



PURIM

THE KEDUSHA OF THE DAY

The *Zohar* notes that Purim is similar to Yom HaKipurim. This means that what is accomplished on Yom Kippur by fasting can be accomplished on Purim by rejoicing. Furthermore, the very name *Kipurim* ("like Purim"), implies that Purim is the greater *Yom-Tov*, impacting a person more powerfully.

Indeed, *Chazal* teach that when *Moshiach* comes, all the *Yomim-Tovim* will cease to exist; only the *Yom-Tov* of Purim will remain. *Chassidus* explains that the *simcha* and *kedusha* of Purim are so great, that even when we have the *simcha* and *kedusha* of the *geulah*, Purim will still be special.

(תיקוני זוהר נ"ז ע"ב, מדרש משלי פ"ט, ד"ה להבין מאז"ל כל המועדים כ"ו תשס"ז וש"ט)

The author of *Chiddushei HaRim*, the first Rebbe of Ger, illustrated the powerful potential of Purim with a story:

There was once a Yid who set out on a journey, intending to commit a grievous sin, and took along five hundred gold rubles that he had patiently amassed over the years. On his way, he suddenly heard the heartfelt cries of a family in distress. They were being evicted for not paying their rent. His pity aroused, he gave them all the money that he had intended to use for the *aveira*.

His deed aroused such a great tumult in *Shamayim* that it was decided that whatever this man would decree, would materialize. However, to ensure that the privilege would not be misused, it was ordained that he become a drunkard.

Some time later, a terrible *tzara* descended upon the world. The Baal Shem Tov sent his *talmidim* to beg this drunken Yid to intercede and ask *HaShem* for mercy. They repeatedly found him drunk, until finally, catching him sober, they presented their request and he succeeded in abolishing the decree.

The *Chiddushei Harim* would conclude: Purim is a day of *eis ratzon*, when every Yid – like that drunkard – can accomplish great things, without limitation. However, to allow this to happen, one must make sure that the merrymaking will not interfere with this mighty potential.

(שפתי צדיק אות נ"ג)

In the Old Country, it was the custom in many

communities to celebrate Purim by appointing make-believe *rabbonim*, policemen, judges and other important public figures. One year in Ziditchov, the townspeople chose Reb Koppel (the nephew of the *tzaddik*, Reb Tzvi of Ziditchov) to be governor, and he in turn chose some of his fellow *chassidim* to act as his advisers.

On Purim day, that entire band of masqueraders first drank *LeChayim* and then marched off to the *tzaddik's* house, filled with lively spirits. Reb Tzvi treated the young "governor" with great respect, and asked him to remove the candle and meat tax that the government had recently imposed. The lively "governor" agreed, but when he was asked to repeal the army draft on the Jewish boys, he refused. No amount of begging, pleading or threatening could make him change his mind, and the *tzaddik* left the room in anger.

The following day, when the effects of the spirits had worn off, and fellow *chassidim* told Reb Koppel of what had happened the previous day, he had no recollection of it. In fact, he could barely believe the story.

Later that year, the *chassidim* realized what had occurred on Purim – for the candle and meat taxes were in fact removed, but the draft remained enforced.

(סיפורי חסידים זיין מועדים ע' 300)

THE SIMCHA OF PURIM

We read in the *Gemara* that on Purim one must drink "until he cannot differentiate (*ad d'lo yada*)" between 'cursed be Haman' and 'blessed be Mordechai.'"

The *Gemara* relates a story of two *amoraim*, Rabbah and Rav Zeira, who had their Purim *seuda* together, sharing profound secrets of the Torah over a number of cups of wine. However, Rav Zeira was so overwhelmed by the intense *kedusha* of Rabbah's revelations that his *neschama* left his body.

The following day, Rabbah *davened* for Rav Zeira and brought him back to life. The next year, he once again invited Rav Zeira to join him for the *seuda* and to share the deepest secrets of the Torah. Rav Zeira turned down the offer, saying, "Miracles don't happen every day..."

The Rebbe explains: The goal of *ad d'lo yada* (literally, "until he does not know...") is that a person reach a level of utter subservience

to *HaShem*, which is not limited by his own understanding, and through this, all undesirable perspectives will be washed away. As a result, one will have the strength to continue this *avoda* throughout the entire year.

(מגילה ז,ב, לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 1277)

The *Megillah* says that after the miracle of Purim, the Yidden were blessed with *simcha* ("joy"), which *Chazal* understand to mean that they were now able to celebrate the *Yomim-Tovim*. The Rebbe explains that although *goyim* also have holidays, they celebrate them with drinking and unbridled conduct. Yidden, by contrast, even when they rejoice and drink they become closer to *HaShem*, and heighten their *yiras Shamayim* and their *kedusha*.

(לקו"ש ח"ג ע' 920, ח"ד ע' 1274, וראה שוע"ר סי' רצ"ב ס"ג)

On the first Purim after his *chasuna*, the Alter Rebbe gave a non-literal exposition of the *avoda* of attaining the level of *ad d'lo yada*. On Purim, he said, we must ensure that the *lo* – literally, "the No," that is, the things that are forbidden – should be *yada* ("known"). What we are supposed to do is well known, but one must also know what is forbidden, so that it can be treated with extra caution.

In order to ensure that Purim does not lead to undesirable behavior, the Rebbe encouraged people to take precautions – by fulfilling the *mitzva* only because the Torah commanded us to do so, and by following the *takkanos* limiting the drinking of *mashkeh*, bearing in mind that *mashkeh* in itself is repulsive.

(ספר השיחות תש"ה ע' 27, היכל מנחם ח"ג ע' רנ"ה, ת"מ תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 1179)

The Rebbe related how the Rama would disguise himself on *Motzoei Purim* and make rounds amongst the houses of Cracow, reminding the residents to *daven Maariv*.

(שיח"ק תשל"ז ח"א ע' 608)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Is the merrymaking on *Purim* a source of *brachos* or a distraction from it?
- How does one rejoice on *Purim* in a way that brings him closer to *HaShem*?

SOSOVER

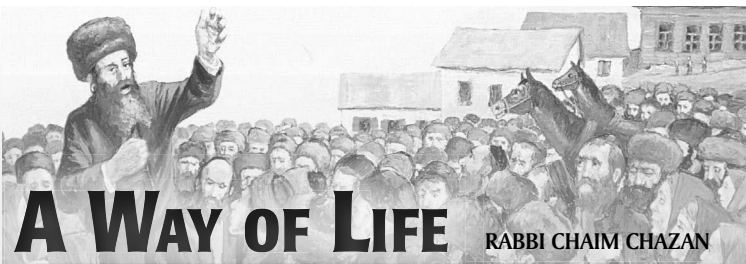
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A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

CURRENT EVENTS

י"א אדר

THE CHIDA

Reb Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai is known as the Chida. He was a great *posek*, a *mekubal*, a *shadar* (collector of funds) who travelled the world, and a great historian. He wrote over 100 *seforim* on a wide range of topics, many of which are published. He was a talmid of the Or Hachaim Hakadosh. He was born in ה'תפ"ד – 1724 and passed away in Livorno, France on the 11th of Adar, ה'תקס"ו – 1806.



The Medrash says that even if this is the only merit that they have, for this alone they are worthy of being redeemed. The Chida explains that this is the meaning of the words in davening, *כי לישועתך... את צמת דוד עבדך מהרה תצמיח...* "קוינו כל היום" We are asking Hashem to send us Moshiach immediately, and to the possible argument that we are undeserving, we say, "Because we hope for your salvation all day," implying that as a reward for awaiting Moshiach, we deserve to be redeemed.



It is told, in the name of Reb Yehoshua Rokeiach of Belz, that the Chida once asked a man from Chevron to accompany and serve him on one of his travels to serve him. During their journey, the man passed away. The Chida was very upset, for now he would be returning to Chevron without the man, and he had left as a healthy, strong individual. Suddenly, as he was thinking this, the man reappeared and began doing his job just as before. He accompanied the Chida until they reached Chevron. There too, the man carried on as before, until the first Friday night of their return. Then the Chida raised his hand heavenward, facing the servant, and called out, "Dai! Dai! Dai! (Enough! enough! enough!)" And the man vanished.

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

MATONOS LO'EVYONIM

What is the optimal way to perform the *mitzvah* of *matonos lo'evyonim*?

- The *mitzvah* of *matonos lo'evyonim* is to give a gift to two needy individuals. The gift should consist of something that the receiver can benefit from on Purim, such as money or food.
- The *Mishneh Brura* brings in the name of the *Ritva* that two *prutos* are sufficient to fulfill the *mitzvah* (in US currency that would be less than ten cents). However, many *poskim* hold that one must give at least enough to cover the cost of a meal. The size of this meal is subject to further debate among *poskim*.
- Although one fulfils the obligation of *matonos lo'evyonim* by giving a small sum to two people, the *Rambam* writes: It is preferable to spend more on *matonos lo'evyonim* than on the *Purim seudah* and *mishloach monos*, because there is no greater and more beautiful *simcha* than to gladden the hearts of the poor.
- One may not use *maaser* money for the actual *mitzvah* of *matonos lo'evyonim*, but it is permissible to use *maaser* to give to additional needy people. On Purim, one should not examine the worthiness of the *tzedakah* cause, rather donate to anyone who requests.
- One who will not encounter needy people on Purim, should appoint an agent who will give on his behalf, either in person or by phone. If for whatever reason this is unfeasible on Purim itself, the consensus of *poskim* is that one should donate before Purim in a manner that the poor people will receive it on Purim. However, if that was not taken care of before Purim and one does not know of any needy people and can't appoint an agent, one should set aside an amount on Purim to be distributed it after Purim.
- *Matonos lo'evyonim* can be given to anyone who doesn't have a steady income that is sufficient for his and his family's basic needs, and doesn't own assets which he is able to sell, other than items for his and his family's personal use such as a home and household wares. One can also give to someone who has an income but doesn't have the resources with which to pay for an exceptional expense such as a medical problem or making a wedding etc.

שו"ע או"ח סי' תרצד, מ"א בשם השל"ה, מ"ב שם, ש"ת סק"א, כף החיים סק"ז, פתחי תשובה שם, צפנת פענח הל' מגילה ע' לה, שו"ת קנין תורה ח"ג סי' קג, שו"ת מהר"י אסאד סי' רז, שו"ת חלקת יעקב ח"א סי' קב. שו"ע יו"ד סי' רנג ס"א, צדקה ומשפט (בלוי) פ"ב ס"ב-ס"א.

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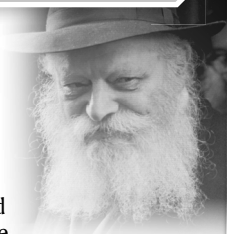
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A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

KREPLACH

Reb Chessed Halbershtam, an assistant in the Rebbetzin's home, remembers many instances where he saw the Rebbe's sensitivity to the Rebbetzin's feelings.



"It happened once that as I served the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin soup at the *Purim seudah*, the Rebbe mentioned the *minhag* of eating *kreplach* on Purim. The Rebbetzin looked very upset. She hastily apologized, for she had forgotten to make the *kreplach*.

"The Rebbe tasted from the soup, but stopped eating. After a while, I got up to serve the chicken course, and the Rebbe asked that I leave the soup on the table. When I brought the chicken, the Rebbe took a piece of the chicken, wrapped it in *challa*, and dropped it into the soup.

"Now we have *kreplach*," he said to the Rebbetzin with a smile..."

לזכות ר' יוסף יהושע משה הלוי בן שרה רייזל שי'



347.471.1770



info@LmaanYishmeu.com



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