

Dvar Torah for The Fast of Esther

written by breslov.org

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Based on Ohr Chadash* of Maharal of Prague and Likutey Halakhot, Tefillin 6:30

[Queen Esther said to Mordekhai the Jew,] “Go gather all the Jews found in Shushan and fast for me. Don’t eat or drink for three days, by day or night...” (Esther 4:16)

Queen Esther told Mordekhai—the Jew—that in praying to avert and rescind the decree of annihilation, it is necessary for the Jews to pray together. Staying at home to pray as individuals won’t be enough.

Maharal points out that this is also the opinion of Tosfot (Megilah 2a).

Jews joining together for the purpose of prayer redeems us and, as it were, the Shekhinah from exile (Berakhot 8a). (The Shekhinah herself is never in exile, but considered to be so because she never leaves our side.) Our praying together when we have gathered for the purpose of praying to God, is an in-gathering from the Exile.

The gathering together to fast was (and is) meant to be an un-doing, as well. Shortly before Esther became queen, many Jews had gathered to eat and drink at Achahveirosh’s ball (Esther 1:1–8). Since their enjoyment of that event was one of the causes for the decree (Megilah 12a), negating the decree called for un-doing their sin.

But un-doing a sin means more than just not doing it, or doing the opposite of what you did. It means feeling ashamed of having lost (control of) your self to such a degree that you acted so un-Jewishly and of being ashamed that you had no

shame. Ideally, Rebbe Nachman teaches, one should feel so ashamed that he's too embarrassed and unworthy to eat.

Then, writes Reb Noson, God wipes away all your wrong-doing and shame, and invites you to eat, drink and be merry at the Purim seudah (meal).

However foolish or silly you may be then, He accepts it in love.

Have an easy, meaningful fast.

*The Maharal's commentary on the Book of Esther.

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