

From Redemption To Redemption

**The Purim – Pesach Connection**

By Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David (Greg Killian)



[Introduction 1](#_Toc164368302)

[The Purim Account 6](#_Toc164368303)

[The Pesach Account 7](#_Toc164368304)

[Chronology (According to Meam Loez) 8](#_Toc164368305)

[Pesach and Purim Redemptions 9](#_Toc164368306)

[Torah Acceptance 10](#_Toc164368307)

[Simcha (Joy) – Purim Till Pesach 11](#_Toc164368308)

[Festival Preparation 12](#_Toc164368309)

[Connection to Eretz Israel 13](#_Toc164368310)

[The Exile - Beit HaMikdash Connection 13](#_Toc164368311)

[The Wine Connection 14](#_Toc164368312)

[The Prayer connection 15](#_Toc164368313)

[HaShem Hidden And Revealed 16](#_Toc164368314)

[Yetzer HaRa - Exposed And Eliminated 18](#_Toc164368315)

[The Children 19](#_Toc164368316)

[Arba Parashiot Connections 20](#_Toc164368317)

[Hallel 20](#_Toc164368318)

[Night and Day 21](#_Toc164368319)

[Thoughts 22](#_Toc164368320)

[Nazarean Connections 23](#_Toc164368321)

[Conclusion 25](#_Toc164368322)



# Introduction

In this study I would like to examine the connections between Purim and Pesach (Passover). This desire was the result of a question: Why is Pesach always, exactly, thirty days after Purim? The fact that Chazal[[1]](#footnote-1) connect these two festivals is an invitation to understand these connections.

Imagine the Moedim (holidays) as a circle beginning with Pesach in Nisan and ending with Purim in Adar. If the Moedim were arranged in a straight line, Purim would be the furthest from Pesach. In a circle, Purim, the last Moed, is adjacent to Pesach, the first. The Talmud records a discussion as to whether, in a year with two months of Adar, one should mark Purim in the first or second Adar. Normally, one would answer this question without hesitation, as we never delay the performance of a mitzva. And yet, in this one instance, we delay our celebration of Purim to the second Adar, so that it should be closer to our celebration of the holiday of Pesach.

This juxtaposition is not incidental. The unique relationship between Purim and Pesach is alluded to in numerous places. Commenting on the famous Mishnah, “When Adar arrives, joy increases”, Rashi writes “Am Yisrael experienced days of nesim (miracles) on Purim and Pesach”. Esther refers to the events of Purim as occurring in “the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar”,[[2]](#footnote-2) implying that Purim should be celebrated in the twelfth month. Yet, when debating whether to celebrate Purim in the first or second month of Adar during a leap year, our sages explain[[3]](#footnote-3) that it is preferable to celebrate it during the latter “in order to have the redemption of Purim adjacent to the redemption of Pesach”.[[4]](#footnote-4)

I can immediately see that there are several obvious connections:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Purim** | **Pesach** |
| Purim is the *last* holiday of the year. | Pesach is the *first* holiday of the year. |
| Purim Takes place outside Israel in Shushan. | Pesach takes place outside Israel in Egypt. |
| Rava said: A person is obligated to mellow oneself [get drunk] until they do not know the difference between 'cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai.'[[5]](#footnote-5) | The Four Cups represent the four expressions of deliverance promised by God in Exodus 6:6–7: "I will bring out," "I will deliver," "I will redeem," and "I will take." |
| Required to read the megillah twice. | Required to read the Haggada twice in the diaspora. |
| Hidden miracles – Nes nigleh.  | Revealed miracles – Nes nistar. |
| Jews despoiled their enemies. | Jews despoiled their enemies. |
| HaShem is not mentioned. | HaShem is openly mentioned. Moshe is not mentioned in the Haggada. |
| Unusual Hallel – the Megillah. | Unusual Hallel – Divided and read at night. |
| Send food to the poor. | Invite the poor to the seder meal. |
| Takes place at the full moon – Adar 14 / 15. | Takes place at the full moon – Nisan 14 / 15. |
| Torah was accepted on Purim. | Torah was given at the conclusion (atzeret) of Pesach. |
|  | fast and to pray. From this we see that the main point of Purim is the unity of the Bne Israel. |
| ***Esther 4:16*** *go,* ***assemble all*** *of the Jews...* The Jews in Shushan gathered together to | Assembled 20 per house, no Pesach bones broken, Pesach is roasted. |
| The account of Purim and Pesach both contain a ‘hero’ who goes to a despotic ruler to free the Bne Israel: Esther went to King Achashverosh.  | The account of Purim and Pesach both contain a ‘hero’ who goes to a despotic ruler to free the Bne Israel: Moshe went to Paro. |
| Both of the ‘heroes’ had a relative who supported them: Esther was supported by Mordechai. | Both of the ‘heroes’ had a relative who supported them: Moshe was supported by Aharon.  |
| Haman’s treasure was given to Mordecai. | The Egyptian’s treasure was given to the Bne Israel. |
| Both Purim and Pesach anticipate the entrance of the Bne Israel into Eretz Israel, the land of Israel. It was Achashverosh’s son, by Esther, that permitted the return of the Bne Israel to return to Eretz Israel. | Both Purim and Pesach anticipate the entrance of the Bne Israel into Eretz Israel, the land of Israel. Moshe took us out on Pesach and Yehoshua led us into the promised land on Pesach. |
| Curiously, Esther uttered these words at Pesach.***Megillah 15b*** *And stood in the inner court of the king’s house. R. Levi said: When she reached the chamber of the idols, the Divine Presence left her. She said, My G-d, My G-d, why hast thou forsaken me[[6]](#footnote-6).* | Curiously, Mashiach uttered these words at Pesach.***Matityahu (Matthew) 27:46*** *And about the ninth hour Yeshua cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My G-d, my G-d, why hast thou forsaken me?* |
| Esther given the raised scepter after three days. | Mashiach was raised after three days. |
| Purim is the feast of Torah study which draws converts.[[7]](#footnote-7) | Pesach is the feast of Torah study which draws converts.[[8]](#footnote-8) |
| Free will in control because HaShem is hidden. | Free will is lost because HaShem was so palpable. |
| Redemption began with the king’s sleep disturbed at midnight. | Redemption began with the death of the firstborn at midnight. |
| On Purim, there is a custom to bring young children to hear the Megillah reading (Tur 689). Children dress in costumes and make noise with groggers when Haman’s name is mentioned. | On Pesach, the entire Seder is structured to get the children to ask questions ( Pesachim 109a, 115b). The “four questions” which start the Seder, are recited by the youngest child present. The *afikomen* game, where a piece of matzah is held “ransom” by the children of the home, is meant to keep the children involved and excited throughout the Seder. |
| On Purim, the book of Esther directs people to give “matanot l’evyonim”, “gifts to the poor”, which the poor can use to celebrate Purim properly. | On Passover, the Mishnah (Pesachim 99b) tells us that even the poorest person was outfitted with four cups of wine for the Seder. Even though wine is a luxury item that we wouldn’t normally distribute to the poor, we provide it poor people on the eve of Passover so they can celebrate the Seder properly. There is also a custom to collect “maot chittim” “money for wheat”, which was distributed to poor people to supply them with wheat for Matzo and money for the Passover Seder. |
| Purim and Pesach fall on the self-same day, forty-five days after the first of Adar: in a leap year, the forty-fifth day after the first of Adar is Purim. | Purim and Pesach fall on the self-same day, in a non-leap year, the forty-fifth day after the first of Adar is Pesach.  |
| Purim comes two weeks before Rosh Chodesh Nisan. | Pesach comes two weeks after Rosh Chodesh Nisan. |
| A crucial component on the Seder plate is karpas (a green vegetable), and the only time in the entire Tanakh that the word karpas appears is in Esther 1:6. | A crucial component on the Seder plate is karpas (a green vegetable). |
| Destroying our enemies, who are also the enemies of G-d Himself, is one of the inseparable components of redemption. The second redemption, that from Babylonian/Persian exile, climaxed with the Jews of the Persian Empire “striking at all their enemies by the sword, slaughtering and annihilating; they did as they wanted to their enemies”.[[9]](#footnote-9) | Destroying our enemies, who are also the enemies of G-d Himself, is one of the inseparable components of redemption. The first redemption, that from Egypt, climaxed with the death of all Egyptian firstborn sons in the Tenth Plague, and the subsequent drowning of their entire army in the Red Sea a week later.  |
| Purim is focused around the power of people to create their own redemption. | Pesach is about the power of HaShem to guard us and bring us to freedom. |
| Purim’s Megillah has a wine feast. | Pesach’s seder has a wine feast. |
| We read the Megillah to tell the Purim story. This is an halachic requirement. | We read the haggada to tell the Pesach story. This is an halachic requirement. |
| We celebrate this miraculous redemption by reading the Megillah of Esther, giving tzedaka, sending food to our neighbors, and celebrating with wine and costumes. The Halakhic requirements for this festival center on building the unity of the Jewish people. | The Pesach seder focuses on unity: Lamb is roasted (which keeps the meat together). No bones are broken. Need multiple families at the seder. All must remain in the house that night. |
| On Purim we begin studying the laws of Pesach. | The decree and the death of Haman took place on Pesach. |

The account of Purim and Pesach both contain a ‘hero’ who goes to a despotic ruler to free the Bne Israel: Moshe went to Paro and Esther went to King Achashverosh. Both of the ‘heroes’ had a relative who supported them: Esther was supported by Mordechai and Moshe was supported by Aharon. Both accounts have a large treasure moving from the bad guys to the Bne Israel.

It is noteworthy to see that the actual events of the Purimstory, in the book of Esther, took place on Pesach.

The command to begin studying the Halachot[[10]](#footnote-10) of Pesach, and preparing for it, thirty days before Pesach is found in the Shulchan Aruch[[11]](#footnote-11), and the Talmud[[12]](#footnote-12). In fact, The Mishna Berurah[[13]](#footnote-13) adds that one should start on the fourteenth of Adar, which is Purim. The juxtaposition of Purim and Pesach is a Halakhic requirement. In a leap year, Purim is celebrated in the second Adar, the one closest to Nisan, so that the two redemptions will be celebrated in consecutive months[[14]](#footnote-14).

***Megillah 6b*** *The reason of R. Simon b. Gamaliel is that more weight is to be attached to bringing one period of redemption close to another. R. Eleazar said: The reason of R. Simon b. Gamaliel is derived from this verse: to confirm this second letter of Purim[[15]](#footnote-15).*

The Talmud states that it is proper to join the redemption of Purim to the redemption of Pesach. The reason for this connection is that the beginning of Haman’s downfall and the redemption from Egypt both took place in the month of Nisan. Also, the spiritual service that brought about the Purim redemption, Mordechai’s efforts to “go collect all the Jews“, took place in Nisan.

Rabbi Nachman suggests another one of the connections between Purim and Pesach:

***Purim is a preparation for Pesach****. Through the mitzva[[16]](#footnote-16) of Purim we are protected from chametz on Pesach[[17]](#footnote-17).*

Thirty days before Pesach the study of the laws of Pesach takes precedence over other Torah studies. The Maharal of Prague explains that Chazal made this decree because thirty days before Pesach is when the spiritual light of the holiday begins to shine on the world. Thus the light of Pesach begins to shine on Purim.

Purim is the *last* holiday of the year and Pesach is the *first* holiday of the year. Purim comes two weeks before Rosh Chodesh Nisan and Pesach comes two weeks after Rosh Chodesh Nisan. Both holidays celebrate stories of how we were oppressed, and almost wiped out, how we survived and even flourished. In the Purim story, told in the Megillah of Esther, HaShem’s name is never mentioned. In the Passover story, told in the Haggada, Moshe’s name is never mentioned.

The performance of the mitzva of reading the Megillah on Purim is characterized by a number of distinctive customs. The scroll from which the text is read, for example, is folded to look like a letter in order to recreate the experience of reading an actual proclamation. The somber tune of Eicha (Lamentations) is used to sing the verses that describe the exile of the Jews from Jerusalem and Mordecai’s state of mourning after learning of Haman’s decree, similarly emphasizing the performative aspect of the Megillah reading. Most unusual of all, however, is the practice of interrupting the reading by making noise to blot out the very sound of Haman’s name each of the fifty-one times it occurs in the Megillah. Thus, the seemingly straightforward practice in our synagogues today of miqra megillah involves not only reading the biblical Purim story, but reenacting it as well, much as the Haggada is both a retelling and a reliving of the redemption from Egypt.

The redemption of Pesach and the redemption of Purim could not be more different. On Pesach HaShem actively intervened to change the course of history. The Jewish people are almost completely passive throughout the whole process relying on the public miracles of HaShem to redeem them. The role of the Jewish people is so insignificant that at our seder the name of Moshe is not even mentioned. It is as if our Law Giver played no part in the Exodus. On Purim we find the exact opposite situation. There are no overt miracles, the central roles are played by Mordechai and Esther, and the role of HaShem is so much behind the scenes that His Name is nowhere to be found in the Megillah.

At Pesach, at the beginning of the year, we had not yet received the Torah and we were slaves at heart. We were like newborn babes. It was all we could do just to follow HaShem. Without His miracles and His mighty hand we would not be able to escape slavery.

Scroll forward eight-hundred plus years. We have now had the Torah for more than eight-hundred years. We have learned how to trust HaShem even when He has hidden His face. We have proven that we would have accepted the Torah even without the coercion of the mighty Presence of HaShem. We are mature adults who can see the hand of HaShem behind every coincidence. We don’t need miracles any more! We are ready to be redeemed again. It is now the end of the year and we have arrived at Purim.

Both Purim and Pesach take place at the time of a full moon. They are both times when we were glowing brightly in our desire to follow HaShem. At Pesach we followed as trusting children, and at Purim we followed with a mature love born of trials.

Thus we see that the secret of Adar’s Purim and Nisan’s Pesach is contained in a kabbalistic[[18]](#footnote-18) concept that: “The end is wedged in the beginning and the beginning in the end”.[[19]](#footnote-19) The first festival of the year is Pesach and the last is Purim.

On Purim we labor and conceal the hand of HaShem from the whole world, while we ourselves see through the mask of nature. On Pesach we relax and do nothing, and when we do, the hand of HaShem is revealed to the whole world.

Purim is the night and Peach is the day. Purim speaks to us of the exile, the night. Pesach speaks to us of the day, the return to the Promised Land. But, both Purim and Pesach speak of redemption.

On Purim, we read the Scroll of Esther, the Megillat Esther*.* The name *Megillat Esther* means: To revealthat which is hidden. This study will follow this theme: To reveal that which is hidden.

Chazal have established a connection between the festivals of Purim and Pesach. There are several connections that Chazal have taught. In this paper we will explore the various connections that Chazal have revealed. By studying these connections, we can gain much insight into the actions that we should have as we prepare to celebrate these magnificent festivals.

# The Purim Account

The background and events of Purim are found in the book of Esther, which is part of the Tanach.[[20]](#footnote-20) The book of Esther opens with a six month party thrown by the evil king Achashverosh during the Babylonian captivity, after the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash (Temple). This party was to celebrate the passage of seventy years since the beginning of the Babylonian captivity. Most of the king’s subject attended this party, including most Jews.

(Chazal teach us that the reason HaShem permitted Haman to issue his decree against the Jewish people, was because they took pleasure in the king’s feast.)

During this party, Achashverosh orders his queen to appear at the party naked. When she refuses, he has her put to death. Following her death, Achashverosh decides to have a beauty contest to select a new queen. Esther, the wife of Mordechai is selected to be the new queen.

During this time, Haman, the Agagite, becomes upset because Mordechai refuse to bow down to him. He becomes so upset that he pays king Achashverosh a great sum of silver, 10,000 talents, to order the destruction of every Jew in the world. The decree to annihilate the Jews is signed on Nisan 13. The decree is to be executed on Adar 13, in eleven months.

When Mordechai hears of this evil decree, he informs the Esther the queen and indicates that it is her responsibility to help bring deliverance to the Jews. Esther decides to see the king unannounced, thereby putting her life in danger. Before going to the king, she asks the Jews in Shushan to fast for three days: Nisan 13, Nisan 14, and Nisan 15. The third day, Nisan 15, is Pesach!

Esther throws a wine party for Achashverosh and Haman, on two consecutive nights. On the second night she requests that king Achashverosh spare the Jews. When king Achashverosh hears that Esther is a Jew and that Haman has conspired against the Jews, he gives the Jews the ability to defend themselves, and he orders that Haman be hung on the gallows that Haman prepared for the hanging of Mordechai.

In the end, the Jews destroy their enemies and HaShem delivers His People from the hand of Achashverosh and Haman, on Adar 14 and 15 – Purim and Shushan Purim. Mordechai orders that these events be commemorated every year as the holiday of Purim.

We celebrate this miraculous redemption by reading the Megillah of Esther, giving tzedaka, sending food to our neighbors, and celebrating with wine and costumes. The Halakhic requirements for this festival center on building the unity of the Jewish people.

The story of Purim is unique in that each segment of this historical drama appears to be coincidental and unrelated to the balance of the narrative. HaShem’s name does not appear in the text, and the miraculous nature of Purim is only detected by piecing together all of the events and realizing that each occurrence was a purposeful piece in HaShem’s puzzle for bringing Bne Israel near to Him and redeeming them.

Purim is a time when the Bne Israel accepted the Torah without any coercion. It is a time of hidden miracles. It is a time when we were redeemed because we merited redemption. It was our teshuva, our repentance, and our unity which were seen by HaShem. He redeemed us, but He made it look like a series of coincidences in history. He wanted it to look like the Bne Israel had saved themselves. But they knew better. The Bne Israel had raised themselves to the level where they knew it was the hand of HaShem as clearly as they saw the hand of HaShem at Pesach when HaShem’s miracles openly revealed Him.

The Bne Israel united and stood, again, as one man before HaShem. They stood as a repentant Adam, totally united to do the will of HaShem. They stood for HaShem without being taken to the Promised Land. They stood for HaShem despite having all of their other troubles to confront them. They were not removed from their troubles and given a reward. Instead they praised HaShem in the place that they found themselves. This was a mighty miracle that was completely hidden from the world. Esther comes from a root that means *hidden*. Everything about this feast and it’s redemption was hidden. HaShem was hidden. The miracles were hidden, and still we looked to HaShem and His Torah. This was the redemption of Purim!

Purim shows us that what appears to be natural and coincidental is truly supernatural.

Finally, the Purim redemption is called *hippuch*, in Hebrew. The most difficult and elusive of all the various terms for redemption seems to be *hippuch* The Purim particular redemption was a *hippuch,* which literally means *reversal*. On a simple level, this refers to a situation where the Bne Israel have not only been saved from harm, but have used the situation for their own benefit. We see that on the very day, of the very same month, that the decree against Israel was to take place, the decree would be turned around for their benefit, but not prior to that date. We see that on the gallows prepared for Mordechai, Haman is hung, and on the very day that had been planned for Mordechai.

# The Pesach Account

The Torah records the events that led up to the Pesach events in the days of Moshe.[[21]](#footnote-21)

The Jews were enslaved by Paro[[22]](#footnote-22) after the death of Joseph. After a generation of suffering, HaShem sends Moshe and Aaron to redeem the Jews from Egypt. The redemption begins with ten plagues which take place over the span of a year. The tenth plague is the death of every firstborn child and beast in the kingdom of Egypt.

Though Paro had been recalcitrant through nine of the plagues, after the tenth plague he freed the Jews so that they could leave Egypt and serve HaShem at Mount Sinai.

On the fateful night when HaShem went through Egypt to slay the firstborn, the Bne Israel were eating the Pesach lamb which had some very special requirements: The Pesach offering was eaten in one house, and only by the family group that was registered for that particular animal[[23]](#footnote-23). Something which indicates unity must be concentrated in one place. The Pesach offering was taken from a one year-old sheep or goat.[[24]](#footnote-24) The number one indicates unity. The Pesach offering was roasted over fire.[[25]](#footnote-25) Cooking in water causes meat to become soggy and the pieces separate. Roasting over the fire draws out the juices and the meat becomes consolidated, another indication of unity. It was prohibited to break any of the bones of the Pesach offering.[[26]](#footnote-26) Again, anything whole and not broken is an indication of unity.

Along with the lamb, we also eat matza, unleavened bread. Chametz, the leaven, represents the yetzer hara, the evil inclination. The yetzer hara is what declares that it was *my* sweat that earned my daily bread. The yetzer hara declares that it is *my* eloquent speech which turned the heart of the king. The yetzer hara declares that it was *my* charm which caused my spouse to fall for me. In short, the yetzer hara drives me to be an individualist, not a communal citizen. The yetzer hara is the destroyer of unity! Thus at Pesach we refrain from chametz, the yetzer hara. Now we can understand why Rabbi Nachman declared that Purim protects us from chametz on Pesach. If we absorb the lesson of Purim that the hand of HaShem is behind every event, we will be well on our way towards negating the chametz, our yetzer hara.

We celebrate the miraculous Pesach redemption by telling the story of this redemption while drinking four cups of wine, every year on the fifteenth of Nisan. The Halakhic requirements center around the removal of leaven and the telling of this miraculous redemption.

After the miraculous plagues, HaShem again showed His mighty wonders at the Reed Sea. Chazal teach that HaShem performed many more miracles on the day He split the sea:

***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XXIII:9*** *Another explanation of THEN SANG MOSES. It is written, The Lord hath made Himself known, He hath executed judgment (Ps. IX, 17)2; this refers to the Egyptians on whom G-d executed judgment in Egypt and also by the Sea. R. Joshua said: The ten plagues with which the Egyptians were smitten in Egypt were wrought with one finger, for it says, Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh: This is the finger of G-d (Ex. VIII, 15); but at the Sea, they were smitten with fifty plagues, for it says, And Israel saw the great hand [work] (ib. XIV, 31). There are five fingers to one hand, and five times ten are fifty.*

HaShem then led us into the wilderness where we counted forty-nine days. As we counted, we worked on our spiritual qualities so that we would be able to stand unified at Sinai.

On Shavuot, which Chazal call *atzeret* - the conclusion of Pesach, we were unified so completely that the Torah was given to us. The moment the Bne Israel arrived at Mount Sinai, it is written:

***Shemot 19:2*** *For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.*

Rashi, noting how the word “encamped” (vayichan) is written in singular form, tell us “as one man, as one heart”. What an awesome thing! The Bne Israel are standing at Mount Sinai about to receive the Torah, and the Torah reveals to us[[27]](#footnote-27) that this particular situation was unlike any other. This time there were no quarrels, no bickering. Everyone is united for one idea and goal.

Thus we can understand that Pesach teaches us that we must stand as one man before HaShem. We must be unified in His Torah, which is Mashiach.

# Chronology (According to Meam Loez)

One of the connections between Purim and Pesach is the chronology of the events surrounding these two festivals. The timing is no accident. HaShem has caused the events to teach us eternal lessons about Himself and about His Torah.

The following are the basic events surrounding these two festivals:

**Nisan 13**

Haman buys the order for the destruction of the Jews. He will be hung in seventy days in 3404. ***Esther 3:7-12***

Esther has Mordecai and the Jews fast for three days before seeing the king. ***Esther 4:16***

**Nisan 14**

King Achashverosh has his sleep disturbed. ***Esther 6:1***

Jews fast for a second day. ***Esther 4:16***

Mordecai is honored by Haman and king Achashverosh. ***Esther 5:1 - 6:10***

Esther invites king Achashverosh and Haman to her wine feast on the second day. ***Esther 5:1-4,*** *Seder Olam 29*

**Nisan 15**

**Pesach / Hag ha-Matza**.

*Leviticus 23:6-7* *Exodus 12:17-20*

Vashti is executed by King Achashverosh. ***Esther 1:21****; Derash le-Purim*

Mordecai and the Jews fast for the third and last day. ***Esther 4:16***

Esther invites king Achashverosh and Haman to her second wine feast on the third day. ***Esther 5:1-4,*** *Seder Olam 29*

King Achashverosh kills Haman. ***Esther 5:5-5***

Haman was hanged in 3404. ***Esther 7:10****, Seder Olam 29*

Mordecai becomes chief minister in place of Haman. ***Esther 8:2***

Full moon

**Sivan 23**

Mordechai’s edict to save the Jews is written. Haman’s seventy days are up. ***Esther 8:9-11***

**Adar 13**

The Jews defeat their enemies in the days of Esther and Mordechai.

**Adar 14**

The Jews of Shushan battle a second day to defeat their enemies.

The Jews of the rest of the world celebrate their victory of the first day.

We begin to inquire about the laws of. Pesach

**Adar 15**

The Jews of Shushan celebrate their victory.

Full moon.

From this chronology we can see that several of the Purim events took place during Pesach, yet none of the major Pesach events took place during Purim. The closest that we come is that the plague of darkness began on Adar I. This suggests that Pesach is the central focus of Purim. It is almost as if HaShem is distracting us from Pesach by calling attention to Purim. This provides us with a compelling reason to study Purim to determine why HaShem views it as a very special holiday. The plague of darkness only serves to emphasize that Adar is a time of hiddenness. The Purim redemption thus appears to be a preparation for the Pesach redemption.

# Pesach and Purim Redemptions

The Torah and the Haggada both describe many miraculous redemptions which took place during Pesach. Some took place before the redemption in the days of Moshe, and some took place after those events. Let’s examine the redemptions that occurred on Pesach as delineated in the Haggada:

The Haggada begins by describing our redemption from Egypt in the days of Moshe. What other redemptions and outstanding happenings occurred on various Pesach nights in the course of our history? The following lists details some of the events:

1. Avraham defeated the four Canaanite kings (Bereshit 14);
2. G-d warned Abimelech the king of Gerar regarding Sarah (Bereshit 21);
3. Laban was warned not to harm Yaakov “in the dark of night (Bereshit 31);”
4. Yaakov triumphed over the angel of Esau (Bereshit 33);
5. The first born of Egypt were destroyed at midnight (Shemot 11 and 12);
6. Sisera’s army was defeated (Shoftim 4);
7. Sancherib’s armies were annihilated (II Melachim 19);
8. the collapse of Nebuchadnezzar’s giant idol Bel;
9. Daniel’s revelation;
10. Belshazzar’s assassination;
11. Daniel’s deliverance from the den of lions;
12. Haman’s ultimate downfall (Achashverosh’s sleep was disturbed).

On the second night of Pesach we read about some other redemptions:

1. Avraham was promised a redeemer – Yitzhak.
2. Lot and his family were delivered from Sodom.
3. Yehoshua besieged Jericho.
4. Midian was destroyed.
5. Haman was hung on Pesach.

The Torah also indicates that Edom will be destroyed on Pesach. Edom is the last place of exile. Thus the destruction of Edom is the end of the exile.

Thus we see that Pesach is the time designated for the redemption of the Bne Israel. The Pesach redemption is accomplished solely by the hand of HaShem. It is a time of open miracles with HaShem giving the Bne Israel redemption as free gift. It is not based on their merits, because we had no merits. We were saved based upon the merits of our forefathers. We were saved because of an oath HaShem made to Avraham.

In the Purim redemption although we remained subjects of Achashverosh we were liberated because we were bound to HaShem through His Torah and mitzvot, the state of subjugation to Achashverosh was completely negated. The Bne Israel “would not bend or bow,” for they were servants of HaShem, and the servant of a king is himself a king.[[28]](#footnote-28)

The Exodus from Egypt was a complete liberation. More than emancipation from slavery, it was a true and complete redemption.

# Torah Acceptance

***Esther 9:27*** *The Jews fulfilled and accepted upon themselves ... to observe these days of Purim...*

***Talmud, Shabbat 88a*** *“Fulfilled and accepted”--they fulfilled (on Purim) that which they had already accepted back then (at Sinai)*

Our Sages teach that the Bne Israel accepted the Torah, without coercion, on Purim. This connection between Purim and Pesach is best understood if we keep in mind that Shavuot is the *atzeret*, the conclusion, of Pesach.

The Bne Israel accepted the Torah at Sinai in the days of Moshe, at Shavuot. The Torah[[29]](#footnote-29) tells us that prior to the revelation at Sinai, the people of Israel “stood beneath the mountain”. How does one stand “beneath” a mountain? The Talmud[[30]](#footnote-30) interprets this to mean that “HaShem held the mountain over them like a jar and said to them: ‘If you accept the Torah, fine; if not, here shall be your grave’”.

Because of the miracles and the manifest presence of HaShem, there was no way to deny the revelation. They were literally *forced* to accept the Torah because they saw the thunders and felt the presence of HaShem. This is a little bit like saying that one is forced to jump out of a window because the flames behind him are so compelling. He really did not have any free will regarding the decision to jump.

At Purim time in the days of Esther and Mordechai, the presence of HaShem was completely absent, yet the Bne Israel did teshuva[[31]](#footnote-31) and accepted the yoke of Torah without duress. This is described in the Talmud:

***Shabbat 88a*** *And they stood under the mount: R. Abdimi b. Hama b. Hasa said: This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, overturned the mountain upon them like an [inverted] cask, and said to them,’ If ye accept the Torah, ‘tis well; if not, there shall be your burial’. R. Aha b. Jacob observed: This furnishes a strong protest against the Torah.[[32]](#footnote-32) Said Raba, Yet even so, they re-accepted it in the days of Achashverosh, for it is written, [the Jews] confirmed, and took upon them [etc.]:[[33]](#footnote-33) [i.e.,] they confirmed what they had accepted long before.*

In the above passage it states that at the time of the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai, the Jewish people only accepted Torah from fear of HaShem; at Purim time, they re-accepted Torah out of love.

When the Bne Israel responded to Esther’s request by gathering together to study Torah. We learn from this that although Jewish unity results from a spiritual connection shared by our people, the conscious establishment of unity requires the medium of Torah. This unity is seen mystically in Mashiach:

***Romans 12:1-5*** *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of G-d, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto G-d, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of G-d. 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as G-d hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Mashiach, and every one members one of another.*

Our diligence in Torah study and the performance of the mitzvot prove our acceptance of the Torah and of Mashiach! Our acceptance of our Purim obligations at Purim time, are the proof of our acceptance of Torah. When we accept Torah when the hand of HaShem is completely hidden we demonstrate true acceptance.

Torah Unity

At Mt. Sinai the Jewish people achieved a sense of complete unity, as may be seen from the verse, “And Israel camped there before the mountain”.[[34]](#footnote-34) In this verse, the Torah uses the singular form of the verb ‘camped’ (vayichan), rather than the expected plural form.[[35]](#footnote-35) Since our people had risen to the level where they were thus “like one man, with one heart”,[[36]](#footnote-36) the singular form here becomes, for the first time, appropriate.

On Purim we also achieved unity.

In order to cancel the decree that was enacted by Haman and King Achashverosh it was necessary to:

***Esther 4:16*** *go,* ***assemble all*** *of the Jews...*

The Jews in Shushan gathered together to fast and to pray. From this we see that the main point of Purim is the unity of the Bne Israel.

There are four mitzvot that every Jew involves themselves with on Purim:

1. reading the Megillah,
2. making a drinking party,
3. sending food gifts to friends and neighbors, and
4. giving tzedaka to the needy.

These four are not just four random mitzvot, but rather are linked together in accordance to the theme of Purim which is unity, being all together.

On Purim we achieved unity by obeying the commands of Esther and Mordechai, by reasserting that the oral Torah was every bit as binding as the written Torah. As the written Torah provided unity at Sinai (concluding Pesach), so the oral Torah provided unity at Purim.

# Simcha (Joy) – Purim Till Pesach

The month of Adar is introduced to us by the famous statement that the Jewish people are bidden *to increase manifestations of simcha, of joy*. This is certainly understandable since the month of Adar contains within its days the great festive day of Purim and celebrates our deliverance from destruction and annihilation by Haman. If deliverance from national destruction is a cause for simcha, and it certainly ought to be, then the month of Nisan should also have as its introductory note the command *to increase manifestations of simcha*. For the month of Nisan, with the holiday of Pesach enshrined within it, is certainly the commemorative moment on HaShem’s calendar. It contains within it our deliverance from Egyptian bondage and the seemingly inevitable destruction of the Jewish people. Therefore, if there is ever a moment of simcha in the Jewish year, it certainly appears that Nisan and Pesach should occupy that role.

***Taanit 29a*** *WITH THE BEGINNING OF AB REJOICINGS ARE CURTAILED. Rab Judah the son of R. Samuel b. Shilath said in the name of Rab: Just as with the beginning of Ab rejoicings are curtailed, so with the beginning of Adar rejoicings are increased.*

Rashi explains that the increased level of simcha continues through the days of Purim and includes Pesach, underscoring the close connection between these two festivals.

The *nesim nistarim*, the hidden miracles, of Purim teach us that not everything that appears bad, is truly bad. A situation that appeared to spell doom and gloom, was completely turned around. Not only was the evil negated, but “the exact opposite occurred, when the Jews ruled over their enemies”.[[37]](#footnote-37) All we need to do is to look through the situation to see the hand of HaShem. Thus the miracles of Purim should cause us to increase our simcha. Additionally, we will no sooner be done with the miracles of Purim when we will encounter the miracles of Pesach. These thirty days are filled with miracle after miracle. Miracles that should lead us to simcha because they signal our redemption.

The awesomeness of the open miracles of Pesach were too lofty for us to enjoy. They not only terrified the Egyptians, but they put the Bne Israel into an extreme state of awe and trepidation. We were so awed by them that we found it difficult to be in a state of simcha. However, the subtle miracles of Purim left us in an extreme state of simcha.

We rejoice in our redemption, but we did not rejoice that our enemies have been destroyed. We rejoiced *that the exile had ended*. Pesach is coming! It is a prelude to the final redemption which will witness the rebirth and regeneration of the Bne Israel as it **rejoices** in the arrival of the King Mashiach.

Now *simcha* and miracles have something in common: Both ***shatter barriers***. When a person is in a state of simcha, he is capable of achieving more than when he is depressed. He can go beyond the *limitations* that are imposed upon him, such as liking a person he normally dislikes or doing a project that he did not want to do.

# Festival Preparation

Another interesting connection between Purim and Pesach is found in a command that teaches us that Purim is the beginning of the period when one is required to begin reviewing the laws of Pesach.

***Sanhedrin 12b*** *From Purim to Pesach is thirty days. From Purim, one should start learning the laws of Pesach. ...*

The Shulchan Aruch[[38]](#footnote-38) states that thirty days before Pesach, we are to discuss the laws of the holiday. The Mishneh Berurah,**[[39]](#footnote-39)** commenting on this law, states that we are to begin this study specifically on Purim; we are, in effect, to begin our preparations for Pesach on Purim. It is also observable that most Jews begin Pesach preparations, like cleaning, thirty days before Pesach, as well.

If one is not familiar with the Biblical calendar, he may not realize that seven out of nineteen years, we add an extra month in Adar, called Adar II. Since Purim falls in Adar, one could assume that Purim remains in Adar, since we avoid delaying the performance of a mitzva. However, this is not the case. In an intercalated year when we add Adar II, we push off Purim into Adar II. Thus Purim is always thirty days before Pesach. In a leap year, Purim is celebrated in the second Adar, the one closest to Nisan, so that the two redemptions, from Paro and from Haman, will be celebrated in consecutive months[[40]](#footnote-40).

Additionally, it seems that the timing of Pesach actually played a role in the date that Haman chose for executing his evil plans. The Megillah states that Haman drew lots “from day-to-day and month-to-month”:

***Esther 3:7*** *In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Achashverosh, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.*

Our Sages explain that he first tried to determine what day of the week would be a propitious time to eliminate the Bne Israel. To do this, he put the names of the days of the week in one box and eight lots in another box. Seven of these were blank, while the eighth said, “To destroy, to kill, and to eliminate”. But his plan failed; all of the lots he drew from the second box came up blank. He then used a similar lottery to choose a month, and the month of Adar came up.

Why Adar? Some Hakhamim[[41]](#footnote-41) have suggested that since the Bne Israel deserved to be destroyed, it was the undoing of the process that had begun in Egypt, at Pesach, in what the Torah calls “the first month”, i.e., Nisan, many centuries before. Since the nation was born in the first month of the Jewish year, Nisan, it was fitting to destroy it in the last month of the Jewish year, Adar.

# Connection to Eretz Israel

Both Purim and Pesach anticipate the entrance of the Bne Israel into Eretz Israel, the land of Israel.

It was Achashverosh’s son, by Esther, that permitted the return of the Bne Israel to return to Eretz Israel.

The Purim connection to Eretz Israel is further emphasized by Chazal in the halacha regarding Shushan Purim. The ones who celebrate Shushan Purim are the ones who lived in cities in Eretz Israel that were walled in the time of Yehoshua ben Nun. Yehoshua led the Bne Israel into Eretz Israel, so it is fitting that Chazal should use this time period for those who celebrate Shushan Purim.

Miracles that occurred *in the kingdom of Achashverosh* remain under the cloak of bondage. Only through remembrance of the Eretz Israel, its walled cities from the time of Yehoshua, and the renewed effort to rebuild Jerusalem can the holiday of Purim be noted and celebrated properly.

In the same way, when the Bne Israel left Egypt at Pesach, their ultimate destination was Eretz Israel. The Torah they received at Sinai contained many laws that could only be fulfilled in Eretz Israel.

# The Exile - Beit HaMikdash Connection

Occurring at the close of the seventy-year Babylonian-Persian exile, the Purim miracle signaled upcoming salvation.[[42]](#footnote-42) Indeed, Darius, the Persian king who allowed Nechemia to complete the second Beit HaMikdash, was Queen Esther’s son by Achashverosh.[[43]](#footnote-43)

Likewise, the Pesach in the days of Moshe occurred shortly before the building of the Mishkan.

The unique thing which connects these two sanctuaries was the requirement that the people be unified. Indeed, each of these structures represent Mashiach whose body is composed of the Bne Israel, unified into a single structure. The Nazarean Codicil speaks to this issue:

***Yochanan (John) 2:19-21*** *Yeshua answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body.*

***I Corinthians 12:27*** *Now ye are the body of Mashiach, and members in particular.*

The Talmud tells us that the disunity of the Bne Israel and their lack of love for one another, led to the destruction of the second Beit HaMikdash:

***Yoma 9b*** *But why was the second Sanctuary destroyed, seeing that in its time they were occupying themselves with Torah, [observance of] precepts, and the practice of charity? Because therein prevailed hatred without cause.*

According to *Megillah* 11b, the parties hosted by Achashverosh early in Megillat Esther celebrated the fact that, according to his calculations, the seventy years prophetically allotted for Babylonian-Persian exile had ended, yet Israel’s redemption had not materialized.

***Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) 25:11-12*** *And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith HaShem, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.*

***Megillah 11b*** *In those days, when the king sat [on his throne]. [How can this be] seeing that it says just afterwards, in the third year of his reign? — Raba said: What is meant by ‘when he sat’? After he began to feel secure. He reasoned thus: ‘Belshazzar calculated and made a mistake; l have calculated and made no mistake’ — What is the meaning of this? — It is written, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon I will remember you, and it is written, That He would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years. He reckoned forty-five years of Nebuchadnezzar and twenty-three of Evil Merodoch and two of his own, making seventy in all. He then brought out the vessels of the Temple and used them.*

In this spirit, Achashverosh served his guests using the vessels of the Beit HaMikdash, thereby urging the Bne Israel to despair of redemption and cast its lot with Persia. In fact, Achashverosh’s party was deliberately designed to imitate the Beit HaMikdash.[[44]](#footnote-44) Whereas the Beit HaMikdash united the Bne Israel, Achashverosh’s party separated them from themselves and from HaShem.

So, if we desire to see the Mashiach and His Beit HaMikdash, let us strive to unite the Bne Israel in love. When we celebrate Purim and Pesach is the perfect time to achieve this goal. as HaShem has put this energy into the world on these two festivals.

# The Wine Connection

***Pesachim 109a*** *Rabbi Yehuda Ben Beteira said: When the Holy Temple stood, there was no rejoicing without meat, as it says,[[45]](#footnote-45) “You shall slaughter offerings and eat them there and rejoice before HaShem your G-d.” Now that the Holy Temple is not standing, there is no rejoicing without wine, as it says,[[46]](#footnote-46) “Wine makes the heart of man rejoice”.*

***Eruvin 65a*** *When wine goes in, the secret comes out.*

We are taught that there are “seventy faces to the Torah”.[[47]](#footnote-47) The word for wine in Hebrew, יין yayin, equals seventy, as does the word sod, ‘secret’. The statement, “When wine goes in the secret comes out”, can be understood to mean that the proper consumption of wine with the right spiritual intentions draws forth from within us new insights into the seventy facets of Torah, the inner, secret dimensions of the Torah.

Purim is about reaching into the level of Sod, Kabbalah, of achieving such intellectual clarity that even Haman is seen as a vehicle of HaShem to help the Jewish people do teshuva and choose redemption.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Wine is taken by the Bne Israel whenever they transition from their current spiritual state to a higher spiritual state. Therefore, taking wine at Purim and Pesach is done with the specific intent to move to a spiritually higher state. We drink more wine on Purim and Pesach than at any other time. This larger than normal intake of wine forms a connection between Purim and Pesach.

Wine plays a crucial role in the Purim celebration and a crucial part in the book of Esther. Additionally, Pesach is famous for the four cups of wine which we drink at the seder. Yet there is a difference, essentially, that in the case of Purim, the purpose of wine is to dull our senses, whereas in the case of Pesach, it is to heighten our awareness.

In connection with Purim, the Talmud says, “A person is obligated to drink until he doesn’t know the difference between ‘Cursed be Haman’ and ‘Blessed be Mordechai’”. On Pesach, the four cups of wine represent the four expressions of redemption which the Torah uses, namely:

“I took you out”,

“I saved you”,

“I redeemed you” and

“I took you for Myself as a People.”

On Purim, drinking of wine is used in conjunction with the idea of *Hester panim*, of masquerade, of changing the identity, of confusion and forgetting. On Pesach, wine is used to bring into sharp focus the different aspects and nuances of redemption, so that we can fulfill the commandment to tell the story of our Exodus from Egypt to our children and grand-children.

Like all Biblical holy days, it is a mitzva to have a seuda (great big meal) on Purim including meat. In addition, this seuda includes lots of wine, more than we normally take for kiddush. The Purim feast must be held during the day, usually after Mincha (afternoon prayers). This Purim meal is different, in that not only do we eat, but we also drink.

Throughout the Purim story, wine is a key factor in the drama. It’s Achashverosh’s drunken demand that Vashti show off that brings her downfall and clears the way for Esther to become queen. It’s again a wine feast that Esther invites Haman and the king to, which results in Haman’s downfall.

Because the miracle of Purim came through wine, we drink lots of wine on Purim:

\* Vashti’s downfall came as a result of a wine feast.

\* Haman’s downfall came as a result of a wine feast.

The Hakhamim of the Talmud said: “On Purim, one should drink “until he can no longer tell the difference between ‘Cursed be Haman’ and ‘Blessed be Mordechai’”.[[49]](#footnote-49)

The time and place for wine drinking is the festive meal, one of the four observances of Purim. **Each observance, or mitzva, is designed to increase feelings of unity amongst the Jewish nation**. After the other three have been fulfilled, the Jew sits down at his meal and drinks. The last barriers break down and a feeling of unity and connection prevails.

Pesach begins with the seder’s four cups of wine and completes with the giving of the Torah on Sinai, where the Bne Israel stood as *one man* in complete unity.

# The Prayer connection

Both on Purim and on Pesach, the turning point of the story hinges on prayer. Hashem first calls on Moshe to return from Midian to lead the Exodus only after the Jewish people literally screamed out to him in heartfelt prayer.

***Shemot (Exodus) 2:23*** *And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they* ***cried****, and their* ***cry*** *came up unto God by reason of the bondage.*

***Shemot (Exodus) 3:7*** *And HaShem said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which [are] in Egypt, and have heard their* ***cry*** *by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;*

***Shemot (Exodus) 3:9*** *Now therefore, behold, the* ***cry*** *of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.*

So too, Esther did not approach Achashverosh until the Jewish people fasted and cried out in prayer, for seventy-two consecutive hours, as is referenced in the ninth chapter of the Megillah:

***Esther 9:31*** *to confirm these days of Purim in their appointed times, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had ordained for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their* ***cry****.*

# HaShem Hidden And Revealed

In **Purim**, HaShem and His hand is so hidden that His name is not even mentioned in the book of Esther. Never the less, HaShem surely delivered His people in a miraculous way. This type of miracle is called a *Nes nistar* - נסתר נס, a hidden miracle.

The Bne Israel in Babylon were threatened with extinction by Haman. Enraged by Mordechai’s refusal to bow to him, Haman persuaded Achashverosh to exterminate all the Jews.[[50]](#footnote-50) The basic facts indicated that Mordechai was to blame for the terrible death threat. In reality, however, the Bne Israel were doomed because they enjoyed the banquet of Achashverosh,[[51]](#footnote-51) which had taken place nine years earlier. When told of this by Mordechai, the Bne Israel accepted this improbable cause, and repented by fasting and reaccepting the Torah. HaShem, through a *nes nistar*, reversed their fate, allowing the Bne Israel to prevail over their enemies, leading to the joy of Adar and Purim.[[52]](#footnote-52)

On the other hand, at Pesach, the hand of HaShem was so palpable that He cannot be missed in the miracles. This type of miracle is called a *Nes nigleh* - נגלה נס, a revealed miracle when the laws of nature are suspended.

When the Bne Israel left Egypt, the logical strategy was to flee. Yet when Moshe told them to move closer to their pursuers, they said: we rely only on the words of Moshe.[[53]](#footnote-53) This led to the Nes nigleh of Kiryat Yam Suf, the splitting of the Sea of Reeds.

The connections between Purim and Pesach are emphasized by the miracles that were involved in both of these festivals. In Purim, the nesim (miracles) were so hidden that a skeptic could claim it was all coincidence. At Pesach, the nesim were so obvious that the entire world was aware of them. This dramatic difference between the nesim of Purim and Pesach is no accident.

The juxtaposition of Purim and Pesach is a Halakhic requirement. In a leap year, Purim is celebrated in the second Adar, the one closest to Nisan, so that the two redemptions, from Paro (Pesach) and from Haman (Purim), will be celebrated thirty days apart.[[54]](#footnote-54)

This halacha reflects a fundamental articulated by the Ramban:[[55]](#footnote-55)

*“And therefore the Torah states regarding the miracles: ‘You will realize that I am G-d, right here on earth,’ to indicate G-d’s Providence that He has not left (the world) to incidental occurrences, as they believed. And the Torah states: ‘You will then know that the whole world belongs to G-d,’ to indicate renewal, that they are His that He created from nothing. And the verse states: “So that you will know that there is none like Me in all the world,” to indicate His ability, that He controls everything, nothing can restrain Him – for the Egyptians either denied all this or were doubtful as to these truths. Thus the signs and great miracles bore faithful testimony to faith in the Creator and in the entire Torah.” [[56]](#footnote-56)*

From the great and obvious miracles, a person should recognize the hidden miracles as the hand of HaShem, which are the basis of the entire Torah. Pesach, the anniversary of HaShem’s nesim niglim (revealed miracles), must be connected to Purim, the holiday of nesim nistarim. While Pesach is the ultimate manifestation of a Nes nigleh, Purim is the prime example of a Nes nistar. Our job is to not only connect the two miracles on the calendar, but to connect them thematically. Just as at Pesach HaShem revealed a great miracle, so too, the events of Purim revealed a great hidden miracle since we were able to see the awesome hand of HaShem behind the scene.

In Ramban’s[[57]](#footnote-57) view, there exists a relationship between a Nes nigleh and a Nes nistar. Since the Nes nigleh is an obvious wonder, those who see this type of miracle undergo a change in their understanding in which three fundamentals of belief are confirmed:

1. HaShem exists and is powerful,
2. HaShem knows man individually,
3. HaShem shows individual providence (*Hashgacha Pratit*).

After one has internalized these three beliefs he is able to recognize the less obvious interventions, of HaShem, in his daily life through nesim nistarim. Thus the nes nigleh of Pesach is only understood once we have undergone a change of our understanding upon experiencing the miracles of Pesach. Hence these two festivals are intentionally connected to help us understand that HaShem is behind all of history and that His nesim are with us at all times.

Jewish tradition teaches that the miracle of Purim is actually greater than the miracles of Pesach because the ultimate revelation of HaShem’s power and ever-presence is when He does not have to interfere. This is the meaning of the Megillat Esther, the revelation of hiddenness. Hidden within the natural world is HaShem’s presence. Within the free choice of people, HaShem’s will and plan are being completely fulfilled, step-by-step, for our benefit:

***Romans 8:26-28*** *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of HaShem. 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love HaShem, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

The final redemption, with its miracles, reflects the fusion of the redemptions and miracles of both Pesach and Purim. In the final redemption the forces of nature will be transcended and yet not nullified, in order that the redemption be complete and not partial. This will be revealed in the era of the final redemption when:

***Micah 7:15*** *According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvelous things.*

At that time there will be a revelation from above which resembles, and transcends the miracles of the exodus from Egypt. Simultaneously, those nesim will be connected with Purim when the transformation, not the nullification, of the world as reflected by the prophecy:

***Zephaniah 3:9*** *For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of HaShem, to serve him with one consent.*

# Yetzer HaRa - Exposed And Eliminated

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto, the Ramchal, in his book “The Way of G-d”, describes the role of the yetzer hara in man’s quest for perfection.

“Man is the creature created for the purpose of being drawn close to HaShem. He is placed between perfection and deficiency, with the power to earn perfection. Man must earn this perfection, however, through his own free will... Man’s inclinations are therefore balanced between good [yetzer HaTov] and evil [yetzer hara], and he is not compelled toward either of them. He has the power of choice and is able to choose either side knowingly and willingly...”

Chazal teach that there are opposing inclinations within every man, both a yetzer tov, and a yetzer hara. HaShem created the yetzer hara in order to challenge us to rise above it. The yetzer hara is the source of all our unproductive worry, lust, and negative desires. We strive to conceal the yetzer hara and pretend that we have only a yetzer tov. On Purim we reveal this hidden side in order to mock it.

The idea of ignoring external actions and looking at what really lies behind them is the whole reason for costumes at Purim time. Just as the hand of HaShem was concealed behind the mask of nature in the days of Esther and Mordechai, so also is our yetzer hara concealed from the world. We wear a yetzer tov mask and pretend that the yetzer hara does not exist. HaShem wants us to harness the yetzer hara for beneficial purposes. He wants us to be driven by the yetzer hara to get married, but to control lust and to use its power to build a family and to build the world. The world needs the yetzer hara. Our job is to control it and not let it control us. We must wear it as a costume where everyone can see that we are in control of this outer mask. On Purim we show that the yetzer hara is only skin deep and that we are in control of this powerful urge, in order to do the will of HaShem.

Our yetzer hara binds us and limits our ability to be able to connect with HaShem. This yetzer hara maintains us in a state of spiritual darkness, separated from HaShem’s life-sustaining energy. We can attain freedom from this enslavement only through elevating ourselves above our current limitations, by learning Torah and doing the mitzvot in the service of HaShem.

The yetzer hara comes to different people in different costumes. To a person who’s on a very simple level, the yetzer hara might come in the form of eating non-kosher food at work. Here is a person who’s not really committed to keeping kosher. His yetzer hara comes in the form of a non-kosher food. For another person that might not be a yetzer hara attraction at all. That particular weakness he never had, or has already overcome. His yetzer hara might be this tremendous urge to skip prayers or Torah study in favor of watching television.

The whole point of wearing costumes on Purim is to reveal our yetzer hara, to mock how the rest of the year we pretend to be what we are not. Purim is the great exposure of the hidden yetzer hara, and more importantly, of the hidden hand of HaShem that shapes destiny and directs the affairs of man, from *behind* the scenes.

Chametz is eliminated on Pesach. Chametz represents the yetzer hara. Therefore, on Pesach we strive to go a week without a yetzer hara. We are so overwhelmed by the miracles that it is as though we have no yetzer hara. In the final redemption, HaShem will take away this yetzer hara.

***Tractate Kiddushin 30b*** *“So said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Israel: ‘My son, I created the Yetzer Hara and I created for it the Torah as an antidote. If you toil in Torah you will not be handed over into his hands...’ “*

At Purim we are to use Torah to see and control our yetzer hara in the same way that HaShem controlled the world, while remaining concealed behind the mask of nature. We get this control using Torah when we see no other help for us. We do this when we do not have any overt miracles to assist us. Our yetzer hara took us to Achashverosh’s party and made us believe that HaShem had abandoned us in exile. When we repented and studied Torah we found that we could control the yetzer hara through Torah study.

Thus we see why we are given the free gift of being without a yetzer hara on Pesach. This gift is given to entice us to receive the Torah at the conclusion of Pesach (Shavuot), and then to study it like mad the rest of our lives in order to experience the Olam HaBa with the yetzer hara totally under control, having used the antidote of Torah to gain the upper hand.

On Pesach we say to our yetzer hara “Sure buddy, we need you around, but, make no mistake about it, we are in control and we can get rid of you anytime we want. Need proof? For the next eight days, you’re symbolically gone via our chametz extermination”! We tell the yetzer hara, that bottom line, we are the boss. However, the real message here is to work on our control of our yetzer hara all year round.

# The Children

The redemption of Purim is closely related to Jewish children. It was the “voice of the kids and lambs, the little children, the voice of the 22,000 children that Mordechai collected together that brought about the negation of Haman’s decree in the spiritual realms.[[58]](#footnote-58)

***Midrash Rabbah - Esther IX:4*** *Having made the gallows, he went to Mordecai, whom he found in the house of study with the schoolchildren sitting before him with sackcloth on their loins, studying the Torah and crying and weeping. He counted them and found there twenty-two thousand children. He put chains of iron on them and set guards over them, saying, ‘ To-morrow I will kill these children first, and then I will hang Mordecai.’ Their mothers brought them bread and water and said to them: ‘ Children, eat and drink before you die to-morrow, and do not die of starvation.’ Straightway they put their hands on their books and swore by the life of Mordecai their teacher saying, ‘We will neither eat nor drink, but will die while still fasting.’ They all wept piteously until the sound of their crying ascended to heaven and the Holy One, blessed be He, heard the sound of their weeping at about the second hour of the night. At that moment the compassion of the Holy One, blessed be He, was stirred, and He arose from the Throne of Judgment and sat on the Throne of Mercy and said: ‘What is this loud noise that I hear as the bleating of kids and lambs’? Moses our teacher thereupon stood before the Holy One, blessed be He, and said: ‘ Sovereign of the Universe, they are neither kids nor lambs, but the little ones of Thy people who have been keeping a fast now for three days and for three nights, and to-morrow the enemy means to slaughter them like kids and lambs.’ At that moment the Holy One, blessed be He, took the letters containing their doom which were signed with a seal of clay and tore them and brought fright upon Achashverosh in that night, as it says, ON THAT NIGHT. etc. (VI, 1).*

Furthermore, the Midrash[[59]](#footnote-59) relates that after hearing Haman’s decree Mordechai met three children coming from school. He asked them to repeat the verses that they had learned. The first replied: “Do not fear sudden terror, nor the destruction of the wicked when it comes”. The second continued: “Contrive a scheme, but it will be foiled; conspire a plot, but it will not materialize, for HaShem is with us”. The third added: “To your old age I am [with you]; to your hoary years I will sustain you; I have made you, and I will carry you; I will sustain you and deliver you”. When Mordechai heard this, he was very happy. He knew that the promises contained in the children’s verses would be fulfilled.

Similarly, the redemption from Egypt was connected with Jewish children. Our sages declared that the redemption was caused by the merit of the righteous women who raised children to be part of “HaShem’s hosts”. The women followed the laws of family purity[[60]](#footnote-60) and thus gave birth to a generation that was able “to recognize HaShem first” at the splitting of the Red Sea.

# Arba Parashiot Connections

Before Purim and Pesach, on four Shabbatot, four special Torah readings are read, as the Maftir, from a second Torah scroll:

1. On Shabbat *Shekalim -* Parshat Shekalim, Shemot (Exodus) 30:11 is read on the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh Adar. This Parsha speaks about the half shekel contribution used to fund the korban tamid.
2. On Shabbat *Zachor -* Parshat Zachor, Debarim (Deuteronomy) 25:17-19 is read on the Shabbat immediately preceding Purim. This Parsha speaks about the eternal war against Amalek.
3. On Shabbat *Parah -* Parshat Parah, Bamidbar (Numbers) 19:1-22 which is read on the following Shabbat, details the laws of the red heifer and the provisions for purification in order to enter the precincts of the Temple. We read this Parsha now because the Bne Israel have to purify themselves in order to be able to offer the korban Pesach, the Pesach offering.
4. On Shabbat *HaChodesh -* Parshat HaChodesh, Shemot (Exodus) 12:1-20 is read on the Shabbat immediately preceding Rosh Chodesh Nisan. This portion of the Torah tells us that Nisan is the first month of the year and we are given the laws of the Korban Pesach.

The very name, Arba Parashiot, four Torah portions, suggests a cohesive quality to the four special Torah portions read before Purim and Pesach. The very intertwining of these Parashiot, as the variant themes of Adar and Nisan, Pesach and Purim*,* mix, simply cannot be ignored. These four Torah portions relate thematically to Pesach or Purim.

Curiously, we read two of these special portions before Purim and two before Pesach. It is almost as though these Parashiot are preparing us for these two festivals.

# Hallel

The Hallel we say on Purim and the Hallel we say on Pesach are the most unusual of all the times we say Hallel. They are the only times when Hallel is said at night. At all other times Hallel is said only during the day.

The custom of the Sepharadim is to recite the entire Hallel after Arbit on the first night of Pesah (as well as on the second night in the Diaspora). The introductory Beracha of “Asher Kideshanu Be’misvotav…Li’gmor Et Ha’hallel” is recited before Hallel, and the concluding Beracha of “Yehalelucha” is recited afterward. It thus turns out that we recite Hallel three times over the course of the first day of Pesah: once after Arbit in the synagogue, once at the Seder – the first two paragraphs before the meal, and the rest after the meal – and then a third time the following morning at Shaharit. The Tikkuneh Zohar comments that these recitations are alluded to by the three Matzot at the Seder. The **two whole** **Matzot** represent the complete Hallel recitations after Arbit and Shaharit, and the **broken Matza** symbolizes the Hallel recited at the Seder, which is done in two separate stages.

On Purim we read the Megillah[[61]](#footnote-61) of Esther and this is our Hallel!

***Megillah 14a*** *R. Nahman said: The reading of the Megillah is equivalent to Hallel.*

Can you imagine a Hallel without mentioning the name of HaShem even once? The Megillah of Esther never once mentions the name of HaShem! This Megillah / Hallel could only be a Purim phenomenon. Only on Purim could HaShem be so hidden that He cannot even be heard in Hallel. On Purim, during the exile, it is our job to see HaShem in every verse of the Megillah / Hallel. He is there, we just need to see Him.

On Purim we read the Megillah of Esther twice: Once at night and once during the day. We, therefore are saying Hallel to reveal HaShem during the exile, at the beginning of our redemption, and during the redemption of the day.

On Purim, if one does not hear the Megillah he is obligated to say Hallel. Thus we can clearly see that the Megillah is Purim’s Hallel.

Thus we see that the Megillah / Hallel of Purim is a hidden Hallel that we say to reveal HaShem during the exile. We say it at night to remind ourselves that HaShem is in control during the exile. We say it a second time during the day to look forward to the redemption at the end of the exile. But it is a hidden Hallel that the world does not see.

On Pesach we say the Hallel, first, during the seder. What makes this Hallel so unusual is that this is the only time when we say Hallel at night and when we divide Hallel and say many words during the division of the two halves. We say Tehillim 113 and 114 before dinner and we say Tehillim 115, 116, 117, and 118 after dinner. At all other times it is forbidden to interrupt Hallel. But, not on Pesach.

***Pesachim 95b*** *THE FIRST REQUIRES [THE RECITING OF] HALLEL WHEN IT IS EATEN etc. Whence do we know it?-Said R. Johanan on the authority of R. Simeon b. Jehozadak: Scripture saith, Ye shall have a song as in the night when a feast is hallowed: the night that is hallowed for a feast [Festival] requires [the reciting of] Hallel [‘Song’], while the night which is not hallowed for a feast does not require [the reciting of] Hallel.*

In addition, we say Hallel a second time on Pesach, during the day. Only on Purim and Pesach do we say Hallel twice: Once at night and once during the day.

Thus we see that the Hallel of Pesach is completely revealed Hallel that we say to acknowledge the hand of HaShem during the redemption when the whole world can see and hear. We say it at night to remind ourselves that HaShem is in control during the exile. We say it a second time during the day to look forward to the redemption at the end of the exile. But it is a revealed Hallel that the whole world can see.

# Night and Day

Chazal have enjoined us to read the Megillah, on Purim, once at night and then again in the morning. At Pesach we begin the story of the haggada at night and conclude during the day. The Bne Israel began to be free at midnight, yet they left with a high hand during the day.

Esther is compared by the Sages to the morning star (called *ayelet hashachar,* the morning star), which rises ever so slowly in the darkest part of the night, before the dawn’s first light. The morning star, the star that signals the beginning of the transition from night to day.[[62]](#footnote-62)

***Yoma 29a*** *Why was Esther compared to the dawn? To tell you that just as the dawn is the end of the whole night, so is the story of Esther the end of all the miracles. But there is Hanukkah? — We refer to those included in Scripture. That will be right according to the opinion that Esther was meant to be written, but what can be said according to him who held that it was not meant to be written?*

Adar is nexus of darkness and dawn, it is winter’s end and springtime’s promise. Adar is Nisan’s ayelet hashachar.[[63]](#footnote-63) So, too, the Purim miracle was slow to manifest and took place in the depths of exile.

***Tehillim (Psalm) 22:1-4*** *To the chief Musician upon ayelet hashachar, A Psalm of David. My G-d, my G-d, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? My Lord, my Lord, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me despite my cries? Oh my G-d I cry in the daytime but you do not respond, and in the night I have no rest. But you are Holy, enthroned by the praises of Israel.*

***Midrash Tehillim Buber, 22:16*** *My Lord, my Lord, why have you forsaken me? My Lord at the [splitting of] the sea, my Lord at Sinai, why have you forsaken me? Why has the order of the world changed concerning me? The order of the mothers? With regard to our mother Sarah, she was held captive by Pharaoh one night and he and his whole household were struck with a plague ... but I have been placed in the bosom of this wicked man all these years, for me you do no miracles. My Lord, my Lord, why have you forsaken me?*

It appears that Purim sets up the spiritual paradigm of our days and, even, of the end of days. Chazal point out that this is the way of the ultimate redemption.

# Thoughts

Mordechai was paraded through Shushan on Nisan 14. The imagery is the imagery of the Pesach lamb which is examined from Nisan 10 through the evening of Nisan 14. Mordechai, as the leader of his generation, is being examined like a sheep. What makes this especially interesting is that Haman, who is leading Mordechai’s horse, is also parading through the street and being examined. During his parade, his daughter will empty the chamber pot on him. That evening he will be judged by the king and killed. Haman will die at approximately the same time that the firstborn in Egypt died in the days of Moshe. Haman, as an Agagite, is a descendent of the king of the Amalekites. He is the firstborn of the Amalekites!

Thus we see that Mordechai and Haman are both examined as the Pesach lamb. Mordechai, representing Jews, is judged favorably and is redeemed. Haman is found wanting and is destroyed. This pictures the final end of the Amalekites.

We also see Esther as a picture of Mashiach ben Yosef. As she stood facing the king, after coming in without an invitation, she spoke the same words that Mashiach spoke as He was being executed:

***Megillah 15b*** *And stood in the inner court of the king’s house. R. Levi said: When she reached the chamber of the idols, the Divine Presence left her. She said, My G-d, My G-d, why hast thou forsaken me[[64]](#footnote-64). Dost thou perchance punish the inadvertent offence like the presumptuous one, or one done under compulsion like one done willingly? Or is it because I called him ‘dog’, as it says. Deliver my soul from the sword, mine only one from the power of the dog? She straightway retracted and called him lion, as it says. Save me from the lion’s mouth.*

***Matityahu (Matthew) 27:46*** *And about the ninth hour Yeshua cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My G-d, my G-d, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Curiously, she uttered these words at Pesach, as did Mashiach.

In addition, as Mashiach was raised after three days, so too was Esther given the raised scepter after three days.

Incidentally, the inference of Esther’s words that, “I have not been called to come to the king these last thirty days”, which she said on the 13th of Nisan, is that *the previous time she had been called to Achashverosh had been on the 13th of Adar*, the day which Haman decreed as the day of extermination, and the day which would later become Taanit Esther.

# Nazarean Connections

I was looking for Purim in the Nazarean Codicil[[65]](#footnote-65) and I was unable to find it. So, I asked my teacher to teach me about Purim as seen through the eyes of the Nazarean Codicil.

My teacher, His Eminence Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai, asked the following question: “What is the Festival of Purim all about”?

His Eminence then went on to provide the following insightful answer:

To answer this question I am going to turn the world upside down if I may, and to make it more vivid. I am going to use the *Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible*, since it seems to show better the problem with the Hebrew tenses which have a different logic to the Latin tenses. As I have taught in the past, in the Hebrew conjugation of verbs there is no future or past or present as we know it in the Latin derived languages. In Hebrew, either the action is about to commence, is ongoing or terminated. Having this in mind let us go to the Text of Esther and find out what Purim is really all about:

***Esther 8:15-17*** *And Mordecai went out from before the king, in royal clothing of blue and white, and a great crown of gold, and a garment of fine linen and purple, and the city of Shushan hath rejoiced and been glad; 16 to the Jews hath been light, and gladness, and joy, and honour, 17 and in every province and province, and in every city and city, the place where the word of the king, even his law, is coming, gladness and joy are to the Jews, a banquet, and a good day; and many of the peoples of the land are becoming Jews, for a fear of the Jews hath fallen upon them.*

Now notice the following:

***Esther 8:17*** *and in every province and province, and in every city and city, the place where the word of the king, even his law, is coming, gladness and joy are to the Jews, a banquet, and a good day; and many of the peoples of the land are becoming Jews, for a fear of the Jews hath fallen upon them.*

Question: What actions were completed and which are ongoing? Answer: All of the actions are ongoing. So what then is the Hebrew grammar of this verse telling us?

It is telling us that the effects of that Purim are continuing to this day. However, we must qualify this answer:

***Esther 8:17*** *“And in every province and province, and in every city and city, the place where the word of the king, even his law, is coming, gladness and joy are to the Jews, a banquet, and a good day.” …*

From this we see that Torah study of ‘The King’ is the qualification. According to the grammar of this verse; Where can the Jews have “gladness and joy”?

The only source of true joy and gladness is in Torah study. That is, if there is a place where the Torah is going out as an ongoing concern then there is much joy and gladness for the Jews. And when this happens as a logical consequence we have: *and many of the peoples of the land are becoming Jews, for a fear of the Jews hath fallen upon them*.

So how should we call this festival of Purim? The feast of Torah study which draws converts? A recreation of Sinai? Yes! Now observe that Yom HaKippurim has an on-going lesson to the Goyim with the Torah with the reading of the Prophet Yonah And Purim has the message of taking the Torah to the Goyim *“and many of the peoples of the land are becoming Jews, for a fear of the Jews hath fallen upon them.”* Now who feasts on Purim with joy and gladness? The Jews or the Goyim? Jews! So then we must say that unlike other festivals, Purim is a uniquely Jewish festival. Now please as an aside, for those who say that Purim was not observed during the times of the Nazarean Codicil, observe:[[66]](#footnote-66)

***2 Maccabees 15:35-38*** *And he hung up Nicanor’s head in the top of the castle, that it might be an evident and manifest sign of the help of G-d. 36 And they all ordained by a common decree, by no means to let this day pass without solemnity: 37 But to celebrate the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, called in the Syrian language, the day before Mardochias’ day. 38 So these things being done with relation to Nicanor, and from that time the city being possessed by the Hebrews, I also will here make an end of my narration.*

The 14th day of Adar, the first day on which the feast of Purim is celebrated, is called in the apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees “Mordecai’s day”, which shows plainly that Purim was observed late in the period between the so called Old and New Testament.[[67]](#footnote-67) But going back to Purim as an unique Jewish festival please observe:

John speaks of the Passover[[68]](#footnote-68), the feast of Dedication[[69]](#footnote-69), and these are specially designated as such, and not simply as ‘a feast of the Jews”[[70]](#footnote-70).

***Yochanan (John 5:1)*** *After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Yeshua went up to Jerusalem,”*

A feast of the Jews? A Jewish Festival? It appears to me that Yochanan knew exactly what he was saying. Purim is not a Festival for the Goyim it is the only festival in the calendar that is uniquely Jewish. Well there are some that say that John 5:1 is not talking about Purim and the say this because in:

***John 5:15-16*** *The man went away, and told the Jews that it is Yeshua who made him whole, 16 and because of this were the Jews persecuting Yeshua, and seeking to kill him, because these things he was doing on a Sabbath.*

So they say see, Yeshua healed on the Sabbath and therefore John 5:1 can’t be Purim because Purim does not fall ever on the Sabbath. But I retort: Read the text man!

***John 5:1*** *After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Yeshua went up to Jerusalem.*

After these things there was a feast of the Jews. and (then) Yeshua went up to Jerusalem. For no one goes up on Purim to Jerusalem, but rather, he goes up after Purim! No other feast could have intervened between December (John 4:35) and Pesach (John 6:4), except Purim!

Since this is a “feast of the Jews” ONLY this explains why the Nazarean Codicil does not pay much explanation to it, unless one says that the whole of the Nazarean Codicil is an explanation on:

***Esther 8:17*** *and in every province and province, and in every city and city, the place where the word of the king, even his law, is coming, gladness and joy are to the Jews, a banquet, and a good day; and many of the peoples of the land are becoming Jews, for a fear of the Jews hath fallen upon them.*

I was amazed when I started to pay attention to the tenses of the verbs in Esther 8:17. It was an eye opener.

We have seen how the Goyim rushed to convert on Purim. Did they also do so on Pesach?

***Shemot (Exodus) 12:37-38*** *And the children of Israel journeyed from Ramses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. 38 And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.*

Thus we see that Pesach is also a feast where many Goyim joined themselves to the Bne Israel.

Here is our passage in context:

***Yochanan (John) 5:1-13*** *After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Yeshua went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. 5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8 Yeshua saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. 10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. 11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. 12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? 13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Yeshua had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.*

According to the Easton’s Bible Dictionary **Bethesda** means house of mercy, a reservoir (Gr. kolumbethra, “a swimming bath”) with five porches, close to the sheep-gate or market.[[71]](#footnote-71) Its name is said to derive from the Aramaic language *beth hesda*, meaning “house of Grace”.

The Rambam,[[72]](#footnote-72) says that on Purim we are commanded to give tzedaka (charity), according to the needs of the recipient. “If he has no wife, arrange a marriage for him..., If the poor person was used to riding on a horse with a servant running before him and he became impoverished, you should buy him a horse to ride on and a servant to run before him, as it is written ‘according to his need’”.

*Matanot l’evyonim*, gifts to the poor. We are instructed to give at least two gifts of edibles to at least two friends, as well as to at least two people in need. Remarkably, we learn regarding *matanot l’evyonim* that: “One is not exceedingly precautious with money on Purim. Rather, everyone who puts out a hand [in need], we are to give to that person”.[[73]](#footnote-73) In other words, on Purim, we give to any and everyone who asks.

# Conclusion

As we have seen, the Children of Israel were taken out of Egypt, by HaShem, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. The mighty miracles that accompanied this redemption were visible to the whole world. HaShem’s presence was palpable. While men, technically, still had free will, it was not possible for any sane man to deny the presence of HaShem. At the conclusion of Pesach, at Shavuot, the Children of Israel received the Torah. Because every man could see and sense the presence of HaShem, it was impossible for them to accept the Torah of their own free will because the presence of HaShem essentially negated their free will. We were redeemed simply by following HaShem and Moshe.

At Purim, HaShem’s presence was so hidden that only the wise could discern His presence. HaShem was “seen” because the events of that time did not make any sense. After all, how could an unintelligent barber, with a severe ego problem, ever rise to be second only to the king? How could a megalomaniac ever be acceptable to the people? Just as an aside, we saw a similar situation fifty+ years ago in Germany.

HaShem’s presence was “seen” through the bizarre circumstance. The wise could see His hand, but to the general world everything was just coincidental. At Purim we were redeemed by fasting, prayer, and repentance.

This timeless lesson has direct relevance today. As believing Jews, we must recall the words of the Ramban. The Bne Israel are punished for their failure to observe the Torah properly; and the appropriate response to crisis is loud communal prayer, accompanied, as in Nineveh,[[74]](#footnote-74) by fasting and repentance.

The Bne Israel must pray, fast and do teshuva (repentance). We must think of Purim, when we fasted and repented on Mordechai’s instruction that our sins caused the grave threat. We must think of Pesach, when we followed Moshe and not conventional military strategy. We are not the Goyim! We serve HaShem who, alone, is able to redeem us. Let us change our hearts and our deeds that we might merit this redemption, today!

“On the 15th of Nisan they were redeemed from Egypt, on the 15th of Nisan they will in the future be redeemed from subjugation in exile”[[75]](#footnote-75) is a very natural concept in Judaism, so it was natural for Esther to begin her scheme to redeem the Jews from extermination on the day of the redemption from Egypt.

**\* \* \***

This study was written by

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David (Greg Killian).

Comments may be submitted to:

Rabbi Dr. Greg Killian

12210 Luckey Summit

San Antonio, TX 78252

Internet address: gkilli@aol.com

Web page: <https://www.betemunah.org/>

(360) 918-2905

Return to [The WATCHMAN](https://www.betemunah.org/) home page

Send comments to Greg Killian at his email address: gkilli@aol.com

1. Chazal (Hebrew: חז”ל‎) is an acronym for the Hebrew” **Ḥ**akhameinu **Z**ikhronam **L**ivrakha”, (**ח**כמינו **ז**כרונם **ל**ברכה, literally “Our Sages, may their memory be blessed”). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Esther 3:7, 3:13, 8:12, 9:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Megillah 6a [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Rashi, Megillah 6b [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Megillah 7b:7-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Tehillim (Psalms) 22:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Esther 8:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Shemot (Exodus) 12:38 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Esther 9:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Halachot is the plural Hebrew transliteration of ‘halacha’ which means “way of walking”, and is the common way to refer to the Torah Laws that are incumbent on Jews at a particular time. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Shulchan Aruch 429:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Pesachim 6, Avodah Zarah 5b, Rosh HaShana 7a [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Mishnah Berurah 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Megillah 6b [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Esther 9:29 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. A mitzva is the fulfillment of a Torah command, a good deed. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Likkutei Moharan II, 74 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. **Kabbalah / Kabala** (Hebrew:קַבָּלָה‎ (lit. “receiving”) is a discipline and school of thought concerned with the esoteric or mystical aspects of Rabbinic Judaism. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Sefer Yetzirah 1:7, Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 46:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Tanach is an acronym for: Torah, Neviim, and Ketuvim – The Law the Prophets, and the Writings. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Moshe is a transliterated Hebrew word that is normally translated as ‘Moses’. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Paro is a transliterated Hebrew word that is normally translated as ‘Pharaoh’. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Shemot 12:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Shemot 12:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Shemot 12:8-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Shemot 12:46 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. The point is stressed in the Mechilta on the same verse. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Tanchuma [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Shemot 19:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Shabbat 88a [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Repentance [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. It provides an excuse for non-observance, since it was forcibly imposed in the first place. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Esther 19:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Shemot 19:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. All the verbs in the very same verse, describing the movements of the Children of Israel before their arrival at Sinai, use plural forms - “they journeyed”, “they arrived”, and “they encamped.” [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Mechilta and Rashi on Shemot. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Esther 9:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Orach Chaim 429:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Biur HaGra refers to Tosafot, Bechorot 57b and Rashi,Sanhedrin 7b, d.h. b’shabata as the source for this concept. It would seem that according to the way the Gaon understood Rashi, it was the fact that the study of the laws of Pesach began on a special day, i.e. Purim, that is being marked. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Megillah 6b [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Hakhamim is the name given to Sephardic Rabbis. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. R. Yaakov of Lisa, *Megillat Setarim* on Ester 9:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See Rashi on Chaggai 1:1 and Malbim on Nechemia 2:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Notice that the colors, terms. And order were all pictures of the Temple. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Devarim 27 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Tehillim 109 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Zohar 3:249b [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Sanhedrin 97b [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Megillah 7b [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Esther 3:5-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Megillah 12a [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. See Michtav MiEliyahu p.76. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Rashi Shemot 14:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Megillah 6b [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Nachmanides (1194–c. 1270), *Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman,* Catalan rabbi, philosopher, physician, Kabbalist and biblical commentator. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Shemot 13:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Ramban al HaTorah [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. It is interesting to note that Mordechai studied the laws of the Omer offering with the children he gathered together — this is particularly relevant at this time (in the midst of Sefirat HaOmer). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Esther Rabbah 7:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Vayikra Rabbah 32:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. In *Hilchot Hanukkah* 3,6, in the Laws of Chanukah, not Purim, Maimonides ruled that: “The Rabbis did not establish that *Hallel* be read on Purim since the reading of the *Megillah* is the *Hallel*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Yoma 29 While several other possibilities are offered by the Babylonian Talmud, the Yerushalmi in Berachot 1:1 seems to indicate such a comparison. See also Anaf Yosef in Ein Yaakov on R. Asi’s position in Yoma. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. The morning star [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Tehillim 22:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. The New Testament [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. This is from Douay-Rheims Bible (1899). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. 2 Maccabees 15:37 [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. John 6:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. John 10:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. John 5:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Nehemiah 3:1; John 5:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. *Hilchot Matanot Aniyim*, Chapter 7 (Rambam (רמב"ם – Hebrew acronym for "Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon"), was a preeminent medieval Jewish philosopherand one of the greatest Torah scholars and physicians of the Middle Ages.) [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. O.H. 694:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. As seen in Sefer Yonah [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Tanchuma, Bo 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-75)