

Kindly take a moment to study MISHNAS CHAYIM in the merit of
Gittel *bas* Velvel *a”h*
a fellow Jew who passed away with no relatives to arrange Torah study on behalf of her *neshamah*

Fulfillment of the Fury

PARSHAS KI SAVO 5777

The all-encompassing nature of the Torah is one of its well-known and wondrous attributes. Chazal seem to be referring to the notion that everything is contained in the Torah when they state in the Mishnah (*Avos* 5:22):

הַפֶּה בָּהּ וְהַפֶּה בָּהּ דְּכִלְמָא בָּהּ.

“Turn it over and turn it over (i.e., examine it repeatedly and thoroughly) – for all is within it.”

Hidden Tragedies

Thus, the Sages advance the idea that every individual, every historical event, everything – is, in some fashion, hinted at in the Torah.

This week’s *parshah*, which features the *Tochachah* (Admonition) (*Devarim* 28:15-69) appears to serve as a prime example. In this extensive section, the Torah outlines in stark detail the retribution to be visited upon the Jewish people in the event that they abandon the path of Torah and *mitzvos*. In the wake of the horror of the Holocaust, there were a number of sagacious figures who characterized those events as a fulfillment of the *Tochachah*.

Of course, only an individual of extremely elevated stature is truly qualified to accurately identify *remazim* (allusions) to actual events in the Torah. One such lofty soul was R’ Shimshon of Ostropolle, a 17th century sage renowned for his piety. He viewed a certain verse appearing in “*Az Yashir*,” the Song of the Sea, as foreshadowing an impending tragedy. This was the *passuk* that states: תִּשְׂלַח הַרְגֶנֶךָ לְאִכְלָמוֹ בְּקֶשׁ – “You shall send forth Your fury, consuming them like (fire consumes) straw” (*Shemos* 15:7). Years later, the saintly Kozhnutzer Maggid (d. 1812), referencing this tradition, revealed the event to which R’ Shimshon had been referring and the time of its occurrence. Such is contained in the *passuk* itself, as the initial letters of the following words – תִּשְׂלַח הַרְגֶנֶךָ – stand for “*Tach*.” The intent, of course, is for the massacres of “*Tach v’Tat*,” which took place in 1648-49 – corresponding to the Hebrew years of ת”ח-ת”ט/5408-5409. (Notably, R’ Shimshon of Ostropolle himself was martyred at this time. Reportedly, he had warned his contemporaries that tragedy would ensue if they would not rectify their ways. His calls, unfortunately, went unheeded.) These were, arguably, the largest-scale massacres to befall the Jewish people until the time of the Holocaust.

The language the Maggid used in conveying the above thought was actually somewhat cryptic. He stated: “The matter (of the “*teshalach charoncha*” tragedy) was *partially* fulfilled in the year 1648... but there is nothing more about which we may be explicit.” In light of the ensuing events, these words spoken about 200 years ago take on new significance, as we shall see.

“Chacham Adif mi’Navi -- A Sage is Superior to a Prophet” (Bava Basra 12a)

The Nesivos Shalom quotes another tradition regarding a *remez* to the tragic events of *Tach v’Tat*, as contained in Megillas Esther. This *sefer*, of course, relates the story of the wicked Haman’s failed attempt to exterminate the Jewish people. In any event, over the course of the Megillah, there are two places – once toward the beginning, once near the end – in which a given letter is written in the scroll in an enlarged fashion. This occurs with the **ח** of the word **חור** (appearing in 1:6) and with the letter **ת** of the word **וְתָקַתָּב** (from 9:29). Taken together, of course, they form the same acronym of **ח”ת**.

The sobering implication, explains the Nesivos Shalom, is that Haman’s decree was not entirely cancelled. In the time of Mordechai and Esther, Klal Yisrael merited a miraculous salvation and were thus spared from the enemy’s sinister plot. But the matter was essentially postponed until a later period – and its actualization came, as alluded to in the Megillah, in the years of “*Tach v’Tat*.” These massacres, apparently, were a manifestation of Haman’s decree of annihilation.

Based on this, the Nesivos Shalom suggests an interpretation of the terse declaration of the Maggid of Kozhnitz. The Maggid stated that the tragedy foretold by R’ Shimshon was fulfilled through the *Tach v’Tat* massacres – but only partially. As we have just seen, these massacres were in fact the actualization of Haman’s decree from long ago. In saying, then, that these constituted only a *partial* fulfillment, the implication is that the completion of this presaged tragedy was yet to take place.

The Nesivos Shalom himself lived out the war years from the relative safety of Eretz Yisrael. But it was there that he learned of the unfolding tragedies of the Holocaust, whose flames engulfed his relatives, close friends, and the community he left behind. In any event, from the hindsight of this episode, it appeared to him that the Maggid’s premonition was realized. Thus it seems that it was Hitler’s minions who brought to completion the decree of his predecessor Haman – may their names be blotted out.

And of course, just as we have witnessed the fulfillment of the prophesied tragedies, so may we behold the fulfillment of the Final Redemption, speedily in our days (*cf. Makkos 24b*).

(The above is based largely on a dissertation of the Nesivos Shalom contained in the booklet “Ha’harugah Alecha.”)

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