

V'NAHAFOCH HU

PURIM

TURN IT UPSIDE DOWN



An alternate reading of the mitzvah of intoxication  
on Purim and a guide to an inclusive Purim party



# PART I :

## V'nahafoch Hu

## TURN IT UPSIDE DOWN

An oft-used statement about Purim in the Talmud stipulates that “a person is obligated to become intoxicated on Purim until they do not know the difference between the curse of Haman and righteousness of Mordechai.” This statement has been used as the guiding principle for what Purim celebrations have comprised in the Jewish community. But it contains a deeper meaning, hidden right beneath the surface.

In many ways, the story of Purim mirrors the world we live in now – a multicultural, multifaith society struggling with deep division. God makes no obvious appearances on any page of the Megillah, the central text of this holiday. Our central character is a young woman of color without a fancy resume who ascends to upper-class life and finds herself responsible for the fate of her people. It’s a world of the topsy-turvy, not unlike our own. For most of the Book of Esther, we might identify with the isolation, the pain and the broken heartedness that come with living in such a world – a world in which God’s presence isn’t as palpable as days before.

**Just like in the story of Purim, faith, community, consistent presence and showing up can create a new ending for our story. However, creating that new ending requires seeing things not as they are, but as how they could be. It means seeing ourselves as powerful and with the possibility for change.**

The idea that intoxication on this holiday may bring us to a place of wonder might be a well-masked invitation to see people, including ourselves, in ways we don't usually imagine. It may very well be a message to us to see the potential in our world – including our own potential. We should become so intoxicated in the potential within us that we open up our minds to seeing new unfolding truths – and our hearts to accept them.

This Purim, I bless you with the boldness of Esther to turn what you need upside down and believe it’s possible. To read this with the lens of what it takes to build the version of ourselves and our communities that are their wildest manifestations. This takes hard work and community – and we have that here for you.

**With love,**

**Arielle Krule and the T’shuvah Center Team**

# PART II :

## Promoting Your Event

### How do we talk about Purim and Purim celebrations?

Promote any Purim celebration in an inclusive way that allows everyone to celebrate safely and doesn't call anyone out for how they choose to celebrate. Community leaders have an important role in normalizing different Purim experiences.

**So, how do we do this?** We invite you to think about how you might incorporate these tips into your planning, promotions, and day-of-celebration processes.

### Language

- Think about how to frame your celebration and/or party. What information is at the center of your promotion? What are you highlighting for your event?
- Showcase the variety of activities that will be available. Equally emphasize the ways people can celebrate Purim without alcohol, whether at your function or on their own.
- Note that alcoholic and nonalcoholic refreshments will be served.
- Whatever your interpretation of Purim's core value and message is, drinking is only one conduit to achieve that state, whether it be one of joy, freedom, love, etc. Emphasize the variety of ways people have to achieve that goal.
- Encourage everyone, struggling or not, to be self-aware enough to recognize that some people just don't respond well to alcohol, and it wouldn't be conducive to the larger goal of the holiday.

# PART III: Planning Your Event

## Food & drinks

- Be sure to label all foods and drinks to show whether they contain alcohol.
- Put alcoholic refreshments and regular refreshments on separate tables.
- Isolate the alcoholic beverages to one corner of the room, and offer nonalcoholic beverages.
- Make sure you have someone giving out the beverages rather than allowing anyone to go and take them.

## Activities

- Think about activities outside of drinking. Concentrate on costumes, dancing, games, photo on costumes, dancing, games, photobooths, etc.booths, etc.
- Holiday learning – Focus on the Megillah reading, the Purim shpiel and other opportunities to teach about Purim.



The Blue Dove Foundation was created to address mental illness and addiction in the Jewish community as well as the greater population. Working with organizations large and small – both Jewish and interfaith – across the country and around the world, we provide educational tools and resources to help people navigate the ever-growing challenges around mental health.

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T'Shuvah Center was an intentional spiritual recovery community for addicts of all kinds. Based in New York City, we integrate Jewish wisdom, text and ritual; the 12 Steps; and spirituality to help those suffering find a path to recovery. If you have the desire to cultivate transformation for yourself, you have a place here. We believe in the power of following your passions and gaining clarity on what lights you up in life, as a central part of recovering from addiction. We help you unlock your passions as part of our comprehensive approach to addiction recovery.

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