

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT TEZAVE-KI TISA-PURIM · 13-20 ADAR 5777 - MAR. 11-18, 2017 · VOL. 24 NO. 21

Editor's note: This Thursday, March 9, is *Ta'anit Esther* (the Fast of Esther) since the 13th of Adar is on Shabbat when we may not fast; *Parshat Zachor* is read on March 11; *Purim* in most places is celebrated on Adar 14, which this year will be immediately after Shabbat until Sunday night March 12; "*Shushan Purim*", Adar 15, which is celebrated in Jerusalem and other cities that had walls around them from the time of Yehoshua bin Nun, is from Sunday evening March 11th until Monday night March 12th. *Happy Purim!*

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Tetzave

NER TAMID — THE EVERLASTING LIGHT

"Pure, pressed olive oil for illumination, to kindle the lamp continually" (27:20)

In last week's *haftarah* it says that King Shlomo made the windows of the Beit Hamikdash wide on the inside and narrow on the outside (*Melachim 6:4*). Usually the reverse would be correct: The windows should be broad on the outside to let in as much light as possible, but narrow on the inside to focus and concentrate the light.

Why did King Shlomo depart from normal building practice?

The Beit Hamikdash was not in need of light. The world needed *its* light. The two *Batei Mikdash* illuminated the world with spirituality.

The first Beit Hamikdash stood for 410 years. In Hebrew we would write that as ״ת״. The second Beit Hamikdash stood for 420 years — ״כ״ת. Those four letters spell the word, ״כתי״, meaning "pressed."

"Pure, pressed olive oil for illumination, to kindle the lamp continually."

Even though the light of the first two *Batei Mikdash* was "כתי" — it was 'pressed' into only 420 years — the Third Beit Hamikdash will "*kindle the lamp continually*". It will radiate light to the world forever.

• Sources: based on *Toldot Yitzchak in Mayana Shel Torah*

Ki Tisa

NISCHT AUF SHABBES GEREDT

"And on the seventh day you shall desist; you shall desist from plowing and harvesting." (34:21)

"N*nischt auf Shabbes geredt* (Yiddish: "Not to speak of it on Shabbat") — you know, they've got an amazing sale next week downtown!"

"Really! *Nischt auf Shabbes geredt*, when does it start?"

"Well, *nischt auf Shabbes geredt*, if I remember correctly, it's on Friday, but it could be, *nischt auf Shabbes geredt*, on Shabbat, *nischt auf Shabbes geredt*."

Shabbat is a delicate creature. She's very easily scared away. To experience what Shabbat really can be we must push the working week away with two hands, and use those hands to embrace the Shabbat.

"If you ...refrain from discussing the forbidden (on Shabbat), then you will delight in G-d..." (Yeshayahu 58:13-14)

Our Sages teach that this verse teaches us that our speech

on Shabbat should not be like that of the weekday. The *Shulchan Aruch*, the Code of Jewish Law (in *Aruch Chaim 307*) says that on Shabbat it is forbidden to discuss worldly matters, and that one should speak briefly even about that which is permissible.

"And on the seventh day you shall desist; you shall desist from plowing and harvesting."

This verse hints to these two ideas: "Plowing" — *charisha* — hints to the forbidden speech about the mundane and the worldly. "Harvesting" — *katzira* — literally "cutting", suggests that one should cut down to the minimum even conversation that is permissible on Shabbat.

And the reward: *"Then you will delight in G-d."*

• Sources: based on the *Noam Megadim in Mayana shel Torah*

BAVA BATRA 46 - 59

“It is a mitzvah to listen the words of the Sages.”

When a Beit Din (Jewish religious court) rules that a husband divorce his wife with a *get*, but he refuses, the Beit Din (in theory) may choose to compel the person with physical pressure until he complies. The Rambam (Laws of Divorce 2:20) explains why such a *get* is valid even though it was apparently given under duress:

Only when one who is under duress sells, gives away something, or does anything he is not obligated to do, is he considered to be acting against his will. However, when he is pressured into doing something which the Torah requires, or to refrain from something that is forbidden, he is actually acting in according to his true will, which his evil inclination has attempted to enslave. Every Jew wishes to be part of his holy nation. He really wants to do what is right, and his outward refusal to obey the order to divorce is due to his being a prisoner of his evil inclination. When pressure is applied, it is to weaken the hold of his ‘captor’, and this ‘liberated Jew’ is considered as having expressed his true will when he complies with the order of the court.

• Bava Batra 48a

Rabbi Yochanan asked Rabbi Banah, “How should the table of a talmid chacham (Torah scholar) be? Rabbi Banah answered, “Two-thirds should be covered (on the side where the diners sit, two-thirds of the width of the table should be covered with a tablecloth for the bread to be put on and for diners to eat upon — Rashbam), and a third should be revealed (the remaining width of the table, away from the diners, should be without a tablecloth, as a place to put the bowls and cups of drink, so that that the spillage from the bowls and cups will not dirty the tablecloth and ruin the food). However, the table of an ‘am ha’aretz (ignoramus) is akin to bonfire with hot pots surrounding it (the bread and tablecloth are in the middle, while the bread and food bowls surround them near the diners — Rashbam).

Rabbi Yochanan asked Rabbi Banah, “How should the bed of a talmid chacham be? Rabbi Banah answered, “It should have nothing under it in the summer except for his sandals (for storage, since he wears them only in the muddy, rainy winter, due to the mud — Rashbam); and nothing under it in the winter except for his shoes. The underside of the bed of an ‘am ha’aretz’, however, is a place where he puts everything, including vessels and food — Rashbam).

Rabbi Banah teaches Rabbi Yochanan in our *gemara* the way a *talmid chacham* behaves with dignity and refinement, befitting a person who has internalized the Torah that he studies. This includes clean and honorable clothing, modest appearance, refined and clean eating habits and even the way he stores what he owns in a pure and orderly manner.

I suggest seeing the Maharsha’s commentary on this *gemara*, which explains the significance of each aspect of the conduct of a *talmid chacham*, as opposed to that of an *am ha’aretz*. The running theme is the dignity, refinement and lack of placing excessive emphasis on constant physical pleasures displayed by a Torah scholar, unlike the self-centered, physical-pleasure-oriented mindset and lifestyle of an *am ha’aretz*.

On a practical note regarding a question I have often been asked by yeshiva students residing in dorm rooms who would like to store their property under their beds (often in a suitcase): When they ask if it’s okay, I say to them that it’s fine if done in an orderly manner, but not to put food under their bed. As the Maharsha explains, this is for reasons of good hygiene, and also since sleep is considered one-sixtieth of death, and there is a “*ruach ra’ah*” (spiritual impurity) under the place where one sleeps. If a person does sleep over food, however, the halachic authorities do not forbid the food from being considered fit to eat.

• Bava Batra 57b, 58a

PARSHA Q&A ?

Tetzave

1. What two precautions were taken to assure the purity of oil for the *Menorah*?
2. How was Aharon commanded to kindle the *Menorah*?
3. What does *tamid* mean in reference to the *Menorah*?
4. What does *kehuna* mean?
5. Name the eight garments worn by the *Kohen Gadol*.
6. To what does Rashi compare the *ephod*?
7. In which order were the names of the Tribes inscribed on the *ephod*?
8. The stones of the *ephod* bore the inscription of the names of the sons of Yaakov. Why?
9. For what sins did the *choshen mishpat* atone?
10. What are three meanings of the word *mishpat*?
11. What was lacking in the *bigdei kehuna* in the second *Beit Hamikdash*?
12. Which garment's fabric was woven of only one material?
13. When the *Kohen Gadol* wore all his priestly garments, where on his head was the *tefillin* situated?
14. What does the word *tamid* mean in reference to the *tzitz*? (two answers)
15. Which garments were worn by a *kohen hediot*?
16. During the inauguration of the *kohanim*, a bullock was brought as a sin offering. For what sin did this offering atone?
17. Moshe was commanded to wash Aharon and his sons to prepare them to serve as *kohanim* (29:4). How were they washed?
18. What was unique about the bull sin-offering brought during the inauguration of the *kohanim*?
19. How did the oil used for the meal-offering differ from the oil used for the *Menorah*?
20. What does the crown on the *mizbeach haketoret* symbolize?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Tetzave's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 27:20 - The olives were pressed and not ground; and only the first drop was used.
2. 27:20 - He was commanded to kindle it until the flame ascended by itself.
3. 27:20 - It means that it should be kindled every night.
4. 28:3 - Service.
5. 28:4,36,42 - *Choshen, ephod, me'il, ketonet, mitznefet, avnet, tzitz, and michnasayim*.
6. 28:6 - A woman's riding garment.
7. 28:10 - In order of birth.
8. 28:12 - So that G-d would see their names and recall their righteousness.
9. 28:15 - For judicial errors.
10. 28:15 - 1) The claims of the litigants, 2) The court's ruling, 3) The court's punishment.
11. 28:30 - The *Urim V'Tumim* — the "*Shem Ha'meforash*" placed in the folds of the *choshen*.
12. 28:31 - The fabric of the *me'il* was made only of *techelet*.
13. 28:37 - Between the *tzitz* and the *mitznefet*.
14. 28:38 - 1) It always atones, even when not being worn. 2) The *Kohen Gadol* must always be aware that he is wearing it.
15. 28:40,42 - *Ketonet, avnet, migba'at, and michnasayim*.
16. 29:1 - The sin of the golden calf.
17. 29:4 - They immersed in a *mikveh*.
18. 29:14 - It is the only external sin-offering that was completely burned.
19. 29:40 - Oil for the *menorah* comes only from beaten olives. Oil for meal-offerings may come from either beaten olives or from ground-up olives.
20. 30:3 - The crown of *kehuna*.

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Tetzave

THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS

This Parsha deals primarily with the special garments worn by the High Priest and the regular priests during their service in the Tabernacle. Abarbanel offers several interpretations of the symbolism of these garments. One of those interpretations is as follows:

Four of the garments were worn only by the High Priest and were considered to have greater importance: the breastplate, the apron, the robe and the headplate. The other less important garments were the turban, the sash, the trousers and the tunic. The four special garments worn by the High Priest were worn opposite the four main components of the body: the head, the heart, the digestive area and the reproductive area. The headplate signifies that all of his thoughts should be directed to G-d. The breastplate over his heart indicates that all of his prayers should be for the benefit of the entire nation, which is why twelve precious stones corresponding to the nation's twelve tribes were set in it. The apron encircled his abdomen, indicating that he should eat and digest only those foods that G-d permits. Finally, the robe covering the reproductive organs indicates that our desires must be constrained by the dictates of the Torah, both publicly and privately. The golden bells attached to the bottom of the robe remind us that we cannot hide our private behaviors. Everything eventually becomes known within the community of Israel.

These four garments also correspond to the four types of service that the High Priest performed. The garments of the head correspond to the inner sanctuary, or Holy of Holies, which the High Priest entered only on Yom Kippur. Here the intellect is represented by the Ark and the Tablets of the Law. The second service was the lighting of the Menorah, or candelabra, which was in the inner courtyard just outside the Holy of Holies. The breastplate with its twelve precious stones corresponded to the Menorah since the letters engraved on the stones would prophetically light up in response to questions that the High Priest would ask of G-d. The third service was the arranging of the loaves of bread on the table, which naturally corresponds to the apron covering the digestive tract. The fourth service was the lighting of the incense on the golden altar. Just as the smoke from the altar announced the presence of the incense, likewise the bells on the hem of the robe announced the presence of the High Priest.

The four garments of the regular priests were much simpler. Rather than employing the gold, silver, precious stones and expensive colorful fabrics of the High Priest's garments, these garments were made of simple linen and were much easier to make. They also corresponded to less religiously significant parts of the body: the skin, the bones, the flesh and the sinews. Finally, although the four specialized garments worn by the High Priest were indicative of his pre-eminence among the people, the fact that he also wore the four simple garments indicated that he still retained his humility and remained connected to the other priests as one of them. Furthermore, in times of need he was expected to perform all of the duties of the regular priests and on Yom Kippur, when he was serving on behalf of the entire nation. He further demonstrated his humility and connection to all the people by wearing only the four simple white linen garments.

Ki Tisa

THE GOLDEN CALF

The sin of the golden calf: What did the people want? What actually was the golden calf? What was Aharon's role?

In order to understand the sin of the golden calf, it is important to realize that the people who left Egypt, especially the mixed multitude of Egyptians who joined the children of Israel, were still steeped in the idolatry and superstitions of Egyptian society. They never completely connected to the concept of an intangible G-d who delivered them from slavery miraculously. Rather, they were much more connected to Moshe as their leader. Seeing that 40 days had passed since Moshe ascended Mount Sinai, and fearing the worst, they looked for a new symbol of leadership. The logical choice would have been to turn to Aharon to take Moshe's place, but they were afraid that, as a mortal human being, the same fate would befall him. Instead, they sought to rely on a talisman, an amulet — a physical object that was considered to have the magical power to serve as an intermediary to bring about the miraculous interventions in nature that they had been experiencing. They assumed that Moshe himself had had access to such items, and they wanted to replace them as soon as possible. They also wanted the amulet to be in the shape of a calf since the constellation of Taurus the Bull precedes the constellation of Aries the Ram, which was the symbol of Egyptian idolatry. Since Taurus precedes

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FACADE OF FURY

From: David

Dear Rabbi,
I have learned that the reason for the decree against the Jews in the Purim story is that they partook of the feast of Achashverosh. Yet, I have also learned that the king had kosher food and kosher wine served for the Jews at his feast. If so, what was the reason for the harsh decree?

Dear David,

You can be certain that Achashverosh did not serve kosher food and wine at his orgiastic feast out of love for the Jews and respect for Judaism!

Rather, his intention was, under the guise of a kosher-catered affair, to lure the Jews into decadence, and ensnare them into transgressing, in order to kindle Divine wrath against them and prolong their exile.

In addition to hoping they'd be dragged into the obscene indulgence and licentiousness of the bacchanalian debauchery, he sought to degrade them and degrade the Holy Temple in its destruction, in order to prevent its rebuilding.

The Sages taught (Megilla 12a) that Achashverosh served the food and wine of the feast in the defiled vessels of the Holy Temple that he had inherited from his predecessors the Babylonians, who decades earlier had ransacked and destroyed Jerusalem. In addition to the great effrontery of reveling with these vessels in the face of the Jews, he presided over the entire orgy wearing the holy garments and breastplate of the High Priest. In this way he inflicted insult and injury on the Jews, whose forced silence bespoke apa-

thy, and thus provoked Divine punishment.

The Talmud (ibid.) also relates another reason. The students of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai asked him why destruction was decreed upon the Jews of that generation. The rabbi asked them to venture an answer. They replied that it was because they participated in, and derived benefit from, the feast of the wicked Achashverosh. He countered that, if so, only the Jews of Shushan who attended the feast should have been accountable, but not those in the rest of the provinces who were also threatened by the decree!

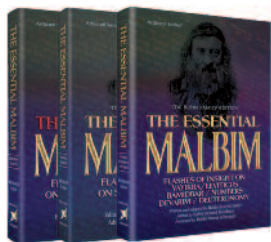
So, the students then asked the rabbi what sin he thought caused the decree. He replied that it was on account of the Jews bowing down to the statue of Nebuchadnezzar. The students replied that in such a case, rather than wondering why the decree was made, the question should be why it was nullified, such that they were saved by Divine intervention. Since they prostrated themselves to this idolatrous image they should be liable for the capital punishment for idolatry even if they repented!

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai answered that they only made an *outward* show of bowing. Tosefot (Pesachim 53b) offers two explanations: Either that the statue was made only to honor the king, so their bowing only smacked of idolatry but technically wasn't; or even if it was made to deify the king, they only bowed out of fear of death but not to worship it. Since their prostration was only external, Rabbi Shimon explained, G-d's display of anger was only a façade, as it were. Once they repented for this external display of infidelity, G-d "repented" for His show of anger and spared them from death.

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READING THE MEGILLAH WITH A MINYAN

When the megillah is read on Purim (the fourteenth of Adar in unwalled cities), or on Shushan Purim (the fifteenth of Adar in “walled cities”, such as Jerusalem), one should ideally read or listen to the megillah with a *minyan*. If, however, this is not possible, one may read the megillah by himself (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 690:18). When, however, the megillah is *not* read in its proper time, it should *only* be read with a *minyan*. (Tractate Megillah 5a; Beit Yosef 690)

Why is it that on the actual day of Purim one may read the megillah by himself, whereas when reading it early it must be with a *minyan*?

The purpose of reading the megillah on Purim is in order to publicize the great miracle that G-d performed in the days of King Achashverosh. Therefore, since on the *actual* day of Purim each and every person is obligated to read the megillah, even when a person reads the megillah by himself the miracle of Purim is publicized. This is because the megillah is read by everyone on that day (Rashi to Megillah 5a).

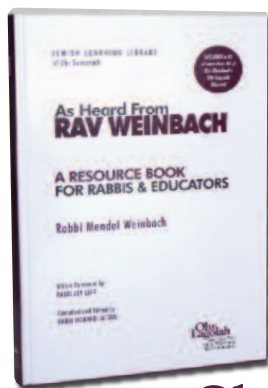
There is a dispute among the rabbinical authorities regarding what may be done when the megillah is read for Shushan Purim when it falls on Shabbat, and the megillah is read on Friday, the day before. According to Rashi’s reasoning, one would be allowed to read the megillah without a *minyan* since everyone reads the megillah on that day. However, the

Ran maintains that in such a case one would not be able to read the megillah by himself, without a *minyan*.

The Turei Even explains the Ran as follows: When the megillah is read on Purim, because there are other celebratory activities performed on that day, such as the special Purim feast, giving food gifts to friends and charity to the poor — they add up to publicizing the Purim miracle, and there is therefore sufficient publication of the Purim miracle even if the megillah is read in private.

However, when the main celebrative activities (the Purim feast and the giving of food gifts to friends) are missing when the megillah is read the day before, reading the megillah without a *minyan* does not sufficiently publicize the miracle. In other words, when there is already a dominant public display of the Purim miracle via the other Purim *mitzvot*, one may read the megillah privately, but when the megillah is the main display of the holiday it must be read publicly in order to fulfill the requirement of publicizing the miracle.

Because there is a dispute regarding this halacha, the Mishneh Berurah rules that in the event that one needs to read the megillah without a *minyan* when Shushan Purim is pushed back to Friday, he should do so without reciting a blessing (Mishneh Berurah 690:61; see Sha’arei Tzion for a different explanation of the rabbinical dispute).



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MAX SIGEL

Age 20 - Conejo Valley, LA, California
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The *Sefer HaChinuch* (attributed by many to Rabbi Aharon HaLevi of Barcelona) shares an amazing insight into how a person's actions, even when done unwillingly, have the power to influence and change a person's behavior and his way of thinking for the better. For example, he states, if a person who is a "rasha gamor" (one who is totally devoid of mitzvah observance) is compelled until he does even one mitzvah, and this process is repeated daily until he does that mitzvah daily — he will eventually become a "tzadik gamor" (completely righteous). Such is the amazing power of the action of a mitzvah upon a Jew. This is not mere behavior modification *à la* Skinner. It not only changes the behavior — it changes the mind. Of course, in our society it is illegal and ill-advised to compel a person to do something, such a mitzvah, against his will. However, I have seen with my own eyes the *Sefer HaChinuch's* insight work on a fellow whom I knew in law school. He was an intellectual; a philosophy major at Brown University who had read extensively about religion, and was a dyed-in-the-wool atheist. He boarded off-campus with a couple of classmates who were Shabbat observant. Since they would not allow him to bring non-kosher food into the house or to cook anything himself he began to exclusively eat kosher food. On Friday nights and Shabbat mornings he went with his friends to *shul*, and then went with them to various families for the Shabbat meals. After three years of this, and all the while maintaining his intellectual disbelief, while immensely enjoying the food and company, he suddenly became convinced of the truth of Torah. He had no idea how this happened but it did! He went on to marry a girl from a religious family, raise a Jewish family and become a pillar of the religious community in his city.

Sometimes the *teshuvah* process occurs in the manner described above, and sometimes it takes a gorilla to shake a Jew out of his comfort zone and realize that he needs to take a different path. That happened to Max.

Max was born into a secular Jewish family in "the Valley" of LA. They were members of a Conservative synagogue and were a bit more traditional than the average secular family. Max went to afternoon Hebrew School until bar



mitzvah, and while in High School became involved with United Synagogue Youth, a program aimed at high school teens to help them maintain their Jewish identity after their "formal" Jewish education had ended with *bar* or *bat* mitzvah. Max was very active in USY. He was elected as the President of his synagogue chapter, and eventually became a member of the Regional Board as Executive Vice President in charge of "Tikun Olam" — meaning, in the Conservative Movement terms, "social action" — a very important portfolio. The region included Southern California, Hawaii, New Mexico, Nevada and Arizona. Max was going places. As a member of the Executive Board of USY he was required to observe Shabbat and *kashrut*. Max took his obligations seriously. Of course, the Conservative Movement doesn't require strict adherence to the laws of Shabbat and *kashrut* as they appear in the *Shulchan Aruch*, but it was still a major change in Max's life, and meant real "mesirat nefesh" (dedication, often at a great personal sacrifice). He didn't go out with friends on Friday nights, didn't use his cell phone on Shabbat, went to the synagogue for services, ate his meals at home and spent the Shabbat day at home with his family. Perhaps, as the *Sefer HaChinuch* says, this had an indelible effect on his *neshamah* (soul).

After graduating high school, his mentors in the movement pushed him to go to Nativ, the Conservative "yeshiva" at their headquarters on Agron Street and King George Street in Jerusalem, to groom him for a leadership role in the movement. Max was fully invested. The courses included revising the Chumash by deleting all the offensive and non-politically correct passages. This was encouraged by the teacher who empathized with all those characters in the Chumash who seemed to be attacked and despised by the Book. Poor Esav, Korach, Bilaam, the idol worshipers, and so on. The students would erase their seeming iniquities from the Book, and replace them with kindness and love.

Max had some "chardal" cousins in Yad Binyamin near Rechovot, and spent Shabbat with them. They questioned the validity of his experience at the "yeshiva" on Agron. Other Orthodox people that he met did the same. He was rattled, but continued on his path. Another

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PARTY HARDY

Each of the three meals that we eat on Shabbat (Tractate Shabbat 117b) is called a *seudah*. On Purim we also have a festive meal, but that meal is called a *mishteh*. What is the difference between the word *seudah* and the word *mishteh* if both mean “meal”? Moreover, there is a third word which also means “meal” — *mesibah*. In what way does the word *mesibah* differ from the other two words? In order to illustrate the differences between these three words and their connotations we will focus on the lexical roots of each word and draw from them deeper insights into their meanings.

What is the root of the word *seudah*? The truth is that the word *seudah* never appears in the Bible, but Radak in *Sefer HaShorashim* explains the etymology of *seudah* by noting that the Rabbis modified the Biblical word *saad* to become *seudah*. What does *saad* mean? The word *saad* means “support” or “sustenance”, both in a rhetorical way (proof that *supports* an argument) and in a physical way (food that *sustains* a person’s body). In a handful of places the Bible uses the verb *saad* in conjunction with bread (see Psalms 104:15, Judges 19:5, and Genesis 18:5). The name Saadia, most famously borne by Rabbeinu Saadia Gaon (882-942), means “support (from) G-d”. Thus, the word *seudah* refers to the benefits of a festive feast for sustaining one’s physical body.

The word *mishteh* or derivatives thereof appear close to fifty times in the entire Bible. Its root is the verb *shoteh*, “drink”. The type of meal, or party, denoted by the word *mishteh*, focuses on drinking. In differentiating between the words *seudah* and *mishteh*, Rabbi Tzaddok HaKohen of Lublin (1823-1900) writes that while they both refer to festive meals, the former focusing on eating and the latter focusing on drinking. Thus, *seudah* is generally associated with bread — the focus of the Shabbat meal — because one *eats* bread (which fills one’s stomach and physically supports him). On the other hand, the word *mishteh* denotes a meal whose focus is on wine — like the festive Purim meal which commemorates/mimics the banquets of wine in the Book of Esther — because one *drinks* wine. (See, however, Rashi to Song of Songs 1:2, to Ecclesiastes 2:3, and to Esther 5:4, who writes that the defining ele-

ment of an enjoyable, joyous meal (*seudah*) is the wine.)

The word *mesibah* arguably appears once in the Bible (see Rashbam to Song of Songs 1:12). Rashi (to Amos 2:8) writes that the word *mesibah* refers to the fact that the participants in the meal would customarily recline (a practice known as *haseibah*). Case in point: At the Passover Seder we customarily ask four questions about why “this” night is different from all other nights. The last of those questions asks why “all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining (*mesubin*), but tonight we eat only while reclining”. Thus, the root of the word *mesibah* is related to the Hebrew word for reclining, and refers to the type of meal where people would sit slouched about, as opposed to sitting erect. It has since been borrowed to refer in general to any type of “party”.

One contemporary linguist argues that the word *mesibah* is related to the word *sovev/sevivah* (“around”), and refers to the fact that everyone “gathers around” for a party. However, this claim remains unsubstantiated.

In short, *seudah*, *mishteh*, and *mesibah* are all words for “meal”, but are not quite synonymous. *Seudah* focuses on the bread eaten at the meal, while *mishteh* refers to a meal which focuses on drinking wine. The word *mesibah* focuses neither on the food nor the drink, but on the posture of the participants, because *mesibah* refers to a meal or party in which the party-goers are seated in couches or lazy-chairs, allowing them to lounge about.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchiv (1740-1810) in *Kedushat Levi (Parshat Vayera)* writes that the word *mishteh* denotes a “happy meal”. Based on that he explains that the party to which Esther invited Haman and Achashverosh is called a *mishteh* in the Bible because that party brought happiness to the Jews. Through that party Esther persuaded Achashverosh to execute Haman and rescind the horrible decree looming over the Jews. The resulting victory for the Jewish People brought happiness for generations to come and is celebrated yearly on Purim.

Author’s note:

Le’Zechut Refuah Shleimah for Bracha bat Chaya Rachel

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Aries in the astronomical sense, they considered it superior. Either they assumed that this was the symbol that Moshe had relied upon, or that Aharon would choose it as the most appropriate symbol.

It is likely that they had been pressuring Aharon for a number of days as they had become increasingly concerned over Moshe's failure to return. At this point Aharon employed every delaying tactic possible, knowing that Moshe's return was imminent. He first asked for the women's gold jewelry, knowing that they would not easily relinquish them. However, the men, in their eagerness, took their jewelry from them immediately. Aharon then threw the gold into the fire and after it melted, he carefully formed it into a small calf. He did not pour the gold into a calf-shaped mold. Rather, he took a long time to craft the object, with two intentions in mind. Firstly, it would be another delaying tactic. And secondly, he wanted to make a perfect amulet. This way, when it would be shown to be powerless, they could not claim that it was hastily and imperfectly manufactured.

However, there were those from the mixed multitude who didn't wait to see if it had any particular spiritual power. They immediately bowed down to it in an idolatrous fashion, seeing it as a replication of the item that Moshe had used to bring down G-d's influence from above. Because this group was from the Egyptian multitude, they referred to the amulet as "your g-d", meaning the intermediary which Moshe relied upon to bring 'you', the children of Israel out of Egypt. The word "g-d" is expressed in plural form, to indicate that they were not denying that G-d was One, but rather that He employed numerous spiritual forces.

This explains why Aharon did not have to give up his life rather than create an idol, since the amulet was not an actual idol. Aharon then volunteered to build an altar for sacrifices and a celebration to take place the next day. He was careful to point out that this would be a festival in honor of G-d, not the amulet. Aharon rejected their offers of assistance and built the altar himself, which of course took longer. He claimed that it would be disrespectful to the altar if anyone other than he, the High Priest, participated in the construction. This, of course, was another delaying tactic. He also assumed that G-d would inform Moshe of what was going on and that Moshe would then immediately return. However, when the people saw the

next morning that Aharon did not immediately offer the sacrifices they took matters into their own hands. They offered sacrifices themselves and proceeded to engage in idolatrous behavior. Clearly, Aharon did not participate in any actual idol worship and did everything possible to prevent the people from obtaining or worshipping the amulet.

However, after Moshe descends and destroys the golden calf, he criticizes Aharon and asks him, "What did the people do to you that you brought a grievous sin upon them?" What Moshe meant was what did they do to you that forced you to fashion the amulet in the first place? Moshe recognized that Aharon was not responsible for manufacturing an actual idol; it was the people who turned it into an object of worship. Aharon's response was that the people always were in doubt whether G-d was truly with them, yet they didn't ask for an actual idol. They only asked for a symbol of leadership to bring down the Divine influences which Moshe has possessed. He told Moshe that he did everything he could to delay since he was certain that Moshe's return was imminent. He tells Moshe, "I asked the people to donate the gold jewelry according to each individual's ability and means. I hoped that arguments would ensue as to who should give more and who should give less and this would cause a further delay. However, they acted immediately and did not even look for other materials that would normally be needed to fashion such an object. I had no idea that it would end up as an object of idolatry."

In this Torah portion Aharon receives no punishment. However, in Devarim (Chapter 20) Moshe tells the people, in recalling this incident, that G-d became very angry with Aharon to the point of almost destroying him if not for Moshe's entreaties on his behalf. When all is said and done, the tragedy did come about, at least indirectly, through his actions. The incident of the golden calf, in combination with the behavior of Moshe and Aharon in regard to the incident of the striking of the rock later on, resulted in Aharon being denied entry into the Land of Israel.

TO DRINK OR NOT TO DRINK?

Can you feel Purim just around the corner? Who isn't eagerly anticipating this annual Yom Tov extravaganza, featuring joyous dancing, *Mishloach Manos*, colorful costumes, and of course the Megillah reading? However, for many, it is the unique mitzvah to get drunk that they are eagerly awaiting. Since Purim is described in the Megillah as "a day of *Mishteh*" (referring to a wine feast), and the Purim turn-about miracle occurred at such wine feasts, there is a rare dispensation from the norm, and an apparent obligation to drink wine. Hopefully, the wine will enable one to experience a sublime, spiritual Purim. Yet, uninhibited drinking may also unfortunately result in catastrophic consequences. If so, what exactly is the mitzvah of drinking on Purim?

The *Gemara* (Megillah 7b) famously rules that *'MeiChayav inish livesumei b'Puraya ad d'lo yada bein arur Haman l'baruch Mordechai'* — a person is obligated to drink and get intoxicated on Purim until he cannot tell the difference between 'Cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai'. The simple meaning is seemingly teaching us that we must get exceedingly drunk on Purim.

Yet, as we will soon see, this assertion is anything but simple.

The very next line in the *Gemara* tells a fascinating story of Rabba and Rabbi Zeira who got excessively drunk together on Purim. In his drunken stupor, Rabba proceeded to kill ('slaughter') Rabbi Zeira. When he sobered up and realized what he had done, he *davened* that Rabbi Zeira be brought back to life. His prayers were answered and Rabbi Zeira rejoined the world of the living. Yet, the next year, Rabbi Zeira refused to join Rabba for his Purim *seudah*, duly noting that a miracle is not a common occurrence and one may not rely on such miracles.

Although there are different interpretations of this story, with several commentaries explaining that it is not to be understood literally, positing that Rabba *did not* actually kill Rabbi Zeira. Nevertheless, many commentaries are bothered by the *Gemara's* choice of words. If the ruling is that one must get drunk on Purim, then why is this story, showcasing the potential drastic and tragic consequences of such drinking, featured immediately following? What message is the *Gemara* trying to impart to us? Additionally, what exactly does it mean that one must drink until "*ad d'lo yada bein arur Haman l'baruch Mordechai*"? What does this enigmatic turn of phrase actually mean?

As with many other issues in *halacha*, the answers to these questions are not as simple as they seem. Several authorities, including the *Rif* and *Tur*, when codifying this mitzvah, do indeed use the basic understanding of the *Gemara's* ruling, that one *is required* to get so drunk on Purim that he cannot

tell the difference between 'Cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai', implying quite drunk.

Yet, Rabbeinu Efraim, cited as *halacha* by the *Ran* and *Baal HaMa'or*, rules the exact opposite! He maintains that since the *Gemara* tells the story of Rabba and Rabbi Zeira *after* the ruling of getting drunk, it is not meant exclusively as a cautionary tale detailing the evils of excessive alcohol imbibing; rather, it is coming to negate the ruling! According to this understanding, it is *forbidden* to get drunk on Purim!

A different explanation of the *Gemara* is that drinking "*ad d'lo yada bein arur Haman l'baruch Mordechai*" does not actually mean getting stone-cold drunk. In fact, most commentaries offer many different rationales as to the *Gemara's* intent with this phrase.

Some say it means drinking until one can no longer perform the mental acrobatics necessary to be able to add up the *Gematrias* of "*arur Haman*" and "*baruch Mordechai*" (Hint: they both equal 502). Accordingly, this is a much lesser degree of drunkenness. Others explain it means drinking until one can no longer decide which was a greater miracle: the downfall of Haman or Mordechai's meteoric rise in prominence. Another interpretation is to drink enough to no longer be able to recite a lengthy Purim-themed *Alef-Beit* acrostic poem in the proper order. An additional understanding is that one must get inebriated just enough to no longer be able to properly thank G-d for the many miracles of our salvation Purim time. It is clear that many authorities throughout the generations felt uncomfortable with the literal interpretation of the *Gemara's* teaching to get drunk on Purim, and each one interprets the instruction as such that it does not imply one's getting fully drunk.

Rav Manoach Hendel of Prague, a contemporary of the Maharshal (mid 1500s), cites many of these explanations to elucidate the *Gemara's* intent. Interestingly, what they all have in common is that not a single one of them understands the *Gemara* to mean actually getting drunk. Utilizing any of these aforementioned opinions would mean that one should definitely not 'get plastered'. Rather, one should only drink a bit, somewhat more than he usually would, until he fulfills one of these aforementioned understandings of the dictum of "*ad d'lo yada*".

In fact, although the *Shulchan Aruch* seems to imply that he agrees with the *Tur's* interpretation, that one must get drunk, it must be noted that in his *Beit Yosef* commentary he completely rejects this approach, exclusively citing Rabbeinu Efraim and the *Orchos Chaim*, who refer to getting drunk on Purim as '*ein lecha aveirah gedolah mi'zu*' (the worst of transgressions), and concludes that one should merely drink a tad more than he is accustomed to. This apparently means that when he codified the *halacha* in the *Shulchan Aruch* as drinking

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Shabbat with a *frum* family in Mitzpeh Rimon exposed him to American yeshiva students from Keren B'Yavne — an Orthodox yeshiva. One of them, himself a *ba'al teshuva* (who is now learning in the Mir Kollel), became very friendly with Max, and the two had long discussions about *hashkafa* (outlook on life according to the Torah) and other Torah subjects. Their friendship continues until today. These conversations had a strong influence on Max, who now began to question the many “ideals” he had been learning.

Max returned to LA to start college at Cal State - Northridge. He majored in Linguistics and Islamic studies. He was observing more and more *mitzvot*, and started attending the daily *minyan* at the Chabad *shul* on campus. He also was teaching in a Conservative synagogue's afternoon school.

On May 28, 2016 a four-year old boy slipped between the bars of a gorilla enclosure and into their habitat at the Cincinnati Zoo. He seemed to be in imminent danger of los-

ing his life from Harambe, a 17 year-old, 450 pound western lowland gorilla. The guards at the zoo decided to shoot Harambe. He died.

The following day, after *davening* Mincha with his class at the afternoon school where Max taught, the school's director asked if anyone wanted to say *kaddish*. One girl raised her hand. She wanted to know if it would be okay for her to say *kaddish* for the gorilla. The director, without hesitation, enthusiastically agreed. That was the last straw for Max. He left Conservative Judaism for good.

This past summer, after an exciting Shabbaton with the Mentors in Flatbush last winter and after reading some inspiring articles by Rabbi Yitzchok Breitowitz of the Ohr Somayach staff, upon the advice of Rabbi Nachi Klein of the Young Israel of Northwood Max came to Jerusalem on a JLE Connect program. He has decided to postpone college for at least another year. Max has been accepted to Yeshiva University, and plans to start there in 2018.

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until “*ad d'lo yada*”, this should be understood in the light of his writing in the *Beit Yosef*, and not ‘getting wasted’, as many mistakenly believe.

The *Rambam* offers an alternate approach. He maintains that one must drink until he falls asleep. Meaning, if one drinks and then falls asleep he has fulfilled his mitzvah of drinking on Purim “*ad d'lo yada*” without actually getting drunk. When asleep, one certainly cannot distinguish between “*arur Haman*” and “*baruch Mordechai*”! This also fits well with his famous ruling in *Hilchot De'ot* about one who gets drunk being a “sinner and a disgrace”.

The *Rema*, when codifying the proper amount to drink on Purim, combines both of the latter approaches: drinking somewhat more than one is accustomed to regularly, and then going to sleep.

So...What's the Halacha?

Many contemporary *Gedolim* personally followed the *Rema's* ruling, including the *Chafetz Chaim*, the *Steipler Gaon*, and *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach*.

It should be noted that several prominent authorities who do rule that one should actually get drunk, including the *Ya'avetz*, *Sha'arei Teshuva*, *Chayei Adam*, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* and *Kaf Hachaim*, add an important caveat. If one might come to be lax in the performance of even one other mitzvah, such as *netillat yadayim*, *bentching* or *davening* while drunk, they all maintain that it is preferable *not to drink at all*, to ensure that all of one's actions remain *l'sheim Shamayim*.

The *Pri Chadash* cites several opinions regarding drinking on Purim, and concludes that already in his time several hundred years ago (late 1600s), with society's decline over the generations, it is proper to follow the opinion of *Rabbeinu Efraim*, and only drink a small amount more than usual. In this way one will be certain not to, G-d forbid, unwittingly transgress any prohibitions, and this way will result in receiving blessings from Above. This is not a “lone opinion, as the *Pri Megadim*, *Aruch Hashulchan* and the *Mishna Berura* all rule like the *Pri Chadash* as the way to fulfill the mitzvah.

If this was the case several centuries ago, how much more relevant is the *Pri Chadash's* prophetic words nowadays, with teen alcoholism on the rise and not a year going by without hearing horror stories about the tragic results of excessive drinking on Purim? In fact, *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zatzal* decried the frivolous and inappropriate behavior that unfortunately has replaced “*Simcha shel mitzvah*” and has become the norm among many, due to extreme intoxication. And, more recently, *Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky* has publicly stated that “it is a transgression to get drunk on Purim”.

In the final analysis, whichever opinion one follows, it seems that the *Hatzolah* medical services organization has it right with their annual Purim message: ‘Don't get carried away this Purim!’

For any questions, comments or for the full sources, please contact the author: yspitz@ohr.edu

PARSHA Q&A ?

Ki Tisa

1. How many “geira” are in a shekel?
2. What was the minimum age of military service in the Jewish army?
3. What were the three different types of *terumah* donated?
4. The Jews were counted after Yom Kippur and again after Pesach. Both times they numbered the same amount. How can this be? Didn't some 19-year olds turn 20 during that six month period?
5. How many ingredients comprise the incense of the *Mishkan*?
6. According to Rashi, why are sailors called “*malachim*?”
7. What is the difference between *chochma* (wisdom), *bina* (understanding), and *da'at* (knowledge)?
8. Shabbat is a “sign.” What does it signify?
9. When did the Jewish People begin to give contributions for the building of the *Mishkan*?
10. How many books are there in Tanach?
11. From where did the men take the earrings that they donated to make the calf?
12. Why did Aharon build the altar for the golden calf by himself?
13. Why did Moshe break the Tablets?
14. How can two brothers belong to two different tribes?
15. Why did Moshe ask that his name be erased from the Torah?
16. How has the sin of the golden calf affected the Jewish People throughout history?
17. In verse 33:2, G-d says that the inhabitants of *Eretz Canaan* would be driven out of the Land. In that verse, only six of the seven Canaanite nations are mentioned. What happened to the seventh?
18. How did G-d show that He forgave the Jewish People?
19. How did Moshe become wealthy?
20. How do the light rays shining from Moshe's face show us the powerful effect of sin?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Ki Tisa's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 30:13 - Twenty.
2. 30:14 - Twenty.
3. 30:15 - For the *adanim* (sockets), for the purchase of communal sacrifices, and for the building of the *Mishkan*.
4. 30:16 - Their ages were calculated based on Rosh Hashana, not based on their individual birthdays.
5. 30:34 - Eleven ingredients were used making the incense.
6. 30:35 - Because they stir (*malach*) the water with their oars.
7. 31:3 - *Chochma* is knowledge acquired from others. *Bina* is the deduction of new knowledge from what one has already learned. *Da'at* is holy inspiration.
8. 31:13 - It is a sign between G-d and the Jewish People that He has chosen them and a sign to the nations of the world that He has sanctified the Jewish People.
9. 31:18 - The 11th of Tishrei.
10. 31:18 - 24.
11. 32:2,3 - From their ears.
12. 32:5 - He hoped that by building it by himself it would take longer and in the interim Moshe would return.
13. 32:19 - Moshe reasoned: If the Torah forbids those who have estranged themselves from the Torah to partake in even a single commandment (Pesach sacrifice), surely the entire Torah cannot be given to a whole nation which has estranged itself from G-d!
14. 32:27 - Half-brothers, sharing the same mother.
15. 32:32 - So people shouldn't say “Moshe was unworthy to plead for mercy on behalf of the Jewish people.”
16. 32:34 - Whenever G-d punishes the Jewish People, part of that punishment comes as payment for the sin of the golden calf.
17. 33:2 - The seventh nation, the Girgashites, voluntarily emigrated.
18. 33:14 - He agreed to let His *Shechina* dwell among them.
19. 34:1 - Moshe carved the Tablets out of precious stone. G-d commanded Moshe to keep the leftover fragments.
20. 34:35 - Before the sin of the golden calf, the people would not have been afraid to look at the light rays, but after the sin they were afraid.

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Tetzave

G-d tells Moshe to command the Jewish People to supply pure olive oil for the *Menorah* in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). He also tells Moshe to organize the making of the *bigdei kehuna* (priestly garments): a breastplate, an *ephod*, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, a sash, a forehead-plate and linen trousers. Upon their completion, Moshe is to perform a ceremony for seven days to consecrate Aharon and his sons. This includes offering sacrifices, dressing Aharon and his sons in their respective garments, and anointing Aharon with oil. G-d commands that every morning and afternoon a sheep be offered on the altar in the *Mishkan*. This offering should be accompanied by a meal-offering and libations of wine and oil. G-d commands that an altar for incense be built from acacia wood and covered with gold. Aharon and his descendants should burn incense on this altar every day.

Ki Tisa

Moshe conducts a census by counting each silver half-shekel donated by all men age twenty and over. Moshe is commanded to make a copper laver for the Mishkan. The women donate the necessary metal. The formula of the anointing oil is specified, and G-d instructs Moshe to use this oil only for dedicating the Mishkan, its vessels, Aharon and his sons. G-d selects Betzalel and Oholiav

as master craftsmen for the Mishkan and its vessels. The Jewish People are commanded to keep the Sabbath as an eternal sign that G-d made the world. Moshe receives the two Tablets of Testimony on which are written the Ten Commandments. The mixed multitude who left Egypt with the Jewish People panic when Moshe's descent seems delayed, and force Aharon to make a golden calf for them to worship. Aharon stalls, trying to delay them. G-d tells Moshe to return to the people immediately, threatening to destroy everyone and build a new nation from Moshe. When Moshe sees the camp of idol-worship he smashes the tablets and destroys the golden calf. The sons of Levi volunteer to punish the transgressors, executing 3,000 men. Moshe ascends the mountain to pray for forgiveness for the people, and G-d accepts his prayer. Moshe sets up the Mishkan and G-d's cloud of glory returns. Moshe asks G-d to show him the rules by which he conducts the world, but is granted only a small portion of this request. G-d tells Moshe to hew new tablets and reveals to him the text of the prayer that will invoke Divine mercy. Idol worship, intermarriage and the combination of milk and meat are prohibited. The laws of Pesach, the first-born, the first-fruits, Shabbat, Shavuot and Succot are taught. When Moshe descends with the second set of tablets, his face is luminous as a result of contact with the Divine.

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

PURIM — REMEMBERING THE LAND

Purim is not celebrated on the same day everywhere. In walled cities, we are told in Megillat Esther, the celebration is on the 15th of Adar, while in cities without walls it is on the 14th.

The reason for this is that in the unwalled cities, the Jews overcame their enemies on the 13th of Adar and celebrated on the 14th, while in the walled capital of Shushan the battle still raged on the 14th, and the Jews there could not celebrate their victory until the 15th. Therefore, all walled cities celebrate Purim on the 15th because of their similarity to Shushan.

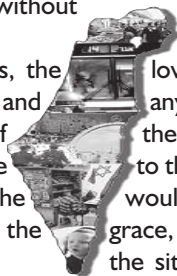
The designation "walled city" does not depend on a city's present situation, but rather on whether it had a wall at the time Joshua led the Jewish nation in the conquest of *Eretz Yisrael*. But why is Joshua's time the criterion for the designation "walled city?" Wouldn't it have been more logical to make this determination based on the time of the Purim miracle?

The answer is found in the Jerusalem Talmud, where

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi declares that this was done in order to accord honor to *Eretz Yisrael* which was desolate at the time of the Purim miracle.

Rabbi Nissan ben Reuven (Ran) explains this as follows: At the time of the Purim miracle there were hardly any cities in *Eretz Yisrael* with their walls still intact. Had the determination of "walled city" been made according to the situation at that time, almost all cities in *Eretz Yisrael* would have the status of unwalled cities. To avoid this disgrace, it was decided to base the status of "walled city" on the situation of the city at the time of Joshua. This made many more cities in *Eretz Yisrael* eligible for this distinction.

Rabbi Yosef Karo (*Beit Yosef*) has a different approach. Our Sages wanted some memory of *Eretz Yisrael* in the celebration of this miracle which took place in a foreign land. In the spirit of "*zecher l'Mikdash*" — those laws and customs we follow to recall the Beit Hamikdash — the Sages linked the determination of "walled city" to *Eretz Yisrael* so that the Jews living abroad would not forget their Holy Land.



ETERNAL LESSON OF PURIM

In the future, all the holidays will be nullified, and the days of Purim will never be nullified... (Yalkut Shimoni, Mishlei, 944).

Rabbi Yochanan said: the [Books of] *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim* will be nullified in the future and the Five Books of the Torah will not become nullified in the future... Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says: *Megillat Esther* and *halachot* will also not become nullified in the future. (Yerushalmi, *Megillah* 1:5)

The above statements appear somewhat surprising. First of all, based on the principle that the Torah is eternal, how is it possible for any holiday to become nullified? Furthermore, in light of the fact that Purim is a rabbinic holiday in origin, in what way is it superior to the other holidays, including those that are of Torah origin, that it has the merit to outlast them? Finally, why will *Megillat Esther*, which was written through *ruach hakodesh*, outlast the Books of *Nevi'im*, which were written through prophecy, a higher form of revelation (see Alshich on *Esther* 9:28)? To answer the above questions we first need to delve into the essence of the holiday of Purim.

Unlike *yetziat Mitzrayim*, where G-d performed numerous open miracles, the final salvation of the Jewish People in the Purim story seemed almost completely natural. Achashverosh's feast, Vashti's execution, Esther's election as queen, Haman's rise to power, Mordechai's role in saving the king's life, and the victory over Amalek did not disobey the laws of nature. In fact, Rav Simcha Zissel *zatzal* points out that because the occurrences described in the *megillah* happened over a span of nine long years, the people who experienced the events could have easily labeled each event as a separate and independent occurrence. In other words, when examining the events of the Purim story superficially one could very well attribute it to chance. Through carefully analyzing the *megillah*, however, a person is given a glimpse behind how every single event was a piece of a puzzle put in place, ultimately depicting the guiding Hand of Divine Providence (*Michtav M'Eliyahu* I p.76). Revealing this hidden Hand of G-d is exactly what the *megillah* is meant to do. This is why the *megillah* never explicitly mentions G-d's Name — to teach us to search for Him when He is not revealed, and to help us realize that G-d is not only the Force behind open miracles, but behind nature as well (see the Maharal's "Ohr Chadash" on *Esther* 6:11).

All the holidays basically revolve around the miracles and revelations of *yetziat Mitzrayim* (see Tur, *Orach Chaim* 271:10). *Pesach* commemorates the miracles that took place while leaving *Mitzrayim*, *Succot* commemorates the miraculous Clouds of Glory that sheltered the Jewish people after their departure from *Mitzrayim*, and *Shavuot* commemorates the grand finale of *yetziat Mitzrayim* — G-d's remarkable revelation at Mount Sinai and *kabbalat haTorah*. Even *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, holidays that may conceivably bear no resemblance to *yetziat*

Mitzrayim, are described as in memory of the coming out of Egypt in *Kiddush* and the *tefillah* (see *Shibulei Haleket, din seder tefillat Rosh Hashana*, 286 for how this is so). Regarding the miracles of *yetziat Mitzrayim*, the Talmud states:

Ben Zoma said to the Chachamim: Will we mention *yetziat Mitzrayim* in the days of *Mashiach*? Doesn't it say "Behold days are coming, the word of G-d, and they will no longer say 'Alive is G-d Who took the Jewish People out of *Mitzrayim*'; rather they will say 'Alive is G-d Who raised up and brought the seed of the house of Israel from the land of *Tzafonah*, and from all the lands to which they were dispersed?' They (the Chachamim) said to him (Ben Zoma): It does not mean that the mention of *yetziat Mitzrayim* will be uprooted from its place; rather, the salvation from servitude to the nations will be primary and *yetziat Mitzrayim* will be secondary (*Berachot* 12b).

The above Gemara helps us attain an understanding behind the *midrash* that says all the holidays, except for Purim, will be nullified in the future. Obviously, since the Torah is eternal, it doesn't mean we will no longer keep the *mitzvot* associated with those holidays. Instead, it means that even though the other holidays will be celebrated, they wouldn't be as significant in light of the new revelations. This idea is beautifully hinted at in *Chazal's* words. The Hebrew word *Chazal* used, *batel*, doesn't mean that something is eradicated; rather, it means that it is insignificant in comparison to something else (*Manos Halevi* on *Esther* 9:28). The other holidays that essentially commemorate the open miracles of *yetziat Mitzrayim* will pale in comparison to the open miracles that will take place with the *Mashiach's* arrival. Purim, however, whose main lesson is uncovering G-d in concealed situations, will not become nullified even in light of the open miracles that will accompany the coming of the *Mashiach* (*Pachad Yitchak, Purim*, 34).

We can now also understand why, as opposed to the other Books of *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim*, *Megillat Esther* will never be nullified. Without a doubt, every book of *Tanach* has invaluable wealth of information that will always be useful. However, when the *Mashiach* comes the Jewish People will rise in their level of knowledge, and they will be able to find all of the lessons from the *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim* in the Five Books of the Torah itself (see Alshich on *Esther* 9:28). As the Gemara says: There is nothing in the writings [*Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim*], that isn't hinted at in the Torah (*Ta'anit* 9a). Even though the lessons of *Megillat Esther* are also hinted at in the Torah, nevertheless the unique lesson of finding G-d even in darkness is better learned through the medium of the *megillah*, which doesn't openly mention G-d and His miracles, instead of the Five Books of the Torah that speak of G-d throughout. This is why it will specifically be the *megillah* that will remain significant even with the arrival of the *Mashiach*.