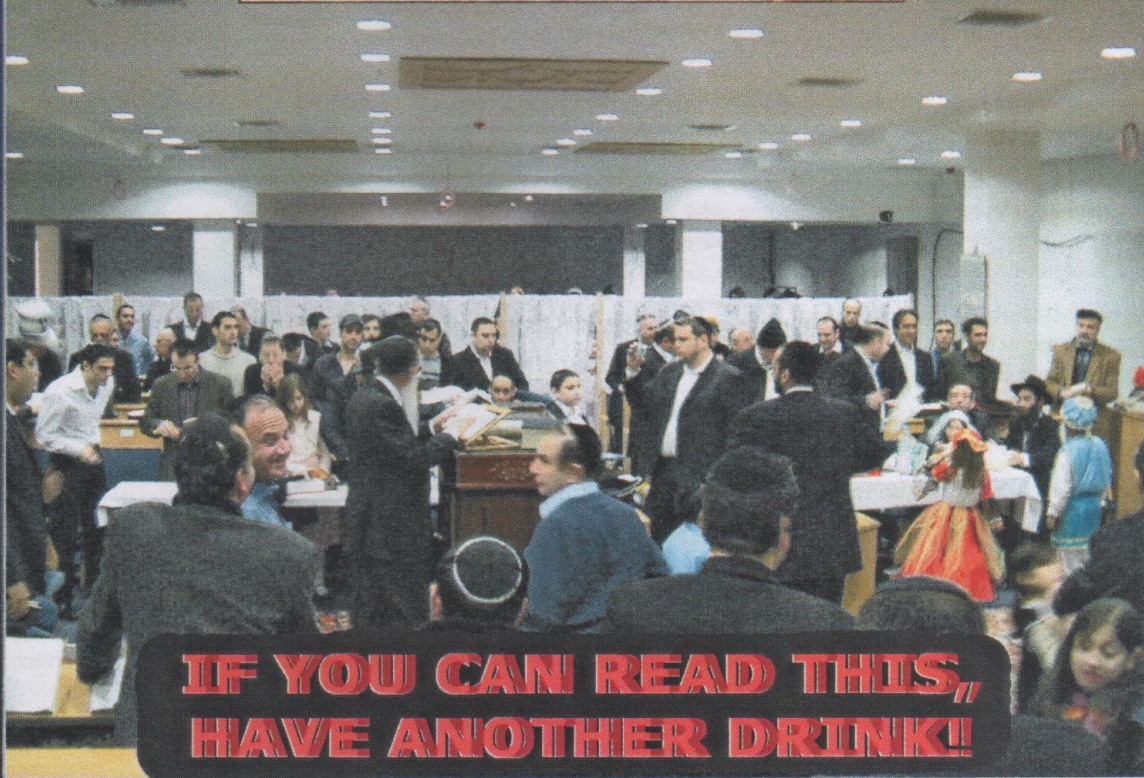


Issue 3

The OAH Review

OD
AVINU
5768 HAI

Purim Edition



**IF YOU CAN READ THIS,
HAVE ANOTHER DRINK!!**

LAWS CONCERNING PURIM TO OUR CUSTOM

1) The Shabbat before Purim is called Shabbat Zachor - all men are obliged to hear the Perasha about Amalek which is read for Maftir, as it says in the Torah, "**Remember what Amalek did to you**".

Even though women are not obliged to hear this being read in the Synagogue, they will be rewarded if they do so.

2) Both men and women are obliged to hear the reading of the Megilla at night and again during the day. It is a mistake to think that it is enough to hear the one reading at night. Children must also be trained in the Mitzvah. But very young children should not be brought to the synagogue lest they disrupt the services.

3) One should not eat a meal before the reading of the Megilla even though he has fasted all day, but he may eat some fruit or cakes if necessary after nightfall.

4) The person who reads the Megilla for women after he himself has already heard it, does not make a Beracha on their behalf and nor do the women themselves. However, if he or another man has not heard the reading of the Megilla, then the Beracha before and after the reading should be said even if there is no minyan, according to the Ben Ish Hai.

5) The Megilla is unrolled completely and folded like a letter before it is read. This practice only applies to the reader and not the congregation

6) The one who reads the Megilla must have in mind to exempt all those who listen and the listeners should intend to fulfill their obligation. They must pay complete attention and must not miss out one word. If one of the congregation doses off during the reading of the Megilla, he has to hear it again from where he missed.

7) The congregants do not need to stand while the Megilla is read but it is customary to stand up while hearing the Beracha before and after the reading.

8) We only need to make the Beracha Shehehayanu on the Megilla at night and we have in mind to include all the Mitzvot of the following day, i.e. the 2nd reading of the Megilla, the Matanot Le Evyonim the Shelach Manot and the Seuda. But if for some reason the Beracha Shehehayanu was not said at night, it can be said for the reading of the morning.

9) At the end of the reading of the Megilla, we all say Arur Haman, Baruch Mordechai, Arura Zeresh, Berucha Esther, Arurim Kol Hareshaim, Beruchim Kol Yisrael, Ve Gam Harbona Zachor Letov as it is written in the Siddur.

10) Both men and women are obliged in the Mitzvah of Shelach Manot, i.e. to send no less than two kinds of food which can be eaten without further preparation to one person (two kinds should be in separate containers). Shelach Manot must be sent to an adult but Matanot Laevyonim may be given to a katan.

11) Matanot Laevyonim must also be given by both men and women. The obligation is to give at least 60p each to two poor people this must be distributed on the same day. The Yeshiva will facilitate this and plates will be placed on the Teva for this purpose.

12) It is a Mitzvah to make a special Seuda on Purim and to drink wine on the day. One does not fulfill this mitzva if done at night. One should dress with Shabbat clothing or other fine clothes on Purim. This year Purim falls on a Friday and we should therefore engage in the Purim Seudah early in the day.

13) Al Hanissim is recited in the Prayers and in Berchat Hamazon on Purim but not on Shushan Purim, the following day. On both days, however, we omit the Anah Tachanunim.

14) A mourner should not be sent Shelach Manot (gifts) for Purim, but he is obliged to send Shelach Manot to one person and to give Matanot to the poor.

Mahasit Hashekel

This offering is given for Sedaka before or on Taanit Esther as a remembrance of the Shekalim which were donated to pay for the offerings in the Temple. The correct amount comes to approximately £3.50 to cover the value of a half Shekal for each person.

Purim

PURIM CHEEZUK

The story of the *Megilla* remains as relevant to the modern world, as it did during the days when it first transpired. We live in a world of *Hester*, darkness, and the hand of Gd is not revealed in open miracles. The world today tries to explain creation and the wonders of life in technological terms and scientific jargon, so that man can do as he pleases without the need for answering to a creator. The *Megilla* teaches us to see through the darkness and to uncover the guiding hand behind it all. A number of unrelated events seem to take place and, ultimately, everything comes together, taking our people from a place of despair and certain annihilation to one of salvation and glory. The hand of Gd is revealed as connecting these events, where so many things could have gone awry. If not for the intervention of Gd, Haman may have carried out his evil intentions.

In the first key event, the king throws a great party for all his citizens, even the Jews, who disobey the warnings of Mordechai by attending. They indulge in food and drink and observe the king showing off his power by desecrating clothes of the Cohen Gadol and by using the vessels of the temple for the mundane. This event represented a great blow to the expectations for the rebuilding of the Temple, as promised to them at the end of the seventy years of exile. As well, witnessing the desecration only served to weaken their faith. The king, in his drunken state, commands the queen to come before him wearing only her crown, representing the

second event. She refuses and, consequently, insults him. He then becomes angry, and his advisors, including Haman, goad him into removing her from power. Against all odds, Esther is chosen to take her place. According to our Rabbis, as indicated in the text, she is not so young. Also, she is married and has a very pale complexion. Yet, the king chooses her instead of all the young beauties of the world.

In the third event, Mordechai discovers a plot to kill the king by two of the king's bodyguards. He tells Esther, who warns the king, and the culprits are, subsequently hanged. This story is documented in the chronicles of the king, another unconnected event that appears to bear no significance at this time. Mordechai is forgotten, but rewarded for uncovering the plot to the king.

In the next event, Haman, the sworn enemy of the Jews, is elevated to power. He succeeds in getting the king to agree to a decree to annihilate the Jews one day in the future. He covers his plot in secrecy so the Jews would remain unaware, but somehow Mordechai finds out and galvanises the Jews to pray, to fast, and to do Tshuva. He convinces Esther to appeal to the king, in order to save the Jews. She is afraid, as she has fallen out of favour with the king lately and realise her life would be at risk for approaching him without a proper summons from the king. Despite her trepidation, she goes and finds favour in his eyes and even invites him to a party.

In the fifth event, Haman is angry at Mordechai for not bowing down and prepares the gallows for hanging him and seeks to ask the king the next morning for permission to hang Mordechai. That night, the king cannot sleep and has his chronicles read to him. He discovers Mordechai has not been rewarded for saving his life, and decides to reward him. That same morning, Haman approaches him and asks permission to hang Mordechai. The king, in turn, springs the question of rewarding Mordechai to Haman who must now honour Mordechai publicly, instead of having him killed. What timing! When Esther reveals her identity as a Jewess and asks for her life, Haman falls and trips over a couch, sealing his fate. Had anyone of these events gone wrong, salvation would never have been able to take place. Indeed, G-d has put them all together to ensure salvation. If we choose to seek the hand of G-d in our lives, we can see how He brings many parts of our lives together to provide us with happiness and joy.

DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID

Welcome Note

Dear Readers,

With much gratitude to Hashem, Od Avinu Hai is once again proud to present the community with the next issue of our magazine the wonderful Purim edition! May this publication add to your celebration throughout this period of simcha.

Developments and achievements:

Baruch Hashem we can once again report that much has changed for the better since our last issue. In the Hanukkah edition, we wrote that work had commenced on a brand new and much needed office for our youth work. It is now our pleasure to announce that the aforementioned work has been completed, and we are in the process of moving in to our new abode.

The OAH winter program is now in full swing - our participation in Avot U'Banim is much appreciated by the children for whom our Motzei Shabbat club has become a weekly highlight!

The seedling that was our Shabbat Musuf Service has blossomed beyond expectation, and attendees are now being treated to a lavish Kiddush after the service.

A series of shiurim, activities, and trips is also in the pipeline. Bezrat Hashem - Operation Kosher Living will be launched in late March.

OAH hopes that you will enjoy reading the magazine as much as we enjoyed making it. We would also like to sincerely thank everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to write articles.

Od Avinu Hai wishes all our readers a Purim sameyach and may our events and programs help to bring the *Moshiach* soon, Amen!

The Od Avinu Hai Team

We would also like to thank the many people who have assisted in bringing this issue to print. May Hashem bless each and everyone of the producers, advertisers, financial supporters. Amen

Yosef David (Article Co-ordinator),
John Richey (Advert Manager)

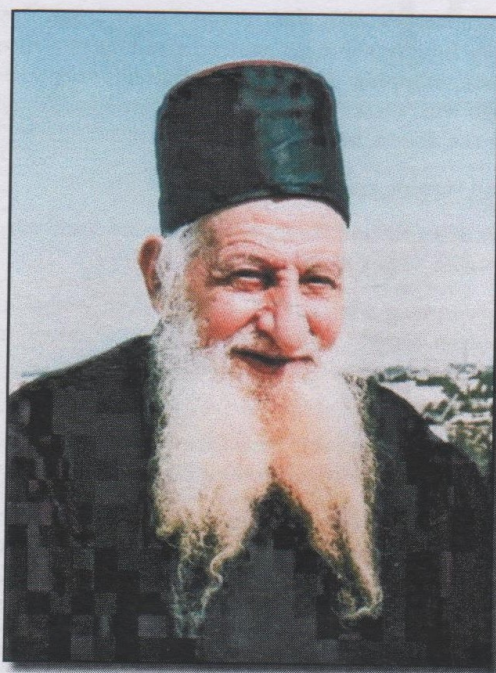
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RAV YITZCHAK KADOURI



Rav Yitzchak Kadouri was born in Baghdad, Iraq, circa 1890 on Shabbat, Chol Hamoed Succot. His father, Rav Katchouri ben Aziza Diba, was a spice trader as well as a prestigious rabbi in Baghdad. As a child, Rav Kadouri excelled in his studies and began learning Kabbalah while still in his teens, a study which would engulf his entire life. During these years, he became chief student of the Ben Ish Hai and studied at the Zilka Yeshiva in Baghdad.

Rav Kadouri moved to the British Mandate of Palestine in 1923 upon the advice of the elders of Baghdad, who hoped that his scholarship and piety would stop the incursion of Zionism in the post-World War I state. It was here that he changed his name from Diba to Kadouri. During the early years of the Mandate, Rav Kadouri was drafted into the British army and worked as a translator. Upon leaving the British army, he went to study in Jerusalem at the Shoshanim David Yeshiva for kabbalists. There he learned from the leading kabbalists of the time, including Rav Yehuda Ftaya, author of Beit Lechem Yehudah, and Rav Chaim Ya'akov Sofer, author of Kaf Hachaim. After completing many successful years in Shoshanim David, Rav Kadouri went to learn in the Porat Yosef Yeshiva in Jerusalem's Old City and immersed himself in Gemara, Halacha, and Kabbalah with the help of the Roshei Yeshiva, Rav Ezra Attia and Rav Saliman Eliyahu.

In 1934, Rav Kadouri and his family moved to the Old City, where the Porat Yosef Yeshiva gave him a flat nearby with a job of binding the yeshiva's books and copying over rare manuscripts in the yeshiva's library. The books remained in the yeshiva's library, while the copies of manuscripts were stored in Rav Kadouri's personal library. Before binding each book, he would study it intently, committing it to memory. He was reputed to have a photographic memory and also mastered the Talmud by heart, including Rashi and Tosafot. During the period of Arab-Israeli friction that led up to the 1948 war, the Porat Yosef Yeshiva was virtually turned into a fortress against frequent flashes of violence. When the Jewish quarter of the Old City fell to the invading Jordanian Army during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Jordanians set fire to the yeshiva and all surrounding houses, destroying all the books and manuscripts that Rav Kadouri could not smuggle out. After this event, Rav Kadouri went on to study at the Kabbalists' Beit El Yeshiva in Jerusalem. He was reputed to know all the writings of Ari'zal by heart. After the passing of the leading kabbalist, Rav Efraim Hakohen, in 1989, the remaining kabbalists appointed Rav Kadouri as Rosh Yeshiva.

Rav Kadouri lived a life of poverty and simplicity. He ate little, spoke little, and prayed each month at the grave sites of tzaddikim in Israel. His first wife, Rabbanit Sarah, died in 1989. In keeping with the Jewish tradition that says that a man, even in advanced old age, should not be single, he remarried in 1993 to Rabbanit Drorit, a baalat teshuva who was just over half his age.

In January 2006, Rav Kadouri was hospitalised with pneumonia in the Bikur Holim hospital in Jerusalem. He died on January 28, 2006. He was alert and lucid until his last day. An estimated 300,000 people took part in his funeral procession on January 29, which started from the Nachalat Yitzchak Yeshiva and wound its way through the streets of Jerusalem to the Givat Shaul cemetery near the entrance to the city of Jerusalem.

Rav Kadouri was one of the many gedolim who dedicated his life to the service of Hashem. Every action he did was weighed and measured on its level of Avodat Hashem and Chesed. Through this discipline, Rav Kadouri was able to attain his status a true gadol in Torah. Only through discipline and effort will we be able to attain a true understanding of the Torah.

DARREN EZEIKIEL

PURIM IN IRAQ MEANT A PARADISE OF PARTIES AND PASTRIES

For Jewish children growing up in Iraq, Chanukah wasn't the premier holiday. It was Purim.

"We were excused from school and over the two-day holiday, we'd attend six parties," says Nora Iny, who grew up in Baghdad during the 1960s and is now a trustee of Congregation Bene Naharayim, an Iraqi synagogue in Jamaica Estates, N.Y.

Looking back, she recalls the spectacular dinners and lunches people threw for their extended families and friends.

"We had guests in the house all the time," says Jamila Shooker, a Manhattan resident who left her homeland with bittersweet feelings in 1946 after witnessing attacks on Jews. Yet she has vivid memories of aunts and uncles lavishing children with gifts at Purim.

At Purim, children received gifts, such as pieces of silver jewelry or coins. Iny recalls her parents and grandparents going to the bank to get two or three new riyals per child, coins worth about 50 cents each.

In 1974, to escape Saddam Hussein's tyranny, she and her family were in the last wave of Jews to flee the country. Although a Jewish culture once flourished there for centuries, today approximately 30 Jews live in Iraq.

Although Purim was a spirited occasion, people didn't use noisemakers or stamp their feet at the mention of Haman's name.

"Even in good times, we didn't dress in costumes as children do here," says Iny. "We wouldn't parade or call attention to ourselves. We were afraid to show we were Jews."

Playing cards was the major entertainment at parties and people often gambled for small change.

"I hated cards and would quit after 15 minutes, claiming I was tired," says Iny, whose fondest memories of Purim revolve around food.

While Ashkenazi Jews adore Hamantaschen, the Iraqi signature dish is Sambusk El Tawa, says Carole Basri, an attorney of Iraqi descent who teaches cooking classes through Sephardic House in Manhattan.

Sambusahs are small pastry crescents filled with chicken and vegetables. Fabulous as appetizers, they can also be served as the main course. The pastry is *el tawa*, meaning fried.

"My mother made this dish every Purim," says Iny, explaining how her mother started cooking two days in advance, stopping only when several platters were piled high with crescents. "My sisters and I would eat them by the dozen, never tiring of the taste."

Beets and turnips graced Iraqi Purim tables, too.

"Simply slice and boil them, then sprinkle with salt," says Shooker. "They're delicious."

From a country where date palms were plentiful, people often topped these root vegetables with date syrup made from straining simmered dates through cheesecloth.

Like Jews the world over, Iraqis also visited friends at Purim and brought sweets to their hosts.

The amount of desserts was incredible, Iny says, describing phyllo-rolled almond cookies and baklava filled with pistachios, sugar and cardamom. Her favorite is Zangula, doughnuts prepared by drizzling dough into hot oil.

After frying Zangula, Basri teaches students to dip them in a syrup of sugar, lemon and rose-water, a distillation of rose petals with an intensely perfumed flavor that's been popular for centuries in the Middle East. Today, rose-water is usually sold at Indian and Middle Eastern stores.

No Purim celebration in Iraq was complete without plenty of extra food for all the friends expected to stop by.

"The warmth in the Jewish community was incredible," says Shooker who, in exile for five decades, still misses the sweetest part of life in Baghdad — Purim parties, family and friends.

LINDA MOREL

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The most comprehensive guide to the Kosher world

COMING SOON

Feature Section

HAPPY PURIM TO ALL READERS, ESPECIALLY THE MUSLIM ONES

This Purim, as the sun sets and the full moon rises across successive time zones, Jews across the world will be celebrating the holiday of Purim.

The story has enough plot twists and subplots to keep a mini-series busy for a week. The long and the short of it, if you don't know already, is as follows:

The King of Persia executes his wife and holds a global search for a new bride.

Unbeknownst to the king, the winner, who he is crazy about, is Jewish. Her cousin Mordechai uncovers a plot to kill the king and informs on the would-be assassins. The king bestows honour on his saviour, unaware of his connection to the queen.

The prime minister, who hates Jews and Mordechai, in particular, is the means the King uses to honour him. The prime minister is so incensed, he has in mind to exterminate all the Jews in the country on a specified date and makes this plan public knowledge.

Mordechai has the queen intercede on behalf of the Jews. She reveals to the King her Jewish identity and the prime minister's genocidal plans. The King allows the Jews of Persia to exact revenge on the prime minister and his cohorts, and to plunder their possessions.

The Jews kill them and take their riches. The aforementioned comprises the short version of the story.

As you read this, the full account is being read aloud in synagogues throughout the world.

So what does this have to do with Muslims?

Firstly, it shows how Jews were living in Persia for over a thousand years before any Muslim set foot there. The Jews there were loyal citizens, as evidenced by Mordechai's allegiance to the king.

Contrary to accusations of treason and treachery, Jews are for the most part loyal and patriotic to whatever country in which they reside. There are Jewish prayer books still being used in Europe that contain a prayer for God's protection of Emperor Franz Josef. Some Jews claim that German Jews would have been great Nazis if the Nazis hadn't gone after them. Muslims and other anti-Semites need to take note of this holiday because just as it tells of the past it also forebodes the fate of those out to destroy Jews. Purim's celebrations are for past deliverance and also anticipatory for what will happen to those who try to repeat the story.

How much better off would the Muslim world be today if it had just acknowledged Israel's right to exist - if it had provided any refugees with citizenship, hospitals, schools, and sustenance instead of bombs, guns and a false hope fed on a diet of hatred?

I sent Purim greetings to the president of my beloved Iran but didn't hear back from him. Here's one more chance Mr. Ahmadinejad. Meet me at this year's Od Avinu Hai Purim party. I'll be the one dressed like Vashti. Maybe you'll be lucky and end up winning the "fanciest dress competition" title, along with the free return ticket to Israel.

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CHEESE SAMBUSAHKS: A POPULAR PURIM SNACK

Ingredients and instructions on how to make Cheese Sambusahks, a popular Purim snack.

Dough

1 lb. flour
½ tsp. baking powder
½ stick melted margarine/butter
¼ cup water
1 raw egg
a pinch of salt
½ package dry yeast
¼ cup warm water
¼ tsp. sugar

Filling

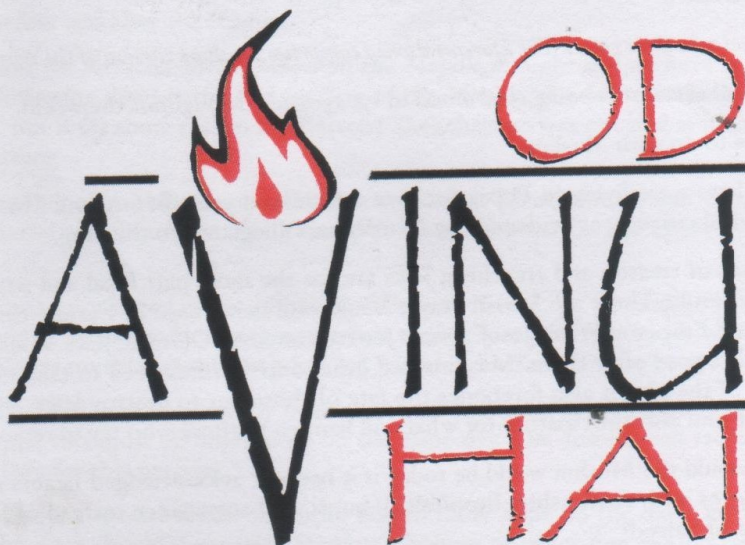
1 cup grated mozzarella cheese
¼ cup farmers cheese
½ tbsp. flour
1 egg



Combine the yeast with the sugar and water until dissolved (10-15 mins.). Combine the remaining dough ingredients with the yeast and knead until the dough becomes soft. Cover the dough with a towel for 3-4 hours.

Combine the cheese ingredients and leave uncovered in your refrigerator overnight.

Divide the dough into walnut size balls and open with a shobak (rolling pin) into a circle. Place one tsp. of the cheese mixture in the lower half of the circle, turn and close firmly. Bake for 15-20 minutes at 375° F.



Carrying the Torch for Sephardi Youth

Visit our website on

www.odavinuhai.org

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and much more!

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