

B”H

# **Angels or Demons**

## **Haman: A Psychological Profile**

By Rabbi YY Jacobson

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 a young soul  
**Alta Shula Swerdlov**  
Daughter of Rabbi **Yossi** and **Hindel Swerdlov**

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

Dedicated by **Elki Rosenfeld**  
In memory of Reb **Yisroel** ben Reb **Yitzchok Eizik** HaLevi

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**Class Summary:**

Why do some children grow to become loyal, faithful and kind human beings, fine mentchen; while others grow up to become obnoxious, arrogant and self-centered? A change of translation of a single word in the Hebrew Bible gives us the answer.

The innermost chamber of the Tabernacle and the Jerusalem Temple, the most sacred site in Judaism, was known as the "Holy of Holies" and seen as the spiritual epicenter of the universe. It displayed nothing else save two golden cherubs, situated atop the covering that veiled the Ark, which contained the two Tablets of the Ten Commandments.

What did these two golden winged cherubs (Keruvim) look like? *Rashi says: "Each of them had the face of a young child."* Yet in the third chapter of Genesis, Rashi translates the word Keruvim as "*angels of destruction.*" How do we reconcile this striking paradox?

<p><b>1. Terumah</b> 25:18</p> <p>18. And you shall make two golden cherubim; you shall make them of hammered work, from the two ends of the ark cover.</p>	<p><b>1. תרומה</b> כה, יח</p> <p>וְעָשִׂיתָ שְׁנַיִם כְּרֻבִים זָהָב מְקֻשָּׁה תַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם מְשֻׁנֵי קְצוֹת הַכַּפְּרֹת.</p>
<p><b>2. Rashi</b> Terumah 25:18</p> <p><i>Cherubim:</i> They had the features of a child.</p>	<p><b>2. רש"י:</b></p> <p>כרבים—דמות פרצוף תינוק להם.</p>
<p><b>3. Bereishis</b> 3:24</p> <p>24. And He drove the man out, and He stationed from the east of the Garden of Eden the cherubim and the blade of the revolving sword, to guard the way to the Tree of Life.</p>	<p><b>3. בראשית</b> ג, כד:</p> <p>וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֶת הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׁכֵּן מִקֶּדֶם לְגַן עֵדֶן אֶת הַכְּרֻבִים וְאֶת לַהֲט הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לְשָׁמֹר אֶת דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים.</p>
<p><b>4. Rashi</b> Bereishis 3:24</p> <p><i>The Cherubim:</i> Angels of destruction.</p>	<p><b>4. רש"י:</b></p> <p>את הכרובים—מלאכי חבלה.</p>
<p><b>5. Bereishis</b></p>	<p><b>5. בראשית</b></p>

<p>2:15-17</p> <p>15. Now the Lord God took the man, and He placed him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to guard it.</p> <p>16. And the Lord God commanded man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat.</p> <p>17. But of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for on the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die."</p>	<p>ב, טו-יז :</p> <p>וַיִּקַּח ה' אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם וַיִּנְחֵהוּ בְּגֶן עֵדֶן לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשֹׁמְרָהּ :</p> <p>וַיֹּצֵו יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכָּל עֵץ הַגֵּן אֲכַל תֹּאכַל :</p> <p>וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרַע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ.</p>
<p><b>6. Talmud Chullin</b> 139b</p> <p>Where does Haman come from in the Torah? Hamin Heitz, [G-d asks Adam] "Did you eat from this Tree?"</p>	<p><u>6. חולין</u> קלט, ב :</p> <p>המון מן התורה מניין? המון העץ.</p>
<p><b>7. Bereishis</b> 3:11</p> <p>11. And He said, "Who told you that you are naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"</p>	<p><u>7. בראשית</u> ג, יא :</p> <p>וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הַגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עִירַם אֶתְּהָ הַמֶּן הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לְבִלְתִּי אֲכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲכָלְתָּ.</p>
<p><b>8. Esther</b> 5:13</p> <p>13. But all this is worth nothing to me, every time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting in the king's gate."</p>	<p><u>8. אסתר</u> ה, יג :</p> <p>וְכָל זֶה אֵינְנִי שׂוֹה לִי בְּכָל עֵת אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי רֹאֶה אֶת מָרְדֳּכָי הַיְּהוּדִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמְּלָכָה.</p>
<p><b>9. Mishna Sotah</b> 9:2</p> <p>Likewise we find by cain, Korach, Bilaam, Doeg, Achitofel, Geichazi, Avshalom, Uzziahu, and Haman. They placed their sights on that which wasn't theirs, What they sought was not given to them and what they already had was taken from them.</p>	<p><u>9. משנה סוטה</u> ט, ב :</p> <p>וכן מצינו בקין וקרח ובלעם ודואג ואחיתופל וגחזי ואבשלום ואדוניהו ועוזיהו והמן שנתנו עיניהם במה שאינו ראוי להם. מה שביקשו לא ניתן להם ומה שבידם נטלוהו מהם.</p>

## Questions and Exercises

1. Are you spoiled? Do you spoil your children?
2. Why does the same word “keruvim” have such two opposite meanings in Genesis and in Exodus?
3. What do you think is the greatest factor in turning children into “agents of destruction”?
4. What is the key factor in turning children into angelic beautiful souls?
5. Having it all, why was Haman obsessed with Mordechai not bowing down to him?
6. Are you satisfied with what you have? Are you craving for more?
7. Are you a control freak? What is it that you are really searching for? And what can you do about it?