

# A CHEERFUL HEART

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

And Haman went out on that day, happy and with a cheerful heart, but when Haman saw Mordechai in the king's gate, and he neither rose nor stirred because of him, Haman was filled with wrath against Mordechai. (Esther 5:9)

Years ago I had the great privilege, one Motzei Shabbos to pick up a venerable sage, Rabbi Moshe Neushchloss the Rav of New Square, to bring him to Monsey for a Bar Mitzvah. I went to his modest home and knocked on the door. He invited me in and asked me to sit at the dining room table. He brought me a piece of Kugel. Then he started to explain the historicity, the Yichus of this piece of Kugel. I can't remember every detail. It came from Sherayim, the "leftovers" of a Kugel that had Sherayim from another Kugel that was eaten by another great and holy Tzadik that had an admixture of Kugel that came from ... I can't remember, but my impression was that this benign looking piece of Kugel had a provenance that stretched all the way back to the Baal Shem Tov himself.

I asked the Rabbi point blank, "What is the source of Sherayim?" I really wanted to know how to rank the experience I was about to have. It was a week before Purim and on the spot he gave two answers. 1) The Talmud says that if someone ate from something that a rodent ate from it causes forgetfulness. Employing the logic, "al achas kama, mida tova meruba"- "how much more so in the positive direction" if a Tzadik ate from something it causes an enhancement of the mind.

2) The verse in Megillas Esther states, "And Haman went out on that day, happy and with a cheerful heart, but when Haman saw Mordechai in the king's gate, and he neither rose nor stirred because of him, Haman was filled with wrath against Mordechai." (Esther 5:9) He asked, "How did Haman that wicked man achieve such a high spiritual level so as to be happy, with a cheerful heart? In a similar language the Torah describes the reason for the destruction of the Temple and the onset of a protracted exile - "...because you did not serve HASHEM, your G-d, with happiness and with gladness of heart, when [you had an] abundance of everything. (Devarim 28:47) How did Haman. The answer is that Haman is going out from the Seudah, the meal that he was invited to by Esther. It was not that Haman reach this spiritual height by his own doing. No! It was the Shirayim of Esther.

I have subsequently heard from one of my Rebbeim another source for Shirayim. The verse tells us about Sara that when she gave birth to Yitzchok after so many years of being barren, "And she said, "Who is the One Who said to Avraham, "Sara would nurse children? For I have born a son in his old age!" (Breishis 21:7) Why does it say that Sara would nurse children, plural? She had only one child, Yitzchok? It should have said, Sara would nurse a child.

Sara was compelled to prove that the child was really hers. The only way to demonstrate the truth of that fact was if she was actually able to nurse other children. People from all over came to have Sara nurse their babies. It publicized the miracle of Yitzchok's birth. This action of Sara nursing children would have far reaching consequences beyond satisfying the temporary hunger of nursing children. All the future Gerim, converts, would descend from those children that drank Sara's milk. The Litvaks- Lithuanian Jews say it was the milk of Sara but the Chassidim claim, "It was the Shirayim of Yitzchok!" In any case I left the Rabbi's house that night for some mystical reason happy and with a cheerful heart!