

BOSTONER TORAH INSIGHTS

BOSTONER 'CHASSIDUS' TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

PURIM & PARSHAS TETZAVEH - 14-16 ADAR 5781

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This year, Purim for most of the world falls out on Erev Shabbos, whereas Shushan Purim falls out on Shabbos Kodesh, but all of Klal Yisroel will read the Megillah on Thursday night and Friday morning. In Yerushalayim, and a handful of other cities, Shushan Purim will be stretched over three days to accommodate the various Mitzvos and customs of Purim. Al HaNissim will be said on Shabbos and the Purim Seudah and Mishloach Manos will be set aside for Sunday. Some have the custom to extend their Seudah Shlishis well into the evening so they can say Al HaNissim on Motzai Shabbos the 16th as well.

When the Gemara (Megillah 2b) discusses which days the Megillah should be read in 'walled' and 'unwalled' cities it explains that there are two facts written explicitly in the Pesukim of the Megillah: (1) Purim is celebrated on the 14th and on the 15th; and (2) 'Unwalled' cities read and celebrate on the 14th of Adar.

Before the Gemara concludes that 'walled' cities read and celebrate on the 15th of Adar it contemplates and promptly rejects the following other possibilities; (1) 'Walled' cities do not read the Megillah at all (Why? Are they not part of Klal Yisroel?); (2) 'Walled' cities must celebrate on both the 14th and 15th (the extra words of the Pasuk indicate two distinct days rather than a two-day period of Purim); (3) 'Walled' cities have the option to celebrate on the 14th or the 15th (the phrase 'in their times' indicates that the time of 'walled' and 'unwalled' cities are unique and distinct without overlap - unless it is impossible because the Chachamim did not allow us to read the Megillah on Shabbos). The Gemara concludes that Purim for 'walled' cities is on the 15th and only the 15th. The simple understanding is that while the Jews around the world rested and celebrated on the 14th, Shushan only rested and celebrated on the 15th

However this was not because the enemies in the city of Shushan continued fighting beyond the 13th and through the 14th. It was Esther who specifically requested from King Achashveirosh that the Jews should be allowed to fight in Shushan another day. Why did Esther do this? Was it simply to annihilate an additional 300 enemies on the 14th on top of the 500 killed on the 13th? Is that what is being celebrated on Shushan Purim? Chas V'Shalom, we do not celebrate the downfall of our enemies, rather we celebrate our salvation.

Around the world 75,000 enemies were removed on the 13th of Adar, the additional 300 killed were not significant because of their quantity, as if there was a minimum Shiur (amount) in order to fulfill a quota of Mechiyas Amalek. One could suggest that Esther wanted to show the enemies of Klal Yisroel that she had direct access to King Achashveirosh. Not only could a decree be sent out by the King's couriers to protect the Jewish People on some later date that the enemy could prepare for, but Esther had the power to put together a spontaneous day for the Jews to fight against their enemies in the capital Shushan on the very next day. This power put additional fear into our enemies of the Jewish People, specifically in the capital city of Shushan, giving the Jews who lived in Shushan additional relief and security that their enemies would not target them. It is this difference that the Jews of Shushan felt, above and beyond the Jews of the rest of the world, that gave Chazal the idea to have a separate and unique Shushan Purim.

It must be understood that even though Yerushalayim will read the Megillah on the 14th, it is specifically NOT Purim for them. If it were, then they would need to recite Hallel on the 14th on all other years, since the Gemara (Megillah 14a) teaches us that the Megillah replaces Hallel on Purim. Thus, if Purim D'Prazim was really Purim for 'walled' cities, then the Chachamim would have instituted Hallel on the 14th for residents of 'walled' cities. The same is true regarding Al HaNissim. Those in 'walled' cities do not recite Al HaNissim on the 14th of Adar this year, together with the rest of Klal Yisroel, even though they are all reading the Megillah on the same day.

The Chasam Sofer says something profound about the 14th and 15th of Adar. When Moshe Rabbeinu was born on the 7th of Adar, the Torah says, "She saw that he was good" (Shemos 2:2). Rashi, quoting the Gemara (Sotah 12a) explains that the words 'he was good' according to one opinion means that the entire house became filled with light when he was born. According to another opinion it means that he was born circumcised.

The Chasam Sofer wonders why it was necessary for the entire house to fill with light and he quotes Rav Yaakov Emden who indicates that the house full of light indicates that Moshe was born on Shabbos. Accordingly, Moshe Rabbeinu's Bris Milah would be the following Shabbos on the 14th of Adar. However, since Moshe was already born circumcised, the ceremonial taking of blood, known as Hatafas Dam Milah, could not be done on Shabbos, but was postponed until the 15th of Adar. Thus, the 14th and 15th of Adar were celebrated as days of Simcha and joy since the days of Moshe Rabbeinu.

May it be Hashem's will that just like Hashem showed his mercy and kindness in the times of Mordechai and Esther, leading to miracles and salvation, so too may we merit to greet the Biyas Go'el speedily in our days.