

Purim and Yom HaKippurim

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“Yom Ki purim” means “a day like Purim”

On most years Parashat Ki Tisa, the golden calf incident in Exodus, in the annual cycle, is read in close proximity to Purim, and according to the Tikunai Zohar, there exists an intrinsic relationship between Purim and Yom Kippurim, the day on which the Jews were forgiven for the sin of the golden calf.

From the Soncino Zohar, Shemoth, Section 2, Page 185a:

‘Observe this: the goat which the Israelites sent down to Azazel, into that desert, was sent with the intention of giving to the “other side” a portion, so pacifying and keeping it occupied that it might not do harm to the sons of the Kingdom.

But it may be objected: “Why, then, was it necessary to have two goats, one “to the Lord” and one to the “other side”? The answer to this question can be gathered from the following parable.

A king once became angered with his son, and he called to that minister whose office it was to punish offenders that he might be at hand to chastise his son on the morrow. The minister, in high spirits, was overjoyed, and entered the palace to partake of food there. The prince, on seeing him, thought to himself: “Surely, that man comes here to no good purpose, but doubtless because my father is angry with me.” So what did he do? He straightway went in unto his father and persuaded him to forgive him. Then the king commanded that a banquet should be prepared for him and his son, but that the minister should not be told thereof, for, he thought to himself, should he get wind of the repast which I have ordered for myself and my son, he will disturb our meal. What, then, did the king do? He called to his chamberlain and said unto him: “Prepare first a meal for this minister, in order that he may imagine that I am showing him a mark of special favor by giving a banquet in his honor, and so be satisfied and depart, without knowing anything of the previous meal which I have commanded thee to prepare, and which we shall consume when he is gone. Therefore let him, as I have said, take his part and then go, that our joy may be complete and undisturbed.” And so it was done. Now, if the king had not dealt thus with his minister and his son, the former would not have left the palace, and the feast of forgiveness would have been marred.

Similarly, the Holy One said to Israel: “Prepare ye two goats, one for Me and one for that Accuser, in order that he may imagine that he is participating in My meal, but in reality may be quite unaware of the true meal of our joy. Let him take his part and go his way and leave My house.” As the “supernal Mother”, the world to come, comes down to dwell in the palace of the lower world in order that all faces should be lit up there, it is meet that the Accuser should not be found in its holy presence, neither he nor any other of the ministers of judgement, when it dispenses blessings and radiates light upon all things and freedom unto all creatures, and Israel takes of these blessings. For when the

“world to come” enters into its palace, the lower world, and finds that it rejoices with its children in the most excellent meal, it blesses the table, and all the worlds are blessed, and all is joy and radiant looks.

Therefore it says (in regard to the Day of Atonement): “That ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord” (Lev. XVI, 30). It is written: “And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for Azazel”. This gives the Accuser great joy: that God should take a lot with him, and, as it were, invite him by the Holy One’s own desire and invitation. *But he little realizes how that the Lord heaps coals of fire on his head and upon the heads of all his legions.*

Haman, too, “went forth that day joyful and with a glad heart” (Esther v, 9) - namely, with that portion which was given him. But when the Supernal King comes in unto the Matrona She pleads before the King for Herself, for Her children, for Her people, and even when Israel is in exile, if they pray all this day long (on the Day of Atonement), She ascends unto the Supernal King and pleads for Her children, whereby all the punishments which the Holy One is about to inflict upon Edom (Rome) are decreed and fixed, and, in addition, those concerning the unsuspecting Accuser himself - for though he knows it not, he is destined to be done away with, as it is written, “And death will be swallowed up for ever” (Isa. xxv, 8).

So Esther said: “For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed... for the enemy could not countervail the king’s damage” (Ibid. VII, 4). And then: “Haman was frightened before the presence of the King and the queen” (Ibid. VII, 6). Then radiant looks and perfect joy prevail, and Israel enters into freedom on that day. And from that day on freedom and joy reign manifestly over them, and the Holy One wills to associate Himself with them in joy thenceforward.

And as the Israelites gave Satan a portion in order that he might leave them alone and in peace, so also did they give a portion to the pagan nations (the offering of seventy oxen on the Feast of Tabernacles for the seventy nations) in order that they might leave them alone here on earth below."

Purim and Yom Kippur two sides of the same coin

The Zohar teaches that there is a relationship between Yom Kippurim (Day of the Atonements), and Purim. Notice the similarity of sound and spelling. In fact *Ki* is a causative prefix often found in the scriptures. Note that on both days the *pur* or lot is cast. “Yom Ki purim” means “a day like Purim”.

The Vilna Gaon (18th century Lithuania) explains that Purim shares the same letters as Yom HaKippurim, the Torah name for Yom Kippur. That which we accomplish on Yom HaKippurim with spiritual pursuits, we accomplish on Purim with physical pursuits. These holidays are two sides of the same coin, two halves of the same day.

The Arizal explained this relationship as follows. Purim is, in fact, on a higher level, and Yom Kippurim should be translated as a day like Purim. “Like” means that Yom Kippurim

is a lesser holy day than Purim because the reality is always greater than the copy that is like it. The Talmud, states that, in the future, all holidays will fall into disuse with the exception of Purim.

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The Kohen Gadol (High Priest) casts lots, in the presence of the goat for Azazel, to determine which goat was for HaShem and which goat was for Azazel.

Comparisons:

- On Purim, Lots were cast in the presence of Haman, for a proper day to destroy the Jews.

On Yom Kippurim The Kohen Gadol cast lots, in the presence of the goat for Azazel, to determine which goat was for HaShem and which goat was for Azazel.

- Purim is a time of joy. We elevate eating and drinking.

Yom Kippurim is a time to afflict your soul. We completely abstain from eating and drinking.

- On Purim we must drink enough wine so that we can not tell the difference between blessed is Mordecai and cursed is Haman. We must be so inebriated that we can not tell the difference between the one destined for holiness (Mordecai) and the one destined for destruction (Haman).

On Yom Kippur We must choose two goats which are identical in outward appearance. They must be so identical that we can not tell the difference between the goat for HaShem and the goat for Azazel. They must be so identical that we can not tell the difference between the goat destined for elevation (l'HaShem) to holiness and the goat destined for destruction (l'Azazel).

- On Purim, Haman (l'Azazel) and "The King" (L'HaShem) both come to the wine feast. The look alike just as the goats did, especially after the wine.

- On Purim We dress in costumes to conceal who we are. Esther, when she went in to the inner chamber to visit "The King", was not wearing makeup. There was simply herself without embellishment.

On Yom Kippur The Kohen Gadol, the High Priest, wears special, plain linen clothing to show exactly who he is and what he represents in Israel.

- The Megillah of Esther is read at Purim. In the Megillah, Esther goes into the inner room and spoke with "The King". It turns out that the Megillah describes the palace of "The King" with the exact same words that it describes the house of The Holy One.

At Yom Kippurim, the Kohen Gadol goes into the inner room, the Holy of Holies, and speaks with “The King”.

- In the Megillah of Esther we never see the name of HaShem. When the Megillah is read, we blot out the name of Haman.

Only on Yom Kippurim is the name of HaShem ever pronounced, and only by the Kohen Gadol.

Mordecai refused to bow to Haman because Mordecai’s father, Benyamin, did not bow to Haman’s father, Esau. Esau was the father of Amalek who was the father of Haman.

Only on this day do Jews kneel. They kneel when the name of HaShem is pronounced by the Kohen Gadol.

In Sefer Divash L’Phi from the Chidah, he states that Purim includes within it all the festivals.

On Pesach (Passover) they went out of slavery to freedom, and here, on Purim they went out of a decree for death to life.

The Sages tell us that third day of Esther’s fast was the 15th of Nisan, the night of the Passover Seder. Because of the desperate situation, the seder could be forfeited. Still, Esther kept as much as she could and served matza at the banquets. Additionally, the banquets are called a wine feast (5:6, 7:2, 7:7), alluding to the four cups of wine that were drunk at the seder.

Just as Esther had spent the whole evening telling the national story (the Haggada), Achashverosh reviews the story of his kingdom as well. When Achashverosh reviews his “royal book” and, for the first time, becomes aware that Mordechai had saved the King’s life (6:2), he determines to reward Mordechai.

On Shavuot (Feast of Weeks) they received the Torah, and on Purim they once again accepted the Torah.

On Rosh HaShanah (The Feast of Trumpets) the book of life and the book of death are open, and on Purim they were judged if the decree would stand [and they would be killed] or if they would be rescued.

On Yom Kippurim (The Day of Atonement) they are forgiven for all their sins and on Purim they were forgiven for having had enjoyment at the meal the king had made, contrary to the Torah.

On Succoth (The Feast of Tabernacles) they are under the shadow of the clouds of

glory and on Purim many came under the shade of the wings of the Shechinah, as the verse says, many of the people of the land became Jews.

It may be that for this reason the holiday is called Purim because of the *Pur*. This is because the first letters of Purim are the first letters of the words: Pesach, And Succoth, Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippurim, Matan Torah, the giving of the Torah.

According to Jewish thought, the last people to see the world in a state of perfection were Adam and Eve. The Garden of Eden means a perfect world. How did Adam and Eve fall from that state? By eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. That is, they pursued the world of illusion, in which the transcendence of the universe (good) is masked by seeming imperfection (evil). If we approach Purim correctly, when we reach the tipsy state of no longer knowing good from evil, we actually realign our perspective by seeing the Transcendent as the source of all physical reality, thereby revealing its hidden perfection. All is good. Therefore Purim at its peak is like a taste of Eden.

The Talmud offers as the origin of the name Haman the verse in Bereshit that refers to Adam's sin: Hast thou eaten of the tree (*Hamin HaEtz hazeh*), whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? (Gen. 3:11)

The mystics call the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil, "the tree of doubt". The Hebrew word for doubt (*sufek*) and the word Amalek share the same gematria, 240.[

As it says, "Pure myhrr", which translates [into Aramaic, Onkelos] mara dachia [the consonants of which spell Mordechai] Exodus 30:23