

# Shvilei Pinches

## Tavlin L'Shabbos Purim

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### The Chasam Sofer's Incredible Revelation

#### Every Motzaei Shabbos at Havdalah We Invoke The Purim Miracle Facilitated by Mordechai and Esther

It is a widespread Jewish custom to recite several pesukim during Havdalah. One of these pesukim is found in the Megillah (Esther 8,16): **“ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר”**—**The Jews had light and happiness and joy and honor**. Let us explain the connection between Havdalah and the miracle of Purim responsible for this institution.

Concerning this matter, we find an amazing insight in the brilliant writings of the Chasam Sofer—in Toras Moshe (Megillas Esther) and in Derashos Chasam Sofer (Purim, p.205, column 4). He teaches us that the Rabbinical institution to recite a berachah over the scent of the spices at Havdalah is connected with Mordechai and Esther—who are compared to spices. Here are his magnificent words:

“ביום השביעי כטוב לב המלך ביין. כתיב (ישעיה נה יג) תחת הסרפד יעלה הדס וגוי, (וסמיך ליה שם נו ב) שומר שבת מחללו. כתב בית יוסף (או"ח סימן רצו ד"ה ומ"ש רבינו) במוצאי שבת מברכים על ההדס, מדכתיב תחת הסרפד יעלה הדס, וסמיך ליה שומר שבת מחללו. נראה לי דדרשו חז"ל פרק קמא דמגילה (דף י:), תחת הנעצוץ, זה המן, יעלה ברוש, זה מרדכי ראש לכל הבשמים, ותחת הסרפד זה ושתי, יעלה הדס, זה אסתר.

והנה ושתי נהרגה בשבת על שעשתה מלאכה עם בנות ישראל בשבת, כדרשו (שם יב:): על פסוק (אסתר ב א) אשר עשתה ואת אשר נגזר עליה, כשם שעשתה כך נגזר עליה, מלמד שהיתה מביאה בנות ישראל ומפשיטן ערומות ועושה עמהן מלאכה בשבת, ויום השביעי כטוב לב המלך ביין שבת היה כדאיתא שם, על כן עתה שזכינו להיות שומר שבת מחללו, נברך על הבשמים, זכר למרדכי ראש הבשמים, ואיזה בושם, הדס, זכר לאסתר שהמליכה תחת ושתי, תחת הסרפד, זה ושתי, יעלה הדס, זה אסתר.”

The possuk (Yeshayah 55,13) reads: **in place of the nettle a myrtle will rise**. Several pesukim later (ibid. 56,2) it states: **שומר שבת מחללו—he who guards the Shabbos against desecration**. The Beis Yosef writes that due to the association and proximity of these pesukim, (O.C. 297) we recite a berachah over the myrtle at the conclusion of the Shabbos. This institution appears to be based on an elucidation of our sages in the first chapter of Megillah (10:): **תחת הנעצוץ, זה המן, יעלה ברוש, זה מרדכי ראש לכל הבשמים, ותחת הסרפד זה ושתי, יעלה הדס, זה אסתר**—**instead of the thorn, this refers to Haman; a cypress shall rise, this refers to Mordechai who was called the finest of all spices; instead of the nettle, this is a reference to Vashti; a myrtle shall rise, this refers to Esther who was called Hadassah**.

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Vashti was put to death on Shabbos for having made Jewish girls strip naked and work on Shabbos—her punishment corresponded to her misdeeds. Now that we are privileged to safeguard and protect the Shabbos from desecration, we recite a blessing over the spices in honor of Mordechai and Esther.

### A Torch of Two Candles

#### Corresponding to Mordechai and Esther

Let us add a spice of our own for the conclusion of Shabbos. Reciting the berachah over the candle is also related to Purim and our two righteous heroes. The Gemorah states (Pesachim 103.): **“אבוקה—להברלה מצוה מן המבחר”**—it is preferable to perform the mitzvah of Havdalah with a torch. The Rama (O.C. 298,1) clarifies: **“ונר שיש לו שתי פתילות מיקרי אבוקה”**—a candle with two wicks is referred to as a torch. It is written in Tehillim (18,29): **“כי אתה תאיר נרי ה' אלקי יגיה חשבי”**—**For it is You Who will light my lamp, Hashem, my G-d, illuminates my darkness.** The Midrash Shochar Tov expounds the possuk as follows: **“כי אתה תאיר נרי במרדכי, ה' אלקי יגיה חשבי באסתר”**—**“For it is You Who will light my lamp”** alludes to Mordechai and **“Hashem, my G-d, illuminates my darkness”** alludes to Esther.

In Derashos Chasam Sofer (148:), he explains that the exile of Media was called “darkness.” The Midrash (B.R. 44,20) elucidates the possuk in Bereishis (15,12) as follows: **“והנה אימה חשיכה גדולה נופלת עליו, אימה זה בבל, חשיכה זו מדי”**. The four exiles are alluded to in this possuk; the term **חשיכה**, meaning darkness, is associated with Media. Accordingly, the Chasam Sofer compares Mordechai and Esther to two candles that illuminated the way for Yisroel through the darkness of the Median exile.

For this reason, it was established that we recite the blessings of Havdalah over a candle which has at least two wicks—corresponding to Mordechai and Esther. This fits in beautifully with the custom to raise the Havdalah candle while reciting the possuk: **“ליהודים היתה אורה”**-- **the Jews had light**, because both the candle with two wicks and the possuk are related—they are both connected with the miracle of Purim.

So, we find three elements of the Havdalah service that are related to the miracle of Purim: (1) the fact that we recite the possuk from the Megillah: **“ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר”**, (2) the blessing recited over spices and myrtles (hadassim) in honor of Mordechai, the finest of all spices, and Esther, who was also called Hadassah and (3) the blessing recited over the torch, the candle with two wicks, also corresponding to Mordechai and Esther. Thus, we have fulfilled the criteria of (Kohelet 4,12): **“והחוט המשולש לא במהרה ינתק”**—**A three-ply cord is not easily severed.**

### **“If Someone Wishes His Properties to Last He Should Plant in Them an Eder Tree”**

Let us propose a praiseworthy rationale for the institution to recall the Purim miracle at the conclusion of every Shabbos while performing Havdalah. As we discussed at length in this week’s essay, on every Shabbos we receive two crowns back from Moshe Rabeinu corresponding to “naaseh v’nishma.” Similarly, on Purim thanks to Mordechai—a spark from Moshe’s neshamah—and Esther, we are privileged to receive two crowns, also corresponding to “naaseh v’nishma.” It was for this reason that

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HKB"H, the King of Kings, placed a royal crown--"כתר מלכות"—upon Esther's head and a large gold crown--"ועטרת זהב גדולה"—upon Mordechai's head.

As is the case on every motzaei Shabbos, we wish to draw as much of the sanctity of the Shabbos as possible into the upcoming week. This includes extending the illumination from the two crowns of "naaseh v'nishma" to the rest of the week. We do so by reciting a berachah over a candle with two wicks—representing the magnificent radiance of the two crowns—and by smelling the spices instituted in memory of Mordechai and Esther—who returned the two crowns to Yisroel.

Furthermore, we have learned in the Gemarah (Beitzah 15:): "הרוצה שיתקיימו נכסיו יטע בהן אדר"—if someone wishes his properties to last, he should plant in them an "eder" tree." Note that the name of this valuable tree is spelled the same as the name of the month Adar—during which the miracle of Purim occurred. The Bnei Yissoscher (Adar 1,9) explains that this statement in the Gemarah is addressing the risks and spiritual hazards associated with the accumulation of wealth. This warning is stated explicitly in the Torah in Devarim (8,11-18). One is likely to become haughty, to take complete credit for any financial success and to forget the true source of all wealth, Hashem.

Now, it is well-known that the miracles of Pesach and the miracles of Purim are very different from one another. The miracles of Pesach involved supernatural feats, such as water turning into blood and the sea splitting and turning into dry land. The miracles associated with Purim, on the other hand, were concealed within the confines of nature. This was meant to teach us a powerful lesson—that even when life and the world appear to be following a normal, natural course of events, everything is, in reality, being directed and supervised by HKB"H; nothing happens by coincidence.

This is the message conveyed by the Gemoreh: "הרוצה שיתקיימו נכסיו יטע בהן אדר"—if someone wishes his properties to last, he should plant in them an "eder" tree." In other words, we should plant and instill in our homes, in our families, in our work, in all facets of our lives, the faith that we learn from the events of the month of Adar. We must always be aware that everything, even the laws of nature, are controlled and supervised by HKB"H. If we do so, our possessions will endure and we remain immune to the traps and temptations of the evil inclination tempting us to believe: **"כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה—my strength and the might of my hand made all this wealth.**

The rationale for invoking the miracle of Purim during Havdalah, at the conclusion of the Shabbos, is now quite clear. Havdalah is the demarcation between Shabbos—a holy day on which work is prohibited and on which we distance ourselves from financial concerns—and the six days of the work week. As we return to our mundane schedules and the financial concerns that occupy us during the week, there exists the danger of falling into the mindset of "כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה"—**my strength and the might of my hand made all this wealth.** With this in mind, our sages instituted a service that invokes the miracle of Purim which demonstrated to us all that HKB"H controls and directs the forces of nature. This awareness of the lessons of Adar insures that our possessions will endure.