

THE ESSENCE OF PURIM

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About Rav Weinberg Zt"l

HaRav Yaakov Weinberg, Zt"l, was the Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivas Ner Yisrael in

Baltimore, Maryland from 1987 until his petira in 1999. For many decades he was a force for Torah in the Jewish world. He was the ultimate Rebbi, transforming the hearts and minds of thousands of talmidim with his unfaltering adherence to the truth of Torah and the words of Chazal. With his

incisive analysis and penetrating insight, he developed generations of outstanding leaders. They follow his example in their understanding of Torah and in their responsibility for its transmission. His talmidim have been instrumental in creating communal organizations including shuls, schools and kiruv centers. Rav Weinberg was a sought-after advisor, involved in hundreds of private and public issues within the Jewish community. He often conducted the question and answer sessions at Torah Umesorah conventions where many benefited from his counsel. Rav Weinberg was married to Rebbetzin Shaina Chana Ruderman, the daughter of Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, zt"l, the founder of Ner Yisroel. He was the older brother and mentor of Rav Noach Weinberg, zt"l, the founder of Aish HaTorah.



Dedicated by Dr. and Mrs. Michael Ring

The following is an adaptation of a shiur that was delivered in Aish HaTorah in Jerusalem. Appreciation is due to Aaron Dayan of Aishaudio.com for authorizing the transcription and publication of this shiur.

The Rosh HaYeshiva had a distinctive and expressive style of speaking. The text has been edited extensively for readability. However, where necessary, the usual grammatical rules have been relaxed to retain the force and flavor of the Rosh HaYeshiva's delivery.

The Essence of Purim

A *Yom Tov* in Judaism is never a commemoration. A *Yom Tov* in Judaism is a “re-living” because that which took place *is in a sense taking place again*. But most importantly, that which

"המועדים בישראל אינם רק ציון לעבר הרחוק. אלא, בכל שנה ושנה מתעורר מחדש כוח הארת וזכר ההוא, כמו שהיה בפעם הראשונה, ואנו חונגים את הנס המועד שנעשה לנו עתה ממש..." [ראה שער הכוונות הקדמה לדרושי ראש השנה].

happened *changed the essence of the Jewish soul*. The people are no longer the same people as they were before the event.

Each event which results in a *Yom Tov* represents something that established a new characteristic in the essence of the Jew. That includes the *middos* as well as the potentials and powers of accomplishment that are acquired as a result of those events. And therefore, that is what we want to recommit ourselves to, and strengthen within us, when that time repeats itself each year.

This is true of the Torah *Yomim Tovim* which are, of course, *Pesach*, *Shevuos*, *Succos*, *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, but it is also true of all Rabbinic *Yomim Tovim*, whether *Yomim Tovim* or *Yomay Tanesim* [fast days]. Wherever the *Chachamim* gave us a particular day to deal with in a particular way, it is always because that day represents something in our potential that is not there otherwise and by which, and through which, we act, understand, and are different. The other point that has to be made is that this difference is of the essence in being able to live as a Jew.

Now, the Biblical *Yomim Tovim* are of the essence in being able to live as a Jew, period! In order to be able to function as a Jew we had to have that which *Pesach* accomplished in our existence,

We could not be full Jews if we did not have those *kochos hanefesh* that these days [i.e., the *Yomim Tovim*] implanted within us.

that which *Shevuos* accomplished, that which *Succos* accomplished, and that which *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* accomplished. We could not be full Jews if we did not have those *kochos hanefesh* - those soul talents, those abilities, those potentials - that these days implanted within us.

In order to be able to function as a Jew we must have the concept of *cheirus* with its consequences and concomitants in our existence, as well as *matan Torah*, *zman simcha*, *zikkaron*, *mechilah* and *kapporah*.

The rabbinic *Yomim Tovim*, of course, obviously are *not* of the essence in our ability to exist as

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Jews. If they were, they would have been Biblical holidays. The very fact that they are not Biblical holidays, but rabbinic holidays, means that we could very well have been Jews without these *Yomim Tovim*. For many centuries we were living as Jews, functioning

as Jews in the fullest sense of the word, *and we did not have these Yomim Tovim!*

So in what sense are we saying that the rabbinic holidays are of the essence to our survival and existence as Jews?

Obviously, the answer is that each one of these rabbinic *Yomim Tovim* represents a *change* in the status of the Jew that brought about the need of a new characteristic, of a new ability that he had to acquire and come to possess in order to be able to face the new circumstances that have

Each one of these rabbinic *Yomim Tovim* represents a change in the status of the Jew that brought about the need of a new characteristic and ability that he had to acquire in order to be able to face the new circumstances that have arisen.

arisen. In order to be able to survive these new dangers that have established themselves he had to acquire these additional characteristics, these new abilities, these new powers, by which to deal with the new situation.

For this, let us take as an excellent illustration, *Purim*. *Purim* is a *Yom Tov*, a very important *Yom Tov*. What happened in *Purim* that required a new ability and

characteristic of the Jewish soul to be able to survive? Now to phrase it more accurately we should begin with the following question: what happened to the Jewish people that they needed a new ability in order to be able to survive as Jews from now on? What new and different situation did the Jews as a people face from this moment on that necessitated that we acquire a whole new ability to deal with things in order to be able to survive?

The events of *Purim* are, of course, the consequence of this new situation, and the way we reacted to *Purim* is that which gave us these new abilities and these new *kochos hanefesh* - these new characteristics of our souls.

So, in order to deal with it the first thing that we have to identify is the specific change in the circumstances of the Jewish people's being and existence that necessitated this new approach,

The first thing that we have identify is the specific change in the circumstances of the Jewish peoples being and existence that necessitated this new approach, which we were able to derive only from the *Yom Tov* of *Purim*.

which we were able to derive only from the *Yom Tov* of *Purim*. Let us examine what happened at the time in order to see what we needed and then try to see how *Purim* supplied it.

We are dealing now with the era of the return to build the *Bayis Sheni* - the Second Temple.

Let us examine the difference in Jewish existence before the destruction of the First Temple, meaning at the time of the First Temple, and Jewish existence during the Second Temple.

The first thing that we have to realize is that the First Temple of Jewish existence is the norm.

We have to realize that Jewish existence during the First Temple era is the norm. This is the way Jews ought to exist.

This is the way Jews ought to exist. If there is a difference between their existence during the First Temple and that which happened during the Second Temple, we will also know what the norm of a Jewish

existence is and what a deviation is. And if we find such a deviation we will have to discover both how to deal with the deviation and how to correct it.

Let's take a look then to see what life looked like during the *Bayis Rishon*, the First Temple.

The first thing, middle thing, and last thing - the *everything* - that we see is that the Jew during the First Temple, (or more accurately from the exodus from Egypt until the destruction of the First Temple, from *yetziyas mitzrayim* until *churban Bayis Rishon*) lived in the immediate and direct presence of G-d.

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One is that, of course, when a people live in the direct and immediate presence of their Creator you do not have a question ever of heresy. You don't have *apikorsos* - blasphemy. You don't have a self-search to see whether or not I believe in G-d. Everybody is aware of the reality of G-d's existence, and of course, everybody is equally aware in the most immediate and direct terms of the reality of the *Torah*.

When you live within G-d's own existence, with Him together, you will have *Nevi'im* - prophets who will deliver to you G-d's guidance, His aids, His teachings, His directions.

We are, in other words, under a very direct relationship with G-d, which is a protection, a help and a direction for all that we are and want to do.

This is obvious.

The second is, as we would expect and of course find, *that we are outside of the limitations of natural law*. There is a constant and unceasing prevalence of miracles. Miracles do not amaze. Miracles are part of the natural order of a Jew who lives together with G-d. The Jew himself

transcends the limitation of nature. In direct contact with G-d nature becomes subordinate.

"עשרה נסים נעשו לאבותינו בבית המקדש. (א) לא הפילה אשה מריח בשר הקדש. (ב) ולא הסריח בשר הקדש מעולם. (ג) ולא נראה זבוב בבית המטבחים. (ד) ולא אירע קרי לכהן גדול ביום הכפורים. (ה) ולא כבו גשמים אש של עצי המערכה. (ו) ולא נצחה הרוח את העמוד העשן. (ז) ולא נמצא פסול בעומר, ובשתי הלחם, ובלחם הפנים. (ח) עומדים צפופים ומשתחוים רווחים. (ט) ולא הזיק נחש ועקרב בירושלים מעולם. (י) ולא אמר אדם לחברו צר לי המקום שאליו בירושלים." [אבות, פרק ה, משנה ה]

And so we find in the time of the First Temple a constant expression and occurrence of miracles. As a matter of fact, it was a daily affair within the *Bais Hamikdash* itself, where

all openly saw that there is *not* the limitation of natural law incumbent upon the Jew.

Third is the immediate awareness of the consequences of one's own actions. An *aveira* [transgression] brought with it an immediate *onesh* [punishment] - a consequence. A *mitzvah* brought with it an immediate response. You're with G-d. He responds immediately to your actions, to your thoughts, to what you're doing. Being in His actual presence brings with it an immediate response and reaction as occurs between a father and his children.

All of which sums up, of course, the difference in the way you see things, in the way you deal

"והאמר רב שמואל בר אינאי, מאי דכתיב '...וארצה בו ואכבד...' וקרינו ואכבד. מאי שנא דמחוסר ה'א? אלו חמישה דברים שהיו בין מקדש ראשון למקדש שני. ואלו הן: (א) ארון וכפורת וכרובים. (ב) אש. (ג) ושכינת. (ד) ורוח הקודש. (ה) ואורים ותומים..." [יומא, דף כא:]

with things, in the way you understand things, in your values and in your behavior patterns, when you are aware of the direct presence of G-d as a constant ongoing thing as to when it isn't so.

Bayis Sheni, the *Shechinah* is no longer there. One expresses it in the term "ואנכי הסתר אסתיר פני..." [וילך, לא, יח] - G-d hides His face. G-d hides His

face means that His *Shechinah* – His presence - is no longer detected. We do not see and feel and are not directly aware of the actual presence of our Creator. We live, in other words, at a distance from Him. His face is turned from us.

When His face is turned from us we no longer see miracles, we no longer have *Nevi'im*, we no longer see clearly, directly and immediately the *hashgachah pratis* – the direct intervention of G-d in sending rewards and punishments.

Now, we have to figure out...why this, why that? And look into it. Whereas before it was immediate. You didn't do the *mitzvos*? No rain, no food, an immediate effect. You did *teshuva*? Bang, the rain came. You knew in advance what would cause what. How it would cause it. What your results would be. When you would have what to eat and when you wouldn't have what to eat. When a plague would come and when it would be cured. When an army can come against you and some of your soldiers will get killed, when none can get killed. How they get killed. Under what situations they get killed and so forth. All this was clear-cut. You could see the relation of immediate consequence of what you did. That's all the stories and events of the *Tanach*, immediate responses, immediate consequences.

What happened?

When it's *hester punim* you don't see this. Things can go on and you don't see the connections. This is all part of G-d's face being hidden from us. We now have to face, in other words, a Jewry that will live in an altogether different set of circumstances, one obviously unnatural.

The natural state of being for the Jew is in G-d's presence, with that relationship. That was the covenant we made with Him, and it is the way we lived with Him ever since we made that covenant with Him. We lived with G-d in this immediacy.

***Bayis Sheni, the Shechinah is no longer there!
We do not see and feel and are not directly
aware of the actual presence of our Creator.***

G-d has left. He's gone away. The husband says to his wife "*alright, goodbye, I leave you.*" She's no longer in her normal circumstances. Her whole way of life has been radically changed and in a

way that leaves her in an unnatural state.

And so the Jew has been left in an unnatural state. In a state which he has lost that which was the major part of his being. The closeness, the relationship, direct and immediate to G-d.

How do you live that way? It is not the way we were meant to live. It is not the way we were formed and created. We have been thrown into a highly unnatural and dangerous situation. We are used to living with a G-d whom we can immediately understand, see, and can be aware of. We now have to live with a G-d who is hidden from us and whom we can forget very easily. You can get lost and forget His existence. You don't see the immediacy of His truths. And so the problem can become, how do I know G-d is?

They had no such “proofs of G-d” problem at the time of the First Temple. You didn’t prove G-d. You felt. You were aware. It was direct. It was immediate.

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Now we have to deal with problems such as “how do you know He gave us a Torah?”

Nobody had that problem then. It was clear. Everybody knew. There was no *shailos* about it. You lived with that *Torah* in G-d’s existence, and

immediate consequences of deviating from it, and immediate responses from keeping it, and a *Navi* who attested to it.

All of which you lost. And so there can and did arise problems of *emuna*. Problems with

"אמרי ליה פפונאי לרב מתנה...אסתר מן התורה מנין? - "ואנכי הסתר אסתיר..." [חולין, דף קל"ט:].

straying, without the help that the *Navi* gives by coming and pointing out the consequences of your actions, and how it’s going to develop, and how it’s

going to be. All this you lost when the *Bayis Sheni* began to be built in *hester punim* – with a hidden face of G-d.

How does the Jewish *neshama*, which was intended to exist naturally and healthfully within the awareness of G-d, adjust to this whole new situation, which is so radically different, and whose effects are impossible to even begin to describe?

How does the Jewish *neshama*, which was intended to exist naturally and healthfully within the awareness of G-d adjust to this whole new situation, which is so radically different, and whose effects are impossible to even begin to describe!?

It’s a whole new way of life. The old *Yomim Tovim* are no longer enough. We need something that injects us with an antidote that creates a new character in the Jewish soul which will enable him to cope with the new situation. We need the

response to deal with this new situation that has arisen.

And the thing that gave that new character and responses is *Purim*!

And the thing that gave us that new character and response is *Purim*! What was *Purim*? *Purim* was that we are “abandoned to fate,” and yet see clearly that the hand of G-d is still there in all the fullness of it.

What was *Purim*?

Purim was that we are “abandoned to fate” and yet see clearly that the hand of G-d is still there in all the fullness of it. It is a *nes* that is made *b'hester punim*. It is a *nes* in which it would be very easy to say that G-d has disappeared and luck has taken over.

If the Jews had reacted that way that would have been the end.

The Jews didn’t react that way.

They understood from the danger itself that G-d is giving a message. They responded to it, and they saw G-d Himself taking away the danger. All of which they could have interpreted in other ways, but which they interpreted correctly. They saw then, the presence of G-d, in spite of its being turned away or in spite of its being hidden from us.

And this was *kovaya* – established - within the Jewish souls the ability to follow the reality of a G-d-directed existence under a condition of *hester punim* – of G-d's face being turned away from

...And this was *kovayo* - established - within the Jewish souls the ability to follow the reality of a G-d-directed existence under a condition of *hester punim* – of G-d's face being turned away from us.

us. And to see that G-d's face being turned away from us is only an appearance, but in reality, His *hashgachah*, His guidance, His rulership and direction remain fully there. They have not been affected.

And above all, His affection, His caring, His awareness of us, His response to our needs. We saw that.

This is what *Purim* was.

We did not think that the danger of *Haman* was a matter of fate, of luck. We recognized immediately that this is G-d speaking. And that it is to G-d who we have to address ourselves to

We recognized that a danger is not natural law, but a danger is sent by G-d as His new form, His new way of directing us and giving us guidance.

find the solution to this danger. And that the danger is not a danger that is *natural law*, but a danger is *sent by G-d* as His new form, His new way of directing us and giving us guidance.

We saw in the *nes* through which we were saved a *nes* that we could have interpreted as just naturally happening.

Esther happened to be beautiful. And happened to find favor. And therefore, *Achashveirosh* responded to her needs and to *Mordechai's* needs. And *Haman* proved himself a nasty old fellow in the first place. And so *Achashveirosh* dropped him and didn't want him anymore.

These are all ways that they could have responded to the events of the day.

They didn't.

They saw in each event G-d's direct intervening hand. And because they did, they recognized the truth, that *hashgachah pratis* - G-d's direct providence and guidance - remains true, an axiom no matter what the situation and no matter how Jews wander. And that the special relationship

We have, now, in fact, achieved a certain strength of soul which did not exist before. It is true that before we didn't need it, but it is a fact that it did not exist - the ability to see the reality of G-d's being even though it was turned away from us.

that we maintain with G-d is there completely and totally unchanged in spite of the new circumstances.

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is true that before we didn't need it, but it is a fact that it did not exist - the ability to see the reality of G-d's being even though it was turned away from us.

It is this *koach hanefesh* - it is this power of soul - that we need with which to survive a *galus* in which G-d is, in fact, hidden from us. That's what *Purim* established within the Jewish soul. To see G-d in spite of His being hidden. To recognize the truth of His relationship in spite of the fact that it is not openly seen.

And so from now on the savings of *Klal Yisroel* are in this roundabout way.

We can attribute the miracle of the *Yom Kippur* war [1973] to tactics, courage, superior abilities, you know the language that's used. We can deny that it is an expression of G-d's providence

We can attribute the miracle of the *Yom Kippur* war [1973] to tactics, courage, superior abilities, you know the language that's used. We can deny that it is an expression of G-d's providence and guidance. Or we can face the truth, and recognize that it was only G-d's good graces and providence that enabled us to survive that terrible assault.

and guidance. Or we can face the truth, and recognize that it was only G-d's good graces and providence that enabled us to survive that terrible assault.

If not for *Purim*, we wouldn't have seen it as it is. And by not seeing it as it is we would have felt that it was [כחי ועצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה...] - the strength, wisdom, and cleverness of our army that

won the war. And we would have ceased to survive as Jews. *Because when a Jew is not aware, and doesn't understand G-d's presence as a constant and as the source for all that he is, he cannot be a Jew!*

So it is *Purim* that is *kovaya* - that establishes - this ability within the Jewish soul, which alone enables him to operate and survive within an environment that the Jewish soul does not see its Creator, and recognize, and deal with Him.

This necessitated a whole new strength that was never needed before!

When we were *mekabel* the *Torah*, and we said: [משפטים, כד, ז] "כל אשר-דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע..." it was fantastic! It was an act of affection, love, commitment and trust that is unmatched. A blank check, anything, whatever you say G-d. A tremendous mark that *Klal Yisroel* has. But one that is not that quite difficult to achieve when you recognize that they heard G-d speaking. They saw G-d

...But now you're faced with something altogether different. Are you ready for that covenant, and to keep on living this way without being able to see with whom you're making a covenant? Without being able to hear Him giving you the directions?

operating. Sure, in such a situation what then would you want if not a "*naaseh v'nishmah*" - a covenant and a relationship with Him! And you answer Him, "yes, we'll do it."

But now you're faced with something altogether different. Are you ready for that covenant, and to

keep on living this way without being able to see with whom you're making a covenant? Without being able to hear Him giving you the directions?

And so we say that the first "*naaseh v'nishmah*" was with a kind of coercion. There's a new *kabbalah* now without that coercion. It is a *free willing acceptance*. This is what *Chazal* mean.

It means that we now accept the *Torah* without hearing G-d speak, without seeing Him, without a direct contact. And we still answered Him "*we accept You.*"

"ויתיצבו בתחתית ההר..." א"ר אבדימי בר חמא בר חסא מלמד שכפה הקב"ה עליהם את ההר כגיגית, ואמר להם, אם אתם מקבלים התורה מוטב ואם לאו שם תהא קבורתכם...אמר רבא, אעפ"כ הדור קבלוה בימי אחשורוש, דכתיב "קִימוּ וקבלו היהודים..." קיימו מה שקיבלו כבר... [שבת, דף פח.]

We *must* be able to do this because we're going to have to live with Him hidden from us.

Therefore, we must be able to commit ourselves

to Him while He is hidden. The "*kimu ma shekiblu kvar*" - the reestablishment of the covenant that they had already accepted upon themselves at *Har Sinai* - the reestablishing of it free willingly, and accepting it without any coercion of seeing reality with our own eyes, but as an

inner commitment because of the acceptance of a truth that our intellect represents and shows us - this is what *Purim* gave. And that's the new *Kabalos HaTorah* that *Purim* represents.

"ופירש מהר"ל ז"ל בס' אור חדש שראו בבהירות גדולה כל כך עד שהיו כמוכרחים מצד השגת שכלם לקבל את התורה... וכיון שכן, הרי חסרה להם בחינת הנדיבות, עד שחזרו וקבלוה בימי אחשוורוש שאז קבלוה בבחינת בחירת הטוב שהיא מגדרי הנדיבות..." [מכתב מאליהו, דף כגאקכד].

But it goes to a further extent. This then is the *pshat* in *Chazal* who tell us: "כל המועדים עתידין ליבטל וימי הפורים אינן בטלים לעולם..." [ילקוט שמעוני, משלי, פרק ט, אות תתקמד]. that in the future all holidays will be of lesser

significance except for *Purim*.

They derive this from the *pasuk* in *Megillas Esther* "...ו'loy yovar..." [Esther: 9:28] - "...it will never pass..." which says clearly that while all other *Yomim Tovim* will lose the sharpness of their need, of their influence and effect, *Purim* never will. There is a *koach* of prophecy - *ruach*

"תניא, ר' אליעזר אומר: אסתר ברוח הקודש נאמרה... רב יוסף אמר מהכא: "...וימי הפורים האלה לא יעברו מתוך היהודים..." פ' רש"י ד"ה לא יעברו: "מנא ידע את העתיד." [מגילה, דף ז.].

hakodesh - in *Megillas Esther* that says that it will never pass away. Which means that *Purim* is going to have a strength that all the other *Yomim Tovim* do not.

We now understand clearly what it is.

Whereas all other *Yomim Tovim* are in the presence of G-d, *l'asid* - in the future - when G-d's presence will again be a constant, ongoing reality in the highest deepest form we won't need the

"כל המועדים עתידין ליבטל..." [ילקוט שמעוני, משלי, פרק ט, אות תתקמד] * "...ומי הוא זה שיאמר שיבטל מן התורה אפילו אות אחת ואפילו קוצו של יו"ד..." [שו"ת הרשב"א, חלק א, סימן צג]

strengths that these *Yomim Tovim* give us. We will be getting them fresh constantly. We will still, of course, keep them because they were the source of where we got it, but we will not need the reaffirmations that these *Yomim Tovim* give us each year. We will have that strength renewed on a constant basis. So the significance of the *Yom Tov* will no longer be there

in the sense that we have to recharge our batteries at these particular periods.

Purim can never go away. Why? Because *Purim* can never be given to us by G-d. *Purim*, "we" have to bring into existence. *Purim* is that special commitment that we made from our initiative of recognizing G-d. Therefore, the fact of G-d's presence can't affect it. It's this special

That extra intimacy, which comes from the fact that we committed ourselves without His being seen and apparent, that strength can never be taken away. That's ours forever. This is why *Purim* will never be *batul*.

relationship we created by the way we responded not to His *presence*, but to *Him*, in His being, by recognizing it and accepting it while hidden.

Therefore, the fact that G-d will be open and clear cannot affect this relationship, which is our own creation and our own bringing in to existence. It will never be *batul*.

There is no way that the significance of *Purim* can ever be replaced, because anything that comes from G-d can only take away significance from that which also came from G-d. Anything that came from us towards G-d can't go away as a result of G-d's new relationship with us. That's ours forever! That strength, that extra intimacy, that extra care which comes from the fact that we committed ourselves without His being seen and apparent, that strength can never be taken away.

In other words, while it's true that in the future we will not need a *Purim* to survive, just like we won't need any of the *Yomim Tovim* to survive when we are again directly with G-d, but the intimacy, the special feelings and closeness between ourselves and G-d that it provides, that will always be there.

That which G-d gave us will be replaced by the new relationship that will take place during the coming of the *Moshiach* – of our life with Him then. But that which we created by showing Him our care, our initiative, that closeness cannot be replaced by anything that will come from G-d. Since it came from us, it is our intimacy that we developed; therefore, it will be a relationship that will constantly derive from the way we reacted at *Purim* and it can never go away.

This is why *Purim* will never be *batul*.

You have in this also another matter of deep significance.

Everybody knows the teaching that we have that *Yom Kippur* means *Yom k'Purim* – a day like *Purim* – which would seem to indicate that *Purim* has a deeper significance than even *Yom Kippur*.

"פורים אתקריאת על שם יום הכיפורים..."
[תיקוני זוהר תיקון כא (דף גז ב)].
"ידוע מה שכתבו בשם האר"י ז"ל שקדושת
יום הכפורים טפלה היא לקדושת פורים: "אל
תיקרי כיפורים אלא כ-פורים..." ("...מי נתלה
במי? הוי אומר קטן נתלה בגדול..." [תענית, דף
ז.]) [מכתב מאליהו, חלק ב, דף קכג]

What we've said already indicates that. The deeper significance is, of course, that it comes *from us* rather than *from G-d*. That itself gives it a deeper significance.

But let's see how it expresses itself in the specifics of what is meant as *Yom k'Purim* – a day like *Purim*. In what sense is

Yom Kippur similar to *Purim*?

The answer is that it is similar to *Purim* in that both are unique in the whole Jewish outlook and in of all of Jewish thinking, practice and living.

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It is this duality that is unique to Man and that creates his humanity, that distinguishes him from the animal, but also -and you must understand this! -

that distinguishes him from the angel.

The animal, he is distinguished through lacking his spiritual existence, the angel, through lacking his physical existence. Man is not an angel, Man is not an animal, he is *Man*! He is

Man is not an angel, Man is not an animal, he is Man! He is superior to the animal, he is superior to the angel, he is superior to both. He is superior to the animal; he has purpose. He is superior to the angel; he has power.

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He is superior to the animal; he has *purpose*. He is superior to the angel; he has *power*. *Has power* means he has freedom. Freedom is power. Freedom means you can do things. Freedom is creative. Freedom means

you are a source of things happening. An angel is not a source of things happening; he is a tool

of G-d's causing things to happen. When you have freedom you're not a tool, you're an operator. You're a factor, a subject. That's freedom. Man is free because of his *dual* nature.

In all our worship of the *Ribono shel olum*, we worship Him through this duality, through soul - spirit, and through body - *guf*.

On *Yom Kippur* we are *malachim* - angels. On *Yom Kippur* we pretend and reach out to become angels. We repress the physical. We don't eat or drink and we engage in all the *i'nuyim* - afflictions. Our body is humiliated.

We believe that you live an animal life together with a spiritual life. And the two together are *neither* animal nor spiritual alone. It is the combination. We eat and we drink and we worship G-d through our eating and drinking, just as we worship G-d through our prayers and doing *mitzvos*. Not on *Yom Kippur*. On *Yom Kippur* we are spiritual beings.

On *Purim* we are physical, "*od d'loy yudo*" - you get drunk. Your minds are out. You give up mind. You give up your spiritual and you worship G-d with your body itself.

This is the *Yom k'Purim* that the *Arizal* is talking about! These two days are days where we repress certain aspects of our existence, of our duality, and we act as though we're mono - as though we're singular - either *guf* or *neshoma*.

This is the *Yom k'Purim* that the *Arizal* is talking about. These two days are days where we repress certain aspects of our existence, of our duality, and we act as though we're mono - as though we're singular - either *guf* or *neshoma*. It is this that expresses itself in the *Yom Tov*. We particularly care about the wellbeing of our fellow beings. We send him *matanos*, we take interest in the welfare of the poor and

deprived. Our entire emphasis is on the physical aspects.

Again, we see clearly, once the initiative comes from below, it has to be that even where the spiritual is hidden from us we recognize in the material world itself G-d's hand. That we see this within the material, within a form of existence that doesn't see directly the transcendence of G-d's truth.

That you have talk today of the world being only material, and you can explain life in terms of physics and chemistry. This is the prevalent belief today! It all comes out of *hester punim*. It is within this that we have to say NO!! The spirit is there! The *ruchni'es* and *kedushah* are operating!

Where you can have as we do today, of course, a persuasion that there is nothing but material. This is a result of *hester punim*. That you have talk today of the world being only material, and you can explain life in terms of

physics and chemistry. That there is no real separate biology and no separate mind - it's all physiological, chemical, physical reactions. And that's all you have to deal with. This is the prevalent belief today. It all comes out of *hester punim*.

It is within this that we have to say NO!! The spirit is there! The *ruchni'es* and *kedushah* - sanctity is operating.

It is this that we have to develop through *Purim*. And that we did develop through *Purim*. And which enables us to deal with the scientist. This enables us to deal with the apparent ability to explain everything rationally with just the material reality, denying a spiritual reality. We have to see the falsehood of that.

So it's from within the material alone that we've got to be able to reach out to G-d. That's why the *avoda* of *Purim* is with the physical, and totally around the physical, as though that's all that it were, and within that to say "*all this is a worship of the Ribono shel olum!*"

It is much easier to worship G-d with aestheticism than it is with materialism. As a matter of fact, it is the peculiar, unique characteristic of *Klal Yisroel* to be able to worship G-d through the material! We have this in *Chazal* over and over again.

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As a matter of fact, it is the peculiar, unique characteristic of *Klal Yisroel* to be able to worship G-d through the material. We have this in *Chazal* over and over again.

For instance, there is a question whether a *goy* can bring anything but a burnt offering [i.e., an *olah*, totally consumed]. When the Jew brings a *korban* - an offering - a sacrifice to G-d, he gives a

"אמר רב הונא: שלמי העובדי כוכבים עולות...סברא, עובד כוכבים לבו לשמים." פ' רש"י ד"ה לבו לשמים: "כוונתו הוא שיהא קרבנותיו כליל לשמים ולא שיאכלו." [מנחות, דף עג:]

piece of it on the altar and the rest he eats. And that eating is *korban*, is sanctification - it's *kadosh*. You have to treat it as *kedushah*. Your eating and your drinking becomes an act of atonement.

The *goy* doesn't have that concept. He doesn't have the concept of eating and drinking itself being the ultimate worship of G-d.

Therefore, like *Rava* says in the *Gemarah* in *Megillah* [12b], when they eat and drink, what it leads to is away from G-d, when we eat and we drink, on a *Shabbos* for instance, it leads us to deeper and greater sanctification and ultimate transcendence.

"ביום השביעי כטוב לב המלך ביין. אטו עד השתא לא טב לביה בחמרא? אמר רבא, יום השביעי שבת היה, שישראל אוכלין ושותין מתחילין בד"ת ובדברי תשבחות. אבל עובדי כוכבים שאוכלין ושותין אין מתחילין אלא בדברי תיפלות." [מגילה, דף יב:]

Purim, a time when we have to worship G-d in His hiddenness, when we see in front of us only the material, we have to emphasize and recognize that from that material we come to G-d too. That within

material existence we reach out to G-d also.

And that's why just as *Yom Kippur* is a day of aestheticism, *Purim* is a day of a kind of

"אמר רבא, מיחייב איניש לבסומי בפוריא עד דלא ידע בין ארור המן לברוך מרדכי." [מגילה, דף ז:]

hedonism. We eat and we make a *seudah*. The *mitzvah* is a *seudah*. And it's a *seudah* in which you have to have a *mishteh*, which you drink. And the drink has to be "*od*

d'loy yudo," to submerge the higher aspects of your humanity. And within that to retain that you understand your relationship to G-d. This is what *Purim* does, and this is what *Purim* is. And that's why the *mitzvos* are all in these terms.

It is, of course, of the essence that we can only manage this as a *people*, not as individuals. That's why the emphasis is on *l'chaveiro* - to our neighbors and friends. { ומשלוח מנות איש לרעהו ומתנות } "לאביונים..." [אסתר, ט, כב:]

The emphasis is on ourselves as an *Am Yisroel*. Because just as *Torah* could not be accepted by individuals, as the whole concept of *Torah* is a covenant between G-d and the *people*, our individuality

The emphasis is on ourselves as an *Am Yisroel*. Because just as *Torah* could not be accepted by individuals, as the whole concept of *Torah* is a covenant between G-d and the people. *Purim*, which is a reaffirmation of it within the material terms, again, has to be the people accepting.

is *only* within the peoplehood that we can relate to G-d. *Purim*, which is a reaffirmation of it within the material terms, again, has to be the *people* accepting. "וידבר אלהים אל משה...לכן אמר לבני ישראל...ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם והייתי לכם לאלהים." - [וארא, ו, ב, ו, ז]

"קימו וקבלו היהודים עליהם." [אסתר, ט, כז] - That's why it's *it's the people as a whole* that affirm *Purim*. This you do

not have by *Chanukah*. By *Chanukah*, the *Chachamim* were *kovaya*. On *Purim*, you can't have the "*Chachamim*", you need "*kimu v'kiblu*" just as you had a "*naaseh v'nishma*." A new acceptance of a relationship with G-d within the hidden frame had also to be the expression of a whole people. And the expression of the whole people has to emphasize that within the material we identify with each other as well. Which is the function of "*ומשלוח מנות איש לרעהו ומתנות לאביונים*" - to emphasize the unity and the oneness of the people as a whole, which is the prerequisite of understanding the peoplehood, but also necessarily must have been the base for their ability to react as they did.

It was because they saw immediately that they were one people, and one nation, that they were able to respond as a unit to the challenge of the threat, and face it as a people, and thereby earn and become able to overcome the threat, and to establish that *koach* - strength in their existence - for the rest of our lives in *galus*, and in a hidden form.

This was only through their uniting to accept the *tzom*, to accept the need of relating back as a unit and as a group. Because to take again the *Torah*, and make the covenant an intimate one, takes, again, the peoplehood. You cannot make individual covenants with *Hashem Yisborach*. That's why all the *mitzvos* of the *Yom* are *material* and require an expression of *unity and oneness*.

"כל המועדים עתידין ליבטל וימי הפורים אינן בטלים לעולם..."
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"ענין חנוכה ופורים הוא להאיר האור המאיר בימים ההם כפי התקונים שנתקנו
בם... ופורים לענין הצלתם של ישראל בגלות בבל וחזרת קבלת התורה שחזרו
וקבלו עליהם לעולם כמו שאז"ל (שבת פח א) הדור קבלוהו בימי אחשורוש
ופרטי הענינם כפי פרטי התיקון." [דרך ה']



A FRIELICHIN PURIM!

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