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The Many Purims

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# My Question:

In this study I would like to answer the following question: Why are so many major and minor festivals associated with the name “Purim” somewhere in their name? Why is Purim special in this way?

I have studied for a long time, but this is the first time that I have been struck by the seemingly pervasive nature of Purim; and that it seems to suffuse the entire year. Because of the pervasive nature of Purim, I am convinced that there is a whole lot more to the story than I have previously seen.

Purim seems to serve as the revelation of Mashiach ben David,[[1]](#footnote-1) the destruction of wickedness, and the wedding feast of Mashiach.

Purim is a very profound festival with cosmic implications! In case you have not noticed, Purim and its counterparts will tap you on the shoulder at regular intervals and demand your attention. If you are sensitive to her call, Purim will reveal Mashiach and the end of days.

Buckle your seatbelt, it is about to get really interesting!

# Introduction

On Purim we read the Megillah of Esther. The Megillah, as we shall see, is the blueprint for the end of days.

Esther is related to the word “nistar”, which means hidden, and the word *Megillah[[2]](#footnote-2)* which is related to the word “megaleh”, which means “to reveal”. Thus, the Megillah of Esther can be literally translated as “*Revelation of the Hidden*”.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Purim has been held in high esteem by the Jewish community at all times. This high esteem is unusual given that Purim is Rabbinically ordained based on the Megillah of Esther. What is even more unusual is that we have so many major and minor holy days that have ‘Purim’ as part of their name.

*The story of Purim is, essentially, another chapter in the ongoing conflict between the Bne Israel and Amalek*.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Chazal, our Sages, teach that, “All festivals will one day cease, but the days of Purim will never cease”.[[5]](#footnote-5) Since Purim contains within it the major themes and influences of all the other festivals, the influence of *Purim is a concentrated culmination of them all*. Once the final redemption occurs, all the festivals of the Torah will be observed through their portended progeny, Purim.

This is actually alluded to in Megillat Esther itself:

***Esther 9:28*** *And these days of Purim shall never pass from among the Jews nor shall their commemoration ever cease from among their seed.*

After the final redemption, Purim’s miracles will be seen as being greater than all the earlier miracles, for by means of Purim’s miracles our nation *remained* in existence to witness the final redemption.

The Gemara makes a curious statement that may be apropos to this study:

***Megillah 2a*** *R. Shaman b. Abba replied in the name of R. Johanan: Scripture says, To confirm these days of Purim in their times.[[6]](#footnote-6) [which indicates that] they laid down many ‘times’ for them. But this text is required for its literal meaning?[[7]](#footnote-7) — If that were all, Scripture could say simply ‘at the [appointed] time’. What then is implied by ‘their times’? A large number of ‘times’! But still I may say that [the expression ‘their’ times’] is required to indicate that the time of one is not the same as the time of the other?[[8]](#footnote-8) — In that case, Scripture should say [simply], ‘their time’. Why does it say ‘their times’? So that you may infer from this all of them. But cannot I say that ‘their times’ means ‘numerous times’?*

It seems the Gemara hints that there are many ‘Purims’.

The following lists shows the major and minor festivals which have ‘Purim’ as part of their name. I have carefully arranged them in the order in which they are encountered. Because they are ‘festivals’, they are arranged according to the months. This order is very important, as we shall see.

**Yom Kippurim Katan Nisan**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Iyar**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Sivan**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Tammuz**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Av**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Elul**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Tishri**

**Yom Kippurim - יוֹם כִּפּוּר**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Heshvan**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Kislev**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Tebet**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Shevat**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Adar I**

**Purim Katan**

**Shushan Purim Katan**

**Yom Kippurim Katan Adar II**

**Purim**

**Shushan Purim**

Some great Hakhamim[[9]](#footnote-9) have said that Purim is as great as the day on which the Torah was given on Sinai.[[10]](#footnote-10) How can this be?

How can a relatively minor holiday, which many think of as a kind of Jewish Halloween, be afforded this measure of veneration? According to the Talmud, it derives from a line in the Megillah: “The memory of Purim will never cease from among their descendants.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

The reason for this lies with Esther, the heroine of the Megillah of Esther. Her name, in Hebrew, also means “hidden”. In the Megillah, the word “HaShem” is never mentioned. HaShem, during the festivities of Purim, is hidden.

Purim is strange because Jews are called to learn and to know Torah. We are supposed to discern between the clean and the unclean, between the good and the bad, and between the holy and secular, except on Purim! On Purim we are commanded to drink strong drink until *Ad d'lo Yada*, which means that we drink until we no longer know the difference between *blessed in Mordecai* and *cursed in Haman*.

1. Judaism makes it a *mitzvah* (only on this one day) to be drunk on Purim.
2. The name of HaShem is never mentioned in the Megillah of Esther.
3. The Megillah of Esther is a book of happenstance, of coincidence.

Hidden but not absent. That is why Jews will always celebrate Purim. No matter how many Hamans, Hitlers, and Ahmadinejads come our way, a miraculous hidden power is always there to redeem us. The Jewish role in the ever-unfolding drama of civilization continues now and forever.

Let’s take a brief, generalized look at each of these ‘Purims’ in order to understand their importance.

# Second Purims (Purim sheni – Purim katan)

A community saved from a disaster may celebrate their own Purim. Here are the ones I know about”

**Purim Ancona** (21 Tevet)

Modern-day Ancona, Italy

The Jewish community of Ancona, Italy, was noted for having four different communal Purims commemorating their salvation from potential disasters in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first of these was established on 29 December 1690 (21 Tevet), when strong earthquakes rattled the city. On 15 Tishrei 1741, a fire threatened but did not destroy the synagogue. On 24 Adar 1775 the Jewish quarter was similarly spared from a fire. On 12 Shevat 1797 the Jewish population escaped rioting during a revolutionary war.[7] In each case, a communal fast day was held the day before the holiday and special prayers were said on both days.[5]

**Purim of the Bandits** (22 Elul)

Popularly known as Purim de los Ladrones (Purim of the Bandits), this celebration marked the deliverance of the Jewish population of Gumeldjina, a city near Adrianople, Ottoman Empire, from accusations of disloyalty. In 1786 the city was attacked by an estimated 5,000 mountain brigands. Though the governor managed to drive off the invaders, the Jews were accused of helping the bandits enter the city. The community went to great lengths to prove its innocence, and further disaster was averted.

**Purim Burghul** (29 Tevet)

In 1795 the Jews of Tripoli, Libya, established Purim Burghul to celebrate the ouster of Ali Burghul Pasha Cezayrli, who usurped the throne and conducted a reign of terror against them from 30 July 1793 to 20 January 1795. The piyut, "Mi Kamokha" (Hebrew: מי כמוך, "Who is like You"), composed by Rabbi Abraham Khalfon, was read in the synagogue on the Shabbat preceding Purim Burghul.

**Purim Cairo** (28 Adar)

In 1524 the governor of Egypt, Aḥmed Shaiṭan Pasha, arrested twelve of the Jewish leaders of Cairo, including Chief Rabbi David ben Solomon ibn Abi Zimra, and demanded an exorbitant ransom. One day he threatened to murder all the Jews in Cairo after he had finished taking his bath. He was stabbed to death in the bathhouse by one of his junior officers and the massacre was averted.

**Purim Hebron** (14 Tevet, 1 Av)

The Jewish community of Hebron has celebrated two historic Purims, both from the Ottoman period. One is called Window Purim, or Purim Taka, in which the community was saved when a bag of money mysteriously appeared in a window, enabling them to pay off an extortion fee to the Ottoman Pasha. The other is the Purim of Ibrahim Pasha (1 Av), in which the community was saved during a battle.

**Purim Narbonne** (21 Adar)

In the heat of an argument between a Jew of Narbonne, France, and a Christian fisherman, the Jew struck the Christian and the latter died. Christian residents rioted in the Jewish quarter and stole the entire library belonging to Rabbi Meir ben Isaac. The governor fortuitously arrived on the scene with his troops and order was restored. Rabbi Meir received his library back and wrote a megillah commemorating the event.

**Purim Rhodes** (14 Adar)

In 1840 Greeks who were in competition with Jews in the sponge trade on the island of Rhodes accused the Jewish community of murdering a child for ritual purposes. The Jews of Rhodes were jailed and tortured, though the child was later discovered alive on the island of Syra. The sultan, 'Abd al-Majid, deposed the local governor and issued a firman confirming the accusations were false. The date of the firman coincided with the date of Purim itself, and so the Jews of Rhodes celebrated a double holiday on that day. Special prayers and piyutim were recited in honor of Purim Rhodes, in addition to the usual Purim observances.

**Purim Saragossa** (18 Shevat)

This holiday commemorated the downfall of a Jewish convert named Marcus, who informed the king that the Jews had removed the Torah scrolls from their cases when they brought them to a parade to honor the king in Saragossa, Spain. While the city's rabbis had instructed the Jews to do so, it impugned the king's honor, and the king called for the cases to be opened on the street the next day. That night, the gabbais of the city's twelve synagogues found out about the order and returned the scrolls to their cases. The next day, Marcus' malfeasance was exposed and the king ordered him to be put to death by hanging. It is uncertain whether this event took place in 1380 under Peter IV of Aragon or in 1420 under Alfonso V of Aragon. Purim Saragossa was celebrated by the descendants of the original Jewish community in synagogues in Constantinople, Magnesia, Smyrna, Salonica, and Jerusalem.

**Purim Sebastiano** (1 Elul)

In 1578 Don Sebastian, king of Portugal, went to Morocco to join the Battle of the Three Kings at Alcazar-kebir. Sebastian was defeated by Sultan Moulay Abd-al-Malik and the Jews were saved from calamity. According to a 2005 work, Purim Sebastiano (also called Purim de los Christianos and Purim de las Bombas) is still commemorated annually in Tangier, Tétouan, and Fez; the holiday incorporates the reading of a megillah, the recital of special hymns, and the giving of charity.

**Purim Tiberias** (7 Elul and 4 Kislev)

The Jews of Tiberias established communal Purims on two dates in 1743 after Suleiman Pasha, governor of Damascus, laid siege to the city for 83 days. The governor lifted the siege on 27 August. While planning his next attack, he suddenly died. The Jews of Tiberias celebrated both the day the siege was lifted (7 Elul) and the day the governor died (4 Kislev) as Second Purims.

**Purim Vinz** (20 Adar)

This communal Purim commemorates the persecution and expulsion of the Jewish population of the Frankfurter Judengasse during the Fettmilch Uprising in 1614 and their restoration to their homes on the order of the German emperor in 1616. The antisemitic leader of the uprising, Vincent Fettmilch, styled himself as the "New Haman" and propagated attacks on the Jewish community. In a final attack, the Jews were expelled and their property confiscated. Several months later, the German emperor ordered that Fettmilch be executed for the injustice; his beheaded and quartered corpse was hung on the gates of the city. Fettmilch's house was also razed, and an account of his crimes and punishment was engraved on a pillar in German and Latin at the site. The Frankfurt authorities welcomed the Jewish population back with military honors. A "Vincent Megillah" was composed in Hebrew and Yiddish by Rabbi Elhanah Ha'elen.

Frankfurt natives Rabbi Nathan Adler (1741–1800) and Rabbi Moses Sofer (the Chasam Sofer, 1762–1839) both observed Purim Vinz even while living outside the city, though neither fasted on the day before the festival, as was done in Frankfurt itself.

# Yom Kippurim Katan - קטן יום כיפורים

Yom Kippurim Katan (“little Yom Kippurim”) refers to the day before Rosh Chodesh, of each month, as this is likened to a beginning[[12]](#footnote-12) and therefore, more of an opportunity to do teshuva.[[13]](#footnote-13) This minor festival originated among the Safed Kabbalists in the 16th century and is referred to by a disciple of Hakham Moshe Cordovero,[[14]](#footnote-14) Abraham Galante, who states that it was a local custom in Safed for men, women, and older children to fast on this day and to spend the whole day in prayer, and confession of sin. He called it Yom Kippurim Katan because on it the sins of the entire month are atoned for.

Why do we have a Purim Katan and a Yom Kippurim Katan, but not a Shavuot Katan, Succoth Katan, or a Chanukah Katan?

These two days are the extremes of the festivals. Yom Kippurim is the extreme of deprivation, and Purim is the extreme of indulgence. It is specifically these two great days, Yom Kippurim Katan and Purim Katan, to remind us that both ways of life have to be lived in moderation, not in extreme.

According to the Shulchan Aruch, the miracles of Purim differ from the other festivals. On Pesach, Shavuot, and Succoth, the miracles were obvious, and no one could deny them. By contrast, Purim’s miracles were done in a hidden manner. To topple Haman, and bring the Bne Israel[[15]](#footnote-15) back to HaShem, HaShem brought many different elements into play, orchestrating everything so that one might think that salvation “came” to Israel by chance, in a “natural” way. Thus, if a person seeks to avoid the truth, he is given leeway, and he can deny the miracles of Purim.

# Purim Katan - קטן פורים

In leap years on the Hebrew calendar, Purim is celebrated in the second month of Adar. The 14th of the first Adar is then called Purim Katan (“Little Purim” in Hebrew), for which there are no set observances but there is a minor holiday aspect to it.

Purim Katan is celebrated by those who live in cities which did *not* have a wall, around them, in the days of Yehoshua.[[16]](#footnote-16)

The day of Purim Katan (the 14th day of Adar I) should be viewed as a relatively rare event, because in the 19-year Metonic cycle[[17]](#footnote-17) of regular years and leap years we have nineteen Purims (which occurs on the 14th day of the second Adar), but only seven Purim Katans (which occurs on the 14th day of the first Adar), according to the Jewish calendar.

The day of Purim Katan (the 14th of Adar I) should be viewed as a precious guest.

Purim Katan is the only time we have a minor festival preceding the actual festival. This suggests that there is something special about a leap year which demands a Purim Katan. Since Purim Katan is a time to prepare for Purim, we learn that Purim is an extremely important festival.

*Purim Katan* contains an allusion to Mashiach, a descendent of King David, about whom it states:

***1 Shmuel (Samuel) 17:14*** *And David was the smallest* (katan)*: and the three eldest followed Saul.*

Although we use the term *small* (katan) with regard to Purim Katan, therein lies its greatness, “this small one (alluding to Purim Katan and King David) will be great,” with the true and complete redemption.

## Communal and Personal

Other occasions when the Jews have been delivered from mass destruction sometimes get the title *Purim Katan* (minor or small Purim). The celebration was modeled after that of Purim with fasting the day before, reading a Megillah that recounted the story of salvation, reciting the *al Hanassim* prayers, and holding a special fast. One well known *Purim Katan* was the Wintz Purim of 1614, when the Jews of Frankfurt-am-Main were driven from the city by a mob led by Wintz Fettmilch. When the emperor intervened, the Jews were allowed to return to their homes. The Encyclopedia Judaica lists more than 100 special Purims.

According to the Midrash, any man or city for whom a miracle has occurred, may make a Purim. Some of these are Purim Fettmilch, Purim of Tiberias, Purim of Shiraz, Curtain Purim, Purim of Bandits, Purim of the Poisoned Sword, Purim of the Bomb.

# Shushan Purim Katan - קטן שושן פורים

In leap years on the Hebrew calendar, Shushan Purim is celebrated in the 15th day of the *second* month of Adar. The 15th of the *first* Adar is then called Shushan Purim Katan (“Little Shushan Purim” in Hebrew), there are no set observances but it does have a minor festival aspect to it.

Shushan Purim Katan is celebrated by those who live in cities which had a wall around them in the days of Yehoshua.[[18]](#footnote-18) Today the only city that we are certain had walls in Yehoshua’s time is Jerusalem. This is despite the fact that in the days of Yehoshua, under whose leadership the Bne Israel first entered and conquered the Land of Israel, Shushan was not yet surrounded by a wall, and hence enjoyed only minor status as a city.

This suggests that there is something *very special* about a wall which is essentially *unrelated to the time* of Shushan Purim Katan!

*Therefore, most people do not celebrate Shushan Purim Katan.*

The day of Shushan Purim Katan (the 15th day of Adar I) should be viewed as a relatively rare event, because in the 19-year Metonic cycle of regular years and leap years we have nineteen Shushan Purims (which occurs on the 15th day of the second Adar), but only seven Shushan Purim Katans (which occurs on the 15th day of the first Adar), according to the Jewish calendar.

The day of Shushan Purim Katan (the 15th of Adar I) should be viewed as a precious guest.

Shushan Purim Katan is the only time, with the exception of Purim Katan, we have a minor festival preceding the actual festival. This suggests that there is something special about a leap year which demands a Shushan Purim Katan. Since Shushan Purim Katan is a time to prepare for Shushan Purim, we learn that Shushan Purim is an extremely important festival.

*Shushan* *Purim Katan* contains an allusion to Mashiach, a descendent of King David, about whom it states:

***1 Shmuel (Samuel) 17:14*** *And David was the smallest* (katan)*: and the three eldest followed Saul.*

Although we use the term *small* (katan) with regard to Shushan Purim Katan, therein lies their greatness, “this small one (alluding to Shushan Purim Katan and King David) will be great,” with the true and complete Redemption.

# Purim - פורים

Purim is a Rabbinically ordained Jewish festival that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people from Haman’s plot to annihilate all of them in the ancient Persian Empire as recorded in Megillat Esther.

The festival of Purim has been held in high esteem by Judaism at all times. The Talmud teaches that when all the prophetical and hagiographical works will be nullified, the Book of Esther will still be remembered, and, accordingly, the Feast of Purim will continue to be observed.[[19]](#footnote-19)

The four main mitzvot of the day are:

1. Listening to the public reading, usually in synagogue, of Megillat Esther in the evening and again in the following morning.
2. Sending food gifts to friends (*Mishloach Manot*).
3. Giving charity to the poor (*matanot l’evyonim*).
4. Eating a festive meal (*seudah*)

# Shushan Purim - שושן פורים

Shushan Purim is celebrated by those who live in cities which had a wall, around them, in the days of Yehoshua. Today the only city that we are certain had walls in Yehoshua’s time is Jerusalem. This is despite the fact that in the days of Yehoshua, under whose leadership the Bne Israel first entered and conquered the Land of Israel, Shushan was not yet surrounded by a wall, and hence enjoyed only minor status as a city.

This suggests that there is something *very special* about a wall which is essentially *unrelated to the time* of Shushan Purim!

*Therefore, most people do not celebrate Shushan Purim.*

**Purim HaMeshulash - המשולש פורים**

When the main Purim date, the 14th of Adar, comes out on a Friday, then in Jerusalem there is a situation called Purim HaMeshulash,[[20]](#footnote-20) a three-part Purim celebration. Shushan Purim is then on the 16th day, rather than the 15th day, of Adar. Each day has a different focus. The giving of money can’t occur on Shabbat and since it would be unfair to make the poor wait a day, so it is moved to the 14th of Adar. The Megillah reading in Jerusalem takes place on the 14th as well.

This “triple” Purim is a chance to strengthen the celebration even outside of Israel, since on Friday the Purim meal cannot be carried over after dark, as is usually done. These are not very common; they cluster (about every 2-3 years) and then they leave gaps as large as thirteen years.

# Yom Kippurim - יוֹם כִפורים

Yom Kippurim,[[21]](#footnote-21) יוֹם כִּפּוּר, is the festival of the Day of Atonement. It falls on the tenth day of the Hebrew month of Tishri, the seventh month of the calendar.[[22]](#footnote-22)

The Talmud hints to a connection between Haman and the sin of Adam and Chava. The Gemara asks, “What is the source for Haman in the Torah?” The Gemara answers with the quote from HaShem to Adam after the sin:

***Chullin 139b*** *Where is Haman indicated in the Torah? — In the verse: Is it [hamin] from the tree?[[23]](#footnote-23)*

The Sages, in their subtle fashion, are pointing out to us that the evil of Haman has its roots in the very first sin of Adam and Chava in Gan Eden, which means that the victory over Haman should connect to the situation of Adam and Chava before the effects of their sin. This makes it especially appropriate that Yom Kippurim, the Day of Atonement, should have a strong connection to Purim. Yom Kippurim is the day when the sin of Adam and Chava is atoned and it is the day when Haman, and therefore evil, is eliminated from the world.

In what other way is Yom Kippurim similar to Purim? In the same way that on Purim we see that even what appears to be coincidence, is under the direct instruction of HaShem. On Purim we destroy Amalek, after reading the Megillah, after reading events that took place over nine years in forty-five minutes, it becomes clear that there is no such thing as coincidence, on Purim all doubt is destroyed. In the same way on Yom Kippurim having previously established Hashem as King, we are like angels, totally spiritual, there is no doubt, there is no questioning. It is only at the end of Yom Kippurim that we can truly exclaim “HaShem Hu HaElokim”. It is not enough to crown HaShem; we must confirm the coronation of Rosh Hashana on Yom Kippurim by removing all doubts.

The opening prayer of Yom Kippurim, the *Kol Nidre*, literally “All Vows”, prayer is chanted to a beautiful melody at the opening of Yom Kippurim. It is an ancient appeal to HaShem to forgive any vows made to him that are impossible to fulfill, thus preparing the worshiper to meet him on this holiest of Biblical festivals.  As the cantor chants the prayer, it is customary for two people to stand on either side of him or her, just as Aharon and Hur stood on either side of Moshe during the battle against Amalek.

What is the connection between Amalek and the opening prayer of Yom Kippurim?  Throughout the Days of Awe from Rosh HaShana through YomKippurim, we pray for HaShem to establish his sovereignty in our midst, and that we would be fit subjects of his reign. Rabbi Soloveitchik notes, however, that “HaShem’s sovereignty is not absolute as long as Amalek continues to exist”.  He goes on to ask, “Who then is Amalek, whose presence somehow inhibits HaShem’s sovereignty?”

In a remarkable insight, Rabbi Soloveitchik places Amalek in the context of the Creation story, when “HaShem created the earth from tohu vabohu, chaos and void”.[[24]](#footnote-24) At the Creation, HaShem did not completely eliminate chaos, but allowed some to remain. “Amalek represents this leftover chaos, identified with sin, which remained behind so man himself can actively play a role in destroying it.”

Yom Kippurim also has many similarities to Purim. This can even be seen by the name “Yom Ki-Purim” which means, “a day like Purim.”[[25]](#footnote-25)

If Yom Kippurim is *like* Purim, the implication is that Purim is even greater than the Day of Atonement.

Yom Kippurim is only *like* Purim, similar to Purim, but not exactly the same as Purim, the Arizal[[26]](#footnote-26) said, because the celebration of Purim contains within it some aspects that are *loftier* than Yom Kippurim. It is as if to say: Yom Kippurim is the appetizer, but the real meal is Purim!

The following table details some comparisons between Purim and Yom Kippurim:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Purim** | **Yom Kippurim** |
| Techelet, crimson, gold, silver of King Achashverosh’s palace.[[27]](#footnote-27) | Techelet, crimson, gold, silver of HaShem’s palace.[[28]](#footnote-28) |
| Wine in the palace.[[29]](#footnote-29) | No wine in His palace.[[30]](#footnote-30) |
| Disobedience leads to the death of Achashverosh’s wife. | Disobedience leads to the death of HaShem’s wife. |
| Achashverosh is in an inner room.[[31]](#footnote-31) | HaShem is in an inner room (Holy of Holies).[[32]](#footnote-32) |
| No one allowed without an invitation.[[33]](#footnote-33) | No one allowed without an invitation.[[34]](#footnote-34) |
| Achashverosh keeps books of deeds.[[35]](#footnote-35) | HaShem keeps books of deeds.[[36]](#footnote-36) |
| Esther wears special clothes to see Achashverosh.[[37]](#footnote-37) | Kohen Gadol wears special clothes to see HaShem.[[38]](#footnote-38) |
| Haman’s daughter lays feces on his head.[[39]](#footnote-39) | Kohen Gadol lays sins on goat’s head.[[40]](#footnote-40) |
| Lots used to determine good day to destroy the Jews.[[41]](#footnote-41) | Lots used to determine which goat is for HaShem.[[42]](#footnote-42) |
| Fasting before feasting.[[43]](#footnote-43) | Feasting before fasting.[[44]](#footnote-44) |
| Feasting to serve HaShem. [[45]](#footnote-45) | Fasting to serve HaShem. [[46]](#footnote-46) |

On Yom Kippurim the Jews fast to attain atonement for the transgressions of the body. On Purim one achieves the same through different means, by feasting and rejoicing (physical pleasures become sanctified from above on Purim). If on one festival one attains holiness through affliction and on another festival one attains holiness through pleasure, which is the greater of the two? It may be said that the one who attains holiness through pleasure is the greater, for the attainment of holiness through pleasure requires a much greater degree of effort.

Rabbi Soloveitchik found two similarities between these two days which only superficially are really very different. He says, “Perhaps the feature common to both Purim and Yom Kippurim is that aspect of Purim which is a call for Divine compassion and intercession, a mood of petition arising out of great distress.” On Yom Kippurim too, “the prayerful mood of Yom Kippurim emerges out of a sense of spiritual anxiety and the desperate need for reconciliation with HaShem.”

Both Purim and Yom Kippurim “involve the casting of lots (goral) characteristic of games of chance. As for the Purim goral it determined the date chosen by Haman for the destruction of the Jews.” For the Yom Kippurim Temple service, two male goats, identical in appearance, size, and value, were brought, one marked “for HaShem”, and the other was hurled to its destruction.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Just as Yom Kippurim contains a mitzva of eating and drinking followed by the mitzva of fasting, so too, Purim also contains these two mitzvot. However, the order of the mitzvot are inverted. First is the mitzva of fasting and then the mitzva of eating and drinking.

Just as one says Selichot[[48]](#footnote-48) before Yom Kippurim and on Yom Kippurim, so too we say Selichot before Purim, on the Fast of Esther, and there are even those that say one should say Selichot on Purim itself.

In the Megillah, we find reference to fasting day and night. And we also find the wording HAMELECH YOSHEIV AL KISEI... The king is sitting on his throne, in the Megillah. This reminds us of the phrase from the morning prayers of Yom Kippurim (and Rosh HaShana) of the same wording, referring to HaShem. (Of course, the phrase exists for Shabbat and all festivals as well, but the image it conjures up is more like Yom Kippurim.)

The Tikunei Zohar point out striking parallels between Esther’s approach to Achashverosh and the High Priest’s service in the Temple on Yom Kippurim: The fasting Queen Esther, dressed in special garments, entered the King's inner chamber at the risk of her life in order to bring salvation to the Jewish people and the fasting High Priest, dressed in special white vestments, entered the normally off-limits inner sanctum of the Temple also at the risk of his life to pray for the people’s forgiveness.[[49]](#footnote-49)

## Garden of Eden

This Yom Kippurim - Purim dichotomy is alluded to at the beginning of Bereshit. Adam and Eve are placed in the Garden of Eden, surrounded by unmatched beauty. They are seemingly given but one command, *not to eat* from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

As several commentaries point out, however, there was, in fact, yet an additional command: “From all the trees in the garden *you shall eat*”.[[50]](#footnote-50) Not just granting permission, an actual command, rather, to enjoy the magnificent delicacies placed before them. This mitzva is the source for the intriguing statement of the Talmud Yerushalmi: “In the future we will all have to answer to HaShem for all that our eyes saw [in His world, with all it has to offer] and did not partake of”.[[51]](#footnote-51)

As we all know, Adam and Eve failed to heed the command to abstain from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But they also failed to regard the positive instruction of eating from all other trees as an actual mitzva. Perhaps we can suggest that HaShem’s precious gift to us of the double-sided coin of Yom Kippurim and Purim provides us with the opportunity to atone for those two grave errors.

On Yom Kippurim we learn how to refrain from food and drink, in addition to other mundane delights. There is a time and a place for everything, we learn and try our utmost to apply, and certain things are indeed off limits. We elevate ourselves to become like Adam in Gan Eden, and attempt to rectify his grave error of disobeying HaShem’s command. Simply put, it’s a time for transcending the physical world around us.

We flip to the other side of the coin and find Purim, a day providing us with an opportunity to expiate for the sin of disobeying HaShem’s positive command to partake of all the other magnificent trees. On Purim we are credited with mitzvot for eating a festive meal and drinking plenty of wine. HaShem made us human with human needs and desires, but our attitude must be that we do our best to partake and enjoy, to consume and imbibe, because that is also the will of HaShem. Enjoy His world and its delightful treasures. But only if you recognize Who the source of it all is, and that HaShem gave mortal man these gifts as a means of getting close to Him through His physical world as well.

# Purim vs. Shushan Purim

Why do we have two festivals on two adjacent days, which commemorate essentially the same event? Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner[[52]](#footnote-52) suggests the following answer:

There were two times that the Bne Israel were involved in battles with Amalek.

1. When we came out of Egypt, Amalek attacked the weak at the edge of the camp.[[53]](#footnote-53)
2. When HaShem commanded King Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites.[[54]](#footnote-54)

There are essentially two different scenarios with the two battles:

1. *Amalek attacked* us and we were in danger.
2. *We attacked* Amalek and we were *not* in danger.

We had the same scenarios in Megillat Esther:

1. On Purim, *Amalek attacked* us and we were fighting for our lives.
2. On Shushan Purim, we were no longer in danger and *we were attacking* to wipe out Amalek.

These two scenarios are also behind the fact that Shushan Purim is celebrated by those who live in cities that were walled in the days of Yehoshua. The walls suggest a city that is not in danger. An unwalled city suggests a city in danger. It was only in Yehoshua’s days that the command to destroy Amalek took effect.

The third and final fulfillment of the destruction of Amalek will occur at the *end of days*, and it is then that Amalek will be entirely destroyed and erased from memory forever.

# Other Festivals

Interestingly, Purim is compared not only to Yom Kippurim but also to the other holidays as well. Hakhamim of previous times have noted the following allusions:

Purim is like Pesach in that on both occasions the Jews were delivered from bondage to freedom.

Purim is like Shavuot in that the Jews reaffirmed their acceptance and commitment to the Torah.

Purim is like Rosh Hashanah[[55]](#footnote-55) in that the existence of the Jewish People hung in the balance as a result of the King’s decree.

Purim is like Yom Kippurim in that the Jews were expiated of their sins.

Finally, Purim is like Succoth whose commemoration of the protective Divine Clouds of Glory[[56]](#footnote-56) parallels HaShem’s providential protection of the Jews against their enemies in Persia.

# The End of Days

Amalek represents evil in the world. When Amalek is destroyed there will be no more evil in the world. This will take place in the end of days.

The Talmud[[57]](#footnote-57) clarifies the process of the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash (the holy Temple). It states that the nation of Israel is commanded to perform three commandments *sequentially* after they occupy the land of Israel:

1. They are to appoint a king,
2. They are to eradicate the offspring of Amalek.
3. They are to construct the holy Temple.

The eradication of Amalek comes after we have a King who is a descendant of Rachel (Either from the tribe of Yosef or from the tribe of Benyamin).[[58]](#footnote-58) Only AFTER Amalek is destroyed can Mashiach ben David, the King, restore the Beit HaMikdash.

Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh said: “The most frequently mentioned sefirotic termin the book of Esther is *malchut* (kingship). No other Biblical text contains such a concentration of references to the term *malchut*. Out of a total of 167 verses in the book, there are over 240 appearances of the root *Melech* (king). In one verse (Esther 4:11), the word *HaMelech* (The King) actually appears five times. In another verse (Esther 5:1), the root *Melech* appears in variant forms a full six times! This itself is a major indication of the Book of Esther’s strong Kabbalistic character, as *malchut* is the key to understanding the entire drama of creation according to the Kabbalah.”[[59]](#footnote-59)

We had a *precursor* of the end of days, in the days of king Saul. King Saul was the first king after the Bne Israel conquered the land of Israel, in the days of Yehoshua. King Saul disobeyed HaShem’s command to completely destroy Amalek. Because of his mis-placed mercy, Amalek survived. Amalek will not be so fortunate in the days of Mashiach. In the end of days, Amalek will be destroyed. We know this because of what is recorded in Megillat Esther.

In Megillat Esther, we see that Mordechai is the Benjamite[[60]](#footnote-60) who destroyed Amalek. He is also the one who laid the foundation of the Temple by teaching the children about the mincha offering and by encouraging the teshuva[[61]](#footnote-61) and fasting that caused the people to cleave to HaShem. In the end he is crowned as king, second only to The King.[[62]](#footnote-62)

The story of the complete destruction of Amalek, is the story of Purim as found in Megillat Esther.

The complete repentance of the Bne Israel, in the days of Mordechai, speaks of the repentance of the Bne Israel in the end of days.

Megillat Esther lays out the script for the end of days.

# Shoshanat Yaakov - שושנת יעקב

It is a custom to recite the Shoshanat Yaakov hymn after the Megillah reading. The words are also used as a basis for traditional Purim songs.

Shoshanat Yaakov, the hymn of Purim, ultimately is a song celebrating the salvation and victory of the children of Jacob in the end of days. Purim and Megillat Esther are a microcosm of the future messianic victory. The song of Purim is a “new song”, telling of the victory of concealed and secret Divine forces.

*The Lily of Yaakov was cheerful and joyous when they saw together the royal blue of Mordechai's [robe].*

*You have been their everlasting redemption, and their hope in every generation. To make known, that all who hope in you will not be embarrassed, and those who take refuge in You will never be humiliated.*

*Cursed is Haman who sought to destroy me, blessed is Mordechai the Jew. Cursed is Zeresh, the wife of my tormentor, blessed is Esther [who acted] for me. May Charvonah also be remembered for good.*

Shoshanat Yaakov comes as a direct contradiction to *ad d’lo yada*, to the command that we drink till be can no longer distinguish between ‘Blessed is Mordechai, and cursed is Haman’. Shoshanat Yaakov clarifies and brings into sharp focus the difference between Haman and his curse, and Mordechai and his blessing.

The Bne Israel sing this song just after the reading of the Megillah. The Megillah gives us the narrative of the difference between Haman and Mordechai. Shoshanat Yaakov puts the differences into a concise format with music in order to drive this into our memories, *before we drink*.

Before we drink, we make the differences clear and sharp. This heightens the contrast to *ad d’lo yada* after we drink.

In a sense, the clarification speaks to the attack of Amalek in the days of Yehoshua. At that point we could clearly see the evil of Amalek.

When we attacked Amalek in the days of King Saul, things were not quite so clear. King Saul was commanded to slaughter every man, woman, child, and animal. Those who were commanded to slaughter were four-hundred years removed from Amalek’s attack in the days of Yehoshua. Amalek was no longer a threat to the Bne Israel. We can then readily understand why there might be some question as to why every living Amalekite entity should be slaughtered. Never the less, the command came from HaShem so we know that it must be for the good.

# Conclusion

Finally, lets return to our original question: Why are so many major and minor festivals associated with the name “Purim” somewhere in their name? Why is Purim special in this way?

By now, I believe we have enough to understand the answers to these questions.

Arthur Green, scholar of Jewish mysticism, makes the following comment that bears on our question:  “Purim is a third festival of revelation.

1. On Shavuot, the original written Torah was revealed.  Because its light was too great for mortals to bear, the tablets had to be broken.
2. Yom Kippurim is the day of the second tablets, the Torah as restored by human participation in the revelatory event; it is thus the source of the oral Torah [the first time HaShem engraves the tablets, the second time they are engraved by Moses’ hand].
3. Purim hints at a third level, the revelation of a Torah beyond rules and statutes: Torah as the Tree of Life itself.  This Torah is purely mystical, it is the name of HaShem, that which was before the beginning and will finally be revealed only at the end.  That is why we are taught that Purim, unlike the other festivals, will continue to exist even in messianic times.

I would say, based on Arthur Green’s idea, that Yom Kippurim Katan, Purim Katan, and Shushan Purim Katan are also minor revelations. Yom Kippurim Katan hints at this revelation as it is preparation for Rosh Chodesh, the revelation of the new light of the New Moon. Purim Katan and Shushan Purim Katan are preparation for the major festivals.

Purim and Shushan Purim, as we discussed earlier, are related to the two battles that the Bne Israel fought against Amalek in the days of Yehoshua and King Saul.

Purim Katan and Shushan Purim Katan suggest that the forces of evil predated the appearance of Amalek on the world stage. We have no actionable mitzvot because we had no national conflict with Amalek before he encountered us in the wilderness of Rephidim. He fought against us because we had become lax in our Torah study, as we learned in the study titled: STAGES. We had received a few mitzvot and now we were already losing interest. When we slacked off, Amalek came. Purim Katan and Shushan Purim Katan stand as reminders that Amalek exists as long as evil exists. We need to be reminded every two or three years, that we need to be on our guard.

Yom Kippurim comes as a yearly reminder that we deserve death because of our sins. Amalek is allowed to attack us, unprovoked, because of our sins. Yom Kippurim Katan comes every month, on the day before Rosh Chodesh, when the moon is darkened, when the Bne Israel are at their lowest ebb. When their Torah study does not shine brightly, the Bne Israel are susceptible to an unprovoked attack from Amalek.

Thus, we see that Purim stands as a beacon which beckons us to Torah study on a regular basis, with multiple reminders of the evil that is crouching at our door.

\* \* \*

*Shushan Purim* is the *last* festival of the year. It is the conclusion of the year and it is the story of the conclusion of evil. It is the story of our final salvation and redemption.

Now we know that “*the end is enwedged in the beginning, and the beginning in the end*”.[[63]](#footnote-63) This teaches us that we must understand the first festival, Pesach, in order to understand the last festival,[[64]](#footnote-64) Shushan Purim. Both Pesach and Shushan Purim are stories of miracles and of redemption.

We get our first minor festival hint, to Purim, with *Yom Kippurim Katan Nisan*. This minor festival points us to the major festival for understanding. Never the less, this minor festival calls us to repentance just before we are to *begin* the festival year. Yom Kippurim Katan calls us to look to the end of the festival cycle to see what we must do at the beginning. This is very significant, given that *all things go after the beginning*. The beginning contains everything. After the beginning, everything else is just an unfolding and a revelation of what we saw in the beginning.

We get our first major festival hint to Purim with the feast of Yom Kippurim, the Day of Atonements. This day ‘like’ Purim, pictures the righteous as angelic creatures[[65]](#footnote-65) beseeching HaShem not to destroy them because of their sins. Purim pictures the Bne Israel as sinners who deserve to die. This festival is partnered with Amalek’s first attack on the Bne Israel. He could only affect those who fell outside the clouds of glory[[66]](#footnote-66) because of their sins.

On Purim we were signed and sealed by HaShem for destruction. That verdict was not repealed, rather HaShem created us anew. Purim is a day to celebrate being newly created. On Yom Kippurim we are signed and sealed for eternal life. The verdict against us was repealed, never the less we were created as sinless creatures. Yom Kippurim is a day to celebrate being newly created.

Yom Kippurim is a picture of a bride divesting herself of her former life and taking on her husband’s life. It is a picture of a wedding. She is fearful because of her past and is doing everything she can to divest herself of the past and to show herself to be perfect to her husband. Her husband knows of her past and is aware of her sins. Never the less, this wedding day is a day when her past sins will be covered and she will become a new creation. Today she will become the ‘house’ of the Holy One. Today she becomes the Beit HaMikdash!

Purim is the last festival of the year, its mitzvot resound with the sound of the end of days, they enable us to “hear” the footsteps of the Mashiach. The miracle of Purim is understood to reflect in this world the ultimate miracle: the resurrection in the World to Come.[[67]](#footnote-67) This is the end of this world and the beginning of the World to Come. Again, we find the beginning and the end enwedged in each other.

Now, if we think a bit about the idea above, we realize that each of our festivals that contain the name ‘Purim’, are related to the World to Come. Rosh Chodesh, the New Moon, speaks of the renewal of Israel in the World to Come. Yom Kippurim speaks to the purity of Israel in the World to Come. Purim, coming at the end of the festival year is also linked to Pesach in the beginning of the year. Both Purim and Pesach speak to the final redemption that the Bne Israel will experience in the World to Come. Shushan Purim speaks of the Sages and Torah scholars who live The City of The King (Jerusalem) and serve in His Palace. These are the ones who deliver the final blow which results in the elimination of Amalek and of evil.

Chazal teach us that at Purim we accepted the Torah without coercion. At Sinai, the presence of HaShem was so palpable that we no longer had free will. In the end of days, we will have another Purim / Sinai experience where we will finally have Torah written on our hearts. We will no longer sin because we will stand in the Light of HaShem and experience His presence.

Purim *does come much more frequently than once a year* but the question is whether or not we know it! I think there are *many* Purims in our lives but all too often, we do not take the time to contemplate and *celebrate* them. On the personal level, on the communal level, on the level of the Bne Israel. Like miracles, the question is not whether they happen anymore but rather whether we can *see* them.

*Chag Purim Sameach!*

# Additional Notes:

The Gemara (Pesachim 50a) says that this world is different than the world to come. In this world, on good news we make the *bracha*, “*Baruch hatov v’hamaitiv”* and on bad news we make the *bracha* “*Baruch dayan haemet.”* In the world to come, however, we will only say “*baruch hatov v’hamaitiv*”. The explanation of this Gemara is that in the world to come even things which on the surface seem bad, we will be able to discern and see the ultimate good in them – something which in this world we cannot see. Hence in this world on bad news we must recite “*dayan haemet*”, but in *Olam Haba* – the World to Come – then we will know the truth; that all the things which may have looked bad were really good and thus warrant a “*Baruch Hatov v’hamativ*.”

Purim itself is a manifestation of the World to Come.

The whole Jewish nation realized how the seemingly bad events were really good. Thus, the whole miracle of Purim was a manifestation of *olam haba* – where even the bad is really good, thus warranting *hatov v’hamativ* – in this world. Therefore, Purim will be celebrated eternally even in the World to Come for Purim itself is a manifestation of the World to Come. The Purim story is a manifestation of *Hatov v’hamativ* in what seemed to be bad news- and although on Pesach there is also that aspect of realizing the good in their 210 years of pain, however the main miracle of Pesach is the actual exodus from Egypt as opposed to Purim where the whole story resonates with this *olam haba* theme!

\* \* \*

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**\* \* \***

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1. The Messiah who is the Son of David, the conquering King. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Based upon the root *gilah.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This can also be understood as ‘the revealing of [secrets](file:///D:\Word\PURIM\sod.html)’. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Purim: Season of Miracles***, By** Z. Fendel. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Yalkut Mishle 944 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Esther 9:31. E.V. ‘their appointed times’. The plural form ‘times’ is stressed. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Lit., ‘for itself’; viz., the 14th and 15th mentioned in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Viz., the time for the villages is not the same as that for the walled towns. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Hakhamim = Rabbis [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. “Pachad Yitzchak”, *s.v.* *Purim*. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Esther 9:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Otzar Hatefillot; Seder Yom Kippurim Katan [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Repentance [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Pri Chadash; Laws of Rosh Chodesh 417 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The Children of Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Joshua [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. the *Metonic cycle* is a period of very close to 19 years which is remarkable for being very nearly a common multiple of the tropical year and the synodic (lunar) month. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Joshua [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. [Talmud Yerushalmi](file:///D:\Word\PURIM\orallaw.html), Megillah I 5a; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Megillah [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Lit. ‘The Triangle’. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Day of Atonement [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:27-28 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Bereshit (Genesis) 3:11 Heb. המן the first word can be read as Haman, and the second can refer to the tree or gallows upon which Haman was hanged; cf. Esth. 7:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Bereshit (Genesis) 1:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The Tikunei Zohar [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Isaac Luria (July 25, 1572), aka as “The Ari”, “Ari-Hakadosh”. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Esther 1:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Shemot (Exodus) 25:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Esther 1:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Vayikra (Leviticus) 10:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Esther 4:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. 1 Melachim (Kings) 6:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Esther 4:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Esther 6:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Shemot (Exodus) 32:32 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Esther 5:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:32 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Esther 6:12, Megillah 16a [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Esther 3:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. The Fast of Esther takes place before the Purim seuda. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Berachoth 8b – We feast on Tishri 9 and fast on Tishri 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. The Fast of Esther takes place before the Purim seuda. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Berachoth 8b – We feast on Tishri 9 and fast on Tishri 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Rabbi Soloveitchik [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Penitential [prayers](file:///D:\Word\PURIM\prayer.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Tikkun 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Bereshit (Genesis) 2:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Tractate Kiddushin, 4:12, commentary of the Meshech Chachmah [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. “Pachad Yitzchak”, *s.v.* *Purim*. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Shemot (Exodus) 17:8ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. I Shmuel (Samuel) 15:1ff [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Yom Teruah [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Shemot (Exodus) 13:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Sanhedrin 20b [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. I have dealt with this topic extensively in the study titled “[Esther](file:///D:\Word\PURIM\esther.html)”. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Kabbalah literally means “receiving”. This is the study of Torah at the [*sod*](file:///D:\Word\PURIM\sod.html) level. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Esther 2:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Repentance [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Esther 10:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Sefer Yetzirah 1:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. See the study titled: [R2R](file:///D:\Word\PURIM\r2r.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. They are all wearing white kittels and standing before HaShem. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Shemot (Exodus) 13:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. HaRav Yitzchak Ginsburgh. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)