

Sparks

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Unmasking Nature: G-d's Love is Here and Now

According to Jewish Tradition, as soon as the Hebrew month of *Adar* begins we must increase our joy because the miracle of the Purim Story happened on that month. Purim celebrates the salvation of the Jews in the year 357 BCE from the wicked Haman's scheme to exterminate all the Jewish men, women and children living in the Persian Empire, which meant all the Jews in the world at that time. In the Purim story, however, there were no miraculous divine interventions. There were no supernatural plagues and no splitting of any seas. In fact, G-d's name is not even mentioned once in the entire Purim story recorded in the Book of Esther (*Megillat Esther*).

Although the holiday of Purim is celebrated only on the 14th of the month of *Adar*, and in some places on the 15th, the whole month is identified with greater joy. Purim is so abundant with joy that its celebration overflows into the entire month, from beginning to end.

Commentators long ago questioned why this is not so with the month of *Nissan*, in which the outright miracles of Passover occurred. After all, it was in Nissan that G-d performed supernatural feats to save the Jews from 210 years of slavery and cruel oppression of Egypt. On Passover we celebrate the miracles of the ten plagues, the beyond time exodus of the Jews from Egypt and the splitting of the sea.

Jewish tradition, however, teaches that the miracle of Purim is actually greater than the miracles of Passover because the ultimate revelation of G-d's power and ever-presence is when He does not have to interfere. This is the meaning of the *Megillat Esther* -- the revelation of hidden-ness. Hidden within the natural world is G-d's presence. Within the free choice of people, G-d's will and plan are being completely fulfilled, step-by-step.

When G-d is depicted in conflict with the wicked, in battle against evil, this is not the ultimate manifestation of His absolute oneness and almighty ruling power. The greatest manifestation of G-d's truth is when we understand that G-d does not have to fight the villain. Rather no matter what choices the villain makes, he completely plays into and fulfills G-d's plan.

Therefore, even though Passover makes us happy it also makes us a little sad because it is not the greatest revelation of G-d's all-embracing oneness, omnipresence and love. The open miracles of Passover attest to G-d's love and power to intervene on behalf of His beloved children, pass over judgment, overrule the laws of nature and overcome natural limitations and obstacles. But open miracles are not ideal.

The Hebrew word for miracle is *ness*, which is associated with the Hebrew word *onnes*, meaning to coerce or rape. When G-d performs an outright miracle it means that He forces, oppresses, violates and rapes nature to act against its natural way.

The events of Purim are a higher revelation of G-d's truth, illustrating how G-d works through humanity and within nature. In other words, that which occurs naturally is actually a greater revelation of G-d's power and omnipresence than miracles. Through nature we see harmony and cooperation. Rather than crushing all the forces that are against us, G-d uses them toward our future good. Because G-d's oneness embraces and fills all, there is no confrontation between G-d and man, the divine and nature. Nature and humanity are not violated by G-d's power and omnipresence but encompassed within it and filled with it.

On Purim, we celebrate the greatest revelation of G-d's truth and love. The hidden miracles of Purim reveal that His ruling power works through the choices of man and that His love for us is hidden within every occurrence and challenge of our lives. Therefore, we can trust that G-d's love and care is concealed even in the worst times of our lives. On Purim we acknowledge G-d's love for us is not only unconditional but also ever-present and forever. On Purim we celebrate trust.

One of the greatest feelings of joy is to know and experience life in holy harmony with G-d. Because of G-d's omnipresence and love, we can never go off course. We are always on target. Our task, however, is to know and feel this in our daily lives.

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