

The Weekly Farbrengens

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PURIM

A POTENT DAY

The *Zohar* notes that Purim is similar to Yom HaKipurim. This means that what is accomplished on Yom Kippur by fasting can be accomplished on Purim by rejoicing. Furthermore, the very name Kipurim (“like Purim”), implies that Purim is the greater *Yom-Tov*, impacting a person more powerfully.

Indeed, *Chazal* teach that when *Moshiach* comes, all the *Yomim-Tovim* will cease to exist; only the *Yom-Tov* of Purim will remain. *Chassidus* explains that the joy and holiness of Purim are so great, that even when we have the joy and holiness of the *geulah*, Purim will still be special.

(תיקוני זהר נ"ז ע"ב, מדרש משלי פ"ט, ד"ה להבין מארז"ל כל המועדים כו' תשט"ז וש"נ)

In the Old Country, it was the custom in many communities to celebrate Purim by appointing make-believe *rabbonim*, policemen, judges and other important public figures. One year in Ziditchov, the townspeople chose Reb Koppel, the nephew of Reb Tzvi of Ziditchov, to be governor, and he in turn chose some of his fellow *chassidim* to act as his advisors.

On Purim day, that entire band of masqueraders first drank *LeChayim* and then marched off to the *tzaddik's* house, filled with lively spirits. Reb Tzvi treated the young “governor” with great respect, and asked him to remove the candle and meat tax that the government had recently imposed. The lively “governor” agreed, but when he was asked to repeal the army draft on the Jewish boys, he refused. No amount of begging, pleading or threatening could make him change his mind, and the *tzaddik* left the room in anger.

The following day, when the effects of the spirits had worn off, and fellow *chassidim* told Reb Koppel of what had happened the previous day, he had no recollection of it. In fact, he could barely believe the story.

Later that year, the *chassidim* realized what had occurred on Purim – for the candle and meat taxes were in fact removed, but the draft remained enforced.

(סיפורי חסידים זוין מועדים ע' 300)

INTENSE REJOICING

We read in the *Gemara* that on Purim one must drink “until he cannot differentiate (“*ad d'loyada*”) between ‘cursed be Haman’ and ‘blessed be Mordechai.’”

The *Gemara* relates a story of two *amoraim*, Rabbah and Rav Zeira, who had their Purim *seuda* together, sharing profound secrets of the Torah over a number of cups of wine. However, Rav Zeira was so overwhelmed by the intense *kedusha* of Rabbah’s revelations that his *neshama* left his body.

CONSIDER

How does a person reach a level of “lo yada”? How does drinking help?

Should a person practice “ad d’lo yada” all year long?

The following day, Rabbah *davened* for Rav Zeira and brought him back to life. The next year, he once again invited Rav Zeira to join him for the *seuda* and to share the deepest secrets of the Torah. Rav Zeira turned down the offer, saying, “Miracles don’t happen every day...”

The Rebbe explains: The goal of *ad d’lo yada* (literally, “until he does not know...”) is that a person reach a level of utter subservience to *HaShem*, which is not limited by his own understanding, and through this, all undesirable perspectives will be washed away. As a result, one will have the strength to continue this *avoda* throughout the entire year.

(מגילה זב, לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 1277)

The Rebbe once said:

It’s obvious that we must distance ourselves entirely from anything negative (“cursed be Haman”), and seek to treasure and embrace all good things (“blessed be Mordechai”). That applies at any time. The unique aspect of Purim is that we can accomplish this by allowing our *neshama* to express itself freely. This kind of *avoda* is superior to serving *HaShem* by means of conscious thought (*yada*). Indeed, in this kind of *avoda* we can resemble the Yidden at the time of the Purim story who, when the inner power of their *neshamos* surfaced, fulfilled all the *mitzvos* faithfully, even to the point of *mesiras nefesh*.

(לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 1280)

CELEBRATING

The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that one should wear fine clothes when going to hear the *Megilla*. In fact the holy *talmid* of the *AriZal*, Reb Chaim Vital, would immerse in the *mikveh* and then put on *Shabbos* clothes in honor of Purim.

It is also written that after returning home from *shul* on Purim night, one should have the table set and candles lit, and partake of a *seuda* in honor of Purim.

(רמ"א סי' תרצ"ה ס"ב, כף החיים שם סקי"ג, רמ"א ס"א)

The *Megillah* records that after the miracle of Purim, the Yidden were granted *orah*, which means “light.” *Chazal* explain that this refers to their freedom to study Torah. It is therefore appropriate to study some Torah before the *seuda* of Purim, preferably the *dinim* of Pesach. Why Pesach? Since Purim marks thirty days before that *Yom-Tov*, it is considered a fitting time to begin preparing for it by learning its *halachos*.

(מגילה ט"ז ע"ב, רמ"א סי' תרצ"ה ס"ב, תו"מ תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 410)

The Rambam writes: It is preferable to be particularly generous with *matanos la'evyonim*, giving more money for the needy than the amount used for the *seuda* and *mishloach manos* combined. There is no greater and more beautiful joy than cheering up those less fortunate, and one who does so resembles *HaShem*.

(רמב"ם הל' מגילה פ"ב הי"ז)

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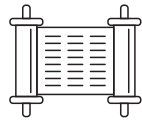
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HOW TO DRINK?

What is the appropriate fulfilment of “ad d’lo yada” on Purim?

The Gemara says that “A person must become intoxicated on Purim until he can’t differentiate between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai.”¹ Although the Torah generally discourages drunkenness since it often leads to misconduct, Purim is an exception, since the miracle of Purim was a result of two drinking feasts.²

There are three approaches amongst the *poskim* regarding the binding requirement of this statement: (1) It is a halachic requirement.³ (2) It is a voluntary *mitzva*.⁴ (3) There isn’t even a *mitzva* to drink so much, only to drink a little during the *seuda*.

Poskim accept that although it is a *mitzva* to drink and be merry,⁵ one is not required to become intoxicated. As the *poskim* explain, the *mitzvah* is not to have empty fun, but to arouse a joy of advancement in the service of Hashem,⁶ and they apply the saying of Chazal, “Whether one does more or less, so long as his intent is for the sake of Heaven.”⁷

(Some *poskim* offer alternative methods to keep the spirit of the Gemara’s statement without becoming drunk, such as drinking until one falls asleep⁸ or that one cannot work out the similar *gematriyos* of those two statements.⁹)

In any case, one must ensure that his drinking does not impair his fulfillment of *mitzvos* (*mincha*, *birkas hamazon*, *maariv*), cause him to behave coarsely, or affect his driving.¹⁰ The Rebbe highlighted multiple times that the limitations which he placed on drinking apply on Purim as well, especially for *bochurim*.¹¹

At the Purim *farbrengen*, the Rebbe would often encourage a volunteer to drink excessively on behalf of everyone present. The Rebbe explained that this was not a halachic fulfillment (in which case one person couldn’t perform it for others), but a way of inspiring joy among everyone else.¹²

Though women are obligated in all the *mitzvos* of the day, they are not required to drink.¹³ Likewise, a person who due to his health cannot drink is not required to do so.

1. מגילה ז' ע"ב.
2. אליה רבא ס' תרצ"ה סק"א.
3. שו"ע או"ח ס' תרצ"ה ס"ב.
4. מנהגי מהרי"ל - פורים, תה"ד בלקט יושר (למצוה ישתכר אבל אינו חובה).
5. שו"ת שבה"ל ח"י ס' ק"ז.
6. מאירי מגילה ז ע"ב, ביאה"ל ס' תרצ"ה ד"ה עד. וראה לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 1280 ועוד.
7. לבוש ורמ"א שם.
8. רמ"א שם. וראה שו"ת מקדש ישראל פורים ס' שכ"ו שנרדם מהשכרות ולא
9. מגילה ז' ע"ב.
10. מנ"א ס' תרצ"ה סק"ג.
11. קצשו"ע ס' קמ"ב ס"ו. סידור נהורא השלם. נט"ג פע"ג ס"ה.
12. מוצאי פורים תש"ן התעודיות תש"ן ע' 273. וראה יחידות כ"ז סיון תשל"ז הודפס ב"דעם רב"נס קינדער" ע' רע"ג, וראה שיחת ש"פ שמיני תשכ"ג.
13. מענה להרב גבריאל צינגער נדפס בלקו"ש חכ"א ע' 492.
14. שו"ת שבה"ל ח"י ס' י"ח.

Our Heroes



REB MONYEH MONESZHON

Reb Menachem Monish (Monyeh) Moneszhon was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash, and the Rebbe Rashab. He was a diamond merchant and used his wealth to benefit the Rebbeim.

tefillin and I am being made crazy already about diamonds!” This was two o’clock in the afternoon...

(ת"מ ח"ה ע' 207)

The Rebbe once related: Reb Monyeh was a successful diamond dealer and had business connections with the government. Nevertheless he would not start business until he had finished *davening*, which included the appropriate preparations before *davening* and a *shiur* thereafter. All in all, it went well past midday!

Reb Monyeh once visited the Rebbe Rashab, and during their conversation the Rebbe highly praised certain simple individuals. Reb Monyeh was surprised and asked why the Rebbe makes so much of them. “They have qualities,” the Rebbe told him. “I don’t see that,” Reb Monyeh replied.

Once, merchants came to Reb Monyeh with a business deal that boasted a very big profit. He was in middle of *davening* so he could not attend to them. The merchants waited quite a while, until one of Reb Monyeh’s family members came to tell him that people were waiting with a big order. Reb Monyah looked up and sighed, “*m’lozt nit a Yid leben!*” They just don’t let a Jew live! I still have not put on *Rabbeinu Tam*

Soon the Rebbe asked him to see some of his diamonds. Reb Monyeh laid out the diamonds on the table and pointed to one particular diamond saying that it was an exceptional gem. The Rebbe countered, “I don’t see anything exceptional about it.” Reb Monyeh explained, “For this one needs to be an expert (*meivin*).” The Rebbe turned to him and said, “A *Yid* is exceptional, however one must be a *meivin*...”

(ס"ה תש"ג ע' 87)

A Moment with The Rebbe



PURIM FARBRENGEN

Purim *farbrengens* always had an intimate air to them. The fiery *sichos*, the *lebedige nigunim*, the personal *lechaims*. In the earlier years, there were often direct conversations with individual people present, encouraging, chiding and *bentching*. There were years when the Rebbe asked that someone be *moitzie* the assembled with “*ad de’lo yoda...*”

accessing Yidden in their homes, and connecting them.

“Before every such *farbrengen* we would ask the Rebbe’s permission, and then make the necessary arrangements.

“Beginning in the early 5740’s,” Reb Hillel Dovid Krinsky of JEM recounts, “we would broadcast five or six of the Rebbes major *farbrengens* on national television, every year. This was a major leap forward in

“One year, a suggestion arose to broadcast the Purim *farbrengen*. We wrote in our idea, but to our surprise the Rebbe turned it down. The context of the answer was that on Purim the Rebbe *farbrengs* just with the chassidim, since *halacha* prescribes that *Seudas Purim* should be celebrated with family.”

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