



# הַמִּזְרָחִי

# HAMIZRACHI

## PARSHA WEEKLY

PARSHAT TETZAVEH – SHABBAT ZACHOR 5783 • 2023










### ISRAEL Parsha Picture

וְאַתָּה תִּצְוֶה אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן זַיִת זָךְ כְּתִית  
לְמָאוֹר לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר תָּמִיד.









שמות כז:כ

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
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# Simchah and Song: The Language of the Soul



Rabbi Doron Perez

Executive Chairman, World Mizrahi

## The month of happiness

The month of Adar is the month of happiness, the only time when the Sages command us to be happy for an entire month.

Across the globe, communities joyously sing the iconic words of the Sages: מְשֻׁנְנֵס אָדָר מְרַבֵּין בְּשִׂמְחָה, "one who enters the month of Adar should increase their happiness."<sup>1</sup>

But how can the Rabbis command us to be happy for even one day – let alone for a full month? Is happiness not a transient emotion dependent upon a particular mood or circumstance? We are certainly happy at beautiful celebrations such as weddings (which we colloquially call a *simchah*), and on national holidays such as Purim we rejoice and celebrate. But is it really possible to be joyous all day, every day – for a month and beyond?<sup>2</sup> How can the Rabbis require such a seemingly unattainable ongoing emotional state?

The Rebbe of Ruzhin<sup>3</sup> offers a fascinating insight into happiness deriving from the very wording of this Talmudic teaching. The Rabbis say that when we enter the month of Adar we should *increase* our joy, and when we enter the month of Av we must *decrease* our joy. The language of the Rabbis implies that the Jewish people must *constantly* be in a state of *simchah*, all year long! We are merely commanded to increase or decrease our constant joy at different points throughout the year.

In other words, the Rebbe is calling for a paradigm shift, offering a critical insight

into the nature of happiness itself. *Simchah* is neither a transient emotion nor a fleeting feeling, but rather a *state of being*. Happiness is meant to be our 'default position'; it is the basic spiritual frequency of inspired G-dly living. Yes, the intensity of our *simchah* will increase or decrease throughout the year as we experience the natural ups and downs of life. But *simchah* should be the constant spiritual undercurrent of life; it is a sign of being in tune with our spiritual mission.<sup>4</sup>

If the laws and commandments of the Torah are the body of Judaism, then *simchah*, happiness, is its soul.

Our relationship with Hashem is far broader than the observance of religious law; it is a celebration of spiritual life. It is living with an inner sense of happiness and contentment and constantly rejoicing over the privilege of living in G-d's world and in His presence. This is the meaning of עֲבוֹדַת ה' בְּשִׂמְחָה, of serving Hashem with *joie de vivre* and profound joy.

## Simchah as song

*All these curses befell you... since you did not serve Hashem your G-d with happiness and with gladness of heart.*<sup>5</sup>

Incredibly, the Torah states that the curses and punishments that befall the people of Israel are a direct result of serving G-d without *simchah*. The scrupulous observance of Torah and *mitzvot* is not enough. Divine service devoid of joy is a foreign form of worship that totally misses the mark and with drastic consequences.

If Judaism's soul is *simchah*, then the language of the soul is song and music. Remarkably, the Rabbis interpret this specific verse as the source for song and music as an integral part of the עבודת השם, the daily service of the Temple. The Talmud<sup>6</sup> argues that this verse is clearly speaking about the service of G-d, and since our service of G-d is primarily performed in the Temple, the verse must be referring to the Temple service. And since the most overt expression of happiness and gladness of heart is music and song, this must be the deeper meaning of the verse – that the Temple service must be accompanied by music and song.

Indeed, the *korban tamid*, the daily communal sacrifice brought every morning and afternoon, had to be accompanied by the beautiful singing of a choir of Levites, who would sing the psalm of the day.<sup>7</sup> There is a dispute amongst the Rabbis as to whether the biblical requirement of song in the Temple service can be fulfilled with vocal singing, or whether musical instruments are also required by the Torah. In practice, the Levite choir was accompanied by a musical ensemble of multiple musicians playing five different instruments,<sup>8</sup> making music an intrinsic part of the Divine service.

### A symbol of humanity

Music is an indispensable part of spiritual life. A universal art form present in human culture and society since time immemorial, it is woven into our very existence as human beings. The ancients, in early hieroglyphics, already depicted song and musical instruments, and in the very first *parasha* in the Torah we encounter music. Yuval, a descendant of Cain,



**If the laws and commandments of the Torah are the body of Judaism, then *simchah*, happiness, is its soul.**

was the first person to תפיש כנור ועוגב, “play the lyre and the flute.”<sup>9</sup> The Sages explain that Yuval was the inventor of musical instruments.<sup>10</sup>

Music is one of the most distinct creations and features of the human spirit. Vocal or instrumental, music uplifts our spirit and stirs our soul. What other medium gives expression to the range and depth of human emotions the way music does? It is somehow able to evoke past memories, experiences, feelings and sentiments with an unparalleled power and potency. In unique moments, singing, playing and listening to music can be a deeply transformative experience.

### Metaphysical music

The Vilna Gaon famously extolled the great virtues of music, believing that the mystical secrets of spiritual life can only be unlocked through the wisdom of music.<sup>11</sup> Music is the most spiritual and esoteric of all human art. Both the visual arts – such as drawing, sculpting and painting – and literature portray the objects and events of our physical world. Music, however, reaches beyond this world. The notes emanating from vocal cords or instruments do not exist in this world; they are ethereal, almost

metaphysical creations.<sup>12</sup> As though borrowed from another world, they create a transcendental and heavenly experience. Mind and imagination, heart and soul, mystically join together this world and the next.

In this, the happiest of months, may we increase our joy; may the great gift of music – its rhythms, melodies and harmonies – unlock our deepest spiritual yearnings and enhance our daily celebration of the privilege of living in G-d's presence. May these months of redemption evoke a human and Divine transformation through which we will once again merit to see כהנים בעבודתם ה' – the priestly Temple service and the stirring, holy and mystical melodies of the Levites.

### *Purim Sameach!*

1. Ta'anit 29a.
2. Rashi explains that *simchah* is actually required for two months, beginning with Adar and continuing throughout Nissan as well, as both are months of redemption.
3. Rabbi Yisrael Friedman (1796–1850) was the one and only Rebbe of Ruzhin.
4. See Malbim, Yeshayahu 35:1, and my “Israel – the Happiest Place in the World”, *HaMizrachi* Vol. 2, No. 5.
5. Devarim 28:45–47
6. Arachin 11a
7. Tamid 7:4
8. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, the Laws of the Vessels of the Temple 3:2–4
9. Bereishit 4:21
10. Midrash HaGadol p.126
11. Cited by Rabbi Yisrael of Shklov, Introduction to *Pe'at Hashulchan*
12. Dr Daniel Shalit, *Yodea Nagen*, p. 41

# Why The Megillah is Named After Esther



**Rabbi Reuven Taragin**  
Educational Director, World Mizrahi  
Dean of Overseas Students, Yeshivat Hakotel



Leadership is “a process of social influence in which one person enlists the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.”<sup>1</sup> Both Mordechai and Esther play this kind of leadership role in Megillat Esther. Comparing their respective roles is one of the *Megillah*'s central themes and accounts for its very name.

## Mordechai's Leadership

Mordechai, the first Jewish character mentioned in Megillat Esther, is introduced with a detailed description of his lineage and personal history.<sup>2</sup> Mordechai's ancestors were exiled together with Yerushalayim's leaders. He followed their path and assumed a leadership role in Shushan.

He is the key (Jewish) actor in the first part of the *Megillah*. He adopts Esther (2:7) and discovers and foils the plot to kill Achashveirosh (2:22). Later, he actively responds to Haman's decree by donning a sackcloth (4:1-2) in the king's court and commands Esther to beg Achashveirosh to spare the Jewish people.

When Esther hesitates due to the danger involved, Mordechai responds with sharp rebuke. He emphasizes the personal responsibility she has to use her position on behalf of her people and explains that it is, in actuality, Esther, not the Jews, whose fate hangs in the balance. If Esther fails to act, Hashem will find another way to save the Jews, but she and her ancestry will be lost.<sup>3</sup>

Mordechai definitely qualifies as one who “enlists (even after being rebuffed!) the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.”<sup>4</sup>

Esther, on the other hand, is passively taken to the palace and, eventually, to Achashveirosh. Her decisions, such as not revealing her nationality,<sup>5</sup> are based on Mordechai's directives.

Considering Mordechai's central role in the various stages of the narrative, it is surprising that the *Megillah* is named after Esther. Should it not be named after Mordechai, at least in some form?<sup>6</sup>

## Esther Takes the Reins

The answer lies in Esther's response to Mordechai's rebuke. She not only takes action, but also takes the leadership reins. She responds not by consenting to Mordechai's command, but rather by 1) changing the plan to include parties for Achashveirosh and Haman,<sup>7</sup> 2) expanding his plan to include the Jewish people in the process, and 3) charging Mordechai with the responsibility for galvanizing them.

She commands Mordechai to gather the Jews of Shushan and fast with them for three days in preparation for her mission to Achashveirosh.<sup>8</sup> Esther reminds us that Jewish salvation hinges not on the heroic actions of individual martyrs, but on the individual's ability to inspire the rest of the people to identify with the mission.

Esther's response changed her role from being passively commanded to becoming the active commander. Mordechai was not the only leader; Esther also “enlisted the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.” Esther's emergence as the leader eclipsed Mordechai's leadership and turned him into the commanded.<sup>9</sup>

From this point forward, Esther becomes the central active character in the story, while Mordechai fades into the background. In the *Megillah*'s central perakim, when the flip (“v'nahafoch hu”) occurs, it is Esther, not Mordechai, who plays the active role. Mordechai is brought back into the picture *by Esther* only after Haman is hanged (8:1). Mordechai may be the one to record the story, but it is a story highlighted by Esther's leadership and heroics. Though Mordechai was the initial leader,

it was Esther who ultimately conceived the plan of action and played the pivotal role. Therefore, the *Megillah* bears her name: Megillat Esther.

## Leadership Lessons

We are meant to learn important lessons from each of the *Megillah*'s models of leadership. Mordechai models a leader's responsibility to consider the significance of the position in which we find ourselves, speculate about what actions and sacrifices we are called upon to make, and ensure that we and others answer the call.

Esther teaches us that even those initially led by others have a responsibility to carefully consider the correct path forward and redirect as necessary.

May Mordechai and Esther's example inspire us to carry out the leadership roles we are expected to fill.

1. Chemers M. (1997) An integrative theory of leadership. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
2. Esther 2:5-6.
3. Esther 4:13-14.
4. Mordechai's leadership continues after the miraculous turn of events in his authorship not only of the letters sent to reverse the decree (8:9), but also of those eternalizing Purim as a Jewish holiday (9:20).
5. Esther 2:10.
6. Presumably, the *Megillah* is named after Esther because she is the only one mentioned in the last pasuk (9:32) that reports the Jewish people's acceptance of Purim as a holiday and of the *Megillah* as part of the canon. This pasuk supports Chazal's description (Talmud Bavli *Megillah* 7a) of Esther as the one who pushed the rabbis to recognize the *Megillah* and the Purim holiday. This having been said, earlier pesukim describing the establishment of the holiday (9:29, 31) mention both Esther and Mordechai. Ultimately, the question is why the last pasuk (and thus future credit) focus only on Esther.
7. See the Gemara (*Megillah* 15b) which questions this decision.
8. Esther 4:15-16.
9. Esther 4:17.

HAFTARAH - PARSHANUT ON THE PARSHA

# ZACHOR: Hashem's War – Remembering, Listening & Leading



**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**  
Educational Director, World Mizrahi

The Tosefta on Megilla 30a teaches us: “On the second [of the four special Shabbatot, we read] Zachor, and the haftarah is “So says the Lord, I have remembered what Amalek did to Israel...” What is considered the second week [out of the four]? The week in which Purim falls.” This week’s connection between the Torah reading (*maftir*) and the haftarah (Shmuel I, chapter 15) is clear; The pesukim of “parashat Zachor” in the Torah teach the mitzvah to “remember what Amalek did to you” – and subsequently “when Hashem your Lord gives you rest from all your enemies around you...you shall wipe out the memory of Amalek” (Devarim 25:17-19). The haftarah provides us with the commandment of Hashem to Shaul to fulfill this order – “And Shaul smote Amalek” (Shmuel I, 15:7). The parasha opens with the words, “Remember [**zachor**] what Amalek did to you,” while the haftarah begins with “So says the Lord of hosts, I have remembered [**pakadeti**] what Amalek did to Israel.” The word “pakadeti”, translated by the Targum Yonatan as the same as “zacharti” (“remembrance”) is employed to teach us that corresponding to the command to Bnei Yisrael to remember, Hashem also remembers Amalek’s evil for they attacked against the rule of G-d, and therefore “G-d is at war with Amalek” (Shemot 17:16).

For the “wiping out of Amalek” to be fulfilled, there must be an explicit Divine command as evidenced by Shmuel’s directive in the haftarah: “NOW go and smite Amalek”. The eradication of an entire nation and its memory cannot be made by humans, but as Rabbi Yehoshua rules: “[only] when the Holy One is seated on His throne...then, at that time, G-d will be at war with Amalek.”(Mechilta Beshalach).

That is why the haftarah begins (according to Sefardi custom, verse 1,) “And Shmuel said to Shaul: ‘Hashem sent me to anoint you to be king over His people, over Israel; now therefore hearken unto the voice of the words of Hashem.’” Only once there is a G-d-appointed human monarch over Israel can there be a clear directive to establish Divine monarchy! This monarch serves as a constant reminder of Hashem’s sovereignty in the world and thereby must lead the nation in eradicating the “enemy” of G-d.

Shaul’s failure to properly wipe out Amalek by leaving the king and flock alive delegitimized the Divine value of the commandment, distorting the entire meaning and morality of the war. The mitzvah demands of man to invoke cruelty against another nation, unmotivated by personal concerns, for the sake of G-d. By deviating from the prophet Shmuel’s instructions, Shaul displayed selfish underpinnings and actions not completely motivated by Hashem’s directive. Keeping the King Aggag alive so that Shaul could publicly kill him in Gilgal and keeping the flock alive for the people to sacrifice and eat, undermined the message of the war. Instead of teaching the people that the difficult commandment was one instructed and implored from Above to glorify G-d’s kingdom, he reinterpreted the war as an act of man, for which there is no justification! With all the excuses and justifications that Shaul offers, he caused a desecration of G-d’s name by leading others to perceive that the war was motivated by economic greed and hubris as he took spoils of war, instead of interpreting the war as “G-d’s war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

Not only did Shaul undermine Hashem’s monarchy by not broadcasting the message of Divine authority as the basis for the war against Amalek, but he undermined the basis of his own monarchy as well. Shaul justified his men taking from the plunder as relief from the difficult fighting in order to avoid conflict and maintain morale (as manifest in previous incidents of listening to the people vs. the prophet). He thought these were marginal details of the prophetic command, and therefore confidently proclaimed to Shmuel: “I have performed the commandment of Hashem”, feeling it was legitimate to reconcile the importance of ameliorating his soldiers with G-d’s command to wipe out Amalek. Unwillingness to stand up to the people, however, is a failure in leadership. Listening to the people in this case was in opposition to listening (שמע = the motif of the chapter, appearing 8 times) to Hashem!

Shaul’s error is dutifully divinely punished with removal of kingship and death in war against the Plishtim. The prophet juxtaposes the story of Shaul’s demise and absence of Divine assistance with the rise of David against the Amalekites, approved of by Hashem (Shemuel I, c. 30), thereby underscoring proper national leadership! Shaul’s errors, however, were eventually corrected by Mordechai called “the Judean” and “the Binyaminite”, for he learned from the positive messages of David how to repair the failed leadership of his ancestor Shaul. Mordechai and Esther, descendants of the house of Shaul, undeterred by others, emphasized that when the Jews killed their Persian enemies, “they did not lay hands on the plunder” (Esther 9:16), thereby broadcasting the national war as a Divine battle, not motivated by greed, spoils or pride!

# Halachic Q&A



## **Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon**

**Head, Mizrahi Rabbinic Council | Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council  
Rosh Yeshivah, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek**

### **Question: What kavanah is necessary when listening to Parshat Zachor?**

Answer: There is a general machloket amongst the rishonim as to whether mitzvot require kavanah. We paskin that biblical mitzvot do require kavanah (SA OC 60:4), and therefore, the biblical mitzvah of remembering Amalek requires kavanah. Nevertheless, the Arugot Habosem writes that one's basic, assumed kavanah in simply listening to the reading of zachor is sufficient for the mitzvah of zechirat Amalek.

Most poskim, however, assume that this does not suffice, as a person's assumed intent is simply to fulfill the obligation of kriyat haTorah but not the mitzvah of remembering Amalek. Therefore, many hold that both the ba'al korei and the congregation need intention to fulfill the mitzvah of remembering Amalek (MB 685:14). The Chatam Sofer would remind the congregation before the reading of parshiyot Zachor and Parah that everyone should have intent to fulfill the mitzvah, and many congregations continue this practice.

If one wants to fulfill the mitzvah through hearing the Torah reading on Parshat Ki Teitzei, one should tell the ba'al korei to intend to be motzei him through the leining (Shu"t Har Tzv).

### **Question: Is the proper reading "zecher" or "zeicher"?**

Answer: Precision with nikud and punctuation in kriyat haTorah is very important. This is especially true during the reading of Parshat Zachor in which we fulfill a biblical commandment. The biggest question regarding this topic revolves around the word "zeicher" in the line "timche

et zeicher Amalek" (Devarim 25:19). The Radak brings two options as to the proper nikud – "zecher" (two sagols) or "zeicher" (tzere and sagol). Ma'aseh Rav attests that the Gra held that "zecher" is the proper nikud, however, in almost all other kitvei yad, including the Aleppo Codex, the word is written as "zeicher."

In practice, it is sufficient to read zachor once with the accepted nikud of "zeicher". However, the Mishnah Berurah (685:18) writes that both versions should be read. One should first read the less accepted version, "zecher", and afterwards repeat with "zeicher." Rav Moshe and Rav Kanievsky both write that one does not need to repeat the whole sentence, but rather can return to "timche et zecher Amalek" and repeat from there. Simply repeating "zecher Amalek" alone should not be done as it may lead to a mistake. One should be as precise with the rest of the reading of Zachor as we are with the proper pronunciation of "zeicher".

### **Question: I am Sephardic. Do I need to hear Zachor from a Sephardic Torah?**

Answer: Some poskim (see Mikra'e Kodesh) require that one must hear Zachor from a sefer Torah written in the way of their edut and read in their cantillation (Ashkenazic, Sephardic, etc.).

It does not seem that one needs to do this, however, it is more beautiful to fulfill the mitzvah in this fashion (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach). If people from different backgrounds are davening together, it can be read once and everybody is yotzei. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach writes that multiple readings should not be done as it is not proper kavod hatzibur.

### **Question: Are women obligated to hear Parshat Zachor?**

Answer: According to the Sefer Hachinuch, only males are obligated in the mitzvah of zechirat Amalek because it is their responsibility to fight the war and take revenge. The Minchat Chinuch disagrees for two reasons. Firstly, he writes that women are also obligated in milchemet mitzvah (war by commandment). Secondly, he disagrees with the entire assumption that the mitzvah of remembering is dependent upon the mitzvah of fighting. A similar explanation is found in Shu"t Torat Chesed.

The Rambam writes in his introduction to his Sefer Hamitzvot that he will specify whenever women are exempt, and regarding the mitzvah of zechirat Amalek, the Rambam does not specify this exemption. Additionally, the Rambam lists all the mitzvot women are exempt from and does not include zechirat Amalek. It seems clear that the Rambam's understanding is that women are in fact obligated in this mitzvah.

In practice, it is proper to be stringent in this matter. Chatam Sofer and Rav Ovadya Yosef are amongst many achronim who paskin that it is an obligation, and many women are careful to come to shul to make sure they fulfill the mitzvah. Some communities have a communal reading of zachor for women. If a woman misses it, she should fulfill the obligation by listening at Parshat Ki Teitzei or in Parshat "Vayavo Amalek" (Purim/Beshalach).

The Chazon Ish and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach are amongst poskim who held that women are not obligated. At the very least, women should read the pesukim from a chumash (Yalkut Yosef).

● *Translated from Hebrew and abbreviated by Yaakov Panitch.*

# דיון משפחתי: פרשת תצוה

הרבנית שרון רימון  
Tanach teacher and author



**ע**ם ישראל נלחם עם עמים רבים במהלך ההיסטוריה, אולם רק כלפי עם אחד יש ציווי למחותו – עמלק. ציווי זה תקף לדורות – לא רק במדבר, כאשר עמלק נלחם עם ישראל, והיווה איום על קיומם, אלא גם לעתיד, כאשר עם ישראל ישב בארצו:

”זָכֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לָךְ עַמְלֵק... וַיִּזְנֶב בְּךָ כָּל הַחַיִּים אֲחֵרֶיךָ וְאַתָּה עֵיפָה וַיִּגַע וְלֹא יָרָא אֶל-לֵקִים... תִּמְחָה אֶת זֵכֶר עַמְלֵק מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא תִשְׁכַּח” (דברים כ”ה, יז-יט).

מה פשר ההתייחסות החמורה לעמלק?

נתבונן בתיאורי המלחמות עם עמלק ומהם ננסה ללמוד על מאפייניו. בפסוק בספר דברים, המצווה על מחיית עמלק, כתוב: ”וַיִּזְנֶב בְּךָ כָּל הַחַיִּים אֲחֵרֶיךָ וְאַתָּה עֵיפָה וַיִּגַע” (יח) – עמלק לא יצאו למלחמה מול צבא ישראל, אלא פגעו ב”נחשלים” – בחלשים שבמחנה, באלו שנשארו מאחור. בנוסף לכך, עמלק ניצלו את ההזדמנות לפגוע בעם ישראל בשעה שהיה ”עיף ויגע”. (עיף, משמעותו ”צמא”, כפי שפירשו רש”י וראב”ע). זו מלחמה לא הוגנת, ובעצם לא היתה ממש מלחמה אלא ניצול מצב של חולשה כדי לפגוע להשתלט, ולהרוויח.

סגנון לחימה זה כנראה אפייין את עמלק, כפי שניתן לראות גם בסיפור המלחמה בין עמלק לדוד (שמו”א, ל’): דוד ואנשיו יצאו למלחמה עם הפלשתים, והשאירו בבית, בעיר צקלג, את הנשים, הילדים, והזקנים, שלא יכולים להלחם. עמלק ניצל את ההזדמנות ולקח בשבי את כל מי שהיה בעיר. שוב אנו רואים שעמלק ”מזנב בחלשים”, פושט על אנשים חסרי ישע, לוקח אותם בשבי ובוזז את רכושם.

בהמשך אותו פרק, תוך כדי מרדף אחרי העמלקים, דוד מבחין באיש מצרי, המתאר את חוסר המוסריות של אדונו העמלקי, אשר עזב אותו בשדה מכיוון שהוא כבר לא יכול להועיל עבורו (ג). נדמה שהסיפור שם מדגיש היטב את הפער בין ההתנהלות המוסרית של דוד מול זו של האדון העמלקי: האדון העמלקי

ואילו בספר דברים, המתאר את מה שקרה ברפידיים, נאמר במפורש: ”וַיִּזְנֶב בְּךָ כָּל הַנַּחֲשִׁלִים”.

מעניין לשים לב שמצוות מחיית עמלק כתובה בספר דברים בהקשר של מצוות מוסריות. התורה מצווה על עם ישראל להמנע מעוול ולהתנהג בצורה מוסרית במשפט, במסחר, ובסיטואציות נוספות.

התנהגותו חסרת המוסריות של עמלק עומדת בניגוד לנורמות המוסריות הגבוהות הנדרשות מעם ישראל. לאורך כל הדורות עם ישראל צריך לזכור את התנהגותו הלא-מוסרית של עמלק, למחות עליה, כדי להתרחק ממנה לגמרי, ולמחות את מידת חוסר המוסריות מנפשם, כפי שמפרש רש”י הירש:

”...המצוה הקודמת השלימה את ציור התמונה האידיאלית של ישראל: זה הוא עם המתרחק מכל ”עוול”, מכל ניצול לרעה של עליונות אדם על חברו... בני העם הזה לא ינצלו לרעה את אימון האדם בחברו, שבלעדיו אין בני אדם יכולים לחיות בחברה אחת. הם חדורי אמונה שה’ הוא אלוהיהם רק אם הם נרתעים ויראים מכל עוול כלפי בריותיו, ומאכן נובע צדק ויושר ללא רבב במשא ומתן בין אדם לחברו... באופי הלאומי של העם הזה יאירו הקווים של השתתפות ברגשות אחרים, של התחשבות, נדיבות וגמילות חסד עם כל חי...”

הניגוד לאופיו של העם הזה מוצג על ידי עמלק, ששמחת תהילתו היא רק בחרב גאותו וברמיסת כל חלש חסר מגן... המאבק עם עקרונו של עמלק עד לאובדנו הגמור הוא תוכן כל ההנהגה ההיסטורית של ה’ עלי אדמות, ואילו כאן נדרש ישראל לראות את עצמו כמכשיר המשתתף במלחמת ה’ בעמלק... (רש”י הירש לדברים כ”ה, יז).

עזב את עבדו לאחר שלושה ימים של חולי וכמעט גרם למותו, ואילו דוד סייע לנער מצרי שנתקל בו במקרה, העניק לו אוכל והשקה אותו במים.

גם במגילת אסתר (אותה נקרא בחג הפורים), עם ישראל נאלץ להתמודד שוב עם עמלק. המן האגגי, מזרע עמלק, משתמש בכח השלטון ומצווה להשמיד את כל היהודים. גזירת ההשמדה של המן כוללת נשים, ילדים וזקנים וביזה של רכושם. גזירה קשה זו נגזרת על כל היהודים רק מפני שיש להמן סכסוך אישי עם מרדכי. ברור שמדובר כאן בצעד בלתי מוסרי בעליל.

אם כן, בכמה וכמה סיפורים בתנ”ך עולה שעמלק היה נוהג לפשוט על קבוצות חלשות, לבוז, לשבות ולהרוג אותם. ההתנהלות הזו מתאימה לעמלק בהיותו עם של נוודים, שאינם יושבים במקום אחד באופן קבוע, ואינם מתנהלים באופן ממלכתי מסודר, אלא פוגעים בעמים אחרים באופן נקודתי כדי להשיג את צרכיהם.

לאור ההבנה הזו על עמלק, נחזור למלחמה הראשונה של עמלק כנגד ישראל, בשמות י”ז. עיון מעמיק בסיפור מגלה כיצד התנהל עמלק במלחמה זו: כאשר בני ישראל חנו ברפידיים, חסרו להם מים. ה’ מצווה את משה להכות על הסלע ומים רבים יוצאים להשקות את העם. אולם, נשים לב שהסלע לא נמצא ברפידיים אלא בהר חורב. כלומר: ה’ ציווה על משה ללכת עם זקני העם לחורב, שם עתיד הנס להתרחש. המים אשר יצאו מן הסלע בחורב היו רחוקים מן העם, ורמב”ן מסביר שהם זרמו בנחל מחורב לרפידיים: ”...וקרוב אלי שיצאו מים מן הצור בחורב, מים קרים נוזלים, הלכו אל רפידיים, ושם שתו אותם...”.

אם כן, עמלק בוחר לתקוף את העם הנמצא ברפידיים בזמן שמנהיגי העם לא נמצאים שם, וחלק מהעם כבר התחיל במסע לכיוון המים היוצאים מהר חורב. עמלק תוקף את שארית העם – את הזקנים והחלשים הנמצאים עדיין ברפידיים. דבר זה לא כתוב במפורש בספר שמות, אך ניתן להבין זאת מתוך המסופר שם,

# Purim Basics



**Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedidya Meir**  
World Mizrahi Scholars-in-Residence

1. On the 13th of Adar, we observe Ta'anit Esther. This fast day commemorates the fast of Esther and of the entire Jewish nation in the days of Haman's decree to destroy the Jews. Esther did not act alone, but rather brought the entire nation together with her when she told Mordechai: "Go, assemble all the Jews." From then until today, we demonstrate strength in numbers when we band together to resist harsh degrees and overcome dire circumstances. In the evening after the fast, the holiday of Purim begins. There are four Purim mitzvot, as follows:

2. Mishloach manot. Each individual is obligated to send two different foods to at least one other person. The foods can be sent to friends and neighbors, yet it is also desirable, of course, to look for new immigrants, the elderly, and other people in your neighborhood who may not be receiving many mishloach manot.

3. Gifts for the needy. The Rambam writes that this is the principle mitzvah of Purim. We are obligated to give tzedakah to at least two poor people. Each person will receive a sum of money (which may be contributed through a charitable organization) that will suffice for a generous portion of food. The joy of Achashverosh in the Megillah is expressed in showing off his riches, profligacy, and a display of his palace grandeur. The joy of Purim is of an opposite kind – joy that comes from giving to others and helping those in need.

4. Purim feast. In the course of Purim day, we eat a festive meal with meat and wine. The excessive alcohol at the feast of Achashverosh, as told in the Megillah, had many negative consequences. Although there is drinking on Purim, we are talking here, too, about a different kind of joy; drinking that does not lead to tumult and violence. On Purim, it becomes clear

that wine can bring out authentic joy and goodness from within us.

5. Reading Megillat Esther. We read the Megillah twice, once in the evening and once during the coming day (in Jerusalem, we begin reading tomorrow evening). The repeat reading of the Megillah underscores the fact that the story of our people involves periods of darkness and gloom as well as periods of light and optimism. Just as reality can change suddenly for the bad (with Haman's decree to destroy the Jews, with the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, or with eruption of the present war in Europe), so too reality can surprisingly change, within one brief moment, for the good. Suddenly our sorrows disappear: "The Jews had light and joy, and gladness and honor." Not only in the days of the Megillah but also – if only – in our days too.

Pay attention to the words of Rashi at the beginning of this week's Torah portion. He explains Aharon's lighting of the menorah in the Mishkan as follows: "He shall light it until the flame rises on its own."

Many commentators ask us to pause here: This is not just about the technical lighting of the menorah. Aharon HaKohen is the people's spiritual mentor and he is, in fact, teaching us how to light a fire and generate enthusiasm in those under our wing: whether we are managers, military officers, teachers, or parents.

Initially, we have the task of simply lighting a fire. To educate, to explain, to pay close attention and to inspire. But it is impossible to always be there with constant instructions about what to do. A stage is reached where we must loosen our grip and let them fend for themselves. It's a matter of finding the right time to

take a step back and allowing them to generate their own light and brighten the worlds around them.

There are no fixed rules here. Sometimes parents must be constantly reassuring and exceedingly patient with a child, while other times they may smother a child with too much attention and need to be more distant. The words of Rashi call upon us to be aware of when to inspire and when to let go, when to supervise and be involved and when to foster independence, "until the flame rises on its own."

Wishing everyone success in this endeavor.



בואו נודה, קשה לנו לשמוח. אנחנו חיים בתקופה מאתגרת-שמחה. אז לכבוד היום השמח הזה, חג הפורים, שממנו אמורים לקבל שמחה לכל השנה, הנה שלושה ציטוטים קצרים מתוך ספרי החסידות, שיכולים לכוון אותנו ליותר שמחה:

"תחשוב טוב יהיה טוב" – מחשבה טובה יכולה לשנות את המציאות. האדם נמצא במקום שבו מחשבותיו נמצאות, ואם מחשבותיו יהיו במקום טוב וחיובי, אם הוא חושב באופן מלא באמונה ובביטחון, אז בכוח המחשבה הוא ישפיע ויקרין החוצה וגם המציאות שלו תשתנה לטובה.

"רק אדרבה – להראות בעצמו תמיד תנועות כאילו הוא מלא שמחה בליבו, אף על פי שאין בליבו כן בשעת מעשה – וסופו להיות כן" – כאן לא מדובר על המחשבה, אלא על המעשה. גם אם אתה לא מלא בשמחה, אם תתנהג באופן שמח, זה ישפיע פנימה וגם תרגיש יותר שמחה. כלומר, הדרך לשמוח היא פשוט להתנהג כאילו אתה כבר שמח.

"מתוך שמחה, נעשית העבודה ביתר הצלחה וביתר מהירות" – אנחנו מתאמצים ועושים ופועלים, אבל לפעמים שוכחים את התבלין המרכזי שצריך ללוות את כל הפעילות בעולם הזה, השמחה. לפני כל המשימות ברשימת המטלות, צריך לגשת אליהן מתוך שמחה, והיא תגרום לכל משימה שהיא להתבצע ביתר הצלחה ומהירות.



# For the Shabbat Table



**Rabbi Danny Mirvis**

Deputy CEO, World Mizrachi

Rabbi of Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Herzliya Pituach

“**Y**ou shall make on its hem pomegranates of techelet, purple and scarlet wool, all around its hem, and gold bells amongst/between them all around. A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe. It (the robe) shall be on Aharon in order to serve, and its sound shall be heard when he comes to the Sanctuary before Hashem and when he leaves, and he shall not die” (Shemot 28:33-35).

In the description of the Kohen Gadol's vestments in this week's Parsha, we are informed that the hem of his robe should be lined with pomegranates made out of wool and golden bells.

Most of our commentators explain that the noise created by the bells served a practical purpose, either so that the Kohen Gadol's movements could be followed whilst he was serving but could not be seen (Chezkuni), so that everybody could notice that he was higher than the other Kohanim (also Chezkuni), as a warning for those who should not get too near to the service (Rashbam), or as a form of announcing his arrival prior to coming to serve before Hashem (Ramban).

HaKtav v'haKabbala, however, writes that the purpose of the bells was not for others to hear the Kohen Gadol, but for the Kohen Gadol to hear himself.



**We all know from the way we notice the actions of others that it is often when they do not intend to make an impression that the greatest impression is made.**

HaKtav v'haKabbala compares the bells to the Mitzva of Tzitzit. Just as Tzitzit are supposed to provide a visual reminder to keep Hashem's Mitzvot, the bells were there as an extra reminder for the Kohen Gadol of his extra Mitzvot, elevated status and added responsibility. Because of the bells, every step he took and every move he made created a noise, therefore reminding him wherever he went and whatever he did, who he represented, who commanded him to wear the bells, and of the impact of every single one of his actions.

The message of the bells does not only apply to the Kohen Gadol on his level, but to all spiritual leaders and to every Jew. Whether we like it or not, we are representatives of Judaism, representatives of Israel and representatives of Hashem.

In this spirit, the Mitzva to make a Kiddush Hashem is not written in the

command form, but is written passively – “v'nikdashti” – “and I shall be sanctified” (Vayikra 22:32).

It is not only when we are aware that we are being watched and intentionally go out of our way that we can make a Kiddush Hashem. Often, the greatest potential for Kiddush Hashem (and conversely, Chillul Hashem) is passive. We all know from the way we notice the actions of others that it is often when they do not intend to make an impression that the greatest impression is made. A Kiddush/Chillul Hashem is therefore achieved, not only with planned actions, but with the way we speak, the way we relate to others, the way we walk around and in the smaller details of the way we behave in our everyday lives.

Other people do not need to be reminded of who we are and what we represent; it is we who need to remind ourselves. If we are aware that every step we take and every move we make can make an impact, and we learn to act accordingly, then we will hopefully not only avoid Chilulei Hashem, but also make the greatest Kiddushei Hashem possible.

Shabbat Shalom!

# Inspiration and Perspiration



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

**B**eethoven rose each morning at dawn and made himself coffee. He was fastidious about this: each cup had to be made with exactly sixty beans, which he counted out each time. He would then sit at his desk and compose until 2:00 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon. Subsequently he would go for a long walk, taking with him a pencil and some sheets of music paper to record any ideas that came to him on the way. Each night after supper he would have a beer, smoke a pipe, and go to bed early, 10:00 p.m. at the latest.

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

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

These details, together with more than 150 other examples drawn from the great philosophers, artists, composers, and writers come from a book by Mason Currey entitled *Daily Rituals: How Great Minds Make Time, Find Inspiration, and Get to Work*.<sup>1</sup> The book's point is simple. Most creative people have daily rituals. These

form the soil in which the seeds of their invention grow.

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

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

Yet their daily lives were the opposite: ritualised and routine. One could even call them boring. Why so? Because – the saying is famous, though we don't know who first said it – *genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety-nine per cent perspiration*. The paradigm-shifting scientific discovery, the path-breaking research, the wildly successful new product, the brilliant novel, the award-winning film. are almost always the result of many years of long hours and attention to detail. Being creative involves hard work.

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

Hence the remarkable aggadic passage in which various Sages put forward their

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But that is all they are: experiences. They linger in the memory, but they are not

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

These rituals have an effect. We now know through PET and fMRI scans that repeated spiritual exercise reconfigures the brain. It gives us inner resilience. It makes us more grateful. It gives us a sense of basic trust in the source of our being. It shapes our identity, the way we act and talk and think. Ritual is to spiritual greatness what practice is to a tennis player, daily writing disciplines are to a novelist, and reading company accounts are to Warren Buffett. They are the precondition of high achievement. Serving G-d is *avodah*, which means hard work.

If you seek sudden inspiration, then work at it every day for a year or a lifetime. That is how it comes. As a famous golfer is said

to have said when asked for the secret of his success: "I was just lucky. But the funny thing is that the harder I practise, the luckier I become." The more you seek spiritual heights, the more you need the ritual and routine of halacha, the Jewish "way" to G-d.

#### AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE:

- Do you find meaning in the everyday tasks of Judaism? Do they feel like work?
- What can you do to make the daily mitzvot you do feel meaningful?
- Do you think religion should be more about intense spiritual experiences? Or do you agree with Rabbi Sacks made that ritual and routine can change the way we feel, think, and act?

1. Mason Currey, *Daily Rituals* (New York: Knopf, 2013).  
2. The passage is cited in the introduction to the commentary *HaKotev on Ein Yaakov*, the collected aggadic passages of the Talmud. It is also quoted by Maharal in *Netivot Olam, Ahavat Re'a* 1.  
3. A point made by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik in his book *Halakhic Man*.



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# Kilayim in the Bigdei Kehunah



**Rabbi Hershel Schachter**

Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

**A** number of the bigdei Kehunah (priestly vestments) contained shatnez, including the choshen and ephod of the Kohen Gadol and the avnet of the Kohen Hedyot (ordinary Kohen). The Rambam rules that the allowance for a Kohen Hedyot to wear the avnet applies only at the time he performs the avodah. He must remove the avnet the moment he concludes the avodah in order to avoid violating the shatnez prohibition. The Ra'avad disagrees and maintains that it is permitted for a Kohen to wear the begadim even after he completes the avodah.

Tosfos explains that the question revolves around whether, in the bigdei Kehunah, the issur of kilayim has been rendered by the Torah as hutrah (permitted) or merely as dechuyah (overridden). In the case of an issur that is hutrah, the Torah commands, without any reluctance, that the issur be disregarded. In the case of an issur that is dechuyah, the Torah reluctantly allows the issur to be pushed aside. According to Tosfos, if kilayim in bigdei Kehunah is hutrah, the heter extends even to when it is not the time of avodah, but if it is only dechuyah, the allowance is only at the time of avodah.

The Peirush HaMeyuchas L'HaRa'avad questions the premise of Tosfos. The allowance to violate the issur of kilayim is certainly a result of the mitzvah involved in wearing the bigdei Kehunah. Accordingly, when the avodah is finished, there is no mitzvah being performed that can permit the violation of the issur. A Kohen cannot smoke a cigar on Shabbos at the same time he is engaged in offering the Korban Tamid or Korban Mussaf of Shabbos, even though the offering of these korbanos on Shabbos is hutrah (Yoma

46b); the allowance obviously does not extend to other chillul Shabbos that is unrelated to the offering of the korbanos. How, then, could there be an opinion that a Kohen may continue to violate the issur of kilayim even after he completes the avodah.

Rav Soloveitchik, in a *yahrzeit drashah*, developed a definition of *dechuyah* and *hutrah* to address this question. This definition of *hutrah* allows for the possibility of wearing bigdei Kehunah even not at the time of avodah.

The Rav explained that *dechuyah* means that in a situation of conflict between a mitzvah and an *aveirah*, the mitzvah is *docheh* (overrides) the *aveirah*. Accordingly, in the view of the Rambam, since the Kohen must wear shatnez in order to fulfill the mitzvah of avodah, and since the *kiyum* (fulfillment) of the mitzvah of *avodas hakorbanos* is *docheh* the issur of shatnez, he may wear the begadim during the avodah. When the avodah is complete, however, and there is no longer any mitzvah to accomplish, he must abstain from violating the issur.

*Hutrah* is a fundamentally different way of viewing the conflict between a mitzvah and an *aveirah*. Here, it is not the *kiyum* of the mitzvah that takes precedence over the issur. Instead, the permissibility of violating the issur is due to the fact that the actual *cheftza* of the mitzvah was exempted from the issur. In other words, when the issur of shatnez was formulated by the Torah, bigdei Kehunah were simply not included in the issur. For this reason, the Ra'avad maintains that a Kohen may continue to wear the bigdei Kehunah containing shatnez, even when he is not performing the avodah. Since the issur of shatnez is *hutrah* in the bigdei Kehunah,

the issur does not apply to these begadim at all.

It is interesting that while the Rambam requires a Kohen Hedyot to remove his avnet the moment he completes the avodah, he does not mention such a requirement with regard to the Kohen Gadol. The Ra'avad notes this discrepancy and questions why the Rambam would neglect to mention this halachah. The Radvaz comments that it would seem that the Rambam, in fact, distinguishes between a Kohen Gadol and a Kohen Hedyot with regard to wearing the begadim that contain shatnez after the completion of avodah. What could be the reason for this distinction? The Beis HaLevi suggests an original answer to this question.

The *tzitz* is one of the Kohen Gadol's begadim, and its purpose is to effect acceptance of a korban that was offered in a state of *tum'ah*. There is a *machlokes Tanna'im* regarding whether *ritzuy tzitz* is operative even when the Kohen Gadol is not wearing the *tzitz* or, as the Rambam rules only when it is present on the forehead of the Kohen Gadol.

A further question with regard to *ritzuy tzitz* is whether wearing the *tzitz* is effective only when it is accompanied by the other begadim or even if it is worn alone. Rabbeinu Tam seems to imply that the Kohen Gadol may wear the *tzitz* alone for the purpose of being *meratzeh* a korban that became *tamei*. The Beis HaLevi argues, however, that when a Kohen is not wearing all of his requisite begadim, he is not considered to possess his special Kehunah status with regard to *avodas hakorbanos*. Thus, the Kohen Gadol's wearing of the *tzitz* unaccompanied by his other begadim should be tantamount

*Continued on next page*

# The Building Process



**Rabbi Yisroel Reisman**  
Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Torah Vodaas

**T**he Medrash explains that Yaakov Avinu planted Atzei Arazim (acacia wood) in Mitzrayim and instructed Bnei Yisrael to take it with them when they left Mitzrayim in order to use it to build the Mishkan. The Gra elaborates that the reason Yaakov Avinu did this is because when things are made from the very beginning with Kedusha and Tahara, they are a greater receptacle for Kedusha. Therefore, Yaakov from the very planting of the acacia wood was involved in what would be the walls of the Mishkan.

However, if that's the case, why did Shlomo Hamelech use Chiram Melech Tzur, a foreign king, for the building of the Beis Hamikdash? Why did he use Chiram to cut down the cedars of Lebanon to build the Beis Hamikdash. Forget about planting because Shlomo Hamelech wasn't going to wait that many years for it to grow, but he could have at least cut it down and prepared it himself so that the process began with Kedusha and Tahara?

On a simple level, we can suggest the following answer. The Gemara (Bava Basra 4a) says that Bava Ben Buta gave King Heord the idea to rebuild the Beis

Hamikdash. The Beis Hamikdash had fallen into disrepair and he told him to build it. The Gemara asks why did he have such a terrible person like King Herod build it? Why not ask one of Am Yisrael to rebuild it? The Gemara simply answers that it wouldn't have happened any other way. He needed a king in order for it to happen, especially because they were under the influence of the Romans at the time. Similarly, maybe in the time of Shlomo Hamelech it was a practical thing as it would not have been built quickly had he not used people who were already trained in preparing the wood and the stones.

A second possible answer is as follows. We learn in Melachim I 7:51 that when Shlomo Hamelech finished building the Beis Hamikdash, he brought all the silver and gold his father had prepared and set aside for the Beis Hamikdash and stored them in the treasure house. All the commentators on the page ask what Shlomo Hamelech did with all the gold and silver and other items that his father prepared. Chazal say in Divrei Hayomim that Dovid Hamelech prepared everything that was needed for the Beis Hamikdash.

If so, why didn't Shlomo Hamelech use the wood and the gold and silver that his father prepared?

Rashi explains that Shlomo Hamelech said to himself that in Dovid's lifetime there was a three year hunger and Dovid Hamelech should have used the money to support the poor people that were starving. Since the money was not used for what it should have been used, Shlomo Hamelech felt it was tainted money and should not be used for the building of the Beis Hamikdash.

Based on this, perhaps Shlomo Hamelech, who knew that Klal Yisrael knew that his father had the money prepared (as his father made a very public appeal to Klal Yisrael for the money), and here wanted to keep it as quiet as possible that he wasn't using what his father prepared and perhaps it could be that that is why he sent the work 'out of town' so to speak to be done in Lebanon as it wouldn't have been as obvious to the people that he wasn't using what his father prepared.

● Edited by Yehuda Kaufold and Josh Harris.

*Continued from previous page*

to a non-Kohen wearing the tzitz, which would certainly be ineffective.

It follows from the psak of the Rambam and the additional assertion of the Beis HaLevi that the Kohen Gadol must wear the tzitz together with his other begadim all day long, since this enables the tzitz to effect acceptance of a korban that is tamei. In this sense, the Beis HaLevi contends, the Kohen Gadol is considered to be performing avodah at all times – namely,

the avodah of ritzuy tzitz – and this kiyum hamitzvah overrides the issur of shatnez with regard to his begadim. This argument obviously does not apply to a Kohen Hedyot, who must therefore remove his begadim when he completes the avodah.

According to the Rambam, only a Kohen Hedyot must remove his begadim upon completing the avodah, since for him, wearing bigdei Kehunah is merely a hechsher mitzvah that enables hakravas

hakorbanos. When he is not performing avodah, he has no independent mitzvah to wear bigdei Kehunah that could override the issur shatnez. However, for the Kohen Gadol, although the issur of shatnez is merely dechuyah, the continuous mitzvah to wear bigdei Kehunah inside the Beis HaMikdash overrides the issur all day long.

● Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Parsha II.

# The Four Secrets of the Megillah



**Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein**  
Chief Rabbi of South Africa

**K**lal Yisrael was cemented at the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. But this week's parsha, Tetzaveh, includes an important ingredient in the forging of Klal Yisrael. Tetzaveh continues the narrative of the building of the Mishkan, the holy sanctuary in the desert, which the entire community was involved in establishing, and which, as the central gathering place for connecting to G-d, was the quintessential communal space. This week we read of the appointment of the Kohanim, the priestly tribe who served in this sacred space.

"And you shall bring close to you, Aaron your brother and his sons with him, from amidst the children of Israel, to serve me" (Shemot 28:1). As the people appointed to perform various tasks in the Mishkan on behalf of the entire Jewish people, the Kohanim were Klal Yisrael's first communal representatives – and a powerful unifying force for the community.

This idea of community building and national unity was personified by Aaron the Kohen Gadol, or "High Priest". The Mishna in Pirkei Avot describes Aaron and calls on us to be his disciples by "loving peace, pursuing peace, loving people and bringing them close to Torah" (Pirkei Avot 1:12). The Maharal says that Aharon's drive to pursue peace was part of a wider vision of unifying the Jewish people. He adds that this unifying role extended to bringing unity between Klal Yisrael and God, through the sacred tasks he performed in the Mishkan.

This value of community goes to the heart of what it means to be a Jew. It is so central to our Jewish identity that the Rambam writes that a person who separates themselves from the community – even though they may live an otherwise

morally unimpeachable existence – "has no portion in the world to come" (Hilchot Teshuva 3:11). The Rambam writes that there are two dimensions to community involvement – one is caring for the needs (whether emotional or physical) of one's fellow community members, and the other is performing the mitzvot together as a community. These two ideas are encapsulated in the famous statement of our Sages, "All of Israel is responsible as guarantors for one another."

Being part of a community means looking out for others and taking responsibility for their wellbeing – in the poignant words of the Rambam, "Entering into their troubles". This includes material assistance – practical acts of kindness and support – but also extends to praying for the welfare of others, and having them "top of mind".

But there is also a metaphysical dimension to this idea of Klal Yisrael and the importance of national unity. The Torah describes how "Israel encamped by the mountain" prior to the giving of the Torah (Shemot 19:2). The verb "encamped" is in the singular, even though it refers to the whole nation. Rashi comments that for the purposes of receiving the Torah, the Jewish people had attained a state of harmony, "like one person with one heart." This state of national unity was in fact a prerequisite for receiving the Torah, because the Jewish people were receiving it as a klal, a collective, and not just as individuals. The Ohr HaChaim points out (Shemot 39:32) that no one Jew can fulfil all 613 commandments. Some mitzvot apply only to Kohanim, and others only to Leviim. Some apply only to men, and others only to women. Some apply only to kings, and others only to judges. Some apply only in the fields of agriculture, and others only in the field of battle. And yet, somehow, all of the mitzvot apply to

all Jews. How is this possible? How can each person perform the full set of 613 commandments? The answer, says the Ohr HaChaim, is that keeping the mitzvot is a communal, collaborative project. "All of Israel is responsible as guarantors for one another". We are all partners in this cosmic endeavour.

Friends, the connectivity of community applies not only horizontally – to the people within our own generation – it applies also vertically, connecting generations of Jews to each other. The Mishna in Pirkei Avot says, "...any community dedicated to heaven will endure forever" (Pirkei Avot 4:14). The Talmudic Sages explain that the community referred to here is Knesset Yisrael – the community of Jewish people who stood at Sinai (Avot DeRabbi Natan). Accordingly, the "community dedicated to heaven that will endure" spans more than 3,300 years, dating all the way back from our present generation to the giving of the Torah; "Knesset Yisrael", and indeed, Klal Yisrael, is a single, vertical community rooted in Sinai, that we are all a part of.

Paradoxically, the power of community transforms the individual. We know that Torah is a framework, a Divine blueprint, for self-transformation and attaining personal greatness. Being part of a community – and contributing to that community, helping those in need, enriching the lives of others – is the platform for achieving exactly this state of being.

Giving to others is how we achieve greatness. The Torah says, "And the boy grew up ... And Moshe grew up and went out to his brothers and saw their suffering" (Shemot 2:10-11). The Maharal explains the repetition of "grew up": the first instance refers to Moshe's physical growth, and the second refers to his growing moral and

*Continued on next page*

# Patience When Influencing Others



**Rabbi Shalom Rosner**  
Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֻּד וּמַעֲיֵל וְכַתְּנֵת תְּשֻׁבָּץ מִצְנֶפֶת וְאַבְנֵט וְעֵשׂוּ בְּגַדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ ... (שמות כח:ד)

*And these are the garments that they shall make: a choshen, an ephod, a robe, a tunic of checker work, a cap, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for your brother Aaron and for his sons to serve Me [as kohanim].*

In Parshat Tetzave we are informed of the majestic garments of the Kohen Gadol. There is a story conveyed in the Gemara (Shabbat 31a) in connection with the pasuk quoted above. A gentile was once passing a study hall when he overheard students being taught about the garments of the Kohen Gadol. The gentile was so impressed with the described beauty of these garments that he decided to convert and become a Kohen Gadol so that he could dress in this attractive attire.

The gentile approached Shamai and asked for assistance in converting so that he could become the Kohen Gadol. Shamai immediately dismissed his request. The gentile then approached Hillel with the same request. Hillel was a bit more accommodating, and notwithstanding the gentile's conditional request of converting so he could become the Kohen Gadol and don the decorated garments, Hillel conducted the conversion. Then Hillel told the new convert, "Can we appoint a king who does not know the customs of royalty? Go and study the requisite portions of the Torah."

The new convert began to engage diligently in the study of Torah and was bewildered when he came across the

following pasuk "v'hazar hakarev yumat" (a stranger (non-Kohen) who approaches shall perish, Bamidbar 1:51). The convert inquired – "to whom is this pasuk referring?" He was informed that even Dovid Hamelech would be considered a "stranger" and is prohibited from performing the service reserved for the Kohen Gadol. The convert understood at that moment that his dream of becoming the Kohen Gadol would never become a reality. Nonetheless, the convert accepted his fate and returned to Hillel and stated "may you be showered with blessings for drawing me under the wings of the Shechina."

Rav Frand in his sefer on the Parsha (vol 2) points out that Hillel's approach to this convert is rather peculiar. Why did Hillel seem to *trick* the convert into believing that one day he had a chance at achieving his dream of becoming a Kohen Gadol? Why did Hillel not relay the truth to the convert from the start – that only a descendant of Aharon Hakohen could become a Kohen Gadol?

Apparently, Hillel had a feeling that this convert was sincerely interested in Judaism and would accept the *mitzvot* even if he could not become the Kohen Gadol.

At the time of the conversion however, he simply could not be talked out of his fantasy. Only after entering the intellectual realm of the *Beit Midrash*, far from the imaginary world, was the convert able to come to the realization and accept the truth.

Parents and educators should emulate Hillel's approach when instructing children and students. We often seek to convey important lessons to them. Sometimes we see children making decisions that we perceive as erroneous based on our experience, and we try to persuade them to avoid certain pitfalls. Irrespective of our good intentions, they seem to fall on deaf ears.

The approach we learn from Hillel is not to nudge and pester them into submission. We need to be patient. It may take a week, month, year or more, but eventually the time will come when the child will be willing to listen, and as did the convert, he will likely express his appreciation for the sound advice. Forcing a position on a child will likely result in opposition. Patience perhaps is a better solution to eventually influence a child's judgment and opinion.

*Continued from previous page*

spiritual stature. Tellingly, the Hebrew word used here is "vayigdal", literally "became big". The act of opening his eyes to the suffering of his brethren enlarged Moshe in a very real sense. He could have remained in the privileged and protected

environment of the palace, yet he gave it all up because of a concern for his community.

We see that through community, we enlarge ourselves, and in enlarging

ourselves, we enlarge others. That is the simple formula for personal and collective greatness – for realizing the perfected world G-d wants us to create.

# Parshas Tetzaveh: The Light of Torah



**Michal Horowitz**  
Judaic Studies Teacher

In this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Tetzaveh*, the Torah continues to instruct us regarding the construction of the *Mishkan*. The *bigdei kehunah* (priestly garments) that are to be made are outlined in great detail, as is the command to build the *Mizbayach ha'zahav* (the golden altar used for daily incense offerings).

The *parsha* begins with the command to take clear olive oil, crushed for illumination, to light a *ner tamid*, a continual lamp, in the *Mishkan*. This oil was used by the *Kohanim* (priests) to light the Menorah, which burned from evening till morning – with enough oil used nightly, so that the lamps of the Menorah would burn through the long winter nights of the month of Teves (see Shemos 27:20-21 w/ Rashi to v.21).

While we no longer have a *Mishkan* or *Beis Ha'Mikdash*, where the *Kohanim* light the Menorah daily, we must create the inner light of the *Mishkan*, the Menorah, and the light of Torah, within ourselves.

Rav Soloveitchik zt'l teaches, "Every equation is reversible. If the *Beis Ha'Mikdash* is a home, then the home must be a *Beis Ha'Mikdash*... To build a home means to build a sanctuary: that every home should have an Aaron (holy ark), a *Shulchan* (table), a Menorah, and be accommodating as far as HKB"H is considered" (The Rav Thinking Aloud, p.xv-xvi).

Every home – nay, *every person!* – must make himself into an Aaron: a receptacle that houses Torah, where the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) will rest, just as the *Shechina* rested, *ki'vi'yachol* (as if it were possible) between the two *keruvim* (cherubs) atop the Aaron in the *Mishkan*.

Every home – nay, *every person!* – must make a table for himself. A makom (place) where food is served alongside *divrei Torah* (words of Torah), and family sits alongside guests. The table must be large enough in

size and spirit to accommodate all those in need, as we elevate the base of wood to the heights of heaven.

And every home – nay, *every person!* – must make for himself a golden Menorah. He must ensure that the flame of excitement for Torah, passion for mitzvos, love of fellow man, and faith in G-d burns ever brighter within his home, and within his very own self. לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר, תָּמִיד – so that always and continually, our flame burns before Hashem.

We may no longer have the Menorah in the *Mishkan* or *Mikdash*, but we have our *neshamos* (souls) which serve in its stead. As the verse tells us: נֵר ה' נִשְׁמַת אָדָם – the candle of G-d is the soul of man (Mishlei 20:27).

After 9/11, Henny (Rebbetzin Henny Machlis a'h, d.2015, J'lem) declared, "We have to do more *kiruv* (bringing Jews closer to Judaism and Hashem). We're not doing enough. Any suffering that happens in the world is Hashem talking to *Am Yisrael* (the Jewish nation). There was a great catastrophe, and Hashem wants us to wake up for *teshuvah* (repentance)."

She devised a plan. On Fridays, Henny, accompanied by her 17 year old twin daughters, and two Chabad girls from the neighborhood, would stand outside a secular high school in their Jerusalem neighborhood, handing out tea-light candles with a toffee, encouraging the girls to light Shabos candles. Henny would talk to the girls, telling them that lighting Shabos candles would bring blessing to them and their families. Henny would encourage them to tell their mothers that only good would come from lighting Shabos candles. Often she got into long conversations with the girls.

Occasionally, the school principal would accost them, but Henny would calmly say, "We're not doing anything. We're just giving out candles." On those occasions,

the principal would inevitably order them to move their campaign farther down the sidewalk.

Having moved her operation down the way, on Friday afternoons, Henny would set up a table with treats outside her door, and with her trademark smile, hand out treats and candles. Sometimes she got her son or son-in-law to put tefillin on the boys. As someone remarked, "It was as if she had nothing else to do on Friday afternoons (keeping in mind that the Machlis' had *hundreds* of guests for the Shabos meals, every week!) except run this *kiruv* operation."

Henny used to carry tea-light candles in her purse. She would give them to any Jewish woman whom she felt she could influence to light Shabos candles. (Emunah with Love and Chicken Soup, p.326-327)

We must ensure that the flame is lit within ourselves, and strive to light the flame, warmth, passion, love and excitement for Torah and mitzvos in those around us as well.

With Haman's downfall and the salvation that the Jews merited in the time of Mordechai and Esther, the Megillah tells us: לְיִהוּדִים, הָיְתָה אוֹרָה וְשִׂמְחָה, וְשֵׁשׁ, וְיָקָר, *the Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor* (Esther 8:16). The Sages teach that *אוֹרָה*, **light** is (the light of) Torah (Megillah 16b).

The path to illumination is to ensure that even in the long dark nights of life, represented in the long dark winter nights of Teves, the Menorah has enough oil to keep the flame burning through the darkness. It is the flame of the *neshama* and the light of Torah that sustains us from time to time and generation to generation.

לִיְהוּדִים הָיְתָה אוֹרָה וְשִׂמְחָה וְשֵׁשׁ וְיָקָר – כִּן תְּהִיָּה לָנוּ!  
*The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor* – so may it be to us!



# Megillat Esther and Sefer Zecharya



**Rabbi Menachem Leibtag**

Tanach Study Center | Yeshivat Har Etzion

**T**he events of the Megilla appear to have catalyzed a major aliya movement. According to Chazal, Ezra's aliya from Bavel took place only a few years afterward, during the seventh year of the reign of Daryavesh.

Thus, according to Chazal's opinion, the events of the Megilla **indeed** had a major effect on the rebuilding of the Temple and "shivat tzion" – the return to Zion.

According to most historians, Achashveyrosh was the Persian king who succeeded Darius (486–465 BCE), and thus the story of the Megilla takes place some forty years **after** the second Bet HaMikdash was built, and thus after Chagai and Zecharya's plea to return and fulfill the potential of Bayit Sheni.

According to this opinion, no major event takes place immediately after the events in the Megilla. In fact, about two decades pass before a new wave of olim come with Ezra and Nechemya to help strengthen the city of Yerushalayim.

If so, why don't we find a mass aliya movement immediately after the miracle of Purim?

Finally, why is it necessary to celebrate Purim for all generations? Purim is not the only time in our history when we were saved from terrible enemies. Chazal go even one step further. They claim that Purim will be the **only** holiday kept at the time of the final redemption!

To our surprise, the prophecies of Zecharya contain several interesting parallels to the Megilla. We posit that these parallels are intentional. In doing so, the author of Megillat Esther suggests that Am Yisrael's predicament during the time period of Achashveyrosh may have been caused because Zecharya's prophecies were not taken seriously!

Construction of the Temple begins in the second year of Daryavesh. Two years later,

an official delegation from Bavel arrives in Jerusalem to ask Zecharya a very fundamental question:

"Ha'evkeh b'chodesh hachamishi? Should we continue to fast in the 5th month (the fast of Tisha B'Av)?"

The question appears to be quite legitimate. After all, now that the Temple is rebuilt, there is no reason to fast on Tisha B'Av anymore!

From Zecharya 7:4–7 it appears that G-d is quite disturbed by their question, for the Jews in Bavel should have been excited about the prospect of returning to Jerusalem. Instead, their only interest was whether or not they have to fast. In the eyes of the prophet, their question reflected a general attitude problem in regard to the entire redemption process.

Zecharya answers that the fast of Tisha B'Av is not a divine commandment; rather it was a minhag instituted by Chazal to remember not only the Temple's destruction, but also the reason **why** the churban took place. Thus, G-d explains, feasting or fasting is man's decision, while G-d is interested in something much more basic – that Bnei Yisrael keep the mitzvot that they had neglected during the first Temple period.

Zecharya continues his answer with two chapters of 'musar' (rebuke) in which he emphasizes the most basic mitzvot that Bnei Yisrael must keep in order for the **Sh'china** to return: truth, social justice, helping the poor and needy, and thinking kindly of one's neighbor, etc. G-d foresees the return the exiles from lands in the East and West. With their return, G-d and His nation will become once again covenantal partners, through "**Emet and Tzdaka**".

Finally, after many words of encouragement and repeated 'musar', G-d answers the original question concerning the fast days. Should Am Yisrael return to Israel and keep "**Emet V'Shalom**," the four fast

days commemorating the destruction of Yerushalayim will become holidays.

Had Am Yisrael heeded this prophetic call in the time of Koresh and Daryavesh, then they would not have been scattered among 127 provinces during the time of Achashveyrosh. Instead of celebrating with the Persians at the party in Shushan, the Jews should have been celebrating at the Bet HaMikdash in Yerushalayim.

One could suggest that the Mordechai's institution of the yearly celebration of Purim reflects this prophecy, for we find the turn around from "yagon" to "simcha," from **mourning** to **holiday**. Purim may symbolize the manner in which the fast days for Jerusalem will one day become holidays.

This could explain the reason for the special mitzvot that we keep on Purim. They reflect Zecharya's repeated message of helping the needy (matanot l'evyonim) and thinking nicely of one's neighbors (mishloach manot **ish l'rei'eihu**). Once a year we must remind ourselves of the most basic mitzvot that we must keep **in order** that we become **worthy** of returning to Yerushalayim and rebuilding the Bet HaMikdash.

Certain halachot instituted by Chazal reflect this message. Interestingly, Shushan Purim is **replaced** with Yerushalayim Purim, for the walled cities from the time of Yehoshua bin Nun replace the walled city of Shushan!

Although this explanation for certain minhagim of Purim may seem a bit 'stretched', textual proof is found in the closing psukim of the Megilla.

Mordechai and Esther need to send out a second "igeret" (letter) explaining and giving authority ("tokef") to the minhagim of Purim explained in the first "igeret." What was the content of this special second

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# Moshe and Noah



**Rabbi Eli Mansour**

Edmond J Safra Synagogue, Brooklyn

**T**he Ba'al Ha'turim (Rabbenu Yaakov Ben Asher, 1269-1343) famously observes that Moshe Rabbenu's name is conspicuously absent from Parashat Tesaveh. Rather than begin this Parasha with the standard introduction, "Va'yedaber Hashem El Moshe Lemor" ("G-d spoke to Moshe, saying"), this Parasha instead begins with G-d saying to Moshe, "Ve'ata Tesaveh Et Beneh Yisrael" – "And you shall command Beneh Yisrael," as though He specifically did not want to mention Moshe's name. The Ba'al Ha'turim attributes this unusual omission to Moshe's demand after the sin of the golden calf that if G-d did not forgive the people, "then erase me from the book which You have written" (Shemot 32:32). Although G-d ultimately forgave the people, nevertheless, the Sages teach that a righteous person's curses are fulfilled, at least partially, even if they are conditional. Moshe's pronouncement was thus fulfilled in the form of his "erasure" from Parashat Tesaveh.

The Vilna Gaon (Rav Eliyahu of Vilna, 1720-1797) added that this Parasha, Parashat Tesaveh, was chosen as the section from which Moshe's name would be "erased" because this Parasha is almost always read around the time of 7 Adar, Moshe Rabbenu's yahrtzeit.

Let us delve a little deeper into Moshe Rabbenu's pronouncement, "Erase me from the book which You have written."

The Midrash contrasts Moshe's response to G-d's decree following the sin of the golden calf, with Noah's response to G-d's decree to flood the earth. Noah obeyed G-d's command to build an ark for himself and his family, but he did nothing to try to save the rest of humanity. In fact, the prophet Yeshayahu (54:9) refers to the flood as "Meh Noah" – "the waters of Noah," and the Zohar explains this phrase as implying that Noah was held accountable for the flood because of his failure to intercede on the people's behalf. Moshe, however, reacted the opposite way to G-d's decree, not only pleading for Beneh Yisrael, but going so far as to say, "Erase me." Like the captain of a ship, Moshe declared that he would not abandon his "passengers" under any circumstances, and that if they were destroyed, then he would be destroyed with them.

The Hida (Rav Haim Yosef David Azulai, 1724-1806) develops this idea further, explaining that Moshe was actually a Gilgul – reincarnation – of Noah. Noah's soul returned in Moshe in order to achieve its Tikkun (rectification). Indeed, the Torah (Shemot 2:2) tells that when Moshe was born, his mother saw that he was "Tob" ("good") – a word which in Gematria equals 17, alluding to the 17 generations between Noah and Moshe. Noah and Moshe are the only ones in the Torah who are said to have been in a "Teba" – the word used in reference to Noah's ark,

and in reference to the basket in which Moshe was placed in the river. The Hida writes that when G-d informed Moshe of His decision to annihilate Beneh Yisrael after they worshipped the golden calf, this was his moment to achieve his Tikkun. Moshe responded by declaring, "Meheni" – "erase me." The letters of this word can be rearranged to spell the words "Meh Noah" – "the waters of Noah," which, as mentioned earlier, speak of Noah's responsibility for the flood. Moshe's pronouncement of "Meheni" rectified this mistake, and thus his soul achieved the Tikkun that it required.

This is a vital message that applies to each and every one of us. We are here in this world to look out not only for ourselves, but for everyone around us. The Arizal (Rav Yishak Luria, 1534-1572) would tell his disciples that the most important thing they need to do is to look out for one another. If a student is concerned only with himself, his wellbeing and his own spiritual advancement, the Arizal warned, then he will not grow. The Torah he learns will not be properly absorbed.

The omission of Moshe's name from Parashat Tesaveh is not a punishment, but to the contrary – a badge of honor, a magnificent testament to Moshe Rabbenu's unbridled and unlimited devotion to Am Yisrael, which sets an inspiring example for all of us to follow.

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letter? To our surprise, one short phrase: "Divrei **shalom v'emet!**"

These two key words point directly to Zecharya's prophecy about the fast days becoming holidays! They explain not only **when**, but also **why** the fast days will become holidays – i.e. if Bnei Yisrael keep **shalom** and **emet!** The second 'igeret' may

simply be an explanation of the purpose of the minhagim of Purim; Mordechai and Esther use this letter to explain to Am Yisrael **why** Purim has been established – as a yearly reminder of the prophecies of Zecharya that remain unfulfilled.

Purim, therefore, has deep meaning for all generations. Its message may have been

'hiding' behind the costumes, the drinking, the "purim Torah" and "shalach mannos." It may have been lost within our ignorance of Tanach. Its message, however, remains eternal, just as our aspirations for Yerushalayim remain eternal.

# Calling Out Modern-Day Evil



**Rabbi Moshe Weinberger**  
 Congregation Aish Kodesh, Woodmere

**P**urim is a holiday of stark contrasts. As we say in the song Shoshanas Yaakov, “Cursed is Haman who attempted to destroy me” and “Blessed is Mordechai the Jew.” We have “Cursed is Zeresh the wife of the one who terrorized me” and “Blessed is Esther [who sacrificed] for me.” The Megillah refers on one hand to “king” Achashveirosh. But it also refers to “The King,” the hidden King of all kings who acts behind the scenes. Purim means making a place in our lives for both parts.

While gratitude to Hashem, rejoicing in His salvation, gifts to the poor and to our friends, and celebrating with friends, are a major part of Purim, an equally important part of the day is hatred of that which is truly evil in the world today. Therefore, when we celebrate on Purim by drinking a little bit, “when the wine goes in, the secret comes out” (Eiruvin 65a). Our inhibitions and political correctness subside and we call out the alternate text of Shoshanas Yaakov, “Cursed are all of the wicked!”

Certainly everything in Yiddishkeit starts and ends with the quality of love. Love is the foundation of the world and is the overarching emphasis in our service of G-d. And the ultimate goal of “turn away from evil” is to “do good” (Tehillim 34:15). As Rabbeinu Bachaya says, “a little bit of light dispels a lot of darkness.” That is always the primary emphasis.

But the truth is that love is not everything. The western world is drunk with the idea that, as the song says, “All you need is love.” That is the perverse current formulation of a concept which originated in the teachings of the apostate from Nazareth. The reality is that “Those who love Hashem hate evil” (Tehillim 97:10). This is a positive form of hate; one which is not only permissible but obligatory. In the western mind, love is always good and hate is always bad. But this extremist, black-and-white

approach is foolish, false, and very dangerous. The truth is that there is a good form of love and a bad form of love. There is a good form of hate and a bad form of hate. We have an obligation to clearly identify evil and evil-doers and work to stop and, if necessary, destroy them. It is forbidden to indiscriminately love everyone and everything.

Judaism is not a religion of love. Nor is it a religion of hate. It is a religion of truth. As long as there are evil acts and evildoers in the world, there will be a limitation on where love is appropriate. If one loves wicked people, he begins to identify with them and eventually justifies and becomes caught up with them, ultimately throwing his lot in with them in every way.

The Rambam rules (Hilchos Melachim 5:5) that “it is forbidden to forget his [Amalek’s] enmity and hatred.” And the Chayei Adam (155:2) teaches us that “It is a positive commandment from the Torah to remember what Amalek did and to hate him with a hatred fixed into the heart...” Why is this? It is because “Those who love Hashem hate evil.”

The same thing that makes a person love Hashem causes him to hate evil. That is why the Alter Rebbe, zy’a, teaches us in the tenth chapter of the Tanya about a complete tzadik: “The extent of the greatness of his love for Hashem is the extent of his hatred for the Other Side and his complete disgust with evil.” It is not that those who love Hashem “also” hate evil. Their love of Hashem itself gives birth to hatred of evil people and their evil actions. The same way a modest, loving mother hates someone who abuses her child, a tzadik’s hatred for evil does not come from anger, jealousy, or arrogance. Rather, it arises from the powerful purity and refinement of his love for G-d. “Love is powerful like death... its coals are like the coals of the fire of the flames of G-d.” When a fiery love of G-d comes into

contact with evil, that evil is completely consumed.

This is the message of Shabbos Zachor. We must clearly identify evil. We must “make no mistake” and “be completely clear.” Esther answered the question “Who is this and where is he” (Esther 7:5) without hesitation or equivocation: “This evil Haman!” (ibid. 6).

Someone pointed out to me that in chassidus, we always learn that there is a spark of holiness in everything in the world, from the most benign to the most evil. He asked whether we should seek out the good in evil ideologies, regimes, and organizations in the world today. Does the Gemara not say (Gitin 57b), “the great-grandchildren of Haman studied Torah in Bnei Brak!” I explained to him that while this is true, how Hashem ultimately redeems the good in the evil things of this world today is none of our concern. He will extract sparks of goodness according to his plan. But as long as something reveals itself as pure evil in this world, we must relate to it as such.<sup>1</sup>

It is no coincidence that amidst the mitzvos of Purim related to love and friendship is the mitzvah to remember the evil of the nation of Amalek. One is the natural result of the other. “Those who love Hashem hate evil.” While the primary mitzvah to destroy Amalek today can only be fulfilled by destroying our own inner Amalek-like qualities, coldness and detachment toward an enthusiastic, wholehearted service of G-d, we must also fulfill the mitzvah by recognizing and calling out the evil and evildoers of the day. May Hashem bless us by giving us and our leaders the clarity and courage to unequivocally identify and destroy the evil ideologies, organizations, and regimes prevalent the world.

1. The good within a Jewish soul within a wicked person’s body is different because that good is revealed on some level even here in this world.

# Be Who G-d Meant You to Be and You Will Set the World on Fire



Rabbi YY Jacobson  
TheYeshiva.net

A Texas farmer was touring England. He happened to meet an English farmer and asked him, “What size farm do you have?”

The Englishman proudly announced, “Thirty-five acres!”

“Thirty-five acres?” the Texan scoffed. “Why I can get in my truck at 8:00 AM and start driving and at noon, I am still on my farm. I can eat lunch and start driving again and at 5:00 PM I am still on my farm.”

“Ah, yes,” the Englishman nodded in understanding. “I had a truck like that once.”

In the opening of the story of the book of Esther, the Persian Emperor, King Achashverosh, throws a massive feast to celebrate his consolidation of power on the Persian throne. It is a lavish, completely over-the-top party, a drunken, decadent bacchanal that lasts for a full 180 days.

And then, when the 180 days are over, he throws yet another feast, lasting seven days. The celebrations continue for 187 days, non-stop!

It seems strange. Although the only aspect of the party of any obvious relevance to the plot of the Purim story is that the King has his wife killed for not entertaining his drunken guests, the Megillah provides us with verse after verse of vivid description of the party itself.

We learn of the setting of the party, the guests, the vessels and utensils used, and the materials and fabrics used to dress up the banquet:

*There were hangings of white, fine cotton, and turquoise wool, held with cords of fine linen and purple wool, upon silver rods and marble pillars; the couches of gold and silver were on a pavement of variegated marble.*

*And they gave them to drink in golden vessels, and the vessels differed from one another, and royal wine was plentiful according to the bounty of the king.*

Why does the book of Esther feel the need to familiarize us with all the opulence of Achashverosh's banquet? Do I really have to know how many fabrics were used at the feast and what was their type? Do I really have to know the types of goblets used? How does that help me understand the story?

Rarely do the Torah and the Tanach give vivid descriptions of events unless it is important to grasp the story. The Torah is not a classic history novel; it is, as its name indicates, a book of lessons and teachings. It wants us to learn something. Why on earth would the king's notorious decadence be relevant to us?

In a Purim address, on Purim 5733, March 18, 1973, the Lubavitcher Rebbe suggested one beautiful explanation.

The message of the Megillah is a simple one, though in a way surprising. When King Achashverosh throws a party, he knows he must go all in. Not for him was a mere hundred-day feast, or goblets from silver instead of gold. He makes a serious party and throws everything he has at his disposal at the party.

This king will not settle for mediocrity or even normal standards of a feast. He

will not just get away with doing a fine job. If he can do it over the top, he will have it just that way! If he can drink for 187 days, so be it. If he can give his people a memory of a lifetime, this is what he will do. No less.

Now, as the Talmud states, this king was a fool. He wasted his money and creativity on a foolish endeavor. Achashverosh's motives in throwing his bash were far from holy. But the Torah is telling us the story, the Rebbe suggested, to teach us an invaluable lesson.

Even this paranoid, foolish king understood that in life you got to give it all you got! You ought not to live a life of “quiet desperation.” Do not settle for smallness. You got to suck the marrow out of life. Carpe Diem! Life calls on us to live it to the fullest.

If even the Persian dictator understood this, how much more do we—G-d's people—need to understand this! Do not settle for smallness. Give life all you got. Utilize every potential, every resource, every opportunity, every faculty, and every talent. Do not squander a moment, and do not squander any aspect of your soul.

Show up to life and to love with every fiber of your being. Hold nothing back. Dance to the end of love. Celebrate to the heavens. Flex all your spiritual, physical, and emotional muscles—let your infinite light radiate and inspire every person you encounter.

Don't be stingy with your love and passion. Be who G-d meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.

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# Zachor: Thanks For the Reminder



**Rabbi Judah Mischel**

Executive Director, Camp HASC; Mashpiah, OU-NCSY

Legendary British financier, banker, activist, and philanthropist, Sir Moses (Moshe Chaim) Montefiore, *zy'a*, was not only the beloved *rosh ha-kahal* of the British Jewish community, he was an influential leader who promoted economic development, education and building for the Jewish People worldwide.

Though not particularly observant early in life, after a transformative visit to Eretz Yisrael in 1827, Montefiore was spiritually inspired and committed himself to the practice of Yiddishkeit and Jewish activism. Later, having gained unprecedented access to halls of power and influence, he was *moser nefesh* for his Jewish brethren as he represented his people before world leaders, including the Pope and Czar of Russia.

On his way to meet the Czar to intercede regarding a particular *gezeirah*, an evil antisemitic decree, he was traveling in a stately coach accompanied by private security and surrounded by an entourage. As he passed through a village on the outskirts of Moscow, a small group of Russian peasant children threw stones toward Montefiore's coach and shouted derisively "*Zhid! Zhid!*" Immediately, he instructed his coachman to stop and bring the thuggish kids to him. The coachman jumped at them, grabbed a couple by the scruffs of their necks and hauled them toward Montefiore's seat.

"Little children," he sighed, stepping down from the coach to look the frightened perpetrators in the eyes, "back in England, I am referred to by my honorary title of 'Sir', and around the world, powerful men stand for me and address me as 'Lord Mayor'. But know this: no honorific that I have ever received is as meaningful a

praise as the one you have just given me by calling me a *Zhid*, a Jew. Thank you!"

Montefiore then smiled and handed each child a golden coin before returning to his seat, and saying, "Thank you for reminding me who I am."



This Shabbos we read Parshas Zachor, a reading which infuses us with the Biblical mitzvah to bring to mind the senseless hatred that drove Amalek to attack the weak and infirm among us. Without an intention to benefit from our land, property or belongings, Amalek was simply driven by bloodthirst and the most ancient form of hatred. Publicly reading this parshah in advance of Purim threads a narrative, connecting the motives of Amalek with those of Haman, as well as insisting that we recognize the relevance of this mitzvah for us today.

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹּהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל־  
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ

"And Yisro, the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moshe heard all that Elokim did for Moshe and Yisrael, His people..." (*Shemos*, 18:1)

Rashi points out that Yisro heard about two major events that made an impression on him to the point that it changed his life. These were *Kriyas Yam Suf*, the splitting of the Sea, and the war with Amalek. An additional opinion expressed in Gemara (*Zevachim*, 116a) by Rabbi Elazar haModa'i is that Yisro also heard about *Matan Torah*, and this was the inspiration for Yisro to convert and cast his fate with Am Yisrael. The seminal events of *Kriyas Yam Suf* and *Matan Torah* express the two main aspects of our chosenness as a people: the revealed love for us at the Sea, and our intimacy with Hashem in the

revelation at Mount Sinai. Yisro also came to understand the reality of what it means to be a Yid, that there is such a force as Amalek and a price-tag to chosenness.

Anti-semitism in fact serves as a reminder of who we are, that we are indeed different from all other nations. When we are singled out, we are stimulated to question what it is that sets us apart. And this gives us the opportunity to reassert our commitment to the spiritual and international obligations we carry.

Rav Joseph Soloveitchik maintained that those who sow hatred of Am Yisrael in the world are the disciples and ideological descendants in the spiritual lineage of Amalek. Today, the dramatic surge in antisemitism worldwide makes Shabbos Zachor all the more relevant:

מִלְחָמָה לְה' בְּעַמְלֶק מִדֹּר דָּר

"Hashem is at war with Amalek from generation to generation."  
(*Shemos*, 17:16).

There is sweetness in being empowered as active partners with the *Ribbono Shel Olam*, and knowing that we are not alone. Whether it emanates from the ideological Right, the 'woke' political Left or the politicians in the United Nations — or whether it is expressed on social media or even on the streets of our own Homeland — we can stand tall in the face of our enemies' derision and hate. We can stand with our people, with holy pride in who we are, and with joy and faith in our purpose in this world.

*Mordechai lo yichra, lo yishtachaveh*, "Mordechai did not kneel and did not bow" to anti-Jewish powers. Rather he stood tall in joyful defiance, unabashed of his Yiddishkeit, and unafraid to display religious

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# Mishenichnas Adar Marbim Besimcha

**Mrs. Shira Smiles**

International lecturer and curriculum developer

Indeed, the day of Purim is spent engaging in mishte and simchah. How do we characterize the nature of this simchah? Further, why is it necessary to heighten our expression of joy from the beginning of the month?

The Slonimer Rebbe in Netivot Shalom explains that this simchah is specifically associated with bitachon in Hashem. It is a joy that acknowledges how Hashem never abandons His people and is with us through all our travails. It is an outgrowth of appreciating how much Hashem loves each one of us and is close to us all. This bitachon reflects our ongoing perspective; whatever situation we are in, it is directed from Above and we are sameach b'chelkeinu knowing we are cherished and sustained always. Just as Yom Kippur has a ten-day period leading up to it, likewise, Purim has a period building up to this zenith of love and connection to Hashem. Purim, when the decree for destruction was signed and sealed yet ultimately rescinded, is a time of celebrating the love and closeness Hashem has to His people.



**Our elation in being saved and this deep feeling of renewal inspires such great joy at this time.**

Rav Pincus emphasizes that the joy of Purim emerges from our near extinction as a people. The decree was signed in heaven as a consequence of the Jews' enjoyment from the feast of Achashverosh, in effect, disconnecting themselves from their relationship with Hashem. The Purim story is about the joy of renewal, the joy of reconnection. Thereupon the Jews reaccepted the Torah at this time expressing the rejuvenation of their attachment to Hashem. Our elation in being saved and this deep feeling of renewal inspires such great joy at this time. Clearly, this joy must find expression in the spiritual realm as well; we can strengthen our connection with Hashem

through increased Torah learning and tefillah during this period.

The Rambam describes Purim as a day of simchah, mishte, mishloach manot, and matanot l'evyonim. Noam Siach learns an incredible insight into the words of the Rambam. We find on all other holidays the mitzvah is for each person to be happy and to make his family happy. Hence, the focus to eat meat, drink wine and buy gifts for one's family. Purim is different in that the directive requires the day itself to be one of simchah. We accomplish this through mishte, mishloach manot, and matanot levyonim. The emphasis is on reaching out to ensure that the day will be one of rejoicing for everyone.

Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz in Tiv Hamoadim adds that for a Jew the only way to achieve happiness is to share joy with others. Making Purim a day of giving and sharing creates the true spirit of simchah.

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If someone is blessed with the ability to write, continued the Rebbe, then he or she must find a way to use that to change the world for the better. If you can raise 18 million dollars a year for Jewish education, do not be content with 17 million. Do not let fear or too much logic stifle you. Aim for the top. Do not make your target close and easy just to avoid fear and shame.

If you can build and spread goodness, kindness, truth, morality, Yiddishkeit, holiness, in yet a bigger and more effective way – don't be satisfied with small measures. The days of an impersonal, restrictive Judaism must remain behind us. The Torah wants our youths, and each of us, to develop wings – wings that will propel them upward to reach their maximum potential and change the world!

There Are Three Types of People: Those Who Make Things Happen, Those Who Watch Things Happen, and Those Who Wonder What Happened. The Megilah teaches us: Make things happen and think big.

# Our Eyes



**Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi**  
Popular Torah teacher and author

**I**t seems to me that with the three enlightened young men buried this week, as with the other twelve victims of this month's attacks, some myths we have grown accustomed to believing have also been buried.

This month we buried the myth that it is no longer possible in the world to find the combination of Torah, people and land.

We buried the myth according to which mourning for the victims of a terrorist attack is necessarily a divisive mourning: This month, ultra-Orthodox, nationally religious and secular people have comforted and consoled one another.

But most importantly, this month we buried two deeply rooted myths:

The myth that the education of children is no longer possible in its ideal form. We have already become accustomed to the idea that we are raising a screen-addicted generation, we have become accustomed to the idea that the maximum that parents can do is to involve them, because even then they do not listen to us, we have become accustomed to the idea that the institution of siblings in the family is conducted at a distance, as each goes his own way, we have become accustomed to



**This month we buried the myth that it is no longer possible in the world to find the combination of Torah, people and land.**

the idea that learning Torah is no longer really in the minds of the children of the year 5783.

This month we met pure children, this month we met pure parents, this month we heard stories about brothers who were never separated in their lives (!). This month, both tender children and mature young men left us with a passion for Torah and learning it.

The word most heard this month wasn't "eyes" for nothing. A secular graffiti artist who painted Oshi and Yanki and told how he made a connection to Heaven through their eyes, the blue eyes of Yigal and Hillel, may G-d avenge them, from which sprouted infinite innocence and love, the eyes of Asher Natan, may G-d avenge him, who came to us only a few months before his murder in Neve Ya'akov, and whose

eyes burn and ask for only one thing: "I'll not perish."

Perhaps these saints are asking all of us to change our eyes.

Perhaps they want us to be Esther, the one who wears the eyes of a seer, until suddenly each of them sees the beauty of their nation.

I ask that we see the beauty of our nations. I ask that we see the beauty of our wonderful testimonies. I ask that we take care of our children. I ask that we all find favor in the eyes of the King this Purim.

Master of the universe! The eyes of the poor are on the Megillah reading this year, perhaps more than any other year.

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symbols and behaviors, even in a time of great physical threat.

Parshas Zachor thus prepares us for *Simchas Purim*, when *kimu v'kiblu haYehudim*, when the Jews established and accepted their historical mission. We, too, are prepared to reassert our desire to live with Torah, as well as our willingness to make sacrifices in maintaining our Jewish

identity. It is this desire and willingness that becomes a source of celebration and joy on Purim — and every day. Perhaps this year, while distributing *d'mei Purim*, we ought to flip a coin or two to all the haters out there, and thank them for helping us to remember...



The story is told that Montefiore was once at a dinner party, seated next to a known anti-Semite. This man told Montefiore that he had just returned from a trip to a distant country "where they have neither pigs nor Jews". Montefiore quipped: "In that case, you and I should go there together...so it will have a sample of each!"

# Hebrew Language in the Parsha



David Curwin  
balashon.com

In Shemot 28:15-20, there is a description of the breastplate of the high priest – the *choshen mishpat*. The breastplate contained 12 stones, in four rows of three.

The identities of many of the stones listed are highly debated. It's very difficult to find two translations that render each of the stones in the same way. But one stone almost always gets the same translation, the *yaqut*:

וְהָיָה הַיָּדָיוּדָה הַרְבִּיעִי תְּרִישִׁישׁ וְשֵׁהָם וְיָשֶׁפֶה מִשְׁבָּצִים זָהָב  
...וְהָיָה...

"And the fourth row: a beryl, a lapis lazuli, and a jasper. They shall be framed with gold in their mountings." (Shemot 28:20)

This should not be surprising, as the English word "jasper" very likely derives from *yaqut* or a cognate Semitic word. The word entered Greek as *iaspis*, then to Latin, then to French, and finally to English. The transliteration of the Hebrew letter *yod* as "j" is very common, and somewhere along the way an "r" was added to the end of the word.

All of this isn't so surprising. Gems have always been rare, and so it makes sense that they would retain the name from where they came. But the story doesn't end there.

According to one theory, just as the jasper was a type of ornamental gem, it also

started to refer to an ornamental cloth. In Latin (and other Romance languages), it was known as *diaspre* (the "j" became "d" via the "dj" sound.) Then instead of a fancy cloth, it referred to cloth in general, then a cloth to wrap babies, and as it transformed into the word "diaper" it took on the meaning it has today.

In Modern Hebrew, it's not uncommon to find words that had a sacred usage in Biblical Hebrew having a secular purpose today. However, it is indeed surprising that via the borrowings in so many languages, the precious *yaqut* eventually became "diaper."

## Parsha Riddle



Reb Leor Broh  
Mizrachi Melbourne

Whilst it does get mentioned amongst the eight clothes of the Kohen Gadol, there is no mention of a command to make it. What is it?

### Answer to the Parsha Riddle

Rabbeinu Bechaye explains that the Torah introduces both the *Urim* and the *Tumim* with the letter *n* in front as if we were dealing with known phenomena whereas in fact they have never been mentioned before. They had never been mentioned as being either part of the furnishings of the Tabernacle or as being part of the priestly vestments. Seeing that later on when the various furnishings and vestments are being described as having been made, we never read of *n* אור or *n* תומים, "he made the *Urim* and the *Tumim*," it is clear that they were not something fashioned by craftsmen. They were something fashioned directly by celestial input. This is the reason they were introduced as a known quantity, something which had been in existence already.

The *Urim VeTumim* is mentioned amongst the eight clothes of the Kohen Gadol, as being inserted into the folded *Choshen* as per the verse below, but nowhere does the Torah state to make it.



### THIS WEEK in Jewish History

- March 4, 1949:** The first permanent government of Israel, headed by David Ben-Gurion, assumed office.
- March 5, 1902:** The Mizrachi Religious Zionist organization was founded in Vilna under the auspices of Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Reines.
- Adar 13, 5746 (1986):** Yahrzeit of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, the leading halachic authority of the generation, particularly regarding modern technology and medicine.
- Adar 14, 3405 (355 BCE):** The Jews of the Persian Empire celebrated their defeat of Haman and his genocidal intent, an event we commemorate today with Purim.
- March 8, 1957:** Israel was forced by the UN and the US to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, which had been captured in the Sinai Campaign.
- Adar 17, 5323 (1563):** R. Yosef Caro completed the *Shulchan Aruch*, a codification of all Jewish law, which to this day, serves as the primary halachic guide for Jewish life.

The above is an abridged weekly version of *Dust & Stars*. To receive a free comprehensive post every day about the events and remarkable Jews who have changed the world, please subscribe: <https://dustandstars.substack.com/subscribe>





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Torat Reva Yerushalayim  
Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi  
Yeshivat Hakotel  
Yeshivat Orayta

### BEIT SHEMESH

Tiferet Midrasha  
Kehillat Nofei Hashemesh  
Yeshivat Ashreinu  
Yeshivat Hesder Lev HaTorah

### HERZLIYA

Mizrachi OU-JLIC Herzliya

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Yeshivat Mevaseret

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Israel XP at Bar Ilan University

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Mechinat Ruach HaNegev

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Kehilat Adat Yeshurun  
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East Denver Orthodox Synagogue  
The Denver Kehillah

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Congregation Sons of Israel of Cherry Hill  
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Ma Tov Day Camp  
Ohav Emeth  
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Yavneh Academy  
National Council of Young Israel  
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High School for Boys  
Young Israel of Merrick  
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OU-JLIC at Binghamton University  
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Young Israel of Jamaica Estates  
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