

I'm going to read you a very long essay about פורים, covering many interesting facts you may not have learned before. The קושיא is a simple one: Is there a particular place in the מגילה, whether a פסוק or a word, that marks the exact point of the turnabout - the turnabout of the פורים story? Now, you might say that the מגילה explicitly states ונהפוך הוא. But that phrase only tells us that a reversal occurred; it does not indicate the precise moment when it happened. So, where exactly does ונהפוך הוא take place? Be patient with me - this is long, but it is worthwhile, and the end makes it all worthwhile.

Through the miracle of פורים, Hashem not only saved the Jewish people from the המן and their other enemies, but he completely reversed the situation, so the Jews switched from being subservient to their enemies to being their overlords. What's fascinating is that the turnabout is perfectly reflected in the מגילה. Each event that appears in the first half of the מגילה, depicting the desperate situation of the Jewish people, is exactly mirrored in the opposite situation, sometimes word for word, when depicting the joy of the ישועה in the second half of the מגילה. The trup frequently is even exactly the same. Here are a few examples that he brings down. Each one of them is worth hearing. Number one: When אחשורוש agreed to allow the המן to hatch his plot, the מגילה states (3:10) וַיִּסֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת טְבַעְתּוֹ מֵעַל יָדוֹ וַיְתִנֶּה לְהֶמָּן. Later when אחשורוש gives מרדכי the same ring after the המן is killed, the מגילה states in almost the exact same words (8:2) וַיִּסֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת טְבַעְתּוֹ. Number two: When the מגילה describes the writing and dispatch of the evil decrees in the first half, and the writing and dispatch of מרדכי's letters in the second half that counteracted the first ones, the same words are employed. You can look it up. Number three: After the promulgation of the המן's decree, the מגילה describes the bewilderment of the Jews of שושן by saying (3:15) וַהֲעִיר שׁוֹשָׁן נְבוֹכָה. When it describes their elation at the news of the letters that מרדכי sent, it says in opposite words (8:14) וַהֲעִיר שׁוֹשָׁן צְהֵלָה וְשִׂמְחָה. Number four: When describing how the Jewish people throughout the empire reacted in mourning to word of the evil decree, the מגילה says (4:3) וּבְכָל מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ. Similarly, when the word of מרדכי's letters reached the same places, the מגילה states in word-for-word language, וּבְכָל מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וּבְכָל עִיר וְעִיר מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ מֵגִיעַ שְׂמָחָה וְשׁוֹשׁוֹן לַיהוּדִים מִשְׁתָּה יוֹם טוֹב וְרַבִּים מֵעַמִּי הָאָרֶץ מִתְנַהֲדִים כִּי נָפַל פַּחַד הַיְּהוּדִים עֲלֵיהֶם.

A rav named R' Mordechai Sabato explains that since each event in the first half of the מגילה has a corresponding mirrored event in the second half of the מגילה, there must be an exact midpoint, which represents the point of the turnabout, of ונהפוך הוא. To that end, he notes, there is no corresponding mirrored event for the public honoring of מרדכי, when the המן leads מרדכי on the king's horse through the streets. Based on this, he explains that that point is when ונהפוך הוא takes place. Expanding on this idea, it can be suggested that even within the story of the parade, we can focus it down even better, even further. The two sides of the ונהפוך הוא close in on each side when אחשורוש surprises the המן by directing him to lead מרדכי through the streets. When the המן details how he envisions the parade, thinking that he will be the honoree, the מגילה states (6:8-9) וַיִּבְיֹאוּ לְבוּשׁ מַלְכוּת אֲשֶׁר לְבוּשׁ בּוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְסוּס אֲשֶׁר רָכַב עָלָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֲשֶׁר נָתַן כְּתֹר מַלְכוּת (6:8-9). בְּרִאשׁוֹ: וַנְּתוֹן הַלְבוּשׁ וְהַסּוּס עַל יַד אִישׁ מִשְׁרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּרָתָמִים וְהַלְבִּישׁוּ אֶת הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקָרוֹ וְהַרְפִּיבֵהוּ עַל הַסּוּס. בְּרִחּוּב הָעִיר וְקִרְאוּ לִפְנָיו כָּכָה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקָרוֹ. Correspondingly, exactly two פסוקים later, when everything has turned around, and the המן has to perform every דיקט for מרדכי, the מגילה states in amazingly similar language (6:11) וַיִּקַּח הֶמָּן אֶת הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת הַסּוּס וַיִּלְבֹּשׁ אֶת מַרְדֳּכָי וַיַּרְפִּיבֵהוּ בְּרִחּוּב הָעִיר וַיִּקְרָא לִפְנָיו כָּכָה יַעֲשֶׂה. In the middle of these פסוקים, which is פסוק י, פרק ו, פסוק י, there is one פסוק. This פסוק must be the central theme of where ונהפוך הוא pivots. In fact, the content of the פסוק clearly depicts the shifting of the favorite from the המן to מרדכי, and it says וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהֶמָּן מִהֵרָ קַח אֶת הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת הַסּוּס בְּאֲשֶׁר דְּבַרְתָּ. וַעֲשֶׂה כֵן לְמַרְדֳּכָי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵל תִּפֹּל דָּבָר מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר דְּבַרְתָּ. Taking it a step further, it is possible to narrow down the ונהפוך הוא in this פסוק to two specific words. What are the central words of this פסוק? מַרְדֳּכָי! Until מרדכי's name is spoken here by the king, the המן was still on top. You can see from this that the main point of this miraculous turnabout was מַרְדֳּכָי הַיְּהוּדִי, who did not waver an iota from his devotion to Hashem and the תורה, even in the face of the המן's threats. We learn from here that מרדכי was the one who brought about ונהפוך הוא. As a result of the תשובה he led the Jews in performing. As fascinating as this is,



the pivotal point of ונהפוך הוא can be narrowed down even further. If פסוק י is the central point of the מגילה, and if the words מְרַדְּכִי הִיְהוּדִי are the central words of the מגילה, and the central words of that פסוק, then the central point of these words is the pivotal point of ונהפוך הוא. The central point of these words, מְרַדְּכִי הִיְהוּדִי, the last letter of מְרַדְּכִי, and the first letter of הִיְהוּדִי, spell י-ה, Hashem's name. It was Hashem Himself, בַּכְבוֹד וּבַעֲצֻמּוֹ, who was the ultimate force behind the ונהפוך הוא. Another great example, of Hashem being hidden in the מגילה in plain sight. Although the events of פורים may not have appeared obvious to the casual observer, since there are no open miracles, Hashem's name is hidden here exactly to point out it was Hashem who brought about the ונהפוך הוא. R' Stickov, who wrote this ספר, gives credit to Shmuel Marcus from our neighborhood here in Queens, having alerted him and brought to his attention, from R' Mordechai Sabato's ספר called, הדסה היא אסתר. I thought this was a splendid piece of תורה that we could all learn something from. Happy פורים!

