

Beyond Limitations; Ad D'lo Yoda

Text 1**Rambam** – obligation of *seudas Purim* and *mishloach manos*

א. כתב הרמב"ם¹: „כיצד חובת סעודה זו שיאכל בשר ויתקן סעודה נאה כפי אשר תמצא ידו, ושותה יין עד שישתכר וירדם בשכרותו. וכן חייב אדם לשלוח שתי מנות בשר או שני מיני תבשיל או שני מיני אוכלין לחבירו שנאמר² ומשלוח מנות איש לרעהו שתי מנות לאיש אחר.”

(1) הלי' מגילה פ"ב הט"ז.
(2) אסתר ט, כב.

“What is the obligation of [the Purim meal]: To eat meat, and prepare a fine meal according to what one can afford. And to drink wine until one is inebriated, and to fall asleep from inebriation. One is also obligated to send two portions of meat, or two types of cooked dishes or two types of food to one's friend ...”

Questions:

- 1) What is the relationship between *mishloach manos* (gifts to a friend) and *seudas Purim* (Purim meal)? (Why are they together in one halacha.)

(Suggested answer: *mishloach manos* (gifts to a friend) is for the *seudah*. Nevertheless it would still be appropriate to be taught separately.)

Text 2**Rambam** – obligation of '*matanos l'evyonim*' (gifts to the poor)

ולהלן⁷ כתב הרמב"ם „מוטב לאדם להרבות כמתנות אביונים מלהרבות בסעודתו ובשלוח מנות לרעיו, שאין שם שמחה גדולה ומפארה אלא לשמח לב עניים ויתומים ואלמנות וגרים. שהמשמח לב האומללים האלו דומה לשכינה שנאמר⁸ להחיות רוח שפלים ולהחיות לב נדכאים.”

(7) הלכה יד.
(8) ישע' נז, טו.

“It is better for a person to increase his gifts to the poor than to make a larger meal or give more *mishloach manos* (gifts to a friend), for there is no greater and more beautiful *simcha* (joy) than gladdening the hearts of the poor, orphans, widows, and *geirim*. For one who gladdens the hearts of these unfortunate is likened to the *shechina* (Divine)...”

Text 3**Ritva** – *matanos l'evyonim* (gifts to the poor) is connected to the '*simcha*' (joy) of Purim

והכי מפורש בריטב"א¹² בפירוש הברייתא¹³ דמגבית פורים לפורים ואין מדקדקין בדבר. ז"ל: „פירשו בירושלמי¹⁴ שכל הפושט ידו ליטול יתנו לו, לומר שנותנין לכל אדם ואין מדקדקין אם הוא עני וראוי ליתן לו שאין נתינה זו מדין צדקה גרידתא אלא מדין שמחה שהרי אף לעשירים יש לשלוח מנות”¹⁵.

(12) למגילה ז, א.
(13) תוספתא מגילה פ"א ה"ה, מובא בכ"מ ע"פ. ב.
(14) מגילה פ"א ה"ד.
(15) רע"י גם רמב"ן ב"מ שם.

“It says in the Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud) that [on Purim] anyone who stretches out his hand you should give to him. This is to teach that we give to everyone, and we are not concerned whether the recipient is poor... Because this giving is not just as a fulfillment of *tzedaka* (charity), but as a fulfillment of *simcha* (joy – i.e. to be joyous), for we even give gifts to wealthy people.”

- 2) Why does the Rambam seem to suggest that the reason for *matanos l'evyonim* (gifts to the poor) is the giver's *simcha* (joy) rather than the recipient's *simcha*?

Text 4

Rambam – on Yom Tov one must not have *simcha* (joy) alone without including the poor

ובהל' יו"ט¹⁶ בענין מצות שמחת יו"ט כתב הרמב"ם: „וכשהוא אוכל ושותה חייב להאכיל לגר ליתום ולאלמנה עם שאר העניים האומללים, אבל מי שנועל דלתות חצירו ואוכל ושותה הוא ובניו ואשתו ואינו מאכיל ומשקה לעניים ולמרי נפש אין זו שמחת מצוה אלא שמחת כריסו כו'". (16) פ"ו ה"ח.

“When one eats and drinks [on Yom Tov] he is obligated to feed also the convert, the orphan, and the widow, amongst other unfortunates. Someone who shuts his doors and eats and drinks with his wife and children and does not feed the poor... This is not the *simcha* of a *mitzvah* rather it is the *simcha* of his stomach.”

- 3) Why does the Rambam not mention that someone who gives *tzedaka* is likened to the *shechina* in the laws of *tzedaka* (instead of just in the laws of Purim)?
4) Why does the Rambam separate the laws of *matanos l'evyonim* (gifts to the poor) from the laws of *seudas purim* (Purim meal) and *mishloach manos* (gifts to a friend)?

Text 5

Rosh – it is forbidden to get drunk

ובל' הארחות חיים³⁰ „וחייב אדם לבסומי בפוריא, לא שישתכר, שהשכרות איסור גמור, ואין לך עבירה גדולה מזו שהוא גורם לגילוי עריות ושפיכת דמים וכמה עבירות זולתו, אך שישתה יותר מלימודו מעט כדי שירבה לשמוח וכו'". (30) הובא בב"י.

“A person must celebrate on Purim, but not get drunk. Drunkenness is a prohibition, and there is no prohibition worse than it, for it leads to immorality and murder, and many other transgressions. Rather a person must drink a little bit more than he is accustomed in order to increase his joy.”

- 5) How can the Rambam say that on Purim one must be inebriated?

Text 6

Talmud – in the days of Purim the Jews renewed their acceptance of the Torah

עוד יש לעיין, דהנה בגמ' שבת³³: „ויתיצבו בתחתית ההר³⁴, א"ר אבדימי בר חמא בר חסא מלמד שכפה הקב"ה עליהם את ההר כגיגית ואמר להם אם אתם מקבלים התורה מוטב ואם לאו שם תהא קבורתכם. א"ר אחא בר יעקב מכאן מודעה רבה לאורייתא (פירש"י: שאם יזימנם לדין למה לא קיימתם מה שקבלתם עליכם יש להם תשובה שקבלוה באונס). אמר רבה אעפ"כ הדר קבלוה בימי אחשוורוש דכתיב³⁵ קימו וקבלו היהודים, קיימו מה שקבלו כבר".

“The verse states (Exodus 19:17) ‘and (the Jews, at the time of Matan Torah) stood at the bottom of the mountain’. Rav Avdimi bar Chasda said; This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed is He, covered them with the mountain as if it were an overturned barrel. And He said to them ‘if you accept the Torah fine, but if not over there will be your burial.’

“Rav Acha bar Yaakov said; from here stems a defense for the Torah (if someone is called to judgment for having transgressed the Torah, he can excuse himself that he was forced to accept it.

“Rava said; Nevertheless they accepted the Torah again in the days of Achashveirosh. As it is written ‘The Jews upheld and accepted,’ (meaning) they upheld that which they had previously accepted.”

6) Why is there no expression of the re-accepting of the Torah that took place on Purim?

Conclusion from question 6 : In fact the primary obligation of *simcha* (joy) on Purim is because it was a time when the Jews re-accepted the Torah.

Text 7

Rambam – A prophet can see prophesy only when his physicality is negated

ברמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה⁴⁰ כתב לענין התגלות הנבואה לנביאים
„וכולן אין רואין מראה הנבואה אלא בחלום בחזיון לילה, או ביום אחר
שתפול עליהן תרדמה .. וכולן כשמתנבאים אבריהן מזדעזעין וכח הגוף
כשל ועשתונותיהם מתטרפות כו'".

(40) פ"ז ה"ב.

“A prophet sees his prophesy only in a dream at night, or during the day after he falls into a deep sleep. During prophesy his limbs tremble, his physical energy is diminished, and he loses control of his senses. Thus his mind is free to comprehend what he sees...”

Answer to question 5 – On Purim, through *simcha* (joy), we are able to reach the self negation and connect to the sublime levels of G-liness that a prophet did through intense preparation.

Answer to question 1& 2 – The objective of the mitzvos of Purim is to lift a person above his nature and feeling of self (which prevents him from connecting to Hashem). This is accomplished by caring about one's friend, and especially unfortunates, just as one cares for himself!

Answer to question 4 – *Matanos l'evyonim* (gifts to the poor) is the greatest expression (-more than the Purim meal or gifts to a friend-) that the true care and joy of a Jew on Purim is in the fulfillment of another person's needs.

Answer to question 3 – A human being cannot, with his own faculties, arrive at such a level. It is only because a Jew is “likened to the *shechina* (Divine)”; the essence of the Jewish soul is a “*chelek Elokah mima'al mamosh!*” (a piece of Divine)

L'chayim!



A freilechen Purim!