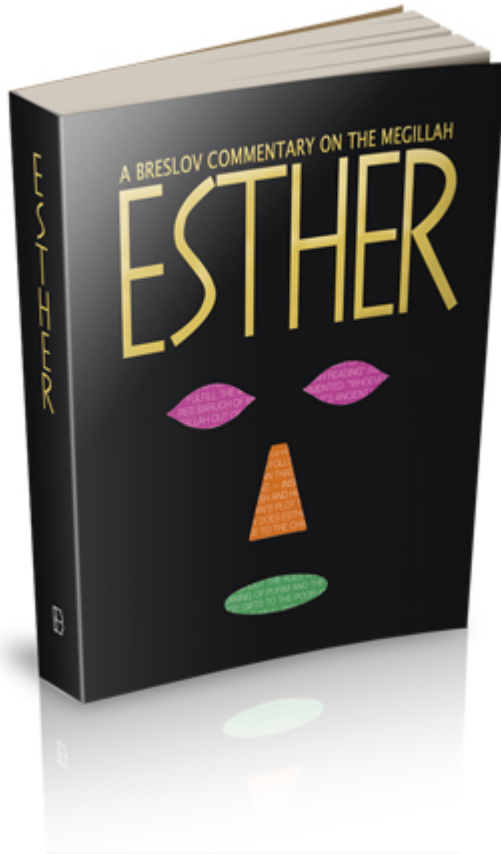


A Thought For The Week: Purim

written by Meir Elkabas
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Purim is a golden opportunity to see major miracles and breakthroughs in life. The Magid of Mezritch (the main disciple of the Baal Shem Tov) teaches that just as Torah law requires us to give charity and gifts to anyone who asks for them on Purim, so too does this apply between man and God. **Whoever extends their hands in prayer/request towards Hashem, He must also give!** Because of all this, the spiritual and emotional preparations for Purim can make a major difference. One very special preparation is the prayer composed by Reb Noson, the primary disciple of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov. For a free download in English of this powerful prayer, follow this link: [Purim Preparation Prayer](#). **Some Insight into the Purim Story** The Talmud teaches (*Chullin 139b*) that Haman, Esther and Mordechai are all hinted to in the Torah itself.

- **'Ha'ma'n** – in the verse regarding the sin of eating of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil (Bereishit 3:11): "...**'Ha'Mi'N** HaEtz (literally: from the tree) – Did you eat from the tree [which I commanded you not to eat?]"
- **'E's'the'r** – in the verse regarding Hashem's relationship towards the Jews before the end of days (Devarim 31:17): "...I will Haster'**A'S'Ti'R** (literally: conceal the concealment) – hide [My face from them]..."
- **'Mo'r'de'kha'i** – in the verse regarding Hashem's command to Moshe to put together the fragrances making up the anointing oil and incense used in the Holy Temple (Shemot 30:23): "[You must take the finest fragrances]... **'Mo'R 'D**ror (literally: pure myrrh)..." and the Aramaic translation of Dror is **'Da'Kh'Ia**.

On a personal level these 3 represent the evil one, the Jewish soul and the Tzaddik. Haman/the evil one uses the admixture and delusions of the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" to fool a person. Being a buffer between the total good and total evil, the "Tree of Knowledge" has both characteristics. Haman – a descendant from the Amalekite nation who were known for their sorcery including the ability to transform themselves into different shapes – connotes doubts (both doubt – *Safek* in Hebrew – and *Amalek* have a numerical value of 240). This changing from good to bad and vice versa is meant to confuse and befuddle a person with doubts in life. (The person is never sure if they are pursuing goodness and God or evil, and their evil inclination.)

Esther connotes the Jewish soul which, due to these confusions and tricks of Haman-Amalek, remains concealed and trapped, unable to release and reveal her true potential in life. The doubts of Haman lead to major feelings of futility, which conceal and keep down the true power and expression of the Jewish soul, stuck in a "concealment within a concealment".

Morkekhai the Tzaddik, however, represents the supernatural power of the incense. Pure myrrh – being the finest and first

of all the 11 fragrances making up the incense – culminates the power of the incense to wipe out and destroy all evil. This in line with the secret revealed to Moshe by the angel of death himself that the holy incense has this power to stop death and plague, and evoke joy, health, wealth etc. (see Rashi on Bamidbar 17:11-13).

Thus Esther, by taking the advice and guidelines of Mordekhai the Tzaddik, was able to overcome and crush the fears, doubts and futility induced by Haman/Amalek, and display the greatest levels of self-sacrifice of Jewish existence. This also applies to every one of us at all times. The True Tzaddikim, similar to the power of the incense, reveal to us our true potential to stand up to and crush these doubts and fears – “Haman” – which attack us.

In Summary Practical steps to draw upon us now and today the light of Mordekhai and Esther

1. Asking Hashem to sanctify us with the holiness of Mordekhai and Esther. (see above link to prayer)
2. Simply and honestly reciting the Ketoret offering known as Pitum Haketoret. In the Holy Zohar, Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai reveals that saying the Pitum HaKetoret even today can activate all the power and benefits of the incense offering in the time of the Holy Temple. (for a free download and audio recitation: [Pitum HaKetoret](#))