**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

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# SICHOT OF THE ROSHEI YESHIVA

**To Be In Need, To Seek Perfection,**

**The Story Of The *Megilla***

Based on a sicha by

Harav Yehuda Amital *zt”l*

If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat;
    if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head,
    and the Lord will reward you. (*Mishlei* 25:21-22)

The Maharal of Prague explains that the fundamental human condition is deficiency. Only when a person is aware of being in want, of requiring aid in many spheres, then God can fill what is lacking. Indeed, a similar idea is at the basis of prayer — in order to approach God for help, one must feel a basic sense of need.

Indeed, we may utilize this to understand the curse of the serpent after the sin in the Garden of Eden: “And you shall consume dust all the days of your life” (*Bereishit* 3:14). The serpent eats dust, i.e., that which is available everywhere. This punishments means that the serpent is never missing anything; it is always complete and full, and so it has no capacity to progress. The inability to advance and develop is the greatest punishment that any living thing could receive!

In the *Megilla*, Queen Esther uses this strategy to open the eyes of King Achashverosh.

Then the king asked, “What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you.”

“If it pleases the king,” replied Esther, “let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him.”

(*Esther* 5:3-4)

According to the simple understanding, Esther wants to invite Achashverosh to the banquet in order to ingratiate herself to him and speak to him when he is in a higher state, “with the king in good spirits due to wine.” However, if this is her aim, why is Haman invited?

We may use the Maharal’s approach to explain this. Esther wants to plant in Haman’s heart the feeling of honor and satisfaction; she wants him to feel, as it were, full. As long as he desires advancement, it is very difficult to topple him. Only when Haman thinks that he has already reached the apex of his desires, that he has no further goal to achieve, can Esther spring her trap on him.

Indeed, this is what the verse from *Mishlei* we began with tells us: in order to defeat one’s enemies, one must fulfill all their needs. Only when they are full and happy can they be vulnerable to fall into a trap.

This is, in essence, a paradox: the complete person is the one who feels deficient, the one who feels that is there is more to aspire to and to achieve. Conversely, the arrogant person, the one who feels that all of his or her goals have been achieved and accomplished, ends up marching in place. In a state of stagnation, as one marches in place, a fall is inevitable.

(Translated by Yoseif Bloch)