

“Purimfest, 1946” – The Purim Link Between Nazi Germany And Nuclear Iran

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Something unexpected happened at the execution of Julius Streicher, one of the high-ranking Nazis sentenced to death at the Nuremberg Trials. Moments before Streicher was hanged in the early hours of October 16th 1946, *Newsweek* reported: “He stared at the witnesses facing the gallows and shouted ‘Purimfest, 1946.’”

What did Streicher mean by this? Why would a condemned Nazi mention Purim in his last words? Streicher was obviously familiar with Megillat Esther, which tells of the attempted genocide Haman planned, and how, when his plans were thwarted and they were defeated, Haman and his ten sons were hanged. Streicher was acutely aware of the irony of history – that he was one of ten Nazis hanged after being sentenced at the Nuremberg Trials. (In fact, eleven had been sentenced to death but Goering committed suicide before his sentence was carried out.) And so in the end ten were hanged, just like Haman’s ten sons in the Book of Esther. Amazingly, Streicher saw the historic link between the Nazi genocide and the attempted genocide of Haman, who, like the Nazis, also intended to wipe out every Jew – man, woman and child.

But there is an even deeper irony, which Streicher was certainly not aware of. Megillat Esther lists the names of Haman's ten sons and according to the *Halachah*, three of the letters in these names are written in smaller font than the rest of the text – a *tav*, *ashin* and a *zayin* – and one letter is written in larger font – a *vav*. What do these unusually sized letters signify?

For generations different explanations have been offered. In the 20th century, however, another amazing meaning was discovered. The large *vav* is numerically 6, corresponding to the sixth millennium; the small *tav*, *shin* and *zayin* are numerically 707; together, these numbers refers to the 707th year of the sixth millennium – in other words, the Jewish year 5707, which corresponds to 1946, the year in which these ten high-ranking Nazis were hanged. Thus, the unusually sized letters - *vav*, *tav*, *shin* and *zayin* – found in the names of Haman's ten sons allude to the year of the execution of these ten Nazi war criminals. What is further fascinating is that they were sentenced on the 1st of October, in the days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur of 1946, and hanged on the 16th of October, which that year came out on Hoshana Rabbah, which, according to the Zohar, is the day that judgment of the world is finalized.

Since the Torah is G-d's wisdom for all times, there are often things which cannot be properly understood until generations later. The differences in the font size of the letters in the list of Haman's ten sons was not completely understood in previous generations. There were other explanations for it, but only in October 1946 did the full meaning of it become clear as ten Nazis were hanged in the Jewish year 5707, *tav shin zayin*.

What does all this mean? The answer comes from one of the great heroines of Jewish history, Queen Esther. At risk to her life, with bravery, conviction and loyalty, she intervened to save her people. Through her bold and dramatic life, Queen Esther showed us that G-d's presence permeates our history. She understood that her fate and destiny – and that of her people – were in G-d's hands. Esther taught us that sometimes G-d interacts with the world through open miracles as we experienced with the ten plagues and the splitting of the sea during the Exodus from Egypt. But mostly He does so in a hidden way, as happened during the time of Purim, when the miraculous salvation of the Jewish people was just as great as the open miracles and yet occurred in a way that was hidden from view and seemingly “natural.” The Gemara (*Chulin* 139b) says that the name “Esther” comes from the Hebrew root “to hide” and refers to the verse where G-d says, “on that day I will hide My face from you” (*Devarim* 31:18). As we know, in the entire Book of Esther, G-d's name is not mentioned once; yet His presence is everywhere. Through our celebrations on Purim, we attribute all of the miracles of that time to G-d's direct intervention in history, albeit hidden behind the machinations of politics and world affairs.

Queen Esther's message is that we must not relate to these events in natural terms alone; we need to see G-d's presence in everything, even though He is hidden. Esther's message applies to us as individuals in our day-to-day lives, where, as Judaism teaches, G-d is involved and interested in every aspect of life; and it also applies to Jewish destiny and history at large, which powerfully demonstrate G-d's involvement in the affairs of people and the direction of civilizations. The supernatural

miracles of the establishment of the State of Israel and the rebirth of Torah learning throughout the world following the devastation of the Holocaust are but two examples of many which show G-d's power and presence in everything.

And even in our current dangers, we can feel G-d's presence and involvement. Julius Streicher, as he was being executed, saw with clarity the connection between the Nazi genocide and the attempted genocide planned by Haman. And now the very country in which Haman lived and in which the events of the Book of Esther took place – Persia – is the very same country that today is called Iran, where the new Hamans, the new Nazis, are proclaiming their intentions of genocide against the Jewish people. This ironic twist of history is so eerie and uncanny that it clearly shows us G-d's presence in these events which affect the Jewish people and the world at large.

Our response to this latest declaration of intent to commit genocide coming from modern-day Persia, must be in the spirit of our great leader and prophetess, Queen Esther. Let us follow her example. Esther pursued not only a practical plan of action that was well executed politically and strategically, but she also pursued a spiritual plan instructing Mordechai to gather the people to repent, pray and fast. She understood and felt G-d's presence in all of the events, and so too should we.

At this time of grave danger, we must follow Esther's example: prepare practically and strategically, but also spiritually – in the form of prayer and repentance as we heed G-d's call to return to Him. May G-d once again bless His people with redemption and liberation so that we

may give thanks to Him as we says in our Purim prayers,
“for the miracles, the redemption, the mighty deeds and
the victories in battle which You performed for our
ancestors in those days and in this time.”

KHT (Kol HaTor) Comment

It was at this time of Purim 5772 (2012), just days ago,
that the Israeli PM finally opposed Pres Obama of the
USA who is siding with Iran in its Haman-like plot to
commit genocide on Israel.

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There are uncanny parallels between the hanging of Haman's 10 sons in the story of Purim and the hanging of 10 Nazis after the Nuremberg Trials for crimes against humanity.

The haunting connection between these two eras in Jewish history begins with a story from the Talmud in which it is explained that in the Purim story Haman's daughter committed suicide and thus didn't need to be hung. Similarly, following the Nuremberg Trials, Hermann Göring, a well known Nazi cross-dresser, also committed suicide and thus was not hung. In fact, Julius Streicher, the Nazi editor of the anti-Semitic *Der Stürmer* newspaper, even proclaimed before he was hung, "Purim Fest 1946."

Indeed, given these facts, it appears as if there is merit to the claim that there is a connection between the Purim story and the Nuremberg Trials.



"This is Purim Fest 1946!" Nazi Julius Streicher commented before entering the gallows in the Nuremberg Prison gymnasium on Oct. 16, 1946. (demstuermer.wordpress.com)

The Bible specifically states that Haman, the evil Persian Prime Minister who sought to annihilate the Jewish people, was an Agagite. Agag was the King of the Amalekites, implying that all ten sons of Haman were also part of the nation of Amalek. Interestingly, the great Torah sage the Vilna Gaon explained that the Germans are also descendants of the nation of Amalek. Simon Dubnow, Arthur Szyk and Raul Hilberg also identified the Nazis, who sought to eliminate the Jewish people, as being Amalekites. There are also Talmudic passages that mention a nation called Germania during the Roman Diaspora that seem prophetic in retrospect.

The numbers of people executed in both instances and the fact both the Nazis and Haman's family were purportedly Amalekites are not the only similarities between the Purim story and the Nuremberg Trials.

According to Dr. Moshe Katz of the Hebrew University, "The ten sons of Haman had already been killed, why bother to hang them? In the writings of the Sages and the commentators, we find several ideas that could clarify this: On the word 'tomorrow,' in Esther's request, the Sages comment: 'There is a tomorrow that is now, and a tomorrow which is later.' In other words, Esther was asking that the hanging of Haman's ten sons not remain an isolated episode in history, but should recur in the future, as well."



Names of Haman's 10 sons who were hanged.

Fascinatingly, one finds in the Book of Esther that four of the Hebrew letters in Haman's sons names utilize small instead of big characters. Jewish sages have taught throughout the generations that whenever there is a variation in the size of a letter or spelling of a word, it has a specific meaning. Thus, if these four small Hebrew letters are used to represent the Jewish number for recording years, it states the year 5707 on the Jewish calendar. 5707 was the year on the Jewish calendar that the 10 Nazi war criminals were hung for committing genocide against the Jewish people.

As Dr. Moshe Katz proclaimed, "Since the trial was conducted by a military tribunal, the sentence handed down should have been death by firing squad, or by electric chair as practiced in the U.S.A. However, the court specifically prescribed hanging, exactly as in Esther's original request: '...let Haman's ten sons be hanged.' Though doubts may linger about the connection between the Book of Esther and the Nazi war criminals, the condemned Julius Streicher certainly had none. Through some insight, Streicher appears to have grasped this link to Purim, as revealed by his final shout, with the noose about his neck, mere seconds before he was hanged."

By: Rachel Avraham

