



**Shabbat Begins 17:35 Shabbat Ends 18:36**



**Purim  
& The  
Dedicated  
Commuter**

**Rabbi  
Jonathan Tawil**

How long does it take you to get to work?

Are you one of those suffering the increase in tube congestion?

How many passengers do you think the London Underground carried last year?

Just over 1.2 billion journeys were made!

A decade ago, the number was much less at roughly 900 million and life seemed much more spacious commuting to work.

Some people take the bus; others have the luxury of the car.

Increasingly, it has become fashionable to circumvent the commute by having an office in the house.

A fascinating story emerged a few weeks ago. James Robertson, a 56 year old man from Detroit, found himself in the headlines.

For the past decade, he has been commuting by bus and foot and walks a whopping 20 miles a day to get to work.

Originally he had a car, but it broke down and was too costly to fix. He decided to make his way through the wintery rain and snow on foot.

What would you do if you heard this story?

Our Sages state Ezech Hu Chacham? Halomed Mikol Adam: Who is a wise man? One who learns from every person.

Looking at James, we get Chizuk (strength). If this is the conviction that someone shows in order to fulfil his mundane job, how much more so should we put in the effort through tough times in order to fulfil our job of serving G-d.



But just learning lessons from this is not enough - we need to act.

And someone did!

Evan Leedy, 19 a university student, heard this story and acted with superb effect, launching an online fundraiser highlighting James walk. People saw and reacted kindly by donating and within a week, he had

raised a whopping \$330,000 for James!!

I know what you're thinking. If only something like that would happen to me. After all, I also have it hard.

Maybe you do, but I would like to share my view as to why this person merited such special assistance.

Purim is one of the most fun packed festivals. Great food, drink, presents, charity for the poor and of course fancy dress!

Two thousand years ago in Persia there arose an evil man - Haman with the power and decree to destroy and annihilate the Jewish people in ONE day.

The Jews were in trouble and didn't know how best to deal with the situation.

A few years earlier, they had attended the king's banquet, against the will of Mordechai (the righteous Jewish leader) and now they needed his advice more than ever. Could they approach him? Could they now tell him they were sorry? Surely that wouldn't go down well with their ego!

Nevertheless, they put their arrogance aside and accepted every word of advice that Mordechai had given. They repented and fasted praying to G-d for three days and

p.t.o.

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were eventually answered with the saviour of the Jewish nation.

You and I are around today due to their gallant decisions.

Over 300 years ago, King Louis XIV of France asked Blaise Pascal, the great Christian philosopher, to give him proof of G-d. His answer was astonishing: "The Jews, your honour, the Jews".

We Jew have faced a tough history, which unfortunately we seem to be feeling more frequently nowadays. Nevertheless we have survived with great accomplishment.

Persistence in the face of adversity is what leads to success.

We live in a generation blessed with choice.

We enter the supermarket and we are engulfed with row after row of products from across the globe.

Send a guy that hasn't been to the supermarket for years in to buy a product and he will certainly get lost. Which row? Which product? Which brand?

From toiletries to food, the rows are filled seemingly with the same product, in different coloured/branded wrappings.

Knowledge is king, but deciphering that knowledge and knowing how to process and allocate it, is really the key.

Two people enter a game and are given a task to buy a chocolate from the local supermarket. One dashes off, before the judge finishes speaking. The other waits.

The judge continues: "There will be several chocolates to choose from. Make sure that the one you get contains no peanut content and comes with a special red label."

The first goes in to the supermarket, tracks down the first chocolate he lays his eyes on and rushes back home easily beating his opponent. The second takes his time, has to look for

the aisle, goes through all the rows until eventually he finds the one product that is without peanut content. He arrives twenty minutes later, but he is the real winner.

Knowing your goal before you set out helps us process the knowledge that we will encounter in our day.

When James Robertson went to work, he did so because he loved his work. Through thick and thin, he would march gallantly to work.

He had a goal, chose a path and happily followed, successfully achieving his aim.

The world saw and reacted.

Now he has been blessed with the ability to fulfil his goal in better standards.

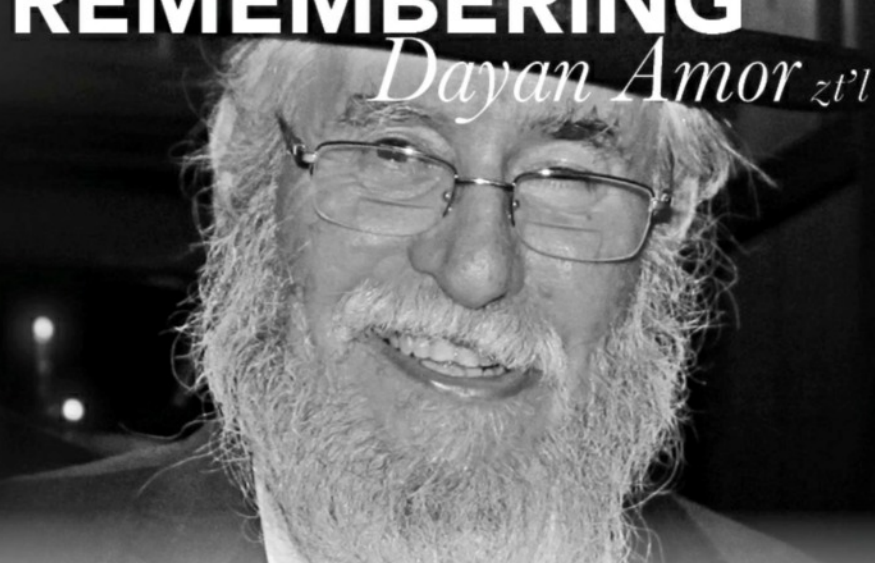
Purim is a time that we celebrate our persistency. As a nation, our primary goal is to believe and serve G-d Almighty.

Throughout our history, there have been tough waves thrown at us, but through our belief we are steady and firm, eventually triumphing in celebration.

In 1899, Mark Twain wrote: "The Egyptians and the Persian rose, filled p.t.o."

# REMEMBERING

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the planet with sound and splendour, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away. The Greek and Roman followed, made a vast noise and they are gone. Other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out and they sit in twilight now or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he

always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew. All other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

And to Mark Twain - I would answer - our conviction and belief in our cause. This Purim, let's keep that conviction strong, eat, drink, share your happiness with others and be merry in celebration of our special relationship with G-d.  
Purim Sameach!

## KIDS AND ADULTS ALIKE - SEE HOW MUCH YOU CAN SCORE.



1. Where is the longest verse in the Bible found?
2. How many words does the Hebrew text contain?
3. When was Haman hanged?
4. What was Esther's Hebrew name?
5. Who was the first person in history known as a Jew?
6. How long did it take Achashverosh to find a new wife - Esther?
7. Who was Vashti's great grandfather?
8. Why is Mordechai called Ish Yemini?
9. How old was Mordechai at the time of the story?
10. What proportion of the Jewish population lived under Achashverosh rule?

1. Megillat Esther.

2. 43

3. Haman was hanged on the second day of Passover. (Purim is the anniversary of the Jews' victory celebration after their war against their enemies 11 month later)

4. Hadasaah.

5. Mordechai was the first person in history to be called a "Jew". (Before then, Jews were called "Hebrews" or "Israelites")

6. Achashverosh searched four years for a queen, during which he considered more than 1400 contestants, before choosing Esther.

7. Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian emperor who destroyed the first Holy Temple

8. Mordechai, who refused to bow to Haman, was a descendant of Benjamin, the only one of Jacob's sons who didn't bow to Haman's ancestor Esau?

9. Mordechai was a very old man during the story of Purim? (He was already a member of the Sanhedrin, the highest court of Torah law in Jerusalem, 79 years before the miracle of Purim!)

10. Every single Jew in the world lived in Achashverosh's kingdom, so that they were all included in Haman's decree.



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