

## CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

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Posted February 9, 2012, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

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## FIND A SILVER LINING

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I write today on Tu Bisvat, the full moon of the month of Shevat, which means we're exactly one lunar month away from Purim. It's a moment of turning in the Jewish year: we're heading out of winter and into the spring. It's a time to look up and look around! We're heading toward the end of the semester, the planning year, etc. So let's learn an optimistic text that gives us a surprisingly charitable view of Ahashueros.

"In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants (Esther 1:3)" Rabbi Shmuel bar Imi said: There were four good points to Ahashueros. He allowed three years to elapse before he assumed the crown or ascended the throne. He waited four years before he found a suitable wife. And he never did anything without getting advice. Rabbi Pinchas said: Moreover, if anyone did him a good turn, he recorded it in write, for it says, "And it was found written in the King's records that Mordecai had denounced those who were plotting to kill the King (Esther 6:1-2)." (Esther Rabbah 1:15)

We usually think of Ahashueros as the drunken, stupid, lecherous king in the Purim story. But here, the midrash is telling us that even this fool has three good points.

I think this text teaches some valuable lessons. What does Ahashueros have going for him? His first good characteristic is that HE TAKES HIS TIME. He doesn't grab the kingship without laying a good foundation first and he doesn't take a wife without seeing all his options (so to speak).

The second characteristic in his favor is that HE TAKES ADVICE. He doesn't jump into a situation without finding out about it first.

And his third characteristic is HE WRITES DOWN THE GOOD THINGS.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Obviously, I'm going to urge all of us to emulate Ahashueros' good traits. Can you remember a time when you took your time and it helped? Conversely, can you remember a time when you rushed into a situation and you wished you hadn't? What happened? Tell us about it!
2. Was there ever a time when you took some good advice or a time when someone gave you great advice and you didn't listen? Again, tell us the story! Have you ever given someone some good advice? What happened?
3. How can each of us create our own "Annals of Good Things That Happened?" Is it journaling? Saving

mementos? How would you create it?

Try writing down the good things that happen to you for just this Jewish month. I'll be interested to see if the discipline of writing it down helps you realize the good things that are happening as they happen. We can revisit the issue on Purim and, hopefully, it'll make the holiday merrier for all of us!

As always, I look forward to hearing your insights!

[NOTE: Maqom is now a discussion group, [Maqom613](http://groups.google.com/group/maqom613), at Google groups. To leave a comment on the above passage, go to <http://groups.google.com/group/maqom613> and join the group. Also, you will need a gmail account to log in, so if you don't have one, then first go <https://mail.google.com/> to set up your email account.]