

Parasha Perspectives

**Der Gantzer Megilah? Why all 10 Chapters?
By Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom**

The Tosefta (Megilah 2:9) notes four opinions about how much of the Megilah we are obligated to read on Purim – ranging from R. Meir (all 10 chapters) to R. Shimon bar Yohai (the second half) – but all are in agreement that whatever is read be read from a complete Megilah. This Megilah includes not only Haman’s nefarious plot, Esther’s brilliant and courageous strategy and the surprising “turnabout” on Adar 13th – along with the establishment of the holiday – it also includes a detailed description of Ahashverosh’s coronation, the argument put forward by Memukhan to dethrone Vashti (Ch. 1) and the very detailed presentation of the primping and prepping the young girls for their night with the king. While some of the details in the Megilah may seem unsavory, we understand the need to fill in the information in order to understand the plot and its denouement – but the first two chapters seem to be nearly completely superfluous and unnecessary. All we need to know, in order to set up the plot, is the Ahashverosh chooses a Jewish queen whose identity is a secret and that her cousin/guardian is a member of the court – we could pick up the story at Mordekhai’s learning of Bigtan and Teresh’s plot to assassinate the king and lose nothing. What then is the import of the first two chapters?

If we look at Esther’s plan, we see that she was really aiming at two enemies of our people (the king and his grand vizier) and her stratagem involved turning them on each other – somehow convincing Ahashverosh that Haman was not to be trusted, was a potential traitor and, perhaps, a pretender to the throne. We cannot fathom her ability to do this without being given a full description of Ahashverosh’s party, his deep and abiding anger at Vashti for refusing him and his ability to be convinced by Memukhan – all of these draw a clear psychological profile of a paranoid king, intent on winning the respect and admiration of his courtiers and royally afraid of their turning away from him. Thus – chapter 1 plays a role as setting important foreground for the plot.

Esther’s ability to read Ahashverosh, gauge his weakness and play on it (by getting him to believe that she and Haman were plotting against him at the parties – see BT Megilah 15b) is equally inscrutable – until we follow her trajectory in the women’s quarters, which contrasts her with the other girls such that she finds favor in everyone’s eyes. Hegai, her patron, favors her and gives her the best treatment and the opportunity to spend a “long, cold night” with the king (BT Megilah). How did she accomplish this? Esther used her uncanny talent to understand the needs of others (especially those in power) and “play” to that need; Hegai, as a eunuch in the court, would generally be treated poorly by the “pretty girls”, who would come to the king with whatever they demanded (Esther 2:13); contradistinctively, Esther only came with what Hegai advised her to wear (ibid. v. 15). This picture, drawn slowly and carefully, of a young girl with a mature and insightful talent for recognizing others’ weaknesses and needs, helps us understand both her strategy and her success in defeating the enemies of her people and ensuring, b’Ezrat Hashem, Jewish survival.

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The Mount Sinai Kesher

February 19-20, 2010 • 6 Adar, 5770 • Parashat Teruma

Shabbat Schedule

Candle Lighting	5:17 p.m.
Mincha	5:22 p.m.
<i>Dinner following davening for those signed up</i>	
Oneg and Shiur by R. Etshalom	8:45 p.m.
Shacharit	7:00, 9:00 a.m.
Kri’at Shema before	9:26 a.m.
Drasha after Mussaf by R. Etshalom	
Rabbi Schwartz’s Gemara shiur	3:50 p.m.
Mincha	4:50 p.m.
<i>Seuda Shlishit following Mincha</i>	
Shiur by R. Etshalom	
Shkia	5:36 p.m.
Maariv/Havdala	6:23 p.m.

**Tefillah Schedule
Week of February 21st**

<i>Shacharit</i>	
Sunday	7:30, 8:30, 9:00 a.m.
Monday	6:45, 7:20, 8:00 a.m.
Tues., Wed., Fri.	7:00, 7:30, 8:00 a.m.
Thursday (Ta’anit Esther)*	6:30, 7:00, 8:00 a.m.

**See inside for the full Ta’anit Esther schedule*

<i>Mincha/Maariv</i>	
Sunday - Wednesday	5:25 p.m.
Thursday	5:10 p.m.

<i>Maariv</i>	
Monday - Wednesday	10:00 p.m.

<i>Next Shabbat, Parashat Tetzaveh, Shabbat Zachor</i>	
Candles	5:25 p.m.
Mincha	5:30 p.m.

**Welcome to Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom,
our Scholar in Residence**

Rabbi Etshalom will be speaking three times over Shabbat on the following topics:

- Friday Night Oneg, 8:45pm: **“Esther in Midrashic Garb: How the Megilah Speaks to Each Generation.”**
Esther has been called "Megilat haGalut;" we will discover how, throughout the many Galuyot we have undergone since Shushan, this story has inspired and helped direct survival strategies and allowed us to understand the oppressive realities around us.
- Drasha after Mussaf: **“The Ethics of Genocide and the Amalek Problem”**
- Seudah Shlishit: **“Between Homiletics and Heresy: Finding the Golden Mean in the Study of Tanakh”**

Thank you to our generous Scholar-in-Residence weekend sponsors:

- Margalit and Raacheli Cooper in memory of their grandfather, Max Abrams, Avraham Mordechai ben Shlomo
- Shoshana Hulkower in hakarat hatov to Rabbi Etshalom for leaving an indelible mark as a teacher
- Yael Barzideh

Thank you to our generous oneg sponsors:

- Steven Rosenthal in honor of Yoni’s birthday
- Mandy Storfer in honor of her birthday



**HATZOLA
(212) 230 - 1000**

Purim! Next Sunday, February 28th

- **Purim at Mt Sinai, Saturday Night, February 27th.** Featuring the Purim Schpiel, The 2nd Annual Digital Shorts Contest and awesome refreshments! Doors open at 8:45pm, Schpiel at 9:15pm. \$5 members/ \$7 non members. **Digital shorts must be submitted to Rebecca by this Thursday!** Shorts must be 3-5 minutes and on digital media. For more information contact Sefi and Rebecca at events@mtsinaishul.com.



- **Matanot L'Evyonim:** The shul is collecting money for the JCC's Matanot L'evyonim Campaign which will be distributed on Purim itself to low income individuals and families in our neighborhood. Donations can be made online or in the office. Please make your checks payable to Mt.Sinai Jewish Center and write "Matanot Levyonim" on the memo. Please get your donations in early if possible. All donations are due by 12PM on Purim Day, February 28th, so that the money can be distributed on Purim itself.

- **Purim Megillah Reading:** If you are able to read Megillah to people who are not able to come to shul or in the hospital, or if you cannot make it to shul and need someone to read Megillah for you, please contact chessed@mtsinaishul.com as soon as possible.

- **Mt. Sinai Purim cards** are on sale now! Send Purim greetings to your friends and family, and help support your shul. Cards are only \$2 each, and if you buy 10 you get 1 free! Contact the office for details.

- You're invited to the **Family Life Committee's annual Purim Chagigah!** Purim morning (2/28), 10:45-12:00 in the social hall. Only \$10 per family for members/\$13 per family for non-members. Music, stories, crafts, hamantaschen, mishloach manot exchange and a costume parade! For more details, please contact familylife@mtsinaishul.com.

Sponsorships

The **ERUV** sponsored by **the women of 435 Fort Washington** in appreciation of the newly extended eruv.

The **KESHER** is sponsored **anonymously** in honor of Chad Hopkovitz, expressing much gratitude to him for his congeniality as he motivates and ennoble others in the furtherance of talmud torah. Yasher koach!

SEUDA SHLISHIT is co-sponsored by Lottie Dassau in memory of her father, Shmuel ben Shlomo, and by Julian Hamburger in honor of his mother, Ruth Hamburger, whose 89th birthday is on February 22nd.

Find out the latest updates with the Washington Heights eruv by calling 646-450-ERUV (3788), sending an SMS to (412) 213-8991 or by sending a Google Chat message to eruv@bot.im.

The Eruv **has again been extended and DOES extend across Broadway**, but does not extend into Fort Tryon Park. For an updated map of the Eruv please go to our [website](#) or see the map in the shul lobby. If you are not sure where you can carry, please contact the rabbi or a member of the eruv committee.

This Week at Mt. Sinai

Sunday:

Chevra Kadisha Breakfast, 9:45 a.m. See below for details.

Monday:

Women's Aerobics, 7:30 p.m. Contact: Anat Coleman, (212) 740 2740. \$10 to try a class.

Women's Basketball, 9:00 p.m. Contact: Susanne Goldstone, susqhb@gmail.com.

PLEASE NOTE: Rabbi Schwartz will not have office hours this Monday.

Tuesday:

Women's Basketball, 9:00 p.m. Contact: Elie Appleson, elie.appleson@gmail.com.

Wednesday:

Men's Basketball, 8:00 p.m. Contact: Daniel Falik, daniel@danielfalik.com

Class with Rabbi Schwartz, 8:45 p.m. "Potato chips, Palm hearts and the Kings Table: Contemporary Issues in Bishul Akum." **Shiur followed by office hours, 9:30 - 10:30.**

Motzai Shabbat:

PURIM! See opposite page for full programming details.

Ta'anit Esther Schedule

Fast Begins	5:24 a.m.
Shacharit	6:30, 7:00, 8:00 a.m.
Mincha	5:10 p.m.
Fast Ends	6:18 p.m.

There will be no 10:00 Maariv.

Welcome New Members

Rabbi & Mrs. David and Elaine Arzouane
Yitzi and Ettie Katz
Gila Cohen
Sara Lebowitz
Aliza Berkowitz



Board Update

Based on your feedback, we have made changes to the constitution draft, which allow for unlimited petitioners and for each candidate to be voted on individually (as opposed to one slate). The draft will be up for vote on Sunday, March 7th, at 10am at a special membership meeting. Please come and vote. This is the last opportunity to change the election process for this cycle. Thank you to all who have given input throughout the process.

Mazel Tov!

Sara and Noah Farkas on the birth of a boy. Shalom Zachar at 9:30 p.m. in the MPR.



Refuah Shleima

Rabbi Yehuda Hilewitz, Edith Glikman, and Charlotte Wahl

Chevra Kadisha Breakfast

The annual Chevra Kadisha Breakfast will take place this **Sunday, February 21 at 9:45 am.**

Our guest speaker will be **Rabbi Daniel Feldman**, who will speak on the topic of Nichum Aveilim. Breakfast will be served and is free of charge, but reservations are required.