

# Zera Shimshon

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## Chapter LVIII: Esther

### Essay 2. The will of a righteous man

**מגילה** פֶּרֶק קמ"א אָמַר [חֲזִיָא] בַּר אַבָּא אָמַר ר' יוֹחָנָן הַקַּצִּיף הִקְבִּ"ה אֲדוֹנִים עַל עֲבָדִים לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן צְדִיק. וְעֲבָדִים עַל אֲדוֹנִים לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן צְדִיק. אֲדוֹנִים וְכו' דְּכָתִיב "פֶּרְעֹה קִצַּף עַל־עֲבָדָיו", לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן צְדִיק וּמִנּוּ יוֹסֵף, "וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־נֹו" וְכו'. עֲבָדִים וְכו' דְּכָתִיב "קִצַּף בְּגִתּוֹ וְתִרְשָׁ", לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן צְדִיק וּמִנּוּ מֶרְדֵּכַי, דְּכָתִיב "וַיִּנְדַּע הַדָּבָר לְמֶרְדֵּכַי" ע"כ. צָרִיךְ עֵינֵינוּ מֵה צוּרְף הַיָּה וְשִׁיקְצִיף הִקְבִּ"ה וְכו', וּמָה אֵיכָפֶת לְהוֹ לַצְדִּיקִים מֵהָאֵי קִצָּף.

Tractate Megillah, in the **first chapter**:

**Rabbi Chiya<sup>1</sup> bar Abba said that Rabbi Yochanan said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, caused the masters to become angry with their servants [in order] to fulfill the will of a righteous man, and the servants with the masters to fulfill the will of [another] righteous man.**

**The masters with their servants, as it is written, "Pharaoh was angry with his servants,"<sup>2</sup> in order to fulfill the will of a righteous man. And who is this? Joseph. As it is written, "There with us was a Hebrew youth."<sup>3</sup>**

**The servants with the masters, as it is written, "At that time, when Mordecai was sitting in the palace gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the threshold, became angry, and plotted to do away with King Ahasuerus."<sup>4</sup> In order to fulfil the will of a righteous man. And who is this? Mordechai. As it is written, "The matter became known to Mordechai."<sup>5</sup>**

- Megillah 13b

**This requires investigation: What need was there that the Holy One, Blessed be He, made them angry? Also, what difference did this anger make to these righteous individuals? I.e., why couldn't G-d have arranged for Joseph and Mordechai to succeed without involving these others?**

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<sup>1</sup> The first edition read Rav Acha.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 41:10.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. 41:12.

<sup>4</sup> Esther 2:21.

<sup>5</sup> Esther 2:22.

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף לְיֹדְעֵי הָאֵלֹהִים אֲנִי בְּעֵינֵי הָאֵלֹהִים לֹא עָשִׂיתִי מְאֹמָה כִּי־שָׂמוּ אֹתִי בְּבֹרֶךְ, לְכַאֲוָרָה אֵין סִבְרָא לְהַאֲמִין שְׁעַל לֹא דְבַר קִצּוֹף עָלָיו אֲדוֹנֹו וְנִסְגִּירָהוּ בְּבֵית הַסֵּהר. אֲמַנָּם כְּשֶׁרָאוּ הַבְּרִיּוֹת שְׂאֵף פְּרֻעָה קִצּוֹף עַל שֶׁר הַמְּשֻׁקִים וְלֹא הָיָה שׁוּם חֲטָא וְעוֹן בְּיָדוֹ, כְּמוֹ שְׁכַתּוּב בְּמִדְרָשׁ שְׂאֲפִשֶׁר שְׁנַפְלָה שְׁלֹא מִדְּעַתּוֹ, וְהִרְאָהָ שְׁהוֹשִׁיבוּ עַל כְּנוֹ, אֲפִשֶׁר שְׂאֵף הָאֲדוֹן שֶׁל יוֹסֵף נָמִי חֲשַׁב שְׁיוֹסֵף חֲטָא וְהוּא לֹא חֲטָא, וְלָכֵן לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן צְדִיק קִצּוֹף פְּרֻעָה עַל שְׁתֵּי עֲבָדָיו.

**It can be said that Joseph said, “nor have I done anything here that they should have put me in the dungeon,”<sup>6</sup> apparently there was no reason to believe Joseph, that his master was angry with him for no reason, and locked him up in the prison unjustly. I.e., many people who are imprisoned proclaim their innocence.**

**However, the people saw that even Pharaoh was angry at the chief wine steward and there was no unintentional or intentional sin on his hands, as is written in the midrash,<sup>7</sup> that a fly had fallen in Pharaoh’s cup, and it is possible that [the fly] fell without [the steward’s] knowledge, and the proof is that he was returned to his position. When the people saw that, they realized that it was possible that even the master of Joseph likewise thought that Joseph sinned when he hadn’t sinned.**

**Therefore, to fulfil the will of the righteous man, Pharaoh was angry at both of his servants. I.e., it wasn’t enough that Joseph was able to come to the attention of Pharaoh as an interpreter of dreams, but it was also critical to introduce the thought that he was trustworthy and had never deserved to be imprisoned.**

וְכֹן בְּאַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ אָמְרוּ וַיִּלְלֵנוּ בְּמִדְרָשׁ עַל פְּסוּק "בְּלִילָה הַהוּא נִדְדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ", שְׁכַל אוֹמְתָה הַלִּילָה הָיָה נִרְאָה לְאַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ שְׁהָיָה "עֹמֵד לְנִגְדוֹ וְסָרְבוּ שְׁלוּפָה בְּיָדוֹ". וְנִבְהַל מְאֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה, וְקִשָּׁה מָה הָיָה לוֹ לְהִתְפַּחַד, וְכִי הִסְבִּירָא גּוֹתְמַת שְׂאֵחֶר שְׁגִדְלוֹ עַל פֶּל הַשָּׂרִים יִהְיֶה כְּפֹי טוֹבָה וַיִּבְקֶשׁ לְהִמִּיתוֹ. וְאַפִּילוּ שְׂרָאָה כְּךָ בְּחֵלוֹם הָיָה לוֹ לֹמַר הַחֲלוּמוֹת שְׁוֹא וַיְדַבְּרוּ, אֲבָל לְאַחַר שְׁמִצָּא בְּסִפְר הַזְּכוּרוֹת שְׂאֵף בְּגִתָּן וְתָרַשׁ שְׁהָיוּ שְׁנֵי סְרִיסִין הָאֲהוּבִים לוֹ בְּקִשׁוֹ הִמִּיתוֹ, אֲפִשֶׁר שְׂאֵף בְּהִמָּן יִהְיֶה כְּךָ, וְלָכֵן נִתְּיָרָא.

**Similarly, with Ahasuerus, [the rabbis] of blessed memory said in the midrash<sup>8</sup> about the verse, “that night, sleep deserted the king,”<sup>9</sup> that throughout that entire night, it had appeared to Ahasuerus that Haman “was standing before him, drawn sword in hand.”<sup>10</sup> The king was very much afraid about this, and it’s hard to understand why he was afraid, for his reasoning was that after he had promoted [Haman] above all the other ministers,<sup>11</sup> would he be ungrateful and seek to kill [the King]? Thus, even when he saw this in the dream, he would have thought to say that the dreams were meaningless,<sup>12</sup> but after he found the book of**

<sup>6</sup> Gen. 40:15.

<sup>7</sup> Gen. Rabbah 88:2.

<sup>8</sup> Esther Rabbah 10:1.

<sup>9</sup> Esther 6:1.

<sup>10</sup> Joshua 5:13.

<sup>11</sup> Esther 5:11.

<sup>12</sup> Yalkut Shimoni on Nach 578:6; Zohar III:234b.

**records that even Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's beloved eunuchs had sought to kill him,<sup>13</sup> it was possible that even with Haman it was thus, and therefore he was afraid.**

ומשום הכי איצטרייך שיקצפו עבדים על האדון לעשות רצון מרדכי, דאי לאו הכי אטשורוש לא הנה שית לבו אל הלום כזה. ואפשר נמי שמשעם זה אמר להביא לפניו ספר הזכרונות דברי הימים, לראות אם יש שום זכרון מאיזה אוהב שמרד במלך.

**Because of this, it was necessary that the servants were angry with their masters, to accomplish the will of Mordechai, for if this were not so, Ahasuerus would not have paid attention to such a dream.**

**It's possible also that for this reason, he ordered [his men] to bring before him the book of records, the annals, to see if there was any record of some beloved subject who had rebelled against the king.**

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<sup>13</sup> Esther 2:21 and 6:2.