



On Purim We Give to Anyone Who Extends His Hand for Tzedakah to Negate the Klipah of Haman Who Extended His Hand against the Jews

In honor of the auspiciously approaching days of Purim, we will examine the mitzvah of “**matanot la’evyonim**”—gifts to the poor. Although it is a mitzvah to give tzedakah all year round, it possesses a unique aspect on Purim. Here is the ruling of the Tur and the michaber (O.C. 694, 3): **One is not exacting with their money on Purim; rather, one should give to anyone who extends his hand.** The source for this practice is found in the Yerushalmi (Megillah 1, 4); the ruling of the Rambam (Megillah 2, 16) concurs.

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by reviewing a passage in the Gemara (Esther 8, 7): **ויאמר המלך: אחשורוש לאסתר המלכה ולמרדכי היהודי, הנה בית המן נתתי לאסתר ואותו. תלו על העץ על אשר שלח ידו ביהודים.** Then King Achashveirosh said to Queen Esther and Mordechai the Jew, “Behold, I have given Haman’s estate to Esther, and they have hanged him on the tree (gallows), because he sent his hand against the Jews.” The commentaries question the claim that Achashveirosh hung Haman, “**because he sent his hand against the Jews.**” After all, he did so, because he thought that Haman was trying to seduce the queen, even though he was nearby.

Now, when Haman was hung, it says (ibid. 7, 9): **ויאמר חרבונה: אחד מן הסריסים לפני המלך גם הנה העץ אשר עשה המן למרדכי אשר דיבר טוב על המלך עומד בבית המן גבוה חמישים אמה ויאמר המלך תלוהו עליו.** Then Charvonah, one of the chamberlains attending the king, said, “Furthermore, the gallows which Haman made for Mordechai—who spoke good for the king—is standing in Haman’s house;

it is fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on it.” So they hung Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordechai.

We find a related teaching in the Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer (Chapter 50): **So the king exclaimed, “Would you actually assault the queen while I am in the house?!” . . . At that moment, what did “Eliyahu of blessed memory” do? He assumed the guise of Charvonah, one of the chamberlains of the king. He said to him, “My lord king, there is a tree in Haman’s house taken from the Kodesh HaKodashim that is fifty cubits high.” As it says (Melachim I 7, 6): “He made a hall of pillars fifty cubits its length.” The king promptly commanded that he should be hanged on it, as it says (Esther 7, 9): “And the king said, ‘Hang him on it.’”**

This teaches us that Haman, his advisors, and his wife planned to hang Mordechai on a fifty-cubit high tree that Haman had taken from the Kodesh HaKodashim. HKB”H, however, performed a miracle: **“ונהפוך הוא”**—He turned the tables on Haman; instead, he was hung on the gallows he had prepared for Mordechai.

To explain the matter, let us refer to a Midrash (Esther Rabbah 7, 2). It explains why HKB”H arranged for Achashveirosh to elevate Haman to a position of honor, as it is written (ibid. 3, 1): **After these events, King Achashveirosh promoted Haman the son of Hamdata the Agagi and elevated him; he set his seat above all the officers who were with him.** Thus, did HKB”H orchestrate Haman’s

dramatic downfall, because he had advised Achashveirosh to cancel the building of the Beis HaMikdash.

We can now understand why Haman and his cohorts opted to take a beam specifically from the Kodesh HaKodashim to fashion a gallows upon which to hang Mordechai. Since Mordechai was a leader of the Sanhedrin, they schemed to kill him, so that he would not focus on rebuilding the Beis HaMikdash. Yet, as we know, HKB”H foiled their scheme; Haman was hung instead of Mordechai. Thus, He demonstrated that no plans or schemes would succeed in preventing the building of the Beis HaMikdash.

Arizal: The Klipah of the Hand Destroyed the Beis HaMikdash

Based on this introduction, we will explain why giving tzedakah on Purim is unique: **One should give to anyone who extends his hand.** Let us begin by introducing a precious teaching from our master, the Arizal, in Pri Eitz Chaim. In his own, sacred way, he interprets the tefilah we recite in Mussaf on the Shalosh Regalim: **”ואין אנו יכולים לעלות ולראות ולהשתחוות לפניך... מפני היד שנשתלחה במקדשך”—and we are unable to ascend, and to be seen, and to bow down before You . . . because of the hand that was sent forth against Your Mikdash.** He refers to a passage in the Zohar hakadosh (Terumah 172) and says: **There is a special window called “zihara” . . . in it is the image of a hand; it is controlled by the wings of the Shechinah. At the time of the churban, it reigned over the Beis HaMikdash. This is the meaning of the statement: “Because of the hand that was sent forth against Your Mikdash.”**

We will elaborate on the words of the Arizal based on another teaching from the Zohar hakadosh (ibid.). There is a star in the heavens that contains the image of the hand of the klipah. While the Beis HaMikdash was extant, this hand was controlled by the Shechinah, which dwelled in the Beis HaMikdash. As a consequence, shevet Yehudah was able to control this hand of the klipah and use it to subjugate the enemies of Yisrael.

This is alluded to by the berachah that Yaakov Avinu bestowed upon shevet Yehudah (Bereishis 49, 8): **”ידך בעורף—your hand will be on the neck of your enemies.** In

other words, that hand of the klipah itself will strike the necks of Yisrael’s enemies and subjugate them under the realm of kedushah. When, however, shevet Yehudah strayed from the ways of Hashem and worshipped avodah-zarah, they began to attribute superpowers to that heavenly hand; they used it in various ways constituting forms of avodah-zarah.

According to the Arizal, this is the deeper meaning of the words in our tefilah: **”מפני היד שנשתלחה במקדשך”**. At the time of the churban, because Yisrael sinned and rebelled against Hashem and His Torah, the klipah of the hand also rebelled against the holy Shechinah. Consequently, shevet Yehudah lost control of that hand. Therefore, instead of—**”ידך בעורף”**—striking the neck of Hashem’s enemies who were laying siege to Yerushalayim, the hand was sent forth against the Beis HaMikdash, destroying it down to its foundation.

“We were delivered from the hand of the klipah”

In the sefer Ba’al Shem Tov (Yisro 26), an explanation is presented in the name of the Ba’al Shem Tov, zy”a, regarding a passuk related to the future geulah (Tehillim 107, 2): **”יאמרו—those redeemed by Hashem will say; those whom He redeemed from the hand of the oppressor.** This implies that they will express their gratitude to Hashem for delivering them from the **“hand”** of the klipah that was sent forth against the Beis HaMikdash. We will expand on this idea by examining the words of the divine poet of mourning (Eichah 1, 10): **”ידו פרש צר על כל מחמדיה”—the oppressor spread out his hand on all her treasures.** This can be interpreted as an allusion to that hand that the oppressor opened to snatch the keys of the Heichal tossed up in the air by the young kohanim, which it used to destroy the Beis HaMikdash. It is in regard to that hand that David HaMelech said: **”יאמרו גאולי ה’ אשר גאלם מיד צר”—those redeemed from the very same hand spread out by the oppressor.**

This provides us with a very nice explanation of the words we recite in Tachanun on Mondays and Thursdays: **”עד מתי—how long will Your strength be in captivity and Your glory in the hand of the oppressor?”** As this verse infers, two outstanding “midos” prevailed in the Beis HaMikdash—strength and glory. Hence, we pray: **“How**

long will Your strength be in captivity and Your glory in the hand of the oppressor?" For, these two midos which prevailed in the Beis HaMikdash remain captive in the hand of the klipah that was sent forth against our Mikdash.

We can also suggest that for this reason the name of the Melech HaMashiach is David, as taught in the Zohar hakadosh (Lech Lecha 82b): **David HaMelech lives on forever; and even in the times of the Melech HaMashiach, he will be king. For, we have learned that the Melech HaMashiach, whether he is from the living, his name is David, and whether he is from the dead who have been resurrected, his name will be David.** Similarly, in his "piyut" for Hoshana Rabbah (Ometz Yishecha), Rabbi Eliezer HaKalir proclaims: "איש צמח שמו הוא דוד בעצמו"—**a man has sprouted up, Tzemach is his name, and he is none other than David.**

Now, the Melech HaMashiach, the head of shevet Yehudah, is called דוד (14), whose gematria is the same as the word for hand—יד (14). This alludes to the fact that at the time of the future geulah, when he will come to redeem Yisrael and wage war against their mortal enemies, he will once again be able to subjugate and harness the hand of the klipah under the control of the Shechinah. He will use it to smite the enemies of Yisrael in keeping with the berachah Yaakov Avinu bestowed upon him: "ידך בעורף אויבך".

The Hand that Ravaged Our Mikdash Is Nourished by the Left Hand of Gevurah

After much thought, I would like to propose my own intriguing explanation for this phenomenon. As explained, while the Beis HaMikdash was extant, the hand of the klipah was subservient and obedient to the will of the Shechinah—such that shevet Yehudah used it to smite the enemies of Yisrael. Yet, when they sinned, that very same hand destroyed the Beis HaMikdash, as expressed by the words: "היד שנשתלחה במקדשך". This is consistent with what Yisrael sang at the sea (Shemos 15, 6): "ימינך ה' נאדרי בכה ימינך ה' תרעץ אויב"—**Your right hand, Hashem, is majestic in might; Your right hand, Hashem, crushes the enemy.** Rashi explains in the name of the Mechilta: **The right hand is mentioned twice in the passuk. When Yisrael are compliant with the will of the Omnipresent, the left becomes a right. Thus, Your**

original right hand, Hashem, is majestic in might, to save Yisrael; while Your second right hand—previously Your left hand—crushes the enemy.

Let us explain. It is known that HKB"H manages the world with two hands, representing the attribute of chesed and the attribute of din. The right hand represents "midas hachesed," providing those who serve Hashem all that is good. The left hand represents "midas hadin," doling out punishment to the wicked. The source for this notion is the Tikunei Zohar in the passage of Pesach Eliyahu (Introduction 17a): "חסד דרועא ימינא, גבורה דרועא שמאלא"—**chesed is the right arm; gevurah is the left arm.**

Now, when Yisrael are compliant with the will of the Omnipresent, they transform "midas hadin" into "midas hachesed." Thus, the left hand, representing the attributes of din and severity, becomes another right hand; in this capacity, it enables Yisrael to use the midah of gevurah to smite their enemies. This then is the interpretation of the passuk: "ימינך ה' נאדרי בכה"—this refers to the actual right hand, the embodiment of chesed; it performs acts of kindness and favor for Yisrael, rescuing them from their foes—the Egyptians—and from difficult situations; "ימינך ה' תרעץ אויב"—the second part of the passuk—refers to the left hand, the embodiment of din. It is transformed into a second right hand for Yisrael's benefit; it provides chesed by enabling Yisrael to use its inherent qualities of gevurah to pound and crush the heads of her enemies.

We can now begin to appreciate the concept of the klipah that appears in the form of a hand to wage war. When HKB"H's left hand, representing din, is dominant in the world, then this klipah draws its power from the residual elements of gevurah native to the left hand; it wages war with the attribute of gevurah. Now, when Yisrael act in accordance with the will of G-d, the left hand functions like a right hand and battles Yisrael's enemies, in the sense of: "ימינך ה' תרעץ אויב"—**Your right hand, Hashem, crushes the enemy.** Hence, shevet Yehudah utilized it to combat Yisrael's enemies fulfilling the berachah of: "ידך בעורף אויבך"—**your hand will be on the neck of your enemies.** Yet, when Yisrael neglect to act according to the will of G-d, this transformation does not occur; the din of the left hand remains in full force against Yisrael, chas v'shalom. As such, that hand of the klipah that is nourished

from the residue of the forces of gevurah remains directed against Yisrael.

With this understanding, we can begin to understand the lament of the divine poet mourning the churban (Eichah 2, 3): **גדע בחרי אף כל קרן ישראל, השיב אחור ימינו מפני אויב, ויבער ביעקב: "He cut down, in burning anger, all the dignity of Yisrael; He drew back His right hand in the presence of the enemy. He burned through Yaakov like a flaming fire, consuming on all sides.** The Zohar hakadosh explains (Beshalach 57a) that HKB"H removed his right hand—the embodiment of "midas hachesed"—leaving the left hand alone, creating a situation of total "din." Thus, at the time of the churban, HKB"H placed His right hand behind Him, and only His left hand, unmitigated midas hadin, remained. As a result, the hand of the klipah that is nourished from the midah of gevurah—which was heretofore subservient to the Shechinah, vanquishing Yisrael's enemies—no longer functioned as a right hand, a force for chesed. Instead, it now waged war against the forces of kedushah to destroy the Beis HaMikdash.

This then is the implication of the hand being directed against our Mikdash with fire, as it is written (Tehillim 74, 7): **"שלחו באש מקדשך"—they have sent Your sanctuary up in flames.** For, fire alludes to the intense, incinerating force of "din." In the words of the Zohar hakadosh, in the Raiya Mehemna (Pinchas 255a): **Chesed is water; gevurah is fire.** Therefore, we pour out our hearts before Hashem with the following tefilah: **"ומפני חטאינו גלינו מארצנו, ונתרחקנו מעל אדמתנו, ואין אנחנו יכולים לעלות ולראות ולהשתחוות לפניך, ולעשות חובותינו בבית בחירתך, בבית הגדול והקדוש שנקרא שמך עליו, מפני הید שגשתלחה במקדשך."** But due to our sins, we were exiled from our country and distanced from our land. We cannot go up to appear and bow down before You, and to perform our obligations in Your chosen House, in the great and holy House upon which Your name was proclaimed, because of the hand that was sent forth against Your Mikdash.

The Holy Shechinah Subdues the Klipah of י"ד with the Name ה"ה

We will continue to delight in the teaching of the Arizal—that the planet that portrays the shape of a hand was **under the control of the Shechinah** while the Beis HaMikdash was extant; it functioned to subjugate the enemies of Yisrael

in keeping with the notion of **"your hand will be on the neck of your enemies."** It appears that we can explain the matter based on a teaching in the Gemara (Sotah 17a): **דריש—רבי עקיבא, איש ואשה זכו שכינה ביניהן, לא זכו אש אוכלתן—Rabbi Akiva expounded: If a husband and wife are meritorious, the Shechinah is present between them; if they are not meritorious, fire consumes them.** Rashi provides the following clarification: What does it mean that the Shechinah is present between them? The letters ה"ה, one of G-d's names, are split between the man and the woman; the letter yud appears in the word אי"ש, while the letter hei appears in the word אש"ה. If they are not deserving, HKB"H removes His name from them; as a consequence, they are consumed by fire, because all that remains is א"ש and א"ש --two opposing, conflicting, devastating fires.

Here we learn a very important principle from Rabbi Akiva. The name ה"ה alludes to the holy Shechinah—the Divine Presence—which is known by this name. In fact, the Megaleh Amukos (Vayeira) writes that the word שכינה"ה can be broken down to שכן י"ה—indicating that the name ה"ה dwells among the people of Yisrael. This is also brought down by the Shela hakadosh elsewhere in the name of the kabbalists.

This enlightens us with regards to the words of the Arizal. As long as the Shechinah dwelled in the Beis HaMikdash, the klipah of י"ד was obedient to the Shechinah. For, the numerical value of the name ה"ה (15) exceeds the numerical value of the word י"ד (14) by one. Thus, the Shechinah controlled the klipah of the hand, and it was obliged to fight against the enemies of Yisrael. At the time of the churban, however, when our transgressions drove the Shechinah away, causing the name ה"ה to vacate the Beis HaMikdash, the klipah of י"ד gained power and proceeded to destroy our Beis HaMikdash, as we state in our tefilah: **"מפני הید שגשתלחה במקדשך."**

"There is a hand on the throne of ה"ה"

Following this sublime path, we will now address the matter of Haman (Esther 8, 7) **"who sent his hand against the Jews."** Let us refer to that which is written in relation to the war with Amalek (Shemos 17, 16): **ויאמר כי יד על כס יה—מלחמה לה' בעמלק מדור דור—and he said, "For there is a hand on the throne of ה"ה; Hashem maintains a war against**

Amalek from generation to generation. We can suggest an interpretation based on the Midrash Rabbah (Eichah 5, 1): **Yisrael said to HKB"H, "Master of the Universe, You wrote for us in Your Torah (Devarim 25, 17): 'Remember what Amalek did to you.' Did he only do it to me and not to You? Did he not destroy Your sanctuary?"** It is apparent from this passage that Amalek is the embodiment of the klipah of the hand that was sent forth against our holy Temple.

It seems obvious that Amalek inherited this klipah from his grandfather Eisav HaRasha, with whom HKB"H associates the churban of the Beis HaMikdash. This is evident from a passage in the Gemara (Megillah 6a) where Yitzchak Avinu requests that HKB"H find some merit in Eisav; however, HKB"H responds (Yeshayah 26, 10): **"בארץ נכוחות יעול"—he acts with corruption in the land of the upright.** According to Rashi, the land of the upright refers to Yerushalayim, and the passuk indicates that Eisav's descendant, Rome, is destined to destroy Eretz Yisrael. And the Midrash teaches (B.R. 67, 5): **"אמר לו הקב"ה, בארץ נכוחות יעול, עתיד הוא לפשוט ידו בבית"**—with these words, HKB"H informed him that Eisav was destined to extend his hand against the Beis HaMikdash. Furthermore, it is written (Tehillim 137, 7): **"זכור ה' לבני אדום את: יום ירושלים האומרים ערו עד היסוד בה."** **"Remember, Hashem, the day of Yerushalayim for the descendants of Edom, for those who would say, 'Destroy! Destroy to its very foundation!'"** And the Torah teaches us (Bereishis 36, 8): **"עשו הוא אדום"—Eisav is Edom.**

It appears that this is what prompted Yaakov Avinu's entreaty (ibid. 32, 12): **"הצילני נא מיד אחי מיד עשו"—please save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav.** Why is **"the hand"** mentioned twice in this passuk? In keeping with this discussion, we can suggest the following: When the Beis HaMikdash was extant, the hand of the klipah obeyed the Shechinah and fought on behalf of Yisrael, in the sense of **"ידך בעורף אויבך"**. Subsequently, at the time of the churban, it rebelled against Hashem and Yisrael destroying the Beis HaMikdash. This then is the meaning of Yaakov's entreaty: **"Please save me from the hand of my brother"** that originally defended me like a brother; and **"from the hand of Eisav,"** who subsequently rebelled against Hashem and utilized his hand to destroy our Beis HaMikdash.

This then is the allusion in the passuk: **"There is a hand on the throne of ה'"; Hashem maintains a war against Amalek from generation to generation.** It is referring to the hand of Amalek that followed in the footsteps of their grandfather Eisav by attacking Yisrael in the midbar and then destroying the Beis HaMikdash years later. **"On the throne of ה'—by means of the name ה'—Hashem maintains a war against Amalek from generation to generation"**—subduing its klipah of ה'.

Let us add a fascinating tidbit related to Purim. The Ba'al HaTurim notes that the first letters of ה'צילני נא מיד spell **"המן"**, alluding to the enemy who sought to exterminate even Jewish women and children. From this perspective, Yaakov prayed to be spared from Haman HaRasha, the descendant of Amalek who intended to direct the klipah of the hand against Yisrael, as it states: **"And they have hanged him on the tree, because he sent his 'hand' against the Jews."**

This also explains very nicely the rationale for instituting the celebration of Purim on two separate days—on ה' Adar for those living in unwalled cities and on the fifteenth of Adar—ה' - for those living in cities that were walled from the times of Yehoshua bin Nun such as Yerushalayim. This alludes to the fact that the name ה' safeguards the kedushah of the Mikdash protecting it from any assault from the hand of the klipah. Equipped with this formidable name, Mordechai thwarted and defeated the ה' of Haman, demonstrating that the name ה' battles Amalek in every generation.

We now have a wonderful interpretation of the passuk: **"ויאמר המלך אחשורוש לאסתר המלכה ולמרדכי היהודי, הנה בית המן נתתי לאסתר ואותו תלו על העץ על אשר שלח ידו ביהודים."** **Then King Achashveirosh said to Queen Esther and Mordechai the Jew, "Behold, I have given Haman's estate to Esther, and they have hanged him on the tree, because he sent his hand against the Jews."** Achashveirosh unwittingly prophesied that it was orchestrated from above for Haman to be hung on the gallows he prepared for Mordechai with a beam from the Kodesh HaKodashim, because he sent **"his hand"**—the klipah of the hand—to prevent the building of the Beis HaMikdash. Therefore, tit for tat, he was hung on a beam from the Kodesh HaKodashim.

Tzedakah Possesses the Power to Hasten the Geulah

Continuing on this sacred journey, we will now explain the rationale for instituting the mitzvah of **"matanot la'evyonim"** on Purim. We mentioned above that the Yerushalmi states that on Purim, we are not exacting, we give to whoever extends his hand. Now, regarding the mitzvah of tzedakah, the Torah says (Devarim 15, 8): **"כי יהיה בך אביון מאחד אחיך באחד שעריך בארצך: לא תאמץ את לבבך ולא תקפוץ את ידך מאחיק האביון, כי פתוח תפתח את ידך לו... נתון תתן לו, ולא ירע לבבך בתתך לו, כי בגלל הדבר הזה יברכך ה' אלקיך בכל מעשיך ובכל משלח ידך."** If there shall be a destitute person among you, any of your brethren in any of your cities, in the land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you, you shall not harden your heart or close your hand against your destitute brother. Rather, you shall open your hand to him . . . You shall surely give to him, and let your heart not feel bad when you give him, for in return for this matter, Hashem, your G-d, will bless you in all your deeds and in your every undertaking.

Note that the Torah attaches significance to the hand that performs the mitzvah of tzedakah. Regarding the negative

aspect, the lo-ta'aseh, it says: **"You shall not harden your heart or close your hand"**; regarding the positive aspect, the aseh, it says: **"You shall open your hand to him."** For, by giving tzedakah with one's right hand, one negates the klipah of **"יד"** that destroyed the Beis HaMikdash. Therefore, HKB"H commanded that the Beis HaMikdash be built with the donations of Yisrael, as it states (Shemos 25, 2): **"ויקחו לי תרומה: מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי"**—**and they shall take to Me a portion, from every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion.**

This then is the deeper significance of the admonition: **"You shall not harden your heart or close your hand against your destitute brother. Rather, you shall open your hand to him."** By opening our hand to graciously give tzedakah, we successfully subjugate the klipah of the hand. By fulfilling this mitzvah, we will hasten the arrival of the geulah, in keeping with the teaching of Chazal (B.B. 10a): **"גדולה צדקה שמקרבת את הגאולה"**—**tzedakah is great, because it brings the geulah closer.** It should be swiftly in our times! Amen.



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