

Parshas Tzav

Rabbi Avi Metchik

The Mussar masters teach us that one of the main points of any Yom Tov, Jewish holiday, is what we can take out of it going forward. A person should always ask himself after Yom Tov has passed, what message can I take with me from this holiday, and utilize it to impact my life for the better. Being as we just had the beautiful Yom Tov of Purim, it would behoove us to see if there is a message in Purim that we can take home with us.

The Gemara (Chullin 139b) poses a fascinating question; where do we find a biblical reference to Haman? The answer given is that in Bereishis (3:11) the Torah says "Hamin Ha'eytz Hazeh". The context there is that Hashem is asking Adam if he had eaten from the tree which was forbidden to him. The Gemara explains that the letters in the word "Hamin" are the same as the name Haman, and this is the biblical reference to Haman. One can only help but wonder, is the Torah playing word games here, or is there something deeper in the answer which is being related.

One of the most striking characteristics of Haman was his inability to be satisfied. He was second in command to the king. He had money, power, family, a great job, what more could he ask for? Yet we find that the Megillah tells us that because Mordechai would not bow down to him, Haman said (Esther 5:13) "All of this is worthless to me". Because Haman was lacking one thing, everything that he did have was worthless to him.

Haman was the ultimate malcontent. The problem with his attitude is that such a person will never truly be happy. We know that the Mishna in Pirkei Avos (4:1) teaches us that the only one who

can truly be happy is one who is happy with his own lot. A person who is always looking for something more will never be able to be happy with what he currently has, they will always remain unsatisfied.

Where do we find such an attitude in the Torah? The Gemara points us to the story of Adam Harishon. There we find that Adam had everything; he had total access and control over this world. All he lacked was one thing. He was forbidden to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Because he was unable to withstand that test we have the world as we are accustomed to today. This attitude is the "Haman Attitude", thus this is the place the

strate the amazing powers of Hashem. Rather, He wanted to teach the Jewish People a powerful lesson for all time. He wanted to show them the ability to be satisfied with their individual lot. Just as no one complained about being squishy in the overcrowded courtyard, so too everyone can always be satisfied with his life. Therefore, immediately after the miracle Moshe gathered the people and told them this is what Hashem wants to show you.

The Mishna says in Pirkei Avos (5:7) "No man ever said to his friend that there is not enough room for me to stay overnight in Yerushalayim". Those who live simply

*"Only one who is satisfied
with his lot is truly happy"*

Gemara uses as our biblical reference for Haman. The story and message is one and the same.

The Chasam Sofer derives the very same message from this weeks parsha. The Torah says (Vayikra 8:3) that Hashem instructs Moshe to "Gather the entire assembly to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting". Rashi there explains that certainly there was not room for the entire assembly of several million people to all gather in that spot. This was a miraculous occurrence of a small area holding a huge number of people.

Right after this miracle Moshe gathers the people and says to them (Vayikra 8:5) "This is the thing that Hashem has commanded to be done". The Chasam Sofer suggests that the purpose of this miracle was not just to simple demon-

and are satisfied with what they have will always have room. In practical terms, the Chasam Sofer suggests that the Torah here is appealing to us to live simply and to turn away from the luxurious things which we don't really need.

Perhaps we can suggest that is no small coincidence that our Parsha this week is directly following Purim. We are getting a double reminder not to desire what your friend has, and not to dream about taking that beautiful shiny new car from next door and parking it in your own driveway. Let's absorb this double reminder of the importance of being satisfied and content with what we already have been blessed with, as we know that this is the only way to achieve true happiness. ♦

Good Shabbos!