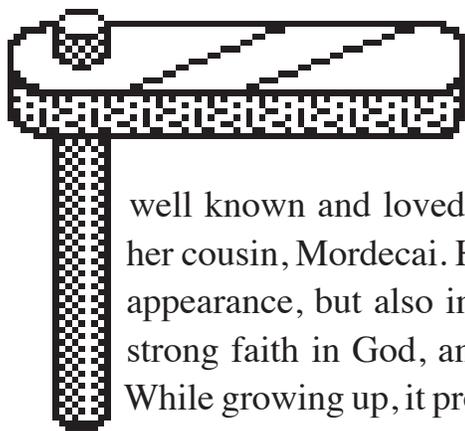


# פורים

## *Purim*



**P**urim is the celebration of the victory that HaShem gave to His people Israel over their enemies during the time when Persia ruled the Near East. The story of Esther (Hadassah) is well known and loved. She was an orphan who was being raised by her cousin, Mordecai. Hadassah was beautiful, not only in her outward appearance, but also in her soul, for she was a young woman with a strong faith in God, and she had learned to live by godly principles. While growing up, it probably never crossed her mind that one day God would use her to save the entire people of Israel! But that's exactly what He did. The pagan King who ruled over the land of Persia was looking for a new Queen, since he had banned the current Queen, Vashti, from his presence because she had refused to dance at one of his drinking parties. When Hadassah was chosen to be his new Queen, it no doubt presented many problems for her. How could she marry a non-Jew? How could she live in the palace of a pagan King? What about worshipping the God of Israel? What about eating kosher food? What about her own community? How could she become the wife of someone who worshipped idols? But she had no choice—the King had the power of life and death, and to refuse the King meant death for sure. So Hadassah called her community together and asked them to pray. For three days they fasted and prayed, asking HaShem to do a miracle on behalf of Hadassah and her cousin Mordecai.

It seemed as though God had not heard their prayers. Hadassah became the Queen and moved to the palace. But God had heard their prayers! Yet He had a slightly different plan. He knew that an evil man by the name of Haman would soon cook up a plan to kill all the Jews. But since Hadassah was now the Queen, she was able, through her wisdom and position in the palace, to expose Haman's deceitful plot, and in turn save the lives of all her people. Since God knew the future, He was able to prepare Hadassah to be His servant to save all the Jewish people from destruction.

The story of Hadassah teaches us that God will keep His promise to bless Israel and protect her. It also teaches us that He can use anyone to do His special work, as long as that person is willing to submit to Him and to live according to His ways.