

!!!PURIM SAMEACH!!!



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SHIUR PRESENTED IN 5777

IN HONOR OF OUR PARENTS
ALFRED & ESTHER HARARY
BY THEIR
CHILDREN & GRANDCHILDREN

PURIM: THE UNSPOKEN TOPIC OF PURIM

THE AVODAH OF ADAR

Previously, we discussed how the feeling of *simchah* in the month of Adar, comes from the fact that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is so close to us, and that Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves us so much. The way we show that we are *sameach* (happy) is by serving Hashem while we are *besimchah*. The *mitzvos hayom* of Purim that were given to us bring us *simchah*. The *shpitz* of the *simchah* is when we show *simchah* by being *domeh leShechinah*. Hashem wants a person to emulate Him and reflect His *middos*. And the *shpitz* of emulating His *middos* is *להחיות ריח שפלים* - *to revive the spirits of the lowly* (Yeshaya 57:15) which we can do through *simchah*. The whole *avodah* of Adar is *leharbos besimchah* (increase happiness) in appreciation of being *oved Hashem besimchah* in all of our *inyanim*. In this way we will counter the sins that brought the *gezeiras misah* upon us.

Today, I want to share with you an understanding and insight that many people don't know and don't talk about. They grow up from kindergarten, making Purim plays and stories. Adar is about fish. They draw pictures of fish in Adar. We have a big bad Haman. Then there's Queen Esther, the beautiful queen. Everyone tries to be Queen Esther. And in some parts of Eretz Yisrael, the "*groise tzaddikim*" instead of having a beauty pageant, they make an Esther pageant - by the *frieh*. That's what they make at this time of the year. They have their Esther pageant.

Purim is seen as a time for having fun, but there is much greater depth to Purim than that, a message that is not often spoken of. We want to gain a deeper understanding of what the *chataim* of the *yidden* were guilty of, prior to and when the Purim story took place.

A MILLION PLUS REMINDERS

We're going to begin with a *passuk* in *Yirmiyah* (7:25), where Hashem says as follows: *למן היום אשר יצאו אבותיכם מארץ מצרים*, *עד היום הזה*, *from the day that your forefathers left Mitzrayim until this day*, *ואשלח אליכם את כל עבדי הנביאים*, *I sent to you all My avadai hanevi'im*. Do you know how many *nevi'im* there were? Do you have any idea? The *gemara* says, *keflayim keyotzei Mitzrayim*, there were one million, two hundred thousand *nevi'im*. I sent to you *kol avadai hanevi'im*, every single day, in the morning, and every single day, at night. *ולא שמעו אלי*, *you didn't listen to Me*, *ולא הטו את אזנם*, *you didn't even give ear*, *ויקשו את ערפם*, *you stiffened your necks*, *הרעו מאבותם*, *you did worse than your forefathers* (ibid, 7:26).

Chazal say that Hakadosh Baruch Hu sent us many messages - every morning and every night - in the form of *nevi'im*, to wake us up that we should change our ways.

Why do you need so many reminders? Do you want to know why? It's very *pashut*. Did you ever try to give a guy *mussar* in the morning? You know what he says to you? "I'm not a morning person." Have you ever given a person *mussar* at night? He tells you, "At night, I can't hear *mussar*. It's not the time to hear *mussar*." So Hashem says okay, "Let Me try one in the morning, and let Me try one at night." Why did He have to send a million, two hundred thousand *nevi'im*? Why can't one *navi* do the same job, the same prophet? Because, people could say, "That *navi* talks too strongly. That *navi*, he's too sharp. I like a softer touch. I like the *navi* who smiles, has a little goatee. Maybe he has a couple of whiskers under his nose and he smiles, and he's so understanding." So Hashem sent all kinds of *nevi'im*. But each guy, whatever Hashem sent him, didn't like that type. "I don't like this. I don't like that."

HASHEM'S ANGER FLARED UP

Hashem also sent us *nevi'im* (during the reign of Tzidkiyahu Hamelech) and what happened? Listen to what it says in the *navi*. The *navi* says in *Divrei Hayamim* (II, 36:16): *ויהיו מלעיבים במלאכי האלקים*, the *Yidden* used to mock Hashem's prophets. They made fun of the *malachei Elokim*, the *shluchim* of Hashem. *ובזוים דבריו*, they would *mamash* be *mevazeh devarav*, they degraded the *nevi'im*. Instead of saying, "Thank you, Rabbi, I hear you. I really appreciate it," they would degrade them! Until it says in the *pasuk* *עד עלות חמת* *ה בעמו*, until the anger of Hashem became so kindled *מרפא לאין*, there was no cure and no healing.

The Rambam writes in *Hilchos Teshuvah* (6:3) that there came a day when Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Klal Yisrael, “I tried so hard to bring you back to *teshuvah*. I sent you so many messages. I gave you an *eitzah* of how to cure all your problems, all your shortcomings and stay healthy. But you know what? You got to the point of **מֵרַפָּא לְאִין מֵרַפָּא**,” and Hashem said, “I’m taking away the chance for you to do *teshuvah* and now you’re going to experience *churban habayis*.”¹

The *passuk* says **מֵמֵת בּוֹ רֵגֶל וְעַד רֵאשׁ אֵין בּוֹ מֵתָם** - *from head to foot no spot is sound, all bruises, and welts, and festering sores, not pressed out, not bound up, not softened with oil* (Isaiah 1:6).² Terrible *zachen*. What’s the *pshat* over here? You know what kind of *charon af* (anger) they experienced?

THE FIRST “BREACH”

Now what was the first *cheit*? *Chazal* tell us the first *cheit* transpired in the days of Nevuchadnetzar. Nevuchadnetzar was a uniquely evil fellow. He was one of the few individuals who was **מֶלֶךְ בְּכִיפָה**. Less than a handful of people ruled the entire universe, the entire world from one end to the other end. One of them was Nevuchadnetzar. He was a *ba'al ga'avah* not *stam*. He was an outstanding *shlechte middos mentsch*. But in order to make his *kavod* greater, you know what he decided to do? He decided to build a statue, a statue of himself. You know how high it was? Sixty *amos*. You know how high sixty *amos* is? Minimum 100 feet. Maybe up to 120 feet. And it was very thin. Now, such a statue can’t stand unless you’re going to put one third of it in the ground. Like a telephone pole; otherwise, it doesn’t stand. But he stood it up without it going into the ground at all, and it didn’t fall. How? Through an idol.

This *avodah zarah* was making an announcement all day long. You know what this *pesel* was saying? From its mouth was coming out, **אֲנִכִי הִי אֲלֵקִיד, אֲנִכִי הִי אֲלֵקִיד**. Could you imagine such a thing today? Today we have technology. Today we have electricity. We would understand they put a tape recorder in the thing, but back then, they didn’t have tape recorders.

HOW DID THEY DO THIS TYPE OF SHTICK?

When Nevuchadnetzar destroyed the *Beis Hamikdash*, he cleaned it out and took a lot of *klei kodesh* with him. One of the things he took was the *tzitz*. That was a forehead plate the *kohen gadol* would wear that had the name of Hashem, the *shem hakadosh on it*. What Nevuchadnetzar did was that he put this *tzitz* into the mouth of the *pesel* and that enabled the *pesel* to stand and say these words. It actually spoke.

What was the end of this *pesel*? There was a famous *tzaddik* named Daniel. Nevuchadnetzar brought Daniel to Bavel. This “*groise tzaddik*” wanted to show Daniel this *mofes*. He thought he’s going to be able to *shtick* around with Daniel. Daniel says, “Wow, I’m impressed. I want to climb up there and give him a hug. I want to give him a kiss. Is it possible to arrange that for me?” Nevuchadnetzar hears this and says, “Pshhh! *Norah noraos*.” So they had to proceed to build a ladder that he could go up to the top of the *pesel*. Daniel climbs up there and he takes a look in the mouth and sees the *tzitz*. He says to it, “You should know, you’re being *mechallel shem shamayim*.” Daniel mentioned the name of Hashem and the *tzitz* came out of the mouth of the idol, and he put it in his own mouth. He climbed down the ladder, and all of a sudden boop! The whole *tzelem* fell down and the *tzelem* stopped talking.

You know what kind of damage Nevuchadnetzar did until then? He was *metzaveh* every nation in the universe to come to the *pesel* - even Klal Yisrael. The Yidden had to come. They had to send a *meshlachs* from the entire world. Every single day they had to go into the *chatzer beis hamalchus* where this *tzelem* was standing and they had to be *menagen beklei shir*. They had specific *klei shir* that were very *chashuv* in the time of the *Beis Hamikdash* and he put those *klei shir* there.

Chananya, Mishael and Azarya were the only ones who weren’t *meshtachaveh* to the *pesel*. They said, “We’re not bowing down.” Every nation in the world, even Yidden - a lot of Yidden, bowed to it. Every nation had to have a representation to serve this thing every single day. But these three, Chananya, Mishael and Azarya, were prepared to be burned *al kiddush Hashem*. As we know, Nevuchadnetzar’s men threw Chananya, Mishael and Azariah into a *kivshan haeish* and they were saved *benisim veniflaos*.

It’s a *shaylah* halachically what that *pesel* was. Was it a statue of himself? Was it *avodah zarah*? It doesn’t make a difference. There was a *chillul Hashem befarhesya* (public desecration of Hashem’s Name) to bow down to this thing and therefore Chananya, Mishael and Azarya were prepared to die *al kiddush Hashem*. But they came out alive from the furnace.

The *gemara* says in *Megillah* (12a) that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai asks: Do you want to know why it was *nigzar* in the times of Haman that Klal Yisrael should be wiped out? It happened because they were *meshtachaveh* (bowing down) to the *pesel*, to this *avodah zarah*. They did a terrible thing.³

¹ וְאִפְשֵׁר שֶׁיִּחְטֵא אֲדָם חֲטָא גָדוֹל אוֹ חֲטָאִים רַבִּים עַד שֶׁיִּתֵּן הַדִּין לְפָנָיו דְּיָן הָאֲמַת שֶׁיִּהְיֶה הַפְּרָעוֹן מִזֶּה הַחוּטָא עַל חֲטָאִים אֲלוֹ שֶׁעֲשָׂה בְּרַצוֹנוֹ וּמִדַּעְתּוֹ שֶׁמוֹנֵגִין מִמֶּנּוּ הַתְּשׁוּבָה וְאֵין מִנִּיחוֹן לוֹ רְשׁוּת לְשׁוּב מִרְשָׁעוֹ קִדֵי שֶׁנִּמּוֹת וְיֵאבֵד בְּחֲטָאוֹ שֶׁעֲשָׂה. הוּא שֶׁהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אָמַר עַל דִּי שֶׁעֲשִׂיהוּ (ישעיהו ו) "הִשְׁמֹן לֵב הַעַם הַזֶּה" וְגו'. וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר (דה"ב לו טו) "וַיִּהְיוּ מִלְעָבִים בְּמִלְכָּאֵי הַאֲלֵהִים וּבַזּוֹיִם דְּבִרְיֵי וּמִתְעַתְעִים בְּנִבְאֵי עַד עֲלוֹת חֲמַת ה' בְּעִמּוֹ עַד לְאִין מִרְפָּא". קְלוֹמֵר חֲטָאוֹ בְּרַצוֹנָם וְהִרְבּוּ לְפִשְׁעֵי עַד שֶׁנִּתְחַיְבוּ לְמַלְעֵי מַחֵן הַתְּשׁוּבָה שֶׁהִיא הַפְּרָא. לְפִקְדֵי קְתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה (שְׁמוֹת ד כ"א) "וַיִּצְוֶינִי (אַחֲזָק) [אַקְשָׁה] אֶת לֵב פְּרַעֲהִי". לְפִי שֶׁחֲטָא מִעֲצֻמוֹ תַּחֲלָה וְהִרְעֵ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל הַגֹּרִים בְּאַרְצוֹ שֶׁנִּצְטָמַר (שְׁמוֹת א') "הִבֵּה נִתְחַקְמָה לוֹ". יָתוּן הַדִּין לְמַלְעֵי הַתְּשׁוּבָה מִמֶּנּוּ עַד שֶׁנִּפְרַע מִמֶּנּוּ, וְכֵן

² (מִכֵּף רֵגֶל וְעַד רֵאשׁ אֵין בּוֹ מֵתָם פִּצַּע וְחַבּוּרָה וּמַכָּה טְרִיהַ לֹא זָרוֹ וְלֹא חֲבִישׁוֹ וְלֹא רִכְכָה בַשֶּׁמֶן (ישעיהו א')

³ שֶׁאֵלּוֹ תַלְמִידֵי אֶת רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בְּרִי יוּחָאִי : מִפְּנֵי מַח נִתְחַיְבוּ שׁוּנְאִיהוֹן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁבֹאוֹתָהּ הַדּוֹר כְּלִיהִי : אִמְרוּ לָהֶם : אִמְרוּ אֲתָם . אִמְרוּ לוֹ : מִפְּנֵי שֶׁנִּהְיֶה מִסְעוּדָתוֹ שֶׁל אוֹתוֹ רִשָׁע . אִם כֵּן שֶׁבִּשְׁוֹשׁוֹ יִהְרֹג , שֶׁבְּכֵל הַעוֹלָם כּוֹלֵו אֵל יִהְרֹגוּ ! אִמְרוּ לוֹ : אִמְרוּ אֲתָם ! אִמְרוּ לָהֶם : מִפְּנֵי שֶׁחֲשַׁתְחוּ לְצַלֵּם

BOWING DOWN

Now, the *gemara* points out, don't think for one second that Klal Yisrael actually had any faith or any belief in this thing. They knew it was a joke. They knew it was nonsense. But they did it *mitoch yirah u'pachad* (fear). However, the *gemara* calls it that they worshiped it on the outside.⁴ But you know what happened? It was a great *chillul Hashem* and they didn't do *teshuvah*. We have to know that. I'm sure there were many people who thought they didn't have to do *teshuvah*. They said, "Why should we have to do *teshuvah*? It was a *gezeiras malchus*. We did it *mitoch pachad* (out of fear). Who is going to go against Nevuchadnetzar? He is the leader of the whole entire world. What do you want from us? We'll play along." But the *midas hadin* said, "What? You're not going to be *chozer b'teshuvah* on the *chillul Hashem befarhesya*? You saw Chananya, Mishael and Azarya who weren't *meshtachaveh* (bowing down) and you still had the *chutzpah* to be *meshtachaveh*? What's wrong with you?"

They gave *kedimah* (precedence) to *yiras basar vedam* over *yiras Hashem*, and that was a *cheit* of lacking *emunah*. There was no remorse, there was no arousing of Klal Yisrael to do *teshuvah*. They made a *chillul Hashem befarhesya* (publicly).

Hakadosh Baruch Hu was patient, *Chazal* tell us, but eventually Hashem decided it was time to collect. That was one of the *chataim* that *Chazal* tell us took place. We have to understand this because it's *p'chadim* (scary to think about it). We wouldn't even see this as a severe *cheit*. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu saw this as a *cheit* that is *mechayev misah begezeiras keliyah*, with no return. That was the first *cheit* that they did.

NOT JUST AN IDOL WORSHIP

The second *cheit* they did, was when Achashveirosh took over. Achashveirosh became the *melech* of the world. *Chazal* tell us the guy *mamash* hated Klal Yisrael, more than Haman. Could you imagine what that means to hate Klal Yisrael more than Haman? Besides that, Haman was his *shutaf*. Such a *chavrusa* you're not *zocheh* to every single day. Haman was from the descendants of *Amalek*. Achashveirosh was busy pumping himself up politically, because he used to work with the horses. He came from nothing. Maybe he had a fancy hairdo. Then he was *zocheh* to become the leader of the world. So years before, Achashveirosh and Haman decided to make a decree of the destruction of Klal Yisrael. Before the *ma'aseh* with Mordechai, Haman came to Achashveirosh and he said, "You know what? Let's have a *shmooze*, a discussion." You know in the government they discuss all possibilities, future plans. So he said, "What would we do if someday we're going to want to make a *gezeirah* on Klal Yisrael?" Haman said, "You know, I have a *mesorah* from my *zeida* Amalek. We have an old *cheshbon*." Achashveirosh said, "Nu, nu? What's your plan?" He says, "We can only do this if we're *matzliach* in getting Klal Yisrael to sin, and we've got to get them to commit a type of sin that's going to upset Hashem very much. Hashem is the *av harachaman* but He has *charon af* (anger) too. He gets upset. If we tick Him off, they'll make a *gezeirah* in *shamayim* on Klal Yisrael and we'll be *matzliach*." "So, what's your *eitzah*, Haman?" So you know what he says? - אלקיהם של אלו שונא זימה - "The G-d of this nation hates immorality, He hates *pritzus*" (Esther Raba 7:13).⁵ What do you see from this?

Somebody once asked an interesting question. He said what's *pshat* here? It says in a number of places: אלקיהם של אלו שונא זימה. Wouldn't the god of any religion hate immorality? You'd think the first tenet of any religion in the world would be, to be against immorality! Why does it say אלקיהם של אלו שונא זימה? Was there a *hava mina* that he wouldn't hate immorality?

So a *talmid* of the Vilna Gaon, by the name of Rav Menachem Mendel Shklover, from the city of Shklov, writes: קבלתי ממורי רבי הגאון. You hear this *kabbalah*? He says שיש לו במסורת, he has *bemesores*, איש מפי איש עד הגאונים, a *mesorah* the Vilna Gaon had from the *gaonim*, and they had the *masores* back to Moshe Rabeinu. So it is a message with a very good *mesorah*. שלכל עבודה זרה, each *avodah zarah* had next to it *avodas hazenus* (immorality). With every *avodah zarah* that existed in the world, there always came along with it a *shtickel avodah* of *zenus*. The Vilna Gaon reveals a secret. That's why whenever it talks about *avodah zarah*, you know what it refers to it as? *Zenus*. זנו אחרי הבעלים, it's always about *zenus*. He said, this is because every *avodah zarah* came along with some *zenus*. And that's why Haman said אלקיהם של אלו שונא זימה, the G-d of these Jews, however, is different, He is שונא זימה. All the other types of service, *avodah zarah*, love *zimah*.⁶

THE SEUDAH: HAMAN'S HIDDEN AGENDA

Now you can understand the *pshat* in a *gemara*, a *shvere gemara*. The *gemara* says in *Sanhedrin* (63b) that the only reason why Klal Yisrael worshiped *avodah zarah* was only להתיר להם זנות.⁷ I remember the first time I saw this *gemara*, I said to myself, "What's the *pshat*? *Avodah zarah* is *matir zenus*? What religion in the world allows *zenus*?" Occasionally, you may have religions that do *zenus* in spite of what they believe, but there are *sheva mitzvos*. The *gemara* says the Bnei Noach were גדרו עצמם - *guarded themselves from immorality*. They understood the danger of *zenus*. But this is the *teretz*: once they got into *avodah zarah*, the next step was obvious and tempting. Every *avodah zarah* came with *zenus*. So the Jew said, "I want to try this *avodah zarah*. It's a *gantze geshmak avodah zarah*."

⁴ אמרו לו: וכי משוא פנים יש בדבר! אמר להם: הם לא עשו אלא לפנים - אף הקדוש ברוך הוא לא עשה עמך אלא לפנים. והיינו דכתיב: "כי לא ענה מלבי"

⁵ אמר הקו לאחשׁוירוש אלקיהם של אלו שונא זימה, ועשה להם זנות, ועשה להם משתה ונזר עליהם שׁיבואו כסם ויאכלו וישתו וישעו כרצונם, שׁינאמר (אסתר א, ח): לעשות כרצון איש ואיש

⁶ כתוב ר' מנחם מנדל ז"ל: "קבלתי ממורי רבי הגאון, שיש לו במסורת איש מפי איש עד הגאונים, ולהם היתה מסורת עד משה רבנו שלכל ע"ז היתה על ידה 'עבודת זנות', ולכן בהרבה פסוקים בתנ"ך שמדובר על ע"ז כתוב

לשון "זנו אחרי הבעלים" וכדו', לרמוז שלא רק ע"ז היה שם אלא גם זנות

⁷ אמר רב יהודה אמר רב יודיען היו ישראל בעבודת כוכבים שאין בה ממש ולא עבדו עבודת כוכבים אלא להתיר להם עריות בפרהסיא

So Haman tells Achashveirosh , “I think we should make a party, for you and for your *kavod*, and at a certain time in the party, we should invite everybody from the capital city, including the Yidden, and they should come to the *beis hamelech* and be *meshtatef* in the *seudah*. But the Yidden aren’t going to come *stam azoy*. You have to prepare for them food that is *kasher lemehadrin*.” Interestingly, the Beis Yosef in the *sefer Maggid Meisharim* writes, that the *malach* was *megaleh* (revealed) to the Beis Yosef that even the waiters at Achashveirosh’s party were Yidden who were *shomer Shabbos*. *Azoy shtait en Maggid Meisharim!* The waiters were *shomrei Shabbos*. You know why? So the wine shouldn’t be *yayin nesech*. They didn’t have *pritzusdik* waitresses at that *seudah* like you have today at *chasunos*. They had *shomrei Shabbos* waiters, so the Yidden shouldn’t have any excuse as to why they’re not coming to the party.

Haman advised one more thing: “Have some people who offer service in the middle - the ‘butler service.’ They should appear in the middle of the party and offer to take away the plates. Those are usually *anderer*, the riff raff. Those people should be *nashim prutzos*, *goyishe prutzos*. They should *draise ach arum* (wander around) over there among the men, and that’s going to cause *hirhurim* for the Yidden, and then Hakadosh Baruch Hu is going to be full of anger at them, and we’re going to succeed and our plan will be *nigzar*.”⁸

Could you imagine someone today coming to a *rosh yeshivah* and telling him, “You know, you’re being *machriv* (destroying) *Klal Yisrael*.” Astonished at such a suggestion, the *rosh hayeshiva* exclaims, “How??” So the fellow says, “Because you are making a dinner in a famous hotel.” The *rosh hayeshiva* says, “It’s *aza kiddush Hashem* - what are you talking about?! Instead of having Obama speak from the podium, they have many *roshei hayeshivah* with long beards in attendance. They have the top *kashrus* and top *mashgichim*. They *kashered* the kitchen. They *kashered* it for Pesach before they came in. They have a private kitchen, separate kitchen - *mamish*. What are you saying?!”

I once went to such an affair a long time ago and I asked the *rosh yeshivah* with a *longe bard* (long beard) who was in charge, “What’s with the *kashrus* here?” He said, “*Ich veis nisht* (I don’t know). I’m assuming it’s good.” But in Shushan they had everything *mehadrin min hamehadrin*. It was to trap the yidden, it was not *stam*. When the yidden participated in that feast, they brought a terrible anger on Klal Yisrael.

NO NEED FOR VIDEOS

Haman knew he didn’t have to show movies to them. He didn’t have these screens they install in the bathrooms nowadays, where they snuck in a couple of

bad videos. No, he didn’t have that, because he already knew for sure, all the Yidden would be in the bathroom.

A girl once called me up. She went to this fancy place in Manhattan on a date. They had some kind of video and you could press a button to see different things about New York City, and about the hotel. She sees the *chosson*, with his eyes glued to the video, watching women dancing in a troupe. She came out and she was watching him. She called me up later and she said, “What’s the *pshat*?” I said, “What can I tell you?” It was part of a fancy hotel. They had a little screen there, I guess so that if one person went to the bathroom, the other person shouldn’t be *mevazbez* (waste) his time, so they show you some interesting things on that screen. So I said to her, “Listen, I don’t think he went to watch that video. He saw this screen, he went to see what it was and *memeilah* (automatically) he was *nimshach* and *nigrar*” (drawn to it). Do you hear that? Could you imagine it? This was the *gantze eitzah* of Haman.

RESPONSE TO MORDECHAI’S WARNING

Nu, what happened? Mordechai, who was the *rosh hagalus*, a member of *anshei kenesses hagedolah*, saw all these signs in the street inviting the Yidden to this *seudah* and he saw that everybody had to show up. He didn’t know the background at that point. He came into all the *batei midrashim* and *batei kenessios* and he said, “I read the signs *mita’am hamalchus* and I’m *paskening* for you - do not go to the *seudah* of Achashverosh! I’m telling you it’s *asur*. I can’t tell you ‘how’ and I don’t know ‘what,’ but I know it’s an opening. I know this is a *tachbulah* (strategy) of the *yetzer hara*. He’s trying to set you up to have the *midas hadin* be *mekatreg* (prosecute) us.” Mordechai was the *nasi* of Shevet Binyamin, and he had the *din* of the *rosh hagalus* at that time. He was the leader. But they all went.⁹

You know what happened? The same thing that happened in an earlier generation. The Yidden were *מְלַעְבִּים בְּמַלְאֲכֵי הַהֶלְלִים* - they *mocked the messengers of Hashem* (ibid). So they didn’t listen to Mordechai. They told him, “You want to anger the *melech*? We’re on good terms with Achashveirosh! We don’t want to mess up. The guy is being extreme and if we’re not going to be *mechabed* him, it’s going to be terrible for us. We’ve got to go to the *beis hamalchus*.” Do you know how many Yidden went to that *seudah*? *Chazal* tell us 18,500 Yidden went to that party in spite of Mordechai’s *psak*. No one listened. *אכלו ושתו*, they got *shikur* and *נתקלקלו* (they messed up).

⁸ וי'ל בספר 'מגיד מישרים': 'ועוד דבר תעשה תביא לשם נשים לבושות בפריצות שתסתובבנה בין הגברים וזה כבר יגרום הרהורים ליהודים ואז הקב"ה יתמלא חימה עליהם ואנחנו נוכל לגזור עליהם כאן"
⁹ פירונו שר'אה מרדכי כד עמד והקריז עליהם ואמר להם לא תלכו לאכלל בסעודתו של אחשׁוורוש, שלא הזמין אתכם כי אם ללמד עליכם קטיגוריא, כדי שיהא פתחונו פה עם מדת הדיו לקטרג עליכם לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא, ולא שמעו לקדברי מרדכי והלכו בלם לבית המשתה. אמר רבי יעמאל שמונה עשר אף וחמש מאות הלכו לבית המשתה ואכלו ושתו ונשתכרו ונתקלקלו (במדרש לעיל)

THE SATAN'S PLAN

Now, *Chazal* don't tell us exactly what the *kilkul* was, and a lot of *sefarim* say all kinds of thoughts. But one thing we know from *Chazal*, is that the *prutzos* were *drayen* around over there and the plan was that they should incite the *yidden*: מיד עמד השטן לפני - the Satan got up and said, "Ribono Shel Olam how long are you going to stick with this nation that separates itself from You and doesn't trust in You?" Do you hear this? There were two things said here. First of all, Yidden don't have *emunah* in You. The proof is that previously they went to worship Nevuchadnetzar. They said that was for *kevod hamalchus*. And now, they're going to the party of Achashveirosh, ostensibly for *kevod hamalchus*, to be *mechabed* this horse guy, so as not to tick him off. It's unbelievable! "Ribono Shel Olam," says the Satan, "you know what I think?" אבד אומה זו מן העולם - "Destroy this nation from the world. Wipe them off the map. Erase them. Don't just give them a *klap*. Don't just give them a *potch*. Wipe them out!"

At that point, Hakadosh Baruch Hu asked the Satan: ותורה מה תהא עליה "And who is going to learn Torah? If there are no Yidden, then who is going to learn Torah? Without Torah the world surely won't exist. The world needs Torah to exist." So the Satan was a *chacham* and he said, "Why should You destroy the world? You have the *elyonim, malachim, malachei ma'alah*. They're not going to get involved in any *narishkeit*. They're not going to get involved in any *chataim*. They don't make any *tzaros*. They don't cause a *churban*. They'll be *mekayem* the world. There are enough *chassidim* in *shamayim*, in the *yeshivah shel ma'alah*." You hear this *ta'inah* from the Satan? It's amazing.¹⁰

Chazal tell us very strong things. Listen to the *lashon* of *Chazal*: ישראל את ישראל, when Hashem heard the Satan's *ta'inah*, He agreed to be *mocheh* (obliterate) Yisrael. באותה שעה אמר הקב"ה למה לי אומה - at that moment Hashem said, "Why do I need this nation for? שבשבילה, that for them, I was *marbeh* ומופתי - *My signs and wonders, against anybody who got up against them*. Therefore, אשבתם מאנוש זכרם - *I'm going to wipe out their memory from mankind*." That's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu *paskened* over here in this *ma'aseh* of Haman. Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to the Satan, "Lech, go, bring Me a *megillah*, ואכתוב עליהם כליה, and I'm going to write a *gezeiras keliyah* on them." *Be'oso sha'ah*, it says, the Satan went and brought a *megillah* and Hashem wrote the *gezeiras keliyah* on them.¹¹

ELIYAHU TO THE RESCUE

Now, I want you to know that the above incident transpired a number of years before Haman had his story. Who was present to witness this? Our friend Eliyahu Hanavi. What did he do? He went to the *Avos*. He went to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. He woke them up. They said, "What are you waking us up for?" He told them what was going on. He said, "Your children have a *gezeiras keliyah*! Hashem wrote it out." They said, "For what *cheit*?" He said, "The final kicker was *מסעודת אחשוורוש*." So they said, "What do you want from us?" They turned back over to sleep, *zei gezunt*. We don't want to get mixed in.¹²

So, the Midrash says that Eliyahu went to all the *Avos* first, and finally he came to Moshe Rabeinu. "Moshe Rabeinu," he said, "you were the *roeh ne'eman*. You're the loyal shepherd. You're the one who stood and protected Klal Yisrael when they did terrible things. In *olam hazeh* you were the *meilitz yosher* for them. Please! You're also going to be quiet?" So Moshe said, "Eliyahu, go look in the *megillah*. Go take a peek at that *megillah*. See how it's signed. Is it signed with blood, red ink, or with *tit*, with mud?" What's the *nafka minah*? Moshe said, "If it's *bedam*, it's too late. There's no hope. If it's *betit*, with mud. There's a possibility for a *yeshuah*." Eliyahu came back and told him that the decree was signed *betit*. So Moshe said, "There's a possibility of a *yeshuah*, but it's a small one."

Now, the Midrash says that right after Eliyahu appealed to Moshe Rabeinu, Moshe asked him the following question: כלום יש אדם - *is there anybody righteous who's left in that generation?* This is a *peledike kasha*. They had *nevi'im* among them. At that point, they still had *nevi'im*. They had people who were *anshei kenesses hagedolah*. What's the *pshat* over here? So Eliyahu said, "Yes. There's an *adam kasher*." Who is he? His name is Mordechai. "Oh, Mordechai," he said. "Go tell Mordechai about this *gezeirah, tekef umiyad*, and tell him what's going on in *shamayim*, and when the *g'zeira* will be *tigzar ba'aretz* (come down to earth). He should immediately start to *daven*. That's the only thing you could do. And if he does everything he can do with *tefilah*, then I'm going to be *mamlitz* for them before the *kisei hakavod*." You hear? That's what Moshe Rabeinu said. Unbelievable!¹³

Now this is a *peleh* because we have to ask ourselves - how did the Yidden get out of paying for this *aveirah*? The *gemara* clearly says that they really didn't

¹¹ מיד עמד השטן והלשין עליהם לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא, ואמר לפניו רבונו של עולם עד מתי תדבק באמה זו שהם מקרישין לבבם ואמונתם ממך, אם רצונך אבד אמה זו מן העולם, כי אינם באים בתשובה לפניך. אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא ותורה מה תהא עליה, אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם תסתפק בעליונים, וגם השונה דעתו למחות את ישראל (במדרש לעיל

¹² באותה שעה אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא למה לי אמה שבשבילה הרבייתי אותי ומופתי לכל הקמים עליהם לרעה (דברים לב, כו): אשביתם מאנוש זכרם. מיד אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא לשטן הבא לי מגלה ואכתב עליה קליה. באותה השעה הלך השטן והביא לו מגלה וכתב עליה (במדרש לעיל

¹³ וכו' באותה שעה רץ אליהו וכוור לטוב בבחלה אצל אבות העולם ואצל משה בן עמרם, ואמר להם עד מתי אבות העולם רדומים בשנה ואי אתם משיגיחים על הצרה שבניכם שרויין בה, כי מלאכי השרת נחמה ולבנה וכוכים ומגלות ושמים נארח וכל צבא המרום בוכים במרר, ואתם עומדים מנגד ואינכם משיגיחים. אמרו לו מפני מה, אמר להם מפני שנתנו מסעודתו של אחשוורוש, ובעבור זאת נגזרה עליהם גזרה לבלותם מן העולם ולאבד את זכרם. (אמרו לו אברהם יצחק ויעקב אם הם עברו על דת הקדוש ברוך הוא ונתתם גזרותם, מה אני יכולים לעשות) (במדרש לעיל

¹⁴ אמר לו משה כלום יש אדם פשר באותו הדור, אמר לו יש, ושמו מרדכי. אמר לו לך והודיעו כדי שיעמד הוא משם בתפלה, ואני מכאן, ובקש רחמים עליהם לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא. אמר לו, רועה נאמן, כבר נכתבה אגרת קליה על ישראל. אמר לו משה אם בטיט היא חתומה תפלתנו נשמעת, ואם בדם נחתמה מה שהיה הוא, אמר לו בטיט היא חתומה. אמר לו משה רבנו לך והודיע למרדכי, מיד הלך והודיע למרדכי, הלא הוא דקתיב: ומרדכי ידע את כל לאשר נגשה ויקרע מרדכי את בגדיו, פיון שהידיד לאסתר, מיד ותתחלחל המלכה מאד. מהו ותתחלחל, מלמד שפרקה נדה. (במדרש לעיל

do the *avodah zarah* sincerely. They did this *aveirah* only *klapei chutz*, externally, out of fear. Therefore, there was a *makom* to get saved. If a guy does something out of fear, we would have said that it's nothing! It's *gornisht ken cheit*. We would have said it's not even a *cheit*. It's *klum*. That's what we would have said.

KOSHER HOT-DOG STAND

These are the two *chataim* that Klal Yisrael committed. Number one, they bowed down to the *tzelem* and number two, they were *נהנה מסעודת אחרונה* and they were mixing with the *goyim* at that *seudah*. They went to the ballgames.

I'll never forget. In Cleveland, they once made a *groise hatzlachah*. They made a kosher hotdog stand in the ballpark. It was *mamash* ויקר ושמחה וששון ויקר ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר in Cleveland that day. They *mamash* made it. There was one *rav* sitting there with a *homburg*, a black jacket, and a tie at that game. He was wearing his *homburg* at that event and talking about *Kiddush Hashem*. I was thinking to myself: "What is the *pshat*? Where are we going? Where are we at? What is happening to this world?" You know what kind of *pritzus* there is at these ballgames? Did they forget what happened by *Achashveirosh*? The guys who sell the hotdogs, the people who are running around over there, it's *geferlach*. What is the *pshat*? Oh, but they sing the national anthem. They start off with a little *avodah*, some service. Can everyone stand up please and listen to the *kol islah* singing the national anthem. *Vaiter nachamol*. It's *mamash* unbelievable! People don't *chap* this at all. Today, we don't even look at it as an *aveirah*. You tell a guy that the problem with going to a ballgame is that there are *nashim pritzos* all over. You know how the guy will look at you? "Where do you live? Do you live in this generation? Are you out of your mind?" The guy will come back at you. He says, "Do you walk in the street? Do you do this? Do you do that?" It's unbelievable.

A COURAGEOUS RABBI FROM RIVERDALE

I always say the following *ma'aseh* that I personally witnessed and I am just amazed at it. I was in Young Israel of Riverdale and the *rav* got up on Shabbos and said, "I'm giving my yearly speech that I give every year - my summer speech." I was so happy I was there that Shabbos. He got up and he said, "I have to tell you this again and reiterate. It's *asur* for you to walk in the street from today until the end of the summer. There's no *heter* to look at *pritzus*. You tell me you need *parnasah*. *Parnasah* doesn't *patur* you from this *issur*." I'm thinking to myself, "They're going to shoot this guy!" At the end I was *melamed zechus*. Why didn't they *takah* kill him? I said to myself, "They must have thought he was nuts. They *pashut* thought he was *shikur*. They thought he was on drugs. He gave his yearly speech and they probably thought this guy is a lunatic." He said, "Anybody who wants to know how to go to work should come and ask me a *shaylah*. If you want to take a walk, I'm going to tell you how to take a walk, if you could take a walk, what time you could take a walk, and what time you have to leave your house to go to work, and what time you should come home."

I'm thinking to myself, "*Shrek*." I couldn't believe it! I was amazed. *That was a kiddush Hashem!* What a *zechus* for that rabbi! He should have *arichus yamim veshanim!* Unbelievable. I heard he has *chashuve* children.

WHAT THEY DON'T TELL YOU IN SCHOOL

So the *teretz* is these are two *chataim* that we committed, *Rabosai*. This was the *matzav* that we were in. *Hashem* was *השוה דעתו למחות את ישראל*. That was the *nes*. The *gezeiros* of *Haman* - they don't tell you that in school. In schools, they don't talk about what led to this *gezeirah* and what *chataim* we committed, and the lessons that we have to learn. They don't tell you that. They're afraid. They don't want to scare the little kiddies. They make it sound like all you have to do is have "connections," like knowing *Donald Trump's* daughter, *Ivanka*, she would get you connected even though she doesn't cover her hair, but *af al pi ken* (regardless of that). I saw somebody write about her kids: "*Zise kinderlach. Eidele panem*." This is the story of *Purim*, and this is the story today.

We think an *aveirah* we do *lefnim* (i.e. for the appearance/on the surface) - "Nah, it's okay. It's a chilled out *matzav*. You have to be normal." *Rabosai*, *Hashem* is telling us that when we did an *aveirah lefnim*, He wanted to wipe us out! When you worship *avodah zarah lefnim*, you're still *mechalleh shem shamayim*, and for that *Hashem* is going to wipe you out.

My zeida (*Rav Avigdor Miller, zt"l*) used to rant and rave about this, that you can't go to a *chasunah* if they have waitresses who are not dressed properly. He used to say, "You should be *mevatel* this *gezeirah*. It's a *gezeirah ra'ah* that came to Klal Yisrael." But today who else is there to listen? Someone told me that my *zeida* started talking about it, after he was at my *chasunah* in Cleveland, and was *ne'sorer* to the issue. He usually didn't stay at *chasunos*. He used to go over and say *mazal tov* and leave. Here he sat a little bit. He sat for the *chasunah*, so he *taka* was wondering: "*Vos tutzach*. What's going on, what's happening over here?"

A person has to understand that the *gezeirah* was *chal*. You have to understand that. And in a short time they did *teshuvah*, a very short time. Three days. Three days of *teshuvah*. It's important to understand how they reached that *teshuvah*. What was their *teshuvah*? What was the *eitzah*? *Moshe Rabeinu* said the *eitzah* was one *eitzah*. You've got to *daven*. A person must regret what he did wrong, plus *daven* with sincere prayer to *Hashem*. That's the key. With *teshuvah* and *tefillah* you can change any *gezeirah*.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Torah juxtaposes the issur of malachah on Shabbos, to working for six days beforehand to teach me important lessons. Number one, despite the popular belief that my efforts actively bring me parnassah, my parnassah actually comes to me as a brochah from Hashem. I learn this from the word te'aseh, the work may be done, which is passive. Number two, observing Shabbos properly (as the Ohr Hachaim writes) is the ultimate source of the bracha in my parnassah for the following week! So the best advice to enhance my parnassah, is to enhance my Shabbos observance! Incorporating these lessons in my shemiras Shabbos will not only enable me to keep the heilege Shabbos properly, but will also enhance the kiyum of the world literally, and my own spiritual and physical wellbeing. Ultimately, strengthening how I daven, learn and grow on Shabbos will create a true partnership with Hashem in the ma'aseh Bereishis on an ongoing basis. This is our part in לעשות את השבת, truly making Shabbos great again!