

From the Pen of Rabbi Nachman HaKohen Kahana

Megilat Esther... and more!

When assessing the conduct of King Achashveirosh it is apparent that he was apprehensive regarding his monarchical status. He was not born to royalty, but was a stablehand of Nevuchad-netzar, father of his Queen, Vashti. The fact that the Queen was born to royalty while he was a commoner instilled in him feelings of insecurity and self-mistrust.

How do we know this?

The Megila begins with the lavish, degenerate parties hosted by Achashveirosh in order to find favor with his inner circle of ministers and with the public at large. The King's policy of populism was the reason that he agreed to Haman's suggestion to murder all the Jews in one single day to the delight of his the Persian citizens.

However this was a feat that even the arch-murderer Hitler could not achieve. So the question is: how could the Persian army complete this grandiose order, involving hundreds of thousand or possibly millions of Jews in the 127 regions under Persian control? But in fact the "aktion" was not relegated to the army, who could not possibly know where every Jew lived or was hiding. The murders were entrusted to your 'friendly' Persian neighbors who knew where their Jewish neighbors lived and

where they were hiding. As in 1929 Chevron, and in Ukraine every year, the pogroms were perpetrated by the plain "folk". But why should these nice people murder their Jewish neighbors; the Goldbergs, the Sacks, the Shwartzes and the Kleins? Answer: Because the King in his need to be loved promised that when they murdered their Jewish neighbors they could have their victims' property and possessions.

Populism at its best and its worst! But it works!

Question: Why was it necessary for Mordechai and Esther to include in the Megila's text the incidence of Vashti's death, when the main narrative of the story is the King's need to find a wife? It would be sufficient to begin the Megila with the search for a Queen without the morbid details of Vashti.

I will return to this BE"H.

An necessary principle when trying to decode the dramatic episodes in world history.

There are five elements in most dramatic events in stories and plays created by authors and playwrights: Exposition (background) , Ascending Action, Conflict (between opposing forces, ideas, or interests), Climax, Surprise Resolution.

In fact, HaShem as the ultimate playwright, incorporates them in the major episodes of TaNaCH and history. But in contrast to our literary giants,

HaShem often incorporates a sixth element - an embedded invisible factor that influences the entire narrative. It can be an individual or an event which apparently has little or no input on the visible narrative, but is embedded in the background and later proves to be the major factor in the unfolding saga .

The five elements in the Megila saga:

EXPOSITION: The King's inappropriate behavior at the party resulting in his imposing the death sentence upon Queen Vashti.

When the King sobers up, he orders a nationwide beauty contest to choose a new queen; the winner (or loser) turned out to be the Jewish Esther.

ASCENDING ACTION: Haman's favored status and his convincing of Achashveirosh to have all the Jews murdered on a single day, the following 13th of Adar.

CONFLICT: Haman's obsession of killing Mordechai and all the Jews.

CLIMAX: Esther's second party and her dramatic accusation of Haman, who was subsequently hanged.

SURPRISE RESOLUTION: According to Persian law, a King's edict cannot be rescinded. Now that the King knows that Esther is a Jewess and subject to the fate of all the other Jews in his 127 regions, he suddenly realizes that he must save Esther by circumventing his own edict, and permitting the Jews to bear arms. Its not out of love for his

Queen that he has to save her and all the Jews, because he has many other women who could have taken her place.

The question is: why did Achashveirosh suddenly act to save the Jews by permitting them to bear arms and even kill Achashveirosh's own Persian citizens?

Here HaShem, the ultimate master of suspense, goes one step beyond the apparent tale of Purim with an embedded factor compelling the King to agree to all of Esther's demands.

Here is the cutting edge of the entire Megila. Achashveirosh is sitting on a wobbly throne, as stated above. If he permits Queen Esther's death after ordering the death of his first Queen, Vashti, his reputation as a rational and deserving leader would be tarnished to the point of rebellion and his own death, which nearly occurred at the hands of Bigtan and Teresh. So the death sentence of two Queens was not an option for the King. Esther, and consequently her Jewish nation had to be saved. Vashti's execution is the invisible embedded event that brings about the miracle of Purim!

Another example of a major saga which came about because of an embedded personality.

The apparent lesson from the Akeida (binding) of Yitzchak is the total submission of Avraham and Yitzchak to the will of HaShem. But that's not the

real reason that HaShem initiated the Akeida test.

The Torah relates that after three days of traveling from Chevron, the entourage which includes Avraham's first son Yishmael and Eliezer, Avraham's slave, stood overlooking the future Temple Mount. Avraham turns to Yishmael and Eliezer and instructs them to remain where they are, together with the donkey.

Avraham and Yitzchak begin walking to Mount Moriah. This was the exact moment for which Hashem brought about the Akeida episode. The embedded personality was Yishmael, who was being put to the test that was to decide his fate, and that of his descendants, for all time.

When Avraham began to walk towards Mount Moriah, Yishmael knew that the mission was for Avraham to sacrifice his son in the service of HaShem. At that moment Yishmael realized that this was the crucial moment in his life that would define his spiritual connection to Avraham and to Avraham's God. At that moment the idea came to Yishmael to say to Avraham, "Abba, take me. I am the favored of HaShem, not Yitzchak. I want to serve HaShem with all my heart, soul and body even unto death". However Yishmael stood paralyzed, which severed his spiritual connection with Avraham and with Hashem for all time. Yishmael stands by the wayside

together with the donkey because that is his spiritual level.

This is the real story of why HaShem commanded Avraham to offer up Yitzchak as a sacrifice. In order to sever Yishmael from all kedusha (holiness) as we see today in the people who abide by Islam.

Another example:

Russia has declared war on Ukraine. Thousands of soldiers and civilians on both sides have already lost their lives, and tens of thousands are wounded. The apparent reason is Russia's ambition to restore its control of over all the nations which comprised the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

This is the drama that is gripping the world. Will Putin use chemical or even nuclear weapons and will he expand his war to include NATO countries?

But is this the true reality, or is there an embedded factor which is responsible for HaShem bringing about these events? Since the drama is still being played out, no one can know for sure. But perhaps the invisible embedded factor that is generating these events is the agreement being discussed in Vienna between European countries and the US on one side, and Iran on the other. Perhaps the war in Eastern Europe will prevent the agreement from being signed? Time will tell.

One more embedded personality who was the cause of --- drama in his time.

Ya'akov's sons went down to Egypt to purchase food during the great seven year famine. Out of nowhere they find themselves entangled in an ominous and complex relationship with the Vizer of Egypt, one step away from life imprisonment in an Egyptian penitentiary.

At the crucial moment, when all hope is gone and the brothers have no understanding how this happened to them, two words are said by the Vizer and everything becomes crystal clear:

ANI YOSEF - I am Yosef

Yosef is the embedded personality that Hashem has placed in order to cause the Jewish people to descend to Egypt for 410 years.

Conclusion: The day will come soon, when HaShem will call out to all humanity

ANI HASHEM - I am the Lord

And the world will realized that the Jewish nation, HaShem's chosen people, are the embedded factor that caused all the world's events from Avraham until Medinat Yisrael.