

# NEFESH SHIMSHON



DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"l

THIS PUBLICATION IS DEDICATED TO THE HATZLACHAH AND ZECHUS OF נחמה ויעקב בן רחל נחמה. MAY THEY GROW TO BE TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM AND OVDEI HASHEM.

## PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE PARSHAH

## Accidents Happen

וְהִקְרִיב עַל חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא פֶּרֶן בֶּקָר תָּמִים לֵה' לְחַטָּאת. (ויקרא ד, ג)

**He shall offer, for the sin he committed, a perfect young bull to Hashem as a sin offering. (Vayikra 4:3)**

The *korban chatas* is a powerful expression of the infinite *chesed* that a person gains access to only if he sins. A parable brings out the point.

There once was a child who was warned again and again not to ride his bike on the road, but he did not listen. One day, he rode his bike on the road and got injured. As he was lying in the hospital after the accident, his parents bought him a present. They bought him a brand-new bike.

This is puzzling. The child rode his bike on the road even though he was warned not to do so, and in the end, he got hurt. Is that a reason to give him a prize?!

It's hard to explain, but there is a certain instinct that Hashem created, that when someone gets hurt, it arouses in those who care about him a powerful, hidden love, to the point that they shower him with enormous warmth and love.

This is the way it is. There are certain wonderful gifts that are reserved for when tragedies happen. They are only for "bad children" who get themselves into trouble. This hidden love was created especially for them. The father is willing to spend a lot of money and invest a lot in this bad child if he senses that he is in danger.

This week's digital publication is dedicated to the hatzlacha of

מרת אילנה בת היה חי"ו

may she see beracha and hatzlacha in all her endeavors and have nachas from all her offspring in health and constant simcha

How did the Jewish people merit receiving the *Yud Gimel Midos Shel Rachamim*? By getting into a serious “accident” (the sin of the Golden Calf). *Hashem* then showered on them endless love, to the point that they received in the end a wondrous present: the Thirteen Traits of Divine Mercy. This is a gift that will always save them from all types of tragedies.

So it is also with the *korban chatas*. This offering expresses *Hashem's* hidden and endlessly great love. This love comes out only in a time of great necessity, when a sin occurs. It is only for “bad children,” so to speak.

This is why a *korban chatas* may not be brought

as a freewill offering. Only when a person sins, does *Hashem* say, so to speak: It's such a shame for my Yankelch! Because of his sins, he is going to die and go to *Gehinom*!

When a person commits a sin, the *chevra kadisha* is already standing by his bed, so to speak, because הנפש החוטאת היא תמות – “The soul that sins shall die.”<sup>1</sup> However, the Torah found a way out: יביא קרבן ויתכפר – “Let him bring an offering and be atoned.”

Such a *chesed* comes only after sin. It is expressed in the *korban chatas* that a person brings and thereby atones for his sin. ●

1 Yechezkel 18:4.

## SPECIAL TOPIC

### Why the Joy of Purim is Unique

Jewish holidays are rich and varied. Pesach is not like Shavu'os, and neither of them is like Sukkos. But they all have in common that they are *mo'adim*. A *mo'ed* is a special time when the Jewish people meets and convenes with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, and this meeting elicits great joy. Thus the *mitzvah* of *simchah*, which is common to all the *mo'adim*.

Purim is absolutely different from all the other holidays. The *mitzvah* of joy and holding a festive banquet on Purim is different from the *mitzvah* of *simchah* on other holidays. On Purim we have a *mitzvah* to drink wine “until one does not know.” Such behavior does not seem to have anything to do with *kedushah*. If you can't even tell the difference between “Cursed is Haman” and “Blessed is

Mordechai,” how can you experience joy of *kedushah*?

It is quite obvious that the character of Purim is unlike that of any other holiday.



### Purim is the End Goal

Another thing that makes Purim unique is its timing. We know that all the holidays form an ascending ladder. We go up a rung with every holiday until we get to the top, which is our end goal, and then we embark on a new cycle of holidays.

The first holiday is Pesach. It is about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* which is the birth of the Jewish people.

## לעילוי נשמות

מוה"ד משה בן אליעזר המבורגר ז"ל

ומוה"ד ברוך זאב בן נפתלי קראוס ז"ל

נדבת נכדיהם ~ עטרת זקנים בני בנים ותפארת בנינים אבותם

Then we count the *Omer*, which is a period of spiritual education, of *chinuch*, until we come to the age when we are obligated in *mitzvos*. Shavu'os is thus the "bar mitzvah" of the Jewish people.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are the days of the "wedding" between the Jewish people and *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, who are drawn close to one another through *teshuvah*, and then enter the *chuppah*, which is the *sukkah*. And Shemini Atzeres is the *yichud*, the culmination of the wedding, when they are alone together.

After the Biblically ordained holidays are over, the days grow shorter and shorter, and darkness comes to the world. It is written וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל פְּנֵי תְהוֹם – "And darkness was on the face of the depth,"<sup>1</sup> in which *Chazal* see an allusion to the darkness of the Greek exile.<sup>2</sup> Counteracting this is the enlightening days of Chanukah which bring back the light of Torah.

So progresses the cycle of the holidays.

The end goal of all these holy times is the day of Purim. It is the ninth and final holiday in the yearly cycle, and after it comes the tenth holiday, which is the time of the coming of *Mashiach*. That is in another realm altogether. It is above and beyond all conception [so it is not considered part of the cycle].

The holidays are just stops on our way to the destination, so to speak, and Purim is the destination.

This calls for explanation. What makes Purim our ultimate goal?

## The Unforgettable

There is another point that makes Purim different from the other holidays. It is mentioned in the writings of the Arizal. We will attempt to understand it on our level.

The other holidays are based on an event that took place, a miracle that occurred in a certain

place and time, which gave rise to a *Yom Tov* that is observed in all subsequent generations. Pesach is based on the great miracle of leaving *Mitzrayim*. Shavu'os is based on the great miracle of the Giving of the Torah. And Sukkos is based on the miracle of the *Ananei Hakavod* that took place when the Jewish people were in the *Midbar*, as a remembrance of which we sit in the *sukkah*.

Rosh Hashanah stands on the miracle of the Creation of the world, which took place on the first of Tishri. And when *Hashem* atoned on the tenth of Tishri for *Cheit Ha'eigel*, we have Yom Kippur, the great Day of Atonement.

This general rule applies as well to the holiday of Chanukah, although it is of Rabbinic origin. It is based on the miraculous event that took place at that time, when they overpowered the Greeks and rededicated the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Every year we return to these powerful miracles at the time they occurred.

*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* created this physical world with a natural yearly cycle. The spiritual cycle of the holidays corresponds to this natural cycle, and at the corresponding times, its spirituality penetrates into our world, and will come back next year at the same time.

Pesach thus became *zeman cheiruseinu*. Every year, when the time of Pesach comes, we experience the time of *cheirus*, spiritual freedom.

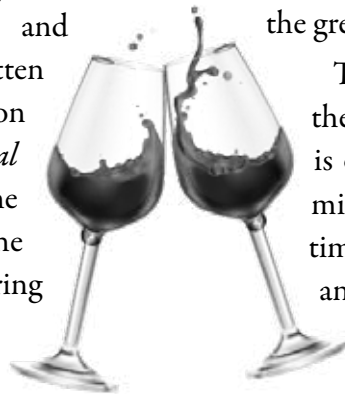
The Torah set these times through the *mitzvos* of the *mo'adim*. And *Chazal*, too, had the power to set a yearly time when Chanukah will reoccur, like it was back then. Now it is not a miracle that "the time of our freedom" comes back every year, and that the gates of heaven open up on Shavu'os like they did back then, because all this has become the nature of these days. It naturally reoccurs.

But Purim is different. The *Midrash* says<sup>3</sup> that Mordechai met *Eliyahu Hanavi* who revealed to him that in heaven, a decree of destruction has been

1 Bereishis 1:2.

2 Bereishis Rabbah 2:4.

3 Esther Rabbah 7:13.



sealed on the Jewish people. The actors on earth were Haman and Achashverosh, but the true calamity was what transpired in heaven. The Jewish people's destruction was sealed by *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

If Achashverosh, a king of flesh and blood, declared that "a document that was written in the name of the king and sealed with the signet of the king cannot be retracted,"<sup>4</sup> surely the seal of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is true, and may not be retracted. This was the true calamity.

The danger threatening the Jewish people was not the wicked Haman, but rather the heavenly decree. The Jewish people had never been in greater danger.

Within this great calamity, *Hashem* opened a rescue door. The miracle was revolutionary. It was a total reversal of the way the world is run. And the day that our enemies thought they would annihilate us turned into a day of salvation. The crux of the miracle was not the mere rescue from the claws of Haman, but rather entailed a fundamental change in relationship between *Hashem* and the Jewish people.

A Heavenly flame of love, mercy and compassion awoke towards the Jewish people, thanks to which they were saved from the danger that threatened them. And with the same warmth and compassion that was expressed in the giving of the first *Luchos*, "They received the Torah again in the days of Achashverosh."<sup>5</sup>

This may be compared to a little child who is asking his father for an expensive gift, and the father refuses him, saying that "money does not grow on trees." He can't afford such a purchase. And then in the middle of the night, the child wakes up crying from pain, and father runs with him to emergency medical care, and ends up taking a private doctor that costs a fortune.

What tree did this money grow on?

That's the nature of the world. When a child's life is endangered, all the fountains of mercy open up wide, without limits. These hidden fountains deep

---

<sup>4</sup> *Esther* 8:8.

<sup>5</sup> *Shabbos* 88a.

in a parent's heart are revealed in a time of imminent danger, and they burst forth.

The Arizal says that the main crux of the Purim miracle was not the actual rescue from danger. That is a natural phenomenon. In a time of imminent danger, a father's compassion is aroused. The crux of the miracle was *וְזָכְרָם לֹא יִסּוּף מִזְרְעָם* – "Their remembrance will not cease from their offspring."<sup>6</sup> The powerful Divine mercy and fiery love that burst out, and brought their deliverance, renews itself every year to the same extent, even though nowadays we are not in the same dire situation as in the time of Haman.

The Ari says that this is something the other holidays don't have. Every *Yom Tov* is a remembrance of what once happened. But every Purim is happening right now.

## Hidden Management

To really appreciate what Purim is all about, we need to understand *hester panim*, *Hashem's* hiddenness. The simple understanding (and it is true) is that *hester panim* is the troubles we suffer. When *Hashem* hides His face from us, the result is disaster. Conversely, when *Hashem* shows the radiance of His face to the Jewish people, they are blessed by great goodness and plenty, as we say in *Tefilah*: *כי באור פניך נתת לנו* – "In the radiance of Your face You gave us..."

In the days of *Shlomo Hamelech*, the Jewish people lacked nothing. There were no sicknesses or troubles. We have no concept of what great goodness there was when *Beis Hamikdash* stood. And since it was destroyed, every day is more cursed than the one before it. This increase in negativity results from *hester panim*.

But there is more to *hester panim* than this. We will explain.

We really have no idea why *Hashem* does what He does. Why is this person rich, and that one poor? Why is this person healthy, and that one sick? Why

---

<sup>6</sup> *Esther* 9:28.

does so and so enjoy such a long life, when someone else died young?

Why can't we understand these things?

Let's imagine a father bringing his three-year-old son to *cheder*. If we would ask the child why he is going to *cheder*, he would say, "Daddy said they have fun toys and they will give me candies." The child has no idea how great the *mitzvah* of Torah study is. He doesn't know that Torah brings him to *Olam Haba*. How could he possibly understand the true reason why he is going to learn Torah? A little kid can't grasp the concept of eternity.

Just as an animal is incapable of understanding what human beings do and why they do it, so anyone on a lower level can't understand the level above him.

How could we understand what *Hashem* does in the world?

However, it says in *Pirkei Avos*:

The world was created in ten Divine statements. And what is the Torah teaching?<sup>7</sup>

There is a teaching whose purpose is to reveal to us the significance and meaning of the order of Creation. *Hashem* could have created the world in one Divine statement. He could have said, "Let there be a world," and there was a world." However, *Hashem* wanted us to understand something about the world, so the Torah teaches us each Divine statement, each "Let there be," pertaining to each part of Creation.

In fact, the whole Torah, from beginning to end, teaches us the order of Creation and the ways of *Hashem* in the world. For instance:

והיה אם שמע תשמעו אל מצותי וגוי ונתתי  
מטר ארצכם בעתו — If you will surely obey  
My commandments... I will give the rain  
of your land in its time.<sup>8</sup>

Someone who learns Torah knows that when it rains, it is because there is a *tzaddik* who *davened* for

it to rain, or because someone sat and learned with *hasmadah*. And if there is a drought, we can find the reason for it in the same passage, as it says:

ועצר את השמים ולא יהיה מטר – And He will close the heavens, and there will not be rain.<sup>9</sup>

And *Hashem* gave us not just understanding of what happens, but also the ability to influence it. A person determines through his actions how the world will be run. He possesses the power of praying for rain, for *parnassah* and for health. There is nothing in the world that is not intended for the Jewish people, and there is nothing we cannot attain by means of spiritual actions.

If a person will do the *mitzvos*, his reward will grant him success, and if he transgresses them, his punishment will cut him off.<sup>10</sup>

We are taught from early childhood that in order to get a candy, we need to say a *berachah*. This inculcates in us that receiving goodness is dependent of doing what is right.

*Hashem* tailor-suited the running of the world to the Jewish people. All the management of the world is according to our deeds, and fitting to our concepts.

But *Hashem's* true nature is hidden from the world. The clear truth that *Hashem* ultimately controls everything is hidden. The world is thus run in a hidden way, in a way of *hester*.

And this *hester* applies to all the *Yamim Tovim*. On Pesach, *Hashem* redeemed the Jewish people from *Mitzrayim* in the merit of *ויאמן העם* – "The people had faith."<sup>11</sup> When the Jewish people said *naaseh* before *nishma* at Sinai, they merited receiving the Torah.<sup>12</sup> When they did *teshuvah*, *Hashem* forgave them.

Everything *Hashem* does in managing the world

9 Ibid.

10 Commentary of the Ramban on *Shemos* 13:16.

11 *Shemos* 4:31.

12 See *Shabbos* 88a.

7 *Avos* 5:1.

8 *Devarim* ch. 11.



is in direct relationship to the deeds of the Jewish people. The miracle of Chanukah was because of the *mesirus nefesh* of the faithful Chashmonaim who went out to battle the vast Greek army.

## Purim Doesn't Work That Way

All this is true until we come to Purim, and then all the rules change. The world is not run in the same way anymore.

How so?

The Jewish people sinned so greatly that their doom was written and sealed. And when *Hashem* signs off on something, when He places His holy seal on a decision, it becomes a reality. The seal of truth was stamped on the Divine decree of להשמיד את כל היהודים – “To destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews.”<sup>13</sup> It says in the *Midrash*<sup>14</sup> that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* replied to *Moshe Rabbeinu* that the decree is already sealed. The Jewish people were dead-ended with no way out.

Then the miracle of Purim took place without the participation of the Jewish people. It was as if *Hashem* said: Go stand on the side and let Me do the job.

*Hashem* did it alone, out of love and mercy. He paid no attention to the sins and saved the Jewish people despite it all. The sealing of the Divine decree created a reality which, according to the rules by which the world is run, should have produced an inexorable result. But *Hashem* is not bound by the rules of the world. He is above all that.

In order for *Hashem* to act on His own, it is necessary to push the person aside. It is necessary to make him drink wine until he can't tell left from right, *arur Haman* from *baruch Mordechai*. And when the person is drunk, *Hashem* makes the miracle.

<sup>13</sup> *Esther* 3:13.

<sup>14</sup> *Esther Rabbah* *ibid*.

As long as the person thinks he is holding the reins, *Hashem* says to him, so to speak: I can't work like this. It's either you or Me.

But when the person steps to the side and lets *Hashem* take over, when he is drunk and knows that he is incapable of doing anything, then he can feel a deep sense of joy in the knowledge that there is Someone who does the whole job for him.

This is what makes Purim unique among the holidays of the year. All the rules change. So it was back then, and so it is now.

*Chazal* say that in the future, all of the *Tanach* will cease, except for the *Chumash* and *Megilas Esther*.<sup>15</sup> This shows that the entire Torah divides into two parts. There is the *Chumash* and there is *Megilas Esther*. The books of the *Nevi'im*, of Yehoshua and Yeshayahu, the *Trei Asar* and all the other *Nevi'im*, they all can cease, because they are all included in the *Chumash*. But that which is written in *Megilas Esther* is not included in the *Chumash*, so it cannot cease.

In other words, we learn a *chiddush* from *Megilas Esther* that is not found in the Torah itself. The Torah articulates a system of running the world that depends on the deeds of the Jewish people. והיה אם – שמע תשמעו אל מצותי וגוי ונתתי מטר ארצכם בעתו – “If you will surely obey My commandments... I will give the rain of your land in its time.”

We learn something else from *Megilas Esther*. We learn that after all is said and done, and there is still no way in the world to save the Jewish people, then *Hashem's* exclusive mastery over the world reveals itself, and He does as He wishes. He disregards the rules.

This is the story of the *Megilah*, and it is something that we don't learn from the *Chumash* or from the *Nevi'im*. It is the great *chiddush* of *Megilas Esther*. This is why it will never cease. ●

<sup>15</sup> *Talmud Yerushalmi* 1:5.