

HAMAN

1. "And Memuchan said." (Esther 1:16)

It was taught in a Baraita: Memuchan is Haman. And why is Haman referred to as Memuchan? Because he was prepared (mukhan) to bring calamity upon the Jewish people. Rav Kahna said: From here we see that the common man jumps to the front. (Megillah 12b)

R. Johanan reported different opinions of three Amoraim. One said that (Memuchan hated Vashti) because she used to strike his face on both sides with her shoe. A second said: It was because she did not invite his wife to the women's feast. The third said: It was because he had a daughter whom he wanted to marry into the royal house. (Esther Rabbah 4:6)

2. R. Pinchas said: There were two rich men in the world, one in Israel and one among the idolaters. In Israel there was Korah, who found the treasures of gold and silver that Joseph had hidden. Among the idolaters there was Haman, who seized the treasures of the kings of Judah. When the king saw his wealth and his ten sons of princely rank before him, he forthwith promoted and exalted him as it says: "After these things did Ahasuerus promote Haman." (Esther 3:1) And the king ordered all to bow down to him and prostrate themselves before him. What did Haman then do? He attached an embroidered image to his garment upon his breast, and everyone who bowed down to Haman bowed down to the image. (Esther Rabbah 7:5)

3. "Some time afterward King Ahasuerus promoted Haman" (Esther 3:1)

This account bears out what Scripture says: "For the wicked shall perish and the enemies of the Lord shall be as fat as the lambs" (Psalms 37:20) which are fattened not for their own benefit but for slaughter. So the wicked Haman was raised to greatness only to make his fall greater. (Esther Rabbah 7:1)

4. The verse states: **"But it seemed contemptible in his eyes to lay his hand on Mordecai alone; for they had made known to him the people of Mordecai; wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai"** (Esther 3:6). **Rava said: At first he wanted to lay his hands on Mordecai alone, and in the end on the people of Mordecai. And who were the people of Mordecai? They were the Sages. And ultimately he sought to bring harm on all the Jews.**

The verse states: **"They cast pur, that is, the lot"** (Esther 3:7). A Sage taught the following *baraita*: **Once the lot fell on the month of Adar, he, Haman, greatly rejoiced. He said: The lot has fallen for me in the month that Moses died. But he did not know that not only did Moses die on the seventh of Adar, but he was also born on the seventh of Adar.**

Haman said to Ahasuerus: **"There is [yeshno] one people scattered abroad [mefuzar] and dispersed [meforad] among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; and their laws are diverse from those of every people; nor do they keep the king's laws; therefore it does not profit the king to tolerate them"** (Esther 3:8). **Rava said: There was none who knew how to slander like Haman. He said to Ahasuerus: Let us destroy them. Ahasuerus said to him: I am afraid of their God, lest He do to me as He did to those who stood against them before me. Haman said to him: They have been asleep [yashnu] with respect to the mitzvot, having ceased to observe the mitzvot.**

Ahasuerus said to him: There are the Sages among them who observe the mitzvot. Haman said to him: They are one people.

Perhaps you will say that I am making a bald spot in your kingdom, there will be a desolate

area within the kingdom. There is no need to worry, though, as **they are scattered** [*mefuzarin*] **among the peoples**. Perhaps you will say that **there is benefit from them**; but this nation is *meforad*, like this barren mule [*pereida*] that cannot bear offspring, and there is no benefit to be gained from them. And perhaps you will say that **there is at least a province that is filled with them**. Therefore the verse states that they are scattered “**in all the provinces of your kingdom**” (Esther 3:8).

Haman continued: “**And their laws are diverse from those of every people**” (Esther 3:8), as **they do not eat from our food, nor do they marry from our women, nor do they marry off their women to us**. “**Nor do they keep the king’s laws**” (Esther 3:8). **They spend the entire year** in idleness, as they are constantly saying: *Shehi pehi*, an acronym for: It is Shabbat today [*Shabbat hayom*]; it is Passover today [*Pesah hayom*]. The verse continues: “**Therefore it does not profit the king to tolerate them,**” as **they eat and drink and scorn the throne**. Proof of this is that **even if a fly falls into the cup of one of them, he will throw the fly out and drink the wine it fell into, but if my master the king were to touch the glass of one of them, he would throw it to the ground, and would not drink it**.

“**If it please the king, let it be written that they be destroyed, and I will weigh out ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king’s treasuries**” (Esther 3:9). Reish Lakish said: **It is revealed and known in advance to the One Who spoke and the world came into being, that in the future Haman was going to weigh out shekels against the Jewish people; therefore, He arranged that the**

Jewish people’s shekels that were given to the Temple preceded Haman’s shekels.

And this is as we learned in a mishna (Shekalim 2a): On the first of Adar the court makes a public announcement about the contribution to the Temple of half-shekels that will soon be due, and about the need to uproot forbidden mixtures of diverse kinds of seeds from the fields now that they have begun to sprout.

“**And the king said to Haman: The silver is given to you; the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you**” (Esther 3:11) (Megillah 13b)

5. “**Yet all this avails me nothing**” (Esther 5:13), teaches that **all the treasures of that wicked one were engraved on his heart, and when he saw Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate, he said: As long as Mordecai is around, all this that I wear on my heart avails me nothing.** (Megillah 15a)

6. “Quick then!” said the king to Haman. “Get the garb and the horse, as you have said, and do this to Mordecai the Jew, who sits in the king’s gate. Omit nothing of all you have proposed.” (Esther 6:10)

Haman said to him: Which Mordecai? Ahasuerus said to him: The Jew. Haman said to him: There are many Mordecai the Jews in the marketplace. Ahasuerus said to him: That sits in the king’s gate.

Haman said to him: Why award him such a great honor? **It would certainly be enough for him to receive one village** [*disekarta*] as an estate, **or one river** for the levy of taxes. Ahasuerus said to him: **This too you must give him. “Let nothing fail of all that you have spoken.”**

“**Then Haman took the apparel and the horse**” (Esther 6:11). When he went, he found Mordecai as the Sages were sitting before him, and he was demonstrating to them the *halakhot* of the handful, i.e., the scooping out of a handful of flour from the meal-offering in order to burn it on the altar. **Once Mordecai saw him coming toward him with his horse’s reins held in his hands, he became frightened, and he said to the Sages: This evil man has come to kill me. Go away from him so that you should not get burnt from his coals, i.e., that you should not suffer harm as well. At that moment Mordecai wrapped himself in his prayer shawl and stood up to pray. Haman came over to where they were and sat down before them and waited until Mordecai finished his prayer.**

In the interim, as he waited, Haman said to the other Sages: **With what were you occupied? They said to him: When the Temple is standing, one who pledges a meal-offering would bring a handful of fine flour and achieve atonement with it. He said to them: Your handful of fine flour has come and cast aside my ten thousand pieces of silver.** When Mordecai finished praying, he said to Haman: **Wicked man, when a slave buys property, to whom belongs the slave and to whom belongs the property?**

Haman said to him: **Stand up, put on these garments and ride on this horse, for the king wants you to do so.** Mordecai said to him: **I cannot do so until I enter the bathhouse** [*bei vanei*] **and trim my hair, for it is not proper conduct to use the king’s garments in this state.**

In the meantime, **Esther sent messengers and closed all the bathhouses and all the shops of the**

craftsmen, including the bloodletters and barbers. When Haman saw that there was nobody else to do the work, **he himself took Mordecai into the bathhouse and washed him, and then he went and brought scissors [zuza] from his house and trimmed his hair.** While he was trimming his hair he injured himself and sighed. Mordecai said to him: **Why do you sigh?** Haman said to him: **The man whom the king had once regarded above all his other ministers is now made a bathhouse attendant [balanei] and a barber.** Mordecai said to him: **Wicked man, were you not once the barber of the village of Kartzum?** If so, why do you sigh? You have merely returned to the occupation of your youth. It was taught in a *baraita*: **Haman was the barber of the village of Kartzum for twenty-two years.**

After Haman trimmed his hair, Haman dressed Mordecai in the royal garments. Haman then said to him: **Mount the horse and ride.** Mordecai said to him: **I am unable, as my strength has waned from the days of fasting.** Haman then stooped down before him and Mordecai ascended on him. As he was ascending the horse, Mordecai gave Haman a kick. Haman said to him: **Is it not written for you: "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls" (Proverbs 24:17)?** Mordecai said to him: **This statement applies only to Jews, but with regard to you it is written: "And you shall tread upon their high places" (Deuteronomy 33:29).**

The verse states: **"And he proclaimed before him: Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor"** (Esther 6:11). As Haman was taking Mordecai along the street of Haman's house, Haman's daughter was standing on the roof and saw the spectacle. She thought to herself that the one who is riding on the horse must be her father, and the one walking before him must be Mordecai. She then took a chamber pot full of feces and cast its contents onto the head of her father. When Haman raised his eyes, she saw that he was her father. In her distress, she fell from the roof to the ground and died.

And this is as it is written: "And Mordecai returned to the king's gate" (Esther 6:12). Rav Sheshet said: This means that he returned to his sackcloth and his fasting over the troubles of the Jewish people. **"But Haman hastened to his house, mourning, and having his head covered"** (Esther 6:12). **"Mourning"; over the death of his daughter. "And having his head covered"; due to what had happened to him, as his head was full of filth.** (Megillah 16a)

7. **"And the king arose from the banquet of wine in his wrath and went into the palace garden"** (Esther 7:7), and the next verse states: **"Then the king returned out of the palace garden to the place of the wine drinking"** (Esther 7:8). The Gemara comments: The verses here compare his returning to his arising: Just as his arising was in wrath, so too, his returning was in wrath. And why did he return in wrath? For when he went out he found ministering angels who appeared to him as people and they were uprooting trees from the garden, and he said to them: **What are you doing? They said to him: Haman commanded us to do this.**

And when he entered his house he saw that **"Haman was falling upon the bed"** (Esther 7:8).

Why does it say **"was falling" [nofel]** in the present tense? It should have said **"fell" [nafal]** in the past tense. Rabbi Elazar said: This teaches that an angel came and pushed him down on it. Ahasuerus said: **Woe unto me in the house and woe unto me outside,** as the verse continues: **"Then the king said: Will he even force the queen before me in the house?"** (Esther 7:8) (Megillah 16a)