

# Ohr Yosef    Yidden are special    Purim p1

Purim is a beautiful and unique Yomtov! We send gifts, share food, drink wine and enjoy ourselves immensely!! What is the reason for all of this happiness, and what thoughts should be in our mind?

To understand this, let us focus a bit on the background. Chazal (Megilla 12a) have a discussion regarding the reason for the Gezeira of Haman. (Bear with me as I translate this Chazal traditionally at first, but at the end we will have a different understanding)

“Why did the Yidden deserve to be destroyed?”

Chazal give 2 answers.

1. מפני שנהנו מסעודתו של אחשוורוש, They ate at Achashveirosh's party.
2. מפני שהשתחוו לצלם בימי נבוכדנצר, They bowed down to Nebuchadnezzar's statue.

The Talmidim asked, “According to the second reason, why were they saved?” In other words, by bowing down to the statue, they did Avoda Zara, which is a capital offense. Reb Shimon bar Yochai responded, “They only sinned externally; so Hashem only inflicted an external punishment!”

This Chazal is difficult to understand!

So what if they ate at the party? They deserve to die for it? What was so terrible at that party?

Rashi says that Mordechai and Haman were the waiters at the party. Both of them were very distinguished people, so it doesn't mean that they were the hired staff. They were the hosts, offering the guests something nice to munch on or a glass of wine. However, Mordechai Hatzaddik surely had better things to do with his time, so why was he there? As we will see, he came as a Mashgiach, making sure that everything was Kosher and proper. So why did they deserve a punishment?

The second reason is also strange. First of all, the situation with statue happened 30-50 years previously. Secondly, the statue was not an actual Avoda Zara , and serving it carries no death penalty (see Tosfos Kesubos 32b, and Rambam Yesodei Hatorah 5:4).

### **The Golus and the Geulah**

Yirmiyahu Hanavi said in the name of Hashem , “After 70 years in Bavel, I will remember you, and you will be able to return to Eretz Yisroel!” At the time of our story, these 70 years were almost over, and Hashem was eagerly anticipating the time that His children would be able to return.

But there was a problem. Unfortunately, many Jews had assimilated, and a significant number had even intermarried with the Goyim. Some of the most prominent and important people were the worst offenders. In the Book of Ezra (Chapters 9-10) we see how significant and widespread the problem had become.

At this rate, it would only be a short time before the entire community would be lost. It seemed that Judaism was doomed. Under these circumstances, there was no way for Hashem to redeem us, because we didn't even want to be redeemed.

### **How did we get to this point? What caused this major downfall?**

I believe that this is the question that Chazal were struggling with! The question wasn't "Why did they deserve to be annihilated?" The question is "How did they reach the point of assimilation so quickly that they would automatically be annihilated?"

There are 2 answers, and both revolve around the same point. As long as we recognize that Yidden are a cut above, that we are a higher class, that we live up to a higher standard, we will not assimilate because we look down upon the silliness and raucousness of the Goyim. But when we consider the Goyim important, when we consider them classy, when we look up to them, we are in immediate danger.

This process was started by Nebuchadnezzar. He wanted everyone to prostrate themselves before his statue, not as an idol, but rather as a sign of servility. Everyone should look up to him, and consider themselves his subjects. After a while, we started feeling that our star has fallen, our glory is a thing of the past, and we started really looking up to the Goyim.

The next phase happened by Achashveirosh's party. The Jews were invited to see the glory of the Goyim. You can have kosher food and drink, as long as you enjoy the party for the honor of the king. The plan was actually to introduce us to the Goyishe women, who somehow found themselves on the men's side. This is why Mordechai had offered his services by the party. He had anticipated that there was some plan afoot. Although he stopped them, and restored the decorum, the seed had been planted. The Jews respected and honored the Goyim, and they had **enjoyed** the party. So, a short time later, they were intermarrying.

How could Hashem save us? There was only one way. We need to see and understand that the Goyim are so rotten and hate us so deeply that we will never want to associate with them. Thus, we will never be assimilated.

This is what is meant by an external problem. The crux of the problem was that we looked at Goyim positively. Through Haman's gezeira this changed. We saw their true colors. We would never want to be like them.

This is why Purim is so important. It is a lesson forever, that we should respect and love our people, even the lowest poor and drunk Jew, and we should stay far away from the Goyim!!

אָרוֹר הָמֶן אֲשֶׁר בָּקֵשׁ לֵאבֹדִי. בְּרוּךְ מְרַדְּכֵי הַיְּהוּדִי  
אֲרוּרָה זָרֵשׁ אֶשֶׁת מִפְּחִידִי. בְּרוּכָה אֶסְתֵּר בַּעֲדִי  
אֲרוּרִים כָּל הָרָשָׁעִים. בְּרוּכִים כָּל הַצַּדִּיקִים