

the legally required time, they may be used for general purposes (O. Ch. 674). What remains on the eighth day of the oil requisite for the legal measure of the Chanukah light may not be used but must be burned (O. Ch. 677). On Friday the Chanukah lights are kindled first and the Sabbath lights afterwards (O. Ch. 679).

PURIM

פורים

347A Its history is clear. It is given in detail in the Book of Esther (מגילת אסתר) in the testimony handed down to us of the two main characters, Mordecai and Esther. We see foul malice seeking to satisfy personal revenge, seeking to gamble with the lives of so many thousands of victims who are without help from the outside world, seeking to conceal its selfish design artfully under the guise of concern for the State, and, in addition, to present the harmless detachment of Israel as dangerous to the aims of the State. We see it quite sure of achieving its infamous plans—against the helpless, against those whose only possession was a serious appraisal of their past life and a coming back to their God, against those in anxious suspense because of the terrifying day which threatened the destruction of them all. To God alone did they turn: would He indeed avert the disaster? And with the will-power with which man has been endowed they resorted to the only way open to them: earnest submission of their cause and prayer. But God, the Unseen, had for a long time already prepared the cure for the wound. God knits human deeds and their issues with His wise design—the ennui of the sleepless night of a king; the fleeting emotion of a moment in a kingly breast—and behold, averted is the blow from the helpless, from those whose only possession is God! The finely calculated flash of lightning laden with destruction is hurled back upon the head of him who released it, and Israel, defenceless Israel, summoned itself to defend its life, emerges from the danger which threatened it with darkness and destruction—emerges into light and gladness.

So it is that the days of such salvation became Days of Remembrance for scattered Israel. These days conserved Israel's strength in their firm faith that God, though unseen, Who had led them into wandering among the nations, still watches over them and brings to naught all that self-seeking wickedness contrives to forge against them with cunning and with intrigue. Jacob, the weak, must remain strong in the unseen, ever-wakeful God.

As physical life was threatened here and physical life saved, so, apart from the public recital of the story handed down to us perpetuating the event, Purim stresses the enjoyment of festivities, mutual gifts and

Chanukah and Purim

consideration for our poorer brethren. Together with this we should joyfully remember how life was given to us again, and in this feeling of joy we should each revive the spirit of our common brotherhood and give it greater scope by bringing cheer to our less fortunate ones.

Its Celebration: On the fourteenth of Adar, both in the evening and in the morning, the story of Purim is read in the Book of Esther (מגילת אסתר). Nothing takes priority over this duty except the care of an unattended dead body lying in the open (O. Ch. 687). Every member of the family of Jacob is in duty bound to read or to hear the Megillah both at night and in the morning. Where possible, one person should read it out aloud when people are assembled and all present should listen to his recital (O. Ch. 689). It should be read out in its entirety from a copy of the Book of Esther (מגילת אסתר), lying before the Reader and conforming completely with the law. In a scroll which has not been drawn up to conform with the law, one may follow the Reader silently but may not pronounce the words with the Reader; and such a defective scroll may certainly not be used to read to the congregation. מגילת אסתר is read as a written testament of what happened in those days (O. Ch. 690). (For rules concerning the preparation of the Megillah, see O. Ch. 691.) (For its recital, Divine Service, etc., see O. Ch. 690-4.) One should give at least two gifts on Purim to two people in need (O. Ch. 694). The actual festive meal for Purim should take place during the day-time. Similarly, two gifts of festive foods should be given during the day to at least one friend (O. Ch. 695). On Purim, unnecessary work should not be done and no lamentation in mourning and no fasting may be instituted (O. Ch. 696). For further rules which apply, see O. Ch. 686-97.

The abuse of power for the destruction of the life characteristic of and peculiar to Israel and the crafty misuse of this way of life of Israel as a pretext for schemes of violence are both most terrifying phenomena which threaten Israel in its wanderings as pillars of fire and as pillars of cloud and they exhort us to remain faithful to *all* obligations, faithful to the mission of Israel, faithful to the country and the rulers who have made us welcome—and then to turn our eyes to God and to fear neither violence nor cunning.

In their import and intent these two are related to the other festivals as follows:¹

	Physical	Spiritual
Israel's creation:	פסח	שבועות
Israel's preservation:	סוכות	שמיני עצרת
Israel's preservation in the Exile:	פורים	חנוכה

¹ See also S. R. Hirsch, *Commentary on the Pentateuch*, Levit. xxxiii, 9.—Ed. Note.