
The YI/Merrick NEWS

**** Shvat 1999 – MEGILLA GORILLA EDITION II ****

It's hard to believe that this is our third Purim edition. While the newsletter hasn't appeared as regularly as I would have liked, I hope that the newsletter still continues to serve it's main purpose - disinformation and propaganda.

A Message from Rabbi Volk:

Dear Friends,

I take this opportunity to inform you that our Scholar-in Residence program will once again take place on the Shabbat of March 5-6. The parshiyot of Ki Tisa and Parah will be read on this Shabbat.

We will have the privilege of hearing Divrei Torah from Rabbi Chaim Wasserman, the spiritual leader of the Young Israel of Passaic-Clifton for the past thirty years. Before coming to Young Israel, he served as the Associate National Director of the National Conference of Synagogue Youth, the youth movement of the Orthodox Union. In that position, he traveled extensively, throughout North America, conducting and attending more than 500 Shabbatonim, leadership training seminars, conventions, and retreats on behalf of NCSY and their affiliated regions and chapters.

Rabbi Wasserman has also served as the Educational Director of Hillel Academy of Passaic and is currently an instructor in modern Jewish history at Bruria High School in Elizabeth. In addition to his current professional responsibilities, he is a psychotherapist in private practice.

The theme for this special Shabbat is: Judaism at the turn of the century: The Current of Passion.

The schedule is as follows:
Shabbat evening - Friday, March 5:
Rabbi Wasserman will speak on the topic entitled: "To Live with a

Passion". Time: 8:30 p.m. with Oneg Shabbat to follow.

Shabbat Morning, March 6: Sermon by Rabbi Wasserman: "Dancing with a Golden Calf: Then and Now". A kiddush lunch will follow davening.

Afternoon Shiur: Rabbi Wasserman's topic will be: "Halachic Dispute (A Machloket: Discovering Various Points of View)". Time: 4:30 p.m.

I encourage you to participate in this Shabbat of learning and introspection. Rabbi Wasserman who is the Editor of The Rabbi's Letter, a publication of the Young Israel Council of Rabbis, brings a wealth of experience as a seasoned rabbi and educator to our community.

Cordially,
Rabbi Marc S. Volk

Women's Class:

A series of classes entitled "A Journey Through the Siddur: The Message of Tefillah. Will be offered by Rabbi Volk on various evenings beginning on Monday, February 22 at 8:30 p.m.. All women are invited and encouraged to attend these classes on the following dates: February 22, March 8, March 15, March 22. In addition, special guest lecturers may come to our community to enhance the discussion of this very important subject.

Teen Shabbat:

Once again, Rabbi and Mrs. Volk will open up their homes and candy dishes to the teens of our community. The Teen Shabbat will take place on Friday, February 26, at 8:30 p.m. All

teens are welcome for lively conversation and an excuse to get out of the house.

Purim : A Minor or Major Jewish Celebration?

Purim is a strange holiday. It doesn't seem to have much substance to it and its basic message seems to be not much more than mindless merriment and joyous spoofing. Drink, forget the world, pretend it is something it is not. This seems to be the story of Purim.

However, the Rabbis treated Purim as something much more than "one continuous party". They considered Purim to be so important that they compared Yom Kippur to Purim and they said that Yom Kippur was a day like Purim. In Hebrew, the name Yom Kippur is also known as Yom Kippurim and "ki" means like or "as". They even said that in the days of the Moshiach, all other festivals, including Yom Kippur will disappear but not Purim.

Purim, therefore, is an important holiday to the Rabbis. It is important because it exemplifies Judaism's perception of the world. At first glance, everything in the world seems cut and dry. The world seems to operate according to its own rules. Natural laws seem unchangeable. The Almighty really doesn't seem to exist. In fact, His name is not mentioned even once. But on closer inspection, as the Purim story unfolds, we see that strange sets of coincidences occur. Miracles occur which don't look like miracles at all.

There seems to be no G-d and no need and no need for religion but the closer we look into things, the more we can see His hand working. Hashem is always there to help and console us if we deem ourselves to be worthy.

The Rabbis say that the mask of Purim has been revealed. Religion is not just for life-turning events, but is something that reflects the reality of the universe.

May we all fully appreciate the lessons of Purim as we understand that Purim may be considered to be a major celebration in Jewish life.

Jeryl and I wish all of you and your families a Purim Sameach.

Rabbi Marc S. Volk

Mishloach Manot

If you haven't already sent your check in and you still want to order the shalach manos baskets, the deadline is Monday, February 22. Please send your check in right away to Rachel Jacobson.

My one sort-of Purim related joke :
Q)How does one Iranian call another Iranian long-distance? A) Persian to Persian.

Statements and opinions presented in signed articles are those of the respective authors, and do not necessarily reflect official opinions of the Young Israel of Merrick.

Times for Purim:

Monday, March 1, Ta'anit Esther - Fast starts at 5:17 a.m., and it ends at 6:35 p.m. Shacharit is at 6:10 a.m. Mincha is at 5:25 p.m., Maariv is at 6:35 p.m. and Megillah reading is at 6:55 p.m.

Tuesday, March 2 - Purim - E.T.T. is at 5:38 a.m. Shacharit is at 5:40 a.m. followed by Megillah. The second morning minyan will be at 8:30 a.m. followed by Megillah. Mincha is at 3:30 p.m.

Purim Play

Our Youth Director, Avi Stein and the "Purim Operetta Players" will be presenting a Purim Play entitled "The Loose Tongue Gregger," on Monday night, March 1, following Megillah reading.

Costume Contest

There will be a costume contest for the kids AND adults on Purim night, March 1. There are prizes and prizes. I think that the adults should dress as outlandishly as possible - it reminds me of a bumper sticker I once saw (you know things have taken a turn for the worse when I start quoting bumper stickers.) It read: 'Revenge is living long enough to embarrass your children'. Pass the clown make-up over here please.

Purim Carnival

There will be a Purim Carnival on Tuesday, March 2 to be held after Megillah reading with the exact time to be announced. All post bar and bat mitzvahs (and of course any adults) are more than encouraged to volunteer their time and energies to help run the various booths. Prizes and junk food galore. Please contact everyone's favorite Purim lady, Gail Stamler for more info and to volunteer.

Now that we've absolutely exhausted the topic of Purim, let's discuss - briefly - our next favorite topic : Pesach (ouch!). Just a few mentions -

1) Tavlin will be getting in their Pesach cake list from Schicks in the next week and the flyers can be picked up so you can peruse your favorite flavour of matzo meal and potato starch.

2). Kosher Emporium - after Purim, all the raw meats and poultry will be kosher l'pesach.. The take-out and cooked foods will be kosher l'pesach about 2 weeks before the holiday.

Garage Sale

Gail is back in action with a vengeance! Thank goodness - I was

all set to give my stuff away to the Salvation Army. On Sunday, April 18th, a garage sale will be held at the home of Gail and Richie Stamler. Clothing is fine, but the stuff that really sells are jewelry (real and costume), bric-a-brac, knick knacks, used videos or video games, and toys. Furniture is good but you have to bring it to Gail and Richie's the day of the garage sale.

Mazel Tov:

1) Mazel Tov to Susan and Avi Abikzer on the Bar-mitzvah of the bechor, David. Hearty congratulations to all the grandparents and great-grandparents and all other family members. Mazel Tov to sisters, Alana, Isabelle, and Jordanna. May you all have much simcha, health, happiness and joy until 120.

2) Mazel Tov to Lois and Aaron David on the bar-mitzvah of their son, Samuel. Many mazel tovs to siblings; Isaac, Rebecca, Rachel, Joseph, Hanna, Eva, Miryam, and Devorah. Much mazel and nachas to all grandparents and extended family - only the best wishes and health, happiness and nachas until 120.

Journal Dinner:

The preparations are falling into place and things are winding down so at this point we would like to wish mazel tov and congratulations to Lauren and Larry Korman on being these year's honorees. They are a wonderful couple whose support and dedication to the shul is extensive. They also just happen to be really good guys. So mazel tov to you and your three beautiful daughters, Shoshana, Jennifer, and Shira, and to Larry's parents, Alice and Benno Korman. Thanks for all your devotion

February Board Minutes update:

1) The Young Israel of North Bellmore has approved the open plot of land for the building of the mikveh. Now that things are organized, YIM will make a

pledge and eventually have a fundraising campaign.

- 2) Journal Dinner is progressing on schedule and we are on target for the budget.
- 3) Building - the plans have been file with the TOH. The whole process could take up to 2 years.. We've also opened up a line of communication with the neighbors
- 4) Scholar- in residence program - discussed setting up account if people want to donate towards it.
- 5) Discussed the need to help the Rabbi purchase his house.
- 6) The second 'm'sheberach' will continue to be said, even though people are not giving a donation because of it.

National Council of Young Israel - Women's League:

There will be 2 lunch-break learning programs for women taking place at the NCYI, 3 West 16th Street. A) "The Month of Adar and Purim" - presented by Rena Kanarek, Rebbetzin, Congregation Beth Tefilah (Paramus, NJ), Faculty Bruriah Jr H.S.; Yeshiva RSRH Bais Yaakov (Breuer's) H.S. on Thursday, February 25. B) "Haggadah - The Language of the Past and the Future" - presented by Dr. Rivkah Blau, author and lecturer. On Thursday, March 18.

Selected Laws and Customs for Purim:

Taanis Esther: 1) In the days of Mordechai and Esther, the Jews gathered on the 13th of Adar to defend themselves and to take vengeance upon their enemies. To accomplish this they had to seek G-d's compassion and help. Therefore they repented, fasted and prayed for Divine assistance on that day. In remembrance, all Israel has accepted that day as a fast day through the generations. This fast is called a Taanis Esther, the Fast of Esther, as a reminder that Hashem sees and hears the plight and prayer of every person in the time of his straits, if he fasts and returns to G-d wholeheartedly, as our ancestors did in those days. 2)

Nevertheless, this fast is less stringent than the four fasts mentioned in the Prophets (10th Teves, 17th Tammuz, 9th Av, 3rd Tishrei). Therefore it is proper to be lenient when necessary as in the case of pregnant women, nursing mothers, a woman within the first 30 days of childbirth, or a person whose eyes ache painfully. Such people should not fast. Nevertheless they should repay the fast by fasting at some later date. Additionally, a groom during his 7 days of Sheva Berachos need not fast. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 141:2) 3) Despite the leniencies mentioned above, all other healthy people should participate in this communal fast. Even travelers who find the fast difficult must nevertheless fast.

Machatzit Hashekel: It is customary for every man to donate machatzit Hashekel, a half shekel, before Purim as a remembrance of the half shekel head tax of Temple times (for the purchase of communal Temple offerings.) Since the shekel is not used universally as currency, we use a half coin of the established currency in the particular country and time that is given. Thus, in the U.S. today, half dollar coins are used. Custom calls for each man to donate three half shekels. The coins are customarily donated before Mincha on the day before Purim. A boy who has not reached his legal majority (i.e. his 13th birthday, according to some views, his 20th birthday) is exempt from machatzit hashekel; however, his father may donate for him if he wishes to, and this is the preferred custom. Moreover, once the father has done so, he must continue to donate for his minor son in subsequent years.

Megillah Reading: 1) Every man and woman is obligated to hear the Megillah reading at night and again by day. Therefore, even those single girls who do not usually attend synagogue services should go to the shul on Purim, or have the Megillah read for them at home. 2) Parents are obligated to bring even young children to shul to train them in the

mitzvah of hearing the Megillah reading. 3) The preferable place to hear the Megillah is in the synagogue, in accordance with the verse, "A multitude of people is the King's glory" (Proverbs 14:28) If this is not possible, at least a minyan of then adult men should be present. If even this is impossible, each individual should read the Megillah from a kosher scroll and recite the 3 blessings that precede it. But is only one of those present knows how to read it, he should read it and the others should listen to his reading with the intention to fulfill their obligation. The blessing recited after the Megillah reading is recited only in the presence of a minyan. 4) The reader of the Megillah must have in mind that his reading will fulfill the obligation of those who listen to it. Similarly, the listener must intend to fulfill his obligation. Moreover, the listener must hear every word, for even a one-word lapse invalidates his fulfillment, and he must hear the Megillah reading again, from the missed word on. Therefore, the reader should be careful not to begin reading after Haman's name until the tumult has stopped completely; otherwise, some congregants may miss a word. 5) During the public reading, 4 verses are recited aloud by the congregation and repeated by the reader. They are "Ish Yehudi" (2:5), "Umordechai yatza" (8:15), "LaYehudim Haisa" (8:16), and "Ki Mordechai" (10:3). Among the reasons for this custom are broadcasting the miracle; since these verses are all seminal passages in the Purim story, reciting them aloud serves to underscore and announce the miracles that took place; and (b) just as various customs have arisen at the Pesach Seder to keep the children alert and attentive; (c) the verses are read aloud as an additional expression of the joy of the day.

Shacharis: As at the nighttime reading the reader recites three blessings before reading the Megillah. The Shecheyanu blessing of the daytime reading also applies to the other mitzvos of the day - matanos

la'evyonim, shalach manos and the festive meal. Therefore, both the reader and the listeners should have three mitzvos in mind when the blessing is recited. All other laws of the nighttime reading apply to the daytime reading.

Mishloach Manos: 1) In recording the mitzvah of mishloach manos (also called shalach manos) the Megillah states "and for sending food portions each man to his friend" (9:22). The plural 'manot' - food portions- implies at least two portions, while the singular 'rai'aihu' - his friend, implies one recipient. Thus the minimum fulfillment of mishloach manos requires the presentation of two foods to one person.

Nevertheless, it is praiseworthy not to stint, but to increase both the size of the gift and the number of gifts sent. (Rambam, Hilchos Megillah 2:15). Moreover, manot indicates ready to eat food and drink.

Therefore it is proper to send cooked meats or fish, baked goods, wine and other beverages, fruit or vegetables (even raw, if that is how they are usually eaten e.g. apples or cucumbers), desserts, candies, etc. However, food that must be prepared by the recipient (such as raw potatoes, unbaked dough or coffee powder) cannot be used to fulfill the obligation. 2) Both men and women are obligated in mishloach manos. Some women rely upon their husband's shalach manos to fulfill their obligation and vice versa, but this is not proper. Rather, each spouse should send portions to at least one friend. Moreover, it is improper for a man to exchange gifts with a woman. Therefore, a man should send to a man, and a woman should send to a woman.

Matanos la'evyonim: Purim's special charity obligation is called 'matanos la'evyonim' - gifts to poor people (Esther 9:22) The plural matanos - gifts implies at least two gifts (usually money) while the plural 'evyonim' - poor people, implies at least two recipients. Therefore the gifts must

be give to two paupers, i.e. a separate gift to each.

Seudah: 1) Everyone is obligated to eat, drink, and be joyous on Purim day. Although the main mitzvah is during the day, it is proper to celebrate to some degree on the preceding night also. However, the nighttime festivities do not replace or fulfill the daytime obligations, for the Megillah (9:22) states 'yimei mishteh' - fast days. 2) The mitzvos of mishloach manos, matanos la'evyonim, and seudas Purim are all daytime obligations. Moreover, since the shecheyanu blessing at the Megillah reading also applies to these mitzvos, it is preferable that they be performed after the reading. 3) Mincha should be recited early in the afternoon to allow enough time for the majority of the Purim meal to be eaten while it is yet day. It is also proper that the meal extend a bit into the night.

"Purim - It's Observance and Significance" - Artscroll Mesorah Series

This Month's Web Sites:

Renée's selection:

<http://www.idf.il> You can log on to the Israel Defense Forces website and get all sorts of information about the Israeli army.

<http://www.hersheys.com> Ok, it's not particularly Jewish, but they have a cookbook that is divided into two parts - pasta and chocolate. I haven't really checked out the pasta side but I can tell you that I've printed almost all the brownie recipes, most of the cake recipes, and I haven't even touched (yet), the cookie, dessert, drinks etc. Sections.

Jeff Maynard's selection:

<http://www.123greetings.com/events/purim> Happy Purim! To Life! Mazel Tov! Mishloach Manot! This is where you send your virtual greetings and even Virtual Mishloach Manot..

<http://www.wzo.org.il/encountr/hst1.htm> This month in Jewish History: February. Here is really informative and interesting information – from the World Zionist Organization!
<http://www.kashrut.com> A really useful Kosher Information Source, bang up-to-date. Consumer Kashrus Alerts, Product Updates etc.
<http://www.lihistory.com/spectown/hist001w.htm> The history of Merrick from 1643. Merrick was a haven for buccaneers who preyed upon merchants during the war of 1812.

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