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## DEFINITION AND CONTEXT

The story of Purim was developed in the fifth century BCE, in Shushan, the capital of the ancient Persian Empire under the rule of King Ahasuerus. On this holiday we commemorate that on the fifteenth day of the month of Adar, the Jews of this kingdom were saved by Esther from Haman's plan to exterminate them.



## THE CHAG'S VALUES



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Megilat Esther does not mention God by name.

While some interpretations argue that a divine intervention existed – although in a “hidden” way – other interpretations give credence to the actions of the characters in the story who took responsibility for their own destiny and fought to avoid such tragedy.

The idea of placing the human being at the center of history, thought and action, is what defines the humanist ideal portrayed in our Tnua's DNA. An example to this can be seen in the different covers of the Darkenu, where we can always find the human being's silhouette as the center of attention.



- Identity is the main topic in the story of Purim. In fact, Esther – one of the story's main characters – hides her true identity until the last moment when, at the request of her uncle Mordechai, she reveals to King Ahasuerus that she is Jewish in order to convince him to reverse Haman's terrible decree. Nowadays, our task as madrichim is to advocate for the strengthening of the Jewish identity, so that our chanichim can proudly embrace it without having to hide it behind any kind of mask.



- Unfortunately, throughout history, and especially during their stay in the Gola, the Jewish people have received, more than once, decrees such as the one narrated in the story of Purim. However, not all of these decrees resulted in an end we can celebrate.

Fortunately, today the Jewish people have a sovereign Jewish state – where a whole Jewish life can be developed as a norm, with a powerful army ready to protect its citizens and any Jew regardless of where he lives – striving to prevent the story of Purim from reoccurring.

- It may be argued that Vashti (Ahasuerus's first queen) is an example of feminine revolution. After her refusal to being used as an object in the royal palace and, fearing that her attitude would spread among the other women in the kingdom, the king's advisers suggested punishing her severely. As a result, Vashti ended up paying for her “rebellion” with her own life. In a world where women are still seeking to establish their position, we aspire as educators in the Tnua to actively raise awareness and seek gender equity – respecting, appreciating and empowering both men and women.



## SYMBOLS AND CUSTOMS

Purim has many different customs and traditions. We will use this opportunity to mention a few of the customs and rituals, relating them to some of the values of Hanoar Hatzioni's DNA.

- **MISHLOACH MANOT (sending of portions) AND MATANOT LAEYONIM (gifts for the poor).**

With the intention that all Am Israel will be able to celebrate Purim as a “day of feasting and joy” (Esther 9:17), we send sweets to our loved ones, in general, and ones in need, in particular. Hence, we can ensure that everyone can celebrate the Salvation of the Jews in Persia, regardless of their economic situation. This kind of custom reflects the values of mutual help, responsibility for others and solidarity.

- **PURIM CELEBRATION, COSTUME PARTY**

In the diaspora, as Purim approaches, mostly children and youths take advantage of the opportunity and throw costume parties and entertaining celebrations. In Israel, however, the whole country celebrates. Therefore, it is commonly seen on the streets that police officers, doctors, public officials, teachers, children, youths, adults and the elderly alike wear fun costumes in broad daylight. This kind of event reminds us that living in Israel allows us to live a Jewish life as a norm since our Jewish holidays are also national holidays.

- **LISTENING TO THE READING OF MEGILAT ESTHER** (The Book of Esther)

In this chag, it is customary to hear the story of Purim from Esther's own book. This tradition involves both the text's reader, as well as those who attentively listen to the reading, waiting to make noise when the name of the villain Haman is mentioned.

In addition, this ritual reflects the values of learning, transmission and continuity. Getting to know our sources, our history, is the best guarantee we have as educators to prevent these events from happening again.



## QUOTES RELATED TO THE CHAG

"We all wear masks to some degree. Some people choose to play the 'social game,' and some are more authentic... some people are more aware they are wearing a mask, and for some, the mask has become who they are.... A part of the mask is a person's social self, and in some cases it serves as a means of impressing others...."

Prof. Gidi Rubinstein – "Is There Anyone as Excited and Happy as I, the Masked Disguise – a Second Look."

"כולנו עוטים מסכות במידה זו או אחרת. ישנם אנשים שמשחקים יותר את "המשחק החברתי" ויש אנשים יותר אותנטיים... יש אנשים שיותר מודעים לכך שהם עוטים מסכה ויש אנשים שהמסכה שלהם הפכה להיות היא עצמם... חלק מהמסכה הוא העצמי החברתי של האדם, ובמקרים אחרים היא אמצעי להרשמת הזולת..."

גידו רובינשטיין, "היש צוהלת ושמחה כמוני מסיכה - מבט שני."



## ARTICLES RELATED TO THE CHAG

### PURIM BELGIUM STYLE, YARIN CHACHAM, ROSH JINUJ HANOAR HATZIONI ANTWERP

In Hanoar Hatzioni Belgium we see Purim as a great opportunity to connect the chaverim to their Jewish Identity through educational peoulot while enjoying the chag. For us, as a Jewish youth movement, it is very important to teach the chanichim about the Jewish traditions and values, but also to teach many educational messages and discuss some dilemmas. Through some characters of the Megilla, I would like to present different topics and dilemmas that can be worked with our chanichim.

### "PURIM BATNUA" – CHARNO, MAZKIRUT OLAMIT

(In this chag) I encourage you to also "REVEAL THE HIDDEN" in all aspects of life and the Tnua. Be chalutzim: do not settle only for the visible aspects. Often, the most productive learning process is in the smallest things that occur throughout our life experiences in the Tnua, whether it is a talk with a madrich, a unique event in the Machane, or simply sharing laughs (or occasionally cries) with our chaverim.

### A LETTER FROM ISRAEL - DVORA EPSTEIN

Despite all the difficulties, everyone is excited as we are approaching Purim, and are preparing as if nothing else is about to happen. With only one month left, the children are already planning their costumes and the chaverim are making gifts for their partners. And how do the pairs form? We just leave it to luck ... And most importantly, the gifts must be handmade – gifting purchased items is forbidden. As you will be able to see, life continues....



## ZMAN LE PEILUT

### HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE PURIM IN YOUR KEN?

Take a picture and share it with the rest of the chaverim of Hanoar Hatzioni across the world.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR THE FULL  
VERSION OF THE ARTICLES:

[www.hholamit.org.il](http://www.hholamit.org.il)

