



Adapted from the sefer **במוצאי שבת** a collection of maamarim on
תנא דבי אליהו given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Tetzaveh 5761

As we approach the *yahrzeit* of the *Pnei Menachem zy”a* I would like to share a story that can guide us to becoming better Jews.

Once, the Rebbe required the assistance of a Jew who had unfortunately ceased to observe Torah and Mitzvos. He asked me to serve as his emissary. Since it was almost Purim, I sent the man *mishloach manos* in the name of the *Pnei Menachem*. After Purim, the man visited the *Pnei Menachem* to discuss the matter further.

He asked the Rebbe, “I’m sure that you, the Gerrer Rebbe, doesn’t want to be the friend of a sinner like me. If so, why did you send me *mishloach manos*? In the *megillah* it says **משלוח מנות איש לרעהו**, you send *mishloach manos* to your friend, not to someone you hate!

Without hesitating, the Rebbe asked him, “Was there chocolate in the *mishloach manos*?” The man responded in the affirmative. The Rebbe continued, “But you didn’t eat the chocolate, because someone who weighs as much as you do, has to avoid sugar”. The man confirmed that he did have an issue with blood sugar. The Rebbe went on, “Does the fact that you can’t eat chocolate also mean that you hate chocolate? Of course not! You love chocolate! However, since you have to be careful to maintain your health, you stay away from it. This is the answer to your question. I don’t, G-d forbid, hate you. On the contrary, I love you very much with all of my heart. However, I do have to maintain a certain distance, because your influence could endanger my *nefesh*.”



[1]

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We need to think about this. If a doctor's orders can get someone to stay away from something he desires so much, shouldn't it be even easier for us to stay away from things that the "Doctors of the *nefesh*" define as hazardous to our souls? Why is it so difficult for us to overcome our desire for things that can endanger our *nefesh* in this world and the next?

Purim can help us free ourselves from these negative habits. In his *sefer Yosef Lekach* (*Megillas Esther* 5/2), Rav Eliezer Ashkenazy zt"l describes Esther's tefilla outside the king's throne room.

"It seems that the *tzadekes* prayed for two opposite phenomena. On one hand she asked Hashem to help her find favor in the eyes of the King so that he would extend his golden scepter, enabling her to approach him and ask him to save her nation. On the other hand, she asked that she not find favor in his eyes when she approached him so that he should not desire her. Hashem answered both of her prayers".

We should learn a *kal va'chomer* from this passage. If Esther's *tefillah* caused *Achashverosh*, a wicked king who was steeped in immorality, to see Esther without her finding favor in his eyes, shouldn't she be able to help Jews who want to follow in her path, elevate themselves so that forbidden desires no longer find favor in their eyes? The power of Esther Hamalkah continues for all generations. The *megillah* tells us that she wrote *כל תוקף*, all of the power of the Purim miracles. When we read the *megillah* we are able to access and utilize Esther's legacy. We must be careful not to waste the inherent power of Purim to help us progress in *kedushah* and *taharah*.

In the year 5752, I brought *mishloach manos* to the Pnei Menachem zy"a. He told me that Purim gives every Jew the ability to acquire the *middah* of *ayin tovah*. The *pasuk* in the *megillah* relates that Achashverosh told Mordechai and Esther *כתבו על היהודים כטוב בעיניכם*. (Write about the Jews that which is good in your eyes). There are two aspects of *ayin tovah*. One is to see only the *maalos* of our friends, and not what is wrong with them. The second is to rejoice when someone else is happy, and to feel



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sorrow when he is suffering. Every Jew naturally has this attribute, but we lose our connection to it as we go through life. Purim is a day when we can reconnect with this *middah*.

The Rebbe concluded by telling me that he is speaking about himself, and not rebuking me. (He was so humble that he felt he was lacking *ayin tova*, and needed to work on it).

Once, when I was with the Rebbe, someone came in to complain about a man who spread vicious rumors about the Rebbe. The man had the *chutzpah* to tell people that the *Pnei Menachem* wore sunglasses so that people wouldn't be able to know what he is looking at. In fact, the Rebbe wore sunglasses to limit his vision when he had to go out in the street.

When the Rebbe heard the complaint, he responded, "It's true, I do need to strengthen my *shemiras einayim*". Once again, I was astounded by the Rebbe's sincere *anavah* (humility).

Purim provides us with an opportunity to acquire *ayin tova* to the extent that we won't even see anything negative, whether *bein adam lamakom* or *bein adam lachaveiro*. Rav Bunim of Pshischa explained that Hashem sends a *neshamah* into the world and provides it with a body made up of limbs and systems that will enable it to perform its *avodah* in this world. It would be reasonable to assume that if someone abuses the powers of his body by performing *aveiros*, he should lose those abilities.

However, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, in his great kindness, anticipates our eventual *teshuvah*, and commands our body to continue to serve us, despite our abuse of its power.

There is a well-known story about my ancestor the *Meor Einayim zy"a*. One Shabbos, the candle went out. A non-Jew relit the candle, but the *Meor Einayim* continued to feel his way around the room as if it was still totally dark. The *kedushah* of his eyes was so great that they refused to



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see light that may have resulted from an action that was questionable according to *hilchos Shabbos*.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe zy”a once pointed out that there is a hint to the *mitzvah* of *mezuzah* in the *megillah*. It tells us that Achashverosh gave the house of Haman to Mordechai. Certainly, Mordechai must have immediately affixed a *mezuzah* to the house. If Mordechai was able to transform the house of a *rasha* who did so much evil, into the house of Mordechai, a place of *Torah*, *avodah*, *kedushah* and *taharah*, we should be able to utilize the power of Purim to purify our own homes in all ways throughout the year אכ”ר.



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