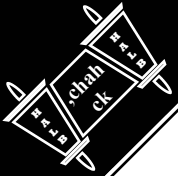


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THE HAND OF HASHEM

BY: RABBI ELLY STORCH, 12TH GRADE REBBE, DRS-YHSB

The ninth *perek* of *Megillat Esther* describes the establishment of Purim and explains that the holiday's name was chosen, "*Al shem ha'pur*," because of the lottery that had been drawn. At the culmination of the entire Purim story, with all its fantastic miracles, exciting ironies and memorable events, the lottery that Haman drew to determine the day on which to kill the Jews seems like a very miniscule detail. Why, then, would it have been deemed important enough to be chosen as the name of the holiday for generations to come?

In order to understand why this name was chosen, we must first comprehend the message of *Megillat Esther* and the holiday of Purim. The *gemara* tells us that the *Megillah* is hinted in the Torah where it says, "*VaAnochi Aster Astir*," and I will hide my face. While Hashem's presence is hidden throughout the story, it is clear at the end that He was orchestrating it entirely. The name of Hashem is omitted to show that even in times that He seems absent; we must realize his omnipresence and omnipotence and act accordingly.

Mordechai *Ha'Tzaddik* understood the role of Hashem in the world. When faced with the tragic news of Haman's plan, he immediately recognized the hand of Hashem and that in order to be saved, the Jewish people needed to redeem themselves in His eyes. When he spoke to Esther he explained, "*Revach VaHatzalah Yavoh LaYehudim MiMakom Acher*," the Jews will undoubtedly be saved by Hashem. He organized prayers

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This week's issue of
Devarim Ha'Yotzim Min Ha'Lev
is dedicated in memory of
Howard Schlenger
beloved father of DRS alumnus
Yehoshua Schlenger.

PARSHAT ZACHOR
PARSHAT TETZAVEH
MARCH 6TH, 2004
13 ADAR, 5764

Last time to recite Shema: 9:14 am
Candle lighting: 5:34 pm
Shabbat ends: 6:46 pm

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BY: JOSH BLACHMAN, 11TH GRADE STUDENT

"And you will command the children of Israel" (*Shemot* 27:20)

The Vilna Gaon asks, why doesn't the *parshah* start out with "And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying", instead of starting with, "And you will command the children of Israel?" Why does the Torah use this odd phrase thereby avoiding the use of Moshe's name? Furthermore, *Parshat Tetzaveh* is the only parsha after Moshe's birth that doesn't mention his name. Why the glaring omission? The Ba'al Ha'Turim answers that this is how Hashem fulfilled Moshe's request of "erase me from your book that you have written" (*Shemot* 32:32) when he was pleading on behalf of the Jewish people after the sin of the Golden Calf. When a *Talmud Chacham* utters a curse, even a conditional curse, the curse is destined to be fulfilled. Ironically, the reading of this *parshah* always falls out during the week of the Yahrtzeit of Moshe Rabbeinu.

This comment of the Ba'al Ha'Turim is most perplexing. Moshe's pleading on behalf of the Jewish people was a very noble deed. As a result of his efforts, the Jewish people were saved. The Succat Dovid cites a Zohar who states that if

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HALACHA Corner

FUN AND FRIVOLITY ON PURIM

BY: RABBI YEHUDA BALSAM

The holiday of Purim is one of the most important days on the Jewish calendar. In fact, The Ariza"l teaches us that the holiness of Yom Kippur, seemingly the most important day of the Jewish calendar, is secondary to that of Purim. This idea is alluded to in the name 'Yom Kippurim' - it is a day 'like Purim', i.e. that its greatness actually approaches that of Purim. With this in mind, it is striking that we are not commanded to fast and abstain from enjoyment and to daven long prayers on this, the holiest of days, rather we are told to eat drink and be merry. Rav Eliyahu Dessler explains (*Michtav Me'eliyahu* II p. 125) that through this type of celebration, we are afforded an opportunity to reach the highest level of union with Hashem; a union of love. Since our goal throughout our rejoicing is to get closer to God, we must work to ensure that we celebrate properly, and in complete accord with *halachah*. What follows is an overview of some *halachot* related to fun and celebration on Purim.

Costumes

Perhaps the first *minhag* that comes to mind when one thinks of Purim is the custom to dress up in some form of disguise. Many explanations have been given for this *minhag*, and it is one that serves to enhance the spirit and *simchah* of the day. A question arises in situations where a boy wishes to dress up as a girl, or vice versa. The Torah commands us not to wear clothing that is normally reserved for the opposite gender (Devarim 15:5) and doing so constitutes an *issur d'oraitah*. At first glance, it seems that the *halachah d'oraitah* would surely take precedence over the *minhag*. However, the *Mahari Mintz* (Responsa 15) suggests that we may make an exception to this biblical prohibition on Purim. He writes that "dressing up" has been a practice among the Jewish people since the times of the early *Rishonim* and none of them ever objected to it. Furthermore, he argues, if one understands the prohibition of '*begged ishah*' properly, he would find nothing wrong with dressing as the opposite gender in this context. First, *Tosafot*, in a number of places, writes that clothing that is worn by both men and women do not present a halachic problem. This applies to Purim in that men wear women's clothing while women don male garb. Thus, on this particular day, these types of clothing are considered unisex. In addition, *Tosafot* suggests that the prohibition may only apply if one's goal is to adorn himself in the manner of a woman, but if he is dressing up to make a joke, he is not violating the Torah. Last, the *Semag* (siman 60) writes that there is only a problem of wearing women's clothing if one's goal is to promote promiscuity. In this case, the individual's intentions are for the *simchah* of the day and thus it is permissible. By putting together these three opinions, the Mahari

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RABBI STORCH (Continued from page 1)

and fasting and influenced them to do *teshuvah*.

Haman *Ha'Rashah*, on the other hand, saw the whole world as a product of chance. Following Haman's experiencing what is one of the most obvious manifestations of Hashem's hand in the whole *Megillah*, he tells his wife, Zeresh, "*Et kol asher karahu*," all that happened to him. He saw the stream of events of Mordechai saving the king, the Achashveirosh's inability to sleep, Haman's timing in being in the hall as the king read from his book and his having to afford extraordinary honor to the very person that he wanted to destroy as merely a group of happenstance coincidences.

The idea of the *pur*, the lottery, highlights the contrast between these two visions of the world – the one held by *Mordechai Ha'Tzaddik* and the other held by Haman *Ha'Rashah*. When Haman wanted to determine the answer to what was to him a major decision, he was content to leave it entirely up to chance; he would destroy the Jewish People on the day in which his lottery determined. On the other hand Mordechai recognized the hand of *Hashem* in the goral. It is now our task to continue to see the *Yad Hashem* in all the events of our lives.

MEGILLAH
READING:
7:15PM

PURIM @ DRS

FOLLOWED BY SKITS AND DANCING



JOSH NISSEL (Continued from page 1)

Noach would have attempted such a forceful argument to Hashem on behalf of his generation, the Flood would have never occurred. It does not seem fair that Moshe should be punished for such a heroic effort. The *Succat Dovid* explains that the omission of Moshe's name in *Parshat Tetzaveh* is not a punishment. Instead, it was just the price that he was willing to pay. He knew that offering "erase me from the Book You have written" was going to cost him, but he cared more about the Jewish people than about his own honor.

Parshat Tetzaveh, far from being a punishment, is actually a tribute to the self-sacrifice of Moshe Rabbeinu. The Ba'al Ha'Turim teaches us that this *parshah* shows how much Moshe Rabbeinu loved the Jewish people. He loved them so much that he was willing to take his name out of the Torah in order to save them. *Parshat Tetzaveh* illustrates the ultimate self-sacrifice that this great leader had for his people. That is why it is not ironic, but most appropriate that this tribute should be paid to Moshe, specifically on the week of his Yahtzeit.

HALACHA (Continued from page 2)

Mintz permits men to wear women's clothing and vice versa, if it is done in the spirit of Purim.

Playful stealing and borrowing without permission

It is not uncommon for a group of friends to play a practical joke on one of their peers by 'borrowing' an item of his and only later revealing that they were the culprits. Normally, the Torah considers this to be a violation of *g'neivah*. Additionally, one is not permitted to borrow his friend's item without permission as the *gemarah* teaches us '*sho'el shelo mi'daat gazlan havei*'. However, Rashi and Tosafot (*Succah* 45a) entertain the possibility that if such stealing was done in the spirit of *simchah shel mitzvah*, it would be permissible. Furthermore, if one causes damages under such circumstances, he is not liable for them and may not be penalized. (This particular *gemarah* is discussing *simchat Yom Tov* of Succot, and Tosafot extends this to include *simchat chatan v'kalah*.) The Mahari Mintz (*ibid*) and the Terumat Ha'Deshen (*siman* 110) both permit this form of practical joking in the spirit of *simchat Purim*. Both statements of the Mahari Mintz are recorded by the *Darcei Moshe* (O.C. 696:5). He quotes a dissenting opinion that one should not even violate an *issur d'raban* in the name of humor, and he seems to assume that this is the proper practice.

Practical Halachah

In the Shulchan Aruch (696:8), the Rema rules that both dressing like the opposite gender and practical joking are permissible, as this is the accepted practice among the Jewish people. However, the Mishnah Berurah (s.k. 30) cites the Taz and the Bach who argue against the practice of dressing like the opposite gender and order that it be abolished. However, if a man was to wear only one article of women's clothing (and vice versa) and it would be clear by the rest of his garb that he is a man, the Pri Megadim would permit it. However, the Knesset Ha'Gedolah and the Shelah prohibit it even in this case. Thus the consensus of opinions cited by the Mishnah Berurah seems to frown upon these forms of fun, as did the Rema himself in the *Darcei Moshe*. In addition, the Chidah (*Bircei Yosef* Y.D. 182:3) writes that all leading Rabbis must proclaim this practice (of violating begged *ishah*) to be completely forbidden. Furthermore, the Aruch Ha'Shulchan (696:12) writes that the Rema in Shulchan Aruch only permitted such a practice because it was the custom of the people in his time, but nowadays we no longer have such *minhagim*. (Clearly, this point is dependent on the specific time and place that a person lives.)

It is critical to note, that although one may dress up during the day of Purim, one may certainly not wear his costume in a shul, as the halachot of *kedushat beit ha'knesset* certainly apply equally on Purim as they do every day. Furthermore, the Rema (695:2) cites the Mahril that the proper custom is to wear *bigdei Shabbat*. Modern day Poskim cite this custom and recommend that one at least wear these clothes when hearing the *Megillah* in honor of the *mitzvah* (see *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*).

Getting Drunk

We are all familiar with the *gemara* (*Megillah* 7b) that states '*chayav inash l'vsumai b'puryah ad d'lo yadah bein arur haman l'baruch mordechai*', one is obligated to become intoxicated on Purim until he can no longer differentiate between cursed be Haman and blessed be Mordechai. Since many articles and publications have discussed the

background and reasons for this *halachah*, and the early sources are well known, I will limit this discussion to the Shulchan Aruch and the subsequent poskim.

The Mechaber (695:2) quotes the *gemara* verbatim and does not qualify the statement. It is unclear from his words how inebriated one must become, nor what beverages he should consume in order to achieve this. However, Rashi (s.v. *l'vsumei*), the Rambam (*Hilchot Megillah* 2:15) and the Radvaz (1:462) all agree that the *gemarah* is speaking specifically of drinking wine, and not liquor. The Chayei Adam explains that the obligation to drink on Purim stems from the fact that the miracle occurred through various "drinking parties" that are recorded in the *Megillah*. Since the parties in the *Megillah* involved the consumption of wine only, we celebrate the miracle through the consumption of wine. This opinion is corroborated by many modern poskim as well (see *Piskei Teshuvot* 695:3).

Concerning how drunk a person should become, the Rema writes that there is no obligation to get especially drunk. Rather, one should drink more than he usually does, and go to sleep. Through this, he will accomplish the goal of '*ad d'lo yadah*', for while asleep, one cannot differentiate between Haman and Mordechai. (This suggestion seems to be a minor deviation of the Rambam's opinion that one should drink until he falls asleep.) The Mishnah Berurah (s.k. 5) cites the Pri Megadim that this is the correct practice. The Rema continues to point out that regardless of how much one drinks his intentions must be *l'sheim shamayim*. Indeed, this is the only purpose for drinking on Purim, as the Bi'ur Halachah (s.v. *ad*) points out. He cites the Me'iri who says that through this act of *simchah*, one should come to love Hashem and recognize his greatness. However, one is not commanded to drink in a manner that leads to '*holellut*' (frivolity) or '*shtus*' (stupidity). Indeed the Chayei Adam writes that if one knows that through his drinking he will act in an improper fashion, he should certainly not drink. Moreover, he must be careful that he is still able to say *Birchat Ha'Mazon* over the meal and to daven *Minchah* and *Ma'ariv*. One who misses any of these obligations for what he perceives to be a 'greater good' is mistaken.

One must also be mindful that any idea of drinking on Purim exists only during the *se'udah* itself. This is how the Rishonim explain the *gemara* and this is the clear tradition. Anyone who takes this *gemara* as permission (or even an obligation) to get drunk during the night of Purim is clearly not following the words of *Chaza"l* and it is as if he got drunk on any other day. There is no other time in the Jewish year where getting drunk is permitted (including *Simchat Torah*), except these few hours. Furthermore, one who honestly drinks *l'sheim shamayim* during the *seudah* must be mindful of the health risks and addictions that can result from such behavior and must take every precaution to ensure that he does not get overly drunk so as not to violate the mitzvah *d'oraitah* of '*u'shmartem m'od et nafshoteichem*'. He must ensure that he does not take this holy day and turn it into a drinking party, something *Chaza"l* clearly never intended.

As previously mentioned Purim is a time when one approaches Hashem through happiness and loving recognition of the greatness that He bestows upon us. Hopefully, the spirit of Purim will permeate through to the rest of our year and we will always be able to serve Hashem with joy.

STORIES OF GREATNESS:
WEEKLY ACCOUNTS OF INSPIRATION
BY: BENJAMIN EGHBALI

THE PRAYER BUSINESS

Rabbi Dov Ber, the *Maggid of Mezritch*, was accustomed to engage in very lengthy prayers. Sometimes his prayers would take hours. Rabbi Yitzchak Luria of Tzfat, another prominent Jew, who, like the *Maggid*, was careful to pray with all of the intentions taught by the Ari Ha'Kadosh, lived near Mezritch. Rav Yitzchak's prayers, however, did not take so long. When he heard about how much time the *Maggid* spent, he was perplexed and was curious to know the reason for the lengthy *tefillah* of the *Maggid*. He decided to confront the *Maggid* about this issue.

Once a year this learned man, who also happened to be quite wealthy, would travel to the great fair in Leipzig. There he would invest some of his capital in merchandise, which he would then sell in his hometown upon his return at a good profit. He was able to live off the proceeds from these transactions for the rest of the year while he devoted his time to Torah-study and prayer. On his next such business trip, he made a point to pass through Mezritch and stop there.

Witnessing the *Maggid's* lengthy prayers for himself, he was amazed. At his first opportunity to speak privately to the *Maggid*, the wealthy scholar said to him: "I also pray according to the *kavannot*, the special mystical intentions, taught by the Ari Ha'Kadosh, yet I don't find the necessity to extend my prayers for so long."

Instead of answering directly, the *Maggid* expressed interest in how his guest made a living. The man explained how it was enough for him to travel once a year to Leipzig to invest in merchandise, which

he then sold for a significant profit in the area where he lived.

"But how do you know that you have made a profit?" inquired the *Maggid*.

"Simple. I enter all of my capital expenditures and traveling expenses in my ledger, and subtract their sum from the total amount of income from sales. The remainder is my profit," replied the merchant, wondering why the *Rebbe* was so interested in the details of his business.

"But why," the *Maggid* asked innocently, "do you waste all that time and money traveling to Leipzig and back? Why don't you just write all the credit and debit figures down in your ledger and calculate your profits that way, without fuss?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the merchant. "Is it possible to think that one can profit by merely writing numbers on a piece of paper? Ha, ha, ha. Of course you have to travel and buy and sell in order for the profit to be real, rather than imagined."

"Well," said the *Maggid*, "the *kavannot* are like merchandise: if they are not fully processed in your mind and heart as if you were 'there,' it is like writing profit figures on a piece of paper without doing the business work. On the other hand, if you are firmly attached 'there,' you can then acquire some excellent 'merchandise' and make a handsome profit with the *kavannot*."

"But that," concluded the *Maggid* to his astonished visitor, "requires extended time and investment in prayer."

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