



Just as Purim is celebrated for the great redemption through which the Jews in all of the 127 countries Ahasuerus ruled were saved from annihilation, many other communities throughout the world have their own "Purims" marking their salvations.

Many communities even wrote their own megilot describing the miraculous events of their salvation. There are at least a score or more of these local Purims, in addition to celebrations established by individual families marking their own personal redemptions.

*The Purim of Saragossa*  
The Purim of Saragossa was established in the year 1440, 52 years before the Jews were exiled from Spain. In the city of Saragossa, Spain, the Jews were ordered to appear at a public reception honoring the king with all of the Torah scrolls of the community.

The rabbis of the community decided that it would be safer to remove the Torahs from their cases, and were sure that the king would never know the difference.

Unfortunately, there was a Jew in the community named Marcos who was a rebel and a troublemaker. He went to the authorities and betrayed the rabbis' plan, citing the Jews' disrespect for the king as the reason for not bringing the actual scrolls.

The king was furious at this slight and ordered the Jews to open the cases at once. A terror fell upon all the Jews, for the punishment for disobeying the king was the most severe, but they had no choice but to open the cases. They were completely amazed and dumbfounded when they saw that all of the cases contained Torah scrolls.

What they could not have known was that the previous night, the caretaker of the synagogue had a dream in which the prophet Elijah appeared to him and ordered him to replace the scrolls in their cases. The dream was so vivid that the caretaker did as he was instructed, but he had no time to inform the rabbis of his action.

The king saw that the Jews were innocent; the accusation was baseless. He ordered the informer put to death for his false accusation. To commemorate their redemption, the rabbis established a special Purim to be celebrated throughout the generations on the 17th and 18th of Shevat.

*The Purim of Cairo*  
This Purim, celebrated by the Jews of the Egyptian capital, was established in 1524 when the Turkish governor of Egypt, Ahmed Pasha, was involved in a revolt against the Turkish sultan.

He seized 12 of the most prominent members of the Jewish community as hostages, threatening to kill them and banish the entire Jewish community unless a large ransom was paid to him.

On the day on which the tremendous sum of money was due, Ahmed was assassinated by chief members of his staff as he left the bathhouse.

The hostages were immediately released (amongst them was the great rabbi David ben Zimra, the teacher of the Ari HaKadosh), and the threat against the Jewish community was annulled.

*The Purim of Rhodes*  
In 1840 the Jewish community on the island of Rhodes faced the terrible accusation of having killed a gentile child to use his blood in baking matza.

The governor of the island arrested the leaders of the community and tortured them as they awaited execution. But the child was found alive and well. The accusation proved baseless and the hapless captives released.

On the 14th of Adar, the Turkish sultan, Abed Almagid, issued a royal decree to be kept in the possession of the Jewish community, stating that the charge was false. From that day forth, the Jews of Rhodes celebrated a double Purim in commemoration of that event.

*The Purim of Chios*  
This Purim, known as "Purim de la Senora" (the "Purim of the woman of honor"), commemorates an event in which a local Jewish woman foiled the plans of the Spanish navy

and saved her community.  
In the year 1595, the Greek island of Chios was blockaded by the Spanish flotilla led by King Ferdinand of Spain.

A Jewish woman who lived in a house adjoining the local fortress went out early in the morning to the great outdoor oven to bake bread for her family.

Sparks from her coal fire accidentally ignited the store of ammunition which lay in the nearby fortress, causing a frightening explosion.

The Spanish flotilla which was anchored nearby quickly sailed away in terror, thus saving the Jewish community from the threat of the Inquisition which the Spaniards always established in their wake.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

### The sons of Aaron the priest will put fire on the altar (Lev. 1:7)

Even though a heavenly fire descended from on High to consume the offerings, the priests were still required to bring ordinary fire as well, to the altar. We learn from this that one may not rely solely on the "fire that descends from on high" – the natural, innate love of G-d which is present in the soul of every Jew. Each of us must also bring an "ordinary fire," kindle that innate love of G-d by taking the initiative and contemplating His greatness, to further nurture that inner spark. (*The Rebbe*)

### If any person sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of G-d...and do any of them (Lev. 4:2)

There are times when even a mitzva can be considered a transgression. If a person fulfills a commandment of G-d, with full knowledge that he is doing a mitzva, yet he thinks he is doing a great favor to G-d by his compliance – this attitude is in itself sinful. (*Kedushat Levi*)

### And if a person should sin...by doing one of the commandments of G-d, concerning things which ought not to be done (Lev. 4:27)

Two disciples of the Maggid of Mezeritch once chanced upon each other. Naturally, the conversation soon turned to matters of Torah. "Oy," sighed the first. "What will be with us after 120 years? How will we be able to face our Maker, having committed so many transgressions during our lifetimes?" "I'm not worried about my sins," replied the second. "We have been granted the path of *teshuva* [repentance] to take care of those. What concerns me is our mitzvot. How will we be able to appear before G-d and defend such paltry mitzvot as we have to our credit..."



**5:40 Candle Lighting Time**  
NY Metro Area  
**8 Adar II/Mar 11**  
Torah Portion Vaikra  
Parshat Zachor  
Shabbat ends 6:40 PM

Dedicated to the memory of  
**חנה בת מענדל ע"ה**  
**Mrs. Anita Adler OBM**  
Long Beach, New York  
by her family

to dedicate an issue call (718) 778-6000

# L'Chaim

בס"ד  
1714  
8 Adar II, 5782  
Mar 11, 2022  
The Weekly Publication for Every Jewish Person  
ניסד תוך ימי השלושים  
Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson  
"...I have called out to the L-rd and He answered me" (Psalm 120:1)



## LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

The additional portion of *Zachor*, which is about Amalek, is always read on the Shabbat before Purim. The *Haftora* is about the war waged by King Saul against King Agog and the Amalekite people.

The obvious connection to Purim is that the wicked Haman, who was the descendant of Agog, sought to kill all of the Jewish people (Heaven forbid), and the miraculous victory over Haman, through Mordechai and Esther, the descendants of King Saul.

The Haftora begins with Samuel our prophet giving G-d's command to Saul to utterly wipe out Amalek. "So says G-d..., 'I remember what Amalek did to Israel..., when they were going up from Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek and destroy all that they have...'" What is interesting about this verse, is how it varies from the verse in the portion of *Zachor*, "Remember what Amalek did to you..., when you were going out of Egypt." In the portion it says, "going out" from Egypt, and in the Haftora it says, "going up." Going out and going up express two different purposes in leaving Egypt.

Going out refers to getting away from the negative influence of Egypt. Going up refers to the positive purpose of going out of Egypt, receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, and becoming G-d's nation.

The main idea of receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, was that we were raised above nature, connecting with G-d, and that G-d would bring himself into the physical, allowing the world to be infused with G-dliness, through our study of Torah and doing of mitzvahs.

The Haftora brings to the fore the nature of Amalek. When does Amalek attack? When we are on the way up, when we are reaching to be who we are meant to be, above the natural and one with G-d. This is what Amalek can't stand, this is where their hatred lies.

This is the war we wage against Amalek every day. When we are inspired to rise above, to be Jewish, above the natural, inevitably an Amalek comes to cool down our inspiration and fervor.

The war against Amalek coming out of Egypt was necessary. Overcoming Amalek was part of what set the stage for receiving the Torah. And the same is true today. We should not see our battle with our personal Amalek as a negative, but rather, as a necessary struggle, that prepares us to rise above.

Through taking our service to this higher level we will once again merit great miracles, like the miracles of Purim, with the coming of Moshiach. May he come now!

Adapted by Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz from the teachings of the Rebbe, yitzihurwitz.blogspot.com. Rabbi Hurwitz, who is battling ALS, and his wife Dina, are emissaries of the Rebbe in Temecula, Ca.

## United We Stand

One of the mitzvot of Purim is to hear the Megila read twice, once in the evening and once on the day of Purim.

On this mitzva, our Sages declare, "Anyone who reads the Megila 'backward,' does not fulfill his duty."

The Baal Shem Tov explained that this alludes to the idea that anyone who thinks that the miracle of Purim was valid "back" then – but not now – has not fulfilled his duty. All of the events that took place back then are equally applicable today.

All one needs to do is look at names and headlines in the news to know that when it comes to Haman's anti-Jewish plan of annihilation it didn't just happen, "back then."

Zhirinovsky. Holocaust revisionists. Farakhan.

These are the Hamans of today.

But, it's Purim! Why emphasize the negative?

There's much more to being Jewish, than learning about anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. And there's much more to Judaism that happened back then which is applicable today.

To mention just a few points from the ancient Purim story which can be incorporated into our "modern" lives:

Esther's only interest in all of the luxury, abundance and power of the palace was that she could use it to save her people and serve G-d.

Mordechai would not bow down.

He was proud of being a Jew and even the threats of the powerful and evil Haman could not induce him to compromise his beliefs.

The deliverance of the Jews from Haman's evil plot was hastened by the Jewish children, who continued to pray and study Torah without interruption.

Despite the fact that the Jews were scattered throughout Ahasuerus' 127 provinces, they were – in Haman's words – "one nation." They were united.



Our greatest strength comes from standing united as one people.

Though G-d's direction of the world is often hidden, as was the case throughout the Purim story – where even Esther becoming the queen seemed to "happen" by itself – yet we must always realize that it is G-d who controls the world and its every detail.

Backward, forward, up or down. Purim is the time to rejoice in the great miracle that G-d wrought for us and the miracles He continues to bestow upon each individual and our entire people, every moment of every day, until the ultimate miracle, the Messianic Era.

# SLICE OF LIFE

## May Dark be Transformed to Light



**Sunday, February 20:** A new Torah scroll was welcomed in Pola, Ukraine, a neighborhood ten kilometers from the center of Dnepropetrovsk with over 10,000 Jewish residents. The Torah scroll will be used in the recently opened synagogue and JCC. Hundreds of excited community members, along with dignitaries and guests, attended the special event. Not one participant imagined how their lives would soon be turned upside down.



**Thursday, February 24:** A photo of The Menorah Center starts appearing on people's facebook feed with the explanation: "This is the largest Jewish community centre in the world. It's not based in Israel or the United States. It's situated in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine and built by Chabad. It caters to thousands of Jews as do the countless other Chabad centres throughout the country."

"It is one of the many Chabad centers throughout the Ukraine with over 170 Chabad couples serving 154 communities in 52 cities – including 49 educational centers, 7 orphanages, 32 soup kitchens, synagogues, mikvahs and community centers.

"As our brothers and sisters face uncertainty and fear, we CAN help. Let's flood the world with goodness!"

Hours after missiles began to hit locations across Ukraine, young Ukrainian *Shluchim* (emissaries of the Rebbe) gathered virtually on zoom to say Psalms for peace and encourage one another. Cities represented included Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Dnipro.

**Friday, February 25:** Rabbi Nochum Ehrentroi, Chabad of Zaparozya updated friends and family, "The government has been handing out weapons to residents so they can

defend themselves. We have been getting and distributing food and necessities to distribute to the members of his community, as the situation is very dire."

**Shabbat, February 26:** Rabbi Pinchas Vishedski told members of his community in Kyiv that they should flee with their families from the Russian airstrikes. After the prayers had ended and in the middle of the Shabbat meal, eight families got the green light to leave. Rabbi Vishedski instructed them to travel on Shabbat because of the imminent danger to their lives. A father of one of the families said he won't be able to join the convoy. "Rabbi, I don't have gas. My tank is empty and there's nowhere to refuel." Rabbi Vishedski didn't miss a beat. He went over to the lectern where he had put his car-keys before Shabbat. "My car has a full tank," the rabbi said, handing over the keys to the man.

"Have your wife and kids transfer to my car and go on your way." The man, deeply moved, asked, "and what will be with you, rabbi?"

"I'll be OK," Rabbi Vishedski assured him.



Days before the war – Rabbi Moscovitz at a 30 Year Celebration of the school that has 400 students

**After Shabbat, February 26,** Rabbi Moshe Moscovitz, who together with his wife Miriam established Chabad of Kharkov in 1990, updated family and friends:

It says that you're not supposed to cry on Shabbat, I failed that three times this Shabbat.

The first time, was on Friday night when we managed to get to the synagogue. After the prayers we went downstairs for a Kiddush, filled with people who were brave enough to come, and the many people who have been living in the synagogue since the war started. After Kiddush we started singing "Nyet nyet nikovo" – a Russian melody that there is no one that we should fear besides G-d alone.

The second time, I wasn't able to hold it in, was Shabbat morning, when we blessed the new month of Adar, saying "Who did miracles for our ancestors," I again felt the tears in my eyes. We also need miracles...

The third time was after the prayers, we have a beautiful tradition in our synagogue that the President of our community, Alexander Kaganovsky, gives blessings to people who have birthdays and special events in the community. Today, he asked everyone to be quiet, and said: "Reb Moisha, I want to tell you in the name of everyone in our community, that we want to thank all of you *shluchim* (emissaries) who have stayed behind to be

together with us. We now see that all of what you have been saying all these years that you are one inseparable part of the community is true" He finished, with a beautiful big hug.

Then we had an amazing Shabbat meal downstairs together There was no need for words, or to say anything inspiring. All of us together, over 100 people sitting in the basement of the synagogue which we are currently using as a shelter, including the people who have been sleeping in the synagogue for the past couple of days, joined together in song. Hard to choose just one moment from the hours we shared together... the man from Kramatorsk who had fled to Kharkov in 2014, thanking us for staying and with prayers that the community should only continue to be stronger...and everyone hand in hand singing "hinei ma tov" (how good it is when we are together)...and the standing ovation for the cooks who have also moved into the synagogue to be 24/7 available to feed everyone who is coming in...from the refugees from Donetsk with their children to the old man who is scared to be alone on the fifth floor.

A Shabbat full of faith, unity and lots of hope for only very good times ahead.



In Times Square, New York City

At the CTeen Shabbaton Havdala Ceremony in Times Square with 2500 teens in attendance, CTeen alum Benjamin Petrushyn from Ukraine led the recitation of "Shema Yisrael..." prayer for our brothers and sisters and all people of Ukraine.

**These are some of the latest updates as we go to print**

*May these days of darkness and chaos be transformed into light and into the new world order of the Redemption that will bring peace to the entire world!*

## TODAY IS...

### 12 Adar II

The Torah portion dealing with altar offerings begins: "A man who offers (yakriv) of you an offering to G-d." The logical order of the words should be, "A man of you who offers, etc." Rabbi Shneur Zalman explains: "A man who offers" – in order that a person becomes closer to G-d – "of you an offering to G-d" – he must bring the offering of himself. He must sacrifice his personal "animal," the desire for evil that is called the animal soul.

# The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

12th of Adar II, 5714 [1954]

To Jewish Women, Mothers and Daughters,

In the coming days, connecting the festivals of Purim and Passover, it is incumbent upon every Jewish woman, wife, mother and daughter, to reflect on the important historical part which the Jewish woman had in these festivals, and what useful lesson may be learnt therefrom.

Our Law requires the Jewish woman to participate in the special *Mitzvot* [commandments] connected with the festivals of Purim and Passover (such as the *Megillah*, *Haggadah*, etc), expressly stating that she merits these privileges because of the special merits of Jewish womanhood in helping bring about the wonderful deliverances "in those days at this season."

The *Megillah* tells us clearly of the decisive part which Esther had in the Miracle of Purim. This is further emphasized by the fact that both the Fast of Esther and the Book of Esther are named after her.

As for Passover, our Sages tell us at length in the *Midrash* that it was the Jewish women who kept up the courage and spirits of their men in the most trying times of Egyptian bondage, and who, moreover, raised the generations which were to receive the Torah at Sinai and later enter the Promised Land, the everlasting inheritance of our people.

The part played by Jewish womanhood on these two occasions was somewhat different: In the case of Passover, the woman's influence was concentrated in the home and family (*'Kol kvodo bas melech pnimo'* [the entire glory of the

King's daughter is within]), displaying all the true feminine Jewish virtues of modesty, piety and faith. In the case of Purim, Jewish womanhood showed that where Divine Providence places her in a position of prominence and influence, she uses it wholly for the benefit of her people, and is ready to sacrifice her very life for it, in compliance, with the instructions of the religious authorities.

**These festivals are living testimony that both at home and outside the Jewish woman will do her utmost to help preserve the sacred traditions of our people...**

The two festivals, Purim and Passover, are two everlasting witnesses testifying to the devotion of the Jewish woman to the Torah and *Mitzvot*. These festivals are living testimony that both at home and outside the Jewish woman will do her utmost to help preserve the sacred traditions and institutions of our people, even with self-sacrifice where need be. Jewish Women, Mothers and Daughters! Follow the example of your mothers of old and keep alive the great tradition of Jewish womanhood; remember, the future of our people is largely your responsibility.

Your sincere devotion to your responsibilities will surely bring you G-d's help; not only will all difficulties and dangers disappear – as in the case of Esther – but you will receive generous Divine blessings for the fulfillment of your needs and those of your family, materially and spiritually.

With blessing for a Happy Purim and a Happy and Kosher Pesach,

forbid. Purim is the only Jewish holiday whose name is not in the holy tongue. That the name of this festival is in Persian teaches us that even in the darkest moments of exile, we must never surrender and we possess the strength to transform darkness into light. Further, that even in the face of a seemingly all-powerful tyrant, G-d is Almighty and will rescue us. (*Time and Transcendence by Rabbi Fivish Dalfin*)

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Purim is a Persian word meaning "lottery." It refers to Haman's lottery in choosing a date for the annihilation of the Jewish people, G-d

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

*This coming Wednesday night and Thursday we celebrate Purim, commemorating the time when the Jews were delivered from Haman's terrible decree. Once Haman's plot to destroy the Jews became known, Mordechai sent a messenger to Queen Esther, asking her to go to the King on behalf of her people.*

*Esther hesitated; anyone who approached the king without being summoned and did not meet with his favor forfeited his life. When Esther relayed this message to Mordechai, he responded:*

*"Think not of yourself... For if you hold your peace at this time, then the deliverance will come to the Jews from another place... And who knows whether you came to the kingdom for just such a time as this."*

*Esther understood Mordechai's message. As a tzadik and the leader of the Jewish people of that generation, Mordechai knew through Divine inspiration that the Jewish people would be delivered. The only question was who would help actualize this Divinely inspired promise?*

*Esther agreed and asked Mordechai to tell the Jews to fast and pray for three days so she would be successful in her mission of finding favor in the king's eyes and saving the Jewish people. That is what happened and the Jews were ultimately delivered.*

*Every generation has a Mordechai – a tzadik and great leader. The Mordechai of our generation, the Rebbe said that the time of the Redemption has arrived. The Rebbe said that to prepare ourselves for the Redemption we should learn about Moshiach and the Redemption. Now, as then, the Rebbe's message was that the deliverance is coming, the Redemption will take place, it's happening.*

*The only question is, "Who will help actualize this Divinely inspired promise?"*

*If we view our interactions and experiences in light of Mordechai's question to Esther – "And who knows whether you came to the kingdom for just such a time as this" we can celebrate each moment of our lives intentionally – including and especially the upcoming holiday of Purim and merit the fulfillment of one of the last verses of the Megila that, "there was light and joy, gladness and honor," so may it be with us.*

*Shmuel Butman*

## L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה י מושקה

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.

Published by Lubavitch Youth Organization 1408 President St., Brooklyn, NY, 11213 phone 718 778 6000

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