



PURIM

A Potent Day

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 אור נ"ג)

For a number of years, the *tzaddik*, Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, lived in seclusion, not even receiving his chassidim for *yehidus*. One Purim, the holy Reb Yechiel Meir of Gostynin found himself in Kotzk and knocked hard on the Rebbe's door.

"What's this?" the Rebbe asked when he opened up.

Reb Yechiel Meir replied, "The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that on Purim, 'Whoever stretches out his hand must be given *tzedaka*.' Rebbe, I am naked and want to be clothed; teach me!"

The Kotzker Rebbe let him in, and the two *tzaddikim* spent many rich hours together. From then on, the chassidim of Kotzk treated Reb Yechiel Meir with utmost respect.

(סיפורי חסידים זוין מועדים ע' 303)

Holy Conduct

The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that one should wear fine clothes when going to hear the *Megilla*. In fact the holy *talmid* of the *AriZal*, Reb Chaim Vital, would immerse in the *mikveh* and then put on *Shabbos* clothes in honor of Purim.

It is also written that after returning home from *shul* on Purim night, one should have the table set and candles lit, and partake of a *seuda* in honor of Purim.

(רמ"א סי' תרצ"ג, כף החיים שם סק"ג, רמ"א ס"א)

Throughout the month of Adar, the conduct of the *tzaddik*, Reb Shmuel Abba of Zichlin, was very joyful, and on Purim his *avoda* expressed extraordinary *simcha*. He had harsh words for those who did not treat the day properly, or who did not dress in their *Shabbos* clothes in honor of the *Megillah* reading.

One year, his *beis medrash* was filled with all the townsmen who had come to hear the *Megillah*. All were dressed in their *Shabbos* best, except for one man, who wore his weekday garb. When some chassidim questioned his behavior, the man responded (playing on a common Yiddish folk-expression), "Purim is not a *Yom-Tov* and fever is not a sickness." At that moment, the *tzaddik* entered, gave this fellow a piercing look and said, "Purim is a *Yom-Tov*, and fever is a sickness."

As soon as he arrived home that night, this man suddenly fell ill with a raging fever. When it only worsened as the days wore on, he sent a message to the *tzaddik*, asking for a *bracha*.

The *tzaddik* replied, "Now he knows that fever is really a sickness, and he needs to know that Purim is really a *Yom-Tov*."

The man suffered in sickness the entire year, until the following Purim.

(סיפורי חזו"ן מועדים ע' 271, ובס' הצאצאים ע' 62 הביאו על אדה"ז)

Appropriate Mitzvos

The *Megillah* records that after the miracle of Purim, the Yidden were granted *orah*, which means "light." *Chazal* explain that this refers to their freedom to study Torah. It is therefore appropriate to study some Torah before the *seuda* of Purim, preferably the *dinim* of Pesach. Why Pesach? Since Purim marks thirty days before that *Yom-Tov*, it is considered a fitting time to begin preparing for it by learning its *halachos*.

(מגילה ט"ז ע"ב, רמ"א סי' תרצ"ה ס"ב, תו"מ תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 410)

The Rambam writes: It is preferable to be particularly generous with *matanos la'evyonim*, giving more money for the needy than the amount used for the *seuda* and *mishloach manos* combined. There is no greater and more beautiful *simcha* than cheering up those less fortunate, and one who does so resembles *HaShem*.

(רמב"ם הל' מגילה פ"ב הי"ז)

The Rebbe once said: It is obvious that we must distance ourselves entirely from anything negative ("cursed be Haman"), and seek to treasure and embrace all good things ("blessed be Mordechai"). That applies at any time. The unique aspect of Purim is that we can accomplish this by allowing our *neshama* to express itself freely. This kind of *avoda* is superior to serving *HaShem* by means of conscious thought (*yada*). Indeed, in this kind of *avoda* we can resemble the Yidden at the time of the Purim story who, when the inner power of their *neshamos* surfaced, fulfilled all the *mitzvos* faithfully, even to the point of *mesiras nefesh*.

(לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 1280)

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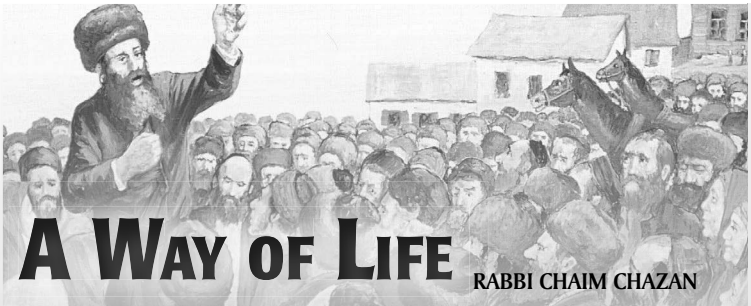


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OUR HEROES

Reb Shmuel Munkes



Reb Shmuel Munkes, a resident of the town Kalisk, was one of the greatest chassidim of the Alter Rebbe, a great *baal madreiga* and known for his cleverness and intelligence. His unique way in *avodas Hashem* is recognized for its joyousness and humorousness through which he conveyed deep ideas and messages.



Reb Shmuel Munkes once suspended himself from the gate leading to the Alter Rebbe's *beis medrash*. When the Chassidim questioned him about his strange perch, he told them, "In front of a shoemaker shop, there hangs a shoe; in front of a tailor's workplace, there hangs a garment; in front of a Rebbe's *shul* there should hang a chossid."

The Chossid Reb Chaim Mordechai Perlov notes that Reb Shmuel was not simply a joker and explains Reb Shmuel's remark as follows:

The reason why a shoemaker and tailor hang their wares at their shop is because that item contains, and therefore expresses, the qualities of the craftsman. Similarly, a chossid must be such that one can recognize on him that he is the Rebbe's handiwork. However, there is a difference: the shoe and garment are hung by the artisan, but the chossid is not hung by the Rebbe but by the chossid himself (as Reb Shmuel did). This means that in order for the Rebbe's efforts to have their effect, the chossid must 'suspend himself,' with total dedication to the Rebbe's directives.



At first, when the Russian officers came to arrest the Alter Rebbe, he hid himself, and they were unable to find him. When they returned sometime later, the Alter Rebbe asked Reb Shmuel Munkes what he should do. Reb Shmuel said that he thinks the Rebbe should go. "But it is dangerous," the Alter Rebbe countered. "No matter," said Reb Shmuel. "For if you are Rebbe, then nothing will harm you, but if not, what right did you have to take away the enjoyment in *gashmiyus* from so many thousands of Yidden?"

The Rebbe once commented: The Rebbeim toiled to remove, or at least minimize, the enjoyment had from the physical world, to enable us to come closer to Hashem. If this goal which they set out to accomplish is not achieved, of what good is the road leading to it? We must put in effort to achieve what the Rebbeim desired and toiled for.

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

Mishloach Monos

What is the required *shiur* (size or volume) of the foods of *mishloach monos* necessary to fulfill the obligation?

■ *Mishloach monos* must consist of two foods that have a *chashivus*,¹ being substantial and respectable. *Poskim*² discuss whether the level of *chashivus* is set according to the standards of the sender or of the receiver. For example: a respectable gift by a sender of modest means may not be important to a wealthy receiver. Conversely, a poorer receiver is likely to be glad with a smaller *mishloach monos*, though the wealthy sender would not consider it substantial.

■ Some say³ that this question depends on a well known *machlokes* on the purpose of *mishloach monos*: (a) The 'Trumas Hadeshen'⁴ holds that *mishloach monos* is to provide a lavish *seudah* to enjoy and celebrate Purim. Wealthy people may also be given *mishloach monos* so that the poor will not be embarrassed to accept gifts. (b) The 'Monos Haleivi'⁵ holds that its purpose is to increase peace and friendship, contrary to Haman's claims that the Yidden are dispersed.

■ Thus: If *mishloach monos* is for the *seudah*, it would depend on the means and status of the *receiver*, whether it would be fit to be used for *his seudah*. But if it is a gesture of friendship, then it depends on the *sender*, because when the gift is substantial on *his* part it is a display of friendship.

■ However, some disagree⁶ and hold that even if *mishloach monos* is for the *seudah*, it still depends on the status of the sender only. The reason being, it is unreasonable to say that when giving to someone of higher standard than oneself one would be obligated to give more lavish foods. Since the reason one can send to a wealthy individual is only so not to distinguish between rich and poor, it is unreasonable to say that this obligation would be *greater* than the original *mitzvah* to provide a *seudah* for the poor.

■ Many *poskim*⁷ point out that respectability is not set by the Torah measurements of *kezayis* or *revi'is*, but depends on the culture of the time and particular place. The minimum would be enough for one portion of a meal.

■ In final analysis one should endeavor that the *mishloach monos* be substantial both according to status of the sender and receiver. It should be noted that all of the above applies only to the one *mishloach monos* with which one intends to fulfill his obligation. The rest are merely to add joy and do not have these regulations.

1. ראה ביאור הלכה סי' תרצ"ה ד"ה חייב לשלוח בשם חיי אדם כלל קנה של"א, וש"ת ציץ אליעזר ח"ד סי' סה.
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5. ערוך השלחן סי' תרצ"ה ס"ט, אשל אברהם בוטשאטש שם.
6. נט"ג שם בשם שו"ת תולדות יעקב סי' לא.
7. ערוך השלחן סי' תרצ"ה ס"ט, אשל אברהם בוטשאטש שם.

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A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

"Why Frighten Yidden?"



Reb Itchke Ganzburg, the legendary *Chabad* activist of Eretz Yisroel, came up with an original method how to spread Torah messages throughout the land. He would supply a lightweight plane company with thousands of pamphlets, and before an upcoming *Yom Tov*, the planes would fly over the city and dispense the literature.

With the Rebbe's approval, this project took off, and showed much success, for a few years. But on the eve of *Purim* 5729, the Rebbe suddenly sent a message to *Tzeirei Chabad* in Eretz Yisroel, not to send these planes anymore.

In a *yechidus* with Reb Itchke, the Rebbe explained the directive:

"Due to the fragile security situation in Eretz Yisroel, when people hear the sound of airplanes, they may be struck with panic. So I thought to myself, why frighten *Yidden*?"

Reb Itchke left the *yechidus* awe inspired; the Rebbe, who had never been in Eretz Yisroel, was so sensitive to such a detail of life there, while none of the local activists had thought of it! "When you care," he said, "you really put yourself in their shoes".

לזכות השליה שלום דובער בן לובה