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A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פורים – מגילת אסתר

וְנִשְׁמַע פְּתֻגַּם הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה בְּכָל מַלְכוּתוֹ כִּי רַבָּה הִיא. (מגילת אסתר א, כ)
The King's decree which he shall proclaim shall be heard throughout all his kingdom, for it is great.
(Megillas Esther 1:20)

There is an interesting insight from the Ba'al HaTurim in last week's *Sidrah* (*Tetzaveh*) that relates to the Megillah. The *possuk* states, וְהָיָה עַל אַהֲרֹן לְשָׁרֵת, וְנִשְׁמַע קוֹלוֹ בְּבֹאוֹ אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ, *It should be on Aharon to serve. Its sound shall be heard when he enters the Kodesh* (Shemos 28:35). The Ba'al HaTurim comments that this word וְנִשְׁמַע appears three times in Tanach: 1) there in Tetzaveh - וְנִשְׁמַע קוֹלוֹ; 2) by the narrative of giving the Torah - נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמַע (*ibid* 24:7); and 3) the *possuk* in Esther above - וְנִשְׁמַע פְּתֻגַּם הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכו' כִּי רַבָּה הִיא.

He explains that this reflects the *halachah* taught in the Gemara (*Megillah* 3b), which states that if there is a conflict between the reading of Megillas Esther and studying Torah, or performing the Avodah in the Mikdash, the reading of Megillas Esther takes precedence. This teaching is alluded to in these three *possukim*. The phrase נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמַע refers to studying Torah, while the *possuk* וְנִשְׁמַע קוֹלוֹ pertains to Avodah. Nevertheless, we are instructed: וְנִשְׁמַע וְנִשְׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ, meaning that *the king's decree* – that is, the reading of the Megillah – *will be heard*. The Megillah must be heard, even at the expense of Torah study and Avodah. This is further emphasised by the juxtaposed phrase, כִּי רַבָּה הִיא, *for it is great*, implying that it is indeed greater than, i.e., takes precedence over Torah and Avodah.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* offers a deeper understanding of this *halachah*, explaining the significance of reading the Megillah and why it takes precedence over Torah and Avodah. He draws on the teaching of Chazal that whenever the word הַמֶּלֶךְ is mentioned in the Megillah, it has a double meaning. In addition to referring to King Achashverosh, it also alludes to the King of the entire world - Hashem. This is because the hearts of all kings and leaders are in Hashem's hands, as stated in the *possuk*, לֵב מֶלֶךְ בְּיַד ה', *the heart of a king is in the hand of Hashem, wherever He wishes, so He directs it* (*Mishlei* 21:1). Through the actions of Achashverosh, Hashem revealed His providence over Klal Yisroel.

The *possuk* recounts that Hashem said to Moshe, וְרָאִיתָ אֶת אַחֲרַי וּפְנֵי לִי לֹא יֵרָאוּ, *You will see my back, but My face may not be seen* (Shemos 33:23). R' Chaim Shmuel Lopian *zatzal* figuratively explained this: we can only perceive the "back" of Hashem, not His "front." In hindsight, after a series of events, we can see the complete picture, recognise Hashem's presence, and comprehend His ways. However, when looking ahead to the future or in the midst of current situations, we often cannot understand Hashem's reasoning for why certain events occur.

Similarly, only by reflecting upon the story of the Megillah after the entire narrative has unfolded can we truly appreciate how Hashem was present all along, orchestrating events for

our ultimate benefit and salvation. At the beginning of reading the Megillah, one could understand the term המֶלֶךְ simply referring to King Achashverosh, as Hashem's influence is hidden behind the scenes. However, by the end of the story, we realise that the decisions and actions of Achashverosh were not genuinely his own; rather, he was merely a puppet in the hands of Hashem. We now come to understand that all along the usage of the term המֶלֶךְ truly refers to the only genuine King – Hashem.

The significance of reading the Megillah goes beyond simply reciting the words; it lies in learning and appreciating the lessons it offers. The Megillah presents a profound perspective on life, emphasising the importance of recognising Hashem's hand in all events. This understanding can serve as a powerful source of inspiration, motivating individuals to draw closer to Hashem and adhere to the teachings of the Torah. For this reason, *halachah* dictates that reading Megillas Esther takes precedence over Torah study and Avodah, as the inspiration it engenders often comes more readily than engaging in Torah study or performing Avodah.

The Rosh Yeshiva emphasises that recognising Hashem's direct providence in our lives fosters appreciation and motivates individuals to better themselves and connect with Hashem. However, there is a prerequisite for this recognition. If a person lacks a foundation in Torah, they will struggle to see Hashem's kindness. Those whose minds and bodies are consumed by the pursuit of materialistic and base desires will be unable to view things from a true perspective. Only someone who has developed an authentic outlook on life through learning Torah can be on the lookout to witness and be inspired by the "Yad Hashem" that is constantly caring for us.

We should appreciate this profound lesson of the Megillah: Hashem orchestrates everything and is behind all that happens, even when we don't realise it. May we be inspired by the Megillah to grow closer to Hashem and experience true *simchah* this Purim!

א פֶּרִיילִיכֵן פּוּרִים!

This Devar Torah is adapted from ספר וענפיה ארזי אל and is presented by the Gateshead Yeshiva Alumni Association. To receive by email, please register your interest by sending an email to parshasheet@yalumni.org.