

The Weekly Farbrengens

MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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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 זהר 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.

(סיפ"ח זוין מועדים 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)

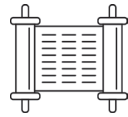
On the first Purim after his *chasuna*, the Alter Rebbe gave a non-literal exposition of the *avoda* of attaining the level of *ad d'lo yada*. On Purim, he said, we must ensure that the *lo* – literally, “the No,” that is, the things that are forbidden – should be *yada* (“known”). What we are supposed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

(סה"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"ת סי' רצ"ב ס"ג)





MATANOS LAEYVONIM BY CHECK

Is giving a check a proper fulfillment of *matanos laevyonim*?

Matanos laevyonim is to be given to two *evyonim* on Purim. One can either give money or food — not clothing or utensils — yet the preference is money.¹

Some *Acharonim* write that since it is called a “gift,” the recipient should know who gave the gift.² Yet the halacha is that the recipient need not know the donor, and indeed, there is a great advantage in giving *tzedaka* in this manner.³

When sending money to an *evyon* before Purim (see issue 294), the main thing is that the *evyon* receives it by Purim for his Purim meal. If he gets it too early, there is concern that he might use the money before Purim, but if the money will only reach him on Purim, there is no concern.⁴ Still, some write that one should not send *matanos laevyonim* before 11 Adar, the earliest date for reading the *megilah*.⁵

There is a debate as to whether it is preferable to give many poor people a minimum amount of *matanos la'evyonim* or to give just a few people a significant amount of *matanos la'evyonim*.⁶

The mitzva of *matanos laevyonim* requires one to gift something out of pocket. Thus, one cannot fulfill the obligation by forgiving a loan, since he isn't “giving” anything right now — the loan money is already “spent” and he is merely exempting the borrower from his obligation to repay it.⁷

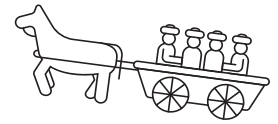
If the *evyon* comes on Purim with the money in hand to repay the loan, some say that telling him at that point to keep the money is sufficient, and we don't require the *evyon* to hand the money back to the lender and then have the lender hand it back. (As the Gemara calls such superfluous actions, “shifting donkey packs from one side to the other”).⁸

Paying a poor person's bill in the grocery store (or other loan) is also insufficient, since the *evyon* must actually receive something to rejoice with on Purim.⁹

Writing a check out to the *evyon* does fulfill the mitzva. Although a check is not actual money and is merely a directive to the bank to withdraw funds, and moreover the bank could even be currently closed after business hours, the check still has intrinsic value and could often be used in a store to purchase against it.¹⁰

1. שו"ת קנין תורה ח"ג סי' ק"ב אות ב'. הרמב"ם בפה"מ מגילה פ"א מ"ג אור שמח פ"ב הט"ז.
2. הגר"י עגל גלוני הש"ס שבת דף י"ע. קובץ הלכות ע' צב ריבוי האיכות.
3. ראה שו"ת קנין תורה ח"ג סי' ק"ב. ראה חזון עובדיה פורים ע' ק"ע.
4. ראה סי' בתי כנסיות ט' תרצ"ה דף א' אות ד.
5. ראה בעל המאור מגילה א ב בדפי קי"ח סע"א.
6. רי"ף, ופמ"ג סי' תרצה א"א סי' יג. 9. מעדני שלמה עמ' ק"ב בשם הגה"ש.
7. ושו"ת יהודה יעלה אות סי' רד יוד. וראה שו"ת תשורת ש"י ח"א סי' ט.
8. אהרן א"ח תרצד הגהות ב", בדעתו. 10. ראה שו"ת משנה הלכות ח"ו סי' קכ"ב.
9. דעת תורה סי' תרצד ס"א, בדעת חזון עובדיה שם ובהערה ט"ז בארכיו.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה



R. MOSHE MEIZLISH

R. Moshe Meizlish was a chossid of the Alter Rebbe, and then Mittlerer Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek. A native of Vilna (born c. 5519), he was an important official in the Vilna *kehila* and became a chossid of the Alter Rebbe. R. Moshe authored a unique sefer titled *Shiras Moshe*, which contains of an acrostic poem for the 620 letters of the *aseres hadibros*, with every line devoted to one of the 620 *mitzvos min hatorah* and *miderabanan*, all following the order of the Rambam. R. Moshe also had broad secular knowledge, and famously used his knowledge of languages to spy against Napoleon, at the behest of the Alter Rebbe. He moved to Eretz Yisroel in 5576 and passed away at an advanced age in 5609.

Although the chassidim of Vilna suffered during the time of the great *machlokes*, they constantly tried to bring about peace and did not respond to their tormentors. At one of their meetings in 5556, some of the young *talmidei chachomim* among them decided that it was time to fight back. R. Meir Refoels, who for many years had worked on keeping the peace, argued against this. R. Moshe Meizlish sided with the younger group, and, deeply pained by all their past suffering, used sharp words against his opponent.

Hearing about this, the Alter Rebbe immediately dispatched a messenger to tell the younger chassidim that although in principle they were right, they must nevertheless act with *middos tovos* and *ahavas Yisroel* — for this was what would ultimately cause the Name of Hashem to be glorified.

Later that year, the Alter Rebbe also wrote a letter to R. Moshe Meizlish, asking him to publicly ask forgiveness from R. Meir Refoels, "For Chazal teach that no peace will come from quarreling, and most *tzores* result from *machloikes* that is thought to be *leshem Shamayim*. (May *HaShem* protect us from it!)"

[אג"ק אדה"ז ע"פ, שם ע' תלה [מליקוט] ד' כסלו תשל"ט ע' 150]

R. Moshe once told R. Aizik Homiler, "The *alef* of Chassidus saved me from a certain

death." He explained, "The Rebbe taught us that the first step, the *alef* of Chassidus, is to serve Hashem with one's inborn abilities, such as the mind's inherent dominion over the heart. This quite literally saved my life." He then shared this story:

During Napoleon's war against Russia, he served as a translator for the French High Command, being a learned man and fluent in German, Russian, Polish and French. The Alter Rebbe had chosen him to associate with the French military officials, to attain a position in their service, and to convey all that he learned to the commanders of the Russian army. Within a short while, he succeeded in gaining the favor of Napoleon's chief commanders and knew their secret plans.

"Once," related R. Moshe "the High Command of the French army was meeting, and were debating the maneuvers and the arrangement of the armies for the upcoming battle. The maps were spread on the floor and the officers were examining the roads, unable to reach a decision. Time was short. Tomorrow, or, at the very latest, the day after, the battle in the surroundings of Vilna must begin.

"They were still debating when the door flew open with a crash. The guard stationed inside the door was alarmed and drew his gun. Everyone thought that the enemy had burst in to capture the French Chief Command..."

"But it was Napoleon himself who appeared in the doorway. The Emperor's face was dark with fury, and he raged: 'Have the orders been given for battle?'"

"'And who is this stranger?!' he continued, pointing to me. In a flash, he was at my side. 'You are a spy for Russia!' he thundered, and placed his hand upon my chest to feel the pounding heart of a man exposed.

At that moment, the *alef* of Chassidus stood me by. In an unwavering voice, I said: 'The commanders of His Highness the Emperor have taken me as their interpreter, as I am knowledgeable in the languages crucial to the carrying out of their duties...' "

At that, Napoleon let him be.

[אגרות קודש אדרי"צ ח"ג ע' שיג]

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE SURPRISE MAAMAR

At 8:50am on Shabbos *Parshas Zachor* 5718 (1958), the Rebbe suddenly appeared in the *zal* and said to Reb Dovid Raskin, "Whoever wants to hear Chassidus should come to my room."

The surprise *maamar* — the early hour as well as location — caught everyone off guard.

Reb Heishke Gansburg describes the scene in his diary: "The Rebbe sat at his table opposite an empty chair, with a very strained expression, as if

he was about to burst into tears."

After assuring that the door was locked, twice, the Rebbe began the *maamar*, expounding on the *avoda* of erasing Amalek. At the conclusion of the discourse, the Rebbe wiped his eyes.

Many latecomers gathered outside, but were not allowed in. "Still," Reb Gershon Mendel Garelik recalls, "the Rebbe was kind. The Rebbe said the *maamar* in an unusually loud tone, so that those outside could follow."