

Purim all year round: A Purim attitude to life in light of Rabbis Shaga"r Froman and Steinzaltz

By: Levi Weinstein. M.A. Drama Therapist at the Ministry of Education and at Ligdol V'Lifroach Child and Family Services.

An analysis of the Book of Esther reveals a subversive subtext undermining the Rule of Man. Based on man's mortal limitation, Rabbi Shaga"r suggests a religious mental attitude to be adopted. According to this attitude, one is required to observe life seriously on one hand, and with an ironic gaze on the other. This dual perspective establishes reality while deconstructing it, thus liberating the individual from the shackles of his self concept.

The experience of Prayer with this attitude is likened to being engrossed in a book, a state in which one is immersed in an experiential reality while being aware that the book is fictional. Rabbi Froman claims that Theatre draws its power from being temporary reality. As such, he identifies Theatre as an art of faith, actualizing the everyday experience of the Believer. Awareness of temporality brings humility vis. a vis. life in general and specifically Religion. Rabbi Steinzaltz expands this attitude that places emphasis on not accepting reality as an absolute to include relating to the physical world.

In this article, a contemporary religious-Jewish-mystical position is presented based on these three thinkers, one that sees life as some form of a theatrical play, thereby paving the way toward transcendence and transformation.

Keywords: Shagar, Froman, Steinzaltz, theo-tre, Purim, religious irony.

Corresponding author: Levi Weinstein, judaicdramatherapy@gmail.com