



The Big Deal About Purim

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In a few days we will again be celebrating Purim. We all know the story of Mordechai and Queen Esther and how they thwarted the evil plot of the wicked Haman. Many of us will dress up in costumes when we go to Synagogue and the following day we will present mishloah manot to our friends, we will have a big meal and some will "make merry" until they can't tell the difference between "blessed be Mordechai" and "cursed be Haman."

Nice Holiday! Now, ask yourselves, is this what Purim is really all about? What is so significant about this event that we should throw a party every year commemorating it?

I am sure that many of you can quote to me all the things you have learned in books and what our blessed Sages have taught. Yet, how many of you know the hidden truth about Purim? Indeed, the name of the Megilah is Esther. The name Esther comes from the root 'seter' which means "to conceal." So, what is being concealed in this holiday? Another thing, why is the Book of Esther the only book in the Bible which never makes any mention of G-d, whatsoever?

The answers to both these questions are essentially one and the same. There is a secret regarding the Purim holiday. So profound is its significance that our Sages have taught that even when Mashiah comes and all other holidays will become "obsolete," Purim will never become so. It will last forever!

The secret of Purim and the Megilah Esther cannot be summed up into a neat little package and described here in any detail. I have already covered this matter in detail in Panu Derekh #6 and in the two-part tape series on Purim. Here now is a condensed version of that material.

Purim is of the greatest significance because it occurred while we were in a state of exile and not during a time of redemption.

While in Egypt, HaShem showed His Mighty Hand with plagues and miracles. It was the Holy One, Blessed be He who brought us out from Egypt. He acted and we just watched. This is redemption. This is not what happened on Purim.

In the Purim story, it is we who acted (through Mordechai and Esther). G-d is nowhere to be found in the story. His blessed Name is not even mentioned, not even once.



In Egypt we sat back and G-d did everything. In Purim, it appears that G-d sat back and that we did everything. Some of you might consider this blasphemous, but it surely is not. Of course, G-d is in everything and behind all things. Indeed, with Purim this is most definitely the case. G-d is behind things, not in front of them. In essence, G-d is concealed. He is not revealed. This is why His blessed Name is nowhere to be found. It is there, written in the Esther scroll, but it is written in code. It is concealed and one will have to look rather hard to find it.

The Purim story is so profound. It is a story for the ages because it teaches us a powerful lesson, which is how we Jews are supposed to act in order to survive while we live in a time of G-d concealment and exile.

Indeed, we Jews are survivors! History documents how many attempts were made to destroy all Jews and the Jewish religion. All of our enemies have fallen and we are still here, strong as ever. Although we know that G-d has been with us, we still cannot point to any Passover type miracles that have been responsible for our survival.

We have survived by our own G-d given, Divinely inspired wits!

We, the Jewish people have survived because we refused to fall into the hands of "fate."

Even when it appears that everything in the world turns against us, we, the Torah faithful community, the stiff-necked people that we are, stand up against every adversity and fight it!

We fight back in any way we can. Somehow and in someway we always land on our feet. This was the lesson learned by Mordechai and Esther and by the survivors of the Holocaust.

Rather than wait for G-d to redeem us, we take whatever action that is necessary to redeem ourselves!

This is not blasphemy or arrogance. It is what G-d wants from us. He wants us to be mature spiritual adults and not spiritual children. Children wait for their daddies to give them everything. Adults have learned from their fathers how to provide for themselves, using those skills that the father has taught them.

This then is the secret and significance of Purim. With the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and our subsequent exile into Babylon-Persia, G-d was sending collective Israel a message. Grow up, my children, He says. Take responsibility for your lives and actions. G-d will always be with us, yet His influence will be concealed and not overt. Therefore, we must act and He (Blessed Be His Name) will bless our actions and make them fruitful.



The lesson of Purim is that G-d takes the first step by creating for us environments that necessitate us to take action. Thus, instead of just falling to our knees in prayer, we must rise up on our feet in action! This is what G-d wants! Otherwise He would not have made matters so!

Remember, it is incumbent upon you TO ACT, not just think about acting. MOVE or the world (and G-d) will pass you by.