

Clown or Crown, which looks best?



פרשת תצוה
Purim Edition
י"ג אדר תש"ע

February 27, 2010

Candle Lighting:	5:24
זמן קריאת שמע:	8:43
Real קריאת שמע:	9:19
First תפלה:	9:51
Second תפלה:	10:15
שקיעה	5:43
הבדלה Earliest:	6:33

All times are for The Five Towns

(50 minutes)

This week's amazing issue of the Ateres HaShavua is sponsored by **The Warsawsky Family** In honor of the engagement of their daughter to Yossi Wagner

This week's edition of the Ateres HaShavua is sponsored by

The Davies and Friedman Families
לזכר נשמת

נוחם משה בן יוסף א"ה
Whose Yartzeit is on
י"א אדר
נעמי איסל בת יצחק א"ה
Whose Yartzeit is on
י"ח אדר

Inside This Issue

Mussar...	Page 2
Hashkafa...	Page 2
Halachos...	Page 3
Focus...	Page 7
Emes...	Page 8
Mitzvos...	Page 8

With All Due Honor

Netanel Rosensweig, 12th Grade

The very last vessel that Hashem commanded Moshe to make was the Mizbeach Hazahav- the golden altar. The Sforno, Ramban, and many others ask why Hashem mentions this over here after talking about the Bigdei Kehuna; it should have mentioned it back in Parshas Terumah when it was talking about the Menora and the Shulchan?

The Sforno explains that there are three main objectives in all of the Keilim. The first was to create a place for the Shechina to rest, like the pasuk says when Hashem commanded Moshe to make the Keilim, "Veshachanti bisocham". The second objective was to make a connection between Hashem's Shechina and Klal Yisrael, in order for the Shechina to rest in the Mishkan, like the pasuk says, "And I will be known there". The final objective of the Keilim was to give honor to Hashem.

How do we understand each of these different purposes? The first two we can understand. The first is like building a house in order to put things into it. The second is like bringing the objects into the house. How do we understand honor though? As the Ramban says in the Igeres HaRamban, "Why should a person have pride? It can't be for wealth because Hashem gives and takes wealth, it can't be wisdom because Hashem also gives and takes wisdom, and it's certainly not honor because only Hashem has honor." So how can we understand what honor really is?

The Megillah says that at the party that Achashveirosh made for the nobles and officers of his kingdom, he displayed all the wealth of his kingdom and the honor of his majesty. The Tanna Rabbi Yossi says that from the fact that it says "Yekar Tiferes" and it says in reference to the Bigdei Kehuna "Lechavod ul'Tifares" that Achashveirosh was wearing the Bigdei Kehuna. The Gra says that the Kavod is a person's position, and the clothing he wears show the honor that the position demands. However, Achashveirosh wasn't fit for the honor of wearing the (continued on page 7)

The Light of Torah

Dovie Sturm, 11th Grade

"ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר"

The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. (Esther 8:16)

It is after the downfall of Haman, after the Jews have defeated their enemies, and are in a state of *simchah* and gratitude for their miraculous redemption. They had "light, gladness, joy, and honor." The question is, what does it mean that they had "light"? What is this light that we are referring to in the *pasuk*?

The *Sfas Emes* gives a very interesting explanation. In fact, he says, this light was the special light that existed during the seven days of Creation. There is a famous Rashi that states that this unique light was hidden away by Hashem so that the *reshaim* would not benefit from it. It is being saved for the *tzaddikim* in the future. However, during certain occasions throughout history, a few rays of this precious light have been allowed to filter down to this world.

One of those times was on the third day after Avraham Avinu's *mila*, an extremely hot day, when Hashem "took the sun out of its sheath." Hashem sent down some of the special light to heal Avraham. Additionally, on Chanuka, we light our *menorahs* in an attempt to bring down that light into our homes. So too, on Purim, when the Jews were joyously celebrating their triumph over Haman, this precious light from Creation shone down upon them.

Our *pasuk* over here uses the term היתה, which the Gemara (*Megillah* 10b) explains, is a term of joy. By Creation, however, we say, "ויהי ערב ויהי בקר"- A *lashon* of ויהי, which is suffering. The reason for the differentiation is obvious. By Creation, where the light was destined to be taken away in a few days, we say ויהי, in regret for the world that forfeited its unique light. By Purim on the other hand, it was the

(continued on page 7)

ATERES HASHAVUA

{ Mussar from the Parsha }

By: Tzadok Picker, Alumnus

“ולא יזח החשן מעל האפוד” (כ”ח כ”ח)

“And the *choshen* should not be removed from the *Ephod*.”

The Chasam Sofer on this *pasuk* is bothered as to why the Torah commands this. He answers that the Choshen represents our atonement in matters of judgment in courts, while the Ephod is used for the atonement of sins regarding *avodah zarah*. The Torah is coming to teach us that these two *aveiros* are intertwined, as the Gemara in *Masseches Sanhedrin* (:Z) says, whoever appoints a judge who is not fit to be a judge, is compared to one who planted a tree next to the *mizbeach* for the purpose of *avodah zarah*.

In his *sefer*, *Darash Moshe*, Rav Moshe Feinstein *zt”l* further explains the connection between the two *aveiros* of dealing improperly in court and worshipping *avodah zarah*. He explains that when a person acts inappropriately in order to gain an advantage or win more money in court, his actions show a clear lack of *bitachon* and trust in Hashem’s words. If a person really believed in Hashem, he would understand that Hashem decreed our income and expenses, and that we cannot change that by trying to sway the outcome of the court. Therefore, one who nonetheless does so is showing clearly that he does not believe that Hashem judges us and decrees on Rosh Hashanah, or any other time. This level of skepticism towards Hashem’s running of the world can only stem from a certain level of *kefirah*, which is the root of *avodah zarah*. Therefore, the Torah is now coming to teach us that when one person tries to persuade the outcome of a ruling to gain more money, and he now comes for atonement from the *Choshen*, we see that the *Choshen* is attached to the *Ephod*, for any *aveirah* in monetary matters stems from a certain level of *avodah zarah*, which we now need the *Ephod* to take care of.

{ Hashkafa from the Haftorah }

By: Daniel Slamowitz

This week’s Haftorah: שמואל א טו: א - לד

This week’s haftorah that we read before Purim deals with Hashem’s command to Shaul Hamelech to wipe out Amalek. It was now the time for Bnei Yisrael to destroy every trace of their earliest enemy who paved the way for all of the subsequent battles. A pure descendent of Eisav, Amalek showed no fear or reverence for Hashem and arrogantly waged war against Hashem’s chosen people with open wickedness. Although Bnei Yisrael successfully defeated Amalek, his open wickedness had not been addressed. Shaul Hamelech devotedly fulfilled most of his order and annihilated the entire Amalek, except King Agag. Shaul destroyed almost all their animals but agreed to Bnei Yisrael’s request to spare select sheep for *karbanos*. Hashem immediately called Shmuel HaNavi to reprimand Shaul for his shortcomings. Shmuel told Shaul that what he did would cost him the throne and that his successor was already in place.

Shmuel continued on to King Agag and ferociously killed him. However, Shmuel’s act came after Agag remained living one last day. The Chachamim teach us that the Amalekite king took full advantage of Shaul’s mistake. In a most unpredictable way Agag managed to spend his last hours of life procuring his nation. His attempt was successful and, against all odds, the entire nation of Amalek was reborn. This total reversal seems to reflect Hashem’s interest in preserving Amalek. Although one day earlier Hashem decreed Amalek’s total destruction, Bnei Yisrael apparently forfeited this privilege. Their recent error called for Amalek- the epitome of anti-Semitism- to continue to exist.

Let us daven to Hashem that we learn our Purim lesson well and merit to reestablish our relationship with Hashem. Once we totally subject ourselves to Hashem, He will undoubtedly respond and end our seemingly infinite troubles. May the day soon arrive when Eisav’s descendent Amalek will be totally destroyed, clearing the path for Hashem’s absolute rule over everyone.

SPONSORED BY:

Visit us at
ramote.org or call
(516)784-0382

Ramote Expeditions Where Adventure Meets Inspiration!

Located in Tannersville, NY, Ramote Expeditions provides safe, challenging, and action-packed tours which promote confidence, self-awareness, and determination. Give your teen the experience of a lifetime and a summer to excel!

-Leadership Skills
-Mountain and Road Biking
-Backpacking Expeditions
-Multi-day Canoe Excursions.
-AND MUCH MORE

2

“It is not enough to destroy Amalek as a nation. Rather we must destroy the Amalek within each and every one of us.”

עטרת השבוע

Halachos of Drinking on Purim

By: Binyomin Agular

Source for the Law:

“Rava said מייחייב איניש לבסומי בפוריא עד דלא ידע בין ארור המן לברוך מרדכי.” “A man is obligated to drink on Purim until he does not know the difference between cursing Haman and blessing Mordechai. Rabba and Rav Zeira made a *Seudas Purim* with each other, they drank, Rabba rose and killed Rav Zeira. The next day he prayed for mercy and brought Rav Zeira back to life. The next year he (Rabba) asked him (Rav Zeira)-“Will the master come and have a *Seudas Purim* together?” He (Rav Zeira) said “Not every time will a miracle occur (that I be brought back to life).” (מגילה דף ז:)

Based on this Gemara.....

There is a *machlokes* if there is a *chiyuv* to drink on Purim. Many hold that there is a *chiyuv* to drink as stated by Rava. The *המאור בעל המאור* however brings the *shita* of Rabbeinu Ephraim, who holds that the story brought after Rava’s statement was brought to show that it is not advised to follow Rava in this *halacha* and that there is no *chiyuv* to drink on Purim.

To What Extent One is Obligated to Fulfill this Possible Chiyuv, and How, When and With What May it be Fulfilled

How:

To understand the nature of what one is obligated in, let us first establish what one is **not** obligated in. A person is not supposed to lose his senses and his control.

- 1) “We were not commanded to get drunk and (thereby) lessen ourselves out of simcha, for we were not commanded on *simcha* of silliness and of foolishness, but rather on simcha of enjoyment that is reached by love of *Hashem Yisborach*, and of admittance to the miracles that He performed for us.... A person should drink more than usual.... However if he knows himself, that he will disgrace the mitzvos in washing, making a bracha, and *bentching*, or that he won’t daven Mincha or Ma’ariv, or that he will act with lightheadedness- **better that he does not get drunk at all and that all his acts be for the sake of Heaven.** (דלא ידע (ביאור הלכה סימן תרצה ד”ה עד
- 2) “And even those who get drunk should only do so for the sake of Heaven.... To remember the miracle.... And not like those who drink to fill their throats.... And who increase, in these days of Purim, to laugh and act light-headed and are not careful about Tefillah. They think that these days are to permit a person to remove the yoke of Heaven.... And that the more a person acts insane the more praiseworthy. All this is, without a doubt, an incredible sin- for only simcha was permitted to us.... Not laughter and light-headedness. And all those who miss davening (due to becoming intoxicated)..... deserve to die. (של”ה הקדוש-מסכת מגילה)
- 3) “Becoming drunk is a complete *aveirah*, and there is no worse *aveirah*, for it leads to adultery, bloodshed, and idol worship. All that is meant is to drink more than normal.” (כל בו סימן מה) brought by the בית יוסף)

So what is the nature of the obligation?:

- 1) Some say that one should drink up until that point of ידע עד דלא (עד ולא עד בכלל).
- 2) The Bach holds that one is obligated to drink to that point (עד ועד בכלל).
- 3) Others say that one should drink more and that at that point one is certainly patur. (שפת אמת על ש”ס)
- 4) The Rambam holds that one should drink more than usual and then fall asleep. The Rema paskens this and the Mishna Berurah holds that it is 100% *L’chatchilah* to do this.
- 5) There is a *machlokes* as to what one is not supposed to know when we say that a person is obligated to drink to the point that he does not know the difference between ארור המן and ברוך מרדכי. Some hold (the *אגודה* brought by the מגן אברהם in תרצה:ג) that a person is not supposed to know the Gematria of ארור המן and ברוך מרדכי. Therefore, most people today have probably fulfilled their *chiyuv* before they even started drinking. There are many *shitos* as to what one is supposed to no longer know, but they are too numerous to list here.

When:

There is a *machlokes* regarding when this *chiyuv* is to be done. Most, if not almost all, *Poskim* hold that the mitzvah is only during the *Seudah*.

With what one can fulfill this mitzvah:

Rashi (מגילה דף ז:), the Rambam (הלכות יום טוב פרק ו’ הלכה כ’), and the *Rokeach* (*Perek 237*) only mention using wine. Most *Poskim* hold that only wine can be used to fulfill the obligation. (continued on page 4)

ATERES HASHAVUA

The extent of the Obligation:

Halachos of Drinking on Purim (continued from page 3)

- 1) The הלכה ביאור rules that this mitzva is not *m'akev*, meaning that it is not an absolute *chiyuv*, and that one has not committed an *aveirah* if he did not do this mitzvah.
- 2) There is a *machlokes* if women are obligated. Consult your Local Orthodox Rabbi.

In Summary:

- 1) There is a *machlokes* if there is a *chiyuv*.
- 2) We hold that there is a *chiyuv*, but not an absolute one.
- 3) There is a *machlokes* to what extent one must drink. Some say just drink a little more than usual, some say to drink more and then go to sleep, and some say to actually drink until one does not know the difference between ארור המן and ברוך מרדכי (whatever that means. It is a *machlokes*). However it is absolutely clear, that if one will become silly from becoming so intoxicated, as most people today do one certainly should not, and perhaps **may not**, get to that point. Certainly, according to the *Poskim*, if one is afraid that he won't be allowed to daven or *bentch* or so on, he is definitely not allowed to drink. Perhaps he should follow the *Rema* quoted above. Each person should ask his local Rav how to perform this mitzvah himself.

May we all merit to follow the mitzvos properly! Have a *Freilichen Purim!*

Better than Booze

Ephraim Weiss, Alumnus

When reading through the *Megillah*, one is struck by the seeming randomness of the events described. The story spans a period of eleven years, and jumps from one episode to the next with no apparent connection. First, the king of the entire world kills his wife in a drunken fit. Four years pass and a Jewish woman is chosen as the new queen. At the same time, her cousin “coincidentally” overhears two palace guards talking and foils an assassination plot against the king. However, five years later everything falls into place, as Mordechai and Esther are perfectly placed to save *Klal Yisroel* from annihilation, *Chas V' Shalom*.

The pasuk in משלי states “לב מלכים ושרים ביד ה'” “The hearts of kings and officers are in the hand of Hashem.” Even when it appears as if the world is running its own course we must understand that Hashem is always backstage, controlling it all. Even the greatest most powerful king or president is a mere puppet in the hands of Hashem, doing only what Hashem decides.

Rav Tzvi Mayer Zilberberg *shlit'a* relates a story told by the Telzer Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Mordechai Gifter *zt"l*. Rav Gifter was once traveling from Cleveland to New York City for a *talmid's chasunah*, accompanied by several of the *chosson's* friends. However, due to an unexpected snowstorm in New York City, the plane was forced to land in Washington D.C. until the New York airports could be reopened. While waiting in the airport, Rav Gifter and his *talmidim* bumped into a group of *Chassidim*, also on their way to New York to see their Rebbe, and the two groups decided to form a *minyan* for *Shacharis*. However, the two groups combined to form only nine men, one short for the *minyan*. The search for a tenth man was about to begin, when a clearly irreligious airport worker approached the group and inquired if they were forming a *minyan*, and if he can join them to recite *kaddish* for his father. Overjoyed, they immediately agreed, and the *minyan* commenced. After davening, the worker asked if he could relate a story to the *minyan*, as to what had prompted him to join them. Curious, the men waited to hear what he would have to say.

“A few days ago, my father passed away and just last night, he came to me in a dream and rebuked me for not saying *kaddish* in his memory. I explained that I work long hours in the airport, and could not possibly take out the time to go to a *minyan* every day.”

“But what if I sent you a *minyan* in the airport?” my father asked. “Then would you make the time in the future?” I immediately agreed, and woke up. My father kept his end of the deal, now it's time for me to do my part. Starting tomorrow I will make the effort to go to a *minyan* to say *kaddish* for my father.”

When recounting this story Rav Gifter remarked “Imagine! The entire New York City was engulfed in a major snowfall and millions of people were inconvenienced only so that nine *Yidden* will be present in Dulles Airport for a Jew to say *kaddish* for his father”.

Every event, big or small is orchestrated by Hashem. The word “*Megillah*” comes from the word “מגלה” “to reveal.” When we read the *Megillah*, we put all the pieces together showing how Hashem was there throughout. Any one of the events of the *Megillah* could be attributed to happenstance; however when put together they form a beautiful mosaic of *Yad Hashem*.

The GR”A, in his *peirush* to *Meggilas Esther* explains how the lessons of Purim serve as a guiding light to our *avodah*, as *Klal Yisroel* living in *galus*. Even in *galus* it is Hashem controlling the world, albeit in a manner of הסתר פנים. It is our job to search for Hashem in both the events of our personal lives,

(continued on page 5)

ATERES HASHAVUA

Ephraim Weiss (continued from page 4)

as well as in the events that affect the entire world, for the *Yad Hashem* is obvious to all who seek to find it. The *Megillah* takes a few random events, scattered over the course of eleven years and uses them to paint a beautiful picture. Although, as is well known the *Shem Hashem* is never mentioned in the *Megillah*, the Divine intervention is readily apparent throughout. In our times it is incumbent upon us to make the effort ourselves and reveal the *Yad Hashem* in our lives. The *GR*²A explains that for this reason Purim has tremendous potential for growth in *emunah*, and *dveykus* in Hashem. When we realize what Hashem does for us on a daily basis, how all the events of the world are orchestrated for the sake of *Klal Yisroel*, we should be filled with tremendous *ahavas Hashem*. Even when we don't understand a particular event, we can be assured that it has its place in the puzzle and will someday make sense. If we truly take this lesson to heart, we will inevitably be drawn to Hashem with *ahavah* and *emunah*.

This, explains the *Nesivos Sholom*, is the *p'shat* in a famous *Gemara* in *Megillah*. The *Gemara* states "בפוריא" "מיחייב איניש לבסומי בפוריא" "A person is obligated to get drunk on Purim" The *Gemara* does not say "בפוריא" "מיחייב איניש לבסומי בין" "A person is obligated to get drunk with wine on Purim" but rather that a person is obligated to become inebriated through Purim itself. If we take the lessons of Purim to heart, we can clearly see the love and care that Hashem has for *Klal Yisroel*. The *simcha* of Purim comes not from wine but from the intoxicating feeling of the day itself as we experience the feeling of closeness to Hashem and the love that exists between Hashem and his nation.

May we be *zocheh* to reveal the hidden *Yad Hashem* in *galus*, so that we may be *zocheh* to see the full revelations of Hashem's glory with the coming of *Moshiach Bimheirah Biyameinu Amen*.

Dovye Sturm (continued from page 1)

other way around – *b'nei Yisroel* rejoiced over the return of the splendid light.

The special light can only be revealed in this world if *Yisrael* is truly worthy to receive it, continues the *Sfas Emes*. Thus, by the Giving of the Torah at *Har Sinai*, the Jews basked in this precious light. However, their high spiritual level was not maintained. Just forty days later, they committed the sin of the Golden Calf, and the light was removed from them.

The commentators explain that on Purim, *klal Yisroel* reaccepted the Torah upon themselves. *Kabbalas HaTorah* allows Israel to experience this light. That is precisely the reason why the Jews in Shushan were able to perceive and enjoy the same light as the Jews by *Har Sinai*. As the *pasuk* in *Mishlei* (6:23) states, "נר מצוה ותורה אור". Torah is comparable to אור, light. We also emphasize this theme in davening every day, "והאר עינינו בתורתך", *enlighten our eyes in Your Torah*.

However, in the *Megillah* we do not use the normal terminology, אור; rather, we use the feminine language, אורה. Indeed, there is a difference between the two terms, as the *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (2b-3a) says. We are unsure if the word אור means day or night, and we bring down various proofs to support either definition. By אורה, however, we are certain that it means day.

If Israel is worthy of receiving the Torah, they can elevate the Torah from אור, an abstract light, to the definite light, אורה. The word היתה, it became, implies that the Torah, or Israel's relationship to it, became אורה. Israel's elevation and renewal of their commitment to Torah on Purim allowed them to receive אורה, the true light.

In the future, in the times of *Mashiach*, when the last vestige of *Amalek* will be eliminated, the Torah's light will be fully revealed. As the *Gemara* states (*Nedarim* 8b) on that future day, when evil will have been totally eradicated, Hashem will remove the sun from its sheath and shine it down upon the righteous. On that glorious day, when the original light of Creation will finally be returned to us, the true light of Torah, long held in its "sheath", will be revealed to all, may it be *b'mehaira beyamenu*. *A freilichen Purim!*

Netanel Rosensweig (continued from page 1)

Bigdei Kehuna. We can compare *Achashverosh* to the subject of the statement in *Gemara Bava Basra* (98A) which says that a person that puts on a garment of a Talmud Chacham can't enter *Olam Haba*. *Rashi* explains that the reason for this is because he's trying to be who he isn't, since when one wears a cloak of a Talmud Chachams, he is being haughty since he is showing that he is a great person. So too by *Achashveirosh*, he wore a garment that wasn't fit for him to wear.

From here it's evident that honor isn't something physical that could be pointed at. Rather, the actions that each person takes and the clothing that he wears show the degree of the person's honor and how much honor is due to him. So too by the *Ketores* on the *Mizbeach Hazahav*, the *Ketores* shows us the level of honor that is demanded to Hashem. This is what *Rabbeinu B'chaye* means when he says that *Shlomo Hamelech* would say "the *Ketores* is dearer to Hashem than any *Korban Olah*", because the *Ketores* shows us how honorable Hashem really is.

The decrees put upon the Jews of Persia were powerful, but in some instances very strange or perhaps even a bit silly. We begin with over a hundred days of feasting, a decree stating that the husband is the master of the home, and a document stating all women must appear before the king. As far out as this all seems, it happened. . . and we were subjected to it. It seems like we were under the control of a kingdom that couldn't make up its mind: from inviting us to eat a delightful amount and then telling us our end is near. . . *who's in charge here?* Obviously, everything going on here possesses a deeper meaning, and all these decrees were well thought out. While on the surface things may seem one way, the deeper meaning would prove otherwise. We were to **זכח** to decipher the **משל** and **נמשל**; the simpler understanding and the even deeper reason, bringing us to eventually succeed in saving ourselves. Even though **המן** was developing and arranging his destruction of the Jews, it seems that every new action set him up in a worse way. Let us look at the **פסוק** describing his main objective: Operation Destroy Yidden.

וּנְשַׁלְחוּ סְפָרִים בְּיַד הַרְצִים אֶל כָּל מְדִינוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְגוֹ לְאַבְדֹת אֶת כָּל הַיְהוּדִים... וְשַׁלְּלֵם לְבוֹאֵי (ג:)

LETTERS WERE SENT BY COURIER TO ALL COUNTRIES UNDER THE KING'S POWER, TO DESTROY, TO KILL, AND TO ANNIHILATE ALL THE JEWS. . . AND TO PLUNDER THEIR POSSESSIONS.

We see an apparent redundancy in the use of several different words to describe the murder and plunder which **המן** planned. The Vilna Gaon, however, teaches us that **המן** planned to strike at every element of every Jew.

The Gaon explains that there are four elements to a person: **נפש**; the basic life-force, **רוח**; spirit, **נשמה**; soul, and **גוף**; the body. In his **ספר**, Rabbi Chanan Nobel directs us to the Gaon's own thoughts on **משלי**. There, the Vilna Gaon says that these correspond to the four basic levels of Creation in our living world: those things which do not grow or live, such as rocks and earth; those which grow, like plants; those which move about, such as the animal kingdom; and that which speaks - humankind.

Yet the Gaon goes further and says that **נפש**; the basic life-force, is intertwined with the body itself. One does not attack a body, but the life inside it. According to this, there is indeed a fourth element of a person: his possessions. The **מהרל** in **עולם נתבות** writes that a person's money is considered part of him, as we see in **ק"ט**. **מסכת בבא קמא**, "a person who steals even a dime from his neighbor, it is as if he had taken his life."

Thus there is no redundancy - **המן** planned to uproot everything. The word **להשמיד**, *to destroy*, refers specifically to a spiritual destruction - taking a person away from *mitzvos*, the thing which elevates his **נשמה**. **להרג**, *to kill*, corresponds to the living spirit within a person. **לאבד**, *to annihilate*, corresponds to the more basic life force and the body itself, meaning to remove all trace; to destroy any remnant of the Jews. Finally, **שללם לבוא**, *the plunder of property*, corresponds to the property itself. **המן** wanted to destroy every last trace of the Jews, yet we see that the Jews persevered and won.

A poor man named Shmerel Yankel was once given the chance to work for a very wealthy man. His job was to bring bricks inside the man's factory from one room to another, and for every brick he transferred he would receive one penny. At the end of the day, the poor man would go to his boss and present him with all the pennies he made over the course of the day, and in exchange receive one dollar. Shmerel Yankel began the job, and after getting used to the daily routine was making around thirty dollars a day.

After a few weeks of working, Shmerel Yankel thought of a way to outsmart his boss. He began pocketing some of the pennies and only gave him fifteen pennies at the end of the day, and was in high spirits over his smart idea of outsmarting his manager. It eventually came to the point where Shmerel Yankel was only giving in one penny a day while keeping the other twenty nine for himself! When his master confronted him and heard this crazy idea, he fired Shmerel Yankel simply because of his stupidity. The more he tried to outsmart his boss, the more Shmerel Yankel was losing out!

מרדכי saw what **המן** wanted to do, so he acted with strict and powerful counter measures. For every act **המן** tried, **מרדכי** replaced it with a wondrous act of his own and the Jews followed suit. Every time **המן** tried to make things harder for us and thought he was succeeding, it turned out that **מרדכי** was always ahead of the game. Each time **המן** thought he was winning his battle with the Jews, he kept sinking lower and lower until it came to the point where he was worse off than when he started - his plans and tactics were hung up! **מרדכי** and the rest of **ישראל** saw the **משל** and **נמשל** in every evil idea: we too can do the same. In a world where all the revolting pleasures seems commonplace we must strive to counterattack the **שטן** and not let ourselves fall into any traps. As we learn from the story of Purim; there are things that look simple but are really deadly, and there are things that look powerful but are really weak.

Focus on Greatness

By: Noam Charnowitz

Rav Eliezer Zusia Portugal zt"l *The Skulener Rebbe* *5658/1898- 5742/1982*

- Harav Eliezer Zusia Portugal zt"l, the Skulener Rebbe, was born in 1898/5658, in the town of Skulen on the Romanian-Russian border.
- His father, Harav Yisrael Avraham, served as the Rav of the town, and was a disciple of Harav Yeshaya Shur, Rav of Yassi, a talmid of Reb Mordechai of Kremnitz.
- When his father passed away, the elders of the town, with the encouragement of the Romanian Torah sages, chose Rav Eliezer Zusia to take on the position of Rav, even though he was only 17 years old.
- As a result of his great success in Skulen, he was invited to the city of Chernowitz. He was most successful there in strengthening Yiddishkeit in many areas, but primarily in establishing an exemplary yeshiva school system.
- Following World War II, after the fall of Chernowitz to the Communist forces, Rav Eliezer Zusia relocated to Bucharest, Romania's capital.
- Recognizing the problem that aroused in there being orphans due to the war, he began an intensive campaign on behalf of them. Through the years he raised hundreds of orphans in his home, and at the first opportunity he smuggled them out of the country, to Israel or to the West.
- In the year 1946, the Communists occupied Romania. They warned the Skulener Rebbe numerous times that they didn't appreciate his activities.
- Being a devoted father to his orphan children, he disregarded Communist threats and, together with his noble Rebbetzin, dedicated himself totally to the task of raising their "children".
- Through the years the Rebbe and his only son were imprisoned on numerous occasions and were tortured for not revealing the identity of Jews, whom were suspected of engaging economic offenses.
- Through international intervention on his behalf, Rav Eliezer Zusia was permitted to leave Romania, and move the Skulener dynasty to America.
- Upon his arrival in America, the Rebbe began an intensive campaign to rescue all the Jews that were stuck in Romanian prisons from the war.
- Even in situations where there seemed to be no hope for the Jewish people, Rav Eliezer Zusia would not despair, and more often than not, he would be successful in his goals.
- In tandem with his activities on behalf of their physical security, the Rebbe worked relentlessly for their spiritual well being, by establishing the internationally famous organization Chesed L'Avraham toward that objective.
- Rav Eliezer Zusia returned his soul to its creator on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul, 1982/5742. Leadership of the Skulener community and Chesed L'Avraham are continued by his only son.

Reuven Davies (continued from page 6)

The Vilna Gaon concludes that our celebration of Purim contrasts with *המנוח*'s goal in every aspect. We add a purely spiritual *mitzvah* to the day – *קריאת המגילה*, to uplift our souls. For the *רוח* that lives in the heart of a person, this is a day of joy. For the *גוף*, it is a day of feasting. For the sake of our property, we are commanded to give special gifts to the poor, in order that even they should have property of their own on Purim. With this fully encompassing holiday of Purim, let us appreciate this time of joy and redemption, and be *זוכה* to the same. Have a *פרייליכן פורים*!

אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

לאסתר במשתה היין מה שאלתך וינתן לך ומה בקשתך עד חצי המלכות ותעש

After risking her life by going before the king, אסתר asks אחשורוש if he and המן will come to a feast that she will make for them that night. אחשורוש agrees, and at the feast, he once again asks אסתר what she wants. The language that אחשורוש uses on both occasions is very strange. He says, "What is your request and it will be given to you? What is your petition and it will be done?" An obvious question is asked. What is the difference between a שאלה and a בקשה? Why was it necessary for אחשורוש to use a double לשון?

Two answers are offered. The first answer, from the ילקוט מעם לועז explains the double לשון as follows; אחשורוש knew that anyone who came before the king came for one of two reasons: Either they were asking for someone's life to be saved, or they were coming to ask the king for money. In this case, אחשורוש was sure that this was true, as אסתר had asked to meet with the king, the only person that could save their lives, and המן who was in charge of the king's money. אחשורוש therefore asked אסתר which one it was. Was she asking for someone's life, or for money? Therefore, אחשורוש used a different לשון for each request.

A second פשט is offered by the Vilna Gaon. He explains that a שאלה is a personal request, and a בקשה is a request on behalf of someone else. This fits in very well with the

later פסוקים. At the second feast, when אסתר finally beseeched the king to spare כלל ישראל, she says, "בשאלתי ועמי בבקשתי", כלל ישראל, she says, "תנתן לי נפשי". תנתן לי נפשי was a personal request, for her own life; however, her בקשה was on behalf of the entire כלל ישראל.

A story is told of HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky זצ"ל. When Rav Yaakov was living in Toronto, a person once told him that schnapps should be drunk at every Jewish activity. He based this on a פשט that he had heard on our פסוק. פסוק's request to save כלל ישראל was answered at a feast with wine. Therefore, if we want our תפילות answered, we should also drink. Rav Yaakov answered with his own פשט on this פסוק. We know that whenever the מלאך says the word הלך, it refers not only to מלאך, but also to Hashem. We also know that when the מלאך says the word הלך, it refers to כלל ישראל as well. A feast that combines Hashem and כלל ישראל can in truth refer only to the learning of Torah. Thus, it must be that the way to have our תפילות answered is through הלכה.

May we be able to grow in our התורה, and through this be able to have all of our תפילות answered, like those of כלל ישראל in the מלאך, and may we be able to say about us, "ולא יאמרו עמנו שאלו עשה לנו", "ולא יאמרו עמנו שאלו עשה לנו".

An Accounting of the Mitzvos

(based on the order of the mitzvos of the Sefer HaChinuch)

By: Motti Sturm

MITZVAH # 48

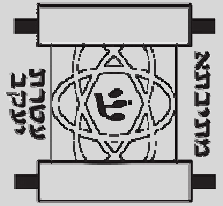
Prohibition of Striking a Parent

Source: "ומו"מכה אביו ואמו מות יומת" "And whoever strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death." (Shemos 21:15)

Reason: We are commanded to put to death one who strikes his father or mother because he raised his hand against the people that brought him into this world and did so many favors for him. It is therefore justice to remove him from his world if he commits this transgression.

Halachos:

- A person is only punished if he wounded his parents in a manner that causes them a loss of blood.
- This punishment even applies if the parents were beating him (unless they were trying to kill him).
- One should not perform any surgery or healing on his parent if it will cause a wound, but if he did perform it, he is not punished.
- This Mitzvah applies in all time periods and for all people.
- If one struck his parents with a blow sufficient to cause a wound, with witnesses and with a warning, his death sentence is Chenek (strangulation). If there were no witnesses, he is Chayiv Kares. If the blow did not cause a wound, he is obligated to make the same payments that he would to a regular person for damages.



Mesivta Ateres Yaakov of Greater Long Island

1170A William Street
Hewlett, N.Y. 11557
516-374-6465

www.AteresHaShavua.com
AteresHaShavua@Gmail.com

Rabbi Shmuel Oratz
Faculty Advisor

Ph.D.

HaRav Mordechai Yaafee

Menahel

Eli Portal

Asher Molava

Reuven Lehman

Shlomo Feit

Yaakov Engelberg

Aaron Bortz

Contributing Headaches

Daniel Slanowitz

Moshe Daphna

Noam Charnowitz

Columnists

Dovie Sturm

Gavriel Kadish

Assistant Editors

Motti Sturm

Yehuda Klein

Editors in Chief

EDITORIAL STAFF

To sponsor an edition of
ATERES HASHAVUA
please contact us at
the Mesivta or
via e-mail:
AteresHaShavua@Gmail.com

SPONSORED BY:



Brooklyn's premier emporium
for imported and domestic bath
& tile specialties since 1984.

1663 Coney Island Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11230
718.787.1000 www.homeandstone.com

BATH
TILES
HARDWARE
LIGHTING