

The Special Significance of the Happiness of Purim Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

Haman was the ultimate *notel* (taker). After Mordechai found out about Haman's decree, he apprised Esther of what was going on, "*V'et parshat hakesef*"- and that Haman had offered Achashveirosh money. Why did Esther have to know this? The statement defines Haman. He was a person who was solely focused on materialism. When he wanted something from Achashveirosh, he took the direction of money. Mordechai spelled out for Esther who Amalek was. Hashem wasn't in the picture. Life was just about physicality. Esther told Mordechai that if she would go to the king she might be executed. Mordechai answered, perhaps that is why you were put in your position- to save *Klal Yisrael*. A Jew lives for a higher purpose.

Vashti forced the Jewish girls to work without clothing on *Shabbat*. She wanted to destroy the ideals of modesty and *Shabbat* and anything that signified- "I'm living for something greater." We see that there is a difference in attitude between a *noten* and a *notel*. A *notel* thinks he's the center of the universe and whatever he can, he takes. The *noten* lives with the *Torah* attitude that giving brings fulfillment as it introduces something infinite into one's life.

The sages say if someone has money and wants it to stay with him, let him plant a tree called Eder. Chazal connect this to Adar which is related to *adir*. In *Tehilim* it says, "*Adir b'marom Hashem*- Hashem who is up there, is great and powerful." The Meiri explains that if a person remembers that Hashem is the master and everything comes from Him, he will conduct his business with total honesty, keeping all the laws of the *Torah*. This is a key to preserving wealth.

Chodesh Adar teaches us to give. If our attitude towards materialism is that it's a means to do Hashem's will, then we will come to a point of, "*V'harikoti lachem bracha ad bli dai*"- I will put blessing upon you with no limitation." Hashem says He will give to such an extent that we will say- enough.

The Chiddushei Harim explains, *Mishenach-nos Adar marbim b'simcha*, that when the concept of *Adar* enters a person's mind -the idea that doing Hashem's will is the only worthwhile pursuit, then he can be genuinely happy. We begin celebrating at the beginning of the month because the essence of this month is *nedivut* (giving). We erase the remembrance of Amalek who signifies taking because our mission is giving. *Simchat Purim* is the antithesis of what Haman stood for. It's knowing that life is something greater than physicality. We have a *mitzva* on Purim to give even to those who have because by sharing we shift from 'me-centered' to 'other-centered' and generate love and unity.

The main celebration on Purim is *kimu v'kiblu*, *Klal Yisrael* accepted upon themselves the Oral Torah. At *Har Sinai* there was an unbelievable level of clarity that was so strong that it took away their free choice. They couldn't say no to the *Torah*. But the story of *Megilat Esther* was a time when Hashem's hand was hidden. It took nine years for the story to unfold. If the Jews were able to re-accept the Torah with a full commitment at such a time it showed greatness on their part.

How did it happen? Mordechai and Esther tackled the weakness of *Klal Yisrael* and the influence of Amalek. Esther told Mordechai, "Gather together all the Jews..." Creating unity

is the antidote to Amalek. Haman tried to convince Achashveirosh that he could overcome the Jews by saying, "They are spread out and divided." Esther understood the danger and told Mordechai to gather them together. The Jews lived up to the challenge. They re-united as it says, "*Kimu v'kiblu*," in the singular form. A condition to being able to accept the Torah is going beyond one's ego to do Hashem's will. Esther told them, "*V'tzamu alei* -fast for me for three days." I'm in danger, so do it for my sake. Although the Jews were also in danger, she was training them to focus on *nedivut*-on giving to others. This is the antidote to overcoming Amalek and a prerequisite to receiving the *Torah*.

At *Har Sinai*, Moshe told the Jews, "*Onochi omed ben Hashem u'beinechem*"-I will serve as a buffer between you and Hashem." He would give over the *Torah*. The Kotzker Rebbe explains it homiletically, *onochi*-your egotism stands between you and Hashem. If we subjugate our ego and put Hashem in the center, we will discover true happiness. The *megillah* tells us how Haman had everything but never had peace of mind because his happiness was dependent on the recognition of others. When we give to the poor, we are in a way giving to ourselves by quieting our distressed subconscious. On Purim we give to everyone, even those who have, because it's not about me but about uniting *Klal Yisrael*.

Chazal instituted a time to be *b'simcha* to teach us that there's a way to achieve it. We begin two weeks before because it's a process. Shifting and getting into the right frame of mind is a real *hachana* to Purim. May it be a day of true rejoicing.

Learning To Make Our Behavior Thoughtful and not Contemptuous

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller Gottlieb

Everyone of us has encountered skepticism in our life. It can take all sorts of forms. We've all felt the pain of feeling self-consciousness and defensive. Mishlei tells us, "Wisdoms shout in the street..." Wisdom speaks for itself and describes to us the reasons why people reject what's right. We can then say, this person isn't an evil person or a threat He's suffering because he's put himself in a box.

"How long will you, naive ones (*peti*) love naivete, and the scoffers desire scoffing, and the fools hate knowledge?" Rashi tells us that the *peti* is far from the truth. Truth by definition is the whole picture and he's lost the picture. He's a person who is easily convinced by other people who are nonbelievers and who make a point of being *meisitim*. A *meisit* is somebody whose ego is built by convincing others of their beliefs. Rashi explains the verse with a question. How long will you enjoy being convinced? Sometimes someone will say something to you and you may find yourself agreeing with them because they sound convincing and you don't have counterarguments. You want the good feeling of being reasonable and willing to see the other person's side. It builds up your ego. The Malbim says that for a person to be convinced

of things that aren't true, it means on some level they really aren't looking for truth. When someone confronts you with an argument that you can't answer, you have to ask- "What's your evidence?" If there really isn't any, the argument easily falls apart.

The Malbim depicts a *leitz* as a much more sophisticated person. He's a skeptic who refuses to hear the truth because not everything that's true could be presented with evidence. Hashem purposely created the world with free choice and so there's room to make bad choices. Mishlei continues, "They hated knowledge and did not choose to fear Hashem." Where does fear of Hashem come from? The Zohar tells a parable of a king who had a huge treasure house which he kept under lock and key. One day the king invited his favorite servant to the treasure house and showed him an exquisite display of precious items. How did the servant feel? He was overwhelmed by the wealth and power of the king and he felt beloved that he was chosen to see it. The Zohar concludes that love and fear are two sides of the same coin. The more you see Hashem's grandeur, the more you feel both awe and love for Him.

There are people who resist feeling this awe. They have the, "I'm here because I'm here syndrome" where they accept everything as normal without thinking too deeply. If you take the time to think about it, you can be overwhelmed by the intricacy of creation. If you're not the type to think about this, you could look at your own life. Hashem's Divine Providence and creativity is constantly influencing the paths of our lives in ways we can discern. The *leitz* refuses to accept the conclusion that there's something bigger than himself. He wants everything to make sense but only on his terms.

Shlomo Hamelech asks the *leitz*, how long will you desire this feeling of dominance? If he wanted, he could see the intricacies of nature or the miraculous events in his life. But, says the Malbim, the fact is he can't know everything with absolute evidence. The laws of wisdom, the ethical laws that come forth from accepting Hashem's will, are in direct opposition to what his heart desires. If we look back in history, at the Enlightenment, at the Shabtai Tzvi followers, it's this *leitzanut* that destroys us more than any other force. It's refusing to accept the Divine Will because it's in conflict with the *yetzer hara*.

Categories of Muktzah Part 5 #2

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Shimon Isaacson

The third category of *muktzah* is *muktzah machmat chisaron kis*. The Gemara in Shabbat quotes a Mishna- Rabbi Yossi teaches, every type of *keli* can be moved on Shabbat except for a giant saw and a peg of a plowshare. Rashi explains that this refers to a large saw that's used to cut beams of wood and to a peg that makes furrows in the field. If an owner is particular to use a precision instrument only for a specific purpose, it's very valuable, and it's set aside in a particular place, it's considered *muktzah machmat chisaron kis* and may not be moved for any reason. This includes a barber's razor and a knife that a scribe uses to make quills and lines on parchment.

The Shulchan Aruch quotes the Rosh that all these objects have one thing in common, they

are only used for a precise purpose which is a prohibited action on *Shabbat*. It has no other use because of its value and precision and therefore it technically takes on the status of *muktzah machmat gufo*. Since it doesn't have a purpose, it becomes absolutely *muktzah* without any leniencies.

How do you determine if a person is particular about using an object only for its purpose? A wealthy person might very well use it for something else and then buy another one if it gets ruined, while a poor person would be more careful. How can we know if it's *muktzah machmat chisaron kis*? The Shulchan Aruch rules that it depends on the owner. If the owner of the object is particular about it, it becomes *muktzah* for everyone. If the owner is not particular, then it won't be *muktzah*.

The *poskim* point that the item doesn't have to be expensive. However, if the owner would only use it for its specific prohibited purpose, it would be *muktzah machmat chisaron kis*. For example, although a page of stamps isn't worth much, you wouldn't use it for anything other than mailing envelopes. You wouldn't line your birdcage with it. Therefore, the Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchaso says stamps have a status of *muktzah machmat chisaron kis* and may not be moved on *Shabbat*. The Magen Avraham rules that writing paper is *muktzah machmat chisaron kis* and the Mishna Berura concurs. Back in those days a blank piece of paper was valuable and was set aside only for writing purposes. Today there are different types of paper. Bond paper or nice stationery which you would only use for writing would be *muktzah machmat chisaron kis*.