

Terumah 5781

BS"D Parashat Terumah and the month of Adar 5781
Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Coming Attractions

Parashat Terumah relates the details of the construction of the Mishkan, the precursor of the three Bet Hamikdashim in Yerushalayim. It served for 39 years in the desert, another 14 in Gilgal, 369 in the town of Shiloh, and in Nov and Givon for 57 years. The minute details of the Mishkan served as "coming attractions" of the three Batei Mikdash in Yerushalayim, built by King Shlomo, Ezra the Scribe and Hordus (Herod), and the future Bet HaMikdash which will B"H be built in our time.

Megillat Esther: Coming Attractions of Miracles in The Final Days

The Talmud (Yoma 29a) states:

וְאַתָּה שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוַת שְׂמֵיכָהּ מֵאֵתְמוֹל עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה מְבַרְכִּים לְפָנֶיךָ וְשׂוֹמְרֵי מִצְוַת שְׂמֵיכָהּ מֵאֵתְמוֹל עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה שׂוֹמְרֵי מִצְוַת שְׂמֵיכָהּ מֵאֵתְמוֹל עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה מְבַרְכִּים לְפָנֶיךָ

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

How can this statement be true when the great miracles of Chanukah well after Esther's time? The Gemara goes on to explain that despite the miraculous military victories and the episode of the candles of Chanukah, the Book of the Maccabees (Sefer Hamakabim) was not included in the Bible, whereas, the

Book of Esther is the 24th and last of the Bible's "miracle" books.

The Gemara (Megillah 14a) explains that the Jewish people brought prophets who numbered twice the men who left Egypt; but 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 in the Bible, will hold relevance for the Jewish people in our future history. Much like a cinema that shows "coming attractions," Megillat Esther serves as "coming attractions" for the final days when HaShem will perform the final miracles in the redemption process of the Jewish people.

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 go beyond 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 (gilui arayot). Each of the Megillah's anti-heroes suffered from all of these flaws, but each one was "distinguished" by accentuating one of them.

Haman stood for idolatry (avoda zara) as we know from the Gemara (Megillah 10b). He presented himself as a personification of avoda zara, which explains Mordechai's adamant refusal to bow before him.

Haman's wife was the "Madame Thérèse DeFarge" (a fictional character in the 1859 novel *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, who symbolized vengefulness and revolutionary excess) of our Purim story. Her distinguishable flaw was shefichut damim, because 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).

Incredibly, 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 by enjoying in this world their reward for the few good things even an evil person does. What brought them all to their final damnation was their intended onslaught against the Jewish Nation.

The holiday of Pesach also serves as the "coming attractions" for the eventual destruction of Egypt because of its attempt to destroy Medinat Yisrael. HaShem sent the prophet Amos to declare 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 (Syria), 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 (Lebanon), 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 (Europe), 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 (Jordan), 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.

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's teshuva (repentance). However, for the fourth sin which is common to all, their cruelty and callousness towards the Jewish people, HaShem will not be silent and will bring upon each nation its 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 (shefichut damim), idolatry (avoda zara) and sexual immorality (gilui 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, England,

France, Germany, Poland, Ukraine and Russia, etc., have “excelled” in murdering Jews.

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 moviegoers in the States, and then spreading 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 they turned their evil machinations on the Jewish people. At that time, HaShem descended from His throne of mercy to ascend His throne of justice.

We, Am Yisrael, 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 toward one of the smallest nations in the world. The wave will gather up even the nations we believe today to be our friends and allies, who will callously and brutally betray us.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 97b) warns us:

יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמַרְנוּ יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמַרְנוּ יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמַרְנוּ
.יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמַרְנוּ יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמַרְנוּ

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, today's Iran. At that time, Haman paid Achashverosh ten thousand shekels for the privilege of annihilating the Jewish people. 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. They will be the first of the nations to come against us militarily (see Malbim on this verse). Today, Egypt has the largest military force in the Middle East, and a very sizable population of extreme Moslems.

However, as then, when the Jewish people had no one to turn to except to HaShem and our own military ability, so too today our salvation will come 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.

The episode of the Megillah ended with the return to Eretz Yisrael of many Jews, led by Ezra the Scribe, 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.

B Careful B healthy B here

JLMM Jewish Lives Matter More

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

Copyright © 5781/2021 Nachman Kahana