

דברי תורה

פרשת תצוה

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פורים

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ואתה תצוה את בני 27:20

ישראל ויקחו אליך שמן זית זך

”כתית למאור, להעלות נר תמיד”

“Now you shall command

the B’nei Yisroel that they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil, for illumination, to kindle the lamp continually.” Why specifically was olive oil needed for the Menorah? This week is Parshas Zochor – what is the connection between this Parshah and Parshas Zochor? The following Divrei Torah will expound on this topic, and support the P’shat offered in the closing paragraph.

ואתה תצוה את בני 27:20 – בן איש חי

Why was specifically Shemen Zayis, olive oil, chosen for the Menorah, when there are plenty other oils that produce a clear, pure light? Additionally, the Gemara in Brochos 57a says that if someone sees olive oil in a dream, he should anticipate the light of Torah. Why does olive oil, that which comes from a bitter fruit, represent the light of Torah, as opposed to a different sweet fruit? Why wouldn’t any oil which brings forth light represent the light of Torah?

There is a story brought down in the Tana D’vei Eliyahu Zuta 2:22 about a Talmid of Rebbe Akiva, who was so great that he sat at the front of the 24,000 Talmidim, and he as well would teach them Torah. One day he went out into the marketplace, and he saw a beautiful Jewish lady who was acting immorally. The Satan caused him to have a desire to be with her, and he sent a messenger to her setting a time for them to meet that night. A few hours prior to the time they were to meet, due to her great joy that she was going to be with this man, she decided to go to the Bais Medrash so that she could see the face of this man before he comes to her. She went onto the roof of the Bais Hamedrash and saw that he was sitting at the head of all these 24,000 Talmidim, like a great minister of a great army, a great glow coming from his face, and the Malach Gavriel sitting to his right. She immediately said in her heart: “Woe to that woman, for certainly all the afflictions of Gehinom will certainly be prepared for she who caused this great man to sin. Should such a great man such as this, who is compared to a Malach, should defile himself by being with her? Certainly, after she dies, she will inherit Gehinom. However, if she does not sin with him, she will be saving the holy man and herself from Gehinom.” She

decided right then and there that she would not sin with him, and that going forward she would no longer sin with any man. She went to her home and waited for the man to come to her, as scheduled. When he came, she asked him, “Why are you willing to give up your life in Olam Habah, for this momentary pleasure in Olam Hazeh?” The man still wanted to sin with her. She did something which she knew would be repulsive to him, and he thus lost his desire to be with her. He returned to his Torah with Kedusha and Taharah, and never came close to sinning like that again. A Bas Kol came forth from Shomayim and said, “That woman and that man are prepared for a life of Olam Habah.”

What are we to learn from this story? The Satan sought to have this holy man sin, so that he would lose all of his Torah, Chas V’sholom. However, the power of the Torah within protected him from falling into that deep dark pit that the Satan dug for him. Chazal tell us that learning Torah Lishma protects a person from the Yetzer Hara. We still need to wonder why Hakodosh Boruch Hu saved this Talmid in such a peculiar way? Why did He make her go to the Bais Medrash to see the Talmid? Why was she Zoche to see the glow of Torah on the face of the Talmid, and why was she Zoche to see the Malach Gavriel sitting on his right? Why didn’t the Torah just protect him, so that the woman was never near him, and that he should have no desire for her? Hakodosh Boruch Hu specifically saved him in this fashion to show us the power of the Torah, that the Zechus of his learning was able to turn bitter to sweet, and darkness to light. This woman, who was exceedingly bitter, and sought to make others Tamei, she herself turned sweet and assisted the Talmid in staying pure, and refraining from sin. The Arizal discusses this concept at length in his Hakdamah. Avrohom Avinu was fathered by Terach, one who served idols. Not only that, but the Satan sought to create as much Tumah as possible for Avrohom Avinu; Terach’s wife was a Nidah when Avrohom was conceived. The Satan tried to bring as much Tumah as possible upon Avrohom, and he hoped in this way he would overpower the holy Neshama of Avrohom Avinu. However, Hakodosh Boruch Hu knew what the Satan was trying to do and did not allow him to accomplish that which he wanted. Hakodosh Boruch Hu helped Avrohom’s Neshama, and

Avrohom converted to Judaism, and he served Hakodosh Boruch Hu faithfully. Not only that, but Avrohom got his father, his relatives, and thousands of others to convert. He took them away from the Satan. In the story above, the Satan used this woman to try to bring Tumah upon the holy Talmid. Not only did his plan not work, but in the end, the woman who had caused so many to sin, also turned away from evil, and completely removed herself from sin. Olives are bitter and when crushed and turned into oil become sweet. That is why the Torah is specifically compared to olive oil, because the power of Torah can take that which is completely bitter and dark, and turn it into something sweet and produces the greatest light.

ואתה תצוה את בני 27:20 – עוד יוסף חי

Why was he called, “Moshe Rabbeinu” – “Moshe our Rebbe” as opposed to the way we call others, with the title first – he should be called, “Rabbeinu Moshe?” The Gematria of the name, “משה” is equal to “א-ל-ש-ד-י” – the Names of Hashem which reign in the Olam of בריאה, and that was where Moshe Rabbeinu was Mekabel the Torah. Moshe was first Mekabel the Torah Hakdosha, and then he taught it to Klal Yisroel. He is called, “Moshe Rabbeinu” for first he was “Moshe” – he was Mekabel the Torah, and then he became “Rabbeinu” the teacher of Klal Yisroel.

את בני 27:20 – ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

From the entire Klal Yisroel – Torah study is to be the general concern of the entire nation and not the special concern of an elite social class in Klal Yisroel. The “oil” of the entire nation is to be offered for the light of the Torah, and the Menorah symbolizes the tree of life of the national spirit, not of the priestly spirit. The proof to this is in the actual Avodah. It is only the הטבת הנרות – the cleaning out of the Neiros, providing the means for obtaining the light daily and attending to the proper condition of the lamps and wicks so that they produce a clear bright light – that is considered עבודת כהונה – the Avodah of the Kohanim, whereas the actual lighting of the Menorah is not part of the Avodas Kehunah. As the Gemara in Yuma 24b and the Rambam in Hilchos Bias Hamikdash 9:7 says that if necessary, the lighting of the Menorah may be performed even by a non-Kohen.

ואתה 27:20 – מלוש לשבת ויום טוב

– The Trop on these words are, גרשיים, מונה, מונה, רביעי, There is

a Remez in these Trop to the way one is to serve Hakodosh Boruch Hu through Torah and Tefilah. Shabbos 101b – “משה שפיר” – “קאמרת” – “Moshe, you said good.” Moshe here is used for every Talmid Chochom, for Moshe Rabbeinu had the knowledge of the entire Torah, and of all of Klal Yisroel, and one who is a Talmid Chochom has a Bechina of Moshe Rabbeinu within him. Even in today's days, when one truly toils in Torah and seeks to truly understand it and follow it, he is given the intelligence to learn it and serve Him, and each person on his own level can be Zoche to have a Bechina of Moshe Rabbeinu. As it says in the Zohar Hakodosh, that Moshe Rabbeinu is spread out throughout every generation. “ואתה תצוה” – Hakodosh Boruch Hu is telling Moshe Rabbeinu – and You must spread yourself out to all future generations so that Klal Yisroel can have an attachment to the Torah Hakdosha. The Trop on top of the word תצוה is גרשיים, which comes from a Loshon of “כי גרשוני היום” (Shmuel 1:26:19) “for he has driven me away” – meaning that Moshe was sent away and spread out through each and every generation to assist Klal Yisroel to have that attachment to the Torah Hakdosha. The next Trop are מונה, מונה which these Trop are on the bottom of the word, (as opposed to the גרשיים, and the רביעי, which are on top of the word) which means that Klal Yisroel should be exceedingly humble in their service to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. The next Trop is the רביעי, which is on top of the word, and is meant to look like a roof on top of the word, as a Remez that if one serves Hakodosh Boruch Hu properly, as stated, then he will be Zoche to have the Shechina envelope him like a protective covering.

משה – It says in Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer Perek 44 – One Posuk says “זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק” – “Remember what Amalek did to you” and another Posuk says, “זכור את יום השבת לקדשו” – “Remember the day of the Shabbos to sanctify it.” How can one be Mekayeim both of them? This one is Zochor, and this one is Zochor. Moshe Rabbeinu told Klal Yisroel, one cannot compare a cup of special delicious wine, to a cup of vinegar. This one is to be remembered to heed it and sanctify it, and this one is to remember to destroy and eradicate it. What do these words of the Pirkei D'rebbe Eliezer mean?

It says in the Sefer עצי חיים regarding the Mitzvah of Mechiyas Amalek,

that Amalek perpetrated two evils. One was that they sought to harm Klal Yisroel and went to battle with them. The second and the main evil was that they infringed on the Kovod of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, for Hakodosh Boruch Hu's Name and throne are not complete until the descendants of Amalek will be completely eradicated. The effect upon Klal Yisroel can easily be felt, as Klal Yisroel are still in a bitter Golus, however the effect on the Kovod of Hakodosh Boruch Hu is not as easily felt and recognized by Klal Yisroel. “זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק” – Remember what Amalek did to – “you” – the damage it did to Klal Yisroel, and then the Posuk adds, “תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים” – that the main thing that Klal Yisroel are to focus on is to eradicate Amalek so that the Kovod of Shomayim becomes complete. There are also two parts to Shabbos Kodesh, as the Posuk says, “אך את שבתותי תשמורו” – two aspects of Shabbos. One part of Shabbos is called, “Shabbos Lashem” – and that is that Shabbos was given to Klal Yisroel so that they could praise Hashem and learn the Torah Hakdosha. The second part of Shabbos is called, “Shabbos Lachem” – Shabbos for Klal Yisroel, that they are to enjoy the Shabbos and delight in it. The דגל explains on the words from Zemiros Shabbos, “כל זרע יעקב יכבדוהו כדבר” – “עדת ישראל יעשו אותו המלך ודתו, לנוח בו ולשמוח בתענוג אכול ושתו, כל לנוח בו” – The name Yaakov refers to Klal Yisroel on a lower level, while the name Yisroel refers to Klal Yisroel on a higher level. The lower level, is לנוח בו – to rest and have enjoyment of eating and drinking on Shabbos – as it begins with “Yaakov.” Then it ends with, “כל עדת ישראל יעשו אותו” – Yisroel – the higher level, is to elevate yourself on Shabbos Kodesh for Hashem, by sanctifying yourself with Torah and Mitzvos.

We now understand that both the Mitzvah of Shabbos and the Mitzvah of Mechiyas Amalek have an aspect of acting L'Shem Shomayim, and that is the main part of the Mitzvah. Klal Yisroel were asking Moshe Rabbeinu about these two Mitzvos, how are we to do it L'Shem Shomayim? Moshe answered them that this Mitzvah is to remember to heed and be Mekadesh Shabbos, and this Mitzvah is to remember to eradicate Amalek. There is a great rule in Avodas Hashem that one must work on being Mekayeim the Mitzvos in the

simple form, even though they may not be able to have the proper Kavonos. By one seeking to fulfill the Mitzvah according to the Halacha, in the best way that he can with a pureness and completeness, Hakodosh Boruch Hu will elevate him with great Kedusha and purity that he should have the proper Kavonos and do so L'Shem Shomayim. “זכרוהו לשמרו ולקדשו” – If one will be careful with “לשמרו” – to heed Shabbos properly, then he will be Zoche to, “ולקדשו” – to sanctify it. “זכרוהו להשמידו ולאבדו” – First one must work on “להשמידו” – remembering the evil that Amalek perpetrated against Klal Yisroel, and then, “ולאבדו” – then one will be Zoche to have the proper Kavonos that the Amalek should be eradicated for the sake of the Kovod of Shomayim, and His throne.

Now we can understand why specifically olive oil was to be used in the Menorah and the connection to Parshas Zochor. Olives are bitter, but when crushed, the liquid that comes out of it is sweet. This represents the Torah Hakdosha. The power of the Torah Hakdosha is great, but at first it is difficult. One must apply himself completely, and work as hard as he can. In the beginning a person may not feel a great love for it, but the more he learns the Torah, and the more he does so for the proper reasons, the more he will come to love it. He will ultimately recognize the intense sweetness of the Torah, and will always seek more of it. It will become an insatiable desire – which is a good desire to have. The Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer teaches us how we must work on ourselves to further our Avodas Hashem, and achieve great levels of Ruchniyos. We must first do as we are supposed to, although we do not have all the proper Kavonos. We must remember what Amalek did to us, and how it adversely affects us, and then think about what Amalek did to the honor of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. It is hard for us to connect to that level – to be indignant about the Kovod of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, but if we follow what we are supposed to do, then we will be Zoche to have those proper Kavonos as well. It is just like the Torah – at first may be difficult – we may not feel that we are doing it correctly, but the more we work at it, the closer we will come. May we be Zoche to see the complete eradication of Amalek, and the return of the Shem Hashem and His throne to be complete, במהרה בימינו אמן!



ויקראו ספרי המלך בעת ההיא בחדש השלישי הוא חדש סיון בשלשה ועשרים בו

“And the King’s secretaries were summoned at that time, on the twenty-third day of the third month, that is the month of Sivan.” The Megilah is telling us that letters were sent out on the twenty-third of Sivan rescinding the decree to annihilate Klal Yisroel, and replacing it with a decree in Klal Yisroel’s favor. The Megilah tells us that the original decree to annihilate Klal Yisroel was sent on the thirteenth of Nisan, seventy days before the letters annulling the decree went out. Haman was killed three days after his decree, on the sixteenth of Nisan. Why did Mordechai and Esther wait such an extended period of time to have their letter be sent out? The following Divrei Torah will expound on this topic, and support the P’shat offered in the closing paragraph.

ויקראו ספרי המלך Esther 8:9 – גר”א
בעת ההיא בחדש השלישי הוא חדש סיון בשלשה ועשרים בו – “And the King’s secretaries were summoned at that time, on the twenty-third day of the third month, that is the month of Sivan.” Haman sent out his letter to eradicate the Jews on the thirteenth of Nissan (Esther 3:12). Haman was hanged on the sixteenth of Nissan. The Megilah tells us here that the letters that Mordechai sent out, reversing the decree, and enacting a decree in favor of Klal Yisroel, were sent out on the twenty-third day of Sivan, which was seventy days after Haman’s letter. Why did Mordechai wait so long to send out the letter? Had Mordechai sent out his letter sooner, people would have thought that perhaps the second letter was a forgery, and that it should be ignored. Therefore, Mordechai waited until the messengers delivering to all of the land the first letter, the letter of Haman, returned, and Mordechai sent those same messengers with this new decree. Being that it was the same messengers, all would realize that both decrees came from the same source, and thus the second decree annulled the first decree, and the new decree was to be followed.

ויקראו ספרי המלך Esther 8:9 – גר”א
בעת ההיא בחדש השלישי הוא חדש סיון בשלשה ועשרים בו – There were seventy days in between the two letters being sent out so that Klal Yisroel would do Teshuva for seventy days, one day K’neged each of the seventy years they were in Golus, one day per year. (We see the concept of one day a year regarding the Meraglim, who spied out the Land for forty years, and gave an evil

report, and therefore Klal Yisroel needed to wander in the Midbar for forty years).

ויקראו ספרי המלך בעת ההיא בחדש השלישי הוא חדש סיון בשלשה ועשרים בו – Esther waited until the twenty third of the month of Sivan to have letters sent out rescinding the decree against Klal Yisroel, for that was seventy days from when the decree against Klal Yisroel was sent out, on the thirteenth of Nisan. Amalek is the head of the seventy nations, the nations that are against Klal Yisroel, as the Posuk in Bamidbar 24:20 says, “ראשית גוים עמלק.” Therefore, from the day that the descendant of Amalek, Haman, sent out a decree to annihilate Klal Yisroel, until the day that the letter went out that Klal Yisroel should destroy Amalek, was seventy days. When Hakodosh Boruch Hu saved Klal Yisroel here, it was as if He took them out from all seventy nations. Each day that Klal Yisroel waited for the letter to go out which rescinded the decree of their extinction, Klal Yisroel were in Tza’ar – one day for each of the seventy nations, as if each nation placed Klal Yisroel in Tza’ar – for a total of seventy days. Once the second letter was sent, that was Klal Yisroel being saved from all seventy nations.

ויקראו Esther 8:9 – מדרש לקח טוב
ספרי המלך בעת ההיא בחדש השלישי הוא חדש סיון בשלשה ועשרים בו – Esther waited until the twenty third of the month of Sivan to have letters sent out rescinding the decree against Klal Yisroel, for she wanted Klal Yisroel to have the Zechus Hatorah. The Torah was given on the sixth of Sivan, and טוב – good – which is the Gematria of seventeen – days later was the twenty third of Sivan. It was then that Klal Yisroel completely embraced and accepted the Torah willingly, and then Esther went in to make her request, knowing that it would be fulfilled in the Zechus Hatorah.

ויקראו ספרי המלך בעת ההיא בחדש השלישי הוא חדש סיון בשלשה ועשרים בו – Esther waited until the twenty third of the month of Sivan to have letters sent out rescinding the decree against Klal Yisroel, because while the decree of Klal Yisroel being killed was really annulled, the decree of their Chas V’sholom losing the Torah was not yet annulled. Thus, Esther waited until after Kabolat Hatorah in the month of Sivan, when Klal Yisroel accepted the Torah, and the decree against their losing the Torah was nullified.

ויקראו ספרי המלך בעת ההיא בחדש השלישי הוא חדש סיון בשלשה ועשרים בו – Esther waited until the twenty third of the month of Sivan to have letters sent out rescinding the decree

against Klal Yisroel, for they wanted the Goyim to have time to prepare to go out and kill Klal Yisroel. While they would be preparing, it would be apparent to all as to what they were doing. Klal Yisroel would then know who were their true enemies. Then when the decree was turned around, and Klal Yisroel would kill the Goyim, they would only kill those who sought to kill them.

ויקראו ספרי Esther 8:9 – דבר יהושע
המלך בעת ההיא בחדש השלישי הוא חדש סיון בשלשה ועשרים בו – Esther waited until the twenty third of the month of Sivan to have letters sent out rescinding the decree against Klal Yisroel, for although Achashveirosh had Haman killed, he was still a hater of the Yidin. The fact that he had Haman killed did not mean that he was prepared to annul the decree to kill them. Esther worked on it for those seventy days, seeking favor in the eyes of Achashveirosh so that he should nullify it, and he acceded to her request on the twenty third of Sivan.

Esther 8:9 – 1:17 – יערות דבש
ויקראו ספרי המלך בעת ההיא בחדש השלישי הוא חדש סיון בשלשה ועשרים בו – Esther waited until the twenty third of the month of Sivan to have letters sent out rescinding the decree against Klal Yisroel, because of the laws of the land. Esther 8:1,2 – Achashveirosh elevated Mordechai to be the second in command. However, according to their laws, a second in command was not considered in full power - he did not have the full power, until he was the second in command for seventy days. Hence, Mordechai could not send out the letter rescinding the decree of Haman until seventy days after he came into power, so that when he sent his letter, it would have the full strength and power to annul the previous decree and create the new decree.

אמר רבי אבהו” 100:6 – בראשית רבה
אותן שבעים יום שבין אגרת לאגרת כנגד שבעים יום – “Rebbe Avahu said: Those seventy days that elapsed between the first letter and the next letter (in the times of Mordechai and Esther) correspond to the seventy days in which Mitzrayim performed kindness for Yaakov Avinu.” (When Yaakov Avinu died, the Torah tells us that the Mitzriyim mourned over his death for seventy days).

100:6 – Bereishis Rabbah
עץ יוסף
”כנגד שבעים יום שעשו מצרים חסד” – The Medrash is connecting the 70 days of mourning for Yaakov Avinu, to the seventy days between the letter of Haman which was sent out to destroy Klal Yisroel, and the letter of Mordechai which saved Klal Yisroel. The Medrash is telling us that it was in the Zechus of Yaakov Avinu that

Klal Yisroel were saved in the days of Mordechai and Esther. Yaakov Avinu died on Pesach, and that was when the decree of Haman was in effect. During the seventy days in which the Mitzriyim mourned for Yaakov Avinu, the seventy days after the letter of Haman went out, Klal Yisroel did not have the complete Zechus of Yaakov Avinu to save them, and abolish the evil decree against them. However, as soon as that seventy-day period was up, and they were no longer mourning Yaakov Avinu, then they had the full Zechus of Yaakov Avinu, and the letters were sent out to save them (see Ya'aros Devash 2:2).

ענין יוסף - Bereishis Rabbah 100:6

“כנגד שבעים יום שעשו מצרים חסד” – The Medrash is connecting the 70 days of mourning for Yaakov Avinu, to the seventy days between the letter of Haman which was sent out to destroy Klal Yisroel, and the letter of Mordechai which saved Klal Yisroel. Mordechai waited seventy days to send out the letter which would free Klal Yisroel from the terrible decree against them because Klal Yisroel really deserved to be destroyed, Chas V'sholom. As long as the initial letter that Haman sent was not retracted or rescinded, Klal Yisroel were in great pain, for there was a death sentence hanging over them. Each day, it was as if they died Al Kiddush Hashem, for they did Teshuva during that time, truly returned to Hashem, and they thought they were going to die. One day for a year, a total of seventy days for a total of seventy years – seventy years is considered the life-span of humans. Thus, it was if they died Al Kiddush Hashem for seventy years, a lifetime, and this gave them a Kapparah for their sins. The Mitzriyim mourned Yaakov Avinu for seventy days, for that represents an entire lifetime, as if to say that they needed to mourn their entire lives over the death of Yaakov Avinu. The Medrash is thus comparing the seventy days of mourning of Yaakov Avinu, to the seventy days between letters, to tell us that just as by Yaakov Avinu it was done to represent the lifetime of a person, so too between letters it represented the lifetime of a person, and therefore it was a complete Kapparah for Klal Yisroel.

שבעים שקל – 14:12 – במדבר רבה

“בשקל הקדש” – The leaders of Klal Yisroel donated basins that weighed seventy Shekels. They did so corresponding to the seventy nations of the world that came from Noah. A different reason for them specifically donating basins worth seventy Shekel is because it corresponds to the beginning of Sefer Bereishis until the curse

of the Nachash, which contains seventy Pesukim. Rebbe Pinchos said: There were two enemies (evil characters) that were not cursed until seventy Pesukim were complete: the Nachash, and Haman Harasha, the Nachash, as we see that the seventieth Posuk in the Torah is 3:14 “אתה מכל הבהמה” – “Accursed are you from all of the Beheimos.” Haman Harasha, as we see in Megilas Esther that Haman rose to power in 3:1, and seventy Pesukim later, Haman was hanged on a tree. On Shabbos Parshas Zochor, some say Piyutim, which includes the phrase, “לתכלית שבעים נתלה על” – “חמשים” – at the end of seventy was hanged on fifty. This means that at the end of the seventy days of Haman's reign, he was hanged on a tree that was fifty Amos high. There are many other alternative P'shatim, things that correspond to the weight of the basins being seventy Shekel: the seventy Names of Hashem that appear in Sefer Bereishis until the Parshah of the Nachash; the seventy years of Terach when he was Zoche to father Avrohom Avinu; the Mitzriyim mourned Yaakov Avinu for seventy days; the seventy days of Yomim Tovim (including Shabbosos) that Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave to Klal Yisroel; the seventy names that Klal Yisroel have; the seventy names for the Torah; the seventy names for Yerushalayim; and the seventy years that Odom deducted from his own years to give to Dovid Hamelech

כל הנפש – Bereishis 46:27 – אור חדש

“חבית יעקב הבאה מצרימה שבעים” – “All the people of Yaakov's household who came to Mitzrayim – seventy.” Yaakov Avinu went down to Mitzrayim with seventy people and formed the foundation of the Jewish nation, which corresponds to the seventy nations of the world. The mission of Klal Yisroel is to keep sacred their core of seventy, and keep it separate from the seventy nations of the world. If Klal Yisroel do that, they will prevail. At the end of the seventy years of Golus Bavel, unfortunately Klal Yisroel did not fulfill this mission, for they sinned by attending the party of Achashveirosh where people were drinking יין, wine, which has the Gematria of seventy. Being that Klal Yisroel sinned by removing the barriers between themselves and the non-Jews, they were punished by the resurrection of the Nachash Hakadmoni, for seventy Pesukim in the form of the rise of Haman to power for seventy days.

בן שבעים – Avos 5:21 – דרך חיים

“לשיבה” – The seventy year old has achieved a fullness of years, for seventy years of life in this world is considered full, for that is the life span of a person in this world.

“שיבה” can be understood as full, or satiated. It is also related to the word, “שבעה” – “seven” which connotes fullness as we find the cycles of life are in the seven days of the week, and seven-year Shemitah cycles. While seventy is the bar by which a person seeks to live a full life, it is possible for one to add additional years to life, as we see the Mishna speaking of one hundred years old.

“בן שבעים לשיבה” – Avos 5:21 – מאיר

– Once one reaches the age of seventy, a ripe old age, and all of his hair has turned white, he should no longer have much of an attachment to matters of Olam Hazeh. Rather, he should focus all of his efforts to his Avodas Hashem.

בן שבעים – Avos 5:21 – סדר היום

“לשיבה” – “שיבה” – a Shin, comes from a Loshon of Teshuva. At the age of seventy, it awakens a person to do Teshuva.

מפני שיבה – Vayikra 87b – זוהר

“תקום” – “מפני” – “before” one reaches the age of “שיבה” – seventy, “תקום” – he should get up and do Teshuva.

Now we can understand why Mordechai and Esther waited specifically seventy days from when the letter of the decree against Klal Yisroel was sent out, to send out their letter annulling the decree. The number seventy is a key theme in the Megilah, and in the great Yom Tov of Purim. Seventy is a considered a full life. Haman was in power seventy days, and the Torah mentions the curse of the Nachash in the seventieth Posuk in the Torah. Just as seventy can be a good number, it can also be an evil number. Seventy is Klal Yisroel against all the seventy nations in the world. Klal Yisroel as a whole must rise above all the other nations of the world, and each individual must take note of the number seventy. While Boruch Hashem there are those who live longer, seventy years is considered a full life – as we know that Odom Harishon gave Dovid Hamelech a full life – seventy years. We must recognize that life is finite and we only have a certain amount of time in this world. We must utilize it to the max, so that no matter how many years we are Zoche to receive, we make our lives complete. The goal is to come close to Hakodosh Boruch Hu and the way to do it is through Teshuva. יין, wine, is the Gematria of seventy. We drink wine on Purim to remind us of what we must accomplish in this world, for we are finite, and thus we must not wait to take advantage of the amazing opportunity Hakodosh Boruch Hu gives us to come close to Him. May we be Zoche to utilize the Yom Tov of Purim to its fullest, in coming close to Hakodosh Boruch Hu.



המן מן – Chulin 139b התורה מנין

From where in the Torah do we see an allusion to Haman? We see it from the Posuk in Bereishis which says, “המן העץ” – which is what Hakodosh Boruch Hu asked Odom – “Have you eaten of the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?” The Gemara is asking us from where in the Torah is there a Remez to Haman. The Gemara answers that we learn it from a Posuk in Bereishis, when Hakodosh Boruch Hu chastises Odom Harishon. The Torah is not written with vowels, so the word Haman can also be pronounced as “Haman” – so this alludes to Haman. If the Torah chose to allude to Haman from this Posuk, there must be a profound connection between Haman, and Odom and Chava’s sin of the Eitz Hada’as. What is the connection between Haman and the sin of the Eitz Hada’as, and what lesson is the Torah coming to teach us? The following Divrei Torah will expound on this topic, and support the P’shat offered in the closing paragraph.

ויאמר ממוכן לפני” Esther 1:16 – רוקח
– “And Memuchan declared before the King and the officials.” The word is read as ממוכן, Memuchan, but is written as ממוכן. The name should be broken up into two – מום כן – referring to Haman, who was a blemish, כן which is the Gematria of 70, endured for seventy days. From the day that Haman sent out the decree against Klal Yisroel, the thirteenth of Nisan, until Mordechai and Esther sent out a new decree, annulling the old one, on the twenty third of Sivan, was seventy days. There is a Remez in the Megilah that Haman was actually in power for seventy days, for there are exactly seventy Pesukim from when the Megilah records his rise to power in 3:1, until he is hanged in 7:10.

ותוסף אסתר ותדרב” 8:3 – מנות הלוי
לפני המלך ותפל לפני רגליו, ותברך ותתחנן לו להעביר את רעת המן האגגי ואת מחשבתו אשר – “Esther spoke to the King again, collapsed at his feet, and cried and begged him to avert the evil intention of Haman the Agagi, and his scheme which he had plotted against the Jews.” Why did Esther wait so long to request of Achashveirosh to send out letters rescinding the previous decree against Klal Yisroel? (To be exact, it was seventy days from the decree of Haman until the letters were sent out retracting that decree). Mordechai and Esther had been granted great favors by Achashveirosh on the sixteenth of Nisan; Haman was executed, Haman’s estate was given to Esther, and

the king’s signet ring was given to Mordechai. We learn from this that when asking something from a king, one must not ask for too much at once. Being that they had already gotten so much, they feared asking about the letter. They waited a little over two months, and began to fear that they needed to do something soon or it may be too late to actually reverse the decree. It was at this point in time, after more than a two-month gap, that she then asked Achashveirosh if he could send out letters nullifying Haman’s decree, and putting into place a decree that was beneficial to Klal Yisroel.

גם אני” Esther 4:16 – חתם סופר
– “I and my maidservant will fast as well, and with that I will go to the king.” The Gematria of the word, “כן” – equals seventy, and the Gematria of the word, “בכן” equals seventy-two. Esther was placing herself in extreme danger at the second party, because she would be accusing Haman, the king’s second in command, of evil in the presence of both Haman and Achashveirosh. As such, she was indicating that she and her maidservants would fast, “כן” – for seventy hours, and then “בכן” – in the Zechus of the seventy-two hour fast of the Yidin, she would make her petition and accuse Haman before the king. Esther only fasted for seventy hours because at the end of the three days, she had to eat at the second party that she prepared for Achashveirosh and Haman.

המן מן – Chulin 139b – חמש ידות
– “התורה מנין – בראשית ג’, י”א – המן העץ” – From where in the Torah do we see an allusion to Haman? We see it from the Posuk in Bereishis which says, “המן העץ” – which is what Hakodosh Boruch Hu asked Odom – “Have you eaten of the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?” What is the Gemara asking here? Why do we need to have a Remez in the Torah to the wicked Haman? The Gemara is asking what is the source for one to have such an evil heart – to be so wicked as Haman Harasha? To this question the Gemara answers, “המן העץ” – the source for this evil is from the Chet of the Eitz Hada’as – the Chet of Odom Harishon. Odom eating from the Eitz Hada’as caused there to be an ability to sprout such wickedness.

Purim - Chulin 139b – מהר”י שטייף
– “המן מן התורה מנין – בראשית ג’, י”א – המן העץ” – From where in the Torah do we see an allusion to Haman? We see it from the Posuk in Bereishis which says, “המן העץ” – which is what Hakodosh Boruch Hu asked Odom – “Have you eaten of the tree from

which I commanded you not to eat?” Megilah 12a – Klal Yisroel were Chayiv Misa because they had Hana’ah, pleasure from the Seudah of that Rasha (Achashveirosh). From where do we see such a concept that there are such severe consequences for eating something in a way that is prohibited? “המן העץ” – We find that Odom and Chavah ate that which was prohibited to them, they ate from the Eitz Hada’as, and because of it death was decreed upon human beings – quite a severe punishment. We see from here that in fact eating and / or drinking that which we shouldn’t can Chas V’sholom have dire consequences. This is a great Musar for us to be very careful to only eat and drink that which we should. It is for this reason that the Chachomim were Mesaken for us to increase our eating and drinking on Purim, of course in a permitted manner, as a Tikun for the Chet of Klal Yisroel at that time of partaking of the Seudah of the wicked.

Purim - Chulin 139b – מהר”י שטייף
– “המן מן התורה מנין – בראשית ג’, י”א – המן העץ” – From where in the Torah do we see an allusion to Haman? We see it from the Posuk in Bereishis which says, “המן העץ” – which is what Hakodosh Boruch Hu asked Odom – “Have you eaten of the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?” That which Haman antagonized Klal Yisroel was orchestrated in Shomayim, as everything is. The reason for Haman was so that Klal Yisroel would do a complete Teshuva. Whenever Klal Yisroel forget the ways of their forefathers, Chas V’sholom, a Haman of some kind rises to power to antagonize Klal Yisroel so that they do Teshuva. Klal Yisroel must know that the Hamans of this world are nothing more than a message from Above to do Teshuva. The question in the Gemara of “Haman Min Hatorah Minayin,” – asking where do we see in the Torah this concept that all of the Hamans of this world only come from Hashgacha Pratis? We see it from, “המן העץ” – where immediately after Odom Harishon sinned with the Eitz Hada’as, Hakodosh Boruch Hu went to Odom and asked him if he indeed ate from the Eitz Hada’as. Odom was embarrassed that he did not fulfill the Rotzon Hashem. Hakodosh Boruch Hu chastised Odom for doing so. Ultimately, Odom did Teshuva for his sin. What we see from here is that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is always running the world, and when we Chas V’sholom sin, Hakodosh Boruch Hu does something to let us know that we sinned, and we must do Teshuva. Odom Harishon was called out for his sin – directly, it was clear that he was being called out on it, while there may be many

times that we do not realize that we are being summoned to come forth and do Teshuva. When we are faced with various circumstances, we must recognize that it is a sign, and if we open our eyes there are times that we can see clear messages that we must do Teshuva for our sins.

ותקח מפריו 19:5 – בראשית רבה
 “And she took of its fruits and she ate; and she also gave to her husband with her and he ate.” Rebbe Eivu said that she squeezed grapes and gave the juice to him.

Bereishis Rabbah 19:5 – יפה תואר
 “סחטה ענבים” – She squeezed the grapes from the Eitz Hada’as. This Medrash is going according to the Shita who says that the Eitz Hada’as was grapes.

Bereishis Rabbah – מתנת כהונה 19:5
 “ותקח מפריו” – The Medrash says that Chava squeezed the grapes, for the Posuk says, “מפריו” – that which comes from the fruit – the juice.

Bereishis Rabbah – אשד הנחלים 19:5
 “סחטה ענבים” – Chava squeezed the grapes so that Odom would not recognize that what she was giving him was from the Eitz Hada’as.

Bereishis Rabbah 19:5 – ידי משה
 “סחטה ענבים” – Being that Odom was not eating the fruit itself and was only drinking from its juice, he assumed that it was not such a great sin.

Bereishis Rabbah 19:5 – עץ יוסף
 “סחטה ענבים” – Chava gave Odom from the juice of the grapes, and not the actual grapes, so that he would not recognize that it was from the Eitz Hada’as. She knew that the Nachash had convinced her to eat from it, but that if she tried to give it to Odom, he would not eat it – as he was not convinced by the wily Nachash. If so, why was Odom punished for eating from the Eitz Hada’as when he did so unwittingly? “אדם” – Man is always responsible for his actions. Chava told him to drink and he did so without checking into it. He had a responsibility to ensure that it was not from the Eitz Hada’as, and he did not do so. Thus, he was liable for eating from the Eitz Hada’as.

כי תשא את ראש 30:12 – בן איש חי
בני ישראל לפקדיהם ונתנו איש כפר נפשו לד' בפקד אתם – “אתם ולא יהיה בהם נגף בפקד אתם” – It is known that Klal Yisroel are called, “גפן” as the Gemara in Chulin 92a says on the Posuk in Tehillim 80:9 “גפן ממצרים תסיע” – “You (Hakodosh Boruch Hu) caused a grapevine (Klal Yisroel) to journey out of Mitzrayim.” The difference between the

words, “נגף”, a plague, and “גפן” are that in the word, “גפן” the letter פ is closed, and the ן is open, while in the word, “נגף” the ן is closed, and the ף is open. The letter ן alludes to the hand of the giver of Tzedakah and the one receiving the Tzedakah. The hand has five fingers which are K'neged the five אורות, lights, and each one really consists of all five. That means each hand represents 25. The hand of the giver and the hand of the receiver – 2 hands, equals 50 – ן. The proper way in giving Tzedakah is to have the hand of the giver open, and giving, and the hand of the receiver open, receiving the Tzedakah. Thus, it is proper for the ן to be the ן open – representing that their hands are open. Conversely, the פ which represents the פה the mouth, should be closed. The giver should not open his mouth to sing his praises for what he has done, and the mouth of the receiver should not need to be open to beg for money, for the hand of the giver is open and there is no need to plead his case. The elevated and proper form of giving Tzedakah is “גפן” – with closed mouths and open hands, this is why Klal Yisroel are called “גפן” for they give in the proper way. However, when Tzedakah is not given properly, and the mouths are open and the hands are closed, that creates the word, “נגף” which causes a plague. “ונתנו איש כופר נפשו” – If one gives Tzedakah properly, without seeking anything in return for it, “ולא יהיה בהם נגף” – then there will not be the letters, “נגף” – there will not be a plague, but it will be Klal Yisroel in the proper form of גפן.

והמלך שב מגנת הבית אל 7:8 – רש"י
בית משתה היין והמן נופל על המטה אשר אסתר
 “עליה” – “When the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet room, and Haman fell on the bed that Esther was on.” A Malach came and pushed him onto the bed.

Hadassah – מערכת ה"א – דבש לפי
 Just as the Hadassah, myrtle, has a sweet and pleasant smell, but has a bitter taste, so too Esther (who is also referred to as Hadassah) was sweet for Mordechai, and bitter to Haman (Esther Rabbah). Esther was a Gilgul of Chava; Haman was clothed with the Nachash; and Mordechai was a Gilgul of Yaakov Avinu. Thus, Esther who was Chavah, was bitter to Haman, who was the Nachash -for it was the Nachash who caused her to sin. She was sweet to Mordechai, for Mordechai was a Gilgul of Yaakov; and Yaakov was a Gilgul of Odom Harishon, the husband of Chavah.

Now we can understand the connection between Haman and the sin of the Eitz Hada’as. On a simple level, we can

explain that they were similar in that both scenarios were ones where they lacked one thing, and needed it (Odom and Chava needed to have from the Eitz Hada’as, and Haman needed each and every person to bow down to him, including Mordechai) – not that they really need it – but they could not control themselves to be happy with everything they had. Instead of focusing on what they had, they focused on the one thing they didn’t. The Torah tells us that Odom and Chava were created in Hashem’s image. It says in the Avos D’rebbe Nosson that they enjoyed great honor in Gan Eden, as Malachei Hashareis prepared food and drink for them. Hashem told them that entire world was theirs for the taking with one exception – they were prohibited to eat from Eitz Hada’as. Although one would think that they could withstand this test, and refrain from this one item, nonetheless, the Nachash succeeded in persuading them to sin and partake from the one food they were commanded not to eat from. However, there is something much deeper here that we must explore.

The story of Haman was on some level a reenactment of the story of the Eitz Hada’as, however this time just the opposite occurred. Purim is all about things being, “ונהפך”. The Nachash fooled Chava by pushing her into the tree, and then when she saw that nothing happened, she was more willing to partake from the tree. Chavah came back in the form of Esther and rectified the sin, as she saved Klal Yisroel from Haman – the Nachash. Esther invited Haman to a משהה יין – wine – and a Malach pushed him onto the bed – that was payback for the wine that the Nachash gave to Chava and for pushing her into the tree. This was a form of Teshuva for the Chet of the Eitz Hada’as. The Yom Tov of Purim revolves around wine, for wine was an integral part of the miracle. That which we see is not always as it is, but we always remember that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is running it all. Klal Yisroel are compared to גפן – for we are supposed to be givers – without outstretched hands. Chazal say, כל הפושט יד – all who stick out their hands should be given Tzedakah – the key words are that all should be sticking out their hands. A Yid gives Tzedakah for he knows that is all Hashem’s, and He says to give Tzedakah. Giving Tzedakah is an exercise in Emunah. May we be Zoche to utilize this great Yom Tov of Purim, and strengthen our Emunah in Hakodosh Boruch Hu – for this day is truly special.



ויאמר המלך לחכמים 1:13
ידעי העתים, כי כן דבר
המלך לפני כל ידעי דת ודון
ויאמר המלך 3:8

אחשורוש ישנו עם אחד מפזר ומפרד בין העמים
בכל מדינות מלכותך ודתייהם שנות מכל עם ואת
דתי המלך אינם עשים ולמלך אין שוה להניחם

“And the King spoke to the experts who knew the times, for that was the word of the King to go in front of all who knew law and judgment.” Achashveirosh commanded the queen Vashti to appear before him, and she did not obey. Achashveirosh needed to know what to do with her. The Posuk tells us that he asked the experts who knew the times, for that was the rule of the King to ask those who knew the laws. What is the meaning of this Posuk? Why was he asking those who knew time, and why does the Posuk tell us that he was going to ask those who knew the laws? Isn't it obvious, and the way one operates in a government, that they ask for judgment from those who know the laws? The following Divrei Torah will expound on this topic, and support the P'shat offered in the closing paragraph.

“And Haman said to Achashveirosh, “There is a certain people scattered aboard and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your realm; their laws are different from every other peoples, and they don't observe the King's laws – therefore it is not befitting for the King to tolerate them.” Haman is speaking to Achashveirosh about the Jews, and without mentioning them by name, he is seeking Achashveirosh's approval to destroy this nation. Why does Haman mention that they are scattered, and then mention that they have their own laws different than all other nations? Why would that be a reason to obliterate them? Why didn't Haman just say his main point, the one that Achashveirosh should care about, and that is that this nation should be destroyed for they do not follow the laws of the land, the laws of Achashveirosh?

לחכמים ידעי העתים 1:13 - קרן ישועה

– The Medrash says that the King chose to consult with the Jewish scholars for the great ministers of the kingdom were כשדיים, from פרס and מדי. Vashti was כשדית. Achashveirosh realized that he would not be able to get a fair and honest judgment from any of his ministers, for they all may have ulterior motives. The כשדיים may say that Vashti is innocent, even though she really wasn't, for if Vashti were convicted and the king were to choose another queen, he would ultimately take from פרס and מדי – and they wanted the queen to be from their people. The judges who were from פרס and מדי may convict Vashti even though she really should be exonerated, in the hopes that the king will choose a new queen from

their own people. Therefore, Achashveirosh chose to ask the wise Jewish men, for they would have no ulterior motive, for they would never even think for a second, that the king would choose a queen from their people.

לחכמים ידעי 1:13 – כפלים לתושיה
העתים – “Experts who knew the time” meant those who understand the matter at hand based on the time and situation. The situation needed to be judged based on what occurred, that Achashveirosh called Vashti to come publicly in front of everyone, and she refused to come. Others explain that there are two types of judgment. There is judgment based on the letter of the law, and then there is judgment dependent on time – meaning that it does not follow the laws, but is based on the specific situation at that time. Prior to calling for a judgment based strictly on the letter of the law, Achashveirosh sought to hear from the ones who judged based on time, for them to decide if this matter should be judged on time or based on the letter of the law.

ויאמר ממוכן לפני 1:16 – בנין אריאל
המלך והשרים לא על המלך לבדו עותה ושתי המלכה, כי על כל השרים ועל כל העמים אשר בכל מדינות המלך אחשורוש – “And Memuchan declared before the King and the officials: ‘It is not only the King whom Vashti the Queen wronged, but also the officials and all the people in the provinces of King Achashveirosh.’ How could Memuchan say to the King that Vashti wronged everyone, the same as the King? That is a rebellious statement, to equate the King with everyone else. The King did not want to judge this matter, for he stated that he was a Noge'i'a B'davar, he was an involved party, and would therefore not be able to judge objectively. Achashveirosh sought someone who would be impartial to judge. To this, Memuchan stated that in fact, all of the people of Achashveirosh's provinces could not be objective, for they were all at the party when Vashti chose not to appear, and embarrass the King. Memuchan was saying that while the King was certainly more important than everyone else, all had seen the travesty of Vashti, and all were tainted by it. Therefore, the King should judge the case himself, for he was not any more impartial than anyone else.

לחכמים ידעי העתים 1:13 - כתם אופיר

– It's brought down in the Likutei Torah that Tzaddikim have the ability to change the Yetzer Hara into a Yetzer Hatov, a Malach Kodosh. In Koheles it says that there are 28 “times” – with 14 of them being good and 14 being not good. Moed Koton 16b – “הקב"ה גוזר וצדיק מבטל” – Hakodosh Boruch Hu decrees and the Tzaddik can annul it. The Tzaddik can turn the 14 times of sorrow into 14 times of joy. The

Tzaddikim know how to bring a Zechus for others, so that they can be saved from judgment.

ישנו עם אחד מפזר 3:8 - מגילת ספר

ומפרד בין העמים בכל מדינות מלכותך ודתייהם שנות מכל עם ואת דתי המלך אינם עשים ולמלך אין שוה להניחם – Why is Haman so verbose, and gives a whole “Megilah” about this nation that should be destroyed? Why not just say, “They don't follow the laws of the King, and therefore you have no need for them?” The kingdom of Achashveirosh basically consisted of two great nations: פרס ומדי. The king's cabinet and ministers were primarily from these two nations. There was one foreigner, who Achashveirosh gave power to, and he was from Amalek – a different nation than the rest of them. They were not happy that Achashveirosh gave Haman any power. These powerful people in Achashveirosh's kingdom began to lobby the king to depose the wicked despot, Haman, from his position of power, and were beginning to rebel against the king. In order for Haman to save himself, he told the King that the reason all the people were against him, is really because the Jews are pinching their wallets. The Jews are charging them much interest, and that is why they are really upset – it really has nothing to do with Haman. Haman says, “There is a certain people scattered aboard and dispersed among the peoples” – for had he said that they resided in one location, the king would have asked Haman, “If so, why are there people in other locales rebelling against me when they are not in contact with Jews?” Haman continues, that even if the King were to make rules that the Jews are not allowed to charge interest, it will not help, for, “Their laws are different from every other peoples,” and they say that it is completely permitted to take interest from non-Jews. Haman then concluded, “Being that they do not follow the laws of the King, they are not worth anything to the King, and he should eradicate them.” With this understanding, we can explain the Gemara in Chulin 139b that says that we know Haman in the Torah from, “המן העץ.” What is the connection between Haman and the Eitz Hada'as? Odom sinned and ate from the Eitz Hada'as, and when Hakodosh Boruch Hu asked him about it, instead of taking blame and apologizing, he blamed it on his wife, Chava, that Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave him. Odom blamed someone else, as did Haman. He blamed everything on the Jews, even though it was he who the people were against.

ויאמר המלך לחכמים 4:1 – אסתר רבה

ידעי העתים – Who were the, “wise ones who knew the times?” Rebbe Simone said that this refers to Shevet Yisochor, as the Posuk in Divrei Hayomim 1:12:33 says, “ומבני”

”יששכר יודעי בינה לעתים לדעת מה יעשה ישראל.” Rebbe Tanchuma explains that this means that they had a keen understanding of when to establish the Yomim Tovim. Rebbe Yose Bar Ketzarta said that it means that they possessed the knowledge of when and how to add a day to a month, and a month to a year.

ויאמר המלך לחכמים “1:13 – קרן ישועה ידעי העתים” – The Medrash tells us that Achashveirosh consulted with the wise Jewish sages as to whether he should kill Vashti. Why did he specifically consult with them, more than other wise men – and what does it mean that they, “knew the times?” It says in the Ya’aros Devash 2:8 that when the Gemara in Sanhedrin 17a says that one does not appoint a person to Sanhedrin unless he knows how to make a Sheretz Tahor, means that he can say on that which is Tamei, that it is Tahor – he can on some level substantiate that it is Tahor – even though it isn’t. Tosfos asks, what is the point in this silliness, of bringing proofs on that which is in fact Tamei, may be Tahor? If one kills another in front of Bais Din and they all convict him, the final rule is that he is not punished. We know that in order to convict someone for death, it cannot be that all the judges convict him, rather there must be at least one judge who votes to acquit the alleged perpetrator. If so, does that mean that this person will get away with his murderous actions, and Jewish blood will fill the streets without any repercussions? If such a scenario were to occur, there would be one of the judges who would find some reason based on the Torah to acquit this person. Being that one wants to acquit and all the others want to convict, the perpetrator would be punished. This takes great wisdom – like one who comes and says on a Sheretz that it is Tahor. So, in order to be a Jewish judge, one needs to be exceedingly wise, so that in a case where something is clearly one way, yet bring an argument on the other side – despite it not really being correct. Achashveirosh knew that the Jewish judges had this sharp great wisdom, a wisdom that no other nation had, that even if the entire world was saying one was guilty, they could find an opening to say the person is innocent. Achashveirosh did not want to kill his beloved wife, yet he did not want there to be an embarrassment for the kingdom. He wanted Vashti to live despite her disrespecting the King. Therefore, Achashveirosh went to these wise men for counsel, for he wanted them to come up with a way that it can be said that according to the law Vashti is innocent, in this way Vashti would be saved, and at the same time the respect of his kingdom would remain intact.

לחכמים ידעי “1:13 – יסועה גדולה

– The Medrash seems to say that Achashveirosh chose to ask the Shevet Yisochor what to do with Vashti, who ignored his command, because of their great knowledge of the calendar and how to change it when necessary. The glaring question is how is this knowledge relevant to an assessment as to Vashti’s guilt? The expertise of Shevet Yisochor was to determine if Vashti was old enough to be punished for her misconduct. There are standards where one under the age of twenty years old is not punished for their transgressions. The Yalkut Shimoni 1049 says that Achashveirosh married Vashti after the death of her father, Balshatzer, when she was twelve and half years old. The Gemara in Megilah 11b tells us that Achashveirosh became king five years later, and made his gala banquet at the beginning of the third year of his reign. If we add the 12 and half years, plus the five years, until Achashveirosh became king, and two full years, (we are counting two years because the banquet was in the beginning of the third year of his reign), that would mean Vashti was approximately 19 and half years old when the banquet began. Achashveirosh ordered Vashti to appear after the 180 day banquet, and then on the seventh day of the extended banquet, which at that point Vashti was 20 years old, and should be punished for her not listening to Achashveirosh. However, if that year was a leap year, a second Adar being added to the year, Vashti would have been just shy of 20 years old, and not liable for punishment. (The Megilah uses the Jewish months – for the Persians followed the same months as the Jews). Achashveirosh consulted with those who knew the calendar to know if there was a leap year that year, which would have direct ramifications if Vashti was culpable for her actions or not.

”ודתיהם שנות מכל עם” 3:8 – קרן ישועה

– Achashveirosh chose to consult with the wise Jewish scholars as to what should happen to Vashti, for they were exceedingly wise, wiser than all the other scholars in the kingdom. The Jews had the ability to “change the laws” and make one who is guilty be innocent. Achashveirosh wanted a judgment in favor of Vashti, so that he would not have to kill her. Haman went to Achashveirosh and attempted to convince him to kill the Jews. He explained that it was the Jews fault that Vashti was killed, for although they could have come up, with their great brilliance, a way to save Vashti, they declined to answer the King. Haman, who said that Vashti should in fact be killed, did not have the ability to come up with an argument to save her, nor did the

other ministers and wise men. It was only the wise Jews who could have saved her, and by their refusing to judge, they were completely at fault that Vashti was killed. “דתייהם שנות” – The Jews have the ability to change the laws, “ואת דתי המלך אינם עושים” - yet they did not do so for the king. Haman was going on the opinion that Vashti was a better queen than Esther, and therefore, by the Jews refraining from judging, they caused the king a loss, for he used to have Vashti, and then he ended up with an inferior queen. However, if in fact Esther was greater than Vashti, whereby the king had no loss – but benefited from the death of Vashti, then Haman said, “אם על המלך טוב” – if this situation is good for the King, nonetheless decree that they be destroyed, for “ועשרת אלפים כסף אשקול” – for I will pay you a great sum of money.

Perhaps now we can understand why Achashveirosh chose to consult with the Jews, and why that was what Haman used to convince Achashveirosh to enact a decree against them – to have them annihilated. The power of the Chachomim was known to all, and Achashveirosh wanted them to use that power to save Vashti. The Chachomim knew that either way they would lose: If they came up with a way to save Vashti, it would be said that they had no right to save her, and she should have been killed. Had they said that she deserved to be punished, they would have been blamed for her death. They therefore recused themselves from judging. Haman used their recusal as a reason for Vashti’s death – basically that it was the Jews fault that Vashti was killed, and they therefore should be wiped out. Haman blamed all of the problems of the kingdom on the Chachomim – the Jews. It was those attributes which Haman used in an attempt to have Klal Yisroel killed; that is the basis for the lifeline of Klal Yisroel. It is the Chachomim who have the power to save Klal Yisroel, to guide Klal Yisroel on the path of Avodah, to Daven for them, and to change the 14 evil times to the 14 times of bliss and happiness.

Purim is when Klal Yisroel accepted upon themselves the Torah Shebal Peh, the Torah from our Chachomim. Purim is a time that we must strengthen ourselves in Torah Shebal Peh – we must use the Torah Shebal Peh and the words of the great Chachomim, in order to truly understand how we must serve Hakodosh Boruch Hu. May it be in the Zechus of our keeping the Torah Shebal Peh that we be Zoche to have all the decrees against us be turned to good, and be Zoche to the ultimate goodness, with the coming of Moshiach, במהרה בימינו אמן!