

THERE IS a story of a man named Eddie Jacobson that reminds us of the role Esther played in the Purim story. Eddie was an ordinary Jewish guy from the Lower East Side of New York. When Eddie was a child, his parents moved to Kansas City and there he met a boy named Harry. Soon they became close school friends, did military service together during the First World War, and decided that when the war was over, they would go into business together. They set up a clothing store in Kansas City, but the business was not a great success and soon they drifted apart. Eddie Jacobson went on to become a travelling salesman, selling clothes. His friend, Harry S. Truman, took a slightly different route and landed up as President of the United States.



Eddie Jacobson (left), with his friend, former President Harry S. Truman

In 1947–48, the Jews of the world needed the support of the United States of America for the state of Israel to be proclaimed and recognised. The State Department was against it and advised the President not to support the creation of the State of Israel. Jews and Jewish organisations tried their utmost to see the President in the White House, and every single attempt was refused. Even the leader of the Zionist movement, Chaim Weizmann, the man who would become the first President of the State of Israel, was refused a meeting.

As time became desperate, somebody remembered that Harry S. Truman had a childhood friend called Eddie Jacobson. So they reached

out to Eddie and asked if he could get the President of the United States to meet with Chaim Weizmann. So Eddie phoned up President Truman and said he had to come and see him. Truman's officials tried to block the meeting, but Truman said "This is my old friend, Eddie, from school, Eddie, from the Army, Eddie, from our shop together! How can I not see this man?"

When Eddie arrived at the White House, Truman said "Eddie, you can talk to me about anything, except Israel." "Okay", said Eddie and he stood in the Oval Office, in front of the President of the United States, and began to cry. "Eddie, why are you crying?" asked the President. Eddie pointed to a marble statue in the room and asked, "Who is that, Harry?" "That's my hero, Andrew Jackson", Truman replied. "You really admire this man?" asked Eddie. "Yes." "And he had an influence over you?" "Yes" said Truman. Then, said Eddie, "I have a hero. His name is Chaim Weizmann. Harry, for my sake, please meet this man." Harry looked at Eddie and he knew that he couldn't say no to his old friend. That is how Chaim Weizmann got to see President Harry S. Truman, and that is how America voted in favour of the creation of the State of Israel. If they had not voted, Israel would not have been brought into being. What's more, Harry S. Truman made the United States the first country in the world to recognise the State when David Ben Gurion pronounced it.

Towards the end of the fourth chapter of Megilat Esther, we find Esther telling her uncle, Mordechai, about all the problems there might be in interceding with King Achashverosh regarding the fate of the Jewish people. Mordechai listens and then responds to her with the famous words, *Im hahareshtachrishi, ba'et hazot revach v'hatzlah ya'amod layehudim mimakom acher*, "If you are silent and you do nothing at this time somebody else will save the Jewish people." *U'mi yodeia im l'et kazot, higa'at lamalchut?* "But who knows, was it not for just this moment that you became a Queen, with access to King Achashverosh in the royal palace?" Just like Eddie Jacobson and Esther HaMalkah, Hashem is calling on each of us, saying there is a reason why we are here, because He has something for us to do, something that only we can do.



That is how Chaim Weizmann got to see President Harry S. Truman, and that is how America voted in favour of the creation of the State of Israel.

Points to Ponder

- 1 What did Esther and Eddie have in common?
- 2 Do you think they should be celebrated for their roles or were they just carrying out God's plan?
- 3 Do you have a sense of what your calling is? How will you know it when you see it?