The story of Purim, as related in the Book of Esther, gives us a clear analysis of the 'Jewish problem.' The Jews at that time were dispersed over 127 provinces and lands, their own still in ruins. Undoubtedly they differed from one another in custom, garment and tongue according to the place of their dispersal,

the enemy of the Jews, Haman, saw those characteristics which united all

Jews, into one people, 'namely, 'their laws are different from those of stars

any other people/' (Book of "sther, ).

Moreover, Haman seeks to destroy 'all the Jews, young and old, children and women.' Although there were in those days, too, Jews who strictly adhered to the Torah and Mitzvoth, and Jews whose religious ties with their people were weak, or who had sought to assimilate themselves completely, yet none could escape Haman's classification of belonging to that 'one people,' and every one was included in his cruel decree of extermination.

In all ages there were Hamans, yet we have outlived them, thank G-d. Wherein lies the secret of our indestructability?

illustration. When a scientist seeks to ascertain the laws governing a certain phenomenon, or to discover the essential properties of a certain element in nature, he must undertake a series of experiments under varied conditions. No true scientific law can be deduced from a limited number of experiments, or from experiments under a limited number of conditions.

For the results as to what is essential and what secondary would then not be conclusive.

The same principle should be applied to our people. It is one of the oldest in the world, beginning its national history from the Revelation at Mount Sinai some 3300 years ago. In the course of these long centuries our people has lived under a variety of conditions, different times and different places all over the world. If we wish to discover the essential elements in

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the existence of our people and its unique strength, we must conclude that it is not its peculiar physical or/mental characteristics, nor its tongue, manners and customs (in a wider sense), nor even its racial purity (for there were times in the early history of our people, as well as during the Middle Ages, when whole ethnic groups and tribes have become proselytes and part of our people). The essential element which unites our 'dispersed and scattered people' and makes it 'one people' throughout its dispersion over all the lands of the world and over several millenia is the Torah and Mitzvoth. It is the Torah and Mitzvoth which made our people indestructable on the world scene in the face of massacres and pogroms aiming at our physical destruction, and in the face of xxixixxx onslaughts of foreign cultures aiming at our spiritual destruction.

Purim teaches us the make age-old lesson, which has been verified even most recently, to our sorrow, that no manner of assimilationism, even such which is extended over several generations, provides an escape from the Hamans and Hitlers and Stalins; nor can any Jew sever his ties with his people by marking attempting such an escape.

Purim reminds us that the strength of our people as a whole, and of each individual Jew and Jewess, lies in a closer adherence to our ancient spiritual heritage, which atoms contains the secret of a harmonious life, hence a happy and healthy life. All other things in life must attune kawax to this vital aspect of our existence to make for the utmost harmony and add to our physical and spiritual strength, both of which go hand in hand in Jewish life.

> With best wishes for a happy Purim, and may we live to see a world free of Hamans, and all types of Amalekites ...

> > Cordially yours

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