

Between Susa and Jerusalem: Lessons for Purim 5782

In our last shiur, we cited the view of Ibn Ezra, who explained Mordechai and Esther's strategy: The new letter, which could not open cancel Achashverosh's edict, were the "corrected version" of the original letter. This gave the impression that the Jews had a license to destroy their enemies, even though the goal was purely self-defense. The result?

Source 1: Megilat Esther 8:17

<p>יז וּבְכָל-מְדִינָה וּבְכָל-מְדִינָה וּבְכָל-עִיר וָעִיר, מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דְּבַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ וָדָתוֹ מָגִיעַ, שִׂמְחָה וְשִׂשׂוֹן לַיהוּדִים, מִשְׁתָּה וַיּוֹם טוֹב; וְרַבִּים מֵעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ, מִתְּיִהְדִים-- כִּי-נָפַל פַּחַד-הַיְּהוּדִים, עֲלֵיהֶם.</p>	<p>17 And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had gladness and joy, a feast and a good day. And many from among the peoples of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews was fallen upon them.</p>
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What will instill fear into the hearts of men?

Source 2: Devarim Ch. 28

<p>ח יֵצֵא יְהוָה אִתָּךְ, אֶת- הַבְּרָכָה, בְּאַסְמִיךָ, וּבְכָל מַשְׁלַח יָדְךָ; וּבִרְכָּךְ-- בָּאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ.</p>	<p>8 The LORD will command the blessing with thee in thy barns, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto; and He will bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.</p>
<p>ט וַיְקִימֶךָ יְהוָה לְעָם קָדוֹשׁ, כְּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע- לָךְ: כִּי תִשְׁמַר, אֶת- מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וְהִלַּכְתָּ, בְּדַרְכָּיו.</p>	<p>9 The LORD will establish thee for a holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn unto thee; if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in His ways.</p>
<p>י וְרָאוּ כָל-עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ, כִּי שֵׁם יְהוָה נִקְרָא עָלֶיךָ; וַיִּרְאוּ, מִמֶּנִּי.</p>	<p>10 And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the name of the LORD is called upon thee; and they shall be afraid of thee.</p>

11 And the LORD will make thee over-
abundant for good, in the fruit of thy
body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and
in the fruit of thy land, **in the land**
which the LORD swore unto thy
fathers to give thee.

יא והוֹתִירָךְ יְהוָה
לְטוֹבָה, בְּפְרִי בְטָנְךָ
וּבְפְרִי בְהֶמְתָּךְ וּבְפְרִי
אֲדָמָתְךָ--עַל, הָאֲדָמָה,
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה
לְאַבְתֶּיךָ, לָתֶת לָךְ.

✧ What will the nations of the world see?

✧ What is the context of this blessing?

**Sources 3 and 4: Shlah & R. Tzadok make the connection
between the Megilah and Sefer Devarim Ch. 28**

R. Yeshaya Horowitz, Shlah, Parshat Tetzaveh

מרדכי מן התורה מנין (חולין קלט ב), נגד 'השבעתי אתכם' (שיר השירים ב, ז), יעקב
הכין לדורון ולא מצינו שעשה כן, השיב 'ואתה קח לך כו' מר דרור' מרדכי, וזה כתיב
לאחר פרשת שקלים, וכבר אמרו רבותינו ז"ל (מגילה יג ב) אלמלא הקדימו ישראל
כו', ומרדכי סמך על זה. ואמר 'ואתה' כי איתא באסתר רבה (פ"ז סי"ח) שמשה היה
מוכן נגד מרדכי, מרדכי התפלל למטה ומשה למעלה, וכן התחלת התורה על ידי משה
רבינו ע"ה, וקבלוה ברצון על ידי מרדכי. ואז נתקיים 'וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה'
נקרא' (דברים כח, י), 'ורבים מעמי הארץ מתייהדים' (אסתר ח, יז). כלל העולה
החשק והדבוק הכנה למטה והשפעה מלמעלה. ובזה מתורץ תמיהת התוספות (שבת
כב ב ד"ה וכי) על וכי לאורה הוא צריך, עיין לעיל (אות יא) בדרוש מה שכתבתי על דרך
פשט. והכל מבואר היטב, דבקה חשיקה חפיצה. סליק.

R. Tzadok Hakohen, Resisi Laila

ובפורים היה גם כן קצת התגלות אור לעכו"ם כמו שנאמר (אסתר ח, יז) ורבים מעמי
הארץ מתייהדים וגו' ואומר (שם פסוק טז) ליהודים היתה וגו' ויקר ודרשו ז"ל (מגילה
טז ב) אלו תפילין שבראש דראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם וגו' (דברים כח, י) והיינו ראיה
זו דשם ה' נקרא על בני ישראל כמו שכתוב (אסתר ח, יז) כי נפל פחד היהודים עליהם
שלא השיגו שום השגה מגילוי שכינתו יתברך דזה היה אז בהעלם גדול ואין שם
שמים נזכר במגילה כלל שלא היה התגלות ופירסום אלהות לעכו"ם רק פירסום גדלות
היהודים איך הם מושגחים בהנהגה עליונה. כי באמת שכינת השם יתברך עצמו אינו
אלא בלבבות בני ישראל לבד ושבת הוא אות ביני ובין בני ישראל ועכו"ם ששבת חייב
(מיתה).

Shlah: This wordly-based Kabbalat haTorah generates the respect / reverence;
R. Tzadok: The nations revere Hashem when they see Him operating
through His השגחה on the Jewish people.

**Source 5: Sefer Yehoshua Ch. 2 - The inroad into inheriting Eretz
Yisrael is paved with this reverence - אימה**

ח וְהִמָּה, טָרַם יִשְׁכָּבוֹן ; 8 And before they were laid down,
וְהִיא עָלְתָה עֲלֵיהֶם, עַל-הַגֹּג. she came up unto them upon the
roof;

ט וַתֹּאמֶר, אֶל-הָאֲנָשִׁים-- 9 and she said unto the men: 'I know
יָדַעְתִּי, כִּי-נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם that the LORD hath given you the
אֶת-הָאָרֶץ ; וְכִי-נָפְלָה land, **and that your terror is fallen**
אִמַּתְכֶם עָלֵינוּ, וְכִי נִמְגּוּ כָל- upon us, and that all the inhabitants
יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם. of the land melt away before you.

Source 6: Sefer Tehilim Ch. 105

לז וַיּוֹצִיאֵם, בְּכֶסֶף 37 And He brought them forth with
וְזָהָב ; וְאֵין בְּשִׁבְטֵי silver and gold; and there was none that
כוֹשֵׁל. stumbled among His tribes.

לח שָׂמַח מִצְרַיִם 38 Egypt was glad when they
בְּצֵאתָם : כִּי-נָפַל departed; for the fear of them had
פָּחַדָם עֲלֵיהֶם. fallen upon them.

Source 7: Rav Yonatan Grossman:

This allusion makes a dual contribution. Firstly, since chapter 105 of Tehillim is an historical psalm, describing the consolidation of Israel into a nation and God's protection of them, the narrator appears to be seeking to include his story, too, within this historical continuum. **He is telling us, as it were, that God's graciousness towards His nation, so tangibly felt in the Israelites' history, did not end with the nation's entry into the land (the point at which psalm 105 concludes), but continues.**

מב כִּי-זָכַר, אֶת-דְּבַר 42 For He remembered His
קִדְשׁוֹ ; אֶת-אַבְרָהָם עַבְדּוֹ. holy word unto Abraham His
servant;

מג ויוצא עמו בששון; בְּרָנָה, אֶת-בְּחִירָיו. 43 And He brought forth His people with joy, His chosen ones with singing.

מד ויתן להם, ארצות גוים; ועמל לאמים יירשו. 44 And He gave them the lands of the nations, and they took the labour of the peoples in possession;

מה בעבור, ישמרו חקיו-- ותורתיו ינצרו; הללו-יה. 45 That they might keep His statutes, and observe His laws. {N} Hallelujah.

Rav Grossman (cont'd) At the same time, this allusion may conceal a veiled criticism of the Jews of Shushan: The reference to the Exodus directs the reader's attention to the joy of the Egyptians when the Israelites left their land. **In light of this reminder, the reader is left thinking about what should have happened in Shushan, in the wake of the fear that fell upon all of the peoples. In other words, would we not expect that the Jews of Shushan would likewise leave Persia and wander back to their homeland, just as the Israelites left Egypt and began their long journey towards their land?** Against the backdrop of this reading, the reader cannot but sense the criticism underlying this comparison, criticism of the Jews of Shushan who remained in Persia and did not follow the example of their forefathers who, following their salvation from Egypt, made their way to the Land of Canaan and conquered it.

Source 8: History Crash Course #24: Purim in Persia

May 9, 2009 | by Rabbi Ken Spiro

A feast celebrating God's abandonment of Israel puts into motion Haman's plot to annihilate the Jews.

The armies of Medes under Darius and the armies of Persia under Cyrus march into Babylon and conquer it. The Babylonian Empire ceases to exist and it is now absorbed by the new Persian Empire.

So what do we have in that part of the world, just to keep it straight? First Assyria, then Babylon, then Persia — they were all great Mesopotamian empires, one after the other, all interacting with the Jewish people.

In 370 BCE Cyrus issues a decree allowing all the indigenous peoples that had been exiled by the now-defunct Babylonian empire to go back to their homeland. One copy of this decree is on display at the British Museum, and although this version does not specifically mention the Jews, they are included as we learn from the Book of Ezra:

In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, upon the conclusion of the Lord's prophecy, by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord aroused the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, and he issued a proclamation throughout his kingdom – and in writing as well, saying, “Thus said Cyrus the King of Persia, ‘All the kingdoms of the earth has the Lord, God of heaven, given to me and He has commanded me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of His entire people – may his God be with him – and let him go to Jerusalem which is in Judah and build the Temple of the Lord...” (Ezra 1:3)

Going Home

You would think that the Jews would jump up, pack up and go. But that's not what happens. Of what is probably a million Jews living in the empire, only 42,000 go back — only about 5% of those that went into exile 70 years earlier go back and the remaining 95% stays put.

The same thing happened in 1948 when the state of Israel was declared. There were about 12 million Jews in the world at that time and only 600,000 or 5% settled the land. The rest 95% preferred to stay in exile.

Why?

Only about 5% of the Jews that went into exile 70 years before go back to the land of Israel.

The answer is the same for 370 BCE, as it is for 1948, as it is for today. The Diaspora is nice. It's more comfortable to live in Brooklyn or Los Angeles or Toronto than in Israel. Why move if you have a nice big house in America and a nice standard of living and two cars, and you have nice day schools.

This attitude is repeated in Jewish history, and it is a problem. Because God might give the Jews a little breathing space in Diaspora from time to time, but in the long run, He's not going to allow them to stay there.

One of the great patterns we're going to see over and over again is the higher the Jews rise in the Diaspora, the lower they fall. The nicer the Diaspora seems to be at first, the worse the subsequent reaction against the Jews. We see it in Egypt. Jews are invited in, they do well and prosper, and look what happens — they end

up slaves. We see this in Spain. We see this in Germany. All the places that once loved and welcomed the Jews eventually turn on them. Therefore, Jews make a mistake if they ever think that the Diaspora is home. It never works for long. Israel is the only home for the Jews.

The 42,000 Jews that go back in 370 BCE immediately start rebuilding Jerusalem, and, of course, the first thing in Jerusalem that they want to rebuild is the Temple, because a Jew can't live a complete Jewish life without a Temple.

The Samaritans, who never liked the Jews and who hate this new influx, immediately send a message to Persia demanding that the Jews be forbidden to continue building. They say that if the Jews are allowed to rebuild the Temple, they're going to rebel.

And, as a result of their threats, Persia freezes the building permit. For 18 years no construction is allowed. And it is during this period that the Purim story, related in the Book of Esther, takes place.

Meanwhile, Back In Persia

Back in Persia, a new king has replaced Cyrus. His name is Achashverosh, and he is married to Vashti, the sole survivor of the blood-bath in the royal palace of Belshazzar during the Persian invasion (as noted in Part 23).

Achashverosh throws a party reminiscent of the one that Belshazzar had thrown some years before. He, too, has been calculating and he has decided that the 70 years allotted in Jeremiah's prophecy for the Jews to regain the land of Israel is up.

(In truth, Jeremiah prophecy mentions 70 years in different contexts, one referring to when God would "remember" Jerusalem, and another when God would "redeem" Jerusalem. The first 70 years — counted from the initial conquest of Judea — was up when the Jews were allowed to return to the land. The second — counted from the destruction of the Temple — will not be up for another 14 years when the Temple will finally be rebuilt.)

To this feast, Achashverosh invites the Jews and, unbelievably, they come — to "celebrate" their own end. This gives you an idea how far gone were the Jews who opted to stay in the comfort of the Persian Diaspora.

To this feast, the king invites the Jews and, unbelievably, they come to "celebrate" their own end.

Though years before they had "sat by the rivers of Babylon and wept," they had gradually adapted to the comforts of exile to the point that they gradually developed into a positive enjoyment of the pagan way of life and its pleasures. So deep was their desire to fit in that these Jews could actually toast their own public humiliation.

The Bridge between Sefer Yehoshua - נפלה פחדם - and an additional expression in both Sefer Yehoshua and Megilat Esther:

Source 9: Megilat Esther Ch. 9

- א** וּבִשְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ הוּא-חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר, בְּשָׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם בּוֹ, אֲשֶׁר הִגִּיעַ דְּבַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ, לְהַעֲשׂוֹת: בַּיּוֹם, אֲשֶׁר שָׁבְרוּ אֹיְבֵי הַיְּהוּדִים לְשָׁלוֹט בָּהֶם, וְנִהְפֹּךְ הוּא, אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלֹטוּ הַיְּהוּדִים הַמָּה בְּשָׁנְאֵיהֶם.
- ב** נִקְהָלוּ הַיְּהוּדִים בְּעָרֵיהֶם, בְּכָל-מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁירוּשׁ, לְשַׁלַּח יָד, בַּמִּבְקָשִׁי רָעָתָם; וְאִישׁ לֹא-עָמַד לִפְנֵיהֶם, כִּי-נָפַל פָּחַדָם עַל-כָּל-הָעַמִּים.
- 1** Now in the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have rule over them; whereas it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;
- 2** the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt; and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them was fallen upon all the peoples.

Source 10: Sefer Yehoshua Ch. 23

- א** וַיְהִי, מִיָּמִים רַבִּים, אַחֲרֵי אֲשֶׁר-הִנִּיחַ יְהוָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל מָקָל-אֹיְבֵיהֶם, מִסָּבִיב; וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ זָקֵן, בָּא בַּיָּמִים.
- ב** וַיִּקְרָא יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, לְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל--לְזִקְנָיו וּלְרָאשָׁיו, וּלְשֹׁפְטָיו וּלְשֹׁטְרָיו; וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם--אֲנִי זָקֵן נָתִי, בְּאֵתִי בַּיָּמִים.
- ג** וְאַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם, אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לְכָל-הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה--מִפְּנֵיכֶם: כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, הוּא הִנָּלְחָם לָכֶם.
- 1** And it came to pass after many days, when the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, and Joshua was old and well stricken in years;
- 2** that Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders and for their heads, and for their judges and for their officers, and said unto them: 'I am old and well stricken in years.
- 3** And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God, He it is that hath fought for

you.

ד ראו הפלתי לכם את-הגוים הנשארים האלה, בנחלה-- לשבטיכם : מן-הירדן, וכל-הגוים אשר הכרתי, והים הגדול, מבוא השמש. **4** Behold, I have allotted unto you for an inheritance, according to your tribes, these nations that remain, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun.

ה ויהוה אלהיכם, הוא יהדפם מפניכם, והוריש אתם, מלפניכם ; וירשתם, את-ארצם, כאשר דבר יהוה אלהיכם, לכם. **5** And the LORD your God, He shall thrust them out from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God spoke unto you.

ו וחזקתם מאד-- לשמר ולעשות, את כל-הכתוב בספר תורת משה : לבלתי סור-ממנו, ימין ושמאל. **6** Therefore be ye very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left;

ז לבלתי-בא בגוים האלה, הנשארים האלה אתכם ; ובשם אלהיהם לא-תזכירו, ולא תשביעו, ולא תעבדום, ולא תשתחוו להם. **7** that ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor worship them;

ח כי אם-ביהוה אלהיכם, תדבקו, כאשר עשיתם, עד היום הזה. **8** but cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day;

ט ויורש יהוה מפניכם, גוים גדלים ועצומים ; ואתם, לא-עמד איש בפניכם, עד, היום הזה. **9** wherefore the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and mighty; **but as for you, no man hath stood against you unto this day.**

Sefer Yehoshua Ch. 41

מא ויתן יהוה, לישראל, את-כל-הארץ, אשר נשבע לתת לאבותם ; וירשוה, וישבו בה. **41** So the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

מב וינח יהוה להם מסביב, ככל אשר-נשבע לאבותם ; ולא-עמד איש בפניהם, מפל-איביהם-- **42** And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that He swore unto their fathers; **and there**

את כל-איביהם, נתן יהוה בידם. stood not a man of all their enemies against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

מג לא-נפל דבר--מכל הדבר הטוב, אשר-דבר יהוה אל-בית ישראל: הכל, בא. {פ} 43 There failed not aught of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. {P}

Source 11: Megilat Esther Ch. 9

יז ביום-שלושה עשר, לחדש אדר; ונוח, בארבעה עשר בו, ועשה אותו יום משתה ושמחה. 17 on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, and on the fourteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

יח והיהודיים (והיהודים) אשר-בשושן, נקהלו בשלושה עשר בו, ובארבעה עשר, בו; ונוח, בחמשה עשר בו, ועשה אותו יום משתה ושמחה. 18 But the Jews that were in Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

יט על-כן היהודים הפרושים (הפרזים), הישבים בערי הפרזות--עשים את יום ארבעה עשר לחדש אדר, שמחה ומשתה ויום טוב; ומשלח מנות, איש לרעהו. 19 Therefore do the Jews of the villages, that dwell in the unwalled towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

כ ויכתב מרדכי, את-הדברים האלה; וישלח ספרים אל-כל-היהודים, אשר בכל-מדינות המלך אחשורוש--הקרובים, והרחוקים. 20 And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far,

כא לקים, עליהם--להיות עשים את יום ארבעה עשר לחדש אדר, ואת יום-חמשה עשר בו: בכל-שנה, ושנה. 21 to enjoin them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly,

כג וקבל, היהודים, את אשר-החלו, לעשות; ואת אשר-כתב מרדכי, אליהם. 23 And the Jews took upon them to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them;

כו קימו וקבל (וקבלו) היהודים עליהם ועל-זרעם ועל כל-הנלוים עליהם, ולא יעבור--להיות עשים את 27 the Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that

שְׁנֵי הַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה, כְּכַתְּבָם
וְכִזְמָנָם: בְּכָל-שָׁנָה, וְשָׁנָה.

they would keep these two days according to the writing thereof, and according to the appointed time thereof, every year;

כֹּט וְתַכְתֵּב אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה בַת-
אֲבִיחַיִל, וּמֹרְדֵכַי הַיְּהוּדִי--אֶת-כָּל-
תַּקְוָּה: לְקַיֵּם, אֶת אֲגֻרַת הַפָּרִים
הַזֹּאת--הַשְּׁנִית.

29 Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote down all the acts of power, to confirm this second letter of Purim.

ל וַיִּשְׁלַח סְפָרִים אֶל-כָּל-הַיְּהוּדִים,
אֶל-שֶׁבַע וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה--
מִלְּכוּת, אֲחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ: דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹם,
וְאֶמֶת.

30 And he sent letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,

לֹא לְקַיֵּם אֶת-יָמֵי הַפָּרִים הָאֵלֶּה
בְּזִמְנֵיהֶם, כְּאֲשֶׁר קִיָּם עֲלֵיהֶם מֹרְדֵכַי
הַיְּהוּדִי וְאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה, וְכְאֲשֶׁר קִיָּמוּ
עַל-נַפְשָׁם, וְעַל-זִרְעָם: דְּבָרֵי
הַצּוּמוֹת, וְזַעֲקָתָם.

31 to confirm these days of Purim in their appointed times, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had ordained for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry.

לִב וּמֵאֱמָר אֶסְתֵּר--קַיָּם, דְּבָרֵי
הַפָּרִים הָאֵלֶּה; וְנִכְתָּב, בַּסֵּפֶר. {ס}

32 And the commandment of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book. {S}

Source 12: Ibn Ezra

וטעם אמת שהם חייבים לשמור הפורים כאשר קבלו על נפשם והעד על זה הפי' שהוא
אמת ומאמר אסתר קיים דבר הפורים, והנה לא נתקיים על יד מרדכי לבדו עד
שכתבה אסתר. וטעם קיימו על נפשם ועל זרעם דברי הצומות על דעת רבים על יום
תענית אסתר... ולפי דעתי שחכמינו ז"ל קבעו התענית יום הפחד, וטעם דברי הצומות
על הנזכרים בספר זכריה שהן בתמוז ואב ותשרי וטבת והטעם כי קיימו היהודים על
נפשם לשמור בימי הפורים כאשר קיימו על נפשם ועל זרעם להתענות בימי אבלם
כאשר הובקעה העיר ונשרף הבית

The meaning of [the phrase], 'Established for themselves and for their descendants concerning the fasts and the lamentations' is, according to many, the day of the Fast of Esther... but to my mind... **'the fasts' refers to the fasts mentioned in the Book of Zekharya, which occur in the months of Tammuz, Av, Tishrei and Tevet.** What this means is that the Jews took upon themselves to celebrate the days of Purim just as they had taken upon themselves and upon their descendants to fast on the days of their mourning, when the walls of the city [of Jerusalem] were breached and the Temple was burned."

- ✧ What's the advantage of interpreting the fasts in question - locally - as referring to the fasts that Mordechai and Esther initiated (as we did in one of our shiurim 2 weeks ago: Feasting and Fasting in Megilat Esther?)
- ✧ What's the disadvantage of interpreting the fasts this way?

Source 13: Sefer Zecharia Ch. 8

יח וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, אֵלַי לֵאמֹר. **18** And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying:

יט כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, צוֹם הָרְבִיעִי וְצוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי וְצוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְצוֹם הָעֲשִׂירִי יִהְיֶה לְבֵית-יְהוּדָה לְשִׂשׂוֹן וּלְשִׂמְחָה, וּלְמַעֲדִים, טוֹבִים; וְהָאֵמֶת וְהַשְּׁלוֹם, אֶהְבֹּ. {פ} **19** 'Thus saith the LORD of hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful seasons; therefore love ye truth and peace. {P}

- ✧ *By linking Purim to these fasts, what are Mordechai and Esther demonstrating?*

A reminder of Megilah Ch. 9...

יט עַל-כֵּן הִיְהוּדִים הַפְּרוּזִים (הַפְּרֻזִּים), הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּעָרֵי הַפְּרוּזוֹת--עֹשִׂים אֶת יוֹם אֲרַבְעָה עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ אָדָר, שְׂמִיחָה וּמִשְׁתָּה וְיוֹם טוֹב; וּמִשְׁלַח מְנוֹת, אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ. **19** Therefore do the Jews of the villages, that dwell in the unwall'd towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

Source 14: Sefer Devarim Ch. 3

ג וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּיָדֵנוּ, גַּם אֶת-עוֹג מֶלֶךְ-הַבָּשָׁן--וְאֶת-כָּל-עַמּוֹ; וַנַּכֵּהוּ, עַד-בִּלְתִּי הֵשָׁאִיר-לוֹ שְׂרִיד. **3** So the LORD our God delivered into our hand Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people; and we smote him until none was left to him remaining.

ד וַנִּלְכַּד אֶת-כָּל-עָרָיו, בְּעֵת הַהוּא--לֹא הָיְתָה קִרְיָה, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-לָקַחְנוּ מֵאֲתָם: שְׁשִׁים עִיר כָּל-חֵבֶל אֲרָגֹב, מִמְּלַכַת עוֹג בְּבָשָׁן. **4** And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we took not from them; threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

ה כל-אלה ערים בָּצֻרֹת, חוֹמָה גְבוּהָהּ--דָּלְתִים וּבָרִים: לְבַד מֵעָרֵי הַפְּרָזִי, הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד. 5 All these were fortified cities, with high walls, gates, and bars; **beside the unwalled towns a great many.**

What could the narrator of the Megilah hinting at by using this term?

Rav Yonatan Grossman: The question of whether all Jews must make special commemoration of the salvation of the Jews of Shushan is connected to the profound tension between the Jews of the land of Israel at the beginning of the Second Temple period, who have returned to their ancestral land with great self-sacrifice and are now fighting for the survival of the Jewish center in that land, and the Jewish center in Persia, embodied in our narrative in the person of Mordekhai. Mordekhai, second-in-command to the Persian king, wants the entire Jewish nation to make special commemoration of the salvation of those Jews who have chosen not to leave the comforts of Persia and return to the land of Israel. It is not difficult to understand the reservations of the Jews in the land of Israel regarding such an initiative.

... However, this (observing **both** days of Purim) is not the custom as we know it today. Jewish law stipulates that in cities that were surrounded by a wall at the time of Yehoshua, Purim is celebrated on the 15th of Adar, while in other places it is celebrated on the 14th.

Source 14: Mishna Megilah 1:1

מְגִלָּה נִקְרָאת בְּאַחַד עָשָׂר, בְּשְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר, בְּשִׁלְשָׁה עָשָׂר, בְּאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר, בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר, לֹא פָחוֹת וְלֹא יוֹתֵר. בְּרִכּוּן הַמִּקְפִּין חוֹמָה מִיָּמֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון, קוֹרִין בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר. כְּפָרִים וְעִירוֹת גְּדוּלוֹת, קוֹרִין בְּאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר, אֲלֹא שֶׁהַכְּפָרִים מְקַדִּימִין לְיוֹם הַכְּנִיסָה

The Megilla is read on the eleventh, on the twelfth, on the thirteenth, on the fourteenth, or on the fifteenth of the month of Adar, not earlier and not later. The mishna explains the circumstances when the Megilla is read on each of these days. **Cities [kerakin] that have been surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, son of Nun, read the**

Megilla on the fifteenth of Adar, whereas villages and large towns that have not been walled since the days of Joshua, son of Nun, read it on the fourteenth. However, the Sages instituted that the villages may advance their reading to the day of assembly, i.e., Monday or Thursday, when the rabbinical courts are in session and the Torah is read publicly, and the villagers therefore come to the larger towns.

Source 15: Talmud Megilah 2b

מִתְּנִיתִין דְּלֹא כִּי הָאֵי תַנָּא. דְּתַנָּא, רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻעַ בֶּן קִרְחָה
אָמַר: כָּרְכִין הַמּוֹקְפִין חוֹמָה מִיָּמֹת אַחֲשֵׁירוּשׁ קוֹרִין
בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר

§ The Gemara notes that the mishna is not in accordance with the opinion of this tanna, as it is taught in the Tosefta (1: 1) that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korla says: Cities that have been surrounded by a wall since the days of Ahasuerus read the Megilla on the fifteenth. According to the Tosefta, the status of walled cities is determined based upon whether they were walled in the time of Ahasuerus rather than the time of Joshua.

מֵאֵי טַעְמָא דְּרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻעַ בֶּן קִרְחָה? כִּי שׁוֹשָׁן. מָה שׁוֹשָׁן
אָף — מּוֹקֶפֶת חוֹמָה מִיָּמֹת אַחֲשֵׁירוּשׁ וְקוֹרִין בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר
כֹּל שֶׁמּוֹקֶפֶת חוֹמָה מִיָּמֹת אַחֲשֵׁירוּשׁ קוֹרִין בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר

The Gemara asks: What is the reason for the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korkha? The Gemara explains that the Megilla is read on the fifteenth in cities that are like Shushan: Just as Shushan is a city that was surrounded by a wall since the days of Ahasuerus, and one reads the Megilla there on the fifteenth, so too every city that was walled since the days of Ahasuerus reads the Megilla on the fifteenth.

וְתֵנָּא דִּידוֹ, מַאי טַעְמָא? יְלִיף "פְּרָזִי" "פְּרָזִי". כְּתִיב הָכָא:
 "עַל כֵּן הִיְהוּדִים הַפְּרָזִים", וְכִתִּיב הָתָם: "לְבַד מַעְרֵי הַפְּרָזִי
 הָרַבָּה מְאֹד". מָה לְהֵלֵן מוֹקֶפֶת חוֹמָה מִימֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון,
 אֲף כָּאן מוֹקֶפֶת חוֹמָה מִימֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון

The Gemara asks: What is the reason for the opinion of the tanna of our mishna? The Gemara explains: It is derived through a verbal analogy between one instance of the word unwalled and another instance of the word unwalled. It is written here: "Therefore the Jews of the villages, who dwell in the unwalled towns" (Esther 9:19), and it is written there, in Moses' statement to Joshua before the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisrael: "All these cities were fortified with high walls, gates and bars; besides unwalled towns, a great many" (Deuteronomy 3:5). Just as there, in Deuteronomy, the reference is to a city that was surrounded by a wall from the days of Joshua, son of Nun, so too here it is referring to a city that was surrounded by a wall from the days of Joshua, son of Nun.

Source 16: Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Megilah:

**פְּרָזִים הַמוֹקֶפֶת חוֹמָה מִימֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון קוֹרִין בְּחֻמְשָׁה
 עָשָׂר. רַבִּי סִימּוֹן בֶּשֶׁם רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי. חִלְקוּ כְבוֹד לְאַרְצָא
 יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁהִיְתָה חֲרִיבָה בְּאוֹתָן הַיָּמִים וְתָלוּ אוֹתָהּ מִימֹת
 יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון. וַיִּקְרְאוּ הַכֹּל בְּחֻמְשָׁה עָשָׂר. רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ דְרֵשׁ
 יְשִׁיבָה יְשִׁיבָה. מָה יְשִׁיבָה שְׁנֵאמַר לְהֵלֵן מִימֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון
 אֲף יְשִׁיבָה שְׁנֵאמַר כָּאן מִימֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון. וַיִּקְרְאוּ הַכֹּל
 בְּאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר. רַבִּי יוֹדָה בַּר פָּזִי דְרֵשׁ פְּרָזִי פְּרָזוֹת. נֶאֱמַר כָּאן
 פְּרָזוֹת וְנֶאֱמַר לְהֵלֵן לְבַד מַעְרֵי הַפְּרָזִי הָרַבָּה מְאֹד: מָה פְּרָזִי
 שְׁנֵאמַר לְהֵלֵן מִימֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון אֲף פְּרָזִי שְׁנֵאמַר כָּאן
 מִימֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון.**

"Places walled from the days of Joshua bin Nun read on the Fifteenth."
 Rabbi Simon in the name of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi: They honored the Land of Israel which was desolate in those days and attached it to the days of Joshua bin Nun. Then should not everybody read on the Fifteenth? Rabbi Abbahu analyzed "dwelling, dwelling". Since "dwelling" mentioned there refers to the days of Joshua bin Nun, so also "dwelling" mentioned here refers to the days of Joshua bin Nun³². Then should not everybody read on the Fourteenth? Rabbi Jehudah bar Pazy analyzed "open, openness." It is said here "openness" and it said there³³ except for very many open towns. Since "open" mentioned there refers to the days of Joshua bin Nun, so also "openness" mentioned here refers to the days of Joshua bin Nun³⁴.

Source 17: Sefer Devarim Ch. 12

**וְעָבַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּשְׁבְּתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
מְנַחֵל אֶתְכֶם וְהָלִיךְ לָכֶם מִכָּל־אֹיְבֵיכֶם מִסָּבִיב וַיִּשְׁבְּתֶם־
בְּטָח:**

When you cross the Jordan and settle in the land that your God is allotting to you, and [God] grants you safety from all your enemies around you and you live in security

Source 18: Rambam, Hilchot Megilah Ch. 1

**שׁוֹשֵׁן הַבִּירָה אֵף עַל פִּי שְׁלֹא הִיתָה מוֹקֶפֶת חוֹמָה בִּימֵי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
בֶּן נֹון קוֹרְאִין בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עֶשֶׂר שָׁבָה הִיא הֵנֶס שְׁנֵאמַר +אִסְתֵּר
ט' + וְנוּחַ בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עֶשֶׂר בּו', וְלָמָּה תֵּלּוּ הַדָּבָר בִּימֵי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כְּדִי
לְחִלּוֹק כְּבוֹד לָאָרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁהִיתָה חֲרֵבָה בְּאוֹתוֹ הַזְּמַן, כְּדִי
שִׁיְהִי קוֹרְאִין כַּבְּנֵי שׁוֹשֵׁן וַיַּחֲשִׁבוּ כְּאִילוֹ הֵן כִּרְכִּין הַמוֹקֶפִין
חוֹמָה אֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁהֵן עֲתָה חֲרֵבִין הוֹאִיל וְהִיוּ מוֹקֶפִין בִּימֵי
יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיְהִיָּה זְכוֹרֹן לָאָרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֶס זֶה**

Source 19: “Esther and Yosef” - R. Yonatan Grossman and Dr. Yehoshua Reiss

Two Biblical stories that have much in common are Megillat Esther and the story of Joseph in Egypt. The broad outlines of the stories similar – a Jewish man and a Jewish woman rise to power in a foreign land and use their respective positions to save their people. Significantly, the megillah carefully makes use of language borrowed from the Joseph story in order to emphasize the parallels between the two stories. This idea was previously noted in Esther Rabbah 7:

Rabbi Yohanan in the name of Rabbi Binyamin bar Rabbi Levi: The children of Rachel experience similar challenges and rise to similar prominence. Their challenges are similar as we find

written: “Now as she spoke to Joseph day after day” ([Genesis 39:10](#)) and here it is written: “Now as they had spoken to him day after day” ([Esther 3:4](#))...

Their rise to prominence is similar, as we find written: Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand ([Genesis 41:42](#)) and here it is written “The king took off his signet ring which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai” ([Esther 8:2](#)). There it is written “And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they proclaimed before him, ‘Bow the knee’” ([Genesis 41:43](#)) and here it is written: “bring him to ride on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king wishes to honor” ([Esther 6:9](#)).

These connections hint to an idea that remains hidden in Megillat Esther, but is clearly spelled out in the story of Joseph. Just as God protected Joseph in Egypt and ensured his success, God is the One who protected Esther in Persia and ensured her success.

It is possible that there is another message to be found in the careful use of language in the megillah. One of the explanations offered by the Sages as to why we do not recite Hallel on Purim is that the redemption was incomplete at that time. Saved from annihilation, the Jews of Persia remained the servants of Ahashverosh (TB [Megillah 14a](#)). Even after the redemption of Purim, the Jews remained in the distant Diaspora and did not return to the Land of Israel. The connection to the story of Joseph in Egypt reminds the reader of the continuation of that story – the subjugation and slavery of the Israelites in Egypt. Even if there is a prominent Jewish leader serving in the non-Jewish government, there is no guarantee of the safety and security of the Jewish people in the Diaspora. There is always the possibility that a new Haman will rise to power – an individual who “does not know Joseph.”