

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

Purim 5786

Insights on the Megilas Esther

פורים תשפ"ו

The Purim message, an urgency of having unity in Klal Yisrael:

The message is clear that the main part of Purim is Achdus, unity. Therefore, we do the *mitzvos* of Purim accordingly. *Mishloach Manos* and *Matanos Levyonim* which we do is to make people happy and bring friendship. The same is the Mitzvah of Megilah which has a special importance to be read in a large gathering bringing people together, and unify us as a group to listen to the Megilah. *Haman Harasha* had tried to utilize an evil and false accusation saying that "Klal Yisroel was spread and torn apart, and are evil, and Achashveirosh should destroy them." Only when there is unity by Yidden, do they have the strength to overcome all evil against them. That is what Esther says לְךָ כְּנוּם אֶת כָּל הַיְּהוּדִים "Gather together all the Yidden" Have them come and be united with Ahavas Yisrael and unity and then we shall defeat Haman. Therefore, there is no other Yom Tov like Purim where Yidden pour out true Ahavas Yisroel, and love for one another; How much Tzedaka is given on Purim! This really brings such Nachas for Hashem. The fact of Machlokes is holding up Moshiach from coming as the *Gemara* says: The Yidden will be redeemed from *Galus* only through Achdus and unity. Esther lays the plan for redemption from the evil Haman, and Megilas Esther is written in Ruach Hakodesh for future generations, as well as for our redemption too. It teaches us that the building of the Bais Hamikdash will be based on unity, and when the opposite will occur there will be destruction. As Chazal teach us the the Second Bais Hamikdash was destroyed because of *Sinas Chinam*, Hatred. That is the reason of giving *Mishloach Manos* to one another and the giving Tzedaka to all who ask, which proves that we love one another. This shows an act of unity which will hasten the building of the Third Bais Hamikdash.

The power of Simchas Purim.

In March of 1953 in the Stoliner Shul in Williamsburg on Rodney St. the Stoliner Rebbe Rabbi Yochonon Perlow זצ"ל was in an extraordinary state of *Simcha* and this overflowed onto the Chassidim. The Chassidim were dancing and overpowered with such happiness. There was a mention of the evil Stalin who murdered so many innocent Jews, and was considered the evil Haman of that generation. It was time to end his evil. At a later date the chasidim were dancing with Simcha and the Stoliner

Rebbe smiled and said with this Simcha we got rid of the evil Stalin. "מיר האבן געפטרט סטאלין מיט שמחה." That was on March 1st and soon after news spread that Joseph Stalin, who loved to see people's blood flow, suddenly became paralyzed and died four days later on March 5th.

On Purim 1953 the Lubavitch Rebbe was speaking to hundreds of his Chassidim in the large Chabad Synagogue in Brooklyn when he, for no apparent reason changed the subject and announced, "Let us all cheer Hurrah! Hurrah!" and the Rebbe began shouting over and over "Hurrah! Hurrah!". His perplexed followers took up the chant until the entire room was rocking from the rhythm of "Hurrah! Hurrah!". That is the power of Simcha in Purim.

When the Megillah is read in public on Purim, it is customary for the congregation to recite aloud four verses of redemption אִישׁ יְהוּדִי הָיָה בְּשׂוֹשׁוֹן הַבִּירָה וּשְׁמוֹ מֵרְדֵּכַי בֶּן יָאִיר בֶּן יִמְיָאִי "For Mordechai the Jew ranked next to King Ahashverosh (2:5) וּמֵרְדֵּכַי יָצָא מִלִּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלִבּוֹשׁ, מַלְכוּת תְּכֵלֶת וְחֹר וְעִמְרֶת וְהָב גְּדוּלָּה וְתִכְרִיד בּוֹיָן וְאַרְגָּמָן וְהָעִיר שׂוֹשׁוֹן לַיהוּדִים, "And Mordechai went out" (8:15) צִהְלָה וּשְׂמָחָה: "The Jews enjoyed light and gladness, happiness and honor" (8:16) כִּי מֵרְדֵּכַי הַיְּהוּדִי מִשְׁנֶה, לְמַלְכָּה אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ וְגִדּוּל לַיהוּדִים וְרָצוּי לְרֵב אֶחָיו דָּרָשׁ טוֹב לַעֲמֹד וְדָבָר לְמַלְכָּה אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ "For Mordechai the Jew and interceded for the welfare of his kindred" (10:3), which are then repeated by the reader. The *Mateh Moshe* on *Orach Chaim* is one source that we repeat these four Pesukim in the Megilas Esther is not a requirement nor a custom but it is intended to make the children rejoice with Simcha. The halacha is brought in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim* 690:17. We have to do whatever we can to promote Simcha. There is also the *Minhag* to use clappers when the chazan reads the word Haman in the Megilah. This is also to bring Simcha. The Torah places a responsibility upon each Jew to bring joy to others, especially in situations in which happiness is necessary. This is equally true for unfortunate individuals who find happiness hard to come by. Simcha is the role of bringing joy to others by creating an atmosphere of joy. Laughter is contagious and will bring happiness to others The Bais Aaharon of Karlin says כִּי בְּשִׂמְחָה תֵּצְאוּ מִכָּל הָצָרוֹת With Simcha you can exit any obstacles in life. On Purim, שְׂמִיחָה simcha is mentioned in the possuk before it mentions sasson; this shows us that on Purim we need to have

something that comes even before sasson. On Purim, we need to find a simcha which comes even before sasson.

Drinking on Purim

We know that Purim is a day when prayers are answered by Hashem. But why do we have to drink "*Ad Delo Yadah*", even to the point of inebriation [within Halachic guidelines]? An incident with the Baba Sali shows us why. A rich and prominent couple were childless and came to the Baba Sali for a Bracha. The tzaddik thought deeply, then poured a glass of arak-liquor for the husband to drink. The man wasn't a big drinker, so he took only a small sip. The Baba Sali insisted that he drink the full glass. The visitor balked! The Baba Sali said simply, "If you don't want children then you can leave right now!" By this time, the man understood that the yeshua he needed was tied up with drinking that glass of arak. He forced himself to drain the glass to the last drop. The holy Baba Sali poured another glass and again insisted that the husband drink the full amount. This scenario was repeated until the husband fell to the ground dead drunk. Now the Baba Sali asked him the purpose of his visit and he cried out "I want to be blessed with children." The Baba Sali proclaimed, "Your prayers have been answered." Within a year the couple were blessed with a son and the happy father returned to Netivot to share the good news with the Rav and thank him for his help. But he felt compelled to ask the Rav, "If I was meant to have a child, why did I have to be humiliated and act like a common drunkard?" The Rav smiled and answered: "You are a rich and prominent person. Your prayers were mixed with Gaaveh/pride and Hashem listens to a prayer only from a humble person. When you were drunk and humiliated, at that moment you were very humble indeed. That is when I saw that your prayers had been answered".

The message of this story holds true for Purim as well. We all pray for our needs and want to have a Yeshua. When we drink "*Ad Delo Yadah*" we are basically in a state of humility and that is when our prayers are more likely to be answered. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

Insights on the מגילת אסתר

לא הנידה אסתר את עמה ואת מולדתה כי מרדכי צוה עליה אשר לא תגיד: (ב) *Esther did not reveal her nationality or her lineage, for Mordechai ordered her not to reveal it. (2:10).* We can add an insight to the reason Esther did not reveal her nationality. Esther was forcibly taken to the court of Achashveirosh. She was always hoping that at the right time, she would escape from the palace. However, were she to reveal her nationality, it would be very easy for the King to locate her, and have her returned to him. By not revealing who she was, she would make her escape a successful one.

Megillah Insight: The miracle began with wine.

ביום השביעי במלך לב המלך ביין: (אסתר א י)

"On the seventh day, when the king's heart was merry with wine." Seforim teach us that the word Esther is derived from the word הסתר, which means that the miracles are hidden. One of the miracles of Purim was that Achashverosh ordered Vashti to be put to death which brought about the rise of Esther to become queen. One of the reasons Vashti did not appear before Achashverosh was that she scolded him over the fact that a king shouldn't become drunk. This is stated in the Gemara Megillah 12:b Vashti sent her husband a message: "You stable boy of my father! My father Belshazzar drank wine the equivalent of what a thousand people drink and did not get drunk, and you Achashverosh became foolish from his wine." Immediately his anger burned within him. Now, the question arises: Achashverosh made a party for 180 days for his ministers and servants, and he drank and drank, more than enough wine, yet he didn't become drunk. Then he made another party for seven days for the people in Shushan. For 186 days he drank wine and didn't become drunk; but on Day 187, he becomes drunk? This difficult to understand. Therefore, we can conclude, that Achashverosh's getting drunk was the beginning of the miracle of Purim. Hashem made sure that Achashverosh would get drunk on Day 187 which coincidentally fell on Shabbos, as Rashi quotes the Gemara Megilla: ביום השביעי -the seventh day- which is Shabbos. When Achashverosh got drunk and ordered Vashti to appear before him, she refused, and berated him. Under the influence of wine, he ordered her to be put to death. After the wine wore off, he wondered what happened to Vashti, which led to his taking Esther for a wife. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

לך כלנו את כל היהודים הנמצאים בשושן וצומו עלי ואל תאכלו ואל תשתו שלשת ימים לילה ויום גם אני ונעמתי אצוים כן ובכל אבוא אל המלך אשר לא כדת: (אסתר ד טז) *Go, assemble all the Jews who are present in Shushan and fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, day and night; also I and my maidens will fast in a like manner; then I will go to the king contrary to the law, Esther commanded assemble "all the Jews", all have to be united in opinion and love to one another, and then and only then I will go to the king, which is referring to Hashem, contrary to the law, even though we have sinned and have not listened to the commandments of Hashem. When Klal Yisrael is with true Achdus and unity and each Yid respects the opinions and minhagim of other fellow Jews, the redemption will come then and לך כלנו את כל היהודים "all the Jews" and אבוא אל המלך we will come towards the Shechina and welcome Him out of this long and bitter exile. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)*

וַיִּסְפֹּר לָהֶם הָמָן אֶת כְּבוֹד עֲשָׂרוֹ וְרַב בָּנָיו וְאֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר גָּדְלוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֵת
And Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches and the multitude of his sons, and all that the king had promoted him and that he had exalted him over the princes and the king's servants.
 (Esther 5:11) The commenters ask: There is a famous fact throughout Chazal. "יש בכלל מאתים מנה" One hundred dinars is contained or included within two hundred, i.e., testimony concerning a large amount includes testimony concerning a smaller amount. If so, why was Haman boasting that he was exalted over the princes and the servants? If he was exalted above the princes, of course he was exalted over the king's servants.

Keren Ledavid, from Hagaon Rav Eliezer David Greenwald, brother of Hagaon Rav Moshe, author of the Arugas Habosem, answers a beautiful insight. We see in the Gemara Berachos 34b: There was an incident involving Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, who went to study Torah before Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, and Rabbi Yochanan's son fell ill. He said to him, Chanina, my son, pray for mercy on behalf of my son so that he will live. Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa placed his head between his knees in order to meditate and prayed for mercy on his behalf, and Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai's son lived. Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai said about himself: Had ben Zakkai stuck his head between his knees throughout the entire day, they would have paid him no attention. His wife said to him, And is Chanina greater than you? He replied to her: No, but his prayer is better received than my own because he is like a servant before the King, and as such, he is able to enter before the King and make various requests at all times. I, on the other hand, am like a minister before the King, and I can enter only when invited and make requests only with regard to especially significant matters. Based on this, we can explain what Haman said: If I were exalted over princes, I would still need permission to come before the king. However, I am exalted over the king's servants, so I can come unannounced before the king and present my evil plan! However, Hashem had different plans for him and Klal Yisrael. (קרן לדוד גרינוואלד מועדים)

Haman's arrogance led to his demise

וַיִּסְפֹּר הָמָן לְיָרֵשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ וְלְכָל־אֲהָבָיו. וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ הַכְּמִיו וְהָרַשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ אִם
 מִנְּרַע הַיְּהוּדִים מְרַדְּכִי. לֹא־תוּכַל לוֹ כִּי־נָפֹל תִּפּוֹל לְפָנָיו:

And Haman recounted unto Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him: 'If Mordechai, before whom thou hast begun to fall, be of the seed of the Jews, you will not prevail against him, but will surely fall before him. (6:13) There is a difficulty here. Haman came to Zeresh and his wise friends for advice on how to be saved and they proceed to tell him of his impending fall! What kind of soothing advice is this? The answer is they

knew that Haman would never succeed in waging a war against Mordechai. However they advised him that he could at least salvage his own life. "If Mordechai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish lineage, then he has a merciful heart. Tell him you regret that you wanted to harm the Yidden and then Mordechai will forgive you." Their words "*fall before him*" imply: fall yes, but for *forgiveness*. Of course Haman, the latter-day Amalek, rejected their advice and marched headlong to his downfall.

כִּי נִמְכַּרְנוּ אֲנִי וְעַמִּי לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהָרוֹג וּלְאַבֵּד:

For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish;
 וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ; וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶכָּה מִי הוּא זֶה וְאִי זֶה הוּא אֲשֶׁר מְלָא
And King Achashveirosh said, and he said to Queen Esther, "Who is this, and who is he, who has dared to do this?" (7:4-5) The obvious difficulty is: Did Achashveirosh really forget that he decreed this to Haman, such that he asks Esther: "Who dared to do this"? However, since Esther never revealed her nationality to Achashveirosh, he still never suspected her to be a Jew. Now the decree was only imposed upon the Jews, and since Esther was definitely not a Jew, her people upon whom a decree had been issued to be slain, did not come from the king: therefore, he asked: "*Who is this and who is he, who has dared to do this?*"

(ספר מחשבות משה, הר"ר משה באכנער ז"ל, קראקא תרפ"ה)

The Bais Aron of Karlin יצ"ל says, that the Chiyus, Geshmak and Simcha that one has on Purim, that same spirit, one will feel on Pesach by the Seder as well as on Yom Kippur. Let us derive and make the right preparation with Achdus and Ahavas Yisrael. By doing so this we will shine that Geshmak into Purim and continue on and on throughout the year and we will be Zoche to the Geula Shelama, Amein.

וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת הָמָן עַל הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לְמֹרְדֵּכַי וְחַמֵּת הַמֶּלֶךְ שָׂכָרָה: בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה אֶת בֵּית הָמָן צָרַר הַיְּהוּדִים וּמֹרְדֵּכַי בָּא לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי הִגִּידָה אַסְתֵּר מָה הוּא לָהּ: וְיֹסֵר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת טַבַּעְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הָעֵבִיר מִהֶמָּן וַיִּתְּנָה לְמֹרְדֵּכַי אֶת־מֹרְדֵּכַי עַל בֵּית הָמָן: וְתוֹסֵף אַסְתֵּר וַתְּדַבֵּר לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתַּפֵּל לִפְנֵי רַגְלָיו וַתִּתְחַנֵּן־לּוֹ לְהַעֲבִיר אֶת רַעַת הָמָן הָאֲנֹכִי וְאֶת מַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁב עַל הַיְּהוּדִים: וַיּוֹשֻׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר אֶת שְׂרָבִית הַזָּהָב וַתִּקֶּם אַסְתֵּר וַתַּעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: וְלֹא־מָר אִם עַל הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב וְאִם מִצָּאִתִּי חֵן לִפְנָיו וְכִשֵּׁר הִדְבָּר לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְשׁוֹכָה אֲנִי בְּעֵינָיו יִכְתֹּב לְהַשְׁיֵב אֶת הַסְּפָדִים מִחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ הָמָן בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶכָּה הָאֲנֹכִי אֲשֶׁר כָּתַב לְאַבֵּר אֶת הַיְּהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ: וְכִי אֵיכָבָה אוֹכַל וְרָאִיתִי בְּרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־יִמָּצֵא אֶת עַמִּי וְאֵיכָבָה אוֹכַל וְרָאִיתִי בְּאֶבְדֵּן מוֹלֶדְתִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וּלְמֹרְדֵּכַי הַיְּהוּדִי הִנֵּה בֵּית הָמָן נִתְּנִי לְאַסְתֵּר וְאִתּוֹ תָּלוּ עַל הָעֵץ עַל אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יָדוֹ בַּיְּהוּדִים וְאַתֶּם כְּתֹבוּ עַל־הַיְּהוּדִים כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ וְחַתְמוּ בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי כָתַב אֲשֶׁר נִכְתָּב בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ וְנִחְתָּמוּ בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵין לְהַשְׁיֵב: (מגילת אסתר פרק ז ח)

Haman was hanged on the gallows he made for Mordechai, and the king's anger subsided. King Achashveirosh granted Queen Esther the house of Haman, the Jews' enemy, on that day. Mordechai appeared before the king, as Esther had informed him of their relationship. The king took off his ring, which he had removed from Haman and gave it to Mordechai, and Esther placed Mordechai in charge of the house of Haman. Esther resumed speaking before the king, and she fell before his feet, and she wept and beseeched him to avert the harm of Haman the Agagite and his device that he had plotted against the Jews. Then the king extended the golden scepter to Esther, and Esther arose and stood before the king. And she said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor before him, and the matter is properly before the king, and I am good in his sight, let it be written to rescind the letters, the device of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces. For how can I see the evil that will befall my people, and how can I see the destruction of my kindred?" Then King Achashveirosh said to Queen Esther and to Mordechai the Jew, "Behold the house of Haman I have given to Esther, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he laid a hand on the Jews. And you-write about the Jews as you see fit, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring, for a writ that is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's ring cannot be rescinded." (Esther chapter 7 & 8)

If Haman was already on the gallows in 7:10, why did Esther need to put Mordechai in charge of Haman's house? Additionally, Esther fell at his feet in verse 3, shedding tears and begging him to intervene and stop the harm that Haman the Agagite had schemed against the Jews. What caused her to continue being concerned about Haman, even after his death? Why was it necessary for Esther to make Mordechai the leader of Haman's estate? What was the purpose? And why only Mordechai and not someone else?

The key can be as follows: We must say that Achashveirosh despised Haman as person and really wanted to get rid of him. That is why he hung him when

the right time came. However, Achashveirosh wasn't in love with the Jews and, as the Gemara states, he was a foolish king and didn't grasp a situation. Mordechai and Esther were very smart, and they knew that Haman was evil and had a secret plan to eradicate the Jews, even if he was killed. However, Esther had to show this proof to Achashveirosh about the secret evil plans and to stop the damage immediately. Therefore, since Mordechai was from the sages of the Sanhedrin who, besides being a Scholar was fluent in all languages. Esther understood that Mordechai could decipher writings even if they were encrypted. Mordechai was placed over the house of Haman and found all the writings of Haman and deciphered his secret evil plans, to be carried out even if after he was killed. Esther came to the king and wept, and says Posuk 5" let it be written to rescind the letters, the device of Haman". Esther showed obvious proof to Achashveirosh that the danger to the Jews was still intact even after the evil Haman was dead. When Achashveirosh was confident in the words of Esther, he said: "Behold the house of Haman I have given to Esther, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he laid a hand on the Jews. He acknowledges that Haman was hanged and the house of Haman, which are the evil plans. Now Achashveirosh had to act quick to rescind the decree. And you-write about the Jews as you see fit, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king's ring, This is so true in all generations where we know that the evil leaders had secret and hidden evil plans against the Jews, and the only way to avert the evil plans was to destroy the movement, and not only the leaders. We see that Hashem eradicated the Romans and all other great nations who were evil to the Jews. In our present time there exist the same actions, but Hashem watches over us constantly, and will take care of all the nations who have secret evil plans for the Jews, and Hashem will hasten the coming of Moshiach. Amein. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

STORIES FOR PURIM (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

*** ***The water carrier drank wine on Purim and the secret leaked out*** ***

Reb Nissan was a wealthy man, who lived in **Yargin**, a small town near **Pressburg**. He had been a student of the

famous **Chasam Sofer**. He was already married for many years, when finally, a son was born to him, in 5583 (1823).

He honored the **Chasam Sofer** to be the Mohel. The bris took place on Purim! The boy was named **Baruch Mordechai**, which means "blessed be Mordechai". At the bris, when the **Chasam Sofer** dipped his finger in the wine to place a drop in the baby's mouth, he raised his voice and called out very loudly the Talmudic expression, נִכְנָס יַיִן וְיָצָא סוֹד (עירובין סה.) "*Nichnas yayin, yatza sod*" "**When wine goes in, secrets come out.**" It wasn't until years later that these words from the great Gaon were understood.

Baruch Mordechai at an early age, had already been outstanding in character and religious observance. However, much to the distress of his parents, his ability to understand Torah was not up to par. After his Bar Mitzvah, when he entered the famous **Pressburg Yeshivah**, it seemed that he was having major difficulties in his studies. In truth, he was very diligent. He would sit absorbed in the seforim from morning until evening. But whenever he was asked to repeat or explain anything, he would only sit silently.

When **Baruch Mordechai** turned eighteen, the Chasam Sofer's son, the **Ksav Sofer**, advised Baruch Mordechai's parents to send him to Eretz Yisrael. Perhaps there, where "the air of the Holy Land makes wise", his success at his studies would grow. His parents decided to send him to the Holy Land. **Baruch Mordechai** arrived in Jerusalem with a letter of recommendation from **Rabbi Shraga Feldheim**, mashgiach at Yeshivas Pressburg, which said that he "is truly pious, prays with great devotion, and his desire to learn Torah is sincere and enormous."

One of the leaders of the Jerusalem community then, Rabbi Yeshaya Bardaki, saw greatness in **Baruch Mordechai**, and busied himself with all of his needs. He was impressed with the young man's sterling character and piety, but he couldn't understand how someone who had done nothing but study Torah diligently all his life could have retained so little. When **Baruch Mordechai** reached the age of twenty, **Rabbi Bardaki** found a bride for him: a simple girl, from a good family in Jerusalem, who wouldn't mind that her husband wasn't a scholar.

Several years after the wedding, **Baruch Mordechai** began to work as a water-carrier. He was very honest, and as a result quickly became very popular. Every Rosh Chodesh, he would deliver water to his regular customers for free; he worried that over the course of the previous month water might have spilled, whereas he had been charging for full buckets. For more than forty years, **Baruch Mordechai** toiled at his chosen profession. Still, he spent many hours learning Torah. He took special satisfaction from serving the many Torah scholars residing within the

walls of Jerusalem; he considered this a great merit, and refused to accept payment from them. It anguished him that the great scholar **Rabbi Yehudah Leib Diskin** refused to take water from him. "I cannot allow myself to be served by the likes of Reb Baruch Mordechai," the rabbi would say, but he refused to explain his words.

Finally, the secret leaked out. On Purim 5653 (1893), when most scholars of the Old City of Jerusalem crowded, as in every year, into the home of **Rabbi Schneur Zalman Fraidkin** of Lublin, the author of *Toras Chesed*, the atmosphere was exceptionally joyous, wine and wise words flowed together.

All of a sudden, Baruch Mordechai called out to the host in a loud voice from amidst the swaying scholars: "**Rebbe! Today is exactly seventy years since my Bris.** Immediately, a large tumbler of an especially strong wine was poured and passed to Baruch Mordechai, who consumed it as commanded. It had an immediate effect. The elderly water-carrier began to sing and dance energetically.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman looked up at Baruch Mordechai and shouted over the crowd: "It would be nice if you would stop fooling everyone, and honor the assemblage with some strong words of halachah and aggadah." Suddenly, there was silence. Everyone's gaze shifted in anticipation to Baruch Mordechai, as he climbed up to stand on the table and began to speak. But then, all the grins slowly gave way to wide-eyed stares of astonishment, as it penetrated the listeners' ears that the water-carrier was discoursing enthusiastically on scholarly Purim topics, and was supporting his words with learned citations from the Gemarah Megillah and a variety of Midrashim and works of Halacha. He went on and on! Indeed, if the strong wine hadn't finally taken its toll, it seemed that he could have continued indefinitely. But the secret had leaked out already! Before Purim was over, the news of the extraordinary scholarship of the unassuming and simple water-carrier had spread throughout Jerusalem. The community was in an uproar. How had they allowed such an accomplished scholar to be disdained in their midst, and to labor as a mere water-carrier for so many years? And how had his profound scholarly knowledge remained hidden for so long? The elders of the community recalled hearing of the mysterious words of the Chasam Sofer seventy years earlier.

Now, they could finally be understood. "נִכְנָס יַיִן וְיָצָא סוֹד" "**Wine enters, secrets emerge.**" יַיִן (wine), spelled yud-yud-nun, has a numerical value of seventy, and so does סוֹד, the Hebrew word for "secrets" This act of hiding his knowledge of Torah was an act of great humility as well as of his extraordinary character development. The Yerushalmis were experts at hiding their achievements.

***** ***The Zichliner Rebbe heals a dying person with drinking with him on Purim*** *****

R' Chaim lived in the city of Szrensk, Padembitz in Poland. His brother-in-law R' Reuven became ill in his lungs, and the doctors advised him to travel to the city of

Meeroin, a resort place, because the air there was very good for the lungs, and as so he will be able to recover. R' Chaim decided that he will travel with R' Reuven.

They were there until before Purim, but suddenly R' Reuven's condition became dangerous as the situation worsened, and the doctor told R' Chaim to take R' Reuven home because they can no longer help him. R' Chaim noticed that R' Reuven was already coughing up white mucus and this didn't bode well. R' Chaim did not tell R' Reuven about his dire condition, just said that the doctors felt that he can go home already, and we are going to leave.

R' Chaim remembered that the train home makes a stop in Zichlin, and the Zichliner Rebbe, R' Shmuel Abba זצוקל, worked wonders on Purim, as it was a time that there is salvation, which derives higher than nature, and R' Reuven certainly needed such salvation. Therefore, they will go visit the Rebbe in Zichlin! They arrived in Zichlin, Taanis Esther, and R' Chaim became very confused wondering if he did the right thing! But on the other hand, he was with a Tzaddik who can make a miracle! He prayed that they would be allowed to see the Rebbe at this time. R' Chaim took R' Reuven who had no strength, and waited to see the Rebbe. R' Chaim asked the Gabbay to let them in because his brother-in-law was dangerously ill, and it was necessary in order to save a Yid. The Gabbay had mercy, and wrote a kvitel and they entered to see the Rebbe. The Rebbe read the Kvitel and became very earnest. Then he scolded them: Why did they come to disturb his Purim? Then the Rebbe changed tones and said: "Come see me tomorrow after the Megillah" These words poured hope into R' Chaim as he felt the Rebbe would help R' Reuven.

They prepared for Purim and went to Shul to hear the Megillah at night. However, that night the condition of R' Reuven turned worse, and R' Chaim became terrified at the thought of being in a faraway city and seeing his brother-in-law pass away. But after a few minutes the situation improved and R' Reuven fell asleep, and R' Chaim could also rest. They went to Shul in the morning, and both were upbeat, hoping for a Yeshua. After the Megillah the Rebbe put his Talis over his head, and asked the crowd to say with Simcha "יְהוָה הוּא אֱשֶׁר יִשְׁלָטוּ הַיְּהוּדִים"

From a Mishloach Manos on Purim, the Ponovezh Rosh Yeshiva gathered his energy for Torah

Harav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman the Ponevezh Rov, was born in Telz, 28 days of Iyar 5646. His father Harav Yehuda Leib was the Rosh Hakahal and Torah Scholar. As a child he attended the Yeshiva in Plunigan, led by Harav Chaim Yitzchak Bloch Hacohen. At the age of 14 he went to the Telzer Yeshiva, under Hagaon Rav Eliezer Gordon and Hagaon Rav Shimon Shkop.

After Hagaon Rav Yitzchok Yaakov Rabinovich passed away in 1919, Rav Yosef Shlomo was appointed the new Rov of Ponevezh. He built three yeshivas there, as well as a school and an orphanage. The Ponevezh Rov, traveled to raise money for his institutions. At the outbreak of World War II, he was visiting Eretz Yisrael which was

"הָמָּה בְּשִׁנְאֵיהֶם: "On the contrary, the Jews will rule over their enemies." And after that, he went into his room for a while and opened the door and cried out "סֵלַח זֶה לְעֵנֵן הָעָם" "סֵלַח זֶה לְעֵנֵן הָעָם" הַזֶּה בְּנִדְלַח הַסְּדֵק" (במדבר יד כ) "Please forgive the objectionable behavior of this nation in accordance with your plentiful kindness", and everyone answered: "סֵלַחְתִּי בְּדִבְרְךָ", "I have forgiven them in accordance with your word."

The Rebbe then gave each person a piece of cake, and a small bottle of wine in order to fulfill the Mitzvah of Mishloach Manos. Afterward, whoever needed a Yeshua would come forth to the Rebbe who would put a piece of the cake into a cup of wine and give it to that person, who after drinking the wine was guaranteed a Yeshua. Meanwhile R' Chaim and R' Reuven were anxiously awaiting the big moment. However, the Rebbe requested the Gabbay to bring strong whiskey and mixed a large bowl with the cake and whisky, and the Rebbe asked R' Chaim to help him feed R' Reuven the drink!

R' Chaim almost forgot where he was, and was shocked to have to give whiskey to R' Reuven, which would irritate his lungs! But he instantly remembered that he was at the Rebbe now, and immediately began to help the Rebbe feed R' Reuven the mixed drink. The Rebbe kept on reciting the words that the Kohen Gadol said on Yom Kippur when he poured the blood. One, one and two, one and three etc. And when the drink was finished, R' Reuven fell into a deep sleep, and was placed on a bed in the Rebbe's house.

R' Reuven slept deeply for many hours. It was late at night and the Rebbe was still in the middle of the Purim meal, and R' Reuven woke up feeling much better! The Rebbe asked him to wash and they celebrated the Seuda by thanking Hashem. R' Reuven went home the next day a healthy person. A Purim miracle! Purim is a day when Hashem answers our prayers. Tzaddikim interpret the phrase of Chazal לוֹ נֹתֵנִים יְדֵי הַפּוֹשֵׁט "He who sticks out his hand to Hashem in prayer, Hashem will give or answer his prayer."

under the control of the British, as he was intending to visit the United States to collect. Upon learning about the occupation of Lithuania, he decided to stay in Eretz Yisrael. He continued, from a distance, to oversee the Ponevezh Yeshiva. After the entrance of the Nazis in Ponevezh, the yeshiva was destroyed and many students were murdered.

In 1944, Harav Yosef Shlomo succeeded in re-establishing the Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. He traveled world wide to secure support for the yeshiva,. With the help of longtime friend Rav Moshe Okun, he succeeded in re-establishing the Ponevezh yeshiva into one of the largest in the world.

The Rosh Yeshiva worked hard, that the wealthy people should have a part in the building of the yeshiva. One day while he was abroad, he returned to his host when he was completely exhausted. He immediately lay down on the bed from lack of strength. The host ran to offer him a cup of tea with some cake to revive his soul. But the Rosh Yeshiva said, "If you want to revive my soul, give me your phone so that I can call a few more addresses." While he was still lying completely exhausted, the Rosh Yeshiva called several wealthy donors to help in building the holy yeshiva after the terrible destruction that had taken place in Europe. His host, who saw the determination, could not help but ask, "The Rosh Yeshiva is no longer young and I see the great strength that he is investing. Where does the Rosh Yeshiva get his strength?" The Rosh Yeshiva replied, "I will tell you a story that happened to me in my childhood and from which I draw my strength:

Every year we were sent by our mother to deliver the *Mishloach Manos* to the Rav of our town. My mother would bake a beautiful cake, and all the time she was baking she would mumble, "This is for the Rav, this is for the Torah." Then she added some more items, and on Purim itself, she would send us to deliver the *Mishloach Manos* to the Rav. One year, my father announced before Purim that this year he too would have a part in the delivery of *Mishloach Manos* to the Rav.

My father said: "Although the cake that my mother baked was also mine, I still was not an active participant in the *Mishloach Manos*. This year I finally will be a part in it too. We were curious to hear what was progressing, and we asked our father what happened? My father recounted that today he met a Seforim peddler who had a Gemarra Baba Basra amongst his Seforim that were for sale. I knew that the Rav does not own a Shas in his house, so I

bought this Gemarra for the Rav, and want to surprise him on Purim. On the morning of Purim, my parents called me and my older brother and told us to go bring the *Mishloach Manos* to the Rav. My older brother held the cake and I wanted to give the Gemarra to the Rav. We entered the Rav's house. My brother presented the cake to the Rav, and the Rav said to the Rebbetzin, "Here are Kahneman's children." I then announced to the Rav that this year, my father was also participating in sending a *Mishloach Manos*. The Rav's eyes lit up when I showed him the gemarra Baba Basra, and explained to him that this was from my father who wanted the Rav to learn from it. With tears in his eyes, the Rav took the Gemarra, pressed it to his heart, and shouted, "Oh this is amazing, the complete Gemarra Baba Basra!" The Rav began to dance for twenty full minutes around the table, as on Simchas Torah. The Ponevezher Rosh Yeshiva continued to tell the story to his host, despite his weakness, he got up from his bed and showed exactly how the Rav of his town danced with the Gemarra in his hands.

The Rosh Yeshiva continued to tell the story. The Rav then gleefully asked the Rebbetzin, "Do you want to also give me *Mishloach Manos*?" "Of course I do." She replied. The Rav said to her, "We agreed yesterday that we would have the Purim Seuda today at five o'clock. I want you to give me one hour for *Mishloach Manos*. I ask of you to start the meal at six, and from five to six, no one should come to me so that I could study the Gemarra for a full hour without interruption." The Rebbetzin replied in the affirmative. Then the Rav pressed the Gemarra to his heart and danced again for another long minute.

I was then a young boy, but when I saw the Rav's love of Torah, I decided that when I grew up I would invest all my strength in Torah. This is where I draw the energy to toil for Torah to my last bit of strength.

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