



חבונה נזכר...

Remembering Harvona

It is customary for Jews to recite the poem *Shoshanat Ya'akov* ("The Rose of Jacob" – The Jewish People) after reading Megillat Ester on Purim:

שושנת יעקב צהלה ושמחה בראותם יחד תכלת מרדכי. תשועתם היית לנצח ותקותם בכל דור ודור. להודיע שכל קוֹיך לא יבשו ולא יכלמו לנצח כל החוסים בך. ארור המן אשר בקש לאבדי. ברוך מרדכי היהודי. ארורה זרש אשת מפחידי. ברוכה אסתר בעדי. ארורים כל הרשעים. ברוכים כל הצדיקים. וגם **חבונה זכור לטוב.**

*The Rose of Jacob exulted and rejoiced when together they beheld the techelet of Mordechai. Their salvation was eternal and their hope established for every generation, proclaiming that all those who beseek You will not be ashamed and those who trust in You will forever not be disgraced. Cursed is Haman who sought to annihilate me, blessed is Mordechai the Jew. Cursed is Zeresh the wife of my terrorizer, blessed is Ester who stood by me. Cursed are all the evildoers, blessed are all the Tzadikim. **Harvoni is also remembered for the good he did.***

- "Harvona is also remembered for the good he did."

True, Harvona pointed out to Achashverosh the gallows Haman had built to hang Mordechai. But the Gemara [Megilla 16a] tells us Harvona was a shameless opportunist who switched sides at the last minute. Why did



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Harvona deserve to be mentioned along with the great Tsadikim -
Mordechai and Esther?

The Vilna Gaon said that everywhere it mentions *HaMelech* – The King – in the Megilla without qualification it is alluding to HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu in exile acts *behester* – hidden, within nature. By analogy, Achashverosh had a policy of official non-intervention. He did not take decisions on his own; instead, he set up privy councils to advise him. His signet ring he gave to others. He played his underlings off against each other; the rivalry between Mordechai and Haman is a case in point. He remained above the fray. Ruling from on high, never intervening openly in the course of events, Achashverosh remained unchallengable and supreme.

When Esther revealed her identity and accused Haman, Achashverosh left the two of them alone to sort things out between themselves. He came back expecting the matter would be resolved, but instead what did he see – Haman sprawled over Esther's couch! Everyone was watching. This was a direct challenge to the king's authority, an intolerable affront that could not go unpunished. However, Achashverosh was caught in a dilemma of his own making. He had to act, but he couldn't intervene! Intervention would mean loss of authority and power.

Harvona of course knew all this. He understood perfectly what the King's dilemma was. So he pointed out to Achasverosh the gallows Haman had built for Mordechai - 50 ammos high. It could be seen from afar. Everyone knew that Haman and Mordechai were arch-enemies from way back. Hang Haman on the gallows, and the people will put it down to Mordechai out-



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foxing Haman – the perfect solution! The King seized the opportunity to save his regime and said, "Hang him on it" on the spot.

There is a lesson in this for the Jews. HaKadosh Baruch Hu is now hidden. He does not want to intervene directly. He is still present but acts behind the scenes. For our part we are obliged not to force His hand so to speak and act in such a way that He will have no choice but to show Himself. This is the reason for the oaths with which HaShem bound the Jewish People already in the Babylonian exile [Ketuvot 111a] – not to conquer the land of Israel by force or to rebel against the gentile nations. The gentiles are likewise bound by oath not to oppress us too harshly for that reason.