



Teacher's annex – Purim customs

(Book of Esther, Chapter 9)

(20) Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Achashverosh, near and far,

(21) To establish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, each and every year:

(22) As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

(23) So the Jews agreed to continue the celebration they had begun, doing what Mordechai had written to them.

(27) The Jews took it upon themselves to establish the custom that they and their descendants and all who join them should without fail observe these two days every year, in the way prescribed and at the time appointed.

(28) These days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family, and in every province and in every city. And these days of Purim should never fail to be celebrated by the Jews—nor should the memory of these days die out among their descendants.





Sending gifts [of food]

Rambam Megillah and Chanukah Laws, Chapter 2, Law 15

17 And one must send two servings of meat or two kinds of cooked dishes or two kinds of food to his friend, as it is said: (Esther 9) “and giving presents of food to one another”, two portions to one person. And the more one sends to one’s friends, the better. And if he has none, then he shall trade with his friend: Each sends his feast to the other, in order to observe “and giving presents of food to one another”.

Gifts to the poor

Rambam Megillah and Chanukah Laws, Chapter 2

Law 16

One is obligated to give to the poor on Purim day. No less than two poor people; one gift each, or small change or different kinds of prepared food dishes to eat, for it is said: “And gifts to the poor” – two gifts to two poor people; and one should not be meticulous about Purim charity; rather, whoever extends his hand to take should be given; and Purim charity shall not be converted to any other form of charity.

Law 17

It is better that a person be more generous giving gifts to the poor than feeding himself at his feast and giving Purim baskets to his friends, since there is no great, grand joy there; rather, just gladdening the hearts of the poor and orphans and widows and foreigners, for he who gladdens the hearts of these unfortunate people becomes like the divine spirit, for it is said (Isaiah 57:15): “to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite”.





Chagim Center

Home for the holidays

Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov, The Book of our Heritage, pp. 85-86

The reason why we are ordered to observe the precepts of sending Purim baskets and gifts to the poor on Purim, is to commemorate the rescue of the Jews from annihilation in the days of Haman by Mordechai and Esther, who strengthened the hearts of the Jews with love and brotherhood with each other, and in complete unity of all of Israel (the Jews). And when Israel is united, they are flawless, and even the evil among them become good.

Banquet

Rambam Megillah and Chanukah Laws, Chapter 2, Law 15

Why this banquet – eating meat and laying out as nice a spread as possible, and drinking wine until falling asleep drunk.

The Book of our Heritage, Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov, pp. 77, 80

Because the miracle of Purim was thanks to wine: Vashti was expelled from the wine banquet and Esther came instead of her; Haman's downfall was at the wine banquet held by Esther, and by repentance that we shall repair the sin committed by the Jews in the time of Achashverosh; hence, our wise men of blessed memory ordered getting drunk with wine, saying: A man is obligated to get drunk on Purim until he cannot distinguish cursed Haman from blessed Mordechai.

However, people for whom drinking lots of wine could endanger their health, or fear they might behave inappropriately or forget to pray and say the blessings, need not get drunk; rather, just drink a bit more than usual and thus fulfill the wise men's order. When asleep, a person cannot tell damned from blessed.



Babylonian Talmud, Megillah Tractate, p. 7b

Raba said: It is the duty of a man to mellow himself [with wine] on Purim until he cannot tell the difference between cursed be Haman and blessed be Mordechai. Rabbah and R. Zera joined together in a Purim feast. They became mellow, and Rabbah arose and cut R. Zera's throat. On the next day he prayed on his behalf and revived him. Next year he said [Rabbah to R. Zera]: Will your honor come and we will have the Purim feast together. He replied: A miracle does not take place on every occasion.

Eliezer Schweid, The Jewish Experience of Time, Am Oved 1984, p.137

A one-time, controlled deviation from the regular path fills a vital role precisely for people who require of themselves severe suppression of impulses [...] The Purimic reversal leads, first of all, to a simulation of satisfaction of suppressed desires, as we learned from the Talmudic story. In the process, a person discovers in himself those sides, the existence of which is not inclined to recognize.

Sefer Kolbo, Chapter 45 (a book of Jewish law, written by Rabbi Abraham of Narbonne, Provence)

It is the duty of a man to mellow himself [with wine] on Purim – but not to get drunk! Because drunkenness is strictly forbidden, and there is no greater sin than this as it leads to adultery and bloodshed and other transgressions. One should drink just a little more than he normally does, in order to be very joyful and bring joy to orphans, and console them and this is complete joy.

Origins of the Adloyada

What is this strange word? What is its origin? And why does it connect to Tel Aviv specifically? In Tel Aviv of the 1920s, a procession was held in the city streets, with costumes and portable stage decorations fixed to wagons and vehicles. They called this celebration a carnival; however, in 1932 the municipal leadership of Tel Aviv, the Hebrew city, decided that the celebration must have a Hebrew name.

For this purpose, the municipality appointed a panel of judges: Yehuda Granovsky (Gur), owner of the Hebrew Hotel, A. Smiatitsky of Omanut Publishing House, and the writers Jacob Fichman, Yehuday Karni and Y.D. Berkowitz. Daniel Persky suggested several names: Purmata, Purina, and Purditza. By word of mouth, rumor had it that an anonymous municipality clerk was working behind the scenes to convince the judges that he had the best proposal: Hinga – Pur. Other considered it a waste of time, since it had already been decided that the name would be: Purimiada, pattern of Olympiada (Olympics).

Bialik too got involved, and suggested Pura, as a Hebrew word with multiple meanings: First Purim; second, a song of joy and debauchery; third, a wine press and vineyard; fourth, a cover for merchandise out of doors (Talmudic), hint of a tour of symbolic plays; fifth, sixth, seventh... Well, that's Bialik for you.

Then one day came with an official notice: The judges, after long, hard deliberation chose the name Adloyada, based on the Talmudic passage: Raba said: It is the duty of a man to mellow himself [with wine] on Purim until he cannot tell the difference between 'cursed be Haman' and 'blessed by Mordechai' (Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 7b). Or, in Hebrew: A man is obligated to get drunk on Purim until he cannot distinguish cursed Haman from blessed Mordechai. The name is given in the feminine form and rhymes with Olympiada, etc. The meticulous Rabbi Avraham Avronin was given the task of adding vowels to the name, and the inventor is our distinguished friend, the author Y.D. Berkowitz.



Chagim Center

Home for the holidays

Reading the Book

- When and why is Shushan Purim celebrated?
- What is the connection between the date of the holiday and place of residence?
- Why is the Book of Esther called The Book? (Hebrew: *Megillah*)
- When is the Book read?
- How is the Book read?
- Why is it customary to make noise while reading the Book? (hint: Amalek)

Jou



Tehilim, Chapter 1:1

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take **or sit in the company of mockers.**

Proverbs 13:1

A wise son heeds his father's instruction, **but a mocker does not respond to rebukes.**

Proverbs 14:6

The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none, but knowledge comes easily to the discerning.

Proverbs 15:12

Mockers resent correction, so they void the wish

Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 22a

[Translated from Aramaic:] Rabbi Broka [...] Elijah the prophet would come to visit him.

He asked him: Are any of the people here destined to enter heaven? [...] In the meantime, two more men came to the market, and Elijah told Rabbi Broka: These men too are destined for the next world.

Rabbi Broka went over to them and asked them: What do you do?

They told him: We are joyful people. Whenever we see someone who is sad or depressed, we cheer him up. When we see two people who are angry with each other, we go and joke around with them and make them friends again.

Is this a Jewish holiday? Shmuel Avidor, Ein Hashofet, 1965

In recent years I have been very disappointed by the way we have celebrated Purim, and remain with a feeling of emptiness in my heart in its wake. I asked myself: Is this really Purim? Is this a Jewish holiday? What does this carnival with cowboys and Indians have to do with the Book of Esther and all its symbolism?

This is just the kind of carnival I have seen among the gentiles abroad. Do we have greater affinity with them? Do they create more joyfulness? Do we and our younger generation identify more with them? Is this the tradition of a Jewish holiday?

Mask

Carl Gustav Jung, The Unconscious Self, Dvir Publishing House 1975, p. 75 and on

The persona (personality) is a kind of mask designed on the one hand to make an impression on people, and on the other hand hide the individual's true nature. Society expects everyone to fill their designated role. A doctor will in any situation behave as expected of a doctor, and a teacher will behave according to the norms expected of a teacher. We do not expect a shoemaker to be poet; this could even be a hindrance to performing his job. The professional or holder of a position or role should focus on one area and fulfill it perfectly. If he has other areas of interest, they will ultimately be pushed aside. In addition, society's demands for polite, civil behavior constitute motivation for an appropriate mask. Private life is led behind the mask. Thus, the personality is divided into an inner personal being and an outer social being.

On the one hand, the world tempts the individual to identify with his mask, while on the other hand he is subject to influences from within as well. A counter force develops. Thus, for example, at times a person plays the role of a strong and effective person; however, it may be that what he feels inside is weakness and fear.