

We are commanded to remember Amalek not hate them. We Jews are not good haters. We sometimes make the mistake of believing there is no evil in the world, that evil is not real. But it is and we always have to be on our guard against it. On Purim we are told that we should drink so much so we can't tell the difference between Bless Mordecai and Curse Haman. Actually this is a refrain from a popular song and it is hard to say even when sober. But this illustrates the point that it is very hard to tell the difference between Mordecai and Haman. In *Genqria* the phrase Bless Mordecai and Curse Haman is identical. Haman, after all, had all the characteristics which we admire. He was ambitious, learned, clever. He was a family man who consulted his wife. He was incorruptible. He even was willing to *pay* the king, to let him do away with the Jews. The only difference between Haman and Mordecai was in their goals. Haman had only negative goals. He was obsessed with hatred. He wanted to destroy, not build. It's very hard to tell the difference between Haman and Mordecai. In our own day Hitler had many admirable traits, he was honest, a vegetarian, he loved animals, he never took a dime from the state, he lived off the royalties from his book, he wasn't a woman chaser, he was willing to go to jail for his beliefs. But he was a terrible person, the devil incarnate. He was obsessed with hatred of us. Many Jews, too, are negative about themselves. The Rabbis ask why did Haman almost succeed. Our Holocaust was worse than the Purim story because the destruction almost happened but in our day a great destruction happened. The Rabbis say that the reason the destruction almost happened was because when king \_\_\_\_\_ had a party at third year or reign he invited everyone and at party he dressed in clothes of high priest which we read about in this week's sedra and he used vessels of Temple. The Jews there, even though they were being degraded, didn't protest. They participated and those who were leaders just withdrew to themselves but didn't try to reach out to fellow Jews and explain that what they were doing was wrong. They fled into own close circle. Purim is celebrated the way it is because

there are two enemies we face, one external and one internal. The external one G-d says he'll take care of, the internal one we have to take care of. We all have to believe that Judaism is a great joy, that it's a blessing not a curse to be a Jew. Amelak thought that he could attack the stragglers in the Jewish people because they had given up Judaism, the other Jews wouldn't care and they, themselves, were negative. But Joshua and Moshe fought for them. Because we must always help our fellow Jews no matter what. We all salute Mizrahi because they're raising a generation of Jews in their schools and youth villages who can tell the difference between good and evil, between a Haman and a Mordecai, who are filled with the love of Judaism, who have self-respect, and who are concerned about their fellow Jews. This is extremely important.

Story about man who was employed to handle company's finances, just a whiz. President of company asked him where he learned finance. He said at Yale. President asked him what name and he said Yim Yonson. The ability to tell difference between good and evil very subtle and very important.

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There has been much talk lately about values and the importance of maintaining a society in which people feel safe. The whole question of law and freedom, of an individual's rights and of society's demands have constantly been brought to our attention. The problem, put very simply, is how do we maintain law and order while, at the same time, safeguarding an individual's rights? How can society's needs and an individual's rights be brought into balance? What are the methods by which a society can insure its own safety and the safety and rights of all its members? To my way of thinking, ~~there are~~ only two ways ~~by which~~ a society can exercise control over its members; either through fear or through public acceptance, love.

Fear means that if you do something you should not do or omit to do something you should do, you will be punished. Things will be taken away from you and/or you will be either bodily harmed or moved to another location. The status quo will be interrupted. Public acceptance means that the status quo will not be changed. Things will not be taken away from you and you will not be physically hurt or moved about, but you will not be allowed to move up the social ladder. People will generally shun your company. You will not be invited to the country club. You will not be praised or be well thought of. <You will not be asked to participate in different activities. You will not be publicly accepted by the powers that be.

Under the Communist system, fear is the predominant method of social control. The secret police <sup>are</sup> everywhere. In America the withholding of love or public acceptance is the dominant form of social control. Failure to learn to speak English correctly or to go to college or to adopt certain life-styles will prevent you from getting certain jobs,

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from being asked to participate in certain activities, from being considered an enlightened person, etc. Up till now in America we have had such great confidence in our ideals and in our society that we have, for the most part, felt that almost everybody will choose to fashion their lives along a pattern which would cause them to be accepted by those who mold the American dream. Unless some overt criminal activity is detected there has been no overt penalty for anybody who refuses to subscribe to American ideals and values. The person is just left to himself. Somehow <sup>today</sup> this system seems to be breaking down.

This basically is the system we, too, in Judaism have used to enforce social discipline except for one important difference, intensive moral education. Jews for almost 2000 years have not enforced social discipline through fear. With only one exception that of traitors or informers who would jeopardize the total Jewish community by falsely informing to the host countries on the activities of the Jewish community, there has been no death penalty or any other corporal punishment in Jewish communities. Penalties when they were enacted were concerned solely with social acceptance. We Jews, however, went one step further and always created an educational system which would cause the Jewish values of morality, kindness, and compassion to be internalized. It was not social acceptance which was the dominant theme of Jewish education but self-acceptance. An individual, after he went through this type of educational system, would not want to do anything wrong, not because his neighbors would not accept him any more, but because he could not accept himself any more if he did these wrong things. He would not longer be a "men<sup>s</sup>ch" in his own eyes.

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"mensch"

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The desire to be a "men<sup>s</sup>ch," to be a person of whom others, but most importantly oneself, could be proud, was the essence of the Jewish educational system. Crime among Jewish people, especially violent crime, was almost unheard of. Wife beating, battered children, crimes of passion were things the Jewish community never knew. Unfortunately, with the breakdown of the Jewish educational system which stressed the forming of character not the teaching of skills, <sup>we</sup> Jews have now become susceptible to these problems. The whole essence of Jewish learning was and is to make the moral and spiritual values of Judaism so internalized that no form of external control is necessary. Unfortunately, in America, today, crime is rising because many people in America do not realize that you cannot run a society based on social acceptance unless there is a strong educational system which teaches shared values and which, also, internalizes them by setting standards for self-acceptance. The idea that all morality is relative and depends upon individual taste is destructive and can only lead to a society governed by fear.


In the Torah portion, Tetzaveh, we have many of these ideas spelled out. We are commanded to first prepare an eternal light which would burn in the Sanctuary. The light was to come from within not from without. No sunlight fell in the Sanctuary. Even later when the Temple was built it had windows that were constructed in such a way so that they were very narrow on the inside growing wider and wider as they passed through the thick walls to the outside. Our values must stem from within and they must spread from the individual outward. Also, in the menorah only pure olive oil was used. Olives when they are taken from the tree are very bitter. To take oil from them is not an easy task. Many times it is very difficult to learn values. People must learn how to get rid of their bitterness. They must learn how to turn themselves

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into people who shed light and warmth. This they can only do if they refine their character and, so to speak, allow the pure olive oil to come forth. Olive oil when mixed with water always rises to the top. With these qualities they could morally rise.  They could become more than themselves. Each of them could become a "mentch."

Of all the Torah portions since Moshe's birth, this is the only one that does not contain his name. This Torah portion speaks mainly about the outer garments that the High Priests and the priests were to wear in the Tabernacle. It concludes by telling us about the little golden incense altar that stood between the menorah and the table in the holy part of the Tabernacle. On this altar, only incense was burned. No sacrifices were sacrificed on it. This description of the altar is placed out of order. All the other items which were inside the Tabernacle, itself, were described in another Torah portion. Only the little gold incense altar is described in this Torah portion right after we learn about the special clothes or uniforms that the priests had to wear. All the priests when they were serving in the Temple had to wear uniforms. Those uniforms might inspire fear. The Temple service, itself, could inspire fear and degenerate into another outward mechanism of fear to control the people. This was not to be. The incense altar was to remind the priests and the people that the Temple service was meant to internalize moral values not to control the people through fear. The Hebrew word for incense is Ketores and the Rabbis say that each letter of that word stands for the spiritual qualities each of us must internalize to run a society on acceptance or love. The koof stands for Kedusha or  self-restraint or refinement; the tet for Tahora, integrity or purity; the raysh for Rachameem, mercy or kindness; and the toph for Tikvah, hope or optimism. These were the inner qualities the Temple service was to inspire in the

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people not fear. Moshe is not mentioned in this Torah portion at all because to many he was a towering fearful figure. The people were to realize that they could run a society without fear but only if they adopted the values of the incense altar.

We know that society can function on love or acceptance but only if there is a strong educational system which internalizes values. If there is not then we, too, must rely on fear. Hopefully, we can construct a society in which social control is maintained with mostly love and very little fear. Unfortunately, in America if we continue to neglect our educational system we will end up with a society based wholly on fear, fear of each other and fear of the state.

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In the Torah portion Tetzaveh we learn how it says and you shall command the children of Israel that they bring unto thee pure olive oil beaten for the light to cause a lamp to burn continually. Aaron and his sons were to light the menorah from evening till morning. This is indeed a strange commandment since the menorah could not be seen by the people. Why were the children of Israel commanded? Just Aaron and his sons actually should have been commanded and why of all substances was olive oil chosen and why should it be beaten for the light? Each of us according to our religion possesses an inner light, an inner piece of G-d. Sometimes we do not know how to express it. It is hidden. It is the job of Aaron and his children of the Jewish religion to help bring this light out. Many times people do not say what they mean. The trick in being a good leader is understanding what people mean not what they say. Olives are a very bitter fruit. Nobody can eat olives but their oil is good. Many times we have a tendency to judge people by their appearances not realizing the goodness that might be underneath. Many times in emergencies when <sup>we Jews literally and figuratively</sup> things are being beaten the most unlikely people step forward because they have the inner purity to persevere and overcome and offer leadership. It's very important that all Israel would recognize this that they look at what people mean and not what they say, and they draw the correct conclusions. My grandmother was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1893 when immigrants who were flooding this country had a favorite story which illustrates this point. An immigrant came to this country not knowing English. He had to earn a living so he was given a box of apples, told to stand by the train depot, and sell them. When a person came up he should say, "Two for five". When they asked a question he should say, "Very fresh", and finally he should say, "If you do not, somebody else will". A man came running up asking him when does the train leave? He answered, "Two for five". The man said, "Are you being fresh with me?" and he said, "Very fresh". And the man said

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"Do you want a punch in the nose?" and he answered, "If you do not somebody else will". It's important that we know what people mean and not just what they say.

20.  
Is Good P.R. or Popularity that Important

TETZAVEH - SHABBOS ZOCHOR  
Rabbi Joseph Radinsky - 1983

In this special Haphtorah which we read for Shabbos Zochor we read how Saul's kingdom was taken away from him after he failed to fulfill G-d's command of destroying the Amalekites and their sheep. Saul was a man who did not know how really to use power. Saul had gone and completed the command of G-d through Samuel to destroy the Amalekites. When Samuel came to Saul he said "What is this voice of sheep that I hear in my ears, and the voice of cattle which I hear?" and Saul answered that these sheep came from the Amalekites, that the people had mercy upon. Shmuel told Saul that he would then have to consult with G-d. Samuel also learned that Saul had spared Gog, the King of the Amalekites. Samuel asked Saul why did he spare the sheep. Why had he allowed them to take booty from the sheep and the cattle? He said, "Are you small in your own eyes, the head of the tribe of Israel?" The trouble with Saul was that he was only interested in p.r. He was only interested in making a good impression. He ~~also~~ wanted to be well thought of. He ~~also~~ wanted to be sure that the New York Times and the Houston Chronicle wrote good things about him. Saul said to Samuel, "I sinned and I have transgressed the command of G-d because I feared the people and I listened to their voice". He then told Shmuel to please forgive his sin and to appear publicly with him. Shmuel refused and Saul grabbed hold of the garment of Samuel and it ripped. Shmuel then told Saul that his kingdom would be ripped away. Here Shmuel had just told him that his kingdom was going to be taken from him and all Saul could think about was that Shmuel would appear with him publicly. All he could think about was p.r. He said, "I sinned, now honor me in front of the elders of my people and Israel and return with me". Shmuel relented and he went with Saul. He was a man whose kingdom was going to be taken away from him and all he could think about was making a good impression. Unfortunately, today we have a lot of the same kind of people. They do not understand that power is necessary and sometimes you have to use power even if you are going to be unpopular. Many times we Jews fail to realize that there is evil in the world. That's what Parsha Zochor tells us. We are to remember that there are times when you are not going to be popular, but you have to fight evil when you see it. You cannot be too concerned about public opinion. It reminds me of the story of the hunter who was hunting for a bear. The bear saw him lift up his rifle and was about ready to shoot. The bear said, "Don't

you think we can negotiate this?" and he proposed that they sit and talk about it. He asked the hunter what he wanted. The hunter said he wanted a fur coat. The bear then said, "Well, all I want is a full stomach". They then sat down to talk about it. After 15 minutes the bear walked away alone. The man had his fur coat and the bear had a full stomach. We have to remember that not everything can be compromised. The PLO just had a meeting at which time they once again affirmed that they would not change their covenant, that they want to destroy Israel. They would not even lie even though they were asked to do so. They made their point very clear. If I were living in the time when Hitler came to power I would not have believed <sup>him</sup> ~~them~~. Would anybody really do that? Would anybody really kill all the Jews? This was just propoganda for the masses. I probably would have gone along with the public opinion and not made too much of a fuss either. After all, in the 30's Winston Churchill when he cried against Hitler was thought to be a nut. He was not very popular. In life popularity is not the most important thing. We should always remember that. That's what the letters Zochor in Hebrew mean. Zach, we should be pure. He did not mind killing the people but he wanted to save the sheep because the people wanted the sheep. The Kahf stands for power. When we have the power to do good we should use it. Raysh stands for Rachmeem, for mercy. Unfortunately, many people do not understand that. They think that p.r. is all there is to life. Good p.r. at the time of the Holocaust brought death. Our power must be used wisely. Sometimes you have to use power even if you are unpopular.

Tetzaveh

## Should we protect ERROR

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Rabbi Joseph Radinsky

One of the major questions we face today is, what are the limits of the right to error? How far<sup>R</sup> can society let each of us go in doing things that ruin our lives? Do each of us have a right to make mistakes, even of the most greivous type, without society's interference, or should society prevent us from harming ourselves, especially when we, by harming ourselves, will also harm others? What are the parameters of error? This problem has, because of drugs, become much more acute now. In extreme cases the answer seems obvious. Do we allo<sup>w</sup> an airline pilot to take drugs by saying that this is only his business, or do we force him to be drug free because, by his taking drugs, he not only endangers his life but that of his passengers. The answer to this question, almost everyone would agree, would be, no, he cannot take drugs. But what about cigarette smoking? Breathing other people's smoke can cause cancer according to the latest studies. How much leeway does a person have when it comes to doing what he may think is right even though it may endanger his health or the health of others?

This is a very difficult problem. It is a problem which society has been wrestling with since the beginning of history. The United States was really founded on the principle of protecting error. What has made this country great is not democracy but the principle of protecting error combined with democracy. Democracy, alone, is actually a terrible form of government. Democracy says that whatever the majority of the people want, the people should get. If the majority should determine that all Jews should be killed, then all the Jews should be killed. That, of course, is what happened in Germany where Hitler was actually elected to the Chancellorship of Germany. His party received the most votes to the German parliament. Democracy is not a good form

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of government if it is unbridled, if it is unlimited. What we in this country have stated clearly in our Constitution is that there are certain things that government cannot do. The majority does not rule on certain issues. The majority cannot determine what religion all this country's inhabitants should practice. The majority cannot determine what newspapers we should read or what speeches we should give, etc. We have <sup>in</sup> limited democracy, rule by the majority, ~~to~~ certain defined areas. What makes our government unique and special is that we have protected error. What we have said, in effect, is that it is not the business of society to intervene in the private life of an individual even if we ~~have good cause to~~ believe that this individual is going to harm himself in either this world or the next world because of his beliefs or practices.

This, of course, is very similar to Judaism's position. Judaism, too, says that in most instances we cannot intervene in the private life of an individual. Most of the punishments that are mentioned in the Torah cannot be enforced. They are only enforceable by G-d. The Torah teaches us that we cannot do certain things, but if we do them, for all practical purposes, there is no punishment by man for them. There is only ~~a~~ punishment by G-d. Even in those instances where the right <sup>to</sup> ~~of~~ punish certain offenses was given to the Jewish court, the implementation of these punishments were hedged in by all sorts of legal safeguards so that, as a practical matter, it was almost impossible to punish anyone. If the Sanhedrin would execute anyone once in 70 years, or some people say once in 7 years, it was considered a bloody court. Capital punishment, itself, lapsed in Judaism 40 years before the Temple was destroyed except in the case of informers.

