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A Taste of Shushan Purim

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Note: This article is real Torah, not Purim Torah. The same cannot be said for the rest of this issue...

At the outset of this article, I would like to admit to my strange relationship with the unique day of Shushan Purim, the 15th of Adar. I was born on this day, and, therefore, on the one hand, feel strong attachment to it; on the other hand, I have never lived in Jerusalem, and so like most people I have never celebrated Shushan Purim as my own Purim. Nevertheless, I have developed a personal fascination with this day of *Purim D'mukafin* ("Purim for those who are inside the walls").

Different approaches can be used to analyze the phenomenon of Shushan Purim:

We can ask historical questions: how did it come about that Jews around the world celebrate a holiday on completely different days? Shouldn't the sages institute their holidays in the same manner as the holidays given by the Torah – a uniform day uniting the entire Jewish people? And all the more so when we deal with Purim – shouldn't we aspire to prove that Haman's portrayal of us as "a scattered and dispersed people among the nations" is untrue? (For one answer to this question see Ramban Megillah 2a.)

We can also ask halachic questions: how exactly should one decide which day of Purim to celebrate? Does it depend on a person's permanent residence, or on where he finds himself

on Purim? What is considered a walled city? To what extent should we add adjacent neighborhoods to the city? (See the second chapter of Masechet Megillah, and its commentaries.)

Yet a third viewpoint is that of experience. What feelings and emotions are at play in a Megillah reading on the night of the 14th of Adar? Is there any change in a Shushan Purim reading? Looked at through this lens, I think there is one change, which while historically and halachically insignificant to our discussion, has a large effect on our Purim experience: The transition from Taanit Esther to Purim. Regardless of the fast's much-debated historic and halachic sources (for a good summary, see Mitchell First, *The Origin of Taanit Esther*, AJS Review. 34:2: 309–351), its practical implications when Purim is celebrated immediately afterward cannot be denied: the Purim feeling of a sudden redemption, of unexpected salvation, is amplified by the abrupt transition from a fast day to celebration.

Celebrating Shushan Purim, on the other hand, is a very different experience. For people living in Jerusalem, the fast day is already a distant memory when they hear the Megillah. Their Purim does not come as a surprise turn of events, but as a well prepared-for day, towards which there is a gradual build up.

In a way, these two different experiences accurately reflect the events in Persia described in the Megillah. On the first day of combat, Adar 13, the Jews were fighting for their lives; just a

few months earlier, this day had been marked for their annihilation. On the next day, Adar 14, when the Jews beyond Shushan rested from the fighting and celebrated Purim, there is no doubt that their primary experience was one of *V'Nahafoch Hu*, an unimagined turnaround.

In light of this, when Esther asked Achashverosh to continue the war in Shushan for an additional day, it seems obvious that her request did not come out of an immediate need to defend the Jews. Given that 75,500 of their enemies empire-wide had just been killed, it is very hard to imagine that the additional 300 killed in Shushan on the second day made much of a difference in the short term. Rather, what Esther was looking for was the leveraging of the temporary triumph towards a permanent victory, by dealing not only with the simple soldiers, but also with their leaders, who resided in the empire's capital. After this, they celebrated Shushan Purim.

And so, while Purim expresses the surprise of an immediate victory, Shushan Purim reflects our prayers for a completion of the redemption – which should elevate us even beyond just securing our physical safety.

From this perspective, this year's Purim, which is separated from Taanit Esther by Shabbat, is a wonderful opportunity for us to have a taste of the complete redemption – may it come speedily in our days, Amen.

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Torah Or HaShalem (alt. title **Tanach: Torah, Neviim, Ketuvim**)

Authors: Hashem, Moshe Rabbeinu, Yehoshua, Elazar, Pinchas, Shemuel, Gad HaChozeh, Natan HaNavi, David HaMelech, Adam HaRishon, Malkitzedek, Avraham Avinu, Heiman, Yedutun, Asaf, sons of Korach, Yirmiyahu, Chizkiyahu, Anshei Keneset HaGedolah, Ezra (Bava Batra 14b)

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About the authors

The authors are essentially a “Who’s Who” of the first several thousand years of world history, and in one case, the Who’s Who of “What was before the world and What will be after it”. Their significant accomplishments include: creation of the world, fathering all monotheistic religions, fathering mankind, dooming humanity to mortal existence, serving as the High Priest, serving as leaders or kings of the Jewish people, acting as prophets, descending to Gehennom alive, introducing rabbinic law, and a series of other noteworthy achievements. Several have also been successful military leaders, singers, and poets.

Purpose of the book

The Talmud is filled with verses from which the Talmud derives both legal and ethical lessons. A reference to each verse can be found in the *Torah Or* at the margins of the page. In some of the newer editions of the Talmud, such as the *Oz VeHadar* and *Artscroll* editions, the full verse is included as well. However, *Torah Or HaShalem* improves on this by collecting all those verses in one place. Now, even one who does not have a newer edition of the Talmud will be able to see the full verses cited in the Talmud, by referencing this small and convenient volume.

Additionally, entire stories and even books have been written around these verses, offering fascinating background and even laws not mentioned in the Talmud. While reading *Torah Or HaShalem*, one could be forgiven for forgetting that it is merely a book of quotes meant to aid in the study of Talmud. One might think that the stories are meant to be read as standalone works!

Torah Or HaShalem has been an

international bestseller in many languages, even among religious populations that don’t understand the Talmud. It has had several successful spinoffs, including, but not limited to, *The New Testament*, the *Koran*, and the *Apocrypha*. The authors have been so successful that many books have been written in their names, though authored by anonymous writers, throughout the ages.

Editions

There are many editions of *Torah Or HaShalem* currently in print, including several that are available for free online. Many translations have been published, and many of those are available for free online as well. Unfortunately, while the book is relatively inexpensive, many shuls and *batei midrash* have few copies, if any. The book’s first five sections, known collectively as Chumash, are readily available there. Often, however, they are not read, but merely left open during davening on Shabbat, while one knowledgeable person chants their contents from the *bimah*.

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Israel’s Chief Rabbis: Write your own!

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Enjoy our weekly Toronto Torah Chief Rabbi columns? Use Chief Rabbi Mad Libs to write your own Chief Rabbi - it’s cheaper than buying one!

Choose one in each row, to fill in the blanks below:

1. Yitzchak; Yeshayah; Avraham; Yoel
2. Hebron; Bnei Brak; Baghdad; Hungary
3. A Malach; Rav Yehudah; Maran HaMechaber; the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem
4. Mercaz haRav; Ponovezh; Porat Yosef; Tehran
5. Lechi; Mishmeres haTznius; the IDF; Neturei Karta
6. Amazing; Astonishing; Groovy
7. An IDF general; A Rosh Yeshiva’s daughter; A Rosh Yeshiva; A concubine
8. Living west of the Green Line; Wearing White and Blue; Mosques in Israel; Hallel on Rosh Chodesh Iyar
9. *Besamim Rosh*; *Torat HaMelech*; *What to Expect When You’re Expecting*
10. Women; Kolleniks; Unicorns
11. Pink champagne; Cigars; Slaves
12. Amona; Lithuania; the Muqata
13. Aryeh Deri; PM Ehud Olmert; Rabbi Yona Metzger; President Moshe Katzav
14. Iconoclasm; Zealotry; Anger management issues
15. Rabbi Haskel Lookstein; Jews; Moshe Rabbeinu
16. “Yechi Adoneinu”; “YOLO”; “Missed me; missed me; now you have to kiss me”
17. King Achashverosh; The Westboro Baptist Church; Donald Trump
18. Voting; Ordination; Jobs; Freedom of Speech
19. Radio station; yeshiva; political party; dance party
20. Uri Geller; Dana International; Tzipi Livni; Rabbi Shmuley Boteach
21. Kol Isha in IDF ceremonies; Highways over pet cemeteries; Bike lanes on Shabbat; Cheesy Osem commercials

22. Tax credits for Sodastream purchases; A draft of chilonim for yeshiva service; Free cottage cheese throughout Israel
23. A third jail term; A date with Eugenie Bouchard; His face on Mount Rushmore
24. Sing Karaoke; Roll Sushi; Surf

Rabbi Avraham 1 Aharonson was born in 2, in 1940; his main rebbe was 3. As a five-year old studying in 4, he personally established a new division of 5. Rabbi Aharonson was known for his 6 scholarship, his 6 chesed (kindness), and his 6 leadership, and with great fanfare he married she-who-must-not-be-named, 7, in 1958.

In 1970, Rabbi Aharonson entered the national Israeli scene by issuing a controversial ruling against 8, followed by an explosive book, 9, on the Torah’s attitude toward 10. He was jailed twice – once for accepting gifts of 11 and once for protesting IDF service for 10. However, these scandals did not prevent Rabbi Aharonson from being selected as Chief Rabbi of 12, with the support of 13.

In his fourteen years as Chief Rabbi of 12, Rabbi Aharonson established a reputation for 14, gaining special notoriety for rejecting conversions performed by 15. With Scud missiles flying overhead during the first Gulf War, he led a group of yeshiva students in a chant of 16 on the roof of City Hall. His stance on women’s issues was welcomed by 17; in particular, Rabbi Aharonson strongly opposed 18 for women.

In 1984, Rabbi Aharonson left his post to form a new 19, in unlikely partnership with 20, dedicated to fighting 21. His ultimate political ambitions are unclear, but they are said to include 22, 23 and learning to 24.

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Biography

The Bamba Rebbe

Adam Friedmann

Rabbi Bambah Baby, a.k.a. the Bamba Rebbe, was born in the late 19th or early 20th century (as you prefer) in a small, obscure Eastern European town which you have never heard of, and whose name cannot be adequately pronounced using the phonemes of the English language. A scion of distinguished rabbinic families, he was descended on his mother's side from Mordechai of Shushan, an *offene modernishe yid* who even held government office. On his father's side, he descended from the much frummer grandchildren of Haman, who learned in Bnei Brak (*mistama* at Ponevezh). Embracing both sides of his heritage, he developed what would later become his rabbinic moniker: **Ben Mordechai**, **Ben Haman**, or Bambah.

Recognized early for his prodigious genius, Bambah Baby studied with the greatest Torah luminaries of several different generations simultaneously. He studied at a series of storied Lithuanian yeshivot, now defunct, ensuring that anything he would ever say subsequently, no matter how extreme, would be enshrined as gospel Torah truth. Bambah Baby was adept at the Kabbalistic arts, studying the discipline with the famed Leshem, and his far more mysterious twin brother, the enigmatic Mashal. He mastered the practice of using the tenets of Kabbalah to mystically produce food with only spoken words, a skill which made him extremely popular at dinner parties. It is thought that his kabbalistic knowledge has maintained his baby-like form, despite reaching the advanced age of 157.

Ever the ardent Zionist, Rabbi Bambah Baby made aliyah in 1952. He settled in Holon, where his home still stands until this day (see <http://bit.ly/2mQzrBe>). Discovering a business acumen which paralleled his Torah greatness, Rabbi Baby soon developed his trademark peanut puff snacks to the delight of teething Israeli babies and, with the advent of international distribution, babies worldwide.

Food scientists are puzzled about the true nature of Bamba snacks, with many arguing that by conventional standards they do not appear to be food at all. Indeed, the most compelling explanation for their nature is that Bamba is the result of Rabbi Baby's kabbalistic experimentations and is composed of pure *chiyus* (spiritual life force), as well as preservatives to maintain freshness.

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Torah and Translation

The Kabbalah of Bamba

The Bamba Rebbe

Translated by Adam Friedmann

רכיבים: בוטנים (49%), תירס, שמנים מהצומח, מלח, ויטמינים.



Editor's Note: It is thought that Rabbi Baby encoded the secret Kabbalistic formula for Bamba in his master work *Rechivim* (an account of the *Ma'aseh Hamerkavah*) and its accompanying explanation *Meida Nosaf* (a philosophical tract). These are maintained for posterity in print on each and every packet of Bamba. The deep secrets encoded in this short segment are hinted in Job 11:9, "The measure of it is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." We have attempted to elucidate the text as far as the limited mind and knowledge of the translator are able.

Ingredients (rechivim) – A reference to the fact that this list is in consonance with the *Ma'aseh haMerkavah*.

Peanuts – The *gematria* is equivalent to *Ha'adom ha'adom hazeh*, Esav's description of Yaakov's lentils. (Bereishit 25:30) This is indicative of deep nourishment, just as the lentils were able to satisfy a deep hunger. Nevertheless, ultimate emphasis cannot be given to the crude physical side. Therefore, this component can only ever be 49% of the finished product, nullified by the majority of pure spiritual ingredients.

Corn (Tiras) – One of the sons of Yefet. (Bereishit 10:2) Yefet represents the beauty in physical life. The invocation of Yefet's son imbues Bamba with a beautiful texture, but apparently this did not help with regards to its appearance.

Vegetable Oils – The plant world represents the simplest type of life. Plants are not dynamic, and do not need to seek food sources. They simply live. The "oils" of "vegetables" thus represent this rarified life essence.

Salt – An invocation of the "covenant of salt" (Bamidbar 18:19) which is part of *korbanot*. Salt has no positive taste of its own, rather it draws the taste out of all other things. This is extremely deep...

Vitamins – A reference to Yaakov's burial (*vayitmon*) of artifacts of idolatry under a tree near Shechem ahead of the family visit to Beit-El. This is perhaps the most daring and dangerous part of this kabbalistic formula. Just as Yaakov buried the idol under the tree, nourishing

the tree through the very root of evil, so is the case with the vitamins of Bamba. The very root of the *sitra achra* (the "other side") is co-opted and transformed into a source of pure and holy nutrition.

In Bamidbar 20:8, G-d instructs Moshe, “And you shall speak to the stone,” from which Rabbi Abba bar Eban derived a commandment to lecture the United Nations on behalf of G-d. (Eduyot 3:7) Rabbi Abba’s protégés expanded the mitzvah to include lecturing all ignorant people, and Rabba Caroline Glick expanded it further to include talking to actual rocks. (Shabbat, Perek Rabbi Elazar d’Milah) Sefer HaChinuch lists this as the Torah’s 618th mitzvah: Jewsplaining. Israelis prefer to call it *Hasbara*, meaning “condescension”.

Within this daily mitzvah, every Jew is obligated to seek out a hostile listener and explain the Middle East to him/her/it for at least eighteen minutes, without convincing him/her/it. Children may also be obligated, because Jewsplaining requires neither intelligence nor maturity, only a willingness to loudly repeat one-sided tropes like “Jordan is the actual

Palestinian state” and “Israel invented oxygen, go boycott oxygen” until the other side draws a weapon or walks away.

One does not recite a blessing before Jewsplaining. Per Rashba (1:18), we do not recite a blessing for a mitzvah which depends on another party for its fulfillment; one example is tzedakah, since the intended recipient might decline. Regarding Jewsplaining, the mitzvah is fulfilled only if the listener remains deaf like a stone, and so one’s success depends on the listener being stubborn. Therefore, there is no blessing. [Note, though, that some authorities rule that the Jewsplainer fulfills her obligation so long as she thinks convincing the listener is impossible. Even if the listener changes his mind, it may be assumed that he was already uncertain, and the speaker’s role was only indirect *grama*.]

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Weekly Highlights: Mar. 11 – Mar. 17 / 13 Adar – 19 Adar

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
שבת Mar. 10-11				
After hashkamah	Adam Friedmann	Parshah Analysis	Clanton Park	
Before minchah	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	Rabbi’s Classroom
After minchah	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah	BAYT	Simcha Suite
Sun. Mar. 12 PURIM				
10:00 AM	R’ Mel Gibson	Yael, Judith, Ivanka: Lethal Weapon III?	325 Bay St. Toronto	Milk and Cheese Served
Mon. Mar. 13 Shushan Purim				
7:00 PM	Adam Friedmann	Jewish Philosophy	Terraces of Baycrest	
8:30 PM	Adam Friedmann	Gemara Arvei Pesachim	Clanton Park	Men
8:30 PM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Pre-Pesach 1: Machine Matzah	Shomrai Shabbos	Men
Tue. Mar. 14				
1:30 PM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Ezra: Funded!	Shaarei Shomayim	
7:30 PM	The Beit Midrash	Torah and Comedy	Netivot haTorah	For Middle School
Wed. Mar. 15				
10:00 AM	R’ Jonathan Ziring	The Jew Victorious 2: David and Goliath(s)	Beth Emeth	There is a fee; info@torontotorah.com
2:30 PM	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Narratives of Vayikra	carolleser@rogers.com	
8:00 PM	Adam Friedmann	Why do we do that?	Shaarei Tefillah	
8:30 PM	Yaron Perez	Parshah: הפרשה ואני	Shaarei Shomayim	Hebrew
Thu. Mar. 16				
1:30 PM	R’ Mordechai Torczyner	Shoftim: Yiftach	49 Michael Ct.	Women
Fri. Mar. 17				
10:30 AM	R’ Jonathan Ziring	Ribbit	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Advanced

This week, our Men’s Beit Midrash for University Students at Yeshivat Or Chaim offers:
Tuesday 8:30 AM, Nefesh haChaim, Rabbi Jonathan Ziring
Friday 8:30 AM, Yeshayah, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

This week, our Women’s Beit Midrash for University Students at Ulpanat Orot offers:
Tuesday, 9:30 AM to Noon, Laws of Kashrut/Chullin, Mrs. Ora Ziring
Wednesday 9:30 AM to Noon, Hilchot Bein Adam laChaveiro, Mrs. Ora Ziring
Thursday 9:30 AM to Noon, Netivot Shalom on the Parshah, Mrs. Ellieza Perez