

## A PURIM LESSON

# It Could Be Worse

RABBI MOSHE DOVID ZEFFREN



GENIUS CAN APPEAR SIMPLE IN HINDSIGHT—AS Sherlock Holmes sometimes discovered, to his dismay. That is, once something has been properly explained and understood, it is hard to remember what it was that seemed complex in the first place. Similarly, we frequently adjust our perspectives in life then forget that we ever viewed things differently.

Sometimes, though, this hindsight bias results in an unfortunate loss of valuable insight. Take, for example, the way we think about exile.

The Talmud (Shabbos 88a) says that, even though our original acceptance of the Torah was involuntary, we freely chose, during the days of Achashveirosh, to accept the Torah anew. Rashi explains that this was due to the love for Hashem inspired by our miraculous salvation from Haman.

This is difficult to understand. There were many miracles leading up to the Giving of the Torah, and then more during the times of the Prophets. None of them caused the Jews to accept the Torah freely. What was so unique about Purim that it inspired a love never before felt?

Rabbi Henschel Karlinstein explains, with a profound thought.

In the beginning of his commentary on the Megillah, the Vilna Gaon writes that Purim was the first instance when our deliverance did not occur in an openly miraculous way. It was a period when Hashem seemed to hide from the Jews, who had been exiled from Israel after the Temple's destruction, and who appeared to be abandoned by Hashem. The Purim miracle proved otherwise. Even though Divine protection was disguised, Hashem's love for the Jews had not been uprooted with the exile. This revelation of Hashem's love accomplished what all the prior miracles did not. It inspired a deep love for Hashem that resulted in a loving and joyful re-acceptance of the Torah.

But the profundity of Purim is lost on us. We have learned the lesson of Purim a little too well. Hashem's guidance and protection throughout our exile is something we now take as a given—because Purim, and other miracles over time, have taught us that Hashem continues to watch over us with

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## A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN


There's a mitzvah on Purim to send *Mishlo'ach Manos*—two types of "food" (two foods, two drinks, or food and a drink) to at least one friend. Mishlo'ach manos must be given on Purim day, not at night or before Purim. However, one can fulfill the mitzvah by sending gifts beforehand, if they will arrive on Purim.

Two different reasons are given for this mitzvah:

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## THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On 8 Adar, 5653 (1893), a bill was presented to the House of Representatives ordering that a gold medal be made in recognition of the services rendered by Haym Solomon—advances of money during the Revolutionary War, upon which his heirs had waived their claims to reimbursement. Haym Solomon was a Polish-born Jewish businessman and political financial broker, who had helped the new American government convert foreign loans into ready cash. In the 1820's, years after his untimely death, his son claimed that Solomon had lent large amounts of money to the U.S. government. The decision to repay Solomon's heirs never passed both Houses of Congress. This led to the suggested bill in honor of Solomon, after his heirs had forgiven the loan. Later research seems to show that, although Solomon brokered on behalf of the Revolutionary War effort, it is doubtful that he lent any of his own money. The bill, incidentally, was never passed. 

## A RIDDLE FOR YOU


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Which four people's names from Chumash also appear (as names) in Megillas Esther?

The answer will appear next week..

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE:

Q What verse in the Torah has all the letters of the Aleph-Beis?

A Sh'mos 16:16. This verse describes the gathering of the miraculous *man* (manna), which fell in the wilderness. This teaches that whoever fulfills the Torah in its entirety—"from aleph to taf" (the first and last letters in the Aleph-Beis)—will be assured of his sustenance by G-d. 

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## GREAT ACTS OF SIMPLE PEOPLE

YAAKOV RAN A FREE LOAN FUND IN JERUSALEM.

One Friday, a young man came in to ask for a loan. As Yaakov looked up at the familiar face, his assistant remarked that the man had been lent money the day before.


The man was perturbed. "You don't think I need the money?!" he said hotly.

Yaakov told the man that, while he was sure that the money was needed, the policy was that a second loan could not be made in such a short period of time.

The man was incensed, and he slapped Yaakov across the face.

Yaakov quietly told the man to please wait. He then ran to another office, where he had a friend whom he could count on in a pinch to come up with money. Running back to the office, Yaakov handed the money to the man and wished him a good Shabbos.


His astounded assistant asked him how in the world he'd had such strength.

Yaakov replied, "I know that man, and under normal circumstances he never would have done such a thing. I realized he must be under tremendous pressure, so I felt I had to help him." 

### It Could Be Worse CONTINUED

the same love as always.

In ancient Persia, however, we can find the Jew's instinctive reaction to exile: genuine fear of abandonment by Hashem. And why not? Read the stark terms with which the Torah describes the consequences that will befall a wayward Jewish nation. Think of the hopelessness the newly exiled Jews must have felt, after the loss of the Holy Temple and the Land of Israel, rudiments of Judaism. Much of the Judaism they knew was gone. Enveloped in destruction, how could they fathom that Hashem's protection and boundless love would continue? Hashem's Purim expression of love felt undeserved and was completely unexpected.

That revelation of the depth of Hashem's love for His people accomplished what numerous open miracles could not. If we, then, want to celebrate Purim properly, perhaps we need to first imagine what exile is supposed to feel like. If we do, then maybe we too will be newly overcome with love and gratitude toward Hashem and, in that way, truly celebrate the legacy of Purim. 

## At the Kollel

EVERY DAY

EVERY WEEK

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(Maseches Y'vamos)

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....

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Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kollel Yisgaber K'ari**  
(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....

Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

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Rabbi Meir Minster.....

Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM

Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🖐️🖐️ **Night Seder Chabura**

in the Annex Library

(Maseches Avodah Zara)

led by Rabbi Tzvi Fishman

Sunday–Thursday 9–9:50 PM

followed by Ma'ariv at 9:50

**KEY:** 🖐️ Beginners 🖐️ Intermediate 🖐️ Advanced 🕒 for men and women

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## A TIMELY HALACHA

(CONTINUED)

- To increase friendship within the Jewish People, to counter Haman description of the Jews (Esther 3:8) as a race "scattered and dispersed among the nations."
- To make sure that everyone has enough food for their Purim meal.


There is disagreement among the authorities as to whether it's preferable to send mishlo'ach manos to a good friend or to someone with whom one's relationship would be improved. Therefore it is best, if possible, to send food to at least two people—one a good friend and the other someone with whom one can establish a better rapport. Sending gifts to even more people is praiseworthy. However, as long as one mishlo'ach manos was sent to any Jew, the obligation has been fulfilled.

Both men and women are required to fulfill this mitzvah, but a married woman does not have to prepare her own gifts. It is sufficient for her husband to communicate to a recipient that the gift is on behalf of his wife, or for the couple to send mishlo'ach manos jointly—ultimately, both fulfill the purpose of mishlo'ach manos, increasing friendship.

Many think that the two foods have to be so different that they require two different blessings, but that is a misconception.

Each of the two items should be of a respectable size, but an exact amount is not given by halachic authorities. Some say that a good measuring stick is whether you would serve a given quantity of an item to a guest. Based on this, a large olive-sized portion of cookies, cake, or fruit, or a cup of wine would suffice. A container filled with many little candies or chocolates is also considered respectable.

Ideally, one should give foods that can be eaten both by the sender and the recipient. As far as kashrus goes, as long as a given item has proper certification, the giver has fulfilled his obligation of mishlo'ach manos—even if the recipient doesn't trust that particular certification (e.g., an Israeli Chareidi who doesn't rely on the OU).

Some say that, ideally, one should send mishlo'ach manos through a shaliach (a third party). Others maintain that a messenger is not required, and some even maintain that performing the mitzvah personally is the preferred method. According to all opinions, the messenger does not need to be an adult—or even Jewish! 

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