

‘Purim Meshulash’: The Perfect Purim

The Secret Meaning Behind Jerusalem’s ‘Three Day Purim’
(An adaptation from Rabbi Moshe Wolfson’s *shli’ta Emunat Iteicha*, p.250)

Mordechai requested from the rabbinic leaders of his day to establish Purim as a full fledged holiday. He felt it qualified as a day of *simcha*, *mishteh ve’ Yom Tov* (*Megillat Esther* 9:19). Why, he wondered, should the celebration of Purim not be likened to every other major *Yom Tov*? Its observance should surely incorporate one of the key features of a Festival: the prohibition of forbidden labor (*issur melachah*).

The *Chachamim*, Elders, agreed that Purim would surely be established as a holiday, but unlike Shabbat and Yom Tov, it would not carry the stringency of *issur melacha* (the prohibition of labor).

Why did the Sages not grant Purim the full festival status?

Perhaps it was due to the fact that one of Purim’s most basic themes commemorates the eradication of *Amalek* and their evil from the world. Unfortunately, this aspect of the day had not yet come to fruition. Only when that reality is fulfilled - only when the evil of Amalek is completely wiped out - will Purim be celebrated as a full fledged festival. Only at that future date will Purim’s true sanctity be consummated.

This year, the city of Jerusalem will celebrate Purim on Shabbat. Therefore no acts of *melachah* (‘forbidden labor’) are to be engaged in on the day. This year, willy nilly, Purim will be observed the way Mordechai had envisioned the day.

This year, we gain a rare glimpse, to a certain degree, of Purim of a future time...a time when Purim will be perfected and practiced in its most pristine form.

As we usher in this year’s distinctive celebration we might choose to ponder how we can possibly attain the ‘perfect Purim’ that Mordechai HaTzadik visualized.

The answer may be embedded in the unique way Purim will be celebrated differently this year than almost any other year. Only during a ‘three day celebration of Purim’, *Purim Meshulash*, does the entire Jewish people read the Megillah and give *Matanot Le’evyonim* (‘Charity to the Poor’) on a single day. This year’s Purim’s celebration is the rare occasion when these unifying mitzvot are celebrated at the same time in all of *Klal Yisrael*.

This year’s unusual Purim observance is pregnant with spiritual potential. Perhaps the message of unity, and that it is needed now more than ever, is the meaning of this moment.

The three day celebration of Purim is not for the residents of Jerusalem alone. Jerusalem is the heart of the nation of Israel. At its core, every Jew is a part of this year’s Shabbat Purim.

When Shabbat arrives each week, a Jew feels an even deeper longing for the Holy City, as evidenced by the additional unique phrase added to Shabbat evening prayers: “Blessed are You...who spreads a canopy of peace over us, over all His people Israel, and over *Jerusalem*.”

May this rare occurrence of the simultaneous celebration of Purim and Shabbat bring us closer to one another and closer to the ultimate celebration of the *geula shlema*, our final redemption.

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