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Dear Editor,

Dear Editor,

I was getting my regular haircut with my usual barber. As we always do, we discussed politics, family, and new happenings. The politics discussion, obviously, went straight to the Russia-Ukraine "incursion." We couldn't help but play out the nuclear scenario: who would push the buttons first and which countries would get involved. He then said to me, but you know you need not worry because the verse (Zechariah 13:8) says: "Throughout the land, declares the L-ord, two-thirds shall perish, shall die, and one-third of it shall survive," and one commentator says the survival refers to the tzaddikim. I was a bit concerned with the word tzaddik, for how many people can really claim such a title?

A fellow barber started humming the word "tzaddik" and then referenced that in Egypt one-fifth of the population survived. (I posed the fraction discrepancy to Rabbi Kalman Topp, and he beautifully said the numbers show our progress.) My barber then quickly changed the conversation as I'm assuming he wanted to move onto some lighter things.

I heard a shiur later that day which pronounced the "obvious but elusive" principle enunciated in Mesilat Yesharim that everything is a test. The speaker continued to say every second is a test. What will you do the next moment? Will it pass muster? Is it the right thing to do? Will you continually try to

watch your eyes, be pleasant with non-Jews, and avoid slander? When you learn, how much time will actually be apportioned to learning and how much to talking? Will you hold back from a moment of anger and run from a moment of pride? And perhaps, most importantly, will you continuously battle against those negative traits that you easily fall prey to? The list goes on. Rabbi Frand notes that our battles should be hidden without seeking fanfare, after all, G-d has created a hidden paradigm, so we should be like Him.

As Purim approaches, we can hope for revelation. This second by second test is weighty, but just might be the antidote for today's times.

Steven Genack

Dear Editor,

This is response to Daniel Feldman's letter to the editor last week with regards to emunas chachamim.

Yes, we are told to follow our rabbanim. After all, they are daas Torah. But not everyone is on the level of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, zt"l, a rabbi he mentioned, or the other rabbanim who have led our generations. When one comes to a gadol hador, their advice should be followed without a doubt.

But this man was writing into the dating column about his son's rebbe, and he had concerns about a shidduch. First and foremost, is the rebbi on the level of a gadol hador whom we follow without question?

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Readers Poll

Do you eat a proper breakfast on Purim?

57% / 43%

Yes / No