

This year, as an עיבור year, we have two Purims פורים קטן - פורים גדול פורים. And we're lucky in that respect. Here's a small הערה, which I had the זכות to hear from R' Aryeh Strickhoff, the author of the well-known book Inside Purim, regarding קטן פורים, and I thought it would be worthwhile to share it with you. פורים, as we know, is a זמן that is very מסוגל for תפילה. Just as אסתר's תפילה was מקובל, so too, throughout all the דורות, תפילות פורים and תענית אסתר have been especially potent. תענית אסתר is particularly מסוגל for תפילה, even though it's not actually the day she fasted - the fast originally took place on פסח - but it is still a special time for תפילות. So what does that wily הרע עיקר do? He keeps us running around on פורים with משלוח מנות. We're busy giving a פעקלעך, getting a פעקלעך, kids getting tips - where is the תפילה? His מקור was the famous משנה in בין אדר ראשון לאדר שני. מגילה, אין בין אדר ראשון לאדר שני, אין בין אדר ראשון לאדר שני. The first בין אדר ראשון לאדר שני that we have is שני, אין בין אדר ראשון לאדר שני. It happens to leave out משלוח מנות, and the מפרשים talk about that, but his הערה was that משלוח מנות, in a very real sense, takes away from some of the עיקר of the טוב. The עיקר is השם, as is everything that we do. Of course, when we do משלוח מנות, we are מקיים the מצוה, and we should not feel bad about it. However, my own personal suggestion (not his) is to keep a תהילים in the car. As the kids run from house to house, say a תהילים between each stop - not only for ישראל, but for us too. Now back to his point: why did Hashem, for our זכות, give us a פורים קטן this year and in all עיבור שנים? Because on פורים קטן, we are not busy running around with משלוח מנות. However, the תפילות סגולה being מקובל remains just as strong. That means we have an extra opportunity, an extra chance, and an extra זכות to have our תפילות answered. So let's do that on this פורים קטן. Let's daven our hearts out. Let's daven for ישראל, כלל, let's daven for ישראל, ארץ, let's daven for us, let's daven for all ישראל, all around the world. Because this פורים קטן there's no משלוח מנות, that's for sure. But we can daven, and we can daven very well. So that's from R' Aryeh Strickhoff, I want to give credit where credit is due, (אבות ו:ו). האומר דבר בשם אומרו מביא גאולה לעולם (אבות ו:ו). So I wanted to share that with you.

It is brought down in the **ספר כנפי השכינה** that the letters of the word **פורים** contain all of the **ימים טובים**, showing that they are all connected to **פורים**. And it's interesting how he says it. **פ** is **פסח**, **ו** is **וִסּוּכּוֹת**, **ר** is **ראש השנה**, **י** is **יום כיפור**, **מ** is **מתן תורה** for **שבועות**. So what's fascinating here is that the **ו**, which stands for **וִסּוּכּוֹת**, could also mean "and". What does that "and" represent? It means that both **פורים** and **פורים גדול** are to be considered **ימים טובים**.

So that's one very cute little vort. But there's another one, which I thought was adorable, and I thought that I would share that with you. The rav of Apter, R' Avraham Yehoshua Heshel, got together and made a סעודה for all of his תלמידים and his חסידים on פורים קטן. And he was sitting there, according to this ספר, [which by the way is אגרת פורים, which I looked for high and low and I found. I purchased this many years ago. It's a little golden ספר on פורים, which I've quoted to many people in the family on every פורים.] Among the people sitting at his סעודה קטן פורים was a Chassidish Rebbe named R' Lieb M'Lichev. He was a very sharp and well-seasoned תלמיד חכם. During the סעודה, the Apter Rav turned to R' Leib and said, "Leib, let's hear something from you! Enlighten us with your words." R' Leib smiled and responded, "The מנהג of the world is that when a woman is pregnant, she gives birth to a ילד קטן - a תינוק. A שנה מעוברת gives birth to a בהמה קטנה. But if you have a שנה מעוברת, what kind of קטן does a שנה מעוברת bring forth?" Nobody had an answer. He laughed and said, "It's פשוט! A שנה מעוברת brings out a פורים!" So I thought that was adorable, and it really puts us into the proper frame of mind to get ready for the פורים גדול. We should be בשמחה.

After גזירה s ה'מן heard about פסוק, he put on שק ואפר as a sign of אבלות over the terrible decree. The פסוק tells us that אסתר sent him clothing so that he would remove his sackcloth, but he refused - he did not want to accept the clothing she sent. The תפארת שלמה asks: did מרדכי not have any clothing? Of course, he did! He had put on the שק ואפר as a statement about the dire situation. So why did אסתר send him clothing? Was he lacking shirts?



אסתר was suggesting there was a better way to daven, a means of תפילה that would be much more effective. While the situation called for שק ואפר, she was saying, “Your תפילות need to be offered in the spirit of שמחה!” In sending the clothing, אסתר was telling מרדכי that he had to daven with confidence and joy, that’s the way to tear up the evil decree. What did מרדכי say? מרדכי’s response was, “No! I am צעבראכן, and my תפילות have to reflect that.” Who was right? Later in the מגילה, אחשורוש commands המן to dress מרדכי in the royal clothing and parade him through the street on the king’s horse. Right after that, מרדכי’s תפילות were accepted. In שמים, they paskened like אסתר. When מרדכי’s תפילות came from a place of שמחה, triumph, and excitement, he was answered. The גמרא מגילה relates that when אחשורוש dispatched המן to go and bring מרדכי and lead him through the streets on the horse, he found מרדכי davening. The גמרא clearly says המן waited for him to finish. This is astounding! The בן יהוידע asks, “Why would a רשע wait for a צדיק to מתפלל?” R’ Elimelech Biderman, who was saying over this דבר תורה, emphasizes each word to make his point as persuasively as possible: It’s because he saw that מרדכי was צעבראכן, filled with anguish and pain. He didn’t want to interrupt that with good news, because that would elevate the whole תפילה, and would enable מרדכי to finish מתפלל in a state of שמחה. המן knew that! A תפילה filled with שמחה is different than a תפילה of צער. Have a very happy קטן פורים!

