

ב"ה Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1650

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פרשת תצוה
PARSHAT TETZAVEH

PARSHAT ZACHOR

OU Israel
Wishes You
Purim
Sameach

OU
ישראל



The Uniform of the Soul

Jen Airley
Page 84



Special Section: Purim Laws

Rabbi Eli Ozarowski
Page 72



לך כנוס את-כל-היהודים
מגילת אסתר ד' ט"ז

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT TETZAVEH ZMANIM:

CANDLES 4:59 PM • HAVDALA 6:13 PM • RABBEINU TAM 6:53 PM

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To View **Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb's Dvar Torah**, please see: www.TorahTidbits.com

A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES
RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

"That they may take unto you, pure olive oil" (27:20) - יקחו אליך שמן זית זך (כז:כ)

What is the meaning of taking "pure" olive oil?

Rashi explains that "pure" refers to the process of how the oil is made. The olives need to be pounded with a hand operated mortar and not grinded by a millstone. This hand made process guaranteed that there were no sediments in the oil. Any further oil extracted would not be used for the Menorah but rather fit for meal offerings.

Rabbi Tzadok HaCohen from Lublin (1823-1900) in his Sefer " Kometz Hamincha or sometimes mistakenly referred to as Kemach Hamincha, describes from this explanation the two basic requirements for the oil to be utilized by the Menorah. In addition to the quality of the oil being superior, the oil had to be pure and derived by means of diligent toil and personal exertion. This technique of how to extract the oil to provide the Menorah with perfect burning flames offers a hint for our own behavior. The light of the Menorah knowledge and insight. For us to reach our potential, we must pursue the purest of sources, the most devout and sanctified instructors. In addition, we need to invest our own personal striving to reach the level of purity. Shabbat Shalom

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

 Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until: 15 Adar/ Tues. night March 3.

 The Fast of Esther begins 4:53am and concludes at 5:55pm. (Jerusalem times).

 Please see the Halachot of Purim on pages 72-81 for all the detailed laws and customs.

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wednesday - Shabbat
February 25 - March 7 / 8- 18 Adar

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:20-5:09
Sunrise	6:11-5:59
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	9:01-8:55
Magen Avraham	8:25-8:19
Sof Zman Tefila	9:58-9:53
<small>(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)</small>	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	11:52-11:50
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	12:22-12:20
Plag Mincha	4:22-4:28
Sunset (Including Elevation)	5:37-5:45



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	Tetzaveh		Ki Tisa	
	Candles	Havdala	Candles	Havdala
Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim	4:59	6:13	5:04	6:18
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	5:18	6:16	5:23	6:21
Beit Shemesh/RBS	5:18	6:14	5:23	6:19
Gush Etzion	5:15	6:13	5:21	6:18
Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba	5:16	6:14	5:21	6:19
Modiin/Chashmonaim	5:16	6:14	5:21	6:19
Netanya	5:16	6:14	5:21	6:19
Be'er Sheva	5:17	6:15	5:22	6:20
Rehovot	5:16	6:15	5:22	6:20
Petach Tikva	4:59	6:14	5:04	6:19
Ginot Shomron	5:15	6:13	5:20	6:18
Haifa / Zichron	5:05	6:14	5:11	6:19
Gush Shiloh	5:14	6:13	5:20	6:18
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	5:16	6:15	5:22	6:20
Givat Zeev	5:19	6:13	5:24	6:18
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	5:15	6:13	5:21	6:18
Ashkelon	5:18	6:16	5:23	6:21
Yad Binyamin	5:16	6:15	5:22	6:20
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	5:07	6:11	5:12	6:17
Golan	5:13	6:11	5:18	6:16
Nahariya/Maalot	5:14	6:13	5:19	6:18
Afula	5:14	6:12	5:19	6:18

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem): Tetzaveh - 6:53 PM • Ki Tisa - 6:58 PM

All Times According to MyZmanim (20 mins before Sunset in most Cities;
40 mins in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva; 30 mins in Tzfat and Haifa)

Daf Yomi: Menachos 48



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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OU ISRAEL
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A year and two months ago, the OU Israel offices moved from our longtime headquarters on Keren HaYesod Street to Har Hotzvim. One of the most interesting things about this new location is the breathtaking mountain view. However, we didn't get that view for too long. Shortly after we moved, things changed, and all we can see from that back view is the excavation efforts making way for new construction - *baruch Hashem*, Yerushalayim is constantly growing and building up.

Alongside all the excavations and the many large and loud trucks, you can see a flag planted in the ground. It was put there by the Israel Antiquities Department to mark an important historical site. The fact is that Har Hotzvim is named Har Hotzvim because it is believed to be the place where the stones of the *Beit HaMikdash* were quarried and chiseled out. Looking at these stones, you can see the shape of enormous blocks whose color,

composition, and size matched the stones of the *Beit HaMikdash*. And the fact that one could sit in an office and look out at the very place where stones were carved for the *Beit HaMikdash* - to know that such holy work was done right here - is deeply moving. I have shown it to many visitors who have come to the office.

This is one more example of something we all experience living in Israel: our history is intertwined and ingrained inside the soil and the stones of this land. I remember many years ago walking with an older man down Kanfei Nesharim Street, back when it had far fewer buildings. We were making our way back to Har Nof, and to pass the time, I was kicking a stone down the road. The older man turned to me and said, "You know, I try not to kick stones in Yerushalayim." I was puzzled and asked him why. He said, "This looks like a tiny pebble, but it might have been part of Jewish history. So if I don't have to kick it, I don't." I replied, "But what are the chances? There are so many stones in Yerushalayim." His answer: "Would you take a chance in kicking what might have once been part of the *Beit HaMikdash*?"

That conversation has stayed with me ever since. I try, even when walking with my kids in Yerushalayim, not to kick stones. I remind myself of what our history is, and what Yerushalayim is to us. We are walking in Jewish history.

This past Wednesday night, I had the distinguished honor of being invited to say a few words at the *siyum* celebrating the completion

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our beloved mother

Claire Chanover a"h

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on her 10th Yahrtzeit - אדר י'

May the Torah learning in this issue
of Torah Tidbits be לעילוי נשמתה

*Rachel Leah & Fyvie Berman
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& Kober families
Her Grandchildren,
great-grandchildren
and great-great-grandchildren*

of the Orthodox Union's Nach Yomi program for women. Rebbetzin Dr. Adina Shmidman, Director of OU's Women's Initiative, invited me to speak alongside OU President Mitch Aeder and Executive Vice President and COO Rabbi Dr. Josh Joseph, as well as Rabbi Yaakov Glasser, Managing Director of Communal Engagement at the Orthodox Union. Each of us had the chance to share a few meaningful words. Also addressing the gathering were Rebbetzin Dafna Baer, wife of the Chief Rabbi, and Sivan Rahav Meir. It was deeply moving to see a room full of hundreds of women who had committed to learning a chapter of Nach every single day for the past two years, and who were already seven days into *Sefer Yehoshua* (starting the third cycle since the program began!).

When I got up to speak, I shared with the audience that today, when we learn Tanach here in Israel, we have the opportunity not just to read about the stories that take place in the Land of Israel, but to live it and see these places firsthand.

I then told them about a meeting I'd had earlier that day. I had the privilege of going with Rabbi Dr. Josh Joseph to the Knesset to meet with the Minister of Heritage, Rabbi Amichai Eliyahu. We heard about many exciting new initiatives taking place at the Herodian, in *Ir David*, and at other incredible heritage sites around the country. At a certain point, Minister Eliyahu took out a small box. Inside was a tiny coin, a *machatztit hashekel* from the period of the Great Revolt in 67 CE.

The coin weighs a little over seven grams. On one side are three pomegranates, and on the other is a goblet with the letter *aleph* above it, marking the first year of the Great Revolt. It is inscribed in ancient Hebrew letters: "*chatzi hashekel*" ("half-shekel") on one



side, and "*Yerushalayim HaKedosha*" ("the holy Jerusalem") on the other. It was found inside caves in *Midbar Yehuda* near Ein Gedi. Only three coins like it have ever been discovered, and the raw material it is made from comes from the *Beit HaMikdash* itself.

I could not help but think: here I am, sitting just a week and a half before I will perform the *mitzvah* of *zecher lemachatztit hashekel*, of reenacting the donation of the half-shekel coin before Purim, and I am holding in my hand an actual *machatztit hashekel* from the time of the second *Beit HaMikdash*. Suddenly, so much of Nach came to life; this made Jewish history so real. To hold a coin from the time of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, from the time of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel HaZaken - it was just such an incredible experience.

Unfortunately, we cannot give our *machatztit hashekel* to the *Beit HaMikdash* today, but we can give our portion to important Jewish organizations doing vital work. I plan on using the money I set aside as *zecher lemachatztit hashekel* towards supporting the work that

May the learning from
this Torah Tidibits be to the לע"נ

Dudley L. Derdiger ז"ל
דוד לייב בן פנחס הכהן ז"ל

On his 21th yarzeiht, ט"ז באדר

His son, daughter-in-law,
grandchildren and great grandchildren

OU Israel does with teenagers at risk here in Israel, and I encourage you to do the same. As I give it, I say to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*: I hope that this is the last time I give *zecher lemachat-zit hashekel*, and that next time, *be'ezrat Hashem*, it will be the *machat-zit hashekel* itself, given in the *Beit HaMikdash*.

Seeing this piece of history reminded me of the well-known saying: a nation that does not have a history does not have a future. We are a nation with so, so much history, it's in the pebbles beneath our feet as we walk this Land and build it up.

On this *Shabbat Zachor*, we should remember that our task is to never forget the threat of Amalek and our *mitzvah* to oppose it. We know that in the generation of Purim, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* gave the Jewish people the strength to overcome their enemies, and may He give us the same *siyata diShmaya*

today. We should connect ourselves to the *Beit HaMikdash*, give our *zecher lemachat-zit hashekel* to the future generation, and invest in tomorrow's leaders. One of the best programs to support the future of *Klal Yisrael* is OU Israel's Teen Center programs. With your help, and with the dedication of our incredible staff working day in and day out, they are receiving the love, guidance, and support they need to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat and an incredibly happy Purim,



Rabbi Avi Berman
Executive Director, OU Israel



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Zachor, Forgiving and Forgetting

In this period of reawakening of the Jew-hatred of the ages, we must study the lessons of Parshat Zachor anew from many angles. One of these is the tension between the values of moving on with forgiveness versus vengefully refusing to forget.

A beautiful characteristic of the Jewish people is their forgiving nature. As our Sages saw it (Avot d'Rabbi Natan 12:1), Aaron Hakohein personified this trait, pursuing peace amongst Jews by encouraging forgiveness and helping them to move on after seeing the regrets of those who had wronged them. It was because of his capacity not to harbor jealousy and resentment that he was privileged to wear upon his good and gracious heart the breastplate bearing the names of all the Jewish tribes, the symbol of unity and caring of the Jewish people (Shabbat 139a).

Yet forgiving and forgetting are not in the cards when it comes to Amalek, as the Torah demands that we never forget what Amalek did to us millennia ago and that we await the eventual opportunity to destroy them. The Purim story of opposition to Haman the Amalekite focuses significantly on revenge and on Haman getting his due where the punishment clearly matched the crime. Immediately following the reading of the Megillah we specifically

bless Hashem for taking revenge on our behalf, *Baruch... hanokeim et nikmateinu.*

Clearly vis-à-vis Amalek there is no room for the beautiful Jewish quality of forgiveness. Quite the opposite; here we are committed to revenge.

The difference is simple. Revenge is both celebrated and reviled by the Torah. G-d is called the G-d of vengeance (Tehillim 94a, Brachot 33a), and the Talmud (Yoma 23a) requires that a Torah scholar be “as vengeful and resentful as a snake.” Yet revenge and the bearing of grudges are prohibited by the Torah (Vayikra 19:18)! Amongst other considerations, the distinguishing factor when revenge is in place is the attitude of those who committed the wrong. If they are regretful and seek forgiveness, we should forgive them and try to forget that it ever happened. But if they are unrepentant and unchanged, we must never forget the evil that they did and continue to pursue truth and justice that can only be served by a suitable and fitting response to their evil behaviors.

This is implied by a classic passage in the Rambam (Rambam Teshuva 2:10), celebrating the Jewish quality of forgiveness:

“It is forbidden for a person to be cruel and refuse to be appeased. Rather, he should be easily pacified, but hard to anger. When the person who wronged him asks for forgiveness, he should forgive him with a complete heart and a willing spirit. Even if he aggravated and wronged him severely, he should not seek revenge or bear a grudge. This is the path of the seed of Israel and their upright spirit. In

contrast, insensitive others do not act in this manner, rather, their wrath is preserved forever (Amos 1:11). Similarly, because the Givonim did not forgive and refused to be appeased, [II Samuel 21:2] describes them, as follows: "The Givonim are not among the children of Israel."

Forgiveness is appropriate for those who seek it and completely misplaced for those like Amalek who do not. Amalek has absolutely no interest in changing his ways as he follows the path of his grandfather Eisav whose very name derives from how complete he appeared at birth (Rashi to Bereishit 25:25), and who – as Rambam quotes from Amos – bears eternal fury towards his brother Yaakov, *evrato shmara netzach* (Amos 1:11). Those like him – individuals and societies - who are entrenched in their evil ways and attitudes do not deserve forgiveness; with them we must hold up the value of judgment such that we never forget the evil they represent and perpetuate and do our part to ensure that that they ultimately face the consequences of their actions.

The worst thing we can do is forgive and forget the antisemitism of those who – like Amalek – continue to harbor it. That is why Rambam's other quintessential negative example of those who eternally bear a grudge is the Givonim's inability to forgive Shaul. It was Shaul who – as we read this week in the *hafatara* for *Parshat Zachor* - lost his throne because he was ready to show a measure of forgiveness to the unrepentant Amalekites. While he may have thought that his gallant compassion would be reciprocated, introducing peaceful civility into a nasty region, the opposite was the case. His forgiving those who remained cruel led to a world where nothing mattered, where he himself acted in a way that was cruel to the kind (Yalkut Shimoni Shmuel I, 121) and that gained his descendants neither forgiveness nor mercy from the Givonim.

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Perhaps that is why Purim is connected to Yom Kippurim, the Day of Atonement. As Jews we believe firmly that people can change, that they can turn the page on past evil deeds, and when they do, we forgive and even embrace them. But for the unrepentant who do not turn the page and remain committed to their evil designs, for the Haman's of then and of now, we can make no more tragic mistake than to forgive them and forget. ■

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Chai Summer



Chai Summer is a powerful three-week program for English-speaking teens (grades 9–12) living in Israel. With separate campuses for boys and girls, Chai offers an immersive experience that combines thoughtful Torah learning, hands-on chesed, and exciting trips in a supportive, values-driven environment. Chai helps teens connect deeply to who they are, where they come from, and the people around them.

Through small, discussion-based learning sessions, participants explore Torah in a way that encourages honest conversation and reflection on their values and Jewish identity. Chesed is central to the experience. Whether volunteering with local communities, working with farmers, or packing and distributing food for those in need, teens contribute meaningfully to the land and people of Israel while building a strong sense of responsibility and belonging. The program also includes a wide range of experiential activities, including hiking, rafting, ATVing, horseback riding, and creative night programming. These moments of energy and reflection, challenge and connection, are crafted to help teens feel engaged and part of something greater.

Participants come from across Israel, including Yerushalayim, Beit Shemesh, Raanana, Modiin, the Gush, and more, forming a close-knit, inclusive community grounded in shared values and love for Am Yisrael, Torat Yisrael, and Medinat Yisrael. Our madrichim and madrichot are inspiring role models, including olim, IDF soldiers, and Sherut Leumi volunteers, who create a warm, supportive space for personal growth. Though the program is only three weeks, Chai leaves a lasting impact rooted in growth, connection, and unforgettable fun

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PARSHAT TETZAVEH

The commandments concerning the special garments of the Kohen Gadol as well as the garments for the regular Kohanim are given. The commands for the 7-day inauguration of the Kohanim and the altar are given. The commands of the daily offering and the altar for incense are given.

This parsha introduces the *activity* of the Mishkan. There are 2 parts to the Mishkan: the building. And the people.

Last week was the building. A building is static. The gold covered walls don't move. The Menorah is stationary.

The *activity* in the Mishkan will be done by the Kohanim. The Kohanim ambulate.

Our parsha deals with the people. How the Kohanim are to dress and how they are to be inaugurated.

In the verses describing the kohen's garments I will indicate in bold which are for the kohen Gadol and which are for the rest of the kohanim.



1ST ALIYA (EXODUS 27:20-28:12)

The Menorah shall be lit every evening. Take Aharon and his sons to serve Me. Make them holy garments for honor and glory. **Kohen Gadol, Garment 1:** Make the **Efod**. It is woven of techelet, purple and red. It is a skirt with shoulder straps. An ornate jewel with the names of 6 tribes is fastened to each of the shoulder straps. Aharon carries the names of the Jewish people as a remembrance before G-d.

There are 2 different sets of garments for the kohanim. The regular kohanim wear 4

white linen garments. The kohen gadol wears these 4 white linen garments as well as an additional 4 fancy coloured and gold garments over the white ones.

The kohen gadol's garments are introduced first. These are regal garments. The colors are the same colors as the beautiful curtains of the Mishkan. The colors remain as colors of pomp and ceremony to this day: gold, red, purple, techelet blue. The kohen gadol is festooned in the same royal colors as the Mishkan.

But wait, isn't that, well, a bit presumptuous? The Mishkan is the dwelling in this world of the Divine. The King of Kings. His home needs to be regal, the colors of nobility, palatial.

But then to dress the kohen gadol in those same colors? A tad presumptuous is it not.

However, this is not *our* idea. This is how we are *commanded*. You are *commanded* to adorn the kohen gadol to appear majestic, royal, noble.

The command to dress regally conveys to us how G-d views us. Obviously in decorating G-d's Home we would use regal colors. But dressing our representative, the kohen gadol in those same regal colors conveys a simple notion. That we are royalty. The majesty of the kohen gadol represents the regal station of the Jewish people.



2ND ALIYA (28:13-30)

Kohen Gadol, Garment 2: Make the **Choshen Mishpat**. Four rows of 3 different precious jewels, each with a name of a tribe of Israel, mounted upon a colored woven background. Fasten this breastplate with gold chains to the shoulder straps

of the Eford and to the skirt. Aharon will bear the names of the Jewish people on his heart when he enters the Holy place. As a constant remembrance before G-d. And place in this breastplate the Urim and Tumim.

The names of the 12 tribes are inscribed twice. The first, 6 names on one jewel, 6 on another, mounted on the shoulder straps of the Eford, the apron-like garment. And second, the names are inscribed individually on each stone of the breastplate.

The kohen gadol carries the names of the tribes of the Jewish people on his body, representing the entire Jewish people, approaching G-d. Twice.

And the Torah tells us why: as a remembrance of the Jewish people before G-d.

In fact, all 4 of the kohen gadol's garments perform a function, of remembrance or presence or gaining favor.

That is a remarkable idea. The kohen gadol does not *perform* the service in the Mishkan, except for Yom Kippur. On a regular day he is expected to be *present* in the Mishkan. And by simply wearing these clothes he is bringing a remembrance of the Jewish people before G-d.

This expresses a profound philosophy of Judaism. The kohen gadol is to linger in G-d's Home. In the Mishkan. Representing us. Or expressed more figuratively: our lives are represented by his, the kohen gadol's, a life of lingering in the House of G-d. We do not merely walk on this earth of ours. Rather we linger in His Home.

On a daily basis we light the Menorah, a symbol of the Divine Presence, the Light. And the incense, the smoke of His Presence, like on Sinai.

And our representative, the kohen gadol, lingers in His Presence, carrying our names. The Jewish People while living on this earth

linger in His Home.



3RD ALIYA (28:31-43)

Kohen Gadol, Garment 3: Make the *Me'il*, a completely techelet colored robe with an opening for the head. At the bottom hem, place pomegranates of colored woven wool and golden bells in an alternating pattern. Aharon's entrance and exit before G-d will hence be heard. **Kohen Gadol, Garment 4:** Make the *Tzitz*, a golden headplate with Holy to G-d engraved on it. Fasten it to the turban so it rests on the forehead. Through this, Aharon will bear the sins committed through holy service and through it the Jewish people gain favour before G-d. **All Kohanim, 4 garments:** The kohen gadol and all kohanim during service wear 4 garments. 3 of these are white linen: 1. **pants**, 2. robe (**ketonet**) and 3. **turban** for the head. The 4th is a **belt** of colored woven wool. The kohanim wear these garments during service; the Kohen Gadol wears only these 4 when he enters the Holy of Holies. He wears these 4 and the 4 fancy gold and coloured garments, a total of 8, during the rest of the year.

The regular kohanim wear white linen garments. This is in stark contrast to the kohen gadol. He is all decked out; they are noticeably simply attired.

The vast majority of the service in the Mishkan is done by the regular kohanim. They

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manage the individual aspirations or disappointments of man, man's offerings.

In that, the offerings we bring as expressions of aspiration or disappointment, we approach G-d with simplicity, humility. Represented by the simplicity of the white garments of the kohen, helping us with our service.

The one individual kohen gadol represents not the individual but the corporate entity of the Jewish people. Oh, that is majestic. Humility of the individual man, against the background of majesty of our people.



4TH ALIYA (29:1-18)

The inauguration of the Kohanim: To sanctify the kohanim take offerings of all the sorts that will be offered in the Mikdash. Dress Aharon in his special garments. Anoint him with oil. Dress the kohanim in their special garments. Bring the various different offerings on the altar – for a pleasing aroma before G-d.

The instructions for the inauguration of the kohanim appear here, while the actual inauguration appears in Parshat Tzav.

**In loving memory of our beloved
Mother, Grandmother,
Great-grandmother
and great-great-grandmother
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5TH ALIYA (29:19-37)

Aharon and the kohanim are inaugurated through the offering of a ram, with blood of the offering placed upon them and upon their garments. The offerings of the inauguration are brought. A future kohen gadol, who will replace Aharon, will wear these special garments for 7 days as their inauguration. They too will repeat this ram offering. Aharon and his sons shall repeat this ceremony every day for 7 days. The altar too is to be inaugurated for 7 days.

Aharon and the kohanim are to be inaugurated in a 7-day ceremony of offerings. That is a long and elaborate inauguration.

It may be such to impress upon the kohanim that while they have a unique position, including gifts and benefits due to their holy work, they are servants of G-d, not lords over people.

Privilege takes a quick path to the head bringing haughtiness and a sense of entitlement. The kohanim, as all public servants, need to be vigilant to remember that they are servers, not served. They serve G-d and the people, not the other way around. Hence, they need a heavy, long inauguration of serving G-d to realize their position as servants of Him and not lords over people.



6TH ALIYA (29:38-46)

2 offerings are to be brought as a daily offering, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. A sheep, with flour and oil, and with wine. It is brought in the Ohel Moed, the place where I meet with the Jewish people. I have sanctified this place, as well as the kohanim. I will dwell amongst the Jewish people and be their G-d. And they will know that I am G-d who took them out of Egypt to dwell amongst them.

The Mishkan representing G-d's Presence invites the Jewish people to approach G-d, to

accept His invitation. We are the active ones in the Mishkan, He the static. Having introduced *who* will make this approach, we now are told *how* and *when* to make this approach.



7TH ALIYA (30:1-10)

Make an incense altar of wood overlaid with gold, 1 square cubit.

Place it in front of the curtain behind which is the Aron, the place upon which I will meet with you. Offer incense twice a day, at the time of the Menorah cleaning in the morning and Menorah lighting in the evening. It is solely for the prescribed incense, not for offerings of flour or wine.

The incense altar is totally out of place. We had all the instructions of the vessels of the Mishkan last week: Aron, Menorah, Table, altar for offerings. What is unique about incense that its altar comes after all the other instructions?

In this I speculate. Incense produces smoke. At Mt. Sinai, when G-d descends to speak to man, His Presence is represented by a thick cloud of smoke. Throughout the rest of the Torah, when His Presence is indicated, it is with a cloud.

Perhaps that is the role of the incense; to produce a cloud of smoke. To indicate His Presence. And it comes at the end of this whole process because that is the culmination. The Mishkan is to be a place for His Presence. The culmination of the Mishkan is His Presence. And so, the final command is to burn incense, to produce a cloud, indicative of His Presence. ■

Maftir Parshat Zachor, Devarim 25:17-19

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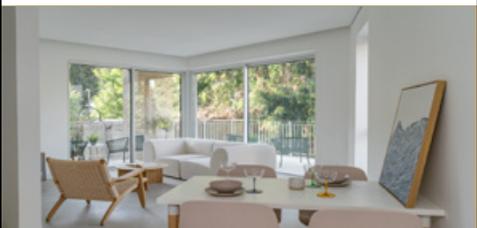
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Prophet and Priest

The sedra of Tetzaveh, as commentators have noted, has one unusual feature: it is the only sedra from the beginning of Shemot to the end of Devarim that does not contain the name of Moses. Several interpretations have been offered.

The Vilna Gaon suggests that it is related to the fact that in most years it is read during the week in which the seventh of Adar falls: the day of Moses' death. During this week we sense the loss of the greatest leader in Jewish history – and his absence from Tetzaveh expresses that loss.

The Baal HaTurim relates it to Moses' plea, in next week's sedra, for God to forgive Israel. "If not," says Moses, "blot me out of the book you

have written" (Ex. 32:32). There is a principle that "The curse of a sage comes true, even if it was conditional" (Makkot 11a). Thus, for one week his name was "blotted out" from the Torah.

The Paneach Raza relates it to another principle: "There is no anger that does not leave an impression" When Moses, for the last time, declined God's invitation to lead the Jewish People out of Egypt, saying "Please send someone else", God "became angry with Moses" (Ex. 4:13-14) and told him that his brother Aaron would accompany him. For that reason, Moses forfeited the role he might otherwise have had, of becoming the first of Israel's priests, a role that went instead to Aaron. That is why he is missing from the sedra of Tetzaveh, which is dedicated to the role of the Kohen.

All three explanations focus on an absence. However, perhaps the simplest explanation is that Tetzaveh is dedicated to a presence, one that had a decisive influence on Judaism and Jewish history.

Judaism is unusual in that it recognises not one form of religious leadership but two: the Navi and Kohen, the prophet and the priest. The figure of the prophet has always captured the imagination. He or she is a person of drama, "speaking truth to power", unafraid to challenge kings and courts or society as a whole in the name of high, even utopian

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ideals. No other type of religious personality has had the impact as the prophets of Israel, of whom the greatest was Moses. The priests, by contrast, were for the most part quieter figures, a-political, who served in the Sanctuary rather than in the spotlight of political debate. Yet they, no less than the prophets, sustained Israel as a holy nation. Indeed, though the Children of Israel were summoned to become “a kingdom of priests” they were never called on to be a people of prophets.¹

Let us therefore consider some of the differences between a prophet and a priest:

The role of priest was dynastic. It passed from father to son. The role of prophet was not dynastic. Moses’ own sons did not succeed him; Joshua, his disciple, was chosen instead.

The task of the priest was related to his office. It was not inherently personal or charismatic. The prophets, by contrast, each imparted their own personality. “No two prophets had the same style.”²

The priests wore a special uniform; the prophets did not.

There are rules of *kavod* (honour) due to a Kohen. There are no corresponding rules for the honour due to a prophet. A prophet is honoured by being listened to, not by formal protocols of respect.

The priests were removed from the people. They served in the Temple. They were not allowed to become defiled. There were restrictions on whom they might marry. The prophet, by contrast, was usually part of the people. He might be a shepherd like Moses or Amos, or a farmer like Elisha. Until the word

1. Moses said, “Would that all God’s people were prophets”, but this was a wish, not a reality.

2. This, incidentally, is why there were prophetesses but no priestesses: this corresponds to the difference between formal office and personal authority. See R. Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, Responsa Binyan Av, I:65.



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or vision came, there was nothing special in his work or social class.

The priest offered up sacrifices in silence. The prophet served God through the word.

They lived in two different modes of time. The priest functioned in cyclical time – the day (or week or month) that is like yesterday or tomorrow. The prophet lived in covenantal (sometimes inaccurately called linear) time – the today that is radically unlike yesterday or tomorrow. The service of the priest never changed; that of the prophet was constantly changing. Another way of putting it is to say that the priest worked to sanctify nature, the prophet to respond to history.

Thus the priest represents the principle of structure in Jewish life, while the prophet represents spontaneity.

The key words in the vocabulary of the Kohen are *kodesh* and *chol*, *tahor* and *tamei*, sacred, secular, pure and impure. The key words in the vocabulary of the prophets are *tzeddek* and *mishpat*, *chesed* and *rachamim*, righteousness and justice, kindness and compassion.

The key verbs of priesthood are *lehorot* and *lehavdil*, to instruct and distinguish. The key activity of the prophet is to proclaim “the word of the Lord” The distinction between priestly and prophetic consciousness (*torat kohanim* and *torat nevi'im*) is fundamental to Judaism,

and is reflected in the differences between law and narrative, *halachah* and *aggadah*, creation and redemption. The priest speaks the Word of God for all time, the prophet, the Word of God for this time. Without the prophet, Judaism would not be a religion of history and destiny. But without the priest, the Children of Israel would not have become the people of eternity. This is beautifully summed up in the opening verses of Tetzaveh:

Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives, to keep the lamp constantly burning in the tent of meeting, outside the curtain that is in front of the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep the lamps burning before the Lord from evening to morning. This is to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites for the generations to come.

Moses the prophet dominates four of the five books that bear his name. But in Tetzaveh for once it is Aaron, the first of the priests, who holds centre-stage, undiminished by the rival presence of his brother. For whereas Moses lit the fire in the souls of the Jewish people, Aaron tended the flame and turned it into “an eternal light”. ■

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The Righteous Virtue of King Sha'ul

This week's haftarah, a selection taken from Sefer Shmuel A, relates the well-known account of Israel's challenge to fulfill Hashem's demand "timcheh et ze(i)cher Amalek" – to obliterate the very memory of Amalek. Chazal's decision to have this episode recited on the Shabbat before Purim, as was their choice for the Maftir reading, revolves around the Megillah's revelation that the arch-enemy of Purim story, Haman, was a descendant of Agag, the leader of Amalek.

However, we might be perplexed by our Rabbis decision to have us read of the **failure** of Israel to fulfill Hashem's charge as commanded, i.e. to "obliterate" Amalek and his memory. The text chronicles G-d's anger and Shmuel's disappointment over the army's reluctance to fully carry out Hashem's charge to destroy Amalek. Indeed, we need simply to turn to the 30th perek of Sefer Shmuel A, to find out how Amalek was **not** decimated and, to the contrary, remained an ongoing torment to Israel. It is there that we learn how the Amalekites attacked and kidnapped David's family and did the same to the families of David's army!

Although one can offer a number of logical reasons as to why this episode was meant to be read - despite our discomfort with it - it is not my **purpose** to do so here. **Rather, it is the following** that perplexes me:

The navi makes it clear that the failure to fulfill Hashem's command lay upon the shoulders of the King, Sha'ul. Given that fact, the challenge that faces me at this time is in understanding why, after Sha'ul's failure as the King of Israel, after he disregarded Hashem's command and Shmuel's directive, after he gave in to the desires of his soldiers and then denied committing any sin.....after all of this, we find that Chazal refer to him as righteous: "Sha'ul Hatzaddik"!!!! The Talmud states [Yoma 22:] "Sha'ul was as innocent as a one-year-old child, never having "tasted" sin", while the **P'sikta Rabba** [15:50] commends him as "a modest man who ate even non-sanctified food only in purity; who distributed his wealth to Israel, who gave honor to his servants as much as he gave to himself. AND he was a "ben Torah"!

Unquestionably, there also are negative rabbinic statements about Sha'ul, but I am curious about these very positive depictions of one who lost his reign due to his surrender to the demands of his officers and those of G-d.

I do realize that the "righteousness" of Sha'ul that was seen by rabbinic scholars might have been based upon the earlier years of his reign. This was a time when the people recognized the deep modesty of the newly appointed King, when he was praised by his removal of the widespread sorcery of 'Ov"

and “Yid'onim” worship and was loved by the population for his great victories over their enemies.

All of these were, indeed, laudable accomplishments.

But I would submit that there was one success that surpassed all of his achievements. It was a “triumph” that changed the nation for centuries and yet, is often ignored. Consider this:

King Sha'ul built an army!

So what?

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And, it is for this reason, that the effect of Sh'aul's act is unequalled! For the first time in over 300 years, **the nation of Israel was UNITED!!!!**

Yes. It is true. He sinned, he was punished, he lost his throne.

But he united Israel, and made them realize that they were one nation.

And, I charge, there could be no greater accomplishment than that! ■

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Purim – Kippurim

PURIM COMPARED TO YOM KIPPUR

The *Tikunei Zohar*¹ draws a striking comparison between Purim and Yom Kippur:

פּוּרִים אֲתִקְרִיאַת עַל שֵׁם יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים

“Purim is named after Yom HaKippurim.”

The very name “Yom HaKippurim” can be read as **Yom K’Purim** - a “day like Purim.” The implication is that Yom Kippur resembles Purim, not the other way around. But how can that be? These two days could hardly appear more different.

TWO OPPOSITE WORLDS

Yom Kippur is the most solemn day of the year. It is a day of fasting, introspection, and

1. Tikunei Zohar 57b

withdrawal from the physical. On that day we abstain from food, drink, and social interaction, seeking to emulate the purity of angels.

Purim, by contrast, is marked by the most physical of mitzvot: eating, drinking, feasting, and rejoicing with others through *mishloach manot* and *seudat Purim*. Yom Kippur is the only sacred day defined by a fast; Purim is the only weekday festival defined by a feast.

Yom Kippur and Purim represent two halves of a spiritual whole. Yom Kippur is a day of transcendence, when we rise above the physical world to serve God in angelic purity. Purim, its mirror image, calls us to serve God *within* the physical world and to reveal holiness precisely through joy, human connection, and the sanctification of the ordinary.

INFUSING THE MUNDANE WITH HOLINESS

Rav Kook, in his *Siddur Olat Re’iyah*,² notes that there is no prohibition of work on Purim. To forbid labor, he writes, would contradict the essence of the day. Purim is not about withdrawing from life’s daily rhythm, but about elevating it. It teaches that eating, drinking, and even working can become acts of divine service when suffused with awareness of God.

This idea finds subtle expression in a halachic discussion. We recite the blessing of *Shehekheyanu* when reading the *Megillah* on Purim night. But what if one lacks a *Megillah*—should *Shehekheyanu* still be recited to mark the day itself?

Rav Rimon³ offers a creative insight. The

2. Rav Kook, *Olat Re’iyah* p 440

3. Rav Rimon, *Purim* p 148

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and Rachel Freeman Steiner**

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at the Young Israel of New Rochelle**

blessing of *Shehekheyanu* is said over something exceptional that stands apart from ordinary time. Yet the essence of Purim is that it should **not** stand apart. Its very goal is to erase the boundary between sacred and secular, to show that joy, friendship, and celebration can themselves become vessels for holiness.

If we were to recite *Shehekheyanu* merely for the day, we would imply that Purim is a rare, unusual moment. But the true message of Purim is that such holiness need not be rare at all. Every day can be a Purim imbued with gratitude, connection, and spiritual joy.

TRANSCENDENCE AND TRANSFORMATION

Purim, then, is the complement, and in a sense, the completion of Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur elevates us by removing us from the physical; Purim elevates us by transforming the physical itself. On Yom Kippur, we strive to become angelic; on Purim, we learn to be truly human and serve God with body and soul united.

That is why, in the language of the Zohar, **Yom Kippur is only “like Purim.”** For the ultimate goal of holiness is not to flee the world but to sanctify it. To find God not only in heaven, but in laughter, in friendship, and in the fullness of life itself.

May this Purim inspire us to open our eyes wide and see the divine not only in the extraordinary but in the everyday, and to live each day as a quiet *Megillah* of God’s hidden presence, written through the joy and faith of our daily lives. ■



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Inviting the Light of Purim

Purim is known as one of the busiest days of the Jewish calendar year. There are so many mitzvot to do and so much activity throughout the day. Nevertheless, we are conscientious to

carve out time both on the eve of Purim and the next morning to fulfill the mitzvah of listening to the Megilah.

Indeed, one must meticulously listen to every word; a unique directive that applies only to *Megilat Esther* as opposed to all of the other *megilot*. More than simply telling the story of the Jews in Persia, the Megilah reading occupies a lofty place characterized by a powerful energy. How can we access this intensely strong *koach* as we hear the Megilah on Purim?

Rav Biderman in *Be'er HaChayim* quotes the *Kav Hayashar* where he discusses the tremendous potency present during the Megilah reading. He describes an exalted and holy world in Heaven that is only revealed to us once a year — the moments that we begin reading *Megilat Esther*. We recite the brachah, “*al mikra megilah* — about reading the Megilah.” *Mikra* means reading, but it can also mean to call or invite. This is a time when we call out to invite this incredible energy into our world with the hope that this great light will be revealed to us. It is crucial to contemplate the enormity of this moment and open oneself as a receptacle to receive this light. This is the deeper meaning when we respond “Amen!” to the brachah.

Rav Biderman further notes that this is also an invitation for each person to gather this energy into his or her life. Everyone has a tremendous wellspring

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of talents and gifts that have not yet been accessed or developed. The time of Megilah reading shines an extraordinary light of clarity, allowing these forces to come to the fore, enabling each of us to tap into their energy.

Rav Wolfson ז"ל explains that this is one of the reasons that the Megilah is left open during the entire reading, in contrast to the Torah reading on Shabbat and chag where the Torah scroll is covered between the *aliyot*, and only open to the section being read. The Megilah is never concealed, even during the noisemaking when Haman's name is said. The energy and light that emanates from the Megilah is from such a sublime source that its revelation spreads and spreads, impacting every person who listens to the Megillah. The Megillah embodies many levels of salvation and each word channels a "Purim angel" that brings deliverance and blessing that each person can access to achieve the *yeshu'ot* that he desires.

Because the energy at the time of Megillah reading is so exalted, Rav Pincus ז"ל suggests that one should spend time davening after hearing the Megillah reading and pour out one's requests to Hashem. These moments are an "*et ratzon*," a special time to take advantage of the tremendous energy of light and mercy that is found in the world. May all of our prayers and requests be answered *le'tovah* this Purim. ■

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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR
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OU ISRAEL

Each year on *Shabbat Zachor*, we read of the biblical mandate to remember how the tribe of *Amalek* attacked the Jewish people as we departed from Egypt, and the obligation to wipe out any semblance of the evil that *Amalek* represents.

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, the Kedushat Levi, zy'a, explains based on the teaching from the *Zohar*, that each and every human being is an *Olam Katan* microcosmic world. Whatever exists in the physical world, explains the Rebbe, also exists metaphysically within the inner microcosmic world of each of us as human beings. If there is a *metziut* of *Amalek*, of evil which we must work to wipe out in the physical world, so too we must strive to overcome the *yetzer hara*- the proverbial *metziut* of *Amalek* which exists within each one of us.

Similarly, the **Netivot Shalom, the Slonimer Rebbe zy'a**, explained that *Amalek* represents not solely those who seek to harm us, but rather a personification of all that is evil in existence. Our role in obliterating *Amalek*, is not simply the removal of an existential threat, but also to replace that evil with ultimate goodness.

This idea can be further understood by taking a closer look at the *pesukim*:

“Zachor-Remember what Amalek did unto you, as you were en route of departure from Egypt. Asher Karcha BaDerech-How they came upon you on your way, and struck the back of your encampment, all that were enfeebled in the rear of the camp, when you were

faint and weary; they did not fear G-d. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord your G-d has given you rest from all your enemies, in the land which the Lord your G-d has given you as an inheritance to possess it, that thou shall blot out all remembrance of Amalek from under heaven, lo tishkach- you shall not forget...”

Rav Yehuda Amital zt'l, the beloved and revered *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshivat Har Etzion* offered an interesting interpretation of this idea that *Amalek* “*karkha baderekh*”-happened upon the people of Israel. This, explained Rav Amital, implies that the attack was random. Whoever *Amalek* ran into, it attacked. According to Rav Amital, Jews can fulfill the *mitzva* to blot out *Amalek* by living lives filled with purpose, with goals, direction, and values.

Rashi, citing the *Midrash Tanchuma* offers a different and interesting insight regarding the words *Asher Karcha BaDerech-How they came upon you on your way*.

Asher Karcha BaDerech this is connected in meaning with the phrase קור וחום “cold and heat” and it means: he made you cold and luke-warm after the boiling heat you had before. For all the nations were afraid to war against you and this one came and began to point out the way to others. A parable! It may be compared to a boiling hot bath into which no living creature could descend. A good-for-nothing came, and sprang down into it; although he scalded himself he made it appear cold to others...

Rashi suggests that *Amalek* somehow represents the Jewish people, being cooled off, becoming vulnerable once again to our enemies, and the powers of evil.

The **Piasieczna Rebbe, the Aish Kodesh zy'a**, offers an interesting explanation of this *midrash* cited by *Rashi*. The Jewish people, having just witnessed the miracles of the ten plagues and incredible redemption from Egyptian servitude, were literally on fire with a burning faith and trust in *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. *Amalek* comes and cools us in our *derech*, they cool off our religious passion, they represent foreign ideas which come to knock *Klal Yisrael* off of our proper *derech*, they cause us to be cooled off, in terms of our commitment and passion in *Avodat Hashem*, making us to be susceptible and in danger not only spiritually, but physically.

The great Chasidic Master, the **Maor VeShemesh, zy'a** offers a beautiful insight to explain this idea of *Amalek* cooling off the Jewish people and becoming vulnerable.

Amalek cooled the Jewish People, they caused

the Jewish people to be cold toward one another, they cooled off their burning good hearted kindness for one another.

What was it that *Amalek* caused to happen, which made us vulnerable and susceptible to harm? A lack of warmth, empathy, and love for one another.

During these incredible days leading up to *Purim*, we are reminded of the sacred task of breaking down barriers, of coming together as one, of repairing relationships, and bringing *simcha* and *achdut* to the world.

As we prepare ourselves for *Shabbat Zachor*, let us work to internalize each of these important teachings and may we merit to be the conduit to bring warmth, goodness and hope to the entire world. *Purim Sameach!* ■

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Purim: Inner Light

To hear the great *Tzadik*, Reb Shalom Rockeach, *Der Ershter Rov*, the ‘First Rebbe’ of Belz (known also as the *Sar Shalom zy’a*), *lein* the Megillah was an unforgettably uplifting experience. When he was a young man, still an unknown budding student of the Chozeh of Lublin, he was called upon to read the Megillah in the Chozeh’s Beis Medrash of Lublin. Those assembled didn’t recognize the young scholar, but sensed that they experienced something special. At the completion of the *leining*, the Chozeh remarked: “The (Purim) story... I have heard many times, but I’ve never heard it told quite like this.”

Once on Purim night, Reb Elazar, the oldest of the Sar Shalom’s five sons, and Reb Yehoshua, his youngest brother, were stranded far from home. For the first time in their lives, they would miss out on Megillah reading with their

illustrious father, which was replete with Kabalistic intentions, in the spiritually-charged atmosphere of the Beis Medrash in Belz.

Reb Elazar was deeply disappointed that they were stuck at a roadside inn hearing an ordinary *balabus*, a community member, read the Megillah. His younger brother, Reb Yehoshua, who would ultimately become the successor and next Rebbe of Belz, felt differently:

“On the contrary, my dear brother. Each year we hear the Megillah from our righteous father and enjoy his other-worldly *leining*. With every word sweet as honey, I too am swept up by our father’s greatness, and my mind wanders from the story of Mordechai and Esther into the upper spheres of Divine perception. There is so much pleasure in it, but truthfully, I fear that my focus has not been on the basic details or the mitzvah of the Megillah, per se.

This year, when we hear the Megillah, I will have no other motivation or *kavannah* than to hear the story, and fulfill the Mitzvah *lishmah*, for its own sake. And I will have to find new meanings and depths in it on my own!

Megillas Esther describes how the Jews celebrated upon hearing of Haman’s downfall and the miraculous turnabout of Purim. *LaYehudim hayesa ora v’simcha v’asson v’yikar*, “The Jews experienced light, happiness, joy and honor.” (8:16)

The Gemara in Megillah (16b) explains the four terms in this verse: *ora*, “light” alludes to Torah, *simcha*, “happiness” alludes to Yom

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Tov, *sasson*, “joy”, alludes to Bris Milah, and *yekar*, “honor”, alludes to Tefillin.

However, this explanation seems to miss a basic point in the narrative of the Megillah and the experience of the Jews of Shushan, namely that the *Gezeira* of Achashveirosh and Haman against Am Yisrael had nothing to do with the mitzvos described here! In the Purim story, the goal was clear: *l'harog, l'abeid* — to annihilate us physically, *chas v'Shalom*, regardless of religious observance or Jewish expression.

It was Antiochus, the villain of the Chanukah narrative, who outlawed Milah, Moed and Shabbos. And it was the Roman Era persecution which forced Jews into hiding to ‘illegally’ study Torah. There is no indication in the Megillah that Haman or the Persian authorities interfered with our observance of Mitzvos.

Another *drasha* in the Gemara (Megillah 10b) explains the Haman’s description of the Jews: *Yeshno Am Mefuzar uMefurad*, “There is a people that is spread out and set apart...” *Yeshno*, our Yidishkeit was ‘sleepy’; our mitzvah observance had become stale, lacking *chiyus*, vitality. We were distracted, pulled in all sorts of directions away from what truly mattered.

Reb Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin zy’a offers a moving interpretation: We did learn Torah, but by rote, lifelessly turning pages as if studying a secular text. There was no “light” in our *limud haTorah*. In the days of the Persian exile, Jews kept Shabbos and Yom Tov, but our experience of those exalted, holy days lacked the main ingredient: *simcha*. Even *Bris Milah*, circumcision, became just another lifecycle event, lacking *sasson*, the deep joy of appreciating what our covenant with Hashem means. Wrapping Tefillin day in and day out had become labor-intensive in our eyes, our daily prayers a heavy ‘obligation’.

The miraculous salvation and turnaround of

Purim was a spiritual jolt that woke us out of this state of sleep (*yeshno*). It put the *ora* back in Torah, restored the *simcha* of the Yamim Tovim, and revealed the *sasson* of our Covenant and the “honor” of wearing Tefillin. Mitzvos that were taken for granted and had become perfunctory ‘observations’ were filled with life once again.

May this Purim be one that we experience with attunement to real inner growth and renewal. In the spirit of the Chozev of Lublin, may we say, ‘It’s a celebration that I have enjoyed many times, but I’ve never enjoyed it quite like this.’

Wherever we may be, and from whomever we hear the Megillah, may we listen and internalize the story like never before — *lishmah*. And may Purim and our mitzvah-observances all year round be drenched with this light, happiness, joy and honor! ■

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Salt, Kosher, and Shabbat – Part One

One of the foundations of modern kosher supervision is a thorough understanding of manufacturing procedures and production methods. Rabbis at the Orthodox Union (OU) Kosher not only possess deep knowledge of how to apply halacha (Jewish law) to the products they supervise, but they also take responsibility for understanding precisely how those products are manufactured.

This expertise often affects areas of halacha beyond the narrow realm of kashrut. Many areas of halacha are intertwined, and because kashrut encompasses so many aspects of modern food production, other halachic subjects frequently intersect with it. As a result, broader halachic issues are often clarified and elaborated through the lens of kosher supervision.

KOSHER SALT PRODUCTION

Table salt is one of the most common household ingredients. From a kashrut perspective, salt is generally considered innocuous. Even modern additives such as calcium silicate or potassium iodide are simple compounds that typically do not pose kashrut concerns.

However, the method by which salt is produced can have significant implications in the realm of Hilchot Shabbat, particularly with

regard to the laws of cooking (*bishul*).

There are three primary methods used to produce salt:

1. Rock Salt Mining

Salt is extracted from underground mines, then crushed, filtered, and packaged. In this method, the salt itself is not subjected to a cooking process.

2. Solar Evaporation

Seawater is collected in large ponds, where the sun gradually evaporates the water, leaving salt deposits behind. The salt is then further dried in ovens heated to approximately 200–300°F for about ten minutes.

This method is viable only in regions with warm, dry climates and extended rain-free periods, such as Australia, California, the Bahamas, and the Caribbean.

3. Solution Mining

In this process, water is pumped into underground salt deposits, creating brine (a salt-water solution). The brine is then extracted and brought to a boil, causing the water to evaporate as steam and leaving salt crystals behind.

Boiling is typically performed in a multiple-effect evaporator system. Pressure decreases from the first chamber to the last (approaching a vacuum), allowing the brine to boil efficiently at progressively lower temperatures.

THE SHABBAT QUESTION

Given these production methods, a halachic question arises: May one add salt to hot food on Shabbat?



In general, Hilchot Shabbat prohibits cooking uncooked food on Shabbat. Adding an uncooked substance to hot food under certain conditions may constitute a serious biblical violation.

If salt were produced through rock salt mining and had not undergone any cooking process, it could potentially be considered uncooked. In such a case, adding it to sufficiently hot food on Shabbat might be prohibited.

By contrast, salt produced through solar evaporation (which includes oven drying) or solution mining (which involves boiling) would appear to qualify as halachically “cooked.” If so, it may be permissible to add such salt to hot food on Shabbat, subject to additional halachic considerations.

Another related issue concerns the additives mixed into salt. Even if the salt itself is considered cooked, if the additives were not subjected to heat, their addition to hot food on Shabbat could present a separate halachic concern.

SALT PRODUCTION IN ISRAEL

Israel has developed a highly successful salt production system. All salt used domestically and sold at retail in Israel is produced locally.

Israel is particularly known for its advanced solar evaporation system. Seawater is collected in a series of large evaporation pools, where the water gradually evaporates, leaving substantial salt deposits. The remaining salt is then heated with hot air to remove residual moisture and further refine the product.

Based on this process, there is little question that Israeli-produced salt is halachically

considered cooked and may therefore be added to hot dishes on Shabbat. The remaining question, however, concerns the additives.

After extensive research, it appears that most additives used in Israeli salt are exposed to high levels of heat during production. Even in cases where they may not be fully cooked, there may still be grounds for leniency based on the ruling of Rav Belsky, *zt”l*, a leading halachic authority and *Posek* for the OU.

Rav Belsky explained that additives are typically present in extremely small quantities, often less than 0.005% (approximately 50 parts per million). If the additives were cooked, the concern would be resolved entirely. However, even where that is not definitively the case, Rav Belsky ruled that the salt may still be considered halachically cooked.

Although the concept of *bitul* (nullification) does not always apply straightforwardly to the laws of *bishul* on Shabbat, Rav Belsky maintained that such minuscule additives are halachically insignificant. Because they are present in such negligible amounts and play no substantive role in the cooking process, they are considered *batul* and do not alter the salt’s halachic status.

There are additional halachic considerations regarding the addition of salt to hot foods on Shabbat. In Part Two, we will examine the final practical conclusions on this subject. ■

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Amalek 2.0

Morality is complex and deeply contextual. For that reason, the Torah does not attempt to spell out every detail of human moral interaction. Such an effort would be endless, because moral situations shift with time, place, and circumstance. As the Ramban explains, the Torah sets out core moral responsibilities that are universal and binding. Beyond those obligations, it calls upon us to preserve the moral spirit of the law even when no specific halachic requirement applies. This is the mitzvah of *lifnim mishurat hadin*, acting beyond the letter of the law. Moral life is often too complicated to be fully captured by formal rules alone.

There are exceptions. The mitzvah to battle Amalek reminds us that some moral situations are not gray, but starkly black and white. When we encounter pure evil in its most horrific form, evil that threatens humanity and challenges the presence of Hashem in the world, we are commanded to eradicate it entirely. In such moments, false compassion and

moral hesitation come up short, and there is no room for moral balancing or contextual excuses.

TWO EVILS

Evil exists in two different forms, one theological and one historical. The seven nations that once inhabited the Land of Israel had become fully submerged in a pagan culture marked by savagery, black magic, sorcery, and even cannibalism. They posed a direct threat to the presence of Hashem and to the survival of belief in monotheism. For that reason, they had to be removed from the land so that the kingdom of Hashem could be established in Yerushalayim. Though the mitzvah to eliminate the seven nations can sound extreme when read in isolation, within its broader theological context it was necessary for the spread of monotheism. Monotheism itself serves the broader welfare of the human condition. This commandment was given only once in history and applied solely under those original conditions.

The second form of evil is embodied by Amalek. Amalek does not deny Hashem, nor does it confront His presence through overt religious challenge. Instead, it sets itself against Jewish destiny. Descended from Esav, Amalek defined its role as resisting the rise of Yaakov. As Jewish history unfolds and that destiny presses forward, Amalek repeatedly emerges, intent on disruption and obstruction.

BA-DERECH

When we first left Mitzrayim, we were meant to enter Eretz Yisrael within a short span of time. Though our failures in the desert

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delayed that journey, the original trajectory was swift and direct. It was at that moment that Amalek attacked, confronting us *ba-derech*, on the way, seeking to block our path and sap our momentum as we moved toward historical and spiritual purpose.

Our entry into Eretz Yisrael was delayed for forty years because of our repeated desert failures. Finally, after four decades, we stood at the threshold of the land, poised to enter from the southeast. At that moment, descendants of Amalek attacked us, disguising themselves as local Canaanite warriors in order to confuse and mislead. Once again, Amalek appeared *ba-derech*, on the road of Jewish history, seeking to slow the march forward and obstruct the unfolding of Jewish destiny.

Hundreds of years later, we were driven from Yerushalayim by the Babylonians and found ourselves exiled in Persia. Slowly, we began the difficult process of return, laying the groundwork for the era of the Second Mikdash. Once again, a descendant of Amalek emerged, this time Haman the Agagite, seeking to undo Yaakov's ascendancy over Esav and to destroy us before we could make our way back to Eretz Yisrael.

AMALEK WITHOUT AMALEKITES

Haman, however, was the last time a genealogical descendant of Amalek rose up against Jewish history. A few centuries earlier, the Assyrians had conquered much of the Mediterranean Levant and forcibly displaced populations, creating lasting demographic confusion. With the identity of the Amalekite nation lost, the specific mitzvah to eradicate Amalek no longer applies. The command of Parashat Ki Teitzei has been frozen in history. Yet the struggle with the idea of Amalek continues. While the command in Ki Teitzei has faded, the verse in Beshalach remains fully alive. It points to an

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ongoing battle with Amalek as a concept, one with broad historical and theological meaning.

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"For a hand is raised against the throne of God; the Lord is at war with Amalek from generation to generation."

In every generation, there are those who become obsessed with the Jewish people and fixated on their destruction. They may not descend from Amalek genealogically, and the mitzvah of Amalek does not translate in our time into a command to kill, but they are part of the same enduring struggle described in Beshalach, a historical battle that resurfaces again and again in different forms.

This Amalek impulse is highly contagious. It surfaces across very different cultures and ideologies, infecting fascists in Germany and communists in Moscow, fundamentalist Islamists and, at times, even Western liberals. Its danger lies partly in how easily it spreads,



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often to people unaware they have absorbed it. From desert encampments outside Egypt to imperial palaces in Shushan, from Europe's killing fields during the Holocaust to battlefields in the Middle East, this impulse has repeatedly driven humanity toward obsessive hatred of the Jewish people and a determination to block Jewish destiny.

Purim offers a microcosm of this continuing struggle. Both then and now, the battle is no longer waged against a clearly defined, genealogical Amalek, but against those who have internalized its poison. The threat has changed form, but the animating hostility remains the same, reappearing whenever Jewish existence and purpose move visibly forward.

SWITCHING SIDES

By introducing a new form of Amalek, Purim also introduced something new into the struggle. We were no longer alone. Allies emerged, people who had once aligned themselves with those who sought our destruction, but who now switched sides.

After Haman's fall, Mordechai rose to prominence and was celebrated in Shushan as a heroic figure. As the new decree empowered us to defend ourselves, a gradual but striking reversal took place. Many who had planned our downfall now stood with us in our defense.

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Twice, the Megillah records this shift.

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“Many among the peoples of the land aligned themselves with the Jews, for the fear of Mordechai had fallen upon them.”

וְרַבִּים מֵעַמִּי הָאֲרָץ מִתְּהִדִים כִּי נָפַל פַּחַד הַיְהוּדִים עֲלֵיהֶם

“Many among the peoples of the land aligned themselves with the Jews, for the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them.”

According to many opinions, these Persian citizens did not formally convert to Judaism; they merely aligned themselves with our cause. Both the awe inspired by the Jewish people and the respect commanded by Mordechai caused former enemies to reverse course and stand alongside us in battle. It was the ultimate *v'nahafoch hu*: those who once threatened us now helped defend us.

Purim created an important historical template that would resurface as we approached the final redemption of history. For nearly two thousand years, we suffered in silence and isolation. Part of what made the Holocaust so horrific, and so emblematic of exile, was that no one rose specifically to our defense. Though we ultimately benefited from the Allied defeat of Hitler, it was not undertaken as a focused effort to protect the Jewish people. If anything, Roosevelt felt compelled to downplay his concern for European Jewry so that the war would not be portrayed as driven by Jewish interests. We were murdered in silence, and we were alone.

Yet history seems to be shifting once again, echoing the pattern first set in Purim. In 1965, the Christian Church formally moved toward rapprochement with the Jewish people, acknowledging and apologizing for nearly two millennia of hatred and discrimination. Since then, Israel has benefited greatly from the

support of Christians who see the Jewish return to history and to the Land as an advance of the divine presence in the world.

As I write these lines, our country and the United States are engaged in a battle against a fundamentalist regime of violence in Tehran. We hope that this ממשלת דודן will soon be swept into the dustbin of history, like all those who have opposed the presence of Hashem or who have spoken in the name of false gods. Perhaps that day will also allow its people to renew a healthier relationship with the Jewish people and with the Jewish state.

Our vision of *acharit hayamim* includes the defeat of the forces of Amalek, those who choose to oppose Hashem and the destiny of His people in their land. We do not believe in predetermined or fated forces of evil. People exercise free choice when they adopt the Amalek impulse and turn their hatred against our people, and they will ultimately be defeated. At the same time, we look toward a future in which many of today's adversaries will once again switch sides, as they did in Persia twenty-five hundred years ago and as we have witnessed, in part, over the past fifty years. ■



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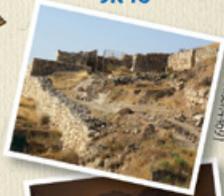
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Mastering Our Moments:

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1 אסתר א:א

וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים אַחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ הוּא אַחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ מֵהוּדוּ וְעַד כּוּשׁ שִׁבְעַת וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה.

Now it came to pass in the days of Achashveirosh – he was Achashveirosh who reigned from Hodu to Cush, one hundred twenty-seven provinces.

How many kingdoms did Achashveirosh rule over? Where else do we find this number?

2 בראשית כג:א

וַיְהִי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים שָׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה.

And the life of Sarah was one hundred years and twenty years and seven years; [these were] the years of the life of Sarah.

What root word appears four times in this passuk?

3 רש"י שם

שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה. כָּלן שְׁוִין לטובה:

"The years of the life of Sarah" – All of them equally good.

According to Rashi, what is the Torah teaching us with this extra repeated word?

4 בראשית רבה נח:ג

רַבִּי אֶקִיבָא הֵיךָ יוֹשֵׁב וְדוֹרֵשׁ וְהַצְבּוֹר מִתְנַמְנָם בְּשֵׁט לְעוֹרְרָן אָמַר מָה רָאָתָה אֶסְתֵּר שֶׁתִּמְלֹךְ עַל שִׁבְעַת וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה, אֲלָא תְּבֹא אֶסְתֵּר שֶׁהִיְתָה בַת בְּתָהּ שֶׁל שָׂרָה שֶׁהִיְתָה מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים וְשִׁבְעַת וּתִמְלֹךְ עַל מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים וְשִׁבְעַת מְדִינוֹת.

Rabbi Akiva was once sitting and lecturing and the audience began to doze off. He wanted to wake them up. He said: 'Why was Esther seen fit to reign over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces? [The explanation is]: Let Esther, who was a descendant of Sarah, who lived one hundred and twenty-seven years, come and reign over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces.'

What did Rabbi Akiva say to help his students stay awake during the class?

How would this help keep them awake?!

Can you imagine students sleeping during the class of Rabbi Akiva?!

The *Chofshi Hareim* is quoted as explaining that Rabbi Akiva was reminding his students about something very important. Sarah was an incredible woman who, as Rashi explained, appreciated and made the most of every moment Hashem had given her. Hashem awarded Sarah tremendously for each moment of her life.

Kids' Kollel Torah Riddle Time / **By Yael Hautmann / OU Israel**

How many Hebrew letters are in the names of all the people who attended the *מסכת* that אסתר put together? Remember that on Purim we erase the memory of ימלך and all his descendants!

phant

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TOWARDS MEANINGFUL PARENTING

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DIRECTOR OF OU ISRAEL WOMEN'S DIVISION

Every Word Matters: Lessons from the Megillah

Today, I want to focus on a halacha that at first glance seems technical, but which actually contains a profound insight into the story of Purim.

The Mishnah Berurah writes as follows:
אדם שלא קרא או לא שמע אפילו מילה אחת מן המגילה, לא יצא ידי חובה, וצריך לחזור ולקרוא את המגילה, מן המילה שלא שמע ואילך

A person who did not read or hear even a single word of the Megillah has not fulfilled the obligation and must return and read the Megillah from the word he missed onward.

According to this ruling, missing even one word of the Megillat Esther means one has not fulfilled the mitzvah. At first, this seems almost extreme. After all, if someone hears 99.99% of the Megillah, shouldn't that be enough? Yet, as Rav Meir Bareli explains in the sefer *Ohalei Halacha*, there is a profound reason behind this halacha. It carries a lesson that extends far beyond the technical

requirements of the mitzvah.

Purim itself is a story built out of details. The entire redemption of the Jewish people emerged not from grand miracles, but from a chain of small, seemingly insignificant events: a sleepless night in the palace, a refusal to come to a party, a conversation overheard at the right moment. None of these moments appeared important when they happened, yet together they formed the basis for salvation. If even one had been missing, the outcome would have been entirely different.

This is precisely why missing even a single word of the Megillah invalidates the reading, for who can say which word might hold the key? The halacha reflects the deeper truth that every detail counts. Hashem's hand is not only revealed through dramatic, open miracles, but also through the quiet, hidden moments that seem ordinary or disconnected. Each one plays a role in the unfolding of His plan.

This understanding changes how we view the story of our own lives. Often, we experience events that feel random, frustrating, or meaningless. We can't yet see how they fit together. But Purim teaches us that nothing is random. Every "word" of our lives, every moment and encounter, is part of a larger plan written by Hashem. Even when His name seems absent, His presence fills every line.

And this perspective extends to the world around us. When we read the news, follow events in Israel, or face uncertainty in global

Mazal Tov to
Daniel & Gabriella Sopher
on the marriage of their son

affairs, it's easy to feel confusion or despair. Yet Purim reminds us that the story isn't yet finished. Just as the people of Shushan could only see Hashem's plan once the story concluded (after 12 years!), we too will one day be able to look back and recognize the divine planning behind each event.

Listening to every word of the Megillah trains us to listen more carefully to life, to recognize that even what feels hidden, delayed, or insignificant may be the "missing word" that brings the entire story together.

May we all be Zocheh to witness how the seemingly disconnected events going on around us will gradually unfold into the ultimate Geula, במהרה בימינו. ■

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RABBI AARON GOLDSCHIEDER

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Purim – Truly Cherishing Torah and Mitzvot

The Talmud famously describes the giving of the Torah in a most surprising way:

“The Holy One, Blessed be He, overturned the mountain over the Jews like a barrel and said to them: ‘If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not, there will be your burial.’ ... Rava said: Even so, they again accepted it [willingly] in the time of Achashverosh, as it is written, ‘The Jews ordained and took upon them ...’ (Esther 9:27), and he taught: The Jews established what they had already taken upon themselves [at Sinai].” (Shabbat 88a)

Rav Kook first addresses the apparent coercion at Mt. Sinai, depicted by the mountain suspended above the people and the threat of burial should they refuse the Law. He rejects any reading that suggests force or intimidation intended to compel a frightened nation into meek submission. Rather, the Talmud is teaching that Torah is not a matter of choice because it is integral and essential to Jewish existence.

The evocative imagery powerfully conveys that the Jewish people cannot survive—cannot “breathe,” so to speak—without Torah. This transcends choice. One does not choose whether to breathe; survival depends upon it. So too, Jewish survival depends upon Torah. (*Ain Aya, Shabbat 88a, p. 191, piska #67*)

What, then, does it mean that there was a reacceptance of the Torah in the time of

Purim, and what is its significance?

Rav Kook beautifully suggests that while Torah is essential to a Jew, it is equally essential to discover the meaning and beauty that Torah and mitzvot bring to one’s life. In the Purim story, the Jews found themselves deeply entrenched in the flourishing culture of Persia, drawn to many of its harmful elements—such as idolatry and decadence, as reflected in the opening chapter of Megillat Esther. Only when they experienced an eleventh-hour, miraculous salvation did they rediscover how precious the Torah truly was to them. Torah and mitzvot that once came naturally had been allowed to atrophy and dissipate. Rav Kook teaches that rediscovering Torah and appreciating it in all its grandeur and profundity is of limitless value.

A beloved verse from Megillat Esther, recited weekly in Havdala, describes the joy of the Jewish people at the time of their salvation:

“The Jews had light and gladness, and joy and honor” (Esther 8:16).

The Talmud (Megillah 16b) suggests that each term refers to a specific mitzvah the Jews celebrated anew: “Light” refers to Torah; “gladness” refers to holidays; “joy” refers to circumcision; and “honor” refers to tefillin.

A beautiful interpretation of this teaching is that after their victory over Amalek and their remarkable salvation, the Jewish

people rediscovered the light and joy within mitzvot—mitzvot they had either neglected or performed mechanically, without vitality. Amazingly, the Talmud interprets Haman's phrase about the Jews, "Yeshno am echad..." ("There is one nation..."), to suggest that the people had grown sleepy (*yashen* = asleep) in their observance of mitzvot (Megillah 13b).

The holidays, the covenant of circumcision, the daily donning of tefillin suddenly shone brightly once again. The Jews perceived in them glimmering opportunities for connection with Hashem and profound solidarity with the nation as a whole. (See *Mei Marom, Sichot Chanukha VPurim*, Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlop, p. 212)

RAV SOLOVEITCHIK AND RAV KOOK: PURIM'S SECOND-RATE DRINKING

The observance of Purim includes a law unlike any found on other holidays: the obligation to become intoxicated. Not only is this unusual—breaking from the standard model of festival observance—but it is also troubling, given that Jewish law generally disapproves of drunkenness and the loss of clarity and dignity it entails.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik notes that Purim introduces a fundamentally different concept. "The concept of joy, or *simchah*, has been modified and converted into hilarity or gaiety. Indeed, one cannot even call this joy or *simchah*." (Days of Deliverance, p. 94)

Alongside drinking, the custom of wearing masks (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 696:8) further emphasizes fun-making and lighthearted revelry.

The Rav suggests that we can better understand the underlying motif of the day by considering another anomaly: on Purim, unlike



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other festivals, we do not recite Hallel.

Why not? The Talmud offers two explanations. First, we remained "servants of Achashverosh." The political reality was unchanged; we were still vulnerable and insecure. Hallel cannot be recited when joy is mitigated and incomplete.

Second, the Megillah itself substitutes for Hallel. Yet even this answer, according to the Rav, underscores the lingering instability of the Purim narrative. The miracle did not usher in lasting redemption. Who is to say that

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others would not rise up again?

The Rav exquisitely suggests that drinking on Purim symbolizes this very insecurity. Intoxication represents a fleeting high—a superficial, short-lived mood shift. It lacks permanence. Excessive drinking on Purim highlights that the salvation of Shushan was temporary. In contrast, true *simchah* reflects being in the presence of one's Creator: "When man experiences His [God's] companionship, there is joy, in the sense of self-fulfillment." (Ibid., p. 98)

When we drink on Purim, we are, in a sense, acting out our joy. It does not reflect the authentic *simchah* celebrated through Hallel and through standing *lifnei Hashem*. There remains an underlying *galut*, an exilic dimension, embedded in Purim's observance. Rav Soloveitchik states explicitly: "We cannot equate the celebration of Purim with *simchat-haregel*, the joy of the Festival." (Ibid., p. 105)

In halachic thought, *simchah* is associated with the Jew dwelling in the Land of Israel—particularly within the borders of Jerusalem and the Beit Hamikdash. Purim, by contrast, symbolizes distance from that elevated sanctity. Its second-rate form of cheer, expressed through intoxication, serves as a stark reminder that Purim commemorates an imperfect salvation and reflects a spiritually deficient state of Jewish life.

Where, then, does the fullness of Jewish joy

manifest?

The answer—so central to Rav Kook's thought and his clarion call—is in the Land of Israel, when we are not merely surviving threats but building a nation, living authentically, and expressing our highest values. In the opening passages of Orot, Rav Kook establishes this as a foundational principle:

"It is impossible for a Jew to be attached and faithful to his thoughts, reasonings, conceptualizations, and imaginations, when he is outside the Land of Israel, compared to the quality of their faithfulness in Eretz Yisrael. Revelations of holiness, on whatever level, are clean in Eretz Yisrael according to their value, while outside the Land of Israel they are mixed with abundant dross and *klipot* (shells/coverings)." (Orot, piska #4)

The term *klipot* is a Kabbalistic concept meaning "shells" or "outer coverings." One way to understand it is as a mask—something that conceals true identity. Jewish existence in *galut* often compels a Jew to suppress aspects of his or her essence, navigating foreign cultures carefully and revealing only what is safe and acceptable. The masks worn on Purim thus reflect not only festivity, but also insecurity—life under foreign rule in a foreign land.

True, the Jews defeated Haman. There was a miracle; they were saved. Of course we celebrate. But the salvation lacked permanence and security. The complete *simchah* of *lifnei Hashem*—of standing fully in God's presence—emerges only when we build our national future in the Land and serve Him in His abode, the Beit Hamikdash. ■

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Booing Haman

Question: During the noise-making breaks after Haman’s name in Megilla reading, some people now vocalize their disdain for Haman with sounds and even words. Is that permitted? If words are forbidden, is “Boooo” a word?

Answer: We bend or break normal rules in order to make Purim “lively” in multiple ways. There are the ideas of drinking wine well beyond the norm and that one is exempt from payment for damages caused during the Purim celebration because the mayhem is part of the *mitzva* (Rama, Orach Chayim 695:2). Regarding Megilla reading, the *minhag* that the congregation reads out loud four *p’sukim* was designed “just for happiness, to make the youngsters happy, and encourage them to ...

listen to the reading” (Hagahot Maimoniot, Megilla 1:7). There, words are being said in a fundamentally unnecessary manner, but they are the words of the Megilla. The idea of putting down Haman finds expression in several statements of *Chazal*.

Is showing disdain for Haman grounds to bend any rules? The practices of “banging for Haman” has undergone changes over time, but is codified in the Rama (Orach Chayim 690:17). Normally, it is forbidden to do actions in a juncture where *hefsek* is forbidden (Shulchan Aruch, OC 97:4 regarding returning a *tallit* that fell off). Much of the non-vocal noisemaking is as much of an action, so we see a bending of the rules. However, *hefsek* exists on a scale, and speech is at its top (Mishna Berura 104:10), so we must look for precedent for speaking due to Haman’s name.

The Magen Avraham (690:21) cites a *minhag* from the Levush (OC 690:17) to say “*Shem resh’a'im yirkav*” when Haman’s name is read, so there is indeed strong precedent. While “boo” lacks the profundity of words from Tanach, the fundamental underpinnings seem the same. On the other hand, the Pri Megadim (ad loc.) criticizes the practice, and it is not cited in the body of the Mishna Berura. In its footnotes (Sha’ar Hatziyun 690:57), he explains that he opposes the practice – however, his grounds (like the Pri Megadim’s; they both disapproved the pause in the *leining*) are that the confusion the proclamation brings can cause one to miss part of the *leining*. However, he suggests the following proof that *hefsek*

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is not a problem. The Shulchan Aruch (ibid. 13) validates a practice to elucidate the Megilla reading during the reading; in other words, with proper justification, one can speak things related to the reading. Igrot Moshe (OC I 192) discusses a deflection of the proof, and leaves the propriety of the Levush's *minhag* unresolved. Regarding the complaint about confusion, in most shuls, vocalization is not going to “push the envelope” (see Living the Halachic Process VI, D-11).

Is wordless vocalization better than speaking with word(s)? *Poskim* treat communicating through *remiza* (hinting) as normally a problem, but when needed, preferable to speaking or even moving from one's place during *Shemoneh Esrei* (Mishna Berura 104:1). That refers to hinting with hands or eyes, not to vocalization. Although I have not found a source for it, it is a longstanding practice (probably overused) for when you must not speak to say “Nu, nu” with gestures and intonations, meaning, “Do as I expect you to understand.” This is apparently worse than *remiza* and better than speaking. In some ways, “Boo” is more like speech, as the interjection “boo” is an entry in dictionaries and has a specific meaning (of disapproval), whereas “Nu” can mean anything, depending on context and intonation. If stretched out greatly, “Boooo” is more of a sound than a word, making it is more similar to “Nu.” Animal sounds are definitely not speaking, and would be not too different from mechanical noisemaking.

In summary, there are enough ways to put

down Haman without the more problematic use of words. On the other hand, words might be okay, even unrelated speech does not disqualify Megilla reading (Rama, OC 690:5), and cramping children's style has a price. Each *shul*/rabbi should act according to its character and the religious/experiential needs of the Purim celebrants. ■

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SHOSHANA JUDELMAN

TORAH TIDBITS CONTRIBUTOR

Beyond the Costumes

I fight a battle every day. The battle for self-knowledge, personal growth and relationship. Do you fight this battle too?

It is a hard but essential fight because most of us don't see ourselves clearly.

As children, we take on roles that help us find safety and relationship. For example, if people smiled when you made a joke, then you learned that being funny was something that could enable you to receive love.

But at some point, this identity can become a stranglehold if you aren't aware of it and working with it. You become locked into that label, unable to change or grow- stuck reacting to life from the vantage point of the little kid looking for love. Instead of from a deeper essential self.

This is connected to the concept of *kelipah*, meaning a shell or a peel.

In the physical world we see that the shell

of an almond protects but also hides the almond. In the early stages of growth, the shell was necessary in order for the almond to grow. Once the almond is ripe, however, the *kelipah* becomes a hindrance.

Another example is the embryonic sac. For a baby in the womb, the embryonic sac is a life-giving device. It provides a nurturing environment for the fetus to grow and receive nourishment. After the baby is born, however, the sac becomes an impediment and even a danger if not removed.

In the spiritual realm, *kelipah* is anything that hides G-dliness. Anything that "thinks" it has an identity other than the G-dliness it holds.

On some level, we live lives of *kelipah*. Lives coded by the beliefs we formed as children. Beliefs that protected me, but now box me in and strangle me emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. And cause me to live from a superficial sense of self that craves outside validation rather than from my essential self that knows its own value.

The Midrash Shir HaShirim presents a mashal of a princess who doesn't know her identity. Her poverty and hunger have brought her to glean in the fields with the other poor girls. The king rides by in his beautiful carriage, and lo and behold! It is his daughter! He sends an officer to rescue her and bring her into the royal carriage. Her friends express astonishment at this turn of events- yesterday she was just a beggar in the fields like them and now she is a princess! She is just as surprised as they are and admits, "I also didn't

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realize that I was a princess!?"

But she was. Even in the fields. Even as she was gleaned. Inside she was always a princess.

Reb Leibele Eiger uses this midrash to explain a deeper meaning behind wearing costumes on Purim. We change our outer appearance, but we remain the same inside.

Wearing the costume of a fire-fighter doesn't make you a fire-fighter, just like wearing a label you created as a child doesn't define who you really are inside.

We are too often fooled by our self-characterizations and limiting beliefs.

Living from the superficial identity of a poor gleaner rather than from your inner princess.

Go deeper. See your G-dly Soul.

Your Royalty.

And then put on a costume so you can remind yourself that there is something vast and Eternal inside of you. That this life in Galus is one big mask, a costume hiding Hashem's Oneness. And your Infinite potential. ■

Shoshana Judelman is passionate about learning and growing through Chassidus. She gives shiurim to women in many communities around Israel, including Efrat, Elazar, Raanana and Jerusalem as well as at Midreshet Rachel V'Chaya. Shoshana also guides groups at Yad Vashem and leads journeys to Poland and other countries around Europe for JRoots.



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RABBI ELI OZAROWSKI

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR



Special Section: Laws & Customs of Purim

The presentation below offers a concise overview of the halachot and customs of Purim for both Ashkenazim and Sephardim. May our careful observance allow Purim to be a time of joyful celebration for the miracles experienced by our people, both those recorded in the Megilla and those of more recent generations, and a source of meaningful spiritual growth.

PARSHAT ZACHOR

Chazal instituted the reading of four special *parshiyot* before and during the month of Adar.¹ These are read following the regular *Keriat HaTorah* as the “*Maftir*” *aliyah*: *Shekalim*, *Zachor*, *Parah*, and *HaChodesh*. *Parshat Zachor*, read the Shabbat before Purim, contains the mitzvah to remember Amalek’s attempt to attack the Jewish people in the

wilderness. Indeed, it is read in order to fulfill this mitzvah, which, according to Chazal, must be performed once each year.² It is read before Purim specifically because Haman was a descendant of Amalek.³

Listening to *Parshat Zachor* with a *minyan* and from a kosher *sefer Torah* is obligatory for men, and the obligation may be biblical in nature.⁴ According to some *poskim*, it is obligatory for women as well,⁵ while others disagree.⁶ It is customary for women to attend shul on this Shabbat in order to fulfill the stringent opinion.⁷ In many communities, an additional reading is held in the presence of a *minyan* after the *tefillah* for those who missed the regular reading of *Parshat Zachor*.⁸

Since the obligation to hear *Parshat Zachor* may be a Torah one, many *poskim* maintain that each tradition should try to hear it with their own pronunciation and cantillation.⁹ However, one still fulfills the mitzvah even if one heard it from an individual reading with a different pronunciation and cantillation

1. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 685:1-4

2. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 685:2; Magen Avraham 685

3. Mishna Berura 685:1

4. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 685:7; Mishna Berura 685:14)

5. Minchat Chinuch 603

6. Sefer Hachinuch 603; Halichot Shlomo

7. Responsa Yechaveh Da’at 1:84; R. Yosef Zvi Rimon, “Purim: Halacha Mimekora,” p.62

8. Responsa Minchat Yitzchak 9:68; Responsa Teshuvot V’hanhagot 2:228

9. Halichot Shlomo 18:1; Chazon Ovadia, Purim p.8

than one's own.¹⁰

Those who miss it entirely should read it from a printed Chumash,¹¹ and they should also listen to the same section of the Torah when it is read within the weekly *parsha*, in *Parshat Ki Teitzei*.¹² According to some opinions, listening to the Torah reading on Purim morning, which relates the story of Amalek's attack, also fulfills the mitzvah in cases of need,¹³ though others disagree.¹⁴ When fulfilling the mitzvah by listening to *Ki Teitzei* or the Torah reading on Purim, one should ask the *ba'al korei* to have in mind to fulfill the mitzvah of remembering Amalek.¹⁵

TA'ANIT ESTHER

The day before Purim, the 13th of Adar, is described by Chazal as a day on which "all gather together [in prayer],"¹⁶ and it has been customarily accepted as a fast day known as Ta'anit Esther.¹⁷ The reasons given for this fast are either to commemorate the fast of Esther and the Jews mentioned in the *Megilla*, which in fact took place in Nissan,¹⁸ or to commemorate a fast undertaken by the Jews in Persia on this day before going out to the war against their enemies, which was the customary practice.¹⁹ Our fasting serves as a reminder that Hashem listens to the prayers of the Jewish people in times of need.

As with the other minor fasts, healthy men and women should both fast.²⁰ Women who are pregnant or nursing are exempt from the

fast, as are those who are ill.²¹ For these purposes, "ill" is defined as one who is bedridden due to illness or who is unable to function normally.²² Even one suffering from a severe headache, such as a migraine, is exempt.²³ The accepted custom is that one who does not fast is not required to make up the fast at a later date.²⁴ Children are not required to fast until the age of bar/bat mitzvah.²⁵ Some maintain that they should not fast at all,²⁶ while others recommend that they fast for part of the day; however, they should be discouraged from fasting for the entire day.²⁷

ZECHER L'MACHATZIT HASHEKEL

There is a widespread custom among both Ashkenazim and Sephardim to give "*zecher l'machatzit hashekel*" (half-shekel) in the afternoon of Ta'anit Esther or Purim night.²⁸ This is given to commemorate the mitzvah to give a half-shekel in the times of the Beit Hamikdash, as delineated in the Torah.²⁹ According to Chazal, announcements were made during the month of Adar to bring the half-shekel by the beginning of Nissan.³⁰ The reason is that the money was used for the *korbanot* in the *Beit HaMikdash*, and the money had to be brought by Nissan for *korbanot* brought after that time.³¹

The *zecher l'machatzit hashekel* today is traditionally given to a *tzedakah* cause or to support a Torah institution.³² The custom to

10. Oholei Halacha, Moadim, vol.1, p.147;

Piskei Teshuvot 685

11. Kaf Hachaim 685:35

12. R. Rimon, "Purim," p.56

13. Magen Avraham 685

14. Mishna Berura 685:16

15. Ibid.

16. Megilla 2a

17. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 686:2

18. Shibolei Haleket 194

19. Mishna Berura 686:2

20. Rema, O.C. 686:2

21. Ibid.

22. Piskei Teshuvot 686:3

23. Rema, O.C. 686:2

24. R. Moshe Harari, Mikraei Kodesh, Purim 3:5

25. Mishna Berura 550:5

26. Chazon Ovadia, Arba Ta'aniyot, p.66

27. Ibid.; Piskei Teshuvot 550:5

28. Rema, O.C. 694:1; Chazon Ovadia, Purim, p.101

29. Shemot 30

30. Shekalim 1:1

31. Megilla 29b; Mishna Berura 685:2

32. Aruch Hashulchan 694:8; R. Rimon, "Purim," p. 91

give is binding on males over bar mitzvah age, though some hold that only men over the age of 20 are required to give it. It is customary in many places for women to give as well, though some maintain that the custom is not binding in the same manner as for men.³³ Parents are also encouraged to give on behalf of children under bar/bat mitzvah age, though this is not a requirement.³⁴

For Ashkenazim, the custom of *zecher l'machatzit hashekel* dictates that one should give three halves of the local currency or its equivalent value on behalf of each individual for whom one is giving. Therefore, in the United States, three half-dollar coins, or their equivalent value, should be given, totaling \$1.50.³⁵

According to Sephardic tradition,³⁶ the value of half an actual silver coin should be given, which is 9.6 grams of pure silver,³⁷ which currently equals approximately \$25 USD.³⁸ If this amount is difficult to give, Sephardim

may follow the Ashkenazic practice.

READING MEGILLAT ESTHER

One of the central mitzvot of Purim is the reading of Megillat Esther, through which we publicize and commemorate the miracle of Purim. To fulfill the mitzvah, one must read – or hear the *Megilla* read – in its proper order, from beginning to end, both at night and again during the daytime.³⁹

TIMING

The nighttime *Megilla* reading may be performed anytime after nightfall (*tzeit hako-chavim*) until dawn (*alot hashachar*).⁴⁰ In cases of great need, many *poskim* maintain that it may be read after *plag hamincha*, which is one and a quarter halachic hours before sunset.⁴¹ The daytime *Megilla* may be read anytime after sunrise (*neitz hachama*) until sunset. In cases of necessity, it may be read after dawn, even before sunrise.⁴²

WHO IS OBLIGATED

The mitzvah of reading the *Megilla* applies to men, women, and children who have reached the age of *chinuch* (education),⁴³ which is approximately age six or seven, depending on the intellect of the child. Although women are generally exempt from time-bound mitzvot, they are obligated in *Megilla* because they, too, were part of the miracle of Purim.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, a woman may not read the *Megilla* on behalf of a man.⁴⁵ Most *poskim* permit a woman to read the *Megilla* for another woman.⁴⁶

33. Kaf Hachaim 694:27

34. Mishna Berura 694:5

35. Rema 694:1; Responsa Tzitz Eliezer 13:72

36. Kaf Hachaim 694:20

37. Many *poskim* calculate the amount as 9.6 grams, based on the calculations given in the halachot of pidyon haben; some calculate it slightly higher and others slightly lower.

38. This is a dramatic increase in value since last year, and the value constantly fluctuates, so one should check again closer to Purim.

39. Megilla 4a; Shulchan Aruch 687:1, 689:2, 690:3,5

40. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 687:1; Mishna Berura 687:1,3

41. Shulchan Aruch O.C. 692:4

42. Shulchan Aruch O.C. 687:1; Mishna Berura 687:4-6

43. Shulchan Aruch O.C. 689:1; Mishna Berura 689:3

44. Megilla 4a

45. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 689:2; Ben Ish Chai, First Year, Tetzaveh

46. Mishna Berura 689:7, though see Magen

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However, *poskim* disagree as to whether a woman should read the *Megilla* for a group of women or whether it is preferable that they hear it read by a man.⁴⁷ With regard to children, those below the age of *chinuch* should not be brought to shul if they are likely to make noise and distract others.⁴⁸

EATING BEFORE THE MEGILLA READING

One may not eat a meal consisting of a *k'beitza* of bread or *mezonot* foods (approximately 56 cc) before listening to the *Megilla*, both at night and in the morning. This restriction applies even if one is hungry at night before breaking the fast.⁴⁹ At night, those who are fasting should ideally refrain from eating anything at all before hearing the *Megilla*, so that the fast is broken only afterward. In cases of need, one may eat foods that are not bread or *mezonot* prior to the *Megilla*.⁵⁰ This is especially relevant for those who attend a later *Megilla* reading (for example, those with young children at home), for whom it may be difficult to extend the fast beyond nightfall or to wait until very late in the morning to eat. Those who live in Jerusalem and read the *Megilla* on the fifteenth of Adar may also not begin a meal within a half-hour before nightfall, even though they are not fasting beforehand.

BERACHOT

Three *berachot* are recited prior to the *Megilla* reading: 1. *Al Mikra Megilla* 2. *She'asa Nisim* 3. *Shehechyanu*.⁵¹ One should listen carefully to all three *berachot* and respond

Avraham 689:6 who disagrees.

47. See Sha'ar Hatzion 689:15, citing Korban Netanel who recommends against; see Aruch Hashulchan 689:5 and Responsa B'mareh Habazak 7:52 who permit.

48. Mishna Berura 689:17-18

49. Rema, O.C. 692:4; Mishna Berura 692:14-15

50. Mishna Berura 692:14-15; Chazon Ovadia, p.95

51. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 692:1

Amen. Ashkenazim recite all three *berachot* both at night and during the day,⁵² while most Sephardim do not recite *Shehechyanu* before the daytime reading.⁵³ One should have in mind that the *Shehechyanu* applies as well to the other mitzvot of the day – the *seudah*, *mishloach manot*, and *matanot l'evyonim* – Sephardim having this in mind at night, and Ashkenazim in the morning.⁵⁴ One who missed hearing the *berachot* may recite them during a break in the reading, such as when the reader stops after reading Haman's name for everyone to make noise.⁵⁵ One who did not recite the *berachah* at all has still fulfilled the mitzvah.⁵⁶

When a woman reads the *Megilla* for herself or other women, Sephardim generally recite the *beracha* in its regular form,⁵⁷ while Ashkenazim generally recite the first *beracha* with the text of "*lishmoa Megilla*" instead of *al mikra Megilla*.⁵⁸ If a man who has already fulfilled the mitzvah himself reads the *Megilla* for one or more women, one of the women generally recites the *berachah* (Ashkenazim and Sephardim each according to their custom), while in some Sephardic communities, no *berachah* is recited at all by either the reader or the women listening.⁵⁹

One should stand while listening to the *berachot*,⁶⁰ though some Sephardim sit during

52. Rema, O.C. 692:1

53. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 692:1; Chazon Ovadia, p.63

54. Mishna Berura 692:1; Kaf Hachaim 692:4

55. See Mishna Berura 692:6.

56. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 692:1

57. Chazon Ovadia, p.53

58. Rema, O.C. 689:2, though see R. Rimon, "Purim," p.133, for other variations of the wording.

59. Kaf Hachaim 689:19; R. Mordechai Eliyahu, "L'moadim V'yamim," p.504

60. Mishna Berura 690:1; Sha'ar Hatzion 690:1; Ben Ish Chai, First Year, Tetzaveh

the *berachot*.⁶¹

Following the *Megilla* reading, the *beracha* of “*Harav et rivenu*” is recited, followed by the paragraphs of “*Asher Heini*” and “*Shoshanat Yaakov*” (Ashkenazim) or “*Arur Haman*” (Sephardim). Most Ashkenazim and some Sephardim recite this *beracha* only in the presence of a *minyán*,⁶² while a minority of Ashkenazim and some Sephardim recite it even when the *Megilla* is read without a *minyán*.⁶³ For this purpose, many *poskim* hold that a group of ten women has the status of a *minyán*,⁶⁴ while some disagree.⁶⁵

DETAILS OF LISTENING TO THE MEGILLA

As mentioned previously, one must read or listen to the entire *Megilla* in order, from beginning to end. It is forbidden to speak during the reading.⁶⁶ One who missed even a single word of the *Megilla* has not fulfilled one’s obligation.⁶⁷ However, it is permitted for up to half of the *Megilla* to be read from a printed text rather than from the kosher parchment scroll used by the *Megilla* reader.⁶⁸ Therefore, if one missed a few words due to noise or

another distraction, one may quickly read those words oneself and then catch up with the *ba’al korei*.⁶⁹ Some are careful to follow the *Megilla* from a kosher scroll and read silently along to ensure that every word is recited in the optimal manner.⁷⁰

One who heard the entire *Megilla* but whose mind wandered during the reading has fulfilled the mitzvah according to most opinions.⁷¹ However, some *poskim* hold that if one was completely focused on unrelated matters, one does not fulfill the mitzvah even if one technically heard the entire *Megilla*.⁷²

It is customary for the congregation to read several significant passages of the *Megilla* aloud before the *ba’al korei* reads them.⁷³ In many places, it is also customary for each individual to read the list of the ten sons of Haman themselves, since they must be read in one breath.⁷⁴

According to most opinions, one should not fulfill the mitzvah by listening to the *Megilla* when it is read using a microphone or other electronic amplification device.⁷⁵ Some permit the use of such a device if one would be able to hear the *Megilla* even without the amplification.⁷⁶ Many *poskim* write that who uses a hearing aid fulfills the mitzvah if they can hear the *Megilla*, at least faintly, without it.⁷⁷

MINYAN FOR MEGILLA

Although one may read or listen to the

61. Chazon Ovadia, p.69

62. Rema 692:1; Chazon Ovadia, p.89

63. Responsa Ohr L’tzion 4:54

64. R. Yaakov Ariel, cited in Oholei Halacha,

Moadim, Vol.1, p.179; Chazon Ovadia, p.91

65. Halichot Shlomo, Tefilla, ch.23

66. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 692:2

67. Mishna Berura 690:5

68. Shulchan Aruch 690:3

69. Mishna Berura 690:60

70. Mishna Berura 689:19, citing Pri Megadim

71. R. Elyashiv, cited in Dirshu Mishna Berura 690, #35; see also Responsa Eretz Tzvi 45.

72. Levushei Serad to Magen Avraham 690:15

73. Rema 690:17; Chazon Ovadia, p.84

74. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 690:15; Aruch

Hashulchan 690:23; R. Rimon, “Purim,” p.184

75. Responsa Minchat Shlomo 1:9; R. Harari, Mikraei Kodesh, ch.7

76. Chazon Ovadia, p.56

77. See Ashrei Ha’ish 43:18 and Oholei

Halacha, p.170, n.26, citing R. Yaakov Ariel.

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Megilla alone, it is halachically preferable to do so with a *minyan* in order to increase the *pirsumei nisa*, the publicizing the miracle.⁷⁸ For purposes of *Megilla*, many *poskim* hold that a group of ten women also counts as a *minyan*.⁷⁹ For this reason, it is preferable to attend a *Megilla* reading in shul rather than hear it from an individual at home.⁸⁰

MISHLOACH MANOT

One of the other special mitzvot performed on Purim is *mishloach manot*, giving at least two food items to one person.⁸¹ The primary reason given for this mitzvah is to ensure that everyone has sufficient food for the Purim seudah in a festive manner.⁸² Some suggest that the reason is to increase unity and love among fellow Jews.⁸³

WHO IS OBLIGATED

Like reading the *Megilla*, *mishloach manot* is obligatory for men, women, and children who have reached the age of *chinuch*.⁸⁴ Although one spouse may give *mishloach manot* on behalf of the other, some hold that it is preferable for a husband and wife each to give at least one *mishloach manot* separately,⁸⁵ and the same applies to children. Accordingly, each child should ideally give *mishloach manot* to at least one friend.⁸⁶

According to many *poskim*, one does not

fulfill the mitzvah by giving *mishloach manot* to someone who observes Purim on a different day. Therefore, one who lives in Beit Shemesh should not fulfill the mitzvah solely by giving to someone who lives in Jerusalem.⁸⁷

THE TIMING OF THE MITZVAH

Mishloach manot must be given during the daytime of Purim, between sunrise and sunset. One does not fulfill the mitzvah by giving at night.⁸⁸ According to many *poskim*, the giving itself must take place on Purim day, and one should not give the package before Purim even if it will only be received on Purim,⁸⁹ though some disagree.⁹⁰ Likewise, one does not fulfill the mitzvah if it is given on Purim day but will only be received after sunset. Accordingly, one should ensure that at least one *mishloach manot* is delivered while the recipient (or a household member) is home. Otherwise, if the recipient returns only after Purim has ended, one may not have fulfilled the mitzvah with that delivery.⁹¹ Some maintain that one does not fulfill the mitzvah if the recipient has already concluded his Purim seudah, though others disagree. In any event, since the basic obligation is fulfilled with one *mishloach manot* delivered properly, additional *mishloach manot* may be given in other ways.⁹²

THE FOODS

The mitzvah of *mishloach manot* may be fulfilled with any food or drink that is ready to eat. Therefore, one should not give raw foods that require cooking, although some maintain that even raw food is acceptable.⁹³ Even

78. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 690:18; Mishna Berura 690:61

79. Responsa Tzitz Eliezer 13:73; Chazon Ish, O.C. 155:2; see also Rema 690:18.

80. Mishna Berura 690:62

81. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 695:4

82. Terumat Hadeshen 111

83. R. Shlomo Alkabetz, *Manot Levi*, Esther 9:16

84. Rema, O.C. 695:4; Mishna Berura 695:25;

Ben Ish Chai, First Year, Tetzaveh; Halichot V'hanhagot, p.28; R. Rimon, "Purim," p.211; Pri Megadim, Eishel Avraham 695:14

85. Chayei Adam 155:3; Chazon Ovadia, p.140

86. Chazon Ovadia, p.142; R. Rimon, "Purim," p.211

87. Piskei Teshuvot 695:21

88. Rema, O.C. 695:4

89. Aruch Hashulchan 695:17

90. Be'er Heitev 695:7, citing Yad Aharon

91. Aruch Hashulchan 695:16; Moadim

Uzmanim 2:186

92. Chazon Ovadia, p.133

93. Mishna Berura 695:20

according to the more stringent view, many *poskim* permit foods that require only minimal preparation, such as instant soups or foods that need only to be heated in a microwave.⁹⁴ Some Sephardic *poskim* recommend that at least one *mishloach manot* – the one through which one fulfills the basic obligation – contains foods suitable for a meal.⁹⁵ However, many *poskim* permit fulfilling the mitzvah entirely with snacks or candies.⁹⁶ Most *poskim* do not allow non-food items, such as clothing or written words of Torah, to count as *mishloach manot*,⁹⁷ though a minority opinion permits non-food items if they bring the recipient joy.⁹⁸

Some maintain that one must give at least a *k'zayit* of food or a *revi'it* of drink to fulfill the mitzvah.⁹⁹ However, many *poskim* hold that the determining factor is the food's significance, and one fulfills the mitzvah with any amount considered significant by the recipient.¹⁰⁰

The two items may share the same *beracha*, but they should not simply be two pieces of the exact same food. Some require that they be two different types of foods.¹⁰¹

MOURNERS

According to many *poskim*, one should not give *mishloach manot* to an *avel* (mourner), whether during *shiva*, *shloshim* (the thirty-day period following burial), or the twelve-month period of mourning for a parent.¹⁰² However,

one may designate the *mishloach manot* for the entire family rather than specifically for the mourner.¹⁰³ Some permit sending *mishloach manot* to a mourner during the twelve-month period,¹⁰⁴ and some permit even during *shiva*.¹⁰⁵ By contrast, a mourner is obligated to give *mishloach manot* to others, even during *shiva*.¹⁰⁶

MATANOT LA'EVYONIM

Another mitzvah of Purim is to give money or food to two poor individuals so that they, too, can experience the joy of the day.¹⁰⁷ One should ideally spend more on *matanot la'evyonim* than on the Purim *seudah* and *mishloach manot*.¹⁰⁸

WHO SHOULD GIVE

Both men and women are obligated in *matanot la'evyonim*.¹⁰⁹ Ideally, spouses should each give independently in order to fulfill the mitzvah separately. However, one spouse may give a double amount and explicitly state that it is on behalf of both.¹¹⁰

Children who have reached bar or bat mitzvah and live at home are also obligated.¹¹¹ Younger children are technically exempt, since they do not own their own money. Nevertheless, some parents give them money to distribute, or give on their behalf, thereby educating them in the mitzvah on the level of *chinuch*.¹¹²

HOW MUCH TO GIVE

According to many authorities, one should

94. R. Elyashiv, cited in the Dirshu Mishna Berura 695, #43

95. R. Mordechai Eliyahu, Lmoadim V'yamim p.506; Kaf Hachaim 695:48

96. Chayei Adam 155:31; Kaf Hachaim 695:48.

97. Mishna Berura 695:20; R. Rimon, "Purim," p.220

98. Beit Shearim 1:380

99. Eishel Avraham 695

100. Aruch Hashulchan 695:15; Mikraei Kodesh, citing R. Shaul Yisraeli

101. Aruch Hashulchan 695:14; Chazon Ovadia, p.125

102. Rema 696:6

103. Pnei Baruch, ch.29; Oholei Halacha, p.190

104. Geshet Hachaim 21:7:10

105. Chazon Ovadia, p.193

106. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 696:6

107. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 694:1; Akeidat Yitzchak, Esther 9:20–21

108. Mishna Berura 694:3

109. Rema 695:4; Mishna Berura 694:1

110. Halichot Bat Yisrael 22:16

111. R. Rimon, "Purim," p. 248

112. Peninei Halacha, Zemanim 16:6

ideally give each recipient enough to purchase a small meal (for example, falafel or pizza and a drink).¹¹³ Strictly speaking, however, even a smaller amount fulfills the basic obligation.¹¹⁴ The minimum required amount may not be given from *ma'aser* funds, though additional sums beyond the basic obligation may be taken from *ma'aser*.¹¹⁵

WHO QUALIFIES AS A RECIPIENT

A poor person for the purposes of this mitzvah is one who lacks a stable source of income sufficient for ordinary living expenses and does not possess unused assets that could reasonably be sold. This category also includes someone burdened with exceptional financial strain, such as overwhelming medical expenses.¹¹⁶

WHEN AND HOW TO GIVE

Many authorities permit giving *matanot la'evyonim* before Purim, provided one is certain that the funds will reach the poor on Purim day itself.¹¹⁷ Additionally, many rule that one fulfills the mitzvah through credit card or other digital payment methods.¹¹⁸ In contemporary practice, many charitable organizations need to know in advance how much funding they will distribute on Purim. In such cases, it may even be preferable to give beforehand, as long as the distribution takes place on Purim day.

According to most opinions, one must give to the poor in a location observing Purim on the same day as themselves, e.g., a resident of Jerusalem should give to poor in Jerusalem.¹¹⁹

113. Sha'arei Teshuva 694; Kaf Hachaim 694:7

114. Mishna Berura 694:2

115. Mishna Berura 694:3

116. Piskei Teshuvot 694:2

117. Eishel Avraham; Piskei Teshuvot 694:8

118. B'oholei Halacha, p. 185, citing R. Yaakov Ariel

119. Bimei HaPurim, p. 85, citing Chazon Ish and R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach

On Purim, it is customary to give to anyone who extends a hand in request for funds, without carefully investigating their eligibility.¹²⁰

PURIM SEUDAH

Another mitzvah of Purim day is to hold a festive meal in order to express gratitude for the miracle of salvation from Haman's decree and to rejoice properly.¹²¹

TIMING OF THE MEAL

According to most authorities, the *seudah* should take place in the afternoon, after *Mincha* has been recited and the other mitzvot of the day have been fulfilled.¹²² Ideally, the majority of the meal should be eaten before sunset.¹²³ Some authorities recommend holding the meal in the morning.¹²⁴

WHAT SHOULD BE SERVED

Many authorities maintain that one should ideally eat bread at the Purim *seudah*, similar to Shabbat and Yom Tov meals,¹²⁵ though some do not view this as strictly obligatory.¹²⁶ Many also maintain that one should serve meat if that is customary at one's Shabbat or Yom Tov meals,¹²⁷ though others hold that this is not required.¹²⁸ One who does not ordinarily eat meat for any reason is not required to do so, but should prepare foods appropriate for an important festive meal.

120. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 694:3. See also Yalkut Yosef, Purim, p.632 and R. Rimon, "Purim," p. 250, for other interpretations of this halacha.

121. Esther 9:22; Shulchan Aruch and Rema, O.C. 695:1

122. Rema, O.C. 695:2

123. Ibid.

124. Kaf Hachaim 695:23; Chazon Ovadia, p. 180

125. Taz 693:2

126. Responsa Shevet HaLevi 4:54; Chazon Ovadia, p. 173

127. Aruch Hashulchan 695:1; Chazon Ovadia, p. 175

128. Magen Avraham 696:15

DRINKING ON PURIM

There is a mitzvah to drink wine¹²⁹ on Purim to the extent that one does not know the difference between “cursed is Haman” and “blessed is Mordechai.”¹³⁰ Some understand this literally, requiring significant intoxication.¹³¹ Others interpret it more moderately, requiring only that one drink somewhat more than usual, or drink a small amount and then sleep.¹³² Many contemporary authorities recommend adopting the more moderate approach and caution strongly against excessive intoxication.¹³³ However one fulfills this mitzvah, it should be done *l'shem shamayim*.¹³⁴ Furthermore, care must be taken that drinking does not interfere with other mitzvot, such

129. See Rashi, Megilla 7b. Some, including R. Mordechai Willig holds that one should not drink intoxicating drinks other than wine (https://halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Seudat_Purim), while some hold that other intoxicating drinks are acceptable (see Piskei Teshuvot 695:3), provided they are consumed responsibly.

130. Megilla 7b; Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 695:2

131. Siddur Beit Yaakov, citing Chacham Tzvi

132. Rema 695:2; Mishna Berura 695:5

133. Chazon Ovadia, p. 175; R. Rimon, “Purim,”

p. 287; Oholei Halacha, p. 197; Mikraei Kodesh,

p. 195. See also https://halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Seudat_Purim, where R. Hershel

Schachter is quoted as saying that one may drink

during the meal and fall asleep after the meal.

134. Peninei Halacha, Zemanim 16:10

as *Birkat HaMazon* or *Ma'ariv*, and certainly not lead to inappropriate conduct.¹³⁵

It is not customary for women to become intoxicated on Purim.¹³⁶ Some suggest that a small amount of drinking is acceptable,¹³⁷ while others maintain that a woman should not drink at all.¹³⁸

AL HANISSIM

One who eats bread on Purim, whether as part of the Purim *seudah* or not, should recite *Al Hanissim* within the *beracha* of “*Nodeh*” in *Birkat Hamazon*. This is true even if *Birkat Hamazon* was recited after nightfall, on the night after Purim.¹³⁹ If it was forgotten, one does not return to that *beracha* or repeat *Birkat Hamazon*.¹⁴⁰

DRESSING UP

Although not mentioned in the Gemara, it is a widespread custom to dress up on Purim.¹⁴¹ Numerous explanations are offered for this practice,¹⁴² including commemorating the hidden nature of the miracle and the theme of *venahafoch hu*—that events were reversed. Others choose instead to wear Shabbat clothing in honor of the festive day.

Regarding cross-dressing, the Rema¹⁴³ records a lenient view permitting it on Purim. However, most authorities prohibit it.¹⁴⁴ Some are lenient for young children or when only a single garment associated with the other gender is worn,¹⁴⁵ while others maintain a

135. Biur Halacha 695:2

136. Responsa Shevet HaLevi 10:18; R. Rimon, “Purim,” p. 287

137. R. Dov Lior at <https://www.yeshiva.org.il/ask/201>; Chazon Ovadia, p. 178

138. Nitei Gavriel 73:4

139. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 188:10, 695:3

140. Mishna Berura 695:15

141. Rema, O.C. 696:8

142. See Yalkut Yosef, 5780 edition, 696

143. 696:8

144. Mishna Berura 696:30; Chazon Ovadia, p. 199

145. See Ashrei Ha'ish 48:5 and Mishna Berura

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stringent position even in these situations.¹⁴⁶

Purim in Jerusalem and Other Walled Cities

Chazal instituted that cities which were not walled at the time of Yehoshua bin Nun celebrate Purim on the 14th of Adar, while cities that were walled at that time celebrate on the 15th.¹⁴⁷ Today, only Jerusalem is definitively known to have been walled at the time of Yehoshua.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, Purim is celebrated in most of Jerusalem on the 15th of Adar (Shushan Purim).

There are several cities regarding which there is uncertainty as to whether they were walled in Yehoshua's time and whether their current location corresponds to the ancient site, such as Tzfat, Hebron, and Jaffa.¹⁴⁹ In such locations, the *Megilla* is read on both the 14th and the 15th, though no *berachot* are recited on the 15th.¹⁵⁰ Some authorities maintain that the other mitzvot of Purim should also be observed on the 15th in those cities,¹⁵¹ while others disagree.¹⁵²

TRAVEL BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND OTHER CITIES

A resident of Jerusalem who departs to another location, such as Beit Shemesh, before dawn on the 14th of Adar celebrates Purim on the 14th according to all opinions, despite his normal residence being in Jerusalem. This is because according to Chazal, even one who visits an unwalled city for Purim alone has the status of a resident of that city with

respect to Purim.¹⁵³ If such a person returns to Jerusalem before dawn on the 15th of Adar, according to many *poskim*, he is also obligated to celebrate Purim a second time on the 15th.¹⁵⁴ If one departs Jerusalem after dawn on the 14th of Adar for Beit Shemesh, one does not become obligated to celebrate Purim on the 14th according to all opinions.

According to many *poskim*, a resident of Beit Shemesh who celebrates Purim at home on the 14th and then travels to Jerusalem before dawn on the 15th of Adar is obligated to celebrate Purim again on the 15th of Adar, at least due to uncertainty, despite having celebrated it already in his own location.¹⁵⁵ If such a person travels to Jerusalem after dawn on the 15th of Adar, he is not obligated to celebrate Purim again according to all opinions.

Many other travel scenarios not mentioned here, as well as some that are mentioned, are subject to significant complicating factors as well as halachic dispute. One should consult a competent halachic authority when practical questions arise.¹⁵⁶ ■

153. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 688:5; Mishna Berura 688:12

154. Piskei Teshuvot 688 n.103; Yalkut Yosef, 5780 edition, p.340

155. R. Yaakov Ariel, cited in Oholei Halacha, p.209; see also Yalkut Yosef, p.306; Hilchot Chag B'chag 9:13

156. See Piskei Teshuvot 688:9–10; Torat HaMo'adim 6:9–10

696:30.

146. Chazon Ovadia, p.199; Mishna Berura 696:30

147. Megilla 2a; Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 688

148. Piskei Teshuvot 688:9; Dvar Chevron, Moadim, p.364

149. Piskei Teshuvot 688:9; Oholei Halacha, p.206

150. Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 688:4

151. Magen Avraham 688:5

152. Pri Chadash 688

Rabbi Eli Ozarowski serves as editor of the *Tzurba M'Rabanan* English Series, an innovative, systematic learning program covering hundreds of major topics in the Shulchan Aruch from Tanach through modern-day halachic application. He is also the author of the OU's Torat Imecha Halacha Series. Rabbi Ozarowski received semicha from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) and holds an M.A. from the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration. He lives in Mitzpeh Yericho with his wife, Zemira, who serves as Director of Women's Programming at OU Israel, together with their nine children.



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The Uniform of the Soul

The last five Parshiot of Sefer Shemot are filled with majestic detail as the Torah describes the construction of the Mishkan — the dwelling place for the Shechinah — and the sacred garments of those who would serve within it. Gold, silver, copper, acacia wood, curtains of blue, purple, and crimson wool, fine linen, goat hair, and animal skins constructed and woven by master artisans — all donated, crafted, measured, and assembled with absolute precision. No deviation tolerated.

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Among all these details, the garments of the Kohen and the Kohen Gadol stand out. The Torah devotes verses upon verses to the



garments — each thread purposeful, each stone positioned exactly as commanded. Clothing here is not fashion. It is theology.

One of my mentors, Rav David Bagno שליט"א, once framed this through a powerful linguistic lens. The Hebrew word for garment is בגד from בגידה — betrayal. A garment can betray. Clothing can mislead. It can present an image that disguises the inner person.

A refined, ethical, and deeply educated individual might wear ripped street clothes and appear careless or unserious. Meanwhile, a laundering thief might dress in an elegant suit and project respectability. Clothing can obscure truth. It can create a false narrative. In that sense, it is בגידה — a betrayal of the inner self.

Yet Hebrew contains another concept: pekidah — פקידה. A charge. An appointment. A mission assigned with responsibility. If beged can betray, it can also declare. Clothing can express not who we pretend to be, but what we are tasked to do.

This duality echoes the linguistic approach of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, who explains that Hebrew roots often carry conceptual families connected through related letters and sounds. Letters such as ב and פ share articulation patterns, as do ג and ק; they can reflect variations of a core idea. A beged can slip into begidah — concealment or treachery. But with a shift of orientation, the garment aligns with pekidah — an outward expression of one's entrusted role.

Clothing, then, stands at a crossroads. It can conceal essence or communicate mission.

The garments of the Kohanim were the Torah's corrective to clothing-as-betrayal. The Torah commands: "...ועשית בגדי קודש" — "לכבוד ולתפארת" — sacred garments, for honor and splendor. These were not costumes. They were declarations. When a Kohen wore the bigdei kehuna, he was not dressing up; he was stepping into a sacred identity. The garments reminded the nation how to see him — distinct, elevated, entrusted with avodah on their behalf.

And they reminded the Kohen how to see himself.

This is why the garments were funded by the contributions of the entire nation. The Kohen did not serve privately. His clothing embodied collective mission. When he entered the Mishkan, he carried Klal Yisrael upon his shoulders — literally engraved in the stones of the ephod and choshen. His garments were his pekidah stitched into fabric.

One of my Binyamin's personal desires enumerated in his big list of aspirations and goals was the desire to "dress nicely." I laughed. His daily attire consisted of ripped work pants and grease-stained shirts. Hardly runway material. No check mark awarded, I thought.

But perhaps I was wrong.

Binyamin worked the land. He planted, built, repaired fences, grazed cattle, and stood guard to protect vulnerable Jewish communities. His clothing is practical, worn, sometimes torn — but it serves his mission. They are the uniform of someone whose hands are in the soil of Eretz Yisrael and whose back bears responsibility. His garments are not begidah. They are pekidah. Those hole-ridden pants are actually holy pants. They set out his mission and help him accomplish his purpose.

His alternate wardrobe was his army uniform. Shirt tucked precisely. Beret angled

exactly as required. Boots tied according to regulation. The uniform is not about style; it is about service. A soldier's clothing announces his charge: to defend, to sacrifice, to stand between danger and his people. It binds him to something larger than himself.

Uniforms do that. A police officer's uniform signals protection and authority. A nurse's attire signals care and healing. The clothing does not create the mission, but it reinforces it — for both wearer and observer.

The Kohen's garments operated on that same principle, but on a spiritual plane. They aligned outer appearance with inner responsibility. They prevented begidah by embedding pekidah into fabric and thread.

And perhaps that is the enduring message of these parshiot.

Does what I wear help me become who I want to be? Does it reflect my values, my aspirations, my responsibilities? Or does it mask them?

The Mishkan required immense investment — precious metals, artistic mastery, exact measurements — because creating a dwelling place for the Divine demands intentionality. So too, shaping ourselves into vessels for holiness requires care and thoughtfulness, even in something as external as clothing.

May we merit to dress our pekidah — to allow what we wear to support who we strive to be. And may our outer presentation harmonize with our inner calling, transforming clothing from potential betrayal into visible purpose. ■

The **Airleys** have built **Beit Binyamin**, a retreat center in Tzfat for those directly affected by the war. Soldiers, Zaka members, security forces, bereaved families and widows can come for respite, relaxation and rejuvenation. For more information and to donate, visit Beitbinyamin.org



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Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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Unmasking The Hidden in an Unusual Megillah

We read Megilat Esther every year on Purim but if we look closely at the story in the Megillah it is very different from most of the other books in Tanach.

First of all the Megillah takes place in Shushan, far away from Israel and all the holy places. The life of the Jews in Shushan is detached from anything to do with Jerusalem and the Beit Hamikdash.

The salvation in the Megillah saves the Jews from Achashverosh's decree, but doesn't redeem them or release them in any other way physically or spiritually.

Other books of the Tanach point out how God reveals Himself in our history, teach us more about God's ways and bring God's words to the world. In Megillat Esther God's name is not mentioned even once. Rather it seems to the reader that the "pur", the lots, are what is managing our lives. That everything

happens by chance.

Other books of Tanach try to teach man (and the whole nation) Torah and musar and how to do Teshuva. Not so Megilat Esther. It refrains from explaining why the Jews were punished, what was their sin, and how they can do teshuva for it.

There's a lot of things in the Megilah that remain hidden and their reasons are not explained in full.

This year I "happened" to open up Rav Yigal's book comparing and contrasting the books of Daniel and Esther. He raises the above questions. Both Daniel and Esther lived in the diaspora, both were taken to the palace of the non-Jewish King, and received an important position there and therefore were able to have some influence on the life of their brethren in galut. When I read the verses in the books of Daniel and Esther (who lived in the same era) it was striking to me how many times Daniel mentions God whereas the name of God doesn't appear at all in Megillat Esther.

Rav Ariel says that the differences found in Megillat Esther are actually the beauty of the book and what makes it relevant each year. It teaches that even in Persia, in the darkness of the galut when God is hidden, even there we can find Hashgachat Hashem. It can be found not necessarily in open miracles, but in subtle

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orchestration. It shows that God will never forsake His nation and that each blow that He might deliver is preceded by the remedy.

Esther knew the importance of these messages for all the generations and asked the Rabbis to have this Megillah written and included in Tanach. With so many enemies around us who are trying to destroy us and sometimes we feel hopeless this Megillah is very relevant. Purim Sameach.

At most Sephardic celebrations you will probably be served *huevos haminados* - hot eggs. Eggs get harder when they are cooked (which is different than most other foods). This symbolizes the Jewish people's resilience under oppression- we keep on going. And on Purim there is even another reason for serving these hot eggs - the word *haminados* sounds like Haman. Some Sephardim also prepare pastries with a hard-boiled egg in the middle symbolizing Haman in jail. So this week's recipe is with whole eggs.

**HUEVOS HAMINADOS – SEPHARDIC
BRAISED HARD-BOILED EGGS**

- Skins from 12 large onions
 - 12 large eggs
 - Water to keep eggs covered
 - 3 tbsp oil
 - Salt, pepper, cumin to taste
- Put onion skins on bottom of pot. Place eggs

on top. Cover with water. Bring to boil. Drizzle with oil to cover the surface. Simmer covered on low for at least 6 hours or overnight. Serve warm or at room temperature.

If you also want to make the egg filled rolls use your favorite pastry recipe or store bought dough, roll out pastry, cut 6.5 cm., about .6 cm thick and shape with your fingers to form a cup shaped base or basket for large end of hard-boiled egg. Roll strips .6 cm to 1.2 cm in thickness and long enough to cross over top and attach to the base. Bake at 180 C for 20 min. ■

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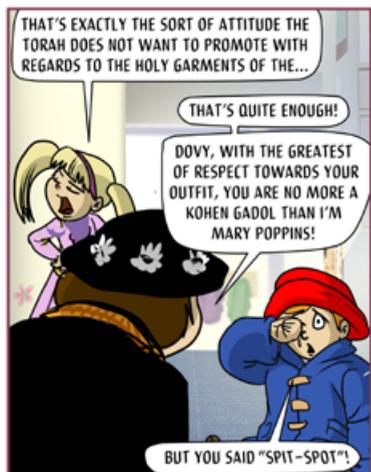
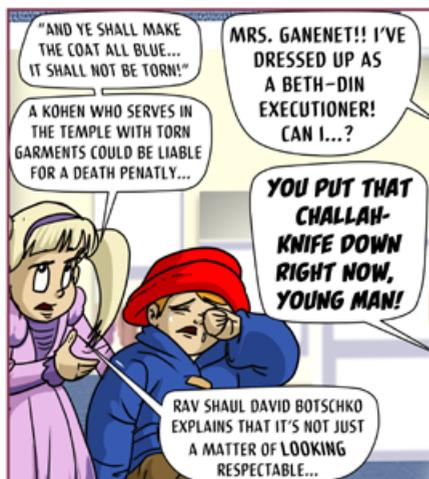
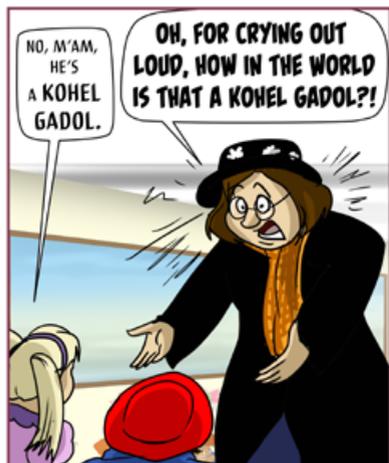
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HEAT OF THE HEART

This week's beautiful Parsha of Tetzaveh continues the holy theme of Terumah, the details of the Mishkan. While Terumah focuses on the structure and its vessels, Tetzaveh brings it to life through the Kohanim, their garments, and most importantly, the daily Avodah performed in the Mishkan and later in the Beit HaMikdash.

The Korbanot were brought on two Mizbechot. The outer Mizbeach stood in the courtyard, where animals, grains, and wine, including the Korban Tamid, were offered with song and great public devotion. The inner Mizbeach, the Mizbeach HaKetoret, was smaller and hidden inside, accessible only to the Kohanim. Why this dual structure? And why such detail?

The Avodah of the Mishkan teaches us about our own Avodah in drawing close (קר-בן-קרוב) to Hashem. The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that every true relationship is rooted in love. There is an "outer love" - inspired by Hashem's greatness as Creator and King. And there is an "inner love" - the recognition that אין עוד מלבדו, that in truth nothing exists

independent of Him.

We are meant to awaken both. Outer love comes from seeking Hashem in the world around us. Inner love comes from seeing only Hashem as ultimate reality.

This is also the message of Shabbat Zachor. Amalek attacked when we were inspired, cooling our passion and planting doubt. Amalek represents spiritual coldness, the opposite of love. Remembering Amalek is not only about recalling an ancient enemy; it is about guarding our inner fire from apathy and disconnection. Just as the Ketoret burned daily in the hidden inner sanctuary, so too must our inner love burn constantly, protected from the chill of Amalek.

May we merit to experience Hashem's true love, panim el panim, in the rebuilding of the third Beit HaMikdash soon.

Shabbat Shalom.



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CREATING AN INNER FLAME:

In this week's parsha, as the Torah continues describing the Mishkan, we are given instructions for lighting the Menorah. The pasuk states: "וְיָאֲתָה תְּצַוְהָהּ... לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר תָּמִיד" - "You shall command... to raise up a constant flame" (Shemot 27:20).

The wording is striking. Instead of saying להע- *להדליק - to light - the Torah says להע- * לת - to raise up. Rashi explains that the Kohan had to hold the flame to the wick until it rose on its own. Only once the fire became

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self-sustaining could he step away.

At first glance, this seems technical. But it carries a powerful lesson about education and growth.

The Torah is teaching us what it means to guide another person. A parent, a rebbe, or any leader cannot live someone else's life for them. Their role is not to create dependence. It is to patiently nurture that spark until it becomes an independent flame.

Real success is not measured by how long someone leans on you, but by how confidently they can stand and shine on their own.

The Menorah reminds us that every Jew already has oil within, already possesses inner light. Sometimes, all it takes is someone willing to hold the match a little longer.

Perhaps that is why the flame is called "Tamid," constant, because once a soul truly catches fire on its own, that light never fully fades.

Shabbat Shalom and Purim Sameach! ■

(P.S.- Mazal Tov to my brother Micha on his Bar Mitzvah - may your flame continue to rise higher and burn brightly!)

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