

A Frelichen (Happy) Purim Everyone. Why did the Sages choose to call our celebration of the miracle of Mordecai and Esther - "Purim?" The Sages wanted to emphasize the nature of evil. The evil Persian King Ahasuerus used Purim - lots to randomly choose a date to kill the Jews. This act symbolized the attitude of Ahasuerus, namely, everything in life is chance.

The idea that everything in life is chance, is the ultimate evil because such an attitude goes against the very foundation of our faith. We Jews believe that Hashem is the Master of the Universe who involves himself in even the pettiest details in the life of a Jew.

One of the 13 principles of the Jewish faith is "I believe in perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, creates and guides all creatures." One who believes that everything in life is chance, is effectively denying Hashem. Thus the name Purim celebrates the victory over those who deny Hashem.

We are a nation which is guided by the Hand of Hashem. As Dovid Hamelech tells us "Hashem is my Shepherd, I shall not lack... Even when I walk in the valley overshadowed by death, I will fear no evil, for You [Hashem] are with me." (Tehillim 23:1,4)

Several years ago on Tisha B'Av, a Jew from Eretz Yisroel Reb Tuvia Chaim Ariel passed away and was buried in Tekoah, a yishuv (settlement) in Eretz Yisroel. During his lifetime, Reb Tuvia experienced some incredible incidents which showed him loud and clear that Hashem is guiding the Jewish people.

Several years ago Tuvia Chaim moved from America to Eretz Yisroel and worked in a kibbutz factory that made baby formula powder. Due to an accident with a grinding machine, Tuvia Chaim lost his right leg above the knee. Undaunted, Tuvia Chaim studied and became a tour guide.

One morning Tuvia picked up an apparently wealthy man from New York at Ben Gurion Airport to bring him to Jerusalem. On the way to Jerusalem it became obvious to Tuvia Chaim that it was not a match made in heaven. Apparently their personalities clashed. Tuvia Chaim pulled the van to the side of the road and told the man that he would get him a different tour guide. The man responded "Listen, you think I am just your typical overbearing New York Jew with gold chains -- I paid my dues." The man then rolled up his sleeve to expose a tattoo from Auschwitz which ended with the numbers 7402. "I lost my mother, my father and all my brothers and sisters."

Tuvia Chaim looked at the tattoo and turned white. In the carpentry shop on his kibbutz there worked a man who escaped from Auschwitz, fought with the Polish partisans and later made his way to Eretz Yisroel. The man also had a tattoo on his arm -- a number that ended with the same last four digits of Tuvia Chaim's Social Security number and "coincidentally" his telephone number -- 7401.

"Did you have a brother named Zalman?" asked Tuvia Chaim.

"Yes, but how could you know that?" replied the shocked man.

"Was he tattooed before you or after you?" persisted Tuvia Chaim.

"Before me, but why?" responded the puzzled man.

"I think your brother is alive," answered Tuvia Chaim and with that he made a U-turn on the old Jerusalem road and headed back to his kibbutz near Lake Tiberias to reunite the two brothers in what Tuvia Chaim described as the most emotional, G-d-filled moment of his life.

Tuvia Chaim was so inspired by this incident of Hashgacha Pratis - Divine Supervision, that he became a Torah-committed Jew. He went on to live a fulfilling life as religious Jew doing chessed (kindness) for many other Jews. (Rabbi Kalman Packouz-Aish HaTorah).

The commentator Yaaros Dvash explains that the simcha of Purim is knowing that Hashem is watching over us. All the miracles that Hashem does is to awaken us to His Torah. Because through the miracles and wonders which happen, we can see that Hashem takes personal interest in every aspect of our lives. (Yaaros Dvash, Drush 3 for the 7th of Adar, p.75 volume 1, Even Yisroel Edition)

Knowing that Hashem is with us is a source of happiness. As Ezra tells us "I was strengthened because the Hand of Hashem was upon me" (Ezra 7:28) Let us be happy on Purim in knowing that Hashem is with us. Even in these trying times we can be strengthened by a firm belief that Hashem is watching over us. **A Frelichen (Happy) Purim Everyone.**