



PORTION FROM THE PORTION

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Unmasking The Hidden in an Unusual Megillah

We read Megilat Esther every year on Purim but if we look closely at the story in the Megillah it is very different from most of the other books in Tanach.

First of all the Megillah takes place in Shushan, far away from Israel and all the holy places. The life of the Jews in Shushan is detached from anything to do with Jerusalem and the Beit Hamikdash.

The salvation in the Megillah saves the Jews from Achashverosh's decree, but doesn't redeem them or release them in any other way physically or spiritually.

Other books of the Tanach point out how God reveals Himself in our history, teach us more about God's ways and bring God's words to the world. In Megillat Esther God's name is not mentioned even once. Rather it seems to the reader that the "pur", the lots, are what is managing our lives. That everything

happens by chance.

Other books of Tanach try to teach man (and the whole nation) Torah and musar and how to do Teshuva. Not so Megilat Esther. It refrains from explaining why the Jews were punished, what was their sin, and how they can do teshuva for it.

There's a lot of things in the Megillah that remain hidden and their reasons are not explained in full.

This year I "happened" to open up Rav Yigal's book comparing and contrasting the books of Daniel and Esther. He raises the above questions. Both Daniel and Esther lived in the diaspora, both were taken to the palace of the non-Jewish King, and received an important position there and therefore were able to have some influence on the life of their brethren in galut. When I read the verses in the books of Daniel and Esther (who lived in the same era) it was striking to me how many times Daniel mentions God whereas the name of God doesn't appear at all in Megillat Esther.

Rav Ariel says that the differences found in Megillat Esther are actually the beauty of the book and what makes it relevant each year. It teaches that even in Persia, in the darkness of the galut when God is hidden, even there we can find Hashgachat Hashem. It can be found not necessarily in open miracles, but in subtle

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orchestration. It shows that God will never forsake His nation and that each blow that He might deliver is preceded by the remedy.

Esther knew the importance of these messages for all the generations and asked the Rabbis to have this Megillah written and included in Tanach. With so many enemies around us who are trying to destroy us and sometimes we feel hopeless this Megillah is very relevant. Purim Sameach.

At most Sephardic celebrations you will probably be served *huevos haminados* - hot eggs. Eggs get harder when they are cooked (which is different than most other foods). This symbolizes the Jewish people's resilience under oppression- we keep on going. And on Purim there is even another reason for serving these hot eggs - the word *haminados* sounds like Haman. Some Sephardim also prepare pastries with a hard-boiled egg in the middle symbolizing Haman in jail. So this week's recipe is with whole eggs.

**HUEVOS HAMINADOS – SEPHARDIC
BRAISED HARD-BOILED EGGS**

- Skins from 12 large onions
 - 12 large eggs
 - Water to keep eggs covered
 - 3 tbsp oil
 - Salt, pepper, cumin to taste
- Put onion skins on bottom of pot. Place eggs

on top. Cover with water. Bring to boil. Drizzle with oil to cover the surface. Simmer covered on low for at least 6 hours or overnight. Serve warm or at room temperature.

If you also want to make the egg filled rolls use your favorite pastry recipe or store bought dough, roll out pastry, cut 6.5 cm., about .6 cm thick and shape with your fingers to form a cup shaped base or basket for large end of hard-boiled egg. Roll strips .6 cm to 1.2 cm in thickness and long enough to cross over top and attach to the base. Bake at 180 C for 20 min. ■

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