*From: Andrew*

*To: travel agent*

*Sent: Tuesday, January 14*

*Subject: Asia trip March*

*Thanks for the prompt reply. Price is fine please invoice as usual. One amendment I need the KUL-PEK flight a day later. I need the extra day in Kuala. Once that is set you can lock in.*

The travel agent responded that he would not be able to book travel for him over the Sabbath, but that he was free to book that flight by himself:

*From: travel agent*

*To Andy*

*Subject Asia trip*

*Date Tuesday, January 14*

*Andy,*

*I wish I can give you a day later but you know I just don't like flying choose on Shabbat.*

*I can take out the leg if you want and you book yourself. The Price drop is \$380.*

Andy agreed with that and planned to book the flight by himself:

*To: travel agent*

*Sent: Tuesday, January 14*

*Subject: Asia trip March*

*I guess I'll just book myself. Lock in the rest.*

And the travel agent noted that if he changed his mind to just let him know:

*From travel agent*

*To Andy*

*Subject Asia trip*

*Date Tuesday, January 14*

*Okay will lock in. Ticket will be sent within 24 hours as usual.*

*If you reconsider the Kuala to Beijing please advise.*

Shortly afterward Andy did just that:

*To: travel agent*

*Sent: Tuesday, January 14*

*Subject: Asia trip March*

*Greetings from Los Angeles airport.*

*Will board my Delta flight in 55 minutes.*

*I reconsidered, you are right I should be more observant. I'll manage without the day in Kuala. Since I'll have an extra night in Beijing can you recommend a good Friday night dinner in Beijing?*

And the travel agent recommended a place to get a nice kosher meal and booked him the originally proposed itinerary, flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on Friday early morning instead of Saturday.

*From travel agent*

*To Andy*

*Subject Asia trip*

*Date Tuesday, January 14*

*Okay glad to hear.*

*Try this: ChabadBeijing.com*

Fast forward to 2 days ago. The travel agent is in Israel and reads this email once Shabbos is over. The email was sent after shabbos, at 7:15pm Beijing time/1:15pm Israel time:

*From: Andrew*

*To: travel agent*

*Saturday, March 8*

*Holy God,*

*You sure heard what happened to M. H 370.*

*I cannot stop thinking about this.*

*This is a true miracle for the books. You are a true lifesaver.*

*I cannot think anymore! We'll talk later this week. Don't know how to thank you enough.*

*Now please change my return. I'm not stepping on a Malaysia flight in my life.*

And the travel agent wrote back, equally in shock at the realization of Shabbos saving his client's life:

*From travel agent*

*To Andy*

*Sunday, March 9 2014*

*Andy,*

*I am so happy for you! No I am not the lifesaver. God and Shabbat where your Lifesavers. You owe them something.*

"Indeed, due to the travel agent worrying about the religious observance of a fellow Jew, Andy was persuaded into flying on Malaysia Air 370 exactly one day prior to the ill-fated flight he wanted to take. "It's not often we hear a story like this. It's been 103 years since Rose was saved from the devastation of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire thanks to observing Shabbos – You can Google that story if you don't know it . And now it was Andy's turn." This is so much more than coincidence. The travel agent wouldn't book the flight and explained way, yet if Andy booked the Saturday flight he wanted, he would have saved \$380 and would have been able to have the time he wanted in Kuala Lumpur. Still something changed his mind and more than that he asked where he could go for Shabbat. So instead of checking in for Flight 370, Andy was sitting with Rabbi Shimon Freundlich ( my daughter Mikhayla's host when she spent a summer there a few years back) in China celebrating Shabbat.

The Megillah which we will read Saturday night is a book of coincidence. Yet one would be hard pressed not to see the miracles and G-d hidden within those coincidences. We have been privy to our own Megillah.

If you ask Andy, he'll tell you that G-d may be hidden but if we look hard enough, he is clearly visible.

"Prayers go out to the families of those still missing."

I have been asked to add a note that there is a copyright on this story and if one wishes to reuse it they should credit DANSDEALS.com

Shabbat Shalom  
David Bibi

## Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: Additional instructions regarding the Olah - ascent offering, and the Mincha - meal offering are detailed.

2nd Aliya: The special meal offering of the Kohain Gadol and the special inaugural meal offering of the regular Kohain is described. This was the same offering in both cases; however, the Kohain Gadol brought his offering every day while the regular Kohain did so only on the day of his inauguration into the service of the Bais Hamikdash. Additional laws of the sin offering, and the guilt offering are detailed.

3rd Aliya: Additional laws of the peace offering are detailed along with those portions of the offering that must be shared with the Kohain.

4th, 5th, 6th, & 7th Aliyot: The remainder of the Parsha describes the first seven days of the inaugural process for Aharon and his four sons. Moshe functioned as the Kohain Gadol to officiate over the inaugural process, and Aharon and his sons were forbidden to leave the Mishkan the entire time.

This week, in addition to the regular Parsha, we read Parshas Zachor. Parshas Zachor is the 2nd of the four special Shabbosim preceding Pesach when additional portions are read from the Torah. The first special Shabbos was Parshas Shekalim. This week we read Zachor, and in a few weeks we will read Parah and Chodesh. There are set rules which determine when each of these additional Parshios is to be read. Parshas Zachor is always read on the Shabbos before Purim.

On Parshas 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

**"I with my maids will fast also. Then I will go in to the king though it is sinful, and if I perish I perish."(Esther 4:16)**

The story of Mordechai and Esther is full of profound lessons for us. The plan was for Esther to go in to the king and beg for the lives of the Jews. This was a plan full of danger because anyone going in to the king without being called was to be killed immediately unless in that second the king extended his royal scepter to spare the life of the intruder. Why would the king want to spare the intruder's life? The Megillah states: if the person finds grace in his eyes. So everything was hanging on that second, and how the king would view that person.

If so, all efforts should have been made that Esther should find grace in the king's eyes. Rabbi Elyashiv zt"l analyzes the situation and wonders what is the king interested in seeing? Is it Esther's righteousness? Her piety and pureness of her heart? Bottom line, the king is interested in physical beauty. If so, Esther should have used these three days to eat the best foods to enhance her beauty. Even unkosher food would have been permitted because after all, her life and the life of all Jewry was on the line. And so it was that she found grace in his eyes, as the Megillah states: And he extended his scepter. It was not because she was his wife nor because she was the queen, but because he liked what he saw. If so, the decision should have been for her to eat and beautify herself.

What was Esther's decision? Fasting for three days and nights! Her and her servants. It is understood that this debilitating fast took its toll on Esther. She could hardly walk. The Gemara says (Megillah 15b) that an angel came and put upon her a special look of "grace of kindness." This amazing look captured the eyes of the evil king.

How would we have reacted today? We would all be saying that she is risking all of the lives of the Jewish people. But, what did people say then? They believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that the evil decree down here originated in the decree in Heaven. Therefore, we must first address the Heavenly decree and after that we could work on the decree on earth. We must first beg for mercy from the King in Heaven and then He will send a messenger to save us. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

**When Haman's great-grandfather, Amalek, attacked the Jewish people in the wilderness, the name of the place where he was able to fight them was Refidim.** This was a station where the Jews were in a weakened state of Torah study, and because of this, Amalek was able to start up with us. Indeed, whenever a tyrant or despot threatens the Jewish nation, it is invariably because of our lack of Torah study. Thus we find that right after the Purim miracle, when Haman and his people were defeated, there was a tremendous resurgence of Torah study amongst the Jews, and this eventually culminated in the compilation of the Oral Law.

The week before Purim, we read Parashat Zachor, which is to remember what Amalek did to us. It is just as important to remember the cause that led to Amalek's battle against the Jews, and that is our weakness in Torah study. Let us commit ourselves to Torah study every day so that we can merit to see Hashem's salvation. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

### Rabbi Wein REGRESSING

One of the unfortunate delusions that besets both our general and Jewish societies is that we are somehow advancing in an unbroken line upwards towards better times. We gaze triumphantly at all of the great technological gadgets and medical advances that give us such satisfaction and pride. In the Jewish world we revel in the new freedoms that we now routinely expect and enjoy and in our reviving numbers and material affluence.

This is certainly true of the Orthodox Jewish community here in Israel and in the Diaspora as well. But it is this very attitude and view that masks the true problems and difficulties that surround us. It should be fairly obvious to all by now that the Holocaust as a moral lesson and as an historical reminder is already very passé and irrelevant. Anti-Semitism, certainly in Europe, has reached the level of the 1930s.

No one is embarrassed to be anti-Jewish and anti-Israel. Just as Germany advocated and enforced boycotts against Jews and Jewish commercial establishments so too is this the tone of European society today regarding Israel and its economy. Just as Germany and Poland in the 1930s banned shechita and ridiculed circumcision and other Jewish beliefs and rituals so too is this wave of hatred cloaked in the piety of animal and human rights sweeping Europe today.

As far as the Jews are concerned, so-called democratic Europe has regressed to where it was eighty years ago – weak, feckless, and institutionally inimical to Jews and Judaism. Appeasement, though by a different name, is the policy of Europe and the United States to all aggressions. And, the United Nations is proving itself to be a worthy successor to the League of Nations in dealing with crises and armed conflicts.

In spite of all of our gains in other areas, generally speaking, the world has regressed in its policies and attitudes towards evildoers, haters and bigots.

In the Jewish world we are also witness to a tide of regression. The Jewish Left has apparently learned little or nothing from the events of the past century. It has whitewashed the Soviet Union, and demonized the American victory in the Cold War. It opposes Israel and its policies of self-defense and portrays it as the main obstacle to world peace and societal serenity.

It has nary a good word to say concerning traditional Judaism or the destiny of the Jewish people. Its political correctness stifles all dissent and it is relentless in its condemnation of Israel. It has learned nothing from the foolish unilateral withdrawals that have brought only grief and death to thousands of Israelis over the past twenty years.

The Arab world also has apparently learned nothing from the events of the past century. One cannot say that it has regressed to its original position of not acknowledging the existence of the Jewish state since it never has changed that position for almost seven decades. Only Egypt and Jordan are the tenuous exceptions to this mindset.

The opportunity for a Palestinian state existed in 1948, again in 1967, in 1991 with the Oslo agreements, with Ehud Barack's proposals at Camp David and later with Ehud Olmert's far-reaching concessions a decade ago. But, all to no avail.

So in effect, in spite of all of the efforts and optimistic statements and all of the pressure placed on Israel for more and more concessions, we have really gone nowhere as far as this so-called two state solution is concerned.

In my opinion, much of the Orthodox Jewish world has also regressed. For many members of this society and for many of its educational institutions, we are still living in 1920s Eastern Europe. It is as though the Holocaust never occurred and, if it is acknowledged, it is as though no practical lessons

are to be learned from it. It teaches us no lessons to be applied in today's society.

And certainly as far as the State of Israel is concerned, it is still embroiled in the battles over Zionism that so roiled the Jewish world a century ago. The reality of the existence of the State of Israel and that it is now the home of over six million Jews and that the Jewish future everywhere is inextricably bound to its welfare and success is completely ignored.

It revels in fighting battles that have long since disappeared from relevance. Constructing a fantasy world of false history, legendary biographies that have no basis in fact, and ignoring the moral and societal implications of the isolationist behavior of much of Orthodox society has created an enormous disconnect between it and the rest of the Jewish people.

Parochial interests, political power and the budgetary pie have created a regression from the nobility of Orthodox life of seventy years ago and returned us to the bitter divisions and internecine warfare of Eastern European Jewish life in the 1800s. One would hope that this disconnect can somehow be bridged before it brings complete disaster upon all concerned.

### **Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks On Not Trying To Be What You Are Not**

The great leaders know their own limits. They do not try to do it all themselves. They build teams. They create space for people who are strong where they are weak. They understand the importance of checks and balances and the separation of powers. They surround themselves with people who are different from them. They understand the danger of concentrating all power in a single individual. But learning your limits, knowing there are things you cannot do – even things you cannot be – can be a painful experience. Sometimes it involved an emotional crisis.

The Torah contains four fascinating accounts of such moments. What links them is not words but music. From quite early on in Jewish history, the Torah was sung, not just read. Moses at the end of his life calls the Torah a song.[1] Different traditions grew up in Israel and Babylon, and from around the tenth century onward the chant began to be systematized in the form of the musical notations known as taamei ha-mikra, cantillation signs, devised by the Tiberian Masoretes (guardians of Judaism's sacred texts). One very rare note, known as a shalsholet ("chain"),

appears in the Torah four times only. Each time it is a sign of existential crisis. Three instances are in Bereishit. The fourth is in our parsha. As we will see, the fourth is about leadership. In a broad sense, the other three are as well.

The first instance occurs in the story of Lot. Lot had separated from his uncle Abraham and settled in Sodom. There he had assimilated into the local population. His daughters had married local men. He himself sat in the city gate, a sign that he had been made a judge. Then two visitors came to tell him to leave. God was about to destroy the city. Yet Lot hesitates, and above the word for "hesitates" – vayitmahmah – is a shalsholet. (Genesis 19: 16). He is torn, conflicted. He senses that the visitors are right. The city is indeed about to be destroyed. But he has invested his whole future in the new identity he has been carving out for himself and his daughters. Had the angels not seized him and taken him to safety he would have delayed until it was too late.

The second occurs when Abraham asks his servant – traditionally identified as Eliezer – to find a wife for Isaac his son. The commentators suggest that he felt a profound ambivalence about his mission. Were Isaac not to marry and have children, Abraham's estate would eventually pass to Eliezer or his descendants. Abraham had already said so before Isaac was born: "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" (Genesis 15: 2). If Eliezer succeeded in his mission, bringing back a wife for Isaac, and if the couple had children, then his chances of one day acquiring Abraham's wealth would disappear completely. Two instincts warred within him: loyalty to Abraham and personal ambition. Loyalty won, but not without a deep struggle. Hence the shalsholet (Genesis 24: 12).

The third brings us to Egypt and the life of Joseph. Sold by his brothers as a slave, he is now working in the house of an eminent Egyptian, Potiphar. Left alone in the house with his master's wife, he finds himself the object of her desire. He is handsome. She wants him to sleep with her. He refuses. To do such a thing, he says, would be to betray his master, her husband. It would be a sin against God. Yet over "he refused" is a shalsholet, (Genesis 39: 8) indicating – as some rabbinic sources and mediaeval commentaries suggest – that he did so at the cost of considerable effort.[2] He nearly succumbed. This was more than the usual conflict between sin and temptation. It was a conflict of identity. Recall that Joseph was now living in, for him, a new and strange land. His brothers had rejected him. They had made it clear that they did not want him as part of their



family. Why then should he not, in Egypt, do as the Egyptians do? Why not yield to his master's wife if that is what she wanted? The question for Joseph was not just, "Is this right?" but also, "Am I an Egyptian or a Jew?"

All three episodes are about inner conflict, and all three are about identity. There are times when each of us has to decide, not just "What shall I do?" but "What kind of person shall I be?" That is particularly fateful in the case of a leader, which brings us to episode four, this time about Moses.

After the sin of the golden calf Moses had at God's command instructed the Israelites to build a sanctuary which would be, in effect, a permanent symbolic home of God in the midst of the people. By now the work is complete and all that remains is for Moses to induct his brother Aaron and his sons into office. He robes Aaron with the special garments of the high priest, anoints him with oil, and performs the various sacrifices appropriate to the occasion. Over the word *vayishchat*, "and he slaughtered [the sacrificial ram]" (Leviticus 8: 23) there is a *shalsholet*. By now we know that this means there was an internal struggle in Moses' mind. But what was it? There is not the slightest sign in the text that suggests that he was undergoing a crisis.

Yet a moment's thought makes it clear what Moses' inner turmoil was about. Until now he had led the Jewish people. Aaron his older brother had assisted him, accompanying him on his missions to Pharaoh, acting as his spokesman, aide and second-in-command. Now, however, Aaron was about to undertake a new leadership role in his own right. No longer would he be a shadow of Moses. He would do what Moses himself could not. He would preside over the daily offerings in the tabernacle. He would mediate the *avodah*, the Israelites' sacred service to God. Once a year on Yom Kippur he would perform the service that would secure atonement for the people from its sins. No longer in Moses' shadow, Aaron was about to become the one kind of leader Moses was not destined to be: a High Priest.

The Talmud adds a further dimension to the poignancy of the moment. At the burning bush, Moses had repeatedly resisted God's call to lead the people. Eventually God told him that Aaron would go with him, helping him speak (Ex. 4: 14-16). The Talmud says that at that moment Moses lost the chance to be a priest. "Originally [said God] I had intended that you would be the priest and Aaron your brother would be a Levite. Now he will be the priest and you will be a Levite." [3]

That is Moses' inner struggle, conveyed by the *shalsholet*. He is about to induct his brother into an office he himself will never hold. Things might have been otherwise – but life is not lived in the world of "might have been." He surely feels joy for his brother, but he cannot altogether avoid a sense of loss. Perhaps he already senses what he will later discover, that though he was the prophet and liberator, Aaron will have a privilege Moses will be denied, namely, seeing his children and their descendants inherit his role. The son of a priest is a priest. The son of a prophet is rarely a prophet.

What all four stories tell us is that there comes a time for each of us when we must make an ultimate decision as to who we are. It is a moment of existential truth. Lot is a Hebrew, not a citizen of Sodom. Eliezer is Abraham's servant, not his heir. Joseph is Jacob's son, not an Egyptian of easy-going morals. Moses is a prophet not a priest. To say yes to who we are we have to have the courage to say No to who we are not. There is pain and conflict involved. That is the meaning of the *shalsholet*. But we emerge less conflicted than we were before.

This applies especially to leaders, which is why the case of Moses in our parsha is so important. There were things Moses was not destined to do. He would not become a priest. That task fell to Aaron. He would not lead the people across the Jordan. That was Joshua's role. Moses had to accept both facts with good grace if he was to be honest with himself. And great leaders must be honest with themselves if they are to be honest with those they lead.

A leader should never try to be all things to all men (and women). A leader should be content to be what he or she is. A leader must have the strength to know what he cannot be if he is to have the courage to be himself.

### **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky Hear Conditioning**

Whoever misses the Divine hand that touched the Purim story is not looking. And if he claims that he heard the Megilah, he probably was not listening. Imagine, the Prime Minister draws lots and decides to annihilate the entire Jewish nation. Within 24 hours he has approval from the ruler of the not-so-free-world, King Achashveirosh.

Within days, the plot is foiled, the Prime Minister is hanged and his prime target is promoted to replace him! Pretty political. Pretty miraculous. And definitely divine. Yet Hashem's name is not mentioned once in the Megilah. Why? Of course, the Megilah is replete

with allusions. There are acronyms that spell the name of Hashem, and our sages explain that every time the word "King" is mentioned in the Megilah, it has a divine reference. But, still, why does the last book of the Prophets, a Divinely inspired Megilah, have only veiled references to Heavenly intervention?

It was a sweltering August day when the Greenberg brothers entered the posh Dearborn, Michigan offices of the notoriously anti-Semitic car-maker, Henry Ford.

"Mr. Ford," announced Hyman Greenberg, the eldest of the three, "we have a remarkable invention that will revolutionize the automobile industry." Ford looked skeptical, but their threats to offer it to the competition kept his interest piqued. "We would like to demonstrate it to you in person." After a little cajoling, they brought Mr. Ford outside and asked him to enter a black Edsel that was parked in front of the building.

Norman Greenberg, the middle brother, opened the door of the car. "Please step inside Mr. Ford."

"What!" shouted the tycoon, "are you crazy? It must be two hundred degrees in that car!"

"It is," smiled the youngest brother, Max, "but sit down, Mr. Ford, and push the white button."

Intrigued, Ford pushed the button. All of a sudden a whoosh of freezing air started blowing from vents all around the car, and within seconds the automobile was not only comfortable, it was quite cool! "This is amazing!" exclaimed Ford. "How much do you want for the patent?"

Norman spoke up. "The price is one million dollars." Then he paused, "And there is something else. We want the name 'Greenberg Brothers Air Conditioning' to be stamped right next to the Ford logo."

"Money is no problem," retorted Ford, "but no way will I have a 'Jew-name' next to my logo on my cars!"

They haggled back and forth for a while and finally they settled. One and one half million dollars, and the name Greenberg would be left off. However, the first names of the Greenberg brothers would be forever emblazoned upon the console of every Ford air conditioning system.

And that is why today, whenever you enter a Ford vehicle you will see those three names clearly defined on the air-conditioning control panel: HI -- NORM -- MAX.

The writers of the Megilah left us with a message that would accompany us throughout our long exile. You will not always see G-d's signature openly emblazoned upon every circumstance. However, throughout persecution and deliverance, He is always there. And just like on Purim His obvious interference is undocumented; but we know and feel it -- and we search for it, and we find it! So, too, in every instance we must seek His name, find it, and recognize it. It may not be emblazoned on the bumper; it may be hidden on the console -- but it is there. For Hashem is always speaking. All we have to do is listen. Joyous Purim!

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