

Shabbos Zachor Sermon
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Dallas, Texas

I know that my sermons have not been so terse,
and feel that it's time for a change in my style,
So today's speech is read in poetic verse,
I hope that it gives you a pre-Purim smile

In the third year of Achashverosh's reign,
He threw a bacchanalian feast,
For half of that year he would entertain,
His subjects who came from north, west, south and east.

And debauched themselves in the king's royal palace,
An opulent lair that served as his garrison,
A Highland Park house, and much of North Dallas,
Look like an outhouse when placed in comparison

Pillars of marble, beds silver and gold
Fabrics adorning elaborate tables,
Single malt poured that was decades old,
the menu remembered in songs and in fables

the presence of Jews was not at all hidden,
among those who partook of the king's ostentation,
Our sages reserved their contempt for those Yidden,
who graced the festivities through participation

I ask you though, what were their choices,
Is it really fair that they were so indicted?
When the king sent around his royal Rolls Royces,
How could they not enter, if they were invited?

And once they arrived at Achashverosh's crib,
Why would they notice anything odd?
What could be bad about royal prime rib,

When the sign said it was kosher, under the Vaad?

In fact, kosher laws were accorded great deference
Through wine, prepared from grapes by the bushel,
Served to the guests based on their preference,
It was totally kosher, maybe mevushal,

I want to share with you an insightful perspective,
From the Lubavitcher Rebbe, of memory blessed
He says that the Jews didn't merit invective,
Solely because they were there and they *fressed*

The eating was not the sin here, you see
or attending a party they could hardly avoid,
There is a word here that is really the key,
That this is an experience they truly *enjoyed*.

This was the sin of the Yehudim,
Living in provinces 127
They were deeply concerned about royal esteem,
And forgot to believe in the One King in Heaven

Now, I never talk politics- it just isn't me
Our political discourse is already corrosive
And Shaare is a 501c3
But what I'm telling you is hardly explosive

Whether you're voting for Cruz, Kasich or Trump,
Stumping for Hillary or feeling the Bern,
Thinking they'll save us? The mark of a chump,
There is no candidate to whom we can turn

Trusting people in office is an act of futility,
Gaining their favor, a necessary evil
Politicians will use us for our utility,
And then they will blame us when there's an upheaval

Yes, in today's complex world we must,
Join groups like AIPAC and plenty of others,

But our challenge is to ensure that our trust,
is foremost in God, and speak for our brothers.

But there is a different lesson I've seen,
From another great Rabbi, in a class of his own,
It's the late, great Rav Aharon Lichtenstein,
The Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Har Etzion

Rav Aharon agreed that the matter at hand,
Was not about eating, but more about morals
As Jewish people throughout the king's land,
Sought relaxation, to rest on their laurels

A back of the napkin, quick calculation,
Yields numbers that really should boggle your mind,
During the half year of depraved celebration,
To whom were the tasks of statecraft assigned?

Who ran the economy, balanced the budget,
Who was in charge of foreign affairs?
Was it an underling told to just fudge it,
While the king and his cabinet passed out in their chairs?

Circling the smorg like ravenous vultures,
Stuffing their faces, enrobed in their tunics
The Jew played a role in those decadent cultures
Built on the backs of the slaves and the eunuchs

The Jews in that day deserved their destruction,
as this was the world to which they aspired
they succumbed to the allure and seduction,
Of a world with no work, where no one perspired

where everyone took but nobody gave,
And everyone's life was just hedonistic
Such a society will always cave,
And rapidly turn into one that's sadistic

The Jews were infected with moral decay,

But there were no transgressions- not even one stricture
Because you can think that you follow God's way,
While you're not even close if you see the big picture

We must follow the laws of our religion,
And never seek avenues for compromise,
But that shouldn't conflict, not even a smidgeon,
From living a life that's creative and wise

We live in a world that still needs redemption,
We must work extra hard to bring that about,
There is no Jew alive for whom there's an exemption,
No one is free to simply check out

But that can only happen with a sense of our mission,
And realize that we are not here for our pleasure,
On good food and nice things there's no prohibition,
But serving God and His world is the ultimate treasure

Let us learn from the Rebbe and Rav Aharon *zatzal*,
And let's let their teachings reach into our souls
By trusting and serving God above all
And improving our world with meaningful goals

If we make these rules axiomatic,
It will take our bodies and souls very far,
The purim we celebrate will be truly ecstatic,
And we'll have אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר

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