

THIS ISSUE DEDICATED BY MORDY & TZVI SPERO "לענין סבם ר' מאיר בן ר' יעקב יצחק ז"ל - תנצב"ה
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and was absolutely enamored by this wonderful concept. Later, upon visiting his <i>Rebbe</i>, the saintly Vilna Gaon ZT"L, R' Chaim told over this <i>chiddush</i>. Said the <i>Gaon</i>, "Such a deep secret could have only been revealed by none other than <i>Eliyohu Hanavi</i> himself!" TORAH GEMS ויהי אמן את הדסה היא אסתר בת דדו כו' (אסתר ב-ז) The name Esther is related to the word הסתר - <i>hidden</i>. For nine years, until Haman's downfall, Esther guarded the secret of her ancestry. She never told anyone that she was a Jewess. Examining her situation, we know that as the wife of Achashverosh she was constantly pressured to reveal the truth. Yet she withstood this pressure. What was it that kept her strong? R' Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg Shlit'a quotes the <i>Medrash</i> that Mordechai realized there was something unique in Esther becoming the queen. She was a righteous woman and only Divine providence could have caused her to become the wife of a non-Jewish king. Mordechai, aware of the impending calamity that would befall the Jews, foresaw that Esther would be the one through whom they would be saved. Had she revealed her ancestry, she would have defeated this purpose. Queen Esther, therefore, carefully guarded her secret due to a character trait that she inherited from <i>Rochel Imeinu</i>, who likewise did not reveal her secret to her betrothed, Yaakov, so as not to shame her older sister. Esther inherited this quality of silence and discretion, which Rochel had shown under such tremendous pressure. This incredible silence is the outstanding virtue that made Esther queen. She boldly and courageously kept her secret for she knew that her silence was necessary for the salvation of the Jewish people. There would come a time when she would have to tell, and there was a divine purpose in store for her. Let us learn the lesson of self-control and silence from the queen whose name was Hadassah and Esther. Hadassah, the one who suffers, was Esther, the hidden one, who kept silent about her ancestry in order to redeem the Jewish people. המן בן המדתא ... תלו אותו ואת בניו על העץ (ט-כח) <i>Chazal</i> tell us that not only was Haman's downfall spectacular in its culmination and permanent in a historical sense, but the descendants of the wicked Haman even became converts to the Jewish faith and sat and learned <i>Torah</i> in <i>Bnei Brak</i>. What a delicious retribution for the evil man who attempted to eradicate the entire Jewish Nation and the <i>Torah</i> that they hold so dear. Many ask, although Haman deserved such a terrible punishment, in what way did he merit that his descendants should be worthy of realizing the truth of <i>Bnei Yisroel</i>, and in fact, enjoy the pleasures of studying <i>Torah</i>? When the <i>Chevron Rosh Yeshiva</i>, R' Moshe Chevronei ZT"L was once on a fundraising trip in America, he found himself in a modern synagogue where the "Rabbi" held forth a lengthy dissertation on the superior importance of secular studies over traditional <i>Torah</i> learning, in the <i>yeshiva</i> system. R' Moshe cut into the Rabbi's speech and declared, "Why, even the wicked Haman wouldn't agree with you!" All eyes turned to him in astonishment and disbelief. He explained. "The <i>Medrash</i> relates that Haman came to the <i>Beis Medrash</i> of <i>Mordechai Hatzaddik</i> and asked one of the children what was being studied. 'The laws of the <i>Korbon Omer</i>,' he was told. Said Haman with a sigh, 'Now I see that your ten measures (of the <i>Omer</i>) will overturn my ten-thousand silver coins.' In the end, even Haman, by recognizing the continued importance of <i>Torah</i> learning, merited wonderful great-grandchildren who became Jews and learned <i>Torah</i> in <i>Bnei Brak</i>!"	*** *** *** *** *** *** *** *** *** *** *** ***	סילוק ושתי, שגרם להמלכת אסתר, וכן הוא בעצמו פסק מה לעשות באיש אשר המלך חפץ ביקרו, והוא הוכרח למלאות בעצמו את פסק הכבוד למרדכי. ויותר מזה, מצאנו במדרש שהמן קרא לעבדיו ואמר להם לבחור בעץ גבוה חמישים אמה. ואמרו לו שאין נמצא בכל המדינה עץ של נ' אלא בבירה שלו לבד. מיד עמד והחריב אכסדרא שלו ונטלן עי"ש. הרי נורא ונפלא, שהמן החריב אכסדרא שלו למען הוצא ממנו את מעשה אבות....סימן לבנים אם על המלך טוב יכתב לאבדם ועשרת אלפים ככר כסף וכו' (מגילת אסתר ג-ט) It was <i>Purim</i> afternoon, and the great R' Chaim Volozhiner ZT"L sat regally at the head of his table enjoying the <i>Yom Tov</i> delicacies. As was his custom each year, he carried a sack of coins to give out to the poor and needy who came to him for alms. No one was turned away as he meticulously fulfilled the Rabbinic dictum, "<i>All who stretch out a hand (in need), are to be given.</i>" One old man, a long flowing white beard gracing his aged and wrinkled face, accepted the proffered coin from R' Chaim, but hesitated for a moment. Gathering up his courage, he boldly requested another coin. "If the <i>Rov</i> will be so kind as to offer me another coin," the old man intoned conspiratorially, a twinkle in his eye, "I will relate a <i>chiddush</i>, a novel thought that I'm pretty certain even the great R' Chaim Volozhiner has never heard!" R' Chaim raised an eyebrow in surprise. Then, moved by the <i>Purim</i> spirit, he smiled, took out another coin from his purse and extended it towards the old man. Happily, he accepted this coin and then asked the following question: "The Yalkut Shimoni describes an incident where <i>Eliyohu Hanavi</i> came to <i>Mordechai Hatzaddik</i> and revealed to him that the deadly decree that was forced upon the Jews of Persia was quite within his reach and ability to have repealed. He explained that the Heavenly decree was not written in blood which would have sealed their fate for good. Rather, it was encrusted in cement, and through the piercing <i>tefillos</i> and <i>Teshuvah</i> of <i>Bnei Yisroel</i>, there was a good chance for them to be saved." The old man now turned directly to R' Chaim and asked, "My question is, where is this concept מרמז - <i>hidden</i>, in the words of the <i>Megillah</i>?" The assembled guests held their breath in anticipation. R' Chaim creased his brow deep in thought. But after a few moments he opened his eyes, smiled and admitted defeat. "Please tell us the answer to your intriguing question," he requested, to the amazement of eveyone. Now, the old man smiled warmly. "The answer is this. We find an opinion that states that every time the word המלך - '<i>the king</i>,' is written in the <i>Megillah</i>, it is a subliminal reference to the King of all Kings, <i>Hakodosh Boruch Hu</i>. When the wicked Haman was attempting to put forth his plan of destruction before King Achashverosh, he said the following words: <i>If it is good before the king, he shall write to eradicate them.</i> If we were to dissect his words, however, the word ילאבדם may be split into two words, ילא בדם. Thus, we have an altogether new approach to understanding this <i>posuk</i>. <i>If it is proper before the King, Hashem</i>,' י כתב' - '<i>not with blood, but rather in cement.</i>'" R' Chaim immediately cried out in excited joy. Indeed, he had never heard such a penetrating novellae	
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