

BJC Wensa

"WENSA" MEANS "FUN" IN JUDEO-ARABIC!

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March 5, 2011

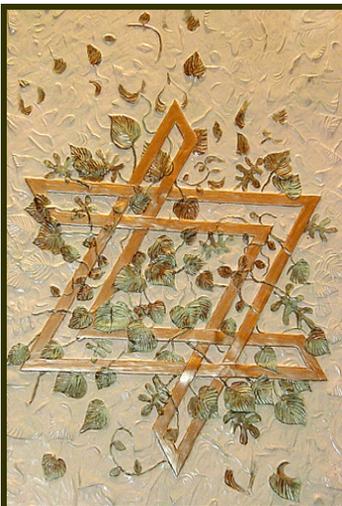
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VOLUME 4

PEKUDEI

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PURIM a fun holiday

Purim, our most fun filled holiday, occurs on the 14th day of Adar. This year, **5771 (2010-2011)**, *Purim* begins sundown **Shabbat, March 19th**, and goes thru **Sunday evening, March 20th**.

In certain walled cities like *Yerushalayim*, *Purim* is celebrated on the 15th day of *Adar*, called "Shushan Purim."

We celebrate *Purim* by:

- Reading *Megillat Esther*, (Scroll of Esther),
- Mishloach Manot* - Sending food to friends,
- Matanot L'evyonim* - Giving gifts to the poor, and
- Enjoying a *Purim Seuda* (meal).



We also celebrate *Purim* by poking fun at ourselves and our Jewish institutions, throwing synagogue decorum out the window and dressing in costumes. The entire month of *Adar*, and not just *Purim* itself, is a time for silliness and humor - "...*Mishenichnat Adar Marbim Besimcha*" - "...When Adar arrives, we increase our happiness." (*Ta'anit* 29a). *Purim*, a wild and crazy holiday, is the holiday that proves Judaism has a sense of humor. Cross-dressing, prohibited in the *Torah*, is practiced by some on *Purim*. Many will be borrowing their spouse's clothes on *Purim*.

Purim is an important holiday. Jews throughout the world, surrounded by anti-semitism, take great joy in a holiday that reminds them, that even though throughout the course of Jewish History there have been too many real-life "Hamans" in the end *Hashem* never lets the anti-semites win.

INTERESTING FACTS:

-*Megillat Esther* is the only book in the scriptures which does not mention *Hashem's* name.



- All the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are found in *Megillat Esther*, ch. 3, v. 13.

- The Talmud instructs that on *Purim* one should drink until he knows not the difference between "Blessed be Mordecai" and "Cursed be Haman." Interestingly, the numerical value of the Hebrew letters in each of the phrases (and) amounts in each case to a total of 502.

- In Missouri and Louisiana there are towns called Esther.

- On January 30th, 1944, Hitler said: If the Nazis are vanquished, the Jews will be able to celebrate a special *Purim*.

- "Hadassah" was founded on *Purim*, in 1912. Hadassah is Esther's Hebrew name.

READING THE MEGILLAH

The service for *Purim* is most unusual. Dressing in silly costumes is encouraged. At no time of the synagogue as "wild" as during the



Jewish year is the *Megillah* reading.

Interrupting the reading with noise-making devices at the mention of Haman's name is encouraged. Fifty-four times Haman's name is read in the *Megillah*, and fifty-four times the congregation erupts in a deafening chorus of "graggers," clanging pots, cap-guns and sirens.

Some write Haman's name on the soles of their shoes; the congregants then stamp their feet at every mention of Haman. Others write his name in wax and melt it!

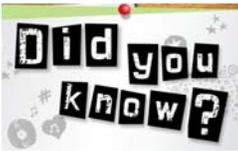
The *gragger* (Yiddish for rattle), is more widely used than the custom of feet stamping. The custom of the Purim "gragger," was obviously introduced to amuse the children, and so keep up their interest in the reading, as children (over 6) are also required to hear the *Megillah*.

So that Haman's ten sons should not feel left out, the congregation again interrupts the *Megillah* reading with resounding noise, when the ten names are read.

Decorum is out, inanity is in. During the service, the entire *Megillat Esther* is read from a handwritten scroll called a "*megillah*." (Could this be where the expression "the whole *megillah*" comes from?)

"The *Megillah*," is read in a special tune to suit the narration of the *Purim* story. When the verse on the hanging of Haman's ten sons is recited, the passage is read in one breath, "because," the *Talmud* says, "their ghosts were given up all together." It has also been suggested that the custom is due to the desire of avoiding the appearance of gloating over their deserved fate - a characteristic expression of Judaism's attitude to the fall of an enemy.

The scroll is unrolled completely and the *Megillah* is so folded as to give it the form of a letter or dispatch. Women are obligated to hear the *Megillah* as well, especially as they played an important part in the miraculous delivery. Women must also perform the other *Purim mitzvot*, - sending food to friends, giving gifts to the poor, and eating the *Purim* meal... (besides preparing it). As mentioned above, children (over 6) are also required to hear the *Megillah*.



Who invented Dental Floss?

Believe it or not, dental floss has probably been around for thousands of years. Researchers have discovered dental floss and toothpick grooves in the ancient teeth of prehistoric humans.

If you think about it, it makes sense. People have been getting food stuck in their teeth since the beginning of time!

It was not until the early 1800s, though, that flossing began to be recommended by a dentist. In 1819, New Orleans dentist Levi Spear Parmly published a book called A Practical Guide to the Management of the Teeth. He recommended that people floss with waxed silk thread "to dislodge that irritating matter which no brush can remove, and which is the real source of disease."

Although historians credit Parmly with the invention of modern dental floss, the first patent for dental floss was granted in 1874 to Asahel M. Shurtleff for "An Improved Pocket Thread Carrier and Cutter" that resembled modern floss packages. Shurtleff's company didn't begin to provide unwaxed silk floss for home use until 1882.

Unfortunately, dental floss didn't become popular right away. Professional dentistry was still a developing field, and silk thread was expensive.

It wasn't until after World War II, when Dr. Charles C. Bass created nylon floss as a substitute for silk floss. Then flossing became more common.

Today, dental floss is still made of nylon, as well as other types of plastic fibers. It comes in many varieties: flavored or unflavored, waxed or unwaxed. Many people today use specialized plastic wands, called "floss picks," instead of traditional floss wrapped around their fingers!

JEWISH JOKE



Neighbors

A Jew lived next door to John, a Christian, whose house was broken into at least once a week. One day John asks his neighbor:

Tell me Moshe: what is this thing you have on your door frame, is this an alarm system?

No my friend, this is called a MEZUZA, It is part of Jewish law and it is actually a prayer for the well being of the occupants of the house. Inside this little box there is a little paper with some prayers for the safety of the house.

And tell me Moshe, do you think you could put one of these, MEZUZA on the entrance to my house. It seems to work for you as the thieves do not go into your house.

Listen John: the Mezuzah is for Jewish homes.

John says: Are we not all children of the G-d? We also have been friends for a long time...

OK says Moshe, because of our old friendship I will put up the Mezuzah in your house.

A couple of months later John knocks on Moshe's door and says: Please forgive me but I am returning the Mezuzah to you.

What happened? asks Moshe, your house is still being broken into?

No, says John, the thieves stopped coming, but since you put up the Mezuzah, every 15 minutes the doorbell rings and people ask for donations:

SYNAGOGUE, CHABAD, JEWISH SCHOOL, POOR PEOPLE, etc. etc.

I made a calculation that the donations cost me much more than what the thieves took!

FOR LAUGHS... CONTRIBUTED BY MIRA ZARA

One afternoon a lawyer was riding in his limousine when he saw two men along the road-side eating grass. Disturbed, he ordered his driver to stop and got out to investigate.

He asked one man, "Why are you eating grass?"

"We don't have any money for food," the poor man replied. "We have to eat grass."

"Well, then, you can come with me to my house and I'll feed you," the lawyer said.

"But sir, I have a wife and two children with me. They are over there, under that tree."

"Bring them along," the lawyer replied.

Turning to the other poor man he stated, "You may come with us, also."

The second man, in a pitiful voice, then said, "But sir, I also have a wife and SIX children with me!"

"Bring them all as well," the lawyer answered.

They all entered the car, which was no easy task, even for a car as large as the limousine was.

Once under way, one of the poor fellows turned to the lawyer and said, "Sir, you are too kind."

"Thank you for taking all of us with you."

The lawyer replied, "Glad to do it."

"You'll really love my place...the grass is almost a foot high."



The question put to the Dalai Lama:

"What thing about humanity surprises you the most?"

His answer was as follows:

"Man"

Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money
Then he sacrifices his money to recuperate his health
And then he is so anxious about the future that he doesn't enjoy the present...

And as a result he doesn't live in the present or the future
And he lives as if he's never going to die, and then he dies having never really lived.

Oh DEAR....

Dear Yahoo,
I've never heard anyone say, "I don't know, let's Yahoo! it..."
just saying... Sincerely, Google

Dear Prince Charming,
You've got some explaining to do!
Sincerely, Cinderella, Snow White, Rapunzel and Sleeping Beauty

Dear Toaster,
Just gonna stand there and watch me burn?
Sincerely, Toast



Science and Religion

(An imaginary story) written by Dr. Albert Khabbaza

Stephen Hawking, the great theoretical physicist met a famous Rabbi and invited him home. After dinner (Kosher, of course) Hawking asked the Rabbi: Can you tell me what was going on before G-d created the Earth and Heaven?

The Rabbi smiled and said: Yes of course I can tell you, but I have a similar question for you and if you answer me, my answer to you would be easy. "What is your question?" Hawking asked.

"Can you tell me what was going on before the explosion of the Big Bang?"

"What kind of question is this?" Hawking replied. "There was no time at the explosion of the Big Bang. Time was created at Big Bang."

"This is also my answer to your question" the Rabbi said and continued: "Your question is also meaningless because there was no time before G-d created the heaven and earth. Time was created at the Creation. If you read the first chapter of the Torah you will realize that it says BERESHIT: 'in the beginning'. In the beginning of what? In the beginning of time, of course."

"So both of us agree that the world has a beginning" Hawking said.

"Yes we do" the Rabbi agreed."

"What about the end of the universe?"

"Our Torah says that there is an end to the world, SOF HAOLAM, but we do not know when that is."

"Our scientists also say that there is an end to the world but they do not know exactly when."

"Who said that there is a contradiction between science and religion?"

Both of them addressed each other while shaking hands.

Take a look!

Technology: Computer VS Cars

At a recent computer expo (COMDEX), Bill Gates reportedly compared the computer industry with the auto industry and stated:

"If GM had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving \$25 cars that got 1,000 miles to the gallon."

In response to Bill's comments, General Motors issued a press release stating:

If GM had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics (and I just love this part):

1. For no reason whatsoever, your car would crash... Twice a day.
2. Every time they repainted the lines in the road, you would have to buy a new car.
3. Occasionally your car would die on the freeway for no reason. You would have to pull to the side of the road, close all of the windows, shut off the car, restart it, and reopen the windows before you could continue. For some reason you would simply accept this.
4. Occasionally, executing a maneuver such as a left turn would cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart, in which case you would have to reinstall the engine.
5. The oil, water temperature, and alternator warning lights would all be replaced by a single *'This Car Has Performed An Illegal Operation'* warning light.
6. The airbag system would ask *'Are you sure?'* before deploying.
7. Occasionally, for no reason whatsoever, your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in until you simultaneously lifted the door handle, turned the key and grabbed hold of the radio antenna.
8. Every time a new car was introduced car, buyers would have to learn how to drive all over again because none of the controls would operate in the same manner as the old car.
9. You'd have to press the 'Start' button to turn the engine off.
10. When all else fails, you could call 'customer service' in some foreign country and be instructed in some foreign language how to fix your car yourself!!!!
11. Macintosh (Apple) would make a car that was powered by the sun, was reliable, five times as fast and twice as easy to drive.

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QUOTES OF THE WEEK:

LIFE IS LIKE A COIN. YOU CAN SPEND IT ANY WAY YOU WISH, BUT YOU ONLY SPEND IT ONCE. **LILLIAN DICKSON**

BE NICE TO PEOPLE ON YOUR WAY UP BECAUSE YOU'LL NEED THEM ON YOUR WAY DOWN. **WILSON MIZNER**

America's Problem:

The current financial crisis explained in a single picture:



This financial crisis is forcing State and local agencies to make some tough decisions.

If things continue for much longer, there's a real risk that we may have to lay off Jose!

Contributed by Mira Zara

TORAH TALKS FROM RABBI SHALOM...



Mrs. Schechter smiled. "That's a very wise question. Let me give you an example that will help clarify things. ... imagine that a parent tells her son to do his homework for the next day. He should also brush his teeth and change into pajamas. A half-hour later, his mother peeks into his room and sees that her son still hasn't started his homework. She asks him why and he answers, 'My friend called and he was upset about something. I was talking to him and trying to cheer him up. I was following the rule that when you're busy doing a mitzvah, you don't have to stop to do another.' What do you think his mother might answer?" Some of the girls raised their hands. Mrs. Schechter pointed to Maya. "I would say that his homework is more important because the next day he's going to get punished if he doesn't have his homework done," said Maya. Dina said, "I would tell him that he could tell his friend that he would have to call him back later or talk to him the next day. His mother told him to do his homework and that *had* to be done for the next day." Mrs. Schechter nodded. "Those are very good answers. When a person has to decide what to do, she has to look at all the possibilities. If she started something that's worthwhile finishing, she should finish it. And if she might lose the chance to do something if she doesn't do it immediately, then she has to do it right away. In our case, if someone collects food during *tefila*, she'll miss davening. That's why I told the girls to go back to class.

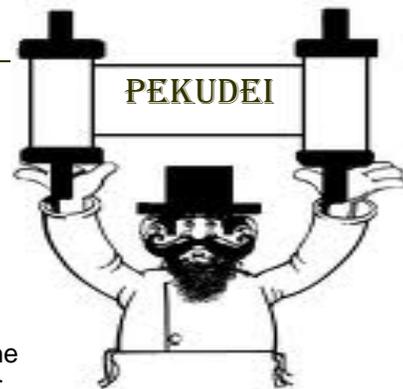
Did you ever have to choose between doing two or more things? How did you choose what to do?

"In general, when I visit a classroom, I'm engaged in a mitzvah. It's important for me to spend time with the girls in my school. When I'm here, I don't do anything else. But if it's an urgent matter, sometimes I have to leave, as I did today. When I was called, I thought something serious had happened. I'm happy to say that when I got to my office, Mrs. Gerber, our secretary, told me that the mayor was on the phone. Apparently, our school has won a prize." The girls applauded. Mrs. Schechter looked at her watch. "The next lesson is just beginning. Rena, Naomi, now would be a good time to announce your new project in all the classrooms." Smiling, Rena and Naomi stood up and left to organize their *tzedaka* project, with the principal's full approval.

PARSHA FACTS

In our last episode, *Bnei Yisroel* was given a fresh start as Moshe got the *Mishkan* project rolling. It was only a matter of hours before the supply tent was filled with enough gold, silver, copper and materials to build the *Mishkan*. With Betzalel at the creative helm, all the pieces - from loop to nuts - was completed in a 3 month *Mishkan* marathon.

As our *Parsha* opens, three months have gone by and all the parts of the *Mishkan* are done. Only the clothing of the *Kohanim* and *Kohain Gadol* remain to be completed. Moshe puts on his accounting hat and does an audit of all the materials collected for the *Mishkan* to determine which supplies went for what purpose. Afterwards he has Itamar ben (son of) Aharon verify his calculations. Moshe does this so no one will suspect him of pocketing any of the nose rings.



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FAMILY SHABBAT UPCOMING DATES:

APRIL 9, 2011

MAY 28, 2011



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