

FROM THE EDITOR

WWW.JEWISHLIFE.CO.ZA



CREDITS

PUBLISHER & MANAGING DIRECTOR

Martyn Samuels
martyn@jewishlife.co.za

EDITOR

Robert Sussman
robert@jewishlife.co.za

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Linda Superfain
linda@jewishlife.co.za

ART DIRECTOR

Rizelle Hartmeier
studio26@telkomsa.net

FEATURES WRITER

Chandrea Serebro

COPY EDITOR/PROOFREADER

Dovid Samuels

PHOTOGRAPHER

Ilan Ossendryver
ilan@ic-creations.com

DIGITAL MANAGER

David Blumenau
david@jewishlife.co.za

CONTRIBUTORS

Lauren Bookin, Leonard Carr, Eliana Cline,
Rabbi Dr David Fox, Bev Goldman,
Rabbi Yossy Goldman, Wendy Kahn,
Serenne Kaplan, Sara Gila Margulies,
Ilan Preskovsky, Dovid Samuels, Liz Samuels,
Chandrea Serebro, Rabbi Ari Shishler,
Richard Sutton, Michelle Vinokur

Printers Paarlmedia kzn

Distribution

Neil Jacobson
Marc Levitt

JEWISH LIFE is published by Total Publishing
(Pty) Ltd ©2008.

If you live within the boundaries of the
eruv, feel free to take this publication
home with you.

**THIS PUBLICATION CONTAINS WORDS
OF TORAH. PLEASE TREAT IT WITH
THE RESPECT IT DESERVES.**

ISSN 1994-8670

Total Publishing (Pty) Ltd

PO Box 52339, Saxonwold 2132

The views expressed in this issue of
Jewish Life are not necessarily those
of the Publisher or Editor.



Certified for the period
July-December 2016: 13 102



Who doesn't dream of changing the world? It's easier than we think. And it doesn't even require millions of people to get together and march on Washington or any other city.

The Rambam (Maimonides) points out¹, regarding Purim, that every Jew in the city of Shushan knew that Esther was the daughter of Mordechai's uncle. It was also public knowledge that King Achashverosh desperately wanted to know about Queen Esther's origins (Who were her parents? What nation was she from?) – so much so that he promised to pay a large sum of silver coins to whoever would reveal this information to him. Remarkably, despite the chance to gain favour with the king as well as to enrich themselves, not a single Jew came forward to reveal Esther's true identity. The Rambam says that it was in this merit of everyone holding his tongue that we were redeemed at that time.

But, he offers a powerful – and sobering – example in contrast to this, of a time when our redemption was needlessly delayed. During our 210-year exile in Egypt, Moshe famously killed an Egyptian officer when he happened upon the man beating a Jew. The midrash tells us that the man Moshe had saved was named Dasan.² The next day, Moshe stumbled upon Dasan again, this time fighting with his brother, Aviram. As one of the brothers raised his hand to strike the other, Moshe interceded, asking the man why he was about to hit his fellow Jew and even calling him a rasha (wicked) just for having raised his hand against another Jew (without having actually hit him). Rather than thank Moshe for having saved his life the day before, Dasan, along with his brother, insolently asked Moshe if he intended to kill them as he had done to the Egyptian officer the day before, and then threatened to tell Pharaoh what Moshe had done. Moshe, who had long wondered why the redemption of the Jewish people had not yet taken place, realised that if there were Jews prepared to inform on their fellow Jews, then the Jewish people were unfortunately not fit to be redeemed.

Shortly thereafter, the troublemaking brothers made good on their threat and informed Pharaoh, causing Moshe to have to flee for his life into exile. Our Sages argue over how old Moshe was at the time of these events, but he was, by all accounts, no older than 40 years old.³ Moshe would spend the next 39 years in exile, while the Jewish people continued to suffer under the tremendous cruelty of the Egyptians, until Hashem finally commanded Moshe to return to Egypt and redeem the Jewish people. Why such a long delay? The reason is alluded to in Hashem's instruction to Moshe to return to Egypt. Hashem specifically noted in the very same sentence that Moshe could now safely return, "...because all the men seeking your life have died."⁴ Rashi explains that Hashem was referring to Dasan and Aviram, who had not really died, but had become impoverished and, as a result, could no longer harm Moshe with their slander.

Consider this: the Torah explicitly tells us that there were approximately 600 000 men who went out from Egypt⁵ – and counting women, children, and the erev rav (the mixed multitude of people who went out from there with us), it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 2 million people in total. And because of the behaviour of two people, the redemption of those millions of people from bondage was delayed by 39 years! Thirty nine years, during which we experienced the most horrible atrocities imaginable – decades of inconceivable suffering, of lives lost, of families broken, and all because of the loshen horah (slander) spoken by two people.

Whether we realise it or not – whether we choose to embrace the idea or not – the things we say and do in this world make a tremendous difference, not only for ourselves, but for the entire Jewish people, along with the rest of the world.⁶

Looking for some personal empowerment? Trying to see how you can make a meaningful difference in the world? Each and every one of us can and does make just such a difference – for good or, chas v'shalom, for bad – every day, on a global scale. We have been given G-d-like power to effect, influence, and change the world in which we live. We must use it wisely and, more than anything, we must carefully watch what we say. On behalf of everyone at JL, Freilichen Purim!

ROBERT SUSSMAN,
EDITOR

¹Megillas Esther - Mayana Shel Torah

²See Bereishis Rabbah 1:28

³See id 1:30

⁴Shemos 4:19

⁵See id 12:37

⁶See, for example, Shemiras HaLoshen 1:2

ON THE COVER: AN ANTIQUE GRAGGER, AKA RA'ASHAN OR NOISEMAKER, (CIRCA 1860) CUSTOMARILY USED DURING THE MEGILLAH READING TO MAKE NOISE WHEN THE WICKED HAMAN'S NAME IS READ. THE HEBREW WRITING ETCHED INTO THE GRAGGER READS ARUR HAMAN, "CURSED IS HAMAN". COURTESY OF: PASAREL FINE ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES, AUCTIONS.PASAREL.COM

