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TAL IS WISHING YOU A LOVELY CHAG SAMACH! MAY THIS PURIM BRING JOY AND LIGHT INTO YOUR HOMES! PURIM SAMEACH

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



THE ART OF GIVING!

Judaism is full of blessings. We are commanded to recite one hundred blessings a day. Yet, there is no blessing with regards to a certain special mitzvah that we perform quiet often – Tsedaka (charity). Out of all the blessings we make every day no blessing is said before parting with our hard earned cash towards the poor and needy.

The Rambam (Laws of Gifts to the Poor (10:1)) states;

"We are obligated to be careful with the Mitzvah of Tzedakah more so than with any other positive Mitzvah. For Tzedakah is the sign of the truly righteous seed of our father, Avraham, as Scripture states: 'For I have known him (Avraham) in order that he might charge his descendants... to do Tzedakah... (Genesis: 18:19)'. And the throne of Israel cannot be established and the true faith cannot stand, except through Tzedakah, as Scripture states 'You shall be established through Tzedakah (Isaiah 54:14)'. And Israel will not be redeemed except through

Tzedakah, as Scripture states: 'Zion in justice will be redeemed, and its captives through Tzedakah (Isaiah 1:27).'"

Giving charity is part of our essence. It is essential and our obligation to be careful with this Mitzvah greater than with any other positive Mitzvah.

Yet there is no blessing for this mitzvah. Why not?

Let's first take a look at the wonderful festival that is upon us – Purim.

Purim is ripe with beautiful Mitzvot, one of which is giving Matanot LaEvyonim – presents to the poor.

In fact we are told to give to whoever puts out their needy hand towards us on Purim and ensure that they do not walk away empty handed.

Although we always have a Mitzvah to give to the poor, and each festival we are told to ensure that the poor have what they need to rejoice, we are never commanded to go so far as to ensure whoever puts out their needy hand towards us must receive from us.

Why the special emphasis on Purim?

Our Sages have offered several possible answers to explain why we do not make a special Berachah before giving Tzedakah.

First, we do not make Berachot on Mitzvot that have no fixed limits. Tzedakah is a Mitzvah that has no limits. Each time a poor person stretches forth his hand the Torah commands us to open ours. ►

14th Adar 5781

Fast of Esther begins 5:17 PM

Fast of Esther ends 6:14 PM

SHABBAT BEGINS: 5:20 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 6:24 PM

PURIM JOKE

Four Jewish ladies are playing a game of cards in Miami Beach. The first lady sighs and says, "Oy..." The second lady nods, sighs, and says, "Oy vey!" The third lady says, "Oy vey meer!" The fourth lady chimes in: "Enough talk about the children already. Let's get back to the game."

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KIDS TIME

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Second, we do not make Berachot on Mitzvot that involve another person. The common reason given for this is that there is a concern that after the Beracha is made, the other person might change his mind and not wish to accept (in this case) the Tzedakah. Since a Beracha on doing a Mitzvah must be recited before the performance of the Mitzvah, the Beracha will have been said in vain.

But I would like to share with you a third approach.

The story is told of an old Bedouin man with three wonderful sons. Time was moving ahead and the man became ill, he realised his time was up. He gathered together his children in order to give them his last will and testament.

“For you my first son I hand down to you Half of my camels.”

“To you my second son I hand over one third of my camels.”

“Finally to you my third son I hand over one ninth of my camels.”

He breathed his last breath and passed away. The children mourned their father and soon after went to the field to collect the camels. They were surprised to find out that there were only 17 camels!!

How would they be able to share the camels in the correct proportions? It did not make mathematical sense unless they were to kill and share parts of the camel.

Surely that's not what the father wanted?!

They went to all the wise men of the town but nobody could answer the predicament. Eventually they found their way to one of the great rabbis. He heard their predicament and swiftly replied;

“Go to my backyard and take one of my camels I give it to you as a gift!

Now add it to the 17 and each one should take their share.”

They did as the great man said, with the first born taking nine camels exactly half of 18. The second son took six (one third) and the third son took two camels (one ninth).

Shocked to see that one camel was still left out of the 18 unclaimed, they came back to the great sage and asked him what should be done with the remaining camel.

Gazing towards them with a smile, the Rabbi said, “I am happy to take my camel back now!”

Sometimes in life we think it's a takers game. If we are all takers then we are all losers. It is only when we decide to give, that we can create, build and successfully live together.

The power of giving is greater than the joy of receiving!

Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg in Seridei Aish (Part Two Chapter 46) suggests Tzedaka is not a usual Mitzvah.

Although there are always reasons for performing Mitzvot, nevertheless we perform all the Mitzvot of the Torah in essence because Hashem commanded us to. We are fulfilling His command.

Tzedakah differs in that should it is preferable to be given out of deep seated emotions of love for our fellow Jews, rather than because of the commandment.

Rabbi Yechiel brings a proof for this concept from a statement of the Rambam, who suggests that the preferability of performing certain Mitzvot out of self-directed emotion is the possible reason why there is no Beracha for the Mitzvah of honouring parents.

Purim is a time when our emotions are running high. We drink, feast and thank G-d from the depths of our hearts for all the amazing kindness He has brought us.

It is such a powerful festival that there is a great connection between Purim and the Holiest day in the Jewish calendar Yom Kippur.

The names seem similar – Purim – Kippur – literally translated “like Purim”.

Rav Dessler addresses the connection between Purim and Yom Kippur.

“The worship service of Yom HaKippurim is meant to purify us from our sins and from the defilement of our souls by means of the concept of Yirah – fear. And Purim comes to do the same by means of the concept of Ahavah – love.

And love is a result of the concept of Chesed – of kindness; one who gives more, loves more; since love is a result of the concept of N'divut – generosity. Thus the joy we feel on Purim for G-d's Holy vengeance against Haman should cause us to recognize that this is the proper time to give generously of ourselves and of our souls to G-d! And from that comes the necessary result of Ahavat Hashem, the Love of God.”

In other words – just give, just give, just give.

Purim is a day when our inner emotions are exposed – believe it or not – we love to give!

That is the day that our soul shines through and our love of G-d emanates.

We can only gain by giving.

Kol Yisrael Areivim – we are all united.

■ Chag Sameach!

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WHAT LIES IN HOW WE DRESS?

Parshas Tezave talks about the components of the building of the Mishkan. Parshas Tezave moves on and discusses the special garments worn by the Kohanim, the people who served in the Mishkan. Why did they need special garments? Why not simply require them to look presentable and clean? The answer lies in how people are dressed in a palace. There are many different types of jobs in the palace by each person has a special uniform.

However, since the Mishkan is a place of spirituality, therefore the uniform here is one that stems from the spiritual realms. The idea here is not simply to look smart since such attire in front of human kings could be seen as disrespectful – e.g. going barefoot. Rather the idea is to draw down the spiritual. What does this mean?

What we see in this world is the physical. The spiritual is hidden from sight. However, we believe that the source of all physical is from the spiritual. Without the spiritual Neshama, the physical body cannot continue existing. The spiritual can only be sensed and glimpsed through physical things. The clothes of the Kohanim were dictated by their spiritual roots. The fact that they wore four garments reflects the spiritual root of the four letters of Hashem's Name.

This is further seen in which parts of the body these garments covered. They wore a hat on top of their head since the head represents the intellect and houses the Neshama in the brain. Next is the shirt over the top half of their body, the place of the heart and feelings. The trousers were to cover the bottom half of the body that carries out in practice the person's thought and feelings. To know that the whole body is not the same level there is the belt that separates above and below the waist. (This idea is seen by some people who wear a gartle during davening.)

These four garments in the Kohen Godol had a special name – "Bigdei Lovon". This literally means "white clothes". The colour white represents purity. This is why people have the minhag to wear white on Rosh Hashana

and Yom Kippur when we have done teshuva and want a clean slate for a new year. The place where the Kohanim served was also called "Levanon" that again has the word "Lovon" in it since the place of the Beis Hamikdash is where the Jews' sins were constantly forgiven and left them with purity.

There are two Hebrew words for clothes – Levush and Beged. The word Levush the Gemora Shabbos 77b learns is a contraction of two words, "Lo Boish" – meaning "not to be embarrassed". The other word, "Beged" can mean "garment" and "traitor". This tells us that people can use what they wear to fool other people. This can be for the good. A great person can disguise himself as a pauper to remain hidden. However, it can also be used for the bad, pretending to be great while this is not so.

This applies when people decide what to wear. Different colours portray different messages. The Kohanim with their special clothes were totally removed from this. The colour was simply white and the clothes were the same for all of them, no matter their spiritual status (with the exception of the Kohen Godol). The choice was not theirs. Let us take the message of the clothes of the Kohanim and reflect outwardly who we inwardly are. Chazal call this Toichoi Kebaroi, to be one whose inside is the same as the outside. The Ben Ish Chai points out that the middle letters of the Hebrew word for inside, toichoi, and the outer letters of the word for outside, kebaroi, are the letters Kaf-Vav that is the gematria of Hashem's Name.

This is reflected in the Aron whose innermost and outermost box was made out of gold. A person must take his spiritual and let it reflect outwardly by carrying out what Hashem wants. Let us all merit to achieve this high level.

■ Chag Sameach

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Shommer Shabbat

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HALACHOT (LAWS) OF GIVING GIFTS ON PURIM

1) Mishloach Manot is fulfilled by sending two types of ready-to-eat food to at least one friend. This mitzvah should be performed on Purim day itself.

2) There is a custom to send Mishloach Manot through a third person messenger, since the word Mishloach is related to the word for messenger, Shaliach.

3) Matanot La'evyonim is fulfilled by giving money to at least two poor people on the day of Purim. The gift should at least equal the value of a fast-food meal.

4) This is not a "family" obligation, but rather each person should perform the mitzvah themselves.

5) The money needn't be given directly to a poor person, but can be given to a community representative – as long as the money is actually distributed to the poor on Purim day.

6) Matanot La'evyonim is a special mitzvah, not to be included in the amount of money a person sets aside for charity during the rest of the year.

7) Maimonides writes that it is inappropriate to buy expensive Mishloach Manot, if this will come at the expense of larger gifts to the poor.

The Chasam Sofer adds that prayers on Purim are so powerful that G-d answers any heartfelt prayer on this special day – even if we don't deserve it. He bases this idea on the words of the Ritv"a.

The Ritv"a in his commentary to Megillah 7a quotes the Talmud Yerushalmi which explains regarding the fulfilment of the obligation to give matanot La'evyonim, gifts to the poor, on Purim, that "Kol Ha'posheit Yado Leetol Yitnu Lo - we give to anyone who extends his hand to receive".

This is to say that on this festive day we give money to everyone who asks, without first checking to see if they truly are poor and worthy of receiving tzedakah funds.

HAMENTASCHEN RECIPE

BY GARLIC AND GANACHE



- 2 eggs
- ½ cup oil
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt

SUGGESTED FILLING

- jam
- chocolate spread
- chocolate chips
- lotus spread
- peanut butter

First mix wet ingredients together, then add dry ingredients and mix until dough formed

Roll out dough and cut round shaped with either a cookie cutter or a glass.

Fill centre if cut outs with desired filling, make sure not to overfill so as to prevent hamantaschen from opening up.

Fold over sides to form a triangle shape and pinch into shape.

Place on a lined baking sheet spaced apart.

Bake at 180°C for about 10-15 mins until sides begin to golden.

Leave to cool before removing from tray

For more yummy recipes and ideas follow @garlic.and.ganache on Instagram



RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE

At the beginning of the perashah, the Torah instructs the high priest to light the menorah – candelabrum every evening. One of its lights would miraculously stay alight constantly, thereby giving testimony that G-d dwells amongst His people. The verse (Tetzaveh 27:20) writes that the olives would be crushed by hand, and the first drop of oil from each olive would be used for lighting the menorah.

Although the Jewish People are compared to various pleasant-tasting or smelling fruits, which symbolize the beautiful traits and praises of our nation, the olive nevertheless, bears the strongest resemblance to us. The oil of the olive can only be extracted, when it is crushed or ground. The oil within an olive is not able to be self-extracted. Only through external pressure can its special oil be extracted. So, too, the inner essence of every Jew is beautiful, but in order for our beauty of character to shine forth, we need to exert ourselves in the learning of Torah and avodat Hashem – service of G-d, in order to bring it out.

Preferably, we should become enthused, of our own accord, with the study and application of Torah and mitzvot, thereby cultivating our potential. However, often we also need external factors to cause us to rise to the challenge and succeed. When we as a nation are persecuted or exiled from place to place, this causes us to return to G-d and consequently, for Him to answer our prayers.

All the afflictions that we endure help to bring out our generosity, sensitivity and other exemplary character traits.

In life, most people find themselves preoccupied with a range of difficulties. Often, just having overcome one hurdle, they find themselves plunged into the next one. If not financial difficulties, they may have health problems, relationship dilemmas, or concerns about their children. In truth, however large or small a worry may be, it tends to take over a person's entire being. Even just changing a tyre or having a dental appointment, makes a person become completely preoccupied with it. We must remember, however, that all these disturbances or difficulties are not sent by Hashem as objectives in themselves, but as a means to extract our true essential beauty, as we draw closer to G-d by "rising to the challenge."

It is common for people to "wish away" their trials; yet, this is not the correct outlook. Trials are not pointless, they are there to be utilised as a springboard for inner growth and are, in fact, to our strongest advantage. When we use trials as opportunities for self-introspection and improvement, we come out feeling spiritually fulfilled, having used them for their intended purpose. Recently, when giving a class to students of marriageable age, I advised them not to be despondent about not having yet found a suitable partner. Rather, they should utilize it as an opportunity to come closer to G-d through prayer, as this situation will probably never return.

Next time we feel overwhelmed or frustrated by a problem, let us draw ourselves closer to G-d and consider how He wants us to face it, thereby maximising the opportunity of this challenge.

■ Shabbat shalom

THE UNIQUE NATURE OF TZEDAKAH AND CHESED

One of the Mitzvoths of the day of Purim is Matanos LaEvyonim – Gifts to the Poor. This Mitzvah is consistent with the theme of unity and harmony among Jews that is very much part of the essence of Purim. We are prone to attack from Amalek only when we are scattered and divided. However, when the Jewish people are in unity, then we are safeguarded from the threats of our enemies.

The Talmud in Tractate Shabbos (88a) states that in the times of Esther and Mordecai the Jewish people had a renewed acceptance of the Torah, this time without the overpowering revelations of Mount Sinai. We know that after the arrival of the Jews at Mount Sinai, they achieved a sense of unity that was always lacking before (see Rashi on Shemos 19:2). Since Purim also stands for a new acceptance of the Torah, the Mitzvoths of the day reflect a drive for unity and harmony among Jews.

Another way to relate Matanos LaEvyonim to the concept of the renewed acceptance of the Torah is based upon last week's lesson. Last week we stated that the concepts of Tzedakah and Chesed are prerequisites for the Torah personality. Receiving the Torah without being imbued with Tzedakah and Chesed is meaningless. Since Purim is a day of new acceptance of the Torah, then Matanos LaEvyonim is intrinsic to this very joyous holiday.

They are to observe these as days of feasting and gladness, and for sending delicacies to one another, and giving gifts to the poor. (Esther 9:22)

The Talmud says Kol Yisrael Araivim – each Jew is responsible one for the other. If the boat is sinking, we're all going down. But when there is love and unity amongst us, even the wrongdoers become righteous and our enemies cannot harm us! For this reason, on Purim we give charity to anyone who asks, without investigating the validity of their need. (In contrast to the rest of the year, when we are obligated to ensure that our Tzedakah money is being disbursed properly.) On Purim, every Jew is worthy without question.

God treats us as we treat others. On Purim, if we give others the "benefit of the doubt" and don't check their worthiness, then God doesn't "check us for worthiness" either. Purim, therefore, is an auspicious time to ask God to bestow gifts of health, unity and a speedy redemption for the Jewish people.

■ Shabbat shalom

PLEASE PRAY FOR
REFUAH SHELEIMA OF:

Mordechai ben Musha Yeta | Aharon ben Leah | Pinchas ben Tamar | Rivkah bat Sarah | Pesach Simcha ben Feigle | Yona bat Esther
Naomi bat Mazal | Sarah Chaya bat Blima Freida | Myriam Lea bat Sarah | Rafael ben Rachel | Elisha Ben Ayala | Sarah Bat Rachel



OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI ALEXANDER MOSHE LAPIDOT

We may say without exaggeration that among the thousands of Bnei Torah living in the world today, there are perhaps only a few hundred who are aware of the fact that a Rav by the name of Rabbi Alexander Moshe lived in Lithuania more than a century ago – a Gaon in a generation of Gaonim and Tzaddikim. Living in the same era as Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan and Rabbi Israel of Salant, Rabbi Alexander Lapidot was considered a Torah genius and was completely refined in heart and mind. He was also a very eloquent orator and a prolific writer.

Rabbi Alexander Moshe was born to Rabbi Tzvi Lapidot on Adar 2, 5579 (1819). From his early youth he was known for his exceptional intelligence and great diligence. At a very young age he went to study Torah in Salant, where he pursued courses given by the great Gaon of his generation, Rabbi Tzvi Broida. There he encountered Rabbi Israel, the founder of the Mussar movement, and bonded with him in a friendship that would last their entire lives. He recounted that during his studies in Salant, when Rabbi Israel was the Rosh Yeshiva there; he studied tractate Nezikin with his students. When Rabbi Israel finished the tractate, Rabbi Tzvi sent his student Alexander Moshe to listen to Rabbi Israel's final course on the subject, and he then asked him to repeat everything that he had heard.

A prominent individual from the city of Yanova (near Kovno) heard people speaking highly of Rabbi Alexander Moshe, and so he took as his son-in-law.

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Hacohen Kook, the Rav of Jerusalem, recounts that when he met Rabbi Alexander Moshe (who was the Rav of Rassein at the time), Rav Alexander was speaking with his fiancée. He told her, "You should realize that what people say about me – that I know how to study – is an exaggeration. I know far less than what people think. And what they say about my fear of Heaven – that too is a great exaggeration. As for those who say I'm modest, they have absolutely no idea how filled I am with arrogance." She listened to these remarks and said, "But it's not possible that you have no virtues whatsoever. Tell me which." Rabbi Alexander Moshe replied, "Yes, I do have one virtue: I am a man of truth. This is why you should realize that everything I've said up to now is absolutely true."

After his marriage, Rabbi Alexander Moshe went to live with his father-in-law, who provided for his needs (which was the norm for Torah scholars at that time). There he studied Talmud and the Poskim with great diligence.

He was first appointed as the Rav and Av Beit Din of Yanova, then after a few years he went to live in a suburb on the other side of the river, in the city of Grodno. From there he went to Rassein, where he remained as Rav and Av Beit Din until his last days some 40 years later.

With Rabbi Alexander Moshe's arrival in Rassein, a new era began in his life. His fame spread to the far reaches of the land, and letters from numerous countries were addressed to him, ones that were filled with various questions and which he answered by the power of his Torah. He assisted Rabbi Israel of Salant in setting up kollels in Kovno and the surrounding areas, and he participated with him in various conferences whose goal was the establishment of kollels as well as other community activities. When Rabbi Tzvi Broida published his book Etz Pri to draw support for kollels, he included articles by Rabbi Israel and Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan, as

well as an introduction and large article written by Rabbi Alexander Moshe.

In his article, Rabbi Alexander Moshe expressed the idea that one must find the happy medium, be it in the fear of Heaven or in character traits, according to what the Rambam recommends in Shemonah Perakim, and contrary to the opinion of non-Jewish thinkers. He warned against putting too much emphasis on any given point, "for just as the wicked risks by nature to infringe upon the prohibition against taking away from mitzvot, there are some people who risk transgressing the prohibition of adding to mitzvot, and to destroy the world by this exaggerated virtue." This is why, Rabbi Alexander Moshe explained, character traits are called midot (literally "measures"), for they must be measured (medudot), weighed, and calculated.

In his city of Rassein there was also a branch of kollels under his direction, and there he gave courses in Mussar according to the style of his Rav and friend, Rabbi Israel of Salant. The following account is given by Rabbi Gedalia Silverstone, the Rav of Washington, in his book Lev Avot: "I heard the Gaon Rabbi Alexander Moshe Lapidot explain the words of the Sages in tractate Berachot ('A man must always "annoy" his good inclination over his evil inclination') as follows: What does the word 'annoy' mean? If the evil inclination comes to incite you to commit a sin, do not plead with him to mercifully leave you in peace, for in that case you will certainly fall into his hands, since he knows no pity. On the contrary, you should exhibit great anger and say to him: 'Get away from me, you rasha, for you are trying to take my soul and destroy me for eternity!' This is the sense of the word 'irritate' – with anger."

Rabbi Alexander Moshe educated many great students, among them being the Gaon Rav Chanoch Henich of Vilna and the Rav of Chaslovich, the Gaon Rabbi Meir Stalivitz (who near the end of his life became the Rav of the Zichron Moshe district of Jerusalem). Rabbi Alexander Moshe was also known as a "lover of Zion," and he wrote articles in which he shared his views on settling in Eretz Israel and the goal of the "Lovers of Zion" movement. Among other things, he wrote: "All that we want is solely to create a group of farmers who will work the earth, firmly settled in Eretz Israel, to which we are connected by thousands of years of history and which was destined to us by G-d through the intermediary of the holy prophets. It is a very great mitzvah to settle there."

Rabbi Alexander Moshe helped Rabbi Nathan Tzvi Finkel (the Alter of Slabodka) establish the Knesset Israel yeshiva there, and in a certain way it was he who "discovered" the Alter of Slabodka. At the beginning of his career, Rabbi Nathan Tzvi went from time to time into the surrounding cities to speak to the public, once coming back to his hometown of Rassein and speaking there. The Rav of the city (Rabbi Alexander Moshe) came to listen to his lecture, and he found this young man filled with wisdom and knowledge. He immediately sent a letter to Rabbi Simcha Zissel, a Mussar great, to ask him to take care of the young man and steer him on the right course. Later on, this young man – the Alter of Slabodka, as he would later be known – became one of the greatest teachers of Mussar.

In 5657 (1897), Rabbi Alexander Moshe published a book on research and faith entitled Avnei Zikaron. In addition, we have many manuscripts containing his responsa on Halachah and Aggadah. Rabbi Alexander Moshe lived to the age of 87. He passed away on Adar 10, 5666 (1906). ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

OPENING NUTS & PEAPODS ON SHABBAT

In ancient times, people would eat "Melilot"-stalks of wheat-which had to be opened to expose the edible kernel inside. It is a problem to eat such things on Shabbat, since separating the chaff from the kernel constitutes the Melacha of "Mefarek" which is a Tolada of "Dash" (threshing). However, Shulhan Aruch (319:6) permits eating such stalks if the separating is done B'shinui-in an unusual manner. For example, he suggests using the tips of the fingers to break it open. Otherwise it would be a problem.

The Rema applies this prohibition to types of nuts that have a soft green shell or peas and chickpeas that grow in a pod. The Mishna Berura also applies it to sesame seeds. All of these would be forbidden to open unless done with a Shinui.

However, it seems clear that the problem is only with the green shell; there is no problem cracking open the hard shell. This is the consensus of many Poskim, including Hacham Ovadia, who permit cracking nuts on Shabbat, since that is the way it is eaten. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Russia – New York, 1895-1986) in Iggerot Moshe (OC 1:125), is also lenient, as long as the nuts are eaten right away. The Ben Ish Hai, as well, in Parashat Beshalach (Par. 8) permits peeling pistachios.

However, it should be pointed out that the Menuhat Ahaba (Rabbi Moshe Halevi, Israel, 1961-2001) was Mahmir (strict) and ruled that peeling nuts today is analogous to taking peas out of the pod. Since nowadays most nuts are sold without a shell, removing the shell is not considered an integral part of the act of eating and is a violation of Mefarek, unless done with a Shinui. This is the opinion of the Shevet Halevi, as well. Most authorities disagree with this strict approach, including the Sis Eliezer, Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata and Hacham Bension.

Thus, there is a difference between taking a pea out of a pod and cracking nuts on Shabbat. It is even permitted to use a nutcracker. When cracking a walnut containing a soft green shell, it may also be removed if done in the same action as cracking the outer shell.

SUMMARY

Removing a pea from its pod and a nut from its soft green shell may only be done with a Shinui, but it is permitted to crack the shells of nuts in a regular fashion.

See Menuhat Ahava, Helek 3, Perek 22, Halacha 8. ■

GRAGGER: A PURIM STORY

Since this is a story about a gragger, it is of course a Purim story.

One Purim many, many years ago, in the little town of Vardik, in far-off Russia, everyone was very sad and worried. Instead of looking forward to the gaiety of the holiday, they were afraid that their entire Jewish community would be destroyed. It almost seemed like the times of the first Purim—that's how great the danger was.

The son of the great powerful Czar had gone hunting in the woods with a group of friends. They had lost their way and by chance arrived in the town of Vardik. All the people were excited to have this distinguished visitor in their midst. They gave him the finest room in the local inn, the finest food, and delicious cakes.

The next day, the prince suddenly became very ill and was unable to return home. Messengers were sent to the Czar to report the bad news. In a very short time, the Czar and several important ministers arrived in Vardik.

They had brought several doctors with them who immediately began to examine the prince. Each one tried to cure him, but none was successful. The prince was moaning in pain. His face was flushed, and he was burning with fever. Most of the time he slept. He refused all food and drink. His very life was in danger.

And then one of the ministers said that it was the fault of the Jews that the prince was sick, because they gave him bad food. This was of course ridiculous and untrue, but everyone was so worried about the sickness of the prince that they believed him. Unfortunately, many times in history, when there was any kind of trouble, evil men placed the blame on innocent Jews.

And so the Jews of Vardik were very frightened, for they knew that their lives might be in danger.

On the day before Purim, two notices were put on trees. They said that if the prince did not recover by the end of the next day, all the Jews in Vardik would be held responsible. Also, since the prince was very weak, everyone had to be very quiet.

But the Megillah had to be read. The Jews gathered silently in the little shul on the main street, right near the inn where the prince lay gravely ill. Everyone in shul was told to sit absolutely still, for the Rabbi would read in a soft, low voice. The children had been told to leave their graggers home, for the notice had requested silence. (A gragger is a noisemaker that is used during the reading of the Megillah: whenever the name of the wicked Haman is mentioned, children swing their graggers and make a lot of noise to show their contempt and hate for him.)

The fathers looked very serious and sad. The mothers in the women's section were crying. There was no feeling of Purim in the air, that's for sure.

Suddenly, there was an awful noise. The name of Haman had been read, and little Yaakov was swinging his gragger with all his might. Happily, with a big smile on his face, he was swinging that gragger.

Everyone became very frightened. The Rabbi continued reading. People were shaking their heads. They made signs to Yaakov that he must be quiet. One man wanted to take the gragger away from him, but Yaakov would not even let him touch it. Everyone was afraid that Yaakov would scream and make a lot of noise if forced to give up his gragger. So he was allowed to keep it. No one could tell him to stop using the gragger, for during the reading of the Megillah it is forbidden to speak. They were hoping that Yaakov would understand and put the gragger away.

The windows to the prince's room were open to let in some fresh air. Gathered around his bed were the ministers, the doctors and the Czar. There was total silence in the room. The prince was pale and weak. He had no strength left. His eyes were closed and he seemed not even to be breathing.

What was that? Who dared to break the rule of silence? All the people in the room ran to the window to see who the guilty one was. The next moment they jumped in fright, for they heard a voice behind them asking for some water.

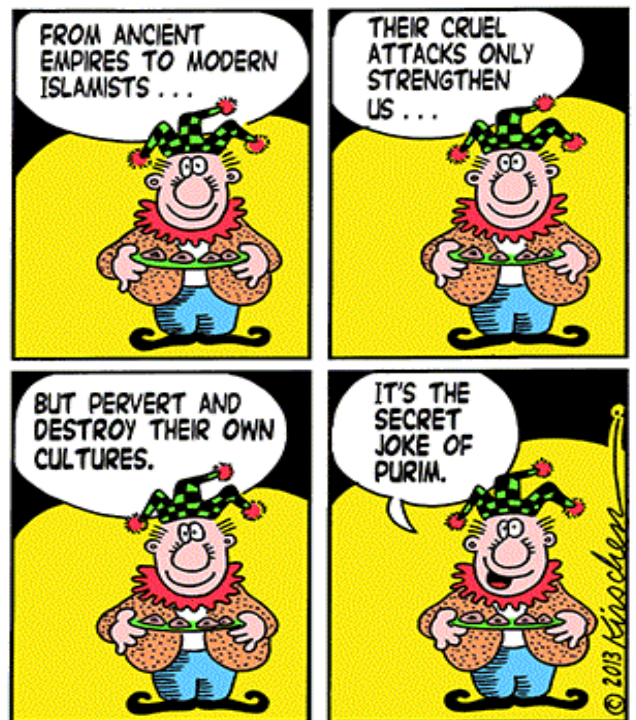
There was the prince, sitting up in bed, wide awake. "What a jolly noise I hear! What is it? Please bring me some water. I have never been so thirsty in my whole life. Hurry, please. I feel so dry." The noise of the gragger had awakened the prince.

In a few days he was well, and the whole company returned in peace to the palace. The Jews in the town were saved, and they had the happiest Purim day you could ever imagine.

Yaakov was the hero of the day. People hugged him and kissed him. They gave him so much nasherei that he had enough to eat till Passover.



Dry Bones



A Purim Word Hunt

Find the words listed below hidden in the grid of letters.
(One example is done for you). Words appear horizontally, vertically
and diagonally. The leftover letters spell out a sentence.

Adar	festival	mishloach
Ahasuerus	gallows	manot
banquet	gragger	Mordecai
bow	Haman	Persia
charity	Hamantaschen	plot
costume	Jew	Purim
decree	king	queen
drinking	lots	Shushan
Esther	mask	spiel
feast	Megillah	Vashti



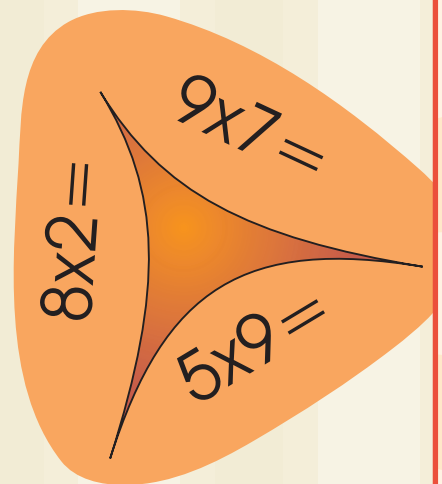
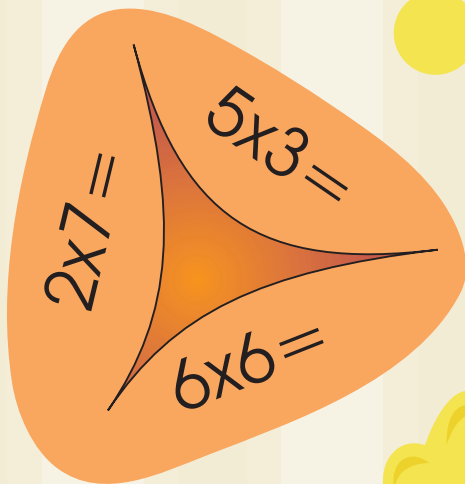
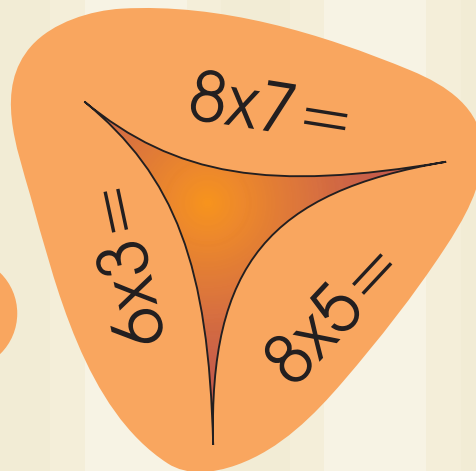
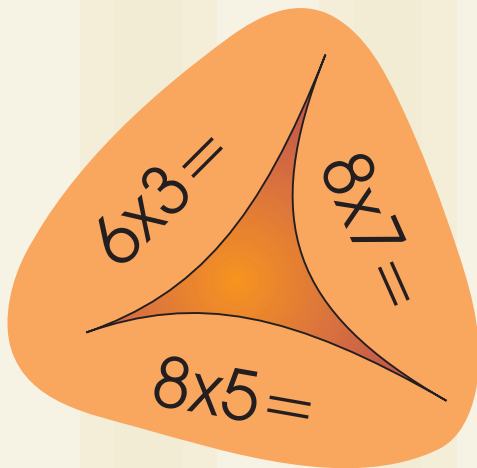
H	A	H	A	M	A	N	F	E	S	T	I	V	A	L
M	B	F	E	A	S	T	A	N	H	T	A	S	E	C
H	A	M	A	N	T	A	S	C	H	E	N	Q	S	H
C	N	H	M	H	B	E	A	N	S	M	A	U	T	A
G	Q	R	A	E	K	O	D	E	H	O	V	E	H	R
R	U	L	S	S	L	I	W	I	U	R	A	E	E	I
A	E	S	K	H	U	W	N	I	S	D	S	N	R	T
G	T	P	S	D	E	E	P	G	H	E	H	I	L	Y
G	O	I	P	J	E	E	R	E	A	C	T	G	O	U
E	M	E	U	M	R	C	M	U	N	A	I	A	T	S
R	F	L	R	S	A	U	R	R	S	I	E	L	S	S
P	A	H	I	B	T	N	M	E	G	I	L	L	A	H
L	D	A	M	S	A	K	O	E	E	D	W	O	I	T
O	A	H	O	L	O	V	E	T	F	O	R	W	P	U
T	R	C	R	D	R	I	N	K	I	N	G	S	I	M

Clowning Around

KIDS ACTIVITIES

[CLICK HERE TO PRINT](#)





*Math
Madness*

Word Find

M	A	C	H	A	S	T	Z	E	D	A	K	A	H
Y	M	M	E	G	I	L	L	A	P	C	E	I	W
D	E	E	S	Y	D	N	R	Q	U	H	E	S	I
N	S	S	T	L	R	Q	H	O	R	A	G	R	G
A	T	R	H	M	I	R	U	P	I	S	I	E	R
C	A	O	E	A	M	T	O	E	A	H	F	P	A
P	H	H	R	P	M	V	C	Y	H	V	T	K	G
B	S	H	U	S	H	A	N	T	C	E	H	I	G
A	N	E	E	U	Q	S	N	R	E	R	A	N	E
L	W	I	N	E	G	H	A	W	D	O	D	V	R
S	U	H	S	N	U	T	M	A	R	S	U	A	P
S	T	F	I	G	P	I	A	P	O	H	E	S	H
T	I	K	A	C	O	S	T	U	M	E	S	R	G

Achashverosh	Gifts	King	Persia	Shushan
Candy	Gragger	Megilla	Purim	Tzedakah
Costumes	Haman	Mordechai	Queen	Vashti
Esther	Horse	Party	Seudah	Wine



Purim is all about being Happy!! TAL has provided two hundred and fifty beautiful Purim Packs with a Megillah and some delicious treats for community members, especially the vulnerable and those who are not as lucky to be with their families on Purim. Rabbi Jonathan Tawil - Founder and Director of TAL said "Big thanks to our generous donors. it's incredible how these beautiful Purim Packs have brought such joy to so many people. We are now ready to enter the Purim spirit altogether in unity- Purim Sameach!"

