

## Pesach Message 5768 / 2008

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It barely seems possible that a whole year has gone by since last Pesach and that, like so many Jewish housewives, Anne is well into the Pesach cleaning, while I'm writing this in the week after Purim!

This year we've had two months of Adar and, as we know, when this occurs, Purim has to be celebrated in the second Adar (Adar Sheni). Our Rabbis tell us that it has to be this way because we want the redemption of the Jews from Haman, that happened in Adar, and the redemption of the Israelites from Pharaoh, which happened in Nisan, to be celebrated side by side.

I was thinking about why this should be, after all, Purim took place in Adar, not in Adar Sheni, so why do we want these two celebrations to be close to one another?

I believe it is to do with the nature of each of these redemptions.

The redemption at Purim was a purely local one. The only Jews who were threatened were those who lived in the kingdom of Ahasuerus. If it would have happened that the wicked Haman had succeeded and actually wiped out all the Jews under his control, then there would have still been Jews elsewhere in the world.

Egypt was different. Our sources tell us that, the Israelites in Egypt had reached such a low level of spiritual impurity, that there were in imminent danger of being wiped out completely. And that's why a Moses came along when he did, because, had he not, the Jewish nation would not have even got off the ground. They would have been assimilated into the host nation and lost for ever.

The requirement to have these two redemptions juxtaposed is to impress on us that a local attack on our people must give us exactly the same cause for concern as a global one. When Jews in one part of the world are threatened, it is the business of Jews everywhere to pull together, to give the greatest support, and to do everything we can to repel the attack.

The reality is that most of the time, most of us do little more than shake our heads in dismay when we hear of Jews in other parts of the world going through a bad time. When the media publish complete untruths about us, or about Israel, we leave it to others to deal with. We're sure that there'll always be some 'good soul' who will take up the cudgels on our behalf.

But can you imagine the impact it would have if we all took up the cudgels together - if we all wrote and phoned and e-mailed when we were unhappy with the lies and distortions and attacks? Why shouldn't you and I be amongst those 'good souls'? You don't have to go out into the streets and wave banners and shout yourself hoarse, ('though there are occasions when that's a good thing to do), but if a well-phrased letter, or a prompt and polite phone call was received from *hundreds* of people each time an unjustified or inaccurate view was published, the effect could be quite dramatic.

There's a famous Rabbinic expression: Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Lazeh - All Jews have a responsibility for one another. The tragedy is that there are not enough of us who are prepared to face up to our responsibilities.

There's strength in numbers, and the more active troops we can engage, the stronger the possibility will be of getting the truth out about us into the public arena.

This Pesach, I call upon you to make a commitment to give more support to your fellow-Jew than you have in the past.

Just as we were saved from the evil machinations in Shushan, and by the dangers of slavery, so, we pray that the Almighty will continue to preserve us so that, through the adhering to the high moral code that we are called upon to maintain, we can become the light to the nations, which is our true destiny.

Anne and I wish you a very Happy and Kasher Pesach