



## GEULAS YISRAEL

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# The “Final Thrust” to Jerusalem

During our embattled history, we have encountered numerous enemies and survived endless threats. Rarely have we faced complete and total annihilation. For some reason, 70 years after the apocalyptic loss of the Mikdash, living under Persian rule, we faced an unforeseen threat from an unfamiliar enemy. Haman threatened to bring it all down. Jewish history could have expired that year in Shushan.

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai’s students queried their teacher: why were the Jews imperiled by Haman’s murderous plan? What possible crime warranted this devastating and potentially existential threat? Instead of replying, Rabbi Shimon prompted his students to respond. They suggested that we were punished for participating in the royal festivities of Achashverosh. Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai didn’t disagree.

The Achashverosh party wasn’t exactly a

high-minded exhibition of moral values or a noble display of ethical probity. Rapacious nobleman gorged for a one-hundred and eighty day culinary orgy, while the peasants of the country-side were taxed through the nose to foot the bill for this debauched exorbitance. Shameless gluttons lying on marble couches provided stimulating eye-candy for voyeuristic passersby. Perhaps the food at this party was kosher but the environment and the spectacle was hideous. Certain events should be “off limits” to religious people—regardless of the kashrut level of the food which is served.

Life was good in Shushan, but it was anything but a picnic in Israel, where the future was unfolding

However, participation in this celebration of shameless piggishness and unbridled appetite still doesn’t justify such a harsh response. Evidently, there was something far more criminal in drinking and binging along with Ahchashverosh and his merry

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# Real Life Rescues



## Giving of One's Self To Help Others

One recent Friday afternoon, a young motorcyclist was speeding along the roads in Netanya when the wheels of his motorcycle slipped and the motorbike skidded out across the road. The rider was thrown to the ground, his body scraping along the asphalt as he rolled towards a parked car. A concerned pedestrian urgently called emergency dispatch for help.

United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Lidan Pindling received a proximity alert to the incident and immediately left the errands that he was taking care of, jumped on his ambucycle and raced over to the location. Additional United Hatzalah volunteers and an ambulance crew arrived as well.

The 24-year-old victim was trapped underneath the parked car. He had suffered deep, bleeding lacerations to his legs with suspected fractures. Lidan and his colleagues got down on the ground to treat the injured man. They stemmed the bleeding and bandaged his serious leg wounds. It was an extremely cold afternoon, and the team covered the victim with a mylar insulating blanket to keep his body temperature stable.



After affixing a neck brace, the EMTs carefully slid the patient onto a backboard and safely extricated him out. The young man was then rushed off to the hospital for further emergency care.

“Volunteering with United Hatzalah gives me the opportunity to think of someone else’s needs and put them before my own. I am proud to give of myself and my time to help others and provide medical care when other people need it,” Lidan said.

revelers.

Context is everything. Purim mustn't be viewed as a "miracle in a vacuum"; it can't be reduced to a simple storyline about a mass-murderer who set his sights on Jewish annihilation but whose plans were dashed by Divine intervention. This "story" of Jewish survival "against all odds" has occurred throughout Jewish history and Purim isn't exceptional. Without understanding the broader "historical framework" of Purim, the miracle feels commonplace. To fully appreciate Purim, it must be analyzed within a historical context.


There is much uncertainty regarding the actual date of the Purim miracle, but according to Chazal's timeline, the miracle in Shushan occurred AFTER our preliminary return to Israel. Having been exiled for around 52 years (depending on when

you count from), we began the great project of resettling our homeland and rebuilding Yerushalayim. Sadly, this restoration was stalled, as hostile locals were staunchly opposed to "Jewish expansionism". Hurred messengers were dispatched back to Persia pleading for international intervention against Jewish aggression. Eventually, international opposition defeated the great hopes of a quick return to the Homeland from which we were evicted only decades earlier. The valiant pioneers who had resettled Israel faced rising aggression and it appeared that redemption had run out of steam.

Eighteen years elapsed between our aborted initial return and our final homecoming – the eventual reconstruction of the Mikdash. It is within this eighteen-year period that the Purim saga unfolded. Purim didn't occur in a vacuum. It occurred as Jews were struggling over their historical rights to their Homeland. A few intrepid visionaries had returned to the Land and were waging a struggle on behalf of the entire Jewish nation and on behalf of Jewish history.

Most Jews remained behind, enjoying the serenity and luxury of the Persian empire. The initial hatred which the Babylonians directed to the Jews had been replaced by Persian acceptance and rapprochement. Life was good in Shushan, but it was anything but a picnic in Israel, where the future was unfolding.

The real crime of the party goes was in



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**Mazel Tov to**  
**Angie & Benny Elisha and family**  
*on the birth of their grandson*

their “historical indifference”. Jews were struggling to settle Israel and were bravely fending off hostile enemies. It is one thing not to emigrate and join the battle. However, it is another thing entirely, to remain behind in Persia and feast and drink for half a year while Jews were struggling and dying in Israel. Their abject disinterest in the historical process – immersing themselves in revelry while their brothers were busy crafting history- was a historical and moral crime and absolutely deserving of a harsh punishment.

It is crucial not to sever Purim from the larger historical drama. The Jewish people were “stuck in the mud”, having returned to Israel, but watching their settlement efforts thwarted. This suspended redemption required one miracle, one great electrifying event, to provide the final thrust to propel us back to our Homeland. Purim provided that national thrust and that redemptive energy. As the Sefat Emet writes, Purim was a “pre-redemptive” event which paved the path back to Yerushalayim. As the Sefat Emmet continues: “it is likely that our final redemption will also be preceded by a pre-redemptive miracle which will provide similar energy.”

The prophecy of this late 19<sup>th</sup> century Chasidic visionary has materialized: our people have been blessed with great miracles which, hopefully, will provide final thrust toward our final homecoming and the terminus of history. Purim Sameach ■

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*Mazal Tov to  
David & Sarah Maslow and family  
on the marriage of their granddaughter*