

# HaChodesh Vayakhel Pekuday

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How many times when learning about the Mishkan did you say to yourself, “This is exactly what the war with Iran is about?” If even once, I’d love to hear why.

Why would we? Because everything is *Hashgochah Pratis* and meant to teach us something, or at least impact us on some level. Things do not coincide in life for no reason, even if that reason remains hidden from us. And even though we change the order of Torah readings for the *chagim*, it’s not to say that there isn’t something *hashgochadik* about the scheduled one, only that we want to focus on the sacrifices instead.

The Purim story is interesting for a number of reasons, one of which is the involvement of Amalek. If we say that Haman was not a born Amaleki, as the Yerushalmi says, then it’s not such a question. A person who was not born an Amaleki can “become” one just by exhibiting Amaleki traits. But if Haman was actually Amaleki, he and his people were a long way from home.

Amalek was a nomadic tribe that lived in the Negev. They were not one of the seven Canaanite nations the Jewish People

had to eliminate, which made their attack even more despicable. They traveled hundreds of miles just to attack the Jewish People in Rephidim on their way to receive Torah for no apparent reason other than a deep-rooted hatred of all things Godly. But Persia? What were they doing all the way over there?

Making a difference. Achashveros may not have liked the Jewish People he controlled, but he was not bent on their genocide either. That took an intense hatred of the Jewish People that only an Amaleki could have, one so intense that Haman could not enjoy any of his success as long as Mordechai sat at the gates of the palace.

When the Ayatollah was still in exile before the uprising in 1979, he was asked what he thinks about everyday. He answered with complete conviction: “The elimination of Israel.” Decades later, nothing has changed, and such hatred has not only overshadowed all the assets the Iranians have to be a hugely prosperous and happy people, but it has led to their own self-destruction.

All the Palestinians and Iranians have to do is forget about Israel. The Jewish People represent no physical or spiritual threat to their peoples and, if anything at all, could help them succeed as we once did under the Shah. Then both countries could instead develop their national assets with full support of the rest of the world and become major tourist resorts with a high quality of living, as Dubai and other similar countries have done. Such is the power of baseless hatred.

But if learned anything at all from the story of Kamza and Bar Kamza (*Gittin* 55a), it is how destructive baseless hatred can be. It led to the Roman takeover of the Jewish People and the eventual destruction of the Second Temple, and everything that has happened to us over the millennia since. Hatred

breeds more hatred, and in a world run by *Hashgochah Pratis*, what goes around comes around.

The Mishkan represented the complete opposite of *k'ish echad b'leiv echad*, the state of unity the Jewish People reached before receiving Torah, and after Haman forced Jews to unify against him. As the GR"A explains, the physical structure acted like a national archive of Jewish hearts, built from *nedavos haleiv*—heart offerings. The materials they donated were just the means to express that love in physical terms.

The word “Mishkan” is actually comprised of two parts, “Shechem” and the letter *Nun*, which always alludes to the *Nun Sha'arei Binah*, the Fifty Gates of Understanding. As the Pri Tzaddik explains, Haman, whose name is *Hem-Nun*—they are fifty—built his gallows fifty *amos* high to block an imminent emanation of the *Nun Sha'arei Binah* necessary at that time to accept the Oral Law with love.

*Nehafoch* can also be read “*Nun hafuch*,” or “upside-down *Nun*,” like the ones in *Parashas BeHa'alosecha* to “separate between punishment and punishment.” Sin is the result of a distortion of truth (*Sotah* 3a), of an upside-down *Nun*. Purim came to rectify it.

Shechem, of course, is where the brother sold Yosef and Dinah was taken from her family. The Gemora calls it “a place set aside for punishment,” a term used for Haman and Amalek. It represents schism, of hatred in the worst way possible, even though it is a part of *Eretz Yisroel*. But so was Sdom.

But add the *Nun Sha'arei Binah* to the name and it becomes Mishkan, just the opposite. It not only ceases to be divisive, it becomes adhesive. That's why Yosef HaTzaddik, associated with *Da'as* and *Nun Sha'arei Binah*, insisted on being buried there.

So, yes, there is a major connection between the events of the *parsha* and the events of today, and we have only scratched the surface. But it's a deep enough scratch for now to help understand what we need to work on internally to limit what's happening to us externally, if not on a national level, at least on a personal and communal level.

Just a reminder that you can order my Haggadah Shel Pesach, "The Wise Son Says," through Amazon, or discounted through me ([pinchasw@thirtysix.org](mailto:pinchasw@thirtysix.org)), especially on larger orders.

Good Shabbos and Besoros tovos,

Pinchas Winston