

THE GAME IS OVER

by Rabbi Label Lam

And when Haman saw that Mordechai did not bow and prostrate to him he became filled with anger. It was despicable in his eyes to send his hand against Mordechai alone, because they told him the nationality of Mordechai and therefore he sought to destroy all the Jews that were in the entire kingdom of Achashveiros, the nation of Mordechai. (Esther 3:5-6)

And Haman told them about his wealth, and his honor, and his abundance of children, and that the king had elevated him above all the other princes and servants of the king. Haman said, "Esther the Queen had invited none other than I to be at a party with the king, and also tomorrow I am summoned to her with the king, and all this is worthless to me every time I see Mordechai the Jew sitting in the gate. (Esther 6:11-13)

Man alive! What is his problem? Is it just a bruised and/or inflated ego? Why does he jump from hating Mordechai to attacking all Jews? How could all of his wealth and status be considered worthless because one individual who refused to show obeisance? Was so drunk with power that he could not tolerate a single dissenting opinion? Is there some other hidden reason at play that we have yet to discover?

The verse tells us in this week's portion, Pekudei, *"And Moshe saw all the work and they did it, as HASHEM commanded so they did and Moshe blessed them."* (Shemos 39:43) In which way did Moshe bless them? Rashi writes, "He said to them, "It should be that the Divine Presence should rest on the work of you hands!" What's so great about that blessing?

Years back I would drive out on a regular basis with an Israeli buddy who was in charge of organizing classes. Yossi had a peculiarity related to buying gas. Many times we traveled with the tank below "E", just so we could fill up later in New Jersey where the prices are reliably less.

One of those fateful evenings heading home we crossed the George Washington Bridge into New Jersey, just in time, and at the place where the sign read "no U turn" he made a U turn and we pulled up to the pump. In New Jersey there is no self-service and therefore at that early hour in the morning and into the frigid weather strode a man, let us say, more acclimated to warmer weather, wearing his wool cap and gloves.

To employ a human touch I suggested to Yossi, "I'm gonna make his day!" Yossi looked at me in horror. "Don't give'm a tip, we came here to save money!" I assured him I had another plan and that

was just to engage him in some meaningful conversation. I stepped out of the car with two Snapple bottles and asked him as he stood by the pump, "Do you recycle these or do they go into this garbage can?" With a shiver in his voice he answered, "They all go in the same place." I nodded in agreement and began, "We're all coming from the same place and going to the same place." He looked at me with an understanding eye and so I continued, "We all come from and go back to G-d. If you understand that you understand everything and if you don't understand that then you don't understand anything." He seemed to understand well so I went on. "If you have that you have everything even if you have nothing else but if you don't have that then even if you have everything else you have nothing." He nodded. We paid for the gas and sped into the night but I think we both had a treat in the brief exchange.

The greatest blessing Moshe could offer is that G-d should settle in the midst of your work. If you have that you have everything. If not, all just may be a bunch of nothing. When confronting Mordechai the Jew, Haman was reminded of and tortured by the notion that, like a kid counting Monopoly money, ultimately his piles of currency and real estate holdings are only valuable until the game is over. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).