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BS"D

## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON PURIM - 5779

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Purim

Hashem is Running the World

**Adapted from Torah Wellsprings by Rav Elimelech Biderman - Purim  
5776**

The Ramban (end of parshas Bo) writes: "On numerous occasions, the Torah stresses that the commandments are reminders of the Exodus from Egypt. Clearly, then, there is a dimension of the Exodus that bears on the entire Torah. We can explain what this dimension is if we begin as follows: Only a few generations after Creation, man began to take up with idolatrous and heretical beliefs. The heresies took on many forms (most of which are still prevalent even today to some extent). Some claimed that the world always existed and that there is no Creator. Others denied that He can be aware of daily occurrences and that He is involved in human affairs. Still others claimed that even if He is involved, there is no reward and punishment.

The Exodus refuted all of these notions. It showed that take a look at is in full control of nature and that nothing and no one can prevent Him from executing His will. Through His prophets, He communicates with man, and He brings into existence whatever He desires. In order to emphasize these points, Moshe repeatedly told Pharaoh that the plagues would demonstrate G-d's sovereignty.

This message of the Exodus, so basic to our belief and existence, must be reiterated constantly. Therefore, we wear it on our person in the form of tefillin and recall it when we perform the commandments. We are zealous in the performance of all commandments — the seemingly minor ones as well as the obviously major ones — because they serve to reinforce our faith and commitment. We gather in synagogues and pray aloud to strengthen this conviction, proclaiming before Him, "We are Your creatures!"

The overt miracles of the Exodus seared into our consciousness the fact that G-d rules His universe, and that the only difference between nature and miracles is that we are accustomed to the former and startled by the latter."

The miracles of yetzias Mitzrayim disproved all these false ideas.

However, some people still remained uncertain. They said, "It is true that during yetzias Mitzrayim, Hashem supervised the world with miraculous hashgahah pratis. That was obvious. But how can I know that even now, when all we see are simple natural occurrences and Hashem's presence is concealed, that He is still running the world, and is performing miracles for us?"

That was the purpose of the miracles of Purim. The Purim miracles show us that even when the world seems to be run by the forces of nature, Hashem leads it, and performs miracles for us.

That is the reason Chazal tell us to be happy in Adar and they didn't tell us to be happy in Nissan. The miracles of Nissan were greater, but we have more joy in Adar, because that's when we become aware that Hashem is with us even today, in our present situation.

The Chidushei HaRim used to say: Imagine what happened in a beis medresh in Shushan, when someone came in and excitedly said, "Did you hear what happened? Vashti was killed!" No one would be interested. "What does that have to do with the gemara we are learning?" they would tell him.

Later, when the news bearer would say that Bigsan and Seresh were killed, or that Esther became the queen, and other reports, the people of the beis medresh would think his words are devarim beteilim (idle, unnecessary speech). They would just go on learning.

But in retrospect, we discover how each news item was an intrinsic piece of the great miracle that Hashem performed. It was one long string of hidden miracles to bring about the great miracle of Purim.

The same thing occurs today. We don't know the reasons for everything that is happening in the world, but there will come a time when we will look back and see how Hashem was leading us in wondrous ways.

The Kedushas Levi (Kedushah Rishonah) asks: Why isn't Hashem's name mentioned throughout the entire Megilah? Isn't it surprising that Hashem's name is hidden? But this is because Hashem was concealed throughout the miracle. Everything seemed natural and standard. However, when one reads "between the lines" he sees that Hashem was there, coordinating everything in just the right way.

Every aspect of the miracle can be explained in a natural fashion: Achashveirosh killed Vashti, because she criticized and shamed him. This can be understood rationally, and logically. Esther took her place. But that is also a natural event — she was the most beautiful woman at the time, so she filled Vashti's position as queen. When she revealed her nationality to Achashveirosh, and that Haman wanted to kill her and her entire nation, Achashveirosh was furious and executed Haman and revised the decree. This can also be explained rationally, since it is natural that a husband wants to please his wife. Achashveirosh bestowed a lot of honor onto Mordechai, but this is logical too, since Mordechai saved his life.

However, when we come to the culmination of all these events and look at them in retrospect, we can clearly see Hashem's guiding Hand and hashgachah. This is the lesson of Purim; to know that even when life seems to be normal and ordinary, and the events seem to be natural, even then, Hashem is the one Who is pulling the strings; things are not happening on their own.

People who live in walled cities (such as Yerushalayim) read the Megilah on the 15th of Adar. All other cities read the Megilah on the 14th.

What is the halachah for someone from Yerushalayim who will be in Bnei Brak on the 14th of Adar? Which day should he read the Megilah? The gemara (Megilah 19) teaches, one follows the laws of the place where he happens to be on that day.

Concerning Yom Tov, the halachah is different. If someone from chutz le'aretz travels to Eretz Yisroel for Yom Tov, he keeps two days Yom Tov, just as he would in his hometown. Why then on Purim, does one follow the laws of the city where he happens to be?

The answer is, the message of Purim is that nothing happens by chance. Everything is pre-destined and planned by Hashem. Therefore, if someone is in Bnei Brak, or if another person is in Yerushalayim, he knows that it isn't by accident. This is where he is supposed to be. Therefore he acquires the laws of the place where he is.

A Freilichen Purim! © Rabbi Eliezer Parkoff

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/french-best-seller-unravels-nazis-cryptic-last-words-about-purim/>

French bestseller unravels Nazi propagandist's cryptic last words about Purim 'Code of Esther' gets Paris buzzing about an alleged biblical prophecy

connecting the Jewish festival and Nazi Germany By REBECCA BENHAMOU  
28 December 2012, 2:39 pm

A best-selling collaboration started after Yohan Perez, left, approached TV journalist Bernard Benyamin in a French synagogue. (Courtesy of Editions First)  
PARIS — “The Code of Esther” reads like “The Da Vinci Code,” yet has nothing to do with fiction. In its first seven weeks in French stores, the book sold more than 26,000 copies, enough to put it on best-seller lists and earn national attention.

“This is unlike anything I’ve experienced before,” says co-author Bernard Benyamin, a leading figure in French investigative journalism and a co-host of the popular TV program “Envoyé Spécial.”

“I never thought I would face this kind of challenge.”

After his mother passed away last year, 63-year-old Benyamin visited his local synagogue in Paris to recite the Kaddish. While there, he met television director and entrepreneur Yohan Perez — his future co-author — who used their encounter to share findings from a four-year investigation into two seemingly disparate topics: senior Nazi official Julius Streicher and the biblical Book of Esther.

Perez and Benyamin’s new best-seller opens at the post-war Nuremberg trials, then shifts to the October 1946 execution of Streicher, a key Nazi propagandist and the publisher of the anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Stürmer*. Just before he was hanged, Streicher turned to witnesses and snapped, “Purim festival, 1946!”

“When I first listened to this story, I was cut to the quick,” says Benyamin. “My mother had just died; I was lost. I needed something to hold onto, and this fascinating project was just what I needed.”

The authors believe they’ve uncovered peculiar similarities between a biblical drama and the Holocaust

To understand Streicher’s final words, Perez decided to look into the textual origins of Purim — the Book of Esther. Part of the Ketuvim, or Writings, of the Hebrew Bible, the book recounts plans to exterminate the Jewish people by Haman, a high-ranking royal adviser, and how those plans were thwarted by Esther, a Jewish woman who had hidden her religious identity to marry Ahasuerus, the king.

Unlike the 20th century genocide that Streicher helped to carry out, the slaughter in Persia was avoided. Yet the more Perez tried to read between the lines, the more he saw peculiar similarities between the two events.

Just like Haman and his 10 sons, Streicher and nine other Nazi defendants were hanged. (Hermann Göring, the head of the German air force and a key figure in planning the Holocaust, killed himself in his jail cell. The Talmud says that Haman’s daughter also committed suicide.)

“Yohan didn’t want this story to sound trivial. He urged me to take part in the project because I already had a strong reputation in journalism,” says Benyamin, who spoke to *The Times of Israel* by phone. “But I have to admit that if my name hadn’t been on the cover, people might have not taken the book as seriously.”

In “The Code,” the co-authors draw readers’ attention to the Book of Esther’s place as one of the most mysterious, distinctive texts in the Torah. “It is, in fact, the only book in which the key protagonist is a woman,” Benyamin notes, “and in which the name of God is never explicitly mentioned.”

But arguably even more intriguing is the style — even the calligraphy — in which the text is written. For generations, Jewish scholars have pondered differences in the sizes of individual letters, as well as other mysteries that inspired talk of “the code of Esther.”

The success of “The Code of Esther” has inspired a documentary currently under production. (Courtesy of Editions First) The success of “The Code of Esther” has inspired a documentary currently under production. (Courtesy of Editions First) A research trip to Jerusalem proved a key stage of Benyamin’s journey. There, he interviewed “the man who deciphered the code”: Rabbi Mordechai Neugroschel, a Holocaust educator and co-founder of Arachim, an Israeli organization that promotes the application of Jewish philosophy to modern society.

According to Neugroschel, the key to the code of Esther lies in the names of Haman’s 10 sons. Three of the Hebrew letters — a tav, a shin and a zayin — are written smaller than the rest, while a vav is written larger. The oversized vav — which can also represent the number six — corresponds to the sixth

millennium in the Zohar, the central books of Jewish mysticism. As for the tav, shin and zayin, their numerical values add up to 707. Put together, these letters refer to the Jewish year 5707, which corresponds to the secular 1946-1947.

In his research, Neugroschel also noticed that the 10 Nazi defendants were executed on Oct. 16, 1946, which that year was also Hoshana Rabba — the day that God’s judgment of the world is finalized after Rosh Hashanah, according to the Zohar.

Describing himself as a “non-observant Jew with a rational outlook on life,” Benyamin says that the seeming connections shook him, describing the Book of Esther as a “prophecy” of what was to occur centuries later in Europe.

Nevertheless, he says, “We are not trying to do religious propaganda here. It is up to the readers to interpret this.”

“I had many pre-conceived ideas about Jewish scholars before I met Rabbi Neugroschel and others,” he says. “I’ve always been slightly agnostic, so when he told me about the code of Esther, my brain was turned upside down... I was in the middle of a situation I never thought I would experience and, strangely, I didn’t want it to end.”

Looking for more information, Benyamin and Perez flew from Israel to the Germany city of Landsberg am Lech. “It was the most hectic moment of the investigation,” Benyamin says. “This is where everything started. Hitler wrote ‘Mein Kampf’ while imprisoned there, following the attempted coup known as the Beer Hall Putsch.”

As Benyamin explored Landsberg prison, he found another peculiar similarity with the Book of Esther: the existence of a man named Max Amann (the spelling of “Haman” in French), one of Hitler’s earliest followers and later the head of Eher Verlag, the Nazi party’s publishing house. It was Amann who suggested that Hitler title his book “Mein Kampf.”

“Unearthing the mysteries of this text was undoubtedly one of the biggest intellectual challenges of my career”

Unlike Esther, Benyamin has never hidden his Jewish origins. But he knew that writing about the purported secrets of a biblical text presented certain risks, especially for a reporter with a reputation to protect in a largely secular country. Yet he says he never worried that he was putting his professional standing on the line.

“I didn’t fear the reaction of readers and critics, not even for one split second, because this is the result of a transparent, rational, journalistic investigation,” he says.

Except for a handful of positive reviews, the French media have largely overlooked the book. But the idea of a secret connection between ancient Persia and Nazi Germany has piqued public interest, generating both solid sales and a spin-off documentary that Benyamin is working on now.

When the investigation ended, he recalls, he felt “groggy.”

“I just needed to catch my breath — I felt like I ran a marathon,” he says.

“My vision of religion has changed,” he continues, although “it doesn’t mean that I will become more observant.”

Whatever the book’s impact on his religious life, he takes pride in bringing discussion of the Book of Esther to a mass secular audience, and in the exploration it forced him to do for himself. “Unearthing the mysteries of this text,” he says, “was undoubtedly one of the biggest intellectual challenges of my career.”

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**Purim/Parshas Tzav**

**Using Up Merits**

**by Rabbi Ozer Alport**

**(1:13 ויאמר המלך לחכמים ידעי העתים אסתר)** When Vashti humiliated Achashverosh by refusing to appear at his party as he had ordered, he turned to his wise counselors who know the times for advice about the appropriate punishment for her act of insolence. The Gemora (Megillah 12b) explains that the advisors he consulted were the Rabbis, who are sagacious and know how to intercalate years and fix the months of the Jewish calendar, which is astonishing. Didn’t Achashverosh understand that the Rabbis hated Vashti for stopping the rebuilding of the Temple (Esther Rabbah 5:2) and forcing the Jewish women to

work on Shabbos (Megillah 12b)? How could he ask them to judge her? Rav Eliezer Ginsburg explains that even somebody as evil as Achashverosh recognized that the Rabbis were able to set their personal biases aside and give Vashti a fair and impartial trial. Nevertheless, the Gemora says that the Rabbis were afraid to rule on this case. They realized that if they opined that Vashti should be punished, Achashverosh would eventually calm down, regret what he did, and blame them for their suggestion. On the other hand, if they advised him to spare her, they would be insulting the king by not standing up for his honor. Therefore, they astutely told Achashverosh that ever since the Temple was destroyed and they were sent into exile, they were no longer wise enough to adjudicate capital crimes. Instead, they recommended that he present the issue to Ammon and Moab for their ruling. Why did the Rabbis specifically tell Achashverosh to consult Ammon and Moab instead of excusing themselves and leaving it to him to decide how to proceed? The Be'er Yosef explains that although they understood that it would be imprudent for them to rule on the case, they still had a vested interest in its outcome. Even though they couldn't be the ones to suggest it, they wanted Vashti killed because of all she had done to the Jewish people. Their challenge was that although they wanted Vashti dead, they understood that even if her behavior was disrespectful, Achashverosh's demand that she publicly appear at his party in an immodest manner (Ibid.) was so inappropriate that no judge would fault her for responding the way she did. There was only one hope to find a judge who wouldn't be repulsed by Achashverosh's request and would be open to punishing Vashti for disgracing him: a judge from the nations of Ammon and Moab, whose very existence was due to the immodest conduct of Lot and his daughters (Bereishis 19:30-38) and who refused to accept the Torah when they were told that it contains a prohibition against adultery (Sifri V'zos HaBeracha 2). The Rabbis shrewdly understood that Ammon and Moab wouldn't be fazed by Achashverosh's request and wouldn't feel any pity about Vashti's predicament. Only judges from these two nations would be willing to punish her harshly, thereby bringing about the desired result while keeping their fingerprints off of the verdict.

**(5:13) וכל זה איננו שוה לי בכל עת אשר אני ראה את מרדכי היהודי יושב בשער המלך**  
 After Haman was honored as the only guest invited to Esther's meal with Achashverosh, he left the banquet elated and exuberant, until he encountered Mordechai, who refused to acknowledge or bow to him. This infuriated Haman, who went home and recounted his tremendous wealth and honor to his family and friends, only to conclude that it meant nothing to him as long as Mordechai remained at the king's gate and would not bow to him. As irritating as it was, why did Mordechai's conduct negate all of Haman's tremendous wealth and render it worthless in his eyes? Quoting the Gemora (Megillah 15a), Rashi explains that many years earlier, Haman was starving and in desperate need of sustenance, so he sold himself as a slave to Mordechai in exchange for food. Years later, Mordechai now pulled out the signed contract and showed it to Haman to remind him of the relationship between them. Therefore, as wealthy as Haman may have been and as much respect as he may have commanded, he also recognized that none of it legally belonged to him, for the law is (Pesachim 88b) that whatever a slave acquires belongs to his master. Accordingly, Haman lived in constant fear that Mordechai may one day enforce his claim to his estate, which would leave him penniless and humiliated. For this reason, Haman informed his family and friends that despite his tremendous wealth, he could not feel secure about it, since Mordechai could come at any moment and take it all away from him. The Chasam Sofer uses this Gemora to explain why Mordechai and Esther were legally permitted to take Haman's estate from Achashverosh (Esther 8:1-2) when seemingly, it should have belonged to Haman's descendants who were entitled to inherit his possessions (Kiddushin 18a). Now that we understand that Mordechai acquired Haman as his slave, everything that Haman owned belonged to Mordechai, who posthumously claimed what was rightfully his. Additionally, the Chasam Sofer notes that the Gemora rules that an eved Canaani (a non-Jewish slave who belongs to a Jew) is obligated to keep all the mitzvos that women observe (Chagigah 4a). Accordingly, not only did Haman belong to Mordechai financially, but he was actually a Jew! If this sounds far-fetched, the Chasam Sofer suggests that it is stated explicitly in the Megillah, which records (Esther 3:2-4) that after Achashverosh promoted Haman, everybody bowed down to him except Mordechai. The king's servants noticed

this and asked Mordechai why he wasn't disobeying the king's orders, but he did not answer them. At that point, they had no choice but to discuss the matter with Haman, with the Megillah recording: **ויגידו להמן לראות היעמדו דברי מרדכי** – The king's servants told Haman to see if Mordechai's words would stand. What were Mordechai's words? **כי הגיד להם אשר הוא יהודי** – He told them **אשר הוא יהודי** – that Haman is a Jew, since he was Mordechai's slave, in which case Mordechai wasn't obligated to bow to him. This claim certainly got their attention, and they immediately conveyed Mordechai's words to Haman. Not surprisingly, when Haman heard that Mordechai accused him of being a Jew, he became furious and enraged.

**(6:10) יאמר המלך להמן מהר** After Achashverosh's sleepless night, Haman approached him early the next morning. Achashverosh asked Haman what should be done for a person whom the king wishes to honor, and assuming that the question was about him, Haman suggested that such a person should wear the royal robe and be led through town on the royal horse. Achashverosh then ordered Haman to do exactly that for Mordechai, and he added the word ??? – quickly. What was the rush? Rav Eliezer Ginsburg suggests that Achashverosh felt bad for Haman. He recognized that what he was commanding Haman to do was humiliating, so he insisted that it be done immediately, early in the morning while the streets were still empty, which would spare Haman the indignity of being seen by many people. Unfortunately for Haman, Mordechai and Esther thwarted this plan. The Gemora (Megillah 16a) records that when Haman found Mordechai and told him about Achashverosh's decision, Mordechai responded that it would be disrespectful for him to put on the king's clothing and ride his horse while looking so disheveled, so he insisted on first going to the bathhouse to wash up, and then taking a haircut. However, every bathhouse they tried to enter was locked, and every barber they went to was closed because while all this was going on, Esther issued a decree that all bathhouses and barbers must temporarily shut down. This left Haman with no choice but to bathe Mordechai himself and personally cut his hair, which caused him even more shame, and this delay also resulted in the streets being full of people by the time they finally went outside. The Gemora's version of events is difficult to understand. Why were Mordechai and Esther out to mortify Haman? Where is there a concept or source for trying to embarrass our enemies? The Shiras Dovid suggests that they learned this approach from Moshe. The Abarbanel writes that the reason Moshe didn't lead the Jewish army against Amalek was because he didn't want to dignify Amalek by showing that they were worthy of his attention. Instead, he sent his disciple Yehoshua (Shemos 17:9) to show his complete disdain for them, and instead of selecting a large army, Moshe only sent a few soldiers to make their defeat that much more disgraceful, a lesson that was learned and applied by Mordechai and Esther. Nevertheless, even if they wanted to shame Haman, why did they specifically force him to serve as the bathhouse attendant and barber for Mordechai more than any other degrading activity? The Shiras Dovid points out that the Rambam rules (Hilchos Melochim 1:6) that a person who was previously employed as either a barber or bathhouse attendant is ineligible to become king, because his occupation is so lowly in people's eyes that he will never be able to command the respect that a king deserves. Since the Rambam says that these professions are considered the most demeaning of all occupations, Mordechai and Esther specifically conspired to force Haman to do these two jobs to maximize his humiliation.

**(8:17) ורבים מעמי הארץ מתיהדים** After Haman was killed, Achashverosh bequeathed his estate to Mordechai and Esther and gave them permission to issue a new decree in his name. They issued a royal order permitting the Jewish people around the world to gather together in self-defense and kill their enemies on 13 Adar. Wherever word of this new edict reached, it brought gladness and joy to the Jews, while many of the nations of the world grew frightened and responded by professing to be Jews. The Vilna Gaon notes that these non-Jews only pretended to act like Jews to protect themselves, but their conversions weren't genuine. For this reason, the Megillah says that they were **מתיהדים**, which means that they made themselves like Jews, instead of **מתגיירים**, because they did not sincerely convert. Rav Shlomo Alkabetz points out that the Megillah teaches us the difference between a Jew and a gentile. When the Jews were faced with Haman's decree to annihilate them all, not a single one attempted to convert or disguise his identity to avoid being killed. Rather than abandon their religion at this critical time, they all joined together in

unprecedented deveikus (clinging) to Hashem. The non-Jews, on the other hand, had little faith in their idols, and when they were confronted with a potential threat, they immediately discarded their religion that they recognized had no ability to save them. The S'fas Emes suggests that this phenomenon is one of the reasons for the widespread custom of wearing costumes on Purim. Just as the original Purim caused the gentiles to dress up and pretend to be Jews, now we don non-Jewish clothing to show that what truly counts is not a person's superficial appearance, but his inner essence and values.

**Tzav**  
"V'zot torat zevach hashelamim asher yakriv Lashem im al today yakrivenu." (Lev. 7:11-12) Parshas Tzav contains the laws governing the Korban Todah (Thanksgiving Offering). The Talmud (Berachos 54b) rules that a Korban Todah is brought by four groups of people to express their gratitude to God for being saved from potential danger. In the absence of the Temple, they instead publicly recite a blessing known as Birkas HaGomel.

It is curious to note that after hearing somebody make a blessing we answer simply, "Amen," with one exception. After hearing a person say Birkas HaGomel, we respond, "Omein, mi shagamalcha kol tov Hu yigamelcha kov selah" - "He who has bestowed upon you all good should continue to bestow upon you all good." As this lengthy response is found nowhere else, it clearly needs an explanation.

In his introduction, the Shalmei Nedorim offers a beautiful insight based on a fascinating episode related by the Talmud (Shabbos 53b). The wife of a poor man passed away shortly after giving birth. The pauper lacked the means to hire a nurse-maid for his newborn, but the baby's life was saved when the man's body miraculously became capable of nursing the baby.

The Amora Rav Yosef praised the man, saying that he must have had great merits to have brought about such an open miracle. Abaye, on the other hand, remarked how lowly he must have been for needing a miracle performed on his behalf. The Shalmei Nedorim explains that Abaye's intent was not to say that the man was wicked. After all, he merited an extraordinary miracle to save his child's life. Rather, Abaye was lamenting that the miracle used up so many of his merits (see Rashi Bereishis 32:11).

In light of this insight, he explains that Birkas HaGomel is recited after a person has been saved from potential danger. While we are happy that he survived, we are also afraid that it may have come at the expense of his accumulated merits. As a result, a simple "Amen" won't suffice, and we add a special supplication requesting that his good fortune should continue and not be depleted through this miracle.

**Rabbi Yisroel Reisman - Parshas Tzav 5774** 3. Let me move on and share with you a Purim thought or two. We have the expression which comes from a Posuk that we have in the Megillah 8:16 (לְיְהוּדִים, הָיְתָה אוֹרְהָ וְשִׁמְחָהּ, וְשֵׁשׁ, וְיָקָר). Jews celebrated. For some reason which is hard to explain this is part of Havdalah. What does it have to do with the weekly Motzoei Shabbos Havdalah (לְיְהוּדִים, הָיְתָה אוֹרְהָ וְשִׁמְחָהּ, וְשֵׁשׁ, וְיָקָר). It is a nice thing, however, it seems to be totally unrelated to Havdalah. Rav Zelig Epstein said the following Pshat. Rav Zelig explained that the Yevonim wanted Klal Yisrael to assimilate with them (אורח זו תורה) Zu Torah. The Gemara in Masseches Megillah 16b (24 lines from the bottom) says that Ora represents the light of Torah. (שמחה זה יום טוב) Simcha Zu Yom Tov, (ששון זו מילה) Sason Zu Milah, (ויקר אלו) Yikar Eilu Hatefillin. These are a reference to four Mitzvos, the Mitzvos being Torah, Yom Tov, Milah, and Tefillin. These are all things which separate Klal Yisrael from the Umos Haolam, from the nations of the world. The Gemara in Masseches Sanhedrin 59a (2nd line from the top) says (ואמר ר' יוחנן) עובד כוכבים שנוסק בתורה חייב מיתה שנאמר תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה לנו מורשה ולא להם. A non-Jew is forbidden from learning Torah She'bal Peh. Yom Tov, we know that (Sanhedrin 58b 3 lines from the bottom) (ואר"ל עובד כוכבים ששבת חייב) Nachri Sheshavas is also Chayuv Misah although this refers to Yom Tov rather than Shabbos, Yomim Tovim are more specific to Klal Yisrael. The Yomim Tovim are a Zeicher to Yetzias Mitzrayim. Milah is the Os Hab'ris that is Madchin between a Yid and not a Yid. And of course Tefillin, Chazal say (ויקר אלו תפלין וכן הוא אומר וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ד' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך) that it is something that differentiates between Klal Yisrael and the Umos Haolam. So,

(לְיְהוּדִים, הָיְתָה אוֹרְהָ וְשִׁמְחָהּ, וְשֵׁשׁ, וְיָקָר) is Shayich to Purim because these four Mitzvos specifically were Mitzvos that the Yevonim sought to rid Klal Yisrael of. They are Mitzvos that are Boruch Hamavdil Bain Yisrael La'amim. They are a Havdalah between Klal Yisrael and the nations. Now of course it is simple that this belongs in Havdalah. Rav Schorr in the Ohr Gedalyahu (in the Moadim volume on page # 98 Os 4) brings (לְיְהוּדִים, הָיְתָה אוֹרְהָ וְשִׁמְחָהּ, וְשֵׁשׁ, וְיָקָר) why doesn't it say Layehudim Osah Torah, V'yom Tov, Umilah, and Tefillin. Why does it hide these Mitzvos with words that only hint at them? Rav Schorr answers in the name of Sfas Emes. He says that Klal Yisrael always had Torah and Milah, Tefillin, and Yom Tov. However, we find that Haman said regarding the Jews (לְשׁוֹנוֹ עַם-אֶחָד) that Mitzvos they do it by route. They do it out of habit. They no longer have the Zechus of doing Mitzvos with a Cheishek, and with a Bren. After the Neis of Purim, Klal Yisrael fixed that. (ליהודים היתה אורה) Orah Zu Torah. They didn't just learn Torah they saw Torah as their light. The same thing with Yomim Tovim. Many people when it comes to Yom Tov do what they have to do and they try to go to sleep and run away after Havdalah. That didn't happen. After the Neis of Purim it became (ששון זו) (שמחה זה יום טוב). (מילה) The same thing, Klal Yisrael had an enthusiasm for Bris Milah. (ויקר אלו) People put on Tefillin every day out of habit. Do we see Tefillin as Yakar, something of great value? We should. Therefore, the Yom Tov of Purim is a time of great Cheishek. Whereas all other Yomim Tovim are Yomim Tovim that Jews unfortunately run away from. After Pesach they are running to get their pizza. After Shabbos it is a Bizayon in the Shuls how people are running to get away from the Shabbos as early as possible. There is friction over having an early enough Minyan. Chazal said Tosafos Shabbos, well we say how much Tosafos Shabbos do we need. When it comes to Purim it is not that way. If you noticed, when Purim goes out it is developing its warmth, its frenzy, and its delight. People who run around all day giving Mishloach Manos and being Osek in the Mitzvah come evening time to their Rabbeim, to their parents, to their grandparents, they get together and have a Cheishek. The Mishna Berura has to caution people stick to a Seuda which has its main foods by day because people push it into the night. But Kach Heim Hadevorim. Purim is different than the other Yomim Tovim. The other Yomim Tovim unfortunately are not with the right Bren. Purim is with a Bren, with a drive, with a desire. Don't let yourself fall to the Yeitzer Hora on Purim to let it be with a coldness, without the warmth that Purim deserves. Attach yourself to Purim, connect yourself to Purim. Show up at your Rabbeim's Purim Seuda whether you are invited or not. Just knock on the door, or don't knock on the door, just go in and be part of the Purim. If they look at you as if it is inappropriate just pretend to be drunk. When a person is drunk he can do whatever he wants. Make sure that there is a warmth to Purim, a Cheishek to a Purim, a drive to a Purim. It is all about Chamimus and Kiyum Hamitzvos, a warmth in doing Mitzvos properly. That is the idea regarding Purim which unfortunately we sometimes overlook. And so, as we prepare for Parshas Zachor and for Purim, I want to wish one and all a meaningful Purim, a Purim with Cheishek and with drive. The best way to get ready for Purim of course is that right after Taanis Esther going straight to the Bais Hamedrash for a Mishmar. Of course that is the way to do it.

<https://www.aish.com/h/pur/f/48970006.html>

### **The Purim Story**

**Feb 2, 2003 | by Yaffa Ganz**

Over 2,000 years ago, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. The Jewish people were sent away from the Land of Israel and were forced to live in Babylonia.

Fifty years later, Babylonia was defeated by Persia. Achashverosh (that's pronounced: Ah-chash-VEY-rosh) was the second Persian king. He ruled 127 provinces from Hodu (India) to Kush (Africa) the largest, strongest kingdom in the world.

A new king needs a new capital, so Achashverosh chose the city of Shushan. To celebrate, he made a tremendous feast for all the important people in the kingdom. It lasted for 180 days. Then he made a second feast just for Shushan. Everyone in the city was invited, even the Jews.

Mordechai, the leader of the Jews, warned his people not to go to the feast, but they were afraid to disobey the king. And to tell the truth, they were honored

and pleased to have been invited. For seven days they ate and drank to their heart's content. Only one thing troubled them. Achashverosh brought the gold and silver vessels from the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and used them for his wild celebration...

The drunken king began to brag that his queen Vashti was the most beautiful woman in the kingdom. On the last day of the feast, he commanded her to come and dance before the crowd. But Vashti was the proud granddaughter of the cruel Nebuchadnezzar and she refused to appear. "Am I a servant to the king?" she asked. In a fit of anger, the king had her killed.

Achashverosh now needed a new queen and he wanted someone even more beautiful than Vashti. His men went from house to house in all of Persia, taking the young girls away to Shushan where they were kept as hostages until they were brought before the king.

In Shushan, a Jewish orphan by the name of Hadassah lived with her cousin Mordechai. When the king's men came to her house, Mordechai said, "Don't be afraid. Go with them. Do not tell them you are a Jewess. Tell them your Persian name -- Esther. God will watch over you!"

Esther was kind and gentle and very beautiful. As soon as the king saw her, he chose her as his new queen. Esther appointed seven maidservants, one for each day of the week, so that she would always remember which day was the Sabbath. Her meals were cooked with kosher foods. And all the while, she kept her secret. No one knew she was a Jew. Everyday, Mordechai sat outside the palace gate to wait for news from Esther.

One day outside the palace, Mordechai happened to hear two men plotting to kill the king. He warned Esther and the two men were caught and killed. Although it was recorded in the Royal Book that Mordechai the Jew had saved the king, the matter was soon forgotten.

Soon after, Achashverosh appointed Haman -- the richest man in the kingdom -- as his new prime minister. All the king's subjects were ordered to honor Haman and bow down to him. Everyone did, except Mordechai. It was permissible to honor Haman and bow to him as the prime minister, but Haman wore a large medallion, engraved with the picture of an idol, on his chest. Mordechai said people might think he was bowing to the idol too, and a Jew is forbidden to worship or honor idols.

Haman was furious. He went straight to the king to complain. "There is one nation," he said, "scattered throughout your kingdom, which is different from all other nations. They don't eat our food, drink our wine, or marry our daughters! They don't keep the king's laws and they don't work! Every seventh day they rest and they are always celebrating holidays. If you give me permission, I will destroy them for you. I will even pay for any expenses from my own money!"

Achashverosh gave Haman his royal ring, to seal the orders and decrees. Anxious to do a perfect job, Haman wanted to execute his plan on the right day, a lucky day blessed by his gods and the stars. He cast lots -- purim in Hebrew -- to choose the day. Then he sent out letters, sealed with the king's royal ring, to each of the 127 provinces in the kingdom.

"On the 13th day of the month of Adar," the decree said "you are to destroy, kill and slaughter all Jews, young and old, women and children, all in one day. Their money and property will then belong to you."

When Mordechai heard of the decree, he ripped his clothing and put ashes on his head as a sign of mourning. He told Esther she must go to the king to try and save the Jews. Esther was afraid, for it was forbidden to come before the king without being invited. But Mordechai said, "Who knows if you have not been put in the palace for this very purpose? If you are silent now, help will come to the Jews from some other place -- and you will perish!"

Esther asked that the Jews in Shushan fast and pray for her for three days. Mordechai gathered all the Jewish children in Shushan and told them to pray, too. (In the end, it was the prayers of the children which were answered.)

The Jews finally realized they should not have gone to the king's feast; they should not have eaten at the royal banquet nor drunk the wine, nor used the vessels from the Holy Temple. They understood that this was their punishment for fearing the king more than they feared God.

When the three days of prayers and fasting were over, Esther went to the king. "What is your request, my queen?" he asked. "Half of my kingdom is yours for the asking!"

But Esther asked only that the king and Haman come to a private banquet she was making. At the banquet, Achashverosh asked again, "What is your wish? Whatever you want is yours!" But Esther only invited the king and Haman to a second party. "How strange," thought the king. But Haman was delighted. On his way out of the palace, he passed Mordechai at the gate. His delight turned to hate. "I am important enough to be invited to the queen's private banquets together with the king -- and that Jew refuses to bow down to me?!" He wanted to kill Mordechai then and there, without waiting for the 13th of Adar!

"Do it!" advised his evil wife Zeresh. So Haman built a gallows, 50 cubits high, in his own courtyard. He would hang Mordechai at the first opportunity!

That night, the king could not fall asleep. He tossed and turned and finally called for his servant to bring out the Royal Book and read him to sleep. The heavy book fell open to the story of how Mordechai the Jew had warned of the plot against the king and saved the king's life.

"What reward did the Jew receive?" asked the king.

"None, sir," was the reply.

"He saved my life and received no reward?!" stormed the king.

Just then, someone knocked. It was Haman, coming for permission to hang Mordechai the Jew. He was in such a hurry he couldn't even wait for the morning!

"Haman!" thundered the king. "Tell me, what shall be done for a man the king wishes to honor?"

"He must be referring to me," thought Haman gleefully. "I know just the thing," he said. "Let him wear the king's royal robes. Place the king's royal crown upon his head. Let him ride the king's royal horse. And let a servant walk before the horse and cry out: Thus shall be done to the man whom the king wishes to honor!"

"Wonderful idea!" cried the Achashverosh. "I shall leave it all to you. Find Mordechai the Jew and do exactly as you described, down to the last detail!"

Haman did as he was commanded, and Mordechai was led with royal honor through the streets of Shushan.

Haman returned home, a bitter, broken man. But he had no time to brood. He had to be at the royal palace in time for the Queen's second banquet. Once again, the king asked, "What is it you desire, Esther? Why have you invited us here? Speak and it shall be done!"

This time, Esther spoke. "Spare my life," she cried, "and the lives of my people. We have been sentenced to death!"

"Death? Your people? By whom?" asked the surprised king.

"By an evil and wicked man -- by your minister Haman!"

The king was so astounded that he marched out of the room to regain his composure.

Trembling and fearful, Haman threw himself on the queen to beg for mercy. At that very moment, Achashverosh returned.

"What?" he cried. "Do you dare to attack the Queen in my palace? Take him away and hang him!" he shouted.

In the end, Haman was hung on the gallows he himself had built for Mordechai. And Mordechai became the king's new prime minister in place of Haman!

According to Persian law, it was impossible to change a decree stamped with the royal seal, so the king could not cancel the decree against the Jews. But Mordechai was given the royal signet ring to issue whatever new decrees he could think of to help save the Jews.

Now it was Mordechai's turn to send out a royal letter. It said: On the 13th of Adar, all the Jews in the kingdom would organize to defend themselves. The Persians were more than happy to listen to Haman and kill Jews, but if the Jews were going to arm themselves and fight back under royal protection, well then, that was another story!

On the 13th of Adar, Jews across the kingdom assembled and defended themselves. Thousands of their enemies were killed, including Haman's 10 evil sons who were hanged from a tree. Unlike the Persians who planned to take money and property, the Jews took no loot at all. On the 14th of Adar, they gave thanks to God and celebrated.

But in the walled capital city of Shushan, the Jews continued to fight an additional day. On the 15th of Adar the Jews of Shushan celebrated their victory. Therefore we celebrate:

The Fast of Esther on the 13th of Adar

Purim Day on the 14th of Adar

And in the walled city of Jerusalem, the main celebration is:  
Shushan Purim on the 15th of Adar.

Esther asked the rabbis to write the story of Purim and include it in the Bible. Scrolls - megillot - were written and sent to the Jews throughout the kingdom. The rabbis commanded the people to keep the holiday of Purim forever as a day of thanksgiving and feasting and joy; of sending gifts to friends and money to the poor. And that is just what the Jewish people have been doing for the past 2,400 years!

#### THE FOUR MAIN MITZVOT OF PURIM

1. MEGILLAT ESTHER -- we read the story of Purim in the evening and the next day. And whenever Haman is mentioned, we make as much noise as possible to blot out his name and his memory!
2. SENDING GIFTS OF FOOD to at least one friend or relative, because Purim is a time of love and friendship between Jews.
3. GIVING GIFTS OF MONEY TO THE POOR because Purim is a time of sharing and caring and helping.
4. EATING A FESTIVE PURIM MEAL - the special holiday meal eaten on Purim afternoon.

AND DON'T FORGET, PURIM IS COSTUME-TIME! We celebrate how everything can turn upside-down and into something else, and nothing is exactly what it seems to be. So start thinking about who you want to be on Purim!

A joyous Purim to all of you! May Purim - and all other days in the year!-- be full of light and gladness, honor and joy, just as it was for the Jewish people in the time of Esther and Mordechai so many years ago.

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from: torahweb@torahweb.org to: weeklydt@torahweb.org date: Mar 19, 2019, 11:21 AM subject: TorahWeb low on cash

Dear TorahWeb readers,

We have avoided sending out a fund raising email for quite a long time now, since we had enough money to cover our expenses and didn't want to take funds away from others who needed them. TorahWeb is now running low on cash and could use your support. To keep all our programs/efforts (web site, yemei iyun, books) going, please donate online or by mail a check to:

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In addition to keeping TorahWeb going "as-is", our impact would likely be increased if we would update our web site and create TorahWeb apps for iOS and Android. We originally attempted to do that using volunteer power, but there was not enough volunteer time available. As such, if someone would like the zechus of donating a five figure sum to make those things happen, please let us know! Wishing you a happy Purim, TorahWeb

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**Rabbi Herschel Schachter**

#### **The Spirit of Purim**

The Rabbis of the Talmud have recorded (Shabbos 88a) the tradition that although the Jewish people accepted the Torah at Mt. Sinai out of their own free will, there was, nevertheless, an aspect of coercion involved. After the miracle of Purim, the people accepted the Torah again, this time without any element of coercion. Today when we observe Purim, one of the themes being celebrated is this second accepting of the Torah. According to the Geonim, this is the reason that Purim alone was singled out from all the other holidays instituted by the Rabbis (and recorded in the Megillas Taanis) to have a mitzva of seuda (eating a festive meal). Just like on Shavuos the Talmud tells us (Pesachim 68b) that all agree that one must have an elaborate meal as part of the commemoration of our accepting the Torah, so to Purim must be celebrated with an elaborate meal for this same reason.

According to the Medrash, the element of coercion at the time of maaamad Har Sinai that necessitated the later second acceptance was regarding the Torah She'beal Peh. The Jews were fully prepared to accept Gods written Torah, since it was clearly of divine origin. But the bulk of the Oral Law consists of laws classified as "divrei sofrim", laws developed by the rabbis over the generations, which have the status of dinim doraisa. The discretion and the judgement of the

rabbis is assumed to have been divinely inspired, and therefore has been endowed with doraisa status. The verse in Tehilim (25,14) that G-d reveals his secrets to those who fear him is quoted several times in the Talmud to bring out this point.

This is in no way a contradiction to the principal developed by the rabbis that "lo bashamayim hi" (see Bava Metzia 59b) - that after mattan torah God will no longer reveal any halachos to man in a supernatural fashion, i.e. through prophecy, and any bas kol proclaiming a halachah must be disregarded. Of course God expects us to work out the halacha. At the same time, He has promised to assist the rabbis - from behind the scenes - in their deliberations to see to it that they do not err. The binding force of any psak of any rabbi is based on the assumption that the individual posek was granted this supernatural divine assistance.

Bnei Yisroel at the time of mattan Torah apparently found it hard to accept this concept (see Meerot Neryah p. 16a). At the time of the nes Purim a group of rabbis known as the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah was setting all the forms of religious observance as they are still being observed today, two thousand years later (brachos, tefilos, categories of halacha). The Jews realized that the yad Hashem was involved in the story from behind the scenes. They came to understand well the concept of "sod Hashem leyereiov." It becomes understandable that halchos are developed by the rabbis with the yad Hashem guiding them. This is what the Torah Shebaal Peh was always about.

Now that the Jewish people had accepted that part of the Torah again without any coercion, this segment of halachos was able to flourish and to develop in a much greater fashion than ever before. Indeed, the greatest part of the development of the Torah Shebaal Peh took place, historically, after the days of Purim (see Be'Ikvei Hatzon p.138, 114).

The Shalah, in his essay on Purim, points to the posuk in the megillah (8:14) "vehados nitnah beshushan habirah", as an allusion to the concept that the Torah was being reaccepted. The traditional festive Purim meal is eaten to celebrate this reacceptance and should be eaten with such an attitude. Becoming drunk and rowdy simply does not fit in with the correct attitude which should pervade the Purim observance. Purim is not the Jewish Halloween. The custom of putting on masks, and dressing up to conceal one's true identity was never intended to represent a Jewish Mardi-Gras; but rather to show that just as in the story of Purim, one had to look below the surface to see the hidden Mover behind the events, so too in Torah study, one must always look below the surface, and read in-between the lines to gain the insights of the Torah Shebaal Peh, which will actually place everything in the Torah in the proper perspective. The custom of masquerading is to teach us, "al tistakel bekankan elah bemah shehyest bo!", (Never look at the outer appearance of the container. Always try to investigate what might possibly be hiding beneath the surface.) The fact that God's name never appears in the megillah is also assumed to be for the same reason. The hidden Torah Shebaal Peh interpretation always enlightens the Torah shebikta, and always puts things into clearer perspective.

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**Purim: "Go Gather All The Jews"**

#### **Rav Kook Torah**

Rav Kook wrote the following article in HaTor (the weekly periodical of the Mizrahi) in 1934, during the rise of Nazism in Germany.

During these days of Purim, in this difficult time, we are besieged by many troubles from without, sufferings that afflict the entire Jewish people.

But our greatest pain comes from our troubles within. We lack unity, shalom bayit in the House of Israel. Let us recall the days and events recorded in the Scroll of Esther, written with prophetic inspiration. For God's spirit transcends the passage of time and transient ideologies. Esther's eternal words - "Go gather all of the Jews" - must rejuvenate us and elevate us from our lowly state.

Is Unity Possible?

One may ask: Is it really possible nowadays to gather all of the Jews together? Is it possible to unite all of the different factions and parties? How will the bones, scattered across the vast valley of exile - both material and spiritual - once again form that entity known as Klal Yisrael, and set forth its demands for renewal and redemption?

The answer is that there is a place where this dispersion, both physical and spiritual, cannot rule over us. But you object: We see with our own eyes the terrible internal strife. Jews rise up against Jews, brothers turn against each other like wolves and snakes. How can we say, "Go gather all of the Jews"?

Whoever thinks that Haman erred when he said, "There is one nation scattered and divided" (Esther 3:8), is mistaken. Indeed, the Jewish people is scattered and divided. But, nevertheless, it is one nation. You may wonder how a nation may be simultaneously united and divided. The world is full of wonders. This nation, whose very survival throughout history is replete with wonders and miracles, demonstrates by its very existence that it is, in its essence, one nation, despite its dispersion and disunity.

True, the afflictions of exile have divided us. But "the Eternal One of Israel will not lie." The exile and all of its horrors must come to an end. The wind has begun to blow from the four corners of the earth, from the troubles surrounding us, and from the spiritual revelation which stirs us to return and be rebuilt in our homeland. Now we are nearing the realization that there is a cure for the malady of our dispersion and division. In the final analysis, we are, and will always be, a united nation. Israel shall once again rise to the eternal words, "Go gather all of the Jews."

#### Our Hidden Spirit

Yet the difficult barrier obstructing the path of redemption remains: the divisive discord that consumes us. The answer is that a person has two aspects. Medical procedures utilize the body's inner resources of vitality and health. This inner spirit is so hidden that even the patient is unaware of its existence.

Spiritual maladies and their physical manifestations only infect our lower aspect, the side which we see. But our hidden, unknown side always bursts with energy. It is brimming with life and strength. This hidden repository of health has the power to heal the outer self, which can mislead us into thinking that we are sick and feeble, when in fact we possess a healthy soul, full of life and vigor.

That which is true for the individual applies to a much greater degree to the entire collective. Klal Yisrael in particular is truly one nation: "And who is like Your people, Israel, one nation in the land?" (I Sam. 15:19) We must admit our error in identifying ourselves, the essence of Israel, with the nation's superficial appearance, with its outer, baser side. This self-image makes us cringe and tremble. We judge ourselves solely on the basis of our dispersion and inner strife.

The Hamans of every generation strike at us with their venom and hatred. Especially in this period of transition, they perceive our weak side, for it is visible and recognizable. But precisely through these tribulations we will come to the realization that we possess a previously unknown, collective soul - a great national spirit whose existence we had forgotten. It abounds with vitality; it has the strength to renew our lives as of old, and repel all of the Amalekites who wish to assault our weak and feeble.

This hidden Judaism, unknown even to ourselves, this great soul of a great nation, bearing both the suffering and the light of the world within it, will become known to us during these portentous times. The blessing of "Go gather all of the Jews" will emerge from its hidden place inside the nation's soul. Every Purim we must appreciate the great inner repository of our blessedness and our essential trait of unity, which will vanquish our divided side.

From a state of being unable to "distinguish between cursed Haman and blessed Mordechai" we will attain a higher awareness: the ability to uncover the hidden traits of Israel within us. Fellow Jews will recognize one another and join hands. And a mighty voice will be heard, "Let us rise up and ascend to Zion, to the house of our God" (Jer. 31:5).