



Parshat Tzav (Sushan Purim)

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STARTING POINT

The Ashes of the Sacrifices - by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

The first part of this week's Torah portion describes the laws of the sacrifices: Olah (Vayikra 6:2-6), Mincha (6:7-16), Chatat (6:17-23), Asham (7:1-10), and Shelamin (7:11-36). In each case, the collection of laws is called "Torah," implying a homogenous and complete set of rules. However, in spite of the identical heading, the description of the Olah is clearly different from the others. For the other sacrifices, the "Torah" is a description of the rituals to be performed. One example is the Mincha: "Let him lift up from it with his fist, from the fine flour of the Mincha and its best portion, and all the incense on the Mincha, and offer it on the Altar" [6:8]. Or, the Chatat: "The Kohen who performs the ritual shall eat it, it shall be eaten in a holy place, in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting. Anything that touches its flesh will become holy." [6:19-20]. The Olah, on the other hand, is described not in terms of the sacrifice itself but with respect to what is left behind after it is burned: "This is the law of the Olah, this is the Olah which is on its flame on the Altar... And the Kohen will put on his cloak of linen and dress his skin in linen trousers, and he shall lift up the ash which the flame has devoured from the Olah on the Altar, and place it near the Altar. And he shall remove his clothing and put on other clothes, and remove the ash to the outside of the camp, to a pure place." [6:2-4]. What is the significance of this difference in approach?

Evidently the exceptional treatment of the "Torah" of the Olah is a way of emphasizing the full meaning of this type of sacrifice. The main element of the descriptions of the sacrifices is the eating of the flesh, whether by the Kohanim or by the owners (for a Shelamin), emphasizing the difference between the parts of the animal that are burned on the Altar and those that are eaten. With respect to the Mincha, for example, the offer on the Altar is first described, "Let him lift up from it with his fist, from the fine flour of the Mincha and its best portion, and all the incense on the Mincha, and offer it on the Altar" [6:8]. This is followed immediately by the aspect of eating: "And what is left from it shall be eaten by Aharon and his sons, let it be eaten as matzot in a holy place, they shall eat it in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting" [6:9]. The same is true for the Asham sacrifice. First the parts that are to be burned on the Altar are listed, "Let him offer all its fat, the tail and the fat that covers the intestines, and the two kidneys and the fat that covers them... And the Kohen shall offer them on the Altar." [7:3-5]. And this is followed by the way the other portions are to be eaten, "Every male among the Kohanim shall eat it, let it be eaten in a holy place." [7:6].

The same sequence appears with respect to the Olah. Here again the first command is to offer flesh on the Altar, and once

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again the subject of "eating" appears, but in this case the verse refers to collecting the ashes and "consuming" by the Altar. "And he shall lift up the ash which the flame has devoured from the Olah" [6:3]. This in fact emphasizes the significance of the Olah sacrifice, which is not divided with man at all, as opposed to all the other sacrifices. The Olah is an expression of complete sacrifice to G-d, based on a feeling of fear and distance. This implies that the main ritual of this sacrifice is related to the ashes, as a sign of the complete consumption of the sacrifice. This is accompanied by a repeated emphasis on another element, the flame: "Let the flame burn on the Altar... And the flame on the Altar will burn on it... Let there be a permanent flame on the Altar, it shall not be extinguished..." [6:2,5,6]. This fire, which will descend from heaven on the eighth day of the dedication of the Tabernacle, will always serve to emphasize the feeling of fear that is required of those who come to the holy site ("A devouring fire!" see Devarim 4:24). This special attribute is most clearly seen in the Olah, as opposed to the other sacrifices, which serve to emphasize the alternative aspect of a partnership with the Kohanim and the owners of the sacrifice, in line with the close approach and the love between the Almighty and Bnei Yisrael.

POINT OF VIEW

The Story of a Man (In the Spirit of Purim) - by Rabbi Yisrael Rozen

Background: A few years ago, in a very roundabout way, I obtained an unknown passage written by the famous author Shai Agnon, a story that has not been published until now. From a detailed search, I have found that the story is based on sources from the Tanach and our sages, and it is clear that Agnon simply "copied" the story, making appropriate adjustments. Eventually, I happened to come across a collection of modern poetry (discarded on a bench at the "Teddy" Stadium in Jerusalem), where I was surprised to see that the poet appeared to address the same theme. Could it be that he also had access to the work of Agnon? Who can tell?

Here are the different versions. The reader is invited to judge on his own.

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לז"נ

מרת הנא בת ר' מרדכי מנדל אלינער

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The Source in the Tanach

And Yehoshafat Ben Elyada from Binyamin went out to the field for a chat, as evening approached. And a man saw him wandering in the field and ran towards him. He said to him, Blessed is the G-d of Yisrael, who has not forsaken His kindness from my nation, and has brought you on the path which I take.

Yehoshafat replied, Come in peace, and peace be with everything that is yours. And the wanderer replied, saying: If you would be kind to me, guide me to the path where I want to go. Where is the house of my friend, the house of Nadav from Alkush?

And Yehoshafat replied, saying: I do not know, neither does my son or my grandson, nor my slaves and maidservants. And the man heard and was shocked, and he spit towards him seven times. And he said: Why then do you not also ask? You should be ashamed! And he turned and left. [I Divrei Hayamim 39:4].

Source from the Sages

It has been told about Rabbi Yossi Ben Chachalia, from the village of the Ma'achati, who was walking on his way. He found a man going on the path who was bleary-eyed. He wished him peace, and the man returned the greeting. He said: I see that you are looking for something. It is possible that I can help you?

The man replied: I swear that I will not move from here until you tell me where a certain man lives and how to get to his place. So Rabbi Yossi Ben Chachalia looked at him and said: I swear that I do not know him or where he is. And he declared, Shaul looked for the donkeys and could not find them.

So the man mocked him, saying: I stand here and ask, and you do not even take the trouble to ask. Have you no fear? The conclusion of the sages is that if a man meets a simple person on the road, it would have been best if he had never been born. (Geniza GQ 3669).

The Story of a Man Who Had a Chance Meeting on the Road - Shai Agnon (Unpublished Fragment)

Calm like on the eve of Pesach could be felt at that moment in the world. Getzel Ziskind, from Ostrov, would take a few steps and yawn, and then take a few more steps and yawn again. And Reb Getzel began to wonder: Why was this day so different from any other? Why should the world be so conducive for a yawn today? And he felt a strong emotion of praise and thanks to G-d. He lifted his legs and went quickly, until he reached a crossroad.

Suddenly, he happened to see a Chassid, wrapped in black with a furrow on his brow, his Tzitzit showing from his clothing. His feet rebelled against him, and he would walk a bit and then fall down. The Chassid stopped Reb Getzel and took hold of his cloak, whispering in his ear the way his old grandmother used to say an incantation over an injury: Does the honored

gentleman know where a certain street is, and what path to use to get there? Which direction should I take at this intersection?

Slowly, Reb Getzel took his pipe out of his pocket, emptied it of its ashes, and filled it with new tobacco. He lit the pipe carefully, and he said: I will answer each question in order, one after the other. I do not know that street, and I do not know the way there. And at this intersection you can go either to the left or to the right.

The Chassid became very angry and would have torn Reb Getzel to shreds as if he were a fish, if he had not seen his own father's image before him. In agitation, he released Getzel, and he yelled at him as his own father used to do whenever he found him playing with Vasiliki, the Gentile: You shall be cursed! If you do not know the way, why do you not ask? Do not wait for others to ask, rise up and take the trouble to find out!

Reb Getzel was so shocked by the voice of the Chassid that he dropped his pipe on his cloak, which began to burn. When he bent down to shake the cloak out, his hat blew off. He might indeed have lost his soul completely if not for an old man who had appeared to him, with mercy, in the image of Charvona, zachur latov.

SERMON BY A GUEST

Purim or Carnival? - by Rabbi Ronnie Gurvitz, Rabbi of the Bar Ilan Congregation and Bnei Akiva, Rio de Janeiro

This year, the Jews in our community in Rio de Janeiro claim that the similarity between Purim and the annual Rio Carnival is greater than ever before. This is true not only with respect to happiness and intoxication, this year it is even true for the length of both celebrations (at least in Jerusalem, Purim will be a three-day holiday this year).

Every year, we explain that Purim is a holiday with deep significance, an expression of the courageous link between Bnei Yisrael and the Almighty, in addition to the power of repentance, teshuva. On the other hand, with respect to the Carnival, the relevant question is different: "What is the point of this happiness?" [Kohellet 2:2]. On Purim, we drink out of our joy of the mitzva, showing that the great love between the community of Yisrael and our Father in Heaven lies on a higher plain than any normal thoughts or logic. In the Carnival, on the other hand, the reason for holding the party is nothing other than the drink itself.

However, this year we feel that the comparison is not completely wrong, at least with respect to the first part of the Megillah. The Megillah is full of satirical descriptions which allude to a significant degree of assimilation. For example, it is written, "There was a Jewish man in Shushan, the capital, and his name was Mordechai..." [Esther 2:5]. It has been noted that in the only other place where the word "bira," capital, appears in the Tanach, outside of the Megillah, is in reference to the Temple (I Divrei Hayamim 29:1,19). In addition, the name Mordechai (a hero and a member of the Sanhedrin) is evidently derived from the name of a Babylonian deity, Marduk. If that is

not enough, a Midrash explains that the celebration which lasted for 180 days, with the full participation of all the Jews, was in effect a party to celebrate the fact that the seventy years of exile had passed and the Temple had not yet been rebuilt (in contrast to Yirmiyahu's prophecy). The status of the Jews of that generation had fallen to such a low level that it entailed a loss of Jewish values, internalizing a foreign culture, and confusion. Jerusalem was even replaced by Shushan. The forces of impurity had penetrated so deeply that in the days of Ezra and Nechemia most of the nation refused to return to Eretz Yisrael.

To our sorrow, a similar situation exists today in Brazil. Many people cannot see the difference between Purim and the Carnival, between dubious values and the values of the Torah, between Eretz Yisrael as the proper place for the Jew and his temporary dwelling in exile. However, in the end, as is well known, the nation of Yisrael knew how to rise up from a deep pit to a high level, and they were wise enough to understand that the way of truth is that of the Torah. "They returned to accept it (the Torah) out of love" (see Esther 9:27).

This is what we pray and work for in Rio: to show the way of tradition to those who have drifted away from it. And as in the days of Purim of old, we have the privilege of seeing that the nation of Yisrael is ready to return to its roots and accept the mitzvot out of a sense of love!

Shabbat shalom, and a happy Purim.

TORAH, SOCIETY, AND GOVERNMENT

Purim and Yom Kippur - by Rabbi Uri Dasberg

According to the Tikunei Zohar, Purim is named for Yom Kippur, which in the future will become a holiday, transforming suffering into joy. But Purim and "Yom Kippurim" are similar not only in name and in the transformation of suffering ("inui") into joy ("oneg"). First of all, both days involve a lottery. The mitzva of Yom Kippur is, "Let Aharon place lots on the two goats" [Vayikra 16:8], while the main event of Purim is related to the lottery that Haman conducted. In addition, anybody who enters the Holy of Holies, except for the High Priest on Yom Kippur, will be punished by death. This reminds us of the law in Shushan: "If any man or woman comes to the inner courtyard without being called, he will receive one punishment: death!" [Esther 4:11].

The point of these comparisons is to highlight the concept of a lottery, which lies at the center of the holiday of Purim. At first glance, it seems that man has no control over a lottery, and for this reason Haman chose it as a method for picking the day that he would destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jews, with no opposition possible. But Mordechai teaches us that we can change our fate. In our Torah, fate is not definite, and it is never correct to say that "something that has been written by the king and sealed with his seal can never be revoked" [Esther 8:8]. Mordechai therefore tears his garments, puts on sackcloth and ashes, and shouts out a great and bitter cry. This is also what the people of Ninvei did: "He (the king) dressed in sackcloth and sat on the ashes, and he cried out" [Yona 3:6-7].

We read this passage as part of the Mincha service on Yom Kippur, to teach us that the gates of repentance are never closed. Mordechai knew that just as the decree "in forty days Nineveh will be overturned" [Yona 3:4] can itself be revoked, so can the decree of Haman be revoked, "and the opposite happened" [Esther 9:1].

The psalmist wrote, "Write this for the last generation, and the nation that was created will praise G-d" [Tehillim 102:19]. The nation of Yisrael has the strength to be reborn and to be created once again, and this is based on the power of repentance, "teshuva." We are taught this lesson every year on Yom Kippur, when our sins are forgiven. And Esther taught the same lesson, when "Esther the Queen wrote... with all her authority" [Esther 9:29]. The psalmist also chooses to contrast two opposites when he mimics the language in the text of the Megillah that states "when the maidens were gathered (Uvehikavetz) a second time" [2:19], by saying, "When nations are gathered (Behikavetz) together with kingdoms, to worship G-d" [Tehillim 102:23]. Just as Mordechai was able to change his clothing from sackcloth and ashes to "royal robes of blue and white, with a large golden crown and a robe of linen and purple" [Esther 8:15], so are we taught, "They will fall and you will stand, and they will all become worn out like a garment, they will be changed like clothing and transformed" [Tehillim 102:27]. The lesson is clear: it is not fate that rules us, rather we can control our own fate.

Reference: Rabbi Meir Goldvicht, "Mipeirot Hakerem," pages 634-644

MOUNT MORIAH

The Tabernacle: Was it According to Plan or After the Fact? - by Rabbi Yitzchak Levy, Yeshivat Har Etzion

The Tabernacle – The Ideal or a Limitation?

In our last article, we raised the issue of the timing of the command to build the Tabernacle, and we discussed two approaches with respect to the dates and the relationship between the Tabernacle and the Golden Calf.

The Ramban sees the Tabernacle as the original plan for a focal point of the revelation of the Shechina within the nation of Yisrael, a continuation of the covenant formed between the Almighty and the community of Yisrael at Mount Sinai. Sforno, on the other hand, feels that the sin brought about a limited situation, seen from the fact that the Tabernacle was at a specific site and the rituals were performed only by the Kohanim, as opposed to the ideal of having the Shechina appear everywhere and in every family. In that case, the rituals would have been performed by the firstborn and Yisrael would indeed have been "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" [Shemot 19:6].

There are other areas related to the Tabernacle about which the sages do not agree as to whether they correspond to the original ideal, "lechatchila," or rather after the fact, "bedi'avad."

The Rituals of the Sacrifices

The Rambam sees the sacrifices as the Divine way to cope with idol worship, making it possible to counteract its influence. The Ramban, on the other hand, feels that the correct way to understand the sacrifices is that man himself should have been brought to the Altar, and that the animals are sacrificed as a replacement. Therefore, man should dedicate himself to the Almighty in thought, speech, and action, since the animals are sacrificed instead of him.

Thus, the Ramban feels that in essence the sacrifices are an ideal way for man to become dedicated to the Almighty and to worship Him, while according to the Rambam the purpose of the sacrifices is to counteract idol worship and replace it with a better alternative.

The Choice of the Kohanim and the Levites

Were the tribe of Levi and the Kohanim chosen because of their innate unique qualities or as a result of the sin of the Golden Calf? Rashi feels that the tribe of Levi was picked because they volunteered to punish those who had sinned with the Calf, which transferred to them the task of performing the holy rituals, replacing the firstborn. At a later stage, the Kohanim were chosen from among the tribe of Levi. This means that there is a direct link between the sin and the choice of the tribe. According to the Ramban, on the other hand, Aharon was chosen because of his innate traits, and the tribe of Levi was later chosen to join the Kohanim.

The Role of the Tabernacle

The Rambam emphasizes that the main task of the Tabernacle is linked to the rituals of the sacrifices, the holiday journeys to Jerusalem three times every year, and the associated Chagiga sacrifices. In his opinion, the Tabernacle is the place where man has been commanded to serve G-d. For this reason, the Rambam does not count the Ark as one of the utensils included in the mitzva of building the Tabernacle, since the Ark is not connected to the rituals of the sacrifices.

In contrast, the Ramban feels that the main tasks of the Tabernacle are the revelation of the Shechina and the meetings with Moshe. It is reasonable that the Ramban, who feels that the Tabernacle was to have been built according to the original plans, emphasizes the revelation of the Shechina and the appearance of G-d. The Rambam, on the other hand, in emphasizing the rituals, sees the Tabernacle as something that was decided on after the fact.

The Tabernacle and the Two Descriptions of Creation

In Chapter 1 of Bereishit, the Torah describes the creation of the world as related to the trait of G-d known as "Elokim," the G-d of nature. In this passage, the presence of G-d is not openly revealed; it is hidden within the acts of creation. Man, created at the end of the process, "in the image of G-d" [Bereishit 1:27], is the high point of creation, and his task is to develop the world and settle in it, utilizing the divine trait in his character.

As opposed to this description, in Chapters 2 and 3, G-d's proper name is used, emphasizing revelation. Man is expelled from the Garden of Eden when he sins, and the Torah expresses a fear that man "will become like G-d" [3:5], knowing the difference between good and bad. This is the opposite of the description in Chapter 1, where man was created in G-d's image.

In Chapter 1, since the Divine traits are hidden within the creation, it is man who is responsible for revealing G-d to the world, operating through the power of his Divine image. In Chapters 2 and 3, with the voice of G-d moving through the garden during the day (3:8), the Almighty can be clearly seen within the creation, and man is no more than a guest in the world belonging to the Almighty. Therefore, the moment he sins he is expelled from the garden.

These two approaches are also related to the Tabernacle. In Chapter 1, where man is in charge, the construction of the Tabernacle can be seen as part of the original plan. The construction of the Tabernacle expresses man choice in recognizing the fact that all of creation is under the control of the Almighty. In Chapter 2, where the Almighty is seen as taking direct charge, the Shechina appears throughout the world – "there is no place free of His presence". The commandment to build the Tabernacle in one place represents a negative step made necessary by the sin of the golden calf. According to this approach, the Tabernacle is built as something of an afterthought.

In the end, we must remember that both approaches are the words of G-d.

A LESSON FOR THE CHILDREN

Jealousy, Lust, and Honor Drive a Man from the World - by Rabbi Yikhat Rozen, Merkaz Neria, Kiryat Malachi

Every day, Bigtan and Teresh arrived at their permanent guard station at the gates of the King. They were both from the Tarsi nation. "Do you remember the great battle, when the Babylonians defeated us?" Bigtan asked one day. "Certainly," Teresh replied. "Who can ever forget that terrible experience? Many Babylonian soldiers attacked throughout our land, killed our best children, destroyed and plundered the temples of our gods, and then sent us into exile in Babylon."

"And then the Persians came," Bigtan continued his memories, "and dragged us to their capital city, Shusan." "At least, Achashverosh is a good king. He treats us like human beings, and he has even promoted us to the honorable position of palace guards, the most prominent guards at the gates of the King." "Yes, who would have believed that we could reach such a high position? When we were expelled from our land, I was sure that was to be the end, but it is not really bad here."

The conversation was cut short when the two saw the chief of the palace guards approaching, accompanied by a man they did not know, who appeared to be a prominent Jew. "Bigtan, Teresh," the chief called, "Come here." "What is wrong... what did we do?" Teresh asked. "Nothing! Be quiet! By order of the

king, from today you will be moved to guard station number 4, on the side of the palace. The first station will from now on be occupied by the Jew Mordechai, who has accompanied me here. Move on, why are you waiting? Get to your stations, now!"

Teresh and Bigtan were shocked, and they were forced to take their weapons and run to the new guard station. There was no way that they could argue with the chief guard, but Bigtan found an opportunity to threaten him quietly: "You will yet hear from us, chief of the guards. You will hear from us, King Achashverosh, and until the end of your days you will sorely regret your mistake. And the end of your days is fast approaching. And you, Jew, you will pay the full price."

The two guards began to hatch an evil plan, and it crystallized in their minds within a few days. One day, they stood and whispered about the details of the plan. Of course, they talked in their own language, which was not understood by the other inhabitants of Shushan. "I will bring the poison," Bigtan said, "and you get the key to the wine room." "No problem," Teresh replied, "and today the nightly banquet of the king will become his feast of death!"

And Bigtan laughed, "Now everybody will know. When we were the guards here, nobody harmed the king. Achashverosh was safe! For several years, no plan of rebellion or assassination succeeded. But now, as soon as the Jew arrived, the enemies of the king found a way to get around him and kill the king..." "And within a few days they will evidently return us to our previous guard post. Mordechai the Jew will almost certainly be hanged..."

The two guards continued making detailed plans, and they gleefully rubbed their hands together, anticipating their revenge. What they did not know all this time was that there was a listener, who understood their language...

You can read the rest of the story in Megillat Esther. The lesson to be learned from this is simple: Jealousy, lust, and the desire for honor can cause a man to be removed from this world.

(Source: Sefer Ha'Agada, based on the Midrash)

THE WAYS OF THE FATHERS (Pirkei Avot)

Chapter 6 - by Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv

There is something like a blessing that is recited before studying the words of the sages, similar to the blessing before studying Torah. This can be seen at the beginning of this chapter: "The sages taught in the language of the Mishna: Blessed is He who chose them and their teachings." The end of the sentence implies praise for the Almighty. (This is similar to what appears in the Hagadda before the discussion of the four sons: "Blessed is the Almighty, Blessed is He, Blessed is He who gave the Torah to His nation Yisrael, Blessed is He.")

Just as the blessing for studying Torah begins with the element of choice – "He who chose us from all the nations" – so the

blessing in this Mishna is related to choice – "He who chose them (the sages) and their teachings." However, with respect to the Torah, we note that because He chose us He gave us the Torah, while with respect to the sages there are two related choices: (1) the sages themselves, and (2) their teachings. This reminds us of the blessing before the reading of the Haftara, "He who chose good prophets, and desired their words..." In this blessing too, there are two related choices: (1) the prophets, and (2) their completely truthful words.

By combining the different texts, we see that there is a multi-staged process. (1) Choosing the nation; (2) Giving of the Torah; (3) Study of the Torah by the sages who were picked, where each one adds his own novel interpretations; and (4) the Almighty chooses them and their teachings, and desires their words.

The tractate of Avot begins with the fact that Moshe received the Torah at Sinai and passed it on to Yehoshua. It continues with the words of wisdom that the sages of each generation received from the earlier ones and with their own additions. Now, in the last chapter, the Almighty is quoted as giving approval to the words of the wise men by choosing not only them but also their teachings.

However, this is not the end of the process. A new process of receiving the Torah from Sinai now begins. This leads to the Mishna of Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi (Mishna 2): "Every day a heavenly voice calls out from Mount Chorev, saying: Woe to the creatures from the insult to Torah." A heavenly voice that repeats a declaration every day is almost a declaration that the Torah is given each day. What connection is there between this new Torah and the one that was received earlier? Evidently, the new Torah includes the innovations of the sages, ever since the time that the Torah was originally given.

It is also possible that when the sages studied Torah and internalized it, they became worthy of receiving a renewed Torah that includes new levels of knowledge and understanding.

This corresponds to the fact that most of the Mishnayot in this chapter deal with praise for the Torah and those who study it. The Torah has no limit or end, and the Almighty has given much Torah and many mitzvot to Yisrael, as is written in the Mishna of Rabbi Chanania Ben Akashia (which is quoted from the tractate of Makkot at the end of Avot). The study of Torah is a never-ending process of reaching higher and higher levels, as is written, "Anybody who constantly studies the Torah rises higher and higher" (Mishna 2). The Almighty, who gave the Torah, and Yisrael, who study it and observe its laws, join together to increase the level of Torah and glorify it.

THE CHAIN OF HALACHA

Why is Reading the Torah Allowed on Shabbat? - by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, Rabbi of Southern Alon Shevut and a teacher in Yeshivat Har Etzion

This week we read the special Haftara starting "And Amalek came..." [Shemot 17:8]. Why are we not afraid that somebody

might carry a Torah scroll in order to learn how to read properly, just as we fear about a Megilla (and therefore we refrain from reading the Megilla on Shabbat)? Actually, this question is relevant for all Torah reading during the year, and it was asked by the Tosafot Yom Tov (Megilla 1:2).

The answer of the Tosafot Yom Tov is that since the Torah reading is usually prepared by reviewing it several times, we do not have to fear that the reader will want to visit an expert, since by Shabbat everybody knows how to read correctly. The problem with this answer is that perhaps the reader has decided to study the reading on Shabbat, in which case he may indeed feel the need to visit an expert on Shabbat.

The "New Tosafot" on the Mishna explains (as does Rabbi Yaacov Emden in "Lechem Shamayim") that there is a difference between a mitzva that an individual is obligated to perform and a public mitzva. There is no need for special caution in a public mitzva, since every person will be reminded by the others present not to violate the laws of Shabbat. This was also noted by the GRA ("Divrei Eliyahu," Rosh Hashanah 29b), and it answers another question of why we do read Ruth, Shir Hashirim, and Kohellet on Shabbat. Since these are an obligation of the community, there is no problem.

It may be possible to give another answer to this question (based on a principle I heard from my teacher Rabbi Blumenzweig): The fear of forgetting Shabbat is only on a holiday, when a person might forget the laws of Shabbat because of his occupation with the holiday. For this reason, the fear is specifically that one will carry the Megillah, since carrying is permitted on a holiday and prohibited on Shabbat. Other cases not directly related to a holiday were not prohibited (for example, circumcision on Shabbat is permitted, in spite of the fear of carrying a knife to the place where the baby is). Since Torah reading is practiced every Shabbat, there is no reason to think that somebody will forget the laws of Shabbat and carry a Torah scroll, as he is used to obeying the laws every week.

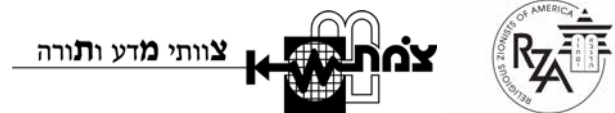
Studying About Purim

It is written in the Talmud, "When Purim is on Shabbat, the issues of the day should be studied" [Megillah 4a]. The Mishna Berura quotes this as law (688:16), and adds that on a weekday Purim there is no need for a special sermon, since reading the Megillah provides enough of an element of publicizing the miracle. This implies that the main theme of this week's sermon should be Purim.

The reason for the above requirement is clear, in that reading the Megillah is the equivalent of reciting Hallel, which is said on all the other holidays. If the Megillah is not read, an alternative should be found. We may then ask why Hallel itself is not recited when Purim is on Shabbat. A discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this article (see Meiri, Megillah 14a; "Sha'arei Teshuva" 693:30), but it would seem that there is a principle which prevents us from reciting Hallel on Purim. As is well known, the miracle of Purim was a hidden one. The explanation for this, according to "Otzar Hageonin" (Megillah 6a), is related to the fact that G-d's name does not appear in the Megillah, because of the hidden nature of the miracles. We are

surrounded by hidden miracles all the time, but we do not recite the Hallel because of them. Hallel will not provide sufficient recognition for a hidden miracle, since the miracle cannot be seen from a simple viewpoint. For this reason, Hallel is not appropriate for Purim.

Reading the Megillah accomplishes the same goal as the Hallel does on all the other holidays. When we read the Megillah, our attention is drawn to the small details of the events surrounding the holiday, and this leads everybody to recognize the role played by G-d. In this way, the Megillah serves as a replacement of Hallel on Purim. Therefore, on Shabbat, when we read neither the Megillah nor Hallel, it is necessary to deliver a sermon on the subject of the miracles of Purim, to tell about the stories of the Megillah, and to thank the Almighty for his daily miracles.



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