

FATE OR FAITH?:
**PURIM AND
YOM HAKIPPURIM**
RABBI AARON LOPIANSKY

THE CAPITOL FEAST
**BRUNCH LIKE A QUEEN
(OR KING!) THIS PURIM**
WITH JAMIE GELLER

PURIM, PARENTING, AND POSITIVITY
RABBI, AT WHAT POINT AM I
"TOO OLD" TO DRESS UP ON PURIM?
ALANNA PEPPER, LMSW
& RABBI DR. AVICHAJ PEPPER

WASHINGTON

Jewish Journal



*What Is
Real Joy?*

ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר

February 2026 | **Purim Edition**



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BENEATH THE CROWN

Fate Or Faith?: *Purim And Yom Hakippurim*



Judgment & Mercy:
The Purim Story We
Rarely Talk About



Joy Is Not
Optional
This Purim



The Spirit of Virginia.
The Craft of Tradition.
Built Barrel by Barrel.



Brunch Like a
Queen (or King!)
This Purim



The Correct
Response



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Mikvah Calendar.com



Precision in the Palm of Your Hand

What happens when MIT-level mathematics meets *Taharat HaMishpacha*? You get a level of halachic precision, once requiring tremendous time and effort, right in the palm of your hand.

For over 140,000 couples worldwide, MikvahCalendar.com has long been the gold standard for navigating the sacred laws of the Jewish home with absolute confidence. Now in its eighteenth year, the platform continues to build on its legacy of accuracy under the dedicated leadership of its founder, Rivkah Bloom. Holding both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Computer Science from MIT, Bloom has utilized her technical expertise to marry centuries-old tradition with the most sophisticated technology available today. Together with her team, she has created a tool that protects the integrity of the mitzvah while easing the lives of families globally.

A Halachic Powerhouse

At its core, MikvahCalendar.com is much more than just a digital calculator. Developed in close consultation with leading *poskim*, the platform handles the complex mathematics of *vestos* so you don't have to. The system is built to allow every Jewish couple, regardless of *shitah*, technical ability,

or level of observance, to keep Taharas Hamishpachah b'hiddur.

- Customized Halachic Profiles: Whether your family follows Ashkenaz, Sephard, Chabad, Bucharian, Satmar, Belz, Skver, Viznitz, or Ger customs, the system calculates according to your specific *shitah*.
- The Gold Standard Kavuah System: Developed through years of collaboration with leading Halachic authorities, MikvahCalendar.com features code capable of identifying and managing intricate *kavuah* (fixed) patterns. MikvahCalendar.com provides seamless tracking of both active and dormant cycles with unparalleled precision.

SMS, Email, and Phone Reminders

Perhaps the most loved feature of the platform is the personal notification system. Users receive discreet, timely reminders via SMS, phone call, or email for every critical date and time from upcoming separations to the latest time to perform a *hefsek taharah*. These alerts do more than just share data; they eliminate the anxiety of "forgetting the day" and remove the mental burden of constant calendar

checking. This allows couples to focus on the beauty of the mitzvah rather than the stress of the logistics.

The Mehadrin Phone System: 845-516-MCMC (6262)

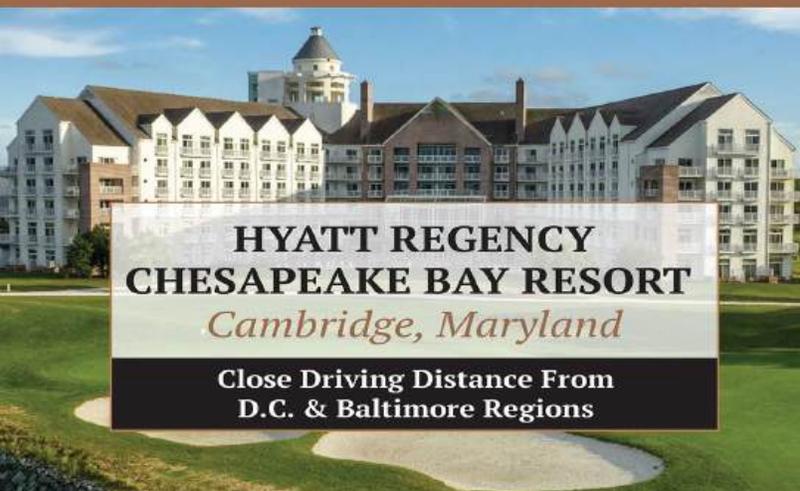
Recognizing that many families choose to limit internet use or prefer a non-digital interface, MikvahCalendar.com has expanded its Mehadrin phone-based system. Fully available in both Hebrew and English, this service provides the same legendary halachic accuracy via a traditional phone call—no internet required. Users can manage their calendar and receive alerts simply by calling 845-516-MCMC (6262).

A Holistic Resource for the Jewish Home

Beyond the calendar, the platform offers an interactive Preparation Checklist, the ability to send Your dates to your Rav or kallah teacher for a *shaila*, and family and health resources for the Jewish home.

In an era where we use technology to optimize every part of our lives, MikvahCalendar.com ensures that our most sacred commitments are kept with the highest level of *hiddur* (excellence).

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Monday, March 2, 2026
י"ג אדר תשפ"ו תענית אסתר

Fast Begins:

5:20 AM Low 26°F | 5:27 AM (fixed)
Ask your Rabbi.



Fast Ends:

R' Tukaccinsky
Fast ends at צאת ג' כוכבים (6:32 PM).

R' Moshe Feinstein
If fasting is difficult – may eat at 6:35 PM.
If not difficult – wait until מוצאי שבת (6:42 PM).

Tuesday, March 3, 2026
י"ד אדר תשפ"ו פורים

Earliest Talis & Tefillin
זמן ציצית ותפילין

High 41°F
below horizon
5:49 AM



Latest Shema – Magen Avraham
(סוף זמן קריאת שמע (מגן אברהם)

72 mins (16.1°)
8:49 AM



Latest Shema – Gra & Baal HaTanya
(סוף זמן קריאת שמע (גר"א ובעל התניא)

9:28 AM



Latest Shacharis – Gra & Baal HaTanya
(סוף זמן תפילה (גר"א ובעל התניא)

10:26 AM



Earliest Mincha (Mincha Gedola)
מנחה גדולה

Lechumra
12:50 PM



Plag HaMincha – Gra & Baal HaTanya
(פלג המנחה (גר"א ובעל התניא)

4:51 PM



Sunset
שקיעת החמה

Sea level
6:02 PM



Nightfall (Tzes – 3 Stars)
לילה צאת ג' כוכבים

36 mins Low 29°F
6:42 PM



Nightfall – 72 Minutes
לילה 72 דקות

7:14 PM





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Fate Or Faith?: Purim And Yom Hakippurim



RABBI AARON LOPIANSKY,
ROSH YESHIVA, YESHIVA OF GREATER
WASHINGTON-TIFERES GEDALIAH

I. A Fast Like the Feast

Purim is a most joyful festival, but it is also elusive in nature. One is convinced that there must be more to it than meets the eye. Indeed, the Ari alludes to the special quality of the day by saying that it is similar to the most solemn day of the year, Yom HaKippurim. In fact, the name Yom HaKippurim means “a day like Purim” (*k’Purim*). This puzzles more than it clarifies, for two days could not be more dissimilar. What binds the two days together?

The prime similarity between the two lies in the word “*pur*,” which means “lottery.” Purim was named after the lots that Haman cast to determine the day on which to kill the Jews. Yom Kippur also has its lottery – the drawing that determined which of two identical goats would be brought on the Altar in the Beis HaMikdash and which would be cast off to Azazel. In what ways are these two lotteries connected? What is their significance – which is apparently so imposing that the very name of the days, expressing their essence, refers to these lotteries?

Furthermore, in the analogy implied in “*k’Purim*,” Purim is presented as more elevated than Yom Kippur – it is the model for the fast day. How is this to be understood?

II. Perceiving the Divine in Human Events

Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, *zt”l*, describes three levels of perception of Divine Providence. Most striking is an encounter with totally supernatural, miraculous events that are a clear revelation of the Divine will.

Such events are completely unrelated to our sphere of existence. We read about such occurrences but never experience them firsthand. Nor is it within our power to cause miracles to take place.

At the other extreme is the form of Divine revelation described as “nature.” While natural occurrences are completely within our frame of reference, they are phenomena in which the Divine influence is not easily perceived. They are a completely enclosed system of cause and effect governed by a set body of laws.

On a third plane, described alternately as “coincidence” or “probability,” events are perceived as completely natural, but the order and pattern within which they occur point to a superior power imposing its will on this seemingly natural order of events.*

III. Divinity through Lots

The Torah has a device that underscores this phenomenon: the lottery. When *Klal Yisrael* entered Eretz Yisrael, the land was divided both according to the dictates of the *urim v’tumim* (the high priest’s breastplate, which was endowed with spiritual powers of counsel and decision) and by the casting of the lots. Since the *urim v’tumim* was foolproof, there was no intrinsic need to resort to lots to determine which parcel of land would be awarded to which tribe. The function of the lottery, then, was not to reinforce the decision of the *urim v’tumim*. The lottery served to prepare Israel for its transition from life in the desert, where they lived a life completely detached from

nature, subsisting on manna and water from Miriam’s well, to life in the Land of Israel, where the people had to discover the spiritual core inherent within nature.

They uncovered this through the *mitzvos hateluyos ba’aretz*, the land-related *mitzvos*, which deal with agricultural activity and produce, demonstrating that even in the most natural of cycles a spiritual dimension exists. Thus, it was not enough to divide Israel by Divine dictum alone; one had to find the Divine will inherent in a seemingly natural chain of events – the chance drawing of lots.

This very same theme was represented by the lottery of Yom Kippur, for there is a parallel lesson to be mastered in our performance of *mitzvos*. Even though *mitzvos* have rational dimensions to them, the essence of a *mitzvah* is Divine will. Thus, on Yom Kippur, two goats, identical in size and shape, were set aside. What would decide which one would be selected as a sacrifice “for G-d” and which one would represent the essence of evil, to be dispatched to Azazel? (See the commentary of the Ramban, who learns that this goat represents the Satan’s portion in this world.) Only a flick of the wrist, producing a “chance” lot that would express the Divine will.

So, too, the lottery of Purim expressed the concept of Divine will diffusing into our realm through “natural” events. Haman used a lottery to pick a month for killing the Jews, and Adar emerged, the month during which Israel’s lawgiver, Moshe Rabbeinu, died. Haman saw this as a sign that Adar



was an auspicious month to destroy the Jewish people. This same month, however, also contained Moshe's date of birth. What determined if this month would bring about the redemption of Israel or its downfall? In the absence of a definitive order of cause and effect, we must turn to an answer that lies beyond cause and effect: the Divine will.

IV. Parallels in the Megillah

This emergence of both good and evil from an identical source occurs repeatedly throughout the *megillah*. A tree is erected on which to hang the leader of *Klal Yisrael*, only to serve as the hanging post of its most virulent foe. It is due to a situation surrounding the queen (Vashti) that Haman gains his prominence, and it is due to the queen (Esther) that he suffers his end. Haman's fortunes begin with a feast and end with a feast. Zeresh and his friends advise him on the method for achieving unchallenged power, and they are the first to predict his downfall. The *pesukim* themselves ring with parallel: "And the riders went out in haste [to deliver the edict to destroy the Jews]" (*Esther* 3:15); "And the riders went out in haste [to deliver the edict allowing the Jews their revenge]" (*ibid.* 8:14).

The very theme of the day is "*v'nahafoch hu*" – the complete reversal of the events occurring. That is, the events stayed the same, but instead of serving as a means for bringing harm on *Klal Yisrael*, they became tools for its redemption.

A prime example of a single source producing opposing results is the *parah*

adumah – the red heifer whose ashes were used to ritually purify those who had been defiled, yet defiled those who were pure. The Midrash (on *parashas Chukas*) explains the phenomenon by quoting the verse "Who can bring a clean thing out of the unclean, if not the One?" (*Iyov* 14:4). The Sfas Emes explains that if the same means can promote opposite effects, then the effect is not inherent in the means but must come from some different source. Thus, if the same heifer can both purify and defile, then both purity and defilement are not traits inherent in the heifer but are expressions of G-d's will. This demonstrates the oneness of G-d, for nothing exists outside His will.

This, then, is the common denominator between Purim and Yom Kippur: the negation of "natural" patterns of cause and effect, and the realization that the root of all cause and effect is G-d's will.

V. Two Approaches to Truth

Why is Purim considered higher than Yom Kippur?

Both days offer a spiritual view of life. There are two ways of reaching this metalogical understanding: one can negate this world, put himself a bit above it, and recognize truth; or one can study the world and involve himself in it until he realizes the truth.

Yom Kippur uses the first method. We abstain from all manner of human activity and emulate *malachim* (angels). To be sure, we gain a higher perception of the world, but it is at the price of our humanity. It is not as humans that we have gained a higher

perception of reality but as angels.

By contrast, Purim affords us this understanding through physical involvement and intoxication ("a person must imbibe until he does not know the difference..."). Here it is the human being who gains this awareness. The gains of Yom Kippur are hard to transfer to everyday reality, for they come about through experiences divorced from it. The gains of Purim are with us for everyday needs.

Rav Yitzchak Hutner, *zt"l*, once quipped on Purim, "The reason we don't make *Havdalah* after Purim is because there is no *motza'ei Purim* – no 'after Purim.' Purim stays with us forever."



With over 20 seforim authored, **Rabbi Aaron Lopiansky** brings to the Greater Washington community and the yeshiva the cumulative impact of decades of learning at the Mir Yerushalayim. He continues the mesorah of his rebbeim, Harav Chaim Shmuelevitz *zt"l*, Harav Nachum Partzovitz *zt"l*, and his father-in-law, Rav Beinisch Finkel *zt"l* (the late Rosh HaYeshiva of the Mir). His approach to learning was also deeply influenced by his long association as a close talmid of Harav Moshe Shapiro *zt"l*. The Rosh Yeshiva's seforim and shiurim can be purchased and accessed at www.eshelpublications.com

JOY IS NOT OPTIONAL THIS PURIM

Why holding onto *emunah* and *simcha* right now is the bravest Jewish act of all



**RABBI DOVID
ROSENBAUM**

We associate the holiday of Purim with much joy. How are we to relate to it this year? True, there are many things that have happened in Israel over the past months for which we should be thankful. There are also many tragedies. Do we feel like celebrating this Purim?

It is vital to remember that Purim is a holiday on which we remember that Hashem dramatically flipped a situation that seemed bleak. If we approach the day with this realization, it can bring much encouragement to us as we face the challenging *matzav*. Even so, it would be difficult for most to channel such a concept into joy.

It is worthwhile to reflect on the primary term used to capture the feeling for the day, *simcha*. There is a famous idea that *sasson* connotes a sudden thrill or excitement, whereas *simcha* connotes a long term sense of contentment. It is difficult, maybe even inappropriate to express thrill and excitement this Purim. Though challenging, I would argue that it is attainable to feel a sense of satisfaction this Purim.

In addition to all the tragedies, so many events have occurred that remind us all that Hashem is running the World. We don't understand this bizarre concoction of circumstances, but it is difficult to deny that this is all His hand. As we reflect on the Purim story, we are reminded of His awesome power to dictate

events, utterly defying their probability of occurrence. If we step a bit further back from the difficult pictures, we see we can appreciate this is part of a much broader panorama that, we know and trust, will ultimately end in the great redemption of His People.

Though far more difficult to accomplish this year than most, may we all merit a bit more clarity and faith this Purim, and may these things inspire within us real *simcha*. May the channeling of our emotions towards *emunah* stand as a great merit for wonderful tidings for Klal Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael speedily in our days.

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum became the Rabbi of YISE in 2010 after having served as the Assistant Rabbi under Rav Gedaliah Anemer, zt"l, for the previous five years. In addition to his responsibilities at YISE, Rabbi Rosenbaum has played an extensive role in the broader Greater Washington Orthodox Jewish community, serving, among other positions, as President of the Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington from 2013 to 2015. Rabbi Rosenbaum is currently the Gittin Administrator for the Vaad, coordinating halachic divorce for couples in the community. He also acts as a halachic resource for a number of organizations in the community.





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Brunch Like a Queen (or King!) This Purim

Perfect Dairy Brunch Ideas for Purim

4 Cheese Baked Ziti

Baked with 4 types of gooey cheese, and baked to creamy perfection, this baked ziti recipe is a popular family favorite. Bake in ramekins for a fancy spin on holidays such as Shavuot.

Duration: 45 min

Cook Time: 35 min

Prep Time: 10 min | Servings: 6

Ingredients

- 5 cups penne pasta
- 5 quarts water
- 5 tablespoons salt
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 cans crushed tomatoes
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ¾ cup Tnuva Quark Creamy Soft Cheese, 95% Fat Free
- 5 ½ ounces Tnuva Shredded Mozzarella
- 5 ½ ounces Tnuva Edam Cheese, shredded
- 5 ½ ounces Tnuva Parmesan, grated
- 1 tablespoon Tnuva Butter
- 2 egg whites
- ¼ cup + 1 tablespoon heavy cream

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
2. Bring the water to a boil with salt. Prepare the pasta according to the directions on the package. The pasta should be “al dente” after about 10 minutes.
3. In a large frying pan, heat up the olive oil and add garlic. Fry until golden. Add the crushed tomatoes and mix well.
4. Gently add all of the Quark cheese and about half of each of the other cheeses to the sauce and mix well.
5. Grease a baking dish with butter and pour the pasta into the dish. Then add the sauce onto the pasta.
6. Beat the remainder of the cheeses with the heavy cream and the egg whites. Spread this mixture over the pasta.
7. Cover the baking dish with aluminum foil. Bake for about 20 minutes. Remove the foil and bake uncovered for about 5 minutes on high heat. Serve immediately.



Mini Caprese Salad

A classic that's elegant in its own right but made even more special for when minified.

Duration: 5 min | Prep Time: 5 min | Servings: 8

Ingredients

- 2 pints grape tomatoes, rinsed and dried
- 1 (1 pound) container Marinated Ciliegine (fresh mozzarella balls)
- 18 basil leaves, rolled up and sliced into thin strips
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil, such as Colavita
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- Freshly cracked black pepper

Preparation

1. Combine tomatoes, mozzarella balls, and basil in a medium bowl.
2. Drizzle evoo and vinegar over the salad and season to taste with cracked black pepper.



Smoked Salmon Salad

Duration: 10 min | Prep Time: 10 min | Servings: 6

Ingredients

- 12 cups arugula, washed and dried well
- 1 (8-ounce) package sliced smoked salmon, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup plain bagel chips, broken into bite-sized pieces
- 5 small sprigs, fresh dill, torn into pieces
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 small red onion, cut in half and thinly sliced
- 3 tablespoons capers, drained
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

Preparation

1. In a large bowl, combine the arugula, salmon, bagel chips, dill, tomatoes, onions, and capers and toss lightly.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper. Pour over salad and toss to coat evenly with dressing. Divide between 6 plates or bowls and serve immediately.

I am going to breakdown the salad ingredients here and give you the “WHY” of each:

12 cups arugula, washed and dried well

I absolutely adore arugula. A nice change from standard lettuce, it has a delicate peppery bite and is excellent in salads, on pizzas, tossed with potatoes, and more. If you are new to arugula or find it too bitter consider tempering its bite by tossing together with salad greens of your choice.

1 (8-ounce) package sliced smoked salmon, cut into 1-inch pieces

I like smoked salmon off a bagel. I of course love me a SS + CC bagel but when I don't want a heavy meal I toss smoked salmon pieces into green lettuce and rice salads. In Israel we don't have kani so I always make this Sushi Salad with smoked salmon flakes and have my friend Miri to thank for the idea.

1 cup plain bagel chips, broken into bite-sized pieces

A little crunch goes a long way. These can of course be whole wheat or everything flavored or even homemade, whole wheat, everything croutons. I have this thing against store bought croutons and would rather not eat a crouton if I didn't make it. I use all my leftover challah (scraps are fine) to make croutons and feel uber thrifty and super satiated when I do.

5 small sprigs, fresh dill, torn into pieces

Do not underestimate the power of a little green. Fresh herbs bring such vibrancy, beauty and a bevy of health benefits to your plate. Dill of course perfectly complements the flavors here but a bit of parsley thrown in, in addition, never hurt anyone.

1 cup grape tomatoes, halved

We buy one to two LARGE cartons of grape tomatoes per week in our house. I love red, yellow, orange, and chocolate covered cherry tomatoes which are rich mahogany in color and have a strong tomato tang. Make sure to halve them lengthwise – much prettier that way.

1 small red onion, cut in half and thinly sliced

Red onion - because it's milder, sweeter and more beautiful than yellow. Perfect for eating raw, I like to slice mine paper thin.

3 tablespoons capers, drained

This pickled berry provides a pungent burst of flavor perfect for cutting the rich fatty salmon.

¼ cup olive oil + 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar + 1 teaspoon kosher salt + freshly ground black pepper

Tied for my favorite simple dressing on earth, it's only rival: EVOO + lemon juice + salt.

Finally, serve your Smoked Salmon Salad with lemon wedges so folks can squeeze just before eating. Sure to brighten your dish and your day. :)

Strawberry Pastry Cups

We have so many cheesecake recipes both dairy and parve so I figured I'd throw Hubby a bone for dessert since he doesn't like cheesecake (WHHHAAATTTT!?!?!?) but really cause I don't want to eat the whole darn thing all by my lonesome.

Duration: 10 min | Prep Time: 10 min | Servings: 16

Ingredients

- 4 ounces cream cheese
- 2 cups store-bought vanilla pudding
- 16 mini pastry shells
- 6 strawberries, hulled and sliced

Preparation

1. Beat cream cheese with an electric mixer until soft and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Beat in vanilla pudding for about 1 minute.
2. Spoon filling into pastry shells. Garnish with sliced strawberries.



Jamie Geller influences millions every day. Known as the “Jewish Rachael Ray” (The New York Times), and the “Queen of Kosher” (CBS) 7-time best-selling author Jamie Geller is the Founder and CEO of Kosher Network International (KNI), the #1 Global Kosher Food Media Company and World's Most Watched Jewish Food Network with almost 1 Billion Views

Jamie Geller, the creative force behind JamieGeller.com also hosts the Chanukah Cooking Special with Jamie Geller on PBS and Create TV, is a regular on the TODAY Show and has been profiled by Yahoo, Forbes, Family Circle, Cosmopolitan, Chicago Tribune among many other media publications and outlets.

One of the most sought-after Jewish food and lifestyle experts worldwide Jamie and “Hubby” live in Israel with their 6 beautiful children. Jamie loves nothing more than sharing Jewish comfort food with friends, family and a worldwide community of food enthusiasts.

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Purim is a holiday about elevation – a time when simple elements on a table become symbols of meaning, when a cup isn't just drunk but experienced. At the intersection of intention and craftsmanship lies a story that resonates far beyond a bottle's label: the story of Catoctin Creek Distilling Company, a pioneering craft distillery nestled in the heart of Purcellville, Virginia.

Founded in 2009 by Becky and Scott Harris as the first legal distillery in Loudoun County since Prohibition, Catoctin Creek brought traditional rye whisky back to its rightful place in American spirits culture. In a region known as the Loudoun Valley – a landscape dotted with vineyards and rolling hills – the distillery embraces a true grain-to-glass philosophy: sourcing local grain and

fruit, free of pesticides and additives, and producing spirits by hand with relentless attention to detail.

The result is award-winning rye whisky, brandies, and gin that reflect both place and process. Their flagship rye – bold, layered, and structured – nods to Virginia's deep whiskey heritage, a tradition that predates many modern craft movements.

For our community, one detail stands out: Catoctin Creek has kosher-certified products under Star-K supervision, ensuring that those who watch for kosher certification can do so with clarity – simply look for the Star-K on the bottle. This commitment to certification reflects the same discipline and transparency that define their craft.

Catoctin Creek isn't a place of shortcuts. It's a place of stories – of mountains and creeks, of grain and fire-kissed oak barrels, of heritage revived with respect. As families gather this Purim, raising glasses with intention and joy, there is something fitting about a spirit that carries both legacy and care.

Not just a pour.

But a crafted moment.

About Catoctin Creek Distilling Company

Located in historic downtown Purcellville, Catoctin Creek's working distillery and

tasting room invite visitors to see the process firsthand – from copper stills to resting oak barrels. Guests can tour the facility, sample spirits on-site, and experience the precision behind every bottle.

Beyond production, the distillery has become a destination in Virginia's growing craft beverage scene – blending education, hospitality, and heritage under one roof.

Learn more at catoctincreek.com.



Scott Harris - Catoctin Creek Distillery

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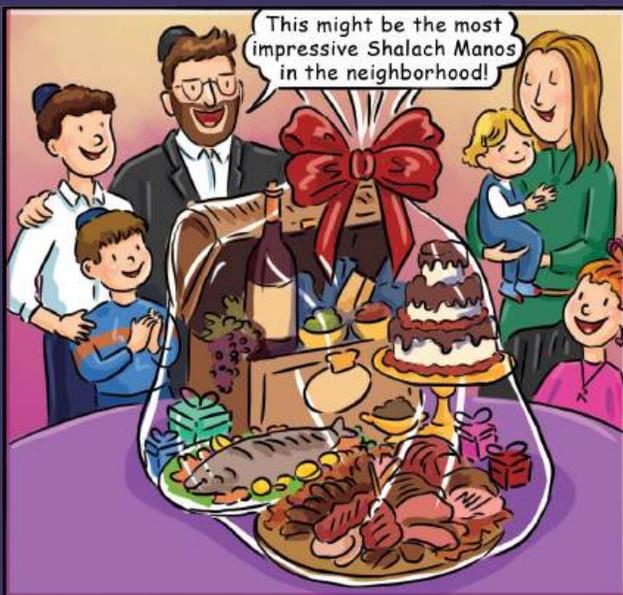
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Purim, Parenting, and Positivity

Co-authored by



ALANNA PEPPER, LMSW



RABBI DR. AVICHAJ PEPPER

Director of Educational Support Services
Yeshiva Of Greater Washington, Boys Division

Rabbi, at what point am I “too old” to dress up on Purim?

Parents often reflect on the challenges of raising children, noting the lack of clear, step-by-step guidance. “If my children only came with an owners manual”, they might say. In truth, parenting might seem to have many wrongs and few, if any rights. When turning to the Torah, we find little explicit instruction on parenting methods. Beyond the narratives in Tanach and the messages woven into these stories, there is no definitive guide to raising children.

However, Mishlei (22:6) teaches: חונך לנער חנוך דרכו—“Educate a child according to his way.” This verse highlights the essence of parenting: recognizing that each child is unique and requires an individualized approach. While this principle is clear, the specifics of parenting methodology remain open-ended. As a result, traditional and Midrashic sources provide narrative and insights rather than a comprehensive guide.

While not its primary focus, *Megillas Esther* offers several valuable lessons on parenting and emotional support for children. When introducing Esther, the Megillah states (2:7), ויהי אמן את

—“And he [Mordechai] raised Hadassah [Esther] because she had neither a father nor a mother.” This phrase is both delicate and profound. The simple translation suggests that Mordechai raised Esther in place of her parents. However,

the word amen (אמן) literally means “to believe”. Based on this, it can be understood that the essence of parenting is to believe in and encourage one’s children. The Torah’s approach to parenting is rooted in positivity and love. Esther lacked parents who could provide her with encouragement, affection, and proactive support. Mordechai, therefore, not only took her in but also embraced the full responsibilities of parenthood, ensuring she felt valued and empowered.

Parenting often involves moments of frustration and difficulty. When children misbehave, it can be hard for parents to separate the behavior from the child. This can lead to feelings of disconnection, irritation, or disappointment. Children, in turn, internalize these emotions. There are two key ideas to consider here. First, parents must remember not to take misbehavior personally. As adults, we make mistakes, say things we regret, or act in ways we wish we could change—but we, as adults, have the coping skills to manage these situations. Children, however, are still learning. Instead of reacting with frustration, we should validate their feelings and help them develop appropriate coping mechanisms. Not to say that consequences don’t have a place in parenting.

Second, children need to be reminded—

constantly—of their parents’ unconditional love. Statements like, “Nothing you do or say will ever change how much I love you,” provide essential reassurance. Additionally, parents often focus more on stopping negative behavior than on reinforcing positive behavior. For example, we are quick to intervene when children fight but hesitant to praise them when they play nicely, fearing that doing so might disrupt their calm. However, if we only respond to negative behavior, children will seek attention through misbehavior rather than through positive actions. By consistently acknowledging and celebrating good behavior, we reinforce the behaviors we want to see more of.

Try this: For the next week, if your children argue, calmly separate them with minimal attention. However, whenever they behave positively, express excitement and praise them. Over time, they will naturally gravitate toward behaviors that earn them the most attention.

Beyond direct instruction, children are shaped most by the behaviors and attitudes they observe in the adults around them. They are perceptive and mirror the emotional responses of those they respect. Looking at the Purim story through this lens, we must ask: *What inspired the children of Shushan to learn and daven with Mordechai during such a turbulent time?* Their resilience was



likely a reflection of the way the adults around them managed stress. To raise children who remain steadfast in adversity, parents must model a healthy balance between bravery and emotional openness. One could theorize, that Mordechai and the Jewish community of Shushan must have engaged in honest conversations about their fears while maintaining an atmosphere of hope and strength. This environment empowered the children to respond with courage rather than fear.

Viewing Purim through this perspective also sheds light on the tradition of dressing up. Are we ever *too old* to wear costumes on Purim? The answer is no. Authoritarian parenting—rigid and overly strict—limits positivity, curiosity, and personal growth. In contrast, an approach infused with warmth, fun, and encouragement fosters deep and meaningful connections, even in times of challenge.

“
Purim presents an opportunity to engage with our children — not just as authority figures, but as participants in their joy and fun. Dressing up as a family fosters teamwork, creativity, laughter, and shared memories.
”



These moments become the foundation of a strong parent-child relationship. True connection is not about control; it is about presence, guidance, encouragement, and mutual enjoyment. By stepping into our children's world—playing with them, joking with them, and celebrating with them—we strengthen the trust and love that define meaningful parenting.

So, at what age should one stop dressing up for Purim? Perhaps the real question is: *At what point should we stop engaging in the joy and connection that infuses parent-child relationships in a fun way?* The answer is—never.



Alanna Pepper, LMSW, is a dedicated therapist at Shalom Tikvah, a nonprofit clinic committed to supporting the Jewish communities of Maryland. With a deep passion for guiding individuals and families toward healing, she brings a wealth of expertise to her practice. Alanna holds a Master's degree in Counseling from Liberty University and a Master's in Social Work from Yeshiva University's Wurzweiler School of Social Work. Her extensive background spans over two decades in education, equipping her with a unique and insightful perspective in social work, parent coaching, and community engagement. Her compassionate approach, combined with her breadth of knowledge, makes her a trusted advocate for those seeking support and transformation. She is also a volunteer at Chail Lifeline Crisis Services Mid-Atlantic.



Rabbi Dr. Avichai Pepper is a seasoned educator with a distinguished academic and professional background. A graduate of the New England Rabbinical College in Providence, RI, he holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and a Master's in Counseling from Liberty University, as well as a Master's in Educational Leadership from Bellevue University. With nearly 30 years in Chinuch and community development, he currently serves as Director of Educational Advancement and Community Relations at the Yeshiva of Greater Washington. Rabbi Dr. Pepper has contributed to Jewish day schools in Providence, Houston, Seattle, Phoenix, and now Silver Spring, and also serves as a teacher coach through Lomdei and adjunct professor at Woodmont College. His leadership centers on fostering positive, growth-oriented school cultures where students thrive academically, socially, and spiritually.

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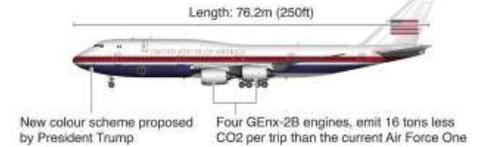
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Presidential Scoop at Kensington's Kosher Baskin-Robbins

Former President Biden made a sweet stop last month at the Kosher Baskin-Robbins in Kensington, right along the Silver Spring border, ordering his favorite milkshake and snapping a selfie with co-partner Mr. Dalsania inside the beloved neighborhood staple – a stand-alone Baskin-Robbins proudly serving kosher-certified ice cream, without a Dunkin' attached. Sometimes diplomacy happens at 30,000 feet; sometimes it happens over a milkshake – proof that while power travels, community remains.



From Potomac to the Front Lines



Rebbetzin Sarah Blooming of Chabad of Potomac shared a moving milestone this week as her son Yosso was commissioned as an officer in the IDF. In one photo, Rabbi Mendel and Rebbetzin Blooming stand beside their son; in another, he is seen speaking with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, joined by senior leadership. (His face is respectfully blurred in accordance with IDF protocol.) A family moment. A national moment. Faith, service, and responsibility meeting in one frame. Some uniforms are worn. Others are carried.

Baltimore vs. The Deer

Baltimore says some neighborhoods now have up to 20x the recommended deer population – which explains why evening traffic sometimes feels like a wildlife crossing.

Starting in March, trained professionals will begin a managed reduction program. The venison will be processed and donated to the Maryland Food Bank, potentially creating 40,000 meals. Sometimes leadership means doing what’s necessary – even when it’s not pretty.



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THE BRIEFING

Metro Rail's Quiet Comeback



After years of delays and track work fatigue, Metro ridership is ticking up again – especially along the Red Line serving Montgomery County. Hybrid work may be here to stay, but commuters are slowly returning to routines. Cleaner stations. Fewer shutdowns. More reliability. Infrastructure rarely makes headlines – until it fails. When public systems regain trust, it's less about trains and more about confidence.

Silver Spring's Housing Squeeze

Montgomery County officials are advancing zoning changes to allow more duplexes and small multifamily buildings near transit corridors. Supporters call it smart growth. Critics call it neighborhood reshaping. Demand is real. Prices are stubborn. The question isn't whether the county will grow – it's how. Density changes skylines, but it also changes who gets to stay.



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Bethesda's Biotech Boom

The I-270 corridor is filling with new lab space as biotech firms expand near NIH. High-wage jobs follow. So do higher rents. Maryland wants to be the East Coast's life sciences capital. Innovation is expensive – but stagnation costs more.



Commanders' \$3.7B Vision



The Washington Commanders are moving ahead with plans for a 70,000-seat, domed stadium at the former RFK site, targeting a 2030 debut. Designed by HKS with a \$3.7 billion investment, the sweeping "Pringle-chip" roof and white-column façade aim to create a year-round destination – not just a game-day venue. It's bold. It's modern. It's momentum for the city.

And if the rumors are true, DMV fans are already asking the real question: will there be kosher stands from Oh Mama's and Char Bar? Because nothing says fourth-quarter comeback like brisket under a translucent roof. Stadiums may host eras – but concessions win loyalties.



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Bamba Hits Costco – Gaithersburg & Wheaton

Bamba is now officially on shelves at Costco in Gaithersburg and Wheaton – a milestone moment for the beloved Israeli peanut snack that spans generations. From toddlers discovering their first crunchy bite to adults who grew up on it, Bamba has long been a household staple.

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Outsiders With Cameras



Inside the New York Town Invaded
by Welfare-Addicted Jews...

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YouTuber Tyler Oliveira recently visited heavily Orthodox Jewish communities in Monsey, Kiryas Joel, and Lakewood, documenting daily life through the lens of an outsider with a microphone. Millions watched. Some were curious. Some were skeptical.

When insular communities meet viral culture, the exchange is rarely neutral. Cameras flatten nuance. Algorithms reward contrast. What looks mysterious to one audience feels ordinary to another. The deeper question isn't whether exposure is good or bad – it's who controls the narrative. Visibility can build understanding. It can also distort it. Sometimes the story being told says as much about the viewer as it does about the subject.

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PURIM

Q & A



RABBI YITZY FOX

02. How many people were hanged in the megillah? Who were they?

01. How many parties did Achashveirosh throw in the Megillah?

04. Whose idea was it for Haman to build gallows to hang Mordechai? Who told Achashveirosh about the gallows?

03. During which month did Haman draw the lots to determine when to kill the Jews?

07. What is the connection between Sarah imeinu and Achashveirosh?

06. Which four kings are mentioned in the Megillah?

05. What was supposed to happen on the thirteenth of Adar? What happened instead?

09. In what way is Purim like Shavuos?

08. How many different outfits did Mordechai wear throughout the Megillah?

10. Which 2 people in Tanach let out a "צַעֲקָה גְדֹלָה וּמְרָה"?

Answers:

- There were three parties hosted by Achashveirosh. The first party was 180 days for his officers and another seven days for all the people of Shushan (which the Jews attended). He made another party when Esther became queen (1:3-5; 2:18).
- Thirteen people: Bigsan, Seresh, Haman, and Haman's ten sons (although they were first killed and then their bodies were hanged).
- Nissan (3:7).
- a) Zeresh (Haman's wife) and his friends (5:14). b) Charvonah (7:9)
- The decree to exterminate the Jews (3:13). Instead, on that day the Jews struck their enemies and killed 500 men and the ten sons of Haman. The next day, the fourteenth of Adar, they killed another 300 men (9:5-15).
1. Achashveirosh (1:1). 2. Yechanyah (Yehoyachin) (2:6). 3. Nevuchadnetzar (2:6). 4. Agag, the king of Amalek, is referenced in 3:1.
- Achashveirosh ruled 127 provinces and Sarah lived for 127 years.
- We know of four: 1. He wore his regular clothes. 2. He wore sackcloth (4:1). 3. He wore the royal robe (6:11). 4. He wore other fancy royal garments after taking Haman's position in the palace (8:15).
- On Shavuos, B'nei Yisrael received and accepted the Torah out of fear. On Purim, the Jews reaffirmed their acceptance of the Torah on their own accord with love, as it says, קִיְמוּ וְקַבְּלוּ הַיְהוּדִים (9:27; Shabbos 88a).
1. Mordechai (4:1) 2. Esav (Bereishis 27:34)

Rabbi Yitzy Fox serves as a Rebbi at Berman Hebrew Academy and is a member of the Chofetz Chaim Kollel at the Silver Spring Jewish Center. Renowned for his dynamic and engaging approach to Torah learning, he is dedicated to making Torah accessible to all ages. His forthcoming sefer, *The Ultimate Parsha Challenge: Shabbos Table Q&A for All Ages*, set for release this Shavuos (May), offers engaging questions and discussions to elevate the Shabbos table. For any questions, comments, or to subscribe to the weekly Parsha Q&A newsletter, please contact rabbiyitzyfox@gmail.com.

Judgment & Mercy: The Purim Story We Rarely Talk About



RABBI YITZCHAK GROSSMAN

Rosh Chaburah, Senior Lecturer
Greater Washington Community Kollel

The primary themes of Purim, as expressed in the Megillah and the liturgy of the day, are exuberant joy and profound gratitude to Hashem over our salvation from Haman's genocidal designs. Our tradition, however, contains another important, if darker and less prominent, perspective on the tale of Purim. While it may seem unpleasant to blame disaster and tragedy on our sinfulness, it is essential to do so. As Rambam (*Ta'aniyos* 1:1-3) writes:

It is a positive Torah commandment to cry out and to sound trumpets in the event of any difficulty that arises which affects the community, ...

This practice is one of the paths of repentance, for when a difficulty arises, and the people cry out [to G-d] and sound the trumpets, everyone will realize that [the difficulty] occurred because of their evil conduct ... This [realization] will cause the removal of this difficulty.

Conversely, should the people fail to cry out [to G-d] and sound the trumpets, and instead say, "What has happened to us is merely a natural phenomenon and this difficulty is merely a chance occurrence," this is a cruel conception of things, which causes them to remain attached to their wicked deeds. Thus, this time of distress will lead to further distresses.

Accordingly, the Talmud (*Megillah* 12a) assumes that the Jews at the time of Purim must indeed have been deserving of annihilation. It initially proposes that this was due to their having partaken of the feast of Ahasuerus, and subsequently concludes that it was actually due to their having prostrated themselves before the idol of Nebuchadnezzar.

Many have wondered at the seeming disproportionality between the suggested sins and the punishment of annihilation: It is not even clear that the food eaten by the Jews at Ahasuerus's feast was non-kosher, and while idolatry is indeed a grave sin, the Jews had worshiped idols on many occasions in their history, and while they were frequently punished for doing so, they were never faced with utter annihilation. We will not attempt to resolve this question here, beyond noting the lesson of the potential severity of Divine justice.

In any event, insofar as the Jews had sinned, why were they ultimately saved from annihilation? The aforementioned Talmudic passage indicates that this

was because their sin had not actually been as grave as it had appeared:

They did not really worship the idol, but pretended to **do so only for appearance**, acting as if they were carrying out the king's command to bow before the idol. **So too, the Holy One, Blessed be He, did not** destroy them but **did act angry with them only for appearance**. He too merely pretended to desire to destroy them, as all He did was issue a threat, but in the end the decree was annulled.

Elsewhere (*ibid.* 14a), however, the Talmud assumes that the Jews were saved because they repented:

The removal of Ahasuerus's ring for the sealing of Haman's decree was more effective than the forty-eight prophets and the seven prophetesses who prophesied on behalf of the Jewish people. As, they were all unable to return the Jewish people to the right way, but the removal of Ahasuerus's ring returned them to the right way, since it brought them to repentance.



Rabbi Yitzchak Grossman is the Kollel's Rosh Chaburah and Senior Lecturer, leading the Kollel faculty in an intense study of Jewish law in both the morning and the afternoon. Rabbi Grossman also lectures throughout the community on a diverse range of Jewish philosophical and halachic topics. Rabbi Grossman can be reached at ygrossman@gwckollel.org

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Greater Washington Daily Shiurim Guide 2026



SUNDAY

- 6:30 a.m. Sunday Morning Daf Yomi with Mr. Judah Lifschitz/Rabbi Hess @ Yeshiva of Greater Washington (Beis Medrash)
- 7:15 a.m. Daf Yomi with Rabbi Rappaport @ OSTT Olney
- Following 7:15 a.m. Shacharis Sunday Morning Kollel Zichron Amram @ Ohr HaTorah
- 8:45 a.m. Mishnah Brura - Shabbos with Rabbi Ben-Horin @ OSTT Olney
- 8:15 a.m. (Approx.) Daf Yomi (Rabbi Uriel Charlap) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 9:30-10:30 a.m. Sunday Brunch & Learn (For men) @ YISE, 1132 Arcola Ave, Kemp Mill
- Illuminating Inquiries in Halacha - Rabbi Mandel
- Judaism 102 - Rabbi Shaps
- Navigating Navi - Rabbi Grossman
- 9:45 a.m. Tanya Class (Rabbi Wolvovsky) @ Chabad of Silver Spring (Zoom)
- 7:30 p.m. Parsha Exploration (Rabbi Yitzchok Grossman) @ KMS (Zoom)
ID: 655-813-1022, Password: 365636
- 8:15 p.m. Tehillim Expositions (Rabbi Schwartz) @ Greater Washington Community Kollel (Zoom)
- 8:00-8:45 p.m. Hlchos Shabbos (Teens) (Rabbi Zaks) @ SSJC (Ma'ariv follows)
- 8:45-9:30 p.m. Daf Hashavua (Rabbi Frank) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 9:00-9:45 p.m. Night Kollel (Ma'ariv follows) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 8:15 a.m. Daf Yomi with R' Azik Schwedter at Chabad SS

MONDAY

- 6:00-6:45 a.m. Morning Kollel and Daf Yomi (Rabbi Uriel Charlap) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 6:30 a.m. Daf Yomi (Mr. Judah Lifschitz/Rabbi Hess) @ Yeshiva of Greater Washington (Beis Medrash)
- 7:30 am Daf Yomi with Rabbi Rappaport @ OSTT Olney
- 11:00 a.m. "Da'as Atzmeinu" (Laura Goldman) @ KMS (Zoom, Classroom B)
- 12:00-12:15 p.m. Rashi a Day (Rabbi Weinberg) @ KMS (Zoom)
- 8:30-9:30 p.m. Evening Learning @ SEHC (For men) @ 10900 Lockwood Drive, Silver Spring
- Michtav M'Eiyahu - Rabbi Musicante
- 8:45 p.m. Semichas Chaver Program (Rabbi Shaps) @ YISE (For men)
- 9:00 p.m. Daf Yomi (Mr. Judah Lifschitz) @ Yeshiva of Greater Washington (Beis Medrash)
- 9:15-9:45 p.m. K'tzos Hachoshen (Rabbi Frank) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 9:00 p.m. Daf Yomi with R' Azik Schwedter at Chabad SS
Sunday is 8:15AM | Shabbos is 45 Mins before Mincha

TUESDAY

- 6:00-6:45 a.m. Morning Kollel @ Ohr HaTorah
- 6:30 a.m. Daf Yomi (Mr. Judah Lifschitz) @ Yeshiva of Greater Washington (Beis Medrash)
- 7:30 am Daf Yomi with Rabbi Rappaport @ OSTT Olney
- 12:00-12:15 p.m. Rashi a Day (Rabbi Weinberg) @ KMS (Zoom)
- 8:00 p.m. Jewish Unity Learning (Greater Washington Community Kollel, For men and women) @ (In Person)
- 8:00 p.m. Machshava Shiur (Chazon Ish: Emunah/B'tachon) (Rabbi Zaks) @ SSJC (Ma'ariv follows)
- 8:00 p.m. Halacha Class (Rabbi Wolvovsky) @ Chabad of Silver Spring (In Person)
- 8:15 p.m. Inspired Tefillah (Mrs. Sara Maika Winter) @ Greater Washington Community Kollel (Zoom, For women)
- 8:30-9:30 p.m. Evening Learning @ SEHC (For men) @ 10900 Lockwood Drive, Silver Spring
- Timely Topics in Halacha - Rabbi Grossman & Rabbi Mandel
- 9:00 p.m. Daf Yomi (Mr. Judah Lifschitz) @ Yeshiva of Greater Washington (Beis Medrash)
- 9:15-9:45 p.m. A Deeper Understanding of Tefillah (Rabbi Frank) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 9:00 p.m. Daf Yomi with R' Azik Schwedter at Chabad SS

WEDNESDAY

- 6:00-6:45 a.m. Morning Kollel and Daf Yomi (Rabbi Uriel Charlap) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 6:30 a.m. Daf Yomi (Mr. Judah Lifschitz/Rabbi Hess) @ Yeshiva of Greater Washington (Beis Medrash)
- 7:30 am Daf Yomi with Rabbi Rappaport @ OSTT Olney
- 9:00 a.m. Siddur Class (Esther Dziadek) @ KMS (Zoom)
ID: 970-1398-4837, Password: 613
- 12:15 p.m. LINKS Learning (Rabbi Shaps) @ Greater Washington Community Kollel (Zoom)
- 8:00 p.m. Bereishis: An In-Depth Study (Mrs. Sara Maika Winter) @ Greater Washington Community Kollel (For women)
- 8:00 p.m. Hlchos Shabbos Class (Rabbi Weinberg) @ KMS (Zoom, Classroom B)
- 8:00-8:45 p.m. Hlchos Shabbos (Teens) (Rabbi Zaks) @ SSJC (Ma'ariv follows)
- 8:30-9:30 p.m. Evening Learning @ SEHC (For men) @ 10900 Lockwood Drive, Silver Spring
- Yesodei Hatorah: Gemara Skills Building - Rabbi Sussman
- 9:00 p.m. Daf Yomi with R' Azik Schwedter at Chabad SS

THURSDAY

- 6:00-6:45 a.m. Morning Kollel and Daf Yomi (Rabbi Uriel Charlap) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 6:30 a.m. Daf Yomi (Mr. Judah Lifschitz/Rabbi Hess) @ Yeshiva of Greater Washington (Beis Medrash)
- 7:30 a.m. Daf Yomi with Rabbi Rappaport @ OSTT Olney
- 7:30 p.m. Thursday Night Shiur with Rabbi Ben-Horin @ OSTT Olney
- 8:45-9:05 p.m. Halacha/Parsha Shiur for Women (Rabbi Frank) @ Zoom
- 8:15 p.m. Yesodei Hatorah: Gemara Skills Building (Rabbi Sussman) @ Greater Washington Community Kollel (Zoom, For men)
- 8:30 p.m. Parashas Hashavua (Rabbi Grossman) @ Greater Washington Community Kollel (Zoom)
- 9:15-9:45 p.m. Tanach Shiur (Rabbi Frank) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 9:20 p.m. Daf Hashavua (Rabbi Frank) @ Ohr HaTorah
- After 10:00 p.m. Ma'ariv - Chumash Shiur (Rabbi Riengold) @ Yeshiva of Greater Washington
- 9:00 p.m. Daf Yomi with R' Azik Schwedter at Chabad SS

FRIDAY

- 6:00-6:45 a.m. Morning Kollel and Daf Yomi (Rabbi Uriel Charlap) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 6:30 a.m. Daf Yomi (Mr. Judah Lifschitz/Rabbi Hess) @ Yeshiva of Greater Washington (Beis Medrash)
- 7:30 am Daf Yomi with Rabbi Rappaport @ OSTT Olney

SHABBOS

- 9:00 a.m. Chassidus Class (Rabbi Wolvovsky) @ Chabad of Silver Spring (Before Davening)
- Post-Kiddush 5th/6th Grade Boy Learning @ Ohr HaTorah Beis Medrash
- 20 Minutes Before Later Mincha Iyun Chaburah (Rabbi Frank) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 25 Minutes Before Ma'ariv (Motzei Shabbos) Mishna B'rurah Shiur (Rabbi Frank) @ Ohr HaTorah
- 10:30 a.m. (Winter Only) Daf Yomi (Mr. Judah Lifschitz/Rabbi Hess) @ Yeshiva of Greater Washington (Beis Medrash)
- 3:40 p.m. New Series! Bitachon Gems with Rabbi Rappaport @ OSTT Olney
- 45 Min Before Mincha Shabbos Daf Yomi with R' Azik Schwedter at Chabad SS

Motzei Shabbos Parent Child Learning and Melave Malka (Winter)

@ KMS (Grades 1-8) | @ YISE (Grades 1-8) | @ SSJC (Grades 1-8) | @ YGW/Ohr HaTorah (Grades 1-8)

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1401 Arcola Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20902

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Chabad of Chevy Chase

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Contact editor@washingtonjewishlife.com
for additions or edits.

PURIM

be passive. The reason for this response is that at the Sea of Reeds the Jews were imperiled, and therefore it was G-d's responsibility to protect His children. On the other hand, the responsibility to protect G-d's honor is ours! This distinction is a fundamental one, but one that is often misunderstood and unappreciated. We reverse these roles so often, becoming actively involved in the defense of the people of Israel – which is primarily G-d's province – while remaining passive and timid in guarding G-d's honor!

On Purim we celebrate not only the downfall of Haman and Amalek, but we mark our active response to their attack upon the Almighty. The reward from Heaven for this reaction was that אורה ושמחה, "light and joy," became our lot. And we pray that so it shall be for all time.



Rabbi Raphael Pelcovitz זצ"ל, was the beloved rabbi emeritus of the famed "White Shul" in Far Rockaway, he was a master teacher whose warmth, clarity, and depth inspired generations, making Torah learning both accessible and uplifting. As one of the crown jewels of the American rabbinate, he guided thousands with wisdom and simplicity, leaving behind a towering legacy of faith, leadership, and devotion that continues to illuminate lives worldwide. At his side stood his wife, **Mrs. Shirley Pelcovitz**, a woman of vision and strength who helped pioneer Miami's first Torah community, laying the groundwork for Jewish education there, and later brought her passion and leadership to Far Rockaway. Her courage, grace, and boundless heart built the foundation for generations of Jewish life, turning dreams into reality and inspiring communities for decades with a legacy that will endure for all time.



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6:30 PM

GENERAL READING IN THE SHUL
FAMILY READING DOWNSTAIRS AT CHABAD
QUIET READING AT WOLVOVSKY HOME

8:30 PM

DOWNSTAIRS AT CHABAD

Tuesday, March 3

7:00 AM	1:00 PM
9:00 AM	2:00 PM
11:00 AM	3:00 PM
12:00 PM	4:00 PM
5:00 PM	

PURIM: Awakening to Hope



RABBI YOSEF
PASTALNIK



Sleep and Purim are deeply intertwined. According to one opinion in the Mishna¹, the turning point of our salvation is marked by a disrupted night's sleep: תָּנַשׁ הַדֹּדֵן אוֹהֶה הַלַּיְלָב - "On that night, the king's sleep was disturbed." A nap, as the Rama² instructs, should follow our Purim drinking to complete the mitzvah. Rebbe Akiava's students doze off during his shiur, only to be awakened by his connecting Esther's provinces to Sara's 127 years³. Most tellingly, sleep defines Haman's accusation against us: וְנִשְׁי ... דְּהָא עַם וְנִשְׁי - תּוֹצְמָה - "There is [yeshnu] one people ... they have been asleep [yashnu] in their mitzvos."⁴ What are we to make of all this sleep? What's the message?

When Hashem puts Adam into a deep sleep to create Chava, the Torah states: הַמְדַרְתַּת מִיקְלָא יְהוָה לְפָנָיו - "Hashem cast a deep sleep on man"⁵. The Medrash⁶ comments: הַנֶּשֶׁן הַלְפָמ תִּלְחַת - "Sleep is the beginning of falling." Chazal⁷ take it further: sleep is one-sixtieth of death. Sleep signifies disengagement, disconnection, and descent - the very state Haman sought to exploit.

When Haman cast his lot - רֹפֵא לִיפָה - against us, it was a dark time for Am Yisrael. Yirmiyahu had prophesied 70 years of exile⁸, yet both we and our enemies miscalculated. We erroneously counted from Yehoyakim's exile⁹, rather than from the actual destruction of the Beis HaMikdash 19 years later. When those 70 years came and Geulah did not, despair set in. And when permission to rebuild the Beis HaMikdash finally came - when hope stirred - Achashverosh suddenly halted the project¹⁰. Dejection and hopelessness permeated our national consciousness.

This was Haman's moment. Like his ancestor Amalek, he believed our fall was final. If Am Yisrael had stumbled, surely they would continue to fall. Indeed, looking closely at the words: קִידַצַּ לּוֹפֵי עֵבֶשׁ - "Seven times the righteous man falls and gets up"¹¹, the letters at the end of each word spell לְמַעַן, for Amalek always appears at our lowest points, whispering to us in our moments of descent, insisting there can be no return.

But Haman miscalculated. He misunderstood the essence of Am Yisrael. As we know from the Megillah, Esther goes before the king to plead for her nation: וַיִּלְגַּר וַיִּפֹּל לְפָנָיו - "She fell before his feet"¹². But immediately, Achashverosh extends his scepter: בְּרִתְסָא עֲקֵתוֹ - "Esther rose and stood before the king."¹³ As Rav Avraham Tzvi Kluger explains, Esther represents Am Yisrael. When we fall, it is never permanent. עֲקֵתוֹ is always followed by לְפָנָיו. We may sleep, we may fall - even seven times - but we always awaken, we will always arise.

Contrast this with Haman's own descent. His wife warns him: לּוֹפֵת לּוֹפֵן יֵכ - "You will surely fall."¹⁴ For Haman, falling is final. And indeed, once he does fall: הִטְמָה לַע לִפְנֵי וַמְהוֹ - "Haman fell onto the bed"¹⁵ - there is no rising. His downfall is fast, final, and forever. We even recognize this daily in davening: וּלְפָנָיו וְעֵרַכְהֵם - "They kneel and fall, but we rise and are strengthened."¹⁶ Yes, we too fall. But what differentiates us is that we get back up. Hashem gives us the strength and ability to rise again.

Shir HaShirim¹⁷ declares: רַע יִבְלוּ הַנְּשִׁי וַיָּגַ - "I sleep, but my heart is awake." The Medrash¹⁸ expounds, depicting a reality so sad, yet beautifully encouraging: וַיָּגַ

רַע יִבְלוּ הַנְּשִׁי וַיָּגַ - "I sleep regarding the end of days, but my heart is awake for the redemption. I sleep regarding the redemption, but Hashem's heart is awake to redeem me." The sleeping Jew falters when redemption seems far, the fallen Jew despairs that he cannot rise again. But even then, he admits: Hashem is awake to redeem me!

We may feel that exile has stretched on too long, that hope is fading. But the Megillah is Hashem's message to every Jew - מִיְקוּחֵרְהוּ מִיְבוּרְקָה - whether spiritually near and far: I have not forgotten you! redemption will come! Sleeping, you will awaken! Fallen, you will stand! לֹא רָמוּשׁ וְנִשְׁי אֵלּוּ מוֹנֵי אֵל - "The Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps"¹⁹. Like Esther, we will rise. Like the Jews of Shushan, we will see Geulah.



Rabbi Yosef Postelnek is currently a member of the Raanana Community Kollel, where he resides with his family and is engaged in advanced Torah study and teaching. He previously served as Assistant Rabbi of Young Shomrai Emunah of Greater Washington and continues to deliver shiurim online to audiences in the United States and abroad.

1 Megillah 19b

2 Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 695:12

3 Bereishis Rabba 58:3

4 Megillah 13b

5 Bereishis 2:21

6 Bereishis Rabba 17:5

7 Berachos 57b

8 Yirmiyahu 25:11

9 Melachim II 24:15

10 Megillah 11b

11 Mishlei 24:16

12 Megillas Esther 8:3

13 Megillas Esther 8:4

14 Megillas Esther 6:13

15 Megillas Esther 7:8

16 Tehillim 20:9

17 Shir HaShirim 5:2

18 Ibid

19 Tehillim 121:4

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6:15 AM	Young Israel Shomrai Emunah	M-F
6:20 AM	Silver Spring Jewish Center	M, Th
6:25 AM	Southeast Hebrew Cong., Knesset Yehoshua	M-F
6:30 AM	Beth Shalom Congregation	M-F
	Chabad of Silver Spring	M-F
	Ohev Shalom Talmud Torah OLNEY	M-F
	Silver Spring Jewish Center	TW, F
	Young Israel Shomrai Emunah	S
	YGW	M, Th
6:35 AM	Ohr Hatorah	M, Th
6:40 AM	YGW	S, M, Th
6:45 AM	Kemp Mill Synagogue	M, Th
	Ohr Hatorah	T, W, F
	Young Israel Shomrai Emunah	M, Th
	Magen David Sephardic Congregation	M-Th
6:50 AM	Woodside Synagogue/Ahavas Torah	M, Th
	Silver Spring Jewish Center	S-F
6:55 AM	Young Israel Shomrai Emunah	T, W, F
7:00 AM	Chabad of Upper Montgomery County	M-F
	Kemp Mill Synagogue	T, W, F
	Southeast Hebrew Cong., Knesset Yehoshua	S
	Woodside Synagogue/Ahavas Torah	T, W, F
	Young Israel Ezras Israel of Potomac	M-F
7:05 AM	Keshet Israel	M, Th
7:15 AM	Kemp Mill Synagogue	M, Th
	Keshet Israel	T, W, F
	Ohev Shalom Talmud Torah/The National Synagogue	M-F
	Ohr Hatorah	S
	Young Israel Shomrai Emunah	M-F
7:30 AM	Chabad of DC	M-F
	Chabad of Potomac	M-F
	JROC	M-F
	Kemp Mill Synagogue	T, W, F
	Southeast Hebrew Cong., Knesset Yehoshua	M-F
	Young Israel Shomrai Emunah	S
	Young Israel Shomrai Emunah (Sfardi)	S-F
7:35 AM	Young Israel Shomrai Emunah	S-F
7:45 AM	YGW (Yeshiva Session Only)	S
7:50 AM	Magen David Sephardic Congregation	F
8:00 AM	Beth Shalom Congregation	S
	Kemp Mill Synagogue	S
	Keshet Israel	S
	Magen David Sephardic Congregation	S
	Ohev Shalom Talmud Torah OLNEY	S
	Southeast Hebrew Cong., Knesset Yehoshua	S
8:00 AM	Ezras Israel Congregation of Rockville (Days of Mussaf)	
	Woodside Synagogue/Ahavas Torah	S
	YGW (High School; School-Contingent)	S
	Young Israel Ezras Israel of Potomac	S
	Young Israel Shomrai Emunah	S
8:05 AM	Ezras Israel Congregation of Rockville	M, Th

8:15 AM	Ezras Israel Congregation of Rockville	S-F
	Ohr Hatorah	M-Th
	Silver Spring Jewish center	M-F
8:20 AM	Ohr HaTorah	M-F
8:30 AM	Beth Joshua Congregation / Berman Hebrew Academy	S-F
	Chabad of DC	S
	Chabad of Potomac	S
	Chabad of Upper Montgomery County	S
	JROC	S
	Ohev Shalom Talmud Torah/The National Synagogue	S
	Silver Spring Jewish Center	S
	YGW (Summer Only)	S-F
8:45 AM	Young Israel Shomrai Emunah	S-F
9:00 AM	Chabad of Silver Spring	S
	Kemp Mill Synagogue	S

MINCHA

1:00 PM	Silver Spring Jewish Center	M-Th
1:50 PM	YGW	Summer
2:20 PM	YGW	School Days
2:45 PM	YGW	S-Th
4:30 PM	Ohev Shalom Talmud Torah OLNEY	S-Th

MINCHA/MAARIV Before Shkiah, S-TH

Beth Shalom Congregation
Chabad of Potomac
Chabad of Silver Spring
Chabad of Upper Montgomery County
Ezras Israel Congregation of Rockville
JROC
Kemp Mill Synagogue
Keshet Israel
Magen David Sephardic Congregation
Ohev Shalom Talmud Torah/The National Synagogue
Ohr Hatorah
Silver Spring Jewish Center
Southeast Hebrew Congregation, Knesset Yehoshua
Woodside Synagogue/Ahavas Torah
Young Israel Ezras Israel of Potomac
Young Israel Shomrai Emunah (Ashkenaz)
Young Israel Shomrai Emunah (Sefaradi)

MAARIV

8:15 PM	OSTT (OLNEY)	S-Th
	SHC, Knesset Yehoshua	M-Th
8:45 PM	YGW	
9:00 PM	Silver Spring Jewish Center	Fall/Winter
9:30 PM	YGW	Summer
	Silver Spring Jewish Center	Spring/Summer
9:45 PM	Ohr Hatorah	M-Th
10:00 PM	YGW	

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DO WHAT YOU LOVE

Aviva Waxman

On the top of my design advice list is my sage (if I may say so myself 😊) insightful tip of "Do what you love." Clients often want a design that is "in style" and although an "in style" home is tantalizing for anyone, and very Instagram worthy, there is nothing



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that stales faster than the trending style. Instead, I always encourage my client to use THEIR style rather than IN style.



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Each person has a unique personality with likes and dislikes and your style is a combination of your personality and interests. When a person's home reflects his/her personal style I believe it gives a person a sense of belonging as their home reflects them. It is always a huge compliment when my client say that they love their space "and it feels so like me" of course, it should!

While using your unique style may not seem trendy, what you love will always look appealing to you. If you love the style of your home, you will always appreciate it regardless of how trendy the design is. I also see that when a design is unique, it withstands the test of time because it does not go out, it is just beautiful.



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The idea of reflecting your inner self is actually a huge theme of Purim. I have heard that the reason that we are supposed to drink wine on Purim is because when a person is drunk his true feelings and personality are revealed. Chazal tell us the 3 ways to truly know a person is how they act with their money, the way a person acts when drunk, and how he gets angry. On Purim we want to connect with our true self to bring out our aspirations and gratitude to G-d which will bring about true real joy.

Each person has a journey and our life work can only be accomplished when we are in touch with who we are on a physical, emotional, and spiritual level. I hope that while encouraging my clients to connect with their true style and personality it will encourage them to tap into who they are and what they love and then of course it will inspire happiness and joy weaved into the design of their home.



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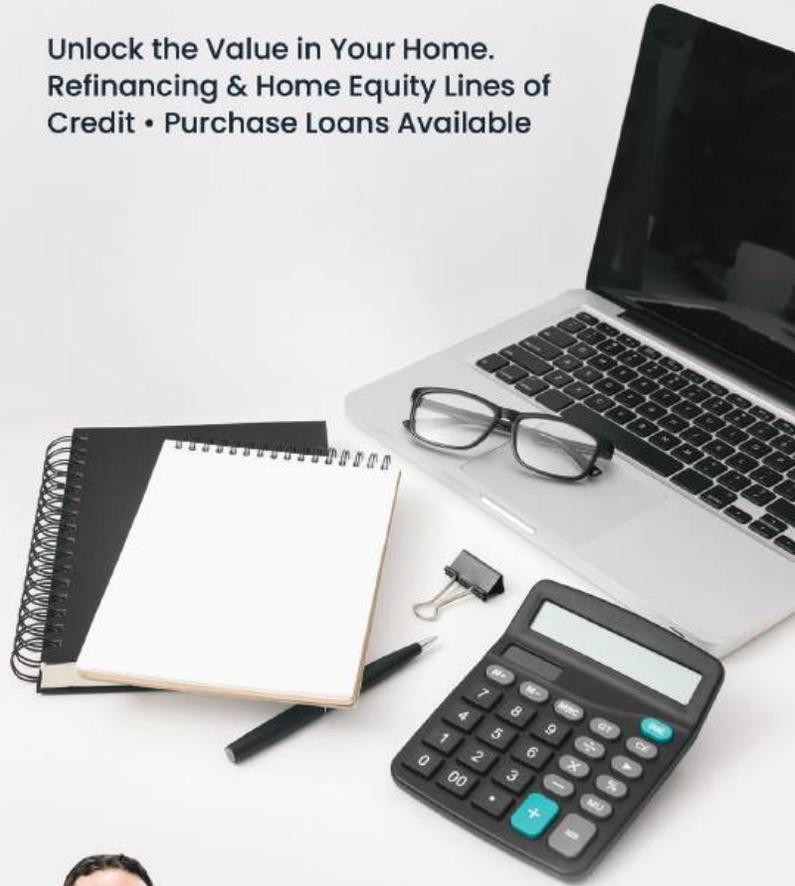
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The History of Ohr HaTorah: A Journey of Growth and Dedication



BY
ILAN COHEN



The First Ohr HaTorah *Shabbos in the Towers*



Top Photo: A view of Ohr HaTorah when in rented space in the Kemp Mill shopping center (above CVS) while the kehillah was building the Kersey Road building.

Below: Rav Malkiel Kotler, Rosh Yeshiva of Beth Medrash Govoha (BMG), graciously traveled to deliver heartfelt and inspiring remarks at the hachtarah of Rav Michael Frank (installation ceremony), celebrating a milestone moment for the community.

In 2011, a group of passionate former talmidim came together with a shared vision: to build a shul that would radiate warmth, energy, and a deep sense of community for the alumni of the Yeshiva of Greater Washington. That vision took shape on November 3, 2012, when Ohr HaTorah held its inaugural Shabbos morning minyan in the Towers Party Room.

The rented space, available for just three short hours each Shabbos morning, may have been modest, but the atmosphere was electric. On the very first Shabbos, which coincided with Hurricane Sandy, over 75 displaced families came to daven. Jews from all over began filling the room. The sense of togetherness and purpose was palpable, setting the stage for what would grow into a thriving and enduring kehillah.

Following that memorable beginning, the congregation settled into a core group of a several dozen regulars, primarily young

couples, many of whom were alumni of the Yeshiva of Greater Washington. Around 20 couples had married locally in the year leading up to Ohr HaTorah's founding, marking the start of a growing trend of Yeshiva alumni establishing roots in Kemp Mill.

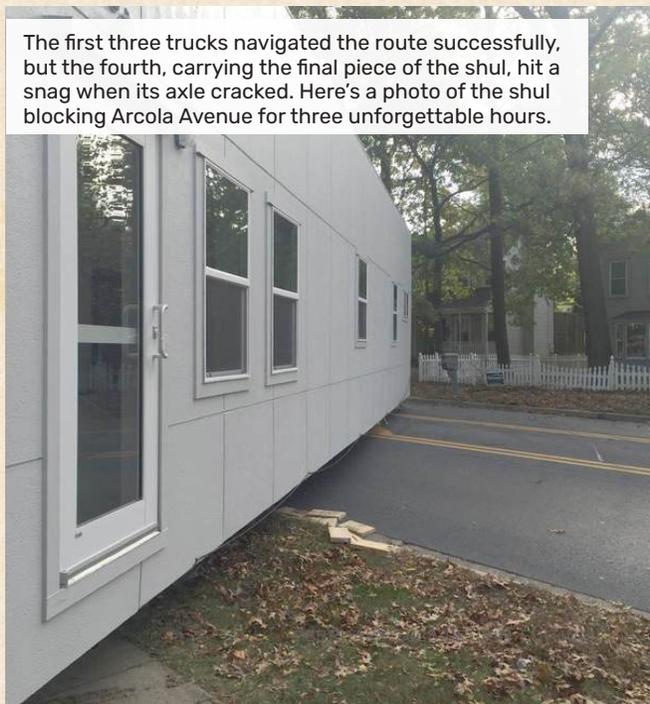
In August 2014, Rav Michael Frank was appointed as Rav and Mara D'Asra, bringing leadership and spiritual guidance that propelled the shul and the entire community forward. On May 12, 2017, Ohr HaTorah moved into its current building, a permanent home that could support its growing membership.

Today, Ohr HaTorah is a thriving kehillah, serving 190 families and standing as a central makom for Torah, tefillah, and community life. From its humble beginnings, the shul has grown into a center of growth, connection, and community unity in the heart of Kemp Mill.

Modular Miracles: How Ohr HaTorah's Shul Made Its Way to Silver Spring

Ohr HaTorah's journey to its permanent home wasn't without drama. The modular units, preassembled in Birmingham, Alabama, arrived in Silver Spring on massive trucks that navigated past the Kemp Mill Shopping Center. To avoid the steep incline of Kersey Road, part of the Silver Spring Jewish Center's playground fence was temporarily removed so that the trucks could turn directly off of Arcola. The first three trucks made it through without issue, but the fourth stole the show when its axle cracked, blocking traffic for three hours. Once resolved, construction carried on smoothly, leaving a story that still brings laughs at Kiddush tables.

The first three trucks navigated the route successfully, but the fourth, carrying the final piece of the shul, hit a snag when its axle cracked. Here's a photo of the shul blocking Arcola Avenue for three unforgettable hours.





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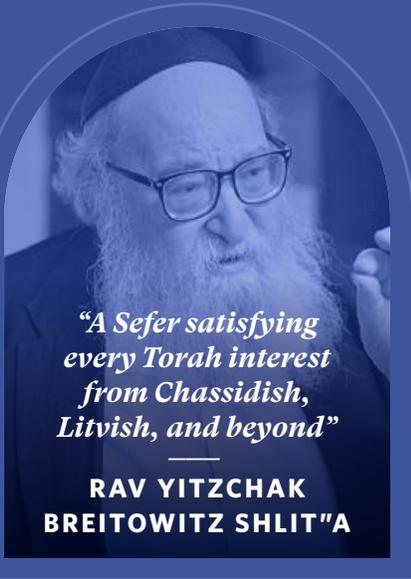
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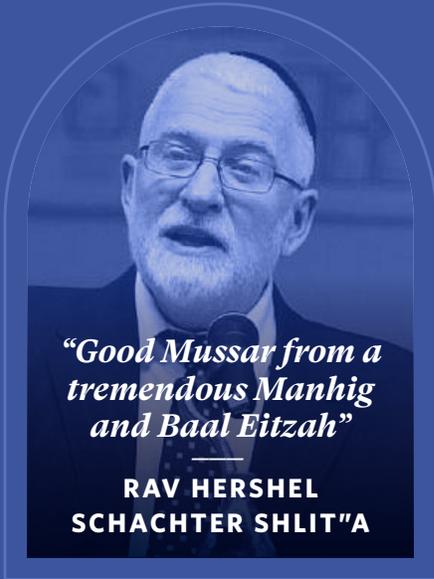
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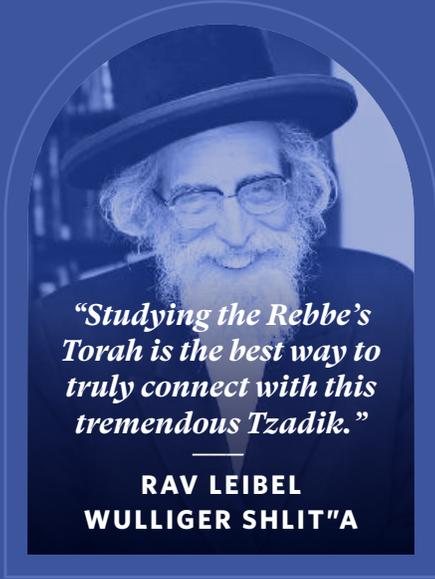
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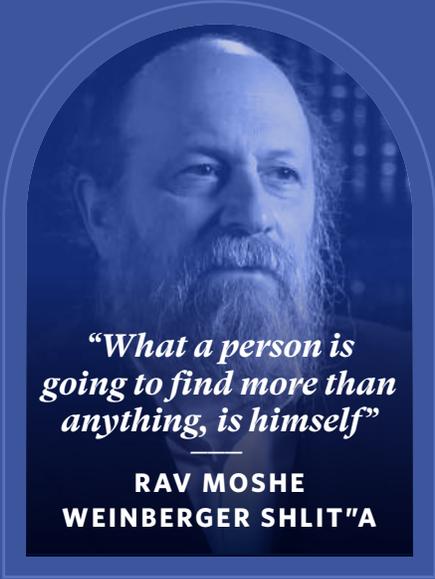
"Good Mussar from a tremendous Manhig and Baal Eitzah"

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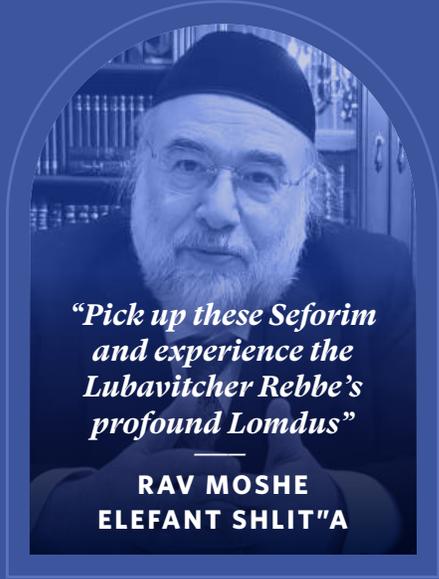
"Studying the Rebbe's Torah is the best way to truly connect with this tremendous Tzadik."

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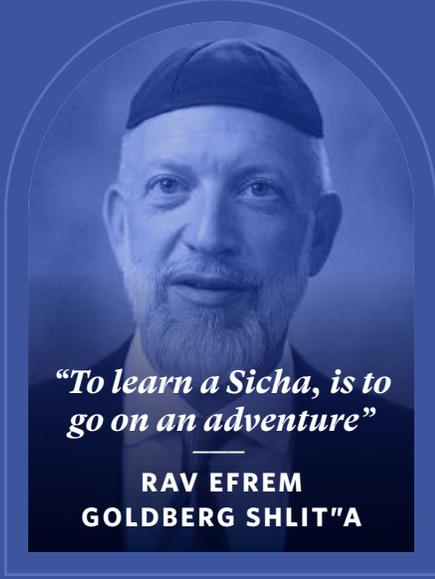
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Hamantaschen on the Hill

From Ignorance to Bliss



BY
NATHAN WITZTUM

We are all familiar with the expression, “*Mishenichnas Adar Marbin b’simchah*—when we enter the month of Adar, we should increase our level of happiness.” It is worth wondering, why is it specifically in Adar, the month of Purim, that we are supposed to be extra happy? Why not Nisan, the month of Pesach, when we attained freedom, or Sivan, the month of Shavuos, when we received the Torah?

We know that the villain of the Purim story was Haman, who was descended from the nation of Amalek. We read Parshas Zachor on the Shabbos before Purim to remind us of how Amalek attacked us in the desert on our way to Har Sinai. The people of Amalek stand ready to strike the Jewish people when we are vulnerable. They did so in the desert, and Haman attempted to do so again in the times of Purim.

The question is: how did Amalek manage to successfully attack us in the desert? Wasn’t Hashem protecting us? If we look at the *pasuk* immediately preceding the attack, the B’nai Yisrael ask, “*hayeish Hashem b’kirbeinu im ayin*—is Hashem with us or not?” The Jewish People falter in their *emunah* and question whether Hashem is really looking out for them. This doubt is what allowed Amalek to attack. Amalek feeds off the power of doubt. In the worldview of Amalek, there are no certainties. Everything happens randomly. This is why Haman cast lots to determine the day he should destroy the Jews—he derived his power from the uncertainty that his ancestors pounced on.

A cursory reading of the megillah makes it seem that the events are a bunch of coincidences that just happened to lead to the salvation of the Jews. There are no open miracles. Hashem’s name is not even mentioned once in the entire book! But thinking more carefully, we realize that the whole story could not have happened by chance. Hashem must have been directing it. The megillah reveals to us the hidden hand of Hashem which was orchestrating the events from behind the scenes. If we had any doubt about whether Hashem was looking out for us in the times of Purim, the megillah, by weaving the different parts of the story together, gives us confidence that Hashem was directing it all along.

There is a well-known *mussar sefer* called *Orchos Tzadikkim*, in which the author goes through many different *middos* and explains their advantages and disadvantages. The *sefer* goes through the *middos* in pairs, describing one character trait and then its opposite. Naturally, we would think that the opposite of *simchah*, happiness, is sadness. However, the author of *Orchos Tzadikkim* lists *da’agah*—worry, as the opposite *middah*. We see that uncertainty, or doubt, reduces our level of happiness. In fact, there is an expression “*ein simchah k’hataras hasfeikos*—there is no joy like resolving a doubt.” On Purim, we doubted whether Hashem was really looking out for us, but the megillah helped us to see that Hashem was behind us all along and brought back our confidence in Him and in ourselves. The resolution of this doubt is the ultimate joy, and that is the source of our unique happiness on Purim.

Nathan Witztum is the author of *Marchiv Gad: A Haggadah Companion* and writes the weekly *Imrei Shefer* parsha sheet. He initiated the *Daf Yomi* shiur at Ohr HaTorah, which he delivered for two years. Professionally, Nathan is a senior ship systems engineer for the U.S. Navy, designing and optimizing cutting-edge naval systems that power the fleet. He has lived with his wife and children in Kemp Mill since 2019. You can reach him at Witztum@WashingtonJewishLife.com.

פורים שמח! HAPPY PURIM

FROM



Chai Lifeline
MID-ATLANTIC

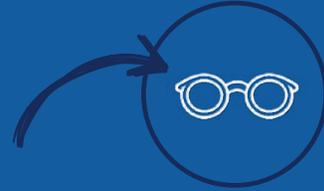


This Purim, our community showed what true simcha looks like. The Chai Lifeline Mid-Atlantic Purim Party brought laughter and light to 350 children and parents navigating illness and crisis. Mishloach manos delivered love straight to our families' doors, with heartfelt thanks to the Baltimore Chesed League for helping package and deliver. Special packages were prepared in partnership with JTAP and Yeshiva of Greater Washington, and a festive carnival at Beth Tfiloh brought smiles to so many faces.

Thank you to our Purim event sponsor, The Reisterstown Road Plaza, for helping make it all possible, and to our incredible community for ensuring that no family celebrates alone.

Support Chai Lifeline Mid-Atlantic today and be part of the simcha all year long:
www.chailifeline.org/midatlantic

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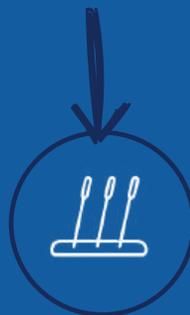
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