

For Such a Time As This

One of my favorite Bible verses is only two words long: *'l'et ka'zot*, 'for such a time as this'. It's so much more efficient in the Hebrew! This pithy text comes from Megillat Esther, the Book of Esther, 4:14 to be exact, and it represents the fulcrum in the story. Esther has no desire to confront Achashverosh to try and save the Jewish people; she's merely a concubine at the court of one of the world's most powerful monarchs. She hasn't been summoned to the king's presence for a month; initiating such a visit could be a capital offense. How is she ever to have hope of redemption?

Yet, Mordechai holds her to account and says: "Do not imagine that you, of all the Jews, will escape with your life by being in the king's palace. On the contrary, if you keep silent in this crisis, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another quarter, while you and your father's house will perish. And who knows, perhaps you have attained to royal position for – *l'et ka'zot*' - just such a time

this very moment matters immensely; this is the unfolding of the universe in our very hands.

It also seems fitting that Purim, in some ways, is the fulcrum between Hanukkah (and Tu Bishvat) and Pesach. This quarter of the Jewish year, I often like to teach, is where we fight to hold our own against the Antiochuses, Hamans and Pharaohs of the world. It is where we rally our community, proudly and courageously, to confront abuses of power and overturn systems of injustice. Purim is the festival of the role-reversal, where we remind the powerful of their limitations and encourage the powerless in their newfound strength. This is the time to take Jewish responsibility; to pursue justice vigorously so that we may all be redeemed from the narrow places come Passover.

I've certainly felt these sentiments keenly. During this time calling for Jewish pride and dignity, I was honored to be interviewed about antisemitism in KCRG's 'Ethical Perspectives in the News' together with colleague Rabbi Todd Thalblum from Temple