Jewish Tribune – Purim

**Party Tricks**

Don’t you marvel at people who seem to know months ahead which days of the week Rosh Hashana or Succos fall out next year?

“Yes”, they say whilst putting away their Pesach cutlery and crockery, “Rosh Hashana this year falls on Shabbos and Sunday. And Tisha B’Av is on a Thursday.”

How do they know? Have they sneaked a look at their little luach?

Well, let me share with you a neat little trick. This could be your party piece. All you need to know is Pesach. Once you’ve got the days of Pesach, everything else falls into place.

It’s actually a line from the Shulchan Aruch. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 428,3) writes:

סימן לקביעת המועדים: א"ת ב"ש, ג"ר ד"ק, ה"ץ ו"ף

The code to remember the days of the yomim tovim are: א"ת ב"ש, ג"ר ד"ק, ה"ץ ו"ף

פירוש: ביום ראשון של פסח יהיה לעולם תשעה באב

The explanation is: the first day of Pesach will always be the same day as the following Tisha B’Av. Namely, א"ת – א, the first day of Pesach corresponds to ת – which stands for תשעה ב'אב Tisha B’Av.

ב"ש means ביום ב' בו שבועות

i.e. ש which stands for שבועות, corresponds to ב, the 2nd day of Pesach. Namely, Shavuos will fall out on the same days as the second day of Pesach. So, this year, the second day of Pesach is a Friday, Shavuos will begin on a Friday.

וביום ג' בו ר"ה

Rosh Hashana will always the be the same day of the week as the third day of the previous Pesach. So, this year, the third day of Pesach is a Shabbos, the first day of Rosh Hashana this year will also be a Shabbos.

ביום ד' בו קריאת התורה שהוא שמחת תורה

Simchas Torah will be the same day of the week as the fourth day of the previous Pesach.

ביום ה' בו צום כיפור

Yom Kippur will always the be the same day of the week as the fifth day of the previous Pesach.

And lastly, ביום ו' בו פורים שעבר.

Purim of the previous year will always the be the same day of the week as the sixth day of the coming Pesach.

So far so good. Just remember the days of Pesach and the rest of the calendar will fall into place with the above mnemonic.

But one question. Why, in the above party trick, do all the days of Pesach correspond to the days of the COMING yomim tovim, but when it comes to Purim, it refers to the PREVIOUS Purim?

In other words, the first day of Pesach will be the same day of the week as the Tisha B’Av coming and the second day of Pesach will be same day of the week as the following Shavuos etc.

But when it comes to Purim, it looks backwards. The sixth day of Pesach will be the same day of the week as Purim. But not the following Purim (like with all the other yomim tovim) but the Purim of the previous year.

The Kedushas Levi (in parshas Emor) gives an amazing answer which goes to the root of the yom tov of Purim.

There are two types of miracles. Open miracles and hidden miracles.

Open, overt miracles where the rules of nature are torn apart and hidden miracles which are disguised within the laws of nature.

For example, we have the ten makkos and krias yam suf. These are miracles that are beyond nature. As the Ramban (Shemos 13,16) explains, they are למעלה מהטבע, above nature.

And then you have Purim, no open miracles, just miracles hidden within nature. Go through the events of Megilas Esther, everything is natural and conforms with nature. For these miracles, it is only with hindsight that you realise they are miracles. With Pesach and other clear and overt miracles, it is blatantly obvious that they are from HKBH.

After the nissim of Pesach, it became clear that all miracles, those within nature and those above nature, are all from Hashem. Pesach is the marker and tells us that everything comes from Hashem. Pesach is therefore used as the barometer of all other yomim tovim ahead.

But Purim, which is hidden within nature, only becomes clear later. With the benefit of hindsight, we recognise that events were puppeteered from on High, it is only with retrospect that this becomes clear.

The mnemonic alludes to this. All the days of Pesach correspond to the days of the COMING yamim tovim, but when it comes to Purim, it refers to the PREVIOUS Purim as only after Pesach, when we realise even the hidden miracles are from Hashem, can we look back and recognise this.

Perhaps this is why the Megillah (9,28) says:

וִימֵי הַפּוּרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֹא יַעַבְרוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַיְּהוּדִים, וְזִכְרָם לֹא יָסוּף מִזַּרְעָם

And these days of Purim shall not be revoked from the Jews, and their memory shall not cease from their seed.

Based on this possuk, the Medrash (Mishlei 9,2) says that in future all the yomim tovim will disappear - apart from Purim. It is a higher level to realise that even hidden miracles, cloaked in nature, are from Hashem. That will still be celebrated in the future.

Wishing you all a wonderful Shabbos and a freilichen Purim and much success with your new party trick.

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