

Shabbat Zachor Poem 5783

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There is a new discovery that's really all the rage,  
A website emblematic of our terrifying age,  
Just put up some popcorn and feed it some parameters,  
And it will write a Purim poem in three different pentameters,

If you're a busy Rabbi and you fail to prepare,  
And delivering a sermon is just too much to bear,  
Just feed the site some guidelines and grill yourself a steak,  
A Dvar Torah will be made for you to get a needed break,

Yes, I am referring to the site ChatGPT,  
That is proving competition to a genius such as me,  
But I promise you this poem was prepared with no AI,  
And if we look at the megillah, I think we will see why,

Haman's plan is sent around, to slaughter all the Jews,  
Mordechai dons sackcloth when he reads the daily news,  
He runs and tells Queen Esther in a scorching speech,  
That now's the time to save the Jews, while it is in her reach

Finally she was convinced that Mordechai was right,  
She said to gather all the Jews to fast each day and night  
For three days, and she and her maids would fast as well,  
Wasn't this quite obvious? Did she really have to tell?

I think there is a lesson here that a thoughtful person learns,  
From the book of Esther's villains, and the story's twists and turns

If you read it carefully, you will detect a theme,  
That not a single bad guy sets in motion their own scheme

Take Haman for example, our story's uber villain,  
In his plan of genocide, *he* wouldn't do the killin'  
Instead, he'd pay a handsome price to those who'd do the deed,  
While he kept his hands unsullied and rode his noble steed,

But even Haman wasn't quite the master of his house,  
He was nothing but a puppet who was guided by his spouse,  
Remember the suggestion to impale Mordechai,  
Came, in fact, from Zeresh who said, "hang him very high,"

But of course she understood her hubby couldn't take the fall,  
So she said "let *them* build a gallows 50 cubits tall,"  
Because there is no question that a man of Haman's status,  
Wasn't getting on a ladder to erect *that* apparatus

Now some say Ahasverosh was a rather stupid dude,  
But according to the Malbim he was really rather shrewd,  
He, too, loathed the Jews because he was a first rate jerk,  
But used his lackey Haman to do all his dirty work

And he seems to be quite gullible, saying yes to everything,  
To round up girls, and kill the Jews, he stamped his royal ring,  
But maybe if you read this with a little more precision,  
It's his way of getting out of blame for his decision

In truth, this is a trait that could be found within our hero,  
If we graded on initiative, Esther's close to zero,

She was taken here, and made up there, all done to her by others,  
She finally took charge when she could do so for her brothers

Esther wasn't satisfied with letting Mordechai,  
Fast for days while she relaxed, She also had to *shrei*,  
When faced with a catastrophe that threatened to be massive,  
She had to roll her sleeves up and refrain from being passive.

For Haman, you can pinpoint when his fortune starts to sour,  
When he came to Achashverosh, at an early morning hour,  
And Achashverosh asked him how to demonstrate his favor,  
And Haman paused, because this was a time for him to savor

Of course he had been thinking of this moment for a while,  
And answered Achashverosh with a barely covered smile,  
“Let someone walk him while he rides, in royal-looking garments,  
And scream how much you love him to those common Persian varmints”

And Achashverosh listened to this lengthy grand delusion,  
And finally it reached its rather overdue conclusion,  
And then he turned to Haman, and with a smile meant to sting,  
He said, “Great! YOU do it! And do not forget a thing!”

And once he ascertained that Achashverosh wasn't kidding,  
The man who was content to let the peons do his bidding,  
Now had to lead Mordechai *himself* through Shushan's streets  
His shame broadcast on TikTok, insta stories and on tweets

I could have used ChatGPT to write these words with ease,  
But I didn't want this poem going right to the Chinese,

But really the main lesson here is if you want things done,  
You can't rely on others, you must know you are the one.

I don't think that anyone can be of the opinion,  
That a shul can be called functional without a daily minyan,  
Thank God when the call goes out we get some volunteers,  
But most people do not answer, and leave it for their peers

We want our shul to be secure, that no one can deny,  
When days of hate and violence are at an all-time high,  
Yet few of us step up to save our shul from any dangers,  
By greeting people at the door and looking out for strangers,

I could, of course, go on, for of examples there's no shortage  
(though kiddush club is doing well, based on my good reportage)  
For programming and youth and such, suggestions do abound,  
But to bring things to fruition fewer people can be found

The Purim story teaches us that if we wait *far yenem*,  
To do things for us, we create a version of *gehennom*,  
Instead, it is incumbent on us all to be a factor  
In building a community, we each must be an actor

And if we do we will be blessed, as people and a nation,  
With being an integral part of bringing our salvation,  
As we write our own story and we send it near and far

ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר

