

To help arouse the spirit of *Mishenichnas Adar Marbim BeSimcha*, we provide the following questions (this time--and answers!) relating to the events of Megillas Esther:

1. **QUESTION:** How long was Haman a barber for before he became Achashveirosh's right-hand [or, perhaps, second-hand] man?

ANSWER: He was a barber in K'far Kartzum for 22 years (Megillah 16A).

2. **QUESTION:** When Haman heard that Achashveirosh ordered him to take Mordechai around on the king's horse--what did Haman suggest to Achashveirosh to do for Mordechai instead?

ANSWER: He said that it would be enough to give him one village or one river (ibid.).

3. **QUESTION:** Name at least two acts that are attributed to the Malach Gavriel in the Purim story.

ANSWER: He placed a tail on Vashti so that she would be too ashamed to appear at Achashveirosh's feast (Megillah ibid. 12B). Also, when Achashveirosh could not sleep and he ordered that his Divrei HaYamim be read before him, Shimshi the king's scribe and a Jew-hater kept on trying to erase the recording of how Mordechai had saved Achashveirosh's life from Bigsan and Seresh--and Gavriel kept on re-writing it (ibid. 16A).

4. **QUESTION:** Can you identify a Pasuk in Tanach that Haman knew?

ANSWER: Chazal teach that when Haman told Mordechai to get up onto the king's horse, Mordechai advised him that he was too weak from fasting to do so. Haman then had to bow down so that Mordechai could step on him to ascend onto the horse. When Mordechai did so, he kicked Haman. Haman responded: "Does it not state '*Bifol Oyvecha Ahl Tismach*'?" (Mishlei 24:17)? Mordechai responded that the Pasuk does not refer to the enemies of K'lal Yisrael (ibid.)!

5. **QUESTION:** What *gezeiros* did Haman make against K'lal Yisrael, besides for his intent to ultimately *r'l* annihilate them?

ANSWER: (i) He decreed that no one could purchase a Jew as a slave--so that no Jew would be protected at the time of the intended annihilation (ibid. 11A); (ii) From the Pasuk of "*Laihudim Haysah Orah*"--which teaches how the Jews celebrated after Haman's plan was foiled, we learn what he decreed against: *Orah*--the study of Torah, *Simcha*--the observance of Yom Tov, *Sason*--Bris Milah, and *Yikar*--Tefillin.

Hakhel Note: Once again, the Pasuk reads: “*Laihudim Haysah Orah V’Simcha*”--we may learn from this that the prerequisite to Simcha is-- Orah--Torah! Certainly, one thing we should be doing now in preparation for Purim is learning more Torah--especially relating to Purim and the Megillah!

6. **QUESTION:** How many Pesukim are there in the Megillah?

ANSWER: 166--corresponding to the number of words in Hallel HaGadol (Tehillim 136). (Sefer *Rokeach*)

7. **QUESTION:** On what day and in what year did Haman intend to annihilate the Jews?

ANSWER: 13 Adar **3405**. Note: Achashveirosh only ruled for 14 years--from 3392 to **3406**. Hakhel Note: Coincidence?

8. **QUESTION:** What Pasuk in the Megillah teaches us that we will celebrate Purim even in the days of Moshiach?

ANSWER: “*Vimei HaPurim Ha’eileh Lo Ya’avru Mitoch HaYehudim Vezichram Lo Yasuf Mizaram*--and these days of Purim will never cease among the Jews...” (Megillas Esther 9:28).

9. **QUESTION:** If when blowing the Shofar, we recite the bracha of *Lishmo’ah Kol Shofar*, then why when reciting the Megillah do we not recite the Pasuk *Lishmo’ah Kriyas HaMegillah*?

ANSWER: The reading of the Megillah involves *havanas halev*--an understanding beyond just hearing, like Kriyas Shema (Sefer *Avudraham*).

10. **QUESTION:** Why is Hashem’s name not written in the Megillah?

ANSWER: There are several answers to this question:

A. Since the Persians recorded the story as well, they would have replaced any Sheim with the name of their own false deity. Accordingly, it is an honor to Hashem for His name not to be mentioned (*Maharil*).

B. So that the unlearned people at the time would not mistakenly rationalize that they could intermarry, for after all, had not Esther done so.

C. Chazal (Chulin 139B) teach that the allusion to Esther in the Torah is from the Pasuk *Ve’anochi Hastir Astir*--and I will hide myself [at that time]. Accordingly, we learn that Hashem wanted His name to be hidden relating the events of Esther.

11. **QUESTION:** Why is the Megillah called Megillas Esther--and not Megillas Mordechai?

ANSWER: There are several answers given:

A. Mordechai was on the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah that approved the Megillah's codification as one of the Sifrei Tanach. Referring to the Megillah as Megillas Mordechai could cause some to claim that Mordechai endorsed it because of his own honor, or as a remembrance as to how the king raised his position and accorded him great honor and wealth." Indeed, it was Esther who requested of the Chachomim: '*Kisvuni L'Doros--* write down my story for future generations.' (See Megillas Esther 9:29, and Megillah 7A).

B. Esther acted with greater Mesiras Nefesh, as she stated (Esther 4:16): "*V'cha'asher Avadeti Avodeti.*" Rashi (Shemos 37:1) provides a similar comment on the Pasuk: "*Vaya'as Betzalel Es Ha'Aron--Betzalel made the Aron*". Because he did more than others, it was rightfully referred to by his name.

C. The *ikar HaNes* occurred through her (see Megillah 4A Tosfos d'h She'af).

D. Even though Esther was a *yesoma* and raised by others--nevertheless a Yeshua Gedolah for all of K'lal Yisrael came through her. This should provide a nechama to all those who are downtrodden to strengthen their bitachon in Yeshuas Hashem--which can come --through him or her--at any moment.

E. To remind us that because Esther reported in the name of Mordechai what Bigsan and Seresh intended to do to Achashveirosh she brought Geulah to the world--and that we too can bring Geulah to the world by fulfilling Chazal's teaching (Avos 6:6): "*Kol Ha'omer Davar B'sheim Amro Meivi Geulah LaOlam!*"

F. See Special Note 4 below for an additional suggestion!

12. **QUESTION:** Are there any cities in Chutz La'aretz that could have possibly been walled from the times of Yehoshua Bin Nun?

ANSWER: Possibly, Prague, Czechoslovakia and Temesvar, Romania--the Shelah HaKadosh writes that an individual should be machmir on himself in these cities and read the Megillah at night and in the day (without a bracha) on the 15th of Adar as well.

13. **QUESTION:** How much time passed between Vashti being put to death and Esther becoming queen?

ANSWER: 4 years--for Vashti was killed in the 3rd year of Achashveirosh's reign and Esther became queen in the 7th year of his reign.

14. **QUESTION:** How many generations were there from Mordechai back to Yaakov Avinu?

ANSWER: 40 (see Targum Sheini to Esther 7:6 for a listing of Mordechai's ancestry generation by generation)

15. **QUESTION:** How many years had Mordechai been in Galus before the Nes of Purim occurred?

ANSWER: Mordechai went into Galus with Yechanya the king of Yehuda in the year 3328. The Nes of Purim occurred in the year 3405. This means that Mordechai had been in galus for 77 years prior to the Nes of Purim!

16. **QUESTION:** We have stated that there are 40 generations from Yaakov to Mordechai. What is the significance of relating Mordechai to Yaakov?

ANSWER: The *Midrash Talpios* teaches that Mordechai's neshama is rooted in the neshama of Yaakov. Hakhel Note: Chazal teach that there were only twenty generations from Eisav to Haman--their *rishus* was much closer to each other!

17. **QUESTION:** What was the name of Haman's mother?

ANSWER: Her name was **Amasla'i** (Bas Urvasi). Chazal (Baba Basra 91A) teach that the name of Avraham Avinu's mother was also **Amasla'i** (Bas Karnevo). One suggested reason for the two mothers having the same name is that whenever the name Haman ben **Amasla'i** is mentioned, it is *me'orer* the zechus of Avraham Avinu--just as when we mention even the city of Chevron, we are *me'orer* the zechus Avos (see Yoma 28B).

18. **QUESTION:** What are the ten significant kingdoms that span all of human history?

ANSWER: (i) Hashem when He created the world, and whose Rulership was recognized by all; (ii) Nimrod, when he rebelled before Hashem in front of the world; (iii) Paroh Melech Mitzrayim; (iv) the kingdom of Ahm Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael; (v) Nevuchadnezzar, king of Bavel; (vi) Achashveirosh; (vii) Yavan; (viii) Rome; (ix) Moshiach; and (x) when Hashem once again is recognized by all as Ruler of the world, as the Navi teaches: "*VeHaya Hashem LeMelech Ahl Kol Ha'aretz*".

19. **QUESTION:** We know that the Gematria of Boruch Mordechai and Arur Haman are the same. To what is the Gematria of Arurah Zeresh equivalent?

ANSWER: Esther Livracha (Steipeler Gaon).

20. **QUESTION:** Why is Mordechai called an *Ish Yehudi* in the Megillah--if he was a direct descendant of Shimi Ben Geirah who was from Shevet Binyomin?

ANSWER: Chazal (Megillah 12B-13A) give different possible explanations. Following are several:

A. He did come from Binyomin--but it was an honor to be referred to as a Yehudi.

B. His father was from Shevet Binyomin, but his mother was from Shevet Yehudah.

C. Shevet Yehudah claimed the credit for Mordechai--as Dovid HaMelech did not kill his ancestor Shimi Ben Geira as he could have, thereby allowing Mordechai to be born.

D. The word Yehudi refers to someone who is *kofer* in Avodah Zara--and Mordechai did not bow down to Haman and anything that he may have been wearing. Hakhel Note: Be proud to be called a Jew!

21. **QUESTION:** At what point in the Megillah did Michoel and Gavriel work together on behalf of the Jews?

ANSWER: After Haman ordered Doniel (who was bringing messages back and forth between Mordechai and Esther) killed, Michoel and Gavriel together took his place (Targum Sheini to Megillas Esther 4:12).

22. **QUESTION:** The Megillah records that when Achashveirosh saw that Esther had dared to appear before him without being called, he miraculously extended his *sharvit* towards her. The Pasuk (5:2) there spells *sharvit* with a yud. Later on in the Megillah (8:4), the Pasuk describes how Achashveirosh extended the *sharvit* to Esther again, but there the word *sharvit* is spelled without a yud. Why--what is the difference?

ANSWER: Chazal teach that when Achashveirosh extended the sharvit to Esther when she entered without permission it miraculously extended for a huge amount of amos--perhaps 200! (see Megillah 15B). We may suggest that then it was no small sharvit--it was as complete as it could get--a sharvit with a yud!

23. **QUESTION:** The word Purim is written five times in the Megillah--twice with a Vav and three times without a Vav--why?

ANSWER: The two times with a Vav (i.e., with the word complete) allude to the 14th and 15th of Adar, each of which are celebrated as Purim in all respects, only depending upon whether the city was originally walled or not. The three times Purim is written without a Vav represents the 11th, 12th and 13th of Adar, days upon which in certain circumstances in the past the Megillah could have been read (and Matanos L'Evyonim given)--but Simchas Purim was in any event even in these circumstances celebrated on the 14th. (*Cheishek Shlomo*)

Hakhel Note to Questions 2 and 3: Oh, how much we can learn from the presence or absence of even one letter in the Megillah!

24. **QUESTION:** Can you name at least three Nevi'im--other than Mordechai and Esther--that lived at the time that the miracle of Purim took place?

ANSWER: Baruch Ben Neryah, Sraya Ben Machsaya, Daniel, Chagai, Zechariah and Malachi. (Rashi to Megillah 15A)

25. **QUESTION:** When was Haman hung?

ANSWER: Haman was hung in the evening after the 16th of Nissan (i.e., the night of the 17th). (ibid.)

26. **QUESTION:** Why does the Megillah refer to Haman's lottery with the term "*Hipil Pur, Hu HaGoral*" (Megillah 3:7)-was is the difference between a *Pur* and *Goral*?

ANSWER: The Meforshim (ibid.) explain that a *Pur* is a lottery which is intended to have a negative result, while a *Goral* is intended to have a positive. Thus, Haman had intended for it to be a *Pur* for Klal Yisroel--however--the Megillah already testified at that time that it would be a *Goral*--a lottery in which we were the winners!

27. **QUESTION:** On what day did the *Ikar Neis* of Purim occur?

ANSWER: The thirteenth day of Adar, when the major wars against our enemies were fought (Rashi to Megillah 2A).

28. **QUESTION:** What does the word *Manos* in *Mishloach Manos* refer to?

ANSWER: Although we commonly translate the term as portions, Rashi (Megillah 7A) defines *Manos* as *Minei Ma'adanim*, kinds of delicacies.

29. **QUESTION:** According to the opinions that one should give *Mishloach Manos* through a *Shaliach*, through an agent--can that agent be a monkey, or other person who would generally not represent you as your 'Shaliach'?

ANSWER: The Chasam Sofer (in the *Chidushei Chasam Sofer* to Gittin 22B) writes that the *Shaliach* need only be competent when the matter to be performed really needs to be performed by the principal, but we just accept the *Shaliach* as his agent. However, when the Torah requires that a *Shaliach* be sent--such as in *Mishloach Manos*, then one can even send a monkey or any other person who would be *Pasul* as a *Shaliach* to deliver the *Shaloch Manos*. How is this for a novel idea for this Purim?

30. **QUESTION:** How does one fulfill the concept of *Pirsumei Nissa* on Purim?

ANSWER: The reading of the Megillah publicizes the miracle--and as a result everyone praises (or should praise) Hashem in its aftermath! As a matter of fact, the reason that we read the Megillah at night and during the day is to remember how K'lal Yisroel cried out to Hashem to be saved both at night and during the day--and through this we remember the *Nes*!

31. **QUESTION:** What should one be sure to do at the Purim Seudah?

ANSWER: The *Nehorah Shaleim* writes that one should read the Parasha of *Vayavo Amaleik* (Shemos 17:8-16), and the Parasha three times of *Zachor Eis Asher Lecha Amaleik*. He should also have candles lit as on Shabbos, and speak of the Nisim that occurred.

32. **QUESTION:** The Navi (Yeshaya 43:18) writes that “*Ahl Tizkeru Rishonos*--once the great Geulah comes, we will no longer remember the Mo’adim that took place celebrating Yetziyas Mitzrayim.” Yet, Chazal teach that we will still celebrate Purim--how was the Nes of Purim greater than all of the Nissim of Yetziyas Mitzrayim?

ANSWER: In Mitzrayim we were not threatened with immediate annihilation of all--men, women and children, while Haman’s decree was from young to old, men and women--covering our entire people. It is thus the salvation of our entire people--oh how we must celebrate--and how we will--forever!

33. **QUESTION:** Why do the Jews who live in Spain and Africa have to celebrate Purim--if they were not under the rulership of Achashveirosh?

ANSWER: The Chida writes that on Purim every year great lights shine **through the entire world**--just as those that were revealed in the times of Mordechai and Esther, as the Pasuk says: “*LaYehudim Haysah Orah V’Simcha*”.

34. **QUESTION:** Esther’s name is mentioned three times in the Megillah as Esther Bas Avichayil. Why is her full name mentioned three times?

ANSWER: We do not know--sometimes that is also an answer! If you know of an answer, please let us know!

35. **QUESTION:** What is the source for the concept of drinking on Purim to the point of not knowing the difference between ‘*Arur Haman and Baruch Mordechai*’?

ANSWER: The source is easy--Megillah 7B--but why?! Once again, we look forward to your answer!

36. **QUESTION:** Why was Esther referred to as Esther?

ANSWER: One answer is because she was hidden (the root of Esther being *seiser*--hidden) in Mordechai’s house **for 75 years** after she was born (Targum and Targum Sheini) until she was discovered by the henchman of Achashveirosh so that the *nes* of Purim could occur.

37. **QUESTION:** What was Mordechai doing for the seven day feast that began after the 180 day feast was over (Megillas Esther 1:5)?

ANSWER: He understood the peril of this concluding party, and fasted and davened for seven days (Targum).

38. **QUESTION:** How was Vashti put to death by Achashveirosh?

ANSWER: Let us just say you could no longer give her a 'heads-up' (Targum).

39. **QUESTION:** After Haman's decree, the Megillah (3:15) records *V'hair Shushan Navocha*-- and the people of Shushan were bewildered. Why were they not happy--after all, can't we assume that they were all Jew-haters?

ANSWER: Yes, you can assume that--Rashi (ibid.) explains that it was **only the Jews** in Shushan that were bewildered. This is why it is so important to learn the Megillah BEFORE Purim with at least one basic peirush....

40. **QUESTION:** We sing "*Shoshanas Yaakov...Birosam Yachad Techeiles Mordechai*. What was the Techeiles of Mordechai all about?

ANSWER: HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita suggests that when Mordechai was told to wear the king's garments, he had to place tzitzis (with Techeiles) on the four-cornered ones, and as a result K'lal Yisrael realized that it was him and not Haman on the king's horse!

41. **QUESTION:** What two words in the Megillah have the Gematria of 95?

ANSWER: Both Hamelech and Haman. This may suggest that neither was a lesser enemy of K'lal Yisrael than the other one was! Fascinatingly, Rabbi Ozer Alport, Shlita, points out that 95 is also the Gematria of *Keis Kah* (Shemos 17:16), from which phrase Chazal teach that Hashem swore that neither His Name nor His Throne will be complete until Amaleik is destroyed. See Rashi (ibid). The phrase *Keis Kah* with respect to Amaleik may also teach us that Hashem's Hand is hidden in the Megillah--there for us to discover.

42. **QUESTION:** Who was the first to do battle with Amaleik?

ANSWER: Yehoshua Bin Nun (Shemos 17: 9). Some suggest that it is for the honor of Yehoshua that Chazal required cities walled from his time to read the Megillah on the 15th.

43. **QUESTION:** At the end of the Megillah, the Pasuk brings that Achashveirosh levied taxes on both the mainlands and the islands (Esther 10:1). Why does the Megillah need to teach us this--what is the connection to the events of the Megillah?

ANSWER: HaRav Nosson Wachtfogel, Z'tl, teaches that although K'lal Yisrael was tremendously uplifted by the great miracles that had occurred--Achashveirosh did not raise himself spiritually at all, and he continued to focus on mundane and monetary pursuits--more money, more money...(Leket Reshimos, p. 113).

44. **QUESTION:** At the conclusion of the Purim miracle, Haman and later his sons are hanged. Why is there no Mitzvah on Purim that relates to *Mechiyas Amaleik* which was such a great part of the Purim salvation?

ANSWER: HaRav Wachtfogel, explains that *Simcha Alein Makt Ouf Amaleik*--a Jew's Simcha itself destroys Amaleik--and that there is no greater mechiyas Amaleik than Simcha (ibid., p. 120).

45. **QUESTION:** If one, under the direction and guidance of his Rav, engages in *Ahd Delo Yadah*--then other than the actual Mitzvos HaYom, what must one be sure to do prior to *Ahd Delo Yadah*?

ANSWER: Teshuvah in *Ahavas Reiyim* and *Ahavas Chaveirim* in a real and substantial way (ibid., 136).

46. **QUESTION:** If only Mordechai did not bow down to Haman--and the rest of K'lal Yisrael in Shushan Habira did--then why would Haman want them killed, after all, they were doing his will?

ANSWER: This is yet another example of a Sonei Yisrael showing his true colors!

47. **QUESTION:** What are the first letters of *Yavo HaMelech V'Haman HaYom* (Esther 5:4)--and what is their significance at this point in the Megillah?

ANSWER: The letters are, of course, the letters Yud-Key-Vuv-Key--the Sheim Hashem that demonstrates Hashem's great mercy for us. By putting herself at a feast with the horrible Achashveirosh and Haman, Esther was pleading with Hashem to override the Middas Hadin and bring upon K'lal Yisrael His Middas HaRachamim!

48. **QUESTION:** The Megillah is one of the *Kisvei HaKodesh*--which has rules as to how it is written and how it is read. Why is Megillas Esther referred to as an *Igeres*, and when read in public, is opened not formally like a Sefer Torah--but actually folded over like a letter.

ANSWER: HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, explains that the Megillah contains three major Letters, the Igeres that Achashveirosh initially sent out for men to rule in their homes--which cast some aspersion on the second Igeres of Haman to destroy the Jewish nation--and then the third *Igeres*, giving the Jews the opportunity to defeat their enemies. Because of the great importance of the '*Igeres*' on Purim, the Megillah itself, albeit one of the *Kisvei Kodesh*, is also read like an *Igeres*. HaRav Kanievsky also points out that the reason that the Purim Mishteh plays such an important role on Purim day for us is because the many Mishta'os in the Megillah are such an important part of the chronology of the Nes.

49. **QUESTION:** Achashveirosh authorized the Jews to take the spoils of war from their enemies. Yet, the Megillah (Esther 9:15) teaches *U'vabizah Lo Shalchu Es Yadam*--that K'lal Yisrael refused to take any booty. Why?

ANSWER: The Rabbeinu Bachya writes that the property of Amaleikim is *assur b'hana'ah*--so that there is no remembrance of Amaleik by someone saying this belonged to Amaleik or that belonged to Amaleik. If so--how, then, was Esther able to take over the Bais Haman and all of its assets (Esther 8:7)? HaRav Chaim Kanievsky explains that Haman had truly sold himself into slavery to Mordechai--and everything that belongs to a slave belongs to his master--so everything that Esther was taking really belonged to Mordechai!

50. **QUESTION:** Why is Purim not celebrated on the 13th of Adar--after all, was that not the day that the *Ikar Neis* occurred--the day that the Jews were to be c'v to annihilated, turning into a day of the Jewish people defeating their enemies?

ANSWER: HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, suggests that on the 13th the Jews were not sure that the enemy had truly succumbed--and the possibility existed of a counter-attack on the 14th. When on the 14th the Jews were able to rest and did not face further conflict, they realized that Hashem had sent them a complete Yeshuah!

51. **QUESTION:** Why did Mordechai not wait for Esther to be granted permission to enter the inner courtroom of Achashveirosh--after all there was still eleven months until the harsh decree would be enacted, and she would surely be called to see Achashveirosh before then. Why did Mordechai insist that she risk her life so early-on?

ANSWER: HaRav Elya Lopian, Z'tl, teaches that Mordechai was telling Esther that in order to overcome the *gezeirah ra'ah*--a special level of Mesiras Nefesh was necessary. Esther understood--and fulfilled Mordechai's instructions. HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, provides a different answer. He teaches that for as long as the decree was in force--the Jews would be in great *pachad*--in terrible fear. Mordechai paskened that it would be better for Esther to undertake this great Mesiras Nefesh than to leave the entire Jewish nation in fear for an undetermined period of time.

52. **QUESTION:** Why do we not daven especially on Purim for *Mechiyas Amalek*?

ANSWER: The Sefer *Kav HaYashar* (Chapter 99) writes that: "I have heard in the name of the Ga'on Moreinu HaRav Rabbi Heshel that when he wanted to try out a pen he would write the name Amalek or the names Haman and Zeresh--and then cross them out to fulfill the Mitzvas Asei of *Macho Timcheh Zecher Amalek*." The *Kav HaYashar* then continues: "... **we are obligated to daven for the obliteration of Amalek so that Hashem's Name and His throne can become complete.** We will then fulfill the words of the Pesukim: "...*Vehisgadilti V'hiskadishiti Besoch Ha'amim*" (Yechezkel 38:23) and "*Bayom Hahu Yiheyeh Hashem Echad U'shemo Echad*." (Zecharia 14:9)

53. **QUESTION:** We recite Shehechyanu twice over the reading of the Megillah--on Purim night, and on Purim day. Is there any other Mitzvah for which Shehechyanu is recited twice in the same day?

ANSWER: We do not know of any--do you? How we should appreciate the Shehechyanu of Purim! Hakhel Note: The Shehechyanu in the morning also covers the other Mitzvos of the day--and one should be sure to have those in mind when reciting or hearing the bracha at Megillah reading!

54. **QUESTION:** We must try to understand what every word in the Megillah means. What does *Achashteranim Bnei Haramachim* (Esther 8:10) mean?

ANSWER: The Ibn Ezra writes that they are mules which are the sons of female horses (mares). Rashi explains that they are types of camels that can run very swiftly.

55. **QUESTION:** From what Pasuk in the Megillah do we learn that *Mishenichnas Adar Marbim B'Simcha* applies to the whole month--including the balance of the month after Purim?

ANSWER: "*VeHachodesh Asher Ne'hepach Lahem Meyagon L'Simcha*"--the **month** was turned from a time of agony to a time of joy! (Esther 9:22) (See gloss of Chasam Sofer to Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 551:2)