

• קונטרס בעניני פורים •

Divrei Torah on Purim

written by the talmidim of
Missouri Torah Institute

פורים תשפ"ג • Purim 2023



MISSOURI TORAH INSTITUTE
- ישיבה ומתיבתא ד'מיזורי -

In Loving Memory of Greg Fox a"h
חזקיהו משה יעקב בן שלמה ע"ה



For past editions of our Purim Kuntrus
visit www.missouritorah.org/purim-kuntrus

Dear Friends,

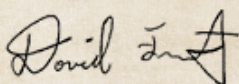
In honor of Purim, we would like to share a few Divrei Torah with you which were written by some of our wonderful talmidim.

Your friendship and support allow the students to grow and the holy Torah to be learned each and every day.

In the zechus of your partnership, may you and your family merit all the brachos that are reserved for those that support Torah.

We hope you enjoy the Divrei Torah.

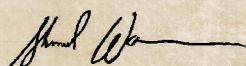
Wishing you and your family a
Freilichen Purim!



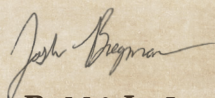
**Rabbi Dovid
Fromowitz**



**Rabbi Avroham
Goldman**



**Rabbi Shmuel
Wasser**



**Rabbi Josh
Bregman**



Purim & Emunah Fundamentals

Yechiel Goldman

In his ספר אור יהל, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Chasman, a תלמיד of Slabodka and mashgiach of Chevron Yeshiva, points out something fascinating about מגילת אסתר. At first glance, the מגילה is an amazing story that is seemingly a series of natural occurrences; the unfolding of מרדכי hearing בגתן and תרש's plan to poison אחשוורוש, the plan and lottery, getting killed, אסתר becoming queen, etc. all seem like a beautiful tale of ישראל's salvation, ככלל ישראל, albeit "coincidental."

However, describes Rav Chasman, if we zoom in a little on the מגילה, we realize that it was clearly divine and miraculous. The timing was too perfect to be "natural." Had בגתן and תרש talked in private, or had מרדכי been there just a couple seconds later, he wouldn't have been there to save אחשוורוש. The fact that this was recorded in the ספר זכרונות, that אחשוורוש's sleep was interrupted on the night המן was advising אחשוורוש to kill מרדכי, that it was opened to the right place, and he read it – Wow! This is clearly the יד ה'. We see that אין עוד מלבדו.

יצאת מצרים was a much more explicit and dramatic show of ה' power over the world. The רמב"ן at the end of פרשת בא teaches that one can learn a lesson for all generations from this one seminal event - ה' runs the world and there is no such thing as nature. "Nature" is ה' constant renewal of the world through continuous hidden miracles that are meant to teach us and help us live with the אמונה that ה' is involved in every facet of our lives.

The קימו in שבת (פח.) tells us that the Yidden in the time of Purim were "קימו" the Torah. In what sense? Says Rav Chasman, it's the אמונה that we described, which the רמב"ן describes as "the foundation of the entire world." The יהודים delved into the מוסר that ה' presented, had new darhers (insights) in the השגחת ה', and therefore came to accept the תורה with new levels of desire and love. (מגילה דף טז.) May we follow in their path, and through "zooming in" to ה' beautiful world, we can see and take to heart the מוסר that ה' is constantly renewing the world for us and is present in every facet of our lives. This will then enable us to reaccept the תורה with greater levels of אהבת ה'.

The Power of Chessed

Yehuda Gutovich

The רלב"ג explains how כלל ישראל was saved from the terrible גזירה to kill all the Jews through the involvement of אסתר and מרדכי. He says it was mainly a result of the חסד that מרדכי performed with אסתר by taking her and raising her after her parents passed away. This seems like a very small and very easy act. If we think about it, אסתר was the cousin of מרדכי! How hard could it have been for him to help her when she needed it most?! Yet even so, this was the act that made מרדכי and אסתר the messengers to bring about the ישועה from the terrible גזירה of המן.

As we know, after אסתר's parents died, מרדכי took her in as a daughter and raised her. Just imagine for a moment if מרדכי had not taken her in. That would have resulted in a vastly different chain of events. Even if אסתר had survived without מרדכי and still became queen, she might not have been able to stay loyal to her nation and risk her life to save them. But since she was raised by מרדכי, she respected him and did what he instructed her to do. Even once she became queen, since she regarded מרדכי as a father, she did not shrug him off, rather she followed his instructions even though she was risking her life! Even when אסתר thought that she would have better chances of success if she waited before appearing before אחשוורוש, she deferred to מרדכי when he said to go immediately.

We see that the power of חסד is incredible! Even מרדכי taking his own cousin and raising her when she needed him most had astounding results. Though ה' would of course be able to bring about a ישועה in a different way, אסתר was chosen to be the שליח of כלל ישראל because of this חסד of מרדכי. We see from this that we should all grab opportunities to do acts of חסד.



שושנת יעקב

Dovy Gordon

The שיר פסוק explains that the source of שושנת יעקב is a פסוק in שיר פסוק that is explained in a ילקוט שמעוני as comparing כלל ישראל to a rose. Just like a rose is beautiful, so too כלל ישראל's actions are more beautiful than the actions of the nations. However, the שיר פסוק asks, what does the פסוק of פורים have to do with roses? Why do we say שושנת יעקב on פורים? Furthermore, when it says ארור המן and ברוך מרדכי, it should have said ברוך מרדכי which would have been the natural flip side of the phrase of "ארור המן אשר בקש לאבד".

To answer these questions, the שיר פסוק begins by quoting the ספר דעת from R' Yerucham Levovitz. R' Yerucham explains that the מגילה is one big ספר מוסר. We can see the negative מדות of בעס, גאווה, and רדיפת הכבוד in the actions of אשורוש and המן. Conversely, we can see the positive מדות of ענוה, הכנעה, and צניעות in learning about מרדכי and אסתר. Therefore, we can learn from the מגילה that כלל ישראל and the nations of the world are exact opposites regarding good and evil. The nations of the world that are the root of evil have bad מדות, and כלל ישראל is the root of good and has good מדות.

Next, R' Yerucham quotes a גר"א that explains the words "ודובר שלום" as good מדות. This is because שלום includes all מדות because it is a result of all מדות. Additionally, it is described as "the clothing of all מדות." The שיר פסוק points out that the מגילה ends with this פסוק which describes מרדכי as having מדות טובות.

R' Yerucham compares the מגילה to שושנת יעקב because the essence of כלל ישראל is good מדות, and thus they are described as "שושנת יעקב" - a crown of beautiful flowers. Each Jew is joined together and is part of the creation of this crown of flowers. Then, R' Yerucham explains the line of שושנת יעקב "צהלה ושמחה בראותם יחד תכלת מרדכי" When כלל ישראל is described as the

"תכלת" of מרדכי, meaning inspired by מרדכי to do תשובה just as תכלת inspires people to do תשובה, they become "שושנת יעקב." They worked on their מדות and were then saved and were "צהלה ושמחה."

The ירח למועדים summarizes that we have just explained that the phrase "שושנת יעקב" shows the beauty of ישראל כלל. This is because they are compared to roses because they are בעלי מדות טובות. Furthermore, כלל ישראל appears to all as roses because just as roses are beautiful, so too כלל ישראל's actions are beautiful among the nations. This is revealed with the story of פורים because the מגילה mentions the bad מדות of אחשוורוש and המן and the exalted מדות of מרדכי and אסתר. When כלל ישראל was saved it was because they worked on their מדות.

Therefore, we can now answer how "בקש לאבדי" would be the opposite of "היהודי" when referring to המן and מרדכי in שושנת יעקב. When it says ארור "היהודי" it is referring to the bad מדות of המן that we read about in the מגילה. On the flip side, "ברוך מרדכי היהודי," refers to מרדכי who was a Jew בעל מדות טובות which is referenced by the word "יהודי." The image and essence of a Jew is good מדות and so stating that he is a יהודי points out these good מדות and contrasts the bad מדות of המן mentioned a few words earlier. Therefore, there is in fact great contrast between "בקש לאבדי" and "היהודי."



Connecting our Whole Selves

Aron Mazer

The פסוק says "ליהודים היתה אורה וששון ויקר" "The Jews enjoyed light and joy and gladness and glory." (Esther 8:16) חז"ל explain that "אורה" refers to Torah, "שמחה" refers to the Yomim Tovim, "ששון" refers to ברית מילה and "יקר" refers to tefillin (מגילה דף טז). מהר"ל says that these refer to different aspects of our devotion to Hashem. "The light of Torah" refers to the intellectual aspect, "the joy of the Yomim Tovim" refers to the emotional aspect, while the "gladness of ברית מילה" shows the physical. The intellectual, emotional, and physical make up the three basic parts of the human personality. "The glory of tefillin" puts them all together, says the מהר"ל.

This too needs elucidation. The light of the Torah is the intellectual pleasure derived from deep Torah study that brings a person closer to Hashem. The joy of the Yomim Tovim is rooted in the emotion of gratitude which creates a bond of giving and taking between Hashem and us. Gratitude is derived from "giving" and this holds true for gratitude to Hashem as well. The gladness of ברית מילה is the knowledge that our bodies are very connected to Hashem which creates a special relationship between us and Hashem. ברית מילה was a מצוה that ישראל "accepted with joy" (שבת דף קל). It involves "giving" to Hashem, and as we know giving leads to love and joy.

The glory of tefillin is that everyone wants to emphasize their own importance. This is the natural consequence of each person having been created with an ego of his own. We all want to feel that there is something that we excel in. This is one of the strongest drives of the human subconscious. If a person reaches the level to the point in which he wishes to excel is his service to Hashem, then he has given his whole self to Hashem. This is the highest point of commitment. This is the meaning of tefillin. Tefillin proclaims that the very essence of בני ישראל is the fact that they belong to Hashem. This is our glory - when the nations recognize that "the name of G-d is called upon us." ירמיהו says (9:22-23), "Let the wise man not boast of his wisdom etc. But this is what the boaster can boast about: understanding and knowing Me, that

I am the G-d who does charity and justice in the world, for these are what I desire..." But is one permitted to boast at all? What ירמיהו means here is not the crass boasting of the arrogant, but rather the universal feeling that one excels in one or more respects. If this feeling shows itself in "understanding and knowing Me" then this "boasting" is the highest of all forms of closeness to Hashem. It includes the whole man.

The recognition of the miracle of Purim led the Jews to experience all these various aspects of connection to Hashem. This is what Purim is all about - the achievement of complete attachment and commitment to Hashem. A person who has reached this level is far above the need for external aids and "instruments." Even if he lacks all that is desirable in this world, even if he is bereft of all that the world thinks of as "pleasure," he does not budge one inch from his attachment to Hashem.

This is the hidden meaning of the well-known חז"ל - "A person must be drunk on Purim to the extent that he cannot tell the difference between 'cursed be Haman' and 'blessed be Mordechai'" (מגילה דף ז:). "Blessing" is the expansion of the means we need for Hashem's service and "curse" is their contraction. One who is "drunk" with the love of and devotion to Hashem needs no external aids. It makes no difference to him whether his "means" are extensive or meager. Even Mordechai and Haman themselves are but external aids whose lesson he no longer needs. He has attained complete attachment to Hashem, and the richness of this relationship provides him with all the lessons he could possibly need. He has transcended and joined the ranks of those precious few in our history who have broken free from the restraints of this world and while alive, already entered the realm of eternity.



Burning Anger

Dovid Orrin

In מגילת אסתר (ה:י"ג), we find that המן gets very angry because מרדכי didn't bow down to him. Why did המן get so furious? Why was it that he was filled with so much rage and anger towards מרדכי and the Jewish people?

One explanation is given by the ביאור הגר"א. He explains that the reason המן got so upset was because even as he got closer and closer to מרדכי, trying to show him how great of a person he was and making sure that מרדכי was aware that המן was paying attention to his response, מרדכי still did not bow down to him and this caused him a lot of pain that caused him to be angry.

A second explanation is from the מלבי"ם. He learns that המן was told that the reason that מרדכי did not bow down to him was because מרדכי was Jewish. המן, with his big ego and his huge desire to be respected, went down to check out מרדכי for himself. When he found מרדכי and asked him why he did not bow down to him, מרדכי said that it was not because he was Jewish, but rather because he did not want to bow down to "you" - המן. That is what got him so mad.

One final explanation comes from the ראשון לציון. He says that when המן saw that מרדכי was not bowing down to him, he had an understanding of a deeper meaning. The deeper meaning was that since המן saw that מרדכי was Jewish, he realized in a broader sense that his evil plan to kill all the Jews would not succeed. המן now knew he would ultimately lose and thus he was burning with anger.

127 Years to 127 Provinces

Yosef Margolese

The first פסוק in מגילת אסתר says - "It happened in the days of אחשורוש — that אחשורוש who reigned over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces from הודו to כוש..." The מדרש on the פסוק tells the story of רבי עקיבא who was once trying to teach his תלמידים but they were falling asleep. The מדרש says that רבי עקיבא wanted to wake them up so he said to them "how did אסתר merit ruling over 127 provinces?" He then answered by explaining that she was the descendant of שרה who lived for 127 years and ה' said, "Let אסתר who was the descendant of שרה who lived for 127 years rule over 127 provinces."

The חידושי הרי"ם asks the obvious question: how are these words of רבי עקיבא supposed to wake up his students? What was so motivating about this that would help his students stay awake in shiur?

The חידושי הרי"ם answers that רבי עקיבא was pointing out that for every perfect year that שרה served ה', her descendant אסתר merited to rule over a province. This means that each day she merited a town, and each hour, a district, and every single moment increased her reward. We see the great reward bestowed upon someone who serves ה'.

We should apply this to our own lives and stay extra focused in shiur :)

Adapted from Rabbi Chagai Vilosky's book: "The Answer is: Megillas Esther"



A Balanced World

Yosef Elisha Friedman

In the first פסוק in מגילת אסתר, it says "הוא אחשוורוש." The מדרש רבה says there are five times that the תורה uses the word "הוא" for good and five times for bad. The first of the bad is by נמרוד, where it says "הוא הִיָּה גִבּוֹר צַיִד;" then by עשו it says "הוא עָשָׂו אֲבִי אֱדוֹם;" then by דתן and אבירם where it says "הוא דָּתָן וְאַבִּירָם;" then by אחז it says "הוא הִמְלִיךְ אֶחָז;" and finally by אחשוורוש where it says "הוא אֶחָשׁוּרוֹשׁ." The five times for good are by אברהם, by משה and אהרן, by דוד, by חזקיהו, and by עזרא. The מדרש concludes by saying that there is One above all of them - "הוא ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכֹל הָאָרֶץ מִשְׁפָּטָיו, שְׂמֵדַת רַחֲמָיו לְעוֹלָם" - "Hashem whose judgements are upon the entire land and whose mercy is forever."

In גם את זה לעמת זה עשה האלקים" (ג, י"ד) Shlomo Hamelech writes "גם את זה לעמת זה עשה האלקים" - "Hashem made one opposite the other" which the גמרא (דף טו.) explains is alluding to the concept that Hashem maintains balance between good and bad. This is the same idea that our מדרש means to illustrate - that the impurity introduced into the world by these five evil people was balanced by the good deeds introduced into the world by their five righteous counterparts. נמרוד got the world to rebel against Hashem, and אברהם balanced that by spreading and sanctifying Hashem's name. עשו utilized his innate aggressive tendency (reflected by his natural ruddy complexion) for murder and plunder, whereas דוד, who was also born with a natural ruddy complexion and aggressive nature, used it to fulfill Hashem's word by waging war against the enemies of Hashem and כלל ישראל, only with the permission of the סנהדרין. דתן and אבירם disputed משה and אהרן's leadership in מצרים and the מדבר, and משה and אהרן countered that with a demonstration of their leadership being chosen by Hashem, and resulting in דתן and אבירם being swallowed by the earth. אחז locked the doors of the בית מדרש to stop the learning of the children and attempted to stop the תורה learning forever. חזקיהו countered that by placing a sword over the entrance of the בית מדרש and saying "whomever doesn't engage in learning will be pierced by this

sword," ensuring that even the children would know the complex הלכות of טומאה, אחשורוש, after ascending the throne, participated in slanderous attacks on the returning Jewish exiles in order to prevent the rebuilding of the בית המקדש, and later told אסתר that he wouldn't let the בית המקדש be rebuilt; עזרא countered this by leading the return of the Jewish people and rebuilding the בית המקדש. Through this, we can gain insight into Hashem's השגחה in our world. Hashem made sure that if one bad person was created with the כח to hurt the Jewish people (אחשורוש, in this case,) there had to be a righteous person to counterbalance it.

Additionally, the מדרש reflects the idea that the word "הוא" connotes a consistency in the person that it's referring to. Each of these people was either always good or bad throughout his life. The חתם סופר explains that this consistency is what the מדרש is highlighting in its conclusion, that we have One superior to all, ה' הוא - Hashem, whose attribute of mercy is consistent and endures forever even when hidden, like in the days of Purim. This consistency of Hashem is a force that cannot be countered, and thus can give us strength to face the unbearable degree of moral corruption in גלות. Although we may lack righteous people of the caliber of these five, we can rest assured that we have the אב הרחמן who protects us until the end of time (אלשיך).



Purim with Moshiach

Joey Sosnick

The משׁיח says in the הלכה פ"ב הלכה י"ח that in the times of משיח, all of the מגילת אסתר will go away except כתובים and נביאים.

In the הגדה it says that in every generation we have to feel as if we ourselves left מצרים. This is because this feeling is relevant to each person. The גמרא in זמן הגלות explains that this requirement applies only in the זמן הגלות, but after משיח comes, it will be טפל to the feeling of המלכות. This is because if we were still in מצרים we still could have been saved by משיח taking us out. רב אלחנן וסרמן הי"ד explains that the שמחה we feel now from יציאת מצרים will no longer be felt in דורות המשיח since we will have already experienced a subsequent salvation. Instead, we will have this שמחה from יציאת מצרים that will replace it. We will view יציאת מצרים merely as a נס that happened to earlier generations.

In contrast, the גזרה of המן was to kill all the Jewish people. Had כלל ישראל been wiped it, it would not have helped to wait for משיח to come afterwards - there would have been no nation for him to save! Therefore, our הברת הטוב to ה' for saving us from the decree of המן will still be relevant בזמן משיח. Purim, the time to celebrate and remember this נס with thanks to הקב"ה for saving us from annihilation, will never go away - even when משיח comes.

A Measured Response

Gedaliah Levi

In Judaism, there is a concept of מדה כנגד מדה, which literally translates to “measure for measure.” A good action yields a fitting good reward and vice versa. This famous concept is highlighted many times throughout the תורה and other Jewish texts. In honor of פורים, I took the liberty to compile three scenarios from the מגילה that highlight this concept.

First, an example of ה' repaying bad for a bad action: ושתי had Jewish girls as servants who were ready to sacrifice themselves for שבת by refusing to sew garments. As a punishment, she made them work immodestly on שבת. “Measure for measure,” אחשורוש commanded ושתי to appear immodestly at the king's celebratory party.

Next, the מדרש tells us that אחשורוש sank his treasure just because he didn't want his son to find it. That's how greedy he was! But when his son דריוש permitted the Jews to resume rebuilding the בית המקדש, Hashem rewarded him with finding the sunken treasure, good for good!

Lastly, we see that בנימין took the blame when his brothers, the שבטים, were accusing him of having stolen יוסף's magic goblet, when in reality יוסף had planted it in his bag. בנימין didn't react. He tore his clothes in remorse. The מרדכי says in the name of the מדרש that he merited that מרדכי, his descendant, tear his clothes when davening and fasting for the Jews to be saved from the המן's evil plot, ultimately meriting the salvation of the Jewish people.

This concept of מדה כנגד מדה should motivate us to help and be kind to others even if one is sometimes pulled to being selfish at times.





MISSOURI TORAH INSTITUTE
– ישיבה ומתיבתא ד'מיזורי –

1809 Clarkson Road

Chesterfield, MO 63017

636.778.1896 | www.missouritorah.org