



The El Paso CHABAD TIMES

Issue 158

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State Representative Cesar Blanco kindles the Shamash middle candle of the giant Menorah at the 20th annual Chanukah Playland as Rabbi Yisrael Greenberg looks on.

Chanukah 2019 at Chabad was a whirlwind of quality programming and meaningful interactions.

For the very first time the Jewish Women's Circle hosted a Menorah and Martinis event where participants crafted their own menorahs out of scraps of granite and enjoyed the fun social atmosphere.

The annual Menorah Workshop at Home Depot was packed for the seventh year going strong and the Chanukah Playland was a delight to young and old. The Chanukah message was broadcast to the broader community through local TV channels, radio stations and newspapers in multiple languages.

The final night of Chanukah was celebrated with a grand dinner and a candle making workshop for the children.

Public Menorah lightings every evening, Menorah displays throughout the city, and special party for the senior citizens at The Monte Vista and The Legacy.

Thank you to all our partners, sponsors and volunteers for making it all happen!

Celebration Seventy



The Day the Labels Died

By Rabbi Zalman Marcus

At 10:40 pm on Wednesday, the tenth of SHEVAT, January 17, 1951, labels for Jews died.

At that moment, at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, NY, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson consented to become the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe.

And at that moment, the brief but destructive life of "labels" came to a swift end. Labels like "Reform," "Conservative," and "Orthodox" were rendered suddenly useless when the new Lubavitcher Rebbe quietly took his seat at the head of table of Chabad.

"In America you're expected to make an official statement - preferably some-

thing sensational - when you take a new position," the Rebbe said during that historic Farbrengen. And then he declared his "official statement."

"There are three loves that are joined as one and cannot exist without each other: Love for G-d, love for His Torah, and our love for each other."

As the Rebbe elaborated on this beautiful vision, the theme of the evening started coming into focus. The Rebbe was committing himself - along with those who had insisted on his leadership - to a whole new level of uncompromising love for his fellow Jews.

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The Rabbi's Message



This year on the 10th day of Shvat the Chabad Lubavitch movement and world Jewry will celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's ascension to leadership in 1950.

We are told that when the Rebbe was nine years old he once jumped into a freezing river to save the life of a drowning child. It seems to me that the idea of saving lives, physically and spiritually, best defines the Rebbe's soul mission.

In 1950 there were millions of "drowning" Jews. Those who had

barely survived the Holocaust by the skin of their teeth, together with whole communities lacking proper spiritual and religious guidance. Hordes of Jewish children who were denied a proper Jewish education and millions of Jews trapped behind the iron curtain. A generation yearning for direction and encouragement and the Rebbe rose to the occasion in ways no one could have ever imagined.

Emissaries were immediately dispatched to North African communities in need of leadership and the fledgling Chabad communities of Israel, Australia and Europe were developed with the singular goal of becoming centers of inspiration for every Jew on their respective continents.

Rabbi Yosef Wineberg was one of the Rebbe's roaming emissaries to communities far and wide. As a fundraiser for the Central

Lubavitch Yeshiva he was guided to utilize every fundraising trip as an opportunity to inspire the locals to greater Torah observance and many of these Jews were introduced to the Rebbe through his efforts.

Once a Jew from a remote community called Rabbi Wineberg late at night with an urgent inquiry for the Rebbe. Rushing to Lubavitch Headquarters he realized that he arrived minutes after the Rebbe's secretary entered the Rebbe's office for the final time that day.

He wrote up the question and inserted the note between the door and the doorpost, hoping that the secretary would notice the note while exiting, understand it is urgent and give it to the Rebbe.

Early the next morning Rabbi Wineberg received the Rebbe's reply, but the secretary had never seen the note. Overcome with regret at having caused the Rebbe to go

through the trouble of picking up the note from the floor, Rabbi Wineberg asked the Rebbe for forgiveness for his brazenness.

The Rebbe replied, "I am all about "picking up" especially those that are forgotten by others."

Seventy years since the Rebbe assumed personal responsibility for the Jewish nation it is clear that the Rebbe focused on ensuring that no one is overlooked. Chabad's permanent presence in every corner of the globe is a testament to this, and every one can partake in this mission.

As we mark Yud Shevat on February 5 seek ways to reach out to another Jew and inspire them to do a Mitzvah or just simply convey the message that they are not alone. Because the Rebbe inspires us all to look out for one another in the truest sense of the word.

Rabbi Yisrael Greenberg

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A Message

from the Lubavitcher Rebbe



The Rebbe enters the main synagogue at Lubavitch World Headquarters for Purim services holding his Megillah. Accompanied by Israel's President Zalman Shazar. Purim 1971.

Blessing and Greeting:

I received your letter; and may G-d grant the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good, that you may have good news to report in all the matters about which you wrote.

The zechut of your observance of our sacred traditions—which I was gratified to note in your letter—will surely stand you and yours in good stead in all of the above, including your continued advancement in all matters of Torah and mitzvot. For although this is a “must” for its own sake, in compliance with G-d's will, this is also the “channel and vessel” through which to receive additional divine blessings in all needs, materially and spiritually.

The above is a particularly timely message now that we are about to celebrate Purim, the highlight of which is the reading of the megillah evening and morning. It is noteworthy and significant that although—

as the megillah tells us—both Mordechai and Esther were instrumental in bringing about the miracle of Purim and saving our people, the megillah is not named after both of them jointly, nor after Esther and Mordechai in that order, but solely after Esther (“Megillat Esther”).

Here is a pointedly emphatic message for every Jewish woman about her unique role in Jewish life. To be sure, no one can compare to the stature of Queen Esther, but it does emphasize the extraordinary potential of every loyal Jewish daughter to shape the future of her family, with far-reaching consequences for the environment and even for the entire Jewish people.

If this seems farfetched and mystical, the following episode will illustrate what even a comparatively small effort can accomplish.

You may have heard that many of our senior Lubavitch students

Esther and the Modern Jewish Woman: Shining Examples For All

volunteer their summer vacation to travel to distant places in order to reach out to fellow Jews in need of encouragement to strengthen their identity with and commitment to our people and the Torah way. In the course of this program it so happened that one of the students visited a small, Jewishly-isolated town where he found only a few Jewish families, and, as he later reported, he was disappointed to have accomplished nothing there.

But several months later, our own Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch which sponsors this program received a letter from one of the families in that town. The writer, a woman, related that one summer day she happened to stand by her front window when she saw a bearded young man, wearing a dark hat, his tzitzit showing, approaching her door. She confessed that when she admitted the young man and learned of the purpose of his visit, she was not responsive, for she and her family were not prepared at that moment to change their lifestyle.

Yet for a long time after that encounter, the appearance of the young man haunted her. He reminded her of her grandfather and had refreshed her memories of the beautiful Jewish life she had seen in her grandparents' home, though the material circumstances were incomparably more modest than she had come to know in her married life.

Finally—the letter went on—she decided to make the change. She made her home kosher, and the family began to observe Shabbat and Yom Tov, and she is raising the children in the Torah way. Since then, her home is filled with such contentment and serenity that she decided to write to the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch and express her profound gratitude.

Now, if all that was the result of a brief encounter with that young man, though unbeknownst to him of its lasting impact, how much more can be achieved by an American Jewish family, whose influence is not limited to a few minutes' conversation, but serves as a shining example of the kind of daily life and conduct that should be the privilege and blessing of every Jewish family?

Needless to say, if, in maintaining the proper Jewish standards, there may be some difficulties to overcome (many of which may even be more imaginary than real), surely such difficulties should be of no significance in comparison to the infinite benefits. Moreover, the effort required is a personal one, while the benefit is also for the many.

With prayerful wishes for a joyous and inspiring Purim and

With blessing,

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From the Rabbis' Blog

www.chabadelpaso.com/blog

Dedicated by **Northeast Feed**



Rabbi Levi Greenberg

Chanukah this year the world was shocked to learn of a sadistic antisemitic attack at a rabbi's home in Monsey during a Chanukah celebration. Coming on the heels of many more attacks throughout New York and New Jersey dubbed a "slow-rolling pogrom" many are asking Jews, especially those who are easily identifiable as Jews, how they feel about continuing to advertise their Jewishness.

Here in El Paso the media asked me if I ever felt threatened due to my mode of dress, and I emphatically responded that in El Paso I

have received nothing but respect.

But the heightened antisemitism in various pockets of the world is deeply troubling and the question is how to handle it.

Today I choose not to wrangle with the question of how to deal with antisemites, because I believe it is more vital to first determine how a Jew should absorb the situation, creating a context with which we can go forward in crafting a plan.

In the Torah portion we read in during Shabbat services immediately following Chanukah we learn of the dramatic showdown between Yehuda and Yosef. Yosef was the viceroy of Egypt, credited with saving all civilization from a raging famine - the most powerful man alive. When Yehuda and his brothers came to Egypt to purchase food they were unaware of the viceroy's true identity and when they were unjustifiably detained and falsely accused by the viceroy of spying,

they were in serious trouble.

Their situation became intolerably dangerous when their youngest brother Binyomin was framed with stealing the viceroy's goblet and his becoming an Egyptian slave forever became inevitable. There was no good way out of their predicament and all seemed lost.

At this moment of complete despair Yehuda bravely approached the viceroy and delivered an ultimatum: Either Binyomin is returned to his family or there will be war. Although it was later revealed that he was speaking to his long lost brother who would never allow for such a thing to happen, for Yehuda at the moment the danger was palpable and the risk of such a confrontation was real.

Nevertheless, despite being surrounded by the mightiest warriors alive and in the presence of a man who had the legal authority to do anything, Yehuda projected the es-

sence of Jewish pride: Judaism and Jews will never be held captive to any outside force.

Jews are called Yehudim because we each have a streak of Yehuda's bravery embedded in our DNA. When challenged we must remember that hiding under our covers and becoming invisible will never work.

There are haters out there and we must protect ourselves while helping society purge itself of this menace. But until our world is cleansed of all evil we must respond by bravely increasing our own personal Torah learning and Mitzvah observance and making ourselves more identifiable to the world. Instead of becoming captive to outside pressures and intimidation we have the ability to rise above the fray and take responsibility for our Judaism and our future.

We must respond to the darkness of hatred by increasing in the light of Torah and Mitzvos.

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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Shacharit 8:30am Maariv 7:00pm Women's Night Out 7:00pm - 8:00pm	Shacharit 7:00am Maariv 7:00pm	Shacharit 8:30am Kabbalat Shabbat as announced each week
Shabbat		
Shacharit 10:00 am • Followed by A Sit Down Kiddush • Mincha will follow the Kiddush Childrens Program 11:00am • Maariv, Havdalah, refreshments and film half hour after Shabbat		
<p>Chabad is always hosting new classes and programs. To receive updates, e-mail chabad@chabadelpaso.com or visit us online at chabadelpaso.com If you would like to set up a private study session, please call 584-8218.</p>		

The Day the Labels Died

Continued from Page 1

As Chassidim spent more time with their new Rebbe, they discovered a pattern: the Rebbe spoke about “the essence of the soul,” the “untainted core of every Jew,” the “unchanged truth of the Jewish spirit,” and other similar ideas. These ideas made the labels sound silly and obsolete. Slowly the Rebbe taught the world that there aren’t “kinds of Jews” any more than there are “kinds of G-d.” G-d is One and so are His People.

“No two Jews are alike; each of us is unique and brings an irreplaceable presence to the world,” the Rebbe taught. “But our incredible diversity is evidence of one Divine, infinite soul we all share.”

The Rebbe embraced those differences that bring out our unity. When we disagree on how to best serve G-d, we are celebrating our common goal of serving G-d. When communities have different customs in how to best perform a particular Mitzvah, it highlights their common love for the Mitzvah.

Titles that highlight our unity are sacred. Labels that emphasize our disunity from each other

are not!

They distract us from our genuine and authentic unity, which is as true as G-d Himself, and as timeless as the Torah He gave us.

So while there may be different degrees to which a person knows or observes the Torah and its Mitzvahs, these are not degrees that need to become careers. We shouldn’t identify by them. Some Jews are doing more, some are doing less. They should all step it up a notch. But they ARE ALL JEWS.

Seventy years later, and here we are. When a Chabad Yeshiva student on Ventura Boulevard asks a fellow Jew if he’d like to use his Tefillin, and the man declines by explaining that, “I’m sorry, I’m Reform,” the uncomprehending look in the student’s eyes is bona fide. By now, he thinks exactly like the Rebbe thought. What’s “Reform” got to do with it? Jews put on Tefillin. These are Tefillin. This is a Jew. So what’s the holdup?

When a Jew meets a Chabad rabbi in Calabasas or anywhere else and starts the conversation by saying, “I grew up Conserva-

tive,” as if that explains everything, he or she should know that to a disciple of the Rebbe, it explains nothing. The Jewish soul knows of no such classifications and it doesn’t compute; the soul wants Mitzvahs.

And finally, when a Jew calls Chabad and says, “I’m visiting my parents for a few days and I wanted to spend Shabbat at Chabad,” the rabbi is usually going to want to know why said Jew is not spending Shabbat with his or her parents. And if the reply is, “Oh, I’m Orthodox and my parents are not,” the answer will not process. Since when can a person who is keeping Shabbat not spend it with people who are not? Especially parents? Especially parents who could use a respectful and loving Shabbat experience? Why does being “Orthodox” have to make you feel distant from your own parents? If the love of G-d is burning in your heart, is the love for your parents burning any less brightly? Would their Divine souls not appreciate a taste of the Shabbat you would spend with them, even if they only grab a tiny taste?

And so as we find ourselves in the seventieth year from the start of the Rebbe’s leadership, who removed all labels for Jews, let’s recommit to their permanent disappearance. They are out of service. A Temple might be Reform. A summer camp might be Conservative. A prayer book might be Orthodox. But a Jew is Jew is a Jew. No ifs, ands, or buts about it.

The Rebbe worked without a day’s break for over 40 years to get this message going. It’s in our hands now.

Yud Shvat will be observed this year on the eve of February 9 through February 10.

Spend a few moments reflecting on how you can do more good every day.

Give charity. Treat others with respect. Commit yourself to observing another mitzvah. Dedicate more time to Torah study. Because each act of kindness makes this world a better place and hastens the beginning of an era when good, peace and freedom will abound for all.

To learn more about the Rebbe, visit TheRebbe.org

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

This is an exciting time for Chabad Lubavitch of El Paso and the entire El Paso Jewish Community. Construction of the brand new Chabad Lubavitch Center for Jewish Life is more than half complete and we are preparing to move all of our operations - including the shul - into the new facility.

In the new facility there will be a brand new memorial wall where the names of your loved ones can be inscribed to be remembered with a memorial light on their Yartzeits and during Yizkor at various times throughout the year.

The two memorials currently installed at the shul on Westwind will not be transferred to the new shul on Escondido. The names currently inscribed on those memorials will be inscribed on the new memorial for the discounted price of \$100 per name. The cost for a new inscription on the new memorial will be \$600.

Please notify us if you would like to have the names of your loved ones currently inscribed on the memorials at the shul on Westwind to be inscribed on the new memorial at the shul on Escondido.

May the memories of your loved ones be for a blessing and may we continue to make them proud by ensuring a strong Jewish legacy for our community.



Chanukah Playland



State Rep. Cesar Blanco, right, is a guest at Sunday's lighting of first candle of the giant West El Paso menorah for Hanukkah. Photo by GUY LAWRENCE FOR CHABAD TIMES

Menorah lighting begins Hanukkah celebrations

Daniel Baranda

Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, began Sunday with the lighting of the giant 20-foot menorah at Chabad Lubavitch in West El Paso. Rabbi Leahavitch Rabbah Yissel Greenberg said that public menorah lighting serves as a symbol of El Paso's dedication to preserve and encourage the right and liberty of all its citizens to worship freely, openly and with pride. "After the senseless tragedy at Walmart, the message of the menorah -- ever increasing light in the darkness -- is more poignant to our community than ever," Rabbah Greenberg said. Festivities included the 20th annual Chanukah Playland with rides, games and activities for children and a toy collection for children in local hospitals. Information and a schedule of events: chabadelpaso.com/Chanukah.



Home Depot Menorah Workshop



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INDEPENDENT LIVING



My Proudest Chanukah Moment

By Rabbi Levi Greenberg

On one of the days of Chanukah I had the opportunity to join Dee Woo on KTEP/NPR live radio for the third year in a row for a discussion about Chanukah. During those 55 minutes we spoke about various Chanukah themes and ideas and touched upon the beautiful ARK project encouraging charitable giving among El Paso school children.

After playing a short Chanukah song performed by the Tz'lil V'zemer children's choir, Dee asked me a question I never expected.

"What about Jews living in remote areas who do not have the opportunity to participate in synagogue services regularly and feel isolated from the broader Jewish community? How do you reach out to them and bring them into the festivities of Chanukah?"

I was struck by the poignancy of the question since, although millions of Jews are celebrating Chanukah throughout the world in one way or another, there are millions more who are completely uninvolved with the holiday and may not even know what Chanukah is all about. Not only in remote areas, but in the heart of communities such as Brooklyn and Los Angeles, surrounded by the most impressive displays of Jewish



pride and observance, there are so many Jews who are unfortunately completely tuned out.

"That's why I'm having this discussion on live radio," I answered. Mainstream media seems to be the best way to broadcast the Chanukah message in a way that is accessible even to those unable to participate in communal celebrations thereby including them in the Chanukah festivities.

Leaving the studio I was dissatisfied with my answer. Is that all I have to

offer to a Jew in a remote town without a Chanukah celebration to participate in? I decided to do something about it.

During the spring I had met Jack (a pseudonym) from a small town in Pennsylvania. An unfortunate family tragedy brought him to El Paso for several days and we connected during his stay. He wrapped Tefillin for the first time at Chabad and over the last eight months we've been in touch sporadically.

I called him on Thursday afternoon, wished him a happy Chanukah and

asked him how he's doing.

"Glad to be in the final week of a really bad year, rabbi."

"Jack, you had a tough year. Let's make the final week a brighter one by doing a special mitzvah."

"I'm listening."

Turns out he has several menorahs at home but hasn't lit them in many years. He immediately made a detour to a local store to buy candles and called me back when he had five candles set up in one of his menorahs. I recited the blessings together with him and after lighting his five candles he sent me a photo of perhaps the only brilliant menorah in his small town in Pennsylvania. It was my proudest Chanukah moment of 2019.

You can have such a moment as well. Think of a Jewish friend or acquaintance who can use some friendly encouragement to do a Mitzvah or join a Torah class. Invite your friends and family to join you for services and ensure they feel welcomed and embraced by their community.

You can be the Rebbe's emissary in reaching out to every Jew so that we can collectively prepare the world for an era of peace and tranquility for all with the coming of Moshiach.

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What is Tu B'Shvat Really About?

By Rabbi Naftali Silverberg

According to Biblical law, there is a seven year agricultural cycle, concluding with the Sabbatical year. When the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem, on years one, two, four and five of this cycle, farmers were required to separate a tenth of their produce and eat it in Jerusalem. This tithe is called Maaser Sheni, the Second Tithe, because it is in addition to the (two percent which must be given to the Kohain, and the) ten percent which is given to the Levite. On the third and sixth years of the cycle, instead of the owners eating the Maaser Sheni in Jerusalem, they gave this seIt was therefore of vital importance to ascertain when

the new year started for produce.

Our Rabbis established that a fruit which blossomed before the 15th of Shevat is produce of the previous year. If it blossomed afterwards, it is produce of the “new year.” [By comparison, grains, vegetables, and legumes have the same New Year as humans, the 1st of Tishrei.] Why is this so? In the Mediterranean region, the rainy season begins with the festival of Sukkot. It takes approximately four months (from Sukkot, the 15th of Tishrei, until the 15th of Shevat) for the rains of the new year to saturate the soil and trees, and produce fruit. All fruit which blossom beforehand are a product

of the rains of the previous year, and are tithed together with the crops of the previous year.

Although this day is Rosh Hashanah for trees, we attach special significance to this holiday because “Man is [compared to] the tree of the field” (Deuteronomy 20:19). Through cultivating strong roots – faith and commitment to G-d – we produce many fruits—Torah and Mitzvot.

Observances and Customs

On this day it is customary to partake of the fruit with which the Holy Land is praised (Deuteronomy 8:8): olives, dates, grapes, figs and pomegranates. If

tasting any of these fruit for the first time this season, remember to recite the Shehecheyanu blessing. (A blessing recited on joyous occasions, thanking G-d for “sustaining us and enabling us to reach this occasion.” This blessing is recited before the standard “Ha’etz” blessing recited on fruit.)

Due to the festive nature of the day, we omit the Tachanun sections (petitions for forgiveness and confession) from the prayers. cond tithe to the poor, who were permitted to consume it wherever they wished.

Tu B'Shvat this year is observed on the eve of February 9 through February 10.

16th Annual Raffle

Dear Friend,

Celebrating 33 years of community and friendship, we are filled with a sense of pride and gratitude. Pride in the beautiful community we have become and gratitude to you for partnering with us in this revolutionary endeavor. Your commitment and support is what enables us to reach out to every Jew in the region regardless of social status, background or affiliation.

At Chabad we aim to facilitate the spiritual growth of every Jew. To provide opportunities to discover our glorious heritage, the beauty of Torah and mitzvot, at a comfortable pace and in a non-judgmental environment. Ongoing synagogue services, adult education classes, youth activities and outreach programs are but a sampling of what goes on at Chabad. There is something here for everyone.

Chabad is hosting its annual fundraising raffle to help support the many ongoing activities. Please participate in the raffle by purchasing one or more tickets and be a partner in ensuring a vibrant Jewish future in El Paso. The grand prize is two round trip tickets to Israel (\$3,000.00).

One (1) ticket - \$100.00 | Three (3) Tickets - \$250.00

The raffle drawing will be held on February 10, 2020.

Chabad remains dedicated to strengthening Jewish identity, unity and education in El Paso. With each raffle ticket that you purchase you become a partner in our vital work.

With much appreciation for your support,

Rabbi Yisrael and Chana Greenberg
Rabbi Levi and Shaina Greenberg

YES! I want to partner with Chabad by purchasing:

1 ticket (\$100) 2 tickets (\$200) 3 tickets (\$250)
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6615 Westwind Dr., El Paso, Texas 79912

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Purim – The Story, Celebration and Customs

Danger In Exile

Jewish morale was at an all-time low. The Temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed, the nation conquered, and for almost 70 years, had been dispersed in foreign lands. The prophesied end of Exile had not materialized, and the blight of assimilation had set in. Just then, the enemy arose to carry out his evil plans. This time it was Haman. Descended from the Jew-hating tribe of Amalek, Haman devised his scheme to solve 'the Jewish problem' once and for all, by annihilating every Jew, men, women and children, throughout the world, in a single day.

Rallying The Jews

And it almost worked. Were it not for Mordechai. A descendent of King Saul, and advisor to King Achashverosh, Mordechai sensed the danger. Donning sackcloth and ashes, he went to the gate of the palace, crying aloud, rallying the Jews to return to Torah. His niece, Queen Esther, called for him. He told her that she must go to the King and plead for her people. Officially in disfavor, she feared to go, but saw that she had no choice. She undertook a three-day fast of penitence, and called upon the whole Jewish people to do likewise. Then she went to the King.

Victory

It is a story of great courage and self-sacrifice--first and foremost by Queen Esther and Mordechai, and ultimately by the whole Jewish nation. For throughout the duration of the whole year, not one single Jew chose to convert, even to save his life. The nation was awakened to a whole-hearted return to Torah and mitzvot, and throughout the year strengthened their faith and observance. And in the merit of this, they were able to rise up against their enemies and destroy them, on the 13th of Adar, the very day destined for the "final solution." The Jewish people had shown their true character. They had earned the right to leave Exile, to return to the Holy Land, and rebuild the Temple. As it was in those days, so may it be with us today. Each year in fulfilling the special mitzvot of the Purim festival, we reaffirm our commitment to the eternal values of the Torah... and we share in the very same merit that redeemed the Jewish people in the days of Mordechai and Esther.

Purim - Then and Now

One of the Purim mitzvot is the reading of the Megillah - the Scroll of Esther, in which the miracle of Purim is recounted. The Talmud tells us that "whoever reads the Megillah backwards does not fulfill his obligation." Our Sages explain that "backwards" does not only mean in reverse order; it also means that whoever reads the Megillah merely as ancient history has missed the point. The Purim story is directly relevant to our contemporary world. As the Megillah itself tells us, that when we celebrate Purim each year, the miraculous events of Purim are "remembered and reenacted" in our lives.

Haman, Then and Now

One does not have to look far to find Haman's

modern-day heirs. Now, as then, there are evil schemers who seek to scapegoat the Jewish people and - Heaven forbid - to erase us from the face of the earth. Each time they rise up to destroy us, their schemes are foiled by the miraculous Hand of G-d. The most striking example in recent times was the Persian Gulf War that ended victoriously on Purim, 5751 (1991).

From Redemption to Redemption

Throughout our history, we have seen miracles. Despite centuries upon centuries of persecution, we have survived and flourished, by the Grace of G-d. Yet we have remained in exile for nearly 2,000 years, hoping and praying for the final and complete Redemption - the Redemption that will end suffering and exile forever. May the observance of Purim be a precursor to the coming of Moshiach, our Righteous Redeemer, whose imminent arrival will bring about a better life for all the nations of the world.

Purim Mitzvot

Here are the details about the Mitzvot of Purim, how to do them and their significance.

1) Listen to the Megillah

Listen to the reading of the Megillah (the Scroll of Esther) twice: once on Purim eve, Monday night, March 9, and again on Purim day, Tuesday March 10.

To properly fulfill the mitzvah, it is crucial to hear every single word of the Megillah.

At certain points in the reading where Haman's name is mentioned, it is customary to twirl graggers (Purim noisemakers) and stamp one's feet to "eradicate" his evil name. Tell the children that Purim is the only time when it's a mitzvah to make noise!

2) Give to the Needy

Matanot La'evyonim

Concern for the needy is a year-round responsibility; but on Purim it is a special mitzvah to remember the poor.

Give charity to at least two, (but preferably more) needy individuals on Purim day, March 10.

The mitzvah is best fulfilled by giving directly to the needy. If, however, you cannot find poor people, place at least two coins into a charity box. As with the other mitzvahs of Purim, even small children should fulfill this mitzvah.

3) Send Food Portions to Friends

Mishloach Manot

On Purim we emphasize the importance of Jewish unity and friendship by sending gifts of food to friends.

On Purim day, March 10, send a gift of at least two kinds of ready-to-eat foods (e.g., pastry, fruit, beverage), to at least one friend on Purim day. Men should send to men and women to women. It is preferable that the gifts are delivered via a third party. Children, in addition to sending their own gifts of food to their friends, make enthusiastic messengers.

4) Eat, Drink and Be Merry

Purim should be celebrated with a special festive meal on Purim Day, at which family and friends gather together to rejoice in the Purim spirit. It is a mitzvah to drink wine or other inebriating drinks at this meal.

5) Special Prayers (Al Hanissim, Torah reading)

On Purim we include the Al HaNissim prayer, which describes the Purim miracle, in the evening, morning and afternoon prayers, as well as in the Grace After Meals. In the morning service there is a special reading from the Torah Scroll in the synagogue (Exodus 17:8-16).

Purim Customs:

Masquerades and Hamantashen

A time-honored Purim custom is for children to dress up and disguise themselves - an allusion to the fact that the miracle of Purim was disguised in natural garments. This is also the significance behind a traditional Purim food, the hamantash - a pastry whose filling is hidden within a three-cornered crust.

Pre/Post Purim Observances:

Torah Reading of "Zachor"

On the Shabbat before Purim a special reading is held in the synagogue of the Torah section called Zachor ("Remember"), in which we are enjoined to remember the deeds of (the nation of) Amalek (Haman's ancestor) who sought to destroy the Jewish people.

The Fast of Esther

To commemorate the prayer and fasting that the Jewish people held during the Purim story, we fast on the day before Purim. This year the fast is observed on Monday, March 9. The fast begins at 6:07 am and ends at 7:35 pm.

The "Half Coins"

(Machatzit Hashekel)

It is a tradition to give three coins in "half" denominations - e.g., three half-dollar coins - to charity, to commemorate the half-shekel that each Jew contributed as his share in the communal offerings in the time of the Holy Temple. This custom, usually performed in the synagogue, is done on the afternoon of the "Fast of Esther," or before the reading of the Megillah.

Shushan Purim

In certain ancient walled cities - Jerusalem is the primary example - Purim is observed not on the 14th of Adar (the date of its observance everywhere else) but on the 15th of Adar. This is to commemorate that fact that in the ancient walled city of Shushan, where the battles between the Jews and their enemies extended for an additional day, the original Purim celebration was held not on the 14th but on the 15th of Adar.

The 15th of Adar is thus called "Shushan Purim" and is a day of joy and celebration also in those places where it is not observed as the actual Purim.

Celebrate Purim In Style!

Megillah Reading

Monday, March 9 - 7:30pm

Tuesday, March 10 - 7:30am

Community Purim Feast

Tuesday, March 10

6:00pm

at Chabad Lubavitch - 6615 Westwind Drive

Stay Tuned For More Details



BUILDING *the* FUTURE TOGETHER

CHABAD LUBAVITCH
CENTER FOR JEWISH LIFE



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TREE OF LIFE DEDICATIONS

All dedications will be honored on a distinctive Tribute Wall located at the Building main entrance.

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