

B”H

## **Reality Unmasked: The Sub-Plot of Purim**

**The Jews were thrilled that they were finally invited to the Persian White House. They forgot who runs the world**

By Rabbi YY Jacobson

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Dedicated by

**David and Eda Schottenstein**

in the loving memory of

Rabbi **Gavriel Noach** and **Rivki Holtzberg** and all of the **Mumbai Kedoshim**

And in the loving memory of

**Alta Shula Swerdlov**, daughter of Rabbi **Yossi** and **Hindel Swerdlov**

Dedicated by **Shira Koenigsberg**

in the merit of **Miriam** Bat **Beila** for a complete and speedy recovery

Dedicated by **Evan Haller** In memory of his uncle **Neil Locker**

Dedicated by **Chana Pass** in memory of **Yocheved Baileh** bas **Moshe** Halevi (yartzeit 13 Shevat)

And in the merit of **Aryeh Leib Yitchak** ben **Yocheved Baileh**

**Shrage Feivel** ben **Yocheved Baileh**

**Chana Leah** bas **Yocheved Baileh**

May G-d grand them all their needs among all of Israel

### **1. Class Summary:**

### **2. Sources.**

### **3. Questions & Exercises.**

#### **1. Class Summary:**

Many questions arise in the book of Esther and the holiday of Purim. Among them: why is this the only Jewish holiday with a Persian name? Why is Esther the only biblical book without even a single mention of G-d's name? Also: The Talmud says that the Jews were deserving of their punishment because they enjoyed the feast of that wicked man Achashveirosh, the Persian king, but since when is death the penalty for eating non-kosher food?

Another question: Why did Esther fast three days, when she needed to enter into the chamber of the king and charm him with her beauty? And why did Mordechai, after being led in victory by Haman in the streets of Shushan, go back to fasting?

A journey into the sub plot of Purim reveals to us one of the most revolutionary ideas of Judaism and its ramifications on our everyday life.

<p><b><u>1. Esther</u></b> Chapter 4, Verses 15-16</p> <p>15. Esther said to relay to Mordechai:</p> <p>16. "Go and gather all the Jews who are in Shushan and fast for my sake, do not eat and do not drink for three days, night and day. My maids and I shall also fast in the same way. Then I shall go to the king, though it is unlawful, and if I perish, I perish."</p>	<p><b><u>1. אסתר</u></b> פרק ד, פסוקים טו-טז</p> <p>(טו) נת אמר אסתר, להשיב אל מרדכי.</p> <p>(טז) לך פנוס את כל היהודים הנמצאים בשושן, וצומו עלי ואל תאכלו ואל תשתו של ששת ימים לילה ויום גם אני ונערתי אצום פן. וכך אבוא אל המלך, אשר לא אכדת, וכאשר אבדתי אבדתי.</p>
<p><b><u>2. Talmud Megilla</u></b> Page 12, Side a</p> <p>The disciples of R. Shimon B. Yochi asked their Master: By what sins had the Israelites incurred the decree of Haman in that age? Answered he: What is your opinion? They said: Because they enjoyed the feast which Ahasuerus the wicked man made. If so, only those of Shushan should have suffered. Why did those of all provinces? They said to him: Let the Master explain. So he answered: Because they kneeled to the image.</p>	<p><b><u>2. מגילה</u></b> דף יב עמוד א</p> <p>שאלו תלמידיו את רשב"י מפני מה נתחייבו שונאיהן של ישראל שבאותו הדור כליה? אמר להם אמרו אתם.</p> <p>אמרו לו מפני שנהנו מסעודתו של אותו רשע. אם כן שבשושן יהרגו שבכל העולם כולו אל יהרגו?</p> <p>אמרו לו אמור אתה אמר להם מפני שהשתחוו לצלם.</p>
<p><b><u>3. Megilla</u></b> Page 12, Side a</p> <p>"To comply with each man's wish." Rava said to comply with the wish of Mordechai and Haman.</p>	<p><b><u>3. מגילה</u></b> דף יב עמוד א</p> <p>לעשות כרצון איש ואיש. אמר רבא לעשות כרצון מרדכי והמן</p>
<p><b><u>4. Esther Rabba</u></b> Esther Rabba, 2:13</p> <p>"The drinking was by the law without force" They did not force them to drink yayin nesech.</p>	<p><b><u>4. אסתר רבה</u></b> אסתר רבה ב, יג</p> <p>והשתיה כדת אין אונס. אין אונס ביין נסך.</p>

<p><b>5. Esther</b> Esther 6:11-12</p> <p>11. So Haman took the garment and dressed Mordechai, and he led him through the city square and proclaimed before him: "So is done for the man whom the King wishes to honor!"</p> <p>12. Then Mordechai returned to the king's gate while Haman hurried to his house, miserable, his face covered.</p>	<p><b>5. אסתר</b> אסתר ו, יא-יב</p> <p>יא. וַיִּקַּח הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת הַסּוּס וַיִּלְבַּשׁ אֶת מֶרְדֳּכָי וַיַּרְכִּיבֵהוּ בַרְחוּב הָעִיר וַיִּקְרָא לְפָנָיו כֹּכָה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בְּיָקָרוֹ.</p> <p>יב. וַיָּשָׁב מֶרְדֳּכָי אֶל-שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמָן נִדְחָף אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ אָבֵל וְחַפּוּי ר' אִשׁ</p>
<p><b>6. Megilla</b> Megillah Page 16 side 1</p> <p>"Mordechai returned to the king's gate" Rav Sheishes said: He returned to his sackcloth and fasting.</p>	<p><b>6. מגילה</b> מגילה טז, א</p> <p>וישב מרדכי אל שער המלך אמר רב ששת שב לשקו ולתעניתו.</p>
<p><b>7. Esther</b> Esther 4:1</p> <p>1. Mordechai knew all that had occurred, so Mordechai tore his clothes [in mourning] and put on sackcloth and ash</p>	<p><b>7. אסתר</b> אסתר ד, א</p> <p>וּמֶרְדֳּכָי יָדַע אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה וַיִּקְרַע מֶרְדֳּכָי אֶת בְּגָדָיו וַיִּלְבַּשׁ שָׂק וְאַפָּר וַיֵּצֵא בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר וַיִּזְעַק זַעֲקָה גְדוֹלָה וּמְרָה.</p>
<p><b>8. Megillah</b> Megillah Page 16 side 1</p> <p>He [Haman] went and found the Rabbis sitting in front of him (Mordechai) and learning the laws of Kmitzah (handful) ... He asked them "what are you learning?" They replied "During the time of the temple someone who committed to bring a mincha offering would bring a handful of flour and would be forgiven." Haman replied "Your handful of flour will outweigh my ten thousand silver coins."</p>	<p><b>8. מגילה</b> מגילה טז, א</p> <p>אזל אשכחיה דיתבי רבנן קמיה ומחוי להו הלכות קמיצה לרבנן ...</p> <p>אמר להו במאי עסקיתו אמרו ליה בזמן שבית המקדש קיים מאן דמנדב מנחה מייתי מלי קומציה דסולתא ומתכפר ליה.</p> <p>אמר להו אתא מלי קומצי קמחא דיכחו ודחי עשרה אלפי ככרי כספא דידי</p>

מקורות להשיעור:

שיחות פורים תשי"ז, תשכ"ב, תשכ"ו, תשכ"ז, תשכ"ט לכ"ק אדמו"ר מליובאוויטש.

### 3. Questions and Exercises

1. What is the singular core-message of the entire Megilah?
2. Why did Esther fast for three days before entering into the king?
3. Why is G-d's name not mentioned in the entire book of Esther? And why is Purim the only Jewish holiday with a Persian name?
4. Do you compromise your spiritual integrity and your relationship to G-d because of material pressures and responsibilities? How so? Can you do it differently?
5. Does Judaism believe in diplomacy, or does it teach complete reliance on G-d?
6. If G-d runs the world why should you employ diplomacy?
7. What was the primary mistake of the Shushan Jews during the Purim era?
8. Do you worship the forces of nature in your personal life? How so?