ESTHER 9:26. What does “Purim” mean?

על כן קראו לימים האלה פורים על שם הפור

When Haman decided to eliminate the Jewish people, he “casted lots” to determine what day would be designated to carry out his evil plan.

This is how the text of the Megilla describes this event:
“In the twelfth year of King Ahashverosh, in the first month, the month of Nisan, the pur (that is, the lot) was cast in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

The Persian custom is to celebrate the beginning of spring, Nouruz, which marks the new year. The first month of the Persian and Babylonian year was the month of Nisan, towards the end of March. Historians report that on the sixth day of that month the coronation of the king (or Emperor) was formally renewed as well as the king’s oath of loyalty to his people. On the ninth day of Nisan, the Persians continued their festivities by exhibiting statues and idols of pagan deities and celebrated with drinks, dances, etc.Then, starting on the 10th of Nisan, the citizens consulted wizards and astrologers about their resolutions for the new year. The key point was to determine which days in the coming year were auspicious for weddings, doing business, starting new ventures, etc. The magicians threw small stones, “purim” at random which revealed the fate of the days of the coming year. Once the times were determined, they claimed that nothing could change it …
With this interesting historical information in mind we can better understand the details of what happened with Haman.

הוא חודש ניסן

The evil minister Haman wanted to make sure that his genocidal project would be carried out successfully; and for that there was nothing better than having the advice of the astrologers, חכמים יודעי העתים, the most qualified men in the empire to determine what was the best day for their plans to succeed. In the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahashverosh’s reign, 474 BCE, the magicians “cast the lots in front of (= for) Haman, who sought to carry out his plan that same year, and the date of the genocide was set on the eleventh month, Adar.”

הפיל פור

Purim is the plural of “pur”. There are those who say that pur is a Persian word, which indicates a kind of container where the lots were drawn. “Pur” can also mean in Hebrew a small stone. When a rock breaks into pebbles, or when a bread crumbles into crumbs, the Hebrew verb “p / r / r” (לפורר, פרורים etc.) is used. These small stones were thrown (להפיל) at random– falling on one of their sides, like dice, or on a special place, similar to a roulette -to indicate what the fortune-tellers would reveal to their clients. This routine, as well as other similar practices such as the famous oracles, were very common among the Pagans. They were associated with practices of idolatry (divination, cleromancy, etc.) which our Torah obviously forbids.

הוא הגורל

The Megila mentions that “these little stones” were used as a kind of lottery, or “goral”. The Tora mentions and approves of the use of draw to resolve or prevent conflicts; The allocation of land in Israel was established by this type of “goral”.
See https://halakhaoftheday.org/2021/09/11/yona-16-7-who-loaded-the-dice/
This is similar to a draw in which the parties agree to abide to the result, as a way to solve, decide or assign. (something

similar is done in sport events when a coin is flipped to decide which of the two teams will start the game, etc.)

PURIM and YONA

The mention of the "goral" in Megilat Ester reminds us of what happened to the prophet Yona. When Yona tried to escape from his Divine mission by fleeing Israel on a ship, and HaShem caused an unusual storm that threatened to destroy the ship, the sailors decided to "cast lots" so that the stones would reveal who was to blame. When we studied that text, I explained that although it is forbidden to assume divine intervention, and or read a Divine message in a matter that is left to chance, on that specific occasion, God intervened so that "the lots would assign the blame on Yona" and so the prophet would resume his important mission. It is very possible then that by connecting "Pur" or Purim with the "goral" the Megila subtly alludes to the event of Yonah, indicating that in the lots of Purim we should also see the Divine intervention.

THE LATEST POSSIBLE TIME

Rabbi Eben Ezra explains that the Divine intervention determined that furthest month from Nisan, the last month of the year, would be chosen, so that the Jews would have the opportunity to repent of their wrong deeds –since they had assimilated and turned away from the Tora – to deserve to be saved.In the end, the genocidal plan of Haman was thwarted, and that same day, the 13th of Adar, which was designated "by casting lots" as a bad day for the Jews, became a day of salvation in which the Yehudim managed to get rid of the enemies that were looking for our destruction.
In this way, the name of the festival, "Purim", reminds us that it is not the little stones, dices, luck or chance what determines the destiny of the people of Israel, but our behavior, and the Divine Providence.