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from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org> date:
Mar 2, 2023, 11:14 AM subject: Rabbi Zvi
Sobolofsky - Ignoring the Obvious, **Acknowledging the
Concealed**

Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky

Ignoring the Obvious, Acknowledging the Concealed
Although Purim and Pesach commemorate two
miraculous events in our history, the nature of these
miracles is entirely different. Purim celebrates the
prototype of a hidden miracle, whereas the events
surrounding yetzias Mitzrayim were an open

manifestation of Hashem's involvement in this world.
Amalek appears at both of these pivotal moments.
Following yetzias Mitzrayim it was Amalek that attacked
Bnei Yisrael. Centuries later it was Haman, the
descendant of Amalek, that set the stage for the miracle of
Purim. Why does Amalek play a role in both the
concealed and revealed miracles that occurred?
After krias Yam Suf, the entire world was in awe of the
manifestation of Hashem's Presence. A detailed
description of the reactions of the inhabitants of Eretz
Yisrael and the surrounding areas of Edom and Moav are
related in Az Yashir. Amalek was well aware of the
magnitude of krias Yam Suf, and nevertheless attacked
Hashem's people. This reaction can only be understood if
Amalek convinced themselves that what appeared
miraculous was in fact only coincidental; that it "just
happened" that the sea split at the precise moment that it
did, that it was "just bad luck" that the sea returned to its
original position just as the Egyptians were pursuing the
Jews. One who wants to deny the obvious Hand of
Hashem in this world will convince oneself of anything
no matter how absurd it is.

Chazal highlight this attribute of Amalek by focusing on
the phrase "קרה בדרך" - Amalek "happened" to attack. The
philosophy of Amalek was that everything just happens,
and as such there was no need to fear Hashem and they
could be victorious over the Jewish people in battle if
they would have good luck. This worldview of Amalek
was the essence of Haman's plan to annihilate Klal
Yisrael. The method he used to choose a date to execute
his plan was bizarre - he simply drew lots, which is the
ultimate game of chance. Chazal once again notice the
significance of happenstance in Amalek and Haman's
mindset. When Mordechai related to Esther the tragedy
that was about to befall her people, the Megilla invokes
the phrase describing the events "אשר קרה" - just happened"
as a hint that the descendant of the original "אשר קרה" had
appeared. What is our response to a worldview that views
everything as just chance and luck?

Immediately prior to Amalek's attack, the Jewish people
had questioned if Hashem is really in our midst. After
seeing the ten makkos and krias Yam Suf and after eating
mann that fell from heaven, how can such a question have
even be asked? To ignore the obvious yad Hashem was
an invitation for Amalek to attack.

What is the way to correct this failing that brought about Amalek? Hashem would perform a miracle that really could be attributed to chance. There would not be any rivers turning to blood, and no sea splitting would save the Jewish people from Haman. Rather, palace intrigue and "coincidental" events would combine to deliver the Jewish people from Amalek's descendant. What would be our reaction to such events? Would we attribute it to good luck that Esther just happened to be in the right place at the right time? No - Klal Yisrael rose to the challenge. Led by Mordechai and Esther, the Jewish people recognized the Hand of Hashem that had been revealed, which was no less significant than the miraculous Hand of Hashem that orchestrated krias Yam Suf. The two yomim tovim of Purim and Pesach complement one another in commemorating Hashem's protection and redemption of His people. Whether displayed in an open miraculous manner or disguised by natural events, Hashem's love is apparent to all who search for it. The parshiyos that deal with the Mishkan highlight Hashem's Presence that is clear for all to see. Miracles such as the light of the menorah that remained lit and the bread of the shulchan that retained its warmth were commonplace as long as Hashem's presence hovered over the mishkan and subsequently the Beis Hamikdash. Tragically, this miraculous existence would come to an end. During galus we live in a world resembling Purim rather than Pesach. And yet, we continue to sense Hashem's Presence, albeit in a hidden way, throughout our long exile. We look forward to the day that Hashem's Presence will once again be clear for all to see. When the Beis Hamikdash will be rebuilt and the philosophy of Amalek will cease to exist, the entire world will acknowledge the yad Hashem in its full glory.

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reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org

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date: Mar 2, 2023, 5:12 PM

subject: Rav Frand - He Was Among His People
Parshas Tetzaveh

He Was Among His People

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1239 The Case of the

Woman Who Slept Through Licht Bentching Friday Night. Good Shabbos!

Aharon Became Kohen Gadol Because he was from Among the People

In this week's parsha, Aharon and his descendants are chosen to be the Kohanim: "Now you bring near to yourself Aharon, your brother, and his sons with him, from among the Children of Israel – Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, Elazar and Isamar, the sons of Aharon – to minister to Me." (Shemos 28:1) Forevermore, Aharon's descendants became the Kohanim, who did the Avodah in the Beis HaMikdash. They duchen (administer the Priestly Blessings). In the future, im yirtzeh Hashem, they will again do the Avodah in the future Beis HaMikdash. They will receive the matnos kehunah (priestly gifts). They are a privileged class.

The Medrash Rabbah connects the above-cited pasuk with the pasuk in Tehillim, "Had your Torah not been my preoccupation, then I would have perished in my affliction." (119:92) and makes the following comment: When the Ribono shel Olam told Moshe to make Aharon and his descendants the Kohanim, it bothered Moshe (that he and his descendants were not given this privilege). Hashem told Moshe, "The Torah had been Mine and I gave it to you. If not for the Torah, the world would be destroyed." In other words, He told Moshe: "What is your problem that Aharon and his sons have the Kehuna? I had the Torah and I gave it to you!"

This Medrash is difficult on two points. First, it seems strange that Moshe was upset by hearing that Aharon and his sons would be the Kohanim. Why was he upset? Was he jealous of his brother? That is impossible to accept. If Aharon was not jealous of Moshe Rabbeinu, his younger brother, because of his own sterling middos (Shemos 4:14), certainly Moshe would not be jealous of his older brother. Moshe, too, had sterling middos! So what was Moshe upset about?

Second, how did the Ribono shel Olam try to mollify Moshe Rabbeinu? If Moshe Rabbeinu was, for some reason, bothered about the Kehuna, how does it help that Hashem had given him the Torah? What does one thing have to do with the other? Furthermore, the Torah was not given just to Moshe, it was given to the entire nation! Rav Avraham Buxbaum, who is a rabbi in Miami, Florida, sent to me a Torah thought from the Yismach Moshe, Rav Moshe Teitelbaum (1759-1841; grandfather

of Rav Yoel Teitelbaum, the 'Satmer Rebbe' zt"l (1887-1979)). He says a beautiful pshat in this Medrash, explaining what was bothering Moshe Rabbeinu, and what Hashem's response was that "I gave you the Torah." The Yismach Moshe writes that Moshe Rabbeinu was not jealous of Aharon. He was perfectly happy for Aharon and his children to be the Kohanim. Rather, Moshe Rabbeinu was bothered that "If You did not make me the Kohen Gadol, it must be because there is something wrong with me." Moshe was perturbed: "What is my problem?" Truth be told, Moshe Rabbeinu had a closer relationship with the Ribono shel Olam than Aharon did. No human being in the history of the world had a closer relationship with Hashem than Moshe Rabbeinu (perhaps excluding Adam). Logic would have dictated that the role of "Ambassador of Hashem" (which is the role played by the Kohanim, and by the Kohen Gadol in particular) should be given to the person on Earth with whom Hashem is closest. "I am not jealous of my brother, but still, I wish to know, what did I do wrong?"

The Yismach Moshe says that Hashem answered Moshe: There is in fact nothing wrong with you – and that itself is the reason why you cannot be the Kohen Gadol! It is because you are too perfect!

We need to understand the role the Kohanim played in the time of the Beis HaMikdash. Who did the average Jew relate to? He brought his terumos and matnos kehunah to the Kohen, but more importantly, if he did something wrong, if he failed to fulfill a mitzvas asei (positive commandment), to whom did he go to bring a Korbon Olah? If he unintentionally desecrated the Shabbos, he needed to bring a Korbon Chatas. Who did the Jews go to when they needed someone to handle their ritual requirements? They went to the Kohen. Therefore, the Kohen must be the type of person who understands that people make mistakes. Sometimes people stumble. Sometimes people succumb to their passions. Sometimes people sin. The Kohen must appreciate that. Moshe Rabbeinu did not have that quality in his resume. Aharon HaKohen did have that quality in his resume because he himself stumbled in connection with the Egel Hazahav (Golden Calf).

Aharon knew what it meant to sin and he knew what it meant to have to bring an atonement. He knew what it meant to have to do teshuva (repenting). Therefore,

Aharon was more fit for the job of Kohen Gadol because he could say, "I have been there and done that."

Therefore, says the Yismach Moshe, this is what the Ribono shel Olam answered to Moshe: "I gave you the Torah." Moshe, you can understand that a person may relate to some things and not to others. The Gemara (Shabbos 86b) records that when Moshe ascended Heavenward (to receive the Torah) the Malachei Hashares (Ministering Angels) asked Hashem, "What is someone born to a woman doing among us?" In other words, they asked, "Why are You giving the Torah to people?" The malachim claimed that the Holy Torah should stay in Heaven "here with us, with the Holy Angels." Hashem told Moshe to respond to this challenge.

Moshe answered: What does it say in the Torah? It says "I am the L-rd your G-d who took you out of Egypt." He turned to the malachim and asked, "Were you ever in Mitzraim?" What else is written in the Torah? "You shall have no other gods before Me." Moshe turned to the malachim and asked, "Do you malachim have a Yetzer Harah for Avodah Zarah? Do you dwell among the nations who still worship Avodah Zarah?" "Do you ever do work that you need to rest on Shabbos?" Etc., etc. The point of the Gemara is that Moshe told the Malachei Hashares – You malachim do not need a Torah. We need a Torah because we are human beings. We have passions and evil inclinations. We have all the things that make us human. We are the people who need Torah. You angels cannot relate to a Torah.

The Yismach Moshe writes that this is what the Ribono shel Olam said to Moshe Rabbeinu. I gave you the Torah because you are a human being and you can relate to it. You can say about the Torah's mitzvos, "Yes. We have been there and done that. They all relate to us."

Therefore, you, Moshe Rabbeinu, should comprehend my rationale for giving the Kehuna to Aharon. Aharon needs to deal with people who did aveiros. He knows how to handle that, because he himself sinned. Just as you convinced the malachim that you deserve the Torah because it relates to you, so too, you should understand that Aharon has the job of being mechaper for those who did aveiros because kapara is something to which he relates.

Using his approach here, the Yismach Moshe also explains a Rashi in Parshas Shemini (Vayikra 9:7). Rashi

asks, why does Moshe Rabbeinu need to tell Aharon “Approach the Mizbayach?” Rashi answers that Aharon was embarrassed and afraid to approach the Mizbayach. He feared – I have shamed myself with the aveira of the Egel Hazahav and now you want me to be the Kohen Gadol? Moshe responded to him: “Why are you embarrassed? That is why you were chosen! (I’Kach nivcharta).”

This fits in beautifully with what the Yismach Moshe wrote. This is EXACTLY why Aharon was chosen to be the Kohen Gadol – BECAUSE HE HAD SINNED! He was experienced and knowledgeable about stumbling and doing teshuva. He was chosen for that reason. It is nothing to be embarrassed about.

Finally, the Yismach Moshe says, with this insight, we can better understand the pasuk at the beginning of Parshas Tetzaveh, quoted above: “Now you, bring near to yourself Aharon, your brother, and his sons with him, from among the Children of Israel...”. Aharon and his sons were chosen precisely because they were AMONG THE PEOPLE. They are very human. They know how to do teshuva, so they are appropriate for the job of accepting korbonos in the Beis HaMikdash. Moshe, you are on a different level. You have your own job – but the Kehuna is not it. The Kehuna requires an understanding of failing and possessing a Yetzer Hara, of being human. That is why Aharon was chosen to be Kohen Gadol.

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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.

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subject: S P E C I A L S - Purim: The Hidden Miracle
For the week ending 4 March 2023 / 11 Adar 5783

Purim: The Hidden Miracle
by Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov used to tell the story of a poor man who once dreamt that if he would travel to a certain bridge in Vienna, he would discover a great treasure.

After having the same dream two or three times in a row, he began the long trek by foot. Arriving in Vienna after many months, he noted that the bridge was patrolled by foot-guards and as a result he could dig at the base of the bridge only for a few hours in the middle of the night and had to laboriously cover up his work before the morning.

After digging for months, he was finally apprehended.

When the guard accused him of espionage, the Jew responded that he was simply following the dream he had in Warsaw. The guard laughed derisively: "How stupid you are to follow your dream. I too had a dream that under a pauper’s hut in Warsaw I would find a buried treasure. Do you think I would ever bother to make such a foolish trip?"

And lo and behold, the pauper went home to his own town, his own house, his own bed, and discovered that the treasure was there all the time. He didn’t have to go anywhere. All he had to do was look and he would find. Rav Nachman commonly offered no explicit moral for his parables. He used to say that even if you learn nothing from the story, at least you enjoy the story. Here, however, the moral here is clear.

We spend our lives and energies looking for excitement, fulfillment, happiness and closeness to Hashem. We somehow dream that it exists elsewhere, wherever we are

not! If we only had another job, another family, another community, then.... This story reminds us that happiness and fulfillment must come from within, that Hashem is close to us in whatever situation we find ourselves, and if all we do is look — we will find. If we don't look, however, the wealth that is literally at our feet will never be discovered. We will live and we will die never realizing who we were and never discovering who we could have been.

And, as Rabbi Zusha taught us long ago that although there is no tragedy in our not being as great as our forefather Avraham, how infinitely sad it is if we never become our essential selves.

The message of this story is important the entire year but has special connection to Purim. We often seek the Hand of Hashem in the flamboyant, the dramatic, the miraculous or the supernatural — that which is far removed from the mundane experiences of our daily lives. Purim, which is a nes nistar (a hidden, non-supernatural miracle, which could be misunderstood as a series of coincidences) occurring in galut (a time of concealment), through a heroine whose very name connotes concealment (Esther), teaches us to see Hashem and feel His loving embrace in whatever place we are. And by reminding us that surface appearances do not correspond with inner realities, ultimate purposes, and final meanings, Purim should impel all of us to search for that hidden treasure within, the core reality that underlies the superficial. And if we search, we shall surely find.

from: **The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust**

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subject: Covenant and Conversation

COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l

TETZAVEH

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Beethoven rose each morning at dawn and made himself coffee. He was fastidious about this: each cup had to be made with exactly sixty beans, which he counted out each time. He would then sit at his desk and compose until 2:00 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon. Subsequently he would go for a long walk, taking with him a pencil and some sheets of music paper to record any ideas that came to him on the way. Each night after supper he would have

a beer, smoke a pipe, and go to bed early, 10:00 p.m. at the latest.

Anthony Trollope who as his day job worked for the Post Office, paid a groom to wake him every day at 5:00 a.m. By 5:30 a.m. he would be at his desk, and he then proceeded to write for exactly three hours, working against the clock to produce 250 words each quarter-hour. Through this method, he wrote forty-seven novels, many of them three volumes in length, as well as sixteen other books. If he finished a novel before the day's three hours were over, he would immediately take a fresh piece of paper and begin the next.

Immanuel Kant, the most brilliant philosopher of modern times, was famous for his routine. As Heinrich Heine put it, "Getting up, drinking coffee, writing, giving lectures, eating, taking a walk, everything had its set time, and the neighbours knew precisely that the time was 3:30 p.m. when Kant stepped outside his door with his grey coat and the Spanish stick in his hand."

These details, together with more than 150 other examples drawn from the great philosophers, artists, composers, and writers come from a book by Mason Currey entitled *Daily Rituals: How Great Minds Make Time, Find Inspiration, and Get to Work*.^[1] The book's point is simple. Most creative people have daily rituals. These form the soil in which the seeds of their invention grow.

In some cases they deliberately took on jobs they did not need to do, simply to establish structure and routine in their lives. A typical example was the poet Wallace Stevens, who took a position as an insurance lawyer at the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company where he worked until his death. He said that having a job was one of the best things that could happen to him because "it introduces discipline and regularity into one's life."

Note the paradox. These were all innovators, pioneers, ground-breakers, trail-blazers, who formulated new ideas, originated new forms of expression, did things no one had done before in quite that way. They broke the mould. They changed the landscape. They ventured into the unknown.

Yet their daily lives were the opposite: ritualised and routine. One could even call them boring. Why so? Because – the saying is famous, though we don't know who first said it – genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety-nine per cent perspiration. The paradigm-shifting

scientific discovery, the path-breaking research, the wildly successful new product, the brilliant novel, the award-winning film. are almost always the result of many years of long hours and attention to detail. Being creative involves hard work.

The ancient Hebrew word for hard work is avodah. It is also the word that means “serving God.” What applies in the arts, sciences, business, and industry, applies equally to the life of the spirit. Achieving any form of spiritual growth requires sustained effort and daily rituals.

Hence the remarkable aggadic passage in which various Sages put forward their idea of klal gadol baTorah, “the great principle of the Torah.” Ben Azzai says it is the verse, “This is the book of the chronicles of man: On the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God” (Gen. 5:1). Ben Zoma says that there is a more embracing principle, “Listen, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut. 6:4). Ben Nannas says there is a yet more embracing principle: “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Lev. 19:18). Ben Pazzi says we find a more embracing principle still. He quotes a verse from this parsha: “One sheep shall be offered in the morning, and a second in the afternoon” (Ex. 29:39) – or, as we might say nowadays, Shacharit, Mincha, and Maariv. In a word: “routine.” The passage concludes: The law follows Ben Pazzi.[2]

The meaning of Ben Pazzi’s statement is clear: all the high ideals in the world – the human person as God’s image, belief in God’s unity, and the love of neighbour – count for little until they are turned into habits of action that become habits of the heart. We can all recall moments of insight when we had a great idea, a transformative thought, the glimpse of a project that could change our lives. A day, a week, or a year later the thought has been forgotten or become a distant memory, at best a might-have-been.

The people who change the world, whether in small or epic ways, are those who turn peak experiences into daily routines, who know that the details matter, and who have developed the discipline of hard work, sustained over time.

Judaism’s greatness is that it takes high ideals and exalted visions – image of God, faith in God, love of neighbour – and turns them into patterns of behaviour. Halacha (Jewish law) involves a set of routines that – like those of the great creative minds – reconfigures the brain, giving

discipline to our lives and changing the way we feel, think, and act.

Much of Judaism must seem to outsiders, and sometimes to insiders also, boring, prosaic, mundane, repetitive, routine, obsessed with details, and bereft for the most part of drama or inspiration. Yet that is precisely what writing the novel, composing the symphony, directing the film, perfecting the killer app, or building a billion-dollar business is, most of the time. It is a matter of hard work, focused attention, and daily rituals. That is where all sustainable greatness comes from.

We have developed in the West a strange view of religious experience: that it’s what overwhelms you when something happens completely outside the run of normal experience. You climb a mountain and look down. You are miraculously saved from danger. You find yourself part of a vast and cheering crowd. It’s how the German Lutheran theologian Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) defined “the holy”: as a mystery (mysterium) both terrifying (tremendum) and fascinating (fascinans). You are awed by the presence of something vast. We have all had such experiences.

But that is all they are: experiences. They linger in the memory, but they are not part of everyday life. They are not woven into the texture of our character. They do not affect what we do or achieve or become. Judaism is about changing us so that we become creative artists whose greatest creation is our own life.[3] And that needs daily rituals: Shacharit, Minchah, Ma’ariv, the food we eat, the way we behave at work or in the home, the choreography of holiness which is the special contribution of the priestly dimension of Judaism, set out in this week’s parsha and throughout the book of Leviticus.

These rituals have an effect. We now know through PET and fMRI scans that repeated spiritual exercise reconfigures the brain. It gives us inner resilience. It makes us more grateful. It gives us a sense of basic trust in the source of our being. It shapes our identity, the way we act and talk and think. Ritual is to spiritual greatness what practice is to a tennis player, daily writing disciplines are to a novelist, and reading company accounts are to Warren Buffett. They are the precondition of high achievement. Serving God is avodah, which means hard work. If you seek sudden inspiration, then work at it every day for a year or a lifetime. That is how it comes. As a famous golfer is said to have said when

asked for the secret of his success: “I was just lucky. But the funny thing is that the harder I practise, the luckier I become.” The more you seek spiritual heights, the more you need the ritual and routine of halacha, the Jewish “way” to God.

[1] Mason Currey, *Daily Rituals* (New York: Knopf, 2013).

[2] The passage is cited in the introduction to the commentary HaKotev on Ein Yaakov, the collected aggadic passages of the Talmud. It is also quoted by Maharal in *Netivot Olam, Ahavat Re’a* 1.

[3] A point made by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik in his book *Halakhic Man*.

<https://torah.org/torah-portion/perceptions-5781-tetzaveh-purim/#:~:text=But%20non-walled%20cities%20will%20actually%20get%20to%20read,he re%20in%20the%20story%20of%20Purim%20as%20well%3A>

Parshas Tetzaveh and Purim

Posted on February 23, 2021 (5781) By

Rabbi Pinchas Winston | Series: Perceptions

Shabbos Night

MOST OF the Jewish world will celebrate Purim on Erev Shabbos, the 14th of Adar. Shabbos itself however will be Purim for Jews living in cities that were walled back at the time of Yehoshua bin Nun. They won't celebrate Purim on Shabbos only because the rabbis didn't want people carrying their Megillas Esther on Shabbos in places lacking an eiruv. So, instead, the people of Jerusalem will read the Megillah at the same time everyone else does, on Thursday night and Friday morning. They will also give their Matanos L'Evyonim on Friday, because as the Talmud says, it is connected to the reading of the Megillah. But that is all the Purim they will celebrate before Shabbos, on which they will add “Al HaNissim” in their bentching since it is technically Purim for them.

On Sunday, they will finally have their “Mishteh,” before which they will have to fulfill their obligation of Mishloach Manos. They will not say “Al HaNissim” however in their prayers or bentching because it will already be the 16th of Adar, and no longer Purim. Hence the name “Purim Meshulash,” which basically means “Purim in three parts.” So, for all intents-and-purposes, Shabbos is normal. In Jerusalem, they will read “And Amalek came” for Maftir, and the Haftarah of Parashas Zachor again. But non-walled cities will actually get to read the regular Haftarah of Tetzaveh, which only happens every couple of years. Nevertheless, there is a connection to Purim in the parsha as well. A central part of the parsha deals with the clothing of the

Kohen Gadol, and that shows up here in the story of Purim as well:

“When he showed the riches of his glorious—kevod—kingdom and the honor of his majestic—tifferes—greatness” (Esther 1:4).

Rebi Yosi bar Chanina said: “This teaches that [Achashveros] wore the priestly clothing. [Proof is how the same terms are written with regard to the priestly vestments, as] it is written here: “The riches of his glorious—kevod—kingdom and the honor of his majestic—tifferes—greatness.” And it is written there [regarding the priestly clothing]: “For glory—kavod—and for majesty—tifferes” (Shemos 28:2). (Megillah 12a) Was Achashveros just being a despotic boor by taunting a downtrodden people whose loyalty he needed? Or was something else more profound going on, and tied to this week's parsha, that even he didn't realize or understand?

Shabbos Day

CLOTHES MAKE the man, or so the expression goes. But when it comes to the bigdei kehunah, it was a lot more than that. The clothing itself was part of the service of the Kohen Gadol, part of the process of interceding on behalf of Klal Yisroel, as the Talmud explains:

Why was the section [in the Torah that discusses] offerings juxtaposed to the section [that discusses the] priestly clothing? To tell you that just as offerings effect atonement, so too, priestly vestments effect atonement. The kesones—tunic—atonement for bloodshed... The michnsayim—trousers—atonement for forbidden sexual relations... The mitznesef—mitre—atonement for the arrogant... The avneit—belt—atonement for thought of the heart... The choshen—breastplate—of the High Priest atones for improper judgments... The ephod of the High Priest atones for idol worship... The me'il—robe—of the High Priest atones for malicious speech... The tzitz—diadem—of the High Priest atones for brazenness... (Zevachim 88b)

Thus, even though the clothing of the Kohen Gadol was made to honor his office, it was also made to allow the Kohen Gadol to intercede on behalf of the Jewish people. While the Kohen Gadol wore his unique and holy clothing, atonement occurred for the Jewish people on an hour-to-hour basis. It wasn't something to rely upon when committing a sin, but it was something to fall back on if sin happened to occur.

But that was only while a worthy Kohen Gadol wore them. The clothing itself was ineffective if worn by an unworthy kohen, and how much more so by a boorish gentile king.

But then again, was this not the message that the king was in fact sending to his Jewish constituents? “Eat, drink, and be merry!” Achashveros insisted, “since you've lost your special status, and can no longer atone for your sins, like the rest of us! So blend in and become part of the Persian family!”

It's a good thing that Achashveros didn't learn Talmud, especially Tractate Megillah. That's where it says:

Regarding Avraham it is written: "And he said, 'God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?'" (Bereishis 15:8). Avraham said before The Holy One, Blessed Is He: "Master of the Universe! Perhaps, God forbid, the Jewish people will sin before You, and You will do to them as You did to the generation of the Flood, and as You did to the generation of the Dispersion"

God told him: "No, I will not do that."

Avraham then said before Him: "Master of the Universe! How will I know this?"

God told him: "Take Me a heifer of three years old (Bereishis 15:9)."

With this, God intimated to Avraham that even if his descendants will sin, they will be able to achieve atonement through sacrificing offerings.

Avraham said before Him: "Master of the Universe! This works out well when the Temple is standing, and offerings can be brought to achieve atonement. But when the Temple will no longer be standing, what will become of them?"

God answered him: "I have already established for them the order of offerings. Whenever they read those portions, I will deem it as if they sacrificed an offering before Me, and I will pardon them for all of their iniquities." (Megil-lah 31b)

It was God's failsafe plan for the Jewish people, effective anywhere in the world and in every generation. It's the reason why we're still here, and Achashveros is not. The Torah wasn't kidding when it referred to the entire Jewish people as "a nation of kohanim."

Seudas Shlishis

PERHAPS THIS is the most important message of the story of Purim, and the clothing of the Kohen Gadol. It was also what drove Mordechai to put everything on the line, and take the incredible chances he did to spark the redemption.

It is the lack of understanding of this message that is responsible for the general spiritual malaise of the Jewish people today, and why so few people are driven today to do what Mordechai did back then. It doesn't matter that it was a different period of history, and that prophets still remained then and not today.

He's the same God He has always been, running His world by the same Torah He always has, and we are the same people He chose back at the beginning, over three millennia ago. Not as much has changed as we think it has, just how distant our minds have become from our hearts.

If our hearts were closer to our minds, then we'd feel how God is right there, despite the hester panim. We'd believe that, though our world seems to have drifted so far away from a Torah one, that God took this into account when He first gave Torah to the Jewish people. Just as themitzvos are as relevant today as ever, so is the Torah's narrative, of which we also are a part.

And not only is our period of history, with all of its modern insanities, part of the Torah narrative for redemption, it is the end of it. The redemption it predicted millennia ago is in our time. When the prophets, thousands of years ago, made predictions about the End-of-Days, they saw us. The only question they may have had was how many of us will see Him...Him behind the politics, Him behind the crises, and Him behind the successes and "natural" miracles.

Wherever the Jewish people go, God goes with them.

Whenever they are ready to do teshuva, He is ready to receive it. Whenever we need to atone, the means always exist. We just have to recall this, believe it, and then take advantage of it.

Melave Malkah

ONE OF the most heart-wrenching pictures I ever saw was of a curtain of shul Aron HaKodesh over the door of a gas chamber. It was the Nazi's way of mocking the Jewish people one last time as they passed under it on their way to certain death.

Was this a cruel joke by God, or His way of telling His people that their deaths were to Him like a Sefer Torah being returned to its Aron HaKodesh? Did God use the Nazi's obsessive desire to degrade Jews to express His "obsessive" love of His people, and the eternal reward He had prepared for them?

Unquestionably the latter.

Similarly, when the very unholy Achashveros donned the very holy vestments of the Kohen Gadol, he had his own message in mind. But THE King just took advantage of that to send His own message to the Jewish people: You may not see Me, but I am here with you. You may not believe in Me, but I still believe in you. When you're ready to come home, I will be waiting for you.

Perhaps this is another reason for the absence of Moshe's name in this week's parsha. In fact, Moshe Rabbeinu probably had no problem writing himself out of it, because it put the entire spotlight on God and His relationship with His people...without any intermediary. On the surface of it, Parashas Tetzaveh and Purim may seem worlds apart. But below that surface, they teach and encourage the very same message about God and His people.

Purim Samayach.

from: **Rabbi YY Jacobson** <rabiyy@theyeshiva.net> via www-theyeshiva.ccsend.com

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subject: Prepare for Purim With Rabbi YY!

February 29, 2012

Futile Revenge of a Bird

When G-d Told Haman: "Even I Could Not Destroy the Jews!"

On Anti-Antisemitism & Jewish Eternity

A fascinating Midrash compares Haman to a foolish bird

attempting to take revenge on an ocean that destroyed its nest.

This deceptively simple fable tells about the secret behind Anti-

Semitism, the inner conflict within the Jewish psyche, and the meaning of Jewish history. A journey into the heart of what it means to be a Jew.

The Frog

A lonely frog, desperate for any form of company, telephoned the Psychic Hotline to find out what the future has in store for him.

His Personal Psychic Advisor advises him, "You are going to meet a beautiful young girl who will want to know everything about you."

The frog is thrilled and says, "This is great! Where will I meet her, at work? At a party?"

"No," says the psychic, "in a biology class."

The Bird and the Sea

As our brothers and sisters in Ukraine face brutal uncertainty, let us pay heed to a Midrash about the Purim story which occurred in present-day Iran, in ancient Persia.

It is a fascinating and enigmatic Midrash [1] describing the plot of Haman, the villain of the Purim story:

"What is a suitable parable for the vicious Haman? To what can he be compared? To a bird which made its nest on the shore of the sea, and then the sea came and swept away the nest. The bird said: I will not budge from here until the sea becomes dry land, and the dry land becomes the sea. What did the bird do? It took some water from the sea in its mouth and dropped it on dry land, and took dirt from the land and dropped it into the sea. Its friend came and stood alongside. He said to the bird: You ill-fated, hapless one! How do you ever hope to succeed in destroying the sea?"

"Similarly, G-d said to Haman the Evil One: Fool of fools! I myself planned to destroy the Jewish people and was unsuccessful, as it is written [2] 'He intended to destroy them [and would have] were it not that Moses, His chosen one, stood before Him in the breach to return His wrath from destroying,' and you, Haman, think you will be able to decimate and annihilate them?! I swear by your life, that your head will be in place of theirs; they will be saved and you will be hanged." At first glance, the Midrash is saying that the annihilation of the Jews is as impossible and ludicrous as the draining of the ocean, beak-full by beak-full, by a bird. The bird is so blinded by its anger at the sea for destroying its nest, that it does not realize the absurdity of its quest.

Yet the Midrash is perplexing.

1) The role of a metaphor in Midrashic and Talmudic literature is to explain and clarify a difficult concept, an abstract idea. What is the concept being clarified via this metaphor of a bird attempting to drain an ocean? What component of the Haman story begs for enlightenment to be understood only via this metaphor?

2) In the Midrashic fable, the sea first sweeps away the bird's nest, arousing its quest for revenge. What is the paralleled

meaning of this sequence of events? What did the Jewish people – compared to the sea – do to Haman – compared to the bird -- to trigger his desire to destroy them? Is the Midrash suggesting that we, the Jews, were guilty of his hatred [3]?

3) The bird was quite foolish in its strategy to dry an ocean drop by drop. It is a ludicrous proposition. Haman -- the viceroy of the greatest empire of the time, who had the full cooperation of the mightiest man in the world, King Achashveirosh – had a well-thought-out plan, and it came dangerously close to fruition. Why then is he compared to the bird trying to drain the ocean, defined as the "fool of fools?"

4) The Midrash relates that "G-d said to Haman the Evil One: Fool of fools! I myself planned to destroy the Jewish people and was unsuccessful." How can G-d be "unsuccessful?" Who can possibly stop G-d from executing His plans?

Why the Jews?

In truth, this simple fable in the Midrash captures the secret behind Anti-Semitism, the inner conflict within the Jewish psyche, and the ultimate meaning of the long Jewish story. In this Midrashic metaphor, we are invited on a journey into the heart of what it means to be a Jew and how to ensure Jewish continuity. [4].

What was it that really perturbed Haman about the Jewish people? What was it about the Jews that struck such a deep chord in so many Haman's throughout the ages, including during our very own times? "Why the Jews?" is one of the oldest mysteries of civilization. Are we really that different? The Midrash, in its own inimitable way, gives us perspective. Like that little desperate bird trying to take revenge for a nest which the sea swept away, Haman felt that as long as the Jews were alive, the nest he attempted to build would be washed away.

One millennium before Haman was born, at the foot of a lone mountain, the Jewish people received a gift that transformed their destiny and changed the landscape of human civilization. It was an experience that imbued Jewish life with the nobility of transcendence, the majesty of Divine ethics, and the grandeur of holiness. The gift of the Torah inculcated Jewish life with great moral and spiritual responsibility, but it simultaneously bestowed upon the Jewish heart, the Jewish home, the Jewish family, and the Jewish community a piece of heaven, a glow of eternity.

But what is heaven for one person may spell hell for another; piano lessons for a 4-year-old Mozart is a paradise, while for another child the lessons may be a living purgatory. Heaven for the Jews was hell for the Hamans of the world. If G-d exists, then the moral law prevails, and there must be limits to power and self-aggrandizement. If G-d exists the barbarian must vanquish himself. Haman felt that two diametrically opposing and mutually exclusive powers were competing for the heart of

humanity. If his “nest” was to take root, the Jews must be obliterated [5].

2300 years later this notion was captured by a contemporary Haman, Adolf Hitler. He remarked that “The Jews have inflicted two wounds on the world: Circumcision for the body and conscience for the soul. I come to free mankind from their shackles.”

But Haman, the avid student of history [6], knew that this was no simple task. He had seen many powerful and seemingly permanent “nests” washed away by the Jewish “sea.” He knew what had happened to Pharaoh, Sisera, Goliath, Sancheriv, and Nevuchadnezzar; how they each attempted to “drain the sea,” to eradicate the Jew once and for all and how they each ended up eradicated and forgotten themselves. Like that poor frog that ends up having its moment of glory in a biology class, all of these cultures and civilizations today appear only in history classes...

Yet the Jew still remained. Not only in Wikipedia, but in real life as well. What was the secret of this “sea?”

It is here where Haman invented an ingenious strategy. Haman believed that he had the “final solution” which had eluded all of his predecessors; he knew how to solve the “Jewish problem,” this time for real. And that was by taking beak-full after beak-full of water and dumping it on dry land.

Haman’s Final Solution

The key to this puzzle lies in reflecting on another Talmudic metaphor concerning “sea” vs. “dry land.”

The Talmud relates the following story [7]:

The Evil [Roman] Empire had prohibited Torah study. Pappus the son of Yehuda came and found Rabbi Akiva making large public gatherings and teaching Torah. Pappus said to him: Akiva! Aren’t you afraid of the authorities? And Rabbi Akiva replied: I will give you a parable.

A fox is walking along a river. He sees the fish frantically scurrying from one place to another.

He says to them: From whom are you running?

From the nets and traps of the fishermen.

Why don’t you come up to the dry land, and we will live happily together, just as our forefathers did!

The fish replied: Is it really you whom they call the cleverest of animals? You are not clever, rather a fool! If we are afraid in the place of our vitality, how much more so in the place of our death!

Rabbi Akiva concluded: If the life is tough as we are sitting and studying Torah, about which it is written “It is our life and the length of our days,” how much worse it will be if we cease to study Torah.

The Torah – Rabbi Akiva is saying -- is to the Jew what the water is to the fish. It is his necessary habitat, the source of his vitality, it is where he can live, breathe, thrive, and be most creative. Like a fish washed up ashore, the Jewish soul

deprived of Torah, will struggle to find real enduring meaning on “dry land,” in an environment unsuitable for his spiritual DNA to flourish and express itself fully. He, like the fish, will flip and flop, experiment with different ideologies and lifestyles, desperately attempting to find solace for his aching soul. He may become a Darwinist, a Marxist, a Bundist, a Buddhist, or what have you, failing to realize that by his essential nature he must remain in his water.

Haman, therefore, understood that what he had to do was dry up the sea; sever the relationship between the Jewish people and their Torah. His goal must be to antiquate the Torah, to teach the Jews how to become “land animals.” He must invite them, in the words of the fox, to “live together with us in peace as our forefathers did.” Once the fish was out of the water, it would be vulnerable to destruction.

And the time seemed ripe for this endeavor.

Out of the Waters

The Talmud asks [8], why was annihilation decreed on the Jews of that generation? Because they enjoyed the feast of that wicked man (Achashveirosh, the Persian king).” As the book of Esther relates in its opening chapter, the Persian monarch threw a major feast, and the Jews of Shushan, the capital of the Persian Empire, enjoyed the feast.

Note the words: The Talmud does not state that they were guilty of eating non-kosher food (if so, it would not make a difference who was serving the meal – a wicked or a righteous person, nor is death the penalty for eating non-kosher food), in fact, the Talmud relates [9] that there was a designated kosher section at the king’s feast. The issue was that “they enjoyed the feast of that wicked man.” It was not the food; it was the psychological transformation of the Jewish psyche: Their dignity and sense of inner worth did not stem from their own soul and identity; it came from being invited to the Persian “White House,” from rubbing shoulders with the Iranian celebrities and from having their photos appearing on the front pages of “The Shushan Times.” As they took their places among the Persians, Medians, Babylonians, Chaldeans and the other nationalities at the feast, they felt that they finally “made it.” After seventy years of exile, they had set themselves free from the “Jewish stereotype,” they were now a member of equal standing in the family of nations at Achashveirosh’s table [10].

Alas, the fish left the water and it was given a royal welcome! Everybody was cheering for the fish which finally made it out of its “prison,” the fish was flipping and flopping to demonstrate its excitement. But inside – it was dying...

This, then, was Haman’s strategy: Dry up the sea, take the Jews out of the water, introduce them to dry land, and they will become vulnerable to destruction.

So “G-d said to Haman: Fool of fools! I myself planned to destroy them and was not able to do so... and you, Haman, thought you would be able to decimate and annihilate them?!” This divine response captures the essence of Jewish existence. G-d Himself, so to speak, could not destroy the Jews. Why? Because the Jew is one with G-d at his or her very core. that innate connection and oneness can never be obliterated because it is intrinsic and essential. Just as no one can destroy G-d, no one can destroy His people, as the prophet Malachi says, "I G-d have not changed, and you have not been destroyed." G-d says: Even I cannot destroy them, because at their core they are Divine; it is not something that anyone can change. It is who they are. The Jew is the manifestation of the Divine light in this world.

The relationship between the Jew and Torah is innate, intrinsic, and essential, and it can never be severed; only eclipsed. Unlike the fish, the Jew can never really leave the water. What occurred at Sinai was that Torah had become part of the very DNA of the Jew; he can love it, he can hate it, but he can't ignore it. He can embrace it, he can run from it, but he cannot stop being defined by it, if sometimes only negatively.

Jewish DNA

The Anti-Semites of the world never loved secular, modern, and assimilated Jews any more than religious and observant Jews. They acutely felt that the Jewishness of the Jew is embedded into his or her very essence, no matter the amount of “nose jobs” or "soul jobs" he or she undergoes.

And paradoxically, this very truth has become our very source of eternal life. Since the Jewish people can never sever their relationship from Torah, our sea can never dry, and our existence can never be obliterated.

This is what G-d is telling Haman: Even I have tried... When the Jews sinned, I planned to destroy them, but I could not because My relationship with them proved deeper than all of our “issues” with each other. It is like the relationship between parents and children: Parents sometimes harbor deep resentment toward the behavior of children who make their lives miserable. Sometimes a parent has been tempted to write-off a child, to stop helping him, even to stop loving him. But they can't... The inner bond proves far more powerful. “A kind is a kind,” a child is a child.

Haman's strategy was brilliant, but he failed to understand “vos eiz a yid,” what is a Jew. He did not realize that Torah to the Jew is what the piano was to Mozart, and even more. The fish will never fully leave the water, and the Jews will never die. And this gives us all perspective on how we ought to view and embrace each Jew, no matter who he or she is. If he was Jewish enough for Hitler to send him to the gas chambers he is Jewish enough for me to love him, embrace him and be there for him. We need to be here for each other unconditionally, and we ought to remember that as we become more saturated with

Yiddishkeit and Torah, we bring light and salvation to each of our brothers and sisters.

(This essay is based on an address by the Lubavitcher Rebbe on Purim 5720 (1960) and Purim 5724 (1964)).

[1] Esther Rabbah 7:10. [2] Psalms 106:23. [3] The Yafah Anaf to Midrash ibid. suggests that it was Haman's revenge against the war of the Jews against his great-great-grand father Amalek. Yet this begs the question: Amalek, too, launched an unprovoked war against the Jewish people when they left Egypt. [4] For alternate explanations for this Midrash, on the Kabbalistic and Chassidic realm, see Or Hatorah Megilas Esther; Sefer Hamamarim 5629 p.87; Pelech HaRimon Shemos Megilas Esther pp. 370-379. In essence, this essay, based on Sichas Purim 5764, presents the Kabbalistic explanation in relevant language. [5] This is the depth behind the famous Talmudic metaphor about the “pit” and the “mound” (Megilah 14a), explained at length in Sichas Purim 5725, translated and discussed in a previous Purim essay. [6] See Talmud Megilah 13b. [7] Berachos 61b. [8] Megilah 12a. [9] Megilah ibid. Esther Rabah 2:13. [10] See at length the Sichos of Purim 5722, 5726, 5727 (1962, 1966, 1967). Likkutei Sichos vol. 31 pp. 170-176 and references noted there. This is one of the most prevalent themes in the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Purim Farbrengens (gatherings) over the years, as he fought for the soul of American and world Jewry.

from: Ira Zlotowitz <Iraz@klalgovoah.org>

date: Mar 2, 2023, 7:03 PM

subject: Tidbits • **Parashas Tetzaveh - Zachor**

REMINDERS

We fulfill the positive Torah commandment of Zecharas M'chiyas Amalek, to remember to eradicate Amalek, through the special krias haTorah of Parashas Zachor (Devarim 25:17-19). The baal korei must have in mind to be motzi the participants in this mitzvah through his leining. One should understand the meaning of the words of these pesukim (see Parashah section below.) Many congregations say yotzros for Parashas Zachor during shacharis. Two sifrei Torah are taken out. The haftarah for Parashas Zachor is read. Av Harachamim is omitted.

Men who inadvertently missed the leining may be yotzei with the kerias hatorah of Purim morning (in this case one should advise the baal korei to be motzi him in that mitzvah). The obligation of women in this mitzvah is a matter of dispute. The minhag in many communities is for women to try to attend Shul for the kria. Many communities hold a special keriah for women who could not attend Shul, although some advise against this practice. If a woman doesn't hear the leining, many poskim advise that she can simply read the pesukim from a chumash.

The final opportunity for Kiddush Levana is Monday, Purim night, March 6th at 11:41 PM Eastern Standard Time. Shushan Purim is this coming Wednesday, March 8th. There is an inyan of simchah on Shushan Purim as well. Tachanun and Lamnatzei'ach are omitted.

Daf Yomi: Erev Shabbos is Nazir 39. Daf Yerushalmi: Pe'ah 16.

Mishnah Yomis: Erev Shabbos is Eirubin 8:7-8.

Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rabbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to do the same!

“וְנִפְגַּעְתִּי שָׁמָּה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל” “And I shall meet there with the Bnei Yisrael” (Shemos 29:44)

On learning of Haman's decree to annihilate the Jewish people, Mordechai immediately donned a sackcloth and led a teshuvah movement. However, because of the sackcloth, Mordechai was not permitted to enter the royal courtyard. Wouldn't Mordechai want to have a presence at the royal palace at this critical period to try and intercede? Furthermore, due to Mordechai's sackcloth, his communication with Esther was restricted to sending messages via Hassoach. Shouldn't he have removed his sackcloth briefly to speak with Esther directly?

Rav Yitzchok Feigelstock zt"l explains that Mordechai was demonstrating that all such decrees are a direct message from Heaven calling on the Jewish people to change. Therefore, the only true path to salvation is heeding the call to teshuvah. Political strategy, power plays and protekzia would be entirely ineffective without Klal Yisrael's heartfelt prayers and return to Hashem. In fact, only once Mordechai confirmed that the nation was engaged in tefillah and doing teshuvah could Esther undertake her hishtadlus and invite Haman to the fateful parties that led to the reversal of the decree and the festival of Purim. The pasuk refers to the Mishkan as a “place of meeting” for us and Hashem. Rav Shmuel Berenbaum zt"l quotes Rav Chatzkel Levenstein zt"l: The Chofetz Chaim had a special room where he read the distressing letters he received from world Jewry. In this dedicated room he would cry out to Hashem, beseeching Hashem to have mercy on his fellow brethren. Although we lack the actual Mishkan, we do have our places of tefillah. We must establish our places of prayer as the true place to seek help, as Hashem always hears our prayers.

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date: Mar 2, 2023, 11:07 PM

subject: Rabbi Reisman's Chumash Shiur

5782 Topic – Why Moshe Rabbeinu's does not appear in the Parsha

As you know, in Parshas Tetzaveh Moshe Rabbeinu's name does not appear. In the Shach Al Hatorah found also in the Nachal Kedumim which is the Chida on the Parsha, they write the lesson from the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu's name does not appear in the Parsha is (שלא יקלו עצמן). A person has to be careful what he says about himself. Don't say negative things about yourself. Moshe Rabbeinu shouldn't have said it and because he said it it came true and he ended up having a Parsha without his name in it.

(שלא יקלו עצמן) It is a common theme that we know that Al Tiftach Peh L'satan. Don't say things that are not proper. Moshe Rabbeinu said as is found in 32:32 (מִהְיֵי נָא, מִסְפָּרֶךָ) erase me from Your Sefer. He shouldn't have said that, and therefore, that is a lesson. It is a lesson that we know. We try not to say negative things.

Let me share with you a question that I have. Rav Chaim Kanievsky has a Sefer on things that are Segulos for remembering. As you know, Rav Chaim has an incredible memory and he has knowledge of Kol Hatorah Kulo which is really incredible. He writes in one of his Kuntersin things that are helpful to a person that a person should be able to remember. One of the things is that a person should say I have a terrible memory and I always forget everything. A person should say that. Can you imagine that a person should say that I have a terrible memory and I always forget everything. That is my best recollection of what he said.

My question is a person should say that I always forget everything? Isn't that terrible? It is one of the biggest Tzar that a Yid has the pain of learning and forgetting. It is very painful when we learn and we forget. We know it is that way and it is part of the Tzar of Limud Hatorah the fact that we tend to forget things.

So why is it that when it comes to such a thing Rav Chaim says that it is a good thing to say it, that a person should say it. Why isn't that Al Tiftach Peh L'satan? I don't know. But right now I will do anything to be able to remember things a little bit better and certainly if Rav Chaim says it is a good thing then I am going to say it. That I should have Siyata Dish'maya that I should remember things B'ezras Hashem. At least I will remember to say this particular thing.

3 – Topic – A Vort directly on a Posuk in the Parsha

Let us start with the first word 27:20 (וְאָמַרְתָּ). The Parsha begins with (וְאָמַרְתָּ תְצַוֶּה) and you should command and as you know it is very unusual. Besides that it doesn't say Moshe Rabbeinu's name but okay there is a reason for that. Besides that it doesn't say Moshe Rabbeinu's name why (וְאָמַרְתָּ תְצַוֶּה), it should say Tzav Es Bnei Yisroel. What is the (וְאָמַרְתָּ)?

There is a Klei Yakar in Parshas Ki Sisa 30:23 which also has the word (וְאָמַרְתָּ) and the Klei Yakar refers back to our Posuk in Parshas Tetzaveh that Moshe Rabbeinu is the source of miracles. Moshe Rabbeinu is the source of things that have

Nitzchios. What Moshe Rabbeinu did had permanence. (ואתה) when it says (אתה) it means it should come from you, it should be something that comes from you. From you meaning from your Kochos Hanefesh. Moshe Rabbeinu did the Nitzchios.

(ואתה תצננה) says the Klein Yakar the Parsha of the Menorah is in Parshas Emor it is not in this week's Parsha to light the Menorah. What is in this week's Parsha the Ner Hamaravi (להעלות נר, תמיד). It says one Ner. Over there it says Neiros and here it says Ner. Here it is the Ner Hamaravi. (ואתה תצננה) Moshe Rabbeinu with your Kochos Hanefesh you command that it be lit. it should come from you the lighting of the Ner Hamaravi. When it says (אתה) it shows something of a permanence.

What is Gevaldig is that in next week's Parsha Parshas Ki Sisa when it talks about the Shemen it says 30:23 (ואתה קח-לך, רשמים) (ראש). What does the (אתה) have to do? Regarding the Shemen Hamishcha, the Gemara in Horayos which we are learning in the Mishmar on Daf 11 says that the Shemen Hamishcha lasted forever. They used it for Keilim, they used it for people, they used for everything and it stayed the complete jug of Shemen Hamishcha and it lasted forever. (אתה) shows permanence.

I happen to have seen the Abarbanel says it there as well and he says that just like the Man that was put away by Moshe Rabbeinu had permanence, had Nitzchios forever, this was also forever. Ad Kan this is what the Klei Yakar says and he brings a few more times when it says (אתה).

According to this now I understand. We have the Mesorah which I don't know if it comes from a Gemara or from a Medrash but there are a number of Achronim among them the Ohr Hachaim Hakadoesh who say that Moshe Rabbeinu didn't go into Eretz Yisrael because if he had built the Beis Hamikdash it would never have been Chorev. The Ribbono Shel Olam wanted that when there would be a time of punishment the punishment should fall on Eitzim and Avanim, stones and wood and not on people, and therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu didn't go in because if he would have gone in and built the Beis Hamikdash it would have been permanent.

How do you that if Moshe Rabbeinu built it would have been permanent? That is the idea of the Klei Yakar. Whatever Moshe Rabbeinu does has Nitzchios. Moshe Rabbeinu's Torah is Nitzchi. Whatever Moshe Rabbeinu brought to Klal Yisrael personally is Nitzchi and that is the idea of (אתה). It is a code word, it should come from you. Tzav Es Bnei Yisrael is to Klal Yisrael and you are a member of Klal Yisrael. (אתה) when it personally comes from you that is something else.

from: contact@michalhorowitz.com
date: Mar 2, 2023, 11:03 AM
subject: [New post] Zechiras Amalek: An Ancient Enemy, A Modern Foe

Zechiras Amalek: An Ancient Enemy, A Modern Foe By Michal Horowitz on Mar 02, 2023 08:01 am

This Shabbos we will read Parshas Tetzaveh. The sedra speaks of the bigdei kehunah (the priestly vestments), further details regarding the Mishkan, as well as the mizbayach ha'zahav (golden altar).

A second sefer Torah will also be taken out from the aron kodesh, and from this we will read from Sefer Devarim 25:17-19, to fulfill the mitzvas asay d'Oraisa of וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לְךָ וְצָמְלִקְךָ, Remember that which Amalek did to you on the way as you were leaving Egypt. At the end of his life, Moshe exhorts us to remember and never forget – לֹא תִשְׁכַּח – the attack of Amalek against the tired, the weary, the weak ones at the rear. Moshe is referring to the Amalekite attack against the newly freed Israelites slaves forty years prior, when the nation was but a few weeks away from the Exodus (Shemos 17:8-16). With great savagery and daring, Amalek – a nation that does not fear G-d – had no qualms or fears about launching an attack against Am Yisrael.

Why is this Torah portion publicly read every year the Shabbos before Purim, when men and women (and many children) all go to hear these ancient words of Torah read aloud, in fulfillment of the mitzvah of 'zachor' 'Thou shall remember'? The wicked oppressor, Haman, who stood up to destroy, kill and obliterate all Jews (Esther 3:13) was known as הַמֶּן הַהֶאֱגָגִי (Esther 8:3); Haman, a descendant of Agag, King of Amalek. Hence, before we read of the salvation on Purim with Mikrah Megillah, we fulfill the mitzvah of Zechiras Amalek; not only do we remember Amalek, the grandson of Eisav (Bereishis 36:12), and Haman ha'rasha m'zerah Amalek, but we must remember every Amalek in every generation that rises to destroy us.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the Rav zt'l, teaches in the name of his grandfather Rav Chaim Brisker zt'l, that Amalek is anyone in every generation who rises up to destroy us.

This past Yom Rishon 5 Adar 5783 (Sunday 2/26/23), 21 year-old Hillel Menachem Yaniv HY"D and his brother, 19 year-old Yagel Yaakov Yaniv HY"D, were shot at point blank range while driving through the Arab village of Huwara on Route 60, the primary north-south traffic artery in Judea and Samaria.

The two brothers were hesder yeshiva students, and were killed while driving back to their yeshivot from their home in Har Bracha.

Hillel, a student in Kiryat Shemona in northern Israel, had recently completed his military service in the Israeli navy, and was set to resume his yeshiva studies. Yagel Yaakov, a student at the Givat Olga hesder yeshiva, had been helping his yeshiva open up a branch in Tirat HaCarmel, and was set to begin his pre-induction process ahead of his formal draft into the army. Hours after the attack, the boys' mother sent a recorded voice message to the youth of Har Bracha. "I spoke with my children

“הבו לה' כבוד שמו שאז מנחה ובהו לפניו” — Give unto Hashem the Glory of His Name, take up an offering[5] and come before Him.”

With these words, written in his characteristic brief style, the Seforno lays out before us three distinct functions (“three dinim”) that are related to the Mishkan and its components, as well as an explanation of their distribution between the Parshiyot of Terumah and Tetzaveh. These parshiyot describe what is required in order to attain the following objectives:

To cause the Shechinah to reside among Bnei Yisrael, through the Mishkan and its keilim.

To bring about the vision of kevod Hashem, through the morning and afternoon korbanot.

To give honor to Hashem and seek His Countenance, through the ketoret.

This final avodah takes place on the inner “golden” Mizbeach in the Mishkan, as opposed to the offering of korbanot that takes place on the outer “copper” Mizbeach in the Courtyard. Both of these are called “mizbeach,” although they have different functions, and even act in different “directions.” The outer Mizbeach serves to bring the Shechinah “downward,” while the inner Mizbeach sends an expression of honor to Hashem “upward,” of account of Him accepting our avodah, as well as to seek His Countenance. The key to understanding the differing functions of the two mizbechot lies primarily with observing the place in the Torah where they appear.

Some Difficulties in the Pasuk

Having discussed briefly the function of the inner Mizbeach, as explained by the Seforno, we now come to the main topic of this chapter, of the relationship between halachah lesa’ah and halachah l’dorot — a halachah that was only relevant at a particular time in history and halachah as it applies for all generations — and how both are addressed by the Torah.

When we consider the concluding pasuk of the parshah, we see that there are a number of difficulties that may be raised.

Kefeilut (Redundancy) — The pasuk states the halachah of “אחת בשנה” — twice.

Kefeilut (Redundancy) — The pasuk describes the avodah — “וְיִכַפֵּר” — twice.

The word “לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם — for your generations” is only mentioned in the second half of the pasuk, not in the first half.

Two Yesodot

The Sar HaTorah, R’ Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk, in his peirush Meshech Chochmah, suggests a unique way of understanding this pasuk and its component parts. In order to fully understand his approach, written in his characteristic terse style, let us first preface with two yesodot (foundations).

The first yesod comes from the beit midrash of the Vilna Gaon, who explains that the seder termed “The Yom Kippur Avodah,” which is described in Parshat Acharei-Mot, exists in two capacities:

Halachah LeSha’ah — The halachah as it applied to Aharon (and perhaps Elazar as well) in the Midbar, when he was able to enter the Kodesh HaKodashim at any time he wanted, as long as he did so accompanied by the Seder Ha’Avodah as described in Parshat Acharei-Mot.

Halachah L’Dorot — The halachah as it applies to the Kohen Gadol in subsequent generations, namely, that he may only enter the Kodesh HaKodashim once a year, on Yom Kippur.

The second yesod comes from the beit midrash of R’ Eliyahu Mizrachi, the foremost among the mefarshim to Rashi’s peirush on the Torah. The Mizrachi (Devarim 25:4 s.v. disho) tells us that we must always pay careful attention to whether the verb precedes the noun, or the noun precedes the verb, in every pasuk that we encounter.

If the verb comes first, then it attains a wider scope. For example, the Torah says (Devarim 25:4) “לֹא תִחַסֵּם שׁוֹר בְּדִישׁוֹ” — you shall not muzzle an ox while it threshes.” Since the words “lo tachsom” came first, the meaning is expanded to denote “מכל מקום — under any circumstances.”[6] In this instance, the words “lo tachsom” constitute a message in their own right, comprised of a subject (Bnei Yisrael), a verb (muzzling) and an object (prior to being qualified — anything!). Hence, there is no need to restrict the scope of the prohibition to the final words “bedisho — while it threshes.”

However, if the noun is mentioned before the verb, the scope of the verb is limited to the noun. For example, the Torah says regarding shemittah (Vayikra 25:5) “אֵת קְפִיֶּיֶךָ קְצִירֶךָ לֹא תִקְצוֹר” — the wild growth of your harvest you shall not reap.” Here, the use of the noun is specific, restricting the prohibition of reaping exclusively to “the wild growth of your harvest,” and we cannot detach it from the verb and say “mikol makom.” The reason for this is that the words, “the wild growth of your harvest” are not in themselves a sentence, as they are missing a verb, and therefore can only be seen as being connected to the verb that follows — “lo tiktzor.”

The Meshech Chochmah’s Explanation

Based on the yesodot that we just discussed, let us now present the words of the Meshech Chochmah, which will provide us with a magnificent answer to the dual references in our pasuk (Vayikra 16:3, s.v. bezot):

This is the meaning of the pasuk in Parshat Tetzaveh, which begins “וְיִכַפֵּר אֶהְרֹן עַל קַרְנֹתָיו אֶחָת בְּשָׁנָה” — Aharon shall atone on its corners once a year,” which obligates (every Kohen Gadol) to atone (at least) once a year, including Aharon. However, Aharon specifically has the possibility of performing this avodah more than once a year, any time he wishes and feels himself able to do so,[7] while once a year for him is obligatory.

However, in subsequent generations (“לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם”), the pasuk says “מִדָּם וְיִכַפֵּר אֶהְרֹן עַל קַרְנֹתָיו אֶחָת בְּשָׁנָה” — from the blood of the sin-offering of the atonements he shall atone,” for then it is possible only once a year and no more. (The reason for this is) since l’dorot there is no Cloud present,[8] he may only enter “once a year.” Therefore it says “אֶחָת בְּשָׁנָה יִכַפֵּר — once a year he shall atone,”[9] where the critical emphasis is that this may be done only once, not twice.

Let us summarize the way the Meshech Chochmah reads our pasuk as follows:

וְיִכַפֵּר (ללא הגבלה) אֶהְרֹן (דוקא) עַל קַרְנֹתָיו אֶחָת בְּשָׁנָה (לפחות. לעומתו, בכהן גדול לדורות) מִדָּם חֲטָאת הַכֹּפָרִים אֶחָת בְּשָׁנָה (בלבד) יִכַפֵּר עָלָיו לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם.

And Aharon (specifically) shall atone (without restrictions) on its corners once a year (at least. By contrast, regarding a Kohen Gadol l’dorot,) from the blood of the sin-offering of the atonements, once a year (only) he shall atone on it for your generations.

And so, our pasuk describes the halachah both for Aharon, the Kohen Gadol lesa’ah, as well as for the Kohen Gadol l’dorot, regarding the Seder Ha’Avodah of Yom Kippur!

[1] These pesukim teach us that the goal of the Mishkan and its keilim were to cause the Shechinah to dwell among us.

[2] This pasuk appears at the end of the perek that discusses the outer Mizbeach on which the korbanot were offered.

[3] In the parshah of the korbanot of the Miluim Days, which served as a prelude to korbanot l'dorot. The Seforno has identified two separate functions within the Mishkan. The first is bringing the Shechinah to dwell among Bnei Yisrael, which was brought about through the Mishkan and its keilim. And, the second is causing the revealed vision of Kevod Hashem to descend, which was achieved through the korbanot. The Mizbeach Haketoret, however, fulfills neither of these roles.

[4] These were the morning and afternoon tamid offerings, whose procedure has already been detailed in perek 29.

[5] The Seforno explains that in our context, the offering (minchah) is the ketoret.

[6] This includes even before the ox has started threshing; see Gemara Bava Metzia 90b.

[7] Accompanied by the Seder Ha'Avodah described in Parshat Acharai-Mot.

[8] That is, throughout the course of the year, in the way that it was for the duration of our time in the Midbar, so that the Mishkan on any given day had the kedushah that the Beit Hamikdash l'dorot only had on Yom Kippur.

[9] And not “וכפר אהת בשנה — he shall atone once a year,” in which case we would be able to explain the word “וְכִפֵּר” as extending beyond the scope of the “אֶהְיֶה בְּשָׁנָה.”

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subject: Purim Misconceptions_

Purim Misconceptions

Rabbi Avraham Rosenthal

“Rabbi, can you clear up a few issues I have?”

“What is bothering you, Mr. Fried?”

“Well, there are several aspects of Purim that I really have difficulty understanding. For example, the idea of getting drunk is very abhorrent to me. Is there really an obligation to get stone-drunk? It seems to me that it should be totally forbidden!”

IS THERE A MITZVAH TO GET DRUNK?

“This is an excellent point. The source of the mitzvah of drinking on Purim is a Gemara (Megillah 7B): Said Rava: A person is obligated ‘livsumei’ on Purim, until he does not know the difference between ‘curse Haman’ and ‘bless Mordechai.’”

“What does ‘livsumei’ mean?”

“There is disagreement among the Rishonim and the poskim. There are two basic groups, that of Rashi and that of Kol Bo. First, let us discuss the opinion of Rashi and those who understand the Gemara like him. They explain that ‘livsumei’ means ‘to get drunk.’

“Although they interpret ‘livsumei’ the same way, they disagree regarding the continuation of the Gemara. The Gemara relates an enigmatic story. Rabbah and Rebbi Zeira ate a Purim Seudah together. Rabbah got drunk and slaughtered Rebbi Zeira. The next day, Rabbah davened, and brought Rebbi Zeira back to life. The following year, Rabbah again invited Rebbi Zeira to the Purim Seudah, but Rebbi Zeira refused, saying that miracles do not happen all the time.

“Some Rishonim (Rabbeinu Efraim, Meiri, and others) contend that although we are to understand ‘livsumei’ to mean ‘get drunk,’ and Chazal indeed instituted that one is to get drunk on Purim, this halacha is no longer in force. This is alluded to by the fact that the Gemara quotes this incident, showing the harmful effects of such activities.

“On the other hand, others are of the opinion that the reason the Gemara quoted the story was to indicate that Rava’s statement, ‘a person is obligated to get drunk,’ is to be taken literally. Also, from the story, itself, we see that this is the halacha, since Rabbah invited Rebbi Zeira to join him again the following year. (Pri Chadash 695:2) In addition, the Chasam Sofer points out that Rava, who was the individual who originally made the statement that ‘one is required to get drunk on Purim...’ lived after Rabbah, and after the story took place, Rava still expressed the halacha as he did. Therefore, it is difficult to say that the Gemara wished to indicate through the story that this is not the halacha.”

“Wow! There really is a halachic basis for getting drunk. What is the other opinion that you mentioned?”

“There is another group of Rishonim who hold that it is not possible that Chazal obligated us to become drunk, as this is a tremendous sin and may cause one to do serious transgressions. Therefore, they explain that the word ‘livsumei’ means ‘to be happy.’ This is accomplished by drinking more than one is accustomed to. (Beis Yosef 695 quoting Orchos Chaim, Rokeiach 239:11, Rema 695:2 quoting Kol Bo) In fact, the author of the Yesod v’Shoresh HaOvodah (12:7) points out that the correct Hebrew word for ‘to get drunk,’ is ‘lehishtaker.’ Chazal do not use this word; rather, ‘livsumei.’”

“But, I do not understand, Rabbi. According to this opinion that one should not get drunk, how does one reach the stage of ‘until he does not know the difference between ‘curse Haman’ and ‘bless Mordechai’?”

“There are several explanations to this. Some contend that one should drink enough that he cannot say all the verses of the piyut, ‘boruch Mordechai, arur Haman, barucha Esther, arurah Zeresh, baruchim kol hatzdikim, arurim kol harasha’im.’ (Tosafos, Ran) Others explain that ‘not knowing the difference’ refers to not being able to calculate the gematria of ‘boruch Mordechai’ and ‘arur Haman’ and to realize that they are the same. (Rabbeinu Yeruchom) And there is a third explanation, that one should not be able to remember which verse is first, ‘boruch Mordechai’ or ‘arur Haman.’ (Kaf HaChaim 495:16) “The common thread among these explanations is that one does not need to get stone-drunk to fulfill the mitzvah. Rather, it is sufficient for him to drink enough that he lacks clarity of thought.”

“I am very grateful to you for setting me straight. I now see that there is halachic basis for getting drunk. Practically speaking, though, what should one do?”

“The poskim are also in disagreement. The Kaf HaChaim (16) quotes the Arizal that one should get drunk. Rav Yaakov Emden (in his Siddur) tells us that his father, the Chacham Tzvi, would get drunk. The Shulchan Aruch (695) simply quotes Rava’s statement as stated in the Gemara, and the Rema understands this to mean that one should get drunk. He adds however, ‘some say that one should not get drunk, rather drink more than he is accustomed to and go to sleep, and since he sleeps, he does not know the difference between baruch Mordechai and arur Haman.’ The Mishnah Berurah (5) quotes the Pri Megadim that this is the proper thing to do.”

“But if that is the opinion of the Rema, Pri Megadim and Mishnah Berurah, why do so many great people get plastered?”

“The Biur Halacha (695, s.v. ad d’lo yada) quotes the Chayei Adam, that ‘since the miracle took place because of wine, therefore, the Sages obligated a person to get drunk, and, minimally, to drink more than he is accustomed to... However, one who knows himself -- that he will be lax with one of the mitzvos such as washing hands or bircas hamazon, or he will not daven...or he will act with too much levity -- should not get drunk, and all of his actions should be for the sake of Heaven.’ In addition, Rav Wolbe zt”l wrote a similar, if not more explicit thought in Alei Shor (vol. II, page 468): ‘A very great person, who is sure of himself, may get totally drunk on Purim. For us small people, small in learning and in Divine service, it is sufficient on Purim to be more happy (l’hisbaseim) than we are accustomed to be, and we do not need to get drunk. We should be prepared to protect the greatness of the day so that it does not, chas veshalom, turn into a day of frivolity and idleness.’

“It is clear from this that it all depends on the person. If a person will get closer to Hashem by drinking and there is no concern of laxity in mitzvos, he may do so. Otherwise, it is probably not a good idea.”
D.U.I.

“As long as we are on the topic of drinking, I have another question. I thought that after drinking intoxicating beverages, one may not daven. Yet, I see many people on Purim davening, when they are clearly drunk. Can you clarify for me the halachos of davening under the influence?”

“Actually, the Rema (99:3) justifies the practice of davening even after having drunk intoxicating beverages. He reasons that since our wines are weak, people daven even after drinking, and, especially, if one davens from a siddur, he does not have to be concerned about being a little tipsy.

“However, since the Mishnah Berurah (17) quotes the Pri Megadim that this is only a justification and it is not proper to follow this practice, let us review the relevant halachos. Depending on how much one imbibed, there are three levels of being drunk: 1) one who can still speak respectably to an important person, 2) one who cannot speak respectably to an important person, and 3) one who has reached the drunkenness of Lot, or he is totally oblivious to what is going on around him.

“One who drank a revi’is (2.9 oz. or 86.4 ml.) or more of wine, ideally, should not daven until the effects of the alcohol wear off. With other intoxicating beverages, the amount is that which would affect him to the same degree as a revi’is of wine. This is true, even if he is accustomed to drinking alcoholic beverages and does not easily become intoxicated. However, if he did, in fact, daven, he has fulfilled his obligation.

“If one realizes that by waiting until the effects of the alcohol wear off the time of davening will have passed, he is allowed to daven. However, it is recommended that he daven from a siddur.

“All of the above applies to a person who is lucid enough to speak respectably to an important person. However, if one is intoxicated to the point where he cannot do so, it is absolutely forbidden for him to daven, even if he will miss the time of davening.

“If, while in that situation, he does daven, his tefillah is considered an abomination, and upon becoming sober, he must daven again. And if, by the time he became sober, the time of davening has passed, he must make up that tefillah, after davening the next tefillah.

“These halachos apply also to Kri’as Shema and its brachos. However, if one sees that he will miss the time of Shema while waiting for the effects of the alcohol to dissipate, he should say Shema, even if he is not lucid enough to speak respectably to an important person. However, he should omit the brachos. If one read Shema while inebriated, and he sobers up before the time of Shema ends, he should read it again.”

“Can someone who is drunk recite bircas hamazon?”

“The Mishnah Berurah (185:6) rules that, ideally, one should recite bircas hamazon before reaching the situation where he cannot speak respectably to an important person. However, if he has already reached that stage, he should, nevertheless, recite bircas hamazon.

“The same applies to reciting brachos in general. If one cannot speak respectably to an important person, ideally he should not recite any brachos. Nevertheless, if he already became obligated to recite the bracha, for example, if he ate and is required to recite a bracha acharonah, he should recite the bracha, even in this situation.”
(Mishnah Berurah 99:11)

“You said that there is a third category of being drunk, where one is totally oblivious of his surroundings. How is this situation different?”

“This is the most stringent category. A person who has reached this level of drunkenness is viewed in halacha as being a ‘shoteh,’ an idiot, and is exempt from all mitzvos. He may not daven or recite any brachos, and if he does so, he has not fulfilled his obligation. Therefore, when he becomes sober, he must daven again.”

“Can someone who is drunk be counted as part of a minyan?”

“According to the Mishnah Berurah (99:10), even before one has reached the stage of the drunkenness of Lot, he should not be counted as part of a minyan.” (See also Ishei Yisrael 22:24, footnote 81 for other opinions)

LASHON HARA AND PURIM SHPIELS

“Another issue I wanted to discuss with you is the practice of belittling people during Purim shpiels. Why is this permitted?”

“There is a line of reasoning that tries to justify this practice based on a Tosafos in Gemara Succah (45A). The Mishnah describes the service in the Beis Hamikdash on Hoshanah Rabbah. The Mishnah concludes with, ‘from the hand of the children, they grab their lulavim and eat their esrogim.’ Tosafos, quoting Rashi, explains that the adults would take and eat the lulavim and esrogim of the children. Although it is normally forbidden to steal from children, in this case, it was permitted, because it was their custom and it was assumed that everyone forgave each other.

“Tosafos uses this concept to justify an apparently common medieval practice of entertaining the bride and groom at their wedding by having a mock jousting match.”

"I hope that people in our day and age don't try to reinstate the practice."

"Agreed. During the match, the combatants would sometimes tear each other's clothing and damage each other's horses. Tosafos rule that since their custom was to do so for the simcha of chassan and kallah, they are exempt from paying damages.

"This concept, that acts of simcha are, under certain circumstances, exempt from the laws of damages, also applies to Purim. The Rema (695:2) maintains that if someone injures his friend because of simchas Purim, he is exempt. This is used as a basis to permit Purim shpiels.

"However, in truth, this is no basis whatsoever, as this leniency is only applicable when there is no intent to cause harm and it is not done out of hatred. In addition, the Mishnah Berurah (695:13) contends that there is a difference between minimal and significant damage, and the custom is not to exempt one who causes significant damage. Many Purim shpiels include lashon hara and motzi shem ra, and cause embarrassment to the subject of the joke."

"I heard of one yeshivah where the Rosh Yeshivah and Rebei'im review the shpiel beforehand to determine that the jibes are not too harsh. This seems to indicate that they are willing to forego their honor. Does this permit the lashon hara?"

"I do not think so. And in this case, the lashon hara is worse, because the subject of the jokes is a talmid chocham. Even though the Gemara says that if a talmid chocham foregoes his honor it is not necessary to honor him, this applies only when it comes to honoring him.

However, he is not allowed to permit someone to belittle or make fun of him. The Gemara in several places mentions how terrible it is to degrade talmidei chachamim. One Gemara says that Yerushalayim was destroyed because of this sin (Shabbos 119b). Also there is a story about Rebbi Elazar the son of Rebbi Shimon who was punished for hearing how a talmid chocham was degraded and did not protest. (Baba Metzia 84b) (See Shu"t Yechaveh Da'as vol. V, 50 and Moadim u'Zmanim vol. II, 191 in the footnote, for a full discussion.)

"It is worthwhile to keep in mind that one never knows how much damage can be done by a joke. (Yechaveh Da'as ibid.)

LO SILBASH

"Another issue that I am having trouble with is understanding the practice of men dressing up as women, or vice versa. I thought that the Torah prohibited this."

"You are correct that there is a Torah prohibition of men wearing women's clothes and vice versa. Nevertheless, there was a custom to be lenient on Purim. The Rema (696:7) quotes this custom with an explanation that they were accustomed to do so, because of simcha. He then quotes another opinion that it is forbidden, but concludes that the custom is like the first opinion.

"The Mishnah Berurah (30), though, quotes several Acharonim who are stringent about this. He also contends that where a man is wearing only one item of a woman, and it is recognizable that he is a man, one need not protest against it, although this is incorrect dress. In addition, the Aruch HaShulchan (696:12) maintains that, although there was a custom to be lenient in the earlier generations, nowadays, one should be strict. Also, even according to the lenient opinion, this applies only to Purim itself. There was never a custom to be lenient at celebrations during the Purim season.

THE REACCEPTANCE OF THE TORAH

"Let me share with you a thought on Purim from the Chafetz Chaim. "The possuk says (Ester 9:27), 'they established and they accepted.' Chazal understood this to mean that the Jewish People experienced a willing reacceptance of the Torah that they had previously accepted at Har Sinai against their will.

"The obvious question is, how is it possible to say about the people of the generation who experienced the ten plagues, the splitting of the sea, and the receiving of the Torah at Har Sinai, where they actually heard Hashem speaking to them, that they needed to be forced into accepting the Torah? They themselves said, 'na'aseh v'nishma,' which indicates a willing acceptance!

"Rather, explains the Chofetz Chaim, Chazal are informing us of what was going through the minds of the people of that generation. They were not refusing, chalilah, to accept the Torah. However, they were concerned that they would not be able to live up to the demands of a Torah-lifestyle throughout all the generations. Would they be able to be shomrei mitzvos in foreign lands and under hostile governments? This is especially so if the Torah requires a distancing between Jew and non-Jew, something that could foster the non-Jew's hatred. Haman's decree to annihilate the Jews was prompted by the fact that Mordechai would not bow to him, since he was wearing an idol.

"What happened when the Purim miracle occurred? Achashveirosh made a complete about-face. He gave a command to hang his most important minister, about whom, not too long before, he had commanded that everyone must bow. For the nation that, several days earlier, he had ordered must be annihilated, he was now doing whatever they wanted.

"The Jews learned from this episode that it is possible to live a proper Jewish life in exile. What is expected of them is to have the desire to keep the Torah, and be willing to be moser nefesh for it. If they do their utmost, the power of the Torah will protect them and Hashem will save them.

"This is why there was a willing reacceptance of the Torah during the days of the Purim miracle. All of their doubts regarding keeping the Torah in diverse situations were laid to rest.

"A freilichen Purim!"