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Megillah Daf 11

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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

Rish Lakish introduced his lecture on Megillas Esther with the following interpretation: It is written [Mishlei 28:15]: As a roaring lion, and a ravenous bear; so is a wicked ruler over a poor people. ‘A roaring lion’ is referring to Nebuchadnezzar the wicked; of whom it is written: A lion is gone up from his thicket. ‘A ravenous bear’ is referring to Achashverosh, of whom it is written: And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and Rav Yosef taught: This refers to the Persians who eat and drink like a bear and are corpulent like a bear and grow hair like a bear and do not repose like a bear. ‘A wicked ruler’ is referring to Haman, and ‘a poor people’ is referring to the Jewish people who were considered poor because of their deficiencies in observing mitzvos. (11a1)

Rabbi Elozar introduced his lecture on Megillas Esther with the following interpretation: It is written [Koheles 10:18]: Through laziness the ceiling collapses and with idleness of hands the house leaks. Because the Jewish people were lazy regarding the study of Torah, the enemy of the Holy One, Blessed be He, became poor. The meaning of ‘mach’ is poor, as it says: And if he is too ‘mach’ for the valuation, and ‘mekoreh’ means only the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it says: Who lays the beams [ha-mekareh] of His upper chambers with water. (11a1)

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak introduced his lecture on Megillas Esther with the following interpretation: A song of ascents: If it had not been for Hashem who was with us, let Israel declare it now. If it had not been Hashem who was with us when a man rose up against us. ‘A man’ (referring to Haman) and not a king. (11a1)

Rava introduced his lecture on Megillas Esther with the following interpretation: When the righteous are exalted the

people rejoice, but when the wicked rule the people sigh. ‘When the righteous are exalted the people rejoice’ — this is illustrated by Mordechai and Esther, as it is written: and the city of Shushan was cheerful and glad (when Mordechai was dressed in the royal garb). ‘But when the wicked rule the people sigh’ — this is illustrated by Haman, as it is written: but the city of Shushan was perplexed (after Haman issued his decree to destroy the Jewish people). (11a1 – 11a2)

Rav Masnah introduced his lecture on Megillas Esther with the following interpretation: For what great nation is there that has God so close to them. (11a2)

Rav Ashi introduced his lecture on Megillas Esther with the following interpretation: Or has any God done miracles etc. (11a2)

And it came to pass [va-yehi] in the days of Achashverosh etc. Rav said: [The word va-yehi is equivalent to] ‘vai and hi’ [woe and mourning]. With reference to this it is written: and there you shall sell yourselves to your enemies for slaves and for bondwomen, etc. (11a2)

Shmuel introduced his lecture on Megillas Esther with the following interpretation: It is written [Vayikra 26:44]: I will not cast them away, neither will I loathe them, to destroy them utterly, to break my covenant with them, for I am Hashem, their G-d. I will not cast them away is referring to the times of the Greeks; neither will I loathe them is referring to the times of Nebuchadnezzar; to destroy them utterly is referring to the times of Haman; to break my covenant with them is referring to the times of Persians; for I am Hashem, their G-d is referring to the times of Gog and Magog.

The Gemora cites a Baraisa that understands the above verse differently. I will not cast them away is referring to the times of the Chaldeans, for in that time I appointed for them Daniel, Chananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; neither will I loathe them is referring to the times of the Greeks, as I appointed for them Shimon Hatzaddik, the Chashmenoi and his sons and Matisyahu the Kohen Gadol; to destroy them utterly is referring to the times of Haman, as I appointed for them Mordechai and Esther; to break my covenant with them is referring to the times of Persians, as I appointed for them Rebbe and other sages of that generation; for I am Hashem, their G-d is referring to the future, when no nation will be able to control the Jewish people. (11a2 – 11a3)

Rabbi Levi introduced [his discourse] from this verse: But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land before you. (11a3)

Rabbi Chiya introduced [his discourse] from this verse: And it shall come to pass that as I thought to do to them, so will I do unto you. (11a3)

The Gemora discusses the interpretation of the name Achashverosh. Rav said: He was the brother of the head, and of the same character as the head. 'The brother of the head': the brother of Nebuchadnezzar the wicked who was called head, as it is written: You are the head of gold. 'The same character as the head': the one killed, the other sought to kill; the one destroyed [the Temple], the other sought to destroy, as it is written: And in the reign of Achashverosh, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

Shmuel interprets the name Achashverosh: In his time the faces of the Jews were black as the bottom of a pot.

Rabbi Yochanan says: Everyone who remembered him would say "woe to his head."

Rabbi Chanina said: His taxes were so heavy that everyone became poor in his days, as it says: And the king Achashverosh levied taxes. (11a3)

It is written: Achashverosh, who is Achashverosh. The Gemora understands this to mean that he remained wicked from the beginning to end. [The Gemora cites other examples like this. It is written in that form by Esav, Dasan and Aviram and King Achaz.] — [Similarly] this is [hu] Esav: the same in his wickedness from beginning to end. [Similarly]: These are that [hu] Dasn and Aviram: the same in their wickedness from the beginning to the end. [Similarly], this same [hu] king Achaz: the same in his wickedness from the beginning to the end. Similarly, it is written [Divrei Hayamim 2, 1:26]: Avram, that is Avraham. The Gemora understands this to mean that he remained righteous from beginning to end. It is written: That is Aaron and Moshe; they remained righteous from beginning to end. And David, he was the youngest; the Gemora understands it to mean that he remained humble from beginning to end. Just as in his youth he belittled himself before anyone who was his superior in Torah, so in his kingship, he belittled himself before anyone who was his superior in wisdom. (11a3 – 11a4)

It is written: Who ruled: Rav said: this indicates that he (Achashverosh) raised himself to the throne (as he did not inherit the position). Some interpret this as a praise, and some as a derision. Some interpret it as a praise, holding that there was no other man equally fit for the throne. Others interpret it as a derision, holding that he was not fit for the throne, but that he was very wealthy, and by means of excessive distribution of money, he rose to the throne. (11a4)

It is written: [Achashverosh, who is Achashverosh, who ruled] from Hodu to Cush. Rav and Shmuel argue regarding this. One says that these countries were at opposite ends of the world, thus the verse teaches that Achashverosh ruled the entire world. The other says that they were adjacent to one

another, and the verse teaches that he ruled the entire world as easily as he ruled these two countries.

The Gemora cites a similar discussion: It is written: “For he (King Solomon) ruled over the entire area on this side of the river, from Tifsach to Azzah.” Rav and Shmuel argue about the meaning of this verse. One says: Tifsach was at one end of the world and Azzah was at the other end. The other says: They were next to each other. Just as he ruled over Tifsach and Azzah, so he ruled over the entire world. (11a4)

It is written: [Achashverosh, who is Achashverosh, who ruled from Hodu to Cush,] one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. Rav Chisda said: Initially, he ruled over seven provinces, later he ruled over another twenty, and at the end he ruled over all one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. The Gemora asks: But if you interpret the verse like that, what of the verse: And the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty-seven years? What lesson will you derive from that? The Gemora answers: There is a difference here, because the whole text is superfluous. Let us see: it is written: from Hodu to Cush. Why then do I require, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces? You must conclude that it is for a special lesson. (11a4 – 11a5)

The Gemora cites a Baraisa: There were only three kings that ruled over the entire world; Achav, Achashverosh and Nebuchadnezzar. [The Gemora proceeds to cite the Scriptural verses proving that.] Achav, as it is written: As Hashem your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent to seek you etc. Now if he was not king over them, how could he make them take an oath? Nebuchadnezzar, as it is written: And it shall come to pass that the nation and the kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and will not put their neck under the yoke of the King of Babylon. Achashverosh, as we have pointed out above.

(Mnemonic: Sh'S'D'K'): The Gemora asks: And there are no others? Didn't King Shlomo rule over the entire world? The Gemora answers: He didn't complete his reign (he became a

common man towards the end of his reign). - This is a sufficient answer for the one who holds that he was first a king and then a commoner. But for the one who holds that he was first a king, then a commoner, and then a king again, what can we reply? — Shlomo was in a different category, because he ruled over the demons of the upper world as well as of the lower, as it says: And Solomon sat upon the throne of God.

The Gemora asks again: Didn't Sancheriv rule over the entire world, as it is written: Who are they among all the gods of these countries that have delivered their country out of my hand? The Gemora answers that he didn't capture Yerushalayim.

The Gemora asks again: Didn't Daryavesh (Darius) rule over the entire world, as it is written: Then king Darius wrote, “To all the peoples, nations and languages that dwell in all the earth, your peace should multiply”? The Gemora answers that there were seven countries that he did not rule over, as it is written: It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps.

The Gemora asks again: Didn't Koresh (Cyrus) rule over the entire world, of whom it is written: Thus said Cyrus, king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth has God given me? The Gemora answers that he was praising himself (the only proof we have for this is Koresh's own words and they are not reliable). (11a5 – 11b1)

It is written: In those days, when King Achashverosh sat on his royal throne, which was in Shushan the capital. This would seem to be referring to the beginning of his reign; yet from the next verse, it explicitly says the third year. It is written: In the third year of his reign, he made a feast for all his ministers and servants. Rava explains: In the third year, his mind was put at ease and he celebrated with a grand party. Achashverosh said: “Balshetzar calculated the seventy years of exile but made a mistake; I calculated the seventy years (which concluded now) and I did not make any mistakes.” — What is the meaning of this? — It is written: After seventy

years are accomplished for Babylon I will remember you, and it is written: That He would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years. He reckoned forty-five years of Nebuchadnezzar and twenty-three of Evil Merodach and two of his own, making seventy in all. He then brought out the vessels of the Temple and used them.

And how do we know that Nebuchadnezzar reigned forty-five years? — As a master has said: ‘They went into exile in the seventh year and they went into exile in the eighth year; they went into exile in the eighteenth year and they went into exile in the nineteenth year.’ — [That is to say], in the seventh year after the subjection of Yehoyakim they underwent the exile of Yehoyachin, this being the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar. In the eighteenth year from the subjection of Yehoyakim they underwent the exile of Tzidkiyah, this being the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, as a master has said: In the first year [of his reign] he [Nebuchadnezzar] overthrew Ninveh; in the second year he conquered Yehoyakim, and it is written: And it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Yehoyachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month on the twenty-seventh day of the month, that Evil Merodach King of Babylon, in the year of his reign, lifted up the head of Yehoyachin king of Judah and brought him forth out of prison. Eight and thirty-seven make forty-five of Nebuchadnezzar. The twenty-three of Evil Merodach we know from tradition. These with two of his own make seventy. He [Belshazar] said to himself: Now, certainly, they will not be redeemed. So he brought out the vessels of the Temple and used them. Hence it was that Daniel said to him: but you have lifted up yourself against the Master of heaven, and they have brought the vessels of his house before you. It is further written: In that night Belshazar the Chaldean king was slain, and it is written: And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years.

He [Achashverosh] said: He calculated and made a mistake, I will calculate and make no mistake. Is it written: seventy years for the kingdom of Babylon? It is written: seventy years for Babylon. What is meant by Babylon? The exile of Babylon. — How many years [is this reckoning] less [than the other]?

Eight. So in place of them he inserted one of Belshazar, five of Darius and Cyrus, and two of his own, which made seventy. — When he saw that seventy had been completed and they were not redeemed, he brought out the vessels of the Temple and used them. — Then the Satan came and danced among them and slew Vashti.

But he reckoned correctly? — He also made a mistake, since he ought to have reckoned from the destruction of Jerusalem.

Granted all this, how many years are short? Eleven. How long did he reign? Fourteen. Consequently, in the fourteenth year of his reign he ought to have rebuilt the Temple. Why then is it written: Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem? — Rava replied: The years were not full ones. It has been taught to the same effect: There was yet another year left to Babylon, and Darius arose and completed it.

Rava said: Daniel also made a mistake in this calculation, as it is written: In the first year of his reign, I Daniel contemplated in the books [etc.]. From his use of the words ‘I contemplated’ we can infer that he [at first] made a mistake.

All the same, there is a contradiction between the texts [is there not]? It is written [in one], when there are accomplished for Babylon, and it is written [in the other], for the desolations of Jerusalem? — Rava replied: [The first term] was for visitation [pekidah] only, and this was fulfilled, as it is written: Thus said Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth has the Lord, the God of the heavens, given to me, and He has charged [pakad] me to build Him a house in Jerusalem.

Rav Nachman son of Rav Chisda gave the following exposition. What is the meaning of the verse: Thus said God to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held. Now was Cyrus the “anointed one”? Rather what it means is: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to the Messiah: I have a complaint on thy behalf against Cyrus. I said, He shall build My house and gather My exiles, and he [merely] said,

Whoever there is among you of all his people, let him go up.
(11b1 – 12a1)

DAILY MASHAL

DEFEAT AMALEK WITH TORAH

Rabbi Elozar introduced his lecture on Megillas Esther with the following interpretation: It is written [Koheles 10:18]: Through laziness the ceiling collapses and with idleness of hands the house leaks. Because the Jewish people were lazy regarding the study of Torah, the enemy of Hashem (referring to Hashem Himself) became poor.

The Maharal comments that it is evident from this Gemora that the only merit that can save Klal Yisroel from the hands of Amalek is the studying of Torah. Klal Yisroel can become elevated through the study of Torah and only then can we overcome Amalek.

The Riaz explains that this is why the salvation of Purim came after Mordechai gathered the twenty-two thousand young children and studied Torah with them. The Gemora later on (16b) expounds on the verse that states: (Esther 8:16) layehudim haysa orah visimcha visasson vikar, the Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. Light is referring to Torah; Gladness is referring to the festivals; Joy is referring to bris milah; Glory is referring to tefillin. Torah is mentioned first because that is the method to prevail over Amalek.

Lesson from Hakhel

Chazal (Megillah 11A) teach that the fourth and fifth words of the Megillah, "Hu Achashveirosh--he is Achashveirosh)" teach us a profound lesson. He "is" Achashveirosh--the very same Achashveirosh--before, during and after the Purim story. Esther, his queen, who was a nevia (prophetess) and one of the greatest women in history, had no impact upon him. Mordechai, as the Mishne L'Melech, the number two man in his government, who was a Tzaddik, a navi (prophet), and one of the great members of the Anshei Kenesses HaGadolah, had no effect on his life. Indeed, even the miracles of Purim--the amazing turn of events which were

years in the making--were personally overlooked and ignored, although they otherwise made the king's chronicles and the history books for all time. As a matter of fact, Achashveirosh had ordered that the work to reconstruct the Beis HaMikdosh be halted at the beginning of his reign--and continued his stop-work order throughout his 14-year reign. The Beis HaMikdosh only continued to be rebuilt upon the succession to his throne by his son, Daryavesh. What an important lesson this is for us! We cannot let the time in which we currently find ourselves in march by us without it having an important impact upon us.

May we suggest learning to have a special kavanah in the first brocha of Shemone Esrei as we recite the words "Ozer", "U'Moshia", "U'Magen":

Ozer--a Helper, who thwarts an existing immediate danger from overpowering a person (example: You have already been attacked and the attacker is defeated);

Moshia--a Savior, who cancels danger threatening to overpower a person (example: Prior to his attacking, the attacker runs away);

Mogen--a Shield, who prevents trouble from reaching you in the first place (example: The attacker never leaves home).