

Tunnel Vision on Purim

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן-בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | יעקב אליעזר בן חנה נשא

The Gemara in Megillah (7B) says, “Rava says a person is obligated to drink on Purim until the point that he does not know the difference between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai.” The Maharsha explains Rava’s statement - “There is a complete Tzadik that merits two tables, to eat the fruit in this world and the main portion in the next world. Mordechai would be an example of this as he merited all the greatness even in this world. On the flip side a completely wicked person that has no merit like Haman, that was from the seed of Amalek and Eisav, also loses this world. Regarding this, Rava said a person is obligated to drink on Purim until the point that he does not know, meaning that he can’t focus to differentiate the great distance between ‘cursed is Haman’ who was completely wicked and he lost two worlds to ‘blessed is Mordechai’ that was a complete Tzadik and merited two worlds.”

The Maharsha seems to be veering off from the simple explanation of the Gemara, which is that a person should reach a point of intoxication in which he is unable to differentiate between Mordechai being blessed and Haman’s downfall. We can assume that the Maharsha felt that these two are always easily discernible irrelevant to what state a person is in. Therefore, he explains that it is rather referring to a person being able to discern the great distance between meriting two worlds and losing both worlds. However, this explanation requires analysis because on the surface this recognition seems fairly simple and obvious and should have the same challenge as the simple explanation of the Gemara?

It seems that the Maharsha views this distance as something

difficult for a person to discern. A person is very stuck in the moment, the here and now, and therefore fails to see the great distance between meriting two worlds and losing two worlds as the next world is somewhat out of view. Since it is so difficult to see this distance when a person gets intoxicated, they will not be able to perceive this gap. Often, a person fools himself into thinking that he understands this distance. We see from here that seeing this distance requires real focus, and attention.

The Eitz Yosef asks on the above quoted statement of Rava quoting the Abudraham, “How can our Sages obligate us to do something which the Torah and Neviim mention in many places as a great stumbling block? The answer is that all the miracles that happened to Klal Yisroel during the days of Achashveirosh were through drinking. At first, Vashti’s downfall happened through drinking, and Esther was brought to the palace through drinking....Similarly, the events that happened to Haman and his downfall were through drinking wine. Therefore, our Sages obligated us to drink until the point in which we remember the great miracle.”

Purim has become synonymous with out of control drinking, that has unfortunately put many people in danger. It is clear from the above that the purpose of the drinking is to bring a person to remember the great miracles that occurred. The wine is serving as a prop to help us deepen our appreciation of the miracle. Clearly there is no place for out of control drinking that shuts down a person’s mind, and this behavior is not in line with the theme of the day.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

She could not imagine that there existed someone else in the world with such outstanding qualities. She knew that deep down she loved him with all her heart and soul and that the feeling was mutual. Though she was aware that only with him would she attain true happiness, she wanted freedom and her overpowering love for him loomed as a potential yoke that would hamper it. Her only option was attempting to ignore and stifle her deep felt emotions, thereby slowly burying them ever deeper into her subconscious, however, it was not to be. The depth of her love was too great to deny and the clear knowledge of her only true path to happiness did not bear obfuscation. Despite her many attempts at denial, the overpowering love buried deep within her eventually burst forth like a volcano. With it came ultimate happiness as she accepted upon herself that yoke of love which she had always known deep down was her only path to true bliss, uniting her eternally with the love of her life.

Shir HaShirim is a description of this struggle with Klal Yisroel described as the bride and Hashem as the groom. Therefore, despite the absence of any mention of the “awe of Heaven and acceptance of the yoke of its rule,” Rashi explains the words of Reb Akiva describing Shir HaShirim as “Holy of Holies” with the following words: *For it’s entirety is expressions of awe of Heaven and the acceptance of the yoke of it’s rule. (Rashi, Shir HaShirim 1:1)*

The **yoke of the rule of Heaven** should not be confused with the yoke of a kingdom on Earth. It is rather a far different sort of yoke. One that comes with the acknowledgement of ultimate love and the eternal happiness it brings, which we at times subconsciously attempt to deny for a mere fleeting pleasure. For this reason, we preface our twice daily acceptance of “the yoke of Heaven” in the recital of Shema, with the blessing: **The One who chooses Yisroel with love**. This is also why we immediately follow it with the Mitzvah: **And you shall love Hashem with all your heart, and your soul, and all your might!**



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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Paris, the year 1427. A tremor sweeps through the courthouse as the all-powerful Judge, in whose hands lies the fate of all who are brought before him, makes his entrance. The prosecution presents its case against Jacob and, though their proofs are weak, the judge seems inclined to believe them, which is all that matters. It looks like his life will soon be over, but he has only one last chance to save himself. The law allows the defendant to see the judge in his private chambers before he makes his final ruling. If the judge, for whatever reason, is willing to spare his life, he will be free. With trepidation, he enters the judge’s inner chamber and falls before his feet. With tears streaming down his face, he explains his innocence and how it was merely his low position in society that made him free fodder for anyone who wished to use him as cover for their own crimes. As he recounts the story of his sorry childhood and how he had been kidnapped as a small child etc., the judge’s demeanor softens. The judge himself had a son who had been kidnapped from him while still a small child and a day has never passed since without his heart yearning for him. As Jacob recounts further details regarding himself, the judge begins to tremble. The details are consistent with his own son’s. Could it be? Could his dear son, whom he yearns for so longingly, really be the man standing before him pleading for his life? He has one way to find out for certain. His own child had had a very distinctive birth mark on his left middle toe. He asks Jacob to remove his left shoe and sock. Though bewildered by the request, Jacob immediately complies revealing that very same distinctive birth mark the Judge had remembered. With tears streaming down his face the judge jumps up to hug his bewildered son, crying, “Jacob! My dear little Jacob! It truly is You! I can’t believe I lived to see this day!”

Everything that will occur in our lives is decided by He who judges the entire world on Rosh Hashanah, a decision we may improve upon by acquiring additional merits throughout the year. However, our judge also has a private chamber, it’s called Shemoneh Esrei! It is there that we can plead with him regarding all our affairs, and it is entirely up to Him to determine our fate. How comforting it is to know that this judge happens to be our dear Father, who yearns and is overflowing with love for us?!