



Fast to Feast, the Purim Perspective!

The Purim Perspective is in honor of Eretz Yisroel. May G-d protect our brave soldiers. May G-d return all the hostages in Gaza immediately.

The Purim Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Hinda Bas Udl, may they have a speedy and complete recovery.

The Purim Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

The Purim Perspective is in honor of the health of the mind, body, and soul of Yakkov Ben Yehudis and the success of Naftoli Ben Yehudis.

The release of this episode coincides with Taanis Esther—the Fast of Esther—as we quickly approach the joyous holiday of Purim. Interestingly, Taanis Esther is unique and differs from other fast days, as demonstrated by this year's schedule that highlights its singularity.

According to Jewish law, one may not fast on the eve of a holiday, nor may they eulogize a loved one who has passed. Additionally, if any fast day besides Yom Kippur falls out on Shabbos, it is postponed to the following Sunday.

This law applies to every fast day except for Taanis Esther, which is not delayed to Sunday; rather, it is observed on the prior Thursday, just as it is this year. The basis behind this unique exception relates to the purpose and meaning of Taanis Esther.

Unlike other fasts, which have a negative connotation associated with them—like Tisha B'Av, with the destruction of both Beis Hamikdash, and Yom Kippur, where we atone for our sins—Taanis Esther does not carry any negative undertones. We fast because the nation was unified and fasted for three days upon Queen Esther's request.

When Mordechai HaTzadik discovered Haman's plan to annihilate the Jewish people, he quickly sent a message to Esther. He told her that she must reveal her identity to King Achashverosh and plead for her nation.

Initially, Esther was apprehensive; she hadn't been invited to see the king in thirty days and knew the penalty for approaching the king unrequested. Realizing what she needed to do, Esther informed Mordechai that she would fast for three days in preparation, and others should do the same.

This decision underscored the collective strength and faith of the Jewish people, uniting them in prayer and purpose. Mordechai gathered the nation and instructed them to fast for three days in preparation for Esther's uninvited visit to King Achashverosh.

The difference between Taanis Esther and other fast days is profoundly significant as we experience comparable unity. In this unity, we find not just strength but also a reaffirmation of our shared destiny and identity. Jews worldwide are finding commonality and collective identity through the lens of how our enemies view us.

As demonstrated on October 7th, those who wish to destroy the Jewish nation do not discriminate based on the nuances that divide us; to them, our distinctions are irrelevant.

The Megillah relates how Haman describes the Jewish nation to King Achashverosh, (3:8) *"There is one nation that is scattered and dispersed throughout*

the peoples in your kingdom." Haman saw that the Jewish nation was divided; they were segregated and detached from each other, making them vulnerable and weak.

However, this perception of division was Haman's mistake, underestimating the unbreakable spirit and the deep bond that connects the Jewish people across distances and differences. Mordechai answered Haman with open unity and solidarity; he assembled 24,000 children to beg G-d for mercy and salvation.

The Purim story teaches a powerful lesson that is all too easy to forget amid our daily struggles: In unity lies not only our survival but also our ability to thrive in the face of adversity. When we are united, our potential is limitless, and we are capable of achieving miracles like those experienced by the Jewish nation during the Purim story - **בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵן הַזֶּה - in those days and in these times.**

The Megillah details the salvation and redemption the Jewish people experienced. **"ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששן ויקר" - the Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor.** May we experience the same light, happiness and joy and strive to fill our world with the G-dliness that it desperately needs for the ultimate redemption!

"The people that can know the full darkness of history and yet rejoice is a people whose spirit no power on earth can ever break."

- Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Have a joyful and meaningful Purim!

Rabbi Sholom Yemini