

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR THE PURIM SEUDAH

The following Questions and Answers are Kosher for Purim and Year-Round use:

QUESTION: In what year of the Jewish calendar did Purim occur?

ANSWER: According to *Yalkut Me'am Loez*, Achashveirosh came to power in the year 3392, and Haman was hung in 3404.

QUESTION: How many years did Purim occur before Chanukah?

ANSWER: Approximately 216 years (Sefer Targum Sheini by Rav Tzvi Dov Cohen, Shlita).

QUESTION: Why isn't the *Shaim Hashem* in the Megillah?

ANSWER: Many answer because Hashem's presence is hidden in the in the subtle events of the Megillah. We may suggest that this is to teach us that we should not fool ourselves--the final battle with Amaleik was not fought then. Only when the final battle is fought before the building of the Third Beis HaMikdash will Hashem's Name become complete. Hakhel Reminder: Chazal teach that whenever the term 'HaMelech' is used in the Megillah in lieu of HaMelech Achashveirosh that it also LeHavdil refers to Hashem (Esther Rabba 3:10). Look out for it and think about how!

QUESTION: How many wars between Bnei Yisrael and Amaleik are mentioned in Tanach?

ANSWER: Actually, there were at least eleven (11) battles with Amalek in Tanach, in one form or another. In the Torah--3 BATTLES: a) Shemos 17: 8 and Devorim 25:17; b) Bamidbar 14:45; and c) Bamidbar 21:1 and 33:40. In Neviim--6 BATTLES : a) Shoftim 3:13; b) Shoftim 6:3; c) Shoftim 6:33; d) Shmuel Aleph 14:48; e) Shmuel Aleph 15:3; f) Shmuel Aleph 30:1. In Kesuvim--2 BATTLES: a) Divrei HaYamim Aleph 4:43...and of course b) MEGILLAS ESTHER! It is clear that this nation has really been out to get us--but in the end we will prevail!

QUESTION: Who was the king before Achashveirosh?

ANSWER: Coresh--see first Rashi to the Megillah.

QUESTION: Who brought Mordechai from Bavel to Shushan?

ANSWER: Coresh--see Targum to Megillah 2:6.

QUESTION: Mordechai was the tenth generation to which great personage?

ANSWER: Shaul HaMelech (Targum Sheni 2:5)

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**QUESTION:** What other name was Achashveirosh known by in Tanach?

**ANSWER:** Artachshaste, mentioned in Ezra 4:7. Chazal (Esther Rabbah 1:3) note and interpret each name.

**QUESTION:** Can you give at least three reasons why Achashveirosh made his incomparable Mishte at the outset of the Megillah?

**ANSWER:** 1. Because he stopped the building of the Beis HaMikdash, and he was sure the Beis HaMikdash would no longer be rebuilt. With the party, he wanted to happily demonstrate his final and complete rulership over the Jews (based upon the Alshich). 2. In honor of his birthday (Midrash Aba Gurion). 3. It was his wedding feast with Vashti, and this is why Vashti also made a party (see Targum Yonasan, Ibn Ezra, and Kad HaKemach).

**QUESTION:** Why does the Megillah go to such great lengths to describe the wealth of Achashveirosh's palace and party? Why do we care?!

**ANSWER:** It is to teach us that if this is what those who anger Hashem receive--*Kal Vachomer* to those who do Hashem's will! The G'ra (*Al Derech Hapshat*) adds that it is to teach that--if this is how grand Olam Hazei is -- imagine how great Olam Habah will be--after all, an hour of Olam Habah is worth all of Olam Hazei of all time!

**QUESTION:** Why didn't Achashveirosh force people to drink to join in his joy-- why was there no "Oness" to drink?

**ANSWER:** The Megillas Sesorim (Megillah 1:8) explains that Achashveirosh wanted the Jews to sin willingly--"*Kedi SheYehenu Beratzon.*"

**QUESTION:** What did Mordechai do during the seven days of Achashveirosh's party?

**ANSWER:** He served as a Sar HaMashkim, as did Haman (see Rashi to Megillah 1:8). HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, explains that he did this in order to save Bnei Yisrael from Ma'acholos Asuros. However, the Targum teaches that he wasn't there and that he davened, and did not eat and drink, for the seven days of the party (Targum Esther 1:10 ).

**QUESTION:** One of the especially named attendees at the Mishte were the '*HaPartemim*' (Esther 1:3)--what does '*HaPartemim*' mean?

**ANSWER:** Some form of rulership. The Me'am Lo'ez writes that they ruled over areas near the Euphrates , the Pras River --hence the letters of the word *Peih Reish Tes Mem Yud Mem.*

**QUESTION:** According to the opinion that Memuchan was Haman:

(A) why was it, BeHashgacha, that he had to give the advice to kill Vashti?; and

(B) Also, al pi hatevah--why would he want to kill Vashti--what did she do to him

already?!

**ANSWER:** (A) So that he himself should be the cause for Esther to marry Achashveirosh--so that she could kill him and his sons. (B) He saw through sorcery that a queen would kill him and he thought it would be Vashti.

**QUESTION:** What is the significance in the fact that the Gematria of Haman and HaMelech are the same?

**ANSWER:** One may suggest that that this is to signify that both Achashveirosh and Haman had the same feeling of hatred towards Bnei Yisrael.

**QUESTION:** Why didn't Esther relate where she was from?

**ANSWER:** The easy answer is, because Mordechai instructed her not to--as the Pasuk clearly states (Esther 2:20). As to the reason for Mordechai's instruction, various explanations are given--including a recognition by Mordechai that perhaps some disaster was going to threaten K'lal Yisrael and her royal position would be the means of their salvation--identifying herself now as a Jew could mean an early end to her position. The Gemara (Megillah 13B) additionally indicates that, even if there was not an absolute directive by Mordechai to hide her identity, Esther herself did not want to reveal to Achashveirosh her royal ancestry (she was a descendant of Shaul HaMelech)--because of her tzniyus and anava.

**QUESTION:** Why was Mordechai sitting at the Sha'ar HaMelech not a 'give away' as to where Esther was from?

**ANSWER:** Daniel appointed his friends to high positions, and appointed Mordechai to be one of the people in the Sha'ar HaMelech before Esther was taken as queen (Ibn Ezra).

**QUESTION:** Instead of blatantly not bowing to him, why didn't Mordechai simply avoid Haman and not go near him?

**ANSWER:** There are various explanations for this. The Chofetz Chaim learns that Mordechai was correcting the mistake of his ancestor Shaul HaMelech, who had compassion on Haman's ancestor, the King of Amalek--Agag. As a result of this misplaced pity, Haman was eventually born and issued his evil edicts. Mordechai, therefore, was unyielding, and stood up to Haman like a pillar of iron refusing to give even an inch for the sake of the honor of Heaven and the honor of Klal Yisrael.

**QUESTION:** Why didn't Mordechai and Esther let Achashveirosh be killed by Bigsan and Seresh so that Esther could be freed and go back to Mordechai and her people?

**ANSWER:** She would have been taken as the queen by the next king anyways, and Mordechai and Esther understood that a special Hatzalah of Bnei Yisrael would result from the unique circumstance of her being taken as queen.

QUESTION: Why didn't Mordechai tell Achashveirosh of the plot of Bigsan Veseresh directly--why did he relate it through Esther?

ANSWER: He wanted Esther to be more highly regarded and more influential before the king (Yosef Lekach).

QUESTION: What was the sin committed by Bnei Yisrael that prompted the great *gezeira* against them?

ANSWER: The Gemara (Megillah 11A and 12A) lists three reasons: 1) a laxity in Torah study and Mitzvah observance; 2) participating in Achashveirosh's first party in which he used the Keilim of the Beis HaMikdash, and which he hosted in celebration of the Jews not being redeemed; and 3) bowing down to the tzelem (idol) of Nevuchadnezzar and/or Haman--, which violated a prohibition of Avoda Zara. **HAKHEL NOTE:** We see how severe sin the first one really is, if it can be compared to such grievous sins as the second two!

QUESTION: On what day did Haman make the "Pur"?

ANSWER: The 13<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan (see Rashi to Mesechta Megillah 15A and Malbim to Esther 3:7).

QUESTION: If the Megillah says that a 'Pur' is simply a Goral, a lottery, why is the term 'Pur' used at all?

ANSWER: 'Pur' indicates a lottery for the bad, whereas Goral indicates a lottery for the good (HaRav Yaakov MiLisa). Hakhel Note: Thus we see the Venahafoch Hu in the name Purim itself! Alternatively, the 'Pur' is a special name for the dice that Haman cast (Ya'aros Devash).

QUESTION: Why was Achashveirosh's notice to kill the Jews issued so far--almost a year-- in advance--didn't he realize that this would provide ample time for the Jews to act?

ANSWER: It was done at Haman's urging so that the king would not rescind the decree, for once it was sealed with the royal seal, it could not be recalled (Malbim Manos HaLevi). Alternatively, one can suggest that Achashveirosh thought the Jews were powerless before Hashem, based on his miscalculation they were "not redeemed at the end of their 70 year exile."

QUESTION: The Megillah records that '*Pashegen HaKesav*' (Esther 3:14)--what does the word "*Pashegen*" mean?

ANSWER: Rashi and the Ibn Ezra write that *Pashegen* means: the text, the nussach, the content. Artscroll translates it as "copies" (of the document containing the decree).

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**QUESTION:** How many humps did the *Achashdranim Bnei HaRamachim* have? How many legs did it have?

**ANSWER:** According to HaRav Yaakov Emden, Z'TL (Megillah 18A), these were a unique type of camel with two humps and eight legs, and were accordingly, exceedingly fast. Fascinatingly HaRav Emden notes that these camels were reportedly in existence in Persia even in his time. According to others, the phrase refers to a special type of mule which was driven by expert riders. (See Ibn Ezra to Esther 8:11 and Rashash to Megillah 18A).

**QUESTION:** In addition to his plan to kill all the Jews, what edicts did Haman immediately issue against them?

**ANSWER:** Chazal (Megillah 16B) teach us what the other edicts were from the Pasuk "*LaYehudim Hoysa Orah...*" (Esther 8:16): The additional decrees included prohibiting the study of Torah, the observance of Shabbos and Yom Tov, performing a Bris Mila and the wearing of Tefillin (see Targum Sheini).

**QUESTION:** Why did Esther initially refuse Mordechai's request to appear before the king?

**ANSWER:** She thought that she did not have to put herself into danger without first being called by Achashveirosh, as there would be ample time over the year to speak to him, and she would probably see Achashveirosh soon as she had not seen him in 30 days.

**QUESTION:** Why did Mordechai emphasize to Esther that she should not be silent "*Ba'eis Hazos*"--at this time?

**ANSWER:** Because it was Nissan, the time of Geulah, and one should not wait for a different time.

**QUESTION:** Why did Esther ask first that the people fast for her, and then state that she and her maidens would also fast--wouldn't it have been Derech Eretz for her to say that she would fast--and then ask them to fast too?

**ANSWER:** Chazal (Bava Kama 82A) teach that if one davens for his friends and needs the same thing, then he is answered first. She therefore asked them to fast for her, so that they would be answered and saved first (Maharal).

**QUESTION:** Why did Esther ask that everyone fast for three days?

**ANSWER:** Chazal teach that Kinah (jealousy), Ta'ava (desire), and Kavod (honor seeking) take a person out of this world. Thus, one day was designated for each of these Middos, as the Zohar HaKadosh teaches that Yamim represent Middos--these three Middos that had to be corrected (Pri Tzaddik, Parashas Chukas).

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**QUESTION:** The Megillah teaches that Esther told Mordechai that not only should the Bnei Yisrael not eat and drink for three days--but that she and her Na'aros would also fast. Yet, she said "*Gam Ani Ven'aarosai Atzum Kein*"--Atzum is in first person singular. What happened to her maidens--weren't they supposed to fast as well?

**ANSWER:** Rav Shlomo Kluger, Z'tl, in the Sefer HaChaim explains that Esther could only state what she knew to be the truth--that she would fast. She did not know what her Na'aros would do privately and she would not say something that she did not know for certain to be the truth.

**QUESTION:** Who in the Megillah was smitten *BeSanveirim* (illusions) and how was he cured?

**ANSWER:** The Sefer *Orah VeSimcha* brings the Midrash that Achashveirosh was suffering from Sanveirim--but when Esther came to the Chatzer, Gavriel tilted the king's head towards her and he was healed. Achashveirosh therefore put out his golden scepter to bring her closer since he was healed by seeing her.

**QUESTION:** Why did the tree that Haman had prepared for Mordechai have to be 50 Amos tall?

**ANSWER:** Haman was afraid that the noose would break, and that Mordechai would thereupon be free of the death penalty (as is the custom in all kingdoms), he thus wanted to ensure that Mordechai would die from the fall in all events (*Ben Dovid*). Alternatively, Haman saw Mordechai in a dream flying on top of his house. He knew that dreams have substance, so he wanted the tree to be higher than his house to ensure that this was the meaning of the dream. What the dream really meant would be (and was) that Mordechai was placed "*Al Beis Haman--in charge of Haman's house*" shortly thereafter!

**QUESTION:** According to Chazal, how many students was Mordechai learning with when Haman came in to take him on the royal horse?

**ANSWER:** Twenty-two thousand. This is equivalent to the number of Malochim who escorted Hashem to Har Sinai. This perhaps demonstrates the new Kabbalas HaTorah by Bnei Yisrael of *Kiyumu V'Kiblu*...we replaced the Malochim when we accepted the Torah of our own free will!

**QUESTION:** How could Mordechai ask Haman for a haircut, after all it was the 16th of Nissan--the first day of Chol HaMoed?

**ANSWER:** The Maharatz Chayes explains that because Mordechai was wearing sack cloth and ashes, and was about to put on royal garments, he was treated as one who had just left the Beis HaAssurim--who is permitted to take a hair cut on Chol HaMoed!

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**QUESTION:** Why did Esther invite Haman to her party with Achashveirosh? The Gemara gives 12 reasons and Eliyahu HaNavi (as quoted in the Gemara) confirms that Esther had all 12 of them in mind. Can you name at least three?

**ANSWER:** The Gemara may be found in Megillah 15B. Here are several reasons: a) she wanted Achashveirosh to suspect that she and Haman were plotting together against him; b) she wanted the Jews not to be overconfident with her political abilities to get them out of their life threatening situation--by her inviting Haman to the party(!), they would daven with even greater intensity; c) she wanted all the other ministers to be jealous of Haman and so unite against him; d) she wanted Haman to be available to trip himself up in some way ; e) so that Achashveirosh would not realize that she was Jewish prior to the party ; and f) so that Hashem would have special mercy on her--seeing that she, a Nevia and a Tzadekes, would have to be in the same room with this arch-enemy of the Jews.

**QUESTION:** At the first Mishte--Esther's request was that Achashveirosh and Haman come back for a second Mishte--why couldn't she accomplish her goal at the first Mishte?

**ANSWER:** Esther did not sense any change that had occurred in K'lal Yisrael's situation at the time--and she was expecting to see a sign that the Tefillos and fasts were accepted. Indeed, the next morning brought Haman parading Mordechai through the streets of the capital--the sign was there! (Ibn Ezra) Alternatively, the Chasam Sofer explains that Amaleik is defeated by "*Machar*"--you wait until 'tomorrow' in order to defeat them (see Rashi to Shmuel I 30:17).

**QUESTION:** Esther told Achashveirosh "*She'eilasi U'Vakashasi*". What is the difference between a *She'eilah* and a *Bakasha*?

**ANSWER:** Some explain that a *She'eilah* is for the short term, and *Bakasha* is for the long term. It is for this reason that Esther later said "*Nafshi V'She'eilasi VeAmi BeVakashasi*" (7:3)--for it was the nation's long term future that was at stake, not only the life of Esther.

**QUESTION:** For how long was Haman hung on the tree?

**ANSWER:** From 16 Nisan--until 14 Adar of the next year. This was for the world to see that the Bnei Yisrael were not to be killed but respected. Finally, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Adar almost a year later, his sons were hung on the gallows below him (*Shailos U'Teshvous Torah LeShma* 321, based upon the Targum Sheni).

**QUESTION:** Why is Haman specifically called an Agagi (8:3) when Esther pleads with Achashveirosh to reverse his decree after Haman was hanged?

**ANSWER:** The Bnei Yissaschar explains that usually when a ruler dies, his decrees are nullified, as his death is viewed as a sign that the decree was inappropriate. However, because Haman was an Agagi and not really from the

ruling authority of *Paras U'Madai*, the decree was not nullified, and Esther had to make a special appeal.

**QUESTION:** Agag and Haman each had a son with the same name--what was it?

**ANSWER:** Veyzasa (see Esther 9:9 and Targum Sheni).

**QUESTION:** Which son of Haman was hung on the lowest rung of the gallows, hanging just an Amah above the ground?

**ANSWER:** Veyzasa (Targum Sheini 9:14). There is a reason for everything--even as to how and where each of our enemies are punished--otherwise Chazal would not record it. We similarly find at the Yam Suf that the Mitzriyim were punished in different ways (being treated in the waters as lead, stones, or straw, depending upon how they treated the Bnei Yisrael). Everything has a Cheshbon--everything!

**QUESTION:** What was the special cause of *VeHa'ir Shushan Tzahala VeSameicha* (and the city of Shushan rejoiced)--how was Shushan's Simcha different from the Jews' Simcha of *Layehudim Hoysa Orah VeSimcha...?*

**ANSWER:** Not only were the Jews happy, but those who respected true justice were happy as well. When Haman's decree was first issued, the city of Shushan was Navocha--they were confused (Manos HaLevi). This was a direct fulfillment of the Pasuk teaches "*Birvos Tzaddikim Yismach Ha'am...* when the righteous become great the people will rejoice, when the wicked men rule the people sigh." (Mishlei 29:2) Alternatively, the term "*VeHa'ir Shushan*" indicates that not only did the people rejoice, but even the inanimate objects of the city--the trees and rocks also rejoiced together with the rejoicing of Mordechai HaTzaddik.

**QUESTION:** Why did Achashveirosh suddenly turn from a Jew-hater into a king who provided a royal decree helping the Jews to quash all of their enemies?

**ANSWER:** The Sefer *Ya'aros Devash* explains that Achashveirosh, through necromancy, learned that his successor as king would be a Jew. He bitterly hated the Jews for this reason, for he assumed that they would rebel against him and take over his throne. When he learned that Esther was a Jew--he realized that his son Daryavesh--a Jew--would be the next king, and he was greatly relieved and pleased that the rulership would stay in his 'family'.

**QUESTION:** Why is Charvona "*Zachur Latov*"?

**ANSWER:** Some learn that the officer Charvona is spelled earlier in the Megillah with an "Aleph", and later in the Megillah with a "Hey" (when he tells Achashveirosh about Haman's tree) because it is actually not the same person. Earlier in the Megillah (1:10) he is an officer of Achashveirosh. Later, it is Eliyahu HaNavi, merely posing as Charvona, who we remember for the good. Others learn that the officer Charvona had Hirhurei Teshuva, and is thus remembered for the good.

- **QUESTION:** How many mishtaos, or parties, are mentioned all-told in the Megillah?

**ANSWER:** Six--a) the Mishte of Achashveirosh for all of Persia; b) the additional Mishte which Achashveirosh made for seven days for just Shushan; c) the separate Mishte of Vashti; d) the Mishte made by Achashveirosh when Esther became queen; e) the first Mishte among Esther, Achashveirosh and Haman; f) the next day--the second Mishte among Esther, Achashveirosh and Haman. If that isn't enough, the Megillah separately records that Haman and Achashveirosh sat down separately simply "to drink" when the King's initial order against the Jews was sent out (Esther 3:15 )!

- **QUESTION:** How many people were hanged in the course of the Megillah?

**ANSWER:** 13--Haman, his ten sons, Bigsan, and Seresh.

- **QUESTION:** Name two evil people in the Megillah whose names rhyme.

**ANSWER:** Zeresh and Seresh (Seresh, one of the infamous plotters whose plan was overheard by Mordechai).

- **QUESTION:** Why did Esther request of the king that the Bnei Yisrael be given an extra day to fight their enemies in Shushan (Megillah 9:13 )?

**ANSWER:** The Megillas Sesarim (HaRav Yaakov MeLisa--the Nesivos) writes that Shushan had more Kedusha in it because the Sanhedrin was there, and because Mordechai was a Navi. When Haman's Gezeira was put into effect the Kedusha was lost, and could not return until the Tumah was eradicated. Esther saw that the Ruach HaKodesh had not yet come back, so she understood that the Tumah in the city was still there. Accordingly, the 10 sons of Haman had to be hung, the other Amaleikim in the city obliterated--and the Kedusha then returned!

- **QUESTION:** What happened to Zeresh?

**ANSWER:** Well, first of all, we curse her every year--"Arura Zeresh Aishes Mafchidi". The Targum ( 9:14 ) writes that she ran away with 70 of her sons, and they became beggars. A Rav taught that this was truly a tremendous punishment--for not only is an ani considered like a mais--but she lived to see Mordechai the Jew in control of all Haman's property and possessions.

- **QUESTION:** What happened to all of Haman's possessions?

**ANSWER:** The Midrash (Shocheh Tov 22) teaches that Haman's money was distributed as follows: 1/3 to Mordechai and Esther, 1/3 to those involved in Torah study, and 1/3 toward reconstruction of the Beis Hamikdash. What a V'Nahafoch Hu!

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**QUESTION:** Why do the unwalled cities and walled cities have different days for observing Purim?

**ANSWER:** The Shoel U'Maishiv brings the Ramban who writes that the walled city dwellers didn't sense the miracle as much because they thought that they were secure in their walled cities--and Mordechai and Esther got them to understand that the miracle very much applied to them as well! Do you think you're secure because you have an alarm system?...

**QUESTION:** If you rearrange the letters of "Shushan", what does it spell?

**ANSWER:** "Sasson"--or happiness!

**QUESTION:** Identify six instances of *Middah K'neged Middah* that appear in the Megillah.

**ANSWER:** a) Vashti made Jewish girls who were her captives work for her unclothed--and so she was ordered to come before the king unclothed (Megillah 12B); b) Haman was hung on the tree that he prepared for Mordechai; c) Bigsan and Seresh wanted to kill the king, yet they were killed instead; d) The Jews ate and drank at Achashveirosh's party, so they were forced to fast for three days; e) Haman wanted everyone to bow to him--at the penalty of death, and in the end Achashveirosh ordered him to be killed--because he fell before Esther; and f) Mordechai put on sackcloth and ashes on his head over what Haman had decreed, and in the end, took over Haman's position, wearing the royal apparel and a large gold crown.

**QUESTION:** What famous American object has the same gematria as "Amaleik"? What can you learn from that?

**ANSWER:** Amaleik has the same gematria as "dollar"--both have the numerical equivalent of 240. As far as the lesson, we will only point to Amaleik's grandfather--Esav--and his passion for money and worldly goods. We leave other lessons up to you.

**QUESTION:** Which cities in Eretz Yisrael (and outside it) in our time would read the Megillah on two days--the fourteenth and the fifteenth of Adar because of a doubt as to whether they were walled from the time of Yehoshua Bin Nun?

**ANSWER:** According to the Sefer *Adar U'Purim* by HaRav Yoel Schwartz, Shlita: Among the cities--In Eretz Yisrael: Chevron, Yafo, Gush Chalav, Akko, Tzefas, Lod, Shechem and Teveria (which is a separate issue--See Megillah 5B). In Chutz La'Aretz: Damascus and Baghdad .

**QUESTION:** What are the last five seforim in Tanach?

**ANSWER:** According to the printed Tanach, the last five Seforim are the Megillos of Koheles and Esther, followed by Daniel, Ezra-Nechemia and Divrei HaYamim. However, the Gemara in Bava Basra 14B-15A lists the following as

the last Seforim of Tanach: Eichah (describing the Churban), followed by Daniel, Megillas Esther, Ezra-Nechemia and Divrei HaYamim. This second listing is, obviously, also chronological, as Sefer Daniel discusses periods prior to the events of Megillas Esther.

**QUESTION:** Who in the Megillah sought after the peace of one person and was rewarded with being Zoche to seek the peace of his entire people?

**ANSWER:** The Megillah teaches that Mordechai went “*Lidrosh Es Shlom Esther*” ( 2:11 ). Chazal teach that Hashem said “You went to seek the peace of one person--in this merit you will seek the peace of your entire nation--*Vedover Shalom Lechol Zaro.*” (Esther Raba 6:6). What a great lesson--how great it is to seek someone else’s peace--think about to where it can lead! Perhaps our Mishloach Manos and Matanos L’Evyonim are to serve as our jump start in seeking the peace of others!

**QUESTION:** How many words are there in the “*Al Hanisim*” of Purim?

**ANSWER:** In Nusach Ashkenaz, there are 68. HaRav Yaakov Emden in his Siddur writes that 68 is the Gematria of “Chaim”--and we thank Hashem for the life he granted us at that time--which has its life-bearing effects to this day, which will continue forever and ever!

**QUESTION:** Why do we refer to the giving of gifts as Mishloach Manos, and not merely as Shlo’ach Manos?

**ANSWER:** The letter *mem* means ‘from’. The Pasuk states ‘*Mishloach Manos Ish L’Rei’ aihu U’Matanos LaEvyonim*’ (Esther 9:22). The goal is that *from* dedicated Mishloach Manos *will result* sincere Matanos LaEvyonim as well!

**QUESTION:** True or false? In order to fulfill the mitzvah of Mishloach Manos, you must give two different foods that have two different Brachos.

**ANSWER:** False. Mishloach Manos must just consist of two different portions of food--they can both be meat, or any other type of food or drink (See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 695:4 and Mishna Berurah there).

**QUESTION:** What did the G’ra send for Mishloach Manos?

**ANSWER:** The Sefer *Ma’aseh Rav* (249) provides the answer: Cooked chicken and cooked fish, and similar ready-to-eat items.

**QUESTION:** How can one fulfill the principle of *Nosei BeOl Im Chaveiro* by accepting Mishloach Manos?

**ANSWER:** The Torah Jew generally does not like to receive gifts as that Pasuk teaches, *Sonei Matanos Yichyeh*. Thus, by accepting another’s gift to help him fulfill the Mitzvah, one is overcoming his overall hesitancy to accept gifts!

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**QUESTION:** What is the source for the wearing of costumes on Purim?

**ANSWER:** The Sefas Emes explains that after Achashveirosh's second decree in favor of the Jews, many people dressed up as Jews (Misyahadim) in order to save their lives. We dress up to remind ourselves of how they dressed up--to be like us!

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**QUESTION:** Why were two days of Purim necessary --Purim itself and Shushan Purim, after all, was not the majority of the miracle completed by the 14th of Adar?

**ANSWER:** Perhaps the most common answer to this question is that with Shushan Purim we give special Kavod to the cities of Eretz Yisrael, as Shushan Purim is celebrated in cities walled from the time of Yehoshua ben Nun--which included many cities in Eretz Yisrael. The Chasam Sofer, however, explains that since people are so busy with the Mitzvos of the day, there may not be as much Torah learning on Purim as there is on other days. Accordingly, Purim is 'split' into two days--so that there will be Torah studied in one place, when it is not studied in another!