

Jewish festivals and special days each have a reason for being established as a holiday. The reasons can be found either in the Written Torah or in the Oral Torah. The basis for the three major festivals and for Chanukah and Purim, as well as for other days established by Torah as special, are enumerated – and they are singled out from the rest of the year. Surely the day of Shabbos, established by Torah as a holy day of delight, is unique from all weekdays as a holy day. While the festivals are “called holy,” they are not “holy” as Shabbos, merely ‘*called*’ – likened to Shabbos.

On Shabbos *all* work is prohibited, however on festivals certain forms of work are permitted. Thus, the festivals are holy, but not as holy as Shabbos. They are “*called* holy.” When one person or item is named after another, the first person is the primary one while the second is named after the first.

Then there are the holidays of Purim and Chanukah. The Talmud relates that Mordechai wanted work to be prohibited on Purim, however his suggestion was not accepted. So it would seem that Purim is not on the level of the festivals – and surely not as holy as Shabbos.

However, we see an aspect of Purim which is greater than the festivals, and even greater than Shabbos: The purpose of the Festivals is to rejoice, “You shall rejoice in your festivals,” and despite this, the festive celebration is limited: The Jewish Court would send messengers to ensure the joy didn’t cause the people to go beyond reasonable limits. On Purim however, not only is it unnecessary to guard the festivities from exceeding reason – but quite the contrary, on Purim, we are obligated to celebrate “until one doesn’t know”; above the limitations of logic.

This indicates that although weekday activities are prohibited during the festivals and are permitted on Purim, the fact the Purim festivities are to go beyond logic, indicates that Purim has something greater than the festivals. The “head” of the Festivals is the first holiday, Pesach, which commemorates the Exodus from Egypt. On Purim however, we don’t celebrate liberation. The Jews remained in exile. Yet *in* exile, a great miracle

occurred, for which this joyous holiday was instituted, a rejoicing even greater than the rejoicing over the liberation from Egypt.

When the Talmud was searching for the true content of the Purim miracle, it would have been simple enough to conclude that it was the reversal of Haman's decree to destroy the Jews. "It was turned upside down: The Jews prevailed over their adversaries." Yet, the Talmud states, this was merely the result of the true miracle. The true miracle – the 'might' of this miracle that distinguished it from all other miracles, says Rashbi, was that "On that night, the king's sleep was disturbed." The fact that Achashverosh could not sleep causing him to request the book of records be read to him, which related that Mordechai had saved his life, and Achashverosh asked, "How was he rewarded?" the ministers responding: "He was never rewarded"— this, the Talmud relates, was the essence of the miracle which set-off the other events of the Purim story. And this isn't a minority opinion in the Talmud; —there is disagreement in the Talmud, but not concerning the essence of the miracle. The disagreement is over the "rise to power" whether it refers to Achashverosh's rise, or to Haman's. Based on this discussion there are two opinions on where the Megilla reading must begin, from its beginning or from the middle? The ruling is that one must begin reading at the beginning, since "the rise" in the Megillah refers to Achashverosh. The disagreement is only which 'rise' the Megila refers to. However, the essence of the miracle is unanimously: "On that night the king's sleep was disturbed." The law is, when reading this verse at the Megillah reading, the reader raises his voice. This indicates that this section is "raised" from the rest of the story. The explanation for raising the voice at this verse: Because this part contains the essence of the Purim miracle, as explained in Maharil. This behooves explanation: True, it occurred that when Achasverosh's sleep was disturbed he requested the book of records be read to him. But even if the book of records were not read to him – when the news of Haman's decree would reach Mordechai and Esther, Esther would surely have known – with Mordechai's advice – how to influence Achasverosh to annul the decree. The reasoning Mordechai gave Esther, which compelled her to do everything possible, including self-sacrifice, to have the decree annulled— Mordechai would have acted such even if Achashverosh's sleep were not disturbed? And Esther would have followed Mordechai's guidance, "Esther obeyed Mordechai's words" regardless of whether the king's sleep

were disturbed or not. We need therefore to understand; why is this event called “the essence, the might, of the miracle?” Its importance is secondary! The miracle could have unfolded in many different ways, and was not even dependant on this event. It was only a cause—or rather, a cause to the cause— that eventually led to the unfolding of the miracle. And yet, the Talmud states simply that the essence of the miracle was the disturbance of the king’s sleep – or as Maharil terms it, “the essence” of the miracle! This leads to another point. All events related in Torah are not merely to mention past events, to remember them as heartwarming tales. Rather, “these days should be remembered and kept.” By remembering these days and the events that occurred in them, they must be ‘kept,’ they must influence one’s actions now. As in Purim, when one remembers the miracle with Achasverosh, it must result in fulfilling the Purim Mitzvos: gifts of food and charity, and it evokes trust in G-d. All details of the Megillah are important. This is why one is obligated to read the Megillah in its entirety, and surely the words “On that night” which must be read according to all opinions. According to the opinion that the entire Megillah is read –this part is included. To the opinion that the reading begins from “that night,” one need not read from the beginning of the Megillah, but all opinions agree “On that night” must be included in the reading. We must understand; how can the Jew’s actions be influenced by reading, studying and contemplating this event in the Megillah – how will he improve be pondering “On that night, the king’s sleep was disturbed?” When one reads about the Jews’ fasting and weeping, we learn that by praying to G-d, G-d fulfills our request. One can also know that a Jew should not take into account the natural order of events. Regardless of whatever problem may exist, as soon as the Jew prays to G-d, G-d will save him from all decrees. Not only will he be saved – but it will be “turned upside down” to precisely the opposite of what nature dictates. However, what could possibly be the lesson from “The king’s sleep was disturbed”? The answer: The Midrash teaches that although the simple meaning of the verse “On that night the king’s sleep was disturbed” refers to Achasverosh, –and the literal translation of the verse is certainly true– in a deeper sense, the description of this event also aludes to another event: On that night, the sleep of the King of the universe was, so-to-speak, disturbed. In general, G-d can at times be ‘resting.’ When the Jews are in exile, G-d is “not awake,” as it were, to the plight of the Jewish people in exile. And Jews pray and beseech G-d,

“Awaken G-d, why do You sleep,” G-d, as it were, should ‘awaken’; make Himself aware, and then, surely, He will release Jews from all hardships. And on that night, the “Sleep of the King of the universe was disturbed.” That night G-d, awoke from a ‘sleep’ regarding the plight of Jews; rather, “the King’s sleep was disturbed.” And this ‘awakening’ by G-d resulted in Achashverosh’s sleep being disturbed; which set-off the entire chain of events which resulted in Haman’s decree being nullified. This is why the Midrash explains that the essence of the Purim miracle was the disturbance of Achashverosh’s sleep, which occurred upon the Jews’ request, “Awaken G-d, why do you sleep,” G-d awakened from His “rest” and evoked the essence of the miracle, until, “it was turned upside down.” But this, in itself, is unclear. Why was this miracle necessary? On the contrary—ordinarily “In all their troubles, G-d is troubled.” When Jews are lacking spiritually or materially; “You are children to G-d;” every Jew – and certainly the entire Jewish nation as a whole – is G-d’s child. So certainly, when a child is in a predicament, the father cannot sleep! And he will toil tirelessly until the situation is righted. So, to the contrary, G-d should not have ‘slept’ in the first place! And here we say that waking from His sleep was miraculous?! Moreover, it is a greater miracle than the reversal of the decree; it is “the essence, and the might, of the miracle!” The Talmud Sotah says, “One is treated as he behaves” –G-d’s behavior towards a Jew mirrors the Jew’s behavior to G-d, specifically because Jews are G-d’s children. As we see in the human experience: The behavior of someone else’s child doesn’t overly distress a person. When he behaves properly; that’s great. When he misbehaves, that’s also okay. Sometimes he will try to help the child, and sometimes not. In any event, it does not disturb him to the level of losing sleep! However when it comes to one’s own child, a father cannot sleep; he leaps from bed when he knows his child is not behaving properly. —How much more so, when it comes to a child of G-d. As we see with parents; the more effort they invest in their children, the more they expect from the child. And when the child behaves inappropriately, it pains the parents even more, and the father cannot possibly sleep. He will toil to cause the child to mend his behavior. So it is in G-d’s relationship with the Jewish people. As the prophet says: “You alone I know from all peoples on the earth; therefore I hold you accountable for your sins.” Other nations are guided by the Noahide Laws but G-d is not as vigilant; they are not as ‘accountable’ as

the Jew. G-d scrutinizes the behavior of a Jew, that he should begin to conduct himself as the child of the King of kings, G-d. Specifically “You know from all peoples on the earth.” That is why G-d tells the Jew that everything depends on his behavior. “Know what is above you.” The Alter Rebbe explains this Mishna to mean: Know that what occurs above is from you, it depends on your behavior. If you desire blessings from Above, you must be connected to Above – stay connected to the Source of blessings and you will receive His blessings. *** From this we also know the reverse. Not because G-d, Heaven forbid, wants to punish a Jew; G-d wants his good: The Mishnas Chasidim writes that G-d’s will is that Jews should have their needs by toiling for them, not as a gift without effort. It should be earned. So G-d showed, through the Torah of Light – which enlightens the life of a Jew – what he should and should not do. In order to have all his needs in the fullest – and for all of the blessings to be earned; rightfully his. This is the meaning of “One is treated as he behaves.” But the person can only toil to the extent of his ability, and G-d, in His kindness, ‘toils’ in return by His standards resulting in His blessings many times over. An analogy: When a person contributes ten percent of his income to charity –when it’s an average income, it is ten percent of an average income. However, when a wealthy person contributes ten percent of *his* income —that equals several times more than the former’s ten percent. Likewise, when a Jew exerts himself to give ten percent of his resources, G-d, in return, will give him ten percent by His standards. G-d is mirroring the Jew’s behavior, but it is many times greater. The state of the Jews at that time was such, that when Haman alleged “There exists one nation spread amongst the nations,” and Mordechai and Esther worked to abolish the decree, they didn’t say that Haman’s allegation was a lie. – It would seem the best approach: The premise of the decree was, “There exists a nation spread amongst the nations,” with its various explanations . Esther and Mordechai should have stated that Haman’s allegation is false! – The fact that they didn’t claim so, shows that Haman’s allegation was true. Commentaries explain that Haman described the Jews ambiguously: ‘Yeshno’ —“There exists one nation,” instead of “There is one nation.” Haman was also alluding to an additional meaning: *Yashnu*—they have fallen asleep! A Jew must be awake; aware of G-d, Torah and His Mitzvos. Haman’s allegation was: There exists a nation which was designated as chosen from all nations; they exist here among us, – the first meaning of

Yeshno but what is their state? ‘Yashnu,’ they have fallen asleep; they are not as the One Nation should be. It should be evident upon every Jew – although he is “dispersed amongst all nations” – that he is a member of One Nation, a chosen nation, and regardless of where the Jew is, he is unique from all those surrounding him. And not only on Shabbos or festivals, on Rosh-Hashana or Yom-Kippur; it is every day and night of the year. Even while “dispersed amongst the nations,” it is obvious that he is a member of “One nation;” he is special. When he eats, it is obvious that he is a Jew, for he eats only Kosher foods, uses only Kosher utensils, and recites a blessing before and after eating. When he walks in the street, it is evident that he is only in appropriate places, and he is not in immodest places. And if he passes a synagogue or study-hall, he enters and says a word of Torah or participates in a Torah-lesson, or recites a prayer. However, for a non-Jew, this is all irrelevant to him. When a non-Jew engages in commerce, it depends on his character; if his nature is honest, then he’s an honest businessperson. If he was born dishonest, then he’s dishonest in business. Even a person born with honest character traits, who will behave honestly – when it will appear that a large profit is at stake, he will search for a pretext that his infringement on someone’s business is only a minor infraction, barely infringement at all, so he can find a loophole, although it takes actually affects someone’s livelihood. So too, when it comes to slander, gossip, or matters of trade. However when a Jew, a member of One Nation engages in business and encounters a dilemma, first and foremost he consults the Code of Jewish Law. And if there is even a trace of infringement he avoids it! – He doesn’t decide for himself what is or is not permissible, nor does his nature decide for him, the Code of Jewish Law guides him! The Code of Jewish Law doesn’t include only the laws of morning blessings; it includes, as well, sections that deal with business, partnership, neighbors, etc., etc. The Torah guides all aspects of life! And this was Haman claim: For any other nation it would be acceptable. However, when we speak of One Nation, whom “I know among all people on earth;” the single nation chosen from all others, and they have now – Haman alleged – fallen asleep! When one is asleep, his intellectual capacities, among others, are not obvious. Likewise, Haman alleged, the quality that makes the Jew a chosen Nation is asleep; it is dormant! This was Haman’s claim to Achashverosh, which mirrored the Heavenly Court’s claim to the King of the universe: Since the Jews slumbered in their

adherence to Torah, as evident by their participation in the royal feast and the other causes for the decree – this was Haman’s statement to Achashverosh, which was reflected by Haman’s minister in the Heavenly Court – that the Jews’ adherence to Torah fell asleep! And who fell asleep? The One nation – chosen from all nations of the world! Haman argued, if the Jews are slumbering, their G-d, too, must sleep! since “we are treated as we behave.” And since Esther and Mordechai did not refute Haman’s argument, obviously, the Jews at the time truly were ‘asleep.’ And this, the Talmud relates, was the essence of the miracle of Purim: G-d ignored the actual situation, and “His sleep was disturbed.” The Heavenly Court claimed that, reflecting the Jews’ indifference, G-d should respond with indifference. Instead, His “sleep was disturbed,” above the natural order. The Midrash relates: What ‘woke’ the Almighty from His ‘sleep’? Jewish children studied Torah – children, before Bar-Mitzva. Ignoring the terrible situation, the Jews obeyed Mordechai and arranged for Jewish children to study Torah – and this allowed for G-d to ignore all arguments, resulting in “The sleep of the King of the universe being disturbed.” And this leads to “it was turned upside down,” as the verse describes, this led to, “The Jews had light, joy, gladness and glory” and by the interpretation of our Sages “light” refers to Torah, etc. When G-d is close to the Jew, it is reflected by the Jew – ignoring the fact that his Judaism is asleep – it awakens the Jew to “light;” Torah study. The Jew sets time for daily Torah study regardless of his personal level yesterday and before. This leads him directly to “The Jews had light” —it enlightens everything, including his material needs. Until, “it shall not depart from their descendants.” The concern people have of parents and children living in different worlds with a tremendous generation gap dividing them; – as in the story of Purim, parent and child connected through Torah – the children study Torah, evoking G-d’s blessings that the parents, as well, study Torah. This brings near “the hearts of parents to children, and children to their parents, uniting everyone as One Nation, children and parents in unity and “as one” we evoke “Bless us, our Father,” – G-d’s infinite blessing, “light, joy, gladness and glory,” as stated. And the two redemptions are connected; from the redemption of Achashverosh we will dance joyously to the redemption from this exile, through our righteous Moshiach, who will come and lead us speedily to our Land. May it be now! ***

Sicha 2

As mentioned in the past, Torah is the Torah of Truth. Truth is constant – never revised; therefore it reaches even the smallest details. This is alluded in the letters of '*Emes*' – truth, which is comprised of the three letters 'Alef,' 'Mem' and 'Tav.' 'Alef' is the first letter of the Alef-Beis, 'Mem' is the middle letter, and 'Tav' is the last letter. This teaches us: What can be called 'truth'? Only something which is always consistent, regardless of whether it is in the beginning, the middle, the end, or in between. – If something is one way and changes over time, that illustrates that from the onset it was not fully truthful. So too, if it changes at the end. That is why 'Emes – truth,' is conveyed in a word which includes the entire Alef-Beis, beginning with 'Alef,' and ending with 'Tav.' And this includes all letters, even the end-letters. In some calculations they are placed before the Alef-Beis, and at times they are placed after the Alef-Beis – therefore the numerical value of the 'end-Chaf' is 500, up to 900 for the 'end-Zadik' – and in this sequence, the middle letter is 'Mem,' with the letters of *Emes* including also the end-letters. All this indicates that truth encompasses all details. From this we derive that when something is written in Torah, it's not truthful only in a general sense but all its details as well, are truth. Therefore, when Torah uses an analogy, all details of the analogy must correspond with the details of the lesson. So, when the Jews' lacking behavior is described as 'sleep' – "they slept in observance of Mitzvos;" it is not a cute metaphor – rather, in all details it was analogous to sleep. In other words: When a Jew, for the time being, is lacking in his Judaism, his only shortcoming is that he's 'asleep,' not, Heaven forbid, anything worse. Whether someone is asleep or awake, his body hasn't changed, his intellect isn't lacking; while asleep, one doesn't lose his intellectual capacities – it is the same soul with the same abilities to reason. A person who is smart while awake retains that quality while asleep. Similarly, one who is kind while awake is still a kind person as he sleeps. The difference however, is: While asleep, his faculties are inactive and don't rule him —but he retains all his abilities in their entirety. When you see a Jew who should study a certain amount of hours per day, yet learns a half hour less – he does not, Heaven forbid, do so to spite G-d, a Jew would never do that! "I know I must study Torah, yet I refuse to" – A Jew couldn't do that! His intellect has merely 'fallen asleep'! What is the solution? Even if someone says, "Don't interfere with my personal endeavors; it's my private life, don't

change me, don't pressure me to observe Torah and Mitzvos." – You are not 'an outsider,' 'interfering' – he merely needs to be awakened from sleep, and then he *himself* wants to observe Torah and Mitzvos! For when, "Their observance was slumbering," while they indulged in the royal feast; or according to another opinion they bowed to an idol – the worst form of idol-worship – even Haman, who was an ardent Jew-hater and sought their shortcomings, had no choice but to recognize the truth: The Jews did not, Heaven forbid, refuse to fulfill God's will. Rather, had they been 'awake,' they would surely observe Torah and Mitzvos. Haman said: Their present spiritual state however, is 'resting.' And if the Jews' enemy claimed only that they were asleep, surely it was not worse than that. He would only exaggerate their shortcomings – certainly not overstate their virtues! The Megillah is teaching a lesson for every Jew. As stated, even a minor detail in the Megillah is a profound and magnificent lesson to every Jew: When one encounters another Jew, you must know that since he is the son of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, or she is the daughter of Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah, it is absolutely certain that their heart is open to Torah and Mitzvos! His heart is awake to study Torah and observe its Mitzvos. It may be that only his heart is awake, and the external faculties which are covering his heart, are asleep and do not allow the heart's desires to come into action – to study Torah and observe Mitzvos on a daily basis. He has merely 'fallen asleep.' If you see someone asleep in a house which is on fire, no one will say that you shouldn't wake him, as "It's his private issue, and you shouldn't get involved." Because when he wakes up, you won't need to explain that he must escape from the house. He himself will know that this house is unsafe. But because he fell asleep, he was unaware of his surroundings. The lesson is: We must know that if a Jew comes along and says "I will not conduct myself according to Jewish law" – those are not the Jew's words, it's his Evil Inclination! And when the Evil Inclination speaks, it is without the Jew's consent – the Inclination has 'sedated' the Jew and he cannot hear what the Evil Inclination is saying! As Maimonides terms it: "His Evil Inclination coerced him," forced him not to hear what the Evil Inclination is saying, that the Jew should not refute him. When you liberate a person from an oppressor who is attempting to pressure him, to coerce him, and to put him in harm's way, it's not improper to get involved in his private life, nor is it "undemocratic." Quite the contrary! This is a case of a person unaware that he is in

danger. Surely, if he were aware of the danger, he would flee from it. And “One who can correct a wrong and does not do so...” The one who does not wake him carries the blame, not the one who is sleeping – for he is asleep! – True, he is at fault for being asleep. And the law is “a person is always liable,” even while asleep – a person is responsible not to lay down in a place where he might do damage – and surely not injure himself. However, once he’s already asleep it is the sacred responsibility of those surrounding him to wake him. You won’t need to do any more than that. For, as Haman said: The Jews’ Torah observance is “asleep.” Any shortcomings in observing Mitzvos; their partaking in the royal feast, or their bowing to the statue, is only a result of their slumber. And therefore, when God ‘awoke;’ “The sleep of the King of the universe was disturbed,” it was mirrored by the awakening of Jewish souls below. And “The Jews had light – Torah, joy – they observed the festivals, gladness – observed circumcision, and glory – Tefillin, to which the entire Torah is compared. This answers another question: Haman had succeeded in creating the decree. That is proof the Jews lacked in Torah observance. Yet, when the decree was abolished, the Jews immediately began to study Torah? The connection: While the decree was looming, Jewish children studied Torah. This, in turn, caused “The disturbance of G-d’s sleep” – which was mirrored by the awakening of Jewish souls below and that resulted in “The Jews had light – Torah, joy – they observed the festivals, gladness – observed circumcision, and glory – Tefillin,” to which the entire Torah is compared. From everything in Torah, we must learn a lesson in our lives: When one encounters another Jew, and it is apparent that this person needs to improve – whether in observance of Mitzvos toward God, or toward his fellow man – he may distance himself from this person, since his behavior is inappropriate. The Megillah teaches that even Haman, the ardent Jew-hater stated that a Jew’s inappropriate conduct is not intrinsic, rather, he’s in a spiritual slumber. When you, or someone else, will wake him, there is no doubt that his conduct toward God and toward his fellow will improve. Moreover, this person, once awoken, may be even greater than the person who wakes him – for we never know what is in the heart of a person. The ‘awakened heart’ of the slumbering person may well be more intense toward Torah and Mitzvos than the person waking him. When can we know this? Only when he will be woken. You may hesitate to disturb someone else’s sleep, for he is sound asleep, and is enjoying it – Torah says, he

merely fell into an unhealthy slumber! The Torah is “Our life and length of our days.” Concerning Mitzvos we are told, “Live by them.” The life of a Jew is to put on Tefillin and to observe all Mitzvos. So if he is lacking in observance, it is in an unhealthy slumber. Surely, when he will be woken, not only will he not be upset, on the contrary, he will forever be grateful that you woke him from an unhealthful sleep. It is a serious illness when one has fallen asleep and cannot be woken for a long time. It is one of the most dangerous afflictions! To say “I should not disturb him,” is harmful to the person! A most sacred task when someone is in a spiritual slumber, is to awaken him at once! Certainly the person will eventually be grateful for it. This is one of the lessons of the Megillah: Although there were people who bowed to the statue – even if they worshipped only for show – and there were those who participated in the royal feast – yet Haman, who searched for the Jews’ shortcomings, could say merely, “the Jews are slumbering”! In other words, Haman said: “They are of full mind and heart – all limbs are intact and able – but instead functioning properly, the body is slumbering!” This is the lesson from the term Haman used for the Jews, ‘*Yeshno* – they’re in a slumber’: Regardless the state of the Jew – he is complete; he needs only to be awakened. Moreover, even while he is in a slumber, one cannot claim “I don’t want to associate with an imperfect person,” the Megillah teaches: the Jew is perfect, he has merely fallen asleep! In order to influence another Jew, to bring him closer to his Father in Heaven, it must be done with love, peacefully. How can you evoke within yourself love for a fellow Jew, while the person is not behaving the way he should be – whether between him and G-d or between him and his fellow? When you comprehend that this person has merely fallen asleep, but all his faculties – his intellect, his emotions, his deeds – are all intact and they are merely inactive, you will realize that the other Jew is also wonderful and you must engage him. And it is your great fortune to awaken this great person. It will benefit the Jew who was sleeping, and even more, it will benefit the person who awakens him. It will bring to the Jewish Nation one more Torah observant Jew, – not only observant in potential. And together, we tip the scales for the individual and the entire world, bringing G-d’s blessings, “light, joy, gladness and glory,” literally, and with its various interpretations, literally, in this world – apparent and visible good! ***

As stated earlier, What caused G-d's sleep to be disturbed? –Notwithstanding the fact that many Jews slumbered– nevertheless, G-d 'awoke' He was sensitive even to those Jews slumbered, to awaken them –not by way of decrees, etc. What caused all this to happen was the fact that the Jews gathered their children to study Torah. The Midrash relates: Mordechai gathered 22,000 Jewish children, —young children, and he studied Torah with them. This caused an commotion On High; it disturbed G-d's sleep, and that became the essence of the miracle —the decree was not only abolished, it was reversed: “the Jews had light, joy, gladness and glory;” “and masses of non Jews converted to Judaism!” As stated, every detail in the Megilla is a practical lesson; a directive for this Purim and the days that follow —in every generation, forever. The lesson: No matter what the situation— you must see to it that wherever there may be a Jewish child, he should study Torah. Even if you are Chief Justice of the Judaic High Court, —as Mordechai was in his time —later-on he wasn't its head, but a member— Mordechai ignored the fact that he was a minister in the King's Court an adviser to the king's court — a position which influenced the entire world—all 127 lands. Moreover, the Jewish People at that time were in a situation where they needed Mordechai to devote his entire time to saving the Jewish nation, as a minister of King Achashverosh ruler of the entire world. In addition, Jews are obligated to do what they can to help gentiles observe the Noahide Laws, so the world should function peacefully. For the world was “not created for emptiness, but to be civilized.” It is incumbent upon Jews to promote this. So seemingly, it would have sufficed to hire a teacher to teach the children. —These were young children under the age of Bar-Mitzva, and even younger, who had no need for the wisdom of Mordechai the Chief Justice, and a member of, the High Court. He surely could have explained that he was the Chief of the High Court—a great a Rosh Yeshiva, he could have argued that he was a Minister in the Royal Palace —a “major community activist,” and an activist not in a small community or even one city, but one whose activism spans the globe! So if he were to call a meeting, if would deliver a speech, and see to it that the newspapers print it and have it publicized by all the king's messengers and riders who would have rushed about with his words —there would have been no greater achievement in the world! Why should he bury himself with teaching Torah to small children?! The Megillah tells us: Quite the contrary! Esther's success in her

pleading before Achashverosh; Mordechai's success in guiding Esther properly; the reversal of the decree; "the essence of the miracle" was caused by the fact that Mordechai did not seek excuses that "he is a big Rosh Yeshiva and it is not appropriate for him to deal with small children;" he is a major activist, how can he deal with a Talmud Torah with young schoolchildren, as he is a major player and the entire world depends on him. Mordechai's success in convincing Esther and Esther's success with Achashverosh resulted from Mordechai's gathering Jewish children and turning them into "Torah students." After from this crucial event, the other Purim events followed, ultimately leading to the miracle. This is a lesson for our daily lives —this Purim and Shushan Purim, as well the days that will follow: If one claims: I am busy! How can I be disturbed with the education young children; That can be delegated to my assistant and I will direct him to make an appeal, and that will suffice. The Meggilah teaches: No! As long there is a Jewish child who has no teacher, you have no choice. Sit down with this child and teach him! He's only a child, and you're the Chief of the High Court? It already happened before. Mordechai, the Chief of the High Court in the time of the Holy Temple, did it! Talmud Shkalim relates That Mordechai was later in the Holy Temple, where he introduced innovations. We say in the Shema —and it is an obligation to recite it twice daily— one of the commandments is "You shall teach your children," and it is mentioned twice, once in the first section, and again in the second. You might say this refers only to your *own* children. Rashi comments—and as stated in the past Rashi's commentary is intended even for a 5 year old student— that "teach your children" refers to students. In truth, your activism is necessary, as well —as Mordechai's fasting and weeping was critical— his prayers surely achieved more than an ordinary person's —yet his supplication succeeded because he first gathered Jewish children to study Torah. And there was no one else, so Mordechai taught them himself. In the words of the earlier discussion: If an adult sleeps-in, he overslept a half-hour, he can make up for the lost time. However, a child who is —Heaven forbid—allowed to "oversleep," if he is not being educated "in his way" – in his childhood —it is uncertain whether the loss can be recovered. This is true in any generation. In today's **day, when strong winds blowing every child has those attempting to distract him in the wrong direction.** If the child is allowed to "oversleep" even a few minutes; by allowing the parents to slumber for a few

minutes; —in order not to insult the parents, and thereby refrain from providing a Jewish child with a true Jewish education— one day, later, you may not be able to reach this child, will he be receptive at that time, or will he be a captive of his circumstances? On the other hand, we can be certain that if we only desire to accomplish, then even those who bowed to the statue, Heaven forbid, those who indulged in the royal feast, —not only will their children study Torah with the parents' agreement and encouragement, but the parents, as well, will share “Light—Torah” which will lead to “Gladness—the festivals,” their true holidays will be Jewish festivals, Sundays and other non-Jewish holidays will be insignificant. His holidays will be the day he was taken out of Egypt, the day he received the Torah, and the day he leaves his beautifully furnished home —with its furniture, wall-to-wall carpets and other amenities— to sit in a Sukkah, because G-d commanded him to! This is his holiday! It doesn't trouble him —regardless, one is not obligated to sit in a Sukkah where he's uncomfortable.— When is it a joyous day for him? When he expended large sums for his house, brought in furniture, added all sorts of amenities, yet when he hears that G-d wants him to sit in the Sukkah —he takes along all his belongings, his fork, his spoon, his plate— he leaves everything behind and settles in the Sukkah. When he's asked, “Isn't this outrageous? You spent \$100,000 on your home, and you'll celebrate your joyous holiday in a hut?!” He responds with the verse: “It's for all to know;” he truly believes it! No one forced him! To fulfill the Mitzva of Sukkah he must really enjoy it! —Since “G-d placed the Jews in a Sukkah when He redeemed them from Egypt— so he celebrates the fact that he leaves his comfortable home and settles in the temporary Sukkah. And he does it with great joy; our “Season of Rejoicing” is specifically Sukkos, —not Pesach and Shavuos. He is told: “This is the way your soul feels; your body, however, is uncomfortable in a Sukkah, and Torah study tires you. When you were “in Egypt” you were “nourished free of charge;” today you must toil for it, you must make a blessing before and after eating. You may not infringe on other people's business —how can you compare all this to the liberty you enjoyed “in Egypt,” where you had no limitations? Sure, your soul enjoys all this, but your body does not?!” He responds: No! “Gladness refers to circumcision,” —he has an “eternal covenant in his flesh”. His physical body has eternal bond with G-d. —Not only his soul; circumcision affects his body! Circumcision effected his flesh —the Jewish body is bound to G-d. He

is asked: “This is true in the you personal surroundings, but you live amongst seventy nations, “spread out amongst the nations,” they will humiliate you?!” He responds: No! “Honor refers to Tefillin!” When he’ll go in the street, “All the nations will see” —when they see that he’s proud of his Judaism— then they “will fear you!” They won’t merely respect you, “The fear of Mordechai fell upon them.” They’ll fear you, not humiliate you. And certainly they’ll treat you with respect. As stated, this all begins with—as Rashi explains “The hearts of fathers will turn back to G-d”—through the children. First and foremost, regardless of his standing, one must ensure that your son and daughter, young and old, —as the Talmud says “until 24, as long as you can influence him,” you must ensure that he studies G-d’s Living Torah. This will ‘awaken’ G-d, to bestow blessings for success upon all Jews, whatever they’re standing. Eventually, every Jew will find the “light of Torah.” And they will have literal brightness, as well. All of verses blessings, as well, both materially and spiritually, “Light, joy, gladness and glory.” Until the Megillah’s further blessing “Peace to all his **offspring**,” peace amongst all Jews, for everyone **will be unified by Torah observance**. This is the only way to achieve unity. Those who teach that the only way to promote unity is by **eliminating** religion; not to acknowledge that a prohibition is truly a prohibition; an destructive action is truly destructive; a decree against the existence of the Jewish nation – are worse then Haman’s! —Haman wanted to destroy the bodies. Today, however, we’re facing a decree which would **jumble** Jews and non-Jews. A Jew won’t know who his daughter or son is befriending. A generation would pass, he himself won’t know whether the fellow standing in Shul, or the person sitting at the table is Jewish. Such a decree is unprecedented! “Peace to all his **offspring**” will not occur by deceiving Jews and dragging them—Heaven forbid—into a horrific destruction! “Peace to all his **offspring**” can only be in one way: “Light is Torah.” Allow Torah to illuminate the way, to illustrate, what is a Jew and what is a gentile, and how a gentile must act and how a Jew should conduct himself. Then there will be “Peace to all his **offspring**.” This verse describes the end of the period of Achashverosh. The Midrash relates, at that time “the faces of the enemies were blackened as a charred pot.” In the face of a terrifying, unprecedented decree we may not despair, and we must ensure that children study Torah. And the children will quiet those who wish to drag them children from the straight path to

a terrible situation—the children will not know who they are marrying; through this unprecedented situation! Torah study will lead to “Peace to all his **offspring**” peacefully, through Torah, as the verse says: “G-d gives strength to His people, G-d blesses His people with peace.” And this will bring peace to the entire world. The Sifri says, before the Giving of the Torah there was an upheaval amongst the nations and when they heard that Torah was given to the Jews, it brought peace to the entire world. May it be G-d’s will, that all this should materialize speedily, pleasantly and peacefully, Beginning with a Jewish education for every single Jewish child, no matter his parents’ observance. And certainly, eventually the parents will not mind; rather, it will delight them. And without a doubt, “The hearts of parents will turn back to G-d—through the children.” The children will effect that their parents will have “Light—Torah;” Torah will not only be studied, but it will be a luminary for the parents. This will lead to “Many of the people became Jews” —as Rashi explains, they converted, a conversion as Rashi means it, according to Halacha. And this will lead to “It was turned upside down, the Jews prevailed over their adversaries” And “it shall not depart from their descendants.” parents and children united, will speedily greet Moshiach, with the true and ultimate redemption, with joy and gladness of heart! ***