

sider the return to Torah by the masses, as a renewal of the acceptance of the Torah, first experienced at Sinai. In fact, the sages declare, that the recommitment to the Torah in Persia contained a fresh element of voluntary acceptance beyond that of Sinai. Such was the exemplary conduct of our heroes, which inspired such adulation and praise by our sages.

Because our sages knew that these Purim episodes would be repeated countless times during our long exile, they therefore attached such importance and significance to the events recorded in the Megillah. They recognized the eternal message of hope and trust that would be so vital for the confidence and trust of the Jewish people. They, therefore, insisted that we read, study and learn from the Megillah, those eternal truths which assure the eternity of the Jewish people. Only a generation loyal to Torah can survive.

How actual and real this message is for Jews world wide. The Megillah has not lost any of its brilliance, lustre or meaning also for Jews in the 20th century. May that we be good students and derive the full benefit of this eternal book, for the eternal people of our eternal G-d.

Finale

by Rabbi Philip H. Singer

On Purim, as during Chanukah, we recite "Al Hanisim." In this thanksgiving prayer, the stories of the miracles of both celebrations are related in a succinct synopsis.

But yet there is an obvious difference. In the "Al Hanisim" of Chanukah, there is a finale. "Thereafter your sons came to the Abode of your House, they cleansed the Sanctuary, purified your place of Holiness and kindled lights in your Holy Courts, and instituted these eight days of Chanukah for avowing thanks and rendering praise to Your great Name." However, in the "Al Hanisim" of Purim there is an abrupt ending. "But you, in your abundant compassion thwarted his plan and frustrated his intention and caused that which he sought to do to recoil on his head; and they hanged him and his sons upon the gallows.

What kind of an ending is this? Don't you feel suspended? Should there not have been a finale? Why not tell that the celebration of Purim was instituted with its reading of the Megillah, Mishloach Monos, alms to the poor and the Seudoh? Why was this portion omitted? Is it possible that the story of Purim is never-ending? Was Haman only an episode in the ceaseless hatred toward the Jews? But, though the history of our people is replete with a succession of Hamans, our rabbis would not indicate that in the Al Hanisim and mar the joyous celebration. Then why is there no uplifting conclusion to the prayer?

The answer is, I believe, because the high-point of the story of Purim was "Keeyemu Vikiblu"—that the Jews again accepted the Torah. Not as at Mount Sinai by compulsion but with love. It would have been erroneous and misleading if we would have ended the Al Hanisim with enumerating the various expressions of celebration. The outcome of the story of Purim was not the merry-making, nor even reading the Megillah or Mishloach-Monos, but the rededication to the Torah.

While kindling the Chanukah lights and reciting Hallel and Al Hanisim are reserved for the eight days of the holiday, our dedication to the Torah is not exclusive for Purim. It is a daily duty throughout the year.

Our Synagogue have affiliate organizations—the Brotherhood, Men's Club, Ladies' Auxiliary, Sisterhood, P.T.A., Mr. and Mrs. Club, Young Marrieds, with varied activities and programs. Their endeavors are admirable. But the goals are not Megilah-readings and skits, nor Mishteh Visimchoh—breakfasts, dinners, and weekends nor Mishloach Monos and charitable work. The primary goal is Keemu Vikiblu—dedication to the Torah—the totality of Judaism.

The Megilah scroll is to be written on parchment, and requires "shirtut," etched lines. "Shirtut" denotes permanency of the writing.

The words of the Megilah are called "Divray Sholom Vi-emes"—"words of peace and truth." And the sages thus derived in Megilah 16 that etched lines are required so that they be words of truth as the truth of the Torah (כאמיחה של תורה). Rashi equates the Megilah to a Sefer Torah. Tosefos (Minochos 32) equates the Megilah to a Mezuzoh. Tosefos prefers the equation to a Mezuzah which contains "Kabolos Ohl Malchus Shomayim"—acceptance of the yoke of the heavenly kingdom.

Why does a Mezuzoh denote the acceptance of the heavenly kingdom more than a Torah scroll? Where is the similarity between the Megilah and the Mezuzoh?

The obvious difference between the position and effectiveness of the Sefer Torah and the Mezuzoh is in that the Torah scroll is deposited in the ark, while the Mezuzoh is affixed on the door posts of every room in every Jewish home. Seemingly Rashi was satisfied with a Keemu Vikiblu in general, in principle by the people of Israel. But Tosefos wished that it be evident in every Jewish home. Purim is celebrated in the synagogue and in the home.

We pray for the success of the prospects for peace for Israel. We pray that they be "Divray Sholom Vi-emes." We pray that

they be marked with "Shirtut" and permanency.

Sholom Vi-emes shall come to Israel if the peace shall mean not only recognition of the State of Israel, but the safety and security of every Jewish settlement and home. The Megilah of the miracle of peace in Israel then shall truly be like a Mezuzah as it shall spell out שומר דלתות ישראל