

אדר תשפ"א

**BILVAVI
PURIM
Q&A**

בלבוי משכן אבנה

השיעורים של הרב זמינים ב"קול הלשון"

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Purim & Corona 5781

Question:

Normally every year on Purim I drink a lot to fulfill ad d'lo yoda. Should this year (5781) be different than other years, due to corona?

Answer:

The special spiritual light shining in our times will be here until Mashiach comes, as well as afterwards. It is the illumination of the Keser. It depicts the concept of “The purpose of knowing is to know that we do not know.” That is the entire purpose of the obligation to drink on Purim ad d'lo yoda, “until one does not know”. From now onward and for the rest of the year, the light of Purim will be shining much clearer, in a way that can be more easily discerned. For this reason, the primary manifestation of this illumination was in the month of Adar of last year (5780) in Eretz Yisrael, the source of the world. The Talmud Yerushalmi is of the view that one can fulfill the mitzvah of hearing Megillah throughout the entire month of Adar, and this is because Adar is the month where mourning was turned into joy, celebration, and festivity. And now, this year, the special light is shining very strongly on this year's Purim, and it is being made more clear that Purim is the “head of all the festivals”, as Rebbi Nachman of Breslev taught. For this reason, we should continue to extend this light into the rest of the year, though it will appear and disappear in a cycle.

Purim is the time of lo yoda, the time to transcend our regular awareness, and Chanukah is the time to draw forth higher wisdom from ayin, the spiritual source of understanding, and we are meant to progress and regress back and forth from Chanukah/chochmah/ayin and Purim/lo yoda, in a cycle.

Purim- Getting It

Question:

1) What is the avodah Hashem on Purim night? Is it better to learn Maseches Megillah, say Tehillim, drink a little and show some simchah a little?

Answer:

The Poskim say that one should eat a bit of a festival meal on Purim night. Chazal established that people should hear Megillah at night. Inwardly, the avodah is to see how the nighttime, which is known as the time of hester (concealment), is really Esther (the aleph/One that is found in all the hester/concealment, the concept that Hashem's Presence that is found with us in the darkness.)

Question:

2) Should a person drink slowly throughout Purim so that he will constantly be in a relaxed and joyous state, or should all of the drinking be limited to the Purim seudah?

Answer:

Each person according to his nature and his needs.

Question:

3) Should Purim mainly be utilized as a day of tefillah (prayer)? Sefer Shem M'Shmuel says that a person can daven for whatever he wants on Purim. Should that be our focus on Purim day? And when should a person daven on Purim?

Answer:

The main part of Purim is to access the special levels of spiritual awareness that are available on Purim, whereas only a part of Purim should be spent on davening for anything you want. The main tefillah to daven on Purim is that you should be zocheh to gain the special power available on Purim day, and the time to feel it is when one is imbibed with wine [at the Purim seudah].

Question:

4) What is the main avodah on Purim? Is it simchah, or ahavas Yisrael, or erasing Amalek, or bitachon, or gaining a deeper connection to Hashem (which goes beyond even talking to Hashem)? The sefarim all say many different definitions of what Purim is all about, so can the Rav please clarify what the primary avodah on Purim is and what the branches are?

Answer:

Lo yoda !!! [it is mainly a day to reach the awareness beyond or normal daas-knowledge].

Purim- Avodah on Shushan Purim

Question:

What is our avodah on Shushan Purim?

Answer:

Besides for the simple understanding, which is that we should show some extra joy on Shushan Purim, as explained in the Poskim, there is also an inner avodah on Shushan Purim, to become connected to Yerushalayim, for Yerushalayim is the only remaining walled city since the times of Yehoshua. In the future, all towns in Eretz Yisrael will become walled cities like Yerushalayim.... When one visits the future in his mind, he sees the spiritual level of the future, and that is how he becomes connected to the true level of Yerushalayim, of the future.

Purim- Deep Insights Into Megillas Esther

Question:

1) Since Esther didn't return to Mordechai for the rest of her life, how can it be that Purim was a time of Geulah if this tzadekes had to spend the rest of her life being married to a rasha?

Answer:

The Geulah on Purim was a preparation for the Geulah shelaimah (complete Redemption), but it was not yet the Geulah shelaimah itself. The Gemara says that "We are still the slaves of Achashveirosh" (Talmud Bavli Megillah 14a). Mordechai was only favored by "most" of Klal Yisrael, but not to all of them, and the Gemara says that this was because he had to be involved with the government, so he was not accepted by everyone after that. And, similarly, Esther remained as Achashveirosh's queen. However, the Zohar says that Esther took control of Achashveirosh's power and of his entire kingdom. Esther represents the spiritual point of malchus d'Atzilus, and Achashveirosh was the Zeir Anpin on the side of impurity. According to the Zohar, she sent a demon in her stead to be with Achashveirosh, and this is unlike the view of the Talmud Bavli, which states that Achashveirosh was forced to be with Achashveirosh. The sefer Magid Meisharim writes that because the Jewish people sinned by marrying gentile women,

they were punished with Esther being forced to be married a rasha. The sefer Chemdas Yomim says that Esther represents the Malchus D'Atzilus, the Shechinah, which was placed into exile, for she was forced to be married to a wicked person, like a rose among the thorns. The Ramchal also writes that Esther being forced to be with Achashveirosh represents how the Shechinah is currently exiled to the Sitra Achra, to the side of evil. Achashveirosh wanted to control Esther – the Shechinah – but Mordechai made the demon swear that it would take Esther's stead and go to Achashverosh instead. So even when she had to go willingly to Achashverosh, she never actually was with him, because she sent a demon to be with him instead, so she never actually stayed with Achashverosh for the rest of her life. It was only in the beginning when she was first taken as queen, that she had to be with Achashverosh – but she did not actually remain with him.

Question:

2) Did Achashverosh become a friend of the Jewish people after the Purim story? Did he come to love the Jewish people?

Answer:

Yaaros Devash (I:3) states that Achashverosh remained an anti-semite and enemy of the Jewish people, and the Gemara (Talmud Bavli Megillah 16a) compares Achashverosh to a mound followed by a ditch, meaning that he was a treacherous enemy of the Jewish people, for he still wouldn't allow the Beis HaMikdash to be rebuilt. The Gemara there also says that when Esther pointed her finger at Haman and said, "This terrible man and enemy", she was actually referring to none other than Achashverosh. Thus, any power that Achashverosh allowed to Mordechai afterward was only out of his love for Esther, but not because he loved the Jewish people.

Question:

3) The Gemara says that "The grandsons of Haman learned Torah in Bnei Brak" (Talmud Bavli Gittin 57b). How could something good come out of Haman, who is Amalek, total evil?

Answer:

This is discussed in sefer Pachad Yitzchok: Purim and in Kedushas Levi. The sefer Shem m'Shmuel (Tetzaveh) says that it doesn't mean Haman's actual grandsons, because how could they have converted to Judaism if we aren't allowed to accept converts from Amalek? What the Gemara means is that there were some sparks of holiness in Haman. The sefer Beis Aharon

explains that these sparks of holiness in Haman were rooted in the fact that Esther invited Haman to her party, which apparently gave some holiness to Haman. And on a deeper level, the Torah learning of Haman's grandsons means that Haman had a spark of good in himself simply because the name "Amalek" is a word of the holy Torah, and that is what enables Amalek to have any holiness in it – the fact that Amalek is a word in the Torah. Reb Tzadok HaKohen (in sefer Resisei Leilah) also discusses this matter. Even in cases where there were those who accepted Amalekites to convert to Judaism, it was in order to convert any sparks of holiness found in Amalek, into Judaism.

Question:

4) What is the connection between the events of Purim and Acharis HaYomim (the End of Days)?

Answer:

In the times of Purim, the people fell into the "50th level of impurity" [from enjoying the party of Achashverosh] and as a hint, Haman built a gallows that was 50 amos high. In the Acharis HaYomim, we are in the 50th level within the 50th level of impurity, its innermost level.

Question:

5) What's a good commentary to learn on Megillas Esther?

Answer:

This is relative to each person.

Purim On Erev Shabbos

Question:

When Purim falls out on Erev Shabbos like this year, what should be the attitude? Should it be a more serious kind of Purim, so that we are more careful about getting ready for Shabbos and so that we don't detract our honor for Shabbos? Or is that just the yetzer hora's tactic to get people to be nervous on Purim so that they won't have simchah on Purim when they keep thinking about how it's soon going to be Shabbos?

Answer:

Part of the decree against Jewry in the times of Purim was that Vashti made the Jewish girls work on Shabbos. And in addition, Haman accused the Jewish people of making every day into a celebration, between of the festivals and Shabbos days that the Jewish people have. The sefer Tzror HaMor (Devarim 26:1) says that on Purim, a person should remember Shabbos. The root of this matter has to do with “Shabbos Zachor”, the Shabbos that precedes Purim. The *avodah* we have when Purim falls on Erev Shabbos, therefore, is to make sure to remember Shabbos.

Women On Purim

Question:

- 1) What is a woman's *avodah* on Purim? What specific points should a women focus on Purim?
- 2) And what should a woman on Purim focus on especially if it's difficult for a woman to feel the holiness of Purim, when it seems that only the men can be happy on Purim, because only the men become drunk and they say *Divrei Torah*, and the women feel left out from all of this? How can a woman truly feel on Purim that “The miracle of Purim came about through women”, and “In the merit of the righteous women the Jewish people are redeemed”? How can a woman become connected to Queen Esther on Purim?
- 3) And especially if a woman is afraid for her husband and children on Purim – which is the case for many women on Purim, who unfortunately don't enjoy Purim and they wish for it to be over already, so everyone can return to normal again...in such situations, how can a woman be happy on Purim, in spite of all the chaos around her?

Answer:

There are a lot of aspects to Purim. The *halachah* of intoxication applies only to men, and the parameters of this *halachah* is explained by the Poskim. But there are many other aspects of Purim as well which apply to both men and women. Here are some of those points to think about, and each person should try to do them on his or her own level, according to his or her personal capabilities – and not based on any reasons influenced by factors that are either social, or emotional, or family-based, because there are many times where people act based solely on “what's normal”, and this uproots any serenity and joy that they could have on Purim.

1) Consider the aspect of reading the *Megillah* on Purim. Both men and women are obligated to hear the *Megillah* on Purim. And on a more inner level, both men and women can reflect on the events in the *Megillah* and see how there was Divine Providence laced throughout this story, because the word “*Megillas Esther*” means to “reveal” the “hidden”, to turn the concealment (*hester*) into *giluy* (revelation of Hashem’s Divine Providence). A person can go through all of the details in the Purim story, from beginning until end, and he can see how it was all an unfolding process of Hashem’s Divine Providence – as opposed to a bunch of random details that have no connection to each other.

On an even deeper level, each person, whether man or woman, on his or her own level, can see Hashem’s inner mode of conduct hidden in the Creation, as explained in sefer *Daas Tevunos*, and how every event in the world can be seen through the lens of Hashem’s carefully planned Divine Providence, His goodness, and the revelation of His Oneness.

2) Consider the mitzvah of sending *Mishloach Manos* on Purim. The purpose of this *mitzvah* is to increase love and friendship. On the obligatory level, everyone is obligated to send two portions of food to someone. On an inner level, one should also think about whom he will make happy by giving *Mishloach Manos* to. Then one should think, “What can I put into this *Mishloach Manos* package which will make the other person happy? What would that person really enjoy?” One should put thought into how much *Mishloach Manos* to send, what the quality of it should be like, how nice it should look, and what kind of nice messages he can send with it. Everyone should do this only according to her personal capabilities, and not to over-do it.

Even more so, when giving the *Mishloach Manos*, it should not just be an act of giving motivated by logic alone, but it should be given from the depth of one’s heart, with love and joy, to make the other person happy.

Included in this aspect (gladdening other people on Purim) is to make the children happy, with costumes and the like. But again, one should do this only within her actual capabilities, and only if she can do it with joy.

3) Consider also the *mitzvah* to give *Matanos L’Evyonim* (gifts to the poor) on Purim. One should look for a person who needs it the most, and who would be the happiest to receive it – and one should strive to give *Matanos L’Evyonim* specifically to this kind of person. A woman usually needs to ask her husband about whom she may give *Matanos L’Evyonim* to, mainly so that her husband should agree with her decision.

4) Regarding the *seudah* of Purim, try to serve good food to each person who is dining by you, fitted to each person's particular tastes. The main point of the *seudah* on Purim is to think about and discuss Purim-related matters and what Purim is all about, and to stay away from words that disparage people, which only awaken the most impure forces in one's soul.

5) The purpose of the day of Purim is to reach a deep place in one's soul that is above one's *daas* (logical reasoning and understanding). For men, whose main mitzvah is to learn Torah, their main work on this world is to develop the power of their logic throughout the year, by studying Torah. That is why men need the intoxicating effects of wine (or the dulling effect of sleep) in order to "nullify" their logical understanding and reach a place that goes beyond logical understanding.

However, women, who are exempt from Torah study, are therefore closer to the concept of nullifying their understanding and to more easily reach a place that goes beyond logical understanding. This is the point known as *temimus* (non-intellectual simplicity or earnestness).

Thus the main *avodah* of the day of Purim is, "Be wholesome with Hashem your G-d", to walk with Him in *temimus* (simplicity), without any intellectual thinking. It is about sensing His unlimited love for us, just as the people in the time of Achashveirosh re-accepted the Torah out of their great love of Hashem that they saw through the miracles of Purim. It is about feeling how He always give to us, out of His great love for us, by saving us from trouble, and by bestowing good upon us. From this understanding, we can come to feel the sweetness and pleasantness of being close to Him.

This is the root of true *simchah* on Purim, because by feeling close to Hashem a person feels physically lighter, in the body in general and specifically in the feet, and that is why one can easily sing and dance on Purim – just as by the song of Miriam.

And that is why the miracles on Purim happened precisely through women [Esther]. It is because women are closer to this *temimus* (simplicity and earnestness).

Men need to drink as a means to reach this place of *temimus*, whereas women are closer to reaching it, without the means of drinking. It only requires a little bit of reflecting and calm silence, and to enter into the deepest place of one's soul – each person on her own level.

To Drink or Not to Drink

Question:

Every year Purim, I am not sure how I am supposed to act, with regards to becoming intoxicated on Purim. I have never gotten completely drunk, I just drink a little more than the usual and afterwards I rest, as stated in the Rema (Orach Chaim 696:1). But every year when Purim is over, I feel that I didn't experience true simchah on Purim. Every year when it comes Purim, I feel instead like a "mourner" who can't rejoice, and that everyone around me is happy while I remain "outside the camp", in solitude, for they are moving around and happy and enjoying and growing, utilizing their elements of water, wind, and fire, while I remain stuck in my element of earth.

I made a self-accounting with myself and I concluded that I have several reasons why I don't want to become drunk on Purim.

Firstly, I am afraid that this will cause me to be careless about mitzvos, i.e. when it comes to davening and bentching, and I see that usually when people drink a lot on Purim, they become sick the day after Purim and they don't daven with a minyan, etc. So I always think to myself: What do I need this for?! Any gains from drinking on Purim become voided, due to all of the losses that result from it. Sometimes people ruin their Purim [because of drinking too much] and sometimes this extends to the day after Purim as well.

Another reason I don't get drunk on Purim is because I am afraid that I will reveal to others what's going on deep inside myself. I am afraid of discovering what's really in me, and I am afraid that I will tell others about my darkest secrets. (I am aware that the Rav has spoken about this in a derashah: that people are scared to discover what's really inside them).

So I am having contradicting feelings, if I should get drunk on Purim or not. On one hand, it just may be my personal soul redemption. On the other hand, I am afraid of the detrimental results it may cause, as mentioned above.

I will add that I have another reason why I should get drunk on Purim: during the rest of the year, I don't express love to others, and I have some family relatives that I would really want to express love to, such as my father, father-in-law, brother-in-laws, uncles, etc. During the rest of the year, I don't have the emotional courage to let them know that I love them (as most people). But if I get drunk on Purim, I will be able to express love to them. I could call my parents and brothers on the phone on Purim, and I would be eating the Purim seudah with my father-in-law, brothers-in-law, and uncles. Perhaps for this reason alone I should get drunk on Purim! Maybe the Rav can guide me about this. It is one day of the year which all of the year depends

on [spiritually], and especially because I wouldn't want to fall into the "doubts" of "Amalek" on Purim, of all days. Much thanks to the Rav, and a tremendous yasher koach.

Answer:

It is written, "*To the Jews there was orah (light) and simchah (joy).*" We should understand that simchah (joy) comes from "*orah*", from "light". There [are two levels of spiritual "light"]: the illumination itself, and the "sparks" of this illumination [a "partial" level of spiritual illumination].

For most people, the joy and laughter that they have [through getting drunk] on Purim is on the "animal" level of the soul (the *nefesh habehaimis*). In some cases, people will sin on Purim by engaging in improper jest of others (*leitzanus*), by insulting others, etc. Their joy is being manifest within the three impure "husks" (*kelipos*) and these people become attached to these *kelipos*.

In other cases, people will not sin on Purim, but their *simchah* on Purim still does not go beyond the "animal" level of the soul: they get joy from things that make the "animal soul" happy, such as meat, wine, and humorous things. There can sometimes be "sparks" of true joy that are contained in this, but they are merely "sparks" of joy. So their joy is a mixture of superficial joy with some sparks of true joy. When people have this kind of joy on Purim, they will express what's in their heart, and they will speak about what they aspire for and what they really want, amidst their state of intoxication. However, in almost all cases, there is still a joy on the level of the "animal" soul, the *nefesh habehaimis*, and at best, they have merely "sparks" of true joy.

However, of Purim it is said "*To the Jews, there was light and joy*", and this means that *simchah* (joy) comes from *orah* (spiritual light). So even though you say that "Everyone around me is happy", that doesn't mean anything! Because their *simchah* is only on a superficial level, as described above.

Regarding the fact that you feel as if you are stuck in your element of "earth", this can be coming from any one of the following two reasons: (A) It can come from a strong leaning towards the element of earth, (B) It can be a subtle, inner recognition that the simchah which you are witnessing on Purim is not genuine, and deep down, your soul isn't interested in it – it only wants "*orah v'simchah*", the joy that comes from spiritual light. Your soul merely connects to the serenity which they are having [but not to their joy].

For most people, it is appropriate to drink a little more than what they are used to, and in a way that will not cause them to lose their *daas* (objective thinking). Rather, they need to get to the point where they feel an inner “expansion” [of the mind], and where their heart become gladdened. This opens the heart, and it then becomes possible for a person to express things which he normally doesn’t express during the rest of the year. However, as mentioned, this should not happen from [becoming intoxicated to the point that one has] loss of *daas*, nor should it come from a desire to unleash one’s pent-up feelings that are stored in his heart. Rather, it should be a result of expanded *daas*, from an expansion of the heart. This is the depth of the verse, “For the heart of the king is good, with wine.” It is a subtle boundary to tread, and this is what is appropriate for many people.

There is also a subtler approach to take: One can [become intoxicated to the point of] “lose” his normal *daas*, and instead become attached with a more expansive kind of *daas*, which is in the category of “surrounding light” (*ohr makif*)... This is the depth behind the difference between the regular cities with the walled cities from the times of Yehoshua. The 14th of Adar, which is for the regular cities, represents the level of nullifying one’s *daas*. The 15th of Adar, which was for the walled cities since the times of Yehoshua, represents the “surrounding light”, the *ohr makif*, the expanded level of *daas*.

In truth, “the question of a wise person is half the answer.” One needs to clarify the definitions of *halachah* of the subject at hand, by studying all of the opinions of the *Poskim*, and then one should clarify his current spiritual level. He should think about what the gains are, and what the disadvantages are. Therefore it is appropriate for each person to clarify all of the views of the *Poskim* about the *halachah* of becoming intoxicated on Purim, and then one should clarify what his personal level is, and if he will gain or lose by becoming intoxicated on Purim. If he feels that he will gain from it, he needs to clarify exactly what he will gain, as well as any detrimental results that may come because of it. This is the proper, clear approach to take, and it is *halachah l’maaseh*.

One should not draw any conclusions from great *tzaddikim* who became intoxicated on Purim. Nor should one conclude that he needs to be like most people on Purim who aren’t careful with *halachah* when they become drunk. (Of this it is not said that “If they are not prophets, they are still the sons of prophets”, since we are dealing here with the “animal” level of the soul which seeks laughter, frivolity, lawlessness, and all other undesirable elements. The “animal” level of one’s soul will seek to learn about happiness from observing animalistic behavior, either by observing animals, or by observing gentiles, who become very intoxicated – on their holidays specifically, and during the rest of their lives in general.) So it is upon each person to act

according to his current level, as mentioned above, by first clarifying the *halachah* and then clarifying all of the details of his current spiritual level.

The avodah of every person on this day [Purim] is to reach the innermost point of the soul, from his current perception, which is his current level of “*orah*” (spiritual light) that he has so far reached. From that point, one can draw forth *simchah*. There is no greater evil on Purim than one who copies others’ behavior, for this is totally ignoring the “individuality” of oneself. And although there is a custom to dress up in costumes on Purim, that is really because we are showing that the way we appear during the rest of the year is actually a “costume” [for during the rest of the year we are not revealing our true self]. That is how we reveal our true self. How pitiful is it when a person has to completely imitate the behavior of others around him, on Purim [because he doesn’t get to be “himself”].

The day of Purim is the day to reach one’s very core, which is above one’s *daas*. From that inner place, one will be able to sense the reality of the Creator, Whom there is nothing else besides. It is a day where “the King” is totally revealed, where the “King of kings” can be revealed even in the most mundane aspects. It is the revelation that the true “king” is really the King of all kings. On the day of Purim, the King is revealed in every place.

So the avodah on the day of Purim is for one to “divest” himself from all “garments”. This is the deeper implication of the word “Megillah”, which means “reveal”. Through this, one can touch upon the very essence of his *neshamah*, and from reaching that place, one can unify with others: to send *mishloach manos* to others in order to increase love and friendship with others, and to give *matanos l’evyonim* to others out of a deep, inner *simchah* that one reaches within. One finds the joy within himself and then he can make others happy. From there, one can find a Torah of revelation, a level of Torah that is called “*megillah*”, where all is revealed and there is no concealment. This is the meaning of what the Sages taught that the “light” revealed on Purim, the *orah*, is referring to Torah. It is a “Torah” of revelation, which brings one to have genuine, deep, inner *simchah*.

That is the true *simchah* on this day, and nothing else compares to it. During the rest of the year, the Torah is called “closed, and revealed”, but on this day, the Torah is entirely about revelation. This is the depth of the concept that the “*Megillah* is read”: from the spiritual light of the *Megillah*, one is able to “read” the entire Torah: the words of Torah will be “read” on their own, for it is entirely in the category of revelation. This is the complete *simchah*, joy at its root, a joy in the Creator: “*The righteous will rejoice in Hashem.*”

What to Drink on Purim

Question:

I heard the Rav say in a derashah that only when one has already revealed his neshamah throughout the course of the year is it proper for him to become intoxicated on Purim. If not, then his intoxication is not in the category of “Wine enters and secrets come out” because such a person has not yet revealed the “secret” [the soul] beforehand. The Rav explained much about the depth of drinking wine on Purim, from different angles. This would seem to imply that all of one’s growth through intoxication on Purim can only come through wine specifically, as opposed to other beverages [i.e. whiskey, schnapps, vodka, beer], for only wine reveals the secret. Therefore, how are we to understand the different views in the Poskim regarding if one fulfills intoxication on Purim through wine specifically or even through other alcoholic beverages?

Answer:

Everything has a root, as well as branches, to it. The “root” of drinking on Purim, which is “When wine enters, the secret comes out” implies that it is wine specifically which reveals the secret. However, in the “branches” of this matter, the spiritual effect of the wine on Purim also extends to other intoxicating beverages. However [any intoxicating beverages other than wine] would not have the gain of the spiritual illumination of the “root”, for it would only be on the level of “branch”.



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