



פרשת תצוה

פרשת זכור

אדר תש"פ

### YESHIVAS MORDECHAI HATZADDIK

According to the Midrash, the Jewish people were saved in the merit of the young boys whom Mordechai gathered to learn Torah.

On Purim day, all boys are invited to join our annual Yeshivas Mordechai Hatzaddik learning program. Each boy who attends will receive a special souvenir prize.

11:20am in the Mezzanine.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY KOLLEL MENACHEM

On Purim 5739, the first group of Kollel families arrived in Melbourne.

For 41 years, Kollel has been teaching and inspiring our community with Torah and Chassidus with our Shiurim and learning programs.

On Purim we will be making our annual Purim SMS appeal.

Please get involved give generously to help support the Kollel and our activities.

### BEIS NISSAN 100 YEARS

This year on Beis Nissan, we will be commemorating 100 years since the passing of the Rebbe Rashab and the beginning of the leadership of the Friedike Rebbe in 5680.

A full program of shiurim, learning programs and farbrengens will be coming out this week.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

# חידוש Chiddush

אין בית המדרש בלא



Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Mendel Gurkow

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## The Power of Ketores

Parshas Tetzaveh concludes with the directive to build the Mizbeach Haketores, the incense altar for the Mishkan.

The commentaries question why it is described here and not back in Parshas Terumah together with the design of the Mishkan and the other Keilim.

The answer lies in the words we say in Lecha Dodi each Friday night; סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה, that which comes last in action, arose first in thought.

The command to build the Mishkan was for a very specific purpose - ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם - Hashem wanted His presence to be manifest within the world and more specifically within the heart of each Jew. This was the initial 'thought'. This initial thought would be actualised in the last detail of the Mishkan to be described - the Mizbeach Haketores.

The Midrash Tanchuma describes the inauguration of the Mishkan. The Mishkan was erected and all of the Keilim were set in their positions. They offered the Korbanos, set the Lechem Hapanim on the Shulchan and kindled the Menorah. But the Divine presence did not enter the Mishkan until they offered the Ketores.

What is the power of Ketores? Why does the incense altar have a greater power than any other aspect of the Mishkan to draw down the Divine presence?

The Sefer Tzror Hamor writes the Mizbeach Haketores unites all of the aspects of the Mishkan. It unites the Elyonim (that which is Above) and the Tachtonim (that which is below) and the Tachtonim with the Elyonim. He connects the word Ketores itself to the word Keshet (meaning a knot) that binds things together to become one.

The Zohar compares Tefillah (which replaces the Korbanos) and the Ketores: None of the Korbanos compared to the level of the Ketores. Tefillah corrects that which needs correcting. But Ketores corrects, ties knots and creates a greater light than anything else, so that everything is perfected, illuminated and tied together as one.

There were two altars in the Beis Hamikdash. The Mizbeach Hachitzon, the outer altar used for the sacrifices, stood in the courtyard. Inside the Heichal

was the Mizbeach Hapenimi, the inner altar which was used for offering Ketores.

The Midrash teaches that the outer sacrificial altar corresponds to the body. Like the body, this altar would "eat" and "drink" from the sacrifices and wine Nesachim. The inner altar parallels the soul since fragrance, being of a spiritual quality, is something that only the Neshama derives pleasure from.

Chassidus takes this deeper, explaining that the two altars reflect two dimensions of the Neshama itself.

The Alter Rebbe identifies two levels of emotional connection, two experiences of fiery love for Hashem that the Neshama can experience. These two dimensions are represented by the two altars.

The outer altar represents the emotions of the conscious soul, referred to as חיצוניות הלב, the external heart. These are the feelings of love for Hashem that are developed through meditation on Hashem's greatness.

The inner heart (פנימיות הלב), represented by the inner altar, is the essential desire which comes from the essence of the soul. This desire transcends reason and understanding. It is the implicit, powerful desire for Hashem alone, that every Jew possesses.

The correlation reflects itself in the Avodah of each of the two altars.

Korban (sacrifice) comes from the word Karov, drawing close. The fire generated by meditation draws us close to Hashem. But we still remain separate and the experience dissipates.

Ketores (incense) is related to the Aramaic term for a knot. A knot binds two things together so that they become one. This is the supra-rational love and desire that comes from the Yechidah, the essence of the soul which is one with Hashem. Once revealed, this love never passes.

More than a building in which to be manifest, Hashem wants to reside and be revealed within our hearts and souls.

The most powerful actualization of this desire is when we reveal our essential oneness with Hashem - our inner altar and inner heart.

# The weekly Halacha analysis

## To Drink or Not to Drink on Purim?

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

To drink or not to drink, that is the question. Whether one is obligated to drink on Purim and how much one is supposed to consume, is a hotly debated topic. There is a full spectrum of opinions on the matter in the writings of the Rishonim and Halachic codes.

The Gemara<sup>1</sup> quotes the teaching of Rava that a person is obligated to become intoxicated on Purim to the extent that they no longer know the difference between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai - **עד דלא ידע בין ארור המן - לברוך מרדכי**

Many of the miracles in the Purim episode occurred through drinking wine. Achashveirosh's intoxication resulted in Vashti being executed and Esther becoming queen. Esther named Haman as the one behind the plot to kill the Jews at a wine-feast leading to his downfall. As a remembrance of these miracles we celebrate by drinking<sup>2</sup>.

The Gemara continues with an account of a Purim Seudah that Rabbah and Rabbi Zeira celebrated together one year. They became intoxicated and Rabbah slaughtered Rabbi Zeira. The following day Rabbah davened and Rabbi Zeira was revived. When he was invited back the following year, Rabbi Zeira declined, saying that miracles don't always happen.

### The Rishonim

The Ri"ף quotes the ruling of Rava as Halacha. The Rambam<sup>3</sup> likewise rules that one should drink wine at the Purim Seudah until the point that they become intoxicated and fall into a deep sleep on account of their drunkenness<sup>4</sup>.

However there is a divergent view which teaches that one should not become intoxicated on Purim. This position is quoted in the name of Rabbeinu Efraim by numerous Rishonim<sup>5</sup>.

Rabbeinu Efraim explains that the story of Rabbah and Rabbi Zeira is juxtaposed to Rava's ruling to show the negative ramifications of excessive drinking. The story is brought to show that Rava's opinion is not accepted Lehalacha.

Meiri<sup>6</sup> writes that on Purim we should be in a state of Simcha and celebrate with feasting. However, we are not commanded to become drunk and debase ourselves, for we have not been commanded to engage in frivolous celebration, but rather to experience a deep Simcha which leads to love of Hashem and causes us to give thanks for the miracles which He did for us.

Orchos Chaim<sup>7</sup> goes further, warning that drunkenness is an Issur Gamur (strictly forbidden) and can lead to immorality and violence and other sinful behaviour. Rather one should

drink slightly more than usual<sup>8</sup>.

### The Poskim and Acharonim

The Tur<sup>9</sup> rules like Rava, that a person should become intoxicated to the extent that they cannot distinguish between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai. This is also the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch<sup>10</sup>.

The Bach<sup>11</sup> writes that the approach of Rabbeinu Efraim is the preferable approach. One should drink more than usual and may become tipsy and even slightly drunk. But they should retain their presence of mind and control.

In his glosses to the Shulchan Aruch, the Ram"o adds that there are those who say that one does not need to become that intoxicated<sup>12</sup>. Rather one should drink more than usual and as a result will fall asleep<sup>13</sup>. Once they are asleep they will not be able to distinguish between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai for in dreams things can be nonsensical.

The Mishna Berura, quoting Pri Megadim, writes that it is preferable to fulfil the Mitzvah this way.

Chayei Adam<sup>14</sup> writes that whilst there is a requirement to become intoxicated on Purim, one who knows that as a result they will be lax in observing Mitzvos, such as washing, making brachos before and after eating and davening Mincha and Maariv, should not become intoxicated. This warning is echoed by the Mishna Berura<sup>15</sup> and also found in Elya Rabbah<sup>16</sup>.

### On what does one fulfil the Mitzvah?

The source in the Gemora does not specify which beverage one should drink on Purim to fulfil this requirement. However Rashi comments that it means to become drunk on wine. Rambam likewise specifies that one should drink wine<sup>17</sup>.

In a Teshuvah, the Razba"z<sup>18</sup> discusses how one who has made a vow not to drink wine should fulfil the Mitzvos of Kiddush, the four cups on Pesach and drinking on Purim. Were one able to fulfil the Mitzvah on any other beverage other than wine, there would be no question.

Based on the explanation that drinking on Purim is a remembrance to the miracles that happened in the Megillah as a result of drinking wine, it makes sense that the obligation is fulfilled with wine.

### When does one fulfil this Mitzvah?

The Rambam places this Halacha in a discussion on how one fulfils the Mitzvah of the Purim Seudah. It therefore appears that the requirement to drink wine on Purim and become intoxicated is specifically during the festive meal. However others<sup>19</sup> learn that it is an independent obligation and applies throughout the day of Purim.

### Other concerns

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach warned his Talmidim that one should be careful even in a state of joy and celebration to be careful not to cause any embarrassment to others, even if in jest. He explains that this could be the meaning of the Gemara that Rabbah killed Rabbi Zeira at the Purim Seudah. One who embarrasses another it is considered as though they have spilled their blood.

### The main thing is Kavanah

Chassidus explains that the state of **עד דלא ידע** is an Avodah. On Purim we are able to transcend the limitations of our understanding and to surrender ourselves to Hashem in way that is deeper than rationale and calculation. This level of connection comes through revealing the essence of our Neshama which is one with Hashem.

In a letter, the Rebbe writes; "The obligation to become intoxicated on Purim **עד דלא ידע** can be achieved with one drop, as long as it affects the person to be able to reach beyond their *Daas*. If we truly desire to reach this level, then even one drop is enough. If however, this is not our objective **מ"ן**, then even a barrel-full will not help<sup>20</sup>.

We will conclude with the words of the Ram"o after he references the two divergent approaches; Whether one drinks more or drinks less, the main thing is that their hearts intention should be Lshem Shamayim.

1. Megillah 7b
2. Avudraham. Biur Halacha 695 חייב איני. Chayei Adam 155. Elya Rabbah 695:1. Based on this, the halachic preference is to drink wine as opposed to other alcoholic beverages.
3. Hilchos Megillah 2:15
4. It is unclear what is the source of the Rambam's requirement that one fall asleep
5. As quoted in Ra"n and Baal Hamaor
6. Beis Habechira Megillah 7b
7. Hilchos Purim umegillah
8. Even those who hold that one should not become drunk on Purim agree that one should drink some wine. The Megillah records that the sages established Purim as a day of Mishteh.
9. Orach Chaim 695
10. Orach Chaim 695
11. Orach Chaim 695
12. In his work, Darkei Moshe, the Ram"o presents alternative and less literal interpretations of the phrase **עד דלא ידע בין ארור המן לברוך מרדכי**. In Chidushei Agudah it is written that **ארור המן** and **ברוך מרדכי** share the same Gematria. Rava could be referring to a level of drunkenness where one is no longer capable of calculating the Gematria.
13. The Minhagim write that there was a song that was sung on Purim. To one verse the audience would respond **ברוך מרדכי** and to the next verse they would respond **ארור המן** and so on. Rava means that one should become drunk until the point that they mix up their responses.
14. Klal 155
15. 691:4
16. 695:2
17. Rabb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach suggests that the term used in this Gemara for intoxication – **לבסונו** – is a term used uniquely for intoxication by wine.
18. 1:462
19. Sfas Emes Megillah 7b. This is also quoted as the view of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach
20. Letter from the Rebbe 5717