

## PURIM – BEING HUMAN

## Background

When the turnaround began, Achashverosh commanded Haman to take Mordechai, dress him in the king's clothes, put him on the king's horse, and parade him around the streets of Shushan. Mordechai and Esther did everything they could to make it difficult for Haman to carry out the king's orders. During the process, Haman was forced to bathe Mordechai and cut his hair. He let out a sigh, to which Mordechai responded by calling him, "Wicked one," and then to ask, "Weren't you a barber for twenty-two years?"

## Questions

Why does Haman's reaction indicate that he is particularly wicked? If anything, his reaction is quite understandable. He had once been a barber, but had risen to great heights. He had escaped his past, and now when he was being forced back down to that level, he felt the slight acutely. Yet Mordechai felt that this reaction was indicative of his evil nature. The question is: why?

## תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף טז/א

אמר ליה קום לבוש הני מאני ורכוב האי סוסיא דבעי לך מלכא אמר ליה לא יכלנא עד דעיילנא לבי בני ואשקול למזיאי דלאו אורח ארעא לאשתמושי במאני דמלכא הכי שדרה אסתר ואסרתינהו לכולהו בי בני ולכולהו אומני עייליה איהו לבי בני ואסחיה ואזיל ואייתי זוזא מביתיה וקא שקיל ביה מזייה בהדי דקא שקיל ליה אינגד ואיתנח אמר ליה אמאי קא מיתנחת אמר ליה גברא דהוה חשיב ליה למלכא מכולהו רברבנוהי השתא לישוייה בלאני וספר אמר ליה רשע ולאן ספר של כפר קרצום היית תנא המן ספר של כפר קרצום היה עשרים ושתיים שנה

*Haman said to Mordechai, "Come, get up and put on these clothes and ride on this horse, for the king has so commanded." Mordechai answered, "I cannot until I bathe and cut my hair because it isn't proper to wear the king's clothing and use his belongings in the state I am in now." During this time, Esther ordered that all the bath attendants and barbers leave their posts. Haman had to bring Mordechai to the bathhouse himself and bring a pair of scissors from his house. When Haman was cutting Mordechai's hair, he let out a deep sigh. Mordechai asked, "Why do you sigh?" Haman answered, "For a man like myself, who is more important to the king than any other officer, it is difficult to now act as a bath attendant and barber." Mordechai responded, "Wicked one, weren't you the barber for twenty-two years in Kfar Kurtzum?"*