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[Home](#) > Weekly Shmuess - 057 Tetzaveh | Purim | Revelation Amidst Concealment

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Two Aspects In Clothing: Covering The Body, and Revealing The Honor of the Soul

Much of *Parshas Tetzaveh* discusses the *bigdei kehunah*, the special garments worn by the *Kohen*. The Torah says that these *bigdei kehunah* were worn “*l’kavod, u’litiferes*” – “for honor, and for glory.”

The concept of clothing exists both in the impaired sense, as well as in the holy, rectified sense.

The “impaired” kind of clothing is the need for clothing which man now has after the sin of Adam. As soon as Adam and Chavah sinned, they became ashamed and they felt a need for clothing, so they made themselves *kosnos ohr*, garments made out of skins, in order to cover themselves. The impaired level of clothing is when clothing is worn in order to cover something we are ashamed of, and this reason for clothing is all a result of the first sin, which produced shame.

In contrast to this, there is also a repaired use of clothing. The prime example of this is the special garments worn by the *Kohen*, as discussed in this week’s *parshah*, which were not merely worn to cover the body, but *l’kavod u’litiferes*, “for honor and for honor.” Clothing worn by the wealthy and is also for the purpose of honor and beauty. The Gemara also says that the clothing of a Torah scholar must be distinct.

The higher purpose of clothing is to reveal the honor of the person, which is the *neshamah* (Divine soul), for the *neshamah* is referred to as *kavod* (honor), as in the verse, “*So that honor will sing to You*”.

Therefore, clothing contains two opposite aspects. On one hand, it is for the purpose of covering and concealing, and on the other hand, it is also for the purpose of revealing. It is there in order to cover the body, and at the same time, it is worn in order to reveal that the soul is to be honored.

Megillas Esther: Concealment and Revelation

The story of the *Megillas Esther* contains both of these opposite aspects, concealment and revelation. The word *megillah* is from the word “*giluy*”, to “reveal”, whereas the word “*Esther*” is from the word “*hester*”, concealment. In the events of the Purim story, one can see both concealment as well as revelation, throughout.

Many people may study the events of the entire *Megillas Esther*, and even after hearing the entire

story, they are seeing only the *hester*\concealment that was within these events, without seeing the *giluy* that was in it. But the truth is that one can see both *hester* as well as *giluy* in this same story. One person may see only *hester* in it, and another person may see only *giluy* in it, but the truth is that we must see both of these aspects (*hester* and *giluy*) in the *Megillah*.

Hashem has created His world in a way that we can see either the *hester* or the *giluy*, in each thing. They are two different viewpoints. "A judge does not see except for what his eyes see" – either a person will see *giluy*, or a person will see *hester*. The inner way to view reality, however, is that there is *giluy* and *hester* in everything. Therefore, if we see *hester*, we should also look to see the *giluy* in it, and if we see *giluy*, we should also see how there was *hester* in it. "Concealment (*hester*) and revelation (*giluy*) serve together, in a mixture" [similar to what the Sages say of light and darkness].

So if we view each event in the *Megillah* separately, all we will see is *hester*. But the truth is that we should learn to see both the *hester* and the *giluy* in each event. The *avodah* (inner task) of a person is to always see these two sides in everything he comes across – he must see the *giluy*\revelation amidst the *hester*\concealment, as well as the *hester*\concealment amidst the *giluy*\revelation.

It is clear and understandable why we need to see *giluy* amidst the *hester*, because this brings us closer to reaching purpose of Creation, which is the revelation of Hashem upon the world. But why should we look for the *hester* as well? What is the depth of this? It means that when more and more *giluy* is uncovered, the previous level of *giluy* is now seen as *hester*. The previous *giluy* is now *hester*, in relation to the higher level of *giluy*.

Vashti's Punishment: Middah K'Negged Middah, Or An Event Part of A Greater Picture?

An example of seeing both *giluy* and *hester* in the events of the *Megillah* is when we examine what happened with Vashti.

The Gemara says that since Vashti forced the Jewish women to work on Shabbos unclad, she was punished *middah k'neged middah* ("measure for measure") by Hashem, and she was led to her death unclad. If we only consider the aspect that Vashti forced the Jewish women to work on Shabbos and in this undignified manner, we see this nothing but an event of *hester*, and if we only think about her eventual punishment for this, we see the *giluy* in it.

But there is a deeper perspective to view it with: This event is only a detail within a greater picture. When Vashti forced the women to work on Shabbos, it was a *hester* within *giluy*, because it was an event which led to all of the rest of the events in the *Megillah*. All of the *giluy* in the *Megillas Esther* contains aspects of *hester* – but each of these events of *hester* are all but parts of the *giluy*. Therefore, it is not enough to view Vashti's punishment as *middah k'neged middah*. That is just seeing the *giluy* on a partial level, and it is *hester*\concealment, and this does not represent the revelation of the *Megillah*.

Living A Life of Seeing Hashem In Everything

Thus, besides for our *avodah* to see the *giluy* amidst all *hester*, we also need to see how a *giluy* is really *hester*, in relation to a greater level of *giluy*.

When one has this perspective, his entire life becomes a living revelation of Hashem on this world. He lives and reflects, on his own level, how Hashem is revealed in each thing.

One can do this by contemplating intellectually how Hashem is found in something, and even more so, to reflect how it is a *giluy*\revelation of Hashem, and how it is also a *hester*\concealment in relation to a higher level of *giluy*.

Without reflecting like this, a person goes through his whole life and may he only see how there is *middah k'neged middah* in Creation, but with that perspective alone, Hashem will deal with the person according to how the person is judging the world, for the Sages state, "In the measurement that a person measures, he is measured."

Middah k'neged middah is only part of a greater picture. The more inner perspective is [*hanhagas hayichud*]: the fact that Hashem is running the world in order to benefit His people of Yisrael, and that He chose us from all the nations, because He desired us. He created the world in order to bestow His kindness, but He especially desires to bestow his good upon the Jewish people. His will is to reveal Himself to the all of Creation, but especially to the Jewish people, who declare His oneness every day in "*Shema Yisrael*", where we say, "*Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*" – Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is one."

In our times, Hashem is called "*Elokeinu*" (Our G-d), and in the future, Hashem will be called "*echad*" (One). The Ramchal explains in *Daas Tevunos* that this is the deeper mode of how Hashem conducts the world – a deeper way of running the world through His way of *middah k'neged middah*. In this higher mode of conduct [*"echad"*, or "*hanhagas hayichud*"], Hashem awakens His compassion on the Jewish people even when they are deserving.

In the times of Purim, if Hashem would have been running the world through *middah k'neged middah*, it is possible that Vashti would have still received her due punishment, but that would not necessarily save the Jewish people from destruction. The Gemara says that the generation then was deserving of destruction, for enjoying the feast of Achashveirosh. If Hashem would have acted towards the generation with His mode of conduct of *middah k'neged middah*, then just as Vashti was punished with death, so would the Jewish people have deserved death.

But from the events of the story in the *Megillah*, we see that Hashem revealed a higher mode of conduct than *middah k'neged middah*. By saving the Jewish people from death in the times of Mordechai and Esther, Hashem was using a more inner mode of conduct than the usual way.

Therefore, whatever *middah k'neged middah* we see in the *Megillah* [such as Vashti's punishment] was only a *hester*, in relation to the main *giluy*, which was the fact that Hashem was using His higher mode of conduct. Haman's decree to destroy all of the Jewish people was Hashem's way of speaking to them through *middah k'neged middah*, for the generation was deserving of death. But from the events of the story, there was a *giluy*, a revelation, that a *giluy* can really be *hester*, for there is always a greater level of *giluy* that can be revealed.

This is what the story of the *Megillas Esther* reveals. From the great *giluy*\revelation in which Hashem saved the Jewish people from Haman's decree, we see that all of the *middah k'neged middah* beforehand was really *hester panim*.

Two Modes of Conduct – Middah K'Neged Middah ("Measure For Measure") vs. Matnas Chinam ("Free Gift")

It is said that all of the festivals will cease in the future, except for Purim.^[1] [1] One of the reasons behind this is because all of the other festivals are under the category of *middah k'neged middah*, because the festivals are "in remembrance of the exodus from Egypt", whereas Purim was a deeper mode of conduct. Purim was the mode of conduct of the future, where Hashem will not run the world with *middah k'neged middah*, but with the mode of conduct known as **matnas chinam**, "free gift", where we receive from goodness from Hashem regardless of our own behavior.

The Gemara says that the generation in the times of Mordechai (after the miracles of Purim) accepted

the Torah again, and *Rashi* explains that this was out of love for Hashem, from the miracles they had witnessed. Purim was therefore a time of receiving the Torah. What was the difference between this new acceptance of the Torah, with the original acceptance of the Torah that was on the festival of Shavuos?

When it came to preparing for the Torah on Shavuos, the people purified themselves for 49 days. By purifying their *middos*, they could then be ready to receive the Torah. This was really *middah k'neged middah*, for they could only become deserving of the Torah if they purified their *middos*. This was also a state of *yirah* (fear of Hashem). In the times of Purim, however, they received the Torah out of a love for Hashem, from the miracles they witnessed. They were in a state of *ahavah*, and now they could receive the Torah on a higher level than *middah k'neged middah* - now they could receive the Torah as a *matnas chinam*.

The spiritual light that was revealed on Purim, this new acceptance of the Torah that came to them as a *matnas chinam* due to their newfound love of Hashem, was really a spark of the light of the future, when the world will be run with *matnas chinam* and not through *middah k'neged middah*.

When one takes a look at the events in the Purim story in *Megillas Esther* and he simply sees how everything was *middah k'neged middah*, all he sees in the Purim story is *hester*, concealment. He is found within the *hester* in the story, and not in the actual revelation of the "*megillah*" that is in the *Megillah*! In contrast to this, when one views the Purim story with the understanding that it was all a *matnas chinam* from Hashem, he sees the *giluy*\revelation within all of the *hester*\concealment.

During the time of Purim, there was an illumination of the new level of Torah which will be revealed in the future.

"Matnas Chinam" Throughout The Mitzvos of Purim

This concept of *matnas chinam* is manifest throughout the *mitzvos* of Purim. We have already explained one can see *matnas chinam* in the Purim story, which corresponds to the reading of the *Megillas Esther*.

The other *mitzvos* of the day include *matanos l'evyonim* (gifts to the poor) and *mishloach manos* (gift packages to fellow Jews), which are clearly *matnas chinam*, for they are acts of giving free gifts to others. These acts of giving on Purim correspond to the idea of "*matnas chinam*" which is the depth of the story of the *megillas Esther*.

As for the *mitzvah* of *ad d'lo yoda* (the *mitzvah* to become intoxicated until the point where one does not know the difference between "Blessed is Mordechai" and "Cursed is Haman") - how does this correspond to the concept of *matnas chinam*?

The depth of *ad d'lo yoda*, of not differentiating between the good of Mordechai and the evil of Haman, is to realize that even evil is somehow good, for it ultimately is rectified by Hashem, for reasons unknown to us. An example of this is that "the descendants of Haman learned Torah in Bnei Brak." From here we see that even people who descend from the most evil nation, Amalek, can be rectified. Evil is ultimately rectified only due to the *matnas chinam* of Hashem, which one does not have to be deserving or meritorious for.

The celebration and joy of Purim reveals this *matnas chinam*. The *mitzvos* of Purim - *mikra megillah*, *matanos l'evyonim*, *mishloach manos*, and *ad d'lo yoda* - are only possible to keep because of the unique revelation that is on Purim, where "When wine enters, secrets come out" [2] [2], where the inner dimension of reality is revealed.

When something remains a secret, it is in the category of *hester*\concealment, but through the revelations of Purim, we are able to see how everything which appears as *hester*\concealment is really *giluy*\revelation. This is the depth of the *Megillas Esther*, and this is the deeper meaning of how "When wine enters, secrets are revealed".

This was the root of Purim. In the story of Purim, Mordechai is donned with five royal garments, which were "for honor and for glory", which revealed the innermost depths of reality: that all "garments", all forms of *hester* (concealment) in all their many different colors, are really a form of *giluy*.

Practically Applying This Concept In Our Life

In terms that apply to our personal souls, in whatever stage of life we are at, in any part of our life, we need to see the *giluy*\revelation amidst the *hester*\concealment. And with the more *giluy* we uncover, the more we should also look back at the previous examples of *giluy* we found and to see that it was really *hester panim* (concealment), in relation to the current, newfound level of *giluy* we now see. One can keep uncovering more and more *giluy* amidst his life, until he reaches the true Root of all revelations.

We find that the name of Hashem of *havayah* may not be written or pronounced. Thus, even *havayah*, which is the deepest revelation itself and the root of everything, is concealed to us. This is the depth of how there is revelation amidst concealment, and concealment amidst revelation. "Hashem is close to anyone who calls out to Him", and there is no greater way to call out to Hashem than reading the name of *havayah*, yet we are not allowed to pronounce the name of *havayah*, only with the name of *adnus*.

On one hand, the greatest revelation is contained in this, for it is Hashem's Name and the root of everything, but at the same time, it is concealed to us, because we cannot pronounce His Name yet. This is because, as the Gemara says, His Name and His throne are not complete until Amalek is erased.

Thus, on Purim, when "Wine enters, secrets come out" - what is the secret which can come out on Purim? It can reveal the secret of Hashem's name of *havayah*, which is above His name of *adnus*.

The concept that every *giluy* is really a *hester* in relation to a higher level of *giluy* is a process that one can keep traversing, until he reaches a desire for Hashem alone ("You alone I desired, and for the Torah in my innards"). The final revelation for a person to reach is the revelation of "*Ain Od Milvado*", the awareness that "there is nothing besides for Hashem". That is the truest revelation of all.

"Wine enters, secrets come out" does not refer to the revelation of a person's private secrets when he is drunk. (That is merely a state of "small-mindedness", *katnus mochin*). Rather, it means to reveals all of the secrets until one reaches the truest secret, which is *Ain Od Milvado*. This is what personifies the day of Purim.

In Conclusion

May the day of Purim which is soon coming upon us be true days of celebration of joy. May it be a complete revelation for us, in which all *hester*\concealment will be turned into *giluy*\revelation, until we reach the most complete revelation of all - when Hashem and His Name will be one again, when we will all point with our finger and express "This is Hashem, that we hoped for" - the complete revelation of *Ain Od Milvado*.

[\[1\]](#) ^[3] *Midrash Shochar Tov: Mishlei 9:1*

[\[2\]](#) ^[4] *Eruvin 65a*

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