

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • תצוה תשע"ח • 450
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

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 *kedusha* and joy of Purim are so great, that even when we have the *kedusha* and joy of the *geulah*, Purim will still stand out.

(תיקוני זוהר נ"ז ע"ב, מדרש משלי פ"ט, ת"מ חט"ז ע' 118 ושי"ג)

The author of *Chiddushei HaRim*, the first Rebbe of Ger, illustrated the powerful potential of Purim with a story:

There was once a Yid who set out on a journey, intending to commit a grievous sin, and took along five hundred gold rubles that he had patiently amassed over the years. On his way, he suddenly heard the heartfelt cries of a family in distress. They were being evicted for not paying their rent. His pity aroused, he gave them all the money that he had intended to use for the *aveira*.

His deed aroused such a great tumult in *Shamayim* that it was decided that whatever this man would decree, would materialize. However, to ensure that the privilege would not be misused, it was ordained that he become a drunkard.

Some time later, a terrible *tzara* descended upon the world. The Baal Shem Tov sent his *talmidim* to beg this drunken Yid to intercede and ask *HaShem* for mercy. They repeatedly found him drunk, until finally, catching him sober, they presented their request and he succeeded in abolishing the decree.

The *Chiddushei Harim* would conclude: Purim is a day of *eis ratzon*, when every Yid – like that drunkard – can accomplish great things, without limitation. However, to allow this to happen, one must make sure that the merrymaking will not

interfere with this mighty potential.

(שפתי צדיק ארת נ"א)

CELEBRATING PURIM

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)

CONSIDER

How can the merrymaking
on Purim be both a source of
brachos and a distraction from it?
If Purim is really a Yom-Tov why
is it permissible to do melacha?

Throughout the month of Adar, the conduct of, Reb Shmuel Abba of Zichlin was very joyful, and on Purim his *avoda* expressed extraordinary *simcha*. He had harsh words for those who did not treat the day properly, or who did not dress in their *Shabbos* clothes in honor of the *Megillah* reading.

One year, his *beis midrash* was filled with all the townsmen who had come to hear the *Megillah*. All were dressed in their *Shabbos* best, except for one man, who wore his weekday garb. When some *chassidim* questioned his behavior, the man responded (playing on a common Yiddish folk-expression), “Purim is not a *Yom-Tov* and fever is not a sickness.” At that moment, the *tzaddik* entered, gave this fellow a piercing look and said, “Purim is a *Yom-Tov*, and fever is a sickness.”

As soon as he arrived home that night, this man suddenly fell ill with a raging fever. When it only

worsened as the days wore on, he sent a message to the *tzaddik*, asking for a *bracha*.

The *tzaddik* replied, “Now he knows that fever is really a sickness, and he needs to know that Purim is really a *Yom-Tov*.”

The man suffered in sickness the entire year, until the following Purim.

(סיפור ז'וין מוועדים ע' 271, ובס' הצאצאים ע' 62 הביאו על אדה"ו)

LIMITLESS ZEAL

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

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 ז,ב, לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 1277)

On the first Purim after his *chasuna*, the Alter Rebbe gave a non-literal exposition of the *avoda* of attaining the level of *ad d'lo yada*. On Purim, he said, we must ensure that the *lo* – literally, “the No,” that is, the things that are forbidden – should be *yada* (“known”). What we are supposed to do is well known, but one must also know what is forbidden, so that it can be treated with extra caution.

(ס"ה ש"תש"ה ע' 72)

The *Megillah* says that after the miracle of Purim, the Yidden were blessed with *simcha* (“joy”), which *Chazal* understand to mean that they were now able to celebrate the *Yomim-Tovim*. The Rebbe explains that although other nations also have holidays, they celebrate them with drinking and unbridled conduct. Yidden, by contrast, even when they rejoice and drink they become closer to *HaShem*, and heighten their *yiras Shamayim* and holiness.

(לקו"ש ח"ג ע' 920, ח"ד ע' 1274, וראה שו"ע סי' רצ"ב ס"ג)

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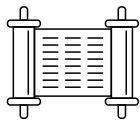


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MACHATZIS HASHEKEL COINS

Which coins can I use for Machatzis Hashekel?

Around Purim, the custom is to give a “half coin” to *tzedaka* in remembrance of the half shekel that was donated during the month of Adar in the times of the Beis Hamikdash.¹ It is given preferably on Taanis Esther before mincha, and so is the Chabad custom, but one who didn't give it then may do so on Purim morning before *megilla*.² It is best to contribute this *tzedaka* to a shul or *beis midrash*, similar to the original *machatzis hashekel* that went to the Beis Hamikdash.³

While some hold that one half coin is sufficient, the Rema quotes from Rishonim that one should contribute three half coins corresponding to the three times the word “*terumah*” (donation) appears in the *pesukim* regarding donations for the *mishkan*. The Rebbe adds that this can also commemorate the three days that Queen Esther fasted.⁴

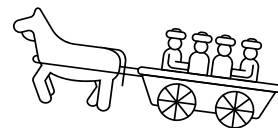
How much is a *machatzis hashekel*? The Rema writes that the coins given should be half coins of the **local** currency (e.g. half dollar, half shekel). Poskim write that in countries where there is no “half coin,” a half coin of an internationally recognized currency (e.g. dollar or euro) may be used. A coin that is colloquially called “half” by the Jewish population (e.g. fifty pence in England as “half a pound”) may be used.⁵

Some sources mention fulfilling the custom in a more preferable way by contributing the actual value of **one** *machatzis hashekel* given in the time of the Beis Hamikdash (9.6 (or 8.5) grams of silver).⁶ Although not the custom as described by Rema, many communities follow this custom, and in addition to giving three **half** coins, they supplement the amount with additional money (presently the value is approx. \$5.15).

The above sources mention an additional advantage in giving actual silver, and therefore some endeavor to donate half coins that contain (in total) 9.6 grams of silver. (American half dollars prior to 1964 contained over 11 grams; until 1970, 4.6 gram; onward, they contain no silver.)

The custom in many communities is to “buy” the three half coins from the *gabbai*. One should first place money in the plate and then lift the coins.⁷ If buying silver coins, it is proper to pay their value, or at least the value of 9.6 grams of silver, though there is some basis to pay a mere \$1.50.⁸ Yet, one can fulfill the custom with three regular half dollars and one is not obligated to add more to fulfill the additional custom.

1. שקורה גם עם ביטול גזירת המן כדאייתא בגמ' (מגילה יג, ב) "הקדים שקליהם לשקליו".
2. רמ"א או"ח סי' תרצ"ד ס"א. מ"א שם סק"ב. ספר המנהגים - חב"ד ע' 37. לוח כולל חב"ד. וי"א גם מר"ח אדר - ראה מקדש ישראל פורים סי' נ"ב ובס' רוח חיים סי' תרצ"ד שכן נהגו באיזמיר.
3. ע"פ שיחת ש"פ שקלים תשכ"ד ותשמ"ב - הובא באוצר מנהגי חב"ד חודש אדר, ע' רננ.
4. רמ"א שם ע"פ מרדכי ריש פ"ק דינמא (ליתן ג). אבל ראה מטה יהודה, הובא בכף החיים סי' תרצ"ד ס"ק כ"ג (ב' תרומות היו רק פ"א במדבר ואת"ו זכר לנ' ימי התענית).
5. ראה סי' הליכות חנוך ע' י"ז.
6. כף החיים סי' תרצ"ד סק"ב. מפי (הגרמש"א ע"ה) מזקני חסידים שמעתי שכן נהגו גם בין חסידי חב"ד אבל לענ"ד אין הוכחה שכן מנהג חב"ד. וראה מקדש ישראל - פורים סימן ג'.
7. ראה מקדש ישראל שם סי' נ"ה שכן לכתחילה.
8. ראה ביה"ל או"ח סי' תרצ"ד ד"ה ויש שנתן לימוד זכות לזה שהגבאים מוכרים בפחות, וראה מקדש ישראל שם סי' נ"ה בין זבוח.



MAHARIL - SON OF TZEMACH TZEDEK

Reb Yehuda Leib was the second son born to the Tzemach Tzedek around the year 5571 (1811) in Liadi. His great-grandfather the Alter Rebbe was his *sandak*. He was very close to his grandfather the Mittlerer Rebbe, and would learn with him very often. He was his father's right-hand man, as most of his father's activities would go through him. He married the daughter of Reb Shlomo Friedes of Shklov, a great *chossid* of the Alter Rebbe. After his father the Tzemach Tzedek passed away, he moved to the city of Kopust and many *chassidim* flocked to him. After a short time he fell ill and passed away on 3 Cheshvan 5627 (1866).

even dancing. His *davening* was also at great length. The men *davening* in his *minyán* told him that they cannot *daven* so long, and every time he would promise to keep it short, however once he started to *daven* he would forget about the deal. Once he decided to tie himself to the *omud* as a reminder to keep the *davening* short, but from such great fervor he started walking around and dragged the *omud* with him to the other side of *shul*.

(אוצר סיפורי חב"ד ח"ח)

All of the Tzemach Tzedek's sons had business partnerships with various merchants. The Maharil had a partnership with a merchant who dealt with horses. At one point, the Maharil made a calculation of the business. As the total he wrote, “*leis asar ponui minei*,” there is no place empty of Hashem.

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 14)

Throughout the year after the Tzemach Tzedek's passing, each of the sons *davened* in a *minyán* of his own. The Maharil's manner of *davening* was with a lot of excitement, sometimes walking from place to place and

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE REBBE'S HEALTH

At the famous *farbrengen* of Purim 5718 (1958), the Rebbe spoke in direct terms to many of the assembled. Several people were admonished for not sending their sons to Tomchei Temimim, and one was even told “Don't be swayed by me! Disregard what I have told you that you could send to another *yeshiva*!”

niggunim. One elder *chossid* worried for the Rebbe's hand, and placed his own hand on the table to protect the Rebbe from unnecessary pain.

The Rebbe's response was direct:

“Those who are genuinely worried about my health should get involved in Tomchei Temimim activities.”

As the *farbrengen* progressed, the Rebbe began banging his fist strongly on the table during the *sichos* and

(*Toras Menachem* vol. 22, page 167; *Otzar Hachassidim NY*, page 157)

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