

• קונטרס בעניני פורים •

— *Divrei Torah on Purim* —

written by the talmidim of  
Missouri Torah Institute

פורים תשפ"א — Purim 2021



MISSOURI TORAH INSTITUTE

– ישיבה ומתיבתא ד'מיזורי –

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חזקיהו משה יעקב בן שלמה ע"ה





# Dear Friends,

In honor of Purim, we would like to share a few Divrei Torah with you which were written by some of our wonderful talmidim.

Your friendship and support allow the students to grow and the holy Torah to be learned each and every day.

In the zechus of your partnership, may you and your family merit all the brachos that are reserved for those that support Torah.

We hope you enjoy the Divrei Torah.

Wishing you and your family a Freilichen Purim!



Rabbi Dovid  
Fromowitz

Rabbi Avroham  
Goldman

Rabbi Shmuel  
Wasser

# Purim on Erev Shabbos

Yosef Yehuda Kamin & Yonah Rosenzweig

This year, with פורים falling out on Friday, we will be having our special פורים סעודה on Friday, and enjoying our שבת סעודה on Friday night. It seems appropriate to discuss an interesting contrast between these two obligatory meals.

The גמרא makes clear that a goal of the פסח יום טוב is to make known the miracle of יציאת מצרים (פסחים קיב). Similarly, פורים makes known the great miracle of מגילה ג' כלל ישראל's salvation from the hands of the wicked. In order to facilitate spreading the knowledge of the נס, on פסח we drink the מילה ג', and on פורים we read the מילה ג'.

שבת, on the other hand, does not include any goal of making a miracle known. The purpose of making things known is to educate outsiders about a particular topic, but שבת is for us and not outsiders. As we say during שחרית שבת:

"ולא נתתו ה' אלקינו לגויי הארצות, ולא הנחלתו מלכנו לעובדי פסילים, וגם במנוחתו לא ישכנו ערלים. כי לישראל עמך נתת באהבה, לזרע יעקב אשר בם בחרת"

"You did not give the Shabbos, Hashem our G-d, to the nations of the world, nor did you make it the inheritance, Our King, of the worshippers of false gods. In its rest, the uncircumcised shall not participate, only to Israel your people, have you given it in love, to the seed of Yaakov whom you have chosen."

May all of כלל ישראל take advantage of both of these messages - acting to publicize the miracles and חסד that הקב"ה has done for us, as well as basking in the personal relationship that we enjoy with הקב"ה - to grow ever stronger in our עבודת ה'.

Adapted from "פורים in a New Light" written by Rabbi Pinchas Stolper based on the teachings of Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner זצ"ל.

## “There is a Nation...”

Dovid Orrin

And **המן** - “ויאמר **המן** למלך **אחשורוש** ישנו עם אחד...” (אסתר ג:ח) said to King **אחשורוש** “There is a certain nation...”

The **פסוק** describes **המן** beginning his pitch to **אחשורוש** to wipe out the Jewish people with a description of how the nation of **כלל ישראל** is so different than all the other nations. However, there is something strange about the **פסוק** - why is the **מגילה** using this unusual language of “ישנו”? The **מדרש רבה** provides two explanations.

The first explanation is that the word “ישנו” comes from the word **ישן** (sleep). **המן** was hinting that **ה** was sleeping and therefore **כלל ישראל** was vulnerable to attack. **ה** then invoked the **פסוק** of **הנה** “**הנה** **כלל ישראל** never sleeps” and punishes **המן** with **מדה כנגד מדה**. “Because you [**המן**] made such an assumption, it will be through sleep that I will destroy you from the world.” (This is seen in the **מגילה**, as the disruption of **אחשורוש**’s sleep is the beginning of the downfall of **המן**.)

A second explanation given by the **מדרש** is that the word “ישנו” comes from the word **שן** - tooth. **המן** was saying that the Jews have large “teeth” - they are constantly eating and saying it’s for the sake of **יום טוב** or **שבת**. He claimed that the amount of money they spend on these holidays diminishes the overall money in the world. There is an almost never-ending cycle of reasons to have big **סעודות**; there is **שבת** every week, **ראש חודש** every month, **סוכות**, **שבועות**, **פסח**, etc. **אחשורוש** responded by countering to **המן** that the Jewish people are just keeping their **תורה**, so why hold it against them? **המן** argued that because they don’t also keep our holidays, they are being disrespectful to us and deserve to be killed. **ה** responded to this harsh claim of **המן** by “answering” - “**רשע!** You are being critical of the **ימים טובים** of **ישראל**? You will see that in the end, your downfall will lead to the creation of a new **יום טוב** for **ישראל**!”

May we be **זוכה** to appreciate that **ה** protects and takes care of us at all times, and may we utilize the **יום טוב** of **פורים** to continue to celebrate and rejoice in our special relationship with the **בורא עולם**.

# The Mitzvah of משלוח מנות

Gavin Kornblum

One of the most unique מצוות of פורים is משלוח מנות, sending gifts of food to others. Why do we send משלוח מנות? What is the historical significance of משלוח מנות? In פרשת לך לך, the פסוק describes each of the four kings אברהם goes to battle with. The fourth king is described as “ותדעל מלך גוים”. The תורה specifies that he is king over many nations, not just a small town or a singular nation. Each one of the four kings represents a different one of the kingdoms that ruled over ארץ ישראל and בני ישראל during its history. תדעל refers to אדום/Rome. Rome is different from the other three kingdoms since the others each ruled over one kingdom for a certain amount of time, but Rome’s rulership stretched over many centuries and over many different countries. This is why תדעל is called, “מלך גוים.” After Abrahamic times, אדום became known as עשו/עמלק and later in history as אדום/Rome. We are currently in the גלות of Rome. From Rome, the Edomites and their descendants create and send all the lies and anti-Semitic tropes to the nations of the world. These lies, such as the Jewish Space Laser and the Elders of Zion, continue to surround the Jews. אדום continues to be a thorn in the side of our people, and they will continue to be there until משיח comes, במהרה בימינו.

On פורים, we see עמלק/אדום influencing another nation to try to destroy the Jewish people. This is shown through המן הרשע and his control over אחשוורוש, king of Persia. During the times of the תנאים and אמוראים, the Jewish leaders used to travel to Rome to plead for the needs of the Jewish people. Before they left, they would study פרשת וישלח which includes the story of יעקב and his confrontation with עשו, his brother. יעקב sends gifts to pacify עשו and make him capable of seeing יעקב without attacking him. These פסוקים contain a hint for future generations of what בני ישראל’s relationship would be like with Rome. So, when the sages went before Rome, they would send gifts/bribes before they arrived. When יעקב sent gifts to עשו, he did so in order to try to calm and pacify him. He didn’t do this out of love, but rather out of fear. When giving gifts to a friend, it shows brotherhood and friendship. In the case of יעקב, or the sages, these gifts are only for the sake of survival.

On **פורים**, when we celebrate our victory over the **עמלקים**, we no longer have to fear **אדום**, at least for a day, and because of that we don't have to send gifts or bribes to appease them. Instead, we are able to send gifts to our friends and family to show brotherly love. In fact, to help emphasize that today's gift-giving is all in the name of **אהבה** and togetherness, it is actually preferable that one first give gifts to someone he has had a problem with in the past. Reaching out to give a gift to this type of person shows that he forgives him and that he is putting in effort to try to rebuild the friendship. After one has reached out to those individuals, he gives gifts to those with whom he already has a loving relationship.

May we be **זוכה** to use the day of **פורים** to strengthen our bonds of love with our fellow Jews so that we can very soon see the day when we will no longer need to send any gifts to **גוים** in power.

Adapted from "פורים in a New Light" written by Rabbi Pinchas Stolper based on the teachings of Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner זצ"ל.

# Open our Hearts

## Avrohom Yosef Staum

We are all familiar with the famous statement of **מיחייב** of **מסכת מגילה** (ז) in **רבא** - **אניש לבסומי בפוריא עד דלא ידע בין ארור המן לברוך מרדכי פורים**, one is obligated to become intoxicated to the point that he doesn't know the difference between "cursed is **המן**" and "blessed is **מרדכי**."

The question asked by Rav Yitzchak Issac Sher, **לזצ"ל**, is obvious. Why would **לחז"ל** set up an obligation to get drunk? Drunkenness is a disgusting trait. Furthermore, getting drunk can lead to terrible results, as we know from the stories of **נח** and **לוט**.

In addition, we have to understand this idea of not knowing the difference between "**ארור המן**" and "**ברוך מרדכי**". How drunk does a person need to get in order to mix up such an elementary idea? How could a person think, no matter how much they drink, that wicked people are good, and righteous people are bad?

There are many approaches to answering these questions, and the following is one of the approaches that Rav Yitzchak Issac Sher relates.

Another **גמרא** in (יד.) **מסכת מגילה** says that when **אחשורוש** removed his ring to give **המן** the power to carry out his terrible decree against the Jews, they were more inspired to do **תשובה** than they were after the rebuke of all 48 **נביאים** and 7 **נביאות** that had up until that point prophesied to **כלל ישראל**. The inspired change brought about through a terrible decree hanging over them was so much more powerful, as the **גמרא** says **למוטב ואילו הסרת טבעת החזירתו למוטב** - that [the **נביאים**] did not succeed in setting the Jews on the correct path, but the removal of [**אחשורוש**'s] ring did set the Jews straight.

This **גמרא** reveals an incredible, though logical, human dynamic. **לחז"ל** are teaching us that when our senses are stimulated, when we feel something, we are more moved than if we simply utilize our minds to recognize the truth. Therefore, feeling is more effective than thinking for purifying our hearts and doing **תשובה**. The way Rav Yisroel Salanter expresses this idea is that "the mind doesn't leave its box; however, **התפעלות** - being emotionally moved - surpasses all the bounds of nature. This is why, through **התפעלות**, we can reach levels which are above nature, like humility."

Rav Yitzchak Issac Sher compares the generation of **משה רבינו** and the generation of **לחז"ל**. **מרדכי הצדיק**. **לחז"ל** tell us that at the time of the **פורים** story, the Jews accepted the **תורה** on an even higher level than at the time of **תורה**. What was the difference? Rav Yitzchak Issac Sher explains that at the time of **מתן תורה**, our acceptance of the **תורה** was from an intellectual recognition of **ה'**, and therefore was limited. However, at the time of the **פורים** story, the levels that we reached were because of an emotional recognition of **ה'** which therefore enabled us to achieve much higher levels.

Now we can understand a reason why **חז"ל** set up an obligation to drink on **פורים**. The emotional recognition, **התפעלות**, brings us closer to **ה'** than the recognition of our intellect. To remind us of this important concept (by doing an action, which is, of course, more effective than just thinking about it), **חז"ל** established that we drink on **פורים**, which affects us so that our mind is subdued and we are more connected to emotion.

(It is important to understand that, of course, the intellect plays a massive role in our **ה'**, **עבודת ה'**, and is not meant to be replaced by emotion. We must understand the **תורה** and **מצוות** to the best of our abilities. This **מצוה** of drinking on **פורים** is just a reminder of the concept that emotional recognition gets us further.)

We can also now understand why **חז"ל** set up a specific amount one is supposed to drink - until one does not know the difference between **"ברוך מרדכי"** and **"ארור המן"**. **מרדכי**, as a member of the Sanhedrin, symbolizes the intellect. This is because the intellectual powers of the Sanhedrin were incredibly acute. **המן**, on the other hand, symbolizes suffering, because of all the suffering he caused the Jewish people.

During the year, we say **"ברוך מרדכי"** and **"ארור המן"**, meaning that **"blessed is the mind"** and **"cursed is suffering"**. This is because we try to sharpen our minds throughout the year to recognize our Creator, and become stronger in our belief, love, and awe of Him. This is the tack that the **נביאים** took in arousing the nation to do **תשובה**.

On **פורים**, we turn things around. We are meant to emphasize thinking about all the great kindness **ה'** does for us, which arouses our emotions. This **התפעלות** brings us to further purity of heart and brings us closer to **ה'** by accepting the **תורה** with desire. We are commanded to drink, which brings us to a heightened sense of emotion. Once we reach this level, our mind is mixed up so that we can, in a way, see more clearly. We say **"ברוך המן"** suffering is good, because suffering is what brings **כלל ישראל** to a high level in their relationship with **ה' הקב"ה** through the emotional reaction to that suffering, just as the decree of **המן** brought that emotional closeness to the Jewish people at the time. **מרדכי**, meaning the intellect, is **"cursed"** because it cannot get us to the same level of purity and closeness to Hashem.

May we all be able to keep this **מצוה** properly, in the way **ה'** wants us to, and be uplifted from our special service of **ה'** on **פורים**. May we all be **זוכה** to accept the **תורה** from a feeling of love, and come closer to our Father in Heaven.

# The Spotlight of אמת

Yosef Zehnwirth

וכל זה איננו שוה לי אמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי חנינא בשעה שראה המן את מרדכי יושב בשער המלך אמר כל זה אינו שוה לי כדרב חסדא דאמר רב חסדא זה בא בפרובבולי וזה בא בפרובבוטי (מגילה דף טו)

היה מתבייש ממנו כשראה אותו בשער המלך בכל שעה והיה מיצר לו ואמר וכל זה איננו שוה לי וגו' (מהרש"א שם)

The **גמרא** in **מגילה** describes how **המן** was telling his family and confidantes all about his **כבוד ועושר**, how he had a lot of children, and how he was invited to the queen and king's private **סעודה**. Yet despite having so much in his life, **המן** still says “**וכל זה איננו שוה לי**,” that all of that honor is worth nothing to me when I see **מרדכי** sitting in the **שער המלך** and not bowing down to me.” Why was this? The **גמרא** explains that at an earlier point in time, **המן** had sold himself to **מרדכי** for loaves of bread, and therefore (elaborates the **מהרש"א**) he felt terrible **בושה** (embarrassment) when he saw **מרדכי** because it reminded him of the fact that he was really an **עבד** (slave).

Under closer scrutiny, it seems strange that **המן**, the second-most powerful man in the world, the man who wielded the king's signet ring, the man to whom all of **פרס ומדי** (save one) bowed down, would feel so embarrassed by seeing **מרדכי**. Presumably, **מרדכי** was unable to reclaim **המן** as his **עבד**; had he been able to assert his ownership over **המן**, he would have done so already in order to save **כלל ישראל**. The fact that long ago **מרדכי** had purchased **המן** is of little practical relevance at this time and should have been easily ignored by **המן** as something which had no impact on his life whatsoever. Instead, it consumes him to the point that he finds all of the wealth and power at his disposal to be worthless! How can this be?

The answer must be that because **מרדכי** knew the truth about **המן**'s status, and **המן** knew that **מרדכי** knew, whenever he saw **מרדכי** in the **שער המלך** he was reminded of that truth that he was really an imposter – an **עבד** masquerading as a powerful minister. The fact that throughout the rest of his day he was treated with tremendous **כבוד** and nobody else knew or cared about his past did not enable **המן** to ignore **מרדכי** and keep on pretending. The **אמת** in front of his face could not be brushed off or forgotten, and it

affected **המן** to such an extent that it spoiled all the good things he had and could have enjoyed. The undeniable reality of knowing he was a faker made his state of existence one of lowliness and embarrassment.

This highlights the **כה** that **אמת** has to penetrate the heart of a human being. One can be a great actor and pretender, but when something happens which puts the truth into the forefront, the pretense disappears and the full effects of that **אמת** are felt in a deep, powerful way by the individual. We can also see from **המן** that attempting to squelch the **אמת** and continuing to live the life of a lie is very difficult and uncomfortable.

May we be **זוכה** to use the power of **אמת** not as a cause of **בושה** but rather to help us understand ourselves, to realize when we are ignoring reality, and to use it to gain insight and clarity that will help us grow in our **עבודת ה'.**

# Knocking out נגיעות

Abe Schulman

Before אסתר goes to אחשורוש, מרדכי tells her, אל תדמי בנפשך להמלט בית, אחשורוש ומי יודע אם לעת כזאת הגעת למלכות. Do not be afraid of going to אחשורוש and potentially getting killed, because it is possible that for this reason - going to אחשורוש on behalf of כלל ישראל - you became queen.

It seems that מרדכי was giving אסתר words of תוכחה - don't let fear hold you back from doing what you are supposed to do - do the right thing! The מהר"ל explains that the real reason why אסתר was hesitant was not because she was scared of going to אחשורוש, but rather she thought that perhaps it would be better to wait a little longer and go to אחשורוש at a more opportune time. מרדכי, however, disagreed with her assessment and thought that it was important that she go immediately. With this new understanding, מרדכי's response to אסתר doesn't seem to make sense. Why did מרדכי tell אסתר to not let fear be a factor in her decision? Her reasoning had nothing to do with fear! Furthermore, why didn't מרדכי explain his arguments to אסתר as to why it was the best time to go to אחשורוש and not delay, instead of telling her to make sure fear did not impact her decision?

R' Henach Leibowitz, in the sefer חידושי הלב, answers beautifully that the reason why מרדכי told אסתר not to let her fear of going to אחשורוש influence her thought process was because he knew that on some very small subconscious level, it was possible that fear was impacting her decision-making and leading her to come to the incorrect conclusion - that it would be better to wait. Therefore, he warned her not to let the fear affect her. If he could successfully remove the distorting effects of her fear, that would enable her to make the right decision on her own. The reason why he didn't explain the intellectual merits of going to אחשורוש immediately, instead of waiting, was because he didn't think that would make as big of an impact as a warning against letting fear blur her vision.

We can learn two incredible lessons from the explanation of the חידושי הלב. Firstly, sometimes our decision making can be impacted by even the smallest of reasons. We therefore have to be very careful to think about why we do everything that we do, to ensure that we are making the right decisions without personal fears or other emotions clouding our intellect. If מרדכי thought that אסתר המלכה, a true צדקה, could let a subtle influence impact

a decision on which hinged the lives of the entire **כלל ישראל**, how much more so do we have to be careful when making our own life decisions.

The second important lesson to be learned from this, is that when one sees a person who is being impacted by a **נגיעה** (bias), it's more effective to attempt to remove that small **נגיעה** than to explain to him why his expressed perspective is wrong. The reason for this is that the person will be convinced that he is right and it may be impossible to explain to him why his opinion is wrong while the small subconscious thought is still affecting him. It's more constructive to neutralize and remove the **נגיעה** so that he can understand on his own why his decision may be incorrect.

May we be **זוכה** to receive **סייעתא דשמיא** from **ה"קב** to be able to recognize any **נגיעות** we may have, rid ourselves of them, and make clear and correct decisions that will align with the **רצון ה'**.

# All for the Best

Eli Silverman

מיחייב איניש לבסומי בפוריא עד דלא ידע בין ארור המן לברוך מרדכי (מגילה דף ז:)

The **גמרא** in **מגילה** brings down a saying from **רבא**: “Every man is obligated to get intoxicated on **פורים** until he doesn’t know the difference between **ארור המן** and **ברוך מרדכי**.” What is the purpose of reaching this level of drunkenness that one is unsure about basic facts? It seems very odd that we’re obligated to lose our **שכל** (sense of logical reasoning) and start thinking things which are simply false.

Perhaps the answer is that **רבא** obviously isn’t telling us to be unsure about which is which. Rather, **רבא** is telling us to have a certain mindset. The same way **מרדכי** was vital and integral in **ה**’s grand plan, so was **המן**. Of course, **מרדכי** was a **צדיק** and **המן** was a **רשע**, but someone who has **בטחון** in **ה** believes that everything **ה** sends his way is for the best. **רבא** is telling us to strive for a level of complete internalization of the idea that even when seemingly terrible events occur, like **המן** trying to wipe out the Jews, it’s a message from **ה**, and can be used as an opportunity for growth.

**ל** tell us: “The same way one makes a **ברכה** on the good, so too one makes a **ברכה** on the bad.” Why would you ever make a **ברכה** on something bad? Because even the “bad” is good. However, we, in our limited wisdom, perceive it as bad. That’s why when something good happens we make the **ברכה** of **הטוב והמטיב** (the One who is good and does good) and when something “bad” happens we make the **ברכה** of **דיין האמת** (the Truthful Judge) - because we can’t completely understand that this “bad” is truly good. In the next world, however, we’ll make **הטוב והמטיב** on everything because we will have a greater clarity of **ה**’s perfect plan.

By drinking alcohol (responsibly), with the right intent, we can elevate ourselves to higher spiritual levels as we begin to understand **ה**’s ways better than we normally can - and understand that everything is for the best. With this mindset, we can achieve true happiness knowing that **ה**, in His infinite wisdom, is always doing what’s best for us.

(Perhaps this is also why **ארור המן** and **ברוך מרדכי** have the same **גימטריה** (numerical value) of 502- to teach us this lesson.)

Freilichen  
Purim!



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