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[**Physical**](physical.html) **and** [**Spiritual**](physical.html) **Attacks**

By Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David (Greg Killian)

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[Jews](gen-jew.html) have been the focus of [physical](physical.html) and [spiritual](physical.html) attacks throughout the ages. Each attack is either [physical](physical.html) or [spiritual](physical.html). [Two](two.html) different kinds of attacks and [two](two.html) different kinds of responses. In this [study](study.html), I would like to examine these attacks to discern what should be my response to an attack.

In II Kings chapters 18 and 19, we have the story of the attack of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, against Hezekiah, king of Judah. Hezekiah offers tribute and Sennacherib responds bringing up a giant army to attack and to belittle [HaShem](hashem.html):

***II Melachim (Kings) 18:28-36*** *Then the commander stood and called out in* [*Hebrew*](hebrew.html)*: "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! This is what the king says: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*. Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *when he says, '*[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will surely deliver us; this* [*city*](city.html) *will not be given into the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of the king of Assyria.' "Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then every* [*one*](one.html) *of you will* [*eat*](eating.html) *from his own vine and* [*fig*](bethphag.html) *tree and drink water from his own cistern, Until I come and take you to a land like your own, a land of grain and* [*new*](new.html) *wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Choose life and not death! "Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, ‘*[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will deliver us.' Has the god of any* [*nation*](nations.html) *ever delivered his land from the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they rescued Samaria from my* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*? Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to* [*save*](salvation.html) *his land from me? How then can* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *deliver* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *from my* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*?" But the people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, "Do not answer him."*

Hezekiah responds to this [*physical*](physical.html) attack with a [spiritual](physical.html) response:

***II Melachim (Kings) 18:37 – 19:7*** *Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went to Hezekiah, with their clothes torn, and told him what the field commander had said. When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the* [*temple*](temple.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary and the leading* [*priests*](priests.html)*, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. They told him, "This is what Hezekiah says: This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the point of* [*birth*](birth.html) *and there is no strength to deliver them. It may be that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God will hear all the words of the field commander, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God, and that he will rebuke him for the words* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God has heard. Therefore* [*pray*](prayer.html) *for the remnant that still survives." When King Hezekiah's officials came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master, 'This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard--those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Listen! I am going to put such a spirit in him that when he hears a certain report, he will return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.'"*

Sennacherib continued his attack and his taunts against [HaShem](hashem.html) until Hezekiah’s and the people’s [prayer](prayer.html) was heard on high:

***II Melachim (Kings) 19:8-37*** *When the field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish, he withdrew and found the king fighting against Libnah. Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the Cushite king [of Egypt], was marching out to fight against him. So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word: "Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, '*[*Jerusalem*](city.html) *will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.' Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? Did the gods of the* [*nations*](nations.html) *that were destroyed by my forefathers deliver them: the gods of Gozan, Haran, Rezeph and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the* [*city*](city.html) *of Sepharvaim, or of Hena or Ivvah?" Hezekiah received the* [*letter*](letters.html) *from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the* [*temple*](temple.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *and spread it out before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. And Hezekiah* [*prayed*](prayer.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*: "*[*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, God of Israel, enthroned between the* [*cherubim*](angels.html)*, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and earth. Give ear,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and hear; open your* [*eyes*](body.html)*,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God. "It is true,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these* [*nations*](nations.html) *and their lands. They have thrown their gods into the* [*fire*](fire.html) *and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by men's* [*hands*](fourteen.html)*. Now,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our God, deliver us from his* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, so that all kingdoms on earth may* [*know*](daat.html) *that you alone,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, are God." Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: "This is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your* [*prayer*](prayer.html) *concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria. This is the word that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has spoken against him: "'The* [*Virgin*](virgin.html) *Daughter of Zion despises you and mocks you. The Daughter of* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *tosses her* [*head*](body.html) *as you flee. Who is it you have insulted and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your* [*eyes*](body.html) *in pride? Against the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *of Israel! By your messengers you have heaped insults on the Lord. And you have said, "With my many chariots I have ascended the heights of the mountains, the utmost heights of Lebanon. I have cut down its tallest cedars, the choicest of its pines. I have reached its remotest parts, the finest of its forests. I have dug wells in foreign lands and drunk the water there. With the soles of my* [*feet*](heel.html) *I have dried up all the streams of Egypt." "'Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities into piles of stone. Their people, drained of power, are dismayed and put to shame. They are like plants in the field, like tender green shoots, like grass sprouting on the roof, scorched before it grows up. "'But I* [*know*](daat.html) *where you stay and when you come and go and how you rage against me. Because you rage against me and your insolence has reached my* [*ears*](body.html)*, I will put my hook in your* [*nose*](body.html) *and my bit in your* [*mouth*](body.html)*, and I will make you return by the way you came.' "This will be the* [*sign*](signs.html) *for you, O Hezekiah: "This year you will* [*eat*](eating.html) *what grows by itself, and the second year what springs from that. But in the* [*third*](three.html) *year sow and reap, plant vineyards and* [*eat*](eating.html) *their fruit. Once more a remnant of the house of Judah will take root below and bear fruit above. For out of* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Almighty will accomplish this. "Therefore this is what* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *says concerning the king of Assyria: "He will not enter this* [*city*](city.html) *or shoot an arrow here. He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it. By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this* [*city*](city.html)*, declares* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. I will defend this* [*city*](city.html) *and* [*save*](salvation.html) *it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant." That night the* [*angel*](angels.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-*[*five*](five.html) *thousand men in the Assyrian* [*camp*](stages.html)*. When the people got up the next morning--there were all the dead* [*bodies*](body.html)*! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke* [*camp*](stages.html) *and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.* [*One*](one.html) *day, while he was worshiping in the* [*temple*](temple.html) *of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer cut him down with the sword, and they escaped to the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son succeeded him as king.*

So, a [physical](physical.html) attack brought a [spiritual](physical.html) response. Please note that if the Assyrians had attacked and begun killing us, our response is to fight back [physically](physical.html) while our bocherim should continue to [study](study.html) Torah and performing the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) with fervent tefila and teshuva. These [spiritual](physical.html) warriors will determine the outcome of the army.

[Chanukah](chanukah.html) is the [festival](festival.html) celebration over those who have tried, and failed, to culturally assimilate us (the Greeks and Western Culture). They did not try to kill us, they tried to separate us from [HaShem](hashem.html) and from Torah. For a [spiritual](physical.html) attack, we attacked [physically](physical.html). “Everything is in the [hand](fourteen.html) of [Heaven](heaven.html) except the [fear](fear.html) of [Heaven](heaven.html).”[[1]](#footnote-1) When we must demonstrate our [fear](fear.html) of [Heaven](heaven.html), we are on our own and we must [*physically*](physical.html) demonstrate our [fear](fear.html) of [Heaven](heaven.html).

***II Maccabees 6:1-31*** *1: Not long after this the king sent an old man of Athens to compel the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *to depart from the* [*laws*](law.html) *of their* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*, and not to live after the* [*laws*](law.html) *of God: 2: And to pollute also the* [*temple*](temple.html) *in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, and to call it the* [*temple*](temple.html) *of Jupiter Olympius; and that in Garizim, of Jupiter the Defender of strangers, as they did* [*desire*](needs.html) *that dwelt in the place. 3: The* [*coming*](coming.html) *in of this mischief was sore and grievous to the people: 4: For the* [*temple*](temple.html) *was filled with riot and revelling by the* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html)*, who dallied with harlots, and had to do with women within the circuit of the holy places, and besides that brought in things that were not lawful. 5: The altar also was filled with profane things, which the* [*law*](law.html) *forbiddeth. 6: Neither was it lawful for a man to keep* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *days or ancient fasts, or to profess himself at all to be a* [*Jew*](gen-jew.html)*. 7: And in the day of the king's* [*birth*](birth.html) *every month they were brought by bitter constraint to* [*eat*](eating.html) *of the sacrifices; and when the fast of Bacchus was kept, the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *were compelled to go in procession to Bacchus, carrying ivy. 8: Moreover there went out a decree to the neighbour cities of the heathen, by the suggestion of Ptolemee, against the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html)*, that they should observe the same fashions, and be partakers of their sacrifices: 9: And whoso would not conform themselves to the manners of the* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html) *should be put to death. Then might a man have seen the present misery. 10: For there were* [*two*](two.html) *women brought, who had* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html) *their children; whom when they had openly led round about the* [*city*](city.html)*, the babes handing at their* [*breasts*](body.html)*, they cast them down headlong from the wall. 11: And others, that had run together into caves near by, to keep the* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day secretly, being discovered by Philip, were all burnt together, because they made a conscience to help themselves for the honour of the most sacred day.*

The end of this story began with Mattithias slaying the Syrian soldier, and ended more than [fifteen](fifteen.html) years later with Syria’s ousting:

***I Maccabees 2:19-27*** *19: Then Mattathias answered and spake with a loud voice, Though all the* [*nations*](nations.html) *that are under the king's dominion obey him, and fall away every* [*one*](one.html) *from the religion of their* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*, and give consent to his* [*commandments*](cmds613.html)*: 20: Yet will I and my sons and my brethren* [*walk*](walking.html) *in the* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *of our* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*. 21: God forbid that we should forsake the* [*law*](law.html) *and the ordinances. 22: We will not hearken to the king's words, to go from our religion, either on the right* [*hand*](mashal.html)*, or the left. 23: Now when he had left* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *these words, there came* [*one*](one.html) *of the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *in the sight of all to* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *on the altar which was at Modin, according to the king's* [*commandment*](cmds613.html)*. 24: Which thing when Mattathias saw, he was inflamed with zeal, and his reins trembled, neither could he forbear to shew his anger according to judgment: wherefore he ran, and slew him upon the altar. 25: Also the king's commissioner, who compelled men to* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*, he killed at that* [*time*](time.html)*, and the altar he pulled down. 26: Thus dealt he zealously for the* [*law*](law.html) *of God like as Phinees did unto Zambri the son of Salom. 27: And Mattathias cried throughout the* [*city*](city.html) *with a loud voice, saying, Whosoever is zealous of the* [*law*](law.html)*, and maintaineth the* [*covenant*](covenant.html)*, let him follow me.*

Judah Maccabee led his faithful band and restored the desecrated altar. Theirs was a [*physical*](physical.html) response to a [*spiritual*](physical.html) attack.

[Purim](Purim.html) is the [festival](festival.html) celebration over those who have tried and failed to [physically](physical.html) destroy us (the Persians and Western Culture). For a [*physical*](physical.html) attack, we reacted [*spiritually*](physical.html). Here our lives are [physically](physical.html) in danger for no other reason than just pure hate. There is no attack to prevent us from fulfilling the [mitzvot](cmds613.html). There was no [spiritual](physical.html) attack, only a [physical](physical.html) attack. For this we realize that [HaShem](hashem.html) is [coming](coming.html) against us. When [HaShem](hashem.html) is [coming](coming.html) against us, all we can to is repent. Any [physical](physical.html) response will be entirely in vain because we would be fighting [HaShem](hashem.html).

Please note that when our enemies attacked us and begun killing us, our response is to fight back [physically](physical.html) while our bocherim should continue to [study](study.html) Torah and perform the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) with fervent tefila and teshuva. These [spiritual](physical.html) warriors will determine the outcome of the army.

**Conclusion:**

At this point we need to be able to put some pieces together. This Torah [knowledge](knowledge.html) must be applied in a practical way. We must learn from the [Purim](Purim.html) [experience](experience.html). So, lets apply this:

Just prior to the beginning of [World](worlds.html) War II, Germany was [known](daat.html) as place of culture and hospitality. Germans were [known](daat.html) as warm loving people. Germany, in the days of Hitler, was very much like [Babylon](bavel.html) in the days of [Haman](esther.html).

[Haman](esther.html) had no particular education, training, or nobel [birth](birth.html) that he should be entitled to rule. In fact, he was Mordechai’s barber. It seems that his only qualification to rule was because [HaShem](hashem.html) wished to use his intense hatred of [Jews](gen-jew.html).

Hitler, like [Haman](esther.html), had no particular education, training, or noble [birth](birth.html) that he should be entitled to rule. It seems that his only qualification to rule was because [HaShem](hashem.html) wished to use his intense hatred of [Jews](gen-jew.html).

From the [Purim](Purim.html) story we learn that the proper response to a totally irrational hatred of [Jews](gen-jew.html), is teshuvah, repentance. Just as this was the proper response in the days of [Haman](esther.html), so it should have been the response of every [Jew](gen-jew.html) during the days of Hitler. [HaShem](hashem.html) brought this intense hatred against us in order to drive us to repentance. Because of our stony hearts, [HaShem](hashem.html) allowed Hitler to bring his illogical hatred to such an intense level, ONLY to drive us to repentance. He proved that the destruction of the [Jews](gen-jew.html) was his total and complete focus. He killed [Jews](gen-jew.html) rather than use those resourses to defend his country.

*To a* [*physical*](physical.html)*, illogical, and irrational, hatred that focuses on our* [*physical*](physical.html) *destruction, our response must be* [*spiritual*](physical.html)*! We must recognize that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is behind this. We must see that our total response must be teshuvah, repentance! We must not react* [*physically*](physical.html)*.*

The Gulf war was another such illogical war as it applied to the [Jew](gen-jew.html). Sadam, like Hitler and [Haman](esther.html), had no particular education, training, or noble [birth](birth.html) that he should be entitled to rule. It seems that his only qualification to rule was because [HaShem](hashem.html) wished to use his intense hatred of [Jews](gen-jew.html). When he wished to fight Kuwait and the allied army, he shot scud missles at Israel. What an illogical reaction. This response, alone, should make us realize that [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [hand](fourteen.html) is behind it. The very lack of logic should cause us to see the [hand](fourteen.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html).

*To a* [*physical*](physical.html)*, illogical, and irrational, hatred that focuses on our* [*physical*](physical.html) *destruction, our response must be* [*spiritual*](physical.html)*! We must recognize that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is behind this. We must see that our total response must be teshuvah – repentance! We must not react* [*physically*](physical.html) *as a way to win the battle, but rather as a way of disguising the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *who will fight for us.*

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1. Berachoth 33b [↑](#footnote-ref-1)