

Joy and Jokes for Purim

JOY

ANOTHER WAY TO THINK OF THOSE GROGGERS

A psalm of thanksgiving: Make a happy noise to Adonai, all the earth.
Serve Adonai with joy; come before God with glad singing.
–Psalm 100:1-2

THE HOLINESS OF PURIM JOY

The Holy Spirit rests on one who has a joyous heart. –Jerusalem Talmud, Sukkah

Contrition on a fast day does not bring you closer to God than a devout heart's joy on a Sabbath or festival.
–Yehudah Halevi

When Jews become saintly, they sing and rejoice. –Midrash Tehilim

AND THE HOLINESS OF PURIM HUMOR

All joys hail from paradise, and jests, too, provided they are uttered in true joy. –Rabbi Pinchas

Joy is not a theological category in the teachings of most religions and is never discussed in handbooks of theology....Even within Judaism, the teaching that joy lies at the very heart of worship, that it is a prerequisite for piety, is a scandal to the dullards and a stumbling block to the bigots. And yet a sense of humor is also a necessary ingredient of Jewish faith....God is not only the creator of heaven and earth. God is also the One “who created delight and joy.” – Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

When people are joyous, they are at their best: they are generous, kind, grateful, reverent.... If by the word “sacred” we mean that we cannot laugh at it, then it is less than sacred. But, conversely, whatever occasions joyous laughter turns out to be sacred. –Rabbi Lawrence Kushner

Jokes

Knock knock.
Who's there?
Vashti.
Vashti who?
Vashti dishes and I'll give you a hamantaschen!

Knock knock.
Who's there?
Haman.
Haman who?
Hama (Hey, man)! What are you doing to celebrate Purim?

Knock knock.
Who's there?
Achashverosh.
Gesundheit.

It's not widely known, but ancient Persia was the origin of eastern mysticism, and it's thought that Mordecai (of the Book of Esther fame) was the person responsible for bringing these beliefs into the Jewish mainstream . . . After Mordecai learned of the plot against King Achashverosh and fingered the would-be assassins, he became very afraid for the safety of Queen Esther so he began praying for her, fasting five days a week, going barefoot, and wearing sack-cloth. When he did eat, he only ate grains and certain vegetables. Since Susa (Shushan) was located in the foothills of the mountains, the ground was fairly rocky so Mordecai developed an impressive set of calluses on his feet. His constant fasting soon made him quite frail and with his odd diet, he suffered from bad breath. So Mordecai had become... (wow, this is so awful that it's great) ...a super-calloused fragile mystic hexed by halitosis. (Courtesy of Ohr Sameach; blame them. Cantor Lenny Mandel has a similar version; blame him, too.)

How many Persian Kings does it take to screw in a light bulb?
One – there is only one – and don't you forget it, Haman.

How many Persian beauty contestants does it take to screw in a light bulb?

Trick question. It's useless. Their hands are so greasy from all that oil they have been soaking in, that a light bulb will slip right out of their hands.

How many Kabbalists does it take to screw in a light bulb?

Eleven. One to hold the light bulb and ten (one for each Divine Emanation) to turn the universe.

How many spiritual leaders does it take to screw in a light bulb?

None. Change must come from within.

How many synagogue members does it take to screw in a light bulb?

One to change the light bulb, plus three committees to approve the change.

How many Purim revelers does it take to change a lightbulb?

One to hold the light bulb and a minyan more to make the room start spinning by what they imbibe.

How many Mosad agents does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

You never saw a light bulb. There was no lightbulb. Do you understand me?!

How would Eliza Doolittle express mock sympathy for Haman? Poor 'im. (Pur -im).

Variations on a theme:

Haman-tush-en: It's not shaped like a hat or an ear...

Ramen-taschen: a little-known noodle dish from the Jews of China.

Bomb-entaschen: shock and awe for those in the Persian Empire (any era) who would destroy the Jews .