A hand wearing a white glove is pulling a red curtain to the left, revealing a bright blue sky with soft white clouds. The red curtain is thick and has deep folds. The background transitions from a pale yellow at the bottom to a clear blue at the top.

BEHIND THE STAGE: THE MEANING OF PURIM

**YOUNG ISRAEL
DOR L'DOR:
FAMILY LEARNING PROGRAM**

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Dr. Al & Helen Weisel
אברהם שלום בן ניסן אריה ורייזע
גיטל חיה בת יוסף אברהם ועטיע
who dedicated their lives to
Jewish education, by their
family.*

User Guide:

This packet is geared towards children from the ages of four until 6th grade to learn with their parents or other family member. On each page, there will be a source for all to learn. On many pages, the sources will be accompanied by guiding questions in different colored boxes, based on age group, to discuss. For the youngest age group, feel free to just focus on the questions. The left-most boxes are for children 4-6, the middle boxes for children 7-9, and the right-most boxes for children 10-12. These are merely suggestions but feel free to try out the other boxes as well. Please note that there are many possible answers to the questions, and the goal is not to reach one "right" answer.

In this packet, we will explore the deeper meaning behind Purim. After learning about the story of Purim, we will delve into the four mitzvot of Purim. We will think about what it truly means to give and how we can give, as well as partake in activities to implement what we learn. From there, we will learn about four themes on Purim and what it means for us today. We will discuss questions such as- how we see God in our lives, why is it important to be united as a people, and how we can show our dedication to Torah.

Enjoy the learning and feel free to contact me with any feedback or questions.



STORY OF PURIM

See if you can fill in the blanks to the Purim story

Let's go back to the time of the Purim story and put ourselves in the shoes of those Jews who lived in Ancient _____. Here we are, more than fifty years since the destruction of the First Temple. We were told by the prophet Yirmiyahu that this exile would only last 70 years and King Achashverosh, thinking it was over, made a huge party celebrating the fact that we weren't redeemed. He invited the Jewish people and disgracefully used the vessels from the First Temple to serve the food at the party. It was at this party that Achashverosh, drunk, demanded _____ to come show herself off. Vashti refused and Achashverosh, furious, kicked her out of the kingdom/had her killed. The time came to find a new queen so King Achashverosh forced the women of the kingdom to come to his palace where after some time he would choose one woman to be his queen. One of those women was _____, an orphan raised by _____. Esther was chosen as queen and was told by Mordechai not to reveal her true identity as a Jew. Meanwhile at that time, Mordechai who was at the gates of the palace, overheard two guards, _____ and _____, planning the assassination of the king. Mordechai told Esther of their plans and saved the king's life.

Now let's skip ahead nine years and take a look at King Achashverosh's advisor, Haman. Haman had all the people of the kingdom _____ down to him, but Mordechai refused to bow down to him. This greatly angered Haman and so he convinced Achashverosh that the Jewish people were a threat and should be killed. After casting a lot, he determined the day to wipe out the Jewish nation. One night when Achashverosh couldn't sleep, he called his advisor to read for him the Book of Records. The book opened to the page about _____ saving Achashverosh from Bigtan and Teresh. When asked how to reward someone loyal to the king, Haman, not knowing that Achashverosh was talking about Mordechai, advised Achashverosh to parade him on the king's horse while wearing the _____. Meanwhile, the Jewish People's lives were in danger because of Haman's decree. Mordechai went to Esther to tell her to speak to Achashverosh and plead on behalf of the Jewish People. At first, Esther was nervous to go because it would mean risking her life. Mordechai encouraged Esther, though, telling her that this was her moment and if she didn't step up, someone else would save the Jewish People. Esther told Mordechai to call the Jewish People together to _____ and _____. For her part, Esther asked the king and Haman to a banquet, and then to a second one where she told Achashverosh of Haman's plan to kill the Jewish People. The king hanged Haman and gave the Jewish People the permission to defend themselves against their enemies. When they defeated their enemies, Mordechai and Esther declared the next day a holiday with joy, a feast, and giving gifts to friends and those in need.



MATANOT L'EVYONIM



Devarim 16:14

(You shall rejoice in your festival, with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your communities.

וְשִׂמְחִיתָ בְּחַגְּךָ אֶת־הָאִתָּלָה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמָּתְךָ וְהַלֵּוִי וְהַגֵּר וְהָיִתוּם וְהָאֵלְמָנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

How?

Megillah 7a

וּמִתְּנוֹת לְאֲבִיּוֹנִים שְׁתֵּי מִתְּנוֹת לְשֵׁנֵי בְנֵי אָדָם

The verse continues: "And gifts to the poor" (Esther 9:22), indicating two gifts to two people.



Why?

Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt, 'Since When Have \$500 Mishlo'ach Manot Baskets Become Normal,' The Forward While the story of Esther begins with opulence — the gilded Persian palace, the tapestries, the golden vessels and flowing wine — the story ends on an entirely different note, a reminder to give matanot l'evyonim, gifts to the poor — that is, charity. The story of Esther and Mordechai is one that serves as a reminder who we truly are: Not the drunken revelers of ancient Persia, but a people charged with altruism, with caring for those with less.

Questions to Think About:

1. What are ways you can help someone out?
2. How do you feel when you're happy? How can you make someone else happy?
3. Think of something that you have that others might not have. What is it? What might someone else need that you can give them or help them with?

1. How can we give tzedakah in a respectful way, without embarrassing the person who we are giving it to?
2. How can we share our happiness with others?
3. If you can spend more money on matanot l'evyonim or mishloach manot, which should you choose?

1. How do we know who to give to?
2. How does the pasuk in Devarim help us understand the Torah's definition of happiness?
3. If you can spend more money on matanot l'evyonim or mishloach manot, which should you choose?



MISHLOACH MANOT



Nechemia 8:10

(10) He further said to them, "Go, eat choice foods and drink sweet drinks and **send portions to whoever has nothing prepared**, for the day is holy to our Lord. Do not be sad, for your rejoicing in the LORD is the source of your strength."

(י) ויאמר להם לכו אכלו משמנים ושתו
ממתקים ושלחו מנות לאין נכון לו
כי קדוש היום לאדנינו ואל תעצבו כי יחדות
ה' היא מעוזכם:

How?

Megillah 7a

תני רב יוסף ומשלוח מנות איש לרעהו
שתי מנות לאיש אחד

Rav Yosef taught a baraita that the verse states: "And of sending portions one to another" (Esther 9:22), indicating two portions to one person.

They should be two different foods that could be eaten without having to be cooked first.

Why?

Responsa Chatam Sofer, Orach Chayim 196:3

The purpose of mishlo'ach manot is] to increase peace and friendship, the opposite of the habit of the enemy [Haman] who said [the Jewish people are] "scattered and separated," meaning that instead of being one nation, they are scattered and separated in disagreements. Therefore, they established mishlo'ach manot.

Mishloach Manot Challenge:

Design or think about how you would design the ultimate mishloach manot. In light of the sources you learned, think about the following questions:

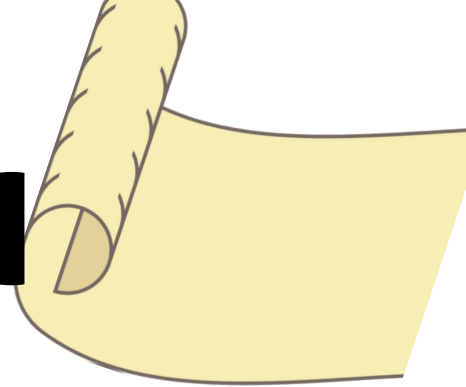
- a) Who could you give to that you may not usually get along with?
- b) Who may be alone or struggling at this time in need of a friend?
- c) What might they need or what will make them feel special?

Include items that fit the halachik framework of the mitzvah (two different food/drinks) and anything else that expresses the purpose of mishloach manot. Be as creative as possible!





MEGILLAH



There is a mitzvah to read the Megillah twice on Purim. The Megillah reading serves a few functions:

- 1) Remembering Amalek
- 2) Pirsumei Nisa- publicizing the miracle
- 3) Hallel- thanking Hashem for what He has done for us

For sources see Answer Guide



Rambam Hilchot Megillah 1:3

מִצְוָה לִקְרוֹת אֶת כָּלָהּ. וּמִצְוָה
לִקְרוֹתָהּ בַּלַּיְלָה וּבַיּוֹם.

One is obligated to read the entire Megillah. And the obligation is to read it once in the night and once during the day.



1. Why do you think we need to read the megillah twice? What could be the difference between the night-time reading of the megillah and the morning?
2. Choose one person in the megillah to keep track of during the reading. See if you can count how many times they come up!



One can fulfill their mitzvah of reading the megillah by listening to someone else read it. In order to fulfill the mitzvah, one needs to hear every word of the megillah. Therefore, it is very important not to talk during megillah reading.



Both men and women are obligated in hearing the Megillah reading. There is a debate if women are also obligated in reading the megillah as men are.
For sources see Answer Guide



MISHTEH- THE MEAL

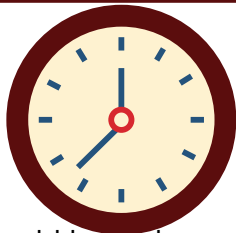


Esther 9:22

The same days on which the Jews enjoyed relief from their foes and the same month which had been transformed for them from one of grief and mourning to one of festive joy. They were to observe them as days of **feasting and merrymaking**, and as an occasion for sending gifts to one another and presents to the poor.

כִּימִים אֲשֶׁר־נָחַו בָּהֶם הַיְּהוּדִים מֵאֲנִיבֵיהֶם
וְהַחֹדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר נִהְפָּךְ לָהֶם מִגֻּלוֹן לְשִׂמְחָה
וּמֵאֵבֶל לַיּוֹם טוֹב לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם יְמֵי מִשְׁתֵּה
וְשִׂמְחָה וּמִשְׁלֹחַ מְנוּחַת אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ וּמִתְּנוּת
לְאֲבִיּוֹנִים:

Halachot-Laws



One should have the meal during the day. This year when it falls on a Friday, the meal should ideally be eaten earlier in the day. One should eat bread at the meal.



One should say Al HaNissim in bentsching, but if one forgot, one doesn't repeat bentsching.

Conversation Starters for Your Purim Meal

- 1.What makes a hero?
- 2.Who is your favorite character in Megillat Esther?
- 3.What is true happiness? What is something we can do to be more happy and to make others happy?
- 4.How did Esther change and grow throughout the story?
- 5.How can we show our care for the Jewish People?
- 6.What is something that you could do this year to help the Jewish People?



HIDDEN HAND OF GOD

Hashem's name is not mentioned explicitly at all in the Megillah, but it is clear that Hashem was orchestrating the events.



This is a reminder to us that even when we don't see Hashem explicitly, He is there "behind the scenes." Where else do we see this idea? Choose your own adventure and find out:

Choose your own
adventure

Right before Amalek attacks the Jewish people, the pasuk states that the people exclaimed, "Is God present among us or not?" (Shemot 17:7). The people just came out of Egypt and saw huge miracles, how did they doubt if God was with them?

Perhaps the Jewish People knew that God was in the big miracles, but wasn't sure if He was in the everyday, in nature. Therefore, God orchestrated that the people defeated Amalek in a natural way but with a clear indication that the victory was from God- the people were victorious when Moshe's hands were raised to heaven.



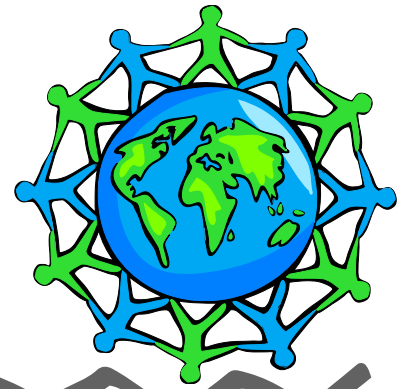
Unlike the earlier stories in Bereshit, where our Avot, forefathers, directly communicated with God, already from the beginning of the Yosef story, these direct conversations with God are missing. Yet, when reading the story, it is clear that God is behind the events-such as when Yosef meets the butler and baker in prison and interprets their dreams and eventually becomes second-in-command in Egypt. Yosef recognized God's role and attributed everything that happened to him to God, as the Rashi says (on Bereshit 39:3)- "The name of Hashem was constantly in his mouth."

From the great and public miracles a man recognizes the hidden miracles, which are the foundation of the entire Torah, for a man has no part in the Torah of Moshe our teacher unless he believes that all our things and occurrences are all miracles and have no nature or the way of the world in them [i.e. everything is from God]. ~Ramban Parshat Bo (Shemot 12)

How do you
see Hashem in
your life?



UNITY



Haman about the Jewish People: (Esther 2:8)

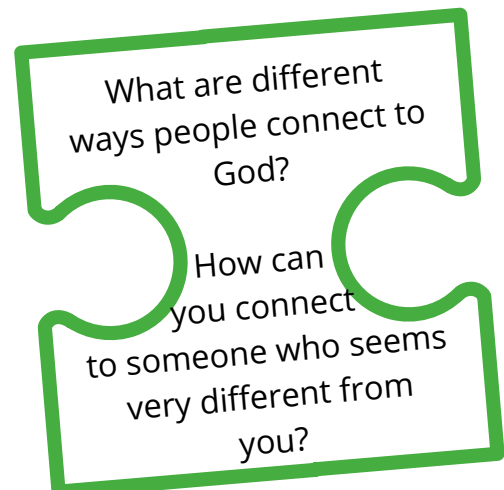
וַיֹּאמֶר הָמָן לַמֶּלֶךְ אֲחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ יֵשֶׁנָּה עַם־אֶחָד מְפֹזֵר וּמְפֹרֵד בֵּין הָעַמִּים בְּכָל מְדִינֹת מְלְכוּתְךָ וְדִתֵּיהֶם שְׁנוֹת מִכָּל־עַם וְאֶת־דִּתִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵינָם עֹשִׂים וְלַמֶּלֶךְ אֵין־שׁוֹה לַהֲנִיחָם:

Haman then said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people, **scattered and dispersed among the other peoples** in all the provinces of your realm, whose laws are different from those of any other people and who do not obey the king's laws; and it is not in Your Majesty's interest to tolerate them.

Esther's Call to the Jewish People:

לֵךְ כְּנוֹס אֶת־כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּשׁוּשַׁן וְצִוּוּהוּ עָלַי וְאֶל־תֹּאכְלוּ וְאֶל־תִּשְׁתּוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים לֵילָה וַיּוֹם גַּם־אֲנִי וְנִעַרְתִּי אֲצִנּוּם כֹּן וּבֹכֶן אָבּוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־כֹדֶת וְכֹאֲשֶׁר אֲבִדְתִּי אֲבִדְתִּי

"**Go, assemble all the Jews** who live in Shushan, and fast in my behalf; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens will observe the same fast. Then I shall go to the king, though it is contrary to the law; and if I am to perish, I shall perish!"



V'NAHAFOCH HU

Examples of the Tides Turning in Megillat Esther:

1. There was a big feast where Achashverosh used the vessels of the Temple, celebrating what he thought was the downfall of the Temple (1).
2. Haman planned to hang Mordechai on a tree (5:14).
3. Mordechai wore sackcloth and clothes of mourning.
4. The people were in a state of mourning and despair (4:1-3).
5. The people gathered together to fast (4:16).



1. After their victory, the people celebrated Purim as a day of feasting and joy (9:17).
2. Haman was hanged on the tree he made for Mordechai (7:10).
3. Mordechai wore royal garb and was paraded in the streets on the king's horse (6:11).
4. The mourning and despair turned into days of joy and celebration (9:22).
5. The people gathered together to defend themselves (9:2).

When has something in your life that you thought was going to be bad turn out to be good?

How can you turn around someone's day and make it better?



What could you do for yourself to feel happier when you are sad or calm down when you are upset?

What can the concept of v'nahafoch hu, things turning around, teach us about faith and hope?



REACCEPTING THE TORAH



Gemara Shabbat 88a

The Gemara cites additional homiletic interpretations on the topic of the revelation at Sinai. The Torah says, "And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the lowermost part of the mount" (Exodus 19:17). Rabbi Avdimi bar Hama bar Hasa said: the Jewish people actually stood beneath the mountain, and the verse teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, overturned the mountain above the Jews like a tub, and said to them: If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not, there will be your burial. Rav Aha bar Ya'akov said: From here there is a substantial caveat to the obligation to fulfill the Torah. The Jewish people can claim that they were coerced into accepting the Torah, and it is therefore not binding. Rava said: Even so, they again accepted it willingly in the time of Ahasuerus, as it is written: "The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them" (Esther 9:27), and he taught: The Jews ordained what they had already taken upon themselves through coercion at Sinai.

וַיִּתְּצוּ בְּתַחֲתֵית הָהָר אֶמֶר
רַב אֲבָדִימִי בֶר חָמָא בֶר חָסָא
מִלְמַד שְׁכַפָּה הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ
הוּא עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הָהָר כְּגִיגִית
וְאָמַר לָהֶם אִם אַתֶּם מְקַבְּלִים
הַתּוֹרָה מוֹטֵב וְאִם לֹא שֵׁם
תְּהֵא קְבוּרַתְכֶם אֶמֶר רַב אַחָא
בֶר יַעֲקֹב מִכָּאן מוֹדַעַא רַבָּה
לְאוֹרֵיתָא אֶמֶר רַבָּא אָף עַל פִּי
כֵן הַדּוֹר קִבְּלוּהָ בִימֵי
אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ דְּכִתְיִב קִימוּ וְקִבְּלוּ
הַיְּהוּדִים קִימוּ מַה שְׁקִבְּלוּ כְּבָר



Meaning Behind the Midrash

When the Jewish People left Egypt they were on a spiritual high. The miracles, and thus G-d's presence in the world, was so clear that all doubts disappeared. It was this clarity that the Midrash metaphorically refers to as a mountain hanging over the Jewish People. At the time, the revelations were so intense and the significance of the Torah was so apparent that it was almost as if there was no option but to accept the Torah. Therefore, even though their acceptance of the Torah was essentially voluntary, it also had an element of compulsion. On Purim however, when G-d's presence was hidden, the Jewish People reaccepted the Torah without the coercion of the "mountain" of clarity. This is the reason why it took until Purim to reaccept the Torah. In the midst of G-d's concealment Purim was indeed the most opportune time for the Jewish People to reaccept the Torah through exercising the full extent of their free will.

Purim and Reacceptance of the Torah, by Rabbi Chaviv Danesh (Ohr Sameach)

What can you do to show your commitment to Torah? How would you feel if you received the Torah from God today?



ANSWER GUIDE

p.3 Happiness in the Torah is always mentioned in reference to sharing one's joy with not only one's family, but "the stranger, the widow, the orphan." Based on this, the Rambam says that true simcha is when we share our happiness those around us and those in need. As he writes, "For there is no great and glorious rejoicing except to bring rejoicing to the heart of the poor and the orphans and the widows and the converts..." (Rambam Hilchot Megillah and Chanukah 2:17). Therefore, for the Rambam, if one has more money that one could spend on Matanot L'evyonim or Mishloach Manot, one should spent it on Matanot L'Evyonim, the gifts to the poor (ibid).

The Ritva writes that when giving Matanot L'Evyonim, "We do not investigate whether he is poor and it is fitting to give him, for this giving does not stem from the laws of charity alone, but rather from the laws of rejoicing..." (Ritva on Megillah 7a).

p.4 Rav Moshe Harari, in his book Mikraei Kodesh, adds a nice idea about Mishloach Manot- "In my humble opinion it is appropriate to increase the number and quantity of mishlo'ach manot for those people whom one has hurt or quarreled with in the past year, in order to increase love between them and restore peace. And through this, Purim can become like [Yom] Kippurim (the Day of Atonement) – atoning for sins between man and his fellow, and Israel will be one unit and not, Heaven forbid, [as Haman says in the megilla] a "nation scattered and dispersed."

p.5 The gemara in Megillah 4a explains, "And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi further said with regard to Purim: A person is obligated to read the Megilla at night and then to repeat it [lishnota] during the day, as it is stated: "O my God, I call by day but You do not answer; and at night, and there is no surcease for me" (Psalms 22:3), which alludes to reading the Megilla both by day and by night." Perhaps the difference between the reading at night and during the day is linked to the nature of night/day. We say in Tehillim, "To proclaim Your steadfast love at daybreak, Your faithfulness each night" (92). The day represents a time of clarity, whereas the night represents confusion and faith. When we read the megillah at night, it is a prayer that just as God protected us in the time of Esther, so may He help us know and reveal Himself in our everyday life. During the day, the megillah reading is praise and thanks, a form of Hallel, thanking God for the great miracles He performed for us then and continues to provide us with now.

The earlier sources that discuss a woman's obligation to hear the Megillah can be found in the Tosefta and the gemara in Arachin. The Tosefta (Megillah 2:7) says that women are exempt but the gemara in Arachin (2b-3a), which we pasken like, says that women are obligated. The Rambam (Hilchot Megillah and Chanukah 1:1-2) and Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 689:1-2) both hold that women are obligated in Megillah on the same level as men, but the Bahag (Sefer Halachot Gedolot 19, Laws of Megillah) says that while women are obligated in listening to the megillah, unlike men, they are not obligated in reading the megillah. The Rama seems to hold like the Bahag (Rama on Shulchan Aruch OC 689:2). [The practical difference between the two opinions is whether women can read the megillah for men, as one is only allowed to fulfill someone else's obligation if they have the same level of obligation].

ANSWER GUIDE

PART II

p.6

Esther greatly changed throughout the Megillah. In the beginning few chapters, we see Esther as passive, doing everything that Mordechai tells her but not taking initiative on her own. In the later chapters, Esther is active and displays self-confidence and strength. The turning point is in chapter four when Mordechai tells Esther to act and approach the king to beg him to save the Jewish People. Though she is hesitant, Mordechai tells her, "Do not imagine that you will escape in the king's palace from [among] all the Jews. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from elsewhere, but you and your father's house will perish. Who knows, perhaps for the sake of a time such as this you have come to join the royalty" (4:13-14). Mordechai tells Esther that she can't just care for herself, she needs to care for all of the Jewish People. It is this that stirs empathy in Esther and true concern for the Jewish People, and accordingly, when she takes a stand and takes initiative. (Based on Rav Aharon Lichtenstein's article- <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/if-you-remain-silent-time-concern-jewish-people>)



PURIM

SAMEACH!

PURIM CAR-NIVAL

Sunday, February 28
NEJA Parking Lot

Families A-H: 10:00 AM
H-P: 10:25 AM
P-Z: 10:45 AM

Join us for a drive-in CARNIVAL!
OPEN TO ALL | DRIVE THROUGH ALL OF OUR EXCITING BOOTHS
All of the fun, none of the cold!
Make sure to wear your COSTUME and DOR L'DOR DECORATED MASK!



The Dor L'Dor Family Learning Program Presents
PURIM MASK-QUERADE

LEARN

- DLD Purim Packet
- Available for download and print by 2/25

DECORATE

- The white mask we gave you!
- Use any materials
- Get creative and have fun!

WEAR

- Wear your decorated mask to the Purim Carnival on 2/28!