

פּוּרִים

פורים

Ta'anis Esther - Early Adar 11/March 13/Thursday

Since Purim falls out on Sunday and we are not allowed to fast on Shabbos, Ta'anis Esther is on Thursday.

Ta'anis Esther commemorates the three days Esther and the people of Shushan fasted in Nisan [Esther 3:12, 4:16].

Ta'anis Esther also commemorates the day the Jews fasted and prayed to Hashem when they defended themselves of the thirteenth of Adar [Esther, 9:1-2].

All men and women must fast. Pregnant or nursing women, or people feeling ill, are exempt. Consult a Rav if necessary.

Shachris:

The Shliach Tzibur says Aneinu in the Repetition of the Sh'moneh Esrei. We say Selichos and the long Avinu Malkeinu, and read the Torah [see Siddur].

Machatzis HaShekel:

Before Minchah we give Machatzis HaShekel (half shekel) to commemorate the silver half shekel Jews gave in the Beis Hamikdash.

They gave it in Adar so that by Nisan they could purchase the Communal Sacrifices (Korbonos Tzibur) for the year.

It's customary to give 3 half dollars, since Parshas Shekalim mentions the Machatzis HaShekel three times.

The obligation begins at age twenty, (according to some opinions thirteen). Some give on behalf of their wives and children. Once you begin to give for a



child you must give every year.

If you didn't give it on Ta'anis Esther, you may still do so before Megillah reading on Purim Day.

It is known the custom to give Machatzis Hashekel for the entire family. (Sicha Ta'anis Esther 5749 - 1989)

Minchah:

We read the Torah and Haftorah for a fast day, and we say Aneinu in Shemoneh Esrei in Shema Koleinu. We say tachnun and Avinu Malkeinu.

פּוּרִים

Adar 14/March 15– 16 Motzei Shabbos ~ Sunday

All men and women are obligated in the five major Mitzvos:

1. Listen To The Reading Of The Megilah

Men and women are obligated to hear the Megilah twice, once at night and once by day.

It's preferable to hear the Megilah in Shul.

It's customary to bring even small children to Shul to hear the Megilah reading (if they won't disturb). The Ba'al Koreh should be well versed in the laws of Megilah.

Before reading the Megilah, the Ba'al Koreh (and listeners with Kosher Megilahs) fold the Megilah into thirds.

The Ba'al Koreh says three Brochos for us. We stand for the Brochos.

Don't answer "Baruch Hu U'Varuch Shemo." **Do** say Amen after each Brochah.

The Ba'al Koreh says the Brochos with the intention that he's saying the Brochos and reading the Megilah for all listeners. When hearing the Brochos and the reading of the Megillah **we** have in mind that we're fulfilling the Mitzvah through him.

To fulfill the Mitzvah, you must hear **every** word of the Megilah. You can't speak from the first Brochah before the Megilah reading until after the Brochah afterward.

If you have a Kosher Megilah you may read with the Ba'al Koreah (quietly so that others can hear the Ba'al Koreh).

If you are following a printed text don't read aloud.

The congregation says the four Pesukim of Geulah and those of Haman's ten sons out loud; the Ba'al Koreh reads them only after the congregation finishes.

The Chabad custom is to make noise at Haman's name only when he's mentioned with a title. The Ba'al Koreh should wait for silence before continuing.

When the Ba'al Koreh reads the words "Igeres HaZos" [9:26] and "Igeres HaPurim HaZos HaSheinis" [9:29], he (and those with Kosher Megilahs) shake the Megilah.

After the Megilah reading if there's a Minyan, we say the Brochah "HaRav Es Riveinu." We say "Shoshanas Yaakov" and roll up the Megilah.

If you read for others after you have already fulfilled the Mitzvah:

It's better that one of the listeners make the Brochos. If you're reading for women only, **they** should say the Brochah "Leshmoah Megilah" instead of "Al Mikrah Megilah." Say the Brochah after the Megilah only if there's a Minyan.

2. Say Al HaNisim

We add Al HaNisim in Shemoneh Esrei and Birchas HaMazon to thank Hashem for the miracle of Purim.

In Shemoneh Esrei:

Say Al HaNisim in the Brochah of Modim.

If you didn't say Al HaNisim and remember it before saying Hashem's name in the Brochah "HaTov Shimchah U'Lichah Naeh L'Hodos," say Al HaNisim and continue from "Ve'al Kulam..."

If you already said Hashem's name, finish the Brochah and don't say Al HaNisim.

In Birchas HaMazon:

Say Al HaNisim in Nodeh, the second Brochah of Birchas HaMazon.

If you didn't say Al HaNisim and haven't said Hashem's name at the end of the Brochah, you can say Al HaNisim at that point.

If you've gone further, continue to "Harachamon Hu Yizakeinu L'Yemos HaMoshiach," and add: "Harachamon Hu Yaseh Lonu Nisim Kemo Sheosah L'Avoseinu Beyomin Haheim B'Zeman HaZeh" and begin Al HaNisim from "B'Yemei Mordechai" [See Siddur].

3. Send Mishloach Manos

On Purim Day, send a gift of at least two kinds of food that can be eaten without preparation (cakes, fruits, drinks, cooked fish or meat, etc.) to at least one friend. This demonstrates friendship and brotherhood among the Jewish people.

A man sends to a man, and a woman sends to a woman, boys send to boys and girls send to girls. Children should be encouraged to send Mishloach Manos.

A mourner must send Mishloach Manos, but we don't send to him. You may send to other members of his family.

4. Give Matonos L'Evyonim

On Purim Day, give charity of at least a nominal sum to two poor people. If you can't find a poor person, set the money aside until you find one, or put it in a Pushka (charity box).

You can give to any poor person, man or woman or a child (who understands), or a mourner. There is **no** requirement for a man to give only to a man, or a woman to a woman, etc. Giving to the poor further demonstrates the spirit of unity among the Jewish people.

A woman should not rely on her husband to fulfill the Mitzvah for her. She should personally give Matonos L'Evyonim, and send Mishloach Manos to her friends.

Children should be encouraged to fulfill this Mitzvah. On Purim, whoever stretches out his hand and asks should be given Tzedakah.

It's better to increase in Matonos L'Evyonim than in Mishloach Manos and Seudas Purim. Machatzis HaShekel and (the minimum amount of) Matanos L'Evyonim may not be from Ma'aser money.

5. Eat The Festive Purim Meal

During the day of Purim we eat a special meal to rejoice in the Purim spirit.

Purim Night – Motzei Shabbos

Since Purim is on Motzei Shabbos, it's a good idea to bring your Megillah to Shul **before** Shabbos.

The **Megillah reading should be delayed somewhat**, to enable everyone, including women and children to come to Shul to hear it.

On Motzei Shabbos, women who don't daven Ma'ariv, (or someone who didn't yet daven Ma'ariv) must say "Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh Lichol" before doing any work, such as bringing their Megillah or driving to shul etc..

Add Al HaNisim in Shemoneh Esrei in Maariv.

After Shemoneh Esrei, we say Kaddish with Tiskabel, then read the Megillah.

After the Megillah, we say Shoshanas Yaakov, Vehi Noam, V'Atah Kadosh, Kaddish (without Tiskabel) and Aleinu.

Don't forget Havdalah and Vayitein Lecha, at home or in Shul.

You may read the Megillah all night until dawn.

We eat a small Seudah on the night of Purim. It's correct to set the table with a tablecloth and candles to emphasize the festive nature of the meal.

Purim Day – Sunday

It's proper to wear Shabbos clothes on Purim.

The Mitzvos of Purim Day may be done from sunrise to sunset.

We don't say Tachnun. After Shemoneh Esrei we read the Torah [YaVo Amalek]. If you didn't hear Parshas Zachor, have in mind the Mitzvah of remembering Amalek.

After the Torah reading, we read the Megilah.

If you still need to give Machatzis HaShekel, do so before the Megilah reading.

We wear Rashi Tefilin during the reading.

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When the Ba'al Koreh says the Brochah of Shehechyanu before the Megilah, have in mind the Mitzvos of Purim: Mishloach Manos, Matanos L'Evyonim and Seudas Purim.

Purim is an excellent opportunity to do Mivtzoim. You can provide people in old age homes, neighbors, and business associates with Mishloach Manos and Matanos L'Evyonim for them to give out.

Children should fulfill the Mitzvos of listening to the Megilah, Mishloach Manos, (boy to boy etc), Matanos L'Evyonim, Seudas Purim, as well as Mivtzoim.

Purim In Leningrad

Following are excerpts of the Purim Farbrengen in Leningrad 84 years ago. Much of this material was recorded by R. Chaim Althaus. This is a continuation of our article from last month which speaks about the Friediker Rebbe's work to keep Yiddishkeit alive in Russia.

A few months after the following Purim Farbrengen, the Friediker Rebbe was arrested and given a death sentence, which was later overturned.

(The Rebbe Rayatz spoke directly to many individuals in the course of the Farbbrengen that night.)

This Purim was utterly different from previous years. The Rebbe spoke openly, sharply and intensely. He wept, his face reddened with emotion, and in his voice was anger before this time, unknown. We witnessed an actual "outpouring of the soul."

The Rebbe Rayatz said to Mr. Chaim Amstitslavsky, "My father looked at you, and he did good for you and for your children, and your whole family. The gaze of a Tzaddik can cause a great effect. In the city of Kremenchug there are many like you, and in other cities, your only advantage is that my father looked at you. You supported the Yeshiva in Kremenchug for a long time." The Rebbe blessed him with a big brochah for gashmius, and said, "We have to have our own cheder and it has to be your cheder."

About midnight, during the Purim Seudah, the Rebbe abruptly stood up, pulled aside his shirt to reveal his heart, and pounded hard with his fist on his bare chest. He called, "Elya Chaim (Althaus)!" and he hastened to draw closer. Then the Rebbe said, "I told you to write harshly last year, but you did not listen, and of course you have been suffering all year. Now I tell you to write immediately to every city and village with these words: "The Rebbe left us his son to guide us (what type of a soul this is people do not know, he would not come to

me without first going to the mikvah), and the son has instructed us to write in his name that anyone handing his son over to the Yevseksia (the schools run by the rabid anti-religious section of the Communist Party) will be severely punished by Heaven. I give a guarantee that Jews who have their children learn (Torah) will have a good year, the one who doesn't do it..." You agree to write this Elya Chaim?!"

The Rebbe repeated his exact words many times, pounding upon his heart. He called me again, and with a radiant, courageously smiling countenance, declared, "Have no feelings of pity - I accept upon myself all four death penalties - when you see the body consumed, concern yourself solely with protecting the head."

The Chassidim were greatly frightened by the Rebbe's open defiance of the Yevseksia. One of the elderly Chassidim, Reb Meir Simcha Chein of Nevel was distraught and unable to control himself. He cried out, "Rebbe, we cannot stand to hear such words. We need a Rebbe of flesh and blood." The Rebbe answered, "I asked my father, "Like Nikolai?" and my father answered, "Like Nikolai."

We were puzzled. The Rebbe saw our confusion and explained quietly, "Nikolai the First was sent as a youth by his father, Czar Paul, to conduct military maneuvers to test his abilities and courage. Nikolai had been a man of arms from his childhood on and distinguished himself to the utmost in the war games, in fighting, command, and strategy. After bringing the maneuvers to a successful conclusion, exhilarated with his achievement, he sealed with his ring a decree which bestowed lavish presents on the officers and soldiers who had participated with him. He did this without consulting his father and the finance minister. When his father learned what had happened, he was gratified by his son's military talents but enraged by his expenditure of such large sums, which were out of proportion to the finances of the treasury. He summoned Nikolai to the palace and expressed his satisfaction with the intelligence and skill he had displayed during the maneuvers. However, as penalty for his excessive generosity and his failure to consult his superiors, the prince was to be banished from the capital city for two full years."

"One time someone came to the Tzemach Tzedek to bless him with children. The Rebbe sent him to his son, the Maharil, R. Yehudah Leib. The Maharil blessed the man with children, riches and many other things. The Tzemach Tzedek punished his son for a year's time. He could not come to him to hear Chassidus..

"I have the power to give (blessings) and I believe with simple faith that I have the power to give (blessings). One time someone asked Rebbe Mendel Horodok if he could bless him, and he said, "I cannot bless you but if you have pure belief in me then my blessing will be fulfilled."

"We have to entrust our children to religious Jewish teachers for this will bring the redemption closer. Those who calculate when Moshiach is supposed to come never thought that upon this, will depend the coming of Moshiach. Therefore we must, with all our might, see that children will learn Torah. Girls now must learn also, and we cannot give them into their schools!

The Rebbe turned to a Chassid from the city of Nevel. "Zalman," he said, "if they should make a big bonfire of good seasoned timber and give you the choice of yielding your child to their schools or casting yourself into the flames, do you know what should be done? Let yourself be burnt up and prevent your children from being given into their schools!

"... The revelation of the light of Moshiach will be in Petersburg as in Lubavitch. Any gentile in Lubavitch knew that the Mikvah was on Petergorodski Street, he knew that on Shabbos he could not buy salt (shops were closed), he knew that a Jew walks with a Tallis and Tefillin to daven and he knew that every Jew sends his child to a Cheder. It is the same in Petersburg - that if a non-Jew has his stall open on Shabbos, it doesn't matter, but a Jew will not keep his store open on Shabbos."

The Rebbe now spoke to a man named Pinye and inquired, "When are you going to bring your son to learn?"

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Pinye replied, "After Pesach, Rebbe."

"Not after Pesach. On Sunday! You are playing with a soul! Those who don't put their children into a Cheder should not come to me. I am not taking any responsibility for them. You are allowed to learn Torah! The government permits it. Only the Yevseksia, Yemach Shemom doesn't permit! Who is this Yevseksia...?"



The Rebbe turned to someone called Itche and said, "You want to make 30 rubles? It's better that 30 children learn. Money is nothing to me; I don't need 30 or 300 or 30,000 rubles - gashmius is dust and ashes! I have the power to give you all your physical needs - just send a telegram.. (saying) 'send money for a ticket.' If you don't (have children in a Cheder) you can be a religious Jew davening and learning (Torah) an entire day, but with me you have no connection at all! I'm not afraid of anyone, nothing can separate me or break me.. One who is not bound to the physical world does not conceal nor cover over!"

"In every city we should see that there is a Mikvah and in every city we should see that there are teachers, too. It is up to the rabbi and the community leaders to do everything for the upkeep of the Mikvah. No one should be ashamed to carry wood to heat up the Mikvah. If there is a caretaker, then the caretaker should take care of the Mikvah; if not, it is up to all to make sure the Mikvah is heated. Young families need a Mivkah."

The open defiance implicit in the story of Nikolai, and the direct confrontation with the agents caused much concern; the Chassidim were completely distraught. They viewed the future with much apprehension.

They were also distressed by the Rebbe's remarks to the chossid named Zalman about the care that should be taken to protect small children from the falsehoods of the Yevseksia education system.

The Rebbe spoke in this vein all night and when he finished, we were overcome even more apprehension and fear. It was doubly difficult for us to hear such things - firstly, because of the dire events he was foretelling; and secondly, because we were acutely aware of the spies from the Yevseksia, standing directly opposite the Rebbe and taking note of every word. He faced them directly and with defiant courage, cried out: "Yemach Shemom - may their names be blotted out! I know that they are here; I am unafraid," We gazed at the intruders, who were known to us, and their faces flushed, and this deepened

our concern for the Rebbe's welfare.

Unable to control himself, and fearful for the Rebbe's safety, R. Elya chaim Althaus hastened to the elderly Rebbetzin, the Rebbe's mother, Shterna Sarah, to ask her to influence her son. He entered her room and related all that had taken place. She hurried to the large room and the Chassidim were relieved to see her. They understood her purpose, and quickly made a path so that she could approach her son.

Before she could speak, the Rebbe turned to her and with respectful deference beseeched, "Mother, please go back to your room. Say Tehillim and weep in prayer to G-d, for that will help." As he spoke, the tears flowed upon his cheeks, and seeing this, the Rebbetzin began crying too. They stood crying together, facing each other in silence and tears. The scene moved the Chassidim deeply, and tears fell from many eyes. After these frightful moments the Rebbe spoke, "I do nothing on my own. I have asked my father."

The Rebbetzin said to her son, "Have mercy on your health. Stop speaking and go rest up in the next room." As she was speaking the Rebbe fainted. The Chassidim took him into the next room to revive him. It was eleven minutes until he awoke and then he rested for two hours.

We waited until his return for the recitation of grace after the meal. On his return he mentioned nothing of what had passed earlier.

Sefer HaSichos 5687

The Four Parshios

**Parshas Shekalim
Pikudei
Adar (1) 29 /March 1**

We read Parshas Shekalim on the Shabbos before Rosh Chodsh Adar. It talks about the Mitzvah of giving Machatzis Hashekel, the silver half-Shekel every man had to give to the Beis Hamikdash annually in Adar. The money was used to buy the communal sacrifices for the year.

**Parshas Parah
Shemini
Adar 20/March 22**

We read Parshas Parah on the next to last Shabbos before Nisan (or the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh). It teaches the laws of the Parah Adu-mah - Red Heifer, and how it purified. Since all Jews had to purify themselves before bringing the Korban Pesach, it is read now. According to some Halachic authorities, it is a Torah obligation.

**Parshas Zachor
Tzav
Adar 13 /March 15**

We read Parshas Zachor on the Shabbos before Purim. It teaches the Mitzvah to remember what Amalek did to us, and to erase their memory. We read it on the Shabbos before Purim since Haman was a descendant of Amalek. It's a Torah obligation. According to many Halachic authorities women are obligated as well as men.

**Parshas HaChodesh
Tazria
Adar 27/March 29**

We read Parshas HaChodesh on the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh Nisan (or on Shabbos Rosh Chodesh Nisan). It tells about the first commandment that HaShem gave us, how to sanctify the months, and establishing the calendar starting from Nisan, as well as the laws of Pesach.

“ ויהי בימי ” “And it was in the time” ~ Was it Good or Bad?

Purim Farbrengen 5729/1969

For Purim more than forty years ago, we bochurim traveled by bus from Lubavitch Yeshiva in Montreal to New York to be with the Rebbe. The Purim Farbrengen went into the wee hours of the morning.

In the first few sichos of the Farbrengen the Rebbe expounded on the first verse of Megillas Esther. The Megillah commences “And it was in the days of King Achashveirosh. The Gemorah states that whenever something starts “vayehi be'mei” it means that there is tzores, difficult times, and we see that at the time of Achashveirosh there was Haman and it became a very difficult time for the Yidden.

The Rebbe asks: “Why begin the Megillah with vayehi be'mei if at that period of time there was no tzores? In that period of time the Yidden lived a very good life, physically and spiritually. Physically we find that Mordechai was Minister in the king's palace. Mordechai was in the royal court of the king and the Jews lived in golden age, physically. Spiritually, Mordechai was one of the heads of the Sanhedrin. Torah was being learned publicly.

When the Megillah tells us about Mordechai it starts with “Ish Yehudi”. A Jewish person lived in Shushan — even before we know his name is Mordechai. We can see that he is Jewish and he is not ashamed of it. In Shushan he did not have to hide his identity. So why start the Megillah with vayehi be'mei saying that there is a problem?

The Rebbe then explained the Medrash that even though we don't find Hashem's name in the Megillah His name is coded in the Megillah. The word Achashveirosh stands for “the one who in the beginning and end belongs to Him.” So what is the tzorah in the time of Achashveirosh if it was in the time of Hashem? The Rebbe's point is that after the words “vayehi be'mei” the problem

is who was king? Achashveirosh was king of the known world and Yerushalayim was in ruins. The Jews are in golus and Achashveirosh is the king. The Bais Hamikdash is not built and there is no Malchus Bais Dovid. You are living in a time of physical prosperity and freedom of religion and you are second to the king and Esther is the queen, but as long as Moshaich hasn't come and Malchus Bais Dovid is not there you are in “vayehi be'mei”, you are in Golus and that's the tzores.

Even according to the Medrash that states that in the word Achashveirosh is also coded the name of Hashem how can we say we were in tzorah when according to the words we were in the time of Hashem? So the Rebbe answered with the story of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev. Once he asked Hashem “What do you want of us? The lust of the world you put in front of our eyes and reward and punishment You put in your holy books. If Gan Eden and Gehinom were in front of our eyes and the lust of the world would be in books and we would only learn about it, then we would be all right.” So the same thing applies here: when we read the Megillah we don't openly find Hashem's name. In simple terms Achashveirosh means a human being. If the only way we can find Hashem name is in a Medrash then we know we have tzoras!

If the Torah tells us such a story, what does the Torah want? To depress us? The Torah wants to teach us from the beginning of the Megillah that something is needed from us: that the key to geulah lies in our hands. If we do teshuvah immediately the geulah will come. Then we will nullify “vayehi be'mei” and Moshiach, who is from Malchus Beis Dovid, will be our king and the revelation of Hashem will be out in the open.

My People

After the Ma'amer the Rebbe spoke about the lessons we can learn from Esther's response.

Haman stood before Achashveirosh, mighty ruler over the 127 countries of the Persian Empire, and presented to the king a number of "reasons" why the Jewish people should be destroyed: "There is a certain people, " he said, "who are scattered and dispersed among the peoples ... their laws are different from those of every people; they do not keep the king's laws" "Therefore," concluded Haman, " ... it is not worthwhile that the king should let them exist." The king agreed, and issued the fateful decree for the annihilation of Israel.

Later, when Esther pleaded with the king to annul the decree, we find, that she made no attempt to refute any of Haman's "reasons"! She merely said, " ... let my life be given me at my petition and my people at my request; for we are sold, I and my people, to be slain and to perish." Such a profound impression did these words make on Achashveirosh, that his anger was immediately aroused against Haman and he said in fury: "Who is he, and where is he, that dares in his heart presume to do such a thing?!"

Why the sudden reversal of the king's attitude? Just a little while before he agreed with Haman that it was not "worthwhile" to let the Jews exist, and Esther did not deny any of Haman's charges. She did not disagree with Haman that the Jews were "scattered and dispersed among the peoples." She did not contest his claim that their laws were "different from those of every people", nor did she deny that the Jews did not keep the king's laws (when those laws were contrary to the Torah).

All she did was to reveal that the Jews were her people (a fact about which the king was previously unaware). In these simple words, "my people," lies the key to the startling effectiveness of her answer. Esther implied by her answer: "You, oh king, assembled all the fairest women from the 127 countries of your empire to select from among them a queen. Then you assembled a second time all the most pleasing young maidens of your vast empire. Who was the most favorite in your eyes of all that

prodigious array? - a daughter of the Jewish nation. Moreover, that Jewish daughter did not please you because she acted in accordance with Persian law and custom; on the contrary, she has conducted herself - even here in the palace - as a true daughter of her people. She acted in precisely the way Haman describes. He says "their laws are different" - true! - Your queen does not eat your food, nor does she drink your wine. You know that she has hired seven maidservants to wait on her, one for each day of the week, so that she should not forget which day to observe as the Holy Shabbos.

Haman declares "They do not keep the king's laws" - true! I will not bow to your idols, nor will I behave immodestly in any way. So Haman's description of my people's conduct is true, but his conclusion - that it is not "worthwhile" for the king to let them exist - is utterly false and malicious. By selecting myself as queen you have yourself repudiated Haman's argument; you have shown that is certainly is "worthwhile" to let our people live. It is our different conduct and our unswerving loyalty to our faith that prove our uniqueness and worth."

A Proof from Esther

Ask a Jew who has abandoned Torah and Mitzvos because he wants to become a "fully-accepted member" of contemporary society if he considers the Jewish people as his people. Usually he will answer in the affirmative. He might take you into his Wall Street office and point to a photograph high on the wall. An old man with flowing white beard and wise, earnest eyes looks out from the frame next to a woman with kind, noble features, a woman whose hair is completely covered with a shawl. "See," he will say, "that's my Zeideh and Bobeh (grandfather and grandmother)." Somewhat proudly he might continue: "Do you think my grandfather was just a plain person? No sir! He was a great Torah scholar who lived an intensely Jewish life, observing all the Mitzvos with warmth and feeling, and he looked Jewish, with a long white beard and big Yarmulka - as you can see. Oh yes, I know all about life in the 'old shtetl.' As for my dear old father, he's also a very fine and pious Jew, and I take good care of him in his old age. I've put him in the very best old-age home, I visit him from time to time and especially on Father's Day. So don't ask me if the Jews are my people. Of

course they are; I'm very proud of my great Jewish heritage!"

Sadly, we think to ourselves: "This person has; in a sense, done to his grandfather what Haman wanted to do to Mordechai; he has 'hung him fifty cubits high.' "The picture hangs in his office high on the wall, detached and separated from his way of life in today's world: We cannot resist asking him further: "Why do you have to bring proof of your Jewishness from an old picture of bygone days? Why don't you make your own children ,a "living picture" of your grandfather? Do you give them the kind of Torah education that will train them to act, think and speak in the same noble Torah-guided way that your grandfather did?"

Are you kidding?" he answers. "That might have been good a long time ago; but times are different now. We are scattered and dispersed among the peoples. We can't make ourselves different from everyone else. We can't have our own laws, or refuse to obey the fashions and fads of society, for if we were to act differently, society: would reject us; we simply could 'not exist!'"

His words, prompted by the "Haman" (the Yetzer Hara, or Evil Inclination) within him, have an ancient ring about them. They were actually spoken thousand of years ago by the first Haman, who tried to persuade the mighty King Achashveirosh of Persia that society cannot let the Jews exist because "... they are scattered and dispersed among the peoples; their laws are different from all the peoples, nor do they keep the king's laws, etc."

How foolish was the Haman of old! How foolish is the inner "Haman" within some Jews today! How could they both be so short sighted and fail to see the living evidence that utterly repudiates their reasoning.

Let us see how Esther answered Haman's argument. She said to the king, "... for I and my people have been sold..:" With the words "I and my people" Esther implied: According to Haman, a people "scattered and dispersed" cannot exist .if they keep different laws, then we should have perished long ago. Well, here am I, selected as queen from maidens of 127 countries, and here are my people still keeping our different laws - as you, Haman, yourself says; but where are the mighty world empires of Egypt, Assyria and Babylon? Not a trace of them remains!

The Jew who stood with us in his office, declaring that we cannot be different if we are to survive - to what does he owe his existence as a Jew? Only to his father, grandfather and ancestors all the way back to the giving of the Torah three-and-a-half thousand years ago, who did keep , their own laws and did not assimilate. If they had reasoned as he now does, then he would not be standing here today talking about the "irrelevance" of Jewish education - for what has become of the descendants of those who maintained that the key to Jewish survival lay in "not being different ?" Where are they today?

Not only does assimilation and imitation of majority cultures accelerate our spiritual decline, it doesn't even accomplish the sought-for material improvement, such as the respect and acceptance of society. We read further in the story of Purim: When King Achashveirosh saw that Mordechai refused to bow down to Haman - a literal violation of the king's own decree - when he saw that Mordechai remained a steadfast and faithful Jew even in the royal court, this aroused his deepest respect and admiration; he thought "this is a man of principle, him I can trust."

History shows repeatedly that those Jews who try to gain society's "acceptance" by discarding and deprecating their Jewish distinctiveness and by copying the styles and customs of others, are ultimately rejected anyway. The princes, rulers or leaders of society who own people and his own tradition, who runs after others, trying to mimic their culture, is nothing but a hanger-on. Furthermore, he is totally unreliable. He has 'sold' his heritage, for money or "honor," so how can I depend on him or trust him? If someone else will offer him a dollar more he will betray his loyalty to me, too, just as he betrayed his loyalty to his own tradition."

Unswerving loyalty to G-d, to His Torah and precepts is the secret of our people's survival, and it is also the only path towards gaining the respect and honor of society as a whole.

(reprinted from "A Thought For The Week")

Adar 2 5774 Calendar

CALENDAR TIMES ARE FOR LOS ANGELES

Rosh Chodesh Adar 2 Day 1
Sunday/March 2/Shevat 30

Rosh Chodesh Adar 2 Day 2
Monday/March 3/Adar 1

Vayikra

Adar 6/March 8

Light Candles Friday March 7: **5:36**

Shabbos Ends: **6:39**

Last Time to Read Shema: **9:08**

Change Clocks One Hour Ahead

After Midnight

Ta'anit Esther - Early

Thursday/Adar 11/March 13

Fast Begins: **5:52**

Machatzis HaShekel / Minchah: **6:15**

Fast Ends: **7:35**

Tzav

Parshas Zachor

Adar 13/March 15

Light Candles Friday March 14: **6:42**

Shabbos Ends: **7:45**

Last Time to Read Shema: **10:02**

Purim Night

Motzei Shabbos/Adar 14/Mar. 15

1. Ma'ariv (Kol Yakov Yehuda): **7:50**

Megillah Reading **8:00**

2. Maa'riv (Kollel): **8:00**

Megillah Reading **8:15**

3. Maariv in Shul **8:15**

Megillah Reading **8:30**

Purim Day

Sunday/Adar 14/March 16

Sunrise: **7:02**

First Minyan (Shul): **7:00**

Megillah Reading: **7:30**

Purim Continued

Second Minyan (Kollel): **8:00**

Megillah Reading: **8:30**

Third Minyan (In Shul): **8:30**

Megillah Reading: **9:00**

4th Minyan (Kol Yakov Yehuda): **9:00**

Megillah Reading: **9:30**

5th Minyan (In Kollel) **9:30**

Megillah Reading: **10:00**

6th Minyan (In Shul) **10:00**

Megillah Reading **10:30**

Mincha 1 **4:00**

Mincha 2 **5:00**

Sunset: **7:01**

Shushan Purim

Monday/Adar 15/March 17

No Tachnun

Shemini

Parshas Parah

Adar 20/March 22

Light Candles Friday March 21: **6:47**

Shabbos Ends: **7:50**

Last Time to Read Shema: **9:56**

Tazria

Shabbos Mevarchim Nissan

Parshas HaChodesh

Adar 27/March 29

Light Candles Friday March 28: **6:52**

Tehillim: **8:15**

Shachris: **10:00**

Shabbos Ends: **7:55**

Last Time to Read Shema: **9:51**

Molad of Nisan

Monday, March 31/ 3:54 and 9 chalakim AM

Rosh Chodesh Nisan

Tuesday/Nisan 1/April 1

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Mivtzah Purim:

We are asking everyone to help us in Mivtzah Purim: One half hour to forty five minutes Purim day, please go to old age homes, business offices or other appropriate locations to give out Shalach Manos and bring Simchah to the people there.

People love when you come with your children.