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STORIES OF GREATNESS  
TOLD OVER BY: HILLEL GOLUBTCHIK

The Baal Shem Tov once gathered a select group of his students and announced: "Come, I will show you someone who sincerely and wholeheartedly welcomes guests into his home." The Baal Shem Tov asked for his horse and wagon to be prepared for a trip. The wheels of the wagon flew through fields and forests, mountains and valleys. By late afternoon, the Baal Shem Tov and his students arrived at a village, and the wagon came to a halt in front of an inn. A Jewish man came running out of the inn to greet them. He called out: "Hooray, there are guests! Precious Jewish guests!" The innkeeper went over to the travelers and invited them into his home. "Come, dear rabbis, come into my home. You can rest up and eat something. You will refresh yourselves, and at the same time bring life to me! It's not every day that I am so fortunate to do the mitzvah of hachnasat orchim [welcoming guests]!" The Baal Shem Tov responded, "Perhaps it would be better that we continue on our way to the nearby city. There we will have a mikvah, and we will be able to pray with the congregation and hear the Torah reading." "Oh, but I have a mikvah and a Torah scroll right here; and together with all of you, we will also have a minyan [quorum of 10]," the innkeeper said, entreating them to remain. He added that if they would like to pray

in the city on Shabbat, they could walk there, because it was within the permissible area one is allowed to walk on Shabbat. In the end, the Baal Shem Tov agreed to the request of the innkeeper, and the travelers became his guests. While the innkeeper lived modestly, he offered his guests his best rooms and did everything he could to make their stay comfortable. After they had prayed, he invited them to a table set with delicious food. He himself stood by to serve them. On Shabbat morning, they all walked to the nearby city to pray. After Shabbat, the innkeeper prepared a lavish melaveh malkah feast (meal after the conclusion of Shabbat), and even invited many more guests from the area. He radiated joy as he greeted his guests and bustled around making sure everyone was cared for. The Baal Shem Tov and his students spent a few more days with the villager, who took care of all their needs personally and did everything in his power to make sure they felt at home. Before leaving, the Baal Shem Tov asked their host if he had any special requests. "My only request is that you pray for me that I merit life in the world to come," he answered. "The thing you ask for is dependent upon you," the Baal Shem Tov responded. "But if you want me to bless you, you must come to me in Mezhibuzh. And, by the way, I can give you

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**Premium Oil**  
By Avi Mandel, 11th Grade

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The Torah writes, "And you shall command the children of Israel that they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination, to kindle the lamp." (Ex. 27:20) We learn from this pasuk that that oil for the menorah must be completely pure: no sediment, excess substances, etc. This olive oil must be completely pure from the start; it cannot be filtered out later on. Therefore, the correct method to extract oil from the olives is to squeeze each olive gently until a single drop is released. Then, the rest of the olives would be crushed and brought at offerings. One can derive an amazing lesson from the fact that only the first drop of the olive oil was used for the menorah, whereas the rest of the olive can be used for the offerings.

In general, religious Jews ensure that the food they eat is kosher. However, oftentimes we are less concerned with the "food for the intellect" that one associates

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**Defeating The Enemy**  
By Ephraim Herrmann, 10th Grade

There is a unique law in the approach to Purim. Mishe-nichnas Adar marbim besimcha: "From the beginning of Adar, we increase in joy." It is stated in the Talmud (Taanit 29a), based on a passage in the Megillah (Esther 9:21-22) in which Mordechai sends a letter throughout the land instructing Jews "to observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and the fifteenth day, every year." This also refers back to the text where Haman decided on the timing of his decree: "In the first month, the month of Nissan, in the twelfth year of Achashverosh, they will have a lottery before Haman from day to day, and from month to month until the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar" (Esther. 3:7). The question is obvious. Why an entire month? The key events were focused on a few days, not the whole month. On top of that, why simcha? We can understand why the Jews of the time felt exhilaration. The decree sentencing them to death had been taken away and their enemies had been punished. Haman had been hung on the very gallows he prepared for Mordechai. Mordechai himself had risen to greatness.

(Continued on page 8)



## Megillah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

### Questions

1. Aside from Achashverosh, which other kings appear in the Megillah?
2. Which two people in the Megillah have names that begin with the letter Vav?
3. Who is assumed to be killed although is never explicitly executed?
4. Aside from wine, what else is mentioned in the Megillah and is served by the Pesach Seder?
5. The gallows that Haman intended to hang Mordechai on were fifty amos long (5:14). Where in the Torah do we find wood measuring fifty amos?

### Answers

1. King Yechonya of Yehuda and King Nevuchadnetzar of Bavel both appear (2:6).
2. The two names are Queen Vashti, and Vayizasa the tenth son of Haman (9:9).
3. Vashti. Memuchan only advises the king to decree that Vashti never again appear before King Achashveirosh and her royal estate be given by the king to another who is better than she" (1:19). The king follows his advice and does according to the words of Memuchan (1:21), but it never states that Vashti is actually executed.
4. Karpas, the vegetable dipped into salt water is mentioned in the Megillah albeit with a different meaning (1:6).
5. In Parshas Noach, the width of the Teivah was fifty amos (Bereishis 6:15). Thus, wood of that length was needed. (Look in Yalkut Shimoni Remez 1056 for an interesting connection).

Rabbi Moshe Atik's Torah Teasers is available on Amazon.com!

## The Letter

By: Max Blumenthal 11th Grade

The Megillah refers to itself as an "igeres", which means a letter. Why is the Megillah called an iggeres instead of a sefer?

In truth, the Megillah is more of a permanent book than a temporary or short communication. However, by the Megillah calling it a letter, its reading constantly brings out the excitement and expectation one feels when a letter is opened for the very first time. By calling the Megillah a letter, Mordechai and Esther are teaching us that the event we are celebrating is not a stale commemoration of a miracle that happened years ago.

Instead, it is a very current and continuing celebration of our tremendous joy at being able to live as Torah committed Jews and Jews who love to serve Hashem, all as a result of the salvation that occurred to them. By reading the Megillah as a letter, and by internalizing the fact that it is a letter, we react to it with excitement and anticipation, as if we have just received the news of our salvation for the very first time.

(Adapted From Rav Dovid Feinstein's Sefer on Megillah Esther)

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With Akiva  
Magder

There is a very fascinating midrash. The midrash says that Rebbe Akiva was teaching his students and found them dozing off. He needed to arouse them so he asked them, "How did Esther merit 127 countries?" He then answered that Hashem arranged that Esther who was the descendant of Sarah, the one who lived for 127 years should reign over 127 countries.

There are a couple of very simple questions that arise from this midrash. Why is this the specific lesson that Rebbe Akiva wanted to use in order to wake up his students? And secondly, just because Sarah lived for 127 years, why does that mean that this is the whole reason as to why Eshter merited her 127 countries?

There is a beautiful answer given by the Chidushei Harim. He says that Rebbe Akiva was conveying an extremely important idea. What Rebbe Akiva was saying was that for every "perfect" one of Sarah's years in her avodas Hashem, her descendant, Eshter merited to rule over a country. Each day was "worth" a town, and each "hour" a district. If this is the type of reward given for a tremendous life of avodas Hashem, how then is it possible to sleep through the precious moments of a shiur? Rebbe Akiva was installing a deep message into his students. For every hour, minute, and second that a person is engaged in learning Torah, the rewards are everlasting.

One can still ask, however, how is it possible for someone to have 127 straight years of "perfect" avodas Hashem? Did she not sleep, eat, or drink? The answer is that when one performs all of their physical needs to enhance their service of Hashem, then these mundane acts are too a service of Hashem. So, the reason Rebbe Akiva specifically quoted this teaching was to impress upon his students this exact lesson. Everything a person does should be to serve Hashem. For example, sleeping: One can sleep for self-serving purposes or it can be an act of serving Hashem. If a person sleeps to have a clear mind in order to be able to properly think and develop ideas in Torah learning, or to daven with more kavnah, then this constitutes service of Hashem. But, sleeping during a shiur certainly does not constitute a service of Hashem! This is the precise reason, says the Chasam Sofer as to why Rebbe Akiva was teaching this exact lesson to his students.



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# Aliyot Summary

By: Dylan Broder

**First Aliyah:** Hashem commands the Jews to use the purest olive oil for the daily lighting of the Menorah. Aharon and his sons are commanded to dress in special priestly garments. The Torah describes the making of the Kohen Gadol's ephod and its shoulder straps on which stones with the names of the shevatim were placed.

**Second Aliyah:** The Choshen, breastplate, contained four rows of three precious stones. Artisans engraved the names of the Shevatim into these twelve stones. The Urim V'Tumim (a paper with the name of Hashem) was placed in the fold of the cloth of the Choshen. The Choshen was attached by gold chains to the ephod.

**Third Aliyah:** The Kohen Gadol also wear the Me'il, a blue robe which was adorned with golden bells and pomegranates at its bottom. On his forehead he wore a golden band saying "kodesh L'Hashem" on it, known as the Tzitz. The Torah then describes the four garments worn by both the Kohen Gadol and the regular priests: tunics, turbans, sashes and pants.

**Fourth Aliyah:** To consecrate Aharon and his sons as Kohanim they were brought to the door of the sanctuary, they immersed in a mikvah, and were dressed in the priestly garments. Moshe then offered various inaugural sacrifices on their behalf.

**Fifth Aliyah:** The Torah continues describing the procedure for the offering, and the consumption of the inaugural sacrifices. Hashem commands Moshe to repeat this inaugural service for a seven day period, after which the consecration will be complete. Also included in this section is a description of how future Kohan Gadols are to be inducted.

**Sixth Aliyah:** Hashem instructs the Jews to offer two burnt offerings daily: one lamb in the morning and one in the afternoon. Hashem promises to dwell in the Mishkan.

**Seventh Aliyah:** This section describes the golden Mizbayach which was placed in the Kodesh. Twice a day the Kohanim would burn ketores on this altar.

(Adapted from chabad.org)



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## The Omission of Moshe's Name

By: Zachary Rosenberg, 10th Grade

In this week's Parsha, Hashem gives instructions to Moshe for tasks such as appointing Aharon and his sons as Kohanim, the clothing that the Kohanim should wear, and commanding Aharon to bring Karbanos. However, throughout the entire Parshas Tetzaveh, Moshe's name is not mentioned once. The question on this entire Parsha becomes, why is Moshe's name never mentioned in this Parsha?

There are various different answers to this question given by Talmidei Chachamim. According to the Mishkenosich Yisroel, when Hashem considered destroying the Jewish people after the Chait Ha'eigel, Moshe intervened and said, "Mecheini na misifrecha asher katavta" — "Erase me now from Your book that You have written." Hashem replied to this, "Whoever has sinned against Me I shall erase from My book," and therefore there was no reason for Moshe to be erased. However, a tzaddik has to be extremely careful with every word he speaks. When Moshe mentioned the concept of being erased from Hashem's Torah, he used an extra word, "asher katavta" (he could have said shekatavta). Therefore, Moshe's name was taken out of Parshat Tetzaveh, because the words "asher" and "Tetzaveh" in Hebrew each have the same gematria of 501.

Alternatively, according to the Chanukas HaTorah, when the Jews sinned with the eigel, Hashem considered no longer accompanying the B'nei Yisrael in the desert, and said to Moshe: "Hinei malachi yeileich lefanecha" — "My angel will go before you." Hashem wanted the angel Michael to lead the Jewish people together with Moshe (the word malachi, in Hebrew, can be rearranged to spell the word Michael). Moshe refused to accept the angel Michael and insisted that Hashem Himself accompany the Jewish people (Rashi). In Parshas Tetzaveh, there are 101 psukim and the way to remember this is the word Michael, which has the gematria of 101. Therefore, the Parshah in which there is a hint for Michael, Hashem doesn't mention the name of Moshe, because Moshe refused to go together with Michael.

Finally, the Ba'al HaTurim also connects this to Moshe's offer, "Erase me from your book that you have written" when he was asking Hashem to forgive the Jews for the sin with the Chait Ha'eigel. When a tzaddik utters a curse, the curse will always be fulfilled no matter what. This meant that Moshe's curse was going to come true regardless of what he and Hashem agreed to. As a side note, Parshas Tetzaveh and the fulfillment of this curse ironically fall out on the week of Moshe's death every year.

However, this act of Moshe was very noble and resulted in the Jewish people being saved, so it doesn't seem fair that Moshe should be punished for his heroic

*(Continued on page 8)*

*(SOG- Continued from page 12)*

some sound advice. Since in our country there is a shortage of wine, when you come, it would be worthwhile to bring with you 100 barrels of wine of the best kind, so that you can earn a nice profit." Time passed, and the students all but forgot about the whole episode. One day, the Baal Shem Tov said to his students, "Today a group of poor people came to our town. Please go and tell them that I am inviting them to my Shabbat meal." The students were very surprised to hear this. The local custom was that poor people and passing guests who came to town had all their needs met by the local committee in charge of accommodating wayfarers, who arranged meals and sleeping accommodations. And now the Baal Shem Tov was inviting this group to his house. When the poor folk were seated around the table, the Baal Shem Tov turned to one of them and invited him to come sit next to him. "Do you recognize me?" the Baal Shem Tov asked him. "Yes," the poor man answered. "I had the merit to host the Rebbe and his students in my inn." The students sitting around the table perked up their ears. "Tell us what happened to you since then," the Baal Shem Tov continued. The villager told the following tale: "When the Rebbe told me to come to him to Mezhibuzh and bring 100 barrels of the best wine, I firmly believed in the words of the Rebbe, and set out to do this. I sold everything I possessed, and bought 100 barrels of wine. Then I set out on my way. Toward evening, as we passed through a forest, a big storm broke out and torrents of rain fell. "The path was totally sodden with water, and the wagons were unable to move forward. I got off the wagon and, leaving the merchandise with the wagon drivers, I started searching for a house or inn in which to spend the night. "Eventually, I noticed a small light far ahead in the darkness. I went toward the light. Soon I reached a house in the forest. An old Jewish man with a flowing beard greeted me at the door. He invited me in. The house was warm and well-lit, and the old man treated me kindly until I warmed up. In the morning, after I said the morning prayers, I parted from the regal old man and went back to where I had left my wagons. However, there was no trace of them. It was as if they had vanished into thin air. "At first I was very upset and depressed. However, then I began to think that I don't have any reason to be upset. 'G-d gave and G-d took, may the name of G-d be blessed.'<sup>1</sup> Surely it is all for the good, I decided. I began to walk, and then came upon a group of poor people traveling this way. I traveled with them until I came to Mezhibuzh." The poor man finished his story, and all eyes now focused on the Baal Shem Tov. "Do you regret that you asked me to be blessed with life in the world to come? Perhaps you would prefer to get all your lost wealth back?" the Baal Shem Tov asked the innkeeper. "G-d forbid!" the man replied without hesitating. "Is the Rebbe suggesting that I give up my share in the world to come in exchange for 100 barrels of wine? Absolutely not, Rebbe. I am prepared to remain a poor person all my life, traveling from place to place, if only I can merit life in the world to come!" "Indeed that is what I wanted to hear from you," the Baal Shem Tov said. "A Jew needs to be ready to give up everything for faith in G-d. You accomplished this, and therefore you will merit life in the world to come." A smile of pure happiness spread across the poor man's face. The Baal Shem Tov continued: "You are thinking that now you will have to wander with your friends for a long time. Well, that is not the case. With the help of G-d, tomorrow the wagons with the wine that you lost in the forest will arrive here. You will sell them for a nice profit, and you will once again be able to do the mitzvah of welcoming guests as before." Sure enough, the very next day, the wagons arrived as the Baal Shem Tov had said. The villager became wealthy, and continued to host guests in a generous fashion.

*(Zachary Rosenberg- Continued from page 4)*

efforts. Therefore, the Succas Dovid explains that the omission of Moshe's name was not a punishment, but rather the price that he was willing to pay. Moshe knew that offering to have his name taken out of the Torah was going to cost him, but he didn't care because he was more worried about the Jewish people than his own honor. The omission of his name is a tribute to the self-sacrifice of Moshe Rabeinu, who was willing to have his name erased for the Jewish people.

There are two places in the Torah that mention the greatness of Moshe: once in Parshas Be'haloscha when Miriam and Aharon spoke badly about Moshe and Hashem disciplined them, and once in Parshas Vezos Habracha where the Torah relates Moshe's final obituary. These are the only two places where the Torah openly gives testimony about Moshe's greatness. The Ba'al HaTurim is telling us that there's also a third Parsha that talks about Moshe's greatness. Parshas Tetzaveh gives a silent testimony about how great Moshe was, that he cared so much about the Jewish people that he was willing to have his name kept out of this Parsha. That is why it's not ironic, but actually very appropriate and suitable that this tribute is paid to Moshe on the week of the anniversary of his death.

*(Ephraim Herrmann- Continued from page 1)*

What we should feel is relief, not necessarily joy. It seems to me, therefore, that the simcha we celebrate throughout the month of Adar is different from the normal joy we feel when something good and positive has happened. That is expressive joy. However, the simcha of Adar is therapeutic joy. On Purim, the Final Solution was averted, but we were still very vulnerable. The Jewish response to trauma is extraordinary. You defeat fear by joy. You prepare a festive meal, invite guests, give gifts to friends, and more. While the story is being told, we make loud noises, not to erase the memory of Amalek, but to make a joke out of them. Since the threat was so serious, you refuse to be serious, and with that refusal you are doing something very serious. You are denying your enemies a victory.

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## The Symbol of Clothing

By Ari Katznelson, Editor of Student Articles, 12th Grade

There is an underlying theme which is seen upon examining this week's parsha and the Purim story. This theme is clothing and its symbolism. In Tetzaveh, while discussing the clothes of the Kohanim, the Torah says these items are worn for "l'chavod u'litfares", for honor and for glory. Rashi explains that this means the clothing is worn to bring honor and glory to Hashem. Some mefarshim say that dressing in clothes made of gold and precious threads, and wearing a breastplate encrusted with jewels, the Kohen Gadol comes to symbolize things which are rare and coveted. The connection is that these special garments symbolize the special and intimate relationship of God and the Jewish people.

Throughout the story of Purim, clothing has much importance with the events that transpire. When Mordechai hears what Haman wants to do, the Megillah tells us that Mordechai sat by the gates of the palace with his clothing torn. When Esther goes to meet with the king, she wears her royal gown. When Haman leads Mordechai around town, he wears the king's clothes. All of these times the Megillah mentions the clothing. It isn't just an interesting fact about clothes but rather that the outward appearance of how one looks matters. The way we dress ourselves and the clothes we wear show our middos as well as how we act. These mentionings of clothing is an important message of the Megillah as well as the parsha. The Jews always have distinct way of conducting themselves to be modest. This distinctiveness is also mentioned by our clothing and how we act. This shows that even with all the distractions from the outside, we must always stay true to how we act and how we behave.

*(Avi Mandel- Continued from page 1)*

with in the form of social media and literature. The "intellect" can be represented by the oil for the menorah, which needs to be 100% pure. That oil must be better compared to the oil of the sacrifices, which represents nourishment. The Torah directly insists that our intellect be only fed with the purest information possible.

This analogy can be extended even further. For example, the everyday car can be filled with regular gas; however, a luxurious car must be filled with premium gas. If a luxurious car were to be filled with regular gas, the engine can be ruined. Similarly, an average person can involve himself with all sorts of material, but a Jew is different. A Jew has a gentle soul. A Jewish soul which can only withstand the most genuine and purest wisdom. If one wants to reach great spiritual heights, he must fill himself with the finest and most spiritual gasoline.

(Adapted from Aish.com)

# 10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by  
Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz  
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by  
Yosef Axelrod

## Purim Costumes

Since Purim is this coming week, I thought it would be appropriate to discuss everyone's favorite part of Purim: costumes!

### History

You don't find much discussed about Purim costumes in the classic Halacha seforim. The earliest sources that tell us about getting dressed up on Purim deal with other tangential halachic problems that come up, like men dressing up as women and women dressing up as men. It is recorded in the teshuva of the Mari Mintz that he was asked about a boy dressing up as a girl or a girl dressing up as a boy on Purim. In his response he mentions the custom that people get dressed up on Purim. We can see that this minhag has been around for centuries.

There are those who find allusions to the minhag elsewhere. The Gemara in maseches Shabbos 66b refers to something that's a mask and Rashi explains that it's "a thing you put over your face to scare little kids." The word that the Gemara uses as a mask is "Pami." Some of the achronim point out that it comes from the same word as Purim, since a mask is something that they would have for Purim. You would only wear a scary mask on Purim. So it could be as early as the Gemara, that there was a minhag to dress up on Purim.

The Sefer Moadim L'simcha quotes the Lev Ha'Ivri chelek 1, 4:2, where the Lev Ha'Ivri tells a story about the Rama dressing up on Purim. The Rama died at 33 years old on Lag B'omer in the year 333, and he also wrote 33 seforim. At his funeral they said 32 nice things to say about the Rama but they wanted to say one more thing to get to 33. The man running the funeral remembered that on Purim the Rama would get dressed up in poor man's clothing and he would ask people for water in order to daven maariv. He did this in order to remind people to daven maariv, since people get caught up in the seudah on Purim.

### Why would we get dressed up on Purim?

Four possible explanations for the minhag

1. It's just fun. It adds joy and levity to the day. There is a unique kind of simcha that were supposed to have on Purim and dressing up adds to that simcha. This can be done in other ways also but getting dressed up in costumes helps.
2. A lot of what Purim is about either happened through costumes or is related to someone dressing up as something.
3. Haman is from Amalek and Amalek originally comes from Esav. What made Esav

# 10-Minute Halacha Cont'

hate Yaakov so much? Yaakov dressed up as Esav in order to get the brachos. The root of the whole battle with Amalek, which is what Purim is all about, comes from dressing up.

4. In dealing with Amalek, Rashi in Bamidbar 21:1 writes that the Amalekim used the trick of dressing up to save themselves. They would act and dress like the Cananim when approaching the Jewish camp for battle so when the Jews davened to Hashem to save them from the Cananim their prayer wouldn't work. However, the Jews were suspicious so the Jews just davened a very general tefilah to save us from our enemies and that way the Jews were victorious.

- There is famous medrash of Vashti growing a tail, which is like a costume. Esther didn't tell achashverosh who she was, meaning she pretended to be someone she wasn't. She pretended to not be Jewish, which is also costume-like.
- The Gemara in Megillah 16 tells us that when Achashverosh left the room and left Haman with Esther, he came back to the room and Haman was on top of Esther. The Gemara says he was upset at Haman not only for what he saw in the room but he was also upset at Haman for what he saw when he left. When he left he saw the servants of Haman chopping down trees in his garden. This made him even more upset at Haman. Really it was malachim disguised, another part of the Megillah where disguise played a role.
- The Eliyah Rabah says that Mordechai got dressed up as a king.
- The S'fas Emes says that there were a lot of non-Jews that started to dress like Jews when they saw that things were good for the Jews in Shushan after what had happened.

It is quoted in the sefer Moadim L'simcha that we dress up to commemorate the joy that comes out of Achashverosh himself. It's not just that Hashem saved us, but that Hashem made it be that the yeshua occur through the enemy. That is the greatest Vinahapoch Hu. By dressing up on Purim were also wearing something that we don't usually wear. That is the greatest way to show the Vinahapoch Hu.

The loшон "Vi'anochi Hasteer Asteer Panay," in the pesukim is the hint to Esther in the Torah. This is Esther hiding her face. In general, the purim story is about a "hiding face" as well, so as a commemoration we hide our face as well with costumes.

There are however, a few opinions who say one should not dress up on Purim. Some people argue that dressing up is a problem of following the goyim (Holoween). However, the Steipler said that they got the custom from us and not the other way around so it is permitted. Additionally, the Bach didn't like the idea of people dressing up on Purim since it might lead to bad situations. Nowadays, however, the accepted practice is that it is okay and recommended to dress up on Purim.

Wishing everyone a freilichen Purim!!