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Making a Heart Donation

The primary resting place of the Shechina was not in the Mishkan, but rather in the hearts and souls of the people who gave of themselves to build it.

Whilst the Mishkan was a physical structure in which the Divine presence was manifest, it was a representation of the Mishkan inside of every Jew.

The Kabbalistic works, like the Shela"h and Reishis Chochma, derive this from the command to build the Mishkan ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם. Lterally, the verse translates as "build for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell within them", referring to Bnei Yisroel.

Just as the Mishkan was a place for the service of Hashem, the spiritual inner Mishkan is created through our spiritual service of Hashem.

With this, the Baal Shem Tov explains the verse מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי. Literally this describes how the donations had to be taken from anyone who was generous of heart. The Baal Shem Tov reads the verse as saying, that from each man who donates his heart, you shall take My contribution (for the Mishkan).

What does it mean to donate one's heart and how does this form a contribution for the Mishkan?

The heart is the seat of our emotions and desires. In order to build the spiritual Mishkan of Avodas Hashem, we must take the Middos that our in our hearts and direct them and utilise them in the service of our Creator.

This does not only include the naturally positive and holy Middos of our Yetzer Tov, but also the negative Middos of our Yetzer Hara. This is the intent of our sages in their interpretation of the Shema, that serving Hashem בכל לבבך, with all of your hearts (in plural form), that we must love and serve Hashem with both of our inclinations; the Yetzer Tov and the Yetzer Hara - to dedicate our whole heart.

Even the negative emotions of the Yetzer Hara can be positively channeled. The powerful desire of the Yetzer Hara for worldly matters can be refocused to be a powerful desire and love for Hashem. The dread that the Yetzer Hara feels of coming to lose out or suffer materially, can be elevated to become a fear and awe of Hashem.

The mystics teach that if Esav would have gone in the ways of the Torah, his service would have been even greater than his brother Yaakov. This is because the emotions of the Yetzer Hara are much stronger than those of the Yetzer Tov.

On the sixth day, Hashem saw all of His work and it was very good - טוב מאד. Our sages teach that טוב(good) refers to the angel of life - the Yetzer Tov. טוב מאד(very good) refers to the angel of death, the Yetzer Hara. When the Yetzer Hara is redirected and transformed, it is not just a level of good equal to that of the Yetzer Tov. It is infinitely greater, as alluded to in the words טוב מאד.

In Chassidus, this is referred to as the light that shine from the darkness itself.

The gold used in the building of the Mishkan is described as זהב טהור, pre gold. The Torah does not refer to it as holy gold, but rather pure. Something becomes pure if it was formally impure (טמא).

In Kabbalistic thought, gold is a metaphor for the emotion of fear. When we redirect the impure emotions of the Yetzer Hara, they become זהב טהור.

This, says the Baal Shem Tov, is how we build the Mishkan, by literally giving Him our heart; our entire heart, the good and the not so good. In this pursuit, it is the negative Middos that Hashem has challenged us with, that are our greatest strength and asset, through which we can transform ourselves to become the home and resting place that He desires.

Tiferes Shlomo on the Parsha

והיו הכרובים פורשי כנפים למעלה

And the Keruvim spread their wings above...

The sages of the Talmud teach that the two golden Keruvim angels that stood on top of the Aron Hakodesh, showed the great love and desire of Hashem towards the Jewish people.

This was revealed in a number of different ways.

Three times each day, at the time the Jewish people would Daven, the Keruvim would miraculously raise their wings upwards. This is symbolic of prayer, which is said with outstretched arms towards the heavens. This miracle was a sign to the Jewish people that Hashem desires their prayers.

One Keruv represented Hashem and the other represented the Jewish people. When Hashem's love was revealed to the Jewish people, the Keruvim would face one another and when this love was at its greatest, the two Keruvim would embrace each other.

In addition to reflecting the love of Hashem to the Jewish people, the fact that the inanimate Keruvim would move, also held a lesson for us in our spiritual service.

The Zohar teaches that the Keruvim would sing praises of Hashem, showing a level of life and understanding.

Sometimes, we may feel inanimate and lifeless in our spiritual service. In the words of the Novi, we may feel ourselves as a dried out, dead stick.

The Keruvim illustrated that even if we feel and appear inanimate, devoid of vitality and enthusiasm, we should not give up on ourselves. We are never lost. Like the Keruvim, Hashem can infuse us with renewed vitality and passion, to lift up our hands towards Him and to turn to Him with passionate love.

1. This is the same reason why the Shofar is not blown when Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbos and why the Lulav is not taken when Sukkos falls on Shabbos.
2. Megillah 5a
3. Quoted in Baal Hamaor
4. Hilchos Megillah 1:7
5. Orach Chaim 690
6. Referenced in Ra"n and Ritv"a Megillah chapter 2
7. Pri Megadim Eshel Avraham 696:2
8. This is accepted practice. Some Acharonim hold that in this Kvius, Al Hanissim is said on Friday the 14th of Adar. Others suggest that whilst Al Hanissim is added to the Shabbos Davening, it is not recited in Bentching, since the Purim Seuda is held on Sunday.
9. Shulchan Aruch 688:6, Elya Rabbah 688:13
10. Megillah 4a
11. Hilchos Megillah Chapter 1
12. Based on the Yerushalmi Megillah 1:4 which derives this from averse in the Megillah. This is brought as Halacha by the Ri"F Megillah 5a
13. Shapir Chazi
14. Radba"z 1:508
15. Siman 111
16. Even though we do not give gifts or make Kinyanim on Shabbos, when it is for the needs of the day itself, such as gifts of food, it is permissible.

The Weekly Halacha Analysis

Purim Meshulash - 3 Days of Mitzvos

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In our fixed calendar, Purim – the 14th of Adar, cannot fall out on Shabbos. However, Shushan Purim can fall out on Shabbos, as it does this year. Shushan Purim, the 15th of Adar, is celebrated as Purim by residents of cities that were walled in the times of Yehoshua, such as the city of Yerushalaim.

When Purim falls in Friday, it is referred to as Purim Meshulash, because in the "walled cities", the Mitzvos of Purim are spread over 3 days; Friday the 14th of Adar, Shabbos the 15th of Adar and Sunday the 16th of Adar. For the residents of the walled cities, the day of the festival of Purim remains the 15th of Adar (Shabbos). But the main Mitzvos associated with Purim are observed on deither Sunday or Friday.

Below we present the Seder of the Mitzvos as it is observed in the "walled cities" and the reason why the Mitzvos are either delayed or brought forward.

Shabbos Zachor

Even in the "walled cities", Shabbos Zachor is observed on the Shabbos prior to Purim, rather than on the Shabbos of Shushan Purim itself. This is because the remembrance of Amalek must precede the reading of the Megillah. Since in this Kvius even the "walled cities" read the Megillah on Friday the 14th of Adar (as will be discussed below), Parshas Zachor must be read the Shabbos before.

Megillah

The Megillah is not read on Shabbos. This is due to a Rabbinic concern known the Gezeira of Rabbah[1].

Rabbah teaches that since every person is obligated in the Mitzvah of reading (or hearing) the Megillah, but not everyone is proficiently expert to read it themselves. The sages were concerned that someone may come to carry the Megillah to an expert to read it for them and thereby violate Shabbos, by carrying 4 Amos in the public domain.

The Megillah reading in the "walled cities" is brought forward to Thursday night and Friday morning of the 14th of Adar, the same day that it is read in all other places.

When the Megillah is not read in its proper time, a Minyan required to be able to read it with the Brachos[2]. Rabbeinu Efraim[3] rules that the same would apply when the "walled cities" read the Megillah on Friday when Purim falls on Shabbos.

However, the Rambam[4] rules that this only applies when the Megillah is read before the 14th of Adar, as used to be done for residents of villages. It does not apply when the Megillah is read on the 14th of Adar, since this is considered the "time" of reading the Megillah, a Minyan is not required. The Shulchan Aruch[5] rules like the Rambam and this was the Minhag in Yerushalaim.

Matanos L'evyonim

The Shulchan Aruch rules that in this Kvius, the residents of the "walled cities" give Matanos L'evyonim on Friday, the same day that the Megillah is read. This is unlike Mishloach Manos which is performed on the Sunday.

The reason for this is based on a Tosefta that teaches that the villagers who read Megillah on an earlier date, give Matanos L'evyonim on that day, because the eyes of the poor eagerly await the reading of the Megillah. The rationale is that after reading about the miracle of Purim, people are in joyous spirits and will be more generous with their Matanos L'evyonim.

Working on Friday

Even though one should not perform work on Purim, and one who does so will not see any blessing from it, the Yerushalmi[6] teaches that when the residents of the walled city read the Megillah a day earlier on the Friday, they are permitted to do work on that day as it is technically not Purim for them. This is brought Lehalacha[7].

Davening

Even though the Megillah is read on Friday, there is no Krias Hatorah in the Friday Davening. Similarly, Al Hanissim is not said either in Davening or in Bentching. The Purim Krias Hatorah is read on Shabbos the 15th of Adar. Tachanun is not said in the "walled cities" on Friday.

Shabbos

Al Hanisim is added in all of the Shabbos Tefillos as well as in Bentching at each of the Shabbos meals[8].

On Shabbos, 2 Sifrei Torah are used. The Krias Hatorah is the regular Parsha of the week, which will be Ki Sisa this year. The Maftir will be the Purim Leining of Vayavo Amalek. Since the Haftorah must be on the same theme as the Maftir, the regular Haftorah of the week is replaced with the account of Shaul being commanded to eradicate Amalek. Even though this was read the week prior as the Haftorah of Shabbos Zachor, it is repeated again[9].

Even though the Halacha is that the Purim Seuda is observed on Sunday, there is a Hiddur to have add something extra to the meal on Shabbos.

The Gemara[10] teaches that when Purim falls on Shabbos, there should be public Shiurim on matter pertaining to Purim. The Rambam[11] writes that this is in order to remember that it is Purim, even though the Megillah is not being read. Whilst Purim can no longer fall on Shabbos, this is applicable in walled cities when Shushan Purim falls on Shabbos.

Sunday the 16th of Adar

In the walled cities, Tachanun is not recited on Sunday the 16th of Adar, even though it is not technically a day of Purim. This is because some of the Mitzvos of Purim are observed on that day. Outside of "walled cities", Tachanun is recited.

The Purim Seuda

The Seuda of Purim is not held on Shabbos[12]. The Seudas Purim is held on Sunday the 16th of Adar. This is based on the Talmud Yerushalmi that teaches that the Seudas Purim is pushed off, and not made earlier. Even though the Megillah reading is brought forward, the Purim Seuda is pushed off to Sunday. This is the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch.

Not everyone agrees with this Halacha, since Sunday the 16th of Adar is not one of the days of Purim and the Megillah says "ולא יעבור" from which the sages derive that one may not read the Megillah after the 15th of Adar. Some Poskim understand that this refers to all of the Mitzvos of Purim. They interpret the Yerushalmi differently. In their view, the Purim Seuda is held on Shabbos, which is the actual day of Purim for "Walled cities".

Some Poskim[13] suggest that as a result of this dispute, one should have a Purim Seuda on both Shabbos and Sunday.

Mishloach Manos

In the walled cities, Mishloach Manos is given on Sunday the 16th of Adar[14]. This is based on the understanding of the Terumas Hadeshen[15] that the entire reason for the Mitzvah of Mishloach Manos is to make sure that everyone has what they need to make the Purim Seudah. As such, it should be given on the day that the Seudah will be held.

According to the view that the Purim Seuda is held on Shabbos, some Poskim write that Mishloach Manos should be given on Shabbos[16], if there is an Eruv. Others suggest that just as the sages employed the Gezeira to forbid reading the Megillah on Shabbos, they would have included Mishloach Manos where the same concern of carrying applies.

Source on reverse