



NO WAY TO HIDE

Dramatic story during the Frierdiker Rebbe's imprisonment teaches a lesson in anti-semitism

One Purim the Frierdiker Rebbe related that when reading the Megillah he is reminded of the following story:

When he was arrested and taken to the Shpalerka prison in the summer of 5687 (תרפ"ז), he made a point to demonstrate vigor and stamina, no matter the price.

The Frierdiker Rebbe was brought to the interrogation room, where four interrogators were waiting for him: Two of them were not Jewish, and the others were Nachmanson and Lulev, the same two Jews that had initially come to arrest him. Although only two of the interrogators were Jewish, the Frierdiker Rebbe intentionally spoke only in Yiddish.

As he entered the room, without even giving the interrogators a chance to speak, the Frierdiker Rebbe declared in wonderment, "This is

the first time that I enter a room and people don't stand up for me!"

Shocked by the 'brazen outburst,' the interrogators shouted, "Have you any idea where you are?"

The Frierdiker Rebbe replied "I certainly know where I am; I find myself in a place that is exempt from having a *mezuzah*. Much like a horse's stable which is also exempt from the obligation of *mezuzah*!"

Then the interrogators asked the Frierdiker Rebbe for his name and other basic information, but before allowing them to continue with the list of questions, the Frierdiker Rebbe interrupted them and said, "I would like to tell you a story..."

The infuriated interrogators screamed, "Just answer the questions we ask you, no more!" The Frierdiker Rebbe replied, "When I tell a story

even *misnagdim* listen!" and without giving them a chance to retort, he went on to tell the following tale:

"My great-grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, was once asked a question by a *maskil-apikores*—an 'enlightened atheist.'

"...The *maskil* asked the Tzemach Tzedek, 'Why is it that when the Megillah tells of Mordechai's message to Hasach to notify Esther of Haman's nefarious decree, the word "בִּיהוּדִים" (Jews) is spelled with two *yuds*, whereas in a later *possuk* of the Megillah, describing the Jews' deliverance, "לִיהוּדִים הִיטָה אֹרֶה"—And for the Jews there was light," the word בִּיהוּדִים is spelled with one *yud*?'"

"The Tzemach Tzedek replied: 'The two *yuds* correspond to the *yetzer tov* and the *yetzer hara*, both of whom contain "*eser kochos hanefesh*"—the ten qualities of the soul. Haman's decree was not directed specifically against those Jews who feared Hashem and followed their *yetzer tov*; he sought



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לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי
בן רבקה שיחי' רובאשקין
שיזכה לגאולה שלימה ולטוב הנראה
והנגלה בקרוב ממש
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' ארי' יצחק הכהן בן חיל' גולדא
וזוגתו מרת ראשא רוזא בת שטערנא
שרה
ומשפחתם שיחיו



also to destroy those who followed their *yetzer hara*.'

"The *maskil* then asked: 'Why is it that in a later *possuk*, "And the Jews in Shushan gathered," we once again find a spelling of two *yuds*?'"

"The Tzemach Tzedek replied: 'This is because the Jews in Shushan, being in the center of all the events, perceived and were profoundly influenced by both the danger and the miracle of Purim, so much so that even non-observant Jews returned to Hashem.' The Tzemach Tzedek concluded: 'The same is true of you; when you will suffer greatly, then you, too, will change greatly.'

"So it was; shortly thereafter the *maskil* fell ill for three months, after which he was completely transformed to a new man, and he became a *yarei Shamayim*."

The Frierdiker Rebbe concluded his story by telling his interrogators, "The same will happen with you, for when you will experience suffering, you will then be transformed and you will witness the great revealed miracles that will take place!"

This tale serves as a refutation for those Jews who believe that by concealing their Jewish identity and behaving like gentiles they will spare themselves of anti-semitism and all that goes along with it. After all, these Jews act and look just like their non-Jewish neighbors so why would anyone be inclined to discriminate?

The word "*baYehudim*" is therefore spelled with two *yuds* to teach us that Haman's decree to eradicate the Jews did not differentiate between those Jews who practiced their Judaism openly and those Jews who tried to assimilate and blend in with the non-Jewish crowd. Both the Jews who followed their *yetzer tov* (the first *yud*) as well as the Jews who followed their *yetzer hara* (the second *yud*) were persecuted equally.

This is because "Esav hates Yaakov." Even when the Jew attempts to conceal his Jewish identity, and is convinced that he succeeded in deceiving his gentile neighbors, his actions don't go unnoticed by the "Eisavs" of the world. As we've seen in the most recent events [of the Holocaust], even the offspring of generations of assimilated

Jews were singled out for persecution. To the contrary, the fact that the Jew attempts to hide his identity is all the more cause for Esav to hate him.

Why indeed do the nations have baseless hatred for the Jewish people? It is because the Jewish people are essentially apart from the other nations. Hashem has made it known to the world that he has chosen *b'nei Yisrael* to be His people, and no one could ever deny it.

The nations know that the Jews are different, and they therefore despise the Jews. Even when one thinks that he has left the fold of Judaism for generations, it is as Torah tells us, "Even though he has sinned, he is a Jew."

This is the lesson to be learned from Purim: Never should a Jew be ashamed of his Judaism and attempt to conceal it, for it'll always be noticeable even before seeing his passport or even his face... So just let it shine. Let the *nekudas hayahadus*, the innermost point of the *neschama* be ablaze and active, having effect on all our actions throughout the year. **T**

(Based on *sichas Purim* 5720)