

The Torah Any Times

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Rabbi Shlomo Farhi

Unlimited

There was a fellow named Raz whose father had just bought a new car in Israel. It was an expensive car and one which the father was happy he finally had. A few days after it had been bought, Raz asked if he'd be able to borrow it. "Of course," replied his father, confident that his son would take care of it responsibly.

Off Raz went along with a friend, taking the car on roads, highways and bridges. But then a nightmare happened. He had been driving too close to the wall and the car ended up with a scratch all across the entire side of the car. Raz was beside himself.

After arriving at his destination, he parked the car in a parking garage and sat down. But he remained all out of sorts, shocked at what had happened and uncertain how to break the news to his father. How could he tell his father that his new car, which he entrusted to him for a mere few hours, was now scratched front to back?

Shaken, Raz decided to head to the nearest shul and say some Tehillim. "Please Hashem," Raz pleaded, "my father is such a good man. He's waited so long to buy something nice for himself, and he finally got it. And I was reckless and banged it. It's not his fault that he should have this dent in his car. Please Hashem, do something about it."

His friend who had accompanied him was less than sure about all this. There was a big problem. What is G-d going to do with a scratch along the side of the car? Is He going to do the bodywork? Does He have an auto shop? His friend then began pulling the religious card. "G-d doesn't perform open miracles; you know that, right?" But Raz remained firm, feeling strong in his heart that what happened wasn't fair to his father. He just couldn't shake the thought that what had happened actually did. "Please Hashem, solve this problem. I don't know what to do."

Eventually, Raz returned home and approached his father. But before he could say anything, the phone rang and his father picked up. "I have terrible news," the man on the other side of the line said. "There was a rocket which was fired into Israel, and it landed on a parking garage and blew the place to smithereens. The most we were able to locate was your license plate. The good news is that since your car was new, you'll be refunded the full amount for a new car."

One of the challenges we face when we think about how G-d runs the world is that we limit Him. We think about G-d through our eyes. Where is He going to find a shidduch for me if I'm this old and have this problem? Where's the solution going to come for my parnassah? There doesn't exist a treatment for this sickness! What is G-d going to do for me?

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But, as we recite in our daily prayers, Hashem is “borei refuot,” He creates new ways of healing. Hashem creates medicines. At the end of the seven days of Creation, Hashem hadn’t expended His creative means. All the time, at any time, He

can create something out of nothing. Even though Raz had no idea how G-d could fix the situation, G-d had a way. And His way doesn’t often look the way we think it would. A random missile falls on a random building and does random damage to a random

car of a random young man who’s been praying to G-d non-stop to solve this problem, and all while his friend is doubting, “How’s G-d going to fix your scratched car?”

But G-d knows better. He always does.

Rabbi Yochanan Cohen

Above and Beyond

The day of Purim contains the powerful potential that even a decree which was signed with the king’s signet ring can be broken. It is a period rich with spiritual opportunity where miraculous salvation and blessing can pour into our lives.

The Shiniaver Rebbe in his sefer *Divrei Yechezkel* writes that Yom Kippur is similar to Purim with an important distinction. In a way, Purim possesses an even more unique opportunity. On Yom Kippur, only the Kohen Gadol himself was permitted entry into the Holy of Holies. Only he was capable of elevating himself to an exceptionally exalted, spiritual level. On Purim, however, such spiritual heights are available to everyone. Each and every simple Jew can access profound spiritual potential on this auspicious day.

Our Sages teach that on Purim, “Anyone who extends a hand, you should give to him” (*Yerushalmi Megillah* 1:4; *Shulchan Aruch* 694:3). We are enjoined to give tzedakah to those who are less fortunate and provide financial support at a time of national simcha. However, this is not just meant to refer to someone who asks for financial help. It also applies to the opportunity we have on this day of Purim when it comes to davening to Hashem, says the Chasam Sofer. “Anyone who extends a hand, you should give to him.” On Purim, the heavenly gates are wide open and whatever you ask for earnestly from

Hashem, He graciously grants you. “We aren’t overly careful to whom we distribute funds” (*ibid.*) is both true in a literal sense as it pertains to those who approach us for tzedakah, and equally to our requests from Hashem. No letters of confirmation, no background checks, no investigations take place on Purim. We give generously and graciously to those who ask. And in the same vein, Hashem treats us the same when we approach him in desperate need for personal, family, communal or national salvation. Whether it be for a shidduch, children, parnassa, refuah, hatzlacha in an endeavor, or a yeshua, Hashem responds in kind.

If someone approached you at your wedding or the wedding of your child for a few dollars, you would certainly give generously. It’s a joyous time, your spirits are lifted, and you’d open your heart and wallet to him! Purim is an *eis ratzon*, a favorable and promising time, and Hashem acts the same way toward us. The Maor Va’Shemesh comments that the light which fills the world on Yom Kippur also enters the world for the full day of Purim.

Chazal state that the “eyes of the poor are raised [hoping to receive funds] during the time of the reading of the Megillah” (*Megillah* 4b). The Chasam Sofer writes that those who are poor, as referenced here, are not only those who are poor financially, but poor in knowledge of Torah and spirituality. During the time of the

reading of the Megillah, a tremendous influx of kedusha enters the world and it is an ideal time to access an elevation in *ruchniyus* and closeness to Hashem.

But the Megillah contains another layer. Hallel is intended to be recited on Purim, as we derive from the miracle of Pesach (*Megillah* 14a). If when the Jews went from slavery to freedom on Pesach, we recited Hallel and thanked Hashem, certainly on Purim when the Jews went from a decree of death to life we should recite Hallel. Based on this reasoning, the *Shem Mi’Shmuel* highlights that the miracle of Purim is even greater than the miracle of Pesach. Moreover, Purim reflects the future era of Moshiach. Haman, a descendent of Amalek, was killed during the miracle of Purim, mirroring the reality which will occur in the future era of Moshiach when Amalek will be eradicated. This explains why the Gemara (*Berachos* 13a) states that in the future, the miracle of Pesach will be secondary to the miracles which accompany the coming of Moshiach and end of Amalek.

On Purim, however, we do not actually recite Hallel, but rather the reading of the Megillah is deemed our Hallel (*Megillah*, *ibid.*). The reading of the Megillah carries similarity to tefillah, as reflected in the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch* (689:5) that if there is no minyan present when reading the Megillah,

and those present know how to read, each individual should recite it themselves. Under such circumstances, it is better that one person specifically not recite it aloud for all others to fulfill their mitzvah. This is so, explains the Magen Avraham (ibid.), because reading the Megillah is similar to tefillah, which requires a minyan to enable one person to recite aloud and fulfill the obligations of all those present.

As such, writes the Shem Mi'Shmuel, we read the Megillah at night, even though we don't generally recite Hallel at night. Reading the Megillah reflects the future era of Moshiach, a time described as when the "night will shine as brilliantly as day" (Tehillim 139:12), and therefore, even the nighttime reading carries the spiritual qualities of daytime, and it is read. Moreover, if the night of Pesach is a time when we recite Hallel,

and Purim is greater than Pesach as in the above respect, it makes sense to recite Hallel on Purim night.

The moments during which the Megillah are read are moments endowed with incredible spiritual energy and potential. When we focus and tune in, we come into contact with something heavenly, something eternal, and something Messianic that can carry us to a plateau above and beyond.

Rabbi Avrohom Ebstein

Purim Prayers

Before Purim, we have Taanis Esther. Why, though, do we have a fast day before Purim? The month of Adar and Purim is a joyous time, and it would seem contrary to the nature of this time of year to hold a somber and serious day of fasting.

The Mishna Berura (Shulchan Aruch 686:2) explains that the reason our Sages instituted this fast is to remind us how the Jews during the days of Purim fasted, turned to Hashem and were answered. This process enables us "to remember that Hashem sees and hears each person during their time of distress when they fast and return to Hashem with all their heart as was done during the time of Purim."

Being that the day of Taanis Esther is an auspicious day for tefillah, the Kav Hayashar (Ch. 97) writes that it is an incredible day to have your tefillos answers. In his words:

"The day of Taanis Esther is very auspicious that our prayers be answered in the merit of Mordechai and Esther. Anyone who needs mercy regarding something for

which he must pray, he should find time for himself and first recite Chapter 22 of Tehillim [a chapter referring to Esther]. Afterwards, he should pour out his heart to Hashem and ask Hashem for his requests, mentioning the merit of Mordechai and Esther, for in their merit Hashem will fulfill his requests. The gates of mercy will open in Heaven, and his prayers will be accepted with favor."

The entire day of Taanis Esther is a tremendously opportune time. It is when we remind ourselves that Hashem listens to and answers our prayers.

This is the lesson of Purim and the Megillah. The Rambam (Intro. to Mishnah Torah; end of Minyan Hamitzvos) explains why we read the Megillah as follows:

"We read the Megillah in order to inform the future generations that it is true that which the Torah promises, 'For who is as great a nation whose G-d is close to them whenever they call out to Him.'"

Based on this Rambam, the Brisker Rav explains how the words of Shoshanas Yaakov perfectly reflect and characterize the underlying mes-

sage of Purim and the Megillah. "Their salvation will be eternal and their hope endure in every generation; to let it be known that all those who hope to Hashem will not be embarrassed, nor will all those who rely on Him be ashamed." The Alter of Kelm points out that in the above passage of Shoshanas Yaakov, we say that the miracle of Purim "will be eternal." But what does this mean? The miracle of Purim occurred during one generation many years ago; how can it be that a miracle which occurred then still occur today?

The salvation of Purim demonstrated that anytime a Jew is in trouble and needs help, all they must do is remember the story of Purim. Don't forget that anyone who turns to Hashem, davens to Him and relies on Him, He is there to listen. The Jewish people's redemption years ago wasn't therefore simply for that generation; it spans and extends to our very time. The same truth which applied then applies now. If you turn to Hashem, He will turn to you.

The Ksav Sofer in fact finds how the above notion is reflected in a Pasuk in the Megillah itself. "And the days of Purim will not depart from the Jewish people, and the remem-

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brance will be forever” (Esther 9:28). The remembrance which the Megillah is alluding to is this fact: never give up hope. You can always turn to Hashem, trust in Him, and He will deliver. Even in the darkest times, He is there.

The Sfas Emes asks why we mention in Shoshanas Yaakov “all those who hope to Hashem” when we should have omitted the superfluous word “all” and just stated “those who hope in Hashem.” He answers that “all” is coming to include even those who are undeserving. Perhaps, we might wrongly assume, Hashem will only listen to someone who is a tzaddik and worthy of having their prayers answered. But someone who doesn’t have the merit, maybe they

shouldn’t turn to Hashem and hope that He will fulfill their wishes. To counter this, we state that “all those who hope to Hashem” will have their prayers fulfilled. Anyone and everyone is included. Even a wicked person who places his trust in Hashem will see Hashem’s kindnesses. When we trust and rely on Hashem, it isn’t because we feel we are deserving. We know we fall short. Yet we rely on the compassion and kindness of Hashem, and know that even if we are undeserving, Hashem will listen to us because we are turning to him.

The whole story of Purim, in fact, is one large lesson about tefillah and turning to Hashem. Sometimes, we’ll look around and wonder where we can gain connections to advance to-

ward a certain goal or attain something we desire. We need to speak to the right people, we tell ourselves. But the Purim story teaches us something else.

The Jewish people were pitted against Haman, and they desperately needed someone who could overturn Haman’s decree. Achashverosh was that man. But how would the Jews get through to him? The answer was Esther. She had access to the king!

Every Jew, just like Esther, has access to Hashem, the King of Kings. When we turn to Hashem and place our reliance upon Him, Hashem guarantees that He will come to our aid and listen to our heartfelt prayers.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn

Think Inside the Envelope

Rabbi Maier Solomon, head of the organization Minchas Shlomo in Jerusalem, travels twice a year to the Five Towns in New York. There he oversees the dozens of boxes which are packaged with clothing by women throughout the community for poor families living in Israel. The clothes are used, but in very good condition. They aren’t frayed, but rather modest, stylish and colorful. All these boxes are then shipped to Israel where they are distributed to those in need.

A few years ago, a woman with five children called Minchas Shlomo and asked if she would be able to receive a box of clothes. She didn’t even have enough to pay for rent that month. After confirming that she was in fact in need of help, they informed her of a specific day she should go to Rechov Shmuel HaNavi and pick up Box #23 from

among a whole row of boxes. “Your name will not be on the box,” she was informed, “because we never want to embarrass anyway. But just know that Box #23 is for you.”

Sure enough, she picked up the box and returned home. And there she opened it, taking delight in the beautiful clothes that would go to her children. But then, at the bottom of the box, she noticed something else. It was a dress for an adult. Almost certain that no clothes for adults were intended to be part of these packages, it was a welcoming and wonderful surprise. Now, after having given up on the thought of attending a Sheva Berachos she was invited to that evening, perhaps she’d be able to go after all. If the dress would fit, she’d have something to wear, and if she’d have something to wear, she’d feel comfortable enough to go.

Putting on the dress, to her delight, it was a fit. She never imagined that

something like this would happen, yet then again, it was.

But all of a sudden, she felt a pin poking into her skin. She hadn’t noticed the pin before. Opening the dress, she noticed that connected to the pin was an envelope. And in the envelope was a letter, which read:

To whoever is wearing this dress... If you are wearing it, it’s obvious that you need the money in this envelope.

In the envelope was \$950, the exact amount she needed for rent that month.

If I’d meet the woman who donated this dress from the Five Towns, I’d sit down so I could stand up for her. Who thinks of that? Who comes up with the idea that if you’re giving clothes to a woman for her children, she obviously doesn’t have clothes herself. And if she doesn’t have clothes herself, she doesn’t have money for tuition, for groceries, for medications, for rent.

When you do something like that, you feel beyond content because that’s what happiness is all about.



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Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 11 Adar II)

רומי בת מירב (גונן)	לירי בת שירה (אלבג)	אריאל בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)	אבינתן בן דיצה תרצה (אור)
רון בן חנה (בנימין)	מישל בן סולמירה (ניסנבאום)	אריאל בן שירי (ביבס)	אביתר בן גליה (דוד)
שגב בן גלית (כלפון)	מקסים בן טלה (הרקיון)	בר אברהם בן ג'וליה (קופרשטיין)	אברהם גלעד בן אמונה (מונדר)
שגיא בן נעמית (חן דקל)	מתן בן ענת (אנגרסט)	גד משה בן שרה (מוזס)	אגם בת מירב (ברגר)
שירי בת מרגיט (ביבס)	מתן בן ירדנה (צנגאוקר)	גיא בן מירב (גלבוע דלאל)	אוהד בן אסתר (בן) עמי)
שלומי בן רוזיטה אירה (זיו)	נדב בן חנה (פופלוול)	גלי בן טליה (ברמן)	אוהד בן אסתר (יהלומי)
שלמה בן מרסיל (מנצור)	נועה בת ליאורה (ארגמי)	דוד בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)	אור בן גאולה (לוי) אורי בן עינב
תמיר בן חירות (נמרודי)	נמרוד בן ייקי (כהן)	דולב בן יעל (יהוד) דורון בת סימונה	אפרת (דנינו) אוריאל בן נעמי
	נעמה בת איילת (לוי)	שרה (שטיינברכר) דניאלה בת אורלי (גלבוע)	(ברוך) איתן בן רות אדית (הורן)
	עדן בת שרית (ירושלמי)	דרור בן דורית (אור)	איתן אברהם בן אפרת (מור)
	עודד בן בלהה (ליפשיץ)	הירש בן פערל חנה (גולדברג פולין)	אלון בן עידית (אהל)
	עומר בן ניבה (ונקרט)	זיו בן טליה (ברמן) חיים בן נחמה (פרי)	אליה בן סיגלית (כהן)
	עומר בן שלי (שם) טוב)	חן חנן בן ורד (יבלונקה)	אליהו בן חנה (שרעבי)
	עומר מקסים בן אורנה אסתר (נאוטרה)	טל בן ניצה (שוהם) קורנגולד)	אליקים שלמה בן אבישג (ליבמן)
	עופר בן כוכבה (קלדרון)	יאיר בן רות אדית (הורן)	אלכסנדר טל אוקסנה (לובנוב)
	עידן בן יעל (אלכסנדר)	יגב בן אסתר (בוכשטב)	אלכסנדר ששה בן ילנה לאה (טרופנוב)
	עידן בן דלית (שתיו)	יוסף חיים בן מרים (אוחנה)	אלכסנדר בן נינה (דנציג)
	עמירם בן שרה (קופר)	יורם בן בלה (מצגר)	אלמוג בן אורית (מאיר ג'אן)
	עמית אסתר חיה בת אילנה אלן (בוסקילה)	יצחק בן אנטה חנה (אלגרט)	אלמוג בן נירה (סרוסי)
	עמרי בן אסתר ורוניקה (מירן)	יצחק בן גילה (גלרנטר)	אלעד בן חנה (קציר)
	צחי בן דבורה (עידן)	ירדן בן פנינה (ביבס)	אלקנה בן רוחמה (בוחבוט)
	קית' שמואל בן גלדיס חוה (סיגל)	כפיר בן שירי (ביבס)	אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה פרנסיס (דמארי)
	קרינה בת אירנה (ארייב)	כרמל בת כנרת (גת)	אנדריי בן יבגניה (קוזלוב)
	רום בן תמר (ברסלבסקי)	ליאור בן מיכל (רודאיף)	ארבל בת יעל (יהוד)

Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 11 Adar II)

Omer ben Shelly (Shemtov)	Yair ben Ruth Idit (Horen)	Elkana ben Ruchama (Bochbut)	Avinatan ben Ditzza Tirtza (Ohr)
Omer Maxim ben Orna Esther (Neutra)	Yegev ben Esther (Buchachev)	Amelia Tehilla bat Amanda Francis (Damari)	Evyatar ben Galya (David)
Ofer ben Kochva (Kaldron)	Yosef Chaim ben Miriam (Ohana)	Andrea ben Yavganina (Kosolov)	Avraham Gilad ben Liat (Mundar)
Idan ben Yael (Alexander)	Yoram ben Belah (Metzger)	Arbel bat Yael (Yehud)	Agam bat Meirav (Berger)
Idan ben Dalit (Stevey)	Yitzchak ben Enta Chana (Algert)	Ariel ben Sylvia Monika (Kunyo)	Ohad ben Esther (Ben-Ami)
Amiram ben Sarah (Cooper)	Yitzchak ben Gila (Gelernter)	Ariel ben Shiri (Bibas)	Ohad ben Esther (Yahalomi)
Amit Esther Chaya bat Ilana Allen (Buskila)	Yarden ben Penina (Bibas)	Bar Avraham ben Julia (Cooperstein)	Ohr ben Tali (Levi)
Omri ben Esther Verah (Miran)	Kfir ben Shiri (Bibas)	Gad Moshe ben Sarah (Muzas)	Ori ben Inav (Danino)
Tzachi ben Devorah (Idan)	Karmel ben Kineret (Gat)	Guy ben Meirav (Galboa Dalial)	Uriel ben Naami (Baruch)
Kityah Shmuel ben Galdis (Segal)	Lior ben Michal (Rudaeff)	Gali ben Talya (Berman)	Eitan ben Ruth Adit (Horen)
Kreina bat Irana (Iriv)	Liri bat Shirah (Elbag)	Gali ben Talya (Berman)	Eitan ben Efrat (Mor)
Rum ben Tamar (Borsalevsky)	Mishel ben Solmirah (Nissenbaum)	David ben Sylvia Monika (Kunyo)	Alon ben Idit (Ohel)
Rumi bat Meirav (Gonan)	Matan ben Anat (Angres)	Dolav ben Yael (Yehud)	Elya ben Siglit (Cohen)
Ron ben Chana (Benjamin)	Matan ben Yardena (Zangauker)	Doron bat Simona Sarah (Steinbrecher)	Eliyahu ben Chana (Sharabi)
Segev ben Galit (Kalafon)	Yardena (Zangauker)	Daniella bat Orli (Galboa)	Elyakim Shlomo ben Avishag (Liebman)
Sagi ben Naamit (Chen-Dekel)	Nadav ben Chana (Popplewell)	Dror ben Dorit (Ohr)	Alexander ben Uksana (Lobanov)
Shiri bat Margit (Bibas)	Chana (Popplewell)	Hirsch ben Perel Chana (Goldberg-Polin)	Alexander Sasha ben Yalena Leah (Trofnov)
Shlomi ben Rosita (Ziv)	Noah ban Liora (Argamani)	Ziv ben Talya (Berman)	Alexander ben Nina (Dantzig)
Shlomo ben Marcel (Mansour)	Nimrod ben Viki (Cohen)	Chaim ben Nechama (Parry)	Almog ben Urit (Meir-Gan)
Tamir ben Cheirut (Nimrodi)	Naama ban Ayelet (Levi)	Chen Chanan ben Vered (Yavlunka)	Almog ben Nira (Sarusi)
	Eden bat Shirit (Yerushalmi)	Tal ben Nitza (Shoham-Corngold)	Elad ben Chana (Ktzir)
	Oded ben Bilhah (Lipschitz)		
	Omer ben Niva (Weinkraut)		