



Moor Lane More Torah

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Serious Party *By Rabbi Moishe Wieder*

We all know, Purim is a time when everything is upside down: because of the theme of "venahafoch hu" which runs through the megillah, Purim tends to be a day we do things slightly differently. Purim seudot with a first course of ice cream and fruit salad, concluding with a bowl of steaming hot vegetable soup are one of the many ways people attempt to pay tribute to this idea. However, another very important aspect of this light-hearted behaviour is that we celebrate that we were saved through heartfelt tefillah and teshuva when Amalek, in the guise of Haman, tried once again to destroy us. It is taken for granted that Purim antics are the best way to celebrate and show our gratitude to Hashem. But is this so simple? Maybe – on closer inspection- it is the least appropriate form of celebration!

Amalek is the nation that represents the joker. This was the first nation foolhardy enough to attack us when we left Mitzraim, because they made light of all the other nations' fear of us. This was their intrinsic characteristic: Amalek lives by the mantra "There is nothing important or holy in the world; life's a joke; let's just party!" So, is it not interesting that on Purim we take up the "art" of Amalek, so to speak, on the day we celebrate our delivery from their evil plans? Isn't it like celebrating our release from Mitzraim by building mini pyramids in our front gardens?! Perhaps a day of serious introspection is more befitting...

Rav Yitchak Hutner ztz"l explains that there are two types of letzanut- mocking/joking. There is the aforementioned behaviour of Amalek, which comes from the underlying belief that there is nothing important in the world, and therefore, when they see someone behaving with reverence towards a person or concept, they mock and make jokes about it. However, the "joking" of the Jews on Purim comes from the opposite character trait. Because we see so much value in this world and in our lives, we laugh out loud at the contradictions of the life style of Amalek; Purim therefore is the perfect time to for us to celebrate in this joyous way- the opposite of the "joking" of Amalek. Happy Purim!



Kiddies' Corner *By Rabbi Moshe Stamler Rabbinical Advisor, Moor Lane Shul*

Correct this poor fellow's version of the מגילה. [I have written how many mistakes there are in each paragraph at the end of the paragraph.] The first fully corrected entry e mailed to rstmalmoorlane@gmail.com will receive a £5 JBC book token. Offer only open to participants aged 16 and under. Include name and address.

King אחשכרוש - celebrating his [mistaken] calculation that the 70 years of גלות אדום had passed without the re-building of the בית המדרש - made a 180 day fast for his objects, followed by a smaller beast for the people in ששון. When his wife בשתי refused to come, he had her grilled, and appointed אסטור [also known as עדשה] in her place as the new quin [after a content to decide on the best person.][14]

After decrying a 4-day feast for all the Dews in Shusnan, Esther entered for an invited audience with the king who rejected her with an outstrtetched septa. She uninvited the king and הרן to a fiesta and then to another one. In between the two, the king fell asleep and had the book of royal hysterics red out, and discovered that מדרכי had never been punished for his roll in shaving the king's life. [19]

Esther's nephew מרדחי discovered a pot to kill the king, and the three potters were hanged. [5]

Enters Human, who has just been advised by his doctor זרת to kill מרדיכ, but is told by the king to charadeידימ on the royal hoarse. He returns to the second yeast, only to be accused of being the arch-friend of Ether's nation, and he is beheaded on the very gallons he had made for מנתתיו. [13]

Then the king erased up חמן the עגיו to a high position. מרדכי's refusal to bough to המו pleased him so much that he decided to get rid of all the Jews, ח"ב. In the month of אייר he cast logs which came out for the month of ארד. [10]

Mordechai sends out a second telegram reversing the instructions of Haman's earlier e mail, and across the 125 countries of the king's vampire on the 12th day of אדר the Jews fite and beet their emenies. The twelve suns of Haman are hanged, all on the same gallops. The Jewels of Shushan right their enemies for another 2 days. The festival of Chanukah is maid, a time for joyfil celebration in each generator. [20]



Ready For The Party? *By Rabbi Shmuel Oppenheimer*

There was a man who had two sons, one wealthy and one poor, who lived in a distant land. The man wrote a letter to his wealthy son inviting him to his upcoming daughter's wedding and offered that he would pay all wedding-related expenses. He finished off the letter asking him to bring along with him his brother, the poor man. The day of the wedding arrived and the rich brother came dressed in beautiful expensive attire whilst the poor brother was dressed in his usual rags. The father was somewhat embarrassed by the appearance of his poor son but didn't say anything. At the end of the wedding the rich son came to his father asking to pay him for his expenses but his father refused. "But you wrote in the letter that you would pay" complained the wealthy son to his father. "I said I would pay for all wedding-related costs" replied the father, "But what you wore wasn't in honour of the wedding but rather in honour of yourself! For if it would have been in honour of the wedding, you would have seen to it that your poor brother also had such a nice attire so as not to embarrass me. Since you didn't do that, I see it wasn't at all in my honour so why should I pay?!"

The above is a parable from the Dubno Maggid (1741-1804) which he used to bemoan those people who spend lots of money on their Shabbat food saying that it's in honour of the Shabbat but don't give money to the poor who can't afford food for Shabbat. If they truly were buying the food in honour of Shabbat, then they would see to it that the poor people also have such delicacies in honour of Shabbat.

Rav Yaakov Neiman (Rosh Yeshiva in Petach Tikva after WW2), in his classic sefer Darkei Mussar, 'borrows' the above parable to enlighten us as to why Chazal enacted the Mitzvot of Mishloach Manot and Matonot L'Evyonim for Purim. He says that Purim is a day of Mishteh V'Simcha (feasting and joy) and Chazal instituted these Mitzvot so that we should all ensure that everybody has enough to eat so that we can all enjoy the simcha, thus making it into a true simcha in honour of Hashem, not just an excuse for us to party and enjoy ourselves.

CATCH-22

כי איככה אוכל וראיתי ברעה אשר ימצא את עמי ואיככה אוכל וראיתי באבדן מולדתי

Queen Esther said to King Achashverosh: "For how can I manage to look on at the bad which will befall my people and how can I manage to

witness the loss of my birthplace".

Esther seems to be repeating herself here. What is the difference between the 'bad' which will befall them and the 'loss' of her birthplace? The Beit Halevi (1820 -1892) explains that the decree was only applicable to those who were determined to stick to keeping Torah and Mitzvot. If a person would have forsaken his religion and joined the Persians, he would have been spared. L'abeid he explains, means lost to their religion. So Esther was bemoaning: how can I withstand looking on at the bad which will befall those of my people who refuse to forsake their religion - here she used the word Ami - my people since she was referring to those who wouldn't forsake their religion. And if King Achashveirosh would say to her that there is a way for them to be saved - by forsaking their religion - then she added - how can I witness the loss of my birthplace.... because they would be lost to the Jewish Nation.

The Beit Halevi is seemingly of the opinion that the threat to the Jews at that time was primarily a spiritual Holocaust. The Mishna Brura however, in Hilchot Chanukah (סימן תרע"ו) brings a Levush who explains that the reason why on Chanukah they fixed Hallel V'Hodaah (Praise and Thanksgiving) and on Purim Mishteh V'Simcha (Feasting and Joy) was because on Chanukah the threat was only a spiritual one. They tried to stop us serving Hashem, so we commemorate it by serving Hashem with Hallel V'Hodaah. Purim however, he explains, was a physical threat to our physical existence, for even if we would have forsaken our religion they still would have killed us, and so we commemorate it with the physical action of Mishteh V'simcha. The Levush is clearly of the opinion that the threat was an entirely physical one.

The Megillat S'tarim, in his commentary on Megillat Esther, also explains L'abeid to mean lost from their religion. He writes that King Achashverosh wanted to achieve this through enticement and persuasion through the large series of parties which he hosted, but Haman wanted to do it forcibly, decreeing that one would be killed unless he would forsake his religion.

Rav Yonason Eibeshitz, in his sefer Ya'arot Devash (Drush 8), explains slightly differently. He says that Achashveirosh wanted all the Jews to abandon their religion but Haman wanted to kill them all, plain and simple.



Tefilah Corner

By Rabbi David Shasha

In the Beracha of Modim, we give thanks to Hashem for his constant kindnesses to us. Additionally, we thank him for his miracles: "ועל ניסך שבכל יום עמנו". Some may think that miracles only happen when the Jewish people are on a very high spiritual level; however, in this beracha we thank Hashem for his DAILY miracles!! What's more: we can't even say that Hashem reserves these miracles for very specific individuals, as the next word is 'עמנו', with each of us.

As we are speedily approaching Purim, I'd like to mention one of the Halachot of reading the Megillah: it must be read in the correct order. One reason given for this is so we can see the "seeds" of the salvation being sown throughout the events. Esther was taken before we were even aware of the decree of Haman; what seemed bad at the time was really the beginning of our rescue. Chazal tell us that after the miracles of Purim, we "renewed" our relationship with the Torah. Inspired by the appreciation of the miracles Hashem had made for us, we accepted the Torah again out of Love.

Behind the mask of nature Hashem is weaving a tapestry of Hashgacha Pratit. If we open our eyes, hopefully we can get a glimpse!!

Credit Where Credit

Is Due By Rabbi Yossi Brysh



When we finish reading the megillah on Purim, we must say "Arur Haman, baruch Mordechai etc.", Chazal tell us. This statement ends with the rather interesting line "Vegam Charvonah zachur latov"- "and also Charvonah is remembered for good". The Gemara in Megillah tells us that although Charvonah was the one who advised Achashverosh to hang Haman, he was also part of the original conspiracy to build the gallows. This leaves us with the question- if he deserves blessings, why don't we say "Baruch Charvonah"; if he deserves curses, we should say "Arur Charvonah"! Why is his 'line' neither here nor there? The Dubno Maggid answers that the Midrash tells us that in truth, it was not Charvonah who told Achashverosh to hang Haman, rather it was Eliyahu Hanavi disguised as Charvonah; so really, he doesn't deserve any blessings. However, since Eliyahu chose him rather than any other person, it could only be because at some point he must have had good thoughts, as Chazal tell us that Hashem causes berachot to come through someone who is worthy. The Maggid brings a parable of a man who needs a suit to attend a wedding, so he goes to his neighbour to borrow one. When the man returns from the wedding, he brings back to the neighbour not only the borrowed suit, but also some cakes from the reception by way of a thank you for providing him with assistance. Similarly, Charvonah is due the credit of being remembered for good, even if not a full blessing, since even though he was not present, Eliyahu "used his suit".



Together As One *By Rabbi Aaron Gillis*

Purim is a time for renewing (and indeed starting) our friendship with others. This is especially shown through the mitzvot of matanot laevyonim and mishloach manot, through which we show our friendship and love to our fellow Jew.

The Sefer Siach Yitzchak (By Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Chaver zt"l) writes that when Haman asked Achashverosh for permission to destroy the Jews, Achashverosh was afraid that he would be punished like those before him who had persecuted the Jews. Haman answered him that the Jews were scattered among the nations. How did Haman answer the question? Explains the Siach Yitzchak that Haman did not mean just physically scattered, but also that they were scattered and divided amongst themselves. They did not behave with love towards one another. Without this love, Haman was sure that Hashem would not save them.

To explain this, we will expand on the importance of behaving with love towards one another with the following parable. A person is made up of all the different limbs of the body. If there would be a dispute as to which one of them is the most essential, the brain would say it is the cleverest. The heart and lungs would immediately claim that they are the ones that keep the body alive. The feet would say that the body would be immobilized without them. And the hands would comment on how productive they are.

This represents the whole of Am Yisrael. We are all born with different qualities. Indeed, some of us find it easier to learn Torah, some of us can naturally pray well, and some of us are incredible at doing acts of kindness. There are those who are easily able to excel spiritually, whilst others find this hard. Additionally each one of us have been given their own set of challenges. We are like the limbs of the body, each one with his own function and purpose, but at the same time we all need each other, as each one can accomplish what the others lack. Hashem has placed us here to overcome our challenges and fulfil our purpose, and not to worry about someone else's. We need to remember that each one of us

has a unique life-mission and at the same time we all need the accomplishments of each other. The only way to come together is to love each other.

There is a hint in the Torah that Hashem's Shechina will only rest on us when we are together. It says that the Shechina only rests on 22,000 people. Needless to say this is when they get on together as one. It is also hinted at in the Gemara, which relates that when Haman wanted to pay Achashverosh for the right to kill the Jews, Hashem responded that the Jews had already preceded him in the desert when they took the machatzit hashekel. What does this mean? Using our previous words - that each one of us completes the other - everyone had to give half a shekel, representing the need for someone else to come and complete the other half. These coins were used for the sockets at the base of the beams of the mishkan, representing that this concept is the base for the whole mishkan. The mishkan was the place where the Shechina resided, and this can only happen when we come together as one, when we love each other and become one unit.

This explains why Haman was so sure Hashem would not save them, for unless we love each other we are not whole and the Shechina will not reside with us. This also explains the idea of the donation of shekalim preceding the money of Haman. Haman's words based themselves on the division in Klal Yisrael; Hashem responded that it was in their make-up from generations ago to be together as one.

The antidote to Haman's claim was Esther's command to gather all the Jews as one in prayer and fasting. On Purim the Mitzvot of the day are centred around others. On this day we come together, as one as one through our love for each other. This unification of Am Yisrael is the essential ingredient to ending oppression and will bring about the geula shleima bimhera beyameinu, Amen!

The Obligation Of Mishloach Manot *By Rabbi Meir Rabinowitz*



There are two different reasons given for the well-known halacha of Mishloach Manot:

1) The Terumat Hadeshen: to make sure that everyone has food for the seudat Purim. The Chatam Sofer adds that one should give to both the rich and the poor so as not to embarrass those who don't have.

2) The Manot Halevi (Rav Shlomo Alkabetz) gives the reason as strengthening friendship. The Birkei Yosef writes that if the Mishloach Manot get lost or stolen on the way, the sender needs to redo the mitzvah, since the main purpose is to make friendship. (There are those who disagree).

There are many differences which come out from these two different reasons, I will outline a few here.

1) The Rema writes that the recipient refuses the Mishloach Manot, the giver has still fulfilled his obligation. The Chatam Sofer explains that this is because the Rema holds that the main purpose of the mitzvah is to create friendship, and once your friend knows that you wanted to give them, it has achieved the purpose. However, according to the reason that they should have food for the seudah, it hasn't fulfilled its purpose.

2) If someone sends the mishloach manot on Purim - notifying the recipient - but it only reaches the recipient after Purim, this would achieve the purpose of increasing friendship, but not the aim of providing food for the seuda.

3) An anonymously sent gift does not increase friendship but does provide food for the seuda.

4) How much does one have to spend on the mitzvah? According to the friendship reason one has to give something that will cause

an increase in friendship according to the living standard of the recipient. If the reason is to provide food for the meal, then it just needs to be something that they can eat.

5) If one sends food which the recipient cannot eat for whatever reason, e.g. due to an allergy, then one hasn't fulfilled the mitzvah if the purpose of the mitzvah is to provide food. However, there has been an increase in the friendship because of it. The Chazon Ovadia suggests that even if the reason is that they should have what to eat, one is still covered, since they can give it to their family members. The same would apply if you gave something meaty to someone who is milky till the end of Purim.

6) According to the reason that one should have what to eat, one needs to send food that would usually get eaten in the meal, and one can't give things which aren't consumed like jewellery etc. even if one can sell them (Yalkut Yosef). The Mishna Berurah mentions differing views about raw food since technically one can cook it for the seudah.

7) If you send one mishloach manot to two people, does it have to be enough food for two people? If the reason is for friendship then this has been achieved, but if the reason is for the seudah, then one would need to give enough for both.

8) If one sent mishloach manot and then found out it had a kashrut problem, according to the reason of increasing friendship one has fulfilled the mitzvah, but not according to the reason of providing food.

One should be strict and ensure to fulfil the mitzva in a manner which caters for both of the reasons [Yalkut Yosef].



Cover Up Or A Show Of Truth? *By Rabbi Namir Cohen*

The Maharshal cites a custom to eat chicken cooked together with almond milk on Purim. He writes that one must place almonds next to the dish when eating it, in order to avoid suspicion that it is real milk (Marit Ayin), leading others to eat chicken with real milk, which is forbidden. I found it ironic that whilst we ensure to show the true identity of the almond milk, at the same time we have a custom to dress up and cover our faces with masks on Purim, and many also eat foods like sambusak or kreplach – covering up what's inside. So is it a day for cover-up or of showing the real thing?

I would like to suggest that the idea of dressing up is that in essence the whole year were dressed up – our bodies - a levush shel neshama - cover up the real 'us' – our holy neshama. On Purim we cover up the 'fake' us – hoping to expose the real us - our holy neshama. Chazal teach us that Nichas yayin yatza sod – when wine goes in, the truth comes out. And so it was the custom to put the almonds next to the chicken, to show the milk's true identity.

A famous tzaddik once watched a jester mimicking his manner of praying, crying with great devotion. The tzaddik started to cry. Those around him asked him why? "I am concerned" he explained "that maybe I too am a jester and the emotions that I show are not real".

Going back to the Maharshal: he derived his stringency of placing almonds besides the dish of chicken and almond milk from the Gemara in Krituth. There the Gemara rules that one may only consume fish blood (which – as opposed to animal blood - is permitted) if it contains scales, in case the onlooker thinks that it's the blood of animals or fowl which are Biblically forbidden. In the same way, he deduces that eating the almond milk with chicken may lead the onlooker to eat real milk with chicken.

Rema [siman 87] takes issue with the above ruling. He says that since eating milk and chicken is a Rabbinical prohibition, we do not need to place almonds alongside this dish, as even if the onlooker would eat chicken and milk, they would have transgressed a Rabbinic decree. We are therefore unable to derive anything from the Gemara in Krituth, since eating blood would constitute a Biblical prohibition.

Taz writes that whilst in principle he agrees with the Rema's lenient ruling, one should still, where possible use the almond method. However even if the almond milk is being eaten with animal meat, where the prohibition of milk and meat is on a Biblical level, he writes one can be lenient if there are no almonds readily available.

Shach however, follows the opinion of the Maharshal and says that the halacha of marit ayin applies also the Rabbinical scenario. His proofs for this are beyond the scope of this article.

The Gemara in Shabbat 146b which says that one may not hang laundry up

on Shabbat (because of marit ayin – an onlooker may think that they were washed on Shabbat which is forbidden because of libun) even in a place where no onlookers will see it.

Tosfot in Ketubot however writes that the Rabbis only forbade things because of marit ayin in private if it would lead to a Torah prohibition. If the whole prohibition is of a Rabbinical nature then they didn't institute a halacha of marit ayin in private, only public. In line with this Tosfot, Pitchei Teshuvah says that certainly in private one can rely on the ruling of the Rema and one need not place almonds next to the dish.

Kreiti Upleiti and Pri Chadash feel that the whole stringency is not at all justified for two reasons. Firstly, fish blood is considered real blood, just that it is still allowed. Therefore, it may end up being mixed up with other genuine animal blood. However, almond juice isn't considered to be milk at all but rather mere fruit juice, and just as it wouldn't make sense to forbid wine because it looks like blood, so too the Rabbis had no concern that the almond milk may get mixed up with real milk.

Secondly, the Gemarah tells us that in the place of Rabbi Yosi Hagelili they ate chicken with milk (only milk with animal meat is Biblically forbidden). They ask why there was no risk people might think that one can also eat meat and milk, and answer that since in that place it was commonplace to eat chicken and milk together, the onlooker would know that it was permitted. Similarly, they maintain, almond milk is tasty and commonplace; therefore, there is no reason to be concerned that people may think it is another type of milk, as opposed to fish blood which isn't generally eaten.

They conclude that since the holy Rema forbade eating almond milk with real meat without placing almonds next to the dish, they would not go against his ruling. However, they allow chicken and almond milk without any almonds. This was also the opinion of Maran Chacham Ovadia, although he adds that if it is not difficult, one should place almonds alongside it to accommodate the opinion of the Maharshal.

We will end off on a practical note. Chacham Ovadia says that when eating parve meat/milk with milk/meat one should place the packaging next to the plate. One may eat parve ice cream even if it looks milky or a coffee with almond milk even after consuming a meaty meal.

Chacham Ovadia also cites the custom of Cushta (Turkey) that if the meat/milk are covered over, it is permitted even without displaying the packaging. He also allows frying parve sausages with butter since the butter isn't visible at the time of eating and we are not concerned that people will notice it being put in the pan.

However, those who wish to be lenient and not place packaging next to the dish have whom to rely upon. (Shu"t Cheishev Haeifod, Vol. 1 responsum 20).



What Amalek Really Means: *Rabbi David Schlama*

The Story of Haman's Last Moments

The King's Generosity

We find in the Midrash that when Achashverosh decreed Haman should die, he said to Mordechai: "Inflict on Haman whichever death and torment you want". Generous.

Then Mordechai took Haman from before the king and said to him: "Now follow me to the gallows you had prepared for me".

Haman Entreats

Surprisingly, the Rasha starts beseeching the Tsadik with tears, with heartrending sobs: "Have pity on my honour, on my old age; I had such a high position [even before the gallows], you are a Tsadik, do not take revenge on me; Tsadikim are not vengeful, revenge is my forefather Esav's ways, not Yaakov's [not too bad a drasha for a rasha], I beg of you to spare me the shame of the gallows, for this is how low-lives die. If you want to kill me PLEASE PLEASE LET ME DIE AS A MINISTER: decapitate me with the king's sword, as befits my rank!"

But Mordechai seemed deaf to Haman's supplications ... though Haman was doomed anyway, he was now a mere shadow. So why waste time hanging him?

Agag Did Not Beseech

Comes the Kedushat Levy [quoted in Meam Loez] and explains: Mordechai understood that Haman was hiding a dreadful intent behind his apparent self-pity; hence he did not yield.

One might ask: what made it so obvious that Haman was hiding his true intent? Perhaps the answer is: Agag King of Amalek, Haman's ancestor, walked proudly to Shmuel Hanavi after his defeat, fully aware he would die a shameful death. Not a wince, not a word of self-pity. Amalek does not

humiliate himself to beg those he despises [10 Reshaim also went proudly to the gallows in 1946]. So why did Haman betray dear Amalekite pride? He was surely after something of ultimate importance.

Is THIS Still Legal?

So, what on earth was important to Haman till his very last breath? The Kedushat Levy explains: the edict making Jews' life free for the taking on the day of the Pur displayed on placards throughout the Empire bore Haman's signature. Therefore, months after Haman's death, would-be-plunderers could have second thoughts: am I still protected by the law if I kill and rob Jews?

Here is where the difference lies: If Haman dies like a minister, that only means he has harmed the king or the kingdom in one way or another, but no more. A minister's law stays the law, unless expressed otherwise.

However, if everybody sees him hanged like a nobody, that means: "He was a fraud, he fooled us all the way!" Then his law is not the law, and people go back to fearing the police who are protecting all citizens. "Baruch Shechalak Mechochmato Lireav": Mordechai understood all that was at stake, and hanged Haman not for revenge, but for Hatsalat Klal Yisrael.

Haman Was Sincere

So, Haman was really crying, he was truly heartbroken indeed, he was tortured by the survival of the Jewish People. Seeing his antisemitic plot pulled down to the ground as he would be pulled up to the gallows was worse than death and disgrace put together. That was a reason to be moser nefesh and do the most hated thing: to humble himself before his sworn enemy.

This is Amalek. We need to unite in sincere Tefilla against such enemies, bechol dor vador.