

Celebration!

Purim Magazine

13-14 ADAR, 5781
FEBRUARY 25-26 2021



The Story
of Purim

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Will I Ever Be
Appreciated?

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VICTORY OVER INDIFFERENCE

The total triumph of the Jewish people over the evil Haman is celebrated on Purim. The holiday transforms the entire month into one of joy and happiness. What, one can ask, is so unique about Purim that, unlike other festivals, it has the power to change a whole month?

Haman was a descendant of the nation of Amalek, infamous for their audacity in attacking the Jewish people soon after their miraculous exodus from Egypt. With the exception of Amalek, the nations of the world trembled at the thought of battling the Jewish nation.

The Torah explains that Amalek “met” the Jewish nation during its journey. Our commentators explain that the Hebrew word for “met” – “karcha” can also mean “made you cold.” After all the miracles and Divine revelations that the Jewish people had witnessed, Amalek wanted to “cool off” the Jewish people from

their fiery faith in G-d and Moses. In fact, the very name Amalek has the same numerical value as the Hebrew word “safek,” meaning doubt. Amalek’s goal was not to win a military victory, but to pierce the faith of the Jewish people by introducing “doubts.”

When the Jewish people were victorious over Haman the Amalekite, it was a victory over all that he stood for – coldness, doubt, skepticism, and the like. Thus, the entire month of Adar is permeated with the joy and happiness of the Purim holiday, because the stakes were so high. For it is our faith and trust in G-d, as well as our enthusiasm and warmth for Torah and Mitzvot, that define us, the Jewish people.

Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, O.B.M.

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Thursday

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Option 2: 7:00pm

FEBRUARY 26

Friday

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Option 2: 12:30pm

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Celebration!

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Will I Ever Be Appreciated?



THE STORY OF PURIM

Once upon a time...

A FATEFUL PARTY

It all began in the city of Shushan of Ancient Persia in the 4th century BCE. The reigning King Achashverosh hosted a series of lavish royal feasts in his palace that went on for 180 days – one half of a year! Every citizen living in Shushan was invited. The Jews, too, participated in the great party.

Intoxicated with the excitement of the festivities and days of endless drinking, King Achashverosh commanded his queen, Vashti, to appear before his guests wearing only her crown. Vashti refused. Enraged at her insolence, the king consulted with his ministers and had Vashti executed.

THE BEAUTY CONTEST

The king now needed a new queen. Achashverosh had all the beautiful daughters of the country brought to the palace so that he might choose a wife. The king chose Esther (Hadassah), the cousin of Mordechai, who was one of the leaders of the Jewish people. Heeding Mordechai's advice, Esther did not reveal her identity as a Jew, and observed Jewish law secretly in the palace.

MORDECHAI TO THE RESCUE

Mordechai would spend time at the palace gates every day, waiting for word from Esther. One day Mordechai overheard two of the king's chamberlains discussing a plot to assassinate the king. He told Esther of the plot and she informed the king. The plot was foiled, and Mordechai was credited with saving the king.

THE ANTI-SEMITIC PRIME MINISTER

Meanwhile, Haman, a descendant of Amalek – the implacable enemy of the Jewish people – became Prime Minister of the king's court. The king had issued an order commanding everyone in the palace to bow down in deference to Haman, but Mordechai refused, because Haman wore an idol around his neck. This so enraged Haman that he devised a scheme to annihilate all the Jews in the kingdom on the 13th day of the Hebrew month of Adar.

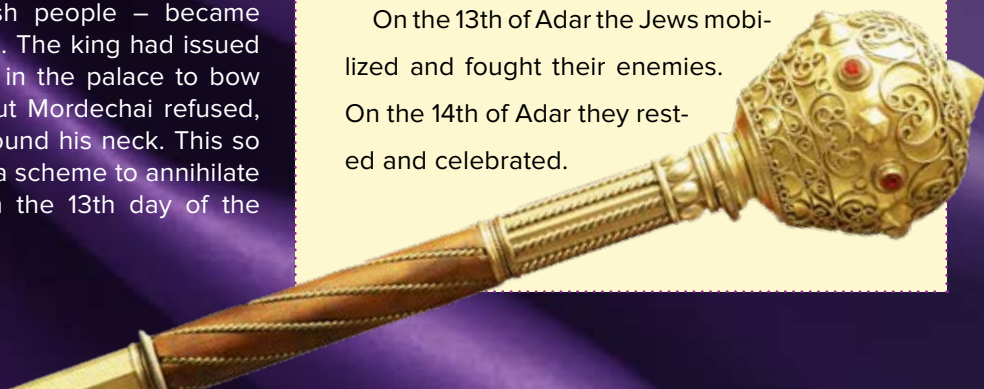
The Story in a Nutshell

The Persian empire of the 4th century BCE extended over 127 lands, and all the Jews were its subjects. When King Ahasuerus had his wife, Queen Vashti, executed for failing to follow his orders, he orchestrated a beauty pageant to find a new queen. A Jewish girl, Esther, found favor in his eyes and became the new queen—though she refused to divulge the identity of her nationality.

Meanwhile, the anti-Semitic Haman was appointed prime minister of the empire. Mordechai, the leader of the Jews (and Esther's cousin), defied the king's orders and refused to bow to Haman. Haman was incensed and had the king issue a decree ordering the extermination of all the Jews on the 13th of Adar—a date chosen by a lottery Haman made.

Mordechai galvanized all the Jews, convincing them to repent, fast and pray to G-d. Meanwhile, Esther asked the king and Haman to join her for a feast. At the feast, Esther revealed to the king her Jewish identity. Haman was sent to the gallows, Mordechai was appointed prime minister in his stead, and a new decree was issued—granting the Jews the right to defend themselves against their enemies.

On the 13th of Adar the Jews mobilized and fought their enemies. On the 14th of Adar they rested and celebrated.



MORDECHAI'S REQUEST

Hearing of the evil plan, Mordechai donned sackcloth and ashes and told Esther that she must go to the king and intercede on behalf of her people. To appear before the king without being summoned meant risking her life. Esther requested that all the Jews undertake a three-day fast of prayer and repentance.

Mordechai complied with Esther's request. He gathered the Jews of Shushan – especially the children, 22,000 of them – and they fasted, repented and prayed to G-d.

asked Haman, "What shall be done to a person whom the king wishes to honor?"

Haman, who was certain that the king wished to honor him, responded: "Bring royal garment and a royal horse. And let one of the king's nobles dress the man and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'So is done for the man whom the king wishes to honor!'"

"Great idea," Achashverosh responded. "Now go get the garments and the horse and do so for Mordechai the Jew!"

Haman had no choice but to comply. On the next

THE FIRST FEAST

At the end of these three days, Esther stood uninvited before Achashverosh. Upon seeing her, the king immediately extended his scepter. "What is it?" Achashverosh asked. "What is your request?" "I would like to invite the king and Haman to a private party," Esther responded.

During the feast, the king again asked Esther whether she had any request. "Yes," Esther responded. "I would appreciate if tomorrow, again, the king and Haman would join me for a feast."

Haman left the party a happy and proud man. Oh, the honor he was being accorded! But standing at the king's gate was Mordechai – who still refused to bow to Haman – and Haman was enraged. When he arrived home, his wife and wise advisors counseled him to erect a gallows, and then to go to the king and request permission to hang Mordechai. Haman excitedly went ahead and put up the gallows.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Sleep eluded the king that night, so he asked his servants to read for him from the Royal Chronicles. When they reached the episode where Mordechai saved his life, he realized that Mordechai had never been rewarded. Just at that moment, Haman appeared in the courtyard, planning to suggest to the king to hang Mordechai.

When he entered Achashverosh's chambers, the king

day he went and honored Mordechai as the king had ordered, and then immediately rushed to join the king and Esther for...

THE SECOND FEAST

"What is your request?" a curious King Achashverosh asked Esther at the feast. "If I have found favor in your eyes, O King," Esther replied. "Spare my life and the lives of my people." Surprised, Achashverosh asked Esther who had threatened her. She replied that it was none other than the wicked Haman. Haman was immediately hanged on the gallows he had intended for Mordechai.

THE TABLES ARE TURNED

Although Haman was dead, his cruel decree remained unchanged. According to Persian law, once a king issues a decree it cannot be rescinded. A new decree was issued, granting the Jews permission to defend themselves against their enemies and to attack and slay all those who would assault them. The Jews experienced a stunning victory in battle.

IN COMMEMORATION

At that time, the 14th day of Adar was consecrated as the festival of Purim, to celebrate and commemorate the great miracle of our people's salvation and the downfall of the wicked Haman.

This holiday, called "Purim," is the most joyous holiday on the Jewish calendar.



MEGILLAH

FEBRUARY 25 & 26

We read the megillah, not just once but twice- on the eve of Purim and again in the morning. The Megillah documents the entire story of Purim and we pay rapt attention to every word. We blot out every mention of Haman's accursed name by twirling our graggers and stamping our feet.

Hear the Megillah at Chabad. See page 2.



MISHLOACH MANOT

Gifts of Food

FEBRUARY 26

This Mitzvah is performed on Purim day. The important thing is to pack up at least two types of edibles or drinks that are ready to eat or drink (e.g. pastry, fruit, beverage) and have them delivered, ideally by a messenger, to at least one friend – men to men, women to women, kids to kids. The ideal messenger? A child of course – they love it!



The A
MITZ
O
PUR

MISHTE

Festive Meal

FEBRUARY 26

Usually, the Purim feast may be eaten anytime during the day. However, this year because Purim falls on a Friday, out of deference to the approaching Shabbat, we start the meal earlier, ideally before midday. It is traditional to include “kreplach” (stuffed dumplings) as part of the menu.



YOUR
ZVOT
OF
PURIM

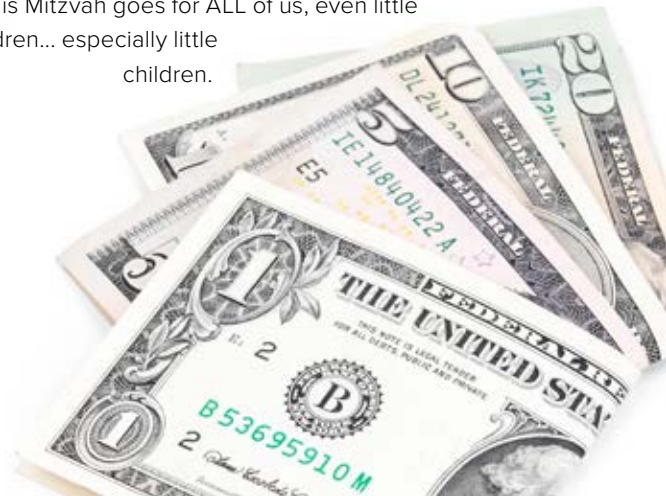


MATANOT L'EVYONIM

Gifts to the Needy

FEBRUARY 26

Dont know any poor Jews? How will my gift get to the poor on Purim day? Not to worry. There are plenty of wonderful charitable organizations that will gladly distribute your tzedakah dollars on Purim. You can even put your *matanot l'evyonim* money in a chaity box. This Mitzvah goes for ALL of us, even little children... especially little children.



SALTED CARAMEL

Hamantaschen Recipe

Ingredients

DOUGH

3 large eggs • 1 cup sugar • ½ cup canola or vegetable oil
1 teaspoon orange juice • 3 ½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon black pepper • 3 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting parchment and dough

CARAMEL FILLING

1 cup sugar • 2 tablespoons water • ½ cup whipping cream
2 tablespoons unsalted butter • ½ teaspoon salt

Directions

To make the caramel, place the sugar and water in a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan. Cook on medium-high heat until sugar melts. After several minutes, the sugar will start to color. Stir the mixture so all the sugar browns. When it is a uniform amber color, turn heat to low, remove saucepan from heat and add the cream. The mixture will bubble up. Add the butter and salt and stir. Return to the heat and cook for one minute, or until mixture is smooth. Remove from heat, transfer to a bowl and let cool. Chill in the fridge for at least a half hour to thicken the caramel. Store in the fridge for up to five days.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line 2 large cookie sheets with parchment. You will bake in batches.

In a large bowl, mix together the eggs, sugar, oil, and orange juice.

Add the baking powder, pepper and flour and mix until the dough comes together. I like to use my hands for this because it kneads the dough well. Divide the dough in half.

Take another two pieces of parchment and sprinkle flour on one, place one dough half on top, and then sprinkle a little more flour on top of the dough. Place the second piece of parchment on top of the dough and roll on top of the parchment until the dough is about ¼-inch thick. Every few rolls, peel back the top parchment and sprinkle a little more flour on the dough.

Use a glass or round cookie cutter about 2 to 3 inches in diameter to cut the dough into circles. Place a little less than a

teaspoon of the filling in the center and then fold in 3 sides to form a triangle, leaving a small opening in the center. Pinch the 3 sides very

tightly. Place on the prepared cookie sheets. Repeat with the rest of the dough and re-roll and cut any dough scraps you have. Place the cookies sheets in the freezer for ten minutes; this helps the hamantaschen hold their shape and not open up while baking.

Bake for 12 to 16 minutes, or until the bottoms are lightly browned. Slide the parchment onto racks to cool the cookies. If desired, drizzle any remaining caramel over the cookies. Store covered

with plastic or in an airtight container at room temperature for five days or freeze for up to three months.

Yields: 4 dozen hamantaschen

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TA'ANIT ESTHER

The Fast of Esther

FEBRUARY 25

The fast of Ester is a dawn-to-nightfall fast held on the day before the holiday of purim. The fasting on this day commemorates the three-day fast of the entire Jewish nation in the times of Purim. They fasted upon request of Queen Esther, who asked that all Jews refrain from food or drink in her merit before she put her life on the line for the sake of her people.

In the Gurnee area the fast begins at 5:05am and ends at 6:06pm.





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WILL I EVER BE *Appreciated?*

By Baruch Epstein

The desire for appreciation seems to be one of our strongest human impulses. We instinctively crave being noticed and valued. School teachers are overwhelmed with joy when former students call to say, “I gave you a rough time back in 7th grade and you rode me real hard, but now I see it was worth it. I succeeded because of you!”

What says Torah of this matter?

Should you help someone even if they will never thank you—or even recognize your beneficence? What if they will resent your help—think pulling the bottle away from a drunk? That question is easy. Ethics of Our Fathers in Chapter 1 instructs: “Do not be a servant who serves his master for the sake of reward [be that a material or a social/emotional reward].”

There’s a tougher question: Would you assist someone else even if it will mean forfeiting your own achievement? Would you use your study time to tutor a weaker student and diminish your own grade even if the other student won’t appreciate it? Here’s a much harder one: Would you help someone else if you weren’t even sure that G-d would appreciate it?

Queen Esther, the heroine of the story of Purim, is instructed by Mordechai to approach King Ahasuerus to plead on behalf of her people. Esther resists and explains that no one, not even she, may approach the King (not much of a marriage there!).

Mordechai insists, and Esther acquiesces, declaring: “If I am lost, I am lost” (Esther 4:16).

The Talmud explains Esther’s apparently redundant expression as her willingness to expose herself to two distinct risks:

On the human plane, approaching the tyrant put her in mortal peril. The earlier story of Queen Vashti’s breach of protocol that resulted in her execution illustrates Ahasuerus’ method of dealing with a disobedient wife.

Yet death isn’t the worst that could happen. After all, Esther is a prisoner to a barbarian, not much of a life to be sure. What really scared her was that Ahasuerus would be happy to see

her and welcome her into his chamber. Now Esther would be compromised.

Until this point she had maintained her spiritual virtue, clinging to the reality that she was a victim, not a willing participant in this so-called “marriage.” This time, though, she would be initiating her interaction with Ahasuerus, approaching willingly, thus forfeiting her innocence, and along with that, possibly, G-d’s approval and appreciation.

Despite the danger, she went, and the rest is history. Ahasuerus allowed her in and acquiesced to her plea, and ultimately the genocide of our entire people was prevented.

Perhaps this was the genuine heroism: Esther’s readiness to rescue her people even if it meant surrendering Divine acknowledgement.

If the fate of an entire people; or even just one person, is at risk, we must be ready to surrender not only our material comforts to rescue him; we must be ready to give up our spiritual rewards as well.



Now before you go running out to save the world at the risk of G-d’s disapproval, make sure you consult with someone like Mordechai: a wholly righteous person, a member of the Sanhedrin, and a leader of the Jewish people.

Like a radical medical procedure, such actions should be undertaken only under the guidance of experts. And of course the rescue of an

entire people colors the equation as

well. The point here is limited to understanding how the anticipation of appreciation should or shouldn’t influence our decision making.

So should we be appreciative? Of course. Should we expect to be appreciated? Yes, again. Should we orchestrate our behavior to receive appreciation? No! That appreciation thing can be addictive. A warm thank-you can be so rewarding, and we are so desirous of it, that if we are not careful, we start seeking it out as an end in and of itself. We replace “Is this the right thing to do?” with “Will this get me a pat on the back?” and when the one showing the appreciation is less than upright, we are heading into a world of hurt.

So the next time you find yourself faced with the opportunity to do someone a favor and that little voice says, “He doesn’t even appreciate what I do for him,” don’t listen and do it anyway. And if another voice whispers, “One day he’ll thank you,” don’t listen and do it anyway.

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Unmasking

By Michael Gourarie

The festival of Purim is the happiest day in the Jewish calendar. One of the traditions of Purim is dressing up in fancy dress and wearing masks. What is the reason for this custom and how does it connect to the celebration of the day?

Our sages tell us that “Happiness breaks boundaries.” When people are truly happy they loosen up and do things that are beyond the norm. But there are two types of happiness. The first is egocentric and hedonistic, seeking pleasure and a good feeling. **This is the festivity that we often witness in pubs or wild parties where there is little purpose or focus.** Here the boundaries that are broken are those of self discipline and self respect. This is when

people curse, insult and often become violent. It is not true happiness.

The second form of happiness is one with purpose and meaning. The goal of this joy is not external pleasure but rather the celebration of meaningful milestones, spiritual growth or major accomplishments. This happiness is a true and lasting one.

The boundaries that are broken with real joy are the barriers and fences that separate us from each other. The happiness allows us to develop a different perspective on ourselves and other people. We stop judging others by their external behavior and things they say and do, and we begin to appreciate their inner soul. We begin to understand that the annoying actions, feelings and per-

JOY BREAKS
THE BARRIERS
AND FENCES
THAT SEPARATE
BETWEEN US

sonality traits that separate us from others are only external masks that conceal the true human being. Beneath the mask there is a pristine soul that makes him/her a special human being. The energy of the happiness allows us to break through the mask and see what is beneath.

On Purim we dress up, reminding ourselves and oth-

ers that our outward appearance and behavior is always a mask. We realize that all those things that separate us from each other have nothing to do with our real identity. The celebration of Purim gives us the ability to look behind the mask and discover the real person.

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HERE'S my STORY

HEALING THE HOSPITALS

DR. VELVL GREENE

Dr. Velvl Greene (1928-2011) was a bacteriologist who served as professor of public health at the University of Minnesota and Ben-Gurion University, as well as director of the Lord Jacobovits Center for Jewish Medical Ethics in Be'er Sheva, Israel. He had previously worked for NASA's Planetary Quarantine Division, which was charged with trying to find life on Mars. He was interviewed in April of 2008.

My work as a bacteriologist started years ago when there was an outbreak of a penicillin-resistant staphylococci which caused an epidemic of staph infections.

At that point, I was doing a lot of research; I was looking for microbes on the walls of hospitals, in the air-ducts of laundry rooms and operating rooms. I was very successful in my work – developing a reputation nationally, and then internationally, in the field of infection control, disinfection, sterilization and quarantine.

Subsequently, in 1969, I met with epidemiologists in London, who asked me to take a leave of absence from the University of Minnesota – where I was teaching and from where I had received a Ph.D. in medicinal bacteriology – in order to spend a few months with them learning how disease spreads in hospitals and how their techniques could prevent this.

People go to hospitals to get cured. Indeed, that is the whole function of hospitals – to cure people. Unfortunately, too many times people go to hospitals and become infected. It's a very insidious thing, but why does it happen? Because sick people with every type of disease come to hospitals – some ill from infectious diseases, some from other types of ailments. So you have all these people together in one environment. To design an isolation system between them is not easy to do.

The epidemiologists in London were researching the spread of infections within their hospital wards, and when they invited me to come to learn their techniques, I asked the blessing for success from the Rebbe, with whom I had developed a relationship over the years.

I was very proud that I had been invited by these people at St. Bartholomew's Hospital who were then on the forefront of studying the epidemiology of antibiotic-resistant bacteria – one of whom has since been knighted by the Queen of England – and when I mentioned all this to the Rebbe, he asked if I could send him a copy of the protocol of the research that I intended to do.

Of course I did so because, to be honest, I wanted the Rebbe to be impressed by it.

The Rebbe looked over my protocol and said, "Very, very good. Of course, I don't understand most of it, but you're the expert in the field, so I wish you great success. But, if you ask me, it might be a little more fruitful to investigate a different field."

I was shocked to hear that. How could I go off to investigate another field after having been given a truly historic opportunity in this field!



But he pressed on: "Why don't you try and study why these bacteria become resistant in the first place? If a microbe is susceptible to penicillin and then becomes resistant, how did it become resistant?"

Oy vey iz mir! I thought to myself.

I was so proud of what I was going to do, but his suggestion would mean that I would have to completely change my career path. I'd have to go back and learn a lot of molecular biology and genetics, which didn't really interest me. I was interested in the drama of epidemiology, of studying disease transmission.

In fact, I venture to say that all epidemiologists love the idea of solving a mystery. There's drama in cutting a chain of infection – it's what movies are made of. Movies aren't made of the day-by-day drudgery of genetics which only molecular biologists understand.

But somehow the Rebbe understood that this line of investigation was going to yield more constructive solutions. In a letter to me dated May 5, 1969, he went into the subject in detail:

I am usually very reluctant to express a view on matters which lie outside my field of competence. However, having glanced through the detailed research program which you enclosed in your letter, I decided to make an observation:

I fail to find among the itemized points of study one aspect which, in my humble opinion, should have been of particular interest. I am referring to the recognition that certain microbes and infections may be germane to hospitals – a view which, I believe, has received some attention in pertinent literature.... Hence it is very possible that methods of infection control which are effective elsewhere may lose their effectiveness ... because the hospital environment has produced certain strains in certain bacteria which has given them a measure of immunity in that specific environment.

I do not know whether the omission of this aspect from your project is due to the circumstance that a three months' study period would not be sufficient to include an investigation into this area, since, undoubtedly, it would entail the problem of distinguishing "immunized" from "non-immunized" bacteria, etc., as well as the problems of changing methods of sterilization

and infection control, and clinical observation, etc. Or, simply, because this question is outside your present work. Yet, it seems to me that this is a question of practical importance...

The direction he was advocating back then has since become the hot topic in science. If you look at the list of Nobel Prizes awarded for recent discoveries in medicine and physiology, you will see that the dominant field is molecular biology, which helps us understand antibiotic resistance.

PEOPLE GO TO HOSPITALS TO GET CURED. INDEED, THAT IS THE WHOLE FUNCTION OF HOSPITALS – TO CURE PEOPLE. UNFORTUNATELY, TOO MANY TIMES PEOPLE GO TO HOSPITALS AND BECOME INFECTED.

Forty years ago, the Rebbe knew it! He said to me, "Velvl, if you ask me, it would be more fruitful to go into this field..."

He gave his advice so modestly. He said, "You are the expert. I don't understand the field ... I'm probably wrong..."

But he was completely right.

Although I didn't follow his advice, in hindsight, I can't help but be amazed at the Rebbe's vision. He had no qualifications in bacteriology or molecular biology but he anticipated – by at least four decades – these developments in modern science. He was greater than life in that respect. It actually sends shivers up my spine. I think now – maybe I should have done what he advised.

Back then, the Rebbe gave me a blessing for success in my work, and I went to England and learned a lot. We solved some of the epidemics, but we didn't find the answer to the basic question which the Rebbe had posed.

MY ENCOUNTER with the REBBE *An oral history project dedicated to documenting the life of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory. The story is one of thousands recorded in the 900 videotaped interviews conducted to date. Please share your comments and suggestions. mystory@jmedia.org*

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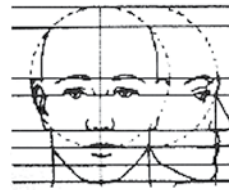
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Celebration!

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Purim AT Chabad

February 25, 2021

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See page 9.