

Beware the Ides of Adar: Connecting the Dots of Time



Shiur this week is kindly sponsored by Barbara and Yitzchak Lehmann Siegel in honor of her mother's yartzheit, **Sara Anne Lehmann - Sara bat Yitzchak Meshulam Feish**, ה"ע (24 Adar)

Ides of March

1. Julius Caesar Act 1, scene 2, 15–19

Caesar:

Who is it in the press that calls on me?
I hear a tongue shriller than all the music
Cry "Caesar!" Speak, Caesar is turn'd to
hear.

Soothsayer:

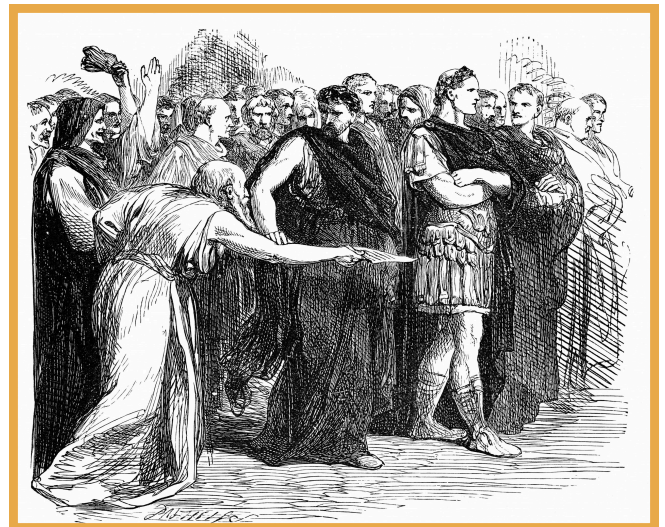
Beware the ides of March.

Caesar:

What man is that?

Brutus:

A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of
March.



Questions

The Name of the Festival

2.Esther 9:24-26

<p>כד כי הָמֹן בֶּן-הַמֶּדְתָּא הָאֲגָגִי, צָרַר כָּל-הַיְהוּדִים--חָשַׁב עַל-הַיְהוּדִים, לְאַבְדֵם; וְהִפִּיל פּוּר הוּא הַגּוּרָל, לְהִמָּם וּלְאַבְדֵם.</p>	<p>24 because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast pur, that is, the lot, to discomfit them, and to destroy them;</p>
<p>כה וּבָבֶאֱהָ, לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, אָמַר עִם-הַסֵּפֶר, יָשׁוּב מִחֲשֻׁבְתּוֹ הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר-חָשַׁב עַל-הַיְהוּדִים עַל-רָאשׁוֹ; וְתָלוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת-בָּנָיו, עַל-הָעֵץ.</p>	<p>25 but when she came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he had devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head; and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.</p>
<p>כו עַל-כֵּן קָרְאוּ לַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה פּוּרִים, עַל-שֵׁם הַפּוּר--עַל-כֵּן, עַל-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הָאֲגָרָת הַזֹּאת; וּמָה-רָאוּ עַל-כִּכָּהּ, וּמָה הִגִּיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם.</p>	<p>26 Wherefore they called these days Purim, after the name of pur. Therefore because of all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and that which had come unto them,</p>

Hijacker Wilfried Böse. Photograph



1.Memory

3.Devarim 25:17-19

<p>יז זָכוֹר, אֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לְךָ עַמְלֵק, בְּדַרְךָ, בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם.</p>	<p>17 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt;</p>
<p>יח אֲשֶׁר קָרַךְ בְּדַרְךָ, וַיִּזְנַב בְּךָ כָּל-הַנְּחֻשְׁלִים אַחֲרֶיךָ--וְאִתָּהּ, עֵיף וַיִּגַע; וְלֹא יָרָא, אֱלֹהִים.</p>	<p>18 how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were enfeebled in thy rear, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.</p>
<p>יט וְהָיָה בְּהֵנִיחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ מְכַל-אֵיבֶיךָ מִסָּבִיב, בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה-אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נַחֲלָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ--תִּמְחָה אֶת-זֵכֶר עַמְלֵק, מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם; לֹא, תִשְׁכַּח. {פ}</p>	<p>19 Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget. {P}</p>

The Origins: Amalek

4. Rashi, Devarim 25:18

אשר קרד בדרך. לשון מקרה; דבר אחר – לשון קרי וטמאה שהיה מטמאן במשכב זכור; ד"א – לשון קר וחם, צננך והפשירך מרתיחתך, שהיו כל האמות יראים להלחם בכם ובא זה והתחיל והראה מקום לאחרים; משל לאמבטי רותחת שאין כל בריה יכולה לירד בתוכה, בא בן בליעל אחד קפץ וירד לתוכה, אע"פ שנכזה הקרה אותה בפני אחרים (תנחומא):

Happenstance



Example 1: The Probability of Heads

Rosencranz and Guildenstern Are Dead, ACT I, Tom Stoppard

GUIL (flipping a coin): There is an art to the building up of suspense.

ROS: Heads. GUIL (flipping another): Though it can be done by luck alone.

ROS: Heads. GUIL: If that's the word I'm after.

ROS (raises his head at GUIL): Seventy-six love. (GUIL gets up but has nowhere to go. He spins another coin over his shoulder without looking at it, his attention being directed at his environment or lack of it.) Heads.

GUIL: A weaker man might be moved to re-examine his faith, if in nothing else at least in the law of probability.

Example 2: The Creation of the World

5.A history of Nearly Everything, Bill Bryson

Proteins are what you get when you string amino acids together, and we need a lot of them. No one really knows, but there may be as many as a million types of protein in the human body, and each one is a little miracle. By all the laws of probability proteins shouldn't exist. To make a protein you need to assemble amino acids (which I am obliged by long tradition to refer to here as "the building blocks of life") in a particular order, in much the same way that you assemble letters in a particular order to spell a word. The problem is that words in the amino acid alphabet are often exceedingly long. To spell *collagen*, the name of a common type of protein, you need to arrange eight letters in the right order. But to *make* collagen, you need to arrange 1,055 amino acids in precisely the right sequence. But—and here's an obvious but crucial point—you *don't* make it. It makes itself, spontaneously, without direction, and this is where the unlikelyhoods come in.

The chances of a 1,055-sequence molecule like collagen spontaneously self-assembling are, frankly, nil. It just isn't going to happen. To grasp what a long shot its existence is, visualize a standard Las Vegas slot machine but broadened greatly—to about ninety feet, to be precise—to accommodate 1,055 spinning wheels instead of the usual three or four, and with twenty symbols on each wheel (one for each common amino acid).^{*} How long would you have to pull the handle before all 1,055 symbols came up in the right order? Effectively forever. Even if you reduced the number of spinning wheels to two hundred, which is actually a more typical number of amino acids for a protein, the odds against all two hundred coming up in a prescribed sequence are 1 in 10^{260} (that is a 1 followed by 260 zeroes). That in itself is a larger number than all the atoms in the universe.

So what accounts for all this wondrous complexity? Well, one possibility is that perhaps it isn't quite—not quite—so wondrous as at first it seems. Take those amazingly improbable proteins. The wonder we see in their assembly comes in assuming that they arrived on the scene fully formed. But what if the protein chains didn't assemble all at once? What if, in the great slot machine of creation, some of the wheels could be held, as a gambler might hold a number of promising cherries? What if, in other words, proteins didn't suddenly burst into being, but *evolved*.

Imagine if you took all the components that make up a human being—carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and so on—and put them in a container with some water, gave it a vigorous stir, and out stepped a completed person. That would be amazing. Well, that's essentially what Hoyle and others (including many ardent creationists) argue when they suggest that proteins spontaneously formed all at once. They didn't—they can't have. As Richard Dawkins argues in *The Blind Watchmaker*, there must have been some kind of cumulative selection process that allowed amino acids to assemble in chunks. Perhaps two or three amino acids linked up for some simple purpose and then after a time bumped into some other similar small cluster and in so doing "discovered" some additional improvement.

Connected Time

6.Rav Hirsch, Bereishis 19:9

קרא stems from the root **קרה**, which is related to **קרא**. (In two places **קרא** has the same meaning as **קרה**: **וקראהו אסון** [below, 42:38]; **אח אשר יקרא** [below, 49:1]).

קרא, "to call," means: to cause someone to turn in our direction, physically or mentally. One who calls us changes our course and turns us in his direction.

מקרה, what happens to us by chance, is a *new development we could not foresee in our path*, an event that "calls" to us and changes our direction. What we call "chance" appears to happen "by chance" only because we did not anticipate it or foresee it. However, inasmuch as it was hidden to our eyes, it was foreseen and foreknown to the One Who called the generations from the beginning. **מקרה**, chance, does not befall us; rather, we are "called" to it, and it "calls" to us — **קרה**, **קרא**.

By extension, **קרה**, the rafters of a house, the roof — which supports the walls and keeps them aligned in their respective upright positions — "calls" the walls **וז לקראת זז** and prevents them from naturally inclining downward.

Disconnected Time

7. Ha'emek Davar, Devarim 25:18

ואתה עיף. פרש"י בצמא. ונראה להוסיף עפ"י שביארנו בפ' בשלח שנענשו בצמא באשר התאוננו ולא היו צמאים. ולא האמינו שהקב"ה יודע שהם אינם צמאים באמת וע"כ נענשו להיות צמאים. וא"כ זה ג"כ חסרון אמונה וגרם להביא עמלק:

ויגע. במה שבחנו את ה' אם הוא בקרבם בהשגחה נסתרת ג"כ הראו לדעת שקשה עליהם לישא משא נסי באשר נדרש לזה הנהגה גבוה ובאמת כן היה הדבר כמו שביארנו בפ' שלח באורך והיינו ויגע ממשא דבר ה' בהנהגה נסית:

8. "Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)"

"LIFE IS WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU WHILE YOU'RE BUSY MAKING OTHER PLANS."

The Fight over Time in the Megillah

The Lots

9. Ralbag, Esther 3:7

ויתכן שזה הגורל היו מפילים על צד הקרי כמו מה שהתפרסם מהזיות הגורל אשר יקראום חכמת העפר.

Esther's Happenstance Plight

10. Esther 4:5-7

ה ותקרא אֶסְתֵּר לְהַתֵּךְ מִסֹּרִיִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ, אֲשֶׁר הָעֲמִיד לְפָנֶיהָ, וּתְצוּהוּ, עַל-מְרֹדֶכַי-- לְדַעַת מַה-זֶּה, וְעַל-מַה-זֶּה.	5 Then called Esther for Hathach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and charged him to go to Mordecai, to know what this was, and why it was.
ו וַיֵּצֵא הַתֵּךְ, אֶל-מְרֹדֶכַי--אֶל-רְחוֹב הָעִיר, אֲשֶׁר לְפָנֵי שַׁעַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ.	6 So Hathach went forth to Mordecai unto the broad place of the city, which was before the king's gate.
ז וַיַּגֵּד לוֹ מְרֹדֶכַי, אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר קָרָהוּ; וְאֵת פְּרִשְׁת הַכֶּסֶף, אֲשֶׁר אָמַר הָמוֹן לְשָׂקוֹל עַל-גִּנְזֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בִּיהוּדִים (בְּיְהוּדִים)--לְאַבְדֵם.	7 And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and the exact sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.

11. Esther 4:14

<p>יד כי אם-החרש תַּחְרִישִׁי, בְּעֵת הַזֹּאת-- רוּחַ וְהַצֵּלָה יֵעָמוּד לַיהוּדִים מִמְּקוֹם אַחֵר, וְאֶת וּבֵית-אָבִיךָ תֵּאבְדוּ; וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ-- אִם-לֵעֵת כְּזֹאת, הִגַּעַתְּ לַמְּלָכוֹת.</p>	<p>14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish; and who knoweth whether thou art not come to royal estate for such a time as this?'</p>
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The Real Lots

12. Ibn Ezra, Esther 3:7

הפיל פור - זאת המלה פרסית ופירושה גורל והנה זה הפך הוא חדש ניסן, ויש אומרים כי בחר להשמיד את ישראל בחדש אדר כי בו נאסף אל עמו משה אדונינו ולא ידע כי בו נולד, ואחרים אמרו בעבור חבור העליונים במזל גדי שהוא שנים עשר למזל דלי שהוא מזל ישראל, והנכון שכן יצא בגורלו כי מהשם משפטו והשם האריך הזמן עד שיעשו ישראל תשובה וימלטו:

13. Malbim, Esther 3:7

הנה הגורל היה בשלשה עשר בניסן (כמ"ש בפסוק י"ב) ובדאי מחשבת המן היה לנקום בעם ה' תיכף והתחיל בגורלו מן ארבעה עשר בניסן שהוא יום המחרת ולא עלה בידו ושוב הגריל על ט"ו ט"ז ניסן תמיד דחהו הגורל עד סוף ימי החדש, וכיון שהגיע לחדש הבא התחיל מיום א' של אייר ודחהו הגורל מיום ליום עד יום האחרון שהוא י"ג אייר, כי הגורל מוכרח ליפול על יום אחד מימים הנגרלים, והיה בהשגחת ה' שיפול על יום המאוחר, כדי שירויחו ישראל זמן, ואח"כ חשב המן בלבו אולי החודש אינו מצליח והתחיל להגריל על החדשים והתחיל מניסן שעומד בו ולא עלה הגורל, וכן דחהו הגורל מחדש לחדש עד החדש האחרון שהוא אדר, ושוב לא הגריל על ימי החדש כי כבר בגורל הראשון יצא יום י"ג, ובא גורלו על י"ג אדר, ואם היה מגריל על החדשים תחלה, וממילא היה נופל ג"כ על אדר שהוא חדש המאוחר ואח"כ היה מגריל על הימים היה בא הגורל על יום האחרון של חדש אדר.

Turning Point: Memory



14. Shmos 17:14

יד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, כְּתֹב זֹאת זִכְרוֹן
בְּסֵפֶר, וְשִׂים, בְּאָזְנֵי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: כִּי-מַחָה
אֶמְחָה אֶת-זִכְרֵ עַמְלֵק, מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם.

14 And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Write this for a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.'

15. Esther 2:1

א אַחַר, הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, כִּשְׁךְ, חֲמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֶחְשׂוֹרֶשׁ--זָכַר אֶת-וְשֵׁתִי וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂתָה,
וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר-נִגְזַר עָלַיָּהּ.

1 After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was assuaged, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.

16. Esther 6:1

א בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא, נִדְּדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ; וַיֹּאמֶר,
לְהָבִיא אֶת-סֵפֶר הַזְּכוּרֹת דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים, וַיְהִיו
נִקְרָאִים, לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ.

1 On that night could not the king sleep; and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles, and they were read before the king.

17. Esther 9:28

כח וְהַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה נִזְכָּרִים וְנֶעֱשִׂים בְּכָל-דּוֹר
וְדוֹר, מִשְׁפָּחָה וּמִשְׁפָּחָה, מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה, וְעִיר
וְעִיר; וַיְמִי הַפּוּרִים הָאֵלֶּה, לֹא יַעֲבְרוּ מִתּוֹךְ
הַיְהוּדִים, וְזָכָרָם, לֹא-יִסּוּף מִזְרָעָם. {ס}

28 and that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed. {S}

