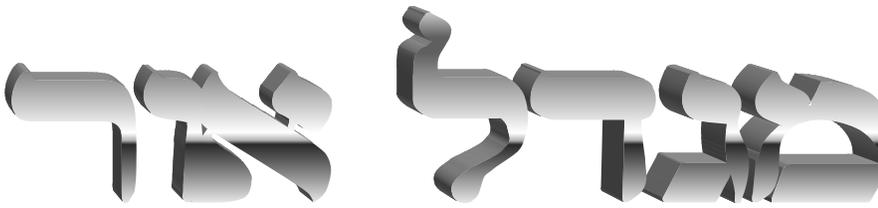


Purim Seudah discussion:

The Midrash says the 50-amah (75-100 ft) gallows Haman constructed was a single piece of wood. Its source? Haman's son was a governor in Turkey and got him the beam from Noah's Ark. Discuss!



Sponsored L'illui Nishmas
 רויזא בת ר' משה ע"ה
 Rose Hollander ob"m
 By her children,
 Irwin Hollander
 and family

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 7:09 - שקיעה תענית אסתר -
- 6:57 - נץ החמה
- 1:03 - תצות
- 6:52 - הדלקת נרות
- 7:10 - שקיעה
- 9:23 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:59 - זק"ש גר"א
- 11:00 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 7:11 - שקיעה
- 7:53 - צאת הכוכבים
- 8:23 - צאת 72

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

אפריילכען פורים!
אגוטען שבת!

Did You קעגן?

The prevalent custom is to give Machatzis HaShekel on Taanis Esther at Mincha. We give three coins per person, for each member of the family. Though most poskim agree that women are not obligated, since the custom is to give for an unborn baby, who might be a boy, once we began giving for that person we do not stop, as learned from the Mishna in Shekalim.

If one does not have his own coins, he can use the coins set aside by the shul by putting down enough money for three coins per person, then picking up and returning the coins to the basket as many times as there are people in his family. Some say he should add money to each amount so that the Tzedaka is gaining from each of his changes but others say this is unnecessary.

There are 2 issues with eating the Purim Seudah this year: 1) eating a large meal before davening Mincha and 2) eating a large meal Friday afternoon, detracting from the mitzvah of eating on Shabbos. If one starts before chatzos (mid-day) he has solved both these problems, but must bear in mind that he must be sober enough to daven Mincha later. If he foresees this as problematic, he should wash before chatzos, avoiding heavy drinking, and then stop to daven Mincha (even b'yeichidus if necessary) before continuing his seudah. If one did *not* wash in the morning he is still obligated to have a Purim Seudah in the afternoon.

Thought of the week:
Fire starts with sparks.

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"אש תמיד תוקד על המזבח לא תכבה" (ויקראו)

"A continual fire shall be lit on the altar; it shall not go out."

When most of us contemplate an "eternal flame," we think of the Ner Tamid in shul. Were we to search for its counterpart in the Mishkan, we would think of the Menorah. What we wouldn't think about is what Rashi tells us from the Gemara in Yoma (45b) that the fire used to light the Menorah, as well as the fire placed on the ketores offering brought into the Kodshei Kodshim on Yom Kippur was taken from the fire continually burning on the mizbe'ach hachitzon, the exterior altar, referred to in our posuk.

The Menorah represents Torah, which is the constant spiritual guide for our lives. Wouldn't it make more sense for the Torah tell us that the fire on the altar should be lit from the Menorah instead of the other way around? What is the significance of the continuous flame on the altar, and that it was used to kindle the Menorah?

The question is strengthened when you consider that for a long time, the flame on the Menorah itself was constantly burning and didn't need the fire from the altar. However, after the death of Shimon HaTzaddik, when klal Yisrael was not on the highest levels of holiness, the lights on the Menorah did not remain lit miraculously and had to be lit from the mizbe'ach. Even though there wasn't a need at the time, the Torah taught us that when the need arose, the Menorah could be kindled from the altar.

The answer lies in the fact that the mizbe'ach hachitzon was the place where the olas tamid, the daily sacrifice was offered. The word korban comes from the word karov, meaning close. The purpose of the korbanos was to draw us closer to HaShem. The words "olas tamid" literally mean "perpetually rising."

Ideally, the Torah should be the constant guide for a person, and his or her means to come closer to HaKadosh Boruch Hu. However, it is not always possible to get that inspiration from on high. That is why G-d built into Creation myriad avenues for us to find our way to Him. This is represented by the mizbe'ach hachitzon, to teach us that we can find HaShem in the external forces in the world; in the experiences we have and the events we witness.

By using these subtle daily messages to continually rise, we keep the flame of our Jewishness alive and ultimately can impact the innermost recesses of our hearts, symbolized by the incense offering which was brought deep inside the Mishkan and Bais HaMikdash. With this flame, we can rekindle even the Menorah itself, to once again be our guide through the darkness of Galus.

This is what happened on Purim, when the external, physical terror planned against the Jews drove us to true repentance and a deeper acceptance of the Torah. The outside affected the inside, and the flame, which had been all but extinguished, was fanned to blazing illumination.

One further point: The Midrash tells us that the twice-daily korban tamid is the cornerstone of our Avodas HaShem. Why? One explanation is that while it is easy to get excited about serving HaShem on special occasions such as Pesach or Yom Kippur, it is harder to be motivated every day to serve Him. To be a devoted follower means to be consistently striving to do more and rise higher.

A little boy asked his mother, "Mommy, can you see G-d?" "Well, sweetheart," she replied, "G-d lives high up in Heaven. We can't see him," and she returned to her phone call.

He asked his father, "Daddy, can you see G-d?" His father responded, "No son, G-d is invisible, we can't see him," and went back to his work.

Then he went to his grandfather. "Grandpa, can you see G-d?" "Of course," he answered. "I see Him in the sunrise, I see Him in the birds chirping in the trees, and I see Him in the way your eyes crinkle when you laugh. In fact," said Grandpa, as he took the boy's hands into his own, "as time goes on, it's getting so I can't see much else."