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Megillah Daf 12

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for his neshamah and may his soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

It is written in the Megillah [1:3]: The army of Persia and Media, the nobles and all the ministers of the provinces in his service; and it is written [10:2] And the entire history of his power and strength, and the account of Mordechai's greatness, whom the king had promoted, are recorded in the Book of Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia. [Why in the first verse are nobles (a lesser title) attached to Media and in the latter verse they are referred to as kings?] Rava answered: They made this agreement between them: When one from our nation will be king, the governors will be from your nation, and if kings come from your nation, then the governors will come from our nation. (12a1 – 12a2)

It is written in the Megillah [1:4]: [For many days, one hundred and eighty days,] he displayed the glorious wealth of his kingdom and the splendid beauty of his majesty. Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina states: This teaches us that Achashverosh wore the priestly garment by this feast. It is written here: the riches of his glorious [tif'eres] kingdom, and it is written elsewhere [in connection with the priestly garments], for splendor and for glory, [tif'eres]. (12a2)

It is written in the Megillah [1:5]: And when these days came to an end, the king made a seven-day feast in the courtyard of the king's palace garden, for all the people in Shushan the capital, nobleman and commoner alike. Rav and Samuel have the following dispute: One said that he was a wise king, and the other said that he was a foolish king. The proof that he was a wise king is because he made the feast first for his remote subjects since he could make

a feast any time for his townsmen. The proof that he was a fool is because it would have been logical to invite his townsmen first, so that if others would rebel, at least his townsmen would defend him. (12a2)

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's students asked him: Why did the Jews of Persia deserve Haman's decree of annihilation? He responded: You answer. They answered: It was because they benefited from the feast of the wicked Achashverosh. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai asked them: If so, only those of Shushan should have been included in the decree. Why were the rest of the Jews ordered to be killed if they didn't partake in the feast? They replied: You tell us. He answered them: It was retribution for bowing to the statue [which the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar had set up]. The students asked him: If they actually bowed to the statue, should favoritism be demonstrated [why did they merit to be saved]? He replied to them: They did not bow as a willful act of idol worship; they only superficially pretended to bow in order to avoid being thrown into the fiery furnace. The Holy One, Blessed be He, reciprocated by only staging a threat of genocide in order to scare them into repenting, and so it is written: For He does not afflict from his heart. (12a2 – 12a3)

It is written in the Megillah [1:5]: [And when these days came to an end, the king made a seven-day feast] in the courtyard of the king's palace garden, [for all the people in Shushan the capital, nobleman and commoner alike]. Rav and Samuel have the following dispute: One said that everyone was placed in the location that was worthy for him; the court, garden, and king's palace. The other one

said that he first tried to place them in the court, but it could not contain them; he then placed them in the garden, and it also could not accommodate them, until he placed them in the king's palace. A Baraisa is cited: He placed them in the court from which two doors opened, one into the garden and another into the palace. (12a3)

The Gemora discusses the details of the feast, such as the hangings, tapestries, cushions, rods, pillars and couches.

Chur – Rav said that the tapestries had many holes (as they were made by needlework), and Shmuel said that it is the white wool which he spread out for them.

Karpas – Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina said that these were cushions of fine wool.

Al gelilei kesef v'amudei sheish - The Gemora cites a Baraisa: Rabbi Yehudah said: Silver couches for some and gold for others; silver, for those who were worthy of silver, and gold for those who were worthy of gold. Rabbi Nechemiah said to him: If that were so, there would have been jealousy at the banquet! Rather, the couches themselves were of silver and their legs were made of gold.

Bahat va'sheish - Rav Assi said: There were stones (which the floor was paved with) that were much sought after by their owners (but were difficult to obtain).

V'dar v'sochares - Rav said: This means that there were rows upon rows (of stones). Shmuel says: There is a precious stone in the seaports called darah. Achashverosh put it in the midst of the banquet, and it lit up the place as it were midday. In the school of Rabbi Yishmael it was taught: It means that he gave a remission of taxes to all merchants. (12a3 – 12a4)

It is written in the Megillah [1:7]: Drinks were served in golden vessels, vessels of assorted design. It should have said, in different vessels?¹ — Rava said that a heavenly voice proclaimed: Balshetzar and his company were killed

¹ Why does the Megillah use the word “repeat” instead of “different”?

because they used the vessels of the Beis Hamikdash and you are repeating their sin! (12a4)

It is written in the Megillah [1:7]: and the royal wine was in abundance as befitting the king. Rav said: This teaches us that every person was served wine which was older than him. (12a4)

It is written in the Megillah [1:8]: and the drinking was according to the law. What does it mean “according to the law”? - Rabbi Chanan said in the name of Rabbi Meir: According to the law of the Torah. Just as according to the law of the Torah the (quantity of) food exceeds the drink (such as by an olah offered on Rosh Chodesh; it consists of one bull and three isronim of flour, which is considerably more than the one half-hin of wine poured over the Altar); so in the feast of that wicked one there was more food than drink.

It is written in the Megillah [1:8]: Without coercion. Rabbi Elozar said: This teaches that each one was given to drink from the wine of his own country.

It is written in the Megillah [1:8]: That they should do according to every man's pleasure. Rava said: This means that they should do according to the will of Mordechai and Haman. Mordechai is called 'man,' as it is written: A Jewish man; and Haman, as it is written: a man, an adversary and an enemy. (12a4)

It is written in the Megillah [1:9]: Queen Vashti, too, made a feast for the women in the royal palace of King Achashverosh. Shouldn't it have said “women's house”? - Rava said that both Achashverosh and Vashti planned to commit depraved acts. And this is consistent with the popular saying: He with big pumpkins and his wife with small pumpkins. (12a4 – 12b1)

It is written in the Megillah [1:9]: On the seventh day, when the king's heart was merry with wine. The Gemora asks: Was his heart not merry with wine until then? Rava answers: The seventh day was Shabbos, a day when the Jews would eat and drink and begin with discourse on the Torah and with words of praise to Hashem. However, the idolaters, when they eat and drink, they begin with words of licentious matters. This transpired by the feast of Achashverosh as well. Some at the party said that the Median women are the most beautiful, and others said that the Persian women are the most beautiful. Achashverosh said to them: The vessel that I use is neither Median nor Persian, but Chaldean and she is the most beautiful. Would you like to see her? They said: Yes, but only if she will be naked.

The Gemora proceeds to explain why Vashti had this coming to her since man receives from Above measure for measure. The wicked Vashti was accustomed to taking the daughters of Israel and strip them naked and force them to work on Shabbos. This explains what is written in the Megillah later [2:1]: After these events, when King Achashverosh's wrath had abated, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed upon her. Just as she had done to the Jewish girls, so it was decreed against her. (12b1)

The Megillah writes further [1:12]: But Queen Vashti refused to appear by the king's order brought by the chamberlains. The Gemora asks: She was immodest and we learned before that Vashti intended to act immorally. Why did she refuse? Rabbi Yosi ben Chanina said: This teaches that leprosy broke out on her and she was too embarrassed to come. We learned in a Baraisa that the angel Gavriel came and placed a tail on her.

It is written in the Megillah [1:12]: And the king grew furious and his wrath seethed within him. Why was he so enraged? Rava answers: She sent Achashverosh a

message: You were a stable boy for my father. My father drank wine equal to what a thousand people drank and he did not get drunk, and you become senseless with much less wine. (12b1)

The Megillah writes further [1:13]: So the king conferred with the wise men, [those knowledgeable of the times, for this was the king's custom, to bring such issues before those who were versed in every law and statute]. The Gemora explains that these wise men were the Rabbis who knew how to intercalate years and establish the months. Achashverosh requested that they should judge Vashti. They said: What shall we do? If we tell him to put her to death, tomorrow he will become sober again and he will require her from us and we will be held responsible. Shall we tell him to let her go? This will cause disrespect for the royalty. They said to him: From the day that our Beis Hamikdosh was destroyed and we were exiled from our land, we have lost the ability to provide counsel and we do not know how to judge capital cases. Go to Ammon and Moab who have remained in their places, like wine that sits on its sediment, and let them judge her. - They spoke to him thus with good reason, since it is written: Moab has been at ease from his youth, and he has settled on his sediment, and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither has he gone into captivity. Therefore, his taste remained in him, and his scent has not changed. - He immediately heeded their advice and called other advisors as is written in the Megillah [1:14] Those closest to him were Carshena, Sheisar, Admasa, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memuchan.

Rabbi Levi said: Every name in this verse contains a reference to the sacrifices. Carshena: the ministering angels said to Hashem: Sovereign of the Universe, did they ever offer before you lambs of the first year (*karim bnei shanah*) as the Jews offered before You? Sheisar: Did they ever offer before You two pigeons (*shtei torim*)? Admasa: Did they ever build before You an altar of earth (*adamah*)? Tarshish: Did they ever minister before You in

the priestly garments (*tarshish is one of the stones that was on the breastplate of the Kohen Gadol*)? Meres: Did they ever stir (*meres*) the blood of a sacrifice before You? Marsena: did they ever stir (*meres*) the meal-offerings before You? Memuchan: Did they ever prepare (*muchan*) a table before You? (12b1 – 12b2)

It is written [1:16]: Memuchan declared before the king and the ministers. The Gemora states that Memuchan is Haman, and he was called Memuchan because he was destined for punishment.

Rav Kahana said: From here we see that an ordinary man (*by the fact that he was mentioned last, it is obvious that he was the least important amongst them*) always pushes himself in front. (12b2 – 12b3)

The Megillah writes [1:22]: [He sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its script and to each nation in its language,] stating that every man shall be master in his home and that he speak the language of his nation. Rava said: If not for these first letters, there would have been left no shred or remnant of the enemies of Israel (*a euphemism for the Jewish people*). People said: What is the meaning of sending us a decree that every man should be the ruler in his own house? Of course he should! Even a weaver must be the authority in his own house! They decided that if this decree is foolish, other decrees are foolish as well and that is why they didn't listen to the decree of killing the Jews. (12b3)

It is written in the Megillah [2:3]: And let the king appoint officers. Rav said: What is the meaning of the verse: Every prudent man acts with forethought, but a fool unfolds his folly? 'Every prudent man acts with forethought': this applies to David, of whom, it is written: And his servants said to him, "Let them seek for my master the king a young maiden." Everyone who had a daughter brought her. 'But a fool unfolds his folly': this applies to Achashverosh, of

whom it is written: and let the king appoint officers. Whoever had a daughter hid her. (12b3)

It is written in the Megillah [2:5]: There was a Jewish man in Shushan the capital, whose name was Mordechai, son of Yair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, from the tribe of Binyamin. The Gemora asks: What is the point of this verse? If it is to give the pedigree of Mordechai, it should trace it right back to Binyamin! [Why then were only these specified?] — The Gemora cites a Baraisa which states that all these names are in fact referring to Mordechai. He is called the son of Yair because he brightened the eyes of the Jewish people in prayer. He is referred to as the son of Shimei because Hashem listened to his prayers. He is called the son of Kish because he knocked on the Gates of Mercy and they were opened for him. (12b3)

The Gemora asks: He is called a Jew (Yehudi), which would imply that he is from the tribe of Yehudah but the end of the verse explicitly states that he was from Binyamin. Rav Nachman said: He was a man crowned with his names [i.e., a man of distinguished character]. Rabbah bar Bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi: His father was from Binyamin and his mother was from Yehudah. The Rabbis, however, said: The tribes would fight with one another. The tribe of Yehudah said: I am responsible for the birth of Mordechai, because David did not kill Shimei the son of Gera (*who was an ancestor of Mordechai*), and the tribe of Binyamin said: He is actually descended from me.

Rava disagrees and posits that in fact, the opposite is true. The Congregation of Israel attributed the blame for Haman's decree to be Mordechai's doing, as Mordechai's birth was the cause for their current difficulties. The Congregation of Israel declared: "See what Yehudah and Binyamin did to me. Dovid, who was from the tribe of Yehudah, did not kill Shimei. This act of passivity allowed for the birth of Mordechai, of whom Haman became jealous. Furthermore, King Shaul, who was a descendant



of the tribe of Binyamin, did not kill Agag, and this oversight allowed for Haman, the enemy of the Jewish People, to be born.”

Rabbi Yochanan answers: Mordechai descended from Binyamin; the reason he was referred to as Yehudi is because he rejected idolatry, and Yehudi is the name given to one who denounces idolatry, as it is written: There are certain Jews etc. (12b – 13a)

DAILY MASHAL

HASHEM WANTS OUR TEFILLOS

It is written in the Megillah [2:5]: There was a Jewish man in Shushan the capital, whose name was Mordechai, son of Yair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, from the tribe of Binyamin. The Gemora asks: What is the significance in mentioning all these names? The Gemora cites a Baraisa which states that all these names are in fact referring To Mordechai. He is called the son of Yair because he brightened the eyes of the Jewish people in prayer. He is referred to as the son of Shimei because Hashem listened to his prayers. He is called the son of Kish because he knocked on the Gates of Mercy and they were opened for him.

The Shem Meshmuel asks: According to this explanation, the phrases are seemingly in reverse order. First, one knocks on the Gates of Mercy, then Hashem would listen to his prayers and afterwards he would brighten the eyes of Klal Yisroel.

Rabbi Eliezer Ginzburg in his sefer, The King's Treasures cites an important principle that was often said by the Mirrer Mashgiach, Reb Yerucham Levovitz.

The Medrash in Parshas Beshalach (61:5) states: Why did Hashem scare the Jewish people? The Medrash answers: Because Hashem desired their prayers. The Medrash is

teaching us that the primary purpose behind the Splitting of the Sea was to stir Klal Yisroel to prayer.

Chazal (Yevamos 64) tell us that Hashem desires the prayers of the righteous. The Matriarchs were barren only so that they should pray to Hashem for children. Their desire for progeny caused the Matriarchs and the Patriarchs to pray to Hashem at a level that under normal circumstances they would not have done.

This can be said in regard to the hardships that happened to the Jewish people in Shushan. It was to chase away the spiritual gloom that comes with exile and to brighten the eyes of Klal Yisroel through tefillah. The phrases are thus arranged in levels of importance.