

BS"D



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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON TETZVAVE-ZACHOR and PURIM - 5764

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From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Sent: March 03, 2004 To: yhe-holiday@etzion.org.il Subject: Special Purim Package
Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Yhe-Holiday: Special Purim Package This shiur is dedicated in memory of Yosef Peretz, the legendary gardener of Yeshivat Har Etzion for over twenty years. Yehi zikhro barukh.

A SELECTION OF THE MORE PRACTICAL LAWS OF PURIM Based on a shiur by RAV MORDECHAI FRIEDMAN

I. PARASHAT ZAKHOR

The Torah (Devarim 25:17) writes that there is an obligation to remember what Amalek did to us on our way out of Egypt. The Rishonim disagree whether this is a biblical obligation or just a rabbinic one: Tosafot Ha-rosh, Terumat Hadeshen, and one opinion in Tosafot all maintain that it is a biblical obligation, while some Rishonim and Acharonim believe it is rabbinic. A practical difference between these two opinions would arise in a situation where a person is unsure whether he has fulfilled this obligation. If we assume the obligation is biblical, then we must be stringent in a case of doubt and therefore the person must make sure to fulfill the commandment again. However, if we assume the obligation is rabbinic, then we are lenient in a case of doubt and consequently the person need not fulfill the obligation again.

The Shulchan Arukh rules (OC 141:2 and OC 685:7) it is biblical. We fulfill this mitzva annually on the Shabbat before Purim because Haman was descended from Agag, the last king of Amalek (Rashi, Megilla 24a, followed by the Magen Avraham).

The Rambam lists two mitzvot in connection with Amalek: to mention the story of Amalek and to erase their remembrance. The accepted ruling is that one should hear parashat Zakhor read from a Sefer Torah during the keriat ha-Torah, as we do on Shabbat Zakhor. One should have intention to fulfill his obligation with the ba'al koreh. The Gra is said to have felt that there is a specific obligation to read parashat Zakhor aloud. In his commentary on Torat Kohanim, the Ra'avad mentions that one may even read the laws of megilla to fulfill the obligation of remembering Amalek. The Sefer Ha-chinukh rules that women are not obligated to read parashat Zakhor because they do not wage war, and this obligation is connected with the obligation to wage war against Amalek. The Minchat Chinukh raises two objections to this. Firstly, it seems that women should be obligated in remembering Amalek because they indeed do go to war in a milchemet mitzva, an obligatory war, such as wars against Amalek. Secondly, the mitzva of remembering (zekhira) is listed as a SEPARATE mitzva from erasing Amalek (mechika). (See Rambam, Hilkhos Melakhim 5:5.) Most authorities (including the Chazon Ish) rule that women are not obligated. Women should, however, make an effort to hear parashat Zakhor, without accepting it upon themselves as a vow (neder). If one misses the keriat ha-Torah, he can read it alone from the Sefer Torah with ta'amim. If one can't do either of these, then he or she can even read parashat Zakhor from a Chumash.

If one misses the Torah reading on Shabbat Zakhor and plans on hearing it on Shabbat parashat Ki Tetzeh (where we repeat this reading in its proper context), there might be a problem. In order to help others fulfill their obligation, the Torah reader himself must have intent to fulfill the obligation of remembering Amalek. In some congregations, they therefore announce that anyone who did not fulfill his obligation on Shabbat Zakhor should now have intent.

II. PARASHAT PARA

The purpose of reading parashat Para was to remind people who would bring the korban Pesach that they had to purify themselves.

III. MEGILLA

1) Most Rishonim maintain that the obligation to read the megilla is a rabbinic one. The Ba'al Halakhot Gedolot includes this obligation in his count of the 613 biblical obligations! 2) Three berakhot are recited when reading the megilla at night: Al Mikra Megilla, She-Asa Nissim, She-hecheyanu. The minhag Sefarad is to say She-hecheyanu ONLY at night. This blessing refers not just to the reading of the megilla, but to the essence of the day itself. The Rema rules that one should say She-hecheyanu in the morning, too, the reason being that the daytime reading is the main one. The Magen Avraham recommends that, while reciting She-hecheyanu in the morning, one should intend for the blessing to cover the obligations of the day, mishloach manot and se'udat Purim.

If one does not have a megilla to read from, he should not recite She-hecheyanu. The Bi'ur Halakha quotes the Meiri, who maintains that the purpose of the She-hecheyanu and Al Ha-nissim is to express thanks for the day of Purim. He leaves undecided the question of whether this is sufficient to recite the berakhot without a megilla.

3) If need be, one is supposed to sacrifice time from his Torah study in order to fulfill the obligation of reading the megilla. The Rambam adds, "and surely [one should take away time from] other mitzvot." The Ran writes that the only time a rabbinic obligation pushes off a biblical obligation is when the biblical obligation can be fulfilled later. Torah study is different, because one is always obligated to learn. This is how the Rema rules. The Taz and the Gra rule that the obligation to read the megilla pushes off biblical obligations in any situation, because it is "mi-divrei Kabbala" and has the impetus of "divrei Torah."

4) Another halakha hinging on the level of the obligation of megilla reading is the situation of safek - doubt. The people of a regular city read the megilla on the fourteenth of Adar. In a city that was surrounded by a wall from the time of Yehoshua Bin Nun, the people read the megilla on the fifteenth. In a case of doubt, where one is unsure whether a city was surrounded by a wall from the time of Yehoshua Bin Nun, Ramban, Rashba and Ritva rule leniently and require the people of the city to read the megilla on the fourteenth. The Rambam and the Shulchan Arukh rule stringently and require the city to read on both days - the first day with a berakha. This is consistent of their previous ruling of viewing it as "ke'ein de-Oraita."

5) One must forgo Torah learning to fulfill the principle of "Be-rov am hadrat Melekh" as well. This principle dictates that one must travel to the largest possible synagogue for megilla reading. The Magen Avraham explains that this is true only when one is does not frequent a specific synagogue. However, if one generally only goes to one synagogue, he should not leave his synagogue for this principle.

6) If there is a berit mila on Purim, the Rema rules that the berit comes before megilla reading. The Gra, Peri Chadash and Mishna Berura rule the opposite, since a mitzva of pirsmei nissa (publicizing the miracle) takes precedence.

7) Shushan Purim

a. A city that was walled during the time of Yehoshua Bin Nun (Jericho, Jerusalem), as well as the city of Shushan, read on the fifteenth of Adar. Everywhere else reads on the fourteenth. The Gemara says that a city that is "samukh ve-nir'eh" (nearby and visible) to a city that was walled from the time of Yehoshua Bin Nun should also read on the fifteenth. Rashi rules that this expression means samukh or nir'eh. The rule of samukh means that anywhere within a "mil," about a kilometer away from a city that reads on the fifteenth, also reads on the fifteenth. Nir'eh means that any place that can be seen from Yerushalayim should read on the fifteenth. The Rambam rules that to read on the fifteenth of Adar, the city must be both samukh and nir'eh.

The Shulchan Arukh follows Rashi, while the Tur sides with the Rambam. Rav Tukitchinsky, a prominent rav in Jerusalem, ruled that any houses which continued uninterrupted from the Old City has the same status as the Old City itself. Bayit VaGan originally read on the 14th, but was later connected to the rest of the city and therefore read on the 15th. Nir'eh could mean that you can see both cities together, i.e., it actually looks like they're part of the same city. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l is quoted to have said that a place is considered nir'eh if they only pay taxes to Jerusalem, i.e., are part of the same municipality.

b. One who travels from a non-walled to a walled city: If one goes, for example, from Alon Shevut to Yerushalayim, and sets himself up to live there for the day, then he obligates himself to read there on the fifteenth. The main time for reading the megilla is the morning. The critical time we're interested in is the morning reading of the city he is now travelling to. The intent a person has at the time he or she leaves a place plays a big factor. In boarding a bus from Alon

Shvut to Jerusalem, one must ask himself: "Where do I plan on being at the moment of obligation of megilla?" If the answer is Yerushalayim, then his trip is effectively uprooting him for Purim. If the answer is not Jerusalem, then this trip does not change his status. If one hears the megilla on the night of the fourteenth and goes to Yerushalayim on the eve of Shushan Purim, then, following the above rule, it is considered uprooting where one lives, and he has to fulfill all obligations A SECOND TIME in Yerushalayim. The Bi'ur Halakha cites the opinion of the Talmud Yerushalmi, which rules that one who lives in both places is obligated in both places.

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein rules that 1. the Yerushalmi's expression of uprooting one's dwelling applies only if he literally plans on moving for at least thirty days; 2. if one is a Jerusalemite and goes to yeshiva elsewhere, he should hear in both places if he will be in both places over Purim; 3. in any case, whether one says Al HaNissim is dependent on where one is, not what day it is for the person. R. Yehuda Amital rules like R. Tzvi Pesach Frank that the Bavli disagrees with the Yerushalmi, and we follow the Bavli. 8) Listening to Megilla a. The reader and the listeners must intend to fulfill the obligation at the time of the blessings and the reading. The Mishna Berura writes that the reader needs to have intent only at the beginning of the reading. b. The Teshuvat HaRashba, the Mishna Berura and most Poskim rule that one must hear every letter of the megilla. If one misses part of the megilla, he can make up for that part by reading up to 49% of the megilla by heart or from a book. If one who is listening is tired and is dozing off, he does not fulfill the obligation. However, if the reader is dozing off, he still fulfills the obligation, if he says every word.

IV. Matanot La-eyyonim
1) One is obligated to give gifts to two poor people. The Magen Avraham, Mishna Berura, and Levush rule that the gifts should preferably be given and received on Purim. One should give to a poor person who is celebrating Purim on the same day, because the gift should preferably help the poor fulfill his requirement of having a meal on Purim. If you can't, then send the money before Purim so that it is received on Purim. If one cannot give the money before Purim, one can even put money on the side and give it later. One should give at least enough money to buy 3 ki-beitzim of food.

2) Zekher Le-Machatzit HaShekel
The giving of the Machatzit HaShekel used to be a way to count the people. What we do today is "le-zekher," a commemoration to Machtzit Ha-shekel. One should give it around Mincha time on Ta'anit Esther. The Magen Avraham rules that one should give it before megilla reading. One should say "Zekher Le-Machatzit HaShekel" when he gives the Machatzit HaShekel in order not to enter a question of hekdesch. One should give three coins of the country he is in that say 1/2 on them. The Sefardim have a custom of giving the value of the weight of a half-shekel (9.6 oz of silver).

V. Se'udat Purim
The mitzva is ONLY during the day. The gemara in Megilla says, "One should be get drunk of Purim until he can't differentiate between cursedness of Haman and the blessedness of Mordechai." The Shulchan Arukh quotes this gemara verbatim. The Rema and Mishna Berura rule that one should just drink more than he or she is used to. The Rambam says enough so that he or she will fall asleep. And in such a state, one would not differentiate between Mordechai and Haman. This obligation to drink is only at the meal. Some feel it should be done with wine.

VI. Mishloach Manot
One is obligated to give one person two foods. They have to be ready to eat as is and be larger than a kezayit. The Rambam points out that the more one gives, the better. Some rule that the mishloach manot must be fitting for the person who is sending and the person who is receiving. Some say that one should do this through a messenger. The Terumat HaDeshen rules that the purpose of mishloach manot is for the meal. Others argue and say that the purpose is to bring closeness between Jews. There are a number of halakhot which hinge on this dispute: 1) an anonymous mishloach manot; 2) mishloach manot given by a Jerusalemite to a non-Jerusalemite on Shushan Purim; 3) if one does not receive the mishloach manot in his hands, yet is informed about it. In this case, the food can't be used for the meal, yet it brings friends closer together. The Arukh Ha-shulchan rules one has fulfilled mishloach manot. The Magen Avraham disagrees.

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From: torahweb@torahweb.org Sent: March 03, 2004 To: weekly7@torahweb.org Subject: Rabbi Herschel Schachter - The

Temple and the Mikdash Me'at To subscribe, email weekly@torahweb.org http://www.torahweb.org/torah/special/2004/rsch_mikdash.html)

RABBI HERSCHEL SCHACHTER - THE TEMPLE AND THE MIKDASH ME'AT

G-d describes Himself in His Torah as "a jealous G-d"[1]. He forbids us to display any interest in any other religion[2]. We are not permitted to attend a religious service of any other faith, or even watch it on television[3]. We may not study works of or about any other religion[4], watch films about them, or study any pieces of religious art. A Jew may not enter a house of worship of any other religion even during the hours that services are not being held[5]. We may not even "utter upon our lips" the name of any other god[6]. This jealousy of G-d is not because He feels personally slighted and hurt. The Tehillim[7] described G-d as sitting in heaven and having himself a good chuckle over all idolatrous practices. But the concern is rather that these practices have a negative effect on mankind[8].

We may not donate any funds towards the furtherance of any other religion[9], nor advise or help in any other way to maintain any other religion.

It is well known that certain religions encourage their clergy to engage in dialogue with the Jewish clergy in order to further conversion[10]. It is obvious that we may not aid the clergy of any other faith in furthering their religion in such a fashion, or in any other fashion.

There mere comparison of the Jewish religion with any other religion already constitutes an affront to the Jewish G-d, as if to imply that there is something substantial shared in common between the two. Rambam[11] compares this to a real person standing next to a statue of a human being, and having someone compare the two.

Each religion is defined by its principles of faith. Judaism is not a "twin sister" to any other religion. Even Catholicism, which started as a break away from the Jewish religion, has moved over the centuries so far away from Judaism, it is improper and misleading to speak of any "Judeo-Christian tradition". Even when these two religions share the same positions on certain moral and ethical issues, the source of the binding force for each group of adherents is totally different.

The Holy Temple represented the notion of the chosenness of the Jewish people. The "western candle" of the menorah burned miraculously to indicate that G-d chose to dwell only with the Jewish people[12]. The twelve loaves that sat on the shulchan all week long were miraculously still fresh and warm at the end of the week, to show how beloved the Jewish people are to G-d[13]. The cherubim hugging each other represented the idea that G-d loves His chosen people like a husband loves his wife[14]. According to Talmudic tradition[15], at the time the Jews were not properly observing G-d's Torah laws, the cherubim would not even be facing each other. Nonetheless, at the time the enemies entered the Holy Temple to destroy it, they noticed that the cherubim were hugging each other[16]. At first glance this doesn't seem to make sense. Wasn't the destruction of the Temple due to the fact that the Jews were not keeping the mitzvos? How could it be that at that time the cherubim were looking at each other, let alone hugging each other[17]? The explanation for this is that G-d did not want the enemies to think that at the time of the destruction of the Temple the Jews had lost their status as "am hanivchar". Even at the time that G-d shows his smiling face to the other nations of the world ("af chovev amim") and delivers the Jews into their hands for punishment and torture, we still maintain our status as "am hanivchar" ("kol kedoshav beyadecha")[18].

G-d singled out the Jewish people and chose to love them as "a daughter", as "a sister", as "a mother", and as "a wife"[19]. The relationship between husband and wife after nisuin is considered much more than any other relative. The husband unites with the wife - in nisuin - to be considered "baal davar"[20]. During erusin the wife is considered an eshes ish who is not yet beviyes habaal. Nisuin consists of

hachansa lershuso for the purpose of completing the ishus. The woman then becomes an eshes ish bevius habaal. The concept of beiso zu ishto applies only after nisuin[21]. The Holy Temple is "beis Hashem", and when the Jewish people entered the temple their nisuin with G-d was completed. The luchos were the kesef kiddushin to create the erusin[22], and the building of the mishkan made it possible to have the nisuin. The Rabbis had a tradition[23] that this is what was referred to in the posuk in Shir HaShirim - about the fact that the Jewish people coronated G-d on the occasion of their marriage which started with the luchos and was completed with the building of the mishkan.

After the destruction of the first Temple many Jews assumed that since the marriage abode was just destroyed, apparently the marriage was terminated; the Jews were no longer the chosen nation and there was no longer any sense in keeping mitzvos[24]. G-d sent His prophets to notify His nation that the marriage was not - and never will be - terminated. The bechira of the Jews was of an everlasting nature.

When the prophet Yechezkel told the Jewish people about the upcoming destruction of the Temple, he added that G-d would still maintain - in Bavel - "a miniature Temple"[25]. This was to indicate that despite the churban they had not lost their chosen status. According to the Talmudic tradition, this refers to botei knesios and botei midrashot all over the world[26].

After the destruction of the second Temple a sect of non-Jews developed a similar theory, that the Jewish people had lost their status of "am hanivchar"[27]. Ever since the beginning of the Zionist movement, that very same group has consistently expressed its view that since Eretz Yisroel is the "chosen land", specially reserved for the "chosen nation", the Jews were therefore not entitled to that land[28]. They had lost their status as the "am hanivchar"!

The consistent insistence of certain sects to internationalize the old city of Jerusalem stems from this same position. Our acquiescing to such demands would imply to those groups our admitting to their position, which is in total contradiction to this fundamental principle of our faith. The chosneness of our people is everlasting, even during periods of churban and after.

When King Solomon built the Temple, he welcomed non-Jews to come to pray[29]. But only provided they came "for the sake of your name"; and only provided they subscribed to the concept of "bechiras Yisroel", which the Temple represented. A non-Jew who does not believe in the Jewish G-d, or who does not recognize our status as "am hanivchar" is not invited to come.

And just as King Solomon only welcomed to the Temple in Jerusalem those non-Jews who accepted the Jewish G-d, and who recognized the chosenness of the Jewish people, so too in our botei knesios and botei medrash we only welcome such individuals.

The prophet Yeshaya also speaks about the time the Temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices will be brought by non-Jews, because "my Temple is a house of prayer for all the nations"[30]. This, of course, is only provided that their prayers and their sacrifices are directed towards the Jewish G-d, and that they recognize bechiras Yisroel.

The rabbis had a tradition that when Titus destroyed the second Temple, he was merely grinding flour that had already been previously ground[31]. The idea contained in that tradition is that the non-Jews really don't have the ability to defile holy sites. It must be that the Jews had already sinned to such an extent that - in a spiritual sense - the Temple had already been destroyed, and there was really very little defilement left for Titus to accomplish[32].

Similarly tradition has it that if a beis hakneses or a beis hemaedrash is defiled by adherents to some other religion, it probably was due to the fact that the Jews who were using that beis hakneses for prayer, or that beis hamedrash for studying Torah, were not acting with the proper derech eretz for such a holy site[33].

The sanctity of the Temple was clearly on a much higher level, and required of us to demonstrate "morah hamikdash". The sanctity of the "miniature Temples" is on a lower level, and therefore only requires of us "kvod beis hakneses". But still it is expected of us that our deportment in botei knesios and botei medrash be of such a nature that it should reflect this principle of bechiras Yisroel.

[1] Shmos (20:5) [2] Shabbos (149a) [3] see Nefesh HoRav pg. 230 [4] Rambam Hil. Avodah Zarah (2:2) [5] See Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah (end of chap. 157) [6] Shmos (23:13) [7] (2:4). See Rambam in Iggeres Taiman [8] See commentary of Rav S.R. Hirsch (end of Parshas Emor) [9] Avodah Zarah (13a) [10] See N.Y. Times Sept. 23, 2000 (pg. A8) [11] Iggeres Taiman (chap. 1) [12] Shabbos (22b) [13] See Chagiga (26b) [14] Yuma (54a) [15] Bava Basra (99a) [16] Yuma (54b) [17] See Ritva and Maharsha [18] See Rashi to Vezos Habrachah(33:3) [19] See Rashi to Shir Hashirim (end of chap. 3) [20] See Rosh to Makos (end of chap. 1) quoting Ravad [21] Yuma (13a) [22] See Nefesh Horav (pg. 289) [23] Last Mishna in Taanis (26b) [24] Sanhedrin (105a) [25] (11:16) [26] Megilla (29a) [27] See Chagiga (5b) and Yad Haktanah [28] See Mipinei Horav (pg. 109) [29] Melochim I (8:41) [30] (56:7) [31] See Sanhedrin (96a) and parallel Midrashim [32] See Mipinei Horav (pg. 205), and Nefesh Hachayim [33] Mishan Brura (chap. 151, nos. 1 and 2)

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From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Sent: March 03, 2004 To: yhe-sichot@etzion.org.il Subject: SICHOT64 -20: Parashat Tetzaveh Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Student Summaries Of Sichot Of The Roshei Yeshiva

This shiur is dedicated in memory of Yosef Peretz, the legendary gardener of Yeshivat Har Etzion for over twenty years. Yehi zikhro barukh.

Mazal tov to Rav Mosheh and Michal Lichtenstein upon the birth of a baby girl, sister to Yehudit and Beruriah. May they and the Lichtenstein/Mintzer families be zocheh to raise her le-Torah, le-chuppa u-le-ma'asim tovim!

PARASHAT TETZAVEH

SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL, SHLIT" A

CLOTHES AND THE MAN

Adapted by Dov Karoll

And you [Moshe] shall command the children of Israel that they shall take to you pure pressed olive oil for light, to light the continual lamp. In the Tent of Meeting outside the Partition near the Testimonial-tablets shall Aharon and his sons arrange it [to burn] from evening to morning before G-d, an eternal decree for all generations, from the children of Israel. And you shall bring near to you Aharon your brother and his sons, from among the children of Israel, to make them priests to me, Aharon, [along with] Nadav, Avihu, Elazar and Itamar, the sons of Aharon. And you shall make vestments of sanctity for your brother Aharon, for glory and splendor. And you shall speak to all the wise-hearted people whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom, and they shall make the vestments of Aharon, to sanctify him to be a priest to Me. (Shemot 27:20-28:3)

In the opening verses of the parasha, the Torah repeats the word "Ve-atta," meaning "And you," three times: "And you shall command," "And you shall bring near" as well as "And you shall speak" (27:20, 28:1, 28:3). While Moshe's name is not mentioned here, the Torah is clearly emphasizing his role in the process. This point is further emphasized by two other second-person commands in this passage: the taking of the oil for the lighting of the menorah ("And they shall take to you," 27:20), and the selection of Aharon ("Bring near to you," 28:1).[1] This stands in contrast to the beginning of last week's parasha, "And let them take a portion for Me," as well as, "And they shall make a Sanctuary for Me" (25:2, 8). The Midrash (Shemot Rabba 37:4), opening an interpretation of the verse "And you shall bring near," cites a verse from Tehillim, "Were it not for Your Torah, my delight, I would have perished in my affliction" (119:92). The Midrash explains that when G-d commanded Moshe "And you shall bring near your brother Aharon," Moshe was saddened, but G-d comforted him saying, "The Torah I possessed I gave

to you; had it not been for the Torah, I would have destroyed the world." The Midrash continues: This can be compared to a wise man who wanted to take another wife after his first wife was unable to bear children for ten years. He asked her to help him in choosing a new wife, explaining that he desired her permission. This is what G-d said to Moshe: I could have appointed your brother as High Priest without informing you thereof, but I wanted you to be his superior. The comfort for Moshe in this arrangement lies in the fact that he was the one receiving the Torah, so he still remains in a position of some superiority.

Why would Moshe be so upset with the fact that he was not gaining the position of Kohen Gadol (High Priest)? Moshe recognized the dangers of splitting the worlds of Torah and Mikdash (Temple). The Mikdash is the focal point for the service of G-d, with a universal message of bringing the world as a whole closer to G-d through His ordained worship. Torah, on the other hand, is "an inheritance to the congregation of Ya'akov" (Devarim 33:4), passed down through Moshe. Moshe was concerned that if the two positions were split between different people, these two aspects of Divine service would diverge, with people drawing the conclusion that they are irreconcilable. Accordingly, G-d came to Moshe to ask his permission for taking Aharon as the Kohen Gadol.

I believe this is also significant on another level. The fashioning of the priestly vestments is another activity that will not be performed by Moshe himself. The Torah emphasizes this point, as the verse states, "And you shall speak to all the wise-hearted people whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom, and they shall make the vestments of Aharon, to sanctify him to be a priest to Me" (28:3). While in the verse immediately preceding this one, G-d tells Moshe, "And you shall make vestments of sanctity for your brother Aharon," He immediately clarifies that Moshe will not be the one doing the designing. Why is that?

When the Torah introduces the fashioning of the vestments, it immediately explains their purpose: "for glory and splendor" (28:2). The Kohen needs glorious vestments to perform the service in the Mishkan (Tabernacle). One could ask, why is this necessary? Is this not an over-emphasis of outward appearance, of superficial exterior?

It seems that it is for this reason that Moshe himself could neither wear nor design the priestly vestments. For Moshe, given his lofty spirituality, garments were of no significance. He did not need the priestly vestments to achieve the level of "glory and splendor." However, G-d recognized that other people are not on the same level as Moshe, and they would need the external expression of the "glory and splendor" in order to properly appreciate what the Divine service symbolizes. Accordingly, G-d selected Aharon to be the one to wear the priestly vestments, and He appointed people "wise of heart," providing them with "a spirit of wisdom" to design these vestments to properly express this notion.

In fact, the Gemara (Avoda Zara 34a) states that during the Seven Days of Consecration described in this week's parasha (chapter 29), Moshe was the one who performed the Divine service. The Gemara explains that when Moshe performed the service, he did not don the priestly vestments. Rather, he performed the service wearing a plain white cloak. Given Moshe's lofty level, he was able to perform the Mishkan service without the regulations that bind all Kohanim, for he was able to relate to G-d in an unparalleled direct way.

Once the task of the Divine service would be transferred to the Kohanim, these vestments would play a central role in the service itself. The Gemara states (Zevachim 17b), based on verse at the end of this week's parasha, that "When wearing their appointed garments, they are invested with their priesthood; when not wearing their garments, they are not invested with their priesthood."

Furthermore, the Gemara (Zevachim 88b) derives from the proximity between the sections on sacrifices and the priestly vestments that the vestments themselves have a role in atonement comparable to the sacrifices.

The Gemara explains, citing verses to back up each association, that the cloak atones for bloodshed, the breeches atones for lewdness, the turban atones for arrogance, the sash atones for impure thoughts of the heart, the breastplate atones for neglect of civil laws, the eiphod atones for idolatry, the robe atones for slander, and the headplate atones for chutzpa. Accordingly, we can see that once the service moves away from Moshe to the Kohanim, the vestments themselves play a crucial role in the Temple service.

This was the mistake of Nadav and Avihu (see Vayikra 10:1-2). They saw Moshe performing the Temple service for seven days without the priestly vestments, and they noted that he was able to transcend the very protocol that they were taught during those days. They thought they could do the same, that they too did not need the vestments, the requisite structures and limitations built in to the Temple service, to come close to G-d. For this chutzpa, they were punished. They were not on the same level as Moshe, and as such, they needed to follow the proper procedures and guidelines in order to approach G-d. There is significance to clothing in Judaism, as an external expression of deep worship of G-d, as an expression of the glory that G-d bestows upon man. "Rabbi Yochanan used to call his clothing 'my honorers'" (Bava Kamma 91b). Similarly, in our parasha, the purpose of the vestments is "to sanctify him to be a priest to Me" (28:3), to enable the Kohanim to attain the status of Kehunna (priesthood).

Returning to the message of the midrash: the integration between Divine service and Torah, which concerned Moshe so much, is essential. We need to develop both our internal world of devotion to G-d and our "clothing," the external expression of that internal devotion. We also need to beware the reverse problem. One ought not be merely a hanger for his clothes. We need to be very careful that our clothing is not a replacement for internal development, but rather that it gives expression to the appropriate honor and internal attitude.

To apply the model of integrating between Mikdash and Torah, we can turn to the prayer we say every day at the conclusion of the Shemoneh Esrei, "Yehi ratzon mi- lefanekha... she-yibbaneh Beit ha-mikdash b'imheira ve- yameinu, ve-tein chelkeinu be-Toratekha," "May it be Your will... that the Temple be rebuilt speedily in our days, and our share shall be granted in the Torah" (based on Mishna Avot 5:20).

[This sicha was delivered on leil Shabbat, Parashat Tetzaveh, 5763 (2003).]

FOOTNOTE: [1] The Ba'al Ha-turim on our parasha (Shemot 27:20) points out that this is the only parasha from the beginning of Sefer Shemot until the end of the book of Bemidbar in which Moshe's name does not appear. He explains that this is a result of Moshe's statement in next week's parasha, "Blot me out of Your book" (32:32). The elimination of Moshe's name from this parasha is a partial fulfillment of that request, despite the fact that its conditions were not met. I would like to point that, notwithstanding the omission of Moshe's name itself, it seems that there is great emphasis on Moshe at the beginning of the parasha. The repetition of "And you" and the emphasis on "to you" makes it clear that he is very central.

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From: DR. MEL BREITE [melbreite@yahoo.com] Sent: Mar 01, 2004

I would recommend having a Loshon Kodosh copy of the Haftorah as you read this. And a special hakoros hatov to Rabbi Yisroel Reisman for his help.

In the haftorah for parshas Zachor we learn that Shmuel has commanded King Shaul to annihilate the Nation of Amalek. The king amasses an army of 210,000 and is poised to carry out the action. He tells the Kenites, who are descendants of Yisro, to leave, lest they too get slaughtered. Presumably hopelessly outclassed, one would imagine that the Amalekites would also try to escape. So how were the warriors of

Israel to tell the difference between them? For this we look at the words of the haftarah.

In posuk 6 Shaul tells the Kenites to withdraw and descend MITOCH AMALAIKI, from the center of Amalaiki. Look at the word A M L K I and withdraw the center letters, which are M L K You have three letters whose gematria is 170, which is the same as the gematria of K I N I. Pretty simple gematria: Withdraw the K I N I=M L K=170 from the center of the A M L K I (with a yud). The next posuk tells us that the Kenites did withdraw MITOCH AMALEK (no yud!) Take out the center letters of A M L K and lo and behold you have a M L. No gematria, but a real word. The Kenites were descended from Yisro and were circumcised. The Amelekites were descendants of Eisav, and were not! And now we have confirmed how the soldiers of Shaul could tell the difference and could "expose" any Amaleki who was ready to escape. Refer to the Rashi in Devorim 25:18 to see the disdain that Amalek had for Bris Milah, and we can see a wonderful example of midoh k'neged midoh.

I would have to assume that it was left to the Kinite males to let the Israelites know who their wives, daughters and even mothers-in law were.

From RABBI BEN KELSEN, ESQ. From: benish@att.net Sent: March 03, 2004 To: parshas_hashavuah@yahoo.com Subject: [parshas_hashavuah] It's Parshas Zachor, once again :)

Every year, on Parshas Zachor, Rebbe u'Mori

HAGAON HARAV SHLOMO ELIMELECH DRILLMAN, ZT"L

would carry on the tradition of his Rebbe, HaGaon HaRav Elchanon Wasserman, zt"l hy"d and tell over the story of "The Dybbuk". Every year for all the years that I knew him Rebbe u'Mori would tell me the story and I, in turn, would try to pass it on to others. Though I miss Rebbe u'Mori every day since his petirah, Shabbos Parshas Zachor is a time when the pain of his passing is especially strong. As this week is Parshas Zachor I would like to carry on the tradition of my Rebbe and his Rebbe before him and relate the story to my friends.

On Friday night of Shabbos Parshas Zachor HaRav Drillman, zt"l was at the home of his Rebbe, Reb Elchanon, as he normally was, and seated around the table with several of his fellow talmidim of Yeshiva Ohel Torah in Baranovich. HaRav Drillman, zt"l related the following:

"One of my friends, Rav Moshe Schwab, zt"l, was nudging the Rebbe to speak about the dybbuk but the Rebbe refused saying that there were young children at the table and, as such, it was inappropriate. Rather he would speak about the parsha. At this time I began to laugh a little, not out loud, chas v'shalom, but Rav Moshe Schwab later told me that you could see a smirk on my face.

"Shlomele" Rebbe shouted slapping me on the shoulder, "what are you laughing at? We are talking about Klal Yisroel being attacked in the midbar. You find this amusing?"

The Rebbe was a very, very large man who always had a stern look on his face. In all my time with him I cannot remember ever having seen him smile. Therefore, to have his eyes burning at me, though in truth there may have been a glint of a smile in them, and have his huge hand on my shoulder was terrifying to me.

"No, Rebbe. Chas v'shalom I was laughing." I stammered "I just find this talk of dybbukim funny. After all there is no such thing."

"Really?" Reb Elchanon asked "If your rebbe tells you something is true, you don't believe him?"

"But the Rebbe hasn't said that it was true" I protested "only that he didn't want to tell over the story in front of us younger talmidim."

"Good for you, Shlomele! A talmid has the inalienable right to demand answers from his rebbe and the rebbe is required to answer the questions of his talmidim to the best of his ability. Therefore I tell you now that such things do exist and that I have seen them with my own eyes. But now that we have gotten into it, I shall have to tell you the story."

This is the story that Reb Elchanon told that night:

In Adar of 5669 (February 1909), Erev Shabbos Parshas Zachor, a man from the village of Fascoli brought his daughter to Radin to see the holy Chofetz Chaim. The girl was suffering from a mysterious illness which none of the specialists consulted could diagnose. The Chofetz Chaim immediately diagnosed the girl as being possessed by a dybbuk. Reb Elchanon explained that the Chofetz Chaim had seen simply by looking into the girl's eyes that she was possessed by the soul of an evil person. (It was for this reason, Reb Elchanon said, that the Chofetz Chaim had not

been willing to look the dybbuk in the eye, because Chazal teach (Megillah 28a) that one should not look at the face of a wicked person.)

The Chofetz Chaim decided to send a minyan of talmidim from the Kollel Kodshim of the yeshiva to deal with the situation with Reb Elchanon as his personal representative. Among those chosen were Rav Naftoli Trop, Rav Yosef Kahaneman, and Rav Gershon Salanter.

Reb Elchanon and the others went to the inn that was owned by a man named Rav Yitzchok Hirsch. After meeting with the girl's family and assessing the situation Reb Elchanon and the talmidim went to meet with the girl herself. The girl sat in a room with her eyes closed and a voice came out of her open mouth asking to be left alone. Reb Elchanon said that voice was pronouncing its words perfectly without any movement of the lips.

However, the dybbuk then began to embarrass several of the talmidim and so Reb Elchanon stated that because it was Erev Shabbos they had to leave and prepare for Shabbos.

That night the girl and her father ate at the home of Reb Fallik Melamed. Later that evening a number of rabbonim from the Yeshiva of Radin came to see the girl. Among those present were Rav Yeruchum Levovitz, the Radiner Mashgiach; Rav Elya Dushnitzer, the Lomzer Rosh Yeshiva; and Rav Hirsch Levinson, a son-in-law of the Chofetz Chaim.

On the morning of Shabbos Parshas Zachor, 6 Adar 5669 (February 27, 1909), following Shacharis, Reb Elchanon went to once again see the girl with his talmidim.

Reb Elchanon immediately stated the purpose of his visit - "I come to you upon the authority and the command of the Chofetz Chaim. Have you heard of HaRav Yisroel Meir HaKohein Kagan, author of the Chofetz Chaim and the Mishneh Berurah?"

The voice acknowledged the authority of the great Tzaddik: "all in Shomayim know of the tziddkus of the Kohein Gadol of this generation. He has the authority of a Tanna."

The oldest of the talmidim stepped forward and said "we are here upon the authority of our rebbe, HaRav Elchanon Bunim Wasserman. Do you recognize his authority?"

The dybbuk responded: "In the Beis Din shel Ma'aleh it is said that it is only because of his merit that this world still stands."

With that Reb Elchanon demanded that the dybbuk leave the girl. However, the dybbuk asked if before it left it could make a request of Reb Elchanon. Reb Elchanon said he would at least listen to the request.

"Please recite the Kaddish Yasom for me until I am able to repair the sin that I have committed that caused me to receive this sentence from the Beis Din shel Ma'aleh." Reb Elchanon agreed.

On Motzaei Shabbos, as those assembled in the Beis Medresh were davening Ma'ariv, as they reached "Shema Yisroel" two students ran into the Beis Medresh and informed Reb Elchanon that the dybbuk was gone. However, the dybbuk soon returned. The Chofetz Chaim immediately sent Reb Elchanon to the home of the girl and her family. Reb Elchanon once again confronted the dybbuk and ordered it to leave the girl adding that to fail to heed the command of the Chofetz Chaim would bring down the wrath of Shomayim. The dybbuk left the girl and never returned.

Years later Rav Mendk Zaks, a son-in-law of the Chofetz Chaim and a Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchanon, tried to get the Chofetz Chaim to tell the story, but without success. Rav Zaks then asked Reb Elchanon why the Chofetz Chaim would not tell the story.

Reb Elchanon explained that the Chofetz Chaim did not want to tell people that it was due to fear of him that the dybbuk left the girl. In addition the Chofetz Chaim is afraid that others will come forward and claim to be possessed as well. In fact, one person visited the Chofetz Chaim crowing like a rooster. The Chofetz Chaim immediately sent the young man to a psychologist in Vilna. Furthermore, said Reb Elchanon, the Chofetz Chaim can see into the hidden places in this world as well as the secrets of Gan Eden. In all the time I have had the honor of calling the Chofetz Chaim "Rebbe" I have heard and witnessed many strange and frightening things. If I could tell you about even just a few of them you would understand his gadlus.

Reb Elchanon said Kaddish until 1932 when, on Shabbos Parshas Zachor, he suddenly stopped.

HaRav Drillman stated that he asked Reb Elchanon why we do not see more dybbukim and other manifestations of the mystical parts of the Creation. Reb Elchanon explained that every generation has its own characteristics. For example, the generation of Yetzias Mitzrayim had the ability to see all of the plagues, Krias Yam Suf, and Ma'amad Har Sinai, and yet was still able to sin at Merivah and with

the Eigel HaZahav. That generation, Reb Elchonon pointed out, did not lose that most important part of humanity, bechiras chofshi, freedom of will and choice. It was this that was given to Man through the eating of the fruit of the Eitz HaDa'as Tov v'Rah. However, in our day and age, at a time when science is used to prove everything, when nothing is believed without empirical evidence, could we retain our bechiras chofshi if we witnessed open miracles daily?

"I wanted to ask him," HaRav Drillman would always say "if he was able to retain his bechiras chofshi in light of what he saw but I was too afraid. I have always regretted that."

Still, HaRav Drillman would tell me, the lesson of this episode is clear: HKB"H has not forsaken the world, he is only hidden slightly. We must look for him everywhere with an open heart and open eyes and there we will find him, standing behind the curtains with open arms. It is perhaps for this reason that this incident took place during the time of Purim, the time when we commemorate the revealing of HKB"H's presence during a time of darkness and despair.

Some have asked me over the last few months who was HaRav Drillman, zt"l. Born in a small town in Germany, HaRav Shlomo Elimelech Drillman's intelligence was discovered by at the age of 12 by the Gaon HaRav Elchanan Wasserman, zt"l hy"d, who brought him to Yeshivas Ohel Torah in Baranovich. There HaRav Drillman became close with Reb Elchonon and the mashgiach at the Yeshiva, Rav Ya'akov Yosef Lupchenski. Shortly before the outbreak of the second world war, at the advice of Reb Elchonon, HaRav Drillman began preparations to flee Europe. However until he was able to obtain a visa he went to learn with Reb Baruch Ber Leibovitz in the Yeshiva of Kaminetz. Rav Drillman remained in Kaminetz until the beginning of the war, when he fled to Siberia with his family and remained until the war's end.

In 1946, Rav Drillman, came to the United States with his mother and siblings, where they were reunited with his father, a rebbe in Yeshivas Torah Vda'as, who had come to the US before the war. Upon his arrival, Rav Drillman presented himself to Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, ZT"L, at Yeshiva University with a letter of commendation from Rav Wasserman. He was immediately accepted into the Yeshiva. Upon receiving Smicha from the yeshiva, he was appointed as a rebbe at B.T.A., the Brooklyn division of YU's high school. When B.T.A. closed its doors, he was appointed as a rebbe at RIETS, where he remained until his first stroke in 1997. Furthermore, Flatbush would not be what it is today had it not been for HaRav Drillman as he served as the rav of the Glenwood Jewish Center, one of the first observant synagogues in Flatbush, for thirty seven years.

HaRav Drillman was also the director of the fourth year Halacha l'Maaseh program, meeting every single one of his semicha students, thereby touching the hearts of an amazing amount of people. HaRav Drillman was known for his tremendous intellect, spanning all walks of secular knowledge in addition to his incredibly vast encyclopedic breadth of Torah knowledge as well. In addition to his intellect, Rabbi Drillman's was famous for the warmth he exuded towards those people with whom he came in contact.

HaRav Drillman, zt"l passed away in Adar of 5760.

Though I could write many more pages about Rebbe u'Mori, zt"l even an infinite number of pages would not suffice and the hour is late and as he would often say on Erev Shabbos when I would call to wish him a good Shabbos: "What are you still doing in the office!?! Krias Yam Suf rarely happens on the highways! Get moving!"

May we all continue to learn the lessons of our Rabbeim and grow in Torah and Yiras Shomayim, ad bias hagoel, bimheirah b'yomeinu. Yehi Zichro Baruch.

To visit the group on the web, go to: [http:// groups. yahoo.com/group/parshas_hashavuah/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parshas_hashavuah/)

From: Midei [rachrysl@netvision.net.il] Sent: March 04, 2004 To: Midei Parsha MIDEI SHABBOS BY RABBI ELIEZER CHRYSLER - Parshas Tetzaveh/Purim Supplement

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...

Parshah Pearls Asking for Trouble

From the time that Moshe was born, in Parshas Sh'mos, up until the time he died, Moshe's name is mentioned in every Parshah in the Torah except this one. Why, asks the Rosh, does the Torah omit his name from Parshas Tetzaveh (which usually coincides with Moshe's birthday on the seventh of Adar)?

And he replies that this was the result of Moshe's own request. Following G-d's initial response to the sin of the Golden Calf, he asked to be erased from 'the book

which He had written' (which according to some, refers to the Seifer Torah). Now the Gemara in B'rachos (56a) teaches us that the curse of a Chacham always materializes. Consequently, G-d decided to fulfill Moshe's request to the latter, by omitting his name from the Parshah that He had just written - the one preceding Ki Sisa, where Moshe made his request - the Parshah of Tetzaveh.

This issue is sponsored le'iluy Nishmas R'Shlomoh b'Reb Ya'akov Prentzlau z.l. whose third Yohrzeit will be on the 13th Adar, by his children Dr. Eli and Sheryl Prentzlau n.y. and family.

POORIM SUPPLEMENT Adapted from the Ta'amei ha'Minragim Esther's Three-Day Fast

The commentaries suggest a number of reasons that Esther ordered Mordechai to initiate a fast that lasted specifically for three days.

The Kad ha'Kemach bases it on the theory that G-d tends not to let Tzadikim suffer for more than three days, as we find with Rachav, who instructed the two spies (Kaleiv and Pinchas) to hide in the mountains for three days before returning to the Camp of Yisrael, and with Yonah, who lived inside the stomach of the whale for three days. And so the Navi Hoshei'a writes (6:2) in connection with the suffering prior to the coming of Mashi'ach.

The B'nei Yisaschar ascribes it to the fact that three days incorporate seventy-two hours, to evoke G-d's chesed (whose numerical value is seventy-two (as is the four-letter Name of Hashem 'Havayah', when the letters are spelt out in full)).

The Ibn Ezra, however, maintains that they did not actually fast three full days, only the night of the decree plus the two following days (including the intervening night). They ate already on the third day. When Esther said "for three days", he explains, she meant until the third day.

Fair enough say I. If, when at Har Sinai, Hashem told Moshe that He would give the Torah on the third day, it turned out to be three days (according to Rabbi Yossi), then it stands to reason that when Esther said that they should fast for three days, it could equally well turn out to be up to the third day.

Perhaps according to the Ibn Ezra, the 'three-day' fast was merely intended to allow Esther time to instigate and carry out her plan. Clearly, she considered it vital for the people to be fasting whilst she was hosting the king and Haman. The night following the second party, she reckoned, the need to fast would already be obsolete.

Incidentally, the Ibn Ezra's explanation clashes with the Medrash that dates the three-day fast as having taken place on the thirteenth, the fourteenth and the fifteenth of Nisan.

* The question with which we began reminds me of another question that one fellow once asked his friend. 'Why', he asked him, 'does a stalk stand on one leg?'

To which his friend replied 'Because if it lifted it up it would fall over!'

Likewise, bearing in mind the Medrash that one cannot live for three days without eating and drinking, and that the fast therefore ended two hours before nightfall, Esther decreed a three-day fast because had she decreed a four-day one, everyone would have died, saving Haman a lot of trouble.

Incidentally, the early ending of the fast is hinted in Esther's words "gam ani ve'Na'arosai otzum kein" (Also I and my girls will fast like that), since the numerical value of the word "kein" is seventy (two hours less than the seventy-two hours that comprise three days).

Mega-Pearls from the Megilah Esther the Prophetess

"...and fast for me (olai); do not eat and do not drink for three days" (Esther 4:15).

The word "alai" (for me) seems out of place, asks the B'nei Yisaschar. Surely it was for themselves that they were fasting, and not for Esther?

He therefore cites the Chida, who points to the same word in Parshas Toldos (27:13), where Rivkah said to Ya'akov "Olai ki'leloischo b'ni" (your curse is on me, my son), and which Unk'lus translates as "It was said to me in a prophecy that you will not be cursed (for your actions), my son".

Perhaps here as well, says the Chida, Esther meant to say the same thing. The people would want to know what right she had to instruct Yisrael to fast on Yom-tov, and to nullify the Mitzvos of eating Matzah and Maror, and of drinking the four cups of wine. So she preempted their question by informing them that, like Rivkah, this was an order from Heaven, and that she was speaking in her capacity as a prophetess.

* Incidentally, the Medrash records that Mordechai did in fact, query Esther's right to institute a fast-day on Seider night. She replied 'Zakein she'be'Yisrael; what is Pesach all about?' (Surely it is to remind us of our survival, whilst we are about to be annihilated!) - There and then, Mordechai conceded that she was right. And the Pasuk continues "And Mordechai passed/ transgressed, in accordance with all that Esther had commanded him".

It seems to me however, that one could explain "olai" quite simply. Esther was in fact, putting her life on the line. As she explained to Mordechai, it was strictly forbidden to appear before the king uninvited, and by all natural means, she stood to be killed for merely entering the king's palace. So what was the point ...? That is why she asked that the people should fast for and pray for Divine mercy - so that she should survive, and be granted the opportunity to save the people.

*
Fasting and Not Eating The Chida also asks why Esther added 'Do not eat and do not drink' after having said 'Fast for me'. How, after all, does one fast if not by not eating and drinking?

And he answers that 'Fast for me' might well have been construed to mean not to eat anything that is generally permitted, and did not include food and drink of a Mitzvah which they were obligated to fulfill, such as Matzah and the four cups that one is obligated to eat at the Seider. So Esther needed to stress 'Do not eat and do not drink', to incorporate them in the fast. And a Navi has the authority to issue a decree negating a Mitzvah, as long as it is on a temporary basis, Like Eliyahu, who ordered the constructions of a Bamah on Har ha'Karmel, even though the Beis Hamikdash was standing (and Bamos are prohibited during the era of the Beis-Hamikdash).

That is why the Pasuk continues "And Mordechai transgressed ... ". Mordechai knew that Esther was an authentic prophetess, so he accepted her ruling to break Pesach just that once.

*
Moch and Rosh The Medrash relates how Esther asked G-d why Yisrael were slated for destruction. To which He replied because they had become 'Moch' and 'Rosh'. When Esther heard that, says the Medrash, she proclaimed "Keili Keili lomoh azavtoni" (My G-d, my G-d, why did you forsake me [Tehilim 22:2])? Needless to say, this Medrash is a Medrash P'li'ah (a Medrash that begs interpretation).

Rebbi Shimshon from Astropol explains it in the following way. Every angel, he says, contains letters from G-d's name, from which it draws its existence. Once those letters are removed, it remains lifeless. Yisrael too, are like an angel in this regard. They contain the letters of Hashem's Name 'Aleph', 'Lamed', 'Yud' (which, out of context, we pronounce 'Keili'). The guardian angel of Yisrael is Micha'el, who contains the same three letters. What is left if one removes these three letters from the one is 'rosh' and from the other is 'moch' (both of which mean 'poor').

When G-d answered Esther that Yisrael had become 'moch' and 'rosh', He meant that due to Yisrael's sins, the three Divine letters had been removed from both their name and the name of their guardian angel, leaving them 'poor and forlorn' (so to speak).

That was when Esther, realizing the seriousness of the situation, began to Daven, beginning, most appropriately, with the words "Keili Keili, lomoh azavtoni".

*
Mordechai Will not Bow Down "And Mordechai would not bow down and would not prostrate himself (lo yichra ve'lo yishtachaveh)" 2:2.

The Seifer Rishon le'Tziy'on explains why the Pasuk is written in the future tense, even though it is really writing in the past.

Not only did Mordechai refuse to bow down to Haman, he says, but whenever Haman walked past, even if at the time, he was bending down or leaning, in a way that exempted him from having to bow down, he would defiantly stand up straight, so that Haman should be aware of his refusal to bow down to him.

Little wonder that Haman was furious!

*
Not Poor, (Nor Even Poorer), But Poorim "That is why they called these days Purim, because of the Pur (the lot)" 9:26.

Surely, if they called the name after the lot, they ought to have called it 'Pur', not 'Purim'? And besides, why call it after the lot at all, as if that was the most significant aspect of the miracle?

The D'vash le'Fi explains that maybe it is due to the fact that Purim incorporates all the Yamim-Tovim (see following article), whose first letters spell the word Purim - 'Pey' stands for Pesach, and 'Vav' (the connecting letter) for Succos (since the Torah in Parshas Emor [23:43]), refers to Succos as an extension of Pesach, when it writes "because I settled the B'nei Yisrael in Succos when I took them from the land of Egypt".

The 'Reish' stands for Rosh Hashanah, the 'Yud' for Yom Kipur and the 'Mem' for Matan Torah.

It would be more than two hundred years until the Chanukah story would occur. So here we have all the Yamim-Tovim that were relevant at the time.

* Practically speaking, what the D'vash le'Fi means (when he says that Purim incorporates all the Yamim-Tovim), he himself, citing the Medrash Eliyahu, explains like this: On Pesach they went from slavery to freedom - on Purim they

went from death to life; On Shavu'os, they received the Torah - on Purim, they reaffirmed their allegiance to Torah (as Chazal interpret the Pasuk in Esther [9:27] "Kiymu ve'kiblu ha'Yehudim"); On Rosh Hashanah, the Books of the living and of the dead are open before Hashem - on Purim, He weighed up whether to forgive them for having eaten at the party of Achashveirosh and save them from Haman's decree, or not; Yom Kipur is a day of forgiveness - on Purim Hashem tipped the scales and forgave them; On Succos, Yisrael were given the Clouds of Glory - on Purim, "many people of the land converted, coming under the protective wing of the Shechinah".

Now we have another good reason as to why Chazal instituted eating and drinking on Purim, just like any other Yom-Tov, only more, because it incorporates all five Yamim-Tovim.

ALL ABOUT POORIM Tasting the Shabbos Food!

When Purim falls on Sunday, we do not move Ta'anis Esther to Friday, but to Thursday.

The Levush explains that this is so as not to interfere with the Shabbos preparations.

Because one might be too weak to prepare for Shabbos?

Not at all. It is because the Shabbos preparations involve tasting the food, something that one is forbidden to do on a fast-day.

This ruling certainly teaches us the importance of tasting the Shabbos food on Erev Shabbos, as is hinted in the Musaf of Shabbos 'those who taste it (in advance) will merit life'.

*

Men Only It is customary to give one's commemorative half-Shekel on Minchah of Ta'anis Esther, just before the advent of Purim di'Perazim (the open cities). The reason that we give only half-a-Shekel, says the Alshich, is because it was only half of K'lal Yisrael who sinned by the Golden Calf, for which the half-Shekel comes to atone. The men sinned! The women did not. Others explain that it is to bring home to every Jew that he is incomplete. He is fact, only half a person. And who is the other half? The answer is not just somebody else, but anybody else. A Jew has to realize at all times, that he is incomplete, and that he needs the other person to help him attain completion. And who is the other half? Anybody! Anybody is eligible to provide the other half, seeing as anybody must give half a Shekel, just like he did. What an incentive to train oneself to love every Jew like himself.

*

No Hallel on Poorim The Gemara in Erchin (10b) gives three reasons not to recite Hallel on Poorim - Because reading the Megilah is akin to Hallel.

Because once Yisrael entered Eretz Yisrael, they were no longer permitted to recite Hallel over a miracle that occurred in Chutz la'Aretz.

Because Hallel begins with the words "Hallelu es Hashem, Hallelu avdei Hashem", implying that the servants of Hashem should praise Hashem, but not the servants of Par'oh. And unfortunately, we are servants of Par'oh once again.

*

And No Haftarah Either Chazal did not institute the Haftarah on Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah and Purim in order to hold back the people, who are waiting to go to work (not working on Purim is no more than a Minhag).

On Tish'ah be'Av, on the other hand, they instituted the Haftarah "Osof Asifeim", because, besides the Minhag not to go to work, everyone remains in Shul until around midday anyway, so nobody is in a hurry to get to work.

They instituted the reading of the Haftarah at Minchah of Yom Kipur, because since everyone is in Shul anyway until nightfall, it disturbs no-one if one does. And they did likewise on a Ta'anis, because it is a Mitzvah read words of Musar and encouragement to induce the people to do Teshuvah. So we read "Dirshu Hashem ... ", which serves that purpose. (No'am Megadim).

*

Adeloyoda The Mitzvah to drink wine on Purim (in spite of the lesson that we learn from No'ach and Lot) stems from the fact that all the major miracles that took place in the Purim story, came about through wine. Vashti lost the throne (and her head) through a wine-party, Esther replaced her through a wine-party, and the downfall of Haman occurred through a wine-party, too. Consequently, says the Avudraham, there is no better way of commemorating the miracle of Purim than through a wine-feast.

And the Mitzvah to drink 'ad de'lo yada' is based on a Piyyut that they used to recite (apparently during the Se'udah), whose refrain alternated, 'Arur Haman' after one verse, and 'Baruch Mordechai' after the next. It needed some concentration to keep track of which one to say, no easy matter for someone who was drunk. Hence, Chazal said that one is obligated to drink so much that one has difficulty in keeping track of which verse is being said, and what one is supposed to answer 'Arur Haman' or Baruch Mordechai'.

Le'chayim!

*

Light ... And Joy If there is a B'ris Milah on Purim, it is performed after Leining, before the reading of the Megillah.

The Darkei Moshe gives two reasons for this:

Firstly, so that when we read "The Jews had (and have) light, and happiness, and joy, and glory", the baby, who adopts the title 'Jew' after his B'ris Milah, will be included.

Secondly, because, based on the Chazal, according to whom 'Orah' means Torah, 'Simchah' - Yom-Tov (festivities), 'Sosson' - B'ris Milah, and 'Yekar' - Tefilin, B'ris Milah belongs exactly where they placed it, after Leining and before the festivities. For sponsorships and adverts call 651 9502

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EZRAS TORAH LUACH

SHABBOS PARSHAS TETZAVEH

PARSHAS ZACHOR

MARCH 6, 13 ADAR

We recite the regular Shabbos service (many say the Yozros for Parshas Zachor). We take out two Sifrei Torah; seven Aliyahs in first from the weekly Sidrah ó Tetzaveh; Half-Kaddish; The Maftir reads from Parshas Ki Seitzei (Deut. 25:17-19) from çZachorç until the end of the Parsha. It is a Mitzvah of the Torah to read Parshas Zachor. The Haftorah for Parshas Zachor is from Samuel I 15:2-34; we do not say Kel Malei" or "Av Harachmimi.

MINCHA Three Aliyahs in Parshas Ki Sisah. We do not say Tzidkascha Tzedek.

(Today, 13 Adar, is the Yahrzeit of HaGaon HaRav Moshe ben HaGaon HaRav Dovid Feinstein, ztl, who served as Honorary President of Ezras Torah for many years.)

PURIM

DEPARTURE OF SHABBOS

SATURDAY NIGHT, Mar. 6 14 ADAR

MAARIV

Shemonah Esrei with Ata Chonantanu and Al Hanisim. If one forgot to say Al Hanisim, and first recalled his omission only after he had already completed the Bracha that follows it, he does not begin the Shemonah Esrei again (the same holds true for Al Hanisim in the Blessing after Meals [Birkas Hamazon]). After Shemonah Esrei, Kaddish Tiskabel. The person who will read the Megillah for the entire congregation folds it like a letter, being careful that he does not damage any of the letters in the Megillah. The reader recites the following three Brachos on behalf of the entire congregation: Mikra Megilahî iSheasah Nisimî, and Shehecheyanu.

[Rav Henkin noted that the Reading of the Megillah, both at night as well as in the morning, is an obligation incumbent upon every man and woman. Therefore, the reader must have a powerful voice that can be heard by everyone. He must read very precisely, without swallowing any words or even letters. For if anyone misses hearing even one word, he does not fulfill his obligation and must repeat the entire Megillah from that point on. Because of the noise that is made after the mention of Haman, many people do not hear the words, and thus fail to perform a Biblical commandment. Those who initiated this custom of making noise at the mention of Haman's name, had the pure intentions of performing the Mitzvah in a superior fashion. But, today the interest is only in wanton levity and unruly conduct that is always prohibited. The Sefardim have a custom of making noise only at the mention of Haman during the singing of Shoshanas Yaakov, after the Reading of the Megillah is already over. This is a fitting custom that should be universally adopted. However, during the reading of the Megillah, we should tolerate no noise-making.]

After the reading and rewinding of the Megillah, the Reader makes the Bracha iHarav Es Reevanuî. We then say iAsher Hanieî and iShoshanas Yakovî followed by iVihi Noamî and iVeatah Kadoshî; Kaddish Shalem

without Tiskabel; Vayiten Lecha; the usual Havdalah for the Departure of Shabbos; Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish.

A mourner during Shiva who does not have a Minyan in his own home should go to Shul for the Megillah Reading.

When we arrive home we make Havdalah, after which we have somewhat of a festive meal, eaten on a nicely set table with candles lit.

SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 7

SHACHRIS

Al Hanisim in Shemonah Esrei; in the Chazzan's Repetition, many say special Piyutim known as the Krovetz L'Purim; no Tachanun; Half-Kaddish; we take out a Sefer Torah from the Aron HaKodesh; three Aliyahs in Parshas Beshalach (çVeyavo Amalekç till the end of the Parsha) Exodus 17:8-16; Half-Kaddish; Yehalelu; we return the Sefer Torah to the Aron HaKodesh; we read the Megillah; before beginning the Megillah, the Reader makes the three Brachos: Al Mikra Megilahî, iSheasah Nisim and çShehecheyanuç (it should be announced that as the Bracha çShehecheyanuç is made we should intend that it also apply to Mishloach Manos, Matonos LaEvyonim and the Seudas Purim [all of these Mitzvohs must be performed during the daytime]). One may not remove his Tefillin until after the Megillah is read, rewound, and the remainder of Shachris completed. After the Megillah is read, the Reader makes the Bracha çHarav Es Reevanuç. We say iShoshanas Yakovî (no iAsher Hanieî); iAshreiî; iUva Letzionî (no Lamnazeach); Kaddish Tiskabel; Aleinu; Psalm of the Day; Mourner's Kaddish. (If one did not yet give his iMachtzis Hashekelf, he should do so now.)

One should be very generous in his distribution of his "Gifts to the Poor." One should give to a minimum of two poor people presents of money or of food and drink. In fulfilling his obligation of "Sending Portions to his Friend," one should do this Mitzvah with food that may be eaten without further preparation, and with portions that reflect well on both the giver and the recipient.

One should not send "Mishloach Manos" to a mourner during his year of mourning. If the mourner is a poor man, one may send him money. A mourner is obligated to send "Mishloach Manos" to a friend. (If one lives in a town where the only other Jew is a mourner, he may send him foods that are not of a joyful nature, e.g., plain vegetables).

Fasting and eulogizing are prohibited on Purim and Shushan Purim.

iIt is better for a person to emphasize giving "Gifts to the Poor" in a generous and magnanimous fashion, rather than to emphasize the "Sending of Portions" or his own lavish Seudas Purim for there is no greater or more praiseworthy form of celebration than that of celebrating in a manner that gladdens the hearts of the needy, the widowed, the orphaned, and the friendless stranger.

One who gladdens the heart of the unfortunate is compared to the Divine Presence, as it is said (Isaiah: 57:15), èto revive the spirit of the downtrodden, and to restore the heart of the broken.î" (Rambam in Laws of the Megillah).

The Seudas Purim must be begun before sunset. We say Al Hanisim in Birkas Hamazon even if the meal is completed after dark.

We begin to inquire about and expound upon the laws of Pesach thirty days before, beginning on Purim itself.

MINCHA Al Hanisim in Shemonah Esrei.

SHUSHAN PURIM MARCH 8, 15 ADAR No Tachanun and no Lamenzafach; we should rejoice somewhat on this day, too.

From: Heritage House [innernetmag@hotmail.com] Sent: March 03, 2004 To: innernet@innernet.org.il

INNERNET MAGAZINE <http://innernet.org.il> March 2004

THE THRONE ROOM

BY YOSEF DEUTSCH

Historical fiction of Achashverosh preparing to display vessels of the Holy Temple. "THE THRONE ROOM"

by Yosef Deutsch

* * *

Four men approached the Great Palace of Shushan in the early morning light. A glowering guard questioned them briefly and then let them pass. Although they had seen the palace many times before, they stopped for a moment to marvel at the massive, flower-shaped structure. (1) Then they walked past the main entrance, with its immense brass-studded, elaborately carved portals, and came to a modest service door around the side of the building. A caretaker showed them in.

"We've come to work on the throne," said one of the men, an older fellow with a tangled gray beard. "My men will need buckets of soapy water, clean rags and plenty of fragrant oils."

"I know," said the caretaker. "They are waiting for you in the throne room. You know the way, so go straight through. I must be running along. There is no end of work to do." Without another word, he hurried off.

The gray-bearded man beckoned to his men and set off at a brisk pace. They walked through endless rooms and corridors adorned with colorful paintings and tapestries. Everywhere, servants were removing golden vessels and precious jewels from royal treasure chests and arranging them for public display.

Finally, they reached a small, unobtrusive door. "Here we are," the gray-bearded man said. "The throne room."

"This simple door?" asked one of the men, an apple-cheeked youngster.

"That's right, young fellow," replied another of the men, an extremely thin fellow with a serious look on his face. "The main door is for guests. This one is for Jews like us who come to polish the throne."

"One day, I'll come in through the front door like everyone else," grumbled the fourth man, a rotund redhead. "Just because I'm a Jew doesn't mean I can't get some respect." (2)

"Enough," said the gray-bearded foreman. "Let's get to work."

He opened the door and led them into a dim hallway. One door stood slightly ajar, sunlight streaming through the opening. The youngster reached for the doorknob.

"Wrong door," said the foreman. "Come this way."

"But what's in here?" asked the youngster. He flung open the door and immediately cried out. The others rushed to his side.

For a long moment, they all stood gaping in astonishment.

"I don't believe it," the rotund redhead said at last. "What is this thing?"

The foreman stepped forward for a closer look. "I believe it's King Solomon's throne," he said reverently. "He supposedly received it as a gift from his father-in-law Sheishak, the Egyptian Pharaoh. Look at this thing! It can't be anything else. Let's get out of here. We have work to do."

"What's the hurry, uncle?" said the thin man with the serious face. "It's early. We have plenty of time. I want to get a good look at this thing. I've never seen anything like it, and I will never will again. It is huge!"

The throne indeed towered above them, a structure of majestic beauty decorated with innumerable jewels, pearls and gold inlay. Tall, slender potted date palms on both sides cast soft shadows on the royal seat. Six steps led up to the throne. On the first, a golden ox and a golden lion crouched menacingly; on the second, a bear and a sheep; on the third, a leopard and a camel; on the fourth, an eagle and a peacock; on the fifth, a cat and a chicken; and on the sixth a young falcon and a dove. Seventy-two golden lions and eagles surrounded the throne...

A loud shout interrupted him. "What's going on here?" It was the caretaker. His face was livid. "What are you Jews doing in here? This room is off limits. Get out!"

"We're sorry, sir," said the foreman. "We just took a wrong turn."

"Well, take another turn and get right to work or I'll throw all of you into the dungeon."

The men slipped out silently and went down the dim hallway until they reached the throne room. Achashverosh's new throne stood in the center. It was also incredibly beautiful, but it paled in comparison to Shlomo's throne. Achashverosh had brought the finest artisans in Alexandria and elsewhere and commissioned them to duplicate Shlomo's throne, but try as they might, they could not achieve the same level of beauty and perfection. Still, the new throne was a spectacle to behold in its own right.

As the caretaker had promised, pails of soapy water, rags and oils awaited them. They set to work scrubbing the newly completed throne one section at a time. They wiped away every speck of dust and grime until it gleamed, and then they rubbed in rich oils to give it an opulent luster.

"This is going to be some party," said the youngster. "I wonder what King Achashverosh will be thinking, sitting on this magnificent throne and receiving the delegates from the 127 lands of his empire. (3) All these treasures will surely make them feel like ants in front of the mighty king..."

[The man explained:] "Let's backtrack a few years. While the kings ruled their empire in Babylon, two new powers were rising in the east. One was Persia, the

great land in which we live, the other was Medea. What I'm about to tell you is not corroborated by eyewitness reports. Some people claim it is only legend. But it is interesting in any case. There was once a Persian king named Astyages. He had a daughter named Mandane who befriended one of the king's courtiers. The furious king killed the courtier and threw his daughter into prison, where she gave birth to a son.

"The king wanted the child to die, but he couldn't bring himself to do it directly. Instead, he gave the order that the child should be left exposed on a mountaintop where it would die in a matter of hours. Miraculously, a dog found the baby and suckled him. The child survived on the mountaintop and grew into a powerful warrior. As he grew older, he drew other warriors to his side until he had his own army. Since he had been raised by a dog, they called him Koresh, which is, as you know, Persian for dog. The Greeks called him Cyrus."

"Hey, isn't he the king who sat on King Solomon's throne?" asked the youngster. "How did he get to be king?"

"Not bad, young fellow," said the thin man sarcastically.

"That's right," said the foreman. "It is one and the same Cyrus. When Astyages, his grandfather, heard he was alive, he sent soldiers to kill him. Cyrus routed the king's soldiers, marched on the capital, killed his grandfather and assumed the throne of Persia. The neighboring kingdom of Medea was ruled by King Darius. Cyrus and Darius forged an alliance that was sealed when Cyrus married Darius' daughter. Together, they invaded Babylon in 3389 and conquered it, killing Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon.

That was the end of the Babylonian Empire and the beginning of the Persian-Medean. (4) Darius and Cyrus agreed to share power by taking turns; when one held the throne, the other was governor, and vice versa. (5) Darius was the first king. When he died in 3390, Cyrus took the crown. One of the first things he did as emperor was authorize the reconstruction of the Beis HaMikdash."

"As Isaiah had prophesied," said the thin man.

"Indeed," agreed the foreman as he stroked his gray beard. "Indeed. And he prophesied it a century before it happened. I know the words by heart. 'So said G-d to His anointed one, to Cyrus whose right hand I held... I lifted him up with righteousness, I will straighten all his ways. He shall build My city and free My exiles.' My mother had me memorize these words as a young boy so that I would not despair of ever seeing the rebuilt Beis HaMikdash. We had never even heard of Cyrus then."

"So what happened with Cyrus?" asked the youngster. "Why isn't the Beis HaMikdash built yet?"

"Good question," said the foreman. "Things started out well. A small group led by Daniel and Mordechai went to Jerusalem first. Zerubavel, a scion of the Davidic dynasty, and Yehoshua ben Yehotzadak followed soon afterward, and construction began. Cyrus himself traveled to the construction site to return the holy vessels Nevuchadnezzar had stolen from the Beis HaMikdash."

"How about Ezra?" asked the youngster. "Did he go, too?"

"No, he didn't," said the foreman. "He was afraid his Torah learning would suffer if he left his teacher, Baruch ben Neriah. Many others were also reluctant to make the journey, discouraged by the poverty and desolation that characterized the Land of Israel at the time and by fear of the hostile peoples who had moved into their vacated homes and towns. They saw the first stirrings of reconstruction as a sign of heavenly favor but not of imminent redemption."

"So what stopped the reconstruction?" asked the youngster.

"Intrigue, lies, intimidation. The Samaritans, or the Kutim if you please, sent a delegation to Cyrus accusing the Jews of plotting to rebel and of not paying their fair share of taxes. At the same time, they threatened the Jews with physical violence. Cyrus gave in to the pressure. He allowed the Jews who had gone up to Jerusalem to stay there, but he called a halt to further emigration. This was a serious blow to the reconstruction. There simply were not enough people to complete it. In 3393, one year later, he died and was succeeded by his son -- our very own beloved King Achashverosh." (6)

The rotund redhead scratched his head. "Why do you say he is beloved? We don't love him. In my neighborhood, they make a pun of his name and say 'Ach larosh, woe to my head.' The taxes he imposed on us are driving everyone into the poorhouse. On top of that, he stopped the reconstruction." (7)

"Yes, he did," said the foreman. "The rabbis also used those words as a pun, 'Ach larosh,' but they translated them as 'brother to the head.' Nevuchadnezzar was the head of the kings, a killer who destroyed the Beis HaMikdash. Achashverosh is his brother in evil; he also seeks to kill Jews and destroy the Beis HaMikdash. (8) It started from the very beginning, when Achashverosh ascended to the throne. The Samaritans and that rascal Haman, the fellow with a whole bunch of sons, wrote Achashverosh a clever letter accusing the Jews of disloyalty. Haman's son Shimshai is a clever scribe, and he made it seem as if he was interested in

promoting peace and harmony in the empire. Achashverosh liked what he heard, but he still wasn't too sure about what to do."

"So why did he decide to stop the reconstruction?" asked the youngster.

"Queen Vashiti, his 18-year-old bride, persuaded him to do it. She is the daughter of Belshazzar, the Babylonian king who died on the night Babylon fell, the great-granddaughter of Nevuchadnezzar, the one who destroyed the Beis HaMikdash. 'Why are you building up,' she asked, 'what my ancestors tore down?' With the support of the haughty queen, Achashverosh issued the decree that put an end to the reconstruction"...

"Quick!" he said. "Everyone back to work. I hear footsteps approaching – many of them."

The men grabbed their oil-soaked rags and went back to shining the already gleaming throne. Moments later, a dozen helmeted palace guards marched into the throne room. With a disdainful glance at the four Jewish laborers, they ran a thorough inspection, then they left the room and assumed positions on either side of the door.

In the silence that followed, the four men heard the stamping of heavy feet accompanied by the clank of armor and the rich rustle of silk and satin. Then he appeared, the mighty King Achashverosh himself, a hulking bear-like figure of a man, with bushy eyebrows and a glowering scowl. (9) Two fawning courtiers ran alongside him, holding up the hems of his robe, bowing incessantly and offering to bring him food, drink or anything else his hungry royal heart might desire.

Walking past the Jewish laborers as if they did not exist, the king strode to the throne and ran his hands lovingly over the opulent carvings.

"It looks just about ready [for the royal feast]," he growled to his courtiers. [And thus began the Purim story...]

* * *

FOOTNOTES

1. Menos HaLevi.

2. See Megillah 12a, according to both views. See Tosafos and Ben Yehoyada there; Einei HaEidah.

3. Eshter became queen over 127 lands in the merit of her ancestor the Matriarch Sarah, who lived 127 years (Esther Rabbah 1:8; Midrash HaGadol 23:1).

4. See Sefer Yuchsin; Seder HaDoros; Shalshales HaKabbalah and Me'am Loez.

5. Megillah 12a.

6. See Maharshato Yoma 9b; Shir HaShirim Rabbah 5:4, 8:9; Maharsha to Megillah 12a and 16a; Rashi to Pesachim 87a.

7. See Maharsha to Megillah 11a; Me'am Loez 1:1. Some suggest that Achashverosh was actually a good king. He was good-hearted by nature and a man of good intentions, but his foolish and gullible character allowed him to be manipulated by others. This influence led to the references to Achashverosh as a wicked Jew-hater, based on his actions towards them (Eshkol HaKofer, Tzof Devash).

8. Maharsha to Megillah 11a; Me'am Loez 1:1; see Midrash HaGadol to Esther 1:1.

9. See Megillah 11a; Daniel 7:5; Krovetz L'Purim.

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From: RAV KOOK List [RavKookList@hotmail.com] Sent: March 03, 2004 6:47 AM To: Shulman, Charles Subject: Rav Kook Dvar Torah List - Purim: Wine Enters, Secrets Emerge

Purim: Wine Enters, Secrets Emerge

What is the significance of the rabbinical precept to drink on the holiday of Purim?

"Wine enters, secrets emerge." [Eiruvin 65a] In our lives, we very much need the secrets to come out and be revealed. Through their revelation, we can perceive what is hidden in our souls, and recognize our true selves.

When we reach the level of intoxication "so that one does not know" ("ad d'lo yada"), we free ourselves - at least temporarily - from all of the

'knowledge' that deludes us. We shake off all of the accepted certainties that conceal the hidden truth from us.

We are drunk with superficial illusions. We think that we have come this far, establishing a foothold in our homeland and launching the very beginning of the dawn of our redemption, by virtue of our wisdom and intelligence. We forget that without the hand of the "Warrior who sows justice and produces triumphs", all of our actions would be for naught.

We forget the secret Hand that is behind all our achievements.

We are drunk from deceptive inebriation. We live unaware of the calculated plans of the greater world, the world ruled by the Master of the universe, with Whom we have a sworn pact guarding over the eternal spirit of the Jewish people. This covenant is ingrained in our very essence. No evasion or alienation can break it. Even if one should sink down to the bottommost level - he cannot change his skin, his body, his soul. He will certainly suffer greatly, until he returns to the camp to which he is integrally connected. "His heart will understand, and he will return and will be healed." [Isaiah 6:10]

In the days of Mordechai and Esther, we willingly accepted upon ourselves to keep the Torah. [Shabbat 85] Now too, the call to "Go, gather all of the Jews" should ring in our ears, so that our inner consciousness will break forth from its hiding place. The spirit's inner conscience, secluded deep in the soul of every Jew, resists the impudent insolence and clever pride from the misleading knowledge that manipulates us.

Let us reveal this epistle of Purim in all of its wonders, set above and beyond all of our petty knowledge and inconsequential facts. Let us announce the power of a united Israel, bringing together all sectors of G-d's people. That is the hidden secret of eternal Judaism. Through the strength of our unity, we will overcome all of the obstacles blocking the path towards our national rebirth.

[Moadei Ri'iah, pp. 266-267, from a 1935 article in "HaYesod" that Rav Kook wrote on his last Purim]

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Part 24 - PURIM IN PERSIA

BY RABBI KEN SPIRO

Another feast celebrating G-d's abandonment of Israel puts in motion a plot to annihilate the Jews.

The armies of Medes under Darius and the armies of Persia under Cyrus march into Babylon and conquer it. The Babylonian Empire ceases to exist and it is now absorbed by the new Persian Empire.

So what do we have in that part of the world, just to keep it straight? First Assyria, then Babylon, then Persia - they were all great Mesopotamian empires, one after the other, all interacting with the Jewish people.

In 370 BCE Cyrus issues a decree allowing all the indigenous peoples that had been exiled by the now-defunct Babylonian empire to go back to their homeland. One copy of this decree is on display at the British Museum, and although this version does not specifically mention the Jews, they are included as we learn from the Book of Ezra:

In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, upon the conclusion of the Lord's prophecy, by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord aroused the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, and he issued a proclamation throughout his kingdom - and in writing as well, saying, "Thus said Cyrus the King of Persia, 'All the kingdoms of the earth has the Lord, G-d of heaven, given to me and He has commanded me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of His entire people - may his

G-d be with him - and let him go to Jerusalem which is in Judah and build the Temple of the Lord..." (Ezra 1:3)

GOING HOME

You would think that the Jews would jump up, pack up and go. But that's not what happens. Of what is probably a million Jews living in the empire, only 42,000 go back - only about 5% of those that went into exile 70 years earlier go back and the remaining 95% stays put.

The same thing happened in 1948 when the state of Israel was declared. There were about 12 million Jews in the world at that time and only 600,000 or 5% settled the land. The rest 95% preferred to stay in exile.

Why?

Only about 5% of the Jews that went into exile 70 years before go back to the land of Israel. The answer is the same for 370 BCE, as it is for 1948, as it is for today. The Diaspora is nice. It's more comfortable to live in Brooklyn or Los Angeles or Toronto than in Israel. Why move if you have a nice big house in America and a nice standard of living and two cars, and you have nice day schools.

This attitude is repeated in Jewish history, and it is a problem. Because G-d might give the Jews a little breathing space in Diaspora from time to time, but in the long run, He's not going to allow them to stay there.

One of the great patterns we're going to see over and over again is the higher the Jews rise in the Diaspora, the lower they fall. The nicer the Diaspora seems to be at first, the worse the subsequent reaction against the Jews. We see it in Egypt. Jews are invited in, they do well and prosper, and look what happens - they end up slaves. We see this in Spain. We see this in Germany. All the places that once loved and welcomed the Jews eventually turn on them. Therefore, Jews make a mistake if they ever think that the Diaspora is home. It never works for long. Israel is the only home for the Jews.

The 42,000 Jews that go back in 370 BCE immediately start rebuilding Jerusalem, and, of course, the first thing in Jerusalem that they want to rebuild is the Temple, because a Jew can't live a complete Jewish life without a Temple.

The Samaritans, who never liked the Jews and who hate this new influx, immediately send a message to Persia demanding that the Jews be forbidden to continue building. They say that if the Jews are allowed to rebuild the Temple, they're going to rebel.

And, as a result of their threats, Persia freezes the building permit. For 18 years no construction is allowed. And it is during this period that the Purim story, related in the Book of Esther, takes place.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN PERSIA

Back in Persia, a new king has replaced Cyrus. His name is Achashverosh, and he is married to Vashti, the sole survivor of the blood-bath in the royal palace of Belshazzar during the Persian invasion (as noted in Part 23).

Achashverosh throws a party reminiscent of the one that Belshazzar had thrown some years before. He, too, has been calculating and he has decided that the 70 years allotted in Jeremiah's prophecy for the Jews to regain the land of Israel is up.

(In truth, Jeremiah prophecy mentions 70 years in different contexts, one referring to when G-d would "remember" Jerusalem, and another when G-d would "redeem" Jerusalem. The first 70 years - counted from the initial conquest of Judea - was up when the Jews were allowed to return to the land. The second - counted from the destruction of the Temple - will not be up for another 14 years when the Temple will finally be rebuilt.)

To this feast, Achashverosh invites the Jews and, unbelievably, they come - to "celebrate" their own end. This gives you an idea how far gone were the Jews who opted to stay in the comfort of the Persian Diaspora.

To this feast, the king invites the Jews and, unbelievably, they come to "celebrate" their own end. Though years before they had "sat by the rivers of Babylon and wept," they had gradually adapted to the comforts of exile to the point that they gradually developed into a positive

enjoyment of the pagan way of life and its pleasures. So deep was their desire to fit in that these Jews could actually toast their own public humiliation.

After some drunken revelry featuring (yet again) the Temple vessels, the king orders his wife to appear wearing nothing besides the royal crown. She refuses to come and he has her executed.

Queen-less, the king sends his scouts to round up all the eligible women in the land - and this is how Esther gets nabbed for the palace. No one knows she is Jewish, and her uncle Mordechai tells her to keep her identity secret. The king falls in love with her and from among all the women taken to the palace Esther becomes queen.

(The Book of Esther is best read with the commentary from the Talmud's Tractate Megillah, because there are a lot of fascinating details to the story that are left out from the simple telling. However, these details are beyond the scope of a crash course in Jewish history. For more see the Aish.com Purim Site.)

HAMAN, THE AMALEKITE

Achashverosh's top minister is a man named Haman HaAgagi. If that rings a bell, it should. Agag was the king of the nation of Amalek whom King Saul neglected to kill as commanded. Haman is an Amalekite, and he harbors a pathological hatred of the Jewish people. (For a detailed explanation of Amalekite ideology see Part 16.)

And so it comes to pass that Haman gets the king to agree to issue a secret decree to annihilate the Jews of Persia on the 13th day of the Hebrew month of Adar. And how he decides on the best date for genocide is very interesting.

Haman throws lots - called "purim."

Why?

It is part of Amalekite ideology that everything is a random occurrence - everything happens by chance. There is no G-d running the show. It's the ultimate denial of reality.

It is part of Amalekite ideology that everything happens by chance. So this holiday which is called Purim - "Chance" - comes to illustrate that, in fact, nothing happens by chance. From the point that Haman throws the lots - flips the dice, so to speak - everything begins to flip on him.

Expecting honors from the king, Haman finds himself forced to bestow these honors on his arch-enemy Mordechai. Invited along with the king to the queen's feast, Haman is preening with pride, only to discover that the queen is Jewish. And that now he is accused of plotting to murder her along with her people. Begging for mercy, he throws himself onto the queen's bed only to be caught by the king in this precarious position and accused of attempted rape.

Things couldn't possibly look worse for Haman and then comes the clincher. Having erected a gallows for Mordechai, he finds them put to an unexpected use when he himself is sentenced to death. And the Jews, whom he had wanted to wipe off the face earth, rather than being annihilated are given the king's permission to annihilate their enemies.

The most fascinating thing about the Book of Esther, which relates this incredible story, is that in the entire text the name of G-d is never mentioned. We learn from this that after the destruction of the Temple the presence of G-d was concealed in the world, but that we could still see G-d acting through history - delivering one hidden miracle after another to help the Jews survive, keeping his promise that Israel would remain an "eternal nation."

We learn from the Talmud that this state of affairs was actually prophesied in the Book of Deuteronomy, where G-d says:

"I will surely conceal My face on that day..." (Deut. 31:18)

The Hebrew word for "conceal," *hester* - because of its identical root letters with the name Esther - is read as an allusion to this time.

HIDDEN FACE OF GOD

In the time when the First Temple stood, you could see G-d's presence clearly. You could feel G-d in Jerusalem. G-d is always here but since

that Temple's destruction the level of spirituality in general is lower and the Jews' ability to relate to G-d from that period of time onward is much less direct.

From this time forward G-d will not act in history in the open manner He had previously. But G-d is always there, nevertheless. He's the master puppeteer behind the scenes putting everything into place.

From this time forward G-d will not act in history in the open manner He had previously. The Book of Esther is the ultimate story of G-d putting the cure before the disease. Everything that's a seeming disaster, in hindsight works out, so at the end of the story the Jewish people look back and see how incredible it all was.

This is why on Purim Jews get drunk so that they can't tell the difference between "Blessed be Mordechai" and "Cursed Be Haman." This is to illustrate that even the worst is really serving the will of G-d. Everything is not what it seems, which is why on Purim it is a custom to wear masks.

The Hebrew word that best describes Purim is *venahafoch hu*, meaning "flipped over story." Whatever bad had seemed to be happening by chance was, in fact, intricately planned for the good. Nothing happens by accident. There's a design to it all.

This, in fact, sums up Jewish history. Just as in the story of Purim when it's over we look back and we see how everything fits into place. Nothing is by chance. Everything has a reason and G-d will make sure that even in the worst circumstances the Jews are always going to have a way out, so that they can accomplish their mission in this world.

The next part of their mission means rebuilding the Temple. Darius II succeeds Achashverosh as King of Persia. He is believed to be Esther's son and he allows the Jews to finish the job they had started under Cyrus.

This is a very special time in Jewish history when the Jews make a second attempt at getting it right.

From: ohr@ohr.edu Sent: March 04, 2004 3:57 AM To: os-special@ohr.edu Subject: S P E C I A L S - Purim Symbols and Cymbals DEEPER INSIGHTS - For the week ending 6 March 2004 / 13 Adar I 5764 - from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu

-- Purim - Symbols and Cymbals By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1579>

"It's Purim and we have nothing to give for shalach manot!"

This was the anguished cry of one of the most famous survivors of the Holocaust, Rabbi Michael Ber Weismandel of blessed memory. Here he was in the bunker together with other Jews hiding from the Nazi murderers whom he had succeeded in outwitting until then. When he boarded the cattle cars headed for Auschwitz he carried with him some emery wire which he later used to cut a hole in the wall of the train through which he leaped to safety. The desperate messages which he subsequently sent to the free world alerted his fellow Jews to the tragedy which was taking place in occupied Europe.

Rabbi Weismandel would eventually reach the U.S. and establish the great Neitra Yeshiva in Mt. Kisco, New York. But at this point in his odyssey of escape he was faced with the dilemma of how to fulfill the mitzvah of sending gifts of food to a friend mentioned in Megillat Esther. He solved his problem as well as possible by presenting a fellow fugitive with two cubes of sugar. But what about the group of young women at the other end of the bunker who did not even possess that resource for a token gift? This great spiritual mentor had been disturbed that these girls had, out of boredom, resorted to reading some indecent magazines which had found their way into the bunker. He turned to them and said:

"I am certain that every one of you is anxious to fulfill the mitzvah of shalach manot but has nothing to give. My suggestion to you is to give

shalach manot to the "Friend" in Heaven Who is keeping you alive while so many of your brothers and sisters are dying. But what can you give to such a friend? Make a commitment to stop polluting your precious souls with the stuff you are reading and that will be the ideal gift."

A touching story indeed. But since when do we refer to G-d as a friend?

The source for this is a passage in the Proverbs of King Solomon (Mishlei 27:10) which advises "Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father." No one is more deserving of this title than the Creator whose friendship to man in every generation is expressed in innumerable ways.

When a gentile asked the Sage Hillel to convert him to Judaism but agreed to undergo this transformation only if he could be taught the entire Torah during the time he was able to stand on one leg, Hillel encapsulated the entire Torah for him by cautioning him: "What is hateful to you, don't do to your friend." (Mesechta Shabbat 31a)

The explanation of this enigmatic condensation offered by the great Talmudic commentator Rashi is that the friend to whom Hillel referred is the same One mentioned by King Solomon. Just as you would find it extremely hateful for your friend to ignore your wishes, Hillel told the conversion candidate, so must you, on becoming a Jew, avoid ignoring the wishes of your Friend in Heaven.

As we clash the cymbals of rejoicing on Purim for the miracle of our Friend in Heaven saving our ancestors from the Holocaust planned by Haman, let us pay attention to the symbols of salvation implicit in our mitzvot of the day. When we send our shalach manot to our earthly friends in the grand fashion which Providence has enabled us to do, let us imagine that we are thus symbolically sending a gift to our Heavenly Friend, not only in appreciation for what He did for us thousands of years ago, but for what He is doing for us today. When we hear the blessing before the morning reading of the Megillah praising G-d as the "One Who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days in this season", we are supposed to bear in mind that this blessing applies to the mitzvah of shalach manot as well. The Chassidic master, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, suggests that the inner meaning of the term "in this season" is that the revelation of G-d's friendship to His people that was experienced by our ancestors "in those days" surfaces again in our own time during the Purim season.

As we go shopping and do our baking and cooking in preparation for shalach manot, let us listen to our cymbals of celebration reverberating throughout the generations and direct our gift to our Friend above in the form of a commitment to avoid ignoring His wishes.

At a time when Jews in Israel are daily faced with the threat of terror bombings and Jews throughout the world face growing anti-Semitism, we are in desperate need of making this gift and praying that our Friend above will reciprocate with the gift of another Purim miracle in our own day.

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From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalist@shemayisrael.com] Sent: March 04, 2004 4:37 AM To: Peninim Parsha Parshas Tetzaveh

PENINIM ON THE TORAH

BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM

PARSHAS TETZAVEH Now you shall command Bnei Yisrael that they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil. (27:20) Why are they commanded to bring the oil to Moshe Rabbeinu? What role did Moshe play in the lighting of the Menorah? Was this not the function of Aharon HaKohen? Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, explains that Moshe's relationship with Aharon was unique in the sense that they were like one person. Aharon reciprocated this feeling. Each one was filled with joy about the success of the other. Aharon was as happy when Moshe, his younger brother, became Klal Yisrael's leader, as if it were he that had ascended to this

position. Likewise, Moshe was overjoyed to hear that Hashem had selected his brother to become the Kohen Gadol. The lighting of the Menorah was a form of appeasement to Aharon, since he was disturbed that neither he - nor any member of his tribe - had been involved in the Chanukas HaMishkan, Dedication of the Mishkan. Hashem told him, "Yours is greater than theirs, for you will light the Menorah." Aharon's anguish was Moshe's anguish. Consequently, when they brought the oil to Aharon for the lighting, it was as if they brought it also to Moshe. His involvement in the lighting of the Menorah was supportive. He was as excited about his brother's lighting as if he himself had been the one who lit the Menorah. Aharon Hakohen was the quintessential ohaiv Yisrael, one who loved all Jews. His empathy was not only for his brother; it was for all Jews. This is why he merited to wear over his heart the Choshen Hamishpat, Breastplate, upon which were engraved the names of the Twelve Tribes, representing Klal Yisrael. The heart that was sensitive to all Jews should carry the Choshen, which served as an atonement for Klal Yisrael. Aharon's heart was pure, untainted by any vestige of jealousy. He was truly happy that Moshe had been chosen to lead Klal Yisrael - an unnatural character trait. He was a unique individual, whose abounding love for others was characterized by a heart that was the pulse of the nation.

The true mark of a gadol, Torah leader, is his ability to be the pulse of the nation. The people's pain is his pain; their joy is his joy. There are those who "talk the talk," but the true gedolim live this throughout their lives, worrying, caring, sensitizing themselves to the needs of the wider Klal Yisrael - both spiritually and physically. Some go beyond the expected. Their sensitivity extends even to those whose emotions are not so sharp, but are nonetheless, very fragile. Their sensitivities are just as important. The following story demonstrates this idea as it characterizes one of our greatest Torah leaders, Horav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zl. A posek, halachic arbiter, without peer, he was also a modern day Aharon HaKohen who loved all Jews with a love that was reciprocated.

A couple once arrived at his home to seek counsel regarding their son who was mentally challenged. They had the option of sending him to either of two fine institutions. Each one had pros and cons. They left the final decision up to Rav Shlomo Zalman.

The Rav asked, "What is the boy's preference? Where would he like to go?"

"Rebbe," the father replied, somewhat taken aback, "did we not say that he is mentally disadvantaged? Regrettably, he is incapable of making even the most simple decision. Surely, he cannot have a say concerning which school he should attend." Rav Shlomo Zalman looked back at the parents in a manner which was not typical of his usual smiling countenance and said, "You are doing your child a grave injustice. Picture yourself in his position. To be suddenly evicted from the comfort of your home and thrown into a strange place could be devastating. Even the most well-adjusted adult has a difficult time getting adjusted to, and acquainted with, a new environment. This is especially true of a young child whose emotions are already very fragile. He needs more love and attention than the average child. You must include him in your decision." While the parents did not disagree with Rav Shlomo Zalman, they had no idea how to implement his practical suggestions into reality. Taking into account their son's mental capacity, even normal communication was most difficult.

Realizing their dilemma, Rav Shlomo Zalman asked to see the child. "What is your name?" the rav asked the boy affectionately when he came into the room.

"Akiva," the boy answered.

"You have a beautiful name," Rav Shlomo Zalman said. My name is Horav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, and I am considered one of the great Torah scholars of our time. Many Jews throughout the world listen to what I have to say. I would like you, Akiva, also to listen to what I have to say. You will soon be going to a new school. I would like to ask a favor of you. Could you please be my agent to supervise the kashrus at the school? It means very much to me to have you do this." The parents listened in total disbelief. They could not believe what they were hearing. To hear Rav Shlomo Zalman accord such accolades to himself was totally anomalous. This was a gadol who was the paragon of humility. How could he speak this way? It was not yet over. Rav Shlomo Zalman looked at Akiva and said, "By the power vested in me, I grant you semichah, ordination, and appoint you as my agent for all areas of kashrus coordination in your new school. Please carry out your duties courteously and responsibly."

When the parents looked at their Akiva, they understood what Rav Shlomo Zalman had done. The child's eyes glimmered with enthusiasm. His face exuded excitement. He could not wait to transfer to his new school. The transition went so smoothly that the boy never wanted to leave the school. He would often tell his parents, "I am the mashgiach, kashrus supervisor, for the gadol hador, pre-eminent Torah leader of our generation. How can I leave my position?"

Once again, it is the little things that make a great person. Expressed in other words: when great people care about little people, they become greater.

You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon, your brother, for glory and splendor. (28:2)

Glory and splendor - kavod and tiferes seem synonymous with each other. Wherein lies the difference between the concept of glory and splendor? The Malbim explains that kavod, glory, is a reference to the inherent spiritual potential with which one is endowed at conception due to the greatness of his neshamah, soul. Tiferes, splendor, is the fruition of this potential, the achievement and fulfillment of the unique capabilities with which one is blessed. When Aharon HaKohen wore the Bigdei Kehunah, he represented these two facets of his unique spiritual character. He was bestowed with a neshamah that was destined for prominence. Second, the unique potential of his neshamah reached fulfillment and, thus, he became the progenitor of all future Kohanim.

Horav Avraham Pam, zl, asserts that this dual concept applies to bnei Torah. They are the modern-day wearers of Bigdei Kehunah. If we were to take into consideration the moral abyss that has become the standard of contemporary society, the permissiveness, licentiousness, violence and drug addiction that confronts us daily in the media and on the street, it is a wonder how in such a poisoned environment the level of Torah study manifest by bnei Torah is so incredibly high. Why do they not sink with the rest of society? How do they overcome the influence of moral degeneration? The answer is: the kavod, glory, the immense potential of the neshamos of these bnei Torah. The prodigious capabilities inherent in those who spend their lives in the pursuit of Torah knowledge, immersed in the holiness and purity of the Torah and mitzvos, are exceptional. They do not abscond to the way of life that is represented by the nadir of depravity to which our society has descended.

"What is the source of this spiritual endowment?" asks Rav Pam. He suggests that it quite probably is a bequest derived from a previous righteous ancestor who served the Almighty under extreme duress and mesiras nefesh, self-sacrifice. This total abnegation of one's self earned him the distinction of having his descendant display a similar dedication to Torah and mitzvos. As the Rosh Hayeshivah notes, with kavod comes the responsibility to obtain the mantle of tiferes and see to it that the enormous spiritual potential achieves fruition. It is not enough to just be better than those on the street. One must strive to set the standard and provide the beacon for others to follow.

You shall make vestments of sanctity for Aharon, your brother, for glory and splendor. (28:2)

The commentaries address the concepts of glory and splendor. Ramban asserts that the vestments were to honor the Kohanim, since these garments were similar to the clothes worn by royalty. Sforno says that the garments were for the glory of Hashem and to lend splendor to the Kohen Gadol as the pre-eminent teacher of the nation, so that he be held in the highest esteem by the shevatim, tribes, whose names he carried on the Choshen Hamishpat. Regardless of the purpose and function of the Bigdei Kehunah, they were exceptional garments that reflected dignity and beauty and raised the esteem of the Kohanim who wore them. Wearing these vestments was an integral component in the Kohen's avodah, service. Indeed, a Kohen who serves in the Bais Hamikdash without wearing the Bigdei Kehunah is liable for Heavenly Excision.

In today's society we have a popular maxim that "clothes make the man." Regrettably, this is true, only in the sense that contemporary society perceives an individual by external appearances. A person is who he is based upon his internal essence, not by the way he dresses and the type of clothes he wears. Human values, however, attribute much to what they see externally. Thus, the ben Torah should reflect the dignity and regality of the Torah. People look at us all the time: some with respect; others with envy and derision. We should raise the banner of the monarchy of Torah by the way we carry ourselves.

There is a fascinating story concerning this concept that occurred with Horav Shimom Schwab, zl, rav of Khal Adas Yeshurun, in Washington Heights. It goes back to 1936, when he was a young Rabbi in Germany. On Shushan Purim, Rav Schwab was accused of publicly maligning the accused Adolf Hitler. It seems that in the rav's Shabbos derashah, sermon, on Parashas Ki Sissa, he was addressing the sin of the Golden Calf. In his disparagement of the sin and the people's error in thinking that one needs a "middleman" to approach Hashem, he had said, "The Jews do not need a vermittler, German for "go between." A government spy, which was a common occurrence in shul during those times, misunderstood this and thought the rav said, "Hitler," and that the German dictator was the focus of Rav Schwab's criticism.

The rav was brought before the Gestapo to explain himself. Making direct eye contact with the official, the rav emphatically declared his innocence. This was not

a sufficient defense for the Nazis. He was told that his case would be reviewed, and he would be advised of the verdict.

After that meeting, Rav Schwab was in fear for his life. He knew that he was not dealing with human beings. In his diary, he recorded that it took up until the middle of Iyar - two months - before the matter was cleared up, so that he was vindicated. During this period, he slept fitfully, if at all - with his clothes on. He feared that he would be arrested in middle of the night, which was common practice for those beasts, and taken to jail - or into the forest to be beaten or left to die.

In other cases, they would rouse their victim in the middle of the night and take him out to the town square for a public hanging. If this would be his fate, he would face it with dignity - and with his clothes on - as befits a Torah leader. He was not about to allow the Nazis to hang the rav of the town in his bedclothes! Chazal view a rav, as well as any Torah leader, as sheluchei d'Rachamana, Hashem's emissaries, and, as such, he must maintain his semblance of dignity at all times. This is the meaning of kavod and tiferes.

You shall make a forehead plate of pure gold and engrave upon it...holy unto Hashem...and it shall be on Aharon's brow. (28:36,37,38)

The Midrash teaches that each of the Kohen Gadol's begadim, vestments, symbolized Divine atonement for various sins. The Tzitz, forehead plate, denoted Divine forgiveness for brazenness. The Hebrew words for brazenness are azuz metzach, literally a "bold brow;" hence, the Tzitz that is worn on the metzach, brow, of the Kohen Gadol. Chutzpah, azuz, brazenness, by any standard, is a character trait that demonstrates a person's lack of shame. It is a middah, character trait, that goes against the personality of a Jew, considering the fact that Jews are defined by three traits: baishanim, they have a sense of shame; rachamanim, they are compassionate; gomlei chasadim, they perform acts of loving kindness. Of course, if the brazenness is employed in a constructive manner, as when a person refuses to yield to the blandishments of contemporary moral standards or stands resolute in the face of overwhelming peer and social pressures, chutzpah is desirable.

In the period prior to Moshiach's advent, chutzpah will be one of the hallmarks of the generation. As mentioned, the true distinction of a Torah Jew is an inherent sense of shame, which prevents him from slipping into inappropriate behavior. Where does today's chutzpah manifest itself and from where does it originate? In the frum, observant, camp it is noticeable in the lack of derech erez, respect/comportment, that we show to our elders, our rebbeim, our parents. There used to be a time when a gadol's, Torah leader's, words were sacrosanct, when students had a respect bordering on fear and awe, for their rebbe. A yeshivah bachur would instinctively show respect to his rebbe. Today, it is different. The student has to "hold" of the rebbe; the rebbe has to conform to the student's line of thinking. The days when a rav was held in the highest esteem are over. Today, he is an employee who often has to take a position commensurate with the future of his paycheck.

Where does this all originate? Horav Moshe Aharon Stern, zl, relates that he was once on a bus when an elderly gentleman alighted. Rav Stern said to a teenager sitting next to him, "Stand up for him and give him your seat." The teenager replied insolently, "There are children on this bus that are younger than I. Let them get up for the old man." Rav Stern looked at the young man incredulously and countered, "But they are not getting up." In the end, the teenager refused to give up his seat for the older gentleman. Rav Stern then got up and gave his seat to the man. The rav was now standing - the old man was sitting - and so was the young man. Then Rav Stern looked at the teenager and said, "Will you at least get up for me?"

The teenager replied, rather smugly, "If you want to stand, that is your business."

This is the type of chutzpah that challenges us on a regular basis. Chazal foretold this would occur, and it has. Now, if you would like to know how this teenager became such a mechutzaf, Rav Stern cites another incident that occurred on the bus. This time, an elderly woman ascended the bus to find seating at a premium. Seated near the door, where the elderly woman stood with her packages, was a young woman with her young child. The people on the bus insistently told her, "Tell your son to stand up for this old woman!"

The mother turned to her son and said, "Do not get up; let her stand."

We intimate to them to ignore mitzvos in the Torah. We teach our children chutzpah when they see us acting inappropriately to others. As our children grow up, they perceive right and wrong consistent with what they see at home. The lessons we impart by our own demeanor can have a lasting effect. Hopefully, it will be of a positive nature.

Meir Bedziner R' Meir ben Betzalel HaLevi z"l niftar 24 Shevat 5764 Reb Meir loved people and was beloved by all. His sterling character and pleasant demeanor

were the hallmarks of his personality. He sought every opportunity to increase the study of Torah and that be accessible to all. Yehi Zichru Baruch

From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org]

A PURIM QUIZ

1. Who is the first man mentioned in the Bible? (The answer is not Adam). Ans Chap. 1.
2. Who was the world's first female financier? Ans Pharaoh's daughter - she went to the BANK of the Nile and drew out a little PROPHET.
3. Who was the first person to study Chumash with Rashi? Ans Rashi's father.
4. What technical term is used to describe an uncircumcised Jewish person more than 8 days old? Ans A girl.
5. Who is frummer - Mr Frummer or Mr Frummer's son? Ans Mr Frummer's son, because he's a little Frummer.
6. What beracha is recited before turning on the ignition of a car? Ans Lehadlik ner SHELL
7. Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible? Ans Samson - he brought the house down.
8. How do we know that the father of the author of our Grace After Meals was Chinese? Ans That's why it's called BEN CHING.
9. How do we know that believers do not need a prayer book on Yom Tov? Ans That's why it's called BEN CHING.
10. Where are barbers commanded not to remove the Mashiach's beard? Ans Al taSHAVE penei meshichecha".