

Purim and Eclipses

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..... Esther 6:6

Haman entered, and the king asked him, "What should be done for a man whom the king desires to honor?" Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

..... Sukkah 29a

...Our rabbis taught: when people are eating in the Sukkah and it starts raining once they've already entered the Sukkah, they aren't made to leave until they've finished their meal. When people are sleeping under the Sukkah and it starts raining once they've already entered the Sukkah, they aren't made to leave until it's light [*ya'or*].

Here's a question: until they wake [*ya'or*] or until it's light [*ya'or*]?

We all know the quote, "...until it's light and the rays of dawn rise." But rather read it as, "...until they wake and the rays of dawn rise."

[...]

Our rabbis taught: a solar eclipse [lit., "wounded sun"] is a bad sign for the entire world.

It's like a flesh-and-blood king who prepared a feast for his servants and set out a lantern before them and then got angry at them and told his servant, "remove the lantern from among them and seat them in the darkness."

Rabbi Meir claimed that any eclipse of a great light is a bad sign for Israel, because they are schooled in suffering. It's like the scribe who comes to the school with a strap in his hand. Who's

afraid of the scribe with the strap? The one who is used to getting wounded daily is the one who is afraid.

Our rabbis taught: a solar eclipse is a bad sign for the Star Worshipers, and a lunar eclipse is a bad sign for Israel because Israel reckons according to the moon, and the Star Worshipers according to the sun.

An eclipse in the east is a bad sign for the inhabitants of the east; in the west, a bad sign for the inhabitants of the west; in the middle of the sky, a bad sign the entire world; its face like blood, the sword will be upon the earth; like sackcloth, arrows of famine upon the earth; like both, the sword and arrows of famine will be upon the earth. An eclipse at moonrise [sunrise?], the disaster will wait; at moonset [sunset?], the disaster will come quickly. But some say it's the other way around. For there is no nation that suffers [lit., "wounded," as in "eclipse"] without its gods suffering with it.

After all, we have Exodus 12: "I will exact judgment upon all the gods of Egypt." And while Israel is doing God's will, it shouldn't fear all of these, as in Jeremiah 10: "Thus says God: 'Do not learn the ways of the other nations, and do not fear the signs of heaven, because the other nations do fear them.' " The Star Worshipers fear them and Israel does not fear them.

Our rabbis taught: On account of four things we get a solar eclipse: on account of a tribunal head who died and who is not properly buried; on account of a raped woman who shouted in a city and no one helped her; on account of illicit sex; and on account of two brothers whose blood is spilled as one. And on account of four things we get an eclipses of great lights: on account of forgerers; on account of false testifiers; on account of those who raise forbidden animals [sheep, goats, etc. — it's a long story] in the Land of Israel; and on account of those who cut down good trees. And on account of four things private property gets handed over to the State....

..... Esther, LXX

In the second year of the reign of Artaxerxes [Ahasuerus] the great king, on the first day of Nisan, Mardocheaus [Mordechai] the son of Jairus, the son of Semeias, the son of Chisaeus, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Jew dwelling in the city Susa, a great man, serving in the king's palace, saw a vision. Now he was of the captivity which Nabuchodonosor [Nebuchadnezzar] king of Babylon had carried captive from Jerusalem, with Jechonias the king of Judea. And this was his dream:

Behold, voices and a noise, thunders and earthquake, tumult upon the earth. And, behold, two great serpents came forth, both ready for conflict, and there came from them a great voice, and by their voice of every nation was prepared for battle, even to fight against the nation of the just. And, behold, a day of darkness and blackness, tribulation and anguish, affliction and great tumult upon the earth. And all the righteous nation was troubled, fearing their own afflictions; and they prepared to die, and cried to God: and from their cry there came as it were a great river from a little fountain, even much water. And light and the sun arose, and the lowly were exalted, and devoured the honorable. And Mardocheaus who had seen this vision and what God designed to

do, having awoke, kept in his heart, and desired by all means to interpret it, even till night. And Mardocheus rested quiet in the palace with Gabatha and Tharrha the king's two chamberlains, eunuchs who guarded the palace. And he heard their reasonings and searched out their plans, and learned that they were preparing to lay hands on king Artaxerxes: and he informed the king concerning them. And the king examined the two chamberlains, and they confessed, and were executed. And the king wrote these things for a memorial; also Mardocheus wrote concerning these matters. And the king commanded Mardocheus to attend in the palace, and gave him gifts for this service. And Aman [Haman] the son of Amadathes the Bugaeon was honorable in the sight of the two kings, and he endeavored to hurt Mardocheus and his people, because of the two chamberlains of the king. And it came to pass after these things in the days of Artaxerxes — This Artaxerxes ruled over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India....

..... **Esther 3:7**

In the first month, that is, the month of Nissan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, a *pur*, that is, the lot, was cast before Haman concerning every day and every month: the twelfth [month], that is, the month of Adar.

What's a "pur"?

..... **Megillah 13b**

We have been taught: When he [Haman] saw that the *pur* fell on Adar, he was overjoyed, thinking, "The *pur* has fallen on the month in which Moses died!" But he did not know that, while Moses died on the seventh of Adar, he was also born on the seventh of Adar.

..... **Megillah 7a**

We have been taught: Rabbi Eliezer says, "It was with the divine spirit that the book of Esther was composed. After all, it says, '...and Haman said to himself.' "