

AWAIT THE DAWN

by Rabbi Label Lam

To Him Who grants victory, upon the strengthening of the power of day's dawning. (Tehillim 22:1)

Why is Esther compared to the darkness before the dawn? It is meant to teach us that just as darkness is at the end of the night, so Esther is the end of all miracles. (Tractate Yoma 29A)

What does it mean that "Esther," the Megilllas Esther, is the last of all miracles?

Jewish National History begins with earth shattering sea splitting episodes. So Pesach and Shevuos walk us yearly through those very same larger than life footsteps. Those were awesome and overpowering demonstrations of power and presence. No one, except Amalek, could have denied the historicity or the significance of those events. Most of the world borrows its religious validation from those overwhelmingly miraculous times. That's how our history and the calendar year begin. That's not how it ends.

We're getting directions now on how to get to a certain important destination. The first marking is a huge highway sign followed by, let's say, 49 lights and then another huge traffic sign -bigger and brighter than has ever been seen. Then the road twists and turns for a good while until another huge sign or two that prepare us for a U-turn near a small hut, not a Pizza Hut. And then there's a straight dark road and eight little lights. Now the signs start to get a little more subtle: Look for odd clusters and unusual sequences of events that together signal the end of the journey is yet nearing.

Megilllas Esther is not just a historical record. It is rather a window into the world, a pair of glasses, 3D glasses that allow us to see with extra depth the signs along that long and dark final stretch of our history. Nothing is overtly miraculous. Only the irreducibly complex patterns of events alert us to what seems like a cleverly imbedded signature or wink - we think.

A few months ago we went to my mother's house for Shabbos for a special occasion. After Shabbos and some cleaning up someone had an idea that we watch one of our oldie family movies. The one on the top of the stack that was ready to go was our wedding video from almost 22 years ago which we rarely get a chance to view. As we watched the parade of people comments flowed on how young or different this one looked and how many are not in this world.

By the Chupah one after another of our Rabbis could be seen with much darker beards making those seven blessings. One person my mother did not recognize. She asked, "Who is that?" I told her that that was Reb Getzel my Rebbe at that time. My wife asked, "Whatever happened to him? I

haven't heard anything about him since then." I told her that I think he went to Cleveland and I also have not heard from him or about him for almost 22 years."

Later that night, back home in Monsey, my cell phone rings. I did not recognize the number on the called ID. I risked taking the call. "Hello Reb Label, Getzelhere!" I was in shock. It was that Rebbe. He told me in his usually excited tone that he was on his way back to Cleveland after an inspiring Shabbos in Philadelphia. After one of his lectures a young man approached him to ask a few pointed questions. He asked the fellow what his name was. He said, "Lam." He asked where he came from. The young man told him, "Monsey". He said, "I taught a Lam in Monsey 22 years ago- a Label Lam!" "That's my father!" He answered. He told me that he was so impressed by and excited to meet my son that he asked him for my number and amazingly he made the call that very night.

Nothing miraculous happened here, just a something extremely improbable. Nothing overtly miraculous happened in the Megilla of Esther either. What does it all mean? I don't know! Perhaps it's just means that we are not alone, not so lost, and we should await the dawn. Text Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and **Torah.org**.