

!!SIMCHAS PURIM!!



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PURIM: A GUIDE TO A MEANINGFUL PURIM



PURIM PREPARATIONS

As we are preparing for Purim there's a great opportunity for growth. We don't want it to go lost. Many children at this stage are planning what they're going to dress up as on Purim. Bachurim, as they get a little older, are planning what type of collections they're going to do on Purim and how shikur they're going to get on Purim. People are "preparing." Adults are preparing what kind of party they're going to have. What friend should they invite? Will they drink? Will they not drink? And the like.

But the preparation for the main part of Purim, you have to know, is "being frustrated." And the reason the preparation is being frustrated is because any time there's a tremendous opportunity for serious growth and serious change, the yetzer hara puts tremendous emphasis, tremendous effort to divert Klal Yisrael from their true success and the true gain.

KAROV L'SHAVASEINU IN ALL GENERATIONS

Today, we're going to begin with a Rambam at the beginning of the famous work, Yad Hachazakah. There, he writes about the mitzvos and he talks about mitzvos that were nischadesh, that were introduced after matan Torah, and how the nevi'im established them and instituted them for Klal Yisrael to observe. Rambam gives an example of mikra megillah. He gives some other examples, but one of his examples is mikra megillah. He says that all these mitzvos that were introduced are not an addition to the Torah. No navi can come and say "This mitzvah is something Hashem commanded" - but rather, the nevi'im and the chachamim come and say, "We are instituting this mitzvah."

What exactly did the nevi'im say? They commanded people to read the megillah at a certain time, for a specific purpose. What was the purpose of their institution of reading the megillah on Purim? Many people will tell you that the institution of Purim was to commemorate and remember that we were saved from someone worse than Hitler. We were saved from Haman. We were facing annihilation.

In what way was Haman's decree worse than Hitler's? First, he already had control over the world. Second, his gezeirah was to eradicate the Jews completely, in one day, whereas Hitler yemach shemo vezichro didn't have that control. He was trying to gain that control and going from country to country.

The Rambam tells us that the reason the rabbanim instituted the holiday is not simply to commemorate an episode, a momentous episode that transpired in our history. Rather, he says, they instituted that we should commemorate and praise Hashem for the great salvation that He brought us, and that He was karov - close to our tefillos, our supplications, our shavaseinu. Remember these words: קרוב לשוועתנו. The reason they instituted this is not simply because of the kindness that Hashem showed us in the past, but rather, in order, lehodia, to publicize what happened, for the future generations.

And here we come to the big chiddush. Most people will think, "Of course you should remember the greatness of the miracle of Purim, but what relevance does it have for us nowadays? Lechorah its relevance was in the past." And on that the Rambam says: It's in order to publicize for all future generations that it's true, that which the Torah promised us. כִּי מִי גוי גדול אשר לו אלקים קרובים אליו כה' אלקינו בכל קראנו אליו, like Hashem is, whenever we call out to Him.

Now that's the chiddush. The novelty is that if a person commemorates the nes, but he doesn't come out with the knowledge and a lesson and a chizuk for his life right now, for this generation, the person has missed the boat! You have to realize that the whole purpose of reading the megillah is not for history. It's to establish a lesson for us! It is a future lesson for generations to come, להודיע לדורות הבאים, that which our Torah promised us has come to fruition. You can take this promise to the bank no matter what.

Do you know what the chiddush of this great promise is? That Hashem will be close to us whenever we call out to Him! But you may still ask: what's the big deal? If a son calls out to a father and the father listens, is that such a big chiddush? What's such a big chiddush here?

The Brisker Rav explained that the chiddush is for the future generations. When we're going to be under the attribute of justice, when Klal Yisrael are loaded with sins and they're going to face awesome decrees, that's a situation that testifies that we have distanced ourselves from Hashem. But if we turn to Him in that situation - even in that dire situation - and we pray and we daven and we do teshuvah, at that moment - bam! - Hashem is going to turn it around. Even if we're facing an awesome gezeirah.

HAMAN'S DOWNFALL IS A MESSAGE FOR TODAY

The nations of the world were blown away by what happened in the Purim story. They knew without a doubt that there was a Hashem in the world and that we were His nation. If you look in Chazal, they tell us that Haman harasha wrote a letter to all the nations of the world, inviting all the leaders to join him in destroying the Jews. You know what they all told him? "Are you out of your mind?" They all responded to him, "What are you taking on, Hashem, Himself? These are Hashem's people. You're never going to get them."

"No," Haman told them. "You're wrong. They're far from Hashem. They're distant from Hashem. Hashem sent them into galus. He destroyed their Beis Hamikdash. They have not done teshuvah. They're doing their own thing. They're not coming back to Hashem. Now's the time to jump. That's the time we can get them." And it seemed like Haman was right. And he implemented his decree and it went out to all the lands, all over the world. Everybody in the world knew that on the upcoming day of Purim, every Jew was going to be killed. This wasn't a secret. This wasn't some kind of meeting like Hitler had in a secret backyard. There were signs all over, proclamations sent out to all 127 medinos. And it looked like it was going to be bad news for the Jews.

Do you know how long it took to turn it around and get Haman hung? From the time the gezeirah was implemented until Haman was hung, do you know how many days went by? Three days! That was it. Three days! We were in the worst possible position. We turned to Hashem with דברי הצומות וזעקתם. They cancelled Pesach that year! Can you imagine canceling Pesach?! I can't imagine that. All the matzah chaburah, the expensive wine. No Pesach that year. Three days of fasting, day and night - דברי הצומות וזעקתם. They cried and they prayed to Hashem, ביום ובלילה Rashi says. And what happened? Bam! Everything changed in three days! Haman was on the tree. The goyim must have been blown out of their minds. The gezeirah wasn't cancelled yet. The gezeirah wasn't cancelled but they said, "Wow! This guy Haman must have really stepped into it." I mean, the guy was a king! He was the second in command to the king. The most powerful fellow in the country. And then, bam!

The Brisker Rav said that the whole purpose of Purim was to establish the truth, to establish the emes of the Torah. And in order to establish this emes, they were allowed to cancel Pesach, and they were allowed to establish a new holiday of Purim and Megillas Esther. The Brisker Rav said this was the reason for the inclusion of the words להודיע שכל קויר לא יבשו in Shoshanas Yaakov. Lehodia — ledoros habaim. You have to know, that is why they introduced this gevaldige new Yom Tov. And if a person just commemorates the greatness of Purim and talks about, "Ah! In those days we had a Mordechai. Ah! In those days we had an Esther. Ah! In those days the Yidden listened. In those days this and that," the guy missed the boat. He missed the point of the yontif.

Hashem is telling us: Today in Cleveland, today in Eretz Yisrael with all the gezeiros that they're making on us, today in Europe with the gezeiros they're putting on the chinuch, the gezeiros on the shechitah, the gezeiros on the milah, the gezeiros in New York, all over, today: Lehodia! Make known what the emes is! Hashem says: Cry out to Me. Come back to Me! להודיע שכל קויר לא יבשו ולא יכלמו. Hashem wants to tell us, קרוב לשעותנו. בכל שעותם, do a little sha'vah! Hashem is telling us, קרוב לשעותנו.

My grandfather used to say, the tragedy in Germany was not Hitler. That wasn't the tragedy. The tragedy wasn't that there were Nazis. The tragedy was that there were no gedolim who were able to successfully unify the Am Yisrael and say, "Don't be afraid. We have a precedent. We have somebody who wanted to do worse than Hitler and he had a plan. He had all the power in his hands. And we averted it. We abolished the gezeirah. The guy was hung on a tree within three days." Gevalt! Can you imagine what would have happened if the roshei yeshivah, if all the gedolei olam that were around then, and the chassidische rebbe'im, could have gotten together and said, "Rabosai, let's make a fast! Everybody go to the shuls! Ignore what's going on. Go into the shuls, go into the yeshivos and pour your hearts out to Hashem for three days." Do you think nothing would have happened?

THE YESHUAH IN 1948

I once asked my Rebbi (R' Meir HaLevi Soloveichik), did he ever know in history where such a thing was done, and there was a yeshuah? He said, "Yes. I saw it with my own eyes." I said, "Tell me when." It happened when he came to Eretz Yisrael and in 1948, these reshaim, the Tzionim, made all kinds of tzaros for Klal Yisrael, and they brought the wrath of the nations of the world upon Klal Yisrael. Yerushalayim was under siege. Bombs were falling in Yerushalayim. Yerushalayim didn't have very many protective places. People were dying every day. If you ever go to Yerushalayim, you can see how close it is to the Arabs. They would lob cannonballs and artillery, and people would die. Every day, my Rebbi said, you would hear that people died. People were scared. There was a food shortage. This was the matzav.

And then word even came down that the Zionist leaders, those 'trustworthy, reliable' reshaim, were ready to give up on Yerushalayim. That's all they were. They were political reshaim. They put themselves up as world leaders. The guy walked around with an unkempt look. He couldn't find a decent barber to give himself a haircut? The guy had a big, chutzpahdike European mouth. A ben niddah the guy was, an az panim. The guy was a nothing. Mamash you read stories about him, gornisht! Not stam gornisht, lower than gornisht! You read about him, and you read about the Nazi leaders, where they came from, and I'm not sure who came from more culture. Not stam. Pechusei am, mamash biligehmentschen. Jewish lives meant nothing to them, and they were ready to sacrifice Yerushalayim, my Rebbi said. To sacrifice Yerushalayim!

And in Yerushalayim, in Meah Shearim, the gedolim instituted a three-day fast. A three-day fast around the clock, davening, tefillos around the clock. My Rebbi said it was something serious. He saw it with his own eyes. After that, things changed. Not that the 'leaders' came up with any better plan. They didn't come up with some genius ideas. It was the rabbonim, they called for fasting, for teshuva, so then Hashem saved them.

That's the message. You can be saved. You can save yourself. You've got to know how to key into this power.

PLEAD FOR THINGS THAT HASHEM WANTS

Now you have to realize that Hashem is קרוב לשוועתנו (Tefillas Aneinu in Shmonei Esrei). What is the meaning that Hashem is קרוב לשוועתנו. Many people tell me, "We davened." I say, "First, do you know how to daven?" How do you daven? What does "shavah" mean? You know what shav'ah means? Shav'ah means to "cry out" to Hashem. That's what שוועתנו is. Shav'ah means a person pleads for rachamim from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Most people can't plead in their davening. People know how to plead for money, sometimes. They go to a gvir. They're desperate and they say, "I need help! I need help!" They put all their bitachon in the nedivim, in the rich people. They always get disappointed: אל תבטחו בנדיבים - trust not in the benefactors! But when a person pleads with Hashem in a very serious fashion it's an avodah; it's what Hashem wants from us. קרוב ה' לשוועתנו בכל קראנו אליו - whenever you call out to Hashem in the proper fashion, you're going to be answered.

Now, a very famous example of pleading to Hashem is the tefilah of Osniel ben Kenaz. He was Calev's half-brother and son-in-law, and the first of the Shoftim. His tefilah is described in the Navi Divrei Hayamim and it's mentioned in the gemara (Temurah 16a).

It says Osniel ben Kenaz had another name. He was called Yaavetz. The passuk says: "And Yaavetz called out to Elokei Yisrael." That means, first of all, in his tefilah he acknowledged that Hashem had a special relationship with Klal Yisrael. And then he said to Hashem as follows: אם ברך תברכינו. The gemara says what does that mean? The gemara (ibid) says, it means to say: If You're going to bless me with Torah, and I'm going to have an increase in my Torah, והרבית את גבולי, and You will increase my boundaries (referring to his talmidim), והיתה ירך עמי, and Your hand will be with me, I want not to forget my Torah from my mind. ועשה מרעתי, I want You to provide me with friends kamosi, לבלתי עצבי, so that the yetzer hara should not overtake me and be able to get me to deviate from my goals. He said to Hashem as follows: אם אתה עושה כן מוטב, "If You do this, good." He didn't say, "Please do this for me." He said, "If You do this, good." ואם לאו, and if not, הריני הולך לנסיסי לשאול, I'm going to die. I'm going to go to Gehinom, to sheol. The passuk says, מיד ויבא אלקים את אשר שאל, Hashem brought it to him. Hashem delivered it, like Amazon Prime, immediate delivery by drone. Hashem fulfilled all his requests.

Because of this episode, his name was changed from Yaavetz. Why did they call him Yaavetz? Because he was a spreader and an encourager of Torah in Klal Yisrael. But they changed his name to Osniel. You know what Osniel means? ענה קל, Hashem answered him. You hear this? He stands before Hakadosh Baruch Hu and he says, "I want hatzlachah," and he gives a whole laundry list of things. "I want Torah. I want talmidim. I want that the yetzer hara shouldn't bother me. I want friends. I want and I want and I want." He doesn't say, "Please give it to me." He said, "If You give it to me, Hashem, mutav, very well. If not, I'm finished." That means, he felt that this was something that his life depended on. When you feel something you need for your life, you cry out for it.

RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR TEFILAH

Many people in Europe didn't cry out for a yeshuah. You know why? They didn't even realize what was going on and how the gezeiros were unfolding, how the clouds were gathering over them. Do you know how many people were in denial? They said, "Nah, you're crazy. This guy is hysterical." One of my uncles came to Telz. He was related to the roshei yeshivah. He was a Sorotzkin. He came to Telz in Europe and told the rosh yeshivah, "Let me tell you what's going on." You know what they said? "You always were an exaggerator." That's what they said. "You always were a person who had a flowery imagination." He was that kind of guy. He told good stories, a geshmake mentsch. They said, "You're telling guzmaos." He said, "Give me your kids. Let me take your kids. I'll save your kids." My mother-in-law went, and his brother, Rav Baruch Sorotzkin. There was a bilbul hada'as. There was a tishtush. Hashem was mebalbel their da'as. They couldn't even see the reality. They said, "It can't be. They're cultured people."

Now, in Eretz Yisrael, you think it's not a matzav, an eis gezeirah? Of course it's a gezeirah. You think they don't want to destroy us? Somebody brought me printed writings from the division of chinuch in Eretz Yisrael with their protocols, with their plans, with copies of the meetings that you can find online. They're available. What's the plan for the frum people, for the Dati. How they're going to undermine them and close down the institutions. It's a planned shmad to get the banos, to get the banim. It's unbelievable! But if you go to Eretz Yisrael and you ask the average guy, "What are you doing?" He'll say, "Ah! Don't worry about it. We believe in this political party. They'll never do it. They need our money. They need our politics. You think they're going to make gezeiros against us? They need us! They won't have a government without us. Of course they're going to give in to us. How come the gedolim don't say anything? The gedolim are not saying anything. They're saying not to worry, so I should worry?" I said, "They said that in Europe too."

But there are a number of gedolim who have mesorah from the Brisker Rav, and they're saying, "Yes, we should worry." They're saying, "I'm telling you, you're not reading the cards. You've got to read the cards." This is part of the

klalah. The klalah is that we don't even see the gezeiros in front of us - so you don't daven for it. A few people that try to make a tumult are quieted down, are swatted down. "Stay quiet." What's wrong with just davening for a yeshuah to be saved from a gezeirah? Even that bothers some people.

HASHEM WANT US TO DAVEN

I went somewhere to speak regarding this, to say over kabalos that I had from my Rebbi about this subject. My Rebbi told me that if I have an opportunity, I should speak about it. He told me exactly what to say. But I got so many calls from people saying, "Don't go. I'm telling you. Bad, bad." I said, "What am I doing? I'm not going to mention the word gedolim. I'll just tell you, my Rebbi said to daven." "No, you don't do that." I said, "Am I losing my mind?" I said, "To daven is a problem? You mean to say, that every time I see a sick person with cancer, if a gadol didn't tell me to daven for him, I shouldn't daven for him? If my kid is sick chas veshalom, if Rav Chaim Kanievsky didn't write a clear letter and put a sign up, then I'm not davening for him? So now, I'm not davening for anybody in Bnei Brak who is sick? I'm only going to give tzedakah to a few people who got Rav Chaim to sign the letters of collection. Are you out of your mind?" I never heard of such a thing in my life. Why shouldn't we daven? Unfortunately, that's what we do today. That's the mehalech.

It's very scary. I was thinking of stopping Shacharis. I think most people would be happy if we stopped Shacharis (joking). Imagine how the conversation would go: "Did Rav Chaim Kanievsky say you have to daven Shacharis?" "I didn't see any kiddush levanah signs - it's important to daven shacharis." "Maybe you don't have to. Ai, it says in Shulchan Aruch." "Nu? There are many things in Shulchan Aruch." It also says: If there's an eis tzarah leYaakov you have to daven. But that's how people are.

You have to understand that when something doesn't bother you, you can't daven. We don't have a feeling that, "If You answer me Hashem, mutav..." but you've got to have that! Most people go into an audience with Hashem to ask their requests and when they daven to Hashem they do it misafek. They're hedging their bets. They don't believe that, "I have a place to go to."

Could you imagine if some gvir adir, some absolutely rich person told you that he would help you? Imagine that I met a guy and I start talking to him and he says, "You know, I like you." I say, "Wow! Now I feel good." I would feel like a million dollars. If you would tell me that Hashem likes me, memeilah. But this guy likes me too. This guy is the real thing. What if he would tell me, "Let me tell you something, Yisroel. Whenever you know of somebody who has a need or you ever know of something important in Klal Yisrael - this is my number. Call my number. My secretary will answer. Tell her your name. She'll put you through in twenty seconds." I'd be shikur. I'd be shikur from happiness. Now, ai, it says in the passuk, *אל תבטחו בדגים בן אדם שאין לו תשועה*, "Do not put your trust in the great men, in a mortal man who cannot save you" (Tehillim 146:3). I know it says don't trust nedivim, don't trust human beings. They have no teshuah. But if the guy would tell me that, I would start making lomdishe shticklach, "Hashem sent him to me. It's min hashamayim really. I really believe in Hashem. I don't believe in this person." Baloney! It's a human being! I would believe in him because the guy knows how to write big checks. Although, some gvirim don't know how to write big numbers.

A person has to realize that we have a tremendous opportunity. The chizuk of Purim has to teach me that I could cry out to Hashem to the point where I feel, "Hashem if You help me - good. If You don't help me - it's not good."

We should invest in our tefilah, but a lot of people become "tzaddikim." They say, "Maybe it's good if a bad thing happens." I said, "Did Hashem tell you to daven when somebody is sick? Why? If it's good, maybe you shouldn't daven." They say, "If Hashem does it then it must be for the best." But I tell a lot of people, "Did Hashem say He's the רופא חולי עמו ישראל, He's the personal doctor of all Jews? He's the personal doctor of the Jewish people." Ai, you want to know why Hashem did it? You have all your good questions. But until Hashem tells me not to daven, I will daven. And there are klalim, it's brought down in the Rishonim when a person gets to a certain point that you stop davening.

I remember, there was a big rosh yeshivah and he had a massive heart attack. They were davening in the yeshivah non-stop. They came into the yeshivah and gave a klap that everyone should stop davening. I thought it was over. I said, "He's dead?" They said, "No, but it's past. It's beyond the point of davening." I said, "No, no, no." I was a young bachur then. Somebody sent me to the address of the gemara in Nedarim, the Ran, I saw it. I looked it up. There is such a point. There's a point that a person gets to, a point of no return and davening at that point is like a tefilas shav. But until Hashem tells me it's a tefilas shav, you've got to be mispallel. You've got to be mispallel to Hashem.

WHEN YOU MUST STRUGGLE TO WIN IN TEFILLAH

Now just because the yetzer hara tries to take this opportunity away from us - and he does every time - it doesn't mean we should give up trying. There is a famous Chafetz Chaim. He says if the yetzer hara gets you in *אתה חונן לאדם דעת*, you get him in *השיבו אביו לתורתך*. If he gets you again in *סלו לו אביו*, come back in *ראה נא*. If he gets in you *רפאנו*, come back in *ברך עלינו*. It's possible that you'll have to fight throughout the whole Shemoneh Esrei. Most people say, "It's not going so good. I'm not into it today. By *אתה חונן לאדם דעת* I'm not connected. I'll let this one slide." But that's a mistake. You've got to return fire! You're in a battle!

A person has to know that when he's in this battle, he's got to believe, number one, that it can be done. You can daven, Hashem wants you to cry out to Him, and it can help the matzav! You have to be mechazek yourself and you have to be mechazek others.

Regarding using Purim properly for tefilah: You have to make a plan for Purim. Think of something you need to ask of Hashem. Something that Hashem definitely wants from you. Not to become wealthy. Not to become tall. Not to become beautiful. Something that Hashem really wants from you and you feel you want it for yourself also. And then, you cry out to Hashem. That's the lesson.

Now this, the Rambam didn't make it up. He got it from the gemara in Megillah. The gemara in Megillah brings down many different rabbanim, many different chachamim that saw different lessons to take out from the Megillah. It says, Rav Masna said: Do you want to know where the megillah, the nekudah of the megillah is in the Torah? כִּי מִי גִּי גְדוֹל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ אֱלֹקִים ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ בְּכָל קְרָאָנוּ אֵלָיו, who is a great nation who has a closeness and a relationship with Hashem? You have to know that the koach, the hatzalah of Klal Yisrael, was from the koach of tefilah. That was what it was, the outcry. It was true then, and it is true now.

A SCENE FROM THE MEGILLAH

Sometimes it looks good. I'm trying to picture Mordechai Hatzaddik during those three days, davening away like crazy with the children, and learning, and being mechazek them. He was giving shmoozen and giving shiurim over and over and over, non-stop. Suddenly a peledige zach! Haman shows up. When Haman showed up, everybody was petrified. The only one that was לא קָם וְלֹא זָע was Mordechai Hatzaddik. He had bitachon like nobody's business. And then this Nazi SS, after he promulgated this decree to destroy the Jews, showed up in the beis hakenesses early in the morning at Shacharis - everyone was scared. He had gone to Achashveirosh early in the morning. And he comes to the beis hakenesses and he's looking for Mordechai. He says, "Come." Mordechai says, "I can't come. We're in the middle here." He says, "No, you've got to come with me." Mordechai says, "What is this?" He tells Mordechai, "I've got some good news for you. The king gave a decree that I should put you on the horse that the king rode on and get you dressed up in levush malchus." Wow! Mamash! And then Mordechai says, "I can't go out like this. I'm messed up. I need to bathe." The problem was, all the bathhouses were closed. Haman had no choice. Haman had to become his bath attendant. Haman had to go, to shlep water and pour it on Mordechai, and scratch his back and take care of his toes and get him up to snuff. Then they walked out.

And what do you think happened with them? You see, Haman was petrified. "How is it going to look, me, Haman, second to the king, walking down the street with Mordechai Hatzaddik sitting on the horse, dressed like the king? Is that going to look normal? No." You know what Haman did? When Mordechai was bathing, he took away his clothes. He took away his frack, his long coat. He took away his shtreimel. Haman took it away and he put it on himself. And he dressed Mordechai in the king's clothes. Haman left his own clothes on the bench. And he put the fancy clothes on Mordechai and he's walking around now. It's a real Purimdike matzav. You understand? The rasha merusha, the Nazi, the SS, is now walking around like the Gerrer Rebbe dressed in his veise zuken, the white socks, the short pants, big overcoat. Another overcoat. The guy looks like the rebbe himself, and he's walking down the street, screaming. Now, everybody who sees them will think it's Mordechai pulling Haman on the horse. People were not going to be choshesh. People didn't look closely at his face. They looked at his clothes.

That's the story with what Haman's daughter did. People didn't realize who was who. Haman walked past his own house and the daughter was looking over the roof and she saw the rosh yeshivah, Mordechai Hatzaddik pulling the horse, to her, it was pashut - the one on the horse was her father, and the one pulling it was Mordechai. She took all the leftovers from the night before, the mei hashofchim over there and she threw it on him. And then what happened? He looks up and he sees the water coming down on top of him. His daughter sees him and she says, "Oy vei iz mir. I am dead." She jumps off the roof and she kills herself. So it backfired on Haman.

DAVEN FOR THE FULL YESHUAH

If I was Mordechai, what would I think of doing? I'd say, "Shrek, take me to the zoo! Take me to the ballgame! We're finished! I won!" That would be the biggest shot in the arm for him. I would think it got him. I would turn to Haman and say, "Haman, you want to change your mind now? You see it's not going in your direction here." And Haman goes home and his wife tells him, "You're finished! נִפְּל תִּפּוֹל. Forget about it! You have bad luck, my friend."

But you know what Mordechai did? He went back to his tefilah. He wasn't finished yet.

A lot of times, people are halfway there. They see a little yeshuah, they see a little sign and that sign makes them feel so excited that they stop davening. That's the mistake of the century. When you see a sign of success, that's a mishan. Hashem is giving you a mishenes. Hashem is giving you a pat on the back. Hashem says, "You're going in the right direction. Now, take it home." If I'm running a race with somebody and I'm a lap ahead of him, you get to the last lap and you start walking backwards, jumping around like you're making jigs. All of a sudden, the guy behind you comes flying past you - and he wins! Don't make no jigs until you're over the line, my friend, because the enemy might come up on you when you're not expecting it.

That's what a person has to know and that's the lesson of Purim. We should take this lesson home with us. Make a plan about what you're going to daven for on Purim. Start right now. Start davening for it now. Say, "Hashem, I trust You. Hashem I believe in You. Hashem in Your Torah You said it. I'm going to hold Your feet to the fire so-to-speak. Hashem, I am going to make this request of You, because You told me if I cry out to You and I call out to You, You will answer! Lehodia, You publicized and gave the chachamim the right to publicize it for all the future generations. I'm in! I'm buying it, Hashem. Bring your baskets and get ready to fill them up."

IN CONCLUSION

It may come as a surprise to learn that we do not read Megillas Esther in order to recall historical events, rather, we do so in order to praise Hashem for His great salvation. We commemorate that He was close to our tefilos at our time of distress, especially the type of tefilah called "shavaseinu," our crying out and pleading to Hashem to save us. Klal Yisrael was due to be completely wiped out, and then three days of intense pleading to Hashem turned the story around and we were saved. Megillas Esther demonstrates to us the immense power of tefilah, and the lessons of the Megillah apply now just as they did then. Purim is an ideal opportunity to wake up our spiritual davening genes and our emunah in Hashem as the One Who is close to us and hears our requests. This week I will, (bli neder,) make a plan of what I am going to daven for on Purim. I will think of something that Hashem definitely wants me to do and daven with intense yearning while pleading to Hashem. I will say, "Hashem, You said that when I call out to You, You will answer! Hashem, I trust in You."