

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Purim 5784

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Achashveirosh makes a seven-day party for all people found inside of Shushan.

חֹר | כָּרְפֶס וּתְכֵלֶת אָחוּז בְּתַבְלֵי-בֹיץ וְאַרְגָּמָן עַל-גְּלִילֵי כֶסֶף וְעֲמוּדֵי שֵׁשׁ מְטוֹת | זָהָב
וְכֶסֶף עַל רִצְפַת בַּהֲטָ-נִשְׁשׁ וְדָר וְסִקְרָת:

“Fine white cotton and blue-purple embroidered in cords of fine linen and purple cloth, hung on silver rods and white marble columns; there were couches of gold and silver, on an onyx marble pavement of red and alabaster, and paved with white pearl.” (Esther 1:6).

This pasuk is often skipped over and considered a nice little descriptive. However, this pasuk is really in stark contrast to the Megillah and the Torah. It does not explain what it is about nor move the story along. It seems to be a non-sequitur as we will explain. Further, this is not a novel. The Torah and the Megillah do not go into unnecessary background descriptives. The Torah does not describe the colors of Avraham’s tent or the material of the kesonas passim. In the Megillah itself, when Mordechai sits in the king’s courtyard it does not describe what it looked like. There is no descriptive of how far from the palace Haman built his gallows and it does not describe the clothing that Esther wore to the king or the food she served.

This pasuk seems to be out of context because the previous pasuk was: “And at the end of this period, the king made for all his people that were found inside of Shushan Castle (inside the walled city), from great to small, a party for seven days, in the garden courtyard of the residence of the king.” (Ibid 1:5). The king made a party for half a year for all his military and political associates. Then he made a seven-day party for just those that found themselves in Shushan, citizen or resident and foreigner, poor and rich. He made the party in the garden courtyard of his residence. The next pasuk should be: וְהִשְׁקוּהוּ: בְּכֵלֵי זָהָב וּכְלִים מִכָּלִים שׁוֹגִים וְיֵין מַלְכוּת רַב כֶּנֶד הַמֶּלֶךְ: “And they drank from golden vessels and vessels from differing vessels, (mismatched), and the royal wine was abundant, from the private stock of the king.” (Ibid 1:7). This is how the Megillah flows. Reading it this way makes sense and the Megillah moves along. The king made a party in his garden and they all drank from gold vessels. There is a lesson to the fact that they were all different. And that is the point and then the Megillah will continue, “and everyone drank according to their own desires...” (Ibid 1:8).

On the surface, without our pasuk of background descriptive the Megillah would be saying the same thing. What substance does this pasuk add? The pasuk also seems out of place because the Torah, generally, is not wont to go into unnecessary adjectives. Pesukim are a premium. This is true not only of Chumash but the rest of Tanakh, also. What was incorporated of Na’ch by the Chazal was the edited and necessary version of these chronologies. Superfluous and flowery pesukim are not normally incorporated for their own artistic value, (except, perhaps, for Shir HaShirim which is poetically written by design). Why is this pasuk here?

Further, this pasuk does not even seem to describe the scene. The scene is “the royal garden courtyard of the king’s residence.” (Ibid 1:5). Instead of describing the flowers and foliage, it describes the man-made structures. The marble and materials. Why is it important to know how the king decorated his garden?

The descriptive is actually important for a few reasons. Contextually, this is the very scene that matters most in the Megillah. If the Megillah was a play, *lehavdel*, this would be the central scenery. It is in this garden courtyard that the king decided to kill Vashti and thereby creating the circumstance where Esther would be queen. After Esther reveals that she is a Jewess and that Haman made a decree to kill her people (ibid 7:6) the king leaves the party to this garden courtyard (ibid 7:7). He then returns from this garden courtyard (ibid 7:8) to catch Haman throwing himself at Esther, and Haman’s fate was sealed. There is importance to the seven-day party being in this garden and that the king retired there to think. Therefore, its decorating can give us a hint as to its importance.

The materials found in this pasuk are also found in the Mishkan. Gold, silver, purple, blue-purple, crimson, columns, and cords. (See Shmos 35:22-25). By the Mishkan all those who were moved to bring brought and their gifts were accepted. Young and old, rich and poor, important and common. The entire nation brought these materials to make a Mishkan for Hashem’s Holy Presence. This garden courtyard was now festooned in the same materials hosting one and all. There is another hint to the Mishkan. “קִיּוֹר” is written with a big ches. It is the name of Betzalel’s grandfather. (Ibid 31:2). Betzalel was the main artisan who constructed the Mishkan. (Ibid 31:3).

There is symbolism in each item as well. Chur is expensive white as seen when Mordechai wore it. (Esther 8:15). כְּרִפָּס means cotton. It also means “like a pas.” This hints at the royal robes that Yaakov made Yoseph. (Bereishis 37:3). It is a Persian word that means cotton. Cotton was only grown in the old world in the Pakistan area (east Persia). Techeles (blue-purple) dye came from sea creatures. Achuz means attached or embroidered but also to grasp. Butz is fine linen made in Egypt (see Yechezkel 27:16). Argaman purple found in the Mishkan and the ephod was from the north, Assyria or Tyre. Glilei refers to rods, similar to the rods and poles in the Mishkan, and hints at the Gallilee. Amudei sheish are white marble columns, imported and hewn. Mitos means couches but is similar to the word for yoke of bondage that Hashem broke (Vayikra 26:13) and the word tribe (Bamidbar 1:16). The floor foundation was red and alabaster and made of *dor* which is akin to generation. *Dor* also derives from *dror* which means freedom. (Midrash Tehillim 90:5). Karpas, ritzpas, and socheres are only found in this pasuk.

This pasuk is teaching that the garden courtyard that commenced and ended the episode was akin to the Mishkan. It was made from materials found all over the kingdom, from east to west, shore to mountains, that the king brought together to show his power and stability. However, this pasuk is a clear hint that Hashem, by indication of the Mishkan—His resting place—not only resided in Shushan but in the Megillah, and all over the world. Freedom, too, was already woven into the background. In order to tell the whole story, the Megillah needed to nod at the shchina being ever-present and always vital.

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