



## PURIM ROUND-UP

It was a busy week in Kollel Menachem as we shared a full program of pre-Purim shiurim with the community to help get inspired and prepared for Purim.

On Sunday at the Shaalos and Teshuvos shiur, Rabbi Johnson explored a Teshuvah of the Minchas Yitzchak on the status of alcohol produced with dairy fermentation agents.

On Monday night Rabbi Johnson delivered a comprehensive shiur on the topic of Drinking on Purim. After exploring the Halachic application (see reverse) of this requirement and whether such a Mitzvah exists, he analysed the inner meaning of the Gemara according to Chassidus.

The shiur concluded by highlighting some of the key statements of the Rebbe on the topic of alcohol consumption and the Rebbe's Takanos restricting drinking and how it applies on Purim.

Rabbi Gordon gave a fantastic Nach Shiurim on Megillas Esther, one for men and one for women, illuminating the Megillah with Midrashim and Maamarie Chazal.

Rabbi Michael Stern led a shiur on the Halachos of reading and hearing the Megillah, high-lighting Halachos and areas for the Baal Koreh to be careful to ensure that we are Yotzai Megillah 100%.

All of the shiurim were very well attended and well received by all of the participants.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא  
**חידוש** Chiddush



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## The Power of a Purim Seudah

The Gemara records the teaching of Rava that on Purim one should become intoxicated 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 are perplexed by this ruling for a number of reasons. One of the key questions is how is it possible, no matter how intoxicated one is, to not be able to distinguish between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai.

And so many of the great Chassidic masters and Baalei Mussar offer deeper insight and interpretation to this teaching by taking it out of its literal meaning.

A beautiful lesson is taught by Rabbi Manoach Handel (Poland 16th century) in his work Chochmas Manoach;

There are two primary reasons we may harbour negative feeling towards our fellow man.

We feel dislike and hold grudges against someone who we see as our enemy, someone we feel has wronged or offended us. Our natural response is to despise that person and harbour feelings of hatred, dislike and vengeance towards them. This is alluded to by the phrase ארור המן, the hatred we feel towards our enemies.

We may also harbour ill-feelings towards someone who has never wronged us in any way. When we see the success of others who have been blessed or achieved success, be it financial or otherwise, we may harbor negative feelings that stem from envy and jealousy at their success and their blessings.

These feelings are alluded to by ברוך מרדכי. Mordechai was blessed. He became elevated to a position of great honour. He achieved wealth and fame and leadership. As such he was not liked by all. Even though he did so much for the Jewish people, there were those who could not stand to see his success instead of their own.

The Gemara's ruling teaches us how to remove

both of these types of sentiments and negative feelings from our hearts.

Sharing a meal together (and a Lchaim certainly helps) and extending our hospitality breaks down boundaries, fosters good will and increases friendship. Our sages teach לגימה שמקרבת את הלבבות את הגולה, great is eating together for it draws the hearts closer.

It is much easier to invite our close friends to share our Purim Seudah, Shabbos meals and other celebrations. But Purim calls on us to reach beyond our circle of friends to extend the hand of friendship and Shalom to those we don't get along with or to those we feel hurt by or jealous of. It is an opportunity to begin to mend strained relationships, replacing ill-will with good will.

By inviting them to join us in our Purim feasting - לבוסומי בפוריאי, and sharing the experience together, we can reach a level of ידע, where we no longer know either (בין) the feelings of ארור המן or those of ברוך מרדכי - the negative attitude towards those we feel have hurt us or the jealousy and resentment towards those who have more than we do.

The same is true with our Mishloach Manos delivery lists. The purpose of Mishloach Manos is to create feelings of friendship and affection.

The accusation of Haman to Achashveirosh when he requested permission to kill the Jews was that they are a nation scattered and dispersed. By highlighting the divisions and fractures amongst the Jewish people he sought to erode the Divine protection which unity brings.

Mordechai rallied the Jewish people in a state of Achdus, revealing how they may be scattered throughout the lands but they remain an עם אחד, one nation. In this merit they received Hashem's salvation and redemption

We can all think of someone who for us is either ברוך מרדכי or ארור המן. This Purim lets try and reach עד דלא ידע that we no longer know these feelings anymore.

# Drinking on Purim

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

It is common knowledge and common practise that on Purim we drink and become intoxicated. But not everyone seems to agree.

The source of this is found in the Gemara<sup>1</sup> where the Amora Rava teaches 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. Intoxication led to Vashti being executed and Esther becoming queen. Esther named Haman as the one behind the plot to kill the Jews at a wine-feast. As a remembrance to these miracles we celebrate by drinking<sup>2</sup>.

The Rishonim are split whether this ruling is the accepted Halacha or not.

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

## Rishonim against drinking

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 understands that Rava's ruling is negated by the continuation of the Gemara which describes the result of excess drinking when Rabbah and Rabbi Zeira celebrated their Purim Seudah together. The Gemara records that Rabbah slaughtered Rabbi Zeira and was forced to revive his the following day. The following year Rabbi Zeira refused to participate in the Seudah with Rabbah.

The fact that the story illustrating the negative repercussions of drinking is placed directly after Rava's ruling serves to prove that Rava's ruling 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 be frivolous but rather to experience a 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.

## The Poskim and Acharonim

The Bach<sup>8</sup> writes that the approach of Rabbeinu Efraim is the preferable approach. One should drink more than usual and may become drunk, but not to the extent that they lose their presence of mind and control as Rava advocates.

The Shulchan Aruch rules like Rava as does the Tur, that a person should become intoxicated to the extent that they cannot distinguish between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai.

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, referring to the ruling of Rabbeinu Efraim. Rather one should drink more than usual and as a result will fall asleep<sup>9</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.

Concluding, the Ram"o writes that whether one drinks more or drinks less, the main thing is that their intention is Lshem Shamayim.

Chayei Adam<sup>10</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>11</sup> and also found in Elya Rabbah<sup>12</sup>.

## On what does one fulfil the Mitzvah?

The source in the Gemara 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 writes that one should drink wines specifically.

In a Teshuvah, the Razba"z<sup>13</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 know 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>14</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 Ikar is Kavanah

Chassidus explains that the state of עד דלא ידע means to transcend the limitation of our human minds and understanding and surrender ourselves to Hashem beyond rationale and calculation.

In a letter the Rebbe wrote "The obligation to become intoxicated on Purim עד דלא ידע can be achieved with one drop, as long as it affects the person to reach beyond their *Daas*. If we truly desire that this be the objective then even a drop is enough. If it is not our Kavanah ו"ן, then even a barrel-full will not help<sup>15</sup>.

1. Megillah 7b
2. Avudraham. Biur Halacha 695 חייב אינוש. Chayei Adam 155. Elya Rabbah 695:1
3. Hilchos Megillah 2:15
4. It is unclear what is the source of the Rambam's requirement that one fall asleep 10. Klal 155
5. As quoted in Ra"n and Baal Hamaor 11.691:4 12.695:2
6. Beis Habechira Megillah 7b 13.1:462
7. Hilchos Purim umegillah 8. OC 695
8. OC 695
9. There is a difference between the Rambam and the Ram"o. Whilst they both write that one should fall asleep, the Rambam writes that one falls asleep as a result of their drunkenness whereas the Ram"o writes that one falls asleep in place of becoming drunk. 14. Sfas Emes Megillah 7b. This is also quoted as the view of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach 15. Letter from the Rebbe 5717