



## A Sense of Jewish Symbols 24/7



for the Early Childhood & Primary School Classroom  
A weekly idea from SAJES Dept. of Early Childhood Education  
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**Jewish Symbols 24/7** If you were in Israel right now, this is what you'd see...

### A Letter from Shira Ackerman, Director JAFI Early Childhood Department

It's getting warmer. All of the *shekadiyot* – almond trees, are in full bloom and the sight is quite beautiful. As you drive up to Jerusalem, the road is flanked by rows and rows of *shekadiyot*.

This is also the time of year that small black birds called Common Swifts and in Hebrew – *Sees*, visit Israel for 100 days on their way from South Africa to Europe. The Swift stop flying for nesting, which they don't do in treetops like other birds, but in cracks of buildings and structures. Their favorite nesting place in Israel is the *Kotel*, where they stay in the cracks between the stones.

The moment *Tu Bishvat ended*, signs of Purim began appearing. *Ozney Haman* – Hamantaschen, are on sale in all the supermarkets, bakeries and kiosks. Stores showcase merchandise that is related to Purim. In any bookstore, there will be a sale table with special offers on books about Purim. Toy stores will display costumes, masks and other dress up items (somewhat similar to Halloween although it's doubtful you would find a Mordechai costume at Halloween time). In EVERY mall, costumes and Purim paraphernalia are sold at stands that have been set up just for this purpose.

If you go to a preschool store, there will be an astonishing array of noisemakers, masks, templates for *mishloach manot* containers, different types of "fill in the story" *megillot* as well as posters and pictures of children and families dressing up and celebrating Purim.

Preschool and kindergarten classroom across the country have been transformed into Persian palaces with carpets, pieces of velvet, gold and silk like fabric. Costumes and makeup galore are available to the children on a daily basis (often, as a center) during the weeks prior to the holiday. Every day, the children will gather in the palace to hear a part of the Purim story. In many classes, the children will also spend time exploring masks from different cultures and learning about camouflage in the animal world. The children will make *raashanim* - noisemakers, bake *ozney haman* and prepare *mishlochey manot* for one another. There will also be a Purim party. Sometimes, parents are also invited to the celebration.

Purim is a three-day school holiday for everyone. Purim eve, Purim Day all over Israel and Shushan Purim in Jerusalem and a few other cities in Israel, one day later. In the *megilla* we learn that the festivities in Shushan took place one day later than in the rest of the provinces. Because Shushan was a walled city, it was decided that in all walled cities the holiday would be celebrated one day later.

On Purim itself, the *megilla* will be read in every synagogue **AND** on national television. The anchor people on the news will probably wear a funny hat or costume and Purim tunes will be played on the radio throughout the holiday. There will be Purim parties, special performances and activities in all the towns and cities. You can see children in costume in the streets delivering *mishlochey manot* to neighbors and friends. The next day, a big parade called an "*Adloyada*" takes place in the city of Holon. The *Adloyada* tradition began in Tel Aviv in 1912 and later moved to Holon. For many years, the parade didn't have an official name and it was decided to hold a naming contest. The name that was chosen "*adloyada*" comes from the Talmud – one is commanded to drink until he doesn't know the difference - *ad de lo yada* – between the words "Blessed be Mordechai" and "Cursed be Haman".

Many families gather in the afternoon for a festive meal – *seudat Purim*. And then, everyone begins to get ready for Pesach.

**Chag Samech from Yerusahlayim!**

*The Symbol: the outward expression of the inward signification-  
should above all charm the senses by and for itself. Heine*

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