

Teruma 5777

BS"D Parashat Teruma and the month of Adar 5777

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Why was Esther the End of Miracles?

האם אנו יכולים לומר שהפרשת תרומה היא סוף המiracles? אולי כן, אולי לא.

"Esther is likened to the dawn. That just as dawn signals the end of night, so too does Esther signal the end of miracles."

The statement that "Esther signals the end of miracles", is questioned there in view of the great miracles which occurred later at the time of Chanuka. And the Gemara explains that Chanuka with its military victories and the episode of the candles was indeed a huge miracle, but the meaning of Esther as "the end of miracles" is that the Book of Esther is the twenty fourth and last of "miracle books" to be including in the Bible, whereas the Book of Macabees is not included in Tanach.

The Gemara (Megillah 14a) explains that although the Jewish people brought forth many prophets, only those prophecies which would have relevance in the future were included in the Bible. From here we learn that the story of Esther, which is included, will hold relevance for the Jewish people and the world in the future. In a manner of speaking, Megillaht Esther serves as "coming attractions" for the final days when HaShem will bring about the final redemption of the Jewish nation in Eretz Yisrael.

On Purim, we dust off its cyclical resha'im (villains) – Achashverosh, Haman and Mrs. Haman – and realize again how formidable these enemies were and how great was HaShem's intervention in our salvation.

Let's step out of the simple facts of the near tragedy and analyze who these people were and what they stood for.

There are three cardinal sins for which HaShem has limited patience: murder (shefichat damim), idolatry (avoda zara) and sexual immorality (gi'loi arayot).

Each of the megillah's anti-heroes suffered from all of these flaws, but each one "distinguished" himself by accentuating one of them.

Haman stood for idolatry (avoda zara, Megillah 10b). He presented himself as a component of avoda zara, which explains Mordechai's adamant refusal to honor him.

Haman's wife was the "Madame Lafarge" of the episode (shefichat damim), for it was she who proposed to erect a gallows 50-amot high from which to hang Mordechai.

His Royal Highness, Achashverosh, King of Persia and Media, was hopelessly licentious (gilui arayot).

All three lived their daily lives without too much "interference" from HaShem, who gives resha'im (evil people) enough rope to hang themselves. Had Achashverosh, Haman and his wife continued with their private, polluted and depraved ways, they would have finished their evil lives enjoying in this world their reward for the few good things even evil people do. What brought them all to their final damnation was their intended onslaught against the Jewish Nation.

Pesach, too, is the episode of the eventual destruction of a superpower for its inhumane treatment of the Jewish People.

As stated previously, Purim and Pesach – with their initial

dangers for the existence of our people and our eventual salvation by HaShem – are certainly important for their own sake; but their essential importance is that they serve as “coming attractions” for what we can expect in the days just before the Mashiah.

HaShem sent the prophet Amos to make a reckoning with the evil nations in the regions bordering Eretz Yisrael, as stated in chapters 1 and 2 of his prophecies:

This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Damascus, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth...

This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Gaza, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she took captive whole (Jewish) communities and sold them to Edom, I will send fire upon the walls of Gaza that will consume her fortresses...

This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Tyre, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because she sold whole (Jewish) communities of captives to Edom, disregarding a treaty of brotherhood, I will send fire upon the walls of Tyre that will consume her fortresses

This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath. Because he pursued his brother (Ya’akov) with a sword, stifling all compassion...

This is what the LORD says: “For three sins of Ammon, even for four, I will not turn back {my wrath}. Because he ripped open the pregnant (Jewish) women of Gilead in order to extend his borders.

HaShem, through His prophet Amos, informs the nations of the region that for three of their sins they have until now gone unpunished, because HaShem is compassionate and waits for man to do teshuva (repentance and return to the right path). But for the fourth sin which is common to all – their cruelty and

callousness towards the Jewish Nation – HaShem will not be silent and will bring upon each nation their deserved retribution.

The Malbim, in his commentary on Amos, identifies the three unnamed sins in the verses referring to Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom and Amon, for which these nations were as yet untouched by HaShem's quality of justice. The Malbim states that they were the three cardinal sins of murder (shefichat damim), idolatry (avoda zara) and sexual immorality (gi'loi arayot), with the immediate cause of the total annihilation of these peoples and their cultures being their cruelty to Am Yisrael.

In the not-far-off future, a man endowed with the spirit of HaShem could justifiably stand on the Temple Mount and address the nations of the world, as did Amos, saying:

"This is what the LORD says: "For three sins of the world, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath."

Meaning: The nations of Europe – including Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, Poland, Ukraine and Russia – have "excelled" in the sin of murder.

The peoples of the East – including the Buddhists, Hindus, Shintos and atheistic China – have excelled in the sin of idolatry.

The nations of North America – primarily the United States – have excelled in the sin of sexual immorality, with every breach in the walls of modesty beginning in Hollywood and endorsed by millions of movie goers in the states, and then spread to the rest of the world.

Let us not forget Islam, the master of all the sins, with the added perverted twist that they perform them all in the name of their god.

HaShem patiently looked aside and permitted the evil in the

world to exist unabated, as He did with the evil peoples of Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom and Moav; until, of course, they turned their evil machinations on the Jewish nation. At that time, HaShem descended from His throne of mercy to ascend His throne of justice.

We, Bnei Yisrael and the chosen of Hashem, would do well to prepare ourselves for a global onslaught of anti-Semitism. It will be like a growing tidal wave of irrational hatred towards the smallest nation in the world. The wave will gather up many nations in its wake. Even the nations we believe today to be our friends and allies, will callously and brutally betray us.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 97b) warns us:

הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרִכְיָהּ יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹהֵן מִלִּיּוֹדֵי הַיָּם
.וְיִשְׁמַח בְּכֹהֵן מִלִּיּוֹדֵי הַיָּם

The Holy One, blessed be He, will appoint a king (general term for a leader) whose decrees will be as harsh (towards the Jewish people) as those of Haman, and this will arouse the Jewish people to do teshuva and return to the desired way.

This Purim when listening to the Megillah, recall that the episode occurred in Persia – modern-day Iran. At that time, Haman paid Achashverosh ten thousand shekels for the privilege of annihilating the Jewish nation. Today, the Iranian-Persians are utilizing ten thousand centrifuges to enrich uranium for that same purpose. As for Pesach being a “coming attraction”, the prophet Yechezkel (32:17) states that in the future the main enemy of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael will be Egypt. And they will be the first of the nations to come against us militarily (see Malbim on this verse).

But as then, when the Jewish people had no one to turn for help except to HaShem and their own military ability, so too, today, our salvation will come about by returning to HaShem

and through the holy soldiers of Tzahal. The “coming attractions” are very quickly becoming the real scenes of our lives, in which we are no longer passive spectators but rather the stars in the final production of history.

And just as the episode of the Megillah ended with the return of the faithful to Eretz Yisrael and the rebuilding of the Bet HaMikdash, so too will this episode in contemporary Jewish history cause the return to Eretz Yisrael of those who are faithful to the call of HaShem; and we will merit to rebuild the Bet Hamikdash on Har HaBayit (The Holy Temple on the Temple Mount).

Shabbat Shalom,

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