



# Habayis

*Home with Hashem*

**AN INNER GLIMPSE:**  
At The Famous Herzog Wineries  
In Oxnard, CA

**SIMCHAH ARTICLE**  
How Can I Really Be Happy?

**ASK THE RABBI**  
Minhagim of Purim

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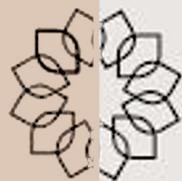


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# Make Purim Last All Year Long!!

by: Rabbi B. Wildey

**Oh, Purim!** Purim is such a wonderful *yom tov*! We bring out our colorful clown costume and graggers, and everyone is so happy! The only problem is that Purim doesn't last all year long. Well, guess what? It can! How? Well, for that, you can read on...

The *yomim tovim* are like gas stations placed along the way of our journey through life; as every year goes by, the *yomim tovim* come and go to refuel us. A large part of the goal of life is that we should strengthen and deepen our bond with Hashem while spreading awareness of Him, and to love all creations. The *yomim tovim* help us attain that goal! So, what is the true meaning of Purim, and what are we supposed to get out of it?

Joy is one of the most important and powerful tools to achieve our goal and see success in life. The way that the joy is attained plays a very big factor, as we need to ensure that we acquire *true joy* – the joy that comes from *emunah*! This is one of the messages that we learn from Purim.

The Jews who lived at the time of the *megillah* thought that they would find the happiness that they desired at Achashveirosh's party. This is an identical

situation to what is playing out today. Many people become forlorn due to running after fleeting pleasures that only *appear* to bring what they need. However, instead, we must come to the realization that the only path is to pursue Hashem, His Torah and His *mitzvos*! A person who knows that Hashem's love for him is endless and that

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Hashem is constantly looking after him, has nothing to worry about at all and lives a serene, happy life!

Oftentimes in life, a person doesn't see Hashem in a revealed way. This is because of the concealment in our *golus*. However, when a person begins to strengthen his faith, and he become more and more aware of Hashem's Hand in his everyday life, he begins to see all the blessings and miracles that



Hashem does for him. This is exactly what we see in the story of Purim. Although Hashem's name isn't found even once, the whole story is chock-full of unbelievable miracles, one after the other. And today, when a person gets up, walks around, takes one breath after another, and his heart continues to beat, he comes to the realization that he is witnessing Hashem's constant miracles of the exact same proportion as during the Purim story so long ago. He is filled with a profound sense of wonder and appreciation for every little detail, and he knows that every facet of his life is being woven into a precise tapestry by none other than Hashem, his loving Father. Every single second is full of miracles. To us, it may seem like nature, but the truth is that Hashem is right there.

We say in *birchas hashachar* that Hashem actively renews the works of creation every single day. We also say in *havdalah* that Hashem creates the flame of fire, and we use the verbiage of the word "create" in the present tense. In other words, we are acknowledging that Hashem is constantly keeping us alive - He is sustaining us *right now*. Every minute is full of *brachos*, of happenings for which we can thank Hashem

endlessly. And, when a person begins to see all the kindnesses that Hashem does for him every second, he starts to overflow with joy and gratitude to the Creator of the Universe. He becomes grateful to Hashem for giving him another day to live and for guiding him along every step of the way.

When a person has this perspective, he sees that everything happens for a reason. He can then understand that there is simply no such thing as a coincidence. He starts feeling purpose in his life; his recognition of all the kindnesses in his life overcome him, and he sees the overflowing of blessings that he has. Pirkei Avos 4:1 says, "Who is wealthy? He who is happy with his lot". We can literally feel what Dovid HaMelech says in Tehilim 23, "נטוּי רוּיָהּ, my cup is overflowing". This person is brimming with gratitude that overflows as he sees everything he has as the blessing that it is as opposed to something to which he is entitled.

Let's say that Reuven expects to come home to a fresh slice of delicious chocolate cake, but when he gets to his house, he's disappointed to find a noted lack of cake. Reuven has two choices before him. He decides

*not* to get upset, as he realizes that everything he has is a gift. Instead of having an evening full of bitterness about his loss of cake, he feels so loved and blessed, thinking of all the gifts that he has been given. Hashem owes us nothing!

Everything you have is a gift from Hashem. He loves you and cares about you! Sometimes we can't understand why Hashem gave us what we have, as our view in this test called life is limited. We can't always see the gifts that our problems really are! I have a very close family friend who was never, *ever* late to work. Somehow, one day he missed his train to his job, much to his chagrin. Although he was quite frustrated with himself, a short while later he found out that a terrorist attack had just happened at work that day, and there were, unfortunately, many casualties. His joy knew no bounds when he realized that his uncharacteristic lateness was a blessing in disguise. Not always are things so crystal clear, but in every occurrence and in any circumstance, we can know that everything is for the best. Hashem loves us and only does things for our benefit.

When a person has this perspective, they merit seeing

the endless gifts that they have. Sometimes a person is, *chas v'shalom*, stuck in a deep depression, and he finds it difficult to get out of this state. Rebbe Nachman of Breslev gives us much priceless advice on what to do to get out of the rut. A person who is stuck can pretend that he is happy. Despite his depression, this will begin to affect him, and his act will become reality. Rebbe Nachman also says in Likutei Moharan 2:48 that a person should focus on their good points that they definitely have, because every single individual has good within. Rebbe Nachman encourages everyone to make a significant focus on even a tiny little bit of good that he did and use that to make himself ecstatic. Sometimes, because of the deepness of his depression, he might have a hard time finding the good inside him. There's a solution to this one, too! Just think about the fact that you a Yid. "Thank you Hashem for making me a Jew!" Even if I've done so many

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not good things in my life that I can't find anything good to harp upon to raise my spirits, this is one that that I can't deny! I am a Jew! Focusing on this will make us so happy that we will begin to find other good points as well.

When we do even little things, things we might consider insignificant, those tiny actions are treasured by Hashem. Even a good thought, a smile, or one word expressed of a desire to be close to Hashem is of tremendous value. Never, ever underestimate a small action. When we do this, not only do we lift our spirits, but we actually raise ourselves up to a higher level.

Rebbe Nachman says in Sefer HaMiddos that when a person rejoices in a *mitzvah*, he merits protection from Hashem. In Gemara Taanis it says that two jesters merited Olam Haboh simply by bringing joy into the hearts of others. Rebbe Nachman says that a person should make himself happy even by being silly. But he

must ensure that the silliness doesn't include making fun of anyone and that it is spoken in a manner of proper etiquette. Rebbe Nachman also says in Sefer HaMiddos that dancing or energetic movements can bring a person joy! He goes further and in Sichos HaRan 43, he says that through happiness you can give a person life, and that a happy face can literally unburden another person. Rebbe Nachman says in Sichos HaRan 131 that clapping and joyful can actually mitigate harsh judgements and decrees.

**CLAPPING  
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May our true joy remove any harsh decrees. May we all be able to attain the constant, reassuring comfort of knowing that Hashem's loving hand is always present in every facet of our lives, and having our every moment permeated with true happiness, no matter what. And may we live lives where we see all the miracles that Hashem does for us every day. In this merit, may we see the day on which all miracles will be revealed when we will have a palpable sensation of Hashem's infinite kindness and love which He showers upon us at every moment.

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ספורי מעשיות

# ~ THE LOST PRINCESS ~

Translated by: S. Leser



*Recap: After many years of searching for the royal princess, the loyal viceroy finds her in a castle, which is the place of Evil. She gives him instructions on how to take her out: For an entire year he must yearn and pray for her, and on the last day he was to refrain from eating. The faithful viceroy did as he was told, but on the last day, while on the way to her castle, he bit into an apple and fell into a deep sleep that lasted many years. When he awoke, he went to her and she again instructed him as before, except that on the final day he was allowed to eat, only to refrain from drinking wine in order not to fall asleep. But again, the viceroy fell through on the last day when he tasted from a flowing brook which smelled of wine and slept for many years. Upon awakening, his assistant told him of a procession of soldiers who had passed by, including a chariot from which a royal princess had alighted. She had sat by his side and wept profusely, then she had written something with her tears on her kerchief and departed with the soldiers.*

The viceroy took the kerchief and held it up to the sun. He began to see the letters and started to read what she had written. He read all her lamentations and grief, and then continued reading, "I am no longer in the castle. Now you must search for a mountain of gold and a pearl castle. There you will find me." Upon reading the words which the princess had written with her tears, the viceroy immediately embarked on his way, determined to find the princess in her pearl castle atop a golden mountain.

*The Rebbe does not tell how the princess came to the pearl castle atop the golden mountain, yet here lies a profound message*

*of encouragement: For two full years the viceroy had been toiling and yearning day and night to be able to take out the princess, and both times he had been unable to withstand the challenge of the last day. It seemed that all his efforts had been in vain, for he had not succeeded in taking her out. What had come of his two years of hard work on behalf of the princess? Had all been lost because of the last day? Not at all! As a result of his efforts, the viceroy had succeeded in having the princess removed from the palace of the Evil Ones and taken to a castle of pearls on a golden mountain!*

*Similarly, we must remember that when it*

*comes to avodas Hashem, there is no such thing as any effort ever being 'lost'; whether it is a single word of Torah or tefillah, a small act of kindness, or even one positive thought - it all gets saved towards our account.*

He left his servant behind and set off on his own to find her.

*He realized that this was something he would have to do on his own, for his assistant had been of no use to him at all. At some point in life, a person comes to realize that in order to come closer to Hashem he must let go of his friends and surroundings who are preventing him from making progress.*

For several years, the viceroy searched for the lost princess. After searching for a long time, the viceroy came to the conclusion that he would not find a castle of pearls on a golden mountain in any civilized area. Therefore, he began to search in the deserts.

After several years, he met a huge man in the deserts. This giant was so huge that he could hardly be considered a human being, and he carried an equally massive tree, far bigger than any tree found in the civilized world.

The man asked him, "Who are you"?

"I am a human being", answered the viceroy.

The giant was astounded, "I have been in the wilderness for so many years and have

never yet encountered a human being!"

The viceroy then told him his entire story, and how he was now searching for a castle of pearls upon a golden mountain.

The giant man said to him, "There is no such thing as a castle of pearls and a mountain of gold. You have been told nonsense, for this does not exist!"

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another one of  
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the yetzer hara.  
He dresses in  
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to become closer  
to Hashem.**

The loyal viceroy was not swayed by the odd man's dissuasion. He burst into tears and cried out with conviction, "There must be such a place somewhere in the world."

*When a person sets out in his path to serve Hashem with sincere devotion, and he tries climbing to greater heights, whether by increasing his diligence in his learning, or by persevering in his tefillah and his bodedot, he will undoubtedly face many challenges. After surmounting the various obstacles set in his path, a person will then be faced with the most difficult challenge of all: A 'giant man', i.e., a great, respected leader, one who has as many followers as the leaves on the giant tree, will try to dissuade him.*

*This is but another one of the sly tricks of the yetzer hara. He dresses in the disguise of a distinguished person and tries to discourage you from trying to become closer to Hashem. 'You're not cut out for this. Don't even bother trying, you'll never succeed!'*

*It is interesting to note that at first, Rebbe Nachman describes the stranger as a 'huge man' but once he began discouraging the viceroy, the Rebbe names him the 'odd man'; for regardless of how famous and respected a person is, if he discourages a person from trying to become closer to Hashem, he loses his respected status and should be seen as an odd person whose advice would not be heeded.*

"There is no such place. I'm telling you, you were told foolish stories."

The viceroy still remained steadfast. "There definitely is such a place."

"Look here", the great man finally said. "As far as I know, you are speaking nonsense, for such a castle of pearls upon a mountain of gold simply does not exist. However, seeing that you are so insistent, here's what I can do.

I am in charge of all the animals in the world. For your sake, I will summon them all together. The animals run all over the world; perhaps one of them knows about this mountain and castle.

*He remained strong, so he was able to overturn his מניעות into נעימות, that is, the obstacle itself actually became the vehicle that would help him in his quest.*

The giant man duly gathered all the beasts and inquired if any of them had ever seen a castle of pearls on a mountain of gold, but they all answered that they had not.

*Anyone who tries to discourage a person is in essence an 'animal disguised as a human*

*being', as Rebbe Nachman describes one who is far from Hashem.*

"See! You were told such nonsense!" said the weird man to the viceroy. "If you were to listen to me, I would tell you to go back to where you came from, for your search is in vain. You will never find this place; it simply does not exist!"

But the viceroy continued to press him, and said, "But it must exist! I am sure of it!"

*The trick to succeed in life lies in a strong belief that "it definitely exists". Let no one try to convince you that there is no such thing as true happiness, or that no one these days can become a tzaddik. The secret to success is to know for certain that "it does exist" and thus ignore anyone who tries to discourage you.*

Said the giant, "Listen, somewhere in the desert I have a brother who is in charge of all the birds. Since they fly high in the sky, perhaps one of them has seen this mountain and castle. Go to my brother and tell him that I have sent you to him.

The viceroy traveled many, many years until he finally found him. He encountered this huge giant, just like the first one, and he was also carrying an immense tree.

This giant asked the same questions as his brother had, and the viceroy replied, telling him the entire story again, and how his brother had sent him here. The second giant's reaction was just like his brother. He laughed and discouraged the viceroy, saying, "This is obviously something that

**Let no one try to convince you that there is no such thing as true happiness, or that no one these days can become a tzaddik.**

does not exist!" But the viceroy was not swayed, and he insisted as before, that it definitely does exist.

The giant then said to him, "I am in charge of all the birds. I will summon them and perhaps one of them will know something."

He called all the birds, from the biggest to the smallest, and asked every one of them. They all replied that they did not know of any such mountain or castle.

The giant turned to the viceroy, "Don't you see that there is no such a place in the world? Listen to me and go back home, for this certainly does not exist!"

"But I am certain that it *does* exist somewhere in the world!" cried the viceroy with conviction.

The giant then told him, "Further on in the desert, you can find my brother, who oversees all the winds. They fly all over the world, perhaps one of them will know."

Once again, the viceroy traveled in the deserts for years in search of the third brother. After many, many years he finally found him, a giant just like the first two, also carrying a huge tree. He asked similar questions, and the viceroy answered, telling him his story. This giant also tried to discourage him, but the viceroy still did not allow himself be dissuaded, and remained steadfast in his conviction that such a place definitely exists.

At his insistence, the third giant told him that he would assemble all the winds for his sake, and he would ask them. Upon his summons, all the winds came, and he asked them all, but not one of them knew anything about a mountain of gold or a castle of pearls.

"Don't you see that people have told you

foolish tales?" said the giant.

The viceroy realized that he had come to the end of the trail, and he had nowhere else to turn to. Yet he did not lose his conviction. He began to weep very bitterly.

*When you see that you have reached the end of the path, and it seems that you will never be freed from the evil clutches of the yetzer hara, remember that tears break all barriers. Our chachomim teach us that even when all the gates of tefillah are locked, the gate of tears is never barred. The only way to overcome the greatest challenges and be zoche to come close to Hashem is by crying out to Him, begging for mercy.*

*When crying to Hashem, however, it should never be from grief and depression, chas v'shalom. The tears must come from yearning, "Ribono shel Olam, I want to do teshuvah! Help me be zoche to return to You, to overcome my many nisyonos and only cleave to You!"*

"But I know for a fact that **it does exist!**"

Just then he saw another wind arrive. The giant was angry, "Why did you come so late?" he demanded. "I decreed for all the winds to come! Why did you not come with all the others?"

The wind replied, "I was detained because I had to carry a royal princess to a gold mountain and a pearl castle..."

The viceroy was overjoyed. He had been right after all!

*To be continued...*



# A Glimpse at: HERZOG WINERY

by: S. Feldman

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It graces our table at each simcha and takes center stage in our *mitzvos*, too! From *Kiddush* and *Havdalah* on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* to *L'chaim's* and *chuppahs*, wine accompanies us to all of our happiest occasions. However, the first thing that comes to mind when we think of wine is, of course, Purim! “חייב איניש לבסוכו” “בפוריא עד דלא ידע”. To give us a heightened appreciation of wine in anticipation of the upcoming *Yom Tov*, we bring you here a fascinating interview with Mr. Joseph Herzog, partner and vice president of the famed Herzog winery, who gives us a closer glimpse into this mini-universe. Based in the sun-bathed Southern California, Mr. Herzog will take us on a tour of the winery and explain many of the amazing things that happen at the famed winery.

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**Habayis:** Hello Mr. Herzog. Thank you for giving us of your precious time. Before we can even start delving into the wine-making process, let's hear a little about the Herzog family. While we are all very familiar with Herzog wines, many of us don't know anything about how the whole business began. Can you

share the history with us?

**Mr. Herzog:** The business began with the Herzog family back in Europe. We are the oldest wine-making family in the United States! We have an unbroken history of wine-making that began in the 1800's. Needless to say, the production of wine back in Europe was

brought to an abrupt halt when the Holocaust reared its ugly head. After Eugene Herzog fled Europe's bloodied soil in 1948 to settle in America, he gradually rebuilt the family business on these shores. His son, David, who is now the Chairman of the Board, then established what would become "Herzog Wine Cellars" together with his brother, Earnest, who is my father. They are the ones who moved the business out west to California in 1985. Twenty years later, in 2005, they built the current winery located in Oxnard with a healthy dose of *siyata dishmaya*. David's son, Mordy, is currently the CEO of Royal Wine who owns Herzog, Kedem, and all its

subsidiaries.

**Habayis:** Wow! That's really incredible! Who would have thought that such a large production of wine began with one person who came to post-war America bereft of everything he had previously owned? Talk about rebuilding yourself!

Now that we're a bit more acquainted with the family, let's get to the winery itself. Since most of us have not been privileged to visit your expansive facility, perhaps you can take us on a virtual tour?

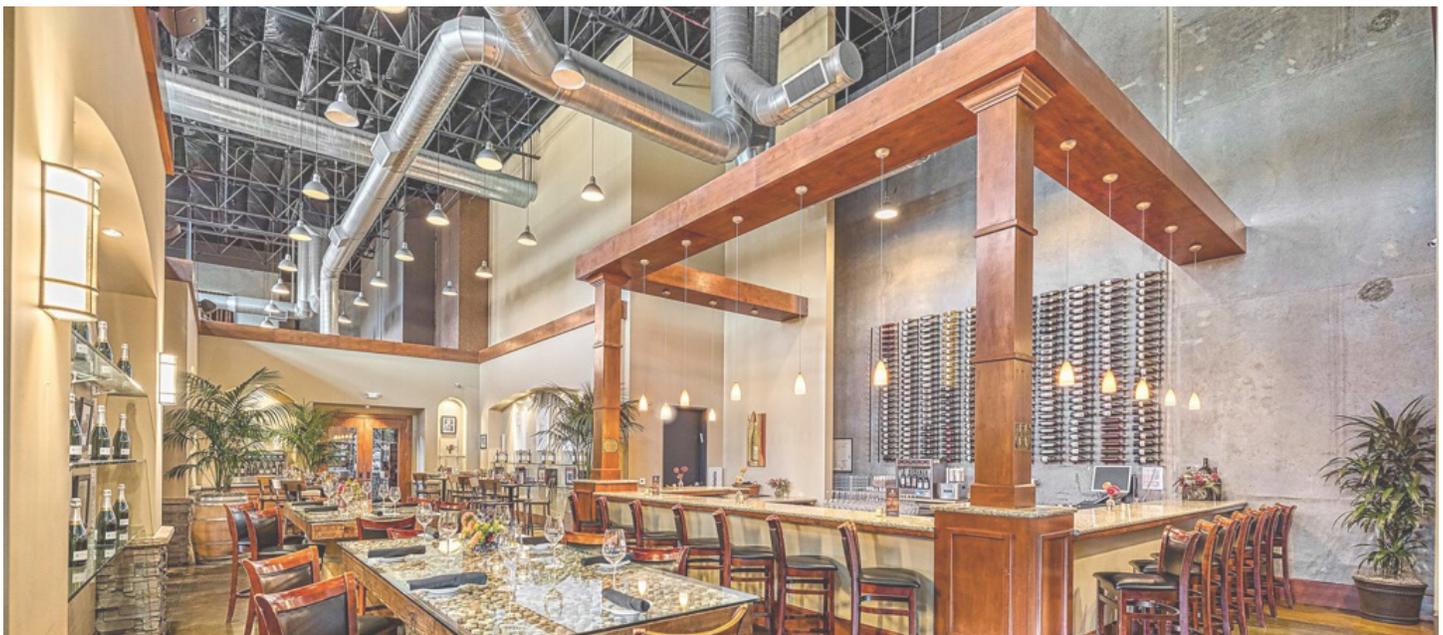
**Mr. Herzog:** Expansive facility? That's pretty accurate. The building is 77,000 square feet! We use all



# *A Glimpse at:* HERZOG WINERY

that space very well with all the machinery, aging barrels, bottling, etc. The winery was designed to handle the entire wine-making process from beginning to end. It is equipped with everything necessary to make wine, from receiving the grapes to juicing them, refining the juice of all the grape's impurities, aging the wine in the barrels, bottling it, storing the bottles and distributing them to the world. To accomplish all that, the winery boasts a variety of

sophisticated machinery including loading docks where the grapes come in, our bottling line, our aging rooms with steel tanks and wooden barrels and our packaging and warehousing areas. In addition, our building also houses all the offices for the team that runs the entire winery from both the business and the marketing standpoint. Perhaps the best part is our world-class tasting room and the Tierra Sur restaurant that is on premises as well, where the greater





public can come enjoy our wines along with great foods and exclusive events.

**Habayis:** Incredible! It surely does sound like a mass production running on well-oiled gears. Speaking of the loading docks that you mentioned accept grapes from the vineyards, where do you actually get the grapes from? Does the winery have its own vineyards?

**Mr. Herzog:** In Oxnard, we don't have any vineyards. However, the Herzog family does own or control the land of many vineyards in some of

the most exclusive vineyards in the most sought-after areas in Northern California, like Napa Valley, Sonoma, Lake County, Lodi and Clarksburg. Our workers go up north to those locations to pick the grapes when they're ripe.

**Habayis:** Sounds like a lot of work. Once the grapes get to the winery, they still have a long journey until being ready, bottled wine. How many machines assist the process? And what do they each do?

**Mr. Herzog:** There are a great many machines. We have dozens of steel tanks and thousands of barrels for aging the wine. Then we have a bottling line that can bottle over 100 bottles per minute.

**Habayis:** Wow! That's fast!

**Mr. Herzog:** Yes, it is. It's fascinating to watch its speed of production. We also have various other machines. They extract the juice from the grapes, remove the skins from the grapes, filter out the impurities in the grapes and transport all the juice into

# A Glimpse at: HERZOG WINERY

tanks. Then, there is the bottling line that mentioned previously that fills and packages the bottles. Personally, I think that the most fascinating piece of equipment is the “Pellanc”. It is a sophisticated sorting machine that takes pictures of each individual grape and selects only the best ones to become part of our high-end wines. The other grapes are separated out using a complex series of guns and conveyer belts. It’s quite interesting to watch!

**Habayis:** You’re intriguing me. A trip down to Oxnard is sounding more and more appealing! How many employees does it take to keep the whole process up and running smoothly?

**Mr. Herzog:** Currently, we have approximately 100 employees as part of our team. They include business administration, shipping and receiving, and hospitality, to name a



few.

**Habayis:** Wow! That’s a pretty full staff! I guess most of your staff is Jewish to prevent the issue of the non-mevushal wines.

**Mr. Herzog:** All workers who handle the wine from the moment it comes in the building as grapes or juice until the moment it is sealed in the bottle are fully observant shomer shabbos Jews, as it has been for thousands of years. Many of the workers in other departments are not Jewish, as Herzog values viewpoints and experience from a diverse group of



individuals.

**Habayis:** Very commendable. Many of us still visualize the wine-making process as a young man stomping barefoot on grapes in large barrels. You've taught us a thing or two about how the process has changed! But, what happens if one of your sophisticated machines break? Does it halt production until it's fixed?

**Mr. Herzog:** That's a great question. First of all, with a winery this size, we do regular maintenance on our machines throughout the year, so, Baruch Hashem, scarcely do we have one go down. On the rare occasion that one does break, we have redundancies, which means that we have more than one way to accomplish each goal. So, if one machine is temporarily broken, the work can continue as usual, albeit in a slightly manner until the machine is repaired.

**Habayis:** I see. Business goes on as usual. No spontaneous vacation in

this business! The aging of wine is part of what makes each wine so unique, no? Can you describe what the aging process looks like?

**Mr. Herzog:** Honestly, each wine is different. Some wines are only aged in steel tanks, while higher-end wines are aged in wooden barrels. The wine is monitored throughout the entire process to make sure it is going in the right direction and to see if changes need to be made. Once the wine gets to where it needs to be, we bottle it. Aging can range from a few weeks to over a decade. Each wine has its own story.

**Habayis:** How old is your oldest wine?

**Mr. Herzog:** Our first vintage wine is from 1985, and we actually have a bottle of it in the winery. It's a Sonoma County Cab, and it bears the wine-stained fingerprints of my late father, Earnest Herzog.

**Habayis:** That's pretty old wine, and that bottle surely has great

# A Glimpse at: HERZOG WINERY

sentimental value. Tell me, what is your role at the winery?

**Mr. Herzog:** I am currently the vice president of the operations. In the past, I was the general manager for the Marlboro winery in New York.

**Habayis:** When did you start working in the business?

**Mr. Herzog:** Since I was a young child! When I was seven years old, my father took me to the vineyard, and we picked Concord grapes for Kedem grape juice.

**Habayis:** Awesome! Talk about starting them young! Since you mentioned Kedem grape juice, how does the wine-making process differ

from the grape-juice-making process?

**Mr. Herzog:** While we don't actually make grape juice at the winery, the basic difference is that grape juice doesn't go through the fermentation.

**Habayis:** Interesting. How many locations does the Herzog winery have?

**Mr. Herzog:** The winery in Oxnard is the only one we have.

**Habayis:** Really? You mean to say that all the Herzog bottles we see everywhere we go are all coming from one location?? Incredible! Can you share with us any other interesting behind-the-scenes info?

**Mr. Herzog:** One of the most exciting



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things about the winery is that it is very unique in that it is set up to produce large volume wines, like the ones you'll find in most grocery stores, while also being able to do very small runs of boutique wines, of which there are maybe just a few hundred bottles. Most wineries only do one or the other. We love that we can do both at the same time and have baruch Hashem proven that we can do both very well.

**Habayis:** Amazing! Have you any stories or anecdotes of distinguished visitors or guests to the winery?

**Mr. Herzog:** While we have definitely had our share of well-known, distinguished visitors, we try our best to maintain their privacy, as this is a place they visit to escape the hustle and bustle of the big city and get some peace and quiet in our little

beach community.

**Habayis:** My trip to Oxnard just became even more appealing! I'll come for a fascinating visit, and no one will even need to know I was there!

In all honesty, it has been a fascinating learning experience hearing about the detailed process inherent in our simple kiddush wine. I assure you that you're time was well-spent, as you have just enhanced our drinking this Purim, iy"eh. May the zchus of bringing simchas Yom Tov to Yidden around the globe stand you in good stead, and may we soon be zoche to drink the **יין המשומר**!

Thank you again for giving us so generously of your time.

A Freilichen Purim!



“Happiness is a journey.” As they say. A well-beaten path, strewn with obstacles and littered with potholes; a trail where we can easily lose our way. Yet, it’s a path on which we were all destined to travel. There is no destination on the path of happiness, because *simcha* is a struggle we must endure on a constant basis. Since man’s nature is inclined to misery, happiness must be a goal to prioritize and actively pursue.

What is the difference between happiness and other character traits? Why is *simcha* so elusive and so hard to achieve?

Unlike other *middos*, happiness is a state of mind. While common belief dictates that a person’s circumstances are what will bring him happiness, it is a flawed school of thought. A person can have everything, health, wealth, *nachas*, etc., and still be a very unhappy person. When a person’s happiness is dependent on material possessions, or on a certain outcome to an event, then his *simcha* will be very short-lived. The dream home, closing the business deal of a lifetime or that perfect number on the scale will all bring us some measure of happiness, but if we have not yet worked on the core, which is being happy despite our circumstances, then the *simcha* won’t last long. We learn in

A person who believes and trusts in Hashem will find inner happiness, because he knows that his circumstances, both challenging and easy, are exactly how they are meant to be.

# ‘HAPPINESS IS A JOURNEY’

by: E. Stern

Pirkei Avos that a person who has one hundred needs two hundred. A person finally acquires his life-long dream, but after a while, the novelty wears off. The excitement evaporates, and he is back at the drawing board. Only when we possess an inner happiness will physical possessions then enhance our lives.

So, what is the key? How can a person obtain that true inner happiness and contentment that we all seek? How can a person remain happy even when he is going through hardship and suffering?

The answer is that it all depends on how strong the person's faith is. When we internalize that even the smallest, most insignificant detail in our lives has an exact accounting for, and Hashem knows exactly what is best for us, then we are at peace. *Emunah* is the most powerful weapon we wield. *Emunah* is what a person must grasp onto when events threaten to overwhelm him. A person with *emunah* won't envy others, because he knows that no one can take away something that is rightfully his. A person who believes and trusts in Hashem will find inner happiness, because he knows that his circumstances, both challenging and easy, are exactly how they are meant to be.

Yet, an all-too-common hindrance to happiness is envy of others.



There is a well-known mashal that Rebbe Nachman of Breslev would tell about a poor, yet hardworking, Yid, R' Moshe, who lived

in a small ramshackle hut in some faraway village. One night, R' Moshe had a dream. In his dream he saw that an enormous treasure lay buried under a certain bridge in the big city. The next morning, buoyed with hope, R' Moshe grabbed his spade, bid his wife and children farewell, and set out on a long journey to the big city. As soon as he



arrived, he inquired about the whereabouts of the bridge, and after being pointed in the right direction, he finally reached his destination. A majestic bridge loomed before him, stretching over the glistening waters of the river that flowed through the city. Spade in hand, he feverishly began digging. Logic played no role; his thoughts were merely occupied with the fortune that would soon be his. His fantasies were rudely

interrupted by a loud voice belonging to an officer guarding the bridge. "Hey Zhid! What are you digging here for? This is protected property!" Frantic, R' Moshe told him about his dream and the fortune that lay directly beneath this very bridge. The officer burst out laughing, "Ha, Ha, Ha!" he laughed! "And I, too, had a dream that in a far-off village, in the home of a poor Jew named R' Moshe, an enormous treasure is buried directly underneath his fireplace! Do you think I would be so foolish and naive as to pursue such irrational dreams? Only a Jew would be so foolish!" And with a complimentary kick, he left

**We look around  
and are convinced  
that others have  
it all... however,  
the fortune, the  
treasure, and  
the gold, all lie  
beneath our very  
own ovens.**

R' Moshe to himself. R' Moshe, however, was shocked! He got up in a hurry; the village the officer had named was his own! And, according to the dream, there was a treasure hidden beneath his very own fireplace! R' Moshe rushed home, dug up the treasure, and his life and destiny changed forever.

As a young child, this was one of my favorite bedtime stories. I would listen to it happily time and again. In my young mind, it was the perfect plot, with the perfect 'and they all lived happily ever after' ending. It wasn't until many years later, when I had grown into adulthood, that I was able to grasp the depth and poignant messages this story brings out. We look around and are convinced that others have it all. If only I would have what my neighbor or friend has, *then* I would be happy. Rebbe Nachman is telling us, however, that the fortune, the treasure, and the gold, all lie beneath *our* very own ovens. Envy others will only cause us suffering and heartache. We must dig deep down and find *our* happiness. We'll find that it has been there all along. Every person possesses thousands of reasons why he can be happy. We need to reach deeper, unearth the treasure, and recognize the blessings. My neighbor's possessions, wealth, or family, will not bring *me* happiness. We must change our perspective and find happiness within the confines of our own homes. 'Tov Hashem La'kol' – Hashem gives every one of us many, many blessings; it is up to us to recognize them and choose happiness over jealousy and bitterness. When R' Nosson of

Breslev was lying on his deathbed in terrible pain, he was asked how he feels. He replied: "גרויס חסדים גרויס חסדים", meaning, "It is packaged with so much kindness. (Loosely translated)" In every situation we can find Hashem's kindness; Hashem's compassion accompanies us at all times. Life is so much easier and sweeter when we choose to acknowledge Hashem's constant presence.

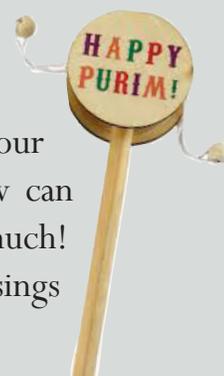
A constant inspiration, and a close friend of mine, already diagnosed with a debilitating illness as a young child, taught me a thing or two about happiness.

Despite going through painful treatment and having to contend with the consequences of his condition on a daily basis, I never, ever heard him complain. He radiates such positivity and is always surrounded by family and friends. He is funny, vivacious, and HAPPY. He once shared with me that after the frightening diagnosis, he made a conscious decision. Realizing that a choice was at hand, and that he could dwell on his illness, letting it define his life, he instead chose to live

life to its fullest. His life is filled with positivity, because he chooses to see the blessings he has, instead of dwelling on what he is lacking.

Dovid Hamelech says in Tehillim, "בצר הרחבתה לי" – Even in my *tzar*, in my distress, You have relieved me. We must remember that even in our distress, Hashem is good to us! How can we complain?! Hashem gives us so much! When a person chooses to see the blessings

But there is one thing that every Yid can always rejoice with: how blessed we are that we are part of am Yisroel!



that he has rather than dwelling on the negative, then his suffering is eased.

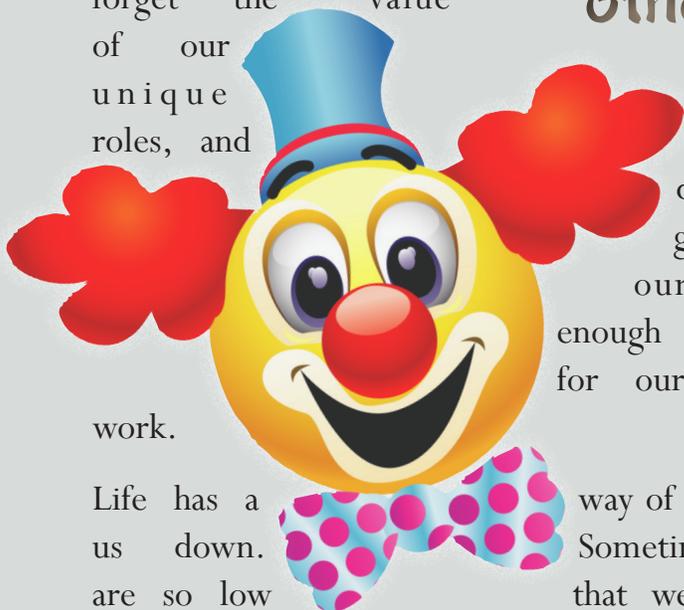
Likewise, gratefulness, recognizing the blessings we receive, and thanking Hashem for every aspect of our lives, is what breeds happiness. A grateful person is a happy person. We should take a few minutes every day to thank Hashem for the blessings in our lives. We should thank Him for every breath, every heartbeat, and every step that we take. It's all a gift! A gift for which we did nothing to deserve. We should thank Him for our spouse and children and their physical and emotional health. When a person begins thanking, he realizes what wealth he beholds! Complaints and aggravations suddenly melt away as things fall into perspective.

Yet sometimes, the hardest struggle is finding happiness in the mundane. Naturally, we sometimes get trapped in a cycle of negativity. We forget the value

of our unique roles, and work.

Life has a way of pulling us down. Sometimes we are so low that we can't even see the blessings Hashem has granted

**“Simcha is not a mitzvah in the Torah. But what a person can attain through simcha, cannot be attained through any other mitzvah”**



we don't give ourselves enough credit for our hard

us. But there is one thing with which every Yid can *always* rejoice: how blessed we are that we are part of Am Yisroel! *Ashreinu ma tov chelkeinu* – how fortunate is our lot! How lucky we are that our life here on earth has meaning and purpose!

One morning, the great *tzaddik*, R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, was reciting *birchas hashachar* aloud in shul. To the surprise of those around him, R' Levi Yitzchok omitted the *bracha* of *shelo asani goy*. When someone pointed it out to him, thinking he must have omitted it accidentally, however, R' Levi Yitzchok passionately replied, “I woke

up this morning and felt so very dejected that I couldn't even think of anything to cheer me up. But then it dawned on me how fortunate I am that I am a Yid. I couldn't contain my excitement, and I shouted out the *bracha* of *shelo asani goy* on the spot! That is why I skipped it now while saying the rest of the *brochos*.”

What a lesson this is for us! If such a *tzaddik* was able to lift his spirits with the notion of *shelo asani goy*, we, who are of far lesser *madreigos*, can and *should* rejoice and find the excitement therein!

Picture any social setting; a wedding, a family get together, or even an afternoon in the park. Somehow, there are always those people who others gravitate towards. Take note of what qualities they possess. They are almost always the ones who are exuding positive energy. People love being around happy people. We must be that happy person! It's not that difficult; we must make

a conscious effort to greet others with a smile, and instead of complaining about our day, we should try boosting their spirits. We can give a compliment, share a happy thought. Giving from ourselves to others will generate our own happiness.

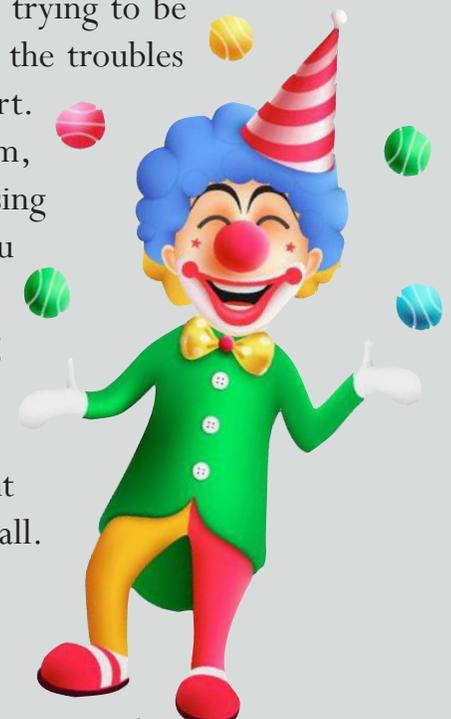


Shlomo Hamelech says in Mishlei, **”כמים הפנים לפנים, כן לב האדם לאדם”**, when we peer into water with a happy expression, our reflections will show the same. And if we frown, the water will reflect it back to us. Our face is exposed. When we flash a smile, we will get one in return. When we make an effort to radiate simcha, our surroundings will be positively impacted. We can be the ones to create a happy atmosphere in our homes, offices, or wherever we are. And we will reap the amazing returns.

There was a *bochur* who, although orphaned of both his parents, was a happy, upbeat individual. His friends, *magidei shiur*, and even his Rosh Yeshivah enjoyed being in his presence. One day his Rosh Yeshivah pulled him aside and asked him the question that baffled them all. “How do you display such happiness? How can you be so *b’simcha* when your life is so full of pain?” The *bochur* replied, “When I lost both my parents, I felt like my heart had been torn into pieces. I cried so much. I brokenheartedly wept and wept until my tears ran dry. But then I realized something. Crying had gotten me nowhere. Of course, it generated pity, but who wants to be an object of constant pity? So, I decided instead to smile. In the beginning it was very hard. It still is sometimes, but my life is truly happy. I realized that only I have the power to dictate my happiness.”

We all know the famous dictum of, “*Mitzvah gedolah lehois besimcha*”. The *tzaddik*, R’ Ahron of Karlin would say, “*Simcha* is not a *mitzvah* in the Torah. But what a person can attain through *simcha*, cannot be attained through any other *mitzvah*”. *Simcha* possesses enormous power. When a person is happy, he has *yishuv hadaas*; he has the presence of mind to make the right decisions in life. Science has proven that *simcha* has the power to heal and relieve even deathly ill patients of their suffering. Sometimes just a happy countenance can cheer someone up and pull him out of his depressing thoughts. We won’t even know the far-reaching effects of our smile, but the *schar* is certainly immeasurable. The next time you are disturbed and unhappy, at least put on a happy front. Deep down, you may be miserable, but if you act happy, the feeling will eventually become genuine.

As with every other aspect of life, this too requires a lot of *tefillah*. Daven to Hashem in the language you are accustomed to. Tell Him about your pain and suffering. We call this *hisbodedus*, and it’s a priceless gift that we can all implement into our daily lives. Talk to Hashem; tell Him the struggle that you endure when trying to be happy. Tell Him about the troubles that weigh on your heart. By talking to Hashem, you will start sensing His presence, you will build up a solid *emunah*. By including Hashem in your life, and speaking to Him often, happiness might not be so elusive after all.



# YOUR PURIM



# SORTED

# Q & A

## Ask the Rabbi



**Q:** To the Rosh Yeshivah Shlita,

Thank you for all the *shiurim* and *chizuk*; they truly enhance my life.

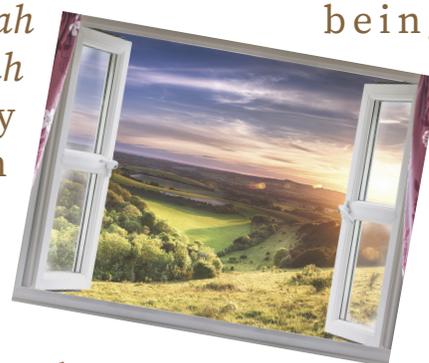
As the Yom Tov of Purim is approaching, I wanted to ask the Rosh Yeshivah for guidance on how to conduct myself on Purim. Also, would the Rosh Yeshivah elaborate on some of the *minhagim* of Purim, and the significance therein?

Thank you.

**A:** *Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu*, that we have Rebbe Nachman who lifts our spirits, gladdens us, reminds us not to dwell on our past wrongdoings, to never lose hope, and to always start again anew.

On Purim, we will once again be *zoche* to hear the *megillah* read. The *tzaddikim* say that during *krias ha'megillah* all the gates of Heaven are open, and we can merit any *yeshuah*. Every time the word “*hamelech*” appears in the *megillah* without a name, it alludes to Hashem, the Melech Malchei Hamlochim. May we already be *zoche* to what we read in the *megillah* (Esther 2, 3):

being



“ויפקד המלך פקידים בכל מדינות מלכותו” – Hashem should remember us, fulfill all our wishes, and send us *yeshuos*, both in *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus*.

While the *megillah* is being read, it is an auspicious time to daven for *parnassah*, *shidduchim*, and children, as Chazal say (Megillah 4b):

“עיניהם של עניים נשואות במקרא מגילה” – The eyes of the destitute (everyone can be considered a pauper in his own regard), are all anticipating the reading of the *megillah* to merit *brachos* and *yeshuos*.

Mohorosh would relate a poignant story that the Spinka Rebbe, the Baal Imrei Yosef, would tell every year on the second night of Pesach.



On the second night of Pesach, there was a Yid who had already concluded an uplifting *seder*, and he was preparing to go to sleep when he thought to himself, “I just completed the entire *seder*, both the Haggadah and *shiur hashirim*, and my heart is still overflowing with praise to Hashem. What else can I do to thank Hashem?” Suddenly, it dawned on him that it was on the second day of Pesach that Haman HaRasha was hanged. He, therefore, decided to read Megillas Esther to celebrate the tremendous miracle.

He proceeded to read the entire *megillah*, and once he completed it, a *neshamah* from above suddenly appeared before him. The Yid asked the *neshamah*: “What do you want from me, and what connection do we have that brought you here?” In response, the *neshamah* started describing the proceedings up in Heaven. There are *neshamahs* who have completed their time in Gehinnom, but they are not yet allowed into Gan Eden until they have

a special merit. However, every year when the *megillah* is read, the gates of Gan Eden are opened, and these *neshamahs* are allowed to enter Gan Eden. From a few months before Purim, thousands and thousands of *neshamahs* begin to assemble at the gates, in order to have a chance to enter Gan Eden. However, because the reading of the *megillah* only takes several hours, not all the *neshamahs* succeed in entering Gan Eden. Those who fail to get in must wait until the following year’s *megillah* reading for another chance.

The *neshamah* continued: “It’s been several years now that I have been trying to enter Gan Eden, but every year, just as my turn comes, the gates slam shut before me. This year it seemed that I was finally going to get in, but once again the gates shut in my face! However, this time I decided that I’m not going to budge from my place; I’ll stay right here until next year, so I can finally be *zoche* to enter Gan Eden.

“I was standing at the gates, waiting for the upcoming Purim, when suddenly I heard someone reading the *megillah*. I started banging at the gates of Gan Eden, demanding that they open the door and let me in! The Malach who guards the gates, and is in charge of who is allowed into Gan Eden, came to ask me what all the noise was about. I told him that I can hear the *megillah*

being read, and that I want to enter Gan Eden. He answered that although it is true that the *megillah* is being read, tonight is really Pesach! He told me very unequivocally that I would have to wait until the following Purim to be allowed in. But I just couldn't accept his response, and I argued, "What is the difference if it's Purim or Pesach? The *megillah* is being read, and I deserve to be allowed to enter Gan Eden!" I screamed and argued until the *beis din shel maaleh* came to investigate what all the commotion was about. After listening to both sides, the *beis din shel maaleh* determined, "Indeed, it is not Purim, and the designated time has already passed, but if the *neshamah* descends to the Yid who is reading the *megillah*, and that Yid *paskens* that he can enter Gan Eden, then he will be allowed to enter Gan Eden upon his return to Heaven.

The *neshamah* turned to the Yid and cried, "I beg you! Give me permission to enter Gan Eden!" The Yid answered him, "I take upon myself to rectify everything that still needs rectifying, and you can return to the *beis din shel maaleh* and tell them that I allow you entry."

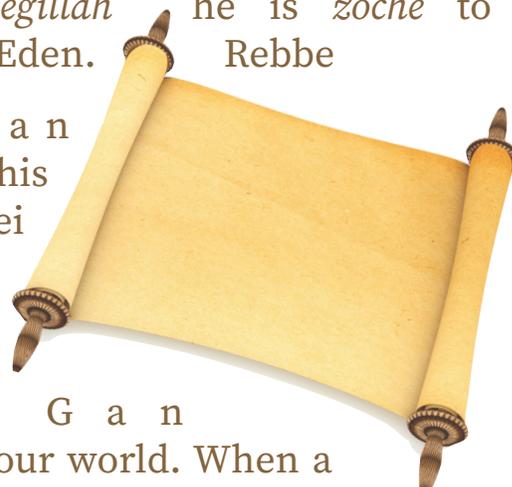
This was the story the Baal Imrei Yosef would tell every Pesach. Those who heard it understood that he himself had been the Megillah-sayer in the story.

Mohorosh brought out that we learn from this story that when a person reads the *megillah* he is *zoche* to enter Gan Eden. Rebbe

N a c h m a n alludes to this in Likutei Moharan (2:119), where he says that G a n Eden is in our world. When a person is *zoche* to live with *emunah*, and he lives with the knowledge that Hashem determines everything that occurs, then he is in Gan Eden. A person can be *zoche* to this *emunah* by reading the *megillah*.

We observe an interesting phenomenon in the *megillah*; Haman had everything, fame, wealth, estates, children, etc. Achashveirosh even appointed him as the ruler of his many countries. If so, why did it bother him that one lowly Jew didn't bow to him?! Haman said (Esther 5:13) "My entire wealth is not worth anything to me, when I see Mordachai sitting at the palace gates." What upset him so badly? What business did he even have with Mordechai? The entire country bowed before him; what was it about Mordechai that made him lose his head?!

To answer this, we can draw the following parallel. Haman is the *yetzer*



*harah*, and he grows wealthy with the *aveiros* in which he ensnares us. His focal effort is to cause us to despair and lose hope that we have an opportunity to return to our Father in Heaven. His triumph is when feelings of worthlessness cause a person to abandon Torah and *mitzvos*.



However, when he sees a Yid paying no attention to him; he continues serving Hashem despite the *yetzer hara's* best efforts at making him feel inadequate, then it drives him crazy! When he sees that a Yid continues going to shul to daven *shachris*, *mincha*, and *maariv*, and makes an effort to learn a little, especially a *daf Gemara*, he sees a Yid 'sitting at the palace gates'. This makes him turn wild and shout, "All the *aveiros* with which I manage to trap the Jews are completely worthless to me if they know they have a chance to do *teshuvah* and return to Hashem!" Because, when he pushes someone down – and it makes no difference in what *aveirah* he made the person stumble – his goal is not the *aveirah* itself; it's the despair that accompanies the *aveirah* that the *yetzer harah* needs. But when he sees a Mordechai Hatzaddik – a Yid who refuses to submit to him, then his entire purpose is destroyed.

This is the lesson that we must learn

from Purim, and it must accompany us throughout the entire year. We must shout out, (Esther 3:5) **וְמֹרְדֵכַי לֹא יִשְׁתַּחוּהָ**

**“יִרְעֵ וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּחוּהָ”** – I will not submit to Haman HaRasha, and I will not give up! No matter what happens, I will continue coming to shul three times a day to daven *shachris*, *mincha*, and *maariv*. I will NOT submit to the *yetzer harah*, under any circumstances! People abandon Torah and *mitzvos* only because the *yetzer harah* makes them feel worthless and constantly reminds them of their past actions.

A Freilichen Purim, and may you be *zoche* to constant happiness.





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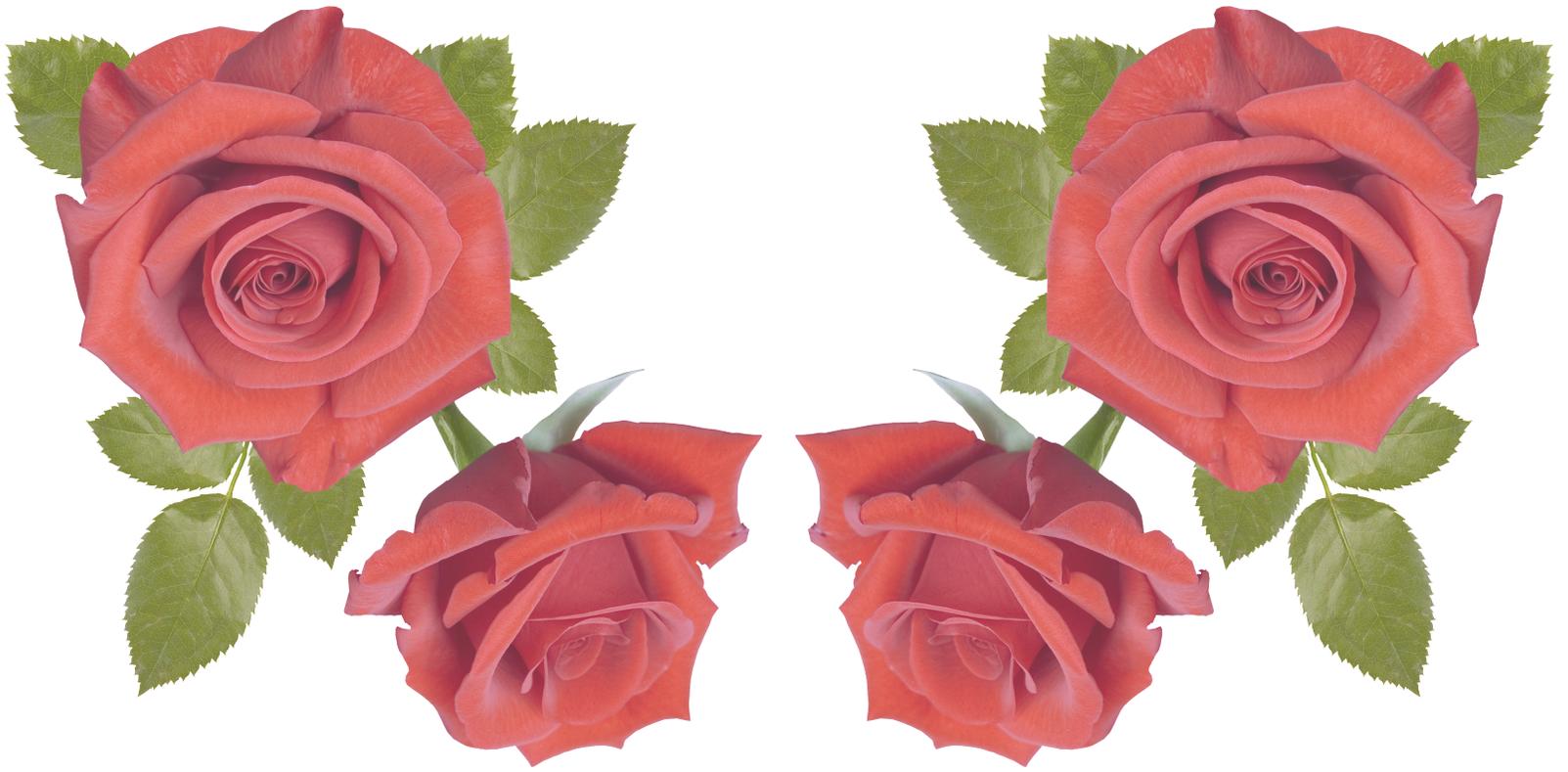


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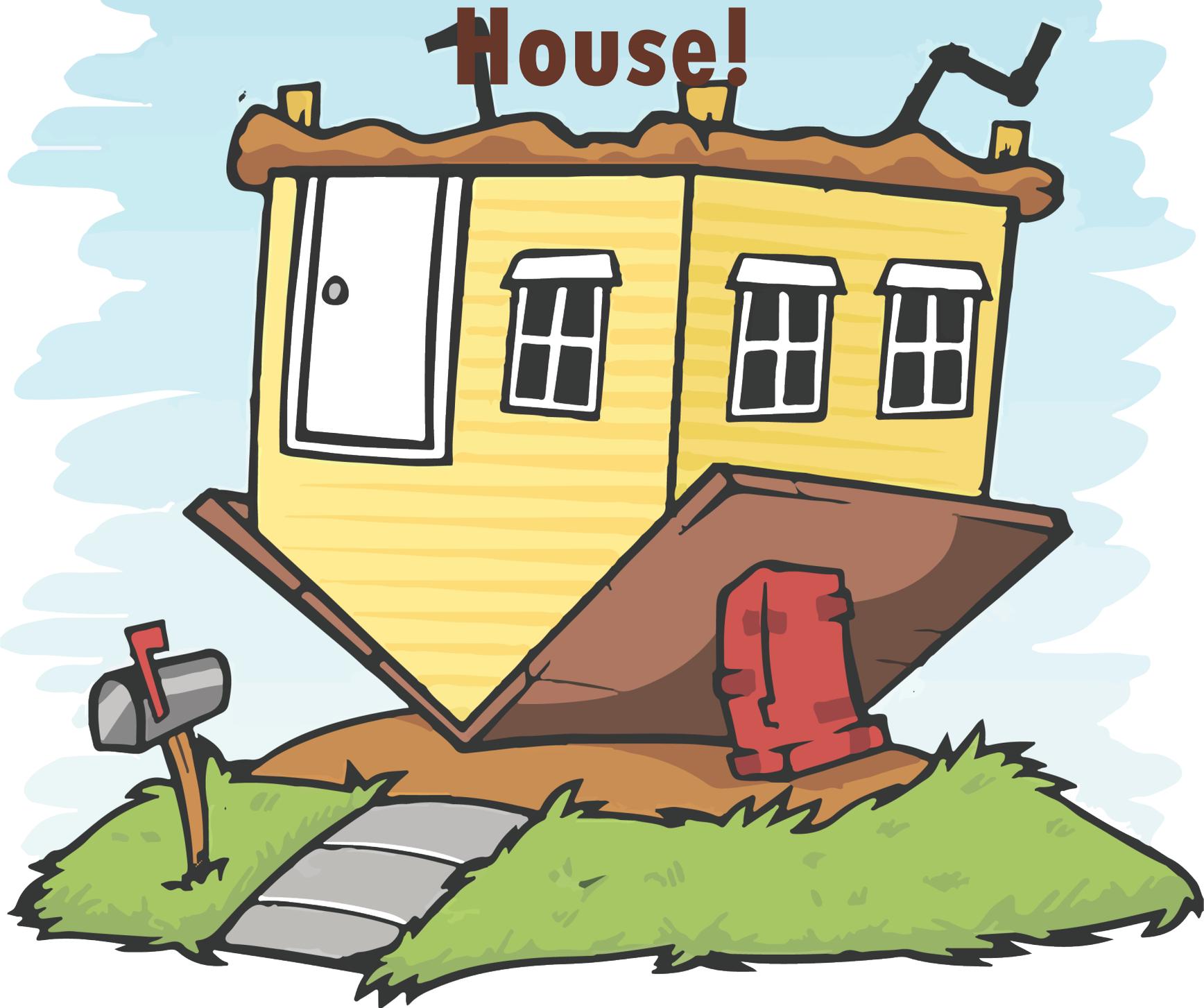


*Akeres Habayis*

# *Women's Section*



# 3 Live Accounts of Purim in a Jewish House!



# BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

by: S. Heskel

'Layehudim', the music is loud  
Purim finally came around  
I open my eyes to start the day  
Quietly to Hashem I pray  
"Please make this day go smoothly for me  
Full of smiles and stress free"

"Where's my costume? Where's my costume?"  
All 7 come barging into my room  
Suri can't find her gold crown  
Mendy needs help putting on his clown  
Miri's wearing Chaya's dress  
All I see is one big mess!

Chaim won't give in  
Peri the princess won't stop to spin  
Baby Dov is crying for a feed  
A bit of quiet is all I need  
But for the kids I go the extra mile  
And bravely paste on a smile

I barely make it downstairs  
When Chaim's pant leg tears  
Trying to keep it all in control  
I take care of the hole  
The pants I quickly sew  
While tying together Suri's bow

I feel like I'm the worst  
They should really get a healthy breakfast  
Purim is full of junk food  
But I'm just not in the mood  
I give out slices of cake  
Promising a healthy lunch to make

I now guide them to the wall  
Telling them to stand tall  
Face the camera then each other  
But Mendy is angry at his brother  
No picture after an hour on my feet  
How do the neighbors photos always look so neat?!

Putting Dov for a nap in bed  
Running the mishloach monos list in my head  
Sending the kids on the route  
Hoping I didn't leave anyone out  
Finally to the couch, relaxed I get  
Oh no! Megila! How can I forget?!

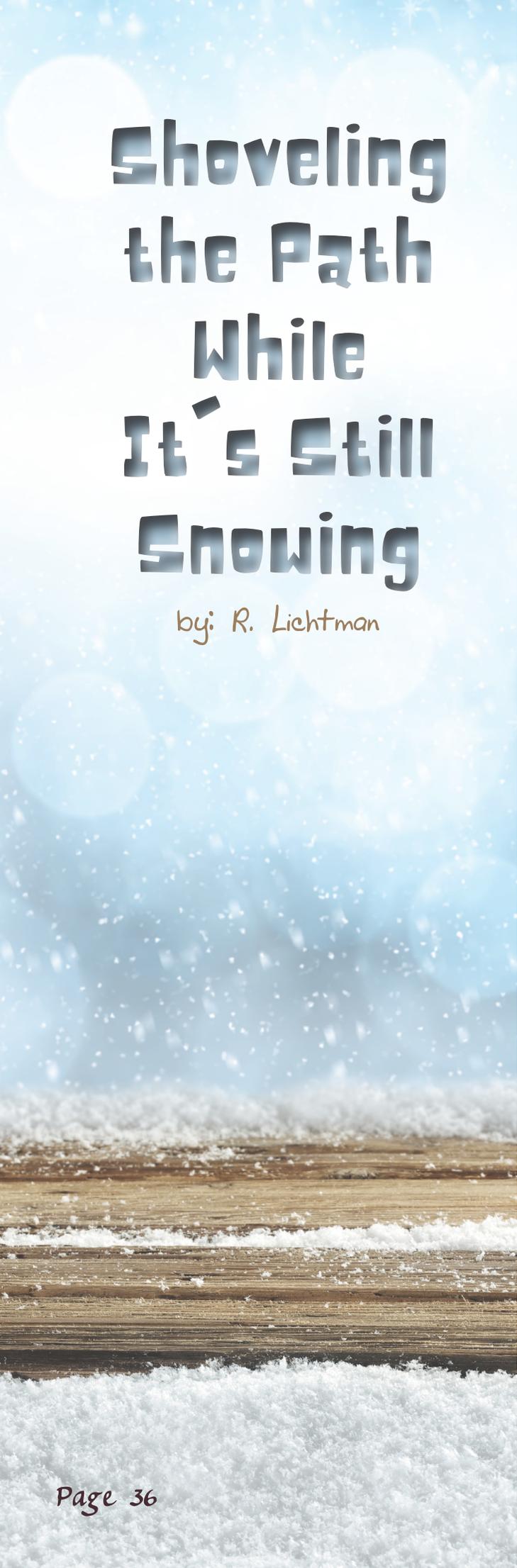
I missed megila I'm such a fool  
But my husband is still in shul  
I call all neighbors in fear  
Where can I megila hear?  
Finally found where they didn't yet read  
Now a babysitter I need!

I'm done! I'm falling apart!  
The day didn't even start  
I still need to warm up the meal for today  
And tehillim I really wanted to say  
Schlep to the grandparents in this rainy  
weather  
I can't seem to hold it together

What kind of mother am I?  
I pat my face dry  
How will I make it till night?  
My sister always seems to get it all right!  
Why can't I do it all?  
In a depression I start to fall

But then I pause, and I reflect  
I'm not seeking others respect  
All I'm here in this world to do  
Is serve Hashem every day anew  
A happy mother I aim to be  
And try my best to do my duty!

All that matters is that I try  
I now hold my head up high  
Hashem trusted me with 7 souls  
I don't need to make myself goals  
'I'm the greatest mom', I say aloud  
And I surely make HIM proud!



# Shoveling the Path While It's Still Snowing

by: R. Lichtman

Purim morning, after a long night's sleep, I wake up for *vasikin* and daven *shachris* in shul, while my oldest daughter babysits at home.

Right.

Lets redo that.

After a nuts *seudah* last night that lasted until way too late with the excuse of "it's Purim" to be way too wild, we all went to bed way too late, because I had to emergency put the little ones to sleep. And, yeah, all the food got left out from the *seudah* last night. So today's *seudah* will have to be cooked from scratch, I guess. The teenagers sleep until 11. The *mishloach manos* isn't finished being baked yet, let alone packed up and ready. If not for the *chiyuv* to hear *megillah*, I wouldn't be so desperate to run out the door while everyone recovers from their "sugar hangover".

Life is very full of children of all ages, and although we'd had discussions (a.k.a. arguments) back in Kisleiv about who wants to dress up as the costume that the older sister was planning to sew in sewing class, or which *bochurim* would agree to dress up in something matching to the girls, we have the 2-year-old with his costume off at 9 am (just after taking a picture of him) and there's always the one child who changes every hour ('cuz apparently, I really don't have enough laundry to do...).

Baruch Hashem, I'm not like my irreligious mother-in-law, who always has the TV on in the background so she's not lonely. I'm never lonely! No matter which room I'm in, everyone settles around me, waiting to shmooze.

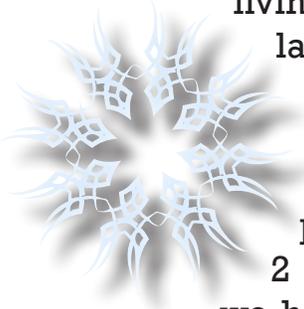
Thank you, Hashem, that I can walk around, prepare and serve. Not like in the summer, when I broke my leg and wasn't able to carry the laundry from the washing machine to the dryer without some major maneuvering.

Thank you, Hashem, that I can hear the constant hum of noise; the siblings "hocking" in the

kitchen every night till midnight over an ever-ready plate of dozens of fried eggs. I know a mother who lip-reads to hear her kids and can only hear one child at a time. I know a boy who can't hear his Rebbe in class.



Thank you, Hashem, for making me feel like I'm shoveling the walkway while it's still snowing. Like baking a cake while the kids lick the bowl, or taking a cake out of the oven while slices from the increasingly disappearing edges are enjoyed simultaneously. It's like having a cleaning lady while we still have kids living at home; like doing the laundry while 11 of us are still wearing clothes (which will have to be washed once they are replaced with pajamas). Like listening to 2 people at once (isn't that we have 2 ears??), while giving over instructions, and typing with my hands and rocking the baby with my foot.



Thank you Hashem for my capabilities, my vulnerabilites, my kids independence, my kids brashness, my kids helpfulness, my kids pushiness, my life with everything that fills it to overflowing.

I'm overwhelmed with gratitude. And sometimes, just a teeny, weeny bit overwhelmed in general. But, generally overwhelmed with tremendous gratitude!



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by: m. Salz

# Purim In A Day

I wake up bleary eyed at the crack of dawn,  
“What is going on?” I ask my kids with a yawn.  
“Mommy, Mommy, don’t you remember what is today?  
It’s Purim and I’m going to be a clown- hurray, hurray!”  
I wash negel vasser, put on my socks and climb out of bed,  
But for some odd reason, I feel a slight pounding at the back of my head.  
“Mommy, can I have a nosh?” asks Shloimy with a grin.  
“Whoa! Let’s first eat breakfast for a healthy begin!”  
With all the kids dressed, eaten, and the baby in tow,  
To hear Megillah leining, off to Shul we go.  
Hoshea es amecha, do we have everyone here?  
“One second, Faigala’s missing, I don’t see her anywhere!”  
Wait! A short tefillah, I most certainly could,  
Hashem, please help everything go as it should.  
Hey! Just look who is coming our way!  
It’s Faigala! “Thank you, Hashem, for helping me today!”  
“Mommy, can I go to my teachers and my friends? Can I go here, can I go there?”  
“Kids, kids, slow down. soon we’ll be able to go everywhere.  
Shloimy, Nachman Nusen and Yoelish, with Totty you should go,  
Udel, Faigala, and Malky, to our Schwartz cousins our mishloach manos let us show.  
Bye- everyone, have a lot of fun,  
While distributing shaloch manos to everyone.  
But Hashem please help everyone stay together,  
The boys with their father and the girls with their mother.  
Hey Mommy, just look what I see,



There's a man acting very scary.  
 I spin around and the blood drains from my face,  
 Two drunk men, in our direction are making a race.  
 I'm so very scared, what should I do,  
 Wait! I think there's a trick I already knew.  
 "Please Hashem help everyone to stay safe today,  
 and help that those drunkards leave right away".  
 "Hey Moishe", yells one drunk, "come over here",  
 "This store sells good vodka and beer!"  
 And they just walk away, leaving me to stare.  
 That night as I lay in my bed, so many thoughts were running through my head,  
 What a full day this has been!  
 I need to thank Hashem, but where do I begin?  
 With Faigala, everyone staying safe and the drunk coming towards me.  
 Without You Hashem, how lost I would be!  
 And it's not like its only today,  
 If we look hard, there are millions of miracles every day.  
 Before shopping, work, cooking and more,  
 I can stop and to Hashem, my heart pour.  
 Say a short tefillah before everything you do,  
 It can be in English, Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, Spanish and Japanese too!  
 Thank you, Hashem, for my wonderful life!  
 That I have the zchus to be a Yiddishe mother and wife!  
 Please help tomorrow be a good day,  
 And I should only do Your will in every way!



# Household HINTS & TIPS

by: R. de Vries

## ➔ Quick Clean Up Tips:

- For a fast cleanup when peeling vegetables, spread out a plastic and peel onto it. Then, all you need to do is roll up the plastic and toss it!
- To stop a pot from boiling over, keep a wooden spoon inside or laying on top!
- If a pot does boil over, turn off the flame and clean it right away! Do not wait until you finish cooking! Clean-up will be much easier!
- After making a batter for a cake, a smoothie, or tomato dip in blender, it's much easier to rinse out right away! Waiting until the morning, or the cleaning lady comes, will make the dirt harden and leave you wondering why you ever started!
- Flat placemats can be placed underneath the plastic tablecloth to avoid having to clean them, and still get the pretty effect!
- When using a measuring cup or spoon, for sugar, cocoa, oil, etc, always measure it out above the sink, so any spills can be washed away!
- An open box of baking soda in the fridge absorbs odors from fridge or freezer to keep it smelling nice and fresh.
- Store your opened bottle of oil in a foil pan lined with parchment paper to capture unwanted drips and stains!
- To clean a microwave place a cup of water inside and turn it on to the hottest setting for one minute. Then simply wipe away the dirt. The steam will have loosened all the grime!
- To clean the blade of an immersion blender, simply blend warm water and soap in a bowl!
- Silicon mats and pans can be washed in the washing machine!
- Store your toaster in a foil pan to capture the crumbs!



### ➔ Budget and Shopping Secrets:

- Keep a paper on a magnet on your fridge to quickly jot down when an item needs to be replaced! When you go shopping, grab the list!
- Alternately, create a master list of all the items you use. Once a week, go through the list and check off what you need for that week!
- Do NOT shop when you are hungry!!
- Choose a time of day when the supermarket is quiet for a relaxed shopping experience!
- Only buy bulk if you need it! Items on sale can be very expensive! You can save 10% when buying offers, and 100% when not buying the offers!
- Breadcrumbs can be made by toasting and spicing leftover challahs!
- After Purim save your supplies. Many things can be used for next year. Containers or baskets can be used for organizing your closets!



### ➔ Food Preparation Hacks:

- Forgot to soak your chulent beans? Do so express: Place one cup of beans and two cups of water in microwave!
- To ripen a banana for a baby, poke holes in banana and microwave for 30 seconds.
- Convert tortilla shells to tacos by crisping up in microwave!
- Microwaving a lemon before juicing makes it easier to juice!
- Microwave a garlic before peeling for easier peeling!
- To keep a cucumber in salad crispy for a few days, scoop out the middle soft part and give to a kid to enjoy! Use the remaining parts for longer lasting freshness!
- Slice a bagel before freezing it, to save yourself from needing to cut through a frozen bagel!



Send in your favorite hints and tips to the email on page 2 to have them featured in future Habayis issues.



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# ~ RECIPES ~

by: S. Feldman





# CHOCOLATE CHEESE HAMANTASHEN

A delightful twist on a classic favorite, these are perfect for the Yiddishe Mamme to enjoy with her coffee so she can embrace the challenges of raising children with joy and a sweetness. They are utterly irresistible, so plan correctly... and TRIPLE the recipe! (I did!)

## *Dough:*

2 eggs  
1/2 c oil  
3/4 cup sugar  
1/2 tsp vanilla extract  
2 1/4 cups flour  
1/4 + 1/8 cup confectioner's sugar  
1/8 cup + 1/2 Tbsp cocoa  
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

*pinch of salt*

## *Filling:*

4 oz cream cheese  
1/2 cup confectioner's sugar  
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla sugar



- **Dough:** Mix eggs, oil, sugar and vanilla until combined. Add flour, confectioner's sugar, cocoa, baking power and salt, mixing constantly, until a smooth dough forms. (If the dough is very sticky, you can add up to another 1/2 c flour.)
- **Filling:** In a separate bowl, combine all filling ingredients.
- Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
- Roll out the dough to 1/4 inch thick, and cut into circles using a round cookie cutter (or an overturned cup). Place 1 tsp of filling in the center of each circle, and pinch the corners closed to form a hamantasch.
- Bake at 350 for 8-10 minutes and allow hamantachen to cool completely before transferring them onto another surface.



## AMBROSIA

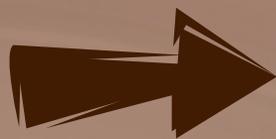


Don't we all love recipes that are simple, easy and very tasty? This really fits the bill. And to top it all off, this ambrosia can be plated beautifully in individual cups with diced pineapple as a garnish, making it an elegant, yet simple ending to your Purim seudah.

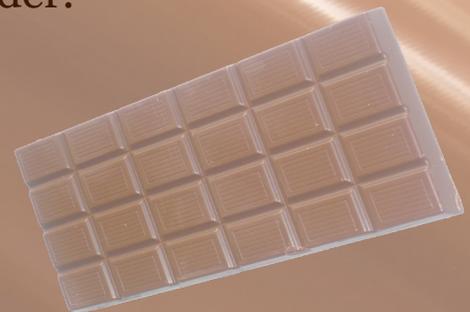
*1 can pineapple tidbits, drained  
1 - 16 ounce bag frozen strawberries*

*1 - 9 ounce whip topping, thawed*

- In a food processor fitted with the "S" blade, add pineapple, strawberries and whip topping. Blend until just combined, as you still want some whole pieces. Garnish as desired.
- This can also be done using an immersion blender.



## BARKS



Those of you who have never made bark might regard this recipe with some skepticism. Too many details, another pot to wash, very precise timing... it might not seem worth the effort. However, these are literally licked clean, practically gone before they even made it to the freezer. And, they're a winner each time! The recipe is also actually quite simple and presents beautifully, making it a perfect choice for mishloach manos, gifting, or any other occasion. Don't take my word on this; try it yourself!

15 graham crackers  
1 1/2 sticks margarine  
3/4 cup brown sugar

9 ounces good quality baking  
chocolate

Toppings can be chosen at whim, but here are some combinations I found work well. Feel free to pull out whatever you have on hand and make your own creation! I use sprinkles, chocolate chips, nut crunch, crushed cookies, colorful lentils, etc.

Variation I:

1 cup shredded coconut  
1 1/2 cups toasted slivered almonds

Variation II:

1 cup pistachios  
1/2 cup mini white chocolate chips  
1 cup raisins

Variation III:

1 cup mini colorful chocolate lentils  
1 cup crushed sandwich cookies

Variation IV:

approximately 25 lotus cookies, crushed  
1 cup mini brown chocolate chips  
• drizzle melted lotus cream over the bark  
for an added touch of elegance.

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 F

Spread the graham crackers over lined cookie sheet. Melt margarine and brown sugar in a pot over low heat, stirring constantly until fully incorporated. Pour mixture over graham crackers and spread evenly. Bake at 350 F for 10 minutes. Turn off the oven. Put the baking chocolate over the graham crackers and let it sit in the hot oven for 1-2 minutes so the chocolate can melt. Spread the chocolate evenly and garnish as desired with any of the variations above or our own favorites. Freeze for approximately half an hour to harden, and then break the crackers to desired shape. Smile, thank Hashem and enjoy the treat!



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# The Power of: A Women's TEFILLAH!



## CD, Liberty NY:

Living off the beaten path, we desperately needed a car. However, due to many circumstances at the time, being able to finance a car seemed impossible. We did not know where to turn for help. Only one address wanted to hear from us, our Father in Heaven! We davened a whole lot, because it seemed that only a miracle would help us! One fine day, out of the blue, we got a very random phone call from an acquaintance of ours, offering to help us out! We had never even told them that we needed help! Needless to say, the rest is history! Baruch Hashem, we are now the happy owners of a car!



## SV, Brooklyn NY:

I needed to get some things from the school's walk-in freezer. It was the first time I was inside the freezer, and it was very dark. Suddenly, the door closed behind me! Because of the dark, and the fact that it was the first time I was inside this big freezer, I could not figure out how to open it back up. Not allowing my natural fear to overcome me, I quickly remembered that although I feel alone, Hashem is here with me. I asked Him to help me find my way out, and Baruch Hashem, shortly thereafter, I managed to get out!



## RF, London UK:

My 3-year-old son came home from Cheder, exhausted and in a bad mood. He immediately burst out crying and amidst his tears, I could barely make out what he wanted. I finally managed to figure out that he was desperate for his pacifier. I quickly said, "Let's ask Hashem that we find your paci!" However, try as we may, all of his many pacifiers were nowhere to be found! We davened some more, and at that moment, my son decided to call me from yeshiva. I asked him if he had seen the paci before leaving in the morning. He told me that in the morning, my 3-year-old came into his room with four (!!) pacifiers. I then asked my 3-year-old, "Do you remember that you had 4 pacifiers this morning before you went to cheder? Where did you put them?" Immediately, he said, "Yes, I put it inside the duvet!" Happily, we went to his bed, opened the linen, shook out the duvet, and lo and behold, four pacifiers came tumbling out! Thank you, Hashem, for the emunah that our little children have to ask Hashem for everything, both small and big!

# *Habayis Kids Korner*



# Story of a Tzaddik

by: F. Horowitz

Someone's  
Looking  
Looking

**One** day, the Chofetz Chaim, Harav Yisroel Meir Kagan, זצ"ל, set out on a journey. He was riding in a buggy led by a wagon driver, a *ba'al agalah*. After riding for a while, the driver stopped. They parked in a pleasant orchard with many apple trees. The succulent apples were hanging low, waiting to be picked.

The driver told the Chofetz Chaim, "These apples look delicious! I would like to pick some for myself. Just do me a favor. If you notice the owner of the orchard, let me know. I don't want him to catch me." With that said, he started climbing a tree to choose some juicy, plump apples.

Suddenly, the Chofetz Chaim called out, "He's looking! He's looking!" The wagon driver jumped down and ran towards the wagon, "Wow, that was a close call! Thanks!" He looked around again, and the coast looked clear. No one was around.

Carefully, he went back to the apple tree. He gingerly climbed the tree, checking over his shoulder to see if anyone was watching. As he turned back to the apples, the Chofetz Chaim abruptly yelled,

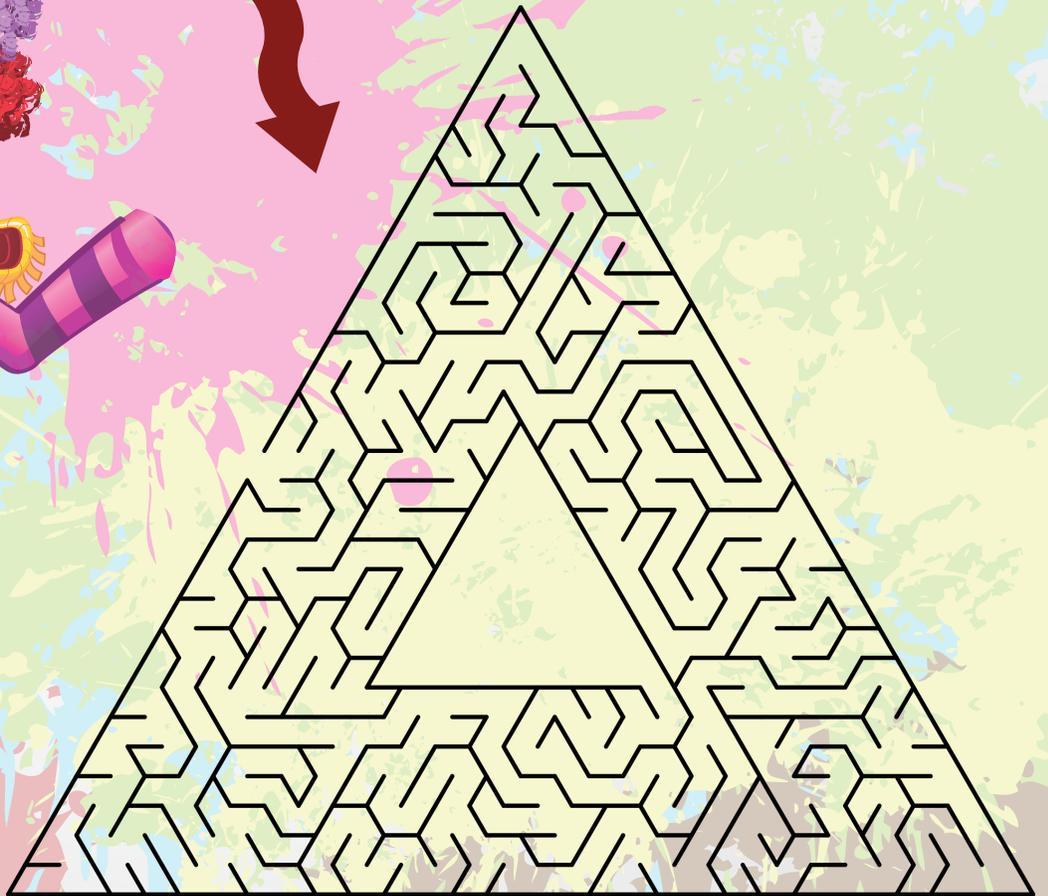
"He's looking! He's looking!" The driver ran back to his seat on the wagon, breathless.

Once again, he looked around, and upon checking his surroundings, he did not notice anyone. The third time, he walked slowly to the tree and gently shook some branches. There was no one other than them to be found for miles. But, again, the Chofetz Chaim suddenly shouted, "He's looking! He sees!" This time the wagon driver got annoyed, and he yelled back, "No one is looking, and no one sees! What are you talking about?!"

The heilige Chofetz Chaim then explained, "You think that no one sees. You may be right that no human being sees. Hashem, however, sees all of our actions and told us that we may not steal. Hashem sees everything!"

We must always remember that Hashem is always here with us and He sees everything we do. Let's make Hashem proud with everything that we do!

Help The Clown Eat  
His Hamantash!!!



# V'NAHAPACHU HAMANTASHEN!

ENJOY THIS V'NAHAPACHU RECIPE, READ THE DIRECTIONS FROM FINISH TO START:

Prep time: 15 minutes ~ Cook time: 15 minutes ~ Yields: 2 dozen

## Ingredients:

3 large eggs  
1 cup granulated sugar  
¾ cup oil  
½ cup orange juice  
2 ½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
5 ½ cups flour  
1 tablespoons baking powder  
1 cup of your favorite hamantash filling

## Directions:

Step 1. Enjoy!

Step 2. Remove from oven and place on cookie sheet to cool for 1 minute.

Step 3. Bake in the preheated oven for 12-15 minutes, or until lightly browned.

Step 4. Pinch edges to form three circles

Step 5. Spoon about 1-2 teaspoons of your favorite filling into the center of each piece of dough.

Step 6. Cut into circles using a cookie cutter or the rim of a drinking glass, then place 2 inches apart onto prepared cookie sheets.

Step 7. Place the dough on a slightly floured surface, roll ½ inch thick.

Step 8. Combine flour and baking powder, stir into batter to form a stiff dough. You can add more flour if needed.

Step 9. Stir in oil, orange juice and vanilla.

Step 10. Combine eggs and sugar in a large bowl. Beat with an electric mixer until smooth and creamy.

Step 11. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C) and lightly grease a cookie sheet.

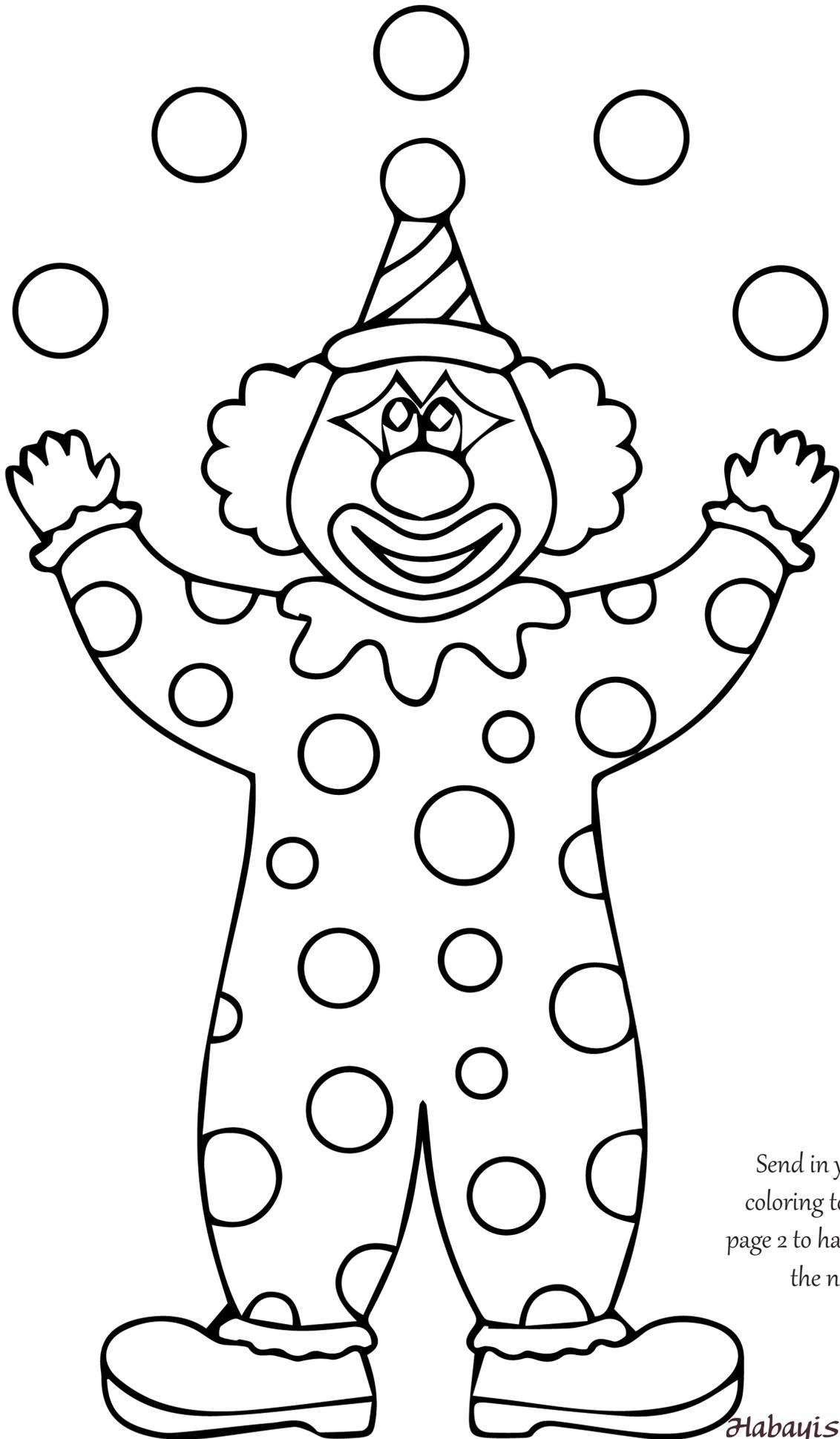
# Can You Spot The 10 Differences??



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- HAMAN
- VASHTI
- SHUSHAN
- GRAGGER
- KING ACHASHVEIROSH
- MATANOS L'EVYONIM
- MORDECHAI HATZADIK
- MISHTEH
- HORSE
- FAST
- MEGILA
- VNAHAPOCHU
- PURIM
- HABAYIS
- ZERESH
- GALLOWS
- MASK
- PERSIA
- WINE
- QUEEN ESTHER
- MISHLOACH MANOS
- COSTUME



Send in your finished coloring to the email on page 2 to have it featured in the next issue.

# KIDS KRAFTS:

## Gefilta Fish Mishloach Manos

### Ingredients:

3 cups flour  
1 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla sugar  
2 eggs  
2 sticks margarine

### Directions:

Step 1: Preheat oven to 350°.

Step 2: Combine ingredients to form a smooth dough.

Step 3: Set aside a small piece to be used for the carrot.

Step 4: Roll out the main dough to form a loaf and freeze for 45 minutes.

Step 5: Cut slices at an angle and place onto a lined cookie sheet.

Step 6: Add 2 yellow drops and one drop red food coloring to the reserved dough to make it orange.

Step 7: Form a loaf, then cut it into thin slices.

Step 8: Place the orange slice in the middle of the cookie to look like a carrot.

Step 9: Bake for 15 minutes.

Step 10: Hearty appetite!



Purim is at the threshold! We're already dancing to Purim music and dreaming of mishloach manos ideas all day long! Everyone's Purim boxes are out, and kids everywhere are rummaging through their boxes trying to find that perfect hat or shoe to match. When I was young (and then not so young!) I would think about what my Purim costume should be for months and months before Purim. I would think of ideas all day long and nix them right away. I just couldn't find that really funny costume that would get everyone to laugh. This year when I started thinking of costumes, I thought of a great idea! I got ideas from kids from all over the world! I'll share with you some of the answers I got. They are terrific! Each and every one of them is so cute and creative. Maybe you'll even find something that works for you! Maybe even for this year!

I saw two kids dressed up as trees, and they had a clothesline with clothes hanging on it connecting them. They walked together everywhere. It was so adorable and creative!

*Rucha'la L. Age 16 - London, England*

I saw a person dressed up like a tree. He was the bark and he had a ton of twigs and leaves on his head.

*Shalom A. Age 5 - Pennsylvania*

I saw a girl dressed up as a present box. She wore a big cardboard box that had holes for her hands and feet. The box was wrapped in wrapping paper and had ribbons on the sides. And there was the bow that you usually put on top of a wrapped box on her head.

*Leah N. Age 9 - Montreal, Canada*

My brother and a few of his friends from Yeshiva formed a group. Their leader was a doctor and all the bochurim were dressed up as hospital nurses. It was very creative!

*Malkiy C. Age 15 - Los Angeles, California*

Someone in our community, a gabai tzedaka for an organization that helps Jewish inmates in prison, dressed up as a huge gorilla holding a small cage in his hands, and he himself was imprisoned behind the bars! His hands were holding on to the bars and he was begging us to free him. I have no clue how he did it. He must have stuffed some parts of the gorilla.

Let me tell you, it was really cool.

*Chaya R. Age 16 - Ramot, Yerushalayim*

I saw someone dressed up as a washing machine. He also had a basket with a few fake detergent bottles on top of his head.

*Tzvi B. Age 5 - Denver, Colorado*

A person walking in a huge blown-up ball! They must have blown it up while he was in it! It was really cool and funny to see him walk/roll around town!

*Leahla T. Age 11 - Canvey Island, England*

What  
is the  
Creative  
Purim cos  
ever

by Leah T. Jacobovitch

One Purim I opened the door, and there was my friend! She looked like she had just tumbled out of bed. Her hair was in a messy bun, she was wearing her morning robe and fuzzies. I didn't know if it was a costume or if she just forgot to get dressed. She started laughing at my confused expressions and handed me her mishloach manos, I started laughing too! It was a costume to remember!

*Rivky D. Age 12 - Monsey N.Y.*

The most creative costume that I remember is actually one my mother made. It was a rooster costume for my little brother. She took a big white sweater and sewed down the bottom leaving two holes for his feet. Then she took a few bunches of white feathers and sewed it from top to bottom. She added a white hat with feathers and red felt for the rooster's crown. The legs/chicken feet were yellow rubber gloves. One of the magazines once featured a contest for the most creative homemade costume and guess what? My mother won!

*Reizy D. Age 12 - Monsey N.Y.*

at  
most  
/ Funny  
time you  
saw?

I saw a big man dressed up as a little baby. He wore an adult sized stretchy. He had an adult sized bottle and pacifier, and he walked around with a blanket in his hands. Whoever saw him stopped and laughed.

*Yiddi S. Age 13 - Brooklyn N.Y.*

My little three-year-old cousin once dressed up as Queen Elizabeth. She wore that perfect hat and her wool coat. She looked exactly like her!

*Faigy M. Age 9 - Liberty, N. Y.*

I don't remember one specific costume but I love seeing families dressed up in Yerushalmi costumes.

*Mushky T. - Age 15 - Crown Heights, N.Y*

The funniest costume I ever saw was a person dressed upside down. He wore a T-shirt on his feet with a fake head stuffed inside by the neck opening. And he wore the pants and shoes on his hands.

*Hershy N Age 11 - Monroe N.Y.*

The most interesting costume I saw was a girl dressed up as a mountain. All her clothing was brown and puffy, and her face and hair were painted brown too!

*Michal M. Age 10 - Yavneel, Eretz Yisrael*

A walking hot air balloon! It was really cute! They made a hole in a big wicker basket, and they went inside. It had four metal wires and a big beach ball placed on top.

*Rissi S. Age 17 - Lakewood N.J.*

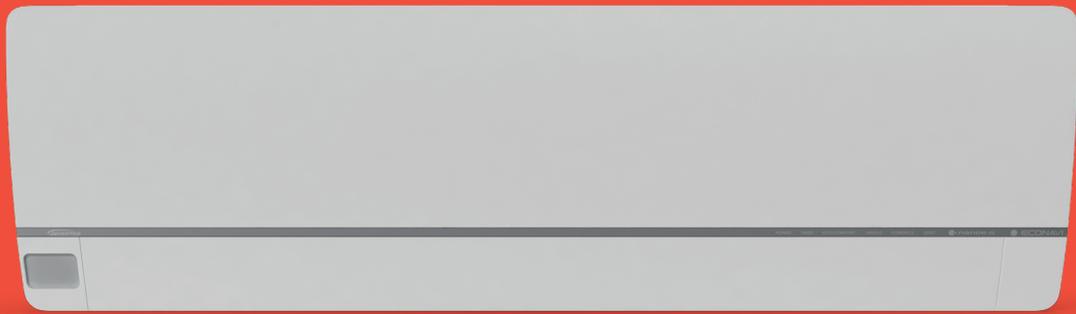
The most impressive costume I remember seeing was a person in a huge inflatable tiger.

*Shmuly F. Age 15 - Ramema Yerushalayim*

Want to share your thoughts? Join the Habayis Kids Crew!

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