



To: parsha@groups.io  
From: cshulman@gmail.com

BS"D

## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON PURIM / TETZAVE - 5781

**25th Anniversary** – [parsha@groups.io](mailto:parsha@groups.io) / [www.parsha.net](http://www.parsha.net) - in our 26th year! To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://www.parsha.net> and click Subscribe or send a blank e-mail to [parsha+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:parsha+subscribe@groups.io) Please also copy me at [cshulman@gmail.com](mailto:cshulman@gmail.com) A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.parsha.net> It is also fully searchable.

---

Sponsored in memory of  
**Chaim Yissachar z"l ben Yechiel Zaydel Dov**

---

Sponsored by **Benjamin and Dorienne Planer**  
in memory of Benjamin's mother  
**Bayla Bat Yaakov ve Chana a"h**  
whose **20th year yartzeit is on Purim**

---

Dedicated for a refuah shleimah to **Yisrael Yaakov ben Rut**

---

To sponsor a parsha sheet contact [cshulman@parsha.net](mailto:cshulman@parsha.net)  
(proceeds to tzedaka)

---

from: Chabad.org <[jewishlife@chabad.org](mailto:jewishlife@chabad.org)> reply-to: [feedback@chabad.org](mailto:feedback@chabad.org)  
date: Feb 24, 2021, 7:37 PM subject: Celebrate Purim: 4 Mitzvahs! 🌟

### **When Shushan Purim Is on Shabbat The Three-Day Purim (Purim Meshulash)**

Excerpted from: **The Book of Our Heritage** by **Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov**.  
Published and copyright by Feldheim Publications

When the fifteenth of Adar falls on Shabbat, Purim is celebrated over a three-day period in the "walled" cities [Jerusalem and Shushan]. Other cities fulfill all of the obligations of Purim on Friday, the fourteenth. Those who are obligated to celebrate Purim on the fifteenth, however, divide the obligations over the period between the fourteenth and sixteenth. How is this done?

The mitzvot of reading the Megillah and giving gifts to the poor are fulfilled on the fourteenth, as in the other cities. On Shabbat, the fifteenth, a second Torah scroll is taken from the Sanctuary and the portion from the parsha of Beshallah that tells of the war with Amalek is read. The Al ha-Nissim prayer is added to the Amidah and the Grace after Meals. On Sunday, the sixteenth, the festive meal is held and gifts of food are sent to friends.

Why was it decided to fulfill the mitzvot of Purim in this manner?

Although the Megillah should be read in the "walled cities" on the fifteenth, the Sages prohibited the reading of the Megillah on Shabbat, lest the Megillah scroll be inadvertently carried in the public domain by people seeking someone capable of reading it for them, a violation of the laws of Shabbat. When then was the reading not delayed until Sunday, the sixteenth? The Sages deduced from specific verses of the Megillah that when the reading cannot be done at its proper time, it should be read earlier than required rather than later. [This is in contradiction to other Rabbinic obligations, e.g., the fast of Tishah b'Av, which are fulfilled later, if the time for their fulfillment falls on Shabbat. The verse in the Megillah states: "And

these days of Purim shall not pass" (Esther 9:27) – that is, we are not permitted to allow the days of Purim, the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar, to pass without our having observed the mitzvah, but we are permitted to do so earlier than required.

The mitzvah of eating the festive Purim meal is delayed until the sixteenth [even though it could theoretically be fulfilled on Shabbat, the fifteenth] because of our tradition that we do not mix one celebration [in this case Shabbat] with another [in this case the Purim meal].

The giving of gifts to the poor and the exchange of mishlo'ach manot between friends cannot be fulfilled on Shabbat, again because we fear that doing so might lead one to inadvertently carry in the public domain. The former obligation is moved to the fourteenth, so that the poor might enjoy their gifts as early as possible. The latter obligation is delayed until the sixteenth since the verse in the Megillah, from which we deduce that we do not allow the days of Purim to pass, does not refer to the mitzvah of exchanging gifts. Additionally, by delaying its fulfillment until the sixteenth of Adar, we establish a noticeable difference between the celebration of Purim in the walled cities and in other cities.

Although the mitzvah of reading the Megillah can be fulfilled without a minyan, when this mitzvah is fulfilled earlier than required [i.e., when the fifteenth falls on Shabbat and the residents of the walled cities move the reading to the fourteenth] it is customary to read only in the presence of a minyan. This also applies to the reading of the Megillah for women; i.e., it should be read in the presence of ten women.

Although the sending of mishlo'ach manot is delayed until the sixteenth, it is nevertheless customary for the residents of walled cities to send a few to friends on the fourteenth. It is also traditional to make the Shabbat meal more elaborate than usual, in honor of Purim. It is customary for the residents of the walled cities to dress in festive clothing on the sixteenth to indicate that they are celebrating Purim. As noted, the Al ha-Nissim prayer is recited on Shabbat, the fifteenth, and is not recited on the sixteenth, neither in Shemoneh Esreh nor in the Grace after Meals.

---

from: Torah Musings <[newsletter@torahmusings.com](mailto:newsletter@torahmusings.com)> via  
sendingservice.net date: Mar 13, 2019, 12:02 PM

### **Extended Purim Seuda by R. Daniel Mann**

Question: My family likes to have the Purim seuda toward the end of the day, and then we eat well into the night. What are the halachic implications (if any)?

Answer: According to the normal rules, we would think that this is not an optimal practice. Presumably, every moment and element of festivity of Purim adds to the mitzva (Rama, Orach Chayim 695). We do not find a halacha of tosefet (adding on to the day before and/or after Purim). Therefore, it all should be during the day.

However, the Terumat Hadeshen (I:110) cites an early source and a broad minhag to start the meal late in the day and go into the night. His requirement that a (significant) part of the meal is during the day makes the matter more one of preferences than of basic fulfillment of the mitzva. After all, if one has a meal in honor of Purim, then even if the part that was eaten during the day was not elaborate, he still fulfills the mitzva, especially if part of the festive food is eaten during the day.

The way the Terumat Hadeshen paints the minhag, it developed based on trading off the preferences of one mitzva vs. another. The morning and even part of the afternoon is full with Kri'at Hamegilla, mishloach manot, and matanot la'evyonim. The latter two are open-ended mitzvot which are strongly recommended to be done on a large scale (Shulchan Aruch, OC 695:4 regarding mishloach manot; Rambam, Megilla 2:17 and Mishna Berura 294:3 regarding matanot la'evyonim). One should also daven Mincha before the big and sometimes incapacitating meal (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 232:2). Thus, allowing the meal to start later enables one not to rush the other mitzvot. One may also add that in order to enable the inclusion of

others (which is desirable, family or not), including those coming from a distance, one must give time for them to finish their mitzvot and make it.

The Terumat Hadeshen describes the minhag as having the main part of the meal in the evening, although, he also writes that he personally had his in the morning. The way the Rama (OC 695:2) sets out the minhag in the manner he considers acceptable, people should not start the meal too close to the end of the day; the main part of the meal should be during the day. It seems logical that he does not care how long one continues after nightfall but whether there was enough time to have the majority of what would have been a proper meal (including merriment and songs and words of inspiration).

Is the festivity into the next night worth anything religiously? There are three ways to explain how it can be. The Terumat Hadeshen seems to say that the two time periods of the meal form one unit, and thus the day-rooted meal was lavish, which is what is important. The Meshech Chochma (see Mikraei Kodesh (Frank) 53)) says that in the time of the Purim story, the celebrations started in the day and continued into the night (as do the laws of korbanot – see Y'mei Hapurim, p. 157) so that the night is an appropriate time for festivities. The Levush (OC 695:2) says that both days of Purim (14 & 15 Adar) are days of festivity, so that the night is appropriate as the second day of Purim. According to the Levush, this minhag should logically not be as desirable in Yerushalayim, where the evening after the seuda is the 16th. That being said, the minhag, at least for Ashkenazim (see Mikraei Kodesh (Harari), 13:5), is to allow extending the meal into the night – even in Yerushalayim.

In theory, there could be a practical consequence of this minhag. The Rosh (see Tur, OC 695) says that Al Hanisim can be said only if Birkat HaMazon is recited during the day. He says the same thing regarding R'tzei at seuda shlishit (Shut 22:6). On the other hand, the Beit Yosef cites a Hagahot Maimoniot that Al Hanisim can be said at night if the meal started during the day, as we do in practice regarding seuda shlishit (Shulchan Aruch, OC 188:2). While the Shulchan Aruch elsewhere (OC 695:3) cites two opinions on the matter, his conclusion and that of the Rama is that Al Hanisim is to be recited in this case.

This column is produced on behalf of Eretz Hemdah by Rabbi Daniel Mann. Rabbi Mann is a Dayan for Eretz Hemdah and a staff member of Yeshiva University's Gruss Kollel in Israel. He is a senior member of the Eretz Hemdah responder staff, editor of Hemdat Yamim and the author of Living the Halachic Process, volumes 1 and 2 and A Glimpse of Greatness.

from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Feb 24, 2021, 6:15 PM

**Parshas Tetzaveh Cloth Bells Teach Humility in Kodesh; A Purim Lesson from Charvona - By Rabbi Yissocher Frand**

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1152 Hashkama Minyan That Heard Parshas Zachor From a Pasul Sefer Torah. Good Shabbos!

Ringling Cloth Bells Teach Us to Perform Kodesh Humbly

The pasuk in Parshas Tetzaveh says "You shall make the Robe of the Ephod entirely of turquoise wool." [Shmos 28:31] One of the garments of the Kohen Gadol was the Meil, a kind of robe. The Torah describes how the Meil is to be made and then it says "You shall make on its hem pomegranates of turquoise, purple, and scarlet wool, on its hem all around, and gold bells between them, all around." [Shmos 28:33] On the hem of the robe, there were little balls in the form of multi-colored pomegranates. Additionally, there were golden bells which alternated with the pomegranates around the hem of the garment. The Torah emphasizes that the sound of these bells would be heard whenever Aharon would come into or leave the Sanctuary. [Shmos 28:35]

This is the simple reading of the pesukim and this is how Rashi interprets the reason for the alternating bells and pomegranates. The Ramban argues with Rashi's interpretation that between every two bells there was a

pomegranate. If the configuration were as Rashi suggested, there would seem to be no point to the pomegranates. The Ramban understands that there were cloth pomegranates and inside each pomegranate was this pseudo bell, made also out of material in the shape of a bell. It was simply cloth against cloth and it did not ring!

Rav Chavel in his commentary on the Ramban notes that according to this interpretation it is hard to understand what kind of sound the "bells" made. What does the pasuk then mean when it writes "And the sound of him will be heard when he comes into the Holy"? Cloth hitting cloth does not make noise! Rav Chavel suggests an answer based on the Pesikta: It was a miracle that sound emanated from these cloth bells as if they were made of gold. Even though based on physics and acoustics the sound of cloth against cloth should have been inaudible, miraculously a sound was heard.

Still, we must ask: Why? Why did HaKadosh Baruch Hu need to make such a miracle in the Beis HaMikdash? Of course, miracles occurred in the Beis HaMikdash on a daily basis – but they all served an understandable purpose. For example, there were never flies around the slaughtered animal meat and the smoke from the Mizbeach ascended directly to Heaven. But, if there was a need to have a sound announcing the Kohen Gadol's entry into the Beis HaMikdash, why not use a real bell? Why use a miraculous sound that emerged from "cloth banging against cloth"?

My son, Reb Yakov, told me a very nice explanation in the name of Rav Yosef Flamm. There is a message here: When someone enters the Kodesh – the Holy – he should not be the party that is making the noise! In Avodas HaKodesh, do not look to make a lot of noise: Do it quietly, do it humbly, do it without a lot of bells and whistles. But the result will nevertheless be "and the sound of him shall be heard when he enters into the Holy." The Ribono shel Olam will make it known. He will publicize the matter. You do not need to make the noise yourself.

When you come into the Kodesh, do not look to make a lot of headlines. "Hatzneah leches..." [Michah 6:8] – Walk quietly! Do not worry that you are not making a strong enough impression in your spiritual activities. The Ribono shel Olam will make sure it gets known: "V'Nishma Kolo b'vo'oh el haKodesh" (And his sound will be heard when he enters the Kodesh.) This is the message, according to the Ramban of the cloth bells on the Robe of the Kohen Gadol.

Like Charvona – Always Diber tov al haMelech!

How many times is Charvona mentioned in the Megillah?

He is mentioned twice: Once in the beginning of the first chapter. He was one of the "kitchen cabinet" – namely one of the seven advisors of Achashverosh listed in the pasuk [Esther 1:10]. The second time Charvona is mentioned is when Haman finally met his downfall. "Then Charvona, one of the chamberlains in attendance before the king, said 'Furthermore, the gallows which Haman made for Mordechai – who spoke beneficially about the king – is standing in Haman's house; it is fifty cubits high.' And the king said 'Hang him on it.'" [Esther 7:9]

Charvona is mentioned a third time in the poem "Shoshanas Yakov" that we recite after the conclusion of the Megillah reading. We say there "And also Charvona, let him be remembered for good." (V'Gam Charvonah zachur l'tov).

Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer notes that the first time he appears in the Megillah, Charvona's name is spelled with an Aleph at the end and the second time he appears his name is spelled with a Hay at the end. Therefore, Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer claims they are not the same person! The real Charvona is the one mentioned in the first Perek. The "second Charvona" was really Eliyahu haNavi impersonating Charvona! Interestingly, the name Charvona in the Shoshanas Yakov poem is immediately followed by the expression "Zachur L'Tov" (let him be remembered for good). About whom else do we find this expression "Zachur L'Tov"? It is none other than Eliyahu HaNavi.

Rav Zalman Mintz told me that he once heard over a beautiful explanation of this from Rav Ephraim Waxman: The message emphasizes how and why the redemption occurred. The pasuk states "And Charvona, one of the

officers before the king, said ‘Also, behold here is the gallows that Haman made for Mordechai who spoke beneficially about the King standing in Haman’s courtyard 50 cubits high.’ The Geulah came because Mordechai never spoke ill of the Ribono shel Olam. Chazal say that every time it says the word “HaMelech” in the Megillah it is referring to the King of Kings. So too, in the expression Mordechai asher diber tov al haMelech – it is referring to the Ribono shel Olam!

The Jews of that time, could very well have fallen into the trap of saying “What is the Almighty doing to us!” Haman came close to executing his plan to exterminate all the Jews – men, women, and children. The Jews could very well have despaired and begin questioning the Justice of Heaven. “Excuse me! What did we do? Why do we deserve this?” Complaints against G-d were very likely being murmured. But Mordechai – who spoke good about the King – never complained and never questioned G-d’s Justice. He never doubted that what was happening was fair and just. He was always “Diber tov al haMelech”. He accepted the Talmudic principle that whatever G-d does is for the best (Kol mai d’Avid Rachmana, l’Tav avid) [Berachos 60b].

The message is that Purim, which is the paradigm of our hope for redemption, foreshadows the way it is going to happen for us again. To ensure the speedy coming of this redemption, we must remember to always be “Diber tov al haMelech”. After thousands of years of Jewish history and thousands of years of suffering – both on a national scale and on a personal scale – the key is to speak positively about the King and not to question and not to complain “Why is G-d doing this to us!”

This is sometimes very difficult, especially for people that lived through national trials and tribulations, lived through the Holocaust, lo aleinu. It is very hard for people who unfortunately have suffered tragedy and tzoros. It is a difficult nisayon. But Pirkei D’Rabi Eliezer is telling us, Charvona is telling us, and Eliyahu haNavi – who is going to usher in and announce the future redemption – is telling us: The key is to act like Mordechai “asher diber tov al haMelech”. If we continue to do that, then just as they merited “For the Jews there was Light, Gladness, Joy and Honor” [Esther 8:16]– so too will it be for us, Im Yirtzeh Hashem.

#### A Freileche Purim.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com  
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org  
This week’s write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. ..A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.  
Rav Frand © 2020 by Torah.org. support Do you have a question or comment? Feel free to contact us on our website. Join the Jewish Learning Revolution! Torah.org: The Judaism Site brings this and a host of other classes to you every week. Visit <http://torah.org> to get your own free copy of this mailing or subscribe to the series of your choice. Need to change or stop your subscription? Please visit our subscription center, <http://torah.org/subscribe/> -- see the links on that page.  
Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 2833 Smith Ave., Suite 225 Baltimore, MD 21209 <http://www.torah.org/> learn@torah.org (410) 602-1350

---

From: YUTorah <office@yutorah.org> via imodules.com date: Feb 24, 2021, 10:02 AM subject: Benjamin and Rose Berger Purim To-Go 5781

#### **The Berakha of Geulah Rabbi Elliot Schrier**

[Rabbi of the Albert Einstein Synagogue in the Bronx]  
Rosh Beit Midrash, North Shore Hebrew Academy High School

#### **Celebrating Partial Triumph**

Imagine for a moment you were tasked with reconstructing, from memory, the tefillot we recite on Purim night. Some components of the prayer service are easy to conjure up and quickly come to mind: the recitation of Maariv, filled with eager anticipation for the Megillah reading to follow; the reading of the Megillah itself; the singing (and, in a pre-COVID world, dancing) of Shoshanat Yaakov. But, for most of us, other parts of the tefillah do not leave the same impression. Once Shoshanat Yaakov has ended, the excitement has faded, and the hunger of Taanit Esther sets in, we recite a host of additional prayers that we all-too-often mutter as we are halfway out

the door, rushing to our break-fast meals. And while it is difficult to label those additional prayers a highlight of the Purim liturgy, in truth, in their own subtle way they communicate a central theme of our Purim celebration.

At the beginning of a discussion of the Purim tefillot, the Tur (O”CH 693) records a debate regarding whether or not we should recite U-Va Le-Tzion Goel — a brief paragraph that we say daily toward the end of Shacharit — after the Purim-night reading of the Megillah. While Rav Amram Gaon would recite the paragraph immediately following Megillah reading, others, the Tur notes, felt the prayers should not be said at night. The Tur explains that the paragraph of U-va Le-Tzion primarily discusses themes of salvation and redemption. Because the Purim redemption was only completed during the daytime — in the words of the Tur: Ein ikar ha-geula ba-layla — the essence of the redemption did not primarily occur at night — the paragraph should only be recited during daytime prayers.

The debate is reminiscent of a similar machloket that appears in Masekhet Berakhot (4B). The Gemara there discusses the principle of semikhut geulah le-tefillah, the halakhic obligation to ensure that the berakha of Ga’al Yisrael, which we recite immediately before Shemoneh Esrei, proceeds directly into the Shemoneh Esrei without any intervening interruption. While all agree that this principle applies during Shacharit, we encounter debate as to whether the principle should apply to Maariv as well. On the one hand, Rabbi Yochanan tells us that semikhut geulah le-tefillah should apply to Maariv as well as Shacharit, and one who is scrupulous in observing this attains the exalted status of “ben Olam Ha-ba.” On the other hand, the Gemara records the opinion of Rabbi Yeshoshua Ben Levi, who maintains that semikhut geulah le-tefillah is unnecessary in the evening prayers.

The Gemara offers several explanations for the machloket, but in one, Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi’s reasoning is nearly identical to the second opinion quoted by the Tur: semikhut geulah le-tefillah is all about the redemption from Egypt, and that geulah was only completed during the daytime. Hence, the practice of semikhut geulah le-tefillah should be reserved for the daytime prayer of Shacharit, and should not be observed at the nighttime prayer of Maariv.

At the heart of each dispute appears to be a question pertaining to how we view partial or incomplete geulah. For one school of thought, partial or incomplete redemption is hardly worthy of recognition, let alone celebration. If daytime is the primary time of geulah, then liturgically, the theme of geulah becomes the exclusive province of the daytime prayers, and we will not highlight the theme at all when we pray at night.

According to the second school of thought, however, redemption need not be complete to be worthy of liturgical inclusion. We say U-va Le-tzion Goel and we emphasize the berakha of Ga’al Yisrael at Maariv, despite the fact that neither the Purim redemption story nor the Exodus from Egypt was complete at night. Even partial steps toward redemption, and perhaps even anticipation of impending redemption, are part of the process of geulah and warrant recognition and appreciation.

While in practice, the Shulchan Arukh rules in accordance with the Tur’s second opinion, the underlying premise of Rav Amram Gaon’s stance is central to the holiday of Purim. The Gemara, Megillah 14A, offers several reasons why we do not recite Hallel on Purim. According to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karcha, we do not recite Hallel because the miracle of Purim occurred outside of Eretz Yisrael, and we do not recite Hallel over miracles that occurred in Chutz La-aretz. In another approach, Rava tells us that the Exodus from Egypt warranted the recitation of Hallel because we went from being slaves to Pharaoh to serving Hashem exclusively; citing Tehillim 113:1, Rava interprets: Hallelu Avdei Hashem ve-lo avdei Paroh — praise those who serve Hashem and don’t serve Pharaoh. By contrast, in the Purim story, there was no such complete redemption; we started as avdei Achashverosh and ended avdei Achashverosh. Even though the immediate existential threat of Haman and his plot to destroy the Jewish people was miraculously averted, at the end of Megillat Esther, the Jews were still the

subjects of Achashverosh. Both approaches highlight the incomplete character of the Purim redemption story.

Yet, even as we omit Hallel on Purim, we still celebrate. Purim, and in certain ways, the halakhically similar holiday of Chanukah, stand as models of our ability to celebrate and appreciate even partial and incomplete redemption stories.

Often, we tend to think of geulah in the kind of binary terms espoused by the first school of thought outlined above: geulah is by its very nature complete, and, when incomplete, it cannot truly be considered geulah at all. When we use the term geulah, and particularly when we use it in reference to the Geulah Sheleimah, the Final and Complete Redemption, we at times deliberately and at times subconsciously connote a redemption that is whole. "Redemption" has a ring of finality to it.

And yet, if we attempt to translate that perception of geulah to our day-to-day lived experiences, we are all-too-often left with nothing to celebrate at all. Moments of complete redemption are difficult to come by, while life is filled with half-victories and partial triumphs. Frequently, the victories we do achieve open up their own set of new concerns and anxieties. A close family friend recently entered remission from cancer after months of grueling treatment. He noted that, now that he had finally achieved the coveted "clean scan" that he had aspired to since diagnosis, he now spends his days divided between inexpressible gratitude and paralyzing fear over the possibility of relapse. On his better days, he succeeds in focusing on the former.

And while, for most of us, that tension is far less acute, to some degree it is present for us all. We all have moments when we figuratively contemplate whether the partial geulot of our lives are truly worthy of celebration. And in those moments, the holiday of Purim stands as a model. When we recite the Al ha-Nissim prayer on Purim and thank Hashem for the great-but-incomplete miracles that He did for our ancestors, we remember to also thank Him for the nissim she-bekhol yom imanu — the daily miracles wrought for us every day — that we mention in the very same prayer of Modim. Purim inspires us to appreciate those incomplete miracles that fill and animate our lives.

Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary • The Benjamin and Rose Berger CJF Torah To-Go Series • Purim 5781

---

from: Aish.com <newsletterserver@aish.com> date: Feb 24, 2021, 4:42 PM  
subject: Aish.com Parsha - Tetzaveh

### **Purim Will Never Cease by Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski**

Commenting on the verse, "And these days of Purim should never cease among the Jews" (Esther 9:28), the Midrash states that even when all the other festivals are discontinued, Purim will always remain. The commentaries give various interpretations on what this Midrash may mean but it is evident from this Midrash that Purim has extraordinary significance, and surpasses in importance even the Scriptural festivals of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. What is it that gives Purim such great significance?

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev explains that supernatural miracles, great as they may be, are of only a temporary duration. The salvation of the Israelites by the dividing of the waters of the Reed Sea was indeed an exceptional occurrence, but it was witnessed only by that generation, and for us it is a historical incident. We do not expect miracles of that type to occur.

The salvation of Purim, however, did not consist of any supernatural miracle. Every event could be seen as a perfectly natural happening. A king becomes intoxicated and in his drunken rage has the queen executed. He chooses a Jewess as his new queen, and she conceals her origin. Her uncle, who is in the royal court, discovers a palace intrigue to assassinate the king, and the queen reports this to the king, thereby saving his life. The anti-Semitic prime minister extracts a decree from the king to exterminate the Jews in his kingdom. The king is reminded that it was a Jew who saved his life. The queen turns the king's wrath against the prime minister, who is

executed. The queen reveals her Jewish origin, her uncle is appointed as prime minister and the Jews are saved.

It is only when the entire sequence of events is put together that one sees the guiding Hand of G-d saving His people. In all likelihood, during the Purim episode, someone in shul related, "Did you hear what happened yesterday? The king was drunk and flew into a rage and had the queen executed!" A listener probably said, "I couldn't care less about what the king does. Politics is not my thing." At no point did anyone realize that a miracle was in the making.

Miracles such as these are with us today. No laws of nature are suspended, but the guiding Hand of G-d causes "natural" events to occur in such a way that results in our salvation.

The realization that everything in the world is orchestrated by G-d is a fundamental principle of Judaism. This teaching of Purim should be with us 354 days of every year. As we say in the Amidah, "for Your miracles are with us every day." This belief enables us to entrust our lives to the care of G-d, and should stimulate us to live our lives according to His commandments

---

From: Daily Halacha <return@email.dailyhalacha.com> via  
torahlearningresources.org date: Feb 24, 2021, 3:05 AM subject: Purim –  
**Can One Fulfill the Misva by Listening to Megilla Reading Over Zoom?**  
iTorah.com **DailyHalacha By Rabbi Eli J. Mansour**

Description: Purim – Can One Fulfill the Misva by Listening to the Megilla Reading Over Zoom?

Halacha requires hearing the reading of Megillat Ester from a kosher Megilla, written on parchment, on the night of Purim and again on Purim day. Before the nighttime reading, the one reading recites three Berachot – "Al Mikra Megilla," "She'asa Nissim," and "She'hehiyanu." According to Sephardic custom, only the first two of these Berachot – "Al Mikra Megilla" and "She'asa Nissim" – are recited before the daytime reading. The congregation answers "Amen" to the Berachot, but do not respond "Baruch Hu U'baruch Shemo." The reader and the congregation must have in mind that the congregation fulfills its obligation by listening to the reading of the Megilla.

This year (5781/2021), during the coronavirus pandemic, many people are unable to attend the Megilla reading in the synagogue. Some people are quarantined because they've contracted the virus or were exposed to somebody who has contracted the virus. Others have medical conditions that put them at risk of death, Heaven forbid, if they contract the virus, and are therefore required to avoid crowds to protect themselves. It goes without saying that we are required to care for our physical health, and so all those advised by medical experts to remain at home and not come to the synagogue should heed this advice. The question arises as to whether those who must remain home have the option of fulfilling their obligation by listening to the Megilla reading through a live video feed, such as Zoom. If the reader arranges the Zoom on the Teba (table in the synagogue) so that people at home can see and hear his reading, do they thereby fulfill their obligation?

This question was addressed many decades ago, during the latter part of the 20th century, in regard to the telephone. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Jerusalem, 1910-1995), in *Minhat Shelomo* (vol. 1, p. 64), advanced the view that one cannot fulfill an obligation to hear a recitation if he hears it via a telephone or microphone. When one speaks into such a device, Rav Shlomo Zalman writes, he causes the device to vibrate and produce a sound. Thus, the listener hears not the speaker's voice, but rather a technologically-induced reproduction of the voice. As such, one cannot fulfill his obligation to hear the Megilla by hearing it via a telephone, since he is hearing an artificial reproduction of the reader's voice, and not the voice itself. This was also the opinion of Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Israel, 1924-1998), in *Or Le'sion* (vol. 4).

Others, however, disagreed. Rav Shlomo Zalman himself, in his responsum, cites the *Hazon Ish* (Rav Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz, 1878-1953)

as ruling leniently in this regard, and maintaining that the sound heard through a telephone is regarded by Halacha as the person's actual voice. Likewise, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Russia-New York, 1895-1986), in Iggerot Moshe (Orah Haim 2:108, 4:91) maintained that since the sound one hears has been produced by the speaker, this suffices to fulfill his obligation. Even though, technically, the listener hears a reproduction of the reader's voice, nevertheless, for all intents and purposes, this sound was produced by the reader speaking into the device, and, quote obviously, the sound could not have happened on its own. Therefore, the listener fulfills his obligation. In fact, some have noted that all sounds which reach the eardrum are "reproduced," in that when a person speaks, the sounds waves reverberate and eventually reach the ear, and so there is no difference between hearing someone's voice via telephone and hearing it directly. This lenient position was held also by Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank (Jerusalem, 1873-1960), in his Mikra'eh Kodesh – Purim (p. 95). He explains that even if the listener is hearing both the speaker's actual voice and a mechanically produced sound, nevertheless, this suffices for the fulfillment of the Misva.

Hacham Ovadia Yosef, in several places (including Hazon Ovadia – Purim, p. 56; and Yehaveh Da'at 2:68), follows the stringent ruling of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, that one cannot fulfill his obligation by hearing a recitation via telephone. Interestingly, however, Hacham Ovadia also ruled that somebody who is deaf, and cannot hear without a hearing aid, may fulfill the Misva by listening to the reading via his hearing aid. As many have observed, these two rulings appear contradictory. After all, hearing via a hearing aid is no different than hearing via a telephone, as in both cases, one hears a reproduction of the original sound produced by the reader's voice. One author suggested reconciling these rulings by distinguishing between somebody who cannot hear at all without a hearing aid, and somebody who can hear without the hearing aid but his hearing is impaired, and he needs the device to amplify the sound. It is only in the latter case, perhaps, that Hacham Ovadia allowed one to fulfill the Misva by listening to the Megilla reading with a hearing aid. However, Rav Yisrael Bitan (contemporary), in the English edition of Yalkut Yosef, argues that from Hacham Ovadia's words it is clear that he permitted even those who cannot hear at all without a hearing aid to fulfill the Misva by wearing the device. Rav Bitan (Purim, p. 118) entertains the possibility that Hacham Ovadia retracted his stringent ruling and decided that one may, in fact, fulfill the Misva by hearing the reading over the telephone. Of course, it is difficult to rely on such a theory, as we normally assume that we must follow that which the Hacham wrote in his books.

Regardless, it would seem that in the case of somebody who is quarantined, or otherwise unable to come to the synagogue, and cannot have somebody come to his home to read the Megilla for him, we may certainly rely on the position of Rav Moshe Feinstein and the other aforementioned Poskim, and arrange for him to hear the Megilla via a live video feed. It should be noted that Rav Moshe applied this ruling to the case of a woman who was in the hospital on Shabbat, and had no possibility of reciting or hearing Habdala other than via telephone. Habdala, according to the Rambam (Rav Moshe Maimonides, Spain-Egypt, 1135-1204), constitutes a Torah obligation, and Rav Moshe nevertheless allowed the woman to fulfill this Misva via telephone when she had no other option. Certainly, then, we may apply this ruling to the Misva of Megilla reading, which, according to many, is a Rabbinic obligation. And although some consider this obligation a Misva Mi'dibreh Kabbala (requirement from the Prophets), nevertheless, it is certainly not a higher-level obligation than Habdala according to the Rambam. Indeed, Rabbi Bitan writes that somebody who is in the hospital on Purim and cannot have the Megilla read for him in person, should try to hear the Megilla via telephone. We might even speculate that Hacham Ovadia himself – who always endeavored to find grounds for leniency in situations of great need – would approve of hearing the Megilla via a live video feed under current circumstances, when there are many people who cannot attend the synagogue due to medical concerns.

In such a case, the one listening to the Megilla by phone or over Zoom should not answer "Amen" to the Berachot recited over the Megilla.

It goes without saying that we would not approve of fulfilling the obligation in this manner simply for convenience, when a person prefers to avoid having to leave home to hear the Megilla reading. This leniency should be relied upon only under extenuating circumstances, if one has no possibility of hearing the Megilla reading in person.

Summary: The Halachic authorities of the late 20th century debated the question of whether one fulfills the Misva of listening to the Megilla reading via telephone. Although we follow the stringent opinion, that one must listen to the reading in person, nevertheless, when this is not possible, and one's only option is to hear the reading via telephone or a live video feed, such as Zoom, this is allowed. Therefore, synagogues with congregants who cannot come to the synagogue due to medical concerns, and cannot have somebody come to their home to read for them, should arrange for a live video feed so these members can hear the Megilla reading.

Torah Learning Resources, P.O. Box 230212, Brooklyn, NY 11223

---

From: **The Office of Rabbi Sacks** <info@rabbisacks.org> v date: Feb 24, 2021, 2:17 PM subject: The Counterpoint of Leadership (Tetzaveh 5781)

**The Counterpoint of Leadership Tetzaveh 5781**

**Rabbi Sacks** zt"l had prepared a full year of Covenant & Conversation for 5781, based on his book Lessons in Leadership. The Office of Rabbi Sacks will carry on distributing these essays each week, so people from all over the world can continue to learn and be inspired by his Torah.

One of the most important Jewish contributions to our understanding of leadership is its early insistence of what, in the eighteenth century, Montesquieu called "the separation of powers"[1]. Neither authority nor power was to be located in a single individual or office. Instead, leadership was divided between different kinds of roles.

One of the key divisions – anticipating by millennia the "separation of church and state" – was between the King, the head of state, on the one hand, and the High Priest, the most senior religious office, on the other.

This was revolutionary. The kings of Mesopotamian city states and the Pharaohs of Egypt were considered demigods or chief intermediary with the gods. They officiated at supreme religious festivals. They were regarded as the representatives of heaven on earth.

In Judaism, by stark contrast, monarchy had little or no religious function (other than the recital by the King of the book of the covenant every seven years in the ritual known as hakhel.) Indeed the chief objection to the Hasmonean Kings on the part of the Sages was that they broke this ancient rule, some of them declaring themselves High Priests also. The Talmud records the objection: "Let the crown of kingship be sufficient for you. Leave the crown of priesthood to the sons of Aaron." (Kiddushin 66a) The effect of this principle was to secularise power.[2]

No less fundamental was the division of religious leadership itself into two distinct functions: that of the Prophet and the Priest. That is dramatised in this week's parsha, focussing as it does on the role of the Priest to the exclusion of that of the Prophet. Tetzaveh is the first parsha since the beginning of the book of Exodus in which Moses' name is missing. It is supremely the priestly, as opposed to prophetic, parsha.

Priests and Prophets were very different in their roles, despite the fact that some Prophets, most famously Ezekiel, were Priests also. The primary distinctions were:

The role of Priest was dynastic, that of Prophet was charismatic. Priests were the sons of Aaron. They were born into the role. Parenthood had no part in the role of the Prophet. Moses' own children were not Prophets. The Priest wore robes of office. There was no official uniform for a Prophet. The priesthood was exclusively male; not so prophecy. The Talmud lists seven women who were Prophets: Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah and Esther. The role of the Priest did not change over time. There was a precise annual timetable of sacrifices that did not vary from year to

year. The Prophet by contrast could not know what his mission would be until G-d revealed in to him. Prophecy was never a matter of routine. As a result, Prophet and Priest had different senses of time. Time for the Priest was what it was for Plato: the “moving image of eternity,”[3] a matter of everlasting recurrence and return. The Prophet lived in historical time. His today was not the same as yesterday and tomorrow would be different again. One way of putting this is that the Priest heard the word of G-d for all The Prophet heard the word of G-d for this time. The Priest was “holy” and therefore set apart from the people. He had to eat his food in a state of purity, and had to avoid contact with the dead. The Prophet by contrast often lived among the people and spoke a language they understood. Prophets could come from any social class. The key words for the Priest were *tahor*, *tamei*, *kodesh* and *chol*: “pure”, “impure”, “sacred”, and “secular”. The key words for the Prophets were *tzedek*, *mishpat*, *chesed* and *rachamin*: “righteousness”, “justice”, “love”, and “compassion”. It is not that the Prophets were concerned with morality while the Priests were not. Some of the key moral imperatives, such as “You shall love your neighbour as yourself,” come from priestly sections of the Torah. It is rather that Priests think in terms of a moral order embedded in the structure of reality, sometimes called a “sacred ontology.”[4] Prophets tended to think not of things or acts in themselves but in terms of relationships between persons or social classes. The task of the Priest is boundary maintenance. The key priestly verbs are *le-havdil* and *le-horot*, to distinguish one thing from another and apply the appropriate rules. Priests gave rulings, Prophets gave warnings. There is nothing personal about the role of a Priest. If one – even a High Priest – was unable to officiate at a given service, another could be substituted. Prophecy was essentially personal. The Sages said that “no two Prophets prophesied in the same style” (Sanhedrin 89a). Hosea was not Amos. Isaiah was not Jeremiah. Each Prophet had a distinctive voice. Priests constituted a religious establishment. The Prophets, at least those whose messages have been eternalised in Tanach, were not an establishment but an anti-establishment, critical of the powers-that-be. The roles of Priest and Prophet varied over time. The Priests always officiated at the sacrificial service of the Temple. But they were also Judges. The Torah says that if a case is too difficult to be dealt with by the local court, you should “Go to the Priests, the Levites, and to the judge who is in office at that time. Inquire of them and they will give you the verdict” (Deut. 17:9). Moses blesses the tribe of Levi saying that “They will teach Your ordinances to Jacob and Your Torah to Israel” (Deut. 33:10), suggesting that they had a teaching role as well.

Malachi, a Prophet of the Second Temple period, says: “For the lips of a Priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth” (Mal. 2:7). The Priest was guardian of Israel’s sacred social order. Yet it is clear throughout Tanach that the priesthood was liable to corruption. There were times when Priests took bribes, others when they compromised Israel’s faith and performed idolatrous practices. Sometimes they became involved in politics. Some held themselves as an elite apart from and disdainful toward the people as a whole.

At such times the Prophet became the voice of G-d and the conscience of society, reminding the people of their spiritual and moral vocation, calling on them to return and repent, reminding the people of their duties to G-d and to their fellow humans and warning of the consequences if they did not heed the call.

The priesthood became massively politicised and corrupted during the Hellenistic era, especially under the Seleucids in the second century BCE. Hellenised High Priests like Jason and Menelaus introduced idolatrous practices, even at one stage a statue of Zeus, into the Temple. This provoked the internal revolt that led to the events we recall on the festival of Chanukah.

Yet despite the fact that the initiator of the revolt, Mattityahu, was himself a righteous Priest, corruption re-emerged under the Hasmonean Kings. The

Qumran sect known to us through the Dead Sea Scrolls was particularly critical of the priesthood in Jerusalem. It is striking that the Sages traced their spiritual ancestry to the Prophets, not the Priests (Avot 1:1).

The Kohanim were essential to ancient Israel. They gave the religious life its structure and continuity, its rituals and routines, its festivals and celebrations. Their task was to ensure that Israel remained a holy people with G-d in its midst. But they were an establishment, and like every establishment, at best they were the guardians of the nation’s highest values, but at worst they became corrupt, using their position for power and engaging in internal politics for personal advantage. That is the fate of establishments, especially those whose membership is a matter of birth.

That is why the Prophets were essential. They were the world’s first social critics, mandated by G-d to speak truth to power. Still today, for good or otherwise, religious establishments always resemble Israel’s priesthood. Who, though, are Israel’s prophets at the present time?

The essential lesson of the Torah is that leadership can never be confined to one class or role. It must always be distributed and divided. In ancient Israel, Kings dealt with power, Priests with holiness, and Prophets with the integrity and faithfulness of society as a whole. In Judaism, leadership is less a function than a field of tensions between different roles, each with its own perspective and voice.

Leadership in Judaism is counterpoint, a musical form defined as “the technique of combining two or more melodic lines in such a way that they establish a harmonic relationship while retaining their linear individuality.”[5] It is this internal complexity that gives Jewish leadership its vigour, saving it from entropy, the loss of energy over time.

Leadership must always, I believe, be like this. Every team must be made up of people with different roles, strengths, temperaments and perspectives. They must always be open to criticism and they must always be on the alert against groupthink. The glory of Judaism is its insistence that only in heaven is there one commanding Voice. Down here on earth no individual may ever hold a monopoly of leadership.

Out of the clash of perspectives – King, Priest and Prophet – comes something larger than any individual or role could achieve.

[1] Charles-Louis Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws* (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952).

[2] In Judaism, power, except that exercised by G-d, is not holy. [3] Plato, *Timaeus* 37d. [4] On this rather difficult idea, see Philip Rieff, *My Life Among the Deathworks* (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2006). Rieff was an unusual and insightful critic of modernity. For an introduction to his work, see Antonius A.W. Zondervan, *Sociology and the Sacred: An Introduction to Philip Rieff’s Theory of Culture* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2005). [5] *American Heritage Dictionary*, 5th ed., s.v. “Counterpoint” (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2011).

[1] See *Shabbat* 55a-b

From: **Peninim on the Torah** <peninim@hacl.org> date: Feb 24, 2021, 9:39 AM subject: Parashas Tetzaveh

**Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum**

We are happy to announce that after much effort we have successfully launched our new website [www.peninim.org](http://www.peninim.org). This website will avail the reader access to all thirty years of Peninim Al HaTorah (over 6,000 *divrei Torah*) Our search engine responds to searches by year, parasha, topic and keyword . This labor of love has been sponsored l’zchus harabim by our dear friends Rabbi & Mrs. Roberto Szerer in memory of Bina bas Eliyahu Yehoshua Z”L.

ואתה תצוה את בני ישראל. (27:20) Home->Tetzaveh-> 5781 Not Moshe, just, V’atah, “Now you.” Indeed, the Torah does not mention Moshe Rabbeinu’s name in this parsha. This is by design, because, in his defense of Klal Yisrael, following the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe pleaded that they be forgiven. If not – *m’cheini na mi’Sifrecha* asher Kasavta, “Erase me from Your Book that You have written” (Shemos 32:32). When a *tzaddik* issues forth a declaration it is not ignored. Thus, one parsha, the one which usually is read around the seventh of Adar, which is Moshe’s *yahrzeit*, is missing his name. From the time that the Torah records Moshe’s entering the scene in *Sefer Shemos*, until the end



of the Torah – this is the only parsha that is missing his name. He sacrificed his name in this parsha out of his abiding love for Klal Yisrael. Hashem turned to Moshe and said, “V’atah Tetzaveh; Now you shall command.” As a result of Moshe’s request to have his name withheld from the Torah –as a result of his extreme devotion to his nation, Hashem said, “You” be the one to issue the command. No name, but “you,” because Hashem always acknowledges and rewards sacrifice. Mesiras nefesh, sacrifice, for Klal Yisrael is not uncommon. Jews from all walks of life have sacrificed themselves for Hashem, for Judaism, and for Klal Yisrael. What is more difficult to come by is to live a life of sacrifice. Kiddush ha’chayim, sanctifying life, is the form of sacrifice that seems to be more demanding. We are prepared to fight to the death to sanctify Hashem’s Name. Are we likewise prepared to live a life of commitment and devotion, regardless of what Hashem asks of us? The Chafetz Chaim, zl, was once traveling by train together with the Imrei Emes, zl, of Gur. Word spread that these two Torah giants were traveling together. As a result, Jews gathered at every stop to gaze at these holy men and receive their blessing – even if it was through a railcar window. At every stop, the Gerrer Rebbe went to the window and blessed those who had congregated at the station. The Chafetz Chaim demurred, claiming that this world is only a vestibule before the next world. The honor and acclaim one receives in this world diminishes the reward that he would otherwise receive in Olam Habba, The World-to-Come. “Why should I benefit from imaginary kavod, esteem?” he asked. The Imrei Emes replied, “For Klal Yisrael (to give a Jew satisfaction), I have long ago been mevateir, conceded, my Olam Ha’zeh (This World) and my Olam Habba (World-to-Come). The Chafetz Chaim went to the window at the next stop. One need not be a Torah giant to express his love for and commitment to Hashem via self-sacrifice. The following story demonstrates that even an ordinary Jew, who was not raised in a strong Torah-oriented background, who did not descend from an illustrious pedigree, gave up his life to proclaim commitment to Hashem. After all, a life in which we must renege our conviction is not a life worth living.

For many years, Jewish boys in Russia (from the young age of six years old) were subject to the evil decree of the Cantonists. Boys were taken captive and forced to serve in the Russian Army for up to twenty-five years, during which time they were physically and emotionally abused and subject to anti-religious laws in which Torah, Kosher and Shabbos were strictly prohibited. The Tzemach Tzedek would often visit these brave soldiers to encourage and offer them emotional and spiritual support. He would reiterate to them, “A person should give up his life, rather than renege on his Yiddishkeit. Even if the Czar himself instructs you to turn your back on your religion, you should sacrifice your life, rather than listen to him!” (In most cases, this was wishful thinking, since these men had been snatched as children, and, as a result, had little to no Jewish upbringing which would inculcate them with strong Jewish conviction and commitment.) Among the soldiers listening to the Rebbe was a sailor named Shimon Levin – a Cantonist who had been held captive for most of his life. He was an excellent soldier who enjoyed being in the Russian Navy. His friends were impressed by his bravery and ensuingly dubbed him Semion Bodri – Shimon the Brave. Shimon received a high commission as a Naval officer, stationed at a base near the Black Sea. One day, his base was informed of important news. The Czar was vacationing nearby and planned on touring the base! As the most powerful person in the country, the Czar injected a sense of fear and awe in every soldier. In his honor, the base was cleaned to a fault. Mistakes were not tolerated in the Russian Army. As part of their welcoming performance, one of the officers would perform an act of extreme bravery in honor of their esteemed guest. Shimon Levin was selected to perform the act of bravery. As everyone watched with bated breath, Shimon stood at the bottom of the tallest ship mast on the sea. He climbed up the mast without stopping, and, when he reached the very top, he dove into the sea! He immediately swam back to the boat, climbed up and saluted the Czar. The Czar was enraptured. He was thrilled. “Semion Bodri, I want to reward you at a celebration

tomorrow!” the Czar declared. The next day, with many officers and important guests in attendance, the Czar announced, “Semion Bodri! Due to the bravery you demonstrated yesterday, I am promoting you and elevating your rank to admiral in the Russian Navy!” “But I am Jewish and, according to Russian law, I cannot hold a position higher than an officer.” The Czar was surprised and embarrassed, “So, you will change your religion and become an admiral – now!” Shimon immediately replied, “I must first carry out the same act of bravery that I did yesterday.” Shimon ran up the ship’s tall mast and climbed to the top. Shouting so that everyone could hear, he declared: “Your majesty, for twelve years I have served in the Russian Navy, and I love my job. However, more important than all this, I am a Jew! I have always observed Shabbos and kept kosher during these twelve years. I will never stop being a Jew. I will never leave Hashem. Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad!” Shimon took one last dive into the sea – only this time he did not emerge from the water. He had publicly given up his life Al Kiddush Hashem, to sanctify Hashem’s Name. This way, the Czar could not force him to renege his Yiddishkeit. Shimon’s greatest act of bravery was performed in death. May his name be a blessing.

ולקחת את שתי אבני שהם ופתחת עליהם שמות בני ישראל You should take the two Shoham stones and engrave on them the names of Bnei Yisrael. (28:9) Chazal (Sotah 36b) teach that when Yosef HaTzaddik almost fell prey to the blandishments of Potifar’s wife, an image of Yaakov Avinu, his father, appeared before him and said, “Yosef, your brothers’ names will eventually be engraved upon the stones of the Ephod, and your name (as of now) is destined to be included among them. Do you want your name to be omitted (if you sin)?” When Yosef heard this, he immediately withdrew. Potifar’s wife was not going to cause him to be deprived of his spiritual destiny.

So much for Yosef. What about Reuven and Yehudah? It is not as if they were not involved in an activity that reflected a degree of lapse in morality (relative to their elevated spiritual plateau); yet, their names were not omitted from the stones. Veritably, this is because of their teshuvah, repentance. Does this mean that had Yosef sinned and subsequently repented, his teshuvah would have been deemed unacceptable – and his name omitted from the Ephod? If so, why was he held to a different standard than Reuven and Yehudah? [Simply, we can say that whatever questionable moral decline they experienced, it was certainly not the same as an immoral relationship with the wife of his master. True, he did not initiate the sin, in that he was seduced and compelled by an unsavory woman bent on committing an iniquitous act of infidelity. Nonetheless, the egregiousness of the sin should have sufficiently distanced him from its perpetration.]

Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, offers a compelling insight into the Shoham stone’s function and Yosef’s connection to it. The Kohen Gadol’s Choshen, Breastplate, contained twelve precious stones upon which the names of the twelve tribes were engraved. The stone on the Breastplate which corresponded with Yosef’s name was the Shoham (onyx) stone. The Shoham was unique in the sense that, in addition to its placement upon the Ephod, two additional Shoham stones were on the shoulder straps of the Ephod. Six names of Tribes were engraved upon each of these stones, so that all twelve names were on both stones. In other words, Yosef’s name was engraved twice upon the Shoham stones – once on the Ephod and once on the kispos ha’Ephod. Yosef’s (Shoham) stone was the foundation stone upon which the names of all the tribes was engraved. This is why Yosef is called tzaddik yesod olam, ‘the tzaddik, righteous person, foundation stone of the world.’”

Had Yosef fallen prey to Potifar’s wife’s seductive efforts and subsequently repented, his name would (like Reuven’s and Yehudah’s) still be etched on the Ephod. He would, however, have forever lost his tzaddik yesod olam status, because he had blemished it with sin. He no longer would have been the untainted, quintessential tzaddik. He was the tzaddik who had erred, repented and now was once again a tzaddik. When one is a tzaddik yesod olam, he has no room for error. When Yaakov Avinu appeared to Yosef to inform him that if he sinned his name would not appear on the

Ephod, he meant that, while his name might have a place on the Choshen, his designated stone, the Shoham, would no longer serve as the foundation stone for all Klal Yisrael.

You too can have a share in Peninim on the Torah. If you would like to sponsor a weekly Parsha please call Rabbi Moshe Marcovich, Director of Development at the Hebrew Academy at 216-727-3008 or email marcovichm@hac1.org. Peninim is published weekly by Peninim Publications in conjunction with the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

---

From: Chabad.org Magazine <inspiration@chabad.org> date: Feb 24, 2021, 10:51 PM subject: How to Celebrate Purim @ Home: 10 Tips

### **Down to the Details**

#### **An Essay on Parshat Tetzaveh**

**By Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz)**

While Parshat Terumah deals primarily with the Tabernacle's outer structure, Parshat Tetzaveh deals with what is inside, its inner workings and the daily routine within its confines.

For this reason, one section of the parshah deals with the priestly garments, in which the Torah emphasizes: "And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they enter the Tent of Meeting, or when they approach the Altar to minister in the holy place, so that they not bear iniquity and die!" This is how they must comport themselves, and anyone who does otherwise puts his life at risk.

The other section deals with the Priests' investiture, describing all the tasks that must be performed inside the Tabernacle. Each part of the daily service that the Priests will later perform in the Tabernacle is already represented in the proceedings of the investiture days, although not necessarily in the same order.

Are all systems go? The section on the Tabernacle – the command, the order of the service, the construction, the dismantling, and the actual performance of the tasks - repeats itself many times, to the point where it becomes wearisome. In order to understand these numerous minutely detailed repetitions, we must first analyze the nature of the Tabernacle itself.

The Tabernacle is a type of instrument whose function is to connect the earth with heaven. To succeed in this task, it has to function properly, without any mishaps. This instrument's only test is whether it really works. If it was assembled incorrectly, even if the error was only in the minutest detail, it does not matter if one had the best intentions when assembling it – it will not work; it will simply malfunction.

The construction of the Tabernacle can be compared to the construction of a spacecraft. A spacecraft is an extremely complex structure made of a multitude of parts, each one of which must be perfectly precise. First of all, all the calculations must all be correct. Then all the parts must be manufactured, and when construction begins, everything must be done exactly according to plan. An entire team of experts pores over each stage. One team checks the accuracy of the calculations; another checks whether the work was done according to all the specifications of the plans. Then an attempt is made to assemble all the parts, and even then everything must be checked: Do the screws really fit? Are they in the right place? Did anything fall out? Have any cracks developed? Once everything is assembled, the whole apparatus must be dismantled to verify whether all is truly in order. At the end of the entire process, after the arduous preparatory process is finally complete, comes the moment when someone presses a button and the real question arises: Will the spacecraft lift off or not?

In 1988, the Soviets sent two satellites to study Mars and its moons. The satellites were operated by solar energy, and for that purpose, they occasionally had to change their wing angle according to instructions they received from Earth. A daily communication lasting a few seconds was sent to them containing thousands of commands in computer code. These commands had to be checked on a daily basis, line after line, and then rechecked, so that no error should creep in. One day, someone erred and entered one incorrect letter in one of the lines of the program. Two days

later, it was discovered that the satellite had shut down, was unable to change its wing angle, had depleted its batteries, and all contact with it was lost.

Thus, an incredibly expensive spacecraft was lost, all because of an error in one word, in one line, which caused it to shut down. The device may still exist somewhere in space, but it doesn't do anything meaningful. It changed from an instrument that could have been of great benefit to a worthless, insignificant object.

Likewise, after the assembly and construction of the Tabernacle was finished, after the anointing, the sanctification, and all the preparation, the Tabernacle had to rise heavenward – its moment of truth. In this respect, the climax of the construction of the Tabernacle is not in its "launch," but precisely in the days of investiture,<sup>2</sup> which, at first glance, appears to have been devoid of any suspense. After all, the Torah merely describes the attiring of the Priests and the bringing of the korbanot. In truth, however, there is a tremendous feeling of suspense that mounts with each and every verse in the narrative.

The Midrash relates that on each of the seven days of investiture, Moses would erect and dismantle the Tabernacle twice. After months of building the Tabernacle, and even though all appeared to be in order and the boards fit together, the Tabernacle was dismantled and rebuilt again and again.<sup>3</sup> For Moses, the fact that the boards fit together was not sufficient; perhaps it does not stand securely. They checked everything, dismantling and assembling; everything is in its proper place. And yet the tension continues to mount: Does it work or not?

On each of the seven days of investiture, the Tabernacle was assembled, Aaron entered, bringing the korban and slaughtering it. Each time, nothing happened – so the Tabernacle was dismantled. It was impossible to know where an error might have crept in, so once again everything needed to be checked from the beginning to determine what might have been the problem. As Rashi and the other commentaries explain, it was only on the eighth day, when Aaron entered the Tent with Moses and they prayed together, that the heavenly fire finally descended upon the Altar. At that moment, everything suddenly happened at once: "G-d's glory was then revealed to all the people. Fire came forth from before G-d and consumed upon the Altar the whole offering and the fat parts. When the people saw this, they became ecstatic and threw themselves on their faces."<sup>4</sup>

An entire nation – all 600,000 men, and all the women and children as well – waits with bated breath. The instructions for how to proceed are complex and detailed; the more progress that is made, the more the tension mounts. What will happen in the end? The Tabernacle is meant to be an instrument that connects the earth with heaven. Will it achieve this goal? Yet the final tasks that Moses, Aaron, and the Priests perform are precisely the least dramatic: Is the Menora in place? Was the ram offered at the right time? And then – "G-d's glory was revealed to all the people," fire descends from heaven, there is contact and a connection. The same picture appears at the dedication of the Temple as well, with all the suspense and the sigh of relief at the end.

The Tabernacle was an instrument whose every part was made with great precision. Everything had its own specifications: where it should stand, what its function is, etc. This is what makes the Tabernacle an instrument for receiving the Divine Presence. If it is made a little differently, if the Menorah is placed even slightly to the side, it will not work. Every one of these details forms the greater whole.

Importance of the details The passages describing the Tabernacle proceedings are so full of details that they are often perceived as some of the most boring parts of the Torah. Yet these details are repeated over and over again. Why does the Torah need to say exactly how the pants should be and where exactly the bells should be attached to the robe? The Torah also elaborates on the breastplate: It should have two rings, to which something else is attached, and to this attachment another thing is attached.



Why must the Torah mention these things? To teach us how to attach one clasp to another, or how to create gold settings? Even if these were indeed important details for us to know, why repeat these details so many times and enconce them in the text of the Torah for eternity?

In truth, however, this story is full of suspense, almost like a cinematic thriller. How will all the intricate plans for the Tabernacle play out in reality? Did Bezalel make everything precisely according to the instructions? Did he perhaps attach one piece at the wrong angle, causing the whole enterprise to fail?

When an ordinary garment is sewn, it makes no difference whether the seam is placed a little to the right or to the left of the proper design. But when a diving suit or space suit is produced, if it is not sewn properly and as a result a small tear develops, the result is catastrophic. This is not a children's game, where someone mistakenly moves a little out of position or three steps ahead without any major consequence. Here, it is like an untrained homeowner who tries his hand at complicated electrical repairs. Even if he has seen the electrician take a certain tool, put it in a certain place, screw it in and turn it three times with his hand, and successfully repair the problem, if the untrained individual tries to imitate these steps he will likely electrocute himself. Every detail in the parshah is intensely serious. To go too far is a fatal mistake. As Aaron was told, he should not enter the Sanctuary without wearing the robe, "so that he not die."<sup>5</sup> In essence, the Torah is telling Aaron that this is not a test. He is dealing with a mighty flame, with the holy of holies. The story of the death of Aaron's two sons relates to this very point. Nadav and Avihu, sons of the High Priest, enter, thinking that they are dealing with a simple matter. But when they make one misstep, they die as a result.

The Talmud describes the terror surrounding the High Priest's entry into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. He is forbidden to remain inside too long, so as not to frighten the people.<sup>6</sup> The Zohar comments that they would tie a rope to the High Priest's foot, so that they could pull him out if he dies while inside.<sup>7</sup> This is not because the place itself is frightening. The fact is that when inspections occasionally had to be made, people used to look inside and artisans would go in to perform renovations. If an artisan can enter, why is everyone seized with such terror when the High Priest is inside?

The answer is that it is just like electricity; it depends on the situation. On an ordinary day, it is possible to go in and touch things without ill effect. On Yom Kippur, however, all the fuses are lit, the current is flowing, and those who enter risk their lives.

Inside the Tabernacle The Tabernacle contains two vital components for forming the connection between heaven and earth. The first component is the vessels, and in Parshat Teruma we saw how they are made and what they are made of. The second component, the Tabernacle's inner dimension, is the person who uses it. The Tabernacle is not an empty instrument; it is an instrument that depends on the people who operate it. The staff can consist of several thousand Priests, as in Second Temple times, or – as in the case of the Tabernacle – it can be a limited staff of several individuals.

In Parshat Tetzaveh we see that there are functions that are indispensable for the Tabernacle's overall structure to work and achieve its purpose; without them, it simply does not respond. The entire parshah deals with service in the Sanctuary – the inner proceedings of the Tabernacle. What allows the system to operate is the inclusion of the human component, the people themselves, who are charged with ensuring that the walls do not remain merely walls but much more than that.

FOOTNOTES 1.Ex. 28:35. 2.Lev. 8–9. 3.Numbers Rabbah 12. 4.Lev. 9:23–24. 5. Ex. 28:35. 6. Yoma 53b. 7. Emor 102a.

Rabbi Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz) (1937-2020) was internationally regarded as one of the leading rabbis of this century. The author of many books, he was best known for his monumental translation of and commentary on the Talmud. To learn more visit his website. Art by Rivka Korf Studio, a Miami-based art design studio run by Rivka Korf, a coffee

lover and mother. Rivka uses her expertise and creativity to run a team that creates masterful compositions and illustrations for corporate and large nonprofit organizations. © Copyright, all rights reserved. If you enjoyed this article, we encourage you to distribute it further, provided that you comply with Chabad.org's copyright policy.

---

from: Aish.com News <newsletterserver@aish.com> date: Feb 21, 2021, 9:10 AM subject: Queen Esther's 6 Lessons for Today; Healing Division: The Jewish People's Strength Feb 18, 2021

### **Queen Esther's 6 Lessons for Today by Slovie Jungreis-Wolff**

Timeless messages that Esther wanted every man, woman and child to hear.

Queen Esther asked that the scroll relaying her story, Megillat Esther, be written and shared for generations to come. She wanted every man, woman and child in every land for eternity to hear her timeless message. Queen Esther lived a legacy that speaks to us until today.

Here are six life lessons from Queen Esther:

1. Master Silence The key to Esther remaining in the palace of Achashverosh was her keeping a secret. Mordechai told Esther not to reveal her origins, that she was a Jew. The time was not yet ripe; Esther was required to master the quality of silence.

There are times in life that we must guard our privacy or someone's confidence. How many relationships have been harmed and friendships broken because we could not keep silent? We were given a trust to keep and couldn't contain ourselves. Or we overshared and exposed intimate details of our life. In our world of social media, we are privy to many photos and conversations that should really be kept hidden. Modesty isn't just about dress. It's about living with dignity and sensitivity, knowing what and when to share, and what and when to keep private.

2. You Have a Unique Life Mission Esther is told by Mordechai that she must speak to the king and plead for her people. She replies: That's impossible. Everyone knows the rule of the kingdom: If you enter the king's chambers without his beckoning, you will be killed unless he extends his golden scepter. "I haven't been called for 30 days!" she relays to Mordechai.

Mordechai's reply gives Esther direction. "You cannot remain silent. Who knows? It might be that you were chosen to be queen just for this moment!"

Every encounter, talent and strength that we have been given is for a purpose. Each of us has our own unique spiritual fingerprints to leave in this world. G-d places us exactly where we need to be to accomplish our mission. Esther is asking us to discover the meaning of our existence.

3. Live with Courage and Compassion After accepting her mission, Esther says, "I will go to the king. And if I die, I die."

I will give it my all. I will muster the courage to do my best.

As seasons of life pass, many people are left with their regrets, If only... but the moment is lost.

Esther is telling us to seize courage, step up to the plate and at least know forever that you tried to make a difference.

In one of my mother's final interviews she was asked "What do you want it to say on your gravestone?"

She replied "I want it to say two words: I cared."

4. Look for G-d's Hidden Hand In the entire Scroll of Esther there is no clear mention of G-d. The name 'Esther' means hidden in Hebrew, 'Megillah' means revelation. Esther is revealing a powerful hidden truth.

How easy it is to think that life is a series of random events. The story of Purim could seem to be a natural story that took place over the course of many years. The king just happened to choose this sweet innocent young Jewish woman, Mordechai just happened to hear a plot against the king, the king just happened to suffer from a bout of insomnia, and all the pieces just fell into place.

Esther is urging us to wake up; see G-d's hidden hand in your every day. It's not only about the big miracles, like the splitting of the sea. It's about the little moments. G-d is in every sunrise, every soul, every success or disappointment life brings. We won't always understand G-d's ways but His presence is here, even now amidst this most challenging time our world is facing.

Esther refused to lose hope when it seemed as if G-d's protective presence was lost in a dark fog. She knew that ultimately, even if it feels as if G-d's hand is hidden, He is directing and watching over us. He will never abandon us.

5. Don't Bow to Haman Mordechai refused to kneel or bow down to Haman.

Every generation has its Haman. Any force that threatens your ability to connect to your soul or tries to cool your passion for what is right and truth is 'Haman'. Haman descends from Amalek, the first nation that tried to destroy the Jewish People after leaving Egypt. We were on a high, connected to G-d, inspired to become a blessing in this world. They tried to squash our spirit.

There will always be people who belittle your desire to be better and live higher. There will be those who mock your standing for truth, for your people, and the land of Israel. Don't crumble. Don't bow. Never lose your passion for goodness. Stay strong as Mordechai did.

6. Unity brings Strength Haman describes the Jewish people as a nation "dispersed and divided" to the king. His words are jolting. "They are constantly bickering and quarreling with each other. Don't worry about them joining together and mounting a united offensive, they can't agree on anything. No one will come to their defense because they are hated. Get rid of them."

Esther succeeds in her mission to save her people by uniting the Jews and bringing them together in prayer and fasting. And she leaves a wish for us, her children. Esther asks that we celebrate this day together with joy, parties, charity, and sending food portions to one another. Esther is telling us to create a feeling of unity and peace. The antidote to all the bickering and hatred is reaching out to one another with friendship. Unity brings strength.

Our enemies never asked, "What type of Jew are you?" No one was spared the gas chamber based on their observance or head covering.

We don't have to be the same. We must only know that we are brothers and sisters, one family.

Stop judging. Start loving.

May you have a joyful Purim.

---

from: Jewish Action <alerts@ounetwork.org> date: Feb 24, 2021 10:04

**Speaking with Rav Hershel Schachter** Interview by Rabbi Shaul Robinson Spending time this summer in the picturesque town of Tannersville, New York, where Rav Hershel Schachter—a rosh yeshivah at Yeshiva University, senior posek of OU Kosher and a leading posek in the Modern Orthodox community—has spent many summers, I had the opportunity to ask him to share his reflections on how Covid-19 has impacted the halachic process. In our hour-long discussion, we talked about the nature of the halachic questions that have arisen since the onset of the pandemic, the volume of questions, and the new way in which piskei halachos are being disseminated.

Perhaps no adjective has been applied to Covid-19 more than the term "unprecedented." In addition to the devastating toll the disease has unleashed in terms of deaths and illness, the challenges posed to every aspect of our religious lives came upon us without warning. From the closing of shuls, schools and yeshivos to challenges in every aspect of halachah—including observing yamim tovim such as Pesach and Rosh Hashanah, keeping the laws of mikveh, attending levayos and visiting shivah homes—our community found itself requiring answers to questions we never thought we would need to ask.

And yet, during these months, we have been blessed with the most extraordinary leadership. Klal Yisrael's senior posekim have not merely given us spiritual and moral encouragement but have ruled in matters of halachah in ways few could ever have imagined. As a member of the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), I myself have benefited—sometimes on a daily basis—from the halachic guidance of Rav Hershel Schachter, shlita, and Rav Mordechai Willig, shlita.

\*\*\*\*\*

My career as a rabbi, first at Cambridge University in England and subsequently on Manhattan's Upper West Side, has brought me into contact with many Jews who question the capacity of halachah to respond to modern-day challenges. In those very fear-filled weeks when the pandemic first struck our community, a few Orthodox voices were heard on social media and in print media questioning if the halachic system could adequately deal with the impending crisis. "The Orthodox rabbinate has proven to be out of touch with the people they serve and unresponsive to their needs," opined one journalist.

And yet, those dire, if predictable, comments proved to be completely wrong. Instead, we observed once again that "lo alman Yisrael—we are not a leaderless generation." We are blessed with posekim, great leaders who have spent decades immersed in learning and teaching Torah, who are able to grasp the essence of the situation and calmly and clearly issue guidance—halachic rulings that are, on the one hand, seemingly unprecedented but, on the other hand, rooted in our Torah and mesorah.

It was eye-opening listening to Rav Schachter's insistence—an insistence I find astonishing—that from a halachic point of view, nothing in this Covid-19 situation is unprecedented! Only a posek who is familiar with every detail of the entire corpus of halachah, and experienced in answering questions of staggering complexity and significance on a daily basis, could possibly respond to the crisis we are experiencing.

Malcolm Gladwell speaks about the "10,000 hours" necessary to acquire the kind of expertise that prepares one to function in times of unique challenge. L'havdil, Chazal tell us, "You cannot compare one who has reviewed his learning 100 times to one who has reviewed 101 times."

Like most people, I do not cope well under extreme stress. On occasions when I have to deal with serious situations—such as, G-d forbid, a she'eilah pertaining to a life-and-death situation—I find that my emotions take over and thinking objectively and rationally becomes extremely challenging. Rav Schachter is famously a very emotional person, as is often evidenced during his speeches. But only a posek of his caliber can set aside his own emotions to calmly and unflinchingly lead in times such as these.

At the end of our conversation, Rav Schachter stated that great rabbanim can be considered as if "married" to the Torah, as they are able to intuit the correct answer to a question without deliberation. "Does that apply to you?" I asked. "No, that doesn't apply to me," he responded adamantly. "I don't have that yet."

It was in the word "yet" that I found encouragement. For I was sitting the day before Tishah B'Av, in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, with one of the greatest posekim of our time, who insists that not only does Torah have the answers to guide us through every difficulty but that the future holds promise. It became clear to me that even when everything has changed, fundamentally nothing has changed. We have our Torah. We can delight in it, we can learn it, and we can take strength in it. In order to meet whatever challenge we may be called upon to face, we can never allow ourselves to stop growing. Baruch Hashem, we have leaders and posekim to guide us every step of the way.

Rabbi Shaul Robinson: Did the Rav ever imagine that he would one day have to pasken that all our shuls and yeshivos should close? How does a posek cope with unprecedented times and with getting hundreds of questions from all over the Jewish world? Rav Hershel Schachter: Of course I never imagined this, but I don't think I answer more questions now than I do during an ordinary week. In the course of a year, people ask me she'eilos all

day long. Many of the she'eilos are very serious, some concerning life and death. I don't think the recent she'eilos are more serious than those I normally get in the beis midrash.

RR: When did the Rav come to realize that the correct thing to do was to pasken that all the shuls should close? RS: I was learning in the beis midrash on Shushan Purim, which was a Wednesday. The beis midrash was half empty, because many students had already gone home. Rabbi [Marc] Penner [dean of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary] came in at around 4 pm and suggested I ask my doctor whether I should stay or not [due to the news regarding the virus]—I'm close to eighty.

I didn't take it so seriously and didn't call my doctor until around 5 PM. The doctor recommended that I go home and stay home. So I took my tallis and tefillin home, and I stayed home. I left all my sefarim in the beis midrash—I didn't realize it was going to be for months and months.

RR: I understand there was a conference call with many leading rabbanim, which took place in the days after Purim. At that point, the scale of the developing emergency and risk was not yet fully known. Most of the posekim, as well as medical experts, on the call felt that it was premature to close the shuls. The situation was serious, but it was not yet clear that this was absolutely necessary. Rav Schachter disagreed. Why was it so clear to the Rav? RS: At first the consensus was to keep the shuls open. One of the doctors said it had not reached the point of [pikuach nefesh]. But I felt it was safek sakanah (a potential danger). I said, "You don't have to wait until it reaches the point of pikuach nefesh. If there's a possibility that it can reach that point, then you're not allowed to go to shul. [Right now] it's a safek sakanah [and that's enough to warrant closing the shuls]." Within twelve hours, everyone's opinion changed.

Ein somchin al hanes. One should not rely on miracles. Obviously, the Ribbono Shel Olam answers our prayers, but still, when there is a sakanah, a dangerous situation, we have to protect ourselves.

It is said that Reb Velvel Soloveitchik remarked that he is not as great as his father Reb Chaim. Reb Chaim Soloveitchik had such keen insight with regard to political issues that he would be able to tell you what would happen in fifty years if you went to the right, and what would happen if you went to the left. "I don't have that ability," said Reb Velvel, "but I think I have a ma'alah [advantage] over my contemporaries—at least I can see what's under my nose!"

I can see what's under my nose. And it was clear to me that it was a safek sakanah.

RR: One of the great changes observed during the pandemic was an acceleration of the use of technology in the halachic process. Even before Covid, congregants had been e-mailing, texting and WhatsApping questions to their rabbis. But when a she'eilah needed to be asked of a posek, people most commonly sought an in-person meeting, or at least a phone call. The sheer number of she'eilos that communities have recently faced, along with the need for social distancing, meant that a different system was urgently needed.

I know, for example, that the RCA began holding regular Zoom meetings with senior posekim, where questions could be submitted in advance. How did the process of receiving and answering many hundreds of questions work? RS: Rav Reuven Taragin [dean of overseas students at Yeshivat HaKotel] would send me a list of questions, or the RCA would interview me. The questions were e-mailed to me. I would [hand]write a response in Hebrew. My wife would scan my response—I don't know how to use the Internet—and e-mail it back. [For the sake of clarity], a group of younger roshei yeshivah at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary became involved in editing the teshuvos and adding mareh mekomos. The teshuvos would then be translated into English and placed on a web site.

RR: Before Pesach we all thought this was going to last a few weeks, but it's been going on for months and the she'eilos seem endless. I'm on the WhatsApp groups that were feeding she'eilos to Rav Schachter. Would the Rav say that these unprecedented times call for unprecedented responses?

RS: There weren't that many unprecedented she'eilos. I took most of what I paskened [rulings] straight from the Gemara or the Shulchan Aruch, or halachic opinions I heard b'feirush (explicitly) from Rav [Joseph Ber] Soloveitchik. I was fortunate to have been in the Rav's shiur for ten years, from 1957 to 1967. If you paid attention to the shiur, [you realized that] in many, many cases, the Rav was deriving the halachah from the Gemara and stating his halachic opinion.

RR: Rav Schachter has been teaching on Zoom multiple times a week, even during the summer. Who taught the Rav how to use Zoom? And does the Rav feel something is lost when teaching talmidim over Zoom? RS: Every day I give shiur. Six days a week. I still don't know how to use Zoom; my wife always sets it up for me. A lot is lost when teaching over Zoom.

RR: Is Rav Schachter concerned that some of the very novel rulings issued in these last few months might become the norm in certain communities even after the current crisis is over? For example, what if people want to hold Megillas Esther readings via Zoom on Purim every year? Or host a siyum Ta'anis Bechoros over Zoom? Or conduct mechiras chametz virtually? Isn't there a danger in creating new halachic precedents? Is that something a posek has to take into account? RS: There is a danger, but we have no choice. You can't expect someone to go around reading the megillah for 1,000 people in their homes. B'she'as ha'dechak (in an extenuating circumstance), you have to rely on kulos (halachic leniencies). So this Purim we paskened that one is yotzei Megillah (fulfills the requirement to hear the Megillah) via telephone.

RR: Was there a havah amina (initial supposition) to say that we shouldn't do Zoom Megillah readings, in order to prevent the ruling from being misapplied in the future, when people might consider it a new, viable option? RS: No, I don't think so. B'she'as ha'dechak we are meikil (rule leniently). There may be reason to worry that some might use the leniency when it's not she'as ha'dechak, but we have no choice. If we want to be yotzei the mitzvah this year, what's the alternative? Tell people not to fulfill mikra Megillah this year? I don't think that's right.

RR: In a recent shiur, Rav Schachter mentioned that sometimes a posek knows intuitively what the answer is to a she'eilah. Does this reflect Rav Schachter's own approach? RS: That does not apply to me. During his last few years, when Rav Soloveitchik was ill, he was not always able to discuss things at length. The head of the Kashrus Commission of the RCA called me up and asked me what the din is on a particular issue. I said, "I don't know, I have to look it up in the Shulchan Aruch." He said, "Before you look it up, what do you say?" I said, "I have to look it up." [He persisted.] "But what's your feeling before you look it up? The Rav used to say that he always has an intuitive feeling." I said, "The Rav is the Rav. I'm not the Rav. I don't have that feeling."

Rabbi Shaul Robinson is rav of Lincoln Square Synagogue.