

“Fighting our Enemies the Esther Way:
A Purim Lesson”

There are two ways of fighting our enemies, according to Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, and it's the stories of Chanukah and Purim that teach us how.

The Syrian-Greeks didn't want to destroy Jews; they wanted Judaism to end. Haman and his henchmen wanted to destroy the Jews of the Persian kingdom. In the former case, Mattathias and his sons – the Maccabees – fought physical battles. On the other hand Esther approached the problem diplomatically; she told Ahasuerus, the king, of Haman's plan and through words was able to convince the king to abort what would have been an annihilation.

God forbid we would ever be in the situation where we have to truly fight, but in terms of today's enemies we can use the Esther method by being in touch with our Senators and Representative, with State and local officials as well as law enforcement agencies. We can use the pen in writing letters to the editor (ok, email).

When we read about the vicious attack by the vice-chair of Sussex County's Republican Party organization, there was an outcry by the clergy and Federation's JCRC, the appropriate channels other than our own responses. And in New Jersey, when a member of the school board in Jersey City blamed the Jews for causing the shooting in the kosher butcher market, most, if not all, of the State's officials demanded her resignation or dismissal.

Would that such acts against us end; would that such anti-Semitic responses end as well. But, alas, while that seems to be our near future, we don't have to sit on our hands. We must not raise arms but we must raise our voices. We shall be heard, God-willing!