

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY
L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

PURIM

THE FLEETING GIFT

The Megillah by Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz



שבע ועשרים ומאה מדינה. — *One hundred and twenty-seven provinces (Esther 1:1)*

Rabbi Akiva was once giving a lecture when he noticed that his students were drowsing. In order to rouse them, he asked, “Why was it seen fit that Esther should rule over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces? Because Hashem said: “Let the daughter of Sarah who lived one hundred and twenty-seven years come and reign over one hundred twenty-seven provinces” (*Midrash*).

second meant a family; each minute, a farm; each day, a village. Had Sarah idled away her time, Esther’s kingdom would have been diminished.

Time is too precious to waste. Sarah’s time well-spent was rewarded during Esther’s reign.

Each of us, too, is presented with the fleeting

Why would these words alert the drowsing students more than the topic of the day?

Rabbi Akiva wanted to impress upon his students the importance of time and the duty to use every second to best advantage. It was because Sarah’s one hundred and twenty-seven years were perfect and completely sin-free that her granddaughter could hold sway over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. Each

TIME IS TOO PRECIOUS TO WASTE.

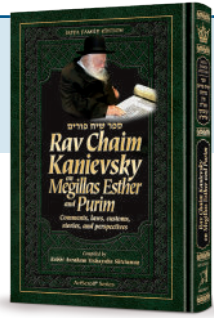
gift of time—and the mission of utilizing it fully and well. Who can say what the rewards will be for each minute well-spent, or the penalty for each minute wasted?

This admonition brought Rabbi Akiva’s students to attention (*Chiddushei Harim*). 📖

PURIM

DESERVING OF REWARD

Rav Chaim Kanievsky on Megillas Esther and Purim
by Rabbi Avraham Yeshayah Shteinman and Rabbi Dovid Hollander



The *Gemara* relates (*Gittin* 57b) that some of the grandchildren of Haman studied Torah in Bnei Brak. How are we to understand this? The descendants of our greatest enemy joined the Jewish people?

powerful blow. The blow hurt the prince but succeeded in dislodging the bone from his throat. The king’s enemy was

brought to judgment for striking the prince.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky related a parable given by the Dubno Maggid: A prince was choking on a bone. An enemy of the king passed by, and seeing the son of his enemy, he gave the prince a



Rav Chaim Kanievsky

It was ruled that since he struck the prince, he must be executed. However, since he had also (unwittingly) saved the prince’s life, his children would be granted titles of nobility.

The same happened with Haman. He indeed struck the Jews a mighty

continued on page 2

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Hashem will often allow a long passage of time before punishing a sinful act. Such delay is not due to His inability to act, *chalilah*, but to His limitless mercy, for the sinner is thus given ample time to reflect and repent.

Unfortunately, many people do not use this respite wisely and soon forget what they have perpetrated. Thus, their deeds go unatoned for.

Eventually, Heaven gives some sign as a reminder of

past misdeeds. Often, the common folk will not realize the connection between the original act and the later warning signal. Only a very wise person will make the link. And this is precisely what occurred during the *Purim* story.

The *Megillah* spans a history of nine years, from the third to the twelfth year of Achashveirosh's reign. A layman could never recognize that the Jews' refusal to obey Mordechai's plea not to attend Achashveirosh's feast would result in a dramatic, but seemingly unconnected, series of events over the next nine years.

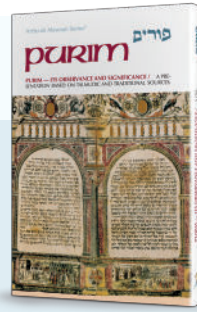
The common people 'knew'

that Haman's decree was caused by Mordechai's obstinate refusal to bow. They held him responsible for the mortal danger to the nation. Mordechai knew better. He knew that the decree was a punishment for the Jews' weakness in enjoying the forbidden feast. He knew that re-

fusil to bow was the first step in a chain of courage and repentance that, alone, could save his people.

When Mordechai and Esther wrote the *Megillah*, he began the story with the feast of Achashveirosh, because the participation of the Jews living in Shushan was the cause of the evil decree, which was annulled as a result of their sincere repentance — a full nine years later.

The *Megillah* teaches us that our leaders discern much more than we do. Ultimate salvation lies in submission to their authority (*The Alter of Kelm cited in Mich-tav M'Eliyahu, vol. I, pg. 76*). 📖



OUR LEADERS DISCERN MUCH MORE THAN WE DO.

DESERVING OF REWARD

continued from page 1

blow, and for that he was punished, as he deserved. However, Haman's decree inspired the Jews to repent. As the *Gemara* states (*Megillah 14a*), all the prophets, with their numerous warnings, could not get the Jews to repent completely, but when Haman received Achashveirosh's ring, the Jews repented and reaffirmed

their acceptance of the Torah. For this, Haman deserved some reward, and thus some of his descendants

THUS, SOME OF HIS DESCENDANTS MERITED TO JOIN THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND STUDY TORAH.

merited to join the Jewish people and study Torah.

Ray Chaim adds that Pharaoh

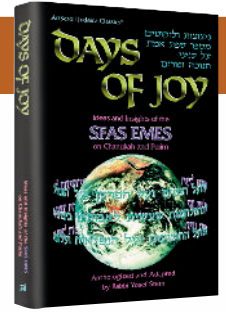
WHY IS HALLEL NOT RECITED ON PURIM?

Days of Joy – Ideas and Insights of the Sefas Emes adapted by Rabbi Yosef Stern

The *Gemara* (*Megillah 14a*) notes that *Hallel* is not recited on *Purim*. Yet, it also rules that reading the *Megillah* is tantamount to reciting *Hallel*.

This apparent contradiction can be resolved by recalling that *Hallel* is only recited on those occasions when we perceive that the inner gates of Heaven were open. The miracle of *Purim*

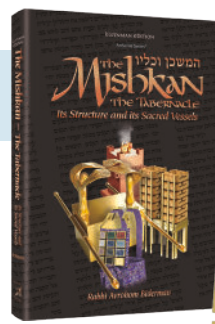
occurring within the context of natural events, when Hashem's name was sanctified in this world, seemingly does not meet these criteria. However, while reading the *Megillah*, we not only celebrate the impact of the *Purim* miracle on earth, but also sense its Heavenly impact as well. 📖



The Sefas Emes

WE SENSE ITS HEAVENLY IMPACT AS WELL.

was similarly rewarded, for the same reason. Although he mercilessly subjugated the Jews, our slavery made us worthy of receiving the Torah. Since in Heaven no good deed is left unpaid, Pharaoh was rewarded, as the *Midrash* states (*Otzar HaMidrashim p. 361*), by surviving the splitting of the *Yam Suf* and later becoming king of the city of Nineveh. 📖



THE חֹשֶׁן, BREASTPLATE

The front of the Breastplate (חֹשֶׁן) had twelve golden settings, aligned in four rows of three.

Each precious gemstone was placed in a setting that completely covered its sides, so that only the face of the stone showed. The colors of the gemstones are shown below, as are the engravings on each of the stones.



The stones of the Breastplate



The Breastplate connected to the Apron with the gold cables

The stones for the Breastplate and Apron (אַפֻּד) were the final items contributed toward the building of the Mishkan. Clouds carried precious stones to the Jews in the Wilderness, together with the manna (Yoma 75a, Rashi שירדו (ד"ה)). The Princes of the tribes (נְשִׂיאִים) contributed the stones needed for the priestly vestments (בְּגָדֵי כֹהֵן) (Rashi below, 35:27).

HOW THE צִיץ, HEADPLATE, WAS WORN

The Headplate (צִיץ) rested on the forehead of the Kohen Gadol, below the front of his Turban (מִצְנֶפֶת).

There were three slots in the Headplate, one on each side and one at the top center, in front.

Wide turquoise ribbons (פְּתִילִים) were looped through each of these slots. The ribbons along each side went around to the back of the Kohen Gadol's head. The front ribbon went over the two sides of his turban (מִצְנֶפֶת).

The ends of the ribbons would all be tied at the base of the Kohen Gadol's head.

The Headplate together with its ribbons looked like a helmet or cap that would fit over the head and turban of the Kohen Gadol (Chullin 138a, as explained by Rashi to our verse).

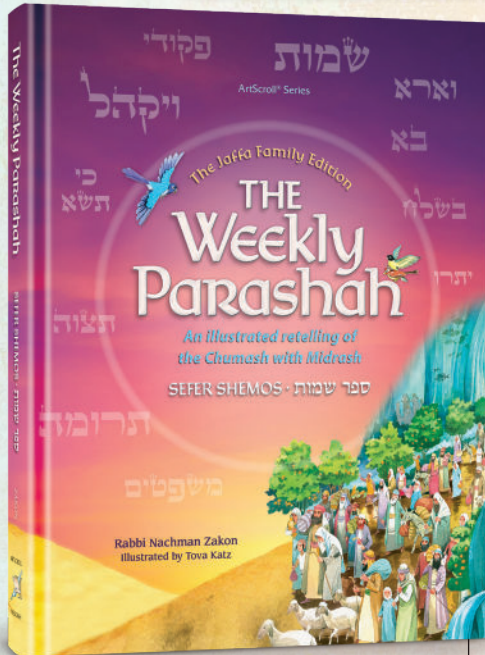
“The Kohen Gadol's hair was visible between the Headplate and the Turban, and that was where he would place his tefillin (Arachin 3b).”



The Headplate was worn below the Turban, and its top ribbon passed over the Turban.

Parashah for Children

פרשת תצוה



FASCINATING FACTS

The letters of the word Ketores (קֶטֶרֶת) are the initials of:

- ק־ kedushah — holiness
- ט־ taharah — purity
- ר־ rachamim — mercy
- ת־ tikvah — hope

The smell of the burning Ketores was so powerful that its sweet scent could be smelled in the air all the way from Yerushalayim to Yericho — fifteen miles away!

Ketores (Incense)

The Golden Mizbei'ach stood in the Mishkan's front section, together with the Menorah and Shulchan. Every day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, a special incense made for the Mishkan was burned on this Mizbei'ach. This is why it's also called the Mizbach HaKetores. On Yom Kippur, blood of some of the Yom Kippur korbanos was sprinkled on this Mizbei'ach.

Smoke and Fire

For the daily Ketores service, the Kohen would go to the copper Mizbei'ach that stood in the Chatzer. He would go up the ramp to the top, and take a shovelful of glowing hot coals from the burning fires.

He then entered the Mishkan building and put the coals on the Golden Mizbei'ach. After that, about ten ounces of specially prepared Ketores was put on the coals. Smoke would rise in a straight column, hit the ceiling, and fill the room with smoke.

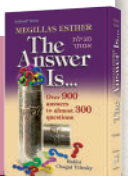


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THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Parashas Tetzaveh-Purim: The Gemara (Megillah 12b) says that Memuchan, who is mentioned in the Megillah (1:16), was Haman. According to another opinion, Memuchan was someone else. Who was he and why was he called Memuchan?

Kids, ask your parents to email the answer to shabbosquestion@artscroll.com by this Wednesday, March 3rd, to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Names of winners will appear in a future edition. HINT: The answer can be found in ArtScroll's "Megillas Esther – The Answer Is."



The winner of the Parashas Mishpatim question is: BATSHEVA LERCH of YERUSHALAYIM