



MEGILLAS ACHDUS

When the Megillah first introduces Mordechai, it singles him out as a Jew. In fact, until Mordechai is introduced, there is no mention of the Jewish people living in Shushan. Our knowledge of the Jewish people in Shushan comes from the Gemara and the midrashim, which teach us that the Jewish people sinned by attending the party of Achashverosh.

The *Sfas Emes* Purim 5641, points out that the introduction to Mordechai is a little strange. Before the Megillah tells us how he arrives in Shushan, it says: “There was a Jew and his name was Mordechai” (2:5). Only after this does the Megillah explain that Mordechai wound up in Shushan because he was exiled along with



Yechonya. Aside from Mordechai’s amazing relationship with Esther, the Megillah does not give us insight into his relationship with the other Jews that he was in exile with. Mordechai seems to spend his time sitting at the gates of the palace, but we are

never told how Mordechai manages to inspire the Jewish people to do teshuva and to accept the Torah.

The *Sfas Emes* points out several important insights that help us understand some of the decisions made by Mordechai and Esther throughout the story. The *Sfas Emes* suggests (based on a midrash *Esther Rabbah* 6:4) that following the original battle of Amalek in Refidim, Hashem promised the Jewish people that as long as they were united, Amalek would have no power over them. This is different than our typical understanding of “*Hakol kol Yaakov vehayadayim yedei Eisav* — The voice is that of Yaakov but the hands are those of Eisav.” Chazal (*Eicha Rabbah*, *Pesicha*) teach us that as long as Bnei

Yisrael are involved in the study of Torah and Avodas Hashem, Eisav has no power over us. This promise, however, also states that Amalek has no power over the Jews when they are united.

When Haman rose to power, it was clearly important to him that everyone respect and acknowledge his power. Haman was desperate to feed his ego and have people bow down to him. When Mordechai refused, Haman acts in a way that appears to be completely irrational and arguably worse than any other anti-Semite in history. One Jew not bowing down to Haman made him want to kill every Jewish man, woman and child in the kingdom of Achashverosh. Why? What did Haman see that was so egregious?

Haman saw a Jew. One Jew. Not one of the rowdy, boisterous Jews who were enjoying the party of Achashverosh, but a Jew quietly going about his business. The Megillah (2:11) tells us that Mordechai checked on Esther every single day because she was an orphan and he was responsible for her. Every day for what was likely four or five years, Mordechai checked in on Esther. Mordechai was the ultimate mensch. He was also completely dedicated to the king, as is proven when he unraveled the plot of Bigsan and Seresh. But Mordechai was alone. He was just one Jew.

Haman recognized an opportunity. Haman was from Amalek and recognized that the only time he could fulfil his purpose of wiping out the Jewish people was when the Jews were not united. Right after Haman saw Mordechai, he did not go to Achashverosh and complain that Mordechai wasn't bowing down. He doesn't try to say that Mordechai is perhaps going to lead a coup against

Achashverosh, similar to what we see in Sefer Shemos when Pharaoh decides to enslave the Jewish people. Haman runs over to Achashverosh and he says that the Jewish people are “*mefuzar umeforad — scattered and dispersed*” (3:8). What kind of a reason would this possibly be to kill out an entire nation?

Haman is not only trying to appeal to Achashverosh, he is appealing to Hashem. Chazal teach us that throughout the entire Megillah there are allusions to Hashem, but Hashem is not mentioned outright. Haman is trying to appeal to Hashem by saying that the Jewish people are divided and scattered. This, Haman tells Hashem, is his opportunity to kill them, because He promised that as long as the Jewish people are not united, Amalek has power over them.

When Mordechai learns of Haman's plot to kill the Jewish people, the Megillah uses very important and purposeful language: “*vayashav Mordechai el Shaar Hamelech — Mordechai returned to the gates of the king*” (6:12). The Gemara in *Megilla* 16a, points out that the word *vayashav* can also have the connotation of *teshuva* — repentance. Why did Mordechai feel the need to do teshuva? He had done nothing wrong. He did not attend the party. He did not bow down to idols. He was a tzaddik.

The answer lies in the fact that Mordechai recognized exactly what Haman was trying to do. Mordechai approaches Esther and in the most dramatic line in the Megillah acknowledges that Hashem will save the Jewish people in some way, but it's up to Esther to decide what her place would be in this story. Esther's reaction is an immediate turnaround.

Esther tells Mordechai right away, “Go gather the Jewish people” (4:16). Salvation of the Jewish people was always going to come from the unification of the Jewish people.

All of the mitzvos of Purim lend themselves to the unification of the Jewish people: Giving baskets of food, giving charity, feasting with our family and friends and the reading of the Megillah. Indeed, the reading of the Megillah should be done in shul with many people because of “*b'rov am hadras Melech*.” Of course, we want all our mitzvos and rituals to be publicized, but none more than the reading of the Megillah, where the whole message is that when we come together, Amalek has no power over us. This is why, after reading the Megillah, we say “*birosam yachad techeiles Mordechai — when they saw together the techeles of Mordechai*.”

Recently, the Jewish people witnessed an incredible unification through the various Siyumei Hashas all over the world. The *achdus* that was felt everywhere was incredible. When Bnei Yisrael came together in the Purim story, they accepted the Torah from Hashem out of love and not out of fear. When the Jewish people gather together for positive reasons, it undoubtedly inspires so many of us to reaffirm our commitment to Hashem and Toras Chaim. May we all experience this Purim ***beyachad*** in order to bring the *binyan Beis Hamikdash*.