



**The International Synagogue  
and Welcoming the World's Travelers  
at JFK Airport**

# Purim 2023

## ART & WRITING CONTEST

*These works of art represent the artistic expressions of thousands of students grades pre-k through high school from across the United States and other countries who entered The Purim Art Contest sponsored jointly by The Jewish Press and the International Synagogue at JFK Airport. If space were not limited, we would gladly print every entry because each is a winning display of talent, effort, love of Torah and Purim. We greatly acknowledge the encouragement of so many schools and parents to enable this contest. The public is invited to view the original works of art on exhibit at The International Synagogue at JFK Airport International Arrivals Building, Terminal 4 – 4th floor in Chapel area.*

*Rabbi Dr. Ari Korenblit, Chaplain  
International Synagogue*

### SANDY SCHOR

Grade 7 Ramaz Middle School New York City

1. The story of Purim is unique because women play a different role than we are used to. Vashti, Esther, and Zeresh, the three female characters in the Purim story, are different from one another, but share a common trait: they don't do what is expected of them. Although these women are not necessarily positive influences in the story of Purim, they each deviate from expectations. Generally, Vashti, the first wife of King Achashverosh, is perceived as an evil character because she doesn't go to her husband's party. There is one *שרדמ* that offers a different view: *תע ד שורוש ח א אנוה בר רמ א ביי'ד הבר רתסא ק ב מ ותש א ו מיש ד ע. לכא ל שק ב מ סדא מל ועב ש גה נמ, ול הת י ה הח ורס* Esther Rabbah 4:12 Rav Huna said: Achashverosh had a warped sensibility. The way of the world is that if a man wishes to eat lentils and his wife wishes to eat peas, can he compel her? No, she will do whatever she wants. According to Esther Rabbah, Vashti never does anything wrong because a man doesn't have the right to control a woman. If we understand Vashti's story in a different way, we realize she simply refuses to do what is expected and doesn't want to be on display or do what her husband tells her. Queen Esther, the female protagonist and savior of the Purim story, also refuses to conform to the typical female role. In a classic story, the king rescues the princess. In the Purim story, Queen Esther saves the day. She is chosen to be the new queen of Persia, but hides her Judaism. When Haman is about to kill the Jews, Esther is honest with her husband, King Achashverosh, and reveals her Judaism. She asks him to stop Haman from killing the Jews, and he listens to her plea. She uses her important but limited power as a way to petition the King to save her people. Esther shows courage and strength because she was not supposed to go to the king unless summoned. She is willing to risk a harsh punishment, maybe even death, to save her people. Her culture, religion, and community are so important to her that she rewrites the rules for women. The Megillah is called Megilat Esther, giving her credit for saving Israel. Haman's wife, Zeresh, is also not a typical female. *ותש א שרז ק הצ ע תת ל סיע ד וי ויה אל מל קב ו ביי'ט הבר רתסא* Esther Rabbah 9:2 Among all of [Haman's advisors], there was no one capable of giving counsel like Zeresh [Haman's] wife. Esther Rabbah explains that Haman's most trusted advisor is none other than his wife, even though women are not usually the ones making the "evil plans." Although Zeresh is certainly not a positive role model, she is gutsy and takes on a new role for women. None of these women, whether good, bad, or somewhere in between, adhere to society's expectations. Instead, they choose to follow their own way. They show all young girls that we can make a new mold instead of making ourselves fit into the old one!



Annalee Haim Grade 11 Torah High School of San Diego, CA



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## ADINA ALON

Grade 5 Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, OH

3. I look at the calendar and cross out the days, and then at last it's on the Adar page. Purim is the highlight of my year, it makes me feel that Hashem is near.

Purim is a time when Hashem comes close to the Jews, because we are the nation that Hashem did choose.

Purim is a very special and powerful day, it's a day when Hashem's Shechinah comes down to hear us pray.

Purim is a time to celebrate, you can give mishloach manos to classmate. your Colorful candys and sodas too, remember to say a bracha on your food.

I eat a lot of hamantaschen oh so yummy. I clean up after myself because they are very crumbly.

A very fun Purim seudah we will make, for the Purim story and for Hashem's sake.

Lots of food we do serve, because vinahapachu, everything is curved.

From the megillah we do read, a bal' korai we ask for us to lead.

We hear him read it loud and clear because Hashem we do fear.

My brothers dressed up as a fireman, my sisters as a soda can.

Hamantaschen represent Haman's hat he wore,

let's give tzedakah to all that are poor.

Lots of coins we do give to help our brothers and sisters live.

Hashem saved us from what the goyim decreed,

a Purim book to my little siblings I will read.

The grogger makes lots of noise, caused by all the heilige boys.

Hashem, please help us with all are needs

Hashem without you we could not succeed.

Let's try to act like Ester the queen and not like Haman so nasty and mean.

The torah is a present Hashem gave to the Jews.

We are the winners, and the goyim loose.

On Purim we get lots of candy to eat, but just remember Purim is the biggest treat!!!

## REEN REICHMAN

Grade 12 Yavne High School Cleveland, OH

2. Purim is a holiday celebrated by Jews to commemorate the salvation of the Jewish

people in the Persian Empire as recorded in the book of Esther. The story of Purim teaches many valuable lessons and ideas that can still be applied to our day.

One of the main ideas from Purim is the importance of standing up for one's

community and self-sacrifice. In the story of Purim, Esther, a Jewish queen, takes a bold stand against the evil plans of the Persian official Haman to exterminate the Jewish people. She risks her own life by appearing in front of the king without permission as a last resort to save her people, showing the importance of standing up for what is right. This idea can be seen today in the ongoing fight for civil rights and social justice, where various individuals and communities continue to stand up against oppression and discrimination.

Another important idea from Purim is the power of unity and community. The Jewish

people in Persia were saved not only by Esther's actions but also by the solidarity and support of the Jewish community. After King Achashverosh found out about Haman's plan to destroy the Jewish people, he gave the Jews permission to defend themselves from their enemies. They united and worked together to overcome the threat of extermination. This idea of unity and community is still relevant today as we continue to face the challenges of antisemitism and adversity. In difficult times, it is important to come together as one and support one another to overcome obstacles and achieve success. In the book of Exodus, it is explained that at Mt. Sinai the Jewish people were "like one man with one heart." We should follow their example through both the good and rough times to be like one.

A third idea from Purim is the concept of fate and providence. In the story, it is clear that the events leading up to the salvation of the Jewish people were not a coincidence but rather a part of God's larger plan. This idea of fate and providence teaches us to trust in G-d and to have faith that everything happens for a reason. Terrible events have occurred in our history and continue to happen but with the understanding that they are part of a master plan, we can be comforted and move on.

In conclusion, the ideas from Purim are still relevant today. History is not like an obsolete medical journal. Even though the Purim story took place over 2,000 years ago, we can still take lessons from it and our ancestors and make them applicable in our lives. The importance of standing up for one's community, the power of unity and community, and the belief in fate and providence, are all ideas that can be seen in our day. These ideas can be applied to our lives to help us navigate the challenges we face and to make the world a better place for everyone.--



Jacqueline Nasar Grade 10 Ilan High School Ocean, NJ



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## TEMIMA BALDINGER

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Rosie Kabariti Grade 10 Ilan High School Ocean, NJ



Yossi Friedman Grade 2 Bader Hillel Academy Milwaukee, WI



Yitzchok & Mendel Rosenblum Grade 5 United Lubavitcher Yeshiva Brooklyn, NY

7. When I wake up on Purim day, I get dressed quickly (into my costume). Then I hear megillah reading. I feel so jumpy while listening to the megillah, because I can't wait to... give out Mishloach Manot, my favorite part of purim!!! My family always does a costume theme, and then we make Mishloach Manot with matching items. For example, this year our theme is Alice in Wonderland, and our Mishloach Manot consists of - a water bottle for "drink me", a peanut butter candy for "eat me", Tweedle dum - dums (two dum dums attached to each other), this year, I am going to be Tweedle Dum - I'm a twin (my twin is going to be Tweedle Dee), the white rabbit's (my mother) candy watch, a Sweet and Spicy tea bag, and an un - birthday granola bar for Alice's (my sister) unbirthday party with the Mad Hatter (my father).

I am stopping at house after house giving a bag of goodies to each of my friends and relatives. Every time I drop a bag in front of someone's house, a smile curves onto my lips - I just did the mitzvah of giving Mishloach Manot, and I gave my friend some delicious treats. I keep on repeating this the whole day.

"Buckle Buckle Buckle", that's what my mother sounds like when she's trying to get me and my siblings to buckle in between each house. She sounds like a chicken! My family and I always joke that she should be a chicken for purim. We have a chicken costume - but it's meant for two-year-olds!!!

Another part of giving out Mishloach Manot that I enjoy deeply is seeing all my friends in their creative costumes. One time, one of my friends was dressed as a very, very, very messy painter. I've also seen other creative costumes - including a banana! I know that my friends also really enjoy seeing my costume.

To conclude, giving out Mishloach Manot is a pleasure lots of people get to have. Part of the fun is getting candy and dressing up, but on Purim you also get to do lots of mitzvot. Another thing is, you get to see lots of very creative costumes. I hope you have enjoyed reading about my favorite part of purim.