



FROM THE REBBE'S FARBRENGEN

# WHO ARE YOU?

WHAT PURIM CAN TEACH US ABOUT JEWISH PRIDE

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לזכות  
כל נכדינו שיחיו  
שיגדלו לתורה לחופה ולמעשים  
טובים לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י  
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר זוזגותו מרת לאה שיחיו  
שפאלטר

THERE'S A BUZZWORD THAT SEEMS TO POP UP EVERYWHERE ALL THE TIME, AND DOESN'T SEEM TO LEAVE THE CONVERSATION. IT'S ABOUT AS OLD AS YIDDISHKEIT ITSELF AND, DESPITE OUR BEST EFFORTS, IT HASN'T YET BEEN ERADICATED. IT'S ANTISEMITISM.

ON PURIM WE CELEBRATE A VICTORY OVER ONE OF ITS FORMS. BUT WHILE THE BATTLE WAS WON, THE WAR IS STILL GOING ON.

UNTIL MOSHIACH COMES, IT'S A REALITY THAT WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH IN VARIOUS FORMS—SOMETIMES OVERT, SOMETIMES MORE DISCREET. DO WE LAY LOW AND TRY NOT TO STIR THE POT? OR PERHAPS A DIFFERENT APPROACH SHOULD BE ATTEMPTED.

THE REBBE ANALYZES THE PURIM STORY AND FINDS AN ANSWER.<sup>1</sup>





## TO EACH HIS OWN

King Achashveirosh's feast for the inhabitants of Shushan was, in the words of the Megillah, "כרצון איש ואיש"—according to the will of each participant. If Mordechai HaYehudi had been at the party, he would have been served kosher food.

Imagine: Achashveirosh was the ruler of the whole civilized world at the time. His Jewish subjects made up a small fraction of the population. Moreover, they were "scattered and spread about." Yet he knew that the Jewish people attending his party would want to eat kosher, and he made sure to provide it for them.

## ARE YOU FOR REAL?

This teaches us a powerful lesson.

We might think that when we're engaging with the outside world, performing our civic duty, it's not the time to proudly demonstrate our Jewishness. Why stand out?

Perhaps in the future, after Moshiach arrives we can live proudly as Jews. But when the Jewish people are a small minority among the nations, shouldn't we just be happy that we're even invited to the feast? Instead of worrying about kosher food, we can make do with eating fruit and drinking water. Must we order a special meal and show everyone that we're different? Won't that provoke antisemitism?

The answer is right here in the Purim story. The Megillah tells us exactly how to





act when we find ourselves in the king's palace, when one of his closest advisors is a Haman, along with many accomplices, or at the very least, passive bystanders, intent on destroying the Jewish people.

This is exactly the time to proudly display our Jewishness, not to cower and hide it.

The idea is simple:

We seek to always show up as wholesome, complete people. Even when someone is disabled, *chas v'shalom*, they attempt to show themselves as a whole person by filling in the missing limb with prosthetics and the like. No one wants to appear "damaged" or crippled. Well, being ashamed of who we are is one of the most crippling defects possible.


Do you think the outside world will be more impressed with us because we've tried to fit in? On the contrary: The non-Jew knows that a Yid is supposed to be different. When he sees one trying to act the same as everyone, he might think of him as a two-faced hypocrite, trying to con others into believing that you are something different than what you truly are.

Once you were born to a Jewish mother (or converted to Judaism according to Halacha) then you are a Yid to your very core. Trying to hide that will get you nowhere!

On the contrary: displaying one's Yiddishkeit proudly, even demanding a kosher meal in the king's palace, this is what invited real success. When the non-Jews see that we are true to ourselves, they will respect us as self-respecting individuals and seek our opinion on important matters. But how are they supposed to trust us if we



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are not acting as our real self?

Much as this principle applies on a grand scale to Jews serving in the palaces of power, the same is true on a smaller scale, in one's immediate surrounding "palace"; in the home, in the neighborhood, or in a place of business.

The more you are true to yourself, acting in a manner that aligns with who you really are, the more you will be respected and successful in the world around you.

## STOP FIGHTING YOURSELF

On a deeper level: This is important not only for the way a Yid displays himself to others, but perhaps more importantly, the way he sees and feels himself.

A person can change their clothing or the way they present themselves, but a person can never change who they are. Your essence, your *neshama*, was with you when you were born and it will always be there throughout your entire lifetime. Of course, you can choose to act in accordance with the *neshama* or you can choose to act otherwise, but that doesn't change your essence one bit.

When a person chooses to act in a way that is not in line with their true identity, they are essentially fighting against themselves, creating a sort of "split-personality." This is, of course, a very unhealthy way to live—even in the practical sense.

For a Yid, the only proper and healthy way to live is the way the Torah dictates. This way one avoids inner conflict and misalignment of the self.

## WHO WON?

Looking back at the sequence of events in the Megillah, we see how this lesson plays out in real time:

True, Haman didn't appreciate that the Jewish people were different. "There is one nation," he complained to Achashveirosh, "spread about amongst all other nations, and their

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conduct is different than any other nation...” Haman was upset that the Jewish people wouldn’t assimilate into their prevailing local cultures.

But where has Haman ended up in history? He became known as *Haman Hara-sha*—Haman the Wicked, even by non-Jews!

And what about the Jewish people? They followed the ways of Mordechai, the one who “would not bend a knee nor bow,” against his principles, even while standing in the king’s court. Ultimately, it was Mordechai and his people who prevailed, even if it took a long road to get there. By sticking to who they were, even those people who initially joined Haman and opposed the Jews came around and learned to appreciate the Jews’ being true to themselves. Eventually, Mordechai was given the very ring that was first given to Haman, and the Jewish people were able to prosper once again.

## CHILD PROTECTION

This is a lesson in education as well. Parents trying to protect their children might mistakenly think it best to hide the child’s Jewishness. Why must his tzitzis hang down conspicuously? Why must he refrain from eating non-kosher candy with the other children on the block? Acting differently will provoke antisemitism!

Nothing could be further from the truth!

Your child is Jewish, and the healthiest thing you could do for him or her is to allow them to live true to their identity. Their non-Jewish friends will respect them all the more for it.

Let your child go out in the street with a yarmulka! Teach your child to check the candy wrapper and make sure it’s kosher. Have your child unabashedly make a bracha before they put food into their mouth.

When the non-Jewish friend sees your child making a *bracha*, they’ll ask what it’s about and your child will explain that he’s thanking G-d for providing the food he’s about to enjoy. This will only increase respect for your child. They’ll ask him, “Why




must you recite a blessing to G-d on a small candy in your hand? What's G-d got to do with it?" Your child will explain the words "*Shehakol nihya b'dvaro*," everything in the world, including this small candy, was created by Hashem. True, it was made in a factory, but ultimately everything comes from Hashem! It's only right to thank Him before enjoying His creations.

The non-Jewish friends will recognize a well-mannered child for who he is, and appreciate him all the more.

This is the best way, the only way, to raise healthy children who will make a positive impact on the world and gain the respect of their peers.

Teach your children not to be embarrassed of who they are. When someone asks them "What people do you belong to?" they should immediately respond, "I'm a member of the Jewish people!"

When a child is accustomed to live this way from a very young age, when they grow older they will live their lives in a healthy manner, as proud Jews. They will build their homes on this foundation as well, creating strong Jewish homes and beautiful Jewish communities around them. Some of these children will grow to assume positions of influence in their communities and cities, and this too will be done in a Jewish way, truthful to who they are. We will see an immense positive effect on the whole of society.

This will raise the prestige of the Jewish people even now, in the time of *galus*, much like Mordechai's becoming viceroy during the Persian exile, as a prelude to the coming of Moshiach, may it be *teikef umiyad Mamash!* 

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1. Based on the farbrengen of Purim 5742, sicha 2.

THE PURIM FARBRENGEN OF 5742 IS HOURS OF SPIRITUAL DELIGHT. THE RICH SICHOS AND LIVELY NIGGUNIM BRING US INTO THE REBBE'S WORLD WHERE LESSONS FROM THE MEGILLAH COME TO LIFE, THE SIMCHA OF PURIM IS TANGIBLE, AND THE LIGHT OF GEULAH ALREADY SHINES.

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