

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
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Purim





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Torah Wellsprings - Purim

Purim and *Emunah*

Each detail of the Megillah can be explained according to the rules of nature. But when we take a collective look at the larger picture that occurred, we clearly recognize Hashem's hand.

The Mishnah (*Megillah* 1:1) states, מגילה נקראת, בי"א בי"ב בי"ג בי"ד במ"ו לא פחות ולא יותר "The megillah is read on the 11th, the 12th, the 13th, the 14th, and the 15th [of Adar], not later and not earlier."

The sum total of the dates equals 65 (11 + 12 + 13 + 14 + 15 = 65). Bris Kehunas Olam writes that 65 is also the gematriya of Hashem's name אדני, the Name that represents that even when the world is run by the rules of nature, it is by Hashem's hashgachah. We read the megillah on these five dates, which are gematriya אדני, to internalize Purim's lesson that the world is led by אדני, even when it seems the world is run by nature.

The Mishnah adds, לא פחות ולא יותר - the Megillah is not read before י"א אדר, nor after מ"ו אדר. The Turei Even asks that this addition seems superfluous. After stating the days we can read the megillah, isn't it obvious that isn't read before or after these days?

The Bris Kehunas Olam answers, the date before is the 10th of Adar, and the date after is 16th. $10 + 16 = 26$, the gematriya of Hashem's name הוי"ה, the name that represents Hashem's revealed leadership of the world through miracles. The Mishnah emphasizes לא פחות ולא יותר, we don't read the megillah on the 10th and on the 16th because the message of the megillah isn't to teach us about הוי"ה, that Hashem can perform miracles. That's Pesach's lesson. On Purim we discover אדני, that nature is but a manifestation of Hashem's presence.

The Kedushas Levi (*Kedushah Rishonah*) writes, "We will explain, with Hashem's help, the reason Hashem's name הוי"ה isn't written explicitly in the megillah, and neither are any of Hashem's other names written in the megillah. Hashem's name is only hinted at in the ראשי תיבות and the סופי תיבות of the megillah, as the Arizal teaches. For example, the *roshei teivos* of ה"מלך ו"המזן ה"יום spell הוי"ה. And the final letters of ל"י שו"ה ל"י spell הוי"ה, and there are other examples too..."

The Kedushas Levi explains that Hashem's presence wasn't revealed during the period leading up to the great Purim miracle. The megillah mirrors this and Hashem's name therefore not explicitly mentioned. Nevertheless, Hashem's name is found in the *roshei* and *sofei teivos* of the megillah, because through examining all the episodes from the megillah, Hashem's presence became evident.

The Kedushas Levi writes, "Hashem's name is written in *roshei teivos* or the *sofei teivos* of several words, for, Hashem's Kingship was seen...through the episodes that happened in the times of Mordechai and Esther, and an episode is comprised from several words. By studying the the series of episodes, collectively, one recognizes Hashem.

This approach to recognizing Hashem is very applicable in our times because we generally don't witness open miracles. The world is run according to the rules of nature. Yet, within the nature, we can see Hashem's hand, leading us in wondrous ways.

Miracles Today

Chazal tell us (*Megillah* 17) : הקורא את המגילה : למפרע לא יוצא, "When one reads the megillah in backwards, he isn't *yotzeh*."¹ The

1. The Minchas Elazer of Munkatz zy'a said לקורא את המגילה למפרע לא יוצא can mean "Someone who reads the

Baal Shem Tov *zy'a* explains that this is referring to someone who reads the megillah and celebrates only the wonders that Hashem performed thousands of years ago. He isn't *yotzei*, because as we rejoice the miracles of the past, we must acquire awareness that miracles continue to happen in our time, too.

The Chidushei HaRim *zy'a* would often say: The Yidden living in Shushan heard the news that Vashti was assassinated because she refused to come to Achashveirosh's party, and they heard the story of Bigsan and Seresh. When Esther became queen, it was the talk of the town. But they thought it was nothing more than current events, interesting news tidbits that didn't carry too much weight or importance. If someone were to come into the beis medresh to tell the latest news, the scholars would say, "Let's learn Torah. Why should we discuss the news?" However, all those episodes became the megillah itself!

Things are happening in our times too, and they aren't trivial. The time will come

when we will look back and celebrate the wonders and miracles Hashem is performing for us, too.

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Ki Sisa*) writes, "There are many things happening around the world, and we often wonder why is Hashem doing this? But years later we understand that everything was for a purpose. Something good always comes from what we initially thought was unimportant and trivial. This is what happened in the Purim story: Vashti was killed; Esther was brought to the palace, and all the other countless details, which all led up to the miracles that saved *klal Yisrael*... There will come a time when we will see that everything was Hashem's kindness. This is the meaning of the *pasuk* (*Shemos 33:23*), וראית את אחורי ופני לא יראו 'You will see My back, but you will not see My face.' We only understand Hashem's ways when we look back. Then we see that everything was *chesed*. But at the time things occur we sometimes don't understand why Hashem is doing it."²

megillah to pay up the debt of his obligation (from the word פריעון he isn't *yotzeh*." Because that isn't the way one should read the megillah. Rather, one should read it with love and joy; with appreciation for the mitzvah and for the miracles that occurred.

2. A poor person was waiting in line to speak with the Tosher Rebbe *zt'l*, to ask for some money. The pauper was next in line, and was therefore extremely insulted when the *gabai* let in a wealthy person before him.

When the pauper came to the Rebbe, he said, "I know that the world isn't fair, but I always thought that at least in Tosh there was truth. Because the Rebbe honors everyone, the rich and the poor the same. But now I see that even here there isn't justice. Why did the wealthy person go in before me? Just because he has money shouldn't mean that his time is more important than mine!"

The Rebbe calmed him, and handed him an envelope.

Outside the Rebbe's house, the pauper and the wealthy man met, and the wealthy man offered the pauper a ride. As the pauper sat in the front seat, he took out the envelope to see how much money he received.

The wealthy man saw the envelope. It was the envelope he had just given the Rebbe. He immediately got out of his car, and returned to the Rebbe. He said, "Why didn't the Rebbe at least open the envelope so he would know how much money I gave him?"

The Rebbe replied, "The poor man who received the money needs to know how much money is there, but why do I have to know?"

In retrospect, everything was understood. The Rebbe saw the pauper waiting in line, but he didn't have any money to give him. He, therefore, requested that the wealthy person come in first. That way, the Rebbe

Reb Yechiel of Ostrovtsa *zy'a* said that even goyim are capable of recognizing Hashem's kindness after they look back and see all that happened to them. As the *megillah* (8:17) says, "ורבים מעמי הארץ מתיהדים," "And many gentiles were converting..." Looking back, they saw Hashem's many miracles, and they converted to Judaism. But ultimately all Yidden must believe in Hashem even before they see a complete, perfect puzzle., They must know that everything is for their ultimate good.³

With this idea in mind, we can explain the Mishnah, הקורא את המגילה למפרע לא יצא (*Megillah* 17). There are people who only recognize Hashem למפרע, in retrospect, when they look back at their lives and see how everything was for their good. The Mishnah says, לא יצא, recognizing Hashem in this mode isn't sufficient. Rather, praise Hashem even during hard times. Although you don't understand how everything is being orchestrated for your good, believe that it definitely is .

Hashem led the nation through the desert and gave them all their needs. As it states (*Devarim* 1:31-32), ובמדבר הזה אשר ראית אשר נשאך ה' אלקך, "...באשר ישא איש את בנו "In this desert you saw that Hashem carried you like a father carries his child..." Manna fell from heaven, the Clouds of Glory protected them, water came out of a stone.

In the next *pasuk* it states, וברבר הזה אינכם , מאמינים בה' אלקיכם , " And in this matter, you aren't believing in Hashem." The Bnei Yissaschar *zt'l* explains that when Hashem's kindness manifests itself just like in the midbar, everyone knows that there is Hashem. This is not belief, it is knowledge. Belief is when we don't understand, yet we continue to believe that it is all for the good.

Erase the Memory of Amalek

The Beis Aharon *zt'l* (p.67.) writes, כל איש ישראל, כל מה שהוא עושה, צריך להיות הכוונה שבזו העשיה יתמחה , זכר של עמלק , "Every Yid, with everything he does, his intention must be that this deed should obliterate the memory of Amalek. וכאשר יהיה נזהר בזה כל בר ישראל או בטוח אני אשר חיש מהר יהיו פטורים מכל הצרות , "When all Yidden will be cautious to do so, I am certain that very soon, they will be redeemed from all *tzaros*."

Once, after immersing in a mikvah, the renowned Stoliner chassid, Reb Zalman Brizel *zt'l* was shouting, ימה שמו! ימה שמו! It sounded humorous, but what did he mean? He explained that he was getting dressed according to halachah (for example, he first put on his right shoe, then his left shoe, and then he tied his left shoe and then the right shoe). The Beis Aharon says that with every good deed we destroy Amalek. "Therefore, as I put on my shoes according to halachah, I shouted ימה שמו, that Amalek's name should be erased."

would receive money, enabling him to help the poor individual. Looking back, the pauper realized that everything – even what he thought was bad – was all for his benefit and good.

3. A Holocaust survivor, who suffered through the war, was telling the Chazon Ish *zy'a* his questions on Hashem. The Chazon Ish showed the man a *Tosfos*. "Can you explain it to me?"

The man tried, but the Chazon Ish showed him that his explanation was wrong. The man tried again, but the Chazon Ish asked him a question, and showed him that he still doesn't understand the *Tosfos*. The Chazon Ish said, "If you can't even understand a *Tosfos*, how do you expect to understand Hashem's ways?"

The Alter of Slabodka *zt'l* said, "Talmidei chachamim can stay up an entire night, trying to understand why the *Rambam* omitted a halachah from his *sefer*. They don't assume that it was an error, and that it was omitted by mistake. "If so," the Alter of Slobadka said, "when Hakadosh Baruch Hu seems to have left something essential out from your life – such as health, *parnassah*, etc. – why do you suspect it was an error? Why don't you realize that everything is for a purpose?"

Rebbe Tzaddok HaCohen (*Divrei Sofrim* #29) writes, "I learned from my teachers that Shabbos Zachor is *mesugal* for bearing children. Shabbos Zachor we read in the Torah about destroying Amalek, which ultimately means that Amalek shouldn't have offspring. Automatically, as kedusha counteracts tumah,, the offspring of Bnei Yisrael will multiply..."

Rebbe Aharon of Belz *zt'l* once said to someone who didn't have children that Purim is a time that is *mesugal* for bearing children. He explained that Hashem too is mekayem the mitzvah of *mishloach manos*. Hashem's *mishloach manos* is children.

Moshe Rabbeinu was born on the 7th of Adar which means that his *shalom zachor* was on this Shabbos.

Chazal (*Shabbos* 89:) teach us that the day after *mattan Torah*, on the 7th of Sivan, all Jewish women became pregnant with boys. The children were born nine months later on the 7th of Adar. The Shabbos afterwards, there was a big *shalom zachor* for all those children. (בדרך צחות) in commemoration of all those *shalom zachors* that were celebrated on this Shabbos, we call this shabbos Shabbos Zachor.

Yom KiPurim is like Purim

The *Tikunei Zohar* (p.57:) writes, יום כ-פורים, "The *Tikunei Zohar* (p.57:) writes, יום כ-פורים, "Yom Kippur is like Purim, because in the future people will enjoy pleasures on Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur will completely change from being a day of affliction and fasting to being a day of pleasure." Therefore, Yom Kippur is called יום כפורים, "a day like Purim."

The Ruzhiner *zy'a* says that Purim is even greater than Yom Kippur because Chazal didn't say "Purim is like Yom Kippur." They said "Yom Kippur is like Purim." This implies that Purim is even greater.

This concept is surprising to many people. Yom Kippur is a day of awe, a day of atonement, an extremely holy day. How can

Purim be similar, and even greater? But that is the reality. Therefore, we should take advantage of Purim to spend the day in best way possible.

The *Mishnah Berurah* (90:28) writes, "The teshuvos Radvaz writes about a situation where a prisoner is granted permission to daven with a minyan, only for one day, the choice is his.. [The Radvaz advises that] he should daven immediately that day, immedand that he shouldn't push off the mitzvah to wait for Yom Kippur or for Purim."

Notice, the Radvaz didn't say "Don't push off the mitzvah and wait for Yom Kippur or Rosh Hashanah." He mentions "Yom Kippur or Purim." This hints to the greatness of Purim. It is from the most important days of the year.

One of the similarities between Purim and Yom Kippur is that they are both days of atonement. The Sfas Emes (תרל"ט) explains that the atonement of Yom Kippur comes through fasting, while the atonement of Purim comes through celebrating.

About the korbanos of Yom Kippur, it states (*Shemos* 30:10) וכפר עליו אהרן קרנותיו אחת בשנה מדם. חטאת הכיפורים אחת בשנה יכפר עליו לדורותיכם. Notice that "once a year" is written twice in this *pasuk*. The Imrei Noam (Dzhikov) *zt'l* explained that the double "once a year" is referring to Purim and Yom Kippur. They are the two אחת בשנה יכפר, one day of the year for atonement. The difference between them is that the atonement of Yom Kippur is through *korbanos*, while the *kaparah* of Purim is even without bringing *korbanos*.

The Gemara says Yom Kippur atones with *teshuvah*. The Ruzhiner *zt'l* said Purim is greater, because on Purim one can attain atonement and forgiveness, even without doing *teshuvah*.

How do we explain this?? How can one attain forgiveness without doing *teshuvah*? The Ruzhiner's grandson, Rebbe Yisrael of Tchortkov *zt'l*, offered an explanation:

Generally, before giving tzedakah, we check whether the person is really poor. But in regards to tzedakah on Purim (for the Purim meal) we give to everyone – the worthy and unworthy. As it states (*Shulchan Aruch* 694:3), אין, מדרקקין במעות פורים אלא כל מי שפושט יד נותנים לו, “One doesn’t check out people for the tzedakah of Purim. We give to whoever requests.”

Therefore, on Purim, Hashem deals with us in the same way. Even if a person doesn’t deserve atonement, because he didn’t do teshuvah, if he asks for forgiveness, he will receive it.⁴

As Chazal (*Megillah* 7.) say, קימו למעלה מה שקבלו, למטה, which can be translated as “Heaven does as the people below.” Therefore, if we give tzedakah indiscriminately, Hashem will forgive indiscriminately, and whoever asks for forgiveness will be forgiven.⁵

We sing, וגם הרבונה זכור לטוב, which can mean even those who are חורבנה, destroyed by sins, זכור לטוב they are remembered for good on Purim, because they can attain their atonement.

The Kedushas Levi (*Kedushah Rishonah*) writes, “The best time for teshuvah is when the megillah is read, because at that time, Hakadosh Baruch Hu purifies Bnei Yisrael from above.”

4. *Shulchan Aruch* states, כל הפושט יד נותנים לו, “Whoever stretches out his hand, we give him.” We can also explain these words to mean, כל הפושט יד, even the hand of a simple, פשוטע (*pashute*) Yid, when he wants to become close to Hashem, נותנים לו, Hashem grants that to him.

5. The megillah states משלוח מנות איש לרעהו, “to send gifts to one's friend.” According to the Sfas Emes (*Megillah* 7: ר"ה בנמרא, רבה שדר) it isn't proper for a regular person to send *mishloach manos* to a rav or to a *rosh yeshiva* because the mitzvah is to give to a friend, and it isn't proper for a regular person to call his rebbe, “my friend.” However, the Sfas Emes accedes, if a great person gave him *mishloach manos*, that means he considers him a friend. Now he may reciprocate and send him *mishloach manos* back.

On Purim, Hakadosh Baruch Hu sends *mishloach manos* to the Jewish nation, which are bounties of goodness. After Hakadosh Baruch Hu considers us רעהו, His friends, we can reciprocate and send Him *mishloach manos*. Our *mishloach manos* to Hashem are the mitzvos of Purim.

The custom of *mishloach manos* is to give the food together with the dish or container. (One doesn't ask for the dish back after delivering the food.) This hints that on Purim Hashem gives us His *mishloach manos* of bounty together with a dish. This means that even if one doesn't have a vessel to accept Hashem's bounty, Hashem gives him the vessel too, to enable him to receive the bounty.

Rebbe Yiddele of Dzhikov *zt'l* relates that one year he was listening to his grandfather, the Ahavas Yisrael of Viznitz *zt'l*, read *Megillas Esther*. When the Ahavas Yisrael came to the words (3:3), מדוע אתה עובר את מצות המלך, “Why are you transgressing the king's command?” the person standing next to the Ahavas Yisrael began to cry copiously. This person was the renowned *baal tzedakah*, Reb Shmuel Eliyahu Stern *z'l*. He was roused to teshuvah. He was asking himself, מדוע אתה עובר את מצות המלך, “Why do you rebel against the King's commands?”

Rebbe Yiddele Djikover said that he didn't know who to look at: At his grandfather, the Ahavas Yisrael, who was reading the megillah with *kedushah* and *teharah*, or at Reb Shmuel Eliyahu who was crying his heart out in teshuvah.

There are other similarities between Yom Kippur and Purim:

The Rashba (*I Teshuvah* 93) writes that due to sins, there may come a time when Hashem will take away the holidays from us. As it states, שבת ה' בציון מועד ושבת, “Hashem will cease in Tzion holidays and Shabbos...” Purim and Yom Kippur are different, for they will never be taken away from us. It states (*Esther* 9:28), וימי הפורים לא יעברו מתוך היהודים, “The days of Purim will

never leave the Yidden; its memory will never cease from their children.”

Yom Kippur is also eternal, as it states, והיתה זאת לכם חקת עולם, “This law is forever...”

The Arizal taught that what a Yid accomplishes when he says *Keser* (*Kedushah*) on Yom Kippur [which is a very exalted moment] can be achieved throughout the entire day of Purim!

The tzaddikim of Slonim *zt'l* explain this with a *mashal*:

A king is moving to a new palace. All the precious items of the old palace have to be transported to the new one. This creates a serious problem, because generally, the king's most precious items are kept under guards or locked up securely in the treasury. How can they risk taking them on a wagon to the new location?

Furthermore, the king has many secret documents, which their contents can't be revealed to the public. How can they be brought over safely? Who can guarantee that they won't be stolen or lost?

But the king's servants were cautious, and they managed to transport the documents and the precious items to the new palace without any problems.

Then came the greatest challenge: Bringing over the crown. How can they transport it, with a guarantee that it won't get stolen?

They came up with a plan: They put the crown on a simple wagon and they covered it with straw. No one will guess that the crown is there. In this manner the crown was delivered it to its new location.

This *mashal* describes Purim.

It's a very special day, but it's also a very concealed day. It isn't a yom tov. Work is permitted. People make parties, etc. This is because the holiest of Purim is so great, it needs to be concealed from the *yetzer hara* who desires to steal it away from us. The

Keser, the King's crown, manifests, throughout the entire day. It is a very special time, a day of immense mercy and compassion. But it is concealed, to hide it from those [*kelipos*] who seek to steal it.

Another similarity between Purim and Yom Kippur is our power of *tefillah*.

The Shinover Rav *zt'l* taught: On Purim every Yid has the power of *tefillah*, similar to the Cohen Gadol who would daven in the Kodesh Kadoshim on Yom Kippur.

It states (*Esther* 4:16) ובכן אבוא אל המלך אשר לא כדת, “I shall go to the king, which is against the law.” The Sfas Emes *zt'l* (*Purim* תרנ"ו) explains that it is against the law for a regular person to come to the Kodesh Kadoshim, but on Purim, everyone is able to figuratively go there, and at this close connection, pray to Hashem and ask all your requests.

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*I Drashos* p.156:) writes: Purim is greater than Shavuos, because by Shavuos we were forced to receive the Torah. Hashem rased Har Sinai above our heads, and said that if we don't accept the Torah, we would be buried underneath. But Purim, the Jewish nation accepted the Torah from love (see *Shabbos* 88.). Purim is also greater than Pesach. Pesach we celebrate liberation from slavery, while on Purim we celebrate salvation from death. Thus, Purim is greater than Pesach, Shavuos and Yom Kippur. May we merit utilizing these holy moments properly. But to do so, we should prepare:

Preparation

This Shabbos, we read parashas *זכור* and it is like a preparation for Purim. As the Gemara (*Megillah* 30.) says, we should have *זכירה*, reading about the mitzvah of mechiyas Amalek, before *עשיה*, actually doing so, with the mitzvos of Purim. This is an indication that preparations are important. Before we do the mitzvos, we should prepare ourselves with our studies and with our joy and anticipation.

If a great king summoned you, wouldn't you prepare yourself before going to the king? Wouldn't you wear expensive clothing, shower, sleep well beforehand, prepare the compliments you will tell the king, and the requests you wish to make? Wouldn't you be extremely happy about the upcoming meeting, and you will always be thinking about it, and speaking about it? This is how we should prepare and yearn for the mitzvos. They are great opportunities, and we should be anxiously looking forward for them, while preparing ourselves to perform the mitzvos in the very best way.

There are three days of preparation before Shavuot - the *shloshes yemei hagbalah*. Similarly, there are three days of preparation before Purim. As the Mishnah (*Megillah* 2.) states, "The megillah can be read on the 11th, 12th, and 13th ..." of Adar. Because Purim is also a day for receiving the Torah. As Chazal (*Shabbos* 88) say, הדר קבלוה בימי אהשורש, "The nation accepted the Torah again in the times of Achashveirosh."

The Yeshuos Moshe of Viznitz *zt'l* said that הכנה (to prepare for a mitzvah) is *gematriya* מה לב, mind and heart. So, it is time to prepare our minds with Torah lessons about Purim, and to prepare our hearts with yearning to keep its mitzvos.

Preparation is essential, as it states (*Esther* 1:21) ויעש המלך כדבר ממוכן, which can be translated, ויעש המלך, the King of the world makes Purim, כדבר ממוכן, according to the amount we prepared for it.

It states (*Esther* 6:4) והמן בא... לתלות את מרדכי על העץ. The simple translation is that Haman prepared the gallows for Mordechai. The Gemara (*Megillah* 16.) however says we should read this pasuk like this: "Haman came...to hang Mordechai on the gallows that he prepared for *himself*." Because in retrospect we see that Haman prepared the gallows for himself, to hang himself on it. Rebbe Chanoch Henoch of Alexander *zt'l* explains that the concept of הכנה, preparation, applies solely to mitzvos. It doesn't apply to other matters. So, if it states that Haman

prepared the gallows, the Gemara understands that it means he prepared it to hang himself on it. And to hang Haman is certainly a mitzvah!

Take Advantage of the Day

After preparing for Purim, when Purim arrives, we should immerse ourselves in it. We shouldn't let the day pass without trying to get the most we can out of this holy day.

Two people were caught printing counterfeit money. One printed dollars, the other printed shekalim. They were brought to court on the same day. The judge ruled that the person who printed dollars should go to prison for ten years, and the person who printed shekalim should go to an asylum.

The judge explained, "The person printed counterfeit shekalim is obviously a fool. He should have printed dollars and earned so much more money with the same effort!"

Because when there is potential to earn a lot, only a fool will settle for less. This lesson relates to Purim. One can gain so much - *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus* - on Purim. Let us not be like the fools who lose out on the opportunity.

Reb Eliyahu Dessler *zt'l* (*Michtav MiEliyahu, Elul - Tishrei*) told the following analogy: Two people had to go to a health spa, to bathe in the mineral hot springs. They needed these baths for their health. One of them was wealthy. He traveled to a hot spring resort, and for several hours, each day, he bathed in its healing waters. The poor person couldn't afford the spa. Instead, he went to a drugstore, bought a bottle of hot springs water, and rubbed the healing waters on his body.

Our goal should be like the proverbial wealthy man, who immerses entirely into the day. He will earn so much more.

The Gemara (*Megillah* 7:) states, קם רבה ושחטיה, that once, at the Purim *seudah*, due to the drinking, "Rabba slaughtered Reb Zeira."

Afterwards, Rabba resurrected him with his *tefillos*.

Some say the Gemara is teaching the potential of *tefillah* on Purim — that one can even resurrect the dead on that day through prayers. Others say that the Gemara is teaching us not to follow the path of excessive drinking.

If we translate their names, *רבה* means great, and *זירא* means small. Hinted here are two paths for *avodas Hashem*. The path of *רבה*, great, signifies taking large strides in *avodas Hashem*. The other approach is *זעירא*, small, which is to take small and gradual steps, without growing rapidly. On Purim, *קם רבה*, the approach of Rabba, of taking large strides slaughters and surmounts the way of Zeira, of taking small steps. Although, generally, we should follow the path of growing gradually, step by step, Purim we should be taking large strides in *avodas Hashem*, extending all our strength towards attaining the incredible growth in *avodas Hashem* that is accessible on this day.

The *yetzer hara* knows the specialness of the day, therefore the *yetzer hara* will often give people something to worry about on Purim, to prevent them from being totally immersed in the Purim. The wise will recognize this as the *yetzer hara's* ploy, and not fall for his tricks.

To understand the *yetzer hara's* ways, we tell an analogy from "Polish thieves," they way they used to steal suitcases from the wealthy by a sea port.

A wealthy person gets off the ship carrying a bag filled with money and precious merchandise. As he walks down the plank, he sees a coin on the ground. He didn't know that the Polish thief planted that coin there. The wealthy man puts down his suitcase, and bends down to pick up the coin. At that moment, the thief grabs the suitcase and runs off.

So the wealthy person earned a coin, but he lost so much more.

The *yetzer hara* does the same to people. He gives them something small to think about, and to be occupied with, and in the meanwhile he steals away so much more from him.

The people who know of the thieves tactics won't stop to pick up the coin. They knew that they would lose much more than gain.

The *yetzer hara* uses similar techniques to cause people to lose out on Purim. The *yetzer hara* gives people something small to worry about and thereby they steal away their Purim. Instead of celebrating Purim, they are lost thinking about some insignificant matter. However, those who know the *yetzer hara's* ways won't fall for this, and they will push away all worries and celebrate Purim properly.

The Polish thieves also used the following technique to steal: One thief would go into a store, take an item off the shelf, and run out of the store. The shopkeeper would run after him. At this moment, the store is unattended. A second thief would now enter the unattended store and empty the cash register. The theory behind the trick is the same as the other one. The thieves got the wealthy occupied with something small so they could take so much more. Let us not make that mistake on Purim. When they *yetzer hara* gives you something small to think about, shout at the *yetzer hara* and say, "I will not fall for your tricks. You are saying I lost something small, but if I become occupied with your claim, I will end up losing so much more."

Taanis Esther

Most fast days commemorate the *churban* Beis HaMikdash, but Taanis Esther isn't about the *churban*. So why do we fast?

The *Mishnah Berurah* (686:2) explains, "In the days of Mordechai and Esther, the nation gathered on the 13th of Adar to wage a war, in order to protect themselves. They beseeched Hashem and requested His

compassion that Hashem help them avenge their enemies. [They also fasted], because Yidden always fast when they go to war. This is what Moshe Rabbeinu did when he waged a war against Amalek. We are therefore certain that in the era of Mordechai and Esther, the nation fasted as they waged war. This is the reason we fast on the 13th of Adar. It is our reminder that Hashem sees and hears every Yid in sorrow when he fasts and does *teshuvah* with all his heart, as Hashem did so in those days."

Yet another explanation for Taanis Esther is to pray that we shouldn't sin due to the drinking and festivities on Purim.

As the Kav HaYashar (ch.97, quoting the Beis Yosef's *magid*) writes, "Hashem's *hashgachah* is always over Bnei Yisrael. They are His lot, His chosen nation, and He wants to grant them Olam Haba. Therefore, when the 14th of Adar is approaching, the day the Jewish nation will be extremely happy with the miracles Hakadosh Baruch Hu performed for them, and for bringing on the downfall of the *rasha* Haman, and of Haman's children, and of other *resha'im* of that time... And Chazal say, 'one is obligated to be happy with wine on Purim,' therefore, Hakadosh Baruch Hu said we should fast before Purim, because fasting is a *segulah* to be saved from sins. It protects us that the Satan shouldn't be *mekatreg* and lead the Jewish nation to sin due to the abundant eating and drinking. "It is therefore important to have *kavanah* in the *selichos* of Taanis Esther (במתי מספר). The final stanza of this *selichos* is שומע תפילה והעבר תיפלה, 'Listen to our prayers and remove sins...' etc. When saying these words have *kavanah* that he shouldn't sin, *chas veshalom*, due to the eating and drinking and festivities of Purim..."

The Kav HaYashar writes, "People from the villages should come to the city, so they

can daven in a beis kneses [with a minyan] on Taanis Esther, because Taanis Esther is very *mesugal* for our *tefillos* to be answered in the merits of Mordechai and Esther. Whoever needs a salvation should take the time to say chapter (*Tehillim* 22), "אילת השחר," and afterwards he should pour his heart out in prayer before Hashem, to request his needs, and to rouse the merits of Mordechai and Esther. In their merits, Hashem will listen to his *tefillos*, open up the gates of compassion, and answer his *tefillos*... Therefore, beloved people of Hashem, the holy nation, who gather to listen to megillah on Purim... Arouse Mordechai and Esther's merits, because Taanis Esther and Purim are days of רצון ואהבה, desire and love. It is good to pray on Taanis Esther, and the One who listens to prayers will compassionately answer your *tefillos*, amen."⁶

Tefillah on Purim

When one speaks to a king, he requests, he pleas, but he doesn't demand. It isn't *derech erez* to demand something from a king. Yet, we find in the megillah that Haman demanded from Achashveirosh. For example, Zeresh told Haman (*Esther* 5:14), ובקר אמור למלך, "In the morning *tell* the king to hang Mordechai..." as though Haman can tell Achashveirosh what he must do.

Haman followed her advice. He came to Achashveirosh (6:4) לאמר למלך לתלות את מרדכי על העץ, "To tell the king to hang Mordechai on the gallows..." How could he do that? How can one tell the king what to do?

The answer is, Haman was at a higher political place than Achashveirosh. As the Gemara (*Megillah* 15.) states, גבה המן מאחשורש, "Haman became greater than Achashveirosh." Similarly, the *Yalkut Shimoni* states that Haman's *biמה*, stage, was higher than Achashveirosh's. Haman could

6. Reb Yeiva of Ostra'a was very poor, and on Purim, someone came to make him happy. Reb Yeiva said that it was Mordechai HaTzaddik himself. Because Mordechai is the *baal simchah* of Purim, and he comes to every Yid to bring him happiness.

therefore tell Achashveirosh whatever he wants, and Achashveirosh was obliged to listen.

Then the miracle occurred, ונהפוך הוא, and everything turned around. Haman lost his greatness, and Mordechai and the Jewish people were raised to greatness.

The Shem MiShmuel (הרע"ז) writes, "Every wise person should take to heart, since Haman's house was given to Esther, and ונהפוך הוא, everything turned around... Every Purim, an aspect of that happens again. Therefore every Yid has the power to say to the King of kings, Hakadosh Baruch Hu [as a tzaddik decrees and Hakadosh Baruch Hu obliges] to request that Haman be hanged, and his name erased, at least from his own heart. But...he must say it with all his heart, with the same desire and yearning that Haman said to Achashveirosh to hang Mordechai. And then this will certainly bear results. Therefore, the early chasidim say that on Purim everyone can be saved and blessed."

The Imrei Noam writes, בימי פורים יש התנברות, הרחמים והרצון עד למעלה ראש, "On the days of Purim compassion and love abounds to the highest degrees," and therefore they are special days for *tefillah*.

The Ateres Tzvi *zt'l* taught that one can accomplish, with his *tefillos*, even more on Shushan Purim than on Purim.

Tzaddikim would say, יעדער שמוגער ווערט א צדיק הדור, every person, even those at low levels, becomes like the tzaddik of the generation, on Purim.

Therefore, we praise Mordechai in *Shoshanas Yaakov*, מרדכי היהודי, "Mordechai the Yid." On Purim, the greatest praise is simply being a יהודי.

Chazal (*Taanis* 29:) teach that if one must have a court case with a non-Jew he should schedule the date for Adar, because then it is a good *mazal* for the Jewish nation. This advice is stated for each and every Yid, even for Yidden who are on low levels. Because

in Adar, especially on Purim, every Yid is on the highest level.

The Pela Yoetz (HaKadmon) writes that on Purim, even the *tefillah* of someone davening *beyichudus* (by himself) is beloved and accepted. This is hinted at in the *pasuk* (*Esther* 9:25), ובנואה, לפני המלך אמר ... ישוב מחשבתו הרעה, "When she came [by herself] before the king... [she said] may Haman's bad plans be foiled..." Hinted here is even when a person approaches Hashem alone, without a *minyan*, the *tefillos* are accepted.

It states in *Segulas Yisrael*, "I learned from a *gadol z'l* that on Purim it is *mesugal* to rise early in the morning and to daven a lot, and to ask Hashem Yisborach for בני היי ומווני, children, health, and *parnassah*, and for any other matter. One should pray for himself and for his relatives, because Purim is a very great *eis ratzon* for *tefillah*, and all worlds are happy and want to give..." (This *segulah* is also taught by the Baal Shem Tov's students.)

Rebbe Yitzchak Eizak of Kamarna *zt'l* writes, "We received the *kabbalah* from our teachers that during the days of Purim a small *neshamah* can reach the *heichal* of a great tzaddik, and no one can stop him. All his *tefillos* go up to Keser without any disturbance... I received this in a whisper and I am revealing it, like someone who reveals a secret, because of my love to the Jewish nation. I opened up a crack. There are great secrets here."

The Tur (693) writes, "Rav Amram *z'l* writes, the custom of the two yeshivos is to say supplications on Purim, since it is a day of miracles (יום נס). We were redeemed, therefore we must ask compassion that Hashem redeem us once again."

The Mareh Yechezkel *zt'l* teaches that throughout the year, when one prays for דברים הכרחיים, things that are absolutely necessary, such as health, food, and the like, his *tefillos* will always be answered. However, when one davens for luxuries, such as wealth, or other matters that one can live without, it isn't certain that Hashem will

grant him his wishes. Heaven will weigh the cons and the pros and decide whether to grant it to him or not.

He writes that this is alluded to in the *pasuk* (Yeshaya 9:12), ויהיה טרם יקראו ואני אענה, עוד הם, מדברים ואני אשמע. The *pasuk* is discussing two types of *tefillah*. When one prays for matters that he absolutely needs (such as food, clothing, and the like) Hashem says ואני אענה, "I will answer him and grant him his wishes." However, עוד הם מדברים, when one prays for עוד, extra matters, such as luxuries, Hashem says ואני אשמע, "I will listen." Hashem listens and considers, but it isn't certain that He will give him his requests.

Purim is an exception. Even the *tefillos* for extravagances will be answered. This is hinted at in the *pasuk* (Esther 9:12), ומה בקשתך עוד, ותעש. On Purim even בקשתך עוד, your requests for unnecessary matters, ותעש, will be answered.

It states (Tehillim 22:3), אלקי אקרא יומם ולא תענה, "I call Hashem by day but You didn't answer, ולילה ולא דומיה לי, and I call Hashem at night and I am not silent." This *pasuk* is talking about a person whose *tefillos* weren't answered.

As the Metzudas Dovid explains, "Also at nighttime I call and I pray. I am not silent.... I continue to pray, because my *tefillos* weren't answered yet."

Surprisingly, the Gemara (Megillah 4.) uses this *pasuk* as a proof that one should read the megillah by day and by night, just as the Yidden prayed for their salvation by day and by night. We wonder, if this *pasuk* is referring to the *tefillos* said in the days of Mordechai and Esther, it should state that Hashem answered their *tefillos*! Why does the *pasuk* speak about the times Hashem doesn't answer our *tefillos*?

We can answer that after Purim passes, one feels he didn't take advantage of *tefillah* as he could have. On Purim, we have the power of *tefillah*; the possibilities of what we can earn are endless. Therefore, after Purim, one rebukes himself, "If only I would have davened more. I could have received so

much more!" He feels ולא תענה, that he wasn't answered, because he could have gotten so much more, if he would have invested more in *tefillah*.

Someone was walking in the desert, and found a mountain, its stones were made of diamonds. He took as many diamonds as he could carry. He pushed stones into his shoes and socks, beneath his belt, under his hat. He emptied all his pockets, and filled them with the diamonds. His fists are full. There are many more diamonds, but he can't take them. He walks away, and he thinks, disappointed, "I wish I had more pockets..." That's the feeling people have after Purim. They feel gratified that they grasped what they could, but they also feel ולא תענה... ולא דומיה לי, that if they would have prayed more, they would have received so much more.

Once, there was a drought and people came to the Baal Shem Tov ז"ל requesting that he pray for rain. The Baal Shem Tov told his students, "I can't cancel this decree, but I know someone who can. He's a drunk, and it isn't easy to speak with him. You must catch him the moment he wakes up, before he begins drinking again. Ask him to pray for rain, and his *tefillos* will be answered."

One morning, the Baal Shem Tov's students were present the moment he woke up. He was already reaching for his bottle, but his students stopped him. "We want you to pray for rain."

"Don't you see I'm a drunk? Why do you want from me?"

"The Baal Shem Tov told us your *tefillos* are powerful, and you can pray for rain."

"There must be some mistake. I'm just a drunk."

"There's no mistake. The Baal Shem Tov said that only you can help us..."

The man raised his hands, davened, and it immediately began to rain.

The Baal Shem Tov told his students, "As you saw, this man isn't the greatest tzaddik.

Nevertheless, he was rewarded with the power of *tefillah*. Because once, he took a bundle of money and left his home to commit a grave sin. As he was walking down a street, he met up with a poor family, who seemed to be living on the curb. All their belongings were with them, the children were crying, and the parents looked forlorn. The pitiful sight roused his mercy, and he asked them what happened.

"We couldn't pay the rent, so our landlord put us out on the street..."

He asked them how much money they needed. It was exactly the amount he had in his pouch, prepared for the *aveirah*. He gave them all the money and returned home.

This mitzvah created a commotion in heaven. In reward, Heaven granted him the power of *tefillah*. For now on, whatever he davens for, will transpire. But since he was a sinful person, he might use his power of *tefillah* in bad ways. Therefore, heaven decreed that he be a drunk. In this manner, he wasn't even aware that he had these special powers of *tefillah*. But the Baal Shem Tov knew, and therefore he sent his students to ask him to pray for rain.

The Chidushei HaRim repeated this story and explained that this is the reason Chazal gave us the mitzvah to drink on Purim. On Purim, everyone has the great power of *tefillah*. All one's requests on this day will be answered. To conceal the great gift, Chazal decreed that people should drink. They get involved in that, and they forget that they have the power of *tefillah*.

Stories of the *Tefillos* that Were Answered

When we read stories of *tefillos* on Purim that were answered, it encourages us to also invest in *tefillah*. The following are few stories that I've heard: There was a *bachur* who was slipping away from Yiddishkeit. People close to him weren't certain that he wore tefillin, each day. He had a devoted *magid shiur*, who spoke with the *bachur*, and tried to talk sense to him, but the *bachur* was

happy the way things were. He wasn't ready to improve his ways.

Purim, the *magid shiur* was happy with wine. He opened the *aron kadosh*, and prayed and cried for this *bachur*.

There was immediately improvement. The next day in yeshiva, the *bachur* was learning joyously. In a short time he finished a *masechta*, and then he finished another one. He turned around, entirely. Everyone was surprised. The change is attributed to the *magid shiur's tefillos* on Purim.

A few days before Purim, a group of *yungerleit* from Lakewood gathered to discuss how they could find time for *Tehillim* and *tefillah* on Purim. They knew that Purim is a time for *tefillah*. As it states, כל הפושט יד, whatever one asks for on Purim, נותנים לו, it is given to him, but people are so occupied on Purim, they don't find time for *tefillah*. Each of these *yungerleit* had their personal *peckel* of *tzaros*, and they were hoping that they will get their salvation on Purim. Together they planned when they would go to sleep on Purim, when they would wake up, how much *Tehillim* they would say, when they would learn Torah, and when they would do the mitzvos of the day. With this plan, they found substantial amount of time for *tefillah* on Purim. Each of them had their *yeshuah* and they publicized it in a letter.

I personally witnessed the following story:

On the first night of Purim, the Belzer beis medresh in Bnei Brak was filled with old and young chassidim. Many were saying *Tehillim*, many were learning Torah, but there was also a group of young *bachurim* speaking idly. An older *bachur*, from a very respectable family, told the boys to say *Tehillim*, and they did so willingly. They said several chapters of *Tehillim* with *hislahaavus*.

Eventually, those *bachurim* went to their homes, but this older *bachur* remained behind. He continued saying *Tehillim* throughout the night, with immense *kavanah*.

When he finished the entire *sefer Tehillim* it was time to prepare for *Shacharis*.

Immediately after Purim he became engaged to a girl from a very respected and prestigious family. His family didn't imagine he would find such a good *shidduch*. He merited building a *bayis ne'eman beYisrael* because of the *Tehillim* he said on Purim night.

Rebbe Mordechai of Nadvorna *zt'l* said that a *beis medresh* that doesn't say the entire *Tehillim* on Purim shouldn't be called a "Nadvorna *beis medresh*."

The *Beis Aharon* (p.48.) writes that with *Tehillim*, אפשר לצאת מכל השטותים ומכל המצרים ומכל, "With *Tehillim* (any day of the year) one can leave all his foolish ways, and he can be saved from all his problems and hardships." My grandfather, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov *zt'l* would say a lot of *Tehillim* on Purim.⁷

The *Gemara* (*Megillah* 5.) states, רבי נטע נטיעה, של שמחה בפורים, "Rebbe planted a plant of joy on Purim."

Generally, planting doesn't cause joy. As it states (*Tehillim* 126:5), הזורעים בדמעה ברנה יקצרו, "Those who sow with tears reap with joy." The harvest is joyous, but not the sowing. When one plants, one isn't certain it will grow. So why does the *Gemara* says "Rebbe planted a plant of joy on Purim"?

The answer is, Purim is different, because whatever one plants and invests in on Purim, will certainly grow. This means, when one invests in Torah and *tefillah*, happiness and mitzvos, on Purim, they will certainly bear fruit. Therefore, on Purim, also the planting is joyous.

It isn't History

Reb Yohonoson Eibshitz *zt'l* (*Yaaras Dvash* 1:3) writes, "Wise nation, who Hashem chose from all other nations, please don't think *Megillas Esther* is a history book, telling the stories that happened to our forefathers... It is called מגלת אסתר because it has סתרי סתרים מעשי למאוד, בראשית למאוד, great secrets of Creation... In addition, there are many lessons of *mussar*, teaching us how to live."⁸ So, the *megillah*

7. Many people were waiting outside the door of Rebbe Shimon Noson Nota of Lelov *zt'l* to bring *mishloach manos* to the Rebbe, but the Rebbe wasn't coming out. One *chassid*, Reb Matisyahu Deutsch, courageously opened the door and told the Rebbe about the long line of people, waiting to bring him *mishloach manos*.

The Rebbe replied, "The *avodah* of the entire year comes from Purim. Do you want to take that away from me?" and the Rebbe told Reb Matisyahu to close the door.

8. Once, for Shabbos, the Baal Shem Tov *zy'a* was a guest in a wealthy person's home, and the host honored the Baal Shem Tov immensely. After Shabbos, the Baal Shem Tov thanked him, and asked him to deliver a letter to someone in a nearby town.

The wealthy man readily agreed. He placed the letter in a secure place, and planned to deliver it the next day. But somehow, he forgot all about the letter, and it lay there, where he put it, for many years.

The wheel of fortune turned, and this wealthy man lost all his money. He had to sell his assets to support his family.

Once, as he searched through his belongings for something to sell, he came across the Baal Shem Tov's letter. He immediately delivered it to the intended address. The letter said, "The man standing before you is a worthy person. He was once wealthy but lost all his wealth. See what you can do to help him."

The receiver of the letter helped him start a business, and he became wealthy once again.

Megilas Esther is called a letter, as it states, דברי האגרת הזאת (Esther 9:26) and it contains all the messages and inspiration we need to know for our lives.

isn't to tell us history. It is to teach us *mussar* lessons of how to live, and it is *מגלה הסתר*, reveals and carries many great, kabalistic secrets of creation.

The megillah ends (10:12), *ובל מעשה תקפו וגבורתו ופרשת גדולת מרדכי... הלא הם כתובים על ספר דברי הימים*, למלכי מדי ופרס, "The deed and greatness of Mordechai... behold they are written in the book of chronicles for the kings of Maday and Persia." Reb Yechezkel Abramsky *zt'l* explains that the megillah is saying: If you want to study history, you can read that in their books of chronicles. The purpose of the megillah is to teach us how to live with *emunah*, and several other great lessons and secrets.

A spy has to write letters to his home country, to reveal the information he discovered. The letters might be censored, so he writes about mundane, humdrum matters, such as how life is in that country, who is getting married, the sites he saw, etc., and here and there he throws in a few code words. The country that receives the letter understands the codes and acquires the information they seek.

Similarly, the megillah is filled with secrets and lessons, and one must look closely and then he will find the intended messages.

Ve'al HaYeshuos

The Midrash (9:2) writes, "None of Haman's advisors knew how to advise him like his wife Zeresh. Haman had 365 advisors, corresponding to the days of the year. Zeresh said, 'If this person [Mordechai] is from the Jewish Nation you will not be able to defeat him, unless you use wisdom. You must use an approach that was never used on this nation before. If you will throw him into a furnace it will not work, as Chananyah and his friends were already saved from a furnace. If you will throw him into a den of lions it will not work, as Daniel was saved from such a situation. If you will put him in jail it will not work, as Yosef was liberated from jail. If you will put him in a

copper pot and light a fire underneath it will not work, as Menashah prayed to Hashem and was saved from exactly that situation. If you will exile him into the desert it will not work, as his ancestors were fruitful and multiplied in the desert. They were tested many times, and they passed all the tests. If you will blind him it will not work as Shimshon killed many Pelishtim when he was blinded. Rather, hang him, because we don't know of anyone from this nation that was saved from hanging.' *ויטב הדבר בעיני המן ויעש*, 'The idea was good in Haman's eyes, and he made the gallows.'"

This Midrash is difficult to understand, because Hashem can obviously save Mordechai from the gallows, just as Hashem saved the Yidden from fire, desert, imprisonment, and all other kinds of dangers.

The Agra d'Kalah (*Ekev*) explains that when people speak about a miracle that happened in the past, it draws down the wellsprings of that miracle, and that causes the miracle to happen again in the present. Zeresh realized that if they try to drown Mordechai, the Yidden would study the parashah of *kriyas Yam Suf*, and Mordechai would be saved. If they try to burn him in a furnace, Yidden would study the story of Chananya Mishael and Azaryah who were saved from the furnace, as stated in *sefer Daniel*, and this would draw down the miracle again, and Mordechai would be saved. Therefore, Zeresh advised that they attack Mordechai in a means that Hashem hadn't yet shown a miracle. The Jewish nation could not bring on a miracle by studying about it. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu made a new miracle for Mordechai and saved him and the Jewish nation.

Therefore, when we read the megillah, this will bring the miracles again, and similar miracles will happen in our generation.

Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l* taught: All *yomim tovim* are *זכר ליציאת מצרים*, a commemoration of what happened in the past. But about Purim it states (*Esther* 9:28), *והימים האלה נזכרים ונעשים*, "these days are

remembered and they happen." It isn't only a commemoration, but rather by reading the megillah, ונעשים, the miracles happen again. Every year, there is ונהפוך הוא, and Hashem saves us from cruel decrees, just as it happened in those days.

As the Bnei Yissaschar (*Adar* 4:6) writes, ונראה לי, ונצולים בכל שנה על ידי קריאת מגילה וצדקה, "They are saved every year by reading the megillah and with their *matanos le'evyonim*."

The stories and the names of the *resha'im* differ in each generation, but the salvations repeat themselves each year. We are saved in the merit of the miracles that happened in the days of Mordechai and Esther, which we read about and celebrate today.

The megillah begins with ויהי, an expression of distress, and ends with ודובר שלום לכל זרעו, an expression of joy. This means that if before

reading the megillah one was in a situation of distress, after reading the megillah there are *yeshuos* and joy.

Shulchan Aruch (693:1) states that we say קדיש תתקבל (the Kaddish that requests that Hashem answer our *tefillos*) after hearing the megillah. This implies that the megillah contains many requests and *tefillos*, concealed within its words. We are praying that Hashem perform miracles for us, today, similar to the miracles He performed for us in those days,.

The Tiferes Shlomo *zt'l* writes that מגילה is *gematriya* מזל. This hints that with the megillah, one can attain בני חיי ומזוני, children, health, and *parnassah*, which are dependent on one's *mazal* (see *Moed Kattan* 28.).

The Imrei Yosef *zt'l* of Spinka says that the gates of Gan Eden open when the megillah is read.⁹

9. The Imrei Yosef *zy'a* told the following story, and he said that it happened "to a chassidische *yungerman* in Spinka." This means it happened to him. Because his son, the Chakal Yitzchak *zy'a*, said, "When the Imrei Yosef told a story, he always told the names of the people in the story. But he said this story without a name. So, I am certain he was referring to himself." Therefore, we will tell the story, using his name, the Imrei Yosef:

It happened on the second night of Pesach, after the Seder. The *poskim* say that one should remain awake after the Seder and talk about the miracles of *yetzias Mitzrayim* until sleep overtakes you. So, the Imrei Yosef went to the bookcase, and took out a *sefer*. It was a *Megillas Ester*. He read it (apparently because many of the miracles of Purim happened on Pesach). When he finished, a *neshamah* came to him with a request.

The *neshamah* said, "After one dies, it can sometimes take up to twelve months to enter Gan Eden. As it states in *Megillas Esther* (2:12-13), 'Six months with *shemen hamor*, and six months with *besamim* [perfume] and *tamrukei hanashim* [cosmetics]. And with these, the girl came to the king.' But sometimes twelve months isn't sufficient, because sometimes they go to the gates of Gan Eden and find them closed. The gates of Gan Eden aren't always open. They open when Yidden read the megillah."

The *neshamah* said, "Every year, Purim, when the megillah is read, *neshamos* line-up and wait their turn to enter Gan Eden. But every year, the doors close right in front of me, and I am unable to go to Gan Eden. This has been going on for many years. So I decided I would wait the entire year by the doorway of Gan Eden. When the megillah will be read, I'll be first in line. I just heard you reading the megillah, so I knew the doors of Gan Eden should open. I knocked at the door and requested entry."

The *malachim* by the door replied, "It's true, the megillah was read, but it isn't Purim today."

"But the megillah was read," the *neshamah* pleaded. "Open the doors and let me go to Gan Eden."

The issue was debated, the case was brought before the *beis din* of heaven, and the *beis din* ruled that if the Imrei Yosef will donate this megillah reading for this soul, he may enter Gan Eden. The *neshamah* explained that he came to request that he grant him the merits of the megillah reading. The Imrei Yosef gave him the merits, and the soul was able to go to Gan Eden.

The Shei'aris Yisrael of Velednik *zt'l* teaches that reading the megillah atones for severe sins, even גילוי עריות, adultery. Therefore, it is called מגילה, from the word גילוי. The Munkatcher Rav *zt'l* tells that when Rebbe Mendel of Riminov *zy'a* was imprisoned, they permitted him to take along one item. The Rebbe requested a megillah (although it was Tamuz then). Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz heard about this and said, "Just not a megillah! Don't permit it, or he'll destroy the entire world."

The Munkatcher Rav writes that we should learn from this the great power that lies within the megillah.

The Divrei Shmuel of Slonim *zt'l* said, "The tzaddikim of today aren't like the tzaddikim of the past, but Hashem remains the same." Therefore, miracles can happen, even for us, even in this generation.

It states (*Esther* 9:18), ועשה אתו יום משתה ושמחה, "He made it a day of drinking and joy." It seems it should say, ועשו, "They made it..." because the Jewish nation made it a day of rejoicing and joy.

The Sfas Emes (*Purim* חר"ב) writes, "The *pasuk* is referring to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, for Hakadosh Baruch Hu celebrates Purim. He rejoices that Bnei Yisrael was saved from Haman's decree, which [was a real decree because] it was also decreed in heaven. When *gezeirah* was annulled due to their *teshuvah*, Hashem makes a holiday... Just as we discuss the miracles that occurred on Purim, the miracles are discussed in heaven, as well..."

When the miracles are discussed in heaven and on earth, it draws the miracles down, and they will happen again. Hashem's joy and celebration are for the miracles of the past, and for the miracles that will

happen in this generation, as well, which are aroused by our talking about the miracles.

The Holiness of Megillas Esther

The Chasam Sofer (164.) teaches that the megillah is holier than a *sefer Torah*, because the Yidden were forced to accept the Torah (Hashem placed the mountain over them, warning them that they must accept the Torah), while the megillah was accepted willingly, with love and desire. This means the megillah is greater and holier than the Torah.

In the Chasam Sofer's words, "*Kabalas haTorah* in Moshe's generation was by force, and in the era of Achashveirosh they accepted the Torah again. Thus the *kedushah* of the megillah is ממש יותר גדול ונכבד literally greater than the holy Torah itself."¹⁰

The Kav HaYashar writes (99), "Every *yom tov* has many secrets and immense holiness. There is a new world above שהוא קדוש ונורא מאוד, which is very holy and awesome. That world is revealed only once a year, and it begins to be revealed when the megillah is read. Mordechai's *neshamah* comes from that world. We must rouse [Hashem's] compassion that that world should be revealed and that it shines on the heads of the Jewish nation who gather to listen to the megillah with a pure heart and with *kavanah*."

The Kav HaYashar explains that the *brachah* על מקרא מגילה means that we are מקרא calling for the מגילה, revelation of that world, and the tzibbur should answer amen to this *brachah* with *kavanah*.

Studying Torah on Purim

It is important to set time for Torah on this day.

10. The Rambam (*Hilchos Megillah* 2:18) writes, "The *sefarim* of the *nevi'im* and of *kesuvim* will become *batel* (and not studied) when Moshiach comes. The exception is *Megillas Esther*. It will remain eternally, just like the five books of the *Chumash* and the *Torah shebe'al peh*. It will never become *batel*." This hints to the holiness of the megillah, as it is compared to the *kedushah* of a *sefer Torah*.

The Chasam Sofer (*Drushim* p.245) writes, "I received from Reb Mendele Lilig *zt'l* the Rav of Frankfort, who received the tradition from the שב יעקב, that whoever studies Torah between the megillah reading at night and the megillah of the morning, it is certain he will merit Olam HaBa."

The Chasam Sofer concludes, *כן קבלתי סתמא*, ולא ידענא טעמא, "That is how I received it, without explanation. I don't know the reason."¹¹

The Rema (695:2) writes, טוב לעסוק מעט בתורה, קדם שיתחיל הסעודה, וסמך לדבר ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה, "It is good to learn Torah before eating the Purim meal, because it states, ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה, and אורה is Torah (*Megillah* 16:)," which precedes שמחה, the Purim celebration. @03

@01The custom is to study the laws of Pesach, because Purim is thirty days before Pesach, and Chazal say that one begins studying the laws of Pesach thirty days before Pesach.

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Drashos, Purim* 5906) said that Purim is two days so there will always be Torah study in the world. When one community is celebrating Purim, the other community will study Torah. Because there must always be people studying Torah in the world.¹²

The Kedushas Levi (*Kedushah Rishonah*) writes, "One should listen to the megillah with a fire of passion in his heart. He should intend at this time that he is accepting the yoke of Torah and mitzvos. He should think, 'What was, was. But for now on, I accept Hashem's mitzvos...'" This is because on Purim we accepted the Torah again, and this time from love (see *Shabbos* 88.).

The Satmar Rebbe *zt'l* said that it would be worthwhile for a person to live seventy years, and to go through all the hardships of life, even if only to hear the megillah just once.

And fortunate are those who merited hearing the Satmar Rebbe as he read the megillah, word by word, with an outpouring of his soul. When he came to the words (4:11), ואני לא נקראתי לבוא אל מהלך, "I wasn't called to come to the king..." he would cry greatly, until it was hard to hear the words. Similarly, he would cry copiously when he would say (3:2), ומרדכי לא יכרע ולא ישתחוה, "And Mordechai wouldn't bow down [to Haman]."

Haman's Goral Revealed Hashem's Unconditional Love to Us

Purim is named for the פור, for the lots that Haman drew. As it states (9:26), על בן קראו, הימים האלו פורים על שם הפור, "Therefore they called these days Purim, because of the *goral*..."

11. Undoubtedly, we can say that if one learns Torah between the megillah of Purim daytime until next year's megillah at night that he will surely merit Olam haba.

12. The commentaries discuss a surprising aspect of the megillah. The decree against the Jewish nation was because they participated in Achashveirosh's meal. Yet, the beginning stages of the salvation took place at this meal. Vashti was killed, creating an opening that Esther would fill. This shows us Hashem's compassion on the Jewish nation. Even when they sin, Hashem's love to them doesn't depart. He seeks ways to save them.

The *pasuk* (1:10) states, ביום השביעי כטוב לב המלך בין, "On the seventh day, when Achashveirosh's heart was happy with wine... he called for Vashti..." The Gemara (*Megillah* 12:) says that this seventh day was Shabbos, the day the Jewish nation eats, drinks, and speaks divrei Torah and they sing Hashem's praises. This is unlike the goyim who eat, drink, and speak *nivol peh* and foolish speech. At this meal, the Jewish people were speaking divrei Torah and they were singing *Shabbos zemiros*, while the goyim were discussing foolishness. The Ben Yehoyadah (*Megillah* 12:) says that it was because of this merit that Hashem prepared their salvation, and Vashti was killed, even as they were participating at the seudah, which was the root of the sin and punishment.

The *goral* was a hard moment for the Jewish nation. It was when Haman was planning the annihilation. Shouldn't Purim be named after the salvation and not for the devastation?

The Bnei Yisaschar explains that the *goral* was a good time for the Jewish nation; it brought about the miracle. The Bnei Yissaschar explains:

"When one chooses one object from among others...he has a reason why he chose that item over the others. But when one chooses by a *goral*, the choice cannot be explained rationally. His choice is whatever the *goral* dictates; there's no logic behind it. When Hashem created the world, He chose the Jewish people to be the purpose of Creation. It wasn't because of our mitzvos and good deeds, since *klal Yisrael* didn't exist yet. We don't know why Hashem chose us. It is simply because this was His will..."

The Baal HaTanya *zt'l* explains that on Yom Kippur the *korban* was chosen by a *goral* – a choice without a reason – to prompt Hashem to remember the time when He chose us without reason; just because He wanted us. The Bnei Yissaschar says that this also happened on Purim when Haman drew lots. Haman thought the lots were a tragedy for the Jewish nation, but it was the basis for their salvation. It roused Hashem to remember that He chose us without logic and reason. Therefore, even if we sinned by bowing down to Nevuchadnezzar's idol or by participating in Achashveirosh's feast, and even if we weren't deserving of the salvation, Hashem saved us, nevertheless. It is a choice that goes beyond logic.

Thus, it is appropriate to call this holiday Purim because Haman's lots roused Hashem's unconditional love to us. As we say after reading the megillah on Purim night, *כי פור המן נהפך לפורינו*, "Haman's *goral*, turned out to be our good fortune."

Trust in Hashem

We can offer another reason Purim is named after Haman's lots:

גויל comes from the word *גול*, to roll, and hints to bitachon. As it states (*Tehillim* 22:9), *גול אל ה' יפלטנו*, "Roll [your problems] onto Hashem and He will save you."

Bitachon saved us in the era of Mordechai and Esther.

The Gemara (*Megillah* 15) asks, "Why did Esther invite Haman to the party? So the Yidden won't say, 'We have a sister in the palace.'" Initially, the Yidden trusted that Esther would help them. When they heard Haman's decree, they said, "But Esther will certainly speak to Achashveirosh, and annul the decree. We have nothing to worry about." Therefore, Esther invited Haman to her party. People lost trust in her, and they trusted in Hashem. That's when they were saved.

The Gemara (*Megillah* 13) states, "When Haman's *goral* fell on Adar he was extremely happy. He said, 'The lot fell on the month when Moshe Rabbeinu died.'"

The Maharal (*Or Chadosh*) explains, "Everything has a time limit how long it will endure. Haman drew lots to discover the date the Jewish nation would end, and it fell on the month that Moshe Rabbeinu was *niftar*. Haman was happy because he thought this meant that *klal Yisrael's* existence would also expire in Adar. He thought that Adar, the last month of the year, denotes, *chas veshalom*, the end of the Jewish people." Haman's theory seemed logical. Where did he go wrong?

The Maharal explains that Haman didn't know that when a Yid has sorrow, and he sees that there is no hope, he places his trust in Hashem. And when a Yid trusts in Hashem he is immediately saved.

With these ideas, we can say that Purim is named after the *פור*, the *goral*, because the *goral* was a positive moment for the Jewish

nation. The tragedy caused them to turn to Hashem. And when Yidden turn to Hashem, they are saved.¹³

Our Thoughts Come from Above

We can offer yet a third explanation why Purim is named פורים, for the *goral*:

When a person comes up with a wise financial plan, and by following this plan he earns a lot of money, he must know that the idea that entered his mind was from Hashem. He didn't succeed on his own. And when the financial plan causes him to lose money, he must believe that Hashem compassionately knows that it was better for him to lose money (for reasons that Hashem knows). He shouldn't berate himself for his bad choice, because also the thoughts that come to our mind come from Hashem.

The concept of a *goral* is that one puts his own intellect and choices aside and he lets Hashem decide for him. The Purim miracles strengthen our *emunah* and we become aware that even when one makes a calculated decision, it is like a *goral*, because the thoughts that came to mind were destined, planned, and given over by Hashem.

Joy

At Esther's party, Achashveirosh said (*Esther* 5:6), עד חצי המלכות, "What is your request and it will be given to you. What do you want? Until half the kingdom, and it will be yours."

Esther replied she would tell her requests on the next day, at the second party.

Why didn't Esther state her requests immediately? It seemed like a perfect opportunity to state her request, since Achashveirosh just told her she can ask for anything, and he would give it to her.

The answer is, Haman was happy at that party. As it states, ויצא המן ביום ההוא שמח וטוב לב, "Haman left that day happy and in good spirits..." Esther knew that she couldn't bring down Haman when Haman was happy. So she pushed it off for the next day when perhaps Haman would be more in a more solemn mood.

Indeed, the next day Haman was אבל והפוי (Esther 7:12) in low spirits. Esther spoke with Achashveirosh, and Haman was hung that day.

We should therefore strive to be joyous on Purim. Our joy raises our *mazal*, and good things will happen to us.

Halachah states one must hear every word of the megillah. The commentaries explain that this is because each word of the megillah tells an aspect of the miracle. If any of the many factors didn't occur, the Purim miracle wouldn't happen.

The Tiferes Shlomo zt'l asks: The megillah elaborates on the story of Haman walking Mordechai through the streets of Shushan, granting him immense honor.

What would be lacking from the *megillah* if this story wasn't there? How is the story part of the miracle?

The Tiferes Shlomo answers, "Mordechai was summoned to ride the king's horse, dressed in the king's clothes. People sang and played music before him. All of this was

13. When a seed is planted in the ground, it roots first, and then it sprouts and grows. Similarly, the Jewish nation grow when they reach their lowest points. This is because that's when they rely solely on Hashem to save them. Zeresh said to Haman, אם מורע היהודים מרדכי... לא תוכל לו, "If Mordechai is from the seed of Yehudah... you will not succeed" (6:13). They are like a seed that grows when they reach their lowest point.

A drunk person feels weak and helpless. And when one feels that way, they recognize that they must turn to Hashem to save them — and that sensation is the recipe for salvation. The Maharal (*Or Chadosh*) says that this is the reason for drinking on Purim.

to raise Mordechai's spirits, so he would be happy. Immediately after Mordechai became happy, *klal Yisroel's* salvation and the wonderful miracle occurred..."

The time for the salvation had arrived, but joy was needed for it to happen. All the honor accorded to Mordechai's lifted his spirits, and that was the final impetus that brought about the salvation.

When Mordechai first heard about Haman's *gezeirah*, he put on sackcloth, and Esther sent him clothing to wear. The Tiferes Shlomo writes, "Why did Esther send clothing to Mordechai...? Did she think Mordechai didn't have what to wear?"

The Tiferes Shlomo answers that Esther understood that the path to salvation is the path of happiness. She didn't want Mordechai to wear sackcloth and to pray with bitter tears, because she believed that joy would bring salvation.

Mordechai also knew that joy was essential, but he understood that one doesn't begin with joy. One needs to pray, cry out and shout first, and afterwards the salvation comes from joy.

As the Tiferes Shlomo writes, "When Esther heard Mordechai's loud cries for Klal Yisrael, she sent him clothing and asked him to remove his sackcloth. She was implying that he shouldn't have despair and agony, rather he should gird himself with joy and pray joyously to Hashem... Mordechai didn't agree, because one needs to start with humility and fear, and only then to start with joy, as we explained."

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* teaches that the debate between Mordechai and Esther (that Mordechai wore sackcloth and Esther sent him clothing) was whether the path to annul harsh decrees is through joy or through tears. Mordechai wore sackcloth, as he followed the approach of annulling the decree with a broken heart and hot tears. Esther sent him clothes, because she wanted to annul the decree with joy. This is the reason Esther

made parties. She wanted to annul the decree with joy.

The Chasam Sofer concludes that Esther's approach was correct, and the salvation came from Esther's approach.

The Gemara (*Megillah* 16.), tells that when Haman came to Mordechai to lead him through the streets of Shushan, Mordechai was davening. Haman waited until he finished the *tefillah*.

The Ben Yehoyadah writes, "Haman knew that Mordechai was davening with *atzvus*, depression, and such prayers aren't answered. [Haman thought] 'If I will interrupt his *tefillah*, he will have to daven again, and after hearing the good news [that Haman must honor him] he will pray with immense joy and his *tefillos* will be answered.'" Haman preferred that Mordechai should pray with sadness, so he waited until Mordechai finished davening.

Purim Seudah

Shulchan Aruch (695) states, מצוה להרבות, במעודת פורים, "There's a mitzvah to make a large Purim seudah... Also [the first] night, one should be happy and make a meal (יוריבה קצת) (במעודה)..."

The four mitzvos of Purim are: *megilah*, *matanos le'evyonim*, *mishloach manos*, and *seudas Purim*. And since the meal is one of the primary mitzvos of Purim, we should strive to celebrate it in an uplifting and joyous spirit.

It states (*Esther* 9:19), על כן היהודים... עושים את יום, ארבע עשר לחדש אדר שמחה ומשתה ויום טוב ומשלוח מנות, "Therefore the Yidden...make the fourteenth of Adar a day of festivities, a *yom tov*, with *mashloach manos*..."

Afterwards in *pasuk* (9:22), it lists once again the mitzvos of Purim, but this time it leaves out **יום טוב**, that Purim is a *yom tov*. The Gemara (*Megillah* 5:) explains that Mordechai wanted that Purim should be a *yom tov*, when work is forbidden, but Klal Yisrael didn't accept that aspect of Purim. The first

pasuk mentions Mordechai's initial decree and the next *pasuk* expresses the reality, because Purim didn't become a *yom tov*.

The Yismach Moshe *zt'l* (Na'ch) asks, why does the Megillah mention the *yom tov* of Purim, if it never happened in the end?

He answers that in one way, Purim is a *yom tov*. The Gemara (*Beitza* 16.) says, "Whatever one spends for Shabbos, *yom tov*, or for learning Torah, it is returned to him." This aspect of *yom tov* remains, because no matter how much one spends on Purim, he will be refunded and get that money back.

Many years ago, in Holland, the crops were infested with worms, and people were concerned that there wouldn't be anything to eat. The king of Holland declared a fast day. Everyone in his kingdom was obligated to pray and fast on that designated day. The problem was, the day he chose for the fast day was on Purim.

The Jewish community of Holland asked the *מעשה רוקח* (who lived in Holland) whether they should fast on Purim that year, to appease the king, or whether they should celebrate Purim like every year.

The Maaseh Rokeiach replied, "No one should fast. Make festive meals like every year. Tell the storeowners to distribute meat and fish and other foods for free. Afterwards I will pay back the stores..."

That Purim, the non-Jews were in their churches, praying and fasting, while *lehavdil*, the Jewish community was celebrating Purim like every year. The day after Purim, the problem was solved. The worms vanished and the crops were saved.

The king of Holland summoned the Maaseh Rokeiach. He asked, "Why didn't the Jewish community obey my decree and fast?"

The king was angry with the Jewish community, but he also respected them. Particularly, he held the Maaseh Rokeiach in high esteem. And since the worms left, he suspected that the Yidden may have acted correctly and they may have brought the salvation.

The Maaseh Rokeiach replied, "Everyone knows אין פרעניויות באה לעולם אלא בשביל ישראל, when punishment comes to the world, it is because of Bnei Yisrael. We understood that our sins stand at the root of the infestation and that the solution is *teshuvah*, to be more loyal to Hashem's commandments. The day you chose for a fast day was Purim, the day Hashem commands us to celebrate and rejoice. We know that the solution to the agriculture problem is to be loyal to Hashem's decree. Therefore, we celebrated on Purim."

The king accepted his explanation. (This story is recorded in *Divrei Shmuel*).

Reb Yisrael Shimon Kastilanetz *zt'l* tells the following story, which he personally witnessed:

One Purim, the Beis Avraham of Slonim *zt'l* was in Lodz, eating the Purim meal together with his chassidim. Suddenly, the chassid Reb Yiddel Ribak *z'l* came in and he said, "My son fell from a high place onto a stone. He's unconscious and the doctors say his life is in danger..."

The Beis Avraham told Reb Yiddel Ribak, "Give three hundred rubles to tzedakah, to support the poor talmidei chachamim of Eretz Yisrael. B'Ezras Hashem, in this merit your son will have a refuah sheleimah."¹⁴

"I don't have cash on me, but I can give a check" Reb Yiddel Ribak replied.

The Rebbe said, "I'm afraid the check will bounce like last time."

14. When the Beis Avraham was in Lodz, he would often encourage the wealthy people who lived there to support the poor of Eretz Yisrael.

Reb Yidal Ribak assured that it wouldn't bounce. The Beis Avraham accepted the check. Then he took an apple that was on the table and threw it forcefully on the head of Reb Yiddel Ribak. The Rebbe shouted, "Go home!"

The Rebbe repeated that he should go home. Some friends walked him home. When he entered his home, he saw his son walking around, completely well.

The custom is to begin the Purim *seudah* by daytime and to continue the meal into the night. This hints that the joy of Purim will wipe away all distress and sorrow, which are characterized by nighttime.

The Machzor Vitri (465) writes, "Purim, when everyone makes long meals, heaven will grant them with all their hearts' desires."

"Until You Don't Know..."

Chazal (*Megillah* 7:) say, חייב איניש לבסומי בפוריא עד, דלא ידע בין ארור המן לברוך מרדכי "One is obligated to be happy with wine (or other alcoholic beverages) on Purim until he doesn't know the difference between the cursed Haman and the blessed Mordechai." ¹⁵ Many *segulos* and salvations – *beruchniyus* and *begashmiyus* – come from this mitzvah.

It states (*Esther* 5:6), ויאמר המלך לאסתר במשתה היין, "The king said to Esther at the wine party, 'What is your request, and it will be yours... Ask for up to half the kingdom, and it will be granted to you.'" The *Minchas Elazar zt'l* says that this *pasuk* means that on Purim the King of the world says to the Jewish nation, "When you are at the משתה היין, wine party, whatever you ask for will be granted."

לבסומי isn't a very common word. It is written solely a few times in Shas. Nevertheless, the Gemara uses the word לבסומי twice on this same page (*Megillah* 7:). The Gemara says that on Purim there is a mitzvah לבסומי, to drink wine. A few lines above that, the Gemara says, רווחא לבסומי שכיחי. That Gemara is referring to the time Abaya came to the home of Mari bar Mar on Purim to deliver *mishloach manos*. Abaya tells that he came to Mari bar Mar's home full and satisfied, and Mari bar Mar served him sixty plates of sixty kinds of cooked dishes, and Abaya ate them all. The final course was pot roast, and Abaya said he was so hungry, he wanted to eat the dish too. The Gemara says, היינו דאמרי אינשי כפין עניא ולא ידע אי נמי, "This is as people say, 'The poor are hungry and they don't know it.'", רווחא לבסומי שכיחי, or it is as people say, 'One can always find room for sweets.'"

So on this page לבסומי means sweets, and לבסומי means to be happy with wine. The *Yeitav Leiv zt'l* connects the two Gemara and explains, if one is בסומי בפוריא, happy with wine on Purim, it will be רווחא לבסומי שכיחי, he will have salvation (רווח והצלה) and life will become sweet for him.

The *Imrei Emes* said that בסומי is *roshei teivos* שמר מפחדך בשרי וממשפטיך יראתי, "My flesh bristles from fear. I am afraid of Your judgment." This hints that one shouldn't drink wine to have fun, rather one should drink with *yiras Shamayim*. Furthermore, implied here is that from this mitzvah one can attain *yiras Shamayim*.

There are many spiritual gains from the mitzvah of drinking wine. The *Chidushei HaRim zt'l* said that with this mitzvah, one can reach the level of Adam HaRishon before his sin.¹⁶

15. Shulchan Aruch (695) states, "Some say that one doesn't have to become so drunk, rather he can drink more than he is accustomed to... The one who drinks a lot and the one who drinks a little are the same, as long as their intentions are for heaven."

16. The *Chidushei HaRim* explains that Adam and Chavah's sin was that they acquired דעת wisdom, from the עץ הדעת, tree of knowledge. When one drinks דע דלא ידע, "until he doesn't know..." he loses his דעת and reverts back to the original stage, clear from sin.

The Mishnah (*Beitzah* 40.), states משקין ושוהטין, and the Gemara explains that the Mishnah is advising us to give water for animals to drink before *shechting* them, as that will make it easier to skin them.

Hinted in this Mishnah is that by משקין, drinking on Purim, one is able to remove his animalistic essence and become a spiritual being. In this very spiritual state, he can pour out his heart before Hashem, and his tefillos will be answered.

It states (*Bereishis* 9:20), ויהל נח איש אדמה ויטע כרם. The Satmar Rebbe *zt'l* said that ויהל represents the weekdays, and נח represents Yom Tov. When does the weekday and *yom tov* merge? On Purim, because Purim is a *yom tov* when work is permitted. The *pasuk* says ויהל נח איש אדמה ויטע כרם, this means ויהל נח, on Purim; איש אדמה, each man receives his material, needs; ויטע כרם, when he drinks wine on Purim.

Chazal say, אל תהא ברכת הדיוט קלה בעיניך, "Never underestimate the value of the *brachos* that simple people give," because even their *brachos* take effect.

Once, on Purim, Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz *zt'l* was speaking with Rebbe Shalom of Belz *zt'l*. A simple farmer came by and said to Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz, "Rebbe, please bless me with a ברכת הדיוט, a blessing of a simple person." The chassidim who were present laughed (because Rebbe Naftali's *brachos* was a ברכת צדיק, not a ברכת הדיוט). Rebbe Naftali Ropshitzer told them, "Why do you laugh? You didn't understand his request. He was asking for the *brachos* that a ברכת הדיוט would ask for. The *ovdei Hashem* ask for success in Torah, to daven with *kavanah*, and the like. But simple people ask for *parnassah*. He asked for a ברכת הדיוט, a *brachah* that a simple person, wants."

The Satmar Rebbe told this story at his *Purim seudah*, implying that the *Purim seudah*, especially by the משתה היין, is a *mesugal* time for attaining success in *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus*.

Once, on Purim, Rebbe Avraham Elimelech of Karlin-Stolin *zt'l* *hy'd* saw one

of his chassidim taking his daughter to the doctor. Rebbe Avraham Elimelech told him, "On Purim, healing doesn't come from doctors. It comes from drinking." The Rebbe gave the father some wine to give to the girl. She drank it, and was cured.

A chassid who didn't have children would often come to Rebbe Avraham Elimelech of Karlin *zt'l* for a *brachah*. The Rebbe would bless him unenthusiastically, almost in a whisper, and the chassid understood that the Rebbe saw with his *ruach hakadosh* that his chances of bearing children were slim. Nevertheless, he kept going to his Rebbe, asking for his *brachos*.

Once, he came to the Karliner beis medresh in Yerushalayim, on Purim. The chassidim were eating and drinking together, and they ran out of drinks. They told him that if he brings them some drinks, he would bear a son. He immediately sought to help them, and he managed to get three bottles. They blessed him with children.

The next time he came to Rebbe Avraham Elimelech, he gave the Rebbe a *kvittel*, and the Rebbe said, amazed, "You are already helped! You will have children! Tell me, which tzaddik did you go to?"

The chassid told him that he didn't go to any tzaddik, other than to him. And he told the Rebbe that the Karliner chassidim promised him a child, in the merit that he brought them drinks on Purim.

The Rebbe replied, "Then it's understood! You received your salvation by their *brachos*."

Rebbe Dovid of Lelov *zt'l* was visiting Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk *zt'l* on Purim. Rebbe Elimelech offered him a drink, and Rebbe Dovid said that his doctor doesn't permit him to drink.

Rebbe Elimelech replied, "The doctor is sleeping now..."

Rebbe Elazar *zt'l* (Rebbe Elimelech's son) said that he now understands the *Shulchan*

Aruch (695:2). It states, *יש אומרים דאין צריך להשתכר כל*, "Some say one doesn't have to drink so much. Rather, he should drink more than he usually drinks and sleep..." The *יש אומרים* are the doctors, because they say that one shouldn't drink too much. The response is *וישן*, the doctor is sleeping.

The Gemara says to drink until we don't know the difference between *ארור המן* and *ברוך מרדכי*.

ארור המן represents the hard occasions of life, *ברוך מרדכי* represents the happy and good times. Purim we seek to attain the awareness that everything – even what seems negative – are for the good.¹⁷

17. It's forbidden to 'drink and drive' but this prohibition is only for the driver. The passengers in the car may drink. The mitzvah to drink on Purim reminds us that we are not the drivers. Hashem is driving us and leading us, and everything is for the best.

The custom to wear masks and dress up on Purim reminds us that things aren't the way they appear. It appears that people do things, but that's just the mask. The truth is everything is from Hashem.

א שבת מיט מורינו הגה"צ רבי מיילך של יא עם כל הדבקות וההתלהבות



עם הפנינים והסיפורים של זמירות "באר החיים"
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חיים של תורה

