



פורים

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Rescued By Prayer

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Part I. Prayer Saves

Haman and Hitler

I want to tell you something now that probably won't register with you right away but I'll say it anyhow because it'll be an introduction to our subject. And it's as follows: The story of Purim didn't have to turn out as well as it did for the Am Yisroel. Don't think that it *had* to be this way, that in a few days we'll be dancing and singing, and eating and drinking in celebration of Purim. Actually it could have just as well been the opposite of Purim. It could've turned out just like Haman wanted.

Now, I know that it's quite difficult for us to really believe so. Today we have a Megillas Esther and we know the happy ending, so it's difficult for us to imagine that it could have been different. But it's a point that we have to emphasize to ourselves - the plain truth is that Purim could have turned out not so *purimdig*, it could have been a Holocaust.

Actually Haman was more dangerous than Hitler. Hitler didn't have all the Jews under his control like Haman did. Hitler, at least, had some shame; he concealed his wicked deeds in far off concentration camps. Of course there were other more practical reasons for that, but don't think it wasn't this also. Hitler was full of bluster but he was also ashamed. Haman on the other hand had no qualms at all; he wanted to wipe out the entire Jewish people without any regard for public opinion. He wanted it done openly on the streets of all the cities of the empire! A bloodbath!

Unlimited Power

And he was well-suited for the job; he was a *tzorer haYehudim* by inheritance, a born and bred anti-semite. He came from a family whose tradition it was, all the way back to Amalek, to be bitter enemies to the Jews. *Lehavdil*, just like we'll gather together in the shuls on the Shabbos before Purim to remind ourselves about what Amalek tried to do to us, don't think that Amalek was any less dedicated. They had a bitter hatred for us and they

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also gathered together in their own places to inflame their hatred, they handed down their traditions of Jew-hatred from father to son throughout the generations. And it was a family tradition that Haman loyally upheld.

And now he had the King's ring – it means he could do with the Jews as he pleased. Here's a man with all the wealth and power, and a fiery Jew-hatred to boot! It means we were in big trouble. The same thing that happened in Europe should have happened in Persia too, worse should have happened.

Only that it didn't. In Europe we lost our nation but in Persia a Purim happened. Two opposite conclusions to the same story! And so, it's an important question: What made Shushan different from Berlin? How could it be that from the same enemy came such different endings? It's not just a historical question – it's a question of what Hashem wants from us, a question of what lessons we're supposed to learn from the Purim story.

A Close Connection

So we look in the Gemara: רב מתנה אומר מהבא – Rav Masnah, when he gave a *drashah* on the Megillah he said a preface by means of quoting a *possuk*. כי מי גוי גדול – *Where is there such a great nation like the Am Yisroel, אשר לו אלקים קרבים אליו* – *who has Hashem so close to him?* (Devarim 4:7). That's a principle that is repeated constantly in the Torah. We are His *Am Kerovo*, the one nation Hashem brings close to Himself, and Rav Masnah is reminding us that the story of Purim was a unique demonstration of that.

On that day Hashem pulled the curtain back, the curtain that hides things in *Olam Hazeh*, and He showed us that we are the one nation that can feel confident that Hashem is with us. That's why Rav Masnah quoted this *possuk* as an introduction to his Purim *drashah*.

However, the Gemara doesn't quote the *possuk* in full and it's very reasonable to say that Rav Masnah himself, when he gave his *drashah*, he said

the whole *possuk*: “Where is there such a nation that has Elokim close to it, בְּכֹל קְרָאנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ – *whenever we call out to Him.*”

“When we call out to Him!” It's on those last words that the whole story of Purim devolves. Yes, it's true that Hashem is close to us and saves us, but those last three words give depth to the idea. I say depth; actually, those words throw a monkey wrench into the whole thing because it's telling us that this promise is dependent on a certain condition. *When do we merit to be that great nation that has Hashem so close? בְּכֹל קְרָאנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ – Whenever we call out to Him.*

When We Cry Out

Oh, that's something else! Hashem's closeness, His being our Savior, is not given as a gift for nothing. It is always given solely in response to our crying out to Him. That's the plain meaning of this verse. Yes, He's close. Yes, our nation can have Purims all the time, He can always save us, but it has to be בְּכֹל קְרָאנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ – *we have to cry out to Him.*

Now, had they failed in the days of Purim to fulfill those last words then the story would have been different. There would be a Tisha B'Av instead of a Purim. Only that we had a Mordechai and an Esther. They saw that we were in trouble and they got busy planning the salvation of the Jewish nation.

ומרדכי ידע את כל אשר נעשה – *Mordechai knew all that was taking place.* And the Gemara says he knew *why* it was taking place. Mordechai and Esther didn't blame it on the gentiles and on anti-semitism. They didn't make organizations and seminars about fighting anti-semitism. They knew that there was one reason, one address: “We have to cry out to Him.”

Mordechai and Esther decided that for such an important event, this was the biggest catastrophe with which our nation was ever faced, so you have to take steps that are the most extreme that our nation ever did.

An Unusual Exertion

וְאֵל תֹּאכְלוּ, וְצוּמוּ עָלַי – “Fast for me,” Esther said, וְאֵל תִּשְׁתּוּ – “Don’t eat or drink three days and three nights.” Three days of *davening*! Three days of קְרָאנוּ אֵלָיו. Mordechai gathered them all together and they wept and prayed for three days; they didn’t eat or drink for three days. Never was such an extreme step taken as to fast and to pray for three days and for three nights.

It was a most unusual exertion of *tefillah*. They didn’t just fast and lie on couches or take walks in the city waiting for nightfall. No, they didn’t fast like we do. We might sleep for a few hours in the afternoon and then we’ll get up; we’re hungry but we’re ready for Maariv now.

Oh no! They were crying out for three days and three nights; fasting and weeping and praying for three days. Try that! Try it sometime, just for fun. They did it! They went hoarse. They fainted from exhaustion but they carried it on.

Prayer for Publication

And it was all קְרָאנוּ אֵלָיו. Everything was directed at Hakadosh Baruch Hu. It wasn’t like people do today, “A Day of Prayer.” What’s “A Day of Prayer for Soviet Jewry”? Nothing to do with prayer. Nothing to do with calling out to Hashem. The main thing is that the newspaper should report it. That’s the purpose of a *yom tefillah*; the reporters should say how many people gathered in the synagogue or at the UN building and so on.

No! This was not for publication. It went directly to one place. בְּכָל קְרָאנוּ אֵלָיו – we called out to Hashem! We weren’t thinking about this way or that way to be saved. We weren’t thinking about killing Haman or bombing the Soviet mission; we were thinking only about Him! And that’s the reason Purim took place. Otherwise, it wouldn’t have been. There wouldn’t have been a Purim. There would have been a Tisha B’Av.

We have to get that into our heads because it’s for lack of understanding this principle, that’s why very big misfortunes took place in our history. Had

the leaders – the misleaders, those who had power over the Jewish people in the times of Hitler – had they understood this principle, there would have been another Purim. No question about it! Purim tells us what could have been. There would have been a Purim in Europe. Ah! Would that have been a Purim! *Purim shel Hitler*.

Assassinating Hitler

I remember when Hitler died. The newspapers published this in tremendous headlines. It was splashed all over the world. All over the world, even the *goyim* were quite happy. And the Jews? They were delirious. His picture was on the front page of the Yiddish newspapers with big headlines: אַ שְׂיִינֶע גֵּוֹרֶה רִיִּינֶע בְּפִרְה. It was a big headline: אַ שְׂיִינֶע רִיִּינֶע בְּפִרְה. You know what that means? “An atonement for the Jewish people.”

But it’s a big pity it was so late. He died a little too late for a Purim. Just think what fun it would have been if he had died eight years earlier. Oh, that would have been a Purim! While he was planning how to kill the Jews in the camps, suddenly out of nowhere, “Hitler is hanging! Look! Hitler is hanging! We were saved!”

And it would have happened; it could have been. When the German general, Olbricht, tried to assassinate Hitler he would have succeeded. Even before that, in 1939, there were plots to kill Hitler. The Generals Oster and Beck had already made detailed plans. So they would have succeeded and the whole thing would have ended with a big Purim. Everybody would have remained – the Jews of Hungary would have remained in Hungary, and of Lithuania in Lithuania and Poland in Poland. If the Am Yisroel had done what they were supposed to do, it could have been different.

United as a Nation

Only that there was no national outcry; no coming together to beg Hashem for mercy. Other things they did. The newspapers were busy; they wrote long letters, editorials, articles against Hitler. But they didn’t say one word about crying

out to Hashem. It didn't enter their mind to cry out to Hashem like in the days of Purim.

And because there was no national attempt made to call on Hakadosh Baruch Hu to help, so He didn't help. Certainly we are a great nation and certainly Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants to be close to us. But He has stated openly, there's one condition: You must cry out! And not just a few *yechidim*. We are a nation! The nation must cry out! The boys and the girls, the men and the women, the old and the young, everybody must cry out, and they must cry loudly, and they must cry from the bottom of their hearts!

In the times of Mordechai v'Esther they did that. And that's how they turned what could have been a world catastrophe, they turned it into a Purim. וְנִהְפֹךְ הוּא – *The whole thing was turned upside down* and instead of the Jews, their enemies were destroyed. And that's why Purim became such a joyous Yom Tov, because we fulfilled the *possuk* בְּכֹל קְרָאֵנוּ אֵלָיו. We were *mispallel* to Hashem.

Part II. Awareness Saves

Tefillah and Tzaros

Now, before we go any further, let's make clear to ourselves what the primary purpose of *tefillah* is – it's an important subject because it's something that many people, even good people, never learned. Why do we *daven*? What are we trying to achieve? Well, the answer may come as a surprise to you but the purpose of asking is *not* to have your request fulfilled; the purpose of *tefillah* is *not* that the *tefillah* should be answered.

Now, if we're going to understand what that means, we have to talk first not about the purpose of *tefillah* but about the purpose of *tzaros*. What's the primary purpose of any kind of vicissitude, any kind of mishap or difficulty in this world? And it's a very important question for us because there's nobody who doesn't have troubles in this world. Big troubles, little troubles; everyone has worries

in this world. Everybody has things they need; health and *parnassah*, children, *shidduchim*, whatever it is. And so it's important for us to know, what is the purpose of all of these *tzaros*? After all, it's not an accident.

And so we'll explain that the greatest good that we can acquire in this world is that we should be aware of Hashem. There's nothing greater than that. Torah, *mitzvos*, *gemilus chassodim*, excellent; no question about it. But we're in this world primarily to become aware of Hashem. It's not for Him; He doesn't need it. It's for you, for your own perfection. To come into this world and to feel, to be aware that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is in charge and He is the one to Whom you have to address yourself for help – that's the biggest benefit of life. *Emunah*, Awareness of Hashem, that's the great success of a man in this world. The more you're aware, the more successful you are.

Saved from the Sword

And so, the purpose of every difficulty that a person encounters is so that the person should cry out to Hashem for help. You're not *davening* because of the difficulty – *the difficulty came to cause you to daven*. Why are you having trouble in the office? So that you should call out to Hashem. Why do you have a headache? So that you should call out to Hashem. Of course there are other purposes too – Hakadosh Baruch Hu has more than one thing in Mind – but there is one common denominator, one underlying purpose that is common to every *tzarah*; and that is to make a man ask Hashem for His help.

That's what it says in the Gemara (Brachos 10a) that a person should never give up hope; he should never stop asking Hashem for mercy even if a sharp sword is already on his neck. So some say that it's because there's always hope – the sword is about to cut off your head? No matter! There's still hope!

But that's not it. It's true; absolutely it's true that Hakadosh Baruch Hu can save you even when the sword is about to cut you down. But that's not

the primary reason for *davening* when the sword is on your neck. It's much more than that. It's because that's the whole purpose of the sword on his neck; Hashem puts the sword there so that he should ask for *rachamim*, so that he should ask Hashem for mercy.

So if a man has a sharp sword on his neck and now he cries out to Hashem because of that, that's his success! Whatever happens subsequently is not important! The biggest achievement is not to get the sword off your neck, because just to continue living without purpose is unimportant. What's important is the calling out to Hashem – to believe in Hashem and to become more and more aware of Him. That's the real success. And then, whatever happens with the sword, you've achieved your purpose in life.

Ice Cream and Figs

And because Awareness of Hashem is the success of a person, that's why Hakadosh Baruch Hu causes things to happen. Of course we would prefer that there should never be any illness and never any enemies. We would like to live in clover always; we should be reclining in the grass under the fig trees eating ice cream all our lives. But then, when would we remember Hakadosh Baruch Hu? You would never think about Him. If everything went smoothly always, you can be sure that Hakadosh Baruch Hu would never be in your thoughts.

And that would be frustrating your purpose in the world. הַשָּׁמַיִם מְשַׁמְּרִים הַשָּׁקֵיף – Hashem is looking down from the skies, לְרֵאוֹת הַיָּשׁ מִשָּׁבֵיל – is there any wise man down below, הַרְשׂ אֶת אֲלֵקִים – who is thinking about Me. Hashem is looking down at us always: “Is anybody thinking about Me?”

That's why there was a Haman. The story of Purim was planned just for this; just so that there should be an outcry. That's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu intended; that's what He was looking for.

He sees that nobody is thinking about Him; even good people. They're thinking about the

siddur and about the Gemara. They're thinking about *mitzvos* and Torah. But they're forgetting about Me! And therefore sometimes He sends *tzaros*, *chalilah*, so that we should remember Him and be successful in this world.

An Explosion!

Sometimes He even sends a Haman. You know when Haman came and advised Achashveirosh to destroy *chas veshalom* the Am Yisrael and the king took off his ring from his finger and he put his ring on the finger of Haman – it was an unprecedented thing to do that. The king's ring?! It means you can do what you want. It meant a Holocaust!

And it caused an explosion in the Am Yisrael. But not only an explosion of terror – the Jewish nation exploded in *tefillah*; outcries, fasting, praying to Hashem. All over. וּבְכָל מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה מְקוֹם. אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ מִגִּיעַ. Now it doesn't tell us in the Megillah, but they were crying out to Hashem from the bottom of their hearts. A national outcry. In those days Mordechai was the leader. He banged on the doors of the *chadarim*, the *yeshivah ketanos*. He banged on the doors and he said, “Take out the children. Let them all cry out to Hashem.” Even children. The whole Jewish nation cried out to Hashem. They cried out. They cried out! It was a *tza'akah gedolah ad lashamayim*; an explosion of *tefillah* for a long time. It was an explosion of Awareness of Hashem.

That's what saved them from Haman! And that's what would have saved us in Europe from the other Haman. Only that there was no Mordechai in those days to tell us that we had to come back to *tefillah*, to Awareness of Hashem.

The Rabbis in Europe

The truth is there were Mordechais but there was no Am Yisroel to listen to them. The *rabbanim*, who listened to them? The *gedolim* in Europe didn't have any influence on the nation at all and I can testify to that. I watched how it progressed, how it came to be.

I was in Slabodka which was a suburb of Kovno. Now Kovno was the main town of Lithuania and the Kovno Rav was the most important Torah authority in all of Lithuania. The most important Torah authority! And yet, no Jewish newspaper would publish anything that he said.

In Europe, there were many daily newspapers, so called Jewish papers. Did the words of the *chachmei hatorah* ever appear in these newspapers? No! The *chachmei hatorah* were only mentioned in order to ridicule them. And so if the Kovno Rav or any of the others would come out with a proclamation that we should pray to Hashem, they'd all ridicule him. "Ha! What a fool! We're talking about Hitler, about war, about serious things, and this foolish old man is talking about *davening*."

At most, the Kovno Rav if he would have the boldness, he could print up some leaflets and post them in some *batei midrashos*. But the people didn't come to the *batei midrashos* anyhow – very few people came. I was in Slabodka. I'm telling you the truth. Nobody came and nobody listened to him. They listened to the writers in the newspapers, to atheists!

The Yeshivos in Europe

I'm sure that he himself prayed. In the Slabodka Yeshivah they prayed. I was present in Slabodka when Hitler marched into Sudetenland, and they prayed; oh, how they prayed. No question that in all the yeshivos they said *tehillim*. They split the ceiling with their *tehillim*. But what did the yeshivos count in a great mass of people? The yeshivos were *batel*, not *b'shishim*; they were *batel b'elef, b'revovos*! A little spot, let's say, in Slabodka – one place, a yeshivah; but outside of Slabodka, who listened to the Rosh Yeshivah of Slabodka?

You have to know that the yeshivah people with their rebbes were only a drop in the ocean of European Jewry and they didn't have anybody who listened to them. An *adam gadol*, Reb Elchonon, said this. I remember, because I was in Europe at

that time. I left Europe in 1938 just when Hitler was already in power. When Hitler started marching, that's when I decided that I had better go home.

Now, at that time Rav Elchonon said the following: "All Jewry in Europe is divided into two groups," he said. "On one side is the Bnei Torah, the yeshivah people. And on the other side are the masses of people who are heading away from the Torah."

Now, it doesn't mean all the Jews were *mechallel Shabbos*, no. But even the Jews who kept Shabbos and *kashrus* and everything else, were no longer on the side of the *roshei yeshivos*. Because their leaders were the irreligious ones. They read their newspapers and in their heads were their ideas of the wrong people.

Those who were in the yeshivos were a small band. They were excellent yeshivos, much better than American yeshivos. But they were isolated from the people. "And therefore," Reb Elchonon said, "The general population did not come together to cry out to Hashem."

Everything is Upside Down

But in the days of Purim we prayed. We cried and prayed and cried and prayed. And what happened because we prayed? The promise of Hashem was fulfilled. *בִּי מִי גּוֹי גָּדוֹל* – *Where is there such a great nation like the Am Yisroel*, *אֲשֶׁר לוֹ אֱלֹהִים*, *אֵלֶּיךָ אֵלֹהֵינוּ* – *who has Hashem so close to Him?* *בְּכָל* *קְרָאנוּ אֵלֶיךָ* – *we called out to Hashem!*

Things started happening as a result of their crying out. You read about it in the Megillah. This happened and that happened and suddenly *וְנִהְפְּאוּ הַיָּמִים*! Everything turned upside down! They cried out so much from the bottom of their hearts that Hashem turned it upside down. Haman is hanging!

You know why it happened? Because of a different *וְנִהְפְּאוּ הַיָּמִים*, a more important *וְנִהְפְּאוּ הַיָּמִים*. The Jewish nation became turned upside down! The Am Yisroel became more aware of Hashem, more than ever before! We were always a good people, an excellent people, but now the excellent

people became even better than before. וְנִהְפְּוּדָה הוּא – They became new people; they were turned upside down by means of calling out to Hashem!

And that's how the tragedy, the most terrible tragedy *chalilah* they were threatened with, became a great *simchah* that every year Jews celebrate it in the most wild happiness. The worst tragedy changed into the wildest happiness because we were changed. Purim became the wildest, happiest, day of the year because they cried out to Hashem. And Hashem heard and said, "All right. I accomplished My purpose. Now I don't need any *tzaros*. From now on I'm going to give them a nice Purim *seudah*, a nice big day of *simchah*, instead. And let them remember Me in happiness instead of troubles."

Part III. Happiness Saves

Repealing the Decision?

You know, one of the common expressions of prayer goes as follows: יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ – "It should be Your will, Hashem." It should be Your will that I am healed or that I make a living; I should be saved from this or that - whatever it is you're *davening* for.

Now if we examine this *tefillah* we begin to realize that it's extremely presumptuous of us to talk this way. Who are we to tell Hakadosh Baruch Hu what His will should be?

Here's a man who's not well; he's laying in bed and he's sick with whatever it is. Now there's no question that it is the Will of Hakadosh Baruch Hu that he should be sick. Also, there's no question that כָּל מְאִי דְעֵבִיד רַחֲמָנָא לְטָב עֵבִיד – *whatever Hakadosh Baruch Hu does, He does for good*. It means that this illness is certainly for the man's benefit; that's beyond any doubt.

So it's the Will of Hashem and also He's doing it for good, that's a given. So how can this man presume now to ask Hakadosh Baruch Hu to change His will? Of course, we know that Hakadosh

Baruch Hu does want that this man should ask Him to be healed but the question is, where's the logic?

The Patient's Great Idea

Suppose a man is in the hospital about to undergo surgery. He's being tied down on the operating table and he says to the surgeon, "Hold up, Doctor. I have a great idea. It should be your will not to do the surgery."

So the surgeon puts the scalpel down and says, "You're a *meshugeneh*. You paid me good money for this. I'm doing it for your benefit. This is exactly what you need."

"Nah; just forget about it. יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ..." the patient says.

He's crazy! What's he telling the doctor what to do? He should keep his nose out of it!

So how can a man tell Hakadosh Boruch Hu, "Forget it and let me get well"? What sense does it make? If it's His will because He knows that's what's good for us, why should we ask that He should change His will just because we want it so? What's the logic?

The Experienced Doctor

And the answer is, there is a lot of logic in it because יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ means that we are offering Him something, something that's also His will, only it's a better will. What are we saying to Hashem? We say like this: "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, I know that all You want from me is to be aware of You, to fulfill my purpose in this world by becoming more and more aware of You. May it be Your will now to take away this trouble from me because You see now that I am accomplishing Your purpose. I'm talking to You, aren't I? I am now aware of You more and I understand that You are the One that brought this on me."

But Hakadosh Baruch Hu is experienced at this. You're not His first patient. And He knows that as soon as you're feeling good again, as soon as you achieved whatever it was you needed, as soon as

He removes the *tzarah*, so you'll forget about Him again.

It's like that surgeon having a conversation with his patient in the hospital. "Look here," he says, "can't we talk this thing over?"

So the surgeon says, "What do you mean 'talk it over'? We talked already in the office three times!" The surgeons like to talk in the office a few times so that they can bill the insurance.

Program of Awareness

So the patient says, "No, no. This is different. I'm serious. I think we can resolve this a different way. Isn't there a long range program by which I can cure myself? I'll stick to a very strict regimen. I'll do all the things that you'll tell me to do and maybe in the course of a few years, I could become well without necessitating an operation."

Of course the surgeon sees now his \$5,000 going down the drain so probably he won't be amenable to the suggestion. But the truth is that even if he's doing a charity operation I don't know if he would agree because he wouldn't trust the patient. If he was silly enough to get himself into the fix, probably he wouldn't follow any kind of a program to help himself.

And so the patient, when he asks Hashem to heal him because His will is being fulfilled now – "I'm aware of You; I'm thinking about You; I'm going to remember You now" – he's going to have to prove himself. He'll have to make a program for himself, a program of Awareness of Hashem.

"Every morning when I open my eyes, I'm going to shout – if your wife is in the same room, so say it quietly; but if you're a bachelor shout – "מִזְרָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ – I thank You that You have given me back my life this morning!"

Never Forget!

And that's only the beginning. During the day he'll remember Hashem a few times too. He's walking out in the street and he reminds himself all

the time that he feels well; he doesn't feel those old pains that bothered him.

You remember when you were laid up in bed with the flu and everything was hurting? And you said *יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ* – "Make me better Hashem and I'll fulfill Your will, Your will that I should be aware of You, in a better way. I'll think about You and thank You always when I'm healthy."

What happened? It disappeared by itself after a while but you forgot all about your side of the bargain. That's the trouble! Immediately, as soon as the *tzarah* disappears, people forget right away. Oh no! We have to make sure to always remember Him! That's what *davening* means – "I'm thinking about You now, Hashem, and I won't stop thinking about You even when my request is fulfilled."

And so we come back now to what Purim is all about. What did we say on that first Purim? "We'll remember You, Hakodosh Boruch Hu! We won't ever forget! *וְיָמֵי הַפּוּרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֹא יִעָבְרוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַיְהוּדִים*, Purim will forever be celebrated by the Jewish people."

Hook or Crook

That's the bargain we made with Hashem and that's one of the important lessons of Purim. One way or another, hook or by crook, we're going to be thinking about Hashem. And the best thing is when it's by the hook of good times. That's what we'll choose; the Awareness of Hashem through *simcha* instead of *tzaros*.

What do you think about as you sit down to eat and drink? What are you thinking about when you listen to the Megillah and when you're sending *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim*? Who caused this whole story? Who made Haman? Who gave him so much power? Hakadosh Baruch Hu caused it. Why did He cause it? Because He wants us to call out to Him. And we did! That's why we were saved.

That's what Purim is for! The *seudah* tastes good. You're enjoying yourself. The whole family is there. You're getting gifts and sending gifts – we're

so happy to be alive, so happy that Hashem saved us that we're sending gifts to one another – and you're a little bit intoxicated. Oh, that's the best time. The best time for what? To remember Hashem. "Oh! Boruch Hashem! Boruch Hashem! We thank You! We remember You. We're thinking about You!"

"Oh," Hashem says, "you're crying out in happiness? You're remembering Me? My children, that's all I want of you. What do you think, I want to torment you? All I want is to give you a great gift of *emunah*, of awareness. And if you'll get it from happiness, from drinking on Purim, from listening to the Megillah, then that's all I want."

Shikurim In The Garbage

Don't forget about that when you go to hear the Megillah. קְרִיאתָ זֶה הַלֵּילָא – Reading the Megillah is like *hallel!* (Megillah 14a). It's for the purpose of thanking Hashem. That's why you shouldn't miss a single word, because every word is like *Hallel*; every word is remembering Hashem. Every minute of Purim is for that.

That's what Purim is for; not merely to be wild. Everything that's wild is no good. Anything that is *meshuga*, that's uncontrolled is no good. *Stam* drunkenness is no good. All these Purim drunkards belong in the garbage can. When people get wild on Purim and forget about Hakadosh Baruch Hu, that's not Purim.

Yes, you can do certain things to celebrate but you must never forget what the purpose is. In ancient times on Purim they used to make a fire in a pit and people used to jump over the fire (Sanhedrin 64b). They used to give a running start and jump over a pit of fire. A *vildkeit* to show that we were saved from the fire. Wild things you do on Purim, yes. All kinds of wild things. But one thing you shouldn't do. You shouldn't forget about Hashem! If you get drunk and you forget about Hashem then goodbye Purim. You might as well go home and sleep. To forget about Hashem is the opposite of Purim.

But it's not only one day! Purim is the beginning of the rest of the year. That's what the Rema tells us at the end of Hilchos Purim. It's getting dark and the *seudah* is coming to an end. He says we're sorry to be finishing off Hilchos Purim now. You're enjoying Purim. You're enjoying it so much and soon it will be over. It's a pity to say goodbye to Purim. Some people on Shushan Purim also are a little wild but it's all over.

Always at the Party

So you read the last words and the Rema gives you a little consolation, *tanchumim*. He says וְטוֹב לֵב מִשְׁפָּתָה תָּמִיד – If you have a good *lev*, it's like you're always at a party. What does it mean a good *lev*? *Lev* means mind in Hebrew. If you have a good *Torahdige* mind, a real Torah mind, you're always at a party. It's *ah gantz yuhr Purim*.

Wouldn't it be good if every day is Purim? The answer is yes, it's wonderful; there's nothing better. And that's why you should acquire a *tov lev*. If you have the right kind of mind, then every day is Purim because every day you're going wild about Hashem.

You walk outside the day after Purim, and the week after Purim, and the month after Purim, and you're still remembering Hashem. You're walking in the fresh air and you say, "I thank You Hashem for fresh air. I thank you for my feet and for the sidewalk."

Then you take a glass of water, "Shehakol *nehiyeh bedvaro!*" and you thank Him for a glass of water. Oh! How good water is. Water is a miracle. Water is hydrogen and oxygen mixed together. You can't drink hydrogen. You can't drink the oxygen. It's a *nes*. Together it's a liquid, the most important liquid in our body. We're 80% water. "We thank You Hashem!"

Enjoy your Sleep

When you go to sleep you're thanking Hashem. You know some people can't sleep. An old man told me, "Ich hub farloiren dem schluff." He can't sleep anymore. Oh, it's a terrible tragedy. Boruch Hashem

you put your head on the pillow and you float away in dreamland right away. “Oh, *Boruch Hashem* I’m so happy.”

“Oh,” Hashem says, “I see you know how to thank Me. I see you learned the lesson of Purim. That’s all I want, that you should make it *ah gantz yuhr Purim*.”

And therefore when we are able to live such a way, it’s *ah gantz yuhr freilach*. All day, every day, it’s Purim. Thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu on Purim and that should be a model for all the days of our lives. It’s *tov lev mishteh tamid*; the more you sing to Hashem in happiness the happier you’ll be. And so everybody here should learn this lesson of Purim and therefore it should be for all of you *ah gantz yuhr freilach* and *ah gantz yuhr Purim tamid leolam vaed*.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET’S GET PRACTICAL

Happy Awareness of Hashem

Our greatest accomplishment in this world is to think of Hashem and to be aware of Him at all times. If we attribute all our happiness to Him, we live joyful lives, the life of the *Tov Lev* which is always fun and there is no need for wake-up calls. This week I will *bli neder* spend one minute each morning thinking about “*mishenichnas Adar marbim b’simchah*”, about all the happiness in my life, that is from Hashem. I will thus be spared hardship and suffering as I delight in Hashem and accomplish my purpose in life.

This week’s booklet is based on tapes:

115 - Preface to Purim 3 | 259 - Preface to Pesach VI
302 - Preface to Purim 8 | 731 - Lessons of Purim and Pesach

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Why is it that Haman tried to kill all the Jews but Nevuchadnezar, who was also a *sonei Yisroel*, didn’t?



And the answer is, Nevuchadnezar, the Gemara says *melech hagun hayah*. He was a righteous king. Now, Nevuchadnezar is called Nevuchadnezar Harasha. He was a *rasha*. But he was a *melech hagun*, a real king. He wasn’t a fool.

Anybody who kills Jews is insane because Jews are not harmful to any government. In many cases, they’re very useful.

Hitler was a madman. The Jews of Germany were financiers, they were great scientists, and immediately there began an exodus. Einstein fled. There were better people than Einstein. Now, a ruler who’ll lose such valuable elements is a maniac! Even if they weren’t valuable, what harm did the Jews do to Germany? Nothing at all!

And so, we don’t have to look for reasons why Nevuchadnezar didn’t make any campaign against the Jews.

But the truth is, it was just the opposite. He began a campaign of utilizing the Jews. He was a *melech hagun* so he took Daniel and his three friends, Chananya, Mishael and Azarya, and immediately he put them in the palace. And he started training them and teaching them the language of Kasdim and the court manners because he wanted to utilize them. Even before the *golus* he took a thousand of the *chorosh v’hamesger*, the best of the Am Yisroel, back to his land because he understood that this is a great gain for his kingdom.

So it’s no *kashe* why he didn’t want to kill the Jews. Does the story of Purim mean everybody wants to kill the Jews? Only that the time came when Hakadosh Baruch Hu saw that the *teshuva* wasn’t going fast enough – the *golus* was supposed to be a convalescence to heal them from their great errors of before and many were convalescing, but not fast enough, so Hakadosh Boruch Hu staged this entire pageant of the *nes Purim* and it had the desired effect.