

Congregation Shaare Rahamim Series

* The Akkad Edition *

The Halachot and History of

Purim



לְהוֹדִים הַיְתֵה אֹרֵה וְשִׂמְחָה וְשִׁשׁוֹן וְיִקָּר

* Sephardic Laws and Customs of the Month of Adar, Ta'anit Esther and Purim
* Historical Background of Purim

— Rabbi's Message —

It is with praise and gratitude to *Hashem* that we present this volume, *Purim and Megillat Esther*, to the community. This is the fourth volume in our popular Festival series which consists of: *Hanukkah*, the *Pesah Haggadah*, and the Three Weeks. As in the past, we trust that this volume will serve as an inspiration and deepen the community's understanding of the Festival.

Purim is generally perceived as a holiday of eating, drinking, dancing, and spending joyous time with family and friends. Nevertheless, we must not overlook the true message of the day — *Emunat Hachamim*, implicit trust in our *Hachamim*.

The story of *Purim* occurred over a twelve year period. It began in the third year of Ahashverosh's reign when he threw an exquisite banquet, first for all his officials, and then for all the inhabitants of the capital city of the Persian Empire, Shushan, the Jews included. The party was primarily to celebrate the solidification of Ahashverosh's rulership. The infamous seventy years of Jeremiah's prophecy (foretelling the return of the Jews to Israel) were complete according to his erroneous calculation, and he now felt secure that the prophecy was not something to be reckoned with. He was sure that his reign would now endure — certainly (to his mind), a cause for celebration.

The Rabbis of Shushan, and especially Mordechai, warned their co-religionists not to attend the party. They explained that this party was rooted in the antithesis of holiness, and therefore, not the place for a Jew. Some Jews listened, but many did not. They felt that they must attend in deference to the king. Indeed, only kosher food would be served — so what could be wrong?

The Rabbis, with their foresight, were absolutely correct. At the party, Ahashverosh made every attempt to entice the Jews to sin. In addition, in line with his purpose for throwing the party, he displayed the utensils from the *Bet Hamikdash*, and even wore the clothes of the *Kohen Gadol*, since to his mind, these were now relics from the past. Even the Jews who attended the party were offended by this callous indifference to their sensitivities. In the end, the whole generation was punished with the threat of annihilation, since these Jews did not heed their *Hachamim* and attended the party.

The importance of heeding the words of our *Hachamim* is underscored in the Torah portion relating to *Kabbalat Hatorah*, the receiving of the Torah. The Scripture states: "*Moses led the people out of the camp*

toward G-d, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.” (Exodus 19:17) On this the Talmud explains: “G-d lifted the mountain over their heads and warned, if you accept the Torah, well and good; if not, you will meet your death there (under this mountain).” (*Shabbat 88a*)

The commentators explain that the Jews were ready to accept the Written Torah at that time from the hand of G-d, but had qualms about accepting the Oral Torah, meaning the portion of the Torah that is explained by the Rabbis of each generation. On their level of holiness, they wanted Torah to be entirely Divine, and did not want to accept the fact that Torah would be interpreted by humans. Notwithstanding their high level of holiness, they were in reality shortsighted by not accepting what *Hashem* felt was appropriate. However, by lifting the mountain over their heads, G-d explained that the Written Torah and Oral Torah are one, and they must be accepted together. In other words, the Oral Torah, the explanation of the Rabbis of each generation is an equal part of the Torah, and is as important as the Torah scrolls.

Upon closer examination of the words of the Talmud, “if not, you will meet your death there,” we notice that the term, “there,” is used rather than “you will meet your death here.” This makes reference to a later date, to the time of Ahashverosh, when once again the Jews doubted the veracity of the words of their *Hachamim*—namely, Mordechai, and as a result were threatened with a decree of destruction.

When Mordechai called upon his co-religionists to repent, he explained the source of the decree to be the party that many Jews had attended nine years earlier. They did not doubt Mordechai this time. They rallied around him, and repented with all their hearts. Once they repented, the decree was lifted.

This is as the Scripture states: “*The Jews confirmed and accepted upon themselves...*” (*Esther 9:28*), upon which the Talmud explains “They confirmed that which they had previously accepted.” This means that on *Purim* the Jews confirmed their acceptance of the Oral Torah, which they had previously accepted on Mount Sinai. At Mount Sinai, the Jews were coerced to accept the Oral Law upon threat of destruction, and on *Purim*, they accepted it of their own accord. This acceptance of the Oral Law, the words of the *Hachamim*, saved them from their destruction.

Time and again, throughout the generations, the Jews’ lack of obedience to the words of the *Hachamim* has caused them untold suffering and tragedy. For example, had the Jews taken heed to the words of their prophets Isaiah and then Jeremiah to repent, perhaps the destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash* could have been averted.

Today's crisis in Israel follows the same pattern. The secular Jews are attempting to create a secular state, and separate the Rabbinat (the *Hachamim*) from governing the state policies. As a result, Arafat and his PLO are inflicting suffering upon the Jews.

Our only hope for salvation is to follow the method employed by the Jews in the time of the *Purim* story: "*They confirmed and accepted upon themselves: they confirmed that which they had previously accepted.*" They accepted upon themselves to follow the words of their *Hachamim*.

As history has shown, the formula of "*They confirmed and accepted upon themselves*" the Oral Law, has been proven to forestall disaster on a national level. But on an individual level, too, this is also a successful approach. There are countless examples where individuals could have been saved from heartbreak and untold suffering, had they only heeded the advice of their *Hachamim*.

Thus, the lesson of *Purim* is clear: *Emunat Hachamim*, heeding the words of our *Hachamim*, is the formula to prevent and reverse tragedy on an individual and on a national level. As we celebrate *Purim* this year, let us stop to think about the purpose of the festivity, and take this lesson to heart. In this way, may we merit the end of all our suffering with the coming of the Messiah, may he come speedily and in our time. Amen.

Rabbi Shlomo Churba

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Congregation Shaare Rahamim



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SECTION 1

HALACHOT PERTAINING TO THE
MONTH OF ADAR AND PURIM



CHAPTER 1

HALACHOT OF THE FOUR PARSHIYOT





THE FOUR PARSHIYOT

Overview

1. *Hazal* instituted the reading of four extra portions from the *Torah* (generally read) during the month of *Adar*. In a *shanah me'uberet* (a year with two months of *Adar*), the portions are read in the second *Adar*. The four portions (*parshiyot*) are:¹
 - a. *Parashat Shekalim*: We read this portion in the *Torah* which talks about the proclamation which was issued on *Rosh Hodesh Adar* ordering everyone to bring a *mahatzit hashekel* (a silver coin) to the *Bet Hamikdash*. These funds were used to buy the *korbanot tzibur* (public sacrifices). Although we cannot perform this *mitzvah* in the absence of the *Bet Hamikdash*, we nevertheless read this portion in the spirit of, “*unshalemah parim sefatenu*” - our commemorative words assume the place of the actual fulfillment of the obligation.²
 - b. *Parashat Zachor*: We read the portion commanding us to remember what Amalek did to the Jews when they left Egypt. The *Torah* requires that we read this portion annually. Since Haman was a descendant of Amalek, *Hazal* instituted that we read this portion before *Purim* in order to associate the destruction of Amalek with that of Haman, a descendant of Amalek.³

(1) סימן תרפ"ה. (2) סימן תרפ"ה מ"ב ב'. (3) סימן תרפ"ה רש"י מגילה כ"ט. על המשנה.



- c. *Parashat Parah*: We read this portion before the month of *Nissan*, which describes how the *parah adumah* (red heifer) was prepared in the *midbar*, and how it was used to purify those that had become *tamei met* (ritually impure due to contact with a dead body). It was prepared before the month of *Nissan*, in order to purify them to bring the *Korban Pesah*.⁴ Our reading of this *parashah* expresses our wish that *Hashem* should soon sprinkle upon us these purifying waters.
- d. *Parashat Hahodesh*: We read the portion in which we are commanded to bring the *Korban Pesah* and sanctify the new month.

Parashat Shekalim

2. On the *Shabbat* immediately preceding *Rosh Hodesh Adar*, two *sifrei Torah* are taken out from the *aron*. In the first, the weekly portion is read. In the second, we read *Parashat Shekalim*, which is taken from the beginning of *Parashat Ki Tissah* (*Shemot* chap. 30 v.11-16). For the *haftarah* we read the section of *ויכרת יהוידע* (*Melachim II* chap. 11 v. 17-20, chap. 12 v. 1-17).⁵

We call up seven *olim* for the first sefer, and the last *oleh* recites half-*kaddish*. Half-*kaddish* is recited after the reading of the second *sefer*, as well.⁶

3. If *Rosh Hodesh Adar* falls on *Shabbat*, we read *Parashat Shekalim* on *Shabbat Rosh Hodesh*. When this happens, we take out three *sifrei Torah* from the *aron*. In the first, the weekly portion is read, and in the second we read the section dealing with *Rosh Hodesh* (*Bamidbar* chap. 28 v. 9-15). *Parashat Shekalim* is read from the third *sefer*.⁷

(4) תרפ"ה מ"ב א'. (5) תרפ"ה סעיף ה', א'.

(6) כף החיים ס' קמ"ז ס"ק מ"ד. (7) ש"ע תרפ"ה ס"א.



Although in this case we do not read the standard *haftarah* for *Shabbat Rosh Hodesh*, the community's custom is to read the first and final *pesukim* of that *haftarah* after completing the *haftarah* of *Shabbat Shekalim*.⁸

In the first *sefer*, we call up six *aliyot* for the reading of the weekly portion. We do not recite half-*kaddish* as we normally do upon the completion of the *parasha*.⁶ If, however, seven *aliyot* or more were added, then half-*kaddish* is recited after the reading of the first *sefer*.⁹ Half-*kaddish* is recited after the readings of both the second and third *sifrei Torah*.

✿ Parashat Zachor

4. Although the general obligation of reading the *Torah* was established by *Hazal*, the reading of *Parashat Zachor* constitutes a Biblical requirement.¹⁰ *Hazal* understood this *mitzvah* to require a verbal reading¹¹ from a proper *sefer Torah*¹³ in the presence of a *minyan*.¹²

The Rambam¹³ explains this *mitzvah* as follows: “Hashem commanded us to remember what Amalek did to us - acting first to harm us -, to despise them at every moment, to arouse our nation to wage war against them, and urge the nation to despise them to the point where this *mitzvah* will never be forgotten and the hatred towards them will never diminish.”

The Ramban,¹⁴ explains “that we should never forget what *Amalek* did to us, until we destroy their name from the world. And we should tell our children and future generations, this is what the evil people did to us, and therefore we are commanded to destroy them.

(8) עיין סידור יחזה דעת וכן מנהג בק"ק שערי ציון
 (9) יחזה דעת ח"א סימן ע"ב (10) תרפה' סע' ז' (11) עיין מגילה י"ח.
 (12) עיין יחזה דעת ח"ג ס' נ"ג - על פי הגמרא מגילה י"ח.
 (13) הרמב"ם מצוות עשה קפ"ט (14) הרמב"ן סוף פרשת כי תצא
 ועיין רמב"ן מ"ע ז' ששכה הרמב"ם (והראה לי ע"י ר' יוסף עזורי נ"ו)



Therefore, one must remember both what Amalek did to us, as well as the mitzvah of destorying them.

The *Shabbat* before *Purim* is *Shabbat Parashat Zachor*, and on this *Shabbat* we take out two *sifrei Torah* from the *aron*. In the first, the weekly portion is read, and from the second *Torah* we read the *maftir* of *Parashat Zachor*, taken from *Parashat Ki Tessei* (*Devarim* chap. 25 v. 17-19).¹⁵ Half-*Kaddish* is recited after both *sefarim* (refer to paragraph 2).

5. The most ritually fit *sefer Torah* should be used for the reading of *Parashat Zachor*.
6. The congregation should be reminded before reading *Parashat Zachor* to have in mind to fulfill through this reading the *mitzvah* of remembering what Amalek did to us - being the first nation to attack us - and to remind ourselves of the *mitzvah* that *Hashem* wants us to destroy them. The *baal koreh* should also have in mind to fulfill the congregation's requirement through his reading of *Parashat Zachor*.¹⁶
7. Everyone must be silent and listen to every word of *Parashat Zachor* from the *baal koreh* reading from the *Torah*. They should not read along from the *humash*, since *Parashat Zachor* must be read from a proper *Torah* scroll. The congregation fulfills its obligation through the principle of "*shome'a ke'oneh*," that they can be considered reading from the *Torah* by merely listening to the *baal koreh's* reading. Therefore, they must listen intently to every word and **not** read along in the *humash*.¹⁷
8. People who live in a place where there is no *minyan* to hear *Parashat Zachor* from the *sefer Torah* must go to a place for *Shabbat* that has a *minyan*. Needless to say, one must not go away for this *Shabbat* to a place where he will not be able to hear *Parashat Zachor*.¹¹
9. The *poskim* argue as to whether a woman is obligated to hear *Parashat Zachor*. It is therefore proper for women to come to the

(15) תרפ"ה סע' ב' (16) מ"ב שם י"ד (17) יהוה דעת ה"ג סימן נ"ג



synagogue to hear *Parashat Zachor* to satisfy the stringent opinion. Nevertheless, women who are lenient in this regard and do not come to hear *Parashat Zachor* have authorities on whom to rely.¹⁸ They should, however, attempt to hear the reading from a *humash* with the *ta'amim* (notes).¹⁹

10. A *katan* (a child before the age of thirteen) should not be called to *maftir Parashat Zachor*. However, if he was called and went to the *Torah*, he may accept the *maftir* and should recite the *berachot* aloud. Nevertheless, only a *baal koreh* who is a *gadol* (has reached the age of obligation in *mitzvot*) can fulfill the *mitzvah* of reading for the congregation.²⁰
11. Even a boy who has reached thirteen years of age, if his development of the physical signs of *gadlut* (maturity) are unknown, he should not serve as *baal koreh* for *Parashat Zachor*.²¹
12. One who could not go to the synagogue to hear *Parashat Zachor* should have in mind to fulfill his obligation when *Parashat Ki Tessei*, which contains *Parashat Zachor*, is read as the weekly portion. He should ask the *baal koreh* to have in mind to fulfill his obligation of hearing *Parashat Zachor*.²² Preferably, he should do the same on *Purim* morning during the reading of “*Vayavo Amalek*,”²³ as according to some views one can fulfill his obligation through that reading, as well. Additionally, it is proper for him to read *Parashat Zachor* from a *humash* on *Shabbat Parashat Zachor*.
13. After *Parashat Zachor* is read, the *haftarah* is read from *Shemuel I* (chap. 15 v. 1-34) אשר-עשה עמלק “ויאמר שמואל אל שאול,” starting from the *pasuk*,

(18) יחווה דעת ח"א ס' פ"ד (19) ילקוט יוסף הלכות פרשת זכור ס"ק י"ב (20) שם ס"ק י"א

(21) עיין יביע אומר ח"ח סימן ט"ו אות כ"א הביא בשם ר' חיים פלאג'י שהביא בשם השמן המאיר

(22) עיין מ"ב תרפ"ה ס"ק ט"ז שלפי הרמב"ן צריך לזכור מחיית עמלק ואינו בפרשת ויבא עמלק.

(23) מ"א סימן תרפ"ה



🌸 Parashat Parah

14. The *Shabbat* before *Shabbat Parashat Hahodesh* is *Shabbat Parashat Parah*, and we again take out two *sifrei Torah* from the *aron*. In the first we read the weekly portion as usual, and in the second we read *Parashat Parah*,²⁴ taken from the beginning of *Parashat Hukat* (*Bamidbar* chap. 19 v. 1-22). If the *baal koreh* mistakenly ended the *keri'ah* before reaching the end of the *parasha*, then if the *oleh* had yet to recite the *berachah*, he should continue until the end. If the *oleh* had already recited the second *berachah*, then the *baal koreh* must start again from the beginning of the *parasha* and read until the end. The *oleh* must recite again the *berachot* before and after the reading of the *parasha*.²⁵ The recitation of half-*kaddish* is said on both *sefarim* (refer to paragraph 2).
15. Some *poskim* are of the opinion that the reading of *Parashat Parah* is a biblical obligation. Therefore, one must ensure to observe all the *stringencies* we mentioned with regard to *Parashat Zachor*. See paragraphs 5 through 11.²⁶
16. After reading *Parashat Parah*, the *haftarah* is read from *Yehezkel*, (chap. 36 v. 16-36).

🌸 Parashat Hahodesh

17. The *Shabbat* before *Rosh Hodesh Nissan* is *Shabbat Parashat Hahodesh*, and two *sifrei Torah* are once again taken from the *aron*. In the first we read the weekly portion, and from the second we read *Parashat Hahodesh* (*Shemot* chap. 12 v. 1-20). If *Rosh Hodesh Nissan* falls on a *Shabbat*, then three *sifrei Torah* are taken out. In

(24) תרפ"ג ס"ג (25) ילקוט יוסף שם ס"ק י"ח (26) ש"ע תרפ"ה ס"ק ז'



the first we read the weekly portion, in the second the special *keriah* for *Rosh Hodesh* (*Bamidbar* chap. 28 v. 9-15), and in the third *Parashat Hahodesh* is read.²⁷ Here, too, half-*kaddish* is recited as discussed above (refer to paragraph 3).

18. After the *keri'ah*, the *haftarah* is read from *Yehezkel* chap. 45 v. 18-25 chap. 46 v. 15.
19. Some *poskim* maintain that a *katan* (a boy under the age of thirteen) should not be called up for *maftir* on any of the four *parshiot*. Others, however, allow a *katan* to be called up for *maftir* on these *Shabbatot*. If a synagogue has a custom to call a *katan* for *maftir*, one should not object to this practice. Nevertheless, it is improper to call a *katan* for *Parashat Zachor* and *Parashat Parah*, because of their biblical obligations.²⁸

(27) תרפ"ה ס"ד (28) ילקוט יוסף שם ס"ק כ"ז



CHAPTER 2

HALACHOT OF TA'ANIT ESTHER





☞ LAWS OF TA'ANIT ESTHER

☞ Ta'anit Esther

1. The practice among all Jews is to fast on the thirteenth of *Adar*. In the days of Mordechai and Esther, the Jews congregated on the thirteenth of *Adar* to fight for their lives. They needed to pray for mercy that *Hashem* should help them to take revenge from their enemies. They fasted on that day like Moshe Rabbenu fasted when he fought against Amalek, as it is written in the *Megillah* (chapt. 9 v. 31) *דברי הצומות וזעקתם* (the matter of the fasts and their lamentations). Therefore, the Jews accepted upon themselves to fast on the thirteenth of *Adar*, every year to remember that *Hashem* answers everyone in his time of distress, when he fasts and returns to *Hashem* with all his heart, as the Jews did then. This fast is called *Ta'anit Esther*.¹
2. If the thirteenth of *Adar* falls on *Shabbat*, we fast on Thursday, the eleventh of *Adar*. If one forgot and ate on Thursday, he should fast on Friday.²
3. Men from the age of thirteen and women from the age of twelve fast.
4. The fast begins at dawn (*amud ha'shahar*) and ends at *tzet hakochavim* (when the stars come out) approximately 40-45 minutes after sunset.

(1) ש"ע תרפ"ו ס"ב. עיין מ"ב ס"ק ב.

(2) מ"ב שם ס"ק ג'. עיין ילקוט יוסף דיני תענית אסתר ס"ק ו'.



5. Although the fast begins at dawn (*amud hashahar*) and we are permitted to eat and drink the entire night before, one must be aware of the following stipulations:
- Once a person falls asleep - whether it is “regular” sleep (even if it is not in bed) or a nap (even during the meal) he may not eat or drink when he awakens, even though it is not yet dawn.³
 - If he **is** coherent during his nap, i.e. when reminded where he placed something and he can answer immediately then he is still permitted to eat and drink.⁴
 - If he slept **before** the evening meal, he can still eat.⁵
 - If one stated **before** he goes to sleep that he intends to eat and drink when he wakes up, then he is permitted to do so until dawn.⁶
6. Washing is permitted on *Ta’anit Esther*. One may even wash one’s entire body with hot water (והמחמיר תבוא עליו ברכה).
7. a. It is appropriate to be strict and **not** rinse one’s mouth on this fast day, because we are concerned that perhaps he will swallow the water.⁷
- b. Nevertheless, if he is accustomed to rinsing his mouth, and not doing so will be difficult for him, he may do so. However, extra care must be taken not to swallow even the slightest amount of water. One should also be careful not to rinse with more than a *revi’it* (three ounces) of water.⁸
- c. The same law applies to brushing teeth.
8. a. It is permissible to taste a food or drink (by placing it on the tongue) to determine if it needs more salt or spice. One must be sure **not** to taste more than a *revi’it* (three ounces), and it should **not** be swallowed.⁹
- b. It is permitted to taste the food for this purpose even several times during the day.¹⁰

(3) תקס"ד עיין מ"ב. (4) תקס"ד עיין מ"ב ס"ק ב'. (5) תקס"ד זער הציון ס"ק ג'.

(6) תקס"ד. (7) תקס"ז כף החיים י"ג (8) ילקוט יוסף שם י"ג. (9) תקס"ז ס"ק א

(10) תקס"ז מ"ב ט'. עיין מ"ב.



9. a. An otherwise healthy person who is suffering from pain during the fast is permitted to take medicine to relieve it as long as it is not flavored and he swallows it without water.
 - b. If a person is sick or has a condition that requires daily medication he is permitted to take it, even if it has flavor (if it cannot be substituted with an unflavored kind).¹¹
10. a. Even if a person accidentally ate and drank on *Ta'anit Esther*, he should still fast for the remainder of the day.¹²
 - b. One is not required to fast on another day to make up this fast.¹³
 - c. If one ate more than a *kezayit* (one ounce) it is questionable if he should recite *Anenu*¹⁴ (the special prayer recited on fast days during the *Amidah*).
11. If he accidentally forgot that it was a fast day and made a blessing over a food, he should eat a tiny amount so as not to have recited the blessing in vain.¹⁵
12. It is not permitted to chew gum on a fast day because the flavor is swallowed.¹⁶

🌸 Laws of the עֲנֵנוּ (Anenu) Prayer

1. a. On a fast day, we add the prayer of *Anenu* (“Answer us”) during the recitation of the *Amidah* - both in the silent recitation and the *hazzan's* repetition. The individual recites *Anenu* as part of the *berachah* of שמע קולנו.¹⁷
 - b. *Anenu* is added during *Shaharit* and *Minhah*, but not at *Arbit* (the night before), because the fast does not begin from then.¹⁸
2. If an individual forgot to say *Anenu*, he does **not** have to repeat the *Amidah*.¹⁹

(11) עיין ילקוט יוסף הלכות ארבע תעניות הלכה י"ד. (12) תקס"ח ס"א. (13) תקס"ח ס"א.

(14) ילקוטיוסף שם י"ז (15) ילקוט יוסף שם י"ח. (16) ילקוט יוסף שם ס"ז (17) תקס"ה א

(18) תקס"ה ג' (19) תקס"ה ב'



3. a. If an individual forgot to say *Anenu* , in its proper place but remembered **before** he finished the *Amidah*, he may insert it at the end of **אלקי נצור** before “יהיו לרצון אמרי פי”, he recites the entire *Anenu* and concludes it with **ברוך שומע תפלה** (not mentioning the name of *Hashem*).²⁰
 - b. If he forgot to properly insert *Anenu* but remembered during the recitation of the conclusion of **שמע קולנו**, he proceeds as follows: If he already said **ברוך אתה ה'** he may **not** insert the words of **למדני חוקיך** in order to go back and say *Anenu*. Rather, he must conclude the *Berachah* correctly of **שומע תפלה** and add *Anenu* at the end of **אלקי נצור**.²¹
4. If he totally forgot to recite *Anenu* then preferably he should closely follow the *hazzan's* recitation of the *Amidah*, word for word, with the intention of being *yotzeh* (fulfilling his obligation).²²
5. Only an individual who is fasting adds *Anenu*, but if someone is ill and not fasting, he does not recite *Anenu*.²³
6. On a *Ta'anit Tzibbur*, (communal fast day) the *hazzan* says *Anenu* after the *Berachah* of **גואל ישראל** and concludes it with the *Berachah* **העונה לעמו ישראל בעת צרה**. The reason it is inserted here is because there is a connection in *Tehillim* between **גאולה** and *Anenu* . In *Tehillim* the final verse in Chapter 19:15 is **יהיו לרצון אמרי פי... ה' צורי גואלי יענך ה' ביום** and immediately is followed by **העונה לעמו ישראל בעת צרה** in Chapter 20:2. Therefore the *Berachah* of **גואל ישראל** is connected to *Anenu* which concludes with the *Berachah* of **העונה לעמו ישראל בעת צרה**.²⁴
7. a. The *hazzan* can only recite *Anenu* if there is a *minyan* (ten people) who are fasting. In the event there are not ten men fasting it is sufficient that there be six and the *hazzan* may be one of them.²⁵
 - b. Those who have already prayed, may **not** be included in this number.

(20) תקס"ה ב (21) ילקוט יוסף שם כ' (22) כף החיים שם אות י"ג

(23) עיין בהיל שם ד"ה בין (24) עיין תקס"ו מ"ב א

(25) עיין תקס"ו ס"ג, ועיין מ"ב שם ועיין תורת המועדים פורים ס"ג ס"ק ט



- c. If the required number is not present, the *hazzan* recites *Anenu* during שמע קולנו (like the individual).²⁶
8. a. Only a *hazzan* who is planning on fasting the entire fast may recite *Anenu* after גואל ישראל.²⁷
- b. If no one else is available to lead the service and the one serving as *hazzan* is not fasting, he may not insert *Anenu* after גואל ישראל but instead recites it during שמע קולנו like an individual.²⁸
9. a. If a *hazzan* forgot to insert *Anenu* in its proper place, he should do so in שמע קולנו, but he does not say the concluding *Berachah* of העונה לעמו ישראל בעת צרה. Rather, he recites the usual conclusion of שמע קולנו.²⁹
- b. If he did not remember to insert *Anenu* during שמע קולנו then he should do so at the end of *Amidah*, but without mentioning *Hashem's* Name in the conclusion - instead he concludes ברוך שומע תפלה.³⁰

🌸 Laws for Reading of the Torah

1. a. On every fast day three people are called to the *Torah* at *Shaharit*, and three are called at *Minhah*.
- b. Only people who are fasting may receive an *aliyah*. Even if a person is the only *Kohen* present he still may not receive the first *aliyah* (belonging to the *Kohen*) if he is not fasting. A *Yisrael* replaces the *Kohen*. Similarly, a *Levi* who is not fasting may not receive the second *aliyah*, even if he is the only *Levi* present. The same *Kohen* who was called for his own *aliyah* is called again to replace the *Levi*.³¹ The non-fasting *Kohen* or *Levi* should leave the synagogue (if they are the only *Kohen* or *Levi*).

(26) ילקוט יוסף הלכות תענית כ"ז (27) ש"ע תקס"ו ה' (28) עיין מ"ב שם ס"ק י"ח
(29) קי"ט סעיף ד' (30) שם מ"ב ס"ק י"ט (31) תקס"ו סעיף ו' ועיין מ"ב שם



- c. Even if his name was called publicly, he should refuse the *aliyah* and explain that since he is not fasting he can not receive an *aliyah*. However, if the fast falls on a Monday or Thursday, days that we always read the *Torah* by *Shaharit*, then if the non-fasting *Kohen* or *Levi* who was publicly called by name by *Shaharit* he should accept the *aliyah*. However, if he was asked privately (even on Mon. or Thurs.) he should refuse.³²
2. An individual who knows he will not complete the fast should not accept an *aliyah*, even if he has not yet eaten.³³
3. The *Ba'al Koreh* should **not** read the *Torah* for the congregation if he is not fasting. However, if no one else can replace him it is permissible to be lenient and permit him to read.³⁴
4. It is our custom **not** to recite a *Haftarah* on a fast day, except on *Tishah B'Av* at *Shaharit*; unlike the Ashkenazim who recite a *Haftarah* on every fast. Therefore, a Sepharadi who prays at an Ashkenazi synagogue should **not** accept the third *aliyah* (which is *maftir*) because it is not his custom to have a *Haftarah* and the third *aliyah* would obligate him to make the *berachot* for the *Haftarah*. However, if they already publicly called his name for the third *aliyah*, he should go up and recite the *berachot* of *maftir*.³⁵
5.
 - a. There must be at least six people fasting in the congregation in order to read the *Torah* portion. Those who already prayed may be included in this number if necessary.
 - b. If there are less than six people fasting present in the congregation, then the *Sefer Torah* is **not** read.
 - c. When the fast falls on a Monday or Thursday and there are less than six people present who are fasting, we read (at *Shaharit*) the *parashah* of the week and not the special reading for the fast day.³⁶

(32) מ"ב שם ס"ק י"ט (33) ש"ע שם מ"ב ס"ק כ' (34) ילקוט יוסף שם ס"ק ל"ג

(35) ילקוט יוסף שם כ"ט (36) עיין מ"ב שם ס"ק י"ג ועיין ילקוט יוסף שם ל"א.

ועיין תורת המועדים פורים ס"ג ס"ק ט



✿ Individuals who are absolved from Fasting

1. a. A person who is not well (not because of the fast), even though his illness is not life threatening is absolved from fasting. There is no reason to be strict in this matter because the fast was not established for the ill.³⁷
- b. He may eat immediately in the morning, if necessary.³⁸
- c. If a sick person does not eat, he is in fact sinning because he will cause himself to become weak and the *Torah* charges us to take care of our health, as it says וּנְשַׁמְרֶתֶם מְאֹד לְנַפְשֵׁיכֶם “you shall safeguard your souls” (*Devarim 4:15*).
- d. Although he may eat, he should not indulge so he can also participate with the community in mourning.³⁹
- e. In a case where it is questionable whether or not he is exempt from fasting a rabbi should be asked. One should not make such a decision himself. **[The foregoing are general halachot and it is advisable to ask a rabbi when a halachic question arises.]**
2. A person who is by nature weak or elderly, or has an eye ache or a headache is absolved from fasting.⁴⁰
3. If during the course of the fast one becomes ill, or feels weaker than is normal for one who is fasting - he may be considered in the category of a sick person. He should ask a rabbi to determine if he may break his fast.
4. A person who was exempt from fasting does not have to fast another day, when he feels better, in order to make up for the fast that he missed. However, if he did not fast because of a headache or eye ache he **must** make up the fast unless he was told by a doctor not to fast due to health reasons.⁴¹
6. A pregnant woman is absolved from fasting.

(37) תק"ג מ"ב ד' (38) ילקוט יוסף שם ה' (39) כף החיים שם ז'

(40) עיין כף החיים שם ו' ועיין ש"ע תרפ"ו סעיף ב' ועיין מ"ד ס' ת"ע ס"ק ב' ובשעה"צ

(41) רמ"א שם ס"ב כף החיים תרפ"ו כ"ב



7. a. A woman who has given birth is absolved from fasting for the first two years of the baby's life, whether she is nursing or not, because it takes that long to regain her previous vigor.⁴²
- b. A woman who has suffered a miscarriage should consult with a Rabbi regarding her obligation to fast.⁴²
- c. A pregnant or nursing mother who eats on the fast day should not indulge, so she can also participate with the community in mourning.⁴³
8. a. A "Katan" - a child before *bar* or *bat mitzvah* - is not obligated to fast, even for a few hours.
- b. If a child wants to fast the entire day, his parents should refrain him/her from doing so.⁴⁴
- c. Children who understand the significance of the fast should not indulge, so they too can participate with the community in mourning.⁴⁵
9. a. When a *Milah* is performed on *Ta'anit Esther* it is permissible to be lenient with the father, the *Sandak* and the *mohel* not to fast.⁴⁶
- b. This law also applies to a groom and bride during the week of *Sheva Berachot* - they can be lenient not to fast.

(42) ילקוט יוסף הלכות ארבע תעניות ד' (43) כף החיים תק"ג ז'

(44) תורת המועדים הלכות תענית ס"ב ס"א

(45) כף החיים תק"ג (46) ילקוט יוסף דיני תענית אסתר ז'



❧ CHAPTER 3 ❧

HALACHOT OF THE READING OF THE MEGILLAH AND PURIM PRAYERS



☞ LAWS OF READING THE MEGILLAH

☞ The Proper Time for Reading the Megillah

1. One is obligated to read the *Megillah* on *Purim* night and read it again during the day. The time to read the *Megillah* at night extends from *tzet hakochavim* (when the stars come out) until *Amud Ha'shahar* (daybreak).¹ Our community's custom is to read the *Megillah* approximately 20-30 minutes after sunset.²
2. The time to read the *Megillah* during the day is from sunrise to sunset. If one cannot read the *Megillah* after sunrise, he may read it as early as *Amud Hashahar*.¹
3. If one did not read the *Megillah* during the night, he cannot make up the night reading during the day.³

☞ Who Must Read/Hear the Megillah?

4. Both men and women are obligated to hear the *Megillah*. Whereas women were included in the miracle that happened on *Purim*, the obligations apply to them, as well. Therefore, women who cannot come to the synagogue to hear the *Megillah*, or cannot hear the *Megillah* properly in the synagogue, must hear the *Megillah* elsewhere, from someone capable of reading the *Megillah* properly.⁴

(1) ש"ע תרפ"ז ס"א (2) כיון שזה דרבנן מקילין ועיין ביאור הלכה תרצ"ב ד"ה מפלג

(3) ילקוט יוסף הלכות דיני קריאת מגילה ס"ק ב' בשם מהר"ם בן חביב

(4) ש"ע תרפ"ט ס"א ועיין מ"ב



5. Children - both boys and girls - who have reached the age of *hinuch* (education) should hear the *Megillah* and be brought to the synagogue for this purpose. Their parents should sit next to them and ensure that they listen to the *Megillah* and not disturb others. The “age of education” in this regard is from (approximately) six to seven years old.⁵

✿ The Berachot Recited Over the Megillah

6. One reading the *Megillah* at night, even individually (without a *minyan*), recites these three *berachot*:⁶

על מקרא מגילה al mikrah Megillah

שעשה נסים she'asah nissim

שהחיינו shehehiyanu

7. When reciting the *berachah* of “שהחיינו,” one should have in mind that the *berachah* relates to the other *mitzvot* of the day: gifts to the poor, *mishlo'ah manot* and the *Purim* meal.⁷

According to the Sepharadi tradition, before the daytime *Megillah* reading one recites only the first two *berachot*, omitting *שהחיינו*.

8. If one forgot to recite the *berachot* before starting to read the *Megillah*, he should recite them when he remembers, as long as he had yet to complete the reading. If he completed reading the *Megillah* and he remembered that he did not recite the *beracha* of *שהחיינו*, he should recite the *beracha* of *שהחיינו* before the daytime reading.⁸

If one who had already heard the *Megillah* now reads on behalf of someone else who had not, he recites all three *berachot*, whether he reads for men or for women.⁹ Preferably, the listener should personally recite the *berachot*.¹⁰

(5) ש"ע תרפ"ט ס"ק א' ו' ועיין מ"ב י"ח (6) עיין ש"ע תרצ"ב ס"א
 עיין רמ"א ס"ס תר"צ בשם ב"י ועיין כף החיים שם ס"ק קכ"ד (7) כף החיים תרצ"ב ס"ק ד',
 (8) כף החיים תרצ"ב ס"ק ה' ועיין שם מה שהביא בשם בן איש חי (9) ש"ע תרצ"ב ס"ג
 עיין יביע אומר ח"א ס' מ"ד שגשים מברכות (10) עיין כף החיים שם ס"ק כ"ה



9. After the reading of the *Megillah*, the *Megillah* is rolled and the *baal koreh* then recites the *beracha* of הרב את ריבנו. This *berachah* is recited only in the presence of a *minyan*; nevertheless, one reading without a *minyan* should recite the *berachah* without Hashem's Name nor the clause, "Elokenu Melech ha'olam."¹¹ When the *Megillah* is read only for women, even when ten women are present, it is questionable whether or not this *berachah* should be recited.¹²

10. After the *beracha* of the *Megillah* is recited, the custom is to say:

ארור המן, ברוך מרדכי, ארורה זרש, ברוכה אסתר, ארורם כל הרשעים,
ברוכים כל ישראל, וגם חרבונה זכור לטוב:

The Reading of the Megillah

11. Out of a sense of honor and respect for the congregation, the *baal koreh* should stand while reciting the *berachot* and reading the *Megillah*. One who reads alone, however, may recite the *berachot* and read the *Megillah* seated.¹³

12. The custom is that the *baal koreh* unroll the *Megillah* and fold it up like a letter before reciting the *berachot*. One reading the *Megillah* without a *minyan* should do the same. The *baal koreh* should not make the *beracha* הרב את ריבנו until the *Megillah* has been completely rolled.¹⁴

(11) ש"ע תרצ"ב ס"א ברמ"א בשם ב"י ועיין כף החיים תר"צ ס"ק קכ"ד ועיין יביע אומר ח"ח ס' ג"ו (12) עיין רמ"א תרצ"ה ס"א שהביא בשם ב"י דצריך ציבור. ועיין יביע אומר ח"ח ס' ג"ו שצריך ציבור רק משום פירסומי ניסא. וכשיש עשרה אנשים יש פירסומי ניסא ובספר מקראי קודש (מרב פ' פראנק) חולק וסובר שהדין ציבור הוא משום דבעי מגין ונשים לא מצטרפין למגין הגם שחייבת באותו דבר. והביא ראיה מר"א ששחרר עבדו לשמוע במגין פרשת זכור, והגם שעבד בלא"ה חייב לשמוע פרשת זכור כמו נשים (לקצת הפוסקים) אפילו הכי אין מצטרפות למגין ע"ש. (13) ש"ע תר"צ ס"א כף החיים שם ס"ק ג' (14) ש"ע תר"צ סע' י"ז עיין כף החיים שם ס' ק"ד. אבל מנהג ארם צובא לעשות כמו דעת מרן. שבשעת הקריאה יפשוט כאגרת ולא קודם. כן הוא בספר דרך אר"ץ.



13. The *Megillah* must be read from a properly written, parchment *Megillah*. The person reading the *Megillah* must have in mind to be *motzi* (fulfill the obligation on behalf of) those listening to the *Megillah*. The listeners themselves must also have in mind to fulfill their obligation through hearing the *Megillah*. They then fulfill their obligation through the principle of “*shome’a ke’oneh*,” that a listener can be considered as having personally read.¹⁵
14. One must be careful to hear¹⁶ every word of the *Megillah*. Therefore, the *baal koreh* should pronounce each word carefully and the congregation may not speak at all throughout the entire reading. In places where noise is made upon the reading of Haman’s name, the *baal koreh* should wait until the noise subsides and then repeat the word Haman to ensure that no one misses any word. If even a single word was not heard, he has not fulfilled his obligation of hearing the *Megillah*.
15. Each person should have at least a printed *Megillah* in front of him so that if he misses any words, he can read them from the printed *Megillah*. Someone who is following in a printed *Megillah* should not read along aloud, but rather listen silently.¹⁵ If he misses a word, he should read that word to himself and then continue reading until he catches up to the *baal koreh*. However, one may not read more than half the *Megillah* from a text other than a proper *Megillah* written on parchment.¹⁷
16. A person reading the *Megillah* for himself should be careful to read the words loud enough so that he hears his reading.¹⁸
17. The custom is that the entire congregation says the five verses of redemption out loud.¹⁹ The *baal koreh* then repeats the verses after the congregation. The verses are: *איש יהודי* (chapt. 2 v. 5), *ההוא* בלילה (chapt. 6 v. 1), *ומרדכי יצא* (chapt. 8 v. 15), *ליהודים היתה* (chapt. 8 v. 16), and the last verse *כי מרדכי* (chapt. 10 v. 3).¹⁹ Those

(15) שם ס"ד ועיין מ"ב (16) ש"ע תר"צ ס"ג ועיין מ"ב

(17) עיין ש"ע תר"צ ס' ג' ועיין בבה"ל דוקא

(18) עיין שער הציון תרפ"ט אות ז' (19) עיין ספר דרך אר"ץ



who do not have a proper *Megillah* in front of them must ensure to hear the *baal koreh's* repetition of these verses.

18. The *baal koreh* should say the names of the ten sons of Haman and the word עשרת that follows their names in one breath, commemorating their having been executed and hung all together. It is preferable to also say the three words חמש מאות איש before their names in the same breath. However, if he did not say any of the above in one breath, he and the listeners have nonetheless fulfilled the obligation of reading the *Megillah*.²¹
19. Some have the custom when reading chapter 8 v. 11 to first read the words להשמיד ולהרג and then repeat and read ולהרג ולהשמיד. In chapter 9 v. 2 they read בפניהם and then read the word as לפניהם. This is done because there is a question as to which is the proper version.

However, the custom of Hacham Rahamim Churba-Cohen *zt"l* was not to follow this practice. He just read “ולהרג” with the preceding letter “vav,” and “בפניהם” without repeating “לפניהם.”
20. One must make an effort to hear the *Megillah* together with a *minyan*, and preferably “*berov am*,” in the presence of a large congregation. If, however, one will encounter unavoidable disturbances in the synagogue - such as noise - that will prevent him from hearing the *Megillah* properly, he may read the *Megillah* in a smaller *minyan*. If one cannot even read with a *minyan*, may do so without a *minyan*.²²
21. One who hears the *Megillah* reading on a tape or radio does not fulfill his obligation, even if he hears a live broadcast. If one hears the *Megillah* over an amplifying system, he does not fulfill his obligation if he could not have heard the reading without the assistance of the sound amplification.²³

(20) ש"ע תר"צ ס' ט"ז ברמ"א (21) שם סימן ט"ו ברמ"א
(22) שם סימן י"ח (23) ילקוט יוסף שם ט"ק י' וסי"ק י"א



✧ Eating Before the Megillah

22. Both at night and during the day after *shaharit*, one may not eat or sleep before reading the *Megillah*, as he may forget to read thereafter. This applies equally to women and men. Despite the leniency practiced in this regard when it comes to *shema*, that we allow eating before reciting *shema*, the *halachah* nevertheless forbids eating before *Megillah* reading due to its stringent obligation, evidenced by the fact that it overrides all other *mitzvot*. We are therefore lenient only when very necessary.²⁴ Namely, someone who experiences great difficulty refraining from eating before hearing the *Megillah* may be lenient with regard to the consumption of fruits or vegetables, even in an amount exceeding two oz., or cake and bread less than two ounces.

(24) עיין רמ"א תרצ"ה ס"ק ד' ועיין מ"א



☞ PURIM EVE AND DAY

🌸 Laws of Al Hanissim

1. On *Purim* eve, one should go to the synagogue in *Shabbat* clothes.¹
2. Before *arbit*, some say the psalm השחר על אילת המנצח (*Tehillim* chapter 22), which refers to *Purim*.²
3. a. On *Purim*, the paragraph of *Al Hanissim* is added to the *Amidah* prayer and *Birkat Hamazon*. If it is forgotten, one **should not** go back to repeat it.³
b. If one forgot to recite *Al Hanissim* and catches his mistake before reaching *Hashem's* Name at the conclusion of the *berachah*, he should go back to *Al Hanissim* and continue from there.
c. If, however, he already said *Hashem's* Name at the conclusion of the *berachah*, he must complete the blessing.
d. He may not complete the blessing he began with the words “*lamedeni hukecha*.” Generally, one who errs while reciting a given *berachah* should add the words “*lamedeni hukecha*” in order to be considered as having recited a complete verse (that of *Tehillim* 119:12), thus avoiding a situation of a wasteful utterance of *Hashem's* Name. In this case, however, he may not do so. Instead, he just finishes the *berachah*.⁴
4. If one mistakenly omitted *Al Hanissim* but remembered before the conclusion of the *Amidah*, he may insert it in the form of a request at the end of the *Elokai netzor* paragraph, just before the words, “*Yihiyu leratzon...*,” using the text of the *ha'rahaman* prayer cited

(1) תרצה מ"ב ס"ק ג'. (2) דרך אר"ן. (3) ש"ע תרצ"ג סעיף ב'.

(4) יחזה דעת ח"ה סימן מ"ט.



below.

5. One who forgot to add *Al Hanissim* in *Birkat HaMazon* continues until the series of *harahaman* prayers recited in the honor of the festivals. There he recites the following text: הרחמך הוא יעשה לנו נסים ונפלאות כשם שעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה בימי מרדכי ואסתר (בימי מרדכי ואסתר).³
6. One may not skip *Al Hanissim* in order to conclude the *Amidah* in time to answer to *Kaddish* or *Kedushah* with the congregation.⁵

✿ Procedure of Tefillot on Purim

7. After the *Amidah*, half *Kaddish* is recited. *Kaddish Titkabal* is not said until after קדושה וסדר קדוש ואתה that is recited after the reading of the *Megillah*.⁶
8. After the *berachot* following the reading of the *Megillah*, the *arbit* service resumes. We say קדושה וסדר קדוש ואתה (the prayer *U'ba Lesiyon* beginning from the third verse), followed by the *Hazan's* recitation of "*Kaddish Titkabal*." Thereafter, the *psalm* שיר למעלות (Tehillim chapter 121), *Kaddish* שלמא יהא עלינו and יהא עלינו are recited. Some have the practice to recite the psalm, "שיר המעלות" instead of "שיר למעלות אשא עיני" ⁷
9. When Purim falls on *motzaei Shabbat* (Saturday night), after the *Amidah* half *Kaddish* is recited, followed by ה' עד מתי שובה (Tehillim chapter 90, verse 13-17 and chapter 91) until the point where "*V'Atah kadosh*" is normally said. The *Megillah* is then read and the service continues as on a normal *Purim* eve.
10. In such a situation, the blessing *Borei Me'orei Ha'esh* is recited over fire before the *Megillah* is read. If the congregation failed to do so before beginning to read the *Megillah* and they remembered in the

(5) יהוה דעת ח"א ס' ע"ו. (6) עיין כף החיים תרצ"ג ס"ק א' ועיין דרך אר"ץ.
(7) עיין דרך אר"ץ



middle of the reading, the *baal koreh* should stop between chapters for the recitation of the *berachah*. The *baal koreh* then resumes the reading of the *Megillah*.⁸

Havdalah is recited after *arbit*.

11. In the morning prayers, after *hazarat ha'shatz*, half *Kaddish* is recited, followed by *Torah* reading and another half *Kaddish*. The service then continues with *Ashre* and *U'ba Lesiyon* until “*Ve'Atah Kadosh*.” Thereafter, the *Megillah* is read.

(8) עיין ילקוט יוסף דיני ליל פורים ס”ק י”ב, י”ג



❧ CHAPTER 4 ❧

HALACHOT OF MATANOT LA'EVYONIM AND MAHATZIT HASHEKEL



☞ MATANOT LA'EVYONIM

1. After *Benei Yisrael's* military victory over their enemies, they accepted upon themselves the annual observance of the fourteenth of *Adar* as a day of “festivity and joy, sending parcels each person to his fellow, and gifts to the poor” (chapter 9:22). From here *Hazal* derived the obligation of “*matanot la'evyonim*,” presenting gifts to poor people on *Purim* day. This obligation requires one to give at least a single gift to two poor people (one gift to each).¹

One must give *matanot la'evyonim* during the day; the obligation cannot be fulfilled by giving at night.²

The gift must consist of something from which the recipient can benefit on *Purim* - either food or money that he can spend on *Purim*.³

However, all this relates only to the strict letter of the law. In truth, it is far preferable to increase one's gifts to the poor on *Purim*, rather than *mishloah manot*, for there is no greater joy than bringing happiness to the hearts of the underprivileged. Helping the poor rejoice by providing them with food renders one comparable to the *Shechinah*.⁴

2. One should have in mind to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *matanot la'evyonim* when he gives his gifts to the poor.⁵
3. One may not fulfill his obligation of *matanot la'evyonim* from *ma'aser* money (a tenth of one's earnings that some set aside to give to charity). However, if he gives to more than two poor people, he may give the extra from *ma'ot ma'aser*.⁶

(1) ש"ע תרצ"ד ס"א. (2) ש"ע תרצ"ה מ"ב ס"ק כ"ב (3) תרצ"ה מ"ב ס"ק ב'.
(4) שם מ"ב ס"ק ג' בשם הרמב"ם (5) מ"ב תרצ"ה ס"ק ד' (6) שם מ"ב ס"ק ג' בשם מ"א.



4. A poor person supported by charity should also give *matanot la'evyonim*.⁷
5. Women are included in the obligation of *matanot la'evyonim*.⁸ A child over the age of *bar mitzvah* should give *matanot la'evyonim*, even if he is still supported by his parents. Furthermore, youngsters even under *bar mitzvah* age should be educated with regard to this obligation and trained accordingly.⁹
6. If a person had in mind to distribute a certain amount of money to the poor on *Purim* and earmarked the money for this purpose, he should not give it to any other charitable cause.¹⁰
7. We do not scrutinize those to whom we give money on *Purim*: we give to whoever asks for it. However, one fulfills his obligation of *matanot la'evyonim* only by giving to a poor person.¹¹
8. A person is considered poor if he does not have a regular income that covers the normal expenses of his family. Someone who has a regular income that covers his normal expenses but encountered special expenses, such as medical fees, which he cannot afford, is also considered poor and hence eligible for *matanot la'evyonim*.¹²
9. One can fulfill his obligation by sending *matanot la'evyonim* to a poor person in Jerusalem, who observes *Purim* on the fifteenth of *Adar*, providing that the money is received on the fourteenth but will not be used until the fifteenth.¹³
10. Many *halachic* authorities rule that one can fulfill his obligation by sending *matanot la'evyonim* via a messenger or through the mail before *Purim* if the poor person receives it on *Purim*.¹⁴

(7) מ"ב שם ס"ק א'. (8) שם. (9) ערוך השולחן תרצ"ד ס"ב. (10) ש"ע תרצ"ד ס"ב עיין מ"ב (11) שם סעיף ג'. (12) עיין ספר דרך אמונה פ"ט ה"ג מה נקרא עני. (13) עיין תורת המועדים של פורים ס"ו ס"ק ר. (14) עיין כף החיים תרצ"ד ס"ק ס"ו בשם מ"א.



MAHATZIT HASHEKEL

1. We have the *minhag* (custom) of collecting money for *zecher lamahatzit hashekel* before the reading of the *Megillah*. In the time of the *Bet Hamikdash* (Temple), a half-*shekel* (half of a silver coin) was collected from each individual during the month of *Adar* and used for the purchase of communal sacrifices (*korbanot tzibur*). In commemoration of this *mitzvah* that was observed during the time of the *Bet Mikdash*, the custom evolved to give a half-*shekel* nowadays, as well. However, whereas this *mitzvah* does not apply in the absence of the *Bet Mikdash*, one should say that the money is being given as a commemoration (*zecher*) of the *mahatzit hashekel*, rather than referring to his donation as for the actual *mahatzit hashekel* itself.¹
2. The “*shekel*” (which was a unit of currency of that time) mentioned in the *Torah* consisted of 20 grams of silver. Thus, the *mitzvah* of giving a half-*shekel* required a donation of 10 grams of silver. During the times of the *Bet Hamikdash*, people gave half of the unit of currency of that time, but that amount had to consist of at least 10 grams of silver.²

Therefore, when commemorating this *mitzvah* today, one should optimally give one-half of our unit of currency - the dollar. Now half a dollar is 50 cents, which does not contain 10 grams of silver. Therefore, the custom is to use a silver half-dollar, which contains a bit more than 10 grams of silver (12.6 grams; the silver coin costs approximately \$3.00).

One who does not have access to this coin can give the value of a coin containing 10 grams of silver.³

(1) ש"ע תרצ"ד ס"א ברמ"א ועיין ילקוט יוסף דיני ליל פורים ס"ק ה'.
(2) עיין רמב"ם הלכות שקלים פ"א הלכה ה'. (3) כף החיים תרצ"ד ס"ק כ'.



3. This obligation applies to men over the age of twenty, though others begin observing this *mitzvah* already from the age of *bar mitzvah*. Some have the practice of having even younger children perform this *mitzvah*. One giving on behalf of children under the age of *bar mitzvah* should say, “*beli neder*” (“without the acceptance of a vow”) so that he will not be bound by this practice the following years.⁴
4. Some people have the custom of giving three half-*shekalim* marking the three times the clause, “*terumah l’Hashem*” (“a donation to Hashem”) appears in the *Torah*.⁵
5. One who cannot afford to give on behalf of his entire family or three half-*shekels* can give half of our unit of currency - 50 cents.⁶
6. The money given for *zecher la’mahatzit hashekel* should be donated to *yeshivot* and *Torah* institutions.⁷
7. Those who set aside one-tenth of their earnings for *ma’aser* money (a tithe for charity) may not use that money for the *zecher l’mahatzit hashekel* or *matanot la’evyonim*. However, one who wishes to give more than the required sum for either of these *mitzvot* may give the additional amount from *ma’aser* money.⁸

(4) מ"ב שם ס"ק ה'. (5) עיין רמ"א שם ועיין כף החיים כ"ג.

(6) כף החיים תרצ"ד ס"ק כ'. (7) ילקוט יוסף שם ס"ק ט'.

(8) עיין מ"ב שם ס"ק ג' ועיין יהוה דעת ח"א סימן פ"ט.



☞ LAWS OF MISHLOAH MANOT

1. One is obligated on *Purim* to send someone portions of food, as it is written in the *Megillah* (chapter 9:19), ומשלוח מנות איש לרעהו. One reason given for this *mitzvah* is to promote friendship and love. By sending presents to his friend, one shows his love and companionship towards that individual. Another reason is that there are people who do not have the means to prepare a proper *Seudah* (meal) for *Purim* and are ashamed to accept presents from others. By instituting a *mitzvah* to send food one to another, including to the rich, those in need will be provided for in an honorable manner without embarrassment.¹
2. One must send one parcel consisting of two different types of food to one other person.²
3. Some authorities maintain that the food must be cooked and ready to eat. Others, however, argue and hold that one fulfills his obligation so long as the food items are ready to be cooked.³
4. One fulfills his obligation by sending only food or beverages. One cannot fulfill his obligation by sending other types of gifts.³
5. If one sends a portion of food and a portion of beverage, he fulfills his obligation. One can also fulfill his obligation by sending two types of beverages. However, it is preferable to send two types of food.⁴
6. The two food items should be two separate types of food. If one sends two portions of the same food, even in separate plates, he does not fulfill his requirement. However, if he sends two different cuts of meat that have different tastes and qualities, he fulfills his obligation.⁵
7. The portions should be worthy of being served to honored guests.⁶

(1) ש"ע תרצ"ה ס"ד (2) ש"ע שם. (3) מ"ב שם י"ט

(4) חכם עובדיה שליט"א בקובץ "קול סיני" והובא בספר תורת המועדים ס"ט ס"ק ו'

(5) עיין ערוך השולחן שם ס"ק י"ד. (6) ערוך השולחן ס"ט ס"ו.



When sending to a wealthy recipient, it is proper to send portions considered respectable by someone of the recipient's status.⁷

8. It is preferable to send both food items at the same time.⁸
9. Some say that the two foods should be placed in separate utensils.⁹
10. It is praiseworthy to send *mishloah manot* to many friends, as doing so promotes friendship among Jews. Nevertheless, one who sent proper *mishloah manot* to one friend need not be stringent regarding the standards of any subsequent *mishloah manot* that he sends.¹⁰
11. It is preferable to spend extra - according to one's means - for *matanot la'evyonim* (gifts to the poor) rather than for the *Seudah* or *mishloah manot*, as there is no greater joy than bringing happiness to the hearts of the poor, orphans and widows.¹¹
12. It is customary to send sweets for *mishloah manot*.¹²
13. Some authorities maintain that if one sends *mishloah manot* anonymously, he does not fulfill his obligation.¹³
14. One must send *mishloah manot* during the day; the obligation cannot be fulfilled by sending them at night.¹⁴
15. Women are obligated in this *mitzvah* of *mishloah manot* and should send to a friend. Men should not send to women, nor women to men.¹⁵
16. Children who are still supported by their parents are obligated to send *mishloah manot* from the age of *bat* or *bar mitzvah*. Even younger children should be educated to send *mishloah manot* to their friends, as well.¹⁶
17. A person supported by charity is nevertheless obligated to send *mishloah manot*.¹⁷
18. It is questionable if one fulfills his obligation by sending *mishloah manot* to a child who has not reached the age of *bar mitzvah*.¹⁸

(7) בבה"ל שם ד"ה חייב. (8) ילקוט יוסף שם ס"ק ט'.

(9) בן איש חי ס"ק ט"ו. (10) ש"ע תרצ"ה ס"ד עיין ילקוט יוסף שם ס"ק י'.

(11) עיין מ"ב תרצ"ד ס"ק ג'. (12) כף החיים שם ס"ק מ"ח.

(13) ילקוט יוסף שם ס"ק י"ג. (14) תרצ"ה ס"ד עיין רמ"א. (15) רמ"א תרצ"ה ס"ד.

(16) ילקוט יוסף שם ס"ו. (17) עיין ש"ע תרצ"ה ס"ד.

(18) עיין ערוך השולחן (ס"ק י"ח) שכן יוצא ובבן איש חי פרשת תצוה ס"ק ט"ז חולק.



SEUDAT PURIM

1. Everyone - men, women and children - is obligated to eat a *seudah* (festive meal) on *Purim*. The *seudah* must be eaten during the day.¹
2. One should eat meat and drink wine and prepare a festive meal according to his means. One should eat bread during the *seudah*, as some authorities maintain that one does not fulfill his obligation without eating bread. Similarly, whereas some authorities hold that one does not fulfill his obligation by eating fish or poultry, one should ensure to eat meat at the *Purim seudah*.²
3. It is proper to learn *Torah* at the beginning of the *seudah*.³
4. It is customary to eat the *seudah* specifically in the afternoon after *Minhah*, since in the morning people are busy with *mishloach manot*. Additionally, we want to ensure to recite *Minhah* before becoming intoxicated. Although the meal may extend into the nighttime, at least most of it should be eaten during the day.³
5. One should gather his family and friends for the *seudah*, since a person cannot truly rejoice alone.⁴
6. During the meal one should have in mind to fulfill his obligation of eating *seudat Purim*.⁵
7. At the *seudah*, one should give praise to *Hashem* and recall the miracles and wonders He has performed for us.⁶
8. There is a *mitzvah* to drink wine on *Purim*. Many halachic authorities say that this obligation does not require one to get drunk;

(1) ש"ע תרצ"ה ס"ק א'. (2) ילקוט יוסף הלכות סעודת פורים ס"ק ב'. (3) דמ"א שם ס"ק ב'
(4) מ"ב שם ס"ק ט'. (5) מ"ב שם ס"ק ד'. (6) עיין בבה"ל שם ד"ה עד



he should rather drink more than usual and go to sleep. One should be careful on Purim that his drinking does not result in laxity in any *mitzvot* such as *Birkat HaMazon* or praying, or in unbecoming behavior.⁷

9. Men are not allowed to wear women's clothing, nor women men's clothes, even on *Purim*. Similarly, it is not proper for children to dress in the above manner. However, if only one garment is changed from a man to a woman or vice versa, but all the other garments are worn regularly, there is room for leniency. Nevertheless, one who conducts himself stringently even in this regard is worthy of blessing.⁸
10. One must be careful not to ridicule or embarrass people on *Purim*. One must also be careful not to make fun of words of *Torah*.⁸
11. If *Purim* falls on Friday, one should preferably eat the *Purim seudah* in the morning so as to ensure an appetite for the *Shabbat* meal. If he did not eat the *seudah* in the morning, he must start the *seudah* before the tenth hour (approximately three hours before sunset).⁹

(7) עיין ש"ע תרצ"ה ס"ב ועיין רמ"א ועיין משנה ברורה.

(8) עיין ילקוט יוסף שם ס"ק ט"ו, ט"ז, י"ז (9) עיין רמ"א שם ס"ק ב'



SECTION 11

THE STORY OF PURIM



CHAPTER 1

Background History

The story of Purim occurred in the year 3404 (357 BCE), sixty-six years after the destruction of the first Bet Hamikdash. At the time of the story, the Jewish people were in exile under the reign of Abashverosh, the King of Persia and Media. To fully appreciate the story of Purim and the subsequent miracle, it is worthwhile to review the history of the times.



Babylonian Empire.

Almost one hundred years before the story of Purim (3319, 442 BCE), Nebuchadnezzar overthrew the King of Assyria and conquered Babylon. *Hashem* bestowed him with immense power, and he conquered one country after another, becoming a world power. One year later (3320, 441 BCE), he conquered Jerusalem. From then on, Israel was a vassal state of the

In the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (3327, 434 BCE), he exiled the Jewish King Yehoyachin to Babylon, after he rebelled against the Babylonian rule.¹ He also exiled the elite of the Jewish nation, including all government officials, ten thousand warriors, as well as Mordechai, Daniel and the Prophet Yehezkel. Nebuchadnezzar plundered the *Bet Hamikdash* and the royal palaces and carried the

1. *Megillah, 11b*



treasures into captivity.² This was the first group to be led into exile by Nebuchadnezzar.

He then appointed Sidkiyahu as the new King of Jerusalem. Nine years later (3336, 425 BCE), Sidkiyahu rebelled against Babylonian rule. Nebuchadnezzar acted swiftly, and immediately sent troops to besiege Jerusalem. The siege lasted two years, during which the Jews suffered immensely from hunger and disease. On the Ninth day of *Ab* in the year 3338 (423 BCE) Nebuchadnezzar set fire to the Holy Temple and exiled the Jewish nation to Babylon.³

The Jewish people suffered under the rule of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar for the next twenty-six years, until his death in 3364 (397 BCE). The Jewish people had some reprieve under the rule of Evil Merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled for the next 23 years. After his death, his son, Belshazzar became king. Belshazzar was evil like his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. In the third year of his reign, Darius I of Media, and his son-in-law Coresh (Cyrus) of Persia joined forces and overthrew the Babylonians (3389, 372 BCE), thus ending the Babylonian Empire.⁴ (See Chapter II for further details.)

Darius I became the King of the Empire, but was killed in battle after ruling for just one and a half years. Coresh then became king. After his death three years later (3392, 369 BCE), Ahashverosh, who was not of royal descent, paid his way to become king. The Jewish people suffered under his rule, reminiscent of the years under Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The Prophet describes those years as follows:

“When a man flees from a lion (reference to Nebuchadnezzar) and a bear encounters him (reference to Belshazzar), and he comes home, leans on the wall and a snake bites him (reference to Haman).” (Amos 5:19)⁵

2. *Kings II, 24*

3. *Kings II, 25*

4. *Megillah, 11b*

5. *Introduction to Midrash Esther, 5*



CHAPTER 11

The Downfall of Babylonian Empire

In the year 3389 (372 BCE), the Babylonian Empire was defeated by King Darius I of Media and his son-in-law Coresh of Persia. The details of how and why Hashem orchestrated the downfall of the mighty Babylonian Empire are discussed in this chapter.

The Kingdom of Persia began under Babylonian command under the rule of King Istrogis. Istrogis had one child, a daughter, who was heiress to the entire kingdom. This princess lived with one of the king's officers and became pregnant. When the king found out about this, he was furious. He ordered his officer killed, and locked his daughter in prison. When the princess bore a son, the king commanded her not to raise him; rather, he instructed that the baby be abandoned atop a mountain and left to starve. The baby escaped certain death on the mountain because *Hashem* sent a dog to raise the child. The child was called Coresh, "dog," in Persian, after the dogs who raised him.

In the mountains, Coresh acquired many followers, who unanimously appointed him as their general. When Istrogis heard that his illegitimate grandson was still alive and had a following, he sent an army to kill Coresh. Coresh's men overcame his grandfather's army and defeated them. Coresh then proceeded to Persia, where he killed Istrogis his grandfather and all the king's advisors, thus claiming the throne.



When Darius I, King of Media, heard about the conquest of Persia, he was enamored by the greatness of Coresh and subsequently asked Coresh to marry his daughter, the princess of Media. After Coresh married Darius' daughter, the two kings conspired together against Babylon. They said to each other, "Since we are both kings, why should we be under the dominion of the Babylonian Empire? Let us join forces and conquer Belshazzar."¹

It was in the year 3388 (373 BCE), the seventieth year of Babylonian rule, that Belshazzar heard that Persia and Media had joined forces. Belshazzar was overcome with fear. He saw this as a threat to his Kingdom, as the Prophet Jeremiah had predicted seven years before the destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*. Jeremiah had prophesied that Babylon would only have jurisdiction over the Jewish people for seventy years. After seventy years in exile, the Jews would return to Israel. He stated:

"So said Hashem: I will remember you after you complete seventy years in Babylonia. And I will bring to fruition my good words to return you to this place." (Jeremiah 29:10)

And:

"... After the completion of seventy years from the destruction of Jerusalem." (Daniel 9:2)

Belshazzar understood this prophesy to mean that the Babylonian Empire would cease to have dominion over the Jews after seventy years.

Persia and Media invaded Babylon. The battle was fierce, but the Babylonians succeeded in thwarting the attack. That night Belshazzar entered the third year of his rule, which completed the seventy years of the reign of the Babylonian Empire.² Belshazzar threw a party to celebrate his successful battle, but even more, to celebrate that his

1. *Meam Loez on Esther, Meam Loez on Isaiah, quoting Abarbanel*

2. *Yalkut Shimoni, Isaiah 21*



Kingdom was secure from the prophesy of Jeremiah. (It was the year 3389, seventy years from the beginning of Babylonian dominion in 3319.) Now Belshazzar would not have to free the Jews nor allow them to rebuild their Holy Temple.³

However, Belshazzar was mistaken. The seventy year count did not start from the first year of Babylonian Empire; rather, it began from when the Babylonian's began their dominion over Israel, which was one year later in 3320.⁴ In addition, he erred in that the prophesy did not indicate the rebuilding of the *Bet Hamikdash* after seventy years. It was only to be a partial redemption after seventy years. As it states: "*So said Hashem: I will remember you after you complete seventy years in Babylonia.*" (*Jeremiah 29:10*) This refers only to a partial redemption. The *Bet Hamikdash* would be rebuilt only after seventy years from the destruction of the First *Bet Hamikdash*. As it states: "... *After the completion of seventy years from the destruction of Jerusalem.*" (*Daniel 9:2*)⁴

The banquet Belshazzar hosted after thwarting the attack was an extravagant affair for his one thousand officers and their wives. The king consumed too much wine at the feast, and in his drunken condition, he was emboldened to take out the utensils of the *Bet Hamikdash*, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought to Babylon following the destruction of the Holy Temple. He then began to drink from the holy vessels in order to prove that the *Bet Hamikdash* would never be rebuilt, and therefore he was not afraid to desecrate the holy vessels. He continued to profane the Al-mighty *Hashem* by announcing that his gods of silver, gold, copper and stone waged war with and conquer *Hashem*. The guests followed the king's example, and they too, drank from the holy utensils, while behaving in a lewd manner with the female guests.

Hashem's wrath was kindled by the sinners, and He sent a hand down from heaven to warn them of their impending doom. To everyone's amazement, the single, unembodied hand began to write a

3. *Daniel 5:1, Rashi, quoting from Josephus. Refer to Megillah 11b*

4. *Megillah 12a*



cryptic message on the wall of the banquet hall. The message was as follows:

מ מ ת ו ס
נ נ ק פ י
א א ל ר ו

Belshazzar went into shock as he witnessed the heavenly message being inscribed. He knew it portended evil, but was unable to decipher the cryptic message written in a foreign language (Aramaic, with Hebrew letters). He announced, “Anyone able to decode this message, will be clothed in regal robes, be given a golden royal medallion to wear around his neck, and be given control of one-third of the kingdom.”

The king’s sorcerers and wise men attempted to decipher the message, but none were able to read the writing, let alone understand it. Their wisdom was rooted in impurity, while this message was a heavenly one, written with extreme purity.

Belshazzar grew impatient. The queen suggested, “My master, the king, do not fear. There is a man in the kingdom on whom the divine spirit rests. He has the knowledge to interpret dreams and explain proverbs. Your grandfather Nebuchadnezzar promoted him to be the head of his wise men. His name is Daniel. Call him here to explain the writing.”

Daniel was immediately summoned. He told Belshazzar the following:

“My master, the king, you know that the Al-mighty Lord gave to your grandfather Nebuchadnezzar greatness, honor and wealth, so that the whole world feared him. Nebuchadnezzar became arrogant and stubborn in his wickedness and rebelled against the holy *Hashem*. He took credit for his own greatness instead of attributing it to Hashem.

“As a punishment, *Hashem* had Nebuchadnezzar dethroned by casting a spell of insanity upon him. He began to think he was an animal, and he left the palace to live in the forest with the animals. He would eat grass and other foods the animals ate. He went around naked,



and his hair and nails grew long so that he even looked like an animal. At last, Nebuchadnezzar recognized the Al-mighty as the Source of knowledge, common sense and greatness to mankind.

“Now, Belshazzar, you did not learn from your grandfather’s experience. You, too, have come to think that you are greater than *Hashem*. You defiled the utensils of the Bet Hamikdash, denied the G-dliness of the Lord and you worshiped gods of gold and silver. Therefore, the anger of *Hashem* has been ignited and He sent down this hand to warn you that tonight is the last night of your reign.”

Reading the message from top to bottom, Daniel explained: *Mene mene tekel u'pharsin* [מנא מנא תקל ופרסין] (*Daniel 5*).

מנא מנא - *Mene, mene*- “counted”: *Hashem* has counted the years of the Babylonian Empire and decided that they have been completed. He decreed that the kingdom come to an end.

תקל - *Tekel*- “weighed”: *Hashem* weighed the merits of the Babylonians against their misdeeds, and found the bad deeds outnumbered the good ones because of the desecration of the holy vessels of the Bet Hamikdash.

ופרסין - *U'pharsin*- “broken up”: Consequently, *Hashem* pronounced that the Babylonian Empire would be broken up.⁵

As he had promised, Belshazzar commanded that Daniel be given one third of his empire, clothed in royal robes, and given a golden chain around his neck. At the same time, Belshazzar was terror-stricken. In his fear that rebels would enter the palace to kill him, he commanded that the entrance to the palace be barred to absolutely everyone, without exception. To strengthen his point, Belshazzar went to the extent to instruct his guards that even if the person attempting to gain access to the palace claims that he is king, he is not to be allowed entry.

That night, Belshazzar awoke from his fitful sleep with an urgent need to relieve himself. He unobtrusively left the palace for that purpose. When he wished to reenter his palace, his guards did not recognize him in the dark, and as per the king’s strict instructions, they

5. *Daniel 5, see commentators*



did not allow him in. Belshazzar demanded, "Let me in, I am the king!" Hearing this, the guards thought that he was certainly an imposter and they beheaded him.

One of the elderly officers realized that it was Belshazzar they had killed. He had believed in Daniel and felt that this was a fulfillment of the writing on the wall. The officer reasoned that once Coresh and Darius would learn of Belshazzar's death, they would come to conquer Babylon and kill all of Belshazzar's deputies, including himself. But, the officer thought, if I could prove my loyalty to Coresh, he will spare my life. He therefore carried Belshazzar's head directly to Coresh and Darius⁶.

They immediately regathered their armies and marched to Babylon, stormed the palace, killed all the officers and victoriously conquered the Babylonian Empire. Thus, Jeremiah's prophecy had been fulfilled.

"This entire land shall lay in ruin and desolation, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years. Upon completion of seventy, I shall make an account of their sin for the kind of Babylon and for that nation -- the word of Hashem -- and for the land of the Chaldeans: and I shall make it into external desolation. For thus said Hashem, G-d of Israel, to me: 'Take this cup of the wine of wrath from my hand and make all the nations to whom I shall send you drink from it.'" (Jeremiah 25:11-12,15)

That night, twelve-year-old Vashti was asleep in her royal chambers. When she awoke, she ran to the throne room and fell before the feet of Darius, thinking he was her father. Darius saw her, took pity on the young girl, and spared her life.

Suddenly the new ruler of the Babylonians, Darius realized what an incredible miracle *Hashem* had performed: the Lord Himself had

6. Meam Loez, pgs 4-5



killed Belshazzar. Darius clearly saw that Belshazzar was punished because he had desecrated the holy utensils of the *Bet Hamikdash*. At that moment, Darius swore that he would begin the restoration of the *Bet Hamikdash* and return the vessels of the Temple to the Jews. After his inauguration, Darius appointed Coresh to oversee much of the kingdom's affairs and commanded him to rebuild the *Bet Hamikdash* and return the holy utensils to their proper place. A year and a half later, Darius died, and Coresh was appointed as the new king.

In 3390 (371 BCE) over 40,000 Jews returned to *Eretz Yisrael* under the leadership of Zerubabel. The building of the *Bet Hamikdash* commenced as soon as they arrived in *Eretz Yisrael*, and Coresh agreed to fund the construction. Coresh had agreed to pay sixty thousand workers, and the foundation of the *Bet Hamikdash* was laid. This was in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy:

"So said Hashem: I will remember you after you complete seventy." (Jeremiah 29:10)

Now in the year 3390, it was seventy years from the beginning of the Babylonian exile in 3320. But this remembrance was only referring to a partial remembrance, because Ahashverosh withdrew his permission to rebuild the *Bet Hamikdash* two years later causing the construction to grind to a halt. Coresh died soon after, in the year 3392.

The beginning of the dominion of Persia and Media over Israel following the downfall of the Babylonian Empire, marked the entrance of Israel into the second era of their *galut* (exile) saga. Daniel dreamed that Israel would be subjected to four eras of *galuth* before the final redemption by the *Mashiah*. They are: 1) Babylonian Era 2) Persian-Median Era 3) Greek Era (during which time the Hanukkah story occurred), and 4) Roman Era⁷.

7. Daniel 7



CHAPTER III

The Rise of Ahashverosh

Ahashverosh became King of Persia and Media in 3392 (369 BCE) after the death of Coresh. He was not of royal lineage, and was originally a stable boy for Belshazzar. His rise to power is documented in this chapter.

The Book of Esther begins with the words: “*And it came to pass in the days of Ahashverosh*” (*Esther 1:1*). The verse does not call Ahashverosh “king,” indicating that he was really undeserving of the throne. Yet, the officials of Persia and Media appointed him king upon the death of Coresh because of his extreme affluence.¹

Ahashverosh, the stable boy in Belshazzar’s palace, came upon his vast riches when Heaven revealed to him the whereabouts of a sunken treasure. It came about as follows:

Nebuchadnezzar’s selfishness was such that he did not want others to enjoy the huge wealth he had amassed during his lifetime. His wealth came from his many conquests, especially from the destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash* and the subsequent exile of the Jewish people. Therefore, in his old age, Nebuchadnezzar had large copper boats built, and he filled the boats with the riches of his Empire. He then put the boats in the Euphrates River, where they sank under their incredible

1. Megillah, 12b



weight. *Hashem* directed Coresh to find this treasure, to allow him ample resources to fund the reconstruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*. When Coresh died, Ahashverosh took these treasures for himself.²

Ahashverosh was so rich and powerful, that at one point he conquered the entire inhabited world, as the scripture states: “*He ruled from Hodu to Cush.*” (*Esther 1:1*). Hodu and Cush are two cities in close proximity, indicating that Ahashverosh’s Kingdom began in Hodu and spanned east, around the world to Cush, encompassing the entire inhabited world.³ This made Ahashverosh one of the ten rulers who ruled over the entire world. The rulers are: Nimrod, Pharaoh, King of Egypt, David, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, Ahashverosh, The Greek Empire, the Roman Empire, Mashiah, and the Ruler of all Rulers, Hashem.⁴

As a ruler, Ahashverosh hated the Jews because Jeremiah’s prophecy predicted only seventy years until the Jews would return to Jerusalem to rebuild the *Bet Hamikdash*. In addition, the astrologers of Ahashverosh predicted that the successor to his throne would be a Jew. (He did not know that this referred to his son Darius II, who was a Jew, since he was the son of Esther, who was a Jewess.⁵) Due to his mistaken rationale, Ahashverosh placed extra hardships on the Jews and raised their taxes. This harshness is immediately apparent in the first word of the Book of Esther, “*Vayehi,*” which connotes a time of distress and oppression for the Jews.

In addition, his very name, Ahashverosh, is indicative of his wickedness. In reality, his name was Artachshashata, which was the generic name for king in the Persian Empire (similar to Pharaoh, as the generic term for an Egyptian king), yet the people preferred to call him Ahashverosh. The name Ahashverosh is composed of two words, “*ah,*” and “*rosh.*” The Jews would say, “*ah l’roshi,*” “woe to my head”—because of the biased decrees against them. Alternatively, these two words can be understood to mean that Ahashverosh was considered an

2. *Midrash, Agarada on Megillah*

3. *Meam Loez, pg. 3*

4. *Esther 1:1, Targum Sheni*

5. *Meam Loez, pg. 8*



“ah,” a brother of “rosh,” the leader, meaning Nebuchadnezzar. Ahashverosh was similar to Nebuchadnezzar in several ways: Both were born under the constellation of red, a sign of bloodshed; just as Nebuchadnezzar killed Jews and destroyed the *Bet Hamikdash*, so too, Ahashverosh sought to kill Jews and he foiled their plans for rebuilding the *Bet Hamikdash*.

Moreover, the name Ahashverosh can be understood to stem from the Hebrew word “*shahor*”, black, because he “blackened” the faces of the Jews due to the fasts they undertook to forestall his evil decrees. Additionally, the name Ahashverosh can be understood to stem from the Hebrew word “*rash*”, poor, as all the Jews became poor from the excessive taxes that he inflicted upon them.⁶ Indeed, the Talmud states that the Jewish people suffered more under the dominion of Persia than they did under Babylonian rule.⁷

Thus, the first verse in the Book of Esther sums up Ahashverosh’s rule, “*And it came to pass in the days of Ahashverosh, he is the Ahashverosh*”--Ahashverosh remained unchanged; wicked from beginning to end.

The above verse tells us the depth of Ahashverosh’s hatred for the Jews in order to emphasize the miracle of Purim. It is not, as one may assume, that Ahashverosh just agreed with Haman’s proposal to kill a non-productive nation in his kingdom, as it states, “*There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among your kingdom.*” (*Esther 3:8*) And then when Ahashverosh discovered it was the Jews whom Haman wished to destroy, he nullified the decree in deference to his queen, Esther. Rather, Ahashverosh knew all along that the edict was against the Jews, and he agreed to support it because of his extreme hatred of them.

In fact, Ahashverosh’s abhorrence of the Jews was deeper than that of Haman’s. He wished to destroy every last Jew, firstly, to protect himself from his astrologists’ prediction that a Jew would succeed him, and secondly, because he did not want to give up his dominion over the

6. *Megillah, 11a*

7. *Gittin, 17a*



Jews when their exile would end. However, he did not implement his hatred, as such irrational hatred did not befit his royal position. Yet when Haman suggested that the Jews be destroyed, Ahashverosh was overjoyed. His wish would be fulfilled without having to take responsibility for the decree. Therefore, when Esther requested the revocation of the edict, it was a tremendous miracle that Ahashverosh relinquished his hatred and nullified the decree.⁸

The Talmud compares the hatred of the Jews by Ahashverosh and Haman to two landowners who benefitted from each other. One landowner had a mound of dirt in his field, and the other had a huge ditch. The two landowners got together, and the one with the ditch filled it with his friend's dirt. In the same way, Ahashverosh abhorred the Jews, but was unable to implement his hatred. When Haman offered to kill the Jews, Ahashverosh was more than happy to be his agent to destroy the Jews.⁹

To summarize, the scripture emphasizes that Ahashverosh was wicked from beginning to end, because Ahashverosh himself--not just Haman--hated the Jews with an irrational hatred. The scripture, however, hides the king's cruelty out of respect for him.

These hardships came upon the Jewish people because of their lack of involvement in *Torah* study, and lax in their fulfillment of the *misvot*. They did not observe the Sabbath, with its proper laws, and they left their shops and businesses open.¹⁰ In punishment, *Hashem* allowed Ahashverosh to rule over the Jews against their will and impose hardships upon them. This is as is stated: "*Ahashverosh who ruled...*" (*Esther* 1:1) "who ruled"--against the will of the people.¹¹

One of the first decrees Ahashverosh imposed upon the Jewish people was to make a ban against the rebuilding of the *Bet Hamikdash*.

When Coresh had allowed the reconstruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*, the Keuthites (Samaritans) who inhabited *Eretz Yisrael* since Sennaherib had exiled the ten tribes in 3205 (556 BCE) expressed

a8. *Megillah*, 14a, *Meam Loez*, pgs. 7,8

9. *Megillah*, 14a

10. *Megillah*, 11a, *Esther* 1:2, *Midrash*

11. *Meam Loez*, pgs. 3



their desire to assist in the reconstruction. Their ulterior motive was to vilify the Jews to the Persian Emperor by claiming that the Jews were preparing to revolt and inevitably the king would rescind his permission to build the *Bet Hamikdash*. However, their offer to assist in the construction was refused since only Jews could build the *Bet Hamikdash*. Therefore, they wrote to the king that in addition to rebuilding their Temple, the Jews were also rebuilding the city walls in the hope to once again become a sovereign nation.

Under the rule of Ahashverosh, the Keuthites appealed to the king to make a ban against rebuilding the Bet Hamikdash. They sent a letter written by the son of Haman to Ahashverosh claiming that if they would be allowed to continue rebuilding their Temple, the Jews would attempt to throw off the dominion of Persia and become independent.¹² When the letter reached Ahashverosh, Haman was present to verify the claims of the letter. Haman's deep-seated hatred of the Jews and his urge to halt the construction of the *Bet Hamikdash* was inherent in him because he was a descendant of Amalek. Amalek was the son of Eliphaz, the son of the wicked Esau, who hated his brother Jacob because Esau felt that Jacob usurped his father's blessings--especially for the Land of Israel. Thus, in every generation the descendants of Esau do not want the Jews to own or live in any part of Israel.¹³

In addition to Haman's claims against the Jews, Vashti, the wife of Ahashverosh, told the king similar falsehoods about the Jews. She told him, "My grandfather Nebuchadnezzar and my father Belshazzar were both greater than you. Are you going to allow the reconstruction of the Temple my grandfather destroyed and my father did not allow to be rebuilt?"¹⁴

When Ahashverosh heard the pleas, he agreed to the ban against the reconstruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*. He commanded the Keuthites to go to the construction site of the Bet Hamikdash and destroy it. They did as Ahashverosh commanded and the ban was in effect.¹⁵

12. *Megillah, 11a, Ezra 4*

13. *Meam Loez, pg. 6*

14. *Esther 1:1, Targum Rishon, Meam Loez, pg.6*

15. *Ezra 4*



Haman, Vashti and Ahashverosh were all punished for their involvement in preventing the reconstruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*. Haman was punished by being hanged on a gallows whose wood originated from the construction site of the *Bet Hamikdash*. This made it clear to everyone that Haman was punished for his involvement in preventing the reconstruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*. One of the reasons Vashti was killed was because of her role in preventing the reconstruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*. Ahashverosh's punishment was that half his kingdom was taken away from him, leaving him with only one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, corresponding to the one hundred and twenty-seven years of our matriarch Sarah's life, in honor of Queen Esther, who was a descendent of Sarah.¹⁶

16. Midrash Esther 1:6, in the name of Rabbi Akiba



CHAPTER IV

☞ The Grandeur of Ahashverosh

During the first years of his reign, Ahashverosh was occupied with conquering nations and establishing his rulership over them. He did not wear his royal robes nor his crown. For a king that is preoccupied with wars can not display regal grandeur. Take Nebuchadnezzar for an example. He sat on his royal throne in his palace and all his subjects accorded him great honor. Ahashverosh did not achieve this royal status until the third year of his reign when all his subjects accepted his rulership over them. Once he felt secure in his reign, he was able to sit on his throne regally. It is for this reason that the verse describes the third year of Ahashverosh's reign, as if it was the beginning of his reign: "*In those days, when he sat,*" (*Esther 1:2*) -- this was the first time during his rulership that he was able to sit on his royal throne and allow his subjects to accord him the honor that he felt was due him. Ahashverosh was extremely gratified that he achieved this status and celebrated with an elaborate feast.¹

Another reason that Ahashverosh celebrated at this time was because until then he had been nervously anticipating the outcome of Jeremiah's prophecy that after seventy years the Jews would be redeemed and would return to Israel to rebuild the *Bet Hamikdash*. Ahashverosh feared that when the end of the famous seventy years approached, he would no longer have jurisdiction over the Jews.

1. *Meam Loetz*, pg. 16



Moreover, he feared that a Jew would overthrow him and take over the leadership of his kingdom, as his astrologists had predicted. However, during the third year of his reign, in 3395 (366 BCE), he thought that the seventy years had been concluded--and uneventfully. To his mind, this signified that Jeremiah's prophecy was no longer something to be reckoned with. Therefore, it was only at this point that he felt truly secure in his reign.²

Ahashverosh did not want to repeat Belshazzar's erroneous calculation of the seventy years. Belshazzar calculated the seventy years from the time Babylon began its dominion over the Jewish people. Therefore, Ahashverosh began the calculation of the seventy years from the time the Jews were first exiled to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar ruled over the Jews in Babylon for 37 years, Evil Merodach for 23 years, Belshazzar for 3 years, Darius and Coresh for 5 years. With the completion of Ahashverosh's second year, the seventy years were completed.

At last Ahashverosh no longer had the nagging worry that his reign would be terminated at the end of the seventy years, and he celebrated with an elaborate feast. At the banquet he took out the utensils of the *Bet Hamikdash* and defiled them, to show that they no longer were holy, as they would not be needed any more, since the Jews would not be rebuilding their Temple.

But he, too, was mistaken, as it states: "*k'shevet*," "*it was as if he was sitting*.." He was not actually sitting on his throne with his reign secure; he only thought he was. In fact, the seventy years began with the destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*, a full nine years later.²

Additionally, some say he made a feast to celebrate his marriage to Vashti.³

In order to show his subjects his true power, that he conquered 127 provinces on his own, and did not inherit his rulership, Ahashverosh moved his capital city from Babylon to Shushan in Persia. In this way he demonstrated himself as an independent power--he did

2. *Megillah*, 11b

3. *Esther* 1, *Ibn Ezra*



not need to rule from the same city where his predecessors had ruled. This is as is stated: “*In those days, when the King Ahashverosh sat on his royal throne, which was in Shushan the capital.*” (*Esther 1:2*) -- it was Ahashverosh whose capital was in Shushan, not his predecessors. This move also sent a clear message to Vashti that although she was of royal lineage, Ahashverosh’s power was not in any way a result of her royal background.⁴

There was another reason Ahashverosh moved the royal capital to Shushan. Ahashverosh knew of the beautiful throne of King Solomon. It was an artistic and mechanical masterpiece. The throne had been made of marble with onyx stones and other precious gems. It had twelve golden lions and opposite them, twelve golden eagles. It had seven golden steps inlaid with precious stones. On both sides of the throne was a golden hollow lion, filled with sweet smelling herbs. When King Solomon ascended his throne and placed his foot on the first golden step, gears would turn and the king would be sprinkled with sweet-smelling herbs. Then the gears would cause a golden eagle to spread its wings and assist the king to ascend his throne. This throne was truly an exquisite masterpiece.

No wonder many kings after Solomon attempted to sit upon it. Nebuchadnezzar took the throne with him to Babylon when he exiled the Jews. When he attempted to ascend the throne, miraculously, one of the golden lions kicked him. He remained lame for the rest of his life. Alexander the Great brought the throne to Egypt. There Shishak of Egypt attempted to sit upon it. He, too, was injured by a golden lion, and from then on was referred to as the “*Lame Pharaoh.*” Then the throne was captured, and in transit, it broke. The world’s best craftsmen were commissioned to attempt to repair it, but to no avail.⁵

Of course, this was not coincidental. *Hashem* caused the throne to break as a result of the prayers of the Jews. They pleaded:

“Please *Hashem*, this throne belonged to Solomon who judged Israel with equity and justice. With the great wisdom, you, *Hashem*,

4. *Esther 1, Malbim*

5. *Esther 1:2, Targum Sheni*



bestowed upon him, he merited this wonderful throne, which was called the Throne of *Hashem*. As it is stated: ‘*And Solomon sat on the throne of Hashem.*’ Shall these kings come and sit on this same throne?”

Therefore, *Hashem* did not allow the throne to be repaired, and it will not be repaired until the Messiah comes.⁶

Ahashverosh, too, wanted to show his pomp and glory by sitting on the magnificent throne of Solomon. He therefore hired the best Persian craftsmen to build him a duplicate of the throne. When the throne was complete, it was too heavy to move to Babylon. Therefore, Ahashverosh moved his capital to Shushan, where the completed throne stood. This is hinted at in the verse: “*In those days, when the king sat on the throne of his kingdom.*” The throne was his, alone, and did not belong to his predecessors. When the throne was completed, Ahashverosh celebrated with a huge feast.

That Ahashverosh moved his capital to Shushan was not a coincidence, but was orchestrated by *Hashem*. For in Shushan was Mordechai, through whom the miracle of Purim came about. It occurred when he was sitting in the capital and overheard Bigtan and Teresh plotting to kill Ahashverosh. He informed Ahashverosh of the plot against his life, which brought about the salvation of Purim. It is for this reason that the verse states that Ahashverosh moved his capital to Shushan, indicating that this, too, was part of the miracle.⁷

6. *Meam Loetz*, pg. 15

7. *Esther 1:2, Targum Sheni, Vilna Gaon*



CHAPTER V

The 180 Day Feast

In the third year of Ahashverosh's reign he made a six-month long elaborate feast for all his officers and noblemen and their families. After that feast was concluded, he made a week-long feast for the inhabitants of Shushan, his capital. The feasts are described herein.

In order to show all his officers and noblemen the extent of his grandeur, Ahashverosh invited them to a magnificent banquet. He wished to emphasize that although he was not of royal lineage, he was superior to other kings who inherited their position and wealth from their fathers. As stated in the previous chapter, this was the reason he moved his capital from Babylon to Shushan in Persia. He hoped that with this display of glory, his subjects would accept him as king wholeheartedly, and in this way his kingdom would be solidified. In addition, he hoped to create a feeling of kinship with his subjects, since a king generally does not display his wealth, and by doing so, he hoped his subjects would view him as a kind, friendly ruler, and this would prevent them from rebelling against him. Moreover, he felt that this display of grandeur would create a favorable impression on his subjects by showing them that he does not need their taxes.¹

The banquet took place in the summer months (*Rosh Hodesh Nissan* through 3 *Tishrei*) when the days were long, and the party lasted

1. *Meam Loez*, pg. 18



a full day every day for six months. Ahashverosh spared nothing for this feast. Each day there were new utensils and new types of food. He spent lavishly for this feast, spending in one day, as much as someone else would have spent for an entire six-month feast.²

During the feast, Ahashverosh displayed his wealth. Each day he showed six treasure houses full of wealth, as is stated in the verse, which uses six descriptions to describe the grandeur of the banquet. "*When he displayed the riches (1) of his glorious (2) kingdom (3) and the splendor (4) of his excellent (5) majesty (6) for many days, one hundred and eighty days.*" (*Esther 1:4*) By the end of the six months, he had opened and displayed all his 1,080 treasure houses full of wealth.³ It was in order to show all his treasures, that Ahashverosh had his feast last so long.⁴

In addition, Ahashverosh displayed the utensils of the *Bet Hamikdash* at the feast each day, displaying 30 utensils each day. At the end of the six months, he had displayed and defiled 5,400 utensils of the *Bet Hamikdash*.⁵ He also appeared wearing the clothes of the *Kohen Gadol*.⁶ As stated, he did this to show that the prophecy of Jeremiah was false and since the Jews would not be going back to Jerusalem, these items were no longer holy.

The Jews were appalled when they saw this callous display of their holy utensils, and wished to withdraw from the feast. Therefore, Ahashverosh prepared a separate feast for them.⁷

The grandeur of the feast is described to explain the greatness of the miracle that followed. For with all his wealth, Ahashverosh did not need the taxes of the Jews, and for all intents and purposes, he had no need for them. This, then, magnifies the miracle, that he agreed to reverse his decree against them.⁸

2. *Meam Loez*, pg. 20

3. *Midrash Esther 2:1*

4. *Esther 1*, *Vilna Gaon*

5. *Meam Loez*, quoting *R. Yonatan Eibenschutz*

6. *Megillah 12*

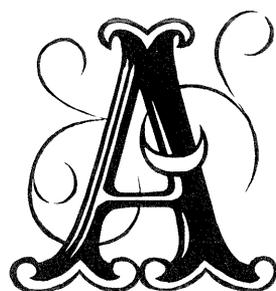
7. *Meam Loez*, pg. 19

8. *Esther 1*, *Alshich*



CHAPTER VI

☞ The Seven Day Feast



fter Ahashverosh's 180-day feast, which served to publicly display his wealth and grandeur and underscore the elimination of the *Bet Hamikdash*, Haman suggested that the king lead the Jews to sin. Their wrongdoing would prompt the Almighty to withdraw His Presence from them, resulting in their destruction. Specifically, Haman recommended that Ahashverosh lure the Jews to engage in promiscuous behavior. Whereas *Hashem* despised licentiousness, the Jewish people's indulgence in this regard would result in severe punishment. Such was Haman's hatred towards the Jewish people.¹

A similar incident had occurred many years earlier, after the wicked Bila'am's unsuccessful attempt to place a curse upon the Jewish people. Realizing that no curse could affect them, Bila'am advised Balak to have women from Moab seduce the Jewish people, which would effectively lead to their destruction. Balak heeded Bilam's advice and implemented the plan. On the market day, the Moabite women sold fine clothing in their prostitution tents. Jewish men entered the tents to look at the merchandise, and the women from Moav came to greet them.

"Why do you hate us," the women asked, "while in reality we are so fond of you? Here, take this garment for cheaper." The women then offered their customers food and served them wine. The Evil

1. *Midrash Esther*, 7:14



Inclination gained the upper hand over the men, who ate together with the women of Moab and they ultimately came to sleep with them. *Hashem* punished the Jewish people with a devastating plague, which killed 24,000 Jews.²

As a result of this tragic incident, Pinhas instituted a prohibition against drinking the wine of gentiles, as a safeguard against marrying into other nations.² Later, during the time of Daniel, it was decreed that Jews refrain from partaking from gentile bread, as a further measure to help prevent promiscuity. *Hazal* also prohibited foods cooked by gentiles as a means to help guard against intermarriage. In fact, the *Zohar Hakadosh* writes that one who is not careful with regard to gentile wine brings about the loss of his “*selem Elokim*,” Divine image, effectively forfeiting great wealth in both this world and the next. Furthermore, says the *Zohar*, such a person will not leave the world before committing a sin of living with a non-Jew. Along similar lines, it is forbidden to partake from even kosher food at gentile feasts, whereas such participation may likely bring one to promiscuity.

Therefore, Haman advised Ahashverosh to conduct a lavish feast including large quantities of wine and delicacies, as well as harlots. The women would stand before the men, as was the Persian practice to have the women dance before the men in order to show their beauty. Queen Vashti herself would come before the king undressed, all in an attempt to lead the Jewish people to sin.⁴

Mordechai heard about the general invitation to the royal feast and immediately understood the underlying purpose behind the affair. He declared that people should not participate in the banquet, whereas it was intended to allow the Divine Attribute of Justice to prosecute against the Jewish people before *Hashem*. In accordance with Mordechai’s admonition, the righteous Jews left before the banquet ever got underway. Many Jews, however, 18,500 in number, remained in Shushan and partook from the royal feast. They went thinking that they would participate in deference to royal authority, oblivious of the fact

2. *Midrash Tanhuma, end of Parashat Balak, see commentaries*

3. *Meam Loez, pg. 22*

4. *Meam Loez, pg. 41*



that the sins they would commit during this affair would directly bring about Haman's decree of destruction.⁵ They were ultimately saved only on account of their sincere repentance.¹

In truth, another factor motivated Ahashverosh's feast, as well, beyond the desire to lead the Jews to sin. He wished to publicly deny any acknowledgment of *Hashem's* authority by flaunting his own wealth, which, in his eyes, afforded him unlimited power over the Jewish people. He thereby conveyed the message that if the Jews accept his kingship, their safety and prosperity would be guaranteed.⁶

With all this in mind, the king issued a general invitation to the entire population of Shushan, Jew and gentile alike. The feast was simply enormous: the expenses for this seven-day affair equaled those of the previous 180-day banquet. Recall that each day of that celebration cost as much as normal meals for one hundred and eighty days. It turned out, then, that over the course of the one hundred and eighty days of celebration the royal treasury spent the amount of money required for 32,400 average meals. This same amount was spent during the week-long party for the people of Shushan.⁶

Having provided for the people every type of food imaginable, Ahashverosh turned to the Jews and asked, "Can *Hashem* supply all this bounty in the World to Come?"⁷

"Yes," they answered, "and even more."

Ahashverosh specifically had all these fine foods prepared to lead the Jewish people to transgress the prohibition against eating foods cooked by gentiles. He similarly served all types of the finest wines, employing various means to lure them to drink in order that they come to adultery. He brought for them special, golden utensils, and, for those who may have trouble drinking wine, he provided aged wine that would pose less difficulty for the more sensitive drinkers. In fact, he ensured to serve each person wine older in age than the individual himself. For example, a forty year old was given forty-one year old wine. After the

5. R. E. Ginsburg

6. Meam Loez pg. 22

7. Based on Midrash 2:100



first drink, the guest was given a different utensil for his next drink. This procedure points to Ahashverosh's immense wealth, enabling him to offer several different utensils to each of his tens of thousands of guests. The king adopted this practice in order that someone otherwise uninterested in drinking would do so because of the beautiful, shiny wineglass served to him. Realizing that some guests may be embarrassed to take wine by themselves, the king hired bartenders to walk around and pour wine generously to all the guests. In this way, even the more bashful attendees would partake of the wine.⁸

The protocol of the feast distinguished between eating and drinking: eating was compulsory, while the drinking was optional. Ahashverosh decided to refrain from forcing anyone to drink out of concern for intoxication. A drunkard who sins is not punished for his wrongdoing, and, as mentioned, Ahashverosh wished to render the Jewish people worthy of destruction. He therefore made the drinking optional, so that his Jewish guests would be held fully accountable for any sins resulting from the wine.⁹

Throughout the affair, guests stood outside in the royal courtyard. The yard was beautifully landscaped with costly flowers and fragrant spice-trees. A tent was erected over the yard woven from the materials mentioned in the verse (*Esther 1:6*): "*White cotton and blue wool, caught up by cords of fine linen and purple wool...*" The ropes were tied to marble pillars with silver rods overhead, and these pillars were situated among the trees in the royal garden. Guests were seated on silver couches with golden footrests. The floor was plated with precious stones, and the throngs of people stepped all over them with their dirty shoes, a further means by which the king flaunted his wealth. He specifically situated the most expensive and eye-catching items - such as the precious stones - lower down rather than above the people's heads. This helped ensure the Jews' continued indulgence in the food, that they would not become preoccupied with what was above them and thereby distracted from eating and drinking, which would eventually cause them to sin.¹⁰

8. *Meam Loez* pg. 30

9. *Meam Loez* pg. 34

10. *Meam Loez* pg. 25



Ahashverosh put on display one special stone called “*dar*,” which shone like the midday sun. He wished to indicate to the Jews that they had no need for the light of *Hashem*; Ahashverosh himself could provide them with sufficient light.¹¹ Hoping that his wealth would lead the Jews to accept his authority, he also sought to compare his affluence with that of King Shelomoh. Shelomoh’s era marked a time of great prosperity for the Jewish people, a period when silver was thrown on the ground like plain stones. Ahashverosh hoped that the resemblance to Shelomoh’s kingship would earn him the same favor in the people’s eyes that Shelomoh’s had received. In truth, Ahashverosh actually tried to outdo Shelomoh: whereas in Shelomoh’s time only silver slabs were treated like stones, Ahashverosh had the floor plated with precious stones. Silver and gold utensils were used at the feast, and no single cup resembled any other. As mentioned, several different cups were served to each of the 18,500 Jewish guests, who comprised but a small minority of the general attendance. We can only imagine how many cups were needed for the entire population of Shushan!¹²

However, despite his efforts to prove to the contrary, the prosperity of the Ahashverosh’s kingship fell far short of that of Shelomoh’s time. First and foremost, the royal treasury was funded entirely from tax revenue, which left the population penniless. In Shelomoh’s time, the entire country enjoyed wealth and prosperity. Additionally, when Ahashverosh produced at the party the accessories of the *Bet Hamikdash*, which were fashioned by Shelomoh, his own golden utensils appeared like lead in comparison. The gold used for the *Bet Hamikdash* was of an especially high quality, which dwarfed the quality of Ahashverosh’s gold. The verse therefore refers to the utensils of the Temple as, “*different utensils*,” because they brought about a change in the people’s perception of Ahashverosh’s utensils.¹³

His insistence on producing the treasures of the Temple was intended to substantiate his assertion that the Al-mighty does not control the world and He will never rebuild the *Bet Hamikdash*, leaving the

11. *Megillah 12b, Meam Loez 28*

12. *Meam Loez 26*

13. *Midrash Esther 2:11*



Jews under Ahashverosh's exclusive rule.¹⁴ To further underscore this point, both he and Vashti wore the clothing of the *kohen gadol*¹⁵. But as he used the utensils from the Temple, a Heavenly voice declared, "Do you not realize that before you Belshazzar and his men were destroyed from the world on account of this sin of using the utensils of the *Bet Hamikdash*? Are you now going ahead and repeating this act?!" This is another reason why the verse uses the term "*kelim shonim*" (literally, "different utensils," as mentioned earlier) in reference to the accessories of the Temple. The word "*shonim*" relates to the Hebrew word "*shinun*," repetition, alluding to Ahashverosh's foolish repetition of the sins of his predecessors. Ahashverosh deserved to die on account of this misdeed, but was spared in the merit of Esther and the son he begot from her, Daryavesh (Darius II), who later rebuilt the *Bet Hamikdash*. Ahashverosh therefore received a lighter punishment: the diminution of his joy by the incident of Vashti.¹⁶

The Jews attending the banquet became extremely distressed at the spectacle of Ahashverosh's public defilement of the sacred articles of the *Bet Hamikdash*. They reached the conclusion that they cannot possibly stay at the feast so long as the disgraceful and humiliating scorn of the *Bet Hamikdash* continued. Ahashverosh took note of the Jews' reaction and ordered his men to prepare a special place for them outside, in order that they do not become distressed¹⁷.

Mordechai saw that the Jews committed serious transgressions at this celebration, which was held during the *Aseret Yemei Teshuvah* (Ten Days of Repentance), when *Benei Yisrael* are to repent, and was alarmed. He and the other spiritual leaders of the generation observed a fast for six days - the six days prior to *Yom Kippur*. On the seventh day - *Yom Kippur*, *Hashem* answered his prayers: Vashti was killed and the party came to an abrupt end. This occurred in the merit of *Yom Kippur*. Nevertheless, although *Hashem* heard Mordechai's petition and ended

14. *Megillah 11b*

15. *Megillah 12a, Meam Loez 39*

16. *Megillah 12b, Meam Loez 29*

17. *Meam Loez 29*



the feast, the decree had already been issued:¹⁸ The Jewish people were to be destroyed.

The *Midrash* describes the issuance of the decree as follows:¹⁹

The Satan stood and spoke negatively about them before the Al-mighty. He said before Him, "Master of the world, for how long will You remain attached to this nation who remove their heart and faith from You? If You so desire, destroy this nation from the world for they do not come before You with repentance."

The Al-mighty then said, "What will be with the Torah?"

He said to Him, "Master of the world, the upper worlds shall be enough for it."

He agreed in His mind to eradicate Yisrael at that moment. The Al-mighty said, "Why do I need this nation for which I performed so many wonders and miracles against all those who arose to harm them? I will erase from humanity their memory." The Al-mighty immediately said to the Satan, "Bring me a scroll, and I will inscribe destruction upon it."

According to the *Midrash*, this decree resulted from the Jewish people's sin at Ahashverosh's feast.

Some views,²⁰ however, maintain that in fact the Jews did not sin by eating the forbidden foods nor drinking from the wine at Ahashverosh's banquet; they sat and ate only kosher foods and their own wines. Their participation nevertheless constituted a sin, whereas it was forbidden for them to take part in a feast that served to publicize the absence of the *Bet Hamikdash* and the rejection of *Hashem's* authority, and promote harlotry. Therefore, the Jewish people's very participation in such an event, even without eating forbidden foods, warranted a decree of annihilation.

18. Targum

19. Midrash Esther 7:14

20. Meam Loez 35



In the end, however, this very same feast that brought about the decree actually became the source of the Jews' salvation. Whereas they performed *teshuvah* after participating in the affair, Vashti was killed and replaced by Esther, through whom the Jews were ultimately saved.²¹

Yet a third view exists as to why the Jewish people deserved to be destroyed at that time. This position maintains that the decree had nothing at all to do with Ahashverosh's banquet. Rather, during the time of Nebuchadnezzar there were Jews who prostrated themselves before idolatrous images, thus rendering the nation worthy of annihilation, Heaven forbid.²²

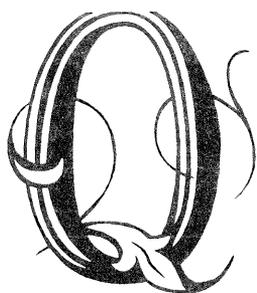
21. *The Kings Treasure* by Rabbi E. Ginsburg

22. *Megillah, 12a*



CHAPTER VII

☞ Vashti's Feast and Death



Queen Vashti conducted a feast, too, for the same reasons that prompted Ahashverosh to do so. Like it states in the verse, “Queen Vashti **also** conducted a feast for women.” (chapter 1,9)¹ Like her husband, Vashti sought to lead Benot Yisrael to sin through promiscuity, as *Hazal* comment, “Vashti and Ahashverosh both had sinful intentions.”² They therefore coordinated that Ahashverosh would call her to come to the men’s banquet and she would accept the invitation. They also ensured to seat the women opposite the men, so that the men would look upon them throughout the feast, thereby arousing their evil inclinations.³

Vashti’s goal was to render the Jewish people unworthy of the rebuilding of the *Bet Hamikdash* through their promiscuous conduct. Her ill-will towards the Jews followed a consistent family tradition: she hailed from Amalek. She was also the daughter of Belshassar and granddaughter of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed the *Bet Hamikdash*. Like her husband, Vashti had the garments of the *kohen gadol* worn at her feast,⁴ as a further demonstration that these garments are no more holy, because the *Bet Hamikdash* will never be rebuilt.

1. *Midrash 3:9.*

2. *Megillah 12b.*

3. *Meam Loez 40.*

4. *Midrash 3:9.*



In addition, Vashti shared with her husband yet another impetus for making a feast: to flaunt her wealth. Just as Ahashverosh wished to host a lavish banquet to show to all his immense fortunes, so did Vashti conduct an extravagant affair where she could put her affluence on public display.⁵

An element of contention also contributed to the gala celebrations in Shushan. Ahashverosh and Vashti argued over whose merit it was in that Ahashverosh ascended to royalty. Vashti credited herself for her husband's success, as she was the daughter of Belshassar, the Babylonian king. Ahashverosh, by contrast, had no royal family roots, and in fact worked as an attendant in Belshazzar's stables. Only through his marriage to the princess, Vashti argued, did Ahashverosh earn the kingship. Vashti felt that in truth, she herself deserved to rule, but whereas women did not serve as emperors, her husband assumed the throne instead.

Ahashverosh vehemently disputed his queen's interpretation of their past. He claimed that his assumption of the throne resulted from his wealth, having discovered invaluable treasures, as well his military might, having conquered 127 countries. He therefore decided to host a lavish feast to exhibit his wealth, so that his subjects would acknowledge his right to royalty. He similarly moved his capital to Shushan as further demonstration of his having personally established his rule, rather than merely taking Vashti's place.⁶

The Scripture relates that Ahashverosh called for Vashti on the seventh day, "*when the king was merry with wine.*" Although he had been hosting banquets for six months, he did not have the opportunity to drink as he was preoccupied showing his riches to the guests. Now that he finished showing the guests around, he allowed himself to celebrate and enjoy himself. He thus indulged in wine on this seventh day to the point of intoxication. Generally speaking, when corrupt gentiles become drunk, they speak of lewd matters. This was especially true in this feast, in which, as stated, the women were intentionally

5. *Ibid.*

6. See *Malbim on 1:6; Meam Loez 39; Alshich; and Gra on 1:12.*



seated in full view of the men. Sure enough, a discussion broke out among the drunken men as to which women were more beautiful, those from Media or those from Persia. The intoxicated king chimed in to settle the vulgar debate once and for all:

“My wife is from neither country,” he said, “but rather from Babylonia, and nowhere in the world is there beauty like hers. If you don’t believe me, come look for yourselves!”⁷

And so the king ordered his servants to summon Vashti to step down from her throne and dance before him undressed. She was to place a golden crown on her head and hold a golden goblet in each hand as she came before the king and his royal guests to show her unparalleled beauty.⁸

Ahashverosh also conveyed a subtle message to the queen to the effect of, “Do not think that as a king’s daughter you have no obligation to obey my orders.” He alluded to her subservience to him by referring to her as, “Vashti the Queen.” (chapter 1,11) First she was just Vashti, and only thereafter did she become the queen, only because of Ahashverosh. He also sent specifically the lowest-ranking servants in the royal court to summon Vashti, further emphasizing his superiority and source of his kingship.⁶

Vashti at first responded favorably to the king’s request. She was shamelessly lewd and had actually wanted to initiate licentious conduct at the feast, figuring that others had not done so already only because they felt embarrassed in the king’s presence. At that moment, however, she contracted leprosy, or, according to other views, the angel Gabriel came and placed a tail on her body, rendering her appearance very displeasing. Embarrassed by her looks, she refused the king’s order.⁹ Too ashamed to tell Ahashverosh the truth, Vashti issued a subtle hint describing the reason for her refusal, only the king did not understand the allusion.¹⁰

7. *Megillah 12b.*

8. *Targum Sheni, 1:11.*

9. *Megillah 12b.*

10. *3:14.*



Vashti also felt insulted by the brazen manner in which the king summoned her, as discussed earlier. She therefore expressed her refusal by referring to herself as “the Queen, Vashti,” (chapter 1,12) suggesting her inherent right to royalty, as opposed to the king’s disparaging reference to her as, “Vashti the Queen.”⁶

She told the servants, “Tell your master, the foolish king, whom was not regarded in the home of my father, Belshazzar, as worthy for any task beyond stable attendant, that my father drank the amount of wine drunk by one thousand people, and yet the wine never led him to say such foolish things!” (See Chapter 3.)

Upon hearing Vashti’s response, Ahashverosh sent her the following reply through his servants: “If you do not obey my order and come before me and the noblemen, I will kill you and destroy your beauty!”

But Vashti remained steadfast in her refusal: “Tell the foolish king that his ideas are self-destructive,” she ordered the servants, “for I am the daughter of Belshazzar and the granddaughter of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia. Since the day I was born, nobody but the king ever saw my body. If I am now exposed before all 127 governors sitting at the feast, they will desire me and kill the king so they can take me as a wife!”¹¹

Upon hearing Vashti’s brazen refusal and seeing how she humiliated him in front of his servants, the king was incensed. He felt especially bitter over her having disobeyed him specifically during a feast intended to confirm his personal right to royal authority. He feared that through her non-compliance, Vashti had undermined his rule and asserted herself as the primary source of authority. All his efforts to demonstrate his self-earned right to the kingship, including showing his wealth to his guests and relocating his capital to Shushan, were in an instant rendered null and void through Vashti’s disobedience.⁶

On the other hand, Ahashverosh loved Vashti very much and wished her no harm. He therefore tried to contain his anger, lest his

11. *Targum Sheni.*



wrath prompt his legal advisors to pronounce a death sentence upon his beloved queen.¹² However, the Al-mighty summoned the Angel of Anger to further ignite the king's rage so that his household will be destroyed. The verse therefore states, "*and his anger burned inside him,*" referring to the Angel of Anger that set Ahashverosh's fury ablaze.¹³ Furthermore, his anger burned specifically "inside him," meaning that his anger was directed against himself. The advisors would now sentence the queen to death, and hence her death would occur on the king's account.¹² Hashem intensified his anger as a punishment for Ahashverosh's attempt to demonstrate the permanent destruction of the *Bet Hamikdash* in his feast as well as his effort to lead the Jewish people to sin. Whereas Ahashverosh sought to prove his unlimited control, Hashem punished him by having him lose control even over himself, as his anger overtook him. Furthermore, since the king tried to lure the Jews to sin, his downfall resulted from his licentious request of Vashti.

Vashti was killed undressed on a *Shabbat*, in retribution for her having undressed Jewish women and compelling them to work on *Shabbat*. She had done so knowing that the Jewish people's observance of *Shabbat* ensures that no nation could oppress them. In her attempt to tighten her authority over the Jews, Vashti sought to accustom Jewish women in *Shabbat* desecration.

As we know, Vashti's death led to Esther's ascent to royalty. It thus turned out that the feast intended to confirm the permanent loss of the *Bet Hamikdash*, resulted in Esther's marriage to Ahashverosh, a union that produced Darius II, under whose auspices the second *Bet Hamikdash* was built.¹⁴

12. *Meam Loez* 47.

13. *Midrash* 3:12.

14. Rabbi E. Ginsburg, *The King's Treasure*



CHAPTER VIII

Esther Becomes Queen



After these events,¹ when the king's anger was appeased, he summoned all his princes and said: "I am not angry at Vashti, but at you! I acted under the influence of wine, but why did you suggest that I execute Vashti and remove her from my kingdom? Now I will kill you, and remove you from my kingdom." After he killed his officers, he brooded over what had occurred—that Vashti was killed even though she was not deserving of death. This was apparently decreed from Heaven, that the descendants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon should be terminated.

Then the king's servants said, "Let beautiful young maidens be sought for the king. Officials in all the provinces of the kingdom shall be appointed to gather together all the beautiful young maidens to Shushan the Capital, to the harem, to the custody of Hege, where their cosmetics shall be given them. The girl who pleases the king, shall be queen instead of Vashti." The idea pleased the king, and he did so.

Living in the city of Shushan at that time was a pious man who prayed before *Hashem* for his people, by the name of Mordechai. He was called so because he was comparable to pure (*dechi*) myrrh (*mor*). He was the son of Yair, son of Shimi, son of Kish, from the tribe of Benjamin. That was the Shimi who insulted David and whom Joab

1. The following chapters are based primarily on Targum Rishon and Targum Sheni. Translation of Targum Rishon: Grossfeld, Bernard, The First Targum to Esther, Sepher-Hermon Press, New York, 1983.



wanted to kill but David did not let him because he foresaw that Mordechai and Esther would descend from him. Therefore, when Shimi ceased to procreate, David ordered his son Solomon to kill him. Mordechai came to Shushan from Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon exiled the Jews.

Mordechai raised his father's brother's daughter Hadassah, or Esther. She was called Hadassah because she was a righteous woman and the righteous are compare to myrtle (*hadassah*). She was also known as Esther since she was concealed (*hester*) in the home of Mordechai for seventy-five years, where she saw no man's face except Mordechai. Mordechai cared for her since her father had died prior to her birth, and as soon as she was born, her mother died. Mordechai took her into his house and called her his daughter.

When the king's decree became public, and once the girls began to be gathered to the king's harem, Mordechai hid Esther from the officers of Ahashverosh who were seeking the maidens. He concealed her in a small room so that the messengers of the king should not see her; unlike the other maidens who would make themselves conspicuous when the king's servants passed by. But the messengers of the king knew of Esther, and when they observed that Esther was not among the maidens, they said to each other, "We are wasting our energy in the provinces. For right here in our province there lives a beautiful maiden, more so than all the girls which we have brought." They thereupon informed Ahashverosh of Esther's absence. He immediately wrote an order that every girl who hides from his messengers shall be killed. When Mordechai heard of this he feared for Esther's life, and brought her out. Esther was then taken to the king's palace, to the custody of Hegai, guardian of the women.

Esther pleased Hegai, and he quickly gave her cosmetics, and seven maids to attend to her during the seven days of the week. Each of the maids attended her on the same day of each week, and in this way Esther was able to determine when it was *Shabbat*. Esther did not relate the identity of her people and of her birthplace, because Mordechai had ordered her not to. Mordechai did this in order to protect the Jewish people. For perhaps Esther would displease Ahashverosh, and order her



to be killed, and then punish her people. Therefore, he instructed Esther not to reveal her background. Mordechai walked every day before the court of the harem, to find out about Esther's well being, and which miracles would occur through her.

After twelve months of being anointed, each maiden had her turn to appear before Ahashverosh. Whatever the maidens desired was given them to accompany them from the harem to the King's palace. When Esther's turn came to go to the king, she asked for nothing but what Hegai the King's courtier, the guardian of the women, advised. Nevertheless, Esther found favor in the eyes of all those who saw her. Esther was taken to King Ahashverosh in the month of *Tevet*, in the seventh year of his reign.

The king loved Esther more than all his other wives, and all the other maidens. He set a golden crown on her head and he replaced the portraits of Vashti hanging in his bed chamber with portraits of Esther. He placed her on the second throne and made her queen instead of Vashti.

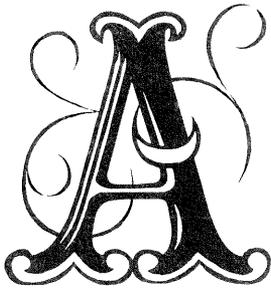
Ahashverosh then made a great feast for all his noblemen and servants--the Feast of Esther, and he gave presents to the provinces. He said to Esther: 'Please tell me your background.' She replied: 'I do not know my background because I was orphaned as a young child.' When Ahashverosh heard this, he lowered the taxes for all countries in his domain and gave gifts to the provinces, thinking: I will act favorably to all the nations in my kingdom since Esther's people is bound to be among them.

Ahashverosh's nobles suggested that he attempt to get Esther to tell more about herself by gathering maidens a second time to make her jealous and thereby heed his bidding. But Esther did not succumb to this tactic. With each passing day the king continued to ask her about her background, but Esther refused to reveal anything, as Mordechai had instructed her. Esther observed Mordechai's teachings in the palace, observing *Shabbat*, Festivals, and also her days of separation; she was careful with cooked dishes and wine of non-Jews, as well as all the other *misvot* which Jewish women observe.



CHAPTER IX

The Plot of Bigtan and Teresh



At that time, Mordechai sat among the Sanhedrin which Esther set up at the king's gate. Two officers of the king, the guardians of the palace, Bigtan and Teresh of Tarsea, saw this and became agitated. They said to each other: "Does the queen wish to remove us and install Mordechai in our place?" They discussed the matter in their Tarsean language and decided to poison Queen Esther and kill King Ahashverosh by sword in his bed chamber.

Mordechai overheard their discussion, and understood their evil intentions, since he was well-versed in seventy languages. He related it to Queen Esther, who in turn related it to King Ahashverosh. The matter was investigated and then confirmed, and they were both hanged on a tree. The matter was recorded in the royal chronicles in the name of Mordechai.



CHAPTER X

Haman's Plot



After these matters, King Ahashverosh promoted Haman, son of Hammedata the Agagite. At that time, the Attribute of Justice came before Hashem and said: "Haman was instrumental in banning the reconstruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*, and now King Ahashverosh promoted him?" Hashem replied: "I do not wish to destroy him before he is well-known. Let him become famous, and then I will punish him for all the suffering he and his ancestors have inflicted upon the Jewish People."

Haman wore an image upon his chest, and all the king's servants bowed to this image as they prostrated themselves to Haman, as the king had commanded. Mordechai, however, would not prostrate himself to Haman nor bow to his image, since Haman had once sold himself to Mordechai as a slave.

The king's servants reproached Mordechai, saying: "How are you different from us--we bow to Haman and you do not?" Mordechai replied: "Fools, listen to me. Tell me, is there a man, born of a woman, who is destined to return to dust, and I shall bow before him? No! I shall only bow to the Omnipotent G-d." The servants said: "But did your ancestors not bow before Haman's ancestors?" Mordechai answered: "Who was it that bowed?" "Did your ancestor Jacob not bow before Esau?" Mordechai continued: "I am descendant of Benjamin, who was not yet born when Jacob bowed before Esau. Benjamin never bowed before a person, for which he was rewarded with the Temple in



his portion of land. When the time comes, all the Jewish people will rejoice there and the nations will bow in his land. As for me, I shall not kneel nor bow before Haman.”

The king’s attendants prevailed upon Mordechai daily to bow to Haman, but Mordechai did not listen to them. The attendants, therefore, told Haman of Mordechai’s refusal to bow to him, and of his claim that Haman once sold himself to Mordechai as a slave. When Haman heard that Mordechai did not prostrate himself before him, he was filled with rage. However, it was beneath him to avenge Mordechai alone, since he was told that Mordechai descended from Jacob, who took away the birthright and blessings from Esau, Haman’s ancestor. Therefore, Haman decided to avenge the people of Mordechai, and he sought to wipe out all the Jews in the kingdom of Ahashverosh.

To determine the most propitious time to carry out his plan, Haman threw a lot. The month of *Nissan* was determined as an inappropriate time since the Jews had the merit of *Pesah*. The month of *Iyar* was deemed inappropriate since the manna began to fall for the Jews during that month. The month of *Sivan* was not chosen since the *Torah* was given to the Jews. During *Tammuz*, the walls of the *Bet Hamikdash* were breached, and Haman reasoned that *Hashem* would not want to inflict two tragedies upon the Jews during the same month. *Ab* was not chosen since the people stopped dying in the Desert, and *Hashem* once again spoke to Moses. *Elul* was not appropriate since Moses went up to Sinai to receive the second set of Tablets. During *Tishrei* the sins of the Jewish people are forgiven. During *Heshvan*, the Great Flood began from which Noah and his family were saved. In *Kislev* the *Bet Hamikdash* was dedicated. In *Tebet* Nebuchadnezzar came up to Jerusalem, and G-d would certainly deem that as a sufficient punishment. *Shebat* had the New Year for Trees from which the Jews brought their first fruits. When Haman reached the last month of *Adar* he gleefully stated: “At last, the Jews shall be caught in my net, like fish, which is the constellation of *Adar*.” However, he was unaware that the descendants of Joseph were blessed that they would multiply like fish.

Wishing to gain Ahashverosh’s endorsement for his evil plot, Haman approached the king and said, “There is a certain people



scattered and exiled among the nations in every province of your kingdom, and their deeds are different from those of any other nation. They do not follow our customs, nor wish to adopt them, and they do not carry out the service of the king. When they see us, they spit on the ground and consider us impure. They gather on their holidays and curse us.

“Their New Year is on the first of *Tishrei*. They gather in their synagogues, pray, and curse our king and rulers, blowing in a trumpet and proclaiming: ‘On the day that our ancestors’ memory comes before our Father in Heaven, may our remembrance be entered for good, and may our enemies be entered for evil and bitterness.’ On the tenth day of that month, *Yom Kippur*, they once again gather in their synagogues, pray, and curse us, saying: ‘Thus should this kingdom be obliterated from the world.’ They pray that the king should die and his power be crushed. On the fifteenth day of the same month, they celebrate *Succot*. They opened up the roofs of their houses, and go out to the orchards and cut down our palm branches, pluck our citrons, strip our willows, and lay our orchards to waste. They make *hoshanot*, and say: ‘Just as the king goes to battle, so do we.’ They rejoice with the *hoshanot*, singing and dancing like goats. If they curse us or bless us, we do not know.

“This nation is scattered among the nations, meaning a few live here and a few there, and not too many live together in one city. So they can not make an uprising against the king. Perish the thought that they will band together to protest this decree, since they are of separate minds from one another. They hate each other. Even their sages can not come to agreement. For example, many of them bow to me, but others refuse to, stating that it is prohibited. No, not even in a time of danger will they unite, since they live at a distance from one another.

“The religion they practice is senseless. For example, they do not eat animal fats or blood, and they remove the rear sinew. And one of their laws is ‘Do not follow their laws,’ meaning that they oppose the king’s laws and act contrary to them. Although other nations do not necessarily practice the same religion, at least they eat together, not so this nation. They are prohibited from eating together with any other nation. They view us as impure. If a fly falls into their cup, they remove



it and drink the wine. But if the king would touch their cup, they will not drink the wine. They will spill it out and rinse the cup three times.

“If it pleases the King, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will deliver ten thousand silver talents from my treasury to yours.”

The king took his signet ring from his hand, and gave it to Haman, and said, “Keep the silver, and as for the people, you may do with them as you wish.”

The king's scribes were immediately summoned to pen the decree, as Haman directed them. The decree was addressed to the governors of every province and to the officials of every people, each in its own tongue. It was written in the name of King Ahashverosh, and sealed with the king's signet ring. The document read as follows:

From Ahashverosh to all the nations who dwell in my provinces, may you all be blessed. Know that a certain individual, a foreigner, has come to assist us in overcoming our enemies, and his name is Haman, son of Agag the king, son of Reuel, son of Eliphaz, son of Esau. He is a nobleman and very wealthy.

He asked of me a small favor regarding an inferior nation, so much so, that they can be likened to fools. They curse the king and wish to avenge their enemies. They are ingrates. Just look at what they did to Pharaoh. He generously accepted them into his country and provided for them during years of famine. And what did they do to him? With the excuse that they were going to celebrate their holiday, they borrowed gold, silver, precious gems, and expensive clothing, each loading fifty donkeys, and they fled, never to return. The Egyptians chased them to retrieve their belongings. But their prophet, Moses, son of Amram, took his staff, raised it above the sea and dried it out to allow his nation to pass on the dry land. The Egyptians followed them into the sea, but Moses returned the water upon them and drowned every last Egyptian. Is that gratitude for all the Egyptians had done for them?



Then Amalek came to avenge the blood of the Egyptians. What did Moses do? He instructed his student, Joshua to likewise be cruel. Moses took a stone and prayed on it until every last one died. Afterwards they fought against Sihon and Og, the mighty ones, and I am unaware of how they killed them. They likewise fought against the kings of Midian and the thirty-one kings, Sisra and Sennaherib.

They had another king, David, by name, who destroyed many kingdoms completely. His son built a Temple, which this nation enters and then exits strong like lions (although I am unaware of how this transformation occurs). Everyone trembles before even the most inferior of them.

In punishment for all their evil, Nebuchadnezzar arose and killed many of them, and led the remainder in chains to us. And they are still adamant in their ways. They mock us and our religion. We are impure in their eyes and they will not marry our children. There are many other things which I can not detail here.

Therefore, I have sold this nation to Haman for the purpose of destruction. Now, I, Ahashverosh, am at peace with myself. Eat, drink and rejoice with me.

Whoever is a bowman, shall use his bow, and whoever is competent with the sword, shall use his sword against them on the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth of the month of Adar, and do not have mercy on them. Kill young and old alike, and take their possessions for yourselves. Every last Jewish servant and maidservant shall be killed in every province, city, and village since they do not heed the king's decree.

The copy of the decree was given out as a law in every province, and publicly proclaimed to all the peoples, so that they should be ready for that day. When that was completed, the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Shushan was in turmoil.



CHAPTER XI

☞ Mordechai's Reaction to the Decree

The righteous Mordechai knew with *ruah hakodesh* (the holy spirit) of all that had transpired between Ahashverosh and Haman and of the decree they issued. Mordechai rent his garments from front to back, covered himself in sackcloth and ashes. He raised his voice and said: “Woe is to us! How great is the decree that the king and Haman issued against us. Not on half of us, a third of us, nor upon a quarter of us did he issue his decree, but upon the whole nation, to destroy us from our roots.”

When the Jewish people saw Mordechai mourning publicly in this fashion, they all came out to him. Soon a huge group was gathered in the streets of Shushan. Mordechai then rose to his feet and in the middle of the assembly, cried out:

“People of Israel, beloved and respected by their Father in Heaven, are you not aware of what has occurred? Have you not heard what the king and Haman decreed upon us? They wish to destroy us from the face of the earth! We have no one upon whom to rely, or even a prophet to pray for us. We have no place to flee, for the decree is in effect in every province. We are like a sheep without a shepherd, like a ship without a captain, like orphans without a father or mother.”

The *Torah* ark was then brought out into the streets, and a *Sefer Torah* covered in sackcloth and ashes was opened. The verse, “When



you are in distress and all these things will happen to you...for the Lord, your G-d, is merciful” (Debarim 4: 30-31) was read.

Mordechai rose once again and said:

“My brothers, let us look at the people of Nineveh, when the prophet Jonah, son of Ammitai was sent there to warn them about the impending disaster that was destined to befall them. When the King of Nineveh heard this, he rose from his throne, removed his crown, and covered himself in sackcloth and ashes. He then issued a proclamation that all subjects must fast and repent from their evil ways. As a result, ‘Hashem retracted the evil decree.’ Let us do as they did. Let us decree fast days because we were exiled from Jerusalem, and we are no longer able to pray and bring sacrifices in the Bet Hamikdash.”

He said through his tears: “Woe to you, children of Israel, for this decree that has been issued against you.” And he went throughout the city, crying bitterly. When he reached the gates of the palace, he stopped, because no one was allowed to enter the palace gates dressed in sackcloth.

There Mordechai overheard a Jewish man speaking to a non-Jew: “Take me, my wife and sons as slaves, so that we may be spared from the death sentence that hangs over our heads.” The non-Jew answered him: “Are you not aware that King Ahashverosh decreed that any non-Jew who is found to have a Jewish slave will be killed?” The Jewish man left in great distress. Thus the verse was fulfilled: “*And there you shall be sold to your enemies for male and female slaves, but no man shall buy you.*” (Debarim 28:68).

Each day the Jews were reminded of their fate, as everyone read the decree of Ahashverosh daily. Thus the verse was fulfilled: “*And your life shall hang before you, and you shall fear day and night and have no assurance in your life. In the morning you will say, when will it be evening, and in the evening you will say, when will it be morning. For the fear of your heart and the sight of your eyes*” (Debarim 28:66,67). In every province of the Persian Kingdom, there was great mourning, fasting, weeping, and wailing among the Jews; and many lying in sackcloth and ashes.



Esther's maids and courtiers came and told her that Mordechai was dressed in sackcloth outside the gates of the palace. Esther was exceedingly distressed, and she sent garments to Mordechai, so that he should remove his sackcloth. Mordechai would not accept them. So Esther summoned Daniel, who was also known as Hatach, for upon his authority the royal decrees were decided (*nehtachin*). She sent him to Mordechai to learn why he was mourning and why he did not accept the garments she had sent him.

Hatach approached Mordechai in the streets of the city, in front of the palace gates. Mordechai revealed to Hatach all that occurred, beginning from how he had not bowed to Haman nor his image, and how Haman offered Ahashverosh ten thousand talents of silver for the right to destroy the Jews. He also gave Hatach a copy of Ahashverosh's decree to destroy the Jews, that was issued in Shushan, to show to Esther. He asked that Hatach tell her that she should go to the king, to plead to him that he should grant mercy for her people. And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordechai.

She sent Hatach to Mordechai with a message that she was concerned that Mordechai not incite Haman into a quarrel, since Haman was evidently nurturing within his heart the age-old enmity between Jacob and Esau. She said, "Did not wicked Haman decree by order of King Ahashverosh that no one may enter the king's inner court without permission? All the king's subjects know that there is one judgement for anyone who enters the king's court without having been summoned on Haman's order--death, unless the king extends toward him his golden scepter. And, as for me, I have not been summoned to the king for the past thirty days."

When Haman saw Hatach entering and leaving from Esther, he became furious and killed him. The angels Michael and Gabriel appeared, and related the message to Mordechai in his stead.

Mordechai responded to Esther, saying: "Perhaps you imagine that you were destined to become queen. Or perhaps you think that you do not need to plead for mercy on behalf of your people. But know, that if even one foot of one Jew would be injured, you will not be completely free from responsibility that you did not make an effort to save your people.



“This evil stems from Saul, your ancestor. For if he would have fulfilled the command of Samuel the prophet, today Haman the wicked would not be able to oppose us. If Saul would have killed Agag the king, this son of Hammedata would not be here to buy us from Ahashverosh for ten thousand talents of silver, and *Hashem* would not have delivered us into the hand of these two wicked ones.

“At first, after Israel left Egypt, there was only one nation who dared to oppose them--Amalek, the ancestor of Haman. They fought against the Jewish people in Refidim, and with prayer, Moses led the Jewish people to victory.

“Therefore, arise and pray to *Hashem* on behalf of your people, for just as He did justice to Amalek, may He do justice to Haman. May, He, who performs miracles for Israel throughout the generations, give our enemies into our hand, so that we may deal with them appropriately. And, Esther, do not imagine that you will be saved in the king’s palace.

“But if you will indeed remain silent at this time, *Hashem* will bring about the redemption of the Jewish people from another source, while you and your father’s house will perish. For who knows, perhaps only in order to right the sins of your ancestors you have come to the palace.”

Esther told Michael and Gabriel to reply to Mordechai:

“Assemble all the Jews in Shushan and fast on my behalf; do not eat or drink for three days and nights. I and my maidens will likewise fast. At the end of three days, I will approach the king without being summoned, and if I will perish in this World (since I will have become prohibited to my husband) for the sake of my people, at least I will have a portion in the World to Come. For until now I lived with the king against my will, and now I shall live with him willfully. And the law is that a Jewish girl who has been coerced by a non-Jew is still permitted to her husband. But as soon as I approach him willfully, I will become prohibited to my husband.

“Let the bride and bridegroom emerge dressed in sackcloth. Likewise, let men and animals not taste anything, and separate the babies from their mothers’ breasts.”



Mordechai assembled twelve thousand young *kohanim* and gave them each a *shofar* in their right hand and a *Torah* in their left hand. They cried out in prayer, saying: ‘Here is the *Torah* which You have given us, and Your beloved nation is about to be destroyed from the world. Who will rise and read from the *Torah* and mention Your name? The sun and the moon will darken, as they were only created for the sake of Your people.’ They fell on their faces and cried: ‘Answer us, our Father, answer us. Answer us, our King, answer us.’ They blew the *shofars* and the people followed along in prayer. This caused an uproar in heaven; the heavenly hosts wept and the forefathers moved in their graves.

As Esther had commanded, Mordechai and the people fasted and sat in ashes on the holiday of *Pesah*.



CHAPTER XII

Esther Pleads for Her People



fter three days of fasting, Esther arose from the ground and her ashes, and adorned herself with her royal garments and precious jewelry. Then she offered a prayer, saying:

“G-d of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and my ancestor Benjamin, it is not because I am worthy before You that I am approaching this foolish king, but only so that Your people should not be destroyed from this world. You created the entire world for the sake of Israel, so if Israel will be destroyed, who will say, ‘*Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh*’ (‘Sanctified, sanctified, sanctified’) three times each day?”

“You have made an everlasting treaty with us. Bring up the merit of the Binding of Isaac before You. Haman has offered money to the king to buy us for ten thousand silver talents. Hear our voice and answer us by delivering us from this oppression. Break down the powerful ones, break down Haman, and let him never rise up again.”

A great cry emerged from Esther’s lips, and she spoke with tears. Her throat became dry from weeping, and her eyes became dim from her tears. She imagined that perhaps she would appear before the king and he would not listen to her. She prayed:

“May an angel of mercy accompany me to the king and bring me grace and kindness. May the merit of Abraham precede me; may the Binding of Isaac strengthen me; may the grace of Jacob be placed in my mouth; and the kindness of Joseph be on my tongue. Happy is the man



who trusts in Him, for he is not frightened. He will extend His right and left hands to me, with which He created His entire world. All of Israel, pray for me, for on your behalf am I going to plead for mercy. For whenever a man prays before *Hashem* in times of distress, his prayer is heard.

“Let us perceive the deeds of our ancestors and act in the same way, then our prayers will be answered. Abraham’s left hand seized Isaac’s throat, while his right hand was on the knife. He fulfilled Your command willingly. You opened up the windows of heaven to allow the angels to cry bitterly. They said: ‘Woe to the world if this occurs.’

“I am likewise calling out in prayer before You. Answer me, as You answer all those who are oppressed and distressed. Merciful One! Gracious One! You are called Slow to Anger and One Who displays abundant kindness and truth; One Who forgives sins and transgression; One Who preserves the treaty and kindness for those He loves and for those who preserve the commandments.

Esther cried out as a woman in childbirth. “Listen to our voice and answer us. Deliver us from our oppression. I have fasted three days. What else can I do? I thought of fasting four or five days, but fasted only three, corresponding to the three days it took Abraham to reach the site for the Binding of Isaac. You promised him that every time his descendants would be in trouble, You would remember for them the merit of the Binding and save them. Moreover, I fasted three days, corresponding to the *Kohanim*, Levites and Israelites who stood at Mount Sinai and said, ‘*Whatever Hashem has spoken, we will do and we will listen.*’ Now save them from this distress.

Esther continued: “*Hashem*, who knows the hearts and kidneys, remember the merit of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and do not turn away from my request.”

Esther then stood opposite Ahashverosh’s court, as the king was seated on his royal throne. When the king saw Esther standing there, with her tearful eyes directed toward the heaven, she found favor in his eyes, and he extended the golden scepter to her. Esther touched the scepter.



The king asked her: “How can I help you, Esther? Even if you were to ask for half my kingdom, I would grant it to you. However, I will not grant you the request to rebuild the *Bet Hamikdash* which is located within the border of half my kingdom, since I am afraid that the Jews will rebel against me. However, any other request I will promptly fulfill.”

When Esther heard these words, she trembled, and therefore did not request that Ahashverosh rescind his decree. Instead she said: “If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared.”

The king ordered, “Hasten Haman, that he may do as Esther has requested.” Then the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

At the banquet, once again, the king said to Esther: “What is your request, and it will be granted to you. If you were to ask, your plea would be granted, except if you would request for the reconstruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*, which is located within the border of half of my kingdom.”

Esther replied: “I do not seek half your kingdom nor the reconstruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*. Rather, if I have found favor before you, and if it pleases the king to grant my request, let the king and Haman come to the meal that I shall prepare, and tomorrow I will do as the king requests.”

Esther invited Haman to the meal along with the king for three reasons: Firstly, because she was aware that Haman had killed Hatach because he was carrying messages between Mordechai and Esther. She thought that she would invite Haman to appease him, so that he would not kill her, as well. In this way, she hoped to uproot Haman’s hatred against her. Secondly, she wished to create jealousy between Haman and Ahashverosh, so that the king should say, “Why, of all my governors, is Esther inviting only Haman?” Thirdly, Esther realized that the eyes of all the Jews were directed toward her, hoping that she beseech Ahashverosh on their behalf. She reasoned that if she acts contrary to their expectations, the Jewish people will instead turn their eyes and hearts toward *Hashem* to ask for mercy.



CHAPTER XIII

Haman's Downfall

Haman left Esther's banquet happy. On his way out, he saw Mordechai studying with children in the *Sanhedrin* Esther established for him at the king's gate. Mordechai did not stand up in respect for Haman's image, nor did he tremble in his presence. Instead, Mordechai stretched out his right foot to show Haman the sales contract written on Mordechai's shoe opposite his ankle, detailing the sale Haman made when he sold himself as a slave to Mordechai in exchange for a loaf of bread. Haman was filled with rage.

Haman controlled himself; and when he came home, he sent for his friends and Zeresh his wife. Haman told them of his wealth and of his two hundred and eight children. He detailed all the ways in which the king had promoted him, and how he had elevated him above the officials and servants of the king. Haman said, "Esther did not invite anyone else to come with the king to the banquet that she prepared, but myself. Tomorrow I am also invited to her banquet with the king. But all of this is worth nothing to me, as long as I see the Jew Mordechai sitting among the *Sanhedrin* with the children at the palace gate."

Zeresh and his friends replied: "You cannot cast Mordechai into the fire, for his ancestor Abraham was saved from it. You can not slay him by sword, since his ancestor Isaac was saved from it. You can not drown him, since Moses and the Israelites were saved from drowning. You can not cast him to the lions, since the prophet Daniel was saved from them. Rather, prepare a gallows fifty cubits high, and in the



morning ask the king to order Mordechai hanged upon it. For until now, none of his ancestors were hanged and saved from it.”

That night Haman did not rest. He brought carpenters and smiths--carpenters to prepare the gallows and smiths to fashion the hanging apparatus. Haman's sons rejoiced while his wife Zeresh played on the harp. Haman said: "I will pay the craftsmen and prepare a meal for them." So pleased was Haman, that he arose to try the gallows on himself. At that moment, a heavenly voice rang out and said, "If it fits you Haman, it is good for you."

Ever since Esther invited Haman to the banquet, the Jewish people were distressed, and said to each other: "Is this what we hoped for? That she should invite him to a meal?" Instead they poured out their heart to trust in *Hashem*, pleading:

"Answer us and all those in trouble. Just as the eyes of the servants are lifted to their masters, so our eyes are lifted toward You until You redeem us. Our enemies are cursing and saying: 'Who are the Jews?' Hear our prayers and redeem us tonight, because every time You redeem us, You do so at night: from Pharaoh, from Sennaherib, and from all those who rise up against us."

On that night, the outcry of the young children was heard in heaven as the sound of young goats. *Hashem* said: "What is this sound of young goats that I hear?" The Attribute of Compassion replied: "This is not the sound of young goats that You hear, but the sound of the young children who are destined to be killed by the decree of the wicked Haman." Immediately, *Hashem* became filled with compassion for His people, and ordered that the decree be torn up.

The angel Michael was sent to disturb the sleep of Ahashverosh. Thus, Ahashverosh's sleep was disturbed that whole night. In addition, the sleep of the entire kingdom was disturbed. There was great mourning heard throughout the cities and provinces; young men were dressed in sackcloth, and old men and women were banging upon their chests in despair. They were all crying out: "Woe to us, that we must witness this great oppression, this great disaster."



Moreover, the sleep of *Hashem* was restless in the heavens on that night. Does *Hashem* sleep? G-d forbid, but when Israel sinned He made Himself appear as if sleeping. But tonight when they do His will, He neither sleeps nor slumbers.

Mordechai, too, could not sleep on that night. The Jewish people assembled and accused him, saying: "You caused this evil to befall us. For if you had stood up in respect for Haman and bowed to him, this disaster would not have come upon us." Mordechai replied: "Haman's garment was adorned with two images, and anyone who stood up and bowed to him, was in actuality bowing to the images. You know that whoever worships idols will perish from This World and be banished from the World to Come." The Jewish people fell silent.

Haman remained awake on that night, as he was engaged in the preparation of the gallows, as stated above.

On that night, Esther was awake, busy preparing the banquet for Haman and Ahashverosh.

Ahashverosh lay in bed awake. He imagined that Esther and Haman were conspiring to kill him, as Esther invited only Haman to the banquet with Ahashverosh. Ahashverosh ordered his Book of Chronicles to be brought before him. The angel Michael sat opposite the king, and the king perceived him as a person. The angel began to speak to Ahashverosh: "Haman wishes to kill you and become king himself. In fact, he will ask you tomorrow morning for your permission to kill someone who has saved you from death. Therefore say to him: 'What should be done to the man whom the king wishes to honor?' See if he does not ask you for royal garments, the royal crown, and the king's horse."

When Shamshai, the scribe, saw recorded in the Book of Chronicles that Mordechai had related the plot of Bigtan and Teresh, he turned the pages of the book, and did not wish to read that incident. *Hashem* wished that the incident should be read, so the events unfolded before the king on their own.

The king asked, "What honor and greatness has been done to Mordechai for this?" The king's servants answered: "Nothing was done for him."



Just then, Haman had come into the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about hanging Mordechai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. The king asked, "Who is in the court?" The king's servants answered, "Behold, Haman is standing in the court."

"Let him come in," said the king.

Haman entered. The king asked him, "What shall be done to the man whom the king wishes to honor?"

Haman thought to himself, whom would the king wish to honor more than me? And he answered the king, "For the man whom the king wishes to honor, have them bring the royal clothing which the king wore on the day of his coronation, and the horse the king rode upon on that memorable day, and the royal crown should be set upon his head; and let this clothing and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble officers, and they should dress the man whom the king wishes to honor, and bring him on horseback through the center of the city, and proclaim before him, 'This is what is done to the man whom the king wishes to honor.'"

When the king heard this, he was certain that Haman wished to kill him and become king instead of him, as he saw in his vision during the night.

So, he said to Haman, "Hurry to the king's treasury and take one of the fine purple garments, a garment of fine silk, and the crown with which I was presented on the day of my coronation, as well as my sword and my coat of armor. Then go to the king's stable and take the horse standing at the entrance of the stable upon which I rode on the day of my coronation. With these things, go and honor Mordechai as you have spoken."

Haman said, "There are many Jews in Shushan with the name Mordechai, to which one shall I go?"

The king said: "To the Jew Mordechai who spoke well of the king and sits at the gates of the palace."

When Haman heard this, he was exceedingly distressed. His countenance darkened, his eyesight dimmed, he became confused, and



his knees knocked. He said, “There are many Mordechais in the world, and I do not know about which Mordechai you spoke.”

Ahashverosh said, “Did I not say the Mordechai who sits at the palace gates?”

Haman replied, “There are many gates of the palace. Which gate do you mean?”

The king said, “Did I not say the gate which passes from the harem to the palace?”

Haman replied, “That man is my enemy and the enemy of my ancestors. May ten thousand talents of silver be given to him instead, but never this honor.”

Ahashverosh replied, “May ten thousand talents of silver be given to him, and I am making him ruler over your house, but this honor shall not be withheld from him.”

Haman pleaded, “Let my ten sons run in front of him, but never this honor.”

The king continued: “You, your sons, and your wife should become Mordechai’s slaves, but this honor should not be withheld from him.”

Haman continued, “Mordechai is a mere commoner, appoint him over a district or a province, but do not accord him this honor.”

The king said, “I am appointing him over districts and provinces over land and sea, but this honor shall not be withheld from him.”

Said Haman, “Both you and I are already famous. If you wish, publicize Mordechai’s name among the provinces of your kingdom, but do not accord him this honor.”

The king answered, “The name of the man who spoke well of the king and saved him from death shall certainly be publicized throughout the world, together with my name, but this honor should not be withheld from him.”

Haman continued, “How can this honor be accorded to Mordechai? Letters have already been sent to every province in the kingdom calling for the destruction of his people.”



The king said, "I hereby invalidate those letters, but this honor should not be withheld from Mordechai." He added angrily, "Haman, hurry and do not neglect anything from all that I have commanded."

When Haman realized that Ahashverosh did not accept his arguments, he entered the king's treasury with a bowed stature, mourning, and with his head covered. He took all the garments the king commanded and proceeded to the royal stables to take the horse the king instructed. He did so and approached Mordechai. He called out to Mordechai, "Arise, you righteous Mordechai, son of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Your sackcloth has superseded the ten thousand talents of silver which I promised to the king, but were not accepted, because you are beloved before your father in heaven. Any time you pray before Him, He accepts your prayer and redeems you from your troubles."

Mordechai replied: "I have been fasting for three days and nights, and am not in a condition to ride on the royal horse." Haman entered the king's treasury and brought out spices and ointments. He bathed Mordechai and anointed him. Then he dressed him in the royal garments and fed him the meal Esther had sent him. Ahashverosh provided him with twenty-seven thousand runners holding golden cups in their right hands and golden goblets in their left hands, to run before Mordechai as he was being led on the royal horse. As Haman led Mordechai on the royal horse through the streets of Shushan, the runners praised Mordechai with, "Thus should be done to the man whom the king wishes to honor."

When the Jewish people saw Mordechai being accorded this honor, they joined the procession, stating, "Thus should be done to the man whom the King, Creator of Heaven and Earth, wishes to honor."

When Esther saw Mordechai, the son of her father's brother, dressed in royal garments, wearing the royal crown, she offered praise to *Hashem* for His salvation.

As they were walking opposite Haman's house, his daughter looked down from the roof, and it appeared to her that it was Mordechai leading her father in royal garments on the king's horse. She took the chamber pot and flung it down on his head. Haman looked up and saw



that it was his daughter who had thrown the dirt on him and said, “You, too, my daughter, inflict shame upon me.” She immediately fell from the roof and died.

Mordechai then returned to the *Sanhedrin* at the palace gates. He threw off the royal garments and put on sackcloth and sat in ashes, while giving praise until evening.

Haman hurried home, mourning for his daughter, and with his head covered, as one mourning both for his daughter and for his disgrace. He related all that occurred to his wife Zeresh and his friends. Zeresh advised him, “Mordechai is from the descendants of the righteous ones, before whom you have begun to fall, as the kings fell before Abraham, and Abimelech before Isaac; Jacob was victorious over the angel, and through Moses and Aaron, Pharaoh and the Egyptians drowned. All kings who have treated the Jews badly, their G-d delivered them into their hands. Likewise, you too will not be able to harm Mordechai, and you will continue to fall before him.”

While they were still talking with him, the king’s courtiers came, and they hurried to bring Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared. At the banquet, the king once again asked Esther: “What is your request, and it will be granted to you. Even if you should ask for half my kingdom, I would grant it to you, save for the reconstruction of the *Bet Hamikdash*, which is located within the border of half my kingdom. However, wait until your son Darius grows up and will inherit my kingdom, then that will be done, as well.”

Esther raised her eyes toward heaven and said, “If I have found compassion before you, let the deliverance of my soul from my enemy be granted to me, as well as the deliverance of my people. For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be exterminated. If we had been sold as slaves and maidservants, I would have remained silent, since the enemy is not concerned with the king’s welfare.”

Ahashverosh answered and said, “Who is he, and where is he? Who presumes in his heart to do so?”



Esther replied: “The enemy is the wicked Haman who wished to kill you yesterday in your bed chamber, and to dress himself today in royal garments, ride on your horse and place the royal crown on his head. But the matter was arranged in heaven for that honor to be bestowed instead upon Mordechai, the brother of my father, whom Haman wished to hang.”

Haman trembled in fear before the king and the queen.

The king then raised his eyes toward the garden and perceived angels resembling the ten sons of Haman cutting down trees in the royal garden. He arose in anger and went out to the garden to investigate. In the meantime, Haman approached Queen Esther to beg for his life, as he assumed that the evil turn of events was arranged by the king. Suddenly, Haman lurched forward and fell upon the couch Esther sat, since the angel Gabriel pushed him in that position.

Just at that moment Ahashverosh returned from the garden, in a rage. When he saw Haman leaning over Esther’s couch, he shouted angrily, “Haman, did you come to the queen’s banquet just to sleep with her while I am present in the palace? Let all the nations judge what your punishment should be.” Haman was utterly ashamed.

The king then addressed Mordechai: “Mordechai, the Jew, who saved the king from death, arise and take the wicked Haman, the oppressor of the Jews, and hang him on the gallows which, in reality, he prepared for himself. You may then punish him as you please.”

Mordechai led Haman away from the king’s palace and addressed him: “Come with me, Haman, you wicked one, and we shall hang you on the gallows which you prepared for yourself.”

Haman responded: “Before they raise me to the gallows, I beg of you, Mordechai, do not hang me like a common criminal. For great men, governors and princes have held me in high regard. I am Haman, Viceroy to the king. ‘Father of the King,’ I am called. I beg of you, spare my life, my lord Mordechai. Do not blot out my name as you do to my ancestor Amalek, and do not hang my gray head upon the gallows. But if you insist upon killing me, behead me with the king’s sword, with which all the nobles are killed.” Haman cried and wept, but Mordechai paid no heed.



When Haman realized that he was being ignored, he began to mourn for his own situation. *Hashem* responded saying: “Listen trees and plants, which I have planted from the beginning of time. When Haman fashioned the gallows, you all took counsel to decide which tree should be chosen on which to hang Haman. After the various trees explained why they would not be suitable, the cedar advised, ‘Let the wicked Haman and his ten sons hang on the gallows which he prepared for himself.’” So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordechai, and the king’s wrath was placated.



CHAPTER XIV

The Happy Conclusion



n that day, King Ahashverosh handed over to Queen Esther the estate of Haman, together with all the members of his household and all his treasures. Esther had told the king how Mordechai was related to her, and Mordechai came before the king. The king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordechai.

Esther placed Mordechai in charge of Haman's estate.

Esther came before the king, fell down at his feet, and pleaded and cried to Ahashverosh, that he avert the evil decree of Haman--the plot he had devised against the Jews. Ahashverosh extended his golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther straightened up and stood before the king. She said, "If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor before him, let it be decreed to revoke the letters written by Haman, the ones he wrote to destroy the Jews living in all the king's provinces. For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come upon my people?"

Ahashverosh replied, "Behold, I have already given Haman's estate to you, and Haman has already been hanged upon the gallows, because he wanted to harm the Jews. Now, you may write about the Jews as you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring. For the decrees which are written in the king's name, and sealed with the King's signet ring, cannot be revoked."



The royal scribes were summoned to pen this new letter at that time, on the twenty-third of *Sivan*. Everything Mordechai had instructed regarding the Jews was written. The letters were written in King Ahashverosh's name, and sealed with the king's signet ring, as the king had instructed. They were addressed to the governors and the officials of each of the 127 provinces in the kingdom, each in its own language. A letter was also addressed to the Jews, written in their own language. The text of the letters was as follows:

King Ahashverosh sends this letter to all inhabitants of land and sea, as well to all the rulers of districts and commanders of the armies:

I am writing to inform you of the honesty and sincerity of the Jewish nation. They love every nation and revere the king. However, there have been evil men who have been close to the king, and in whose charge the kingdom was entrusted. Through their trickery, they caused the kingdom to go astray. In addition, they have written letters which were not truthful, and were even unfavorable among evil men, and bad for the kingdom. They asked of the king to allow righteous people be killed and innocent blood be spilled.

Haman, son of Hammedata, descendant of Amalek, came to us from a foreign nation, but in our land he benefitted greatly. We promoted him and honored him, calling him, 'Father of the King,' and he sat to the right of the king. But he did not know how to act appropriately in his position. Rather, he schemed to overthrow the king, and become ruler of the kingdom. Therefore, we hanged him, and he received the punishment that was due him.

The king therefore authorizes the Jews in every city to gather themselves together on the thirteenth day of Adar, and to defend themselves--to destroy, to slaughter and to annihilate any individual or group that might attack them, and to plunder their possessions.



The letters were sent by couriers, riders of swift mules, hurried and pressed on by the king's command. The decree was likewise circulated in Shushan the Capital.

As Mordechai emerged from the royal gate, the streets were bedecked with myrtle and the courtyard with purple canopies. The ten sons of Haman walked in front of Mordechai, singing and praising the One who rewards the Jews and punishes the wicked. They said, "Our foolish father placed his trust in his wealth and glory, and Mordechai defeated him with fast and prayer." Rejoicing was heard throughout the city of Shushan. The Jews were granted permission to study *Torah* and observe the *misvot*, the *Shabbat* and Festivals, to circumcise their sons, and to place *tefillin* on their hands and heads. In every province, wherever the king's command reached, the Jews rejoiced with a feast and a holiday. The fear of the Jews fell upon the nations of the land, and many of them became Jews.

The thirteenth day of month *Adar* drew near, the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to have power over them, but it turned out to the contrary, that the Jews would be allowed to defend themselves against their enemies. On that day, the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahashverosh to attack those who sought to hurt them, and no one stood in their way, for the fear of the Jews fell upon all the nations. All the governors and officials of the provinces promoted the Jews because the fear of Mordechai had fallen upon them. For Mordechai was the administrator and chief officer in the royal palace, and his coinage was circulated throughout the provinces.

In Shushan the Capital, the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men, including the the ten sons of Haman, son of Hammedata, the enemy of the Jews, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder. The number of those slain in Shushan the Capital was reported to the king. The king said to Esther the Queen, "The Jews have slain five hundred men in Shushan the Capital, including the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the King's provinces? Now, tell me what is your petition, and it shall be granted you. If you have additional requests, they shall be done." Esther replied, "If it pleases the king, let



it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to continue tomorrow in the same fashion, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows."

When Mordechai came and saw Haman and his sons hanging on the gallows, he said, "Haman, you schemed to do evil to the Jewish people, but *Hashem* has brought your scheme upon your own head."

The Jews who were in Shushan also gathered together on the fourteenth day of *Adar*, and slew three hundred men, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder. The remainder of the Jews living in the king's provinces gathered together on the thirteenth day of *Adar* and defended themselves, and slew seventy five thousand of their foes, and they, too, did not lay their hands on the plunder. On the following day, the fourteenth day of *Adar*, they rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing. But the Jews living in Shushan gathered together on the thirteenth and fourteenth days of *Adar*, and rested on the fifteenth, making it a day of feasting and rejoicing.

Therefore, the Jews of the villages and unwalled towns, celebrate the fourteenth day of the month *Adar* as a day of rejoicing and feasting, and a holiday, and for sending gifts of food to one to another; while the Jews of *Shushan* and other walled towns celebrate the fifteenth day of *Adar* as one of rejoicing and feasting.

Mordechai recorded these events and sent letters to all the Jews in all the provinces of King Ahashverosh, both near and far, to establish among them that they should observe the fourteenth day of the month of *Adar*, and the fifteenth day every year, like the days when the Jews rested from their enemies. They should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending gifts of food to one another, as well as gifts to the poor.

The Jews established upon themselves, upon their offspring, and upon all the proselytes who joined them, that they would celebrate these two days in the manner described, on their respective dates. Moreover, these days would be a remembrance to be celebrated with feasting by each generation, by every family, who live in every province, and every city. That these days of *Purim* should not be discontinued among the Jews, nor their remembrance be erased from the lives of their offspring.



Timeline

- 3319.....*Nebuchadnezzar began to rule*
- 3320.....*Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem*
- 3327.....*Jehoyachin was exiled.*
- 3331.....*Yirmiyah prophesized of the destruction of Babylon, and that Hashem will remember the Bet Hamikdash after Seventy years.*
- 3338.....*The Bet Hamikdash was destroyed*
- 3364.....*Nebuchadnezzar died. His son Evil Merodach rules.*
- 3387.....*Evil Merodach died. Belshazzar rules.*
- 3389.....*Belshazzar saw that the Bet Hamikdash was not rebuilt after a complete seventy years had passed since Nebuchadnezzar began his rule in 3319, and threw a banquet to demonstrate that the Bet Hamikdash will never be rebuilt. He was killed that night and his empire was conquered by Darius and Coresh.*
- 3389-3390.....*Darius I became the ruler over the entire kingdom of Babylon.*
- 3390-3392.....*Darius I died. Coresh rules. Reconstruction of the Bet Hamikdash begins, as the 70 years (beginning 3320) were complete.*
- 3392.....*Coresh died. Ahashverosh rules and halts the construction of the Bet Hamikdash.*
- 3395.....*In the third year of his reign, Ahashverosh made a great banquet to celebrate the security of his kingdom despite the end of the seventy years. He calculated incomplete years of reign of Babylonian kings beginning from the exile of Jehoyachin in 3327: 37 years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign +23 years of Evil Merodach's reign +3 years of Belshazzar's reign +5 years of the reign of Darius and Coresh +2 years of his own reign.*
- 3399.....*Esther becomes queen in the seventh year of Ahashverosh's reign.*
- 3404.....*Haman threw a lot in the twelfth year of Ahashverosh's reign, and the miracle of Purim.*
- 3406.....*Ahashverosh died. Darius II, son of Ahashverosh and Esther, rules.*
- 3408.....*Darius II allows the reconstruction of the Bet Hamikdash 70 years after its destruction.*



*After the reading, we first roll up the Megillah
Then recite the following when there is a minyan*

Blessed are You Hashem, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
our God, King of the universe אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
Who has fought our fights (through Yehoshua)*, הָרַב אֶת רִיבֵנוּ,
and Who judges our case (through Ehud Ben Gera), וְהִדִּין אֶת דֵּינֵנוּ,
and Who avenges our vengeance (through Gid'on), וְהִנּוּקֵט אֶת נַקְמַתֵנוּ,
and Who pays due וְהַמְשַׁלֵּם גְּמוּלָה
to all our motal enemies (through Shaul), לְכָל אוֹיְבֵי נַפְשֵׁנוּ,
and Who exacts payment for us וְהַנְּפָרֵעַ לָנוּ
from all our oppressors (through David). מִצָּרֵינוּ.

Blessed are You Hashem, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
The one Who exact payment for his nation, Yisrael הַנְּפָרֵעַ לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל
from all their oppressors (through Mordechai and Esther) מִכָּל צָרֵיהֶם
The Lord the Savior (in the future). הָאֵל הַמּוֹשֵׁעַ:

Afterwards say: (some say three times)

Cursed is Haman, אָרוּר הָמָן,
Blessed is Mordechai, בְּרוּךְ מֹרְדֵכַי,
Cursed is Zeresh, אָרוּרָה זֶרֶשׁ,
Blessed is Esther, בְּרוּכָה אֶסְתֵּר,
Cursed is all the wicked, אָרוּרִים כָּל הָרָשָׁעִים,
Blessed is all of Yisrael, בְּרוּכִים כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
And also Harbonah וְגַם חַרְבוּנָה
is remembered for good. זְכוּר לְטוֹב:

*Then say "Ve'ata Kadosh" and complete the prayers like Sat. night.
(refer to Chapter 3)*

ואומרים "ואתה קדוש" וכו' כמו מוצ"ש, קדיש תתקבל,
ובמקום שיר למעלות אומרים שיר המעלות לולא ה' שהיה לנו וכו',
קדיש יהא שלמא, ברכו, ועלינו לשבח.

*עיי' כף החיים סימן תרצ"ב ס"ק טו"ב



PEREK TEN

פרק י

1 **A**ND AHASHVEROSH levied taxes upon the land, and upon the islands of the sea.

א וַיִּשֶׂם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ
[אחשרוש] | מִסַּעֲלֵה־הָאָרֶץ וְאִיֵּי
הַיָּם:

2 And all acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordechai, to which the King advanced him, are they written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia?

ב וְכָל־מַעֲשֵׂה תְקוּפוֹ וּגְבוּרָתוֹ
וּפְרָשֵׁת גְּדֻלַּת מֶרְדֳּכַי אֲשֶׁר
גִּדְּלוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ הֵלוא־הֵם כְּתוּבִים
עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי
מְדֵי וּפָרַס:

The following verse is chanted aloud by the congregation, and repeated by the baal koreh:

3 For Mordechai the Jew was viceroy to King Ahashverosh, and great among the Jews, and accepted by the majority of his brothers, seeking the good of his people, and speaking peace to all his offspring.

ג כִּי | מֶרְדֳּכַי הַיְהוּדִי מְשֻׁנָּה
לְמַלְךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ וְגִדּוֹל
לְיְהוּדִים וְרָצוּי לְרַב אָחִיו
דֹרֵשׁ טוֹב לְעַמּוֹ וְדוֹבֵר שָׁלוֹם
לְכָל־זָרְעוֹ:





and that these days of Purim should not be discontinued among the Jews, nor their memory perish from their offspring.

וַיְמִי הַפּוּרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֹא יַעֲבֹרוּ
מִתּוֹךְ הַיְּהוּדִים וְזַכָּרָם לֹא-
יִסּוּף מִזֵּרְעָם:

29 Then Esther the Queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordechai the Jew, wrote with complete authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim.

כט וַתִּכְתֹּב אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה
בֶּת-אֲבִיתָיִל וּמֹרְדֵכַי הַיְּהוּדִי
אֶת-כָּל-תִּקְוָהּ לְקַיֵּם אֶת אַגְרַת
הַפּוּרִים הַזֹּאת הַשְּׁנִיטָה:

30 And letters were sent to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahashverosh; in words of peace and truth,

ל וַיִּשְׁלַח סְפָרִים אֶל-כָּל-
הַיְּהוּדִים אֶל-שִׁבְעַת וְעֶשְׂרִים
וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה מַלְכוּת
אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ דְּבַרֵי שָׁלוֹם וָאֱמֶת:

31 to confirm these days of Purim on their proper times, according to what Mordechai the Jew and Esther the Queen had enjoined them, and as they had undertaken upon themselves and their offspring, with regard to the fasting and their lamenting.

לא לְקַיֵּם אֶת-יְמֵי הַפּוּרִים הָאֵלֶּה
בְּזִמְנֵיהֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר קָיִם עֲלֵיהֶם
מֹרְדֵכַי הַיְּהוּדִי וְאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה
וְכַאֲשֶׁר קִיְּמוּ עַל-נַפְשָׁם
וְעַל-זֵרְעָם דְּבַרֵי הַצְּמֹת
וְזַעֲקָתָם:

32 And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

לב וּמֵאֲמַר אֶסְתֵּר קָיִם דְּבַרֵי
הַפּוּרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְנִכְתָּב בַּסֵּפֶר:



25 But when she came before the King, he commanded through the means of letters that the wicked plot, which he (Haman) devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

ה וּבָאָהּ לְפָנַי הַמֶּלֶךְ אָמַר
עַם-הַסֵּפֶר יָשׁוּב מִחֻשְׁבְּתוֹ
הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר-חָשַׁב עַל-
הַיְהוּדִים עַל-רָאשׁוֹ וְתָלוּ אֹתוֹ
וְאֶת-בָּנָיו עַל-הָעֵץ:

26 Therefore, they called these days Purim from the word Pur. Therefore, for all that was written in this letter, and because of what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them,

כו עַל-כֵּן קָרְאוּ לַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה
פּוּרִים עַל-שֵׁם הַפּוּר עַל-כֵּן
עַל-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הָאֲגֻדָּה הַזֹּאת
וּמָה-רָאוּ עַל-כִּכָּה וּמָה הִגִּיעַ
אֲלֵיהֶם:

27 the Jews ordained, and took upon themselves, and upon their offspring, and upon all who joined them, never to fail, that they would observe these two days in the manner which it was written, and according to their appointed time every year.

כו קִיְמוּ וּקְבְּלוּ [וּקְבַל] הַיְהוּדִים |
עֲלֵיהֶם | וְעַל-זָרָעָם וְעַל
כָּל-הַנְּלוּיִם עֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יַעֲבֹר
לְהִיּוֹת עֲשִׂים אֶת-שְׁנֵי הַיָּמִים
הָאֵלֶּה כַּכְּתוּבָם וְכַזְּמַנָּם
בְּכָל-שָׁנָה וּשְׁנָה:

28 And these days should be observed by every generation, by every family, every province, and every city;

כח וְהַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה נִזְכָּרִים וְנַעֲשִׂים
בְּכָל-דּוֹר וְדוֹר מִשְׁפָּחָה
וּמִשְׁפָּחָה מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וְעִיר
וְעִיר



20 And Mordechai wrote down these matters, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahashverosh, both near and far,

כ ויכתב מרדכי את־הדברים האלה וישלח ספרים אל־כל־היהודים אשר בכל־מדינות המלך אחשוורוש הקרובים והרחוקים:

21 to establish this among them, that they should observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and the fifteenth day each and every year,

כא לקיים עליהם להיות עשים את יום ארבעה עשר לתחדש אדר ואת יום־חמשה עשר בו בכל־שנה ושנה:

22 corresponding with the days when the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which had been changed for them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a holiday. They should observe them as days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions (gifts of food) one to another, and gifts to the poor.

כב כימים אשר־נחו בהם היהודים מאויביהם והחודש אשר נהפך להם מיגון לשמחה ומאבל ליום טוב לעשות אותם ימי משתה ושמחה ומשלוח מנות איש לרעהו ומתנות לאביונים:

23 And the Jews accepted to continue doing as they had begun, and as Mordechai had written to them.

כג וקבל היהודים את אשר־החלו לעשות ואת אשר־כתב מרדכי אליהם:

24 For Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to terrify them, and to destroy them.

כד כי המן בן־המדתא האגגי צרר כל־היהודים חשב על־היהודים לאבדם והפיל פור הוא הגורל להמם ולאבדם:



but on the plunder they did not lay their hand.

וּבַבְּזָה לֹא שָׁלְחוּ אֶת-יָדָם:

16 The remainder of the Jews who were in the King's provinces gathered together, and defended themselves, gaining relief from their enemies, and slew seventy-five thousand of their foes, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

טז וּשְׂאֵר הַיְהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּמַדִּינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ נִקְהְלוּ | וְעָמְדוּ עַל-נַפְשָׁם וְנוֹחַ מֵאִיבֵיהֶם וְהָרַגוּ בְּשֵׁנָאֵיהֶם חֲמֵשֶׁה וּשְׁבַעִים אֶלֶף וּבַבְּזָה לֹא שָׁלְחוּ אֶת-יָדָם:

17 This happened on the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day, they rested, and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.

יז בְּיוֹם-שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ אָדָר וְנוֹחַ בְּאַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וַעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ יוֹם מְשֻׁתָּה וּשְׂמִיחָה:

18 But the Jews who were in Shushan gathered together on the thirteenth day and on the fourteenth day of the month, and on the fifteenth day they rested, and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.

יח וְהַיְהוּדִים [וְהַיְהוּדִים] אֲשֶׁר-בְּשׁוּשָׁן נִקְהְלוּ בְּשְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וּבְאַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וְנוֹחַ בְּחֲמֵשֶׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וַעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ יוֹם מְשֻׁתָּה וּשְׂמִיחָה:

19 Therefore, the Jews of the villages, who live in the unwalled towns, celebrate the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a day of rejoicing and feasting, and a holiday, and for sending portions (gifts of food) one to another.

יט עַל-כֵּן הַיְהוּדִים הַפְּרוּזִים [הַפְּרוּזִים] הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּעָרֵי הַפְּרוּזוֹת עֹשִׂים אֹת יוֹם אַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ אָדָר שְׂמִיחָה וּמְשֻׁתָּה וְיוֹם טוֹב וּמְשָׁלוֹת מְנוֹת אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ:



- 11 On that day the number of those who were slain in Shushan the capital was brought before the King. יא ביום ההוא בא מספר ההרוגים בשושן הבירה לפני המלך:
- 12 And the King said to Esther the Queen, "The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the capital, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the King's provinces? Now what is your request? It shall be granted you. What is your additional petition? It shall be done." יב ויאמר המלך לאסתר המלכה בשושן הבירה הרגו היהודים ואבד חמש מאות איש ואת עשרת בני-המן בשאר מדינות המלך מה עשו ומה-שאלתך וינתן לך ומה-בקשתך עוד ותעש:
- 13 Then Esther said, "If it please the King, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do tomorrow also according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows." יג ותאמר אסתר אם-על-המלך טוב ינתן גם-מחר ליהודים אשר בשושן לעשות כדת היום ואת עשרת בני-המן יתלו על-העץ:
- 14 And the King commanded that it be done; and the decree was given in Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons. יד ויאמר המלך להעשות כן ותנתן דת בשושן ואת עשרת בני-המן תלו:
- 15 The Jews who were in Shushan also gathered together on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and slew three hundred men in Shushan; טו ויקהלו היהודים [היהודיים] אשר-בשושן גם ביום ארבעה עשר לחדש אדר ויהרגו בשושן שלש מאות איש



for this man Mordechai grew greater and greater.

כִּי־הָאִישׁ מֹרְדֵכַי הוֹלֵךְ וְגָדוֹל:

5 And the Jews struck all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, slaughtering and destroying, and did what they pleased to their enemies.

וַיִּכּוּ הַיְהוּדִים בְּכָל־אֹיְבֵיהֶם מִכַּת־חֶרֶב וְהָרַג וְאַבְדָּן וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְשֵׁנֵיהֶם כְּרָצוֹנָם:

6 And in Shushan the capital the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men.

וּבְשׁוּשַׁן הַבְּיָרָה הָרְגוּ הַיְהוּדִים וְאַבְדּוּ חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת אִישׁ:

7 And (including) Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha,

וְאַתְּ | וְאַתְּ | וְאַתְּ | פֶּרְשַׁנְדָּתָא דְדַלְפוֹן אֲסַפְתָּא:

8 And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha,

וְאַתְּ | וְאַתְּ | וְאַתְּ | פּוֹרְתָא אַדְלִיָּא אַרִידָתָא:

9 And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vaizatha,

וְאַתְּ | וְאַתְּ | וְאַתְּ | וְאַתְּ | פֶּרְמַשְׁתָּא אַרִיסַי אַרְדַי וַיִּזְתָּא:

10 the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, they slew; but they did not lay their hand on the Plunder.

עֶשְׂרֵת בְּנֵי הָמָן בֶּן־הַמֵּדָתָא צָרַר הַיְהוּדִים הָרְגוּ וּבְבָזָה לֹא שָׁלְחוּ אֶת־יָדָם:



PEREK NINE

פרק ט

1 **A**ND IN THE TWELFTH month, that is, the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, when the King's command and his decree drew near to be enforced, on the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, however it was turned to the contrary, so that the Jews ruled over those who hated them,

א וּבְשָׁנִים עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ הוּא-חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר בְּשִׁלּוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם בּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִגִּיעַ דְּבַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ לְהַעֲשׂוֹת בַּיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר שָׁבְרוּ אִיבֵי הַיְהוּדִים לְשָׁלוֹט בָּהֶם וַנִּהְפֹּךְ הוּא אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלֹטוּ הַיְהוּדִים הַמָּה בְּשִׁנְאֵיהֶם:

2 The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahashverosh, to attack those who sought to harm them; and no one stood in their way; for the fear of them fell upon all the people.

ב נִקְהָלוּ הַיְהוּדִים בְּעָרֵיהֶם בְּכָל-מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ לְשַׁלַּח יָד בַּמִּבְקָשִׁי רַעְתָם וְאִישׁ לֹא-עָמַד בְּפָנֵיהֶם * כִּי-נָפַל פַּחַדָם עַל-כָּל-הָעַמִּים:

3 And all the officials of the provinces, and the satraps, and the governors, and those who manage the King's affairs, exalted the Jews; because the fear of Mordechai had fallen upon them.

ג וְכָל-שָׂרֵי הַמְּדִינֹת וְהָאֲחַשְׁדָּרְפָּנִים וְהַפְּחוֹת וְעֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר לַמֶּלֶךְ מִנְּשָׂאִים אֶת-הַיְהוּדִים כִּי-נָפַל פַּחַד-מֹרְדֵכַי עֲלֵיהֶם:

4 For Mordechai was great in the King's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces;

ד כִּי-גָדוֹל מֹרְדֵכַי בְּבֵית הַמֶּלֶךְ וְשִׁמְעוֹ הוֹלֵךְ בְּכָל-הַמְּדִינֹת * יֵשׁ אוֹמְרִים לְפָנֵיהֶם



The following verse is chanted aloud by the congregation, and repeated by the baal koreh:

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 16 | The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor. | טו
לְיְהוּדִים הָיְתָה אֹרֶה וְשִׂמְחָה
וְשִׂשׂוֹן וְיִקָּר: |
| 17 | And in every province, and in every city, wherever the King's command and his decree reached, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them. | זו
וּבְכָל-מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וּבְכָל-
עִיר וָעִיר מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר
דִּבֶּר-הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ מֵגִיעַ
שִׂמְחָה וְשִׂשׂוֹן לְיְהוּדִים
מִשְׁתָּה וַיּוֹם טוֹב וְרַבִּים מֵעַמִּי
הָאָרֶץ מִתִּיּהָדִים כִּי-נִפְלַ
פְּחַד-הַיְהוּדִים עָלֵיהֶם: |





12 On one day in all the provinces of King Ahashverosh, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

יב בְּיוֹם אֶחָד בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ בְּשְׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר
לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ
אָדָר:

13 The contents of the written copy was to issue a decree in every province, and to be proclaimed to all peoples, so that the Jews should be prepared on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

יג פְּתֻשָׁגֶן הַכְּתָב לְהַנְתִּין דָּת
בְּכָל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה גְלוּי
לְכָל־הָעַמִּים וְלַהֲלוֹת הַיְהוּדִים
[הַיְהוּדִיִּים] עֲתִידִים [עֵתוּדִים]
לְיוֹם הַזֶּה לְהַנָּקֵם מֵאִיְבֵיהֶם:

14 So the couriers, riders of steeds used for the royal service, went out, hurried and urged on by the King's command. And the decree was circulated in Shushan the capital.

יד הָרָצִים רֹכְבֵי הָרֶכֶשׁ
הָאֲחַשְׁתָּרְנַיִם יֵצְאוּ מִבְּהֵלִים
וְדַחוּפִים בְּדַבַּר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהִדָּת
נִתְּנָה בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה:

The following verse is chanted aloud by the congregation, and repeated by the baal koreh:

15 And Mordechai went out from the presence of the King in royal clothes of blue and white wool, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple wool; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

טו וּמֶרְדֵּכַי יָצָא | מִלְּפָנַי הַמֶּלֶךְ
בְּלְבוֹשׁ מַלְכוּת תְּכֵלֶת וְחֹר
וְעִטָּרַת זָהָב גְּדוּלָה וְתַכְרִיף
בוֹץ וְאַרְגָּמָן וְהָעִיר שׁוֹשַׁן
צָהְלָה וְשִׂמְחָה:



And it was written according to all that Mordechai commanded to the Jews, and to the satraps, and the governors and the officials of the provinces which are from Hodu to Kush, one hundred and twenty seven provinces, to every province according to its writing, and to every people in their own language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language.

וַיִּכְתֹּב כָּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה
 מֶרְדֵּכַי אֶל־הַיְהוּדִים וְאֶל
 הָאֲחַשְׁדַּרְפָּנִים וְהַפְּחוֹת וְשָׂרֵי
 הַמְּדִינֹת אֲשֶׁר | מֵהֲדוּ
 וְעַד־כּוּשׁ שְׁבַע וְעֶשְׂרִים
 וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה
 כְּכַתְּבָהּ וְעַם וְעַם כָּל־שָׂנֹו וְאֶל־
 הַיְהוּדִים כְּכַתְּבָם וְכָל־שׁוֹנָם:

10 And he wrote in King Ahashverosh's name, and sealed it with the King's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riders of steeds used for the royal service, bred from swift horses.

וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ
 וַיְחַתֵּם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁלַח
 סְפָרִים בְּיַד הָרָצִים בְּסוּסִים
 רֹכְבֵי הָרֶכֶשׁ הָאֲחַשְׁתָּרְנַיִם בְּנֵי
 הָרַמְכִים:

11 By these the King authorized the Jews who were in every city to gather themselves together, and to defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate, any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, including their infants and women, and to plunder their goods;

אֲשֶׁר נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ לַיְהוּדִים |
 אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־עִיר־וְעִיר לְהִקָּהֵל
 וּלְעִמּוֹד עַל־נַפְשָׁם לְהַשְׁמִיד
 וּלְהַרְג * וְלֹא־בָד אֶת־כָּל־חַיִּל
 עִם וּמְדִינָה הַצָּרִים אֹתָם טָף
 וְנָשִׁים וּשְׁלָלָם לְבוֹז:

* יש אומרים להרוג



let a decree be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the King's provinces;

יִכְתֹּב לְהָשִׁיב אֶת־הַסְּפָרִים
מִחֲשַׁבַּת הַמֶּן בֶּן־הַמְּדַתָּא
הָאֲגָגִי אֲשֶׁר כָּתַב לְאַבְדֹּ
אֶת־הַיְהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־
מְדִינֹת הַמְּלָךְ:

6 For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come to my people? And how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"

כִּי אֵיכָכָה אוֹכֵל וְרָאִיתִי בְרָעָה
אֲשֶׁר־יִמָּצֵא אֶת־עַמִּי וְאֵיכָכָה
אוֹכֵל וְרָאִיתִי בְּאַבְדֹן מוֹלַדְתִּי:

7 Then King Ahashverosh said to Esther the Queen and to Mordechai the Jew, "Behold, I have given Esther Haman's estate, and they have hanged him upon the gallows, because he wanted to harm the Jews.

וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶחָשֶׁוֹרֶשׁ
לְאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וּלְמֹרְדֵכַי
הַיְהוּדִי הַזֶּה בֵּית־הַמֶּן נָתַתִּי
לְאֶסְתֵּר וְאֹתוֹ תָלוּ עַל־הָעֵץ
עַל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח יָדוֹ בַּיְהוּדִים
[בַּיְהוּדִים]:

8 You may write about the Jews, as you please, in the King's name, and seal it with the King's signet ring; for the decrees which are written in the King's name, and sealed with the King's signet ring, cannot be revoked."

וְאֹתָם כָּתְבוּ עַל־הַיְהוּדִים
כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְחַתְמוּ בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ
כִּי־כָתַב אֲשֶׁר־נִכְתַּב בְּשֵׁם־
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְנִחַתּוֹם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֵין לְהָשִׁיב:

9 Then the King's scribes were summoned at that time, in the third month, that is, the month of Sivan, on its twenty third day;

וַיִּקְרְאוּ סֹפְרֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּעֵת־
הַהִיא בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי הוּא־
חֹדֶשׁ סִיּוֹן בְּשָׁלוֹשָׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים
בּוֹ



PEREK EIGHT

פרק ח

1 **O**N THAT DAY KING Ahashverosh gave the estate of Haman, the oppressor of the Jew's, to Esther the Queen. And Mordechai came before the King; for Esther had told how he was related to her.

א בְּיוֹם הַהוּא נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶחְשֵׁרוֹשׁ לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה אֶת־בֵּית הַמֶּן צָרַר הַיְהוּדִים [הַיְהוּדִיִּים] וּמַרְדֵּכַי בָּא לְפָנַי הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי־הִגִּידָה אֶסְתֵּר מֶה הוּא־לָהּ:

2 And the King took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordechai. And Esther placed Mordechai in charge of Haman's estate.

ב וַיִּסֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־טַבַּעְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הָעֵבִיר מִהֶמֶן וַיִּתְּנָהּ לְמַרְדֵּכַי וַתִּשֶׂם אֶסְתֵּר אֶת־מַרְדֵּכַי עַל־בֵּית הַמֶּן:

3 And Esther spoke again before the King, and fell down at his feet, and cried and pleaded to avert the evil design of Haman the Agagite, and his plot that he had devised against the Jews.

ג וַתּוֹסֶף אֶסְתֵּר וַתִּדְבַר לְפָנַי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתִּפֹּל לְפָנַי רַגְלָיו וַתִּבְכֶּה וַתִּתְחַנֵּן־לוֹ לְהַעֲבִיר אֶת־רַעַת הַמֶּן הָאֲגָגִי וְאֵת מַחְשְׁבֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁב עַל־הַיְהוּדִים:

4 The King held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the King,

ד וַיּוֹשֵׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר אֶת שֵׁרְבֵט הַזָּהָב וַתִּקָּם אֶסְתֵּר וַתַּעֲמֹד לְפָנַי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

5 and she said, "If it pleases the King, and if I have found favor before him, and the matter seems proper before the King, and if I am pleasing in his eyes,

ה וַתֹּאמֶר אִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב וְאִם־מָצָאתִי חֵן לְפָנָיו וְכִשֵּׁר הַדָּבָר לְפָנַי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְטוֹבָה אֲנִי בְעֵינָיו



9 Then Harbonah, one of the courtiers before the King, said “Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordechai, who had spoke good for the King, stands in the house of Haman.” Then the King said, “Hang him on it!”

ט וַיֹּאמֶר חַרְבוֹנָה אֶחָד מִן־הַסְּרִיסִים לְפָנַי הַמֶּלֶךְ גַּם הִנֵּה־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה הָמָן לְמָרְדֳּכָי אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־טוֹב עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ עִמָּד בְּבַיִת הָמָן גְּבֵה חֲמֵשִׁים אַמָּה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּלְהוּ עָלָיו:

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordechai. Then was the King’s wrath pacified.

י וַיִּתְלוּ אֶת־הָמָן עַל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־הֵכִין לְמָרְדֳּכָי וַחֲמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁכְכָה:





5 And King Ahashverosh answered and said to Esther the Queen, “Who is he, and where is he, who does presume in his heart to do so?”

ה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ
וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה מִי הוּא
זֶה וְאֵי-זֶה הוּא אֲשֶׁר-מָלְאוּ
לְבוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן:

6 And Esther said, “The foe and enemy is this wicked Haman!” Then Haman trembled in fear before the King and the Queen.

ו וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר אִישׁ צָר וְאוֹיֵב
הֵמֶן הָרַע הַזֶּה וְהֵמֶן נִבְעַת
מִלִּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמַּלְכָּה:

7 And the King rose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; and Haman stood up to beg Esther the Queen for his life; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the King.

ז וְהַמֶּלֶךְ קָם בַּחֲמָתוֹ מִמִּשְׁתֵּה
הַיַּיִן אֶל-גַּנַּת הַבַּיִתָּן וְהֵמֶן
עָמַד לִבְקֹשׁ עַל-נַפְשׁוֹ מֵאַסְתֵּר
הַמַּלְכָּה כִּי רָאָה כִּי-כָלְתָה
אֵלָיו הָרָעָה מֵאֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ:

8 Then the King returned from the palace garden to the winefest room; and Haman had fallen upon the couch where Esther was. The King exclaimed, “Will he also attack the Queen while I am present in the house?!” No sooner did the King say this then they covered Haman’s face.

ח וְהַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁבַ מִגַּנַּת הַבַּיִתָּן
אֶל-בַּיִת | מִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן וְהֵמֶן
נָפַל עַל-הַמָּטָה אֲשֶׁר אֶסְתֵּר
עָלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ הֲגַם
לְכַבֹּשׁ אֶת-הַמַּלְכָּה עִמִּי
בַּבַּיִת הַדָּבָר יֵצֵא מִפִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ
וּפְנֵי הֵמֶן חִפּוּ:



PEREK SEVEN

פרק ז

1 **S**O THE KING AND Haman came to drink with Esther the Queen.

א וַיָּבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמָן לִשְׁתוּת עִם־אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה:

2 And the King said again to Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, "What is your request, Queen Esther? and it shall be granted you; and what is your petition? Even until half of the Kingdom and it shall be fulfilled."

ב וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר גַּם בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי בְּמִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן מַה־שְּׂאֵלָתְךָ אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וְתַנְתֵּן לָךְ וּמַה־בְּקִשְׁתְּךָ עַד־חֲצֵי הַמַּלְכוּת וְתַעֲשֵׂ:

3 Then Esther the Queen answered and said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, and if it please the King, let my life be given to me as my request, and my people as my petition.

ג וַתַּעַן אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וַתֹּאמֶר אִם־מְצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב תִּנָּתֶן־לִי נַפְשִׁי בְּשֵׂאֵלָתִי וְעַמִּי בְּבִקְשָׁתִי:

4 For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be exterminated. If we had been sold as slaves and maidservants, I would have kept my silence, but the enemy is not concerned with the damages of the King."

ד כִּי נִמְכַרְנוּ אֲנִי וְעַמִּי לְהִשְׁמִיד לְהַרְגוֹ וּלְאַבְדּוֹ וְאֵלּוּ לְעַבְדִּים וְלִשְׁפָחוֹת נִמְכַרְנוּ הַחַרְשָׁתִי כִּי אֵין הָעֶרְ שׂוּהָ בְּנֹזֵק הַמֶּלֶךְ:



14 While they were still talking with him, the King's courtiers came, and they hurried to bring Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

ד עוֹדֵם מְדַבְּרִים עִמּוֹ וְסָרִיסֵי
הַמֶּלֶךְ הִגִּיעוּ וַיְבִיחוּ לְהָבִיא
אֶת-הָמָן אֶל-הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר-
עָשְׂתָה אֶסְתֵּר:





10 Then the King said to Haman, "Hurry, and take the clothing and the horse, as you have said, and do all this for Mordechai the Jew, who sits at the King's gate; do not leave anything out from all that you have spoken."

י וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהֶמֶן מְהֵרָה קַח אֶת-הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת-הַסּוּס כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ וְעַשֵׂה-כֵן לְמֹרְדֵכָי הַיְהוּדִי הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-תִּפְּל דְבַר מְכַל אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ:

11 So Haman took the clothing and the horse, and dressed Mordechai, and led him through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "This is what is done to the man whom the King wishes to honor."

יא וַיִּקַּח הֶמֶן אֶת-הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת-הַסּוּס וַיִּלְבַּשׁ אֶת-מֹרְדֵכָי וַיִּרְכִּיבֵהוּ בְּרֶחוֹב הָעִיר וַיִּקְרָא לְפָנָיו כְּכֹה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ:

12 And Mordechai returned to the King's gate. But Haman hurried to his house mourning, and with his head covered [in shame].

יב וַיָּשָׁב מֹרְדֵכָי אֶל-שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהֶמֶן נִדְחַף אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ אֲבָל וַחֲפוּי רֹאשׁ:

13 Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him "If Mordechai, before whom you have begun to fall, is a descendant of the Jews, you shall not prevail against him, but will surely fall before him."

יג וַיְסַפֵּר הֶמֶן לְזֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ וּלְכָל-אֶהָבָיו אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר קָרָהוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ חֲכָמָיו וְזֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ אִם מִזֶּרַע הַיְהוּדִים מֹרְדֵכָי אֲשֶׁר הִחְלֹוֹת לְנַפְּל לְפָנָיו לֹא-תוּכַל לוֹ כִּי-נִפְּוֹל תִּפּוֹל לְפָנָיו:



- 5 And the King's servants answered him, "Behold, Haman is standing in the court." And the King said, "Let him come in." ה וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלָיו הֲנִיחָה הָמָן עֹמֵד בַּחֲצַר וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ יָבֹוא:
- 6 Haman came in. And the King said to him, "What shall be done to the man whom the King wishes to honor?" Now Haman thought to himself, whom would the King wish to honor more than me? ו וַיָּבֹוא הָמָן וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִה־לַּעֲשׂוֹת בְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר הָמָן בְּלִבּוֹ לִמִּי יִחְפֹּץ הַמֶּלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת יָקָר יוֹתֵר מִמֶּנִּי:
- 7 And Haman answered the King, "For the man whom the King wishes to honor, ז וַיֹּאמֶר הָמָן אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ:
- 8 have them bring royal clothing which the King has worn, and a horse that the King rode upon, and the royal crown should be placed upon his head; ח יָבִיאוּ לְבוּשׁ מַלְכוּת אֲשֶׁר לְבִשׁ־בוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְסוּס אֲשֶׁר רָכַב עָלָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֲשֶׁר נָתַן כִּתּוֹר מַלְכוּת בְּרֹאשׁוֹ:
- 9 And let the (royal) clothing and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the King's most noble officers, and they should dress the man whom the King wishes to honor, and bring him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, "This is what is done to the man whom the King wishes to honor'." ט וְנָתַן הַלְבוּשׁ וְהַסּוּס עַל־יַד־אִישׁ מִשָּׂרְי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּרָתְמִים וְהַלְבִּישׁוּ אֶת־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ וְהִרְפִּיבֵהוּ עַל־הַסּוּס בְּרִחוּב הָעִיר וְקָרְאוּ לְפָנָיו כִּכְהָ יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ:



PEREK SIX

פרק ו

The following verse is chanted aloud by the congregation, and repeated by the baal koreh:

1 **O**N THAT NIGHT THE King could not sleep, and he commanded to bring the Book of Records of the Chronicles; and they were read before the King.

א בַּלַּיְלָהָ הָהוּא נִדְדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר לְהָבִיא אֶת־סֵפֶר הַזְּכוֹרֹנוֹת דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים וַיְהִי נִקְרָאִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

2 And it was found written, that Mordechai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the King's courtiers, among those who guarded the door, who planned to attack the King Ahashverosh.

ב וַיִּמְצָא כְּתוּב אֲשֶׁר הִגִּיד מֹרְדֳּכַי עַל־בְּגַתְנָא וְתֶרֶשׁ שְׁנֵי סֹרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמַרְי הַסֶּף אֲשֶׁר בְּקִשְׁוּ לְשַׁלַּח יָד בַּמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ:

3 And the King said, "What honor and greatness has been done to Mordechai for this?" The King's servants who ministered to him said, "Nothing was done for him."

ג וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־נַּעֲשֶׂה יִקָּר וַיְגִדּוּלָהּ לְמֹרְדֳּכַי עַל־זֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁרָתָיו לֹא־נַעֲשֶׂה עִמּוֹ דְּבָר:

4 And the King said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just come into the outer court of the King's palace, to speak to the King about hanging Mordechai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

ד וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מִי בַחֲצַר וְהֵמֶן כָּא לַחֲצַר בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַחִיצוֹנָה לֵאמֹר לְמֶלֶךְ לְתִלוֹת אֶת־מֹרְדֳּכַי עַל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־הֵכִין לוֹ:



14 And Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak to the King that Mordechai should be hanged on it; then go cheerfully with the King to the banquet." And the idea pleased Haman; and he had the gallows made.

יד וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ זֵרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ
וְכָל-אֶהָבָיו יַעֲשׂוּ-עֵץ גְּבוּהָ
חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה וּבִבְקָר | אָמַר
לְמֶלֶךְ וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת-מֶרְדֳּכָי עָלָיו
וּבָא-עִם-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-הַמִּשְׁתֶּה
שְׂמֵחַ וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר לְפָנָי הַמֶּן
וַיַּעַשׂ הָעֵץ:





9 Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordechai at the King's gate, and he did not stand nor move for him, Haman was full of wrath towards Mordechai.

ט וַיֵּצֵא הָמָן בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא שְׂמֵחַ
וְטוֹב לֵב וְכִרְאוֹת הָמָן
אֶת־מֵרְדֳּכָי בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְלֹא־קָם וְלֹא־זָע מִמֶּנּוּ וַיִּמְלֵא
הָמָן עַל־מֵרְדֳּכָי חֵמָה:

10 However, Haman restrained himself; and went home; he sent for his friends and Zeresh his wife.

י וַיִּתְאַפֵּק הָמָן וַיָּבוֹא אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ
וַיִּשְׁלַח וַיִּבֵּא אֶת־אֶהֱבִיו וְאֶת־
זֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ:

11 And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and of his numerous children, and all the ways by which the King had promoted him, and how he had elevated him above the officials and servants of the King.

יא וַיְסַפֵּר לָהֶם הָמָן אֶת־כְּבוֹד
עֲשָׂרוֹ וְרֹב בָּנָיו וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר
גָּדְלוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר נִשְׂאוֹ
עַל־הַשָּׂרִים וְעַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

12 And Haman said, "Also Esther did not invite anyone else to come with the King to the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and tomorrow also, I am invited by her with the King.

יב וַיֹּאמֶר הָמָן אֶף לֹא־הִבִּיאָהּ
אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה עִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה כִּי
אִם־אוֹתִי וְגַם־לְמָחָר אֲנִי
קָרוּא־לָהּ עִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ:

13 Yet all this means nothing to me, as long as I see Mordechai the Jew sitting at the King's gate."

יג וְכָל־זֶה אֵינְנוּ שׂוֹה לִי בְּכָל־
עֵת אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי רֹאֶה אֶת־מֵרְדֳּכָי
הַיְּהוּדִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ:



5 Then the King said, “Hasten Haman, to do as Esther has said.” So the King and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

ה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מְהֵרָה אֶת־הַמֶּן
לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־דְּבַר אֶסְתֵּר וַיָּבֹא
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּן אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה
אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה אֶסְתֵּר:

6 And the King said to Esther at the banquet of wine, “What is your request? and it shall be granted to you. And what is your petition? (Even) up to half of the Kingdom it shall be granted.”

ו וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר בְּמִשְׁתֵּה
הַיַּיִן מַה־שְּׂאֵלָתְךָ וַיִּנָּתֶן לָךְ
וּמַה־בְּקִשְׁתְּךָ עַד־חֲצִי
הַמְּלָכוֹת וְתַעֲשֶׂה:

7 Then Esther answered and said, ‘My request and my petition is;

ז וַתַּעַן אֶסְתֵּר וַתֹּאמֶר שְׂאֵלָתִי
וּבְקִשְׁתִּי:

8 if I have found favor in the eyes of the King, and if it please the King to grant my request, and perform my petition, let the King and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and tomorrow I shall do as the King has said” (to reveal my nation).

ח אִם־מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְאִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב לָתֵת
אֶת־שְׂאֵלָתִי וְלַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־
בְּקִשְׁתִּי יָבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּן
אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה לָהֶם
וּמָחָר אֶעֱשֶׂה כְּדְבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ:



PEREK FIVE

פרק ה

1 **A**ND IT CAME TO PASS on the third day, Esther put on her royal clothes, and stood in the inner court of the King's palace, opposite the King's palace; and the King was sitting upon his royal throne in the royal palace, opposite the entrance.

א וַיְהִי | בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַתִּלְבַּשׁ אֶסְתֵּר מַלְכוּת וַתַּעֲמֹד בַּחֲצַר בֵּית-הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּנִימִית נֹכַח בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב עַל-כִּסֵּא מַלְכוּתוֹ בְּבֵית הַמַּלְכוּת נֹכַח פֶּתַח הַבַּיִת:

2 And it was, when the King saw Esther the Queen standing in the court, she found favor in his eyes; and the King held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the scepter.

ב וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה עֹמֶדֶת בַּחֲצַר נִשְׂאָה חֵן בְּעֵינָיו וַיּוֹשֶׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר אֶת-שֵׁרְבִיט הַזֶּהב אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ וַתִּקְרַב אֶסְתֵּר וַתִּגַּע בְּרֹאשׁ הַשֵּׁרְבִיט:

3 The King said to her, "What do you need, Queen Esther, and what is your request? (Even) up to half of the Kingdom, it shall be given to you."

ג וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה-לָּךְ אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וּמַה-בְּקִשְׁתֶּךָ עַד-חֲצֵי הַמַּלְכוּת וַיִּנָּתֶן לָךְ:

4 And Esther said, "If it pleases the King, let the King and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

ד וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר אִם-עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יָבוֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמָן הַיּוֹם אֶל-הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂיתִי לוֹ:



14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise to the Jews from another place; but you and your father's house shall be destroyed. And who knows whether you have become a member of the monarchy for such a time as this?"

י"ד כִּי אִם־הִחַרֵּשׁ תִּחְרִישִׁי בְּעֵת
הַזֹּאת רוּחַ וְהִצִּילָה יַעֲמֹד
לְיְהוּדִים מִמָּקוֹם אֲחֵר וְאֶת־
וּבֵית־אָבִיךָ תֹאבְדוּ וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ
אִם־לָעֵת כְּזֹאת הִגַּעְתָּ
לְמַלְכוּת:

15 Then Esther said (to them) to return to Mordechai with this answer,

ט"ו וְתֹאמַר אֶסְתֵּר לְהָשִׁיב אֵלַי־
מְרֹדֵכָי:

16 "Go, gather together all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night and day; I and also my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go to the King, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."

ט"ז לָךְ כְּנוֹס אֶת־כָּל־הַיְהוּדִים
הַנִּמְצְאִים בְּשׁוּשַׁן וְצוּמוּ עָלַי
וְאֶל־תֹּאכְלוּ וְאֶל־תִּשְׁתּוּ
שְׁלֹשַׁת יָמִים לַיְלָה וַיּוֹם
גַּם־אֲנִי וְנַעֲרֹתַי אֲצוּם כֵּן וּבְכֵן
אָבוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
כִדָּת וּכְאֲשֶׁר אֲבַדְתִּי אֲבַדְתִּי:

17 So Mordechai went, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

י"ז וַיַּעֲבֹר מְרֹדֵכָי וַיַּעַשׂ כְּכֹל
אֲשֶׁר־צִוְתָהּ עָלָיו אֶסְתֵּר:





- 9 And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordechai. ט ויבוא התך ויגד לאסתר את דברי מרדכי:
- 10 Esther spoke to Hatach, and instructed him to tell Mordechai; י ותאמר אסתר להתך ותצוהו אל-מרדכי:
- 11 “All the King’s servants, and the people of the King’s provinces, know, that any man or woman — who shall come to the King into the inner court without being called, the law is without exception to put him to death, except the one to whom the King shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live; but I have not been called to come to the King for the past thirty days.” יא כל-עבדי המלך ועם-מדינות המלך יודעים אשר כל-איש ואשה אשר-יבוא אל-המלך אל-החצר הפנימית אשר לא-יקרא אחת דתו להמית לבד מאשר יושיט-לו המלך את-שרביט הזהב וחהי ואני לא נקראתי לבוא אל-המלך זה שלושים יום:
- 12 And they told Mordechai Esther’s words. יב ויגידו למרדכי את דברי אסתר:
- 13 Then Mordechai said to answer Esther, “Do not think that in the King’s palace you shall escape, any more than the rest of the Jews. יג ויאמר מרדכי להשיב אל-אסתר אל-תדמי בנפשך להמלט בית-המלך מכל-היהודים:



5 Then Esther called for Hatach, one of the King's courtiers, whom he had appointed to attend her, and she commanded him to go to Mordechai, in order to know what this was about, and why.

ה וַתִּקְרָא אֶסְתֵּר לְהַתָּךְ מִסְרִיִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר הָעֲמִיד לְפָנֶיהָ וַתְּצַוֶּהוּ עַל־מֶרְדֵּכָי לָדַעַת מַה־זֶּה וְעַל־מַה־זֶּה:

6 So Hatach went forth to Mordechai to the city square, which was in front of the King's gate.

ו וַיֵּצֵא הַתָּךְ אֶל־מֶרְדֵּכָי אֶל־רְחוֹב הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר לְפָנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ:

7 And Mordechai told him of all that had happened to him, and of the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay to the King's treasuries to destroy the Jews.

ז וַיַּגִּד־לוֹ מֶרְדֵּכָי אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר קָרָהוּ וְאֵת | פְּרֻשַׁת הַכֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁר אָמַר הָמָן לְשָׂקוֹל עַל־גַּנְזֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בִּיהוּדִים [בִּיהוּדִיִּים] לְאַבְדָּם:

8 Also he gave him the copy of the written decree to destroy them that was issued in Shushan, to show it to Esther, and to inform her; and to command her that she should go to the King, to plead to him, and to beg before him for her people.

ח וְאֵת־פַּת־שַׁגֵּן כְּתַב־הַדָּת אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן בְּשׁוֹשָׁן לְהַשְׁמִידָם נָתַן לּוֹ לְהִרְאוֹת אֶת־אֶסְתֵּר וּלְהַגִּיד לָהּ וּלְצַוּוֹת עָלֶיהָ לָבוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַתְּחַנֵּן־לוֹ וּלְבַקֵּשׁ מִלְּפָנָיו עַל־עַמָּהּ:



PEREK FOUR

פרק ד

1 **A**ND MORDECHAI perceived all that had been done, and Mordechai tore his clothes, and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried a loud and bitter cry.

א וּמֶרְדֵּכַי יָדַע אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה וַיִּקְרַע מֶרְדֵּכַי אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וַיִּלְבַּשׁ שָׂק וָאֶפֶר וַיֵּצֵא בַתּוֹךְ הָעִיר וַיִּזְעַק זַעֲקָה גְדֹלָה וּמְרָה:

2 And he came until the King's gate; for one may not enter the King's gate, clothed with sackcloth.

ב וַיָּבֹא עַד לְפָנַי שַׁעַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי אֵין לָבוֹא אֶל-שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלִבוֹשׁ שָׂק:

3 And in every province, wherever the King's command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; sackcloth and ashes were placed on many.

ג וּבְכָל-מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ מִגִּיעַ אֲבֵל גְּדוֹל לַיהוּדִים וְצוֹם וּבְכִי וּמִסָּפַד שָׂק וָאֶפֶר יָצַע לְרַבִּים:

4 And Esther's maids and her courtiers came and told her. And the Queen was extremely shaken: and she sent garments to clothe Mordechai, and to remove his sackcloth from him; but he would not accept them.

ד וַתָּבוֹאנָה [וּתְבוֹאִינָה] נַעֲרוֹת אֶסְתֵּר וְסֵרִיסֶיהָ וַיִּגִּידוּ לָהּ וַתַּחֲלֹחַלְחַל הַמַּלְכָּה מְאֹד וַתִּשְׁלַח בְּגָדִים לְהַלְבִּישׁ אֶת-מֶרְדֵּכַי וּלְהַסִּיר שָׂקוֹ מֵעָלָיו וְלֹא קָבַל:



13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the King's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, from young to old, children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to plunder their goods.

יג וְנִשְׁלָחוּ סְפָרִים בְּיַד הַרְצִיִם
אֶל—כָּל—מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ
לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְגַּ וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת—
כָּל—הַיְהוּדִים מִנָּעַר וְעַד־זָקֵן
טָף וְנָשִׁים בְּיוֹם אֶחָד
בְּשִׁלּוּשֵׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ
שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר
וּשְׁלָלָם לְבוֹז:

14 The copy of the decree was given out as a law in every province, and publicly proclaimed to all the peoples, so that they should be ready for that day.

יד פְּתֻשָׁגֵן הַכְּתָב לְהַנְתִּין דָּת
בְּכָל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה גְלוּי
לְכָל־הָעַמִּים לְהֵיזֹת עֲתָדִים
לְיוֹם הַזֶּה:

15 The couriers hurried out the King's command, and the decree was given in Shushan the capital. And the King and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Shushan was in turmoil.

טו הַרְצִיִם יֵצְאוּ דְחוּפִים בְּדַבַּר
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַדָּת נִתְּנָה בְּשׁוֹשַׁן
הַבִּירָה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֵּן יֵשְׁבוּ
לְשִׁתּוֹת וְהָעִיר שׁוֹשַׁן נְבוֹכָה:





9 If it pleases the King, let it be decreed that they be destroyed; and I will pay out ten thousand talents of silver under the auspices of those who perform the duties [of the King] to bring to the King's treasuries."

ט אִם-עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יִכְתֹּב
לְאַבְדֵם וְעִשְׂרֵת אֲלָפִים
כֶּכֶר-כֶּסֶף אֶשְׁקוּל עַל-יְדֵי
עֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה לְהָבִיא אֶל-גְּנוּזֵי
הַמֶּלֶךְ:

10 And the King took his signet ring from his hand, and gave it to Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

י וַיִּסֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-טַבַּעְתּוֹ מֵעַל
יָדוֹ וַיִּתְּנָהּ לְהַמָּן בֶּן-הַמְּדַתָּא
הָאֲגָגִי צַרֵּר הִיְהוּדִים:

11 And the King said to Haman, "The silver is given to you, the people also, to do with them as you wish".

יא וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַמָּן הַכֶּסֶף
נָתוּן לְךָ וְהָעָם לַעֲשׂוֹת בּוֹ
כְּטוֹב בְּעִינֶיךָ:

12 Then the King's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and it was written according to all that Haman had commanded to the King's satraps, and to the governors of every province, and to the officials of every people, every province according to its writing, and to every people in their own language; in the name of King Ahashverosh it was written, and sealed with the King's signet ring.

יב וַיִּקְרְאוּ סִפְרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּחֹדֶשׁ
הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּשִׁלּוּשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם
בּוֹ וַיִּכְתֹּב כְּכֹל-אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה
הַמָּן אֶל אַחֲשֵׁדֶרְפָּנֵי-הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְאֶל-הַפְּחֹת אֲשֶׁר | עַל-מְדִינָה
וּמְדִינָה וְאֶל-שָׂרֵי עַם וְעַם
מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה כְּכַתְּבָהּ וְעַם
וְעַם כָּל-שׁוֹנוֹ בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ
אַחֲשֵׁרֶשׁ נִכְתָּב וְנִחְתָּם
בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ:



6 However, it was demeaning for him to lay hands on Mordechai alone; for they had told him of the people of Mordechai; therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahashverosh, the people of Mordechai.

וַיִּבֶז בְּעֵינָיו לְשַׁלַּח יָד
בְּמֹרְדֵכָי לְבַדּוֹ כִּי־הִגִּידוּ לוֹ
אֶת־עַם מֹרְדֵכָי וַיִּבְקֶשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ
לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶת־כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים
אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־מְלָכוֹת אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ
עִם מֹרְדֵכָי:

7 In the first month, which is, the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahashverosh, they cast Pur, meaning “lot”, before Haman for a specific day, and for a specific month, The lot fell out for the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar.

בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ
נִסָּן בְּשָׁנַת שְׁתַּיִם עֶשְׂרֵה
לְמַלְךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ הַפִּיל פּוּר
הוּא הַגּוֹרֵל לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִיּוֹם |
לְיוֹם וּמִחֹדֶשׁ לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם־
עֶשֶׂר הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר:

8 And Haman said to King Ahashverosh, “There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your Kingdom; and their laws are different from every other people’s; and they do not keep the King’s laws; therefore there is no gain for the King to tolerate them.

וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְמַלְךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ
יֵשְׁנוּ עִם־אֶחָד מִפְּזָר וּמִפְּרָד
בֵּין הָעַמִּים בְּכָל מְדִינוֹת
מְלָכוֹתַי וְדַתִּיהֶם שְׁנוֹת מְכָל־
עַם וְאֶת־דַּתִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵינָם
עוֹשִׂים וְלְמַלְךְ אֵין־שׂוּהָ
לְהַנִּיחָם:



PEREK THREE

פרק ג

1 **A**FTER THESE MATTERS, King Ahashverosh promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the officials who were with him.

2 And all the King's servants, who were at the King's gate, bowed, and prostrated themselves before Haman; for the King had so commanded concerning him. But Mordechai did not bow, nor did he prostrate himself.

3 Then the King's servants, who were at the King's gate, said to Mordechai, "Why do you transgress the King's command?"

4 Now it came to pass, when they spoke daily to him about this, and he did not listen to them, they told Haman, to see whether Mordechai's words would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew.

5 And when Haman saw that Mordechai did not bow nor prostrate himself before him, then Haman was filled with wrath.

א אַחַר | הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה גִּדְּלָא
הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ אֶת־הַמֶּן
בֶּן־הַמֵּדָתָא הָאֲגָגִי וַיִּנְשְׂאֵהוּ
וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־כִּסְאוֹ מֵעַל כָּל־
הַשָּׂרִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ:

ב וְכָל־עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־בְּשַׁעַר
הַמֶּלֶךְ כֹּרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים
לְהַמֶּן כִּי־כֵן צִוָּה־לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ
וּמֹרְדֵכַי לֹא יִכְרַע וְלֹא
יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה:

ג וַיֹּאמְרוּ עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־
בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְמֹרְדֵכַי מִדּוּעַ
אַתָּה עוֹבֵר אֶת מִצְוַת הַמֶּלֶךְ:

ד וַיְהִי כְּאָמְרָם [כְּאֹמְרָם] אֵלָיו
יוֹם וַיּוֹם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם
וַיִּגִּידוּ לְהַמֶּן לְרֹאוֹת הַיַּעֲמֹדוֹ
דְּבָרֵי מֹרְדֵכַי כִּי־הִגִּיד לָהֶם
אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יְהוּדִי:

ה וַיֵּרָא הַמֶּן כִּי־אֵין מֹרְדֵכַי כֹּרַע
וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לוֹ וַיִּמְלֵא הַמֶּן
חֲמָה:



23 The matter was investigated and then confirmed, and they were both hanged on a tree (gallows); and it was written in the Book of the Chronicles in the presence of the King.

ג: וַיִּבְקֹשׁ הַדָּבָר וַיִּמָּצֵא וַיִּתְּלוּ
שְׁנֵיהֶם עַל-עֵץ וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּסֵפֶר
דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:





18 Then the King made a great banquet for all his officials and his servants, it was Esther's feast; and he granted a remission of taxes to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the bounty of the King.

יח וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁתֵּה גָדוֹל
לְכָל־שָׂרָיו וְעַבְדָּיו אֶת מִשְׁתֵּה
אֶסְתֵּר וְהִנַּחַה לַמְּדִינוֹת עֲשֵׂה
וַיִּתֵּן מִשְׂאֵת כֶּיֶד הַמֶּלֶךְ:

19 And when the maidens were gathered together the second time, and Mordechai sat at the King's gate.

יט וּבְהַקְבֵּץ בְּתוֹלוֹת שְׁנִית
וּמְרַדְכֵי יָשָׁב בְּשַׁעַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ:

20 Esther did not tell of her birthplace nor her people; as Mordechai had charged her; for Esther obeyed the command of Mordechai, just as she did when she was brought up by him.

כ אֵין אֶסְתֵּר מְגִדַּת מוֹלְדוֹתָהּ
וְאֶת־עַמָּהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה עָלֶיהָ
מְרַדְכֵי וְאֶת־מֵאֲמַר מְרַדְכֵי
אֶסְתֵּר עֲשֵׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר הִיָּתָה
כַּאֲמָנָה אֶתּוֹ:

21 In those days, when Mordechai was sitting at the King's gate, two of the King's courtiers, Bigthan and Teresh, among those who guarded the door, became angry, and planned to attack the King Ahashverosh.

כא בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וּמְרַדְכֵי יָשָׁב
בְּשַׁעַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ קִצְףָּ בְּגִתָּן
וְתֶרֶשׁ שְׁנַי־סְרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
מִשְׁמָרֵי הַסֶּף וַיִּבְקְשׂוּ לְשַׁלַּח
לְד בַּמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרֶשׁ:

22 And the matter became known to Mordechai, who told it to Esther the Queen; and Esther informed the King in Mordechai's name.

כב וַיִּוָּדַע הַדָּבָר לְמְרַדְכֵי וַיַּגִּד
לְאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר
לְמֶלֶךְ בְּשֵׁם מְרַדְכֵי:



14 In the evening she would come, and on the following morning she returned to the second harem, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the King's courtier, who guarded the concubines; she would never come again to the King, unless the King desired her, and she was summoned by name.

ד | הַיָּא בָּאָה וּבְבֹקֶר הַיָּא
שָׁבָה אֶל-בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים שְׁנַי
אֶל-יַד שַׁעֲשֻׁגָז סָרִיס הַמֶּלֶךְ
שֹׁמֵר הַפִּילָגְשִׁים לֹא-תָבוֹא
עוֹד אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי אִם-חֲפֹץ
בָּהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְנִקְרְאָה בְּשֵׁם:

15 Now when the turn of Esther came, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordechai, who had adopted her as his daughter, to go to the King, she asked for nothing more than what Hegai the King's courtier, the guardian of the women, advised. And Esther found favor in the eyes of all those who saw her.

טו | וּבַהֲגִיעַ תּוֹר-אֶסְתֵּר בַּת-
אֲבִיחַיִל | דָּד מְרֻדְכַי אֲשֶׁר
לָקַח-לָוּ לְבַת לָבוֹא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ
לֹא בִקְשָׁה דָּבָר כִּי אִם
אֶת-אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הֵגַי סָרִיס-
הַמֶּלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר הַנָּשִׁים וְתֵהִי
אֶסְתֵּר נִשְׂאֵת חֹן בְּעֵינַי
כָּל-רְאִיָּה:

16 Esther was taken to King Ahashverosh to his royal palace in the tenth month, which is the month of Tevet, in the seventh year of his reign.

טז | וַתִּלְקַח אֶסְתֵּר אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ אֶל-בֵּית מַלְכוּתוֹ
בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָעֲשִׁירִי הוּא-חֹדֶשׁ
טֵבֵת בְּשַׁנַּת-שֶׁבַע לְמַלְכוּתוֹ:

17 And the King loved Esther above all the other women, and she found grace and favor before him more than all the other maidens; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her Queen instead of Vashti.

יז | וַיֶּאֱהַב הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-אֶסְתֵּר
מִכָּל-הַנָּשִׁים וְתִשְׂאֵת חֹן וְחֶסֶד
לְפָנָיו מִכָּל-הַבָּתוּלוֹת וַיִּשֶׂם
כֶּתֶר-מַלְכוּת בְּרֹאשָׁהּ וַיְמַלִּכָהּ
תַּחַת וְשֵׂתִי:



- and he transferred her and her maids to the best place in the harem.
- 10 Esther had not told of her people nor her birthplace; for Mordechai had instructed her that she should not tell.
- 11 And Mordechai walked every day before the court of the harem, to find out about Esther's well-being, and what will be done with her.
- 12 And when every maiden's turn had arrived to come to King Ahashverosh, after she had been there for twelve months, according to the manner prescribed for the women, for so were the days of their anointings accomplished, namely six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes, and with other cosmetics for women;
- 13 And this is how every maiden will come to the King; whatever she desired was given her to accompany her from the harem to the King's palace.
- וַיִּשְׁנֶה וְאֶת־נְעֻרוֹתֶיהָ לְטוֹב בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים:
- י לא־הִגִּידָה אֶסְתֵּר אֶת־עַמָּהּ וְאֶת־מּוֹלַדְתָּהּ כִּי מָרְדֳּכַי צִוָּה עָלֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִגִּיד:
- יא וּבְכָל־יּוֹם וַיּוֹם מָרְדֳּכַי מִתְּהֵלֶךְ לִפְנֵי חֲצַר בֵּית־הַנָּשִׁים לְדַעַת אֶת־שְׁלוֹם אֶסְתֵּר וּמֵה־יַעֲשֶׂה בָּהּ:
- יב וּבִהְגִיעַ תּוֹר נְעֻרָהּ וְנַעֲרָה לָבוֹא | אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ מִקֵּץ הַיּוֹת לָהּ כַּדַּת הַנָּשִׁים שָׁנַיִם עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ כִּי כֵן יִמְלְאוּ יָמֵי מְרוּקֵיהֶן שְׁשֶׁה חֳדָשִׁים בְּשֶׁמֶן הַמָּר וּשְׁשֶׁה חֳדָשִׁים בְּבִשְׂמִים וּבַתְּמָרוֹקֵי הַנָּשִׁים:
- יג וּבִזְהַ הַנְּעֻרָה בָּאָה אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמֶר יִנָּתֵן לָהּ לָבוֹא עִמָּהּ מִבַּיִת הַנָּשִׁים עַד־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ:



6 who had been exiled from Jerusalem among those who were exiled with Jeconiah King of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon had exiled.

7 And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter; for she had neither father nor mother, and the young woman was finely featured and beautiful; and when her father and her mother died, Mordechai adopted her as a daughter.

8 So it came to pass, when the King's command and his decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered together in Shushan the capital, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought to the King's palace, to the custody of Hegai, guardian of the women.

9 The young woman pleased him, and she obtained his kindness; and he quickly gave her her cosmetics, and her appointed portions, and seven maids, that were chosen to be given to her, from the King's palace;

ו אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִם־
הַגְּלָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָתָהּ עִם יְכַנְיָה
מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה
נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל:

ז וַיְהִי אִמָּן אֶת־הַדַּסָּה הִיא
אֶסְתֵּר בַּת־דָּדוּ כִּי אֵין לָהּ אָב
וְאִם וְהִנְעֲרָה יַפְת־תָּאֵר
וְטוֹבַת מְרֹאָה וּבָמוֹת אָבִיהָ
וְאִמָּהּ לְקַחָהּ מֵרַדְכַּי לֹו לְבַת:

ח וַיְהִי בְּהִשְׁמַע דְּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְדָתוֹ וּבְהַקְבִּץ נְעָרוֹת רַבּוֹת
אֶל־שׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה אֶל־יַד הַגִּי
וּתְלַקַּח אֶסְתֵּר אֶל־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֶל־יַד הַגִּי שֹׁמֵר הַנְּשִׂימוֹ:

ט וַתִּיטֵב הַנְּעֲרָה בְּעֵינָיו וַתִּשָּׂא
חֶסֶד לְפָנָיו וַיִּבְהַל אֶת־
תְּמָרוּקֶיהָ וְאֶת־מְנוֹתֶיהָ לְתַת
לָהּ וְאֵת שִׁבְעַ הַנְּעָרוֹת
הָרְאוּיוֹת לְתַת־לָהּ מִבֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ



PEREK TWO

פרק ב

1 **A**FTER THESE THINGS, when the anger of King Ahashverosh was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what had been decreed against her.

2 Then said the King's servants who ministered to him, "Let beautiful young maidens be sought for the King;

3 And let the King appoint officials in all the provinces of his Kingdom, that they may gather together all the beautiful young maidens to Shushan the capital, to the harem, to the custody of Hege, the King's courtier, guardian of the women; and let their cosmetics be given them;

4 And let the girl who pleases the King be Queen instead of Vashti". And the idea pleased the King, and he did so.

The following verse is chanted aloud by the congregation, and repeated by the baal koreh:

5 There was a Jewish man in Shushan the capital, whose name was Mordechai, son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjamite;

א אחר הדברים האלה כשך
חמת המלך אחשוורוש זכר
את־ושתִי ואת אשר־עשתה
ואת אשר־נגזר עליה:

ב ויאמרו נערי־המלך משרתיו
יבקשו למלך נערות בתולות
טובות מראה:

ג ויפקד המלך פקידים בכל־
מדינות מלכותו ויקבצו
את־כל־נערה־בתולה טובת
מראה אל־שושן הבירה
אל־בית הנשים אל־יד הגא
סרס המלך שימר הנשים
ונתון תמרוקיהן:

ד והנערה אשר תיטב בעיני
המלך תמלך תחת ושתִי
וייטב הדבר בעיני המלך
ויעש כן:

ה איש יהודי הנה בשושן
הבירה ושמו מרדכי בן יאיר
בן־שמעי בן־קיש איש ימיני:



19 If it pleases the King, let a royal command be issued by him, and let it be written in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it can not be repealed, that Vashti is never to appear again before King Ahashverosh; and let the King give her royal position to another who is better than she.

אִם-עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יֵצֵא
דְּבַר-מַלְכוּת מִלְּפָנָיו וַיִּכְתֹּב
בְּדַתִּי פָּרַס-וּמְדֵי וְלֹא יֵעָבֹר
אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תָבוֹא וְשִׁתִּי לְפָנַי
הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוּשׁ וּמַלְכוּתָהּ
יִתֵּן הַמֶּלֶךְ לְרַעוּתָהּ הַטּוֹבָה
מִמֶּנָּה:

20 And when the King's decree, that he will issue, shall be proclaimed throughout all his kingdom, even though it is very large, all the wives shall give honor to their husbands, both great and small."

וְנִשְׁמַע פְּתוּגָם הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר-
יַעֲשֶׂה בְּכָל-מַלְכוּתוֹ כִּי רַבָּה
הִיא וְכָל-הַנְּשִׁים יִתְּנוּ יָקָר
לְבַעֲלֵיהֶן לְמַגְדוֹל וְעַד-קָטָן:

21 And this idea pleased the King and the officials; and the King did according to the word of Memuchan;

וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְהַשָּׂרִים וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ כַּדָּבָר
מִמּוּכָן:

22 And he sent letters to all the King's provinces, to every province according to its writing, and to every people in their own language, proclaiming that every man should rule in his own house, and speak the language of his own people.

וַיִּשְׁלַח סְפָרִים אֶל-כָּל-מְדִינֹת
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-מְדִינָהּ וּמְדִינָהּ
כְּכַתְּבָהּ וְאֶל-עַם וְעַם כְּלָשׁוֹנוֹ
לְהִיּוֹת כָּל-אִישׁ שָׂרָר בְּבֵיתוֹ
וּמְדַבֵּר כְּלָשׁוֹן עַמּוֹ:



15 as to what shall be done to Queen Vashti according to law, because she has not obeyed the command of the King Ahashverosh as delivered by the courtiers.

טו כָּדַת מֶה־לַּעֲשׂוֹת בַּמֶּלֶכָה
וְשִׁתִּי עַל | אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָשְׂתָה
אֶת־מֶאֱמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ
בְּיַד הַסְּרִיסִים:

16 And Memuchan said before the King and the officials, "Vashti, the Queen, has wronged not only the King, but also all the officials, and all the people who are in all the provinces of King Ahashverosh.

טז וַיֹּאמֶר מְמוּכָן [מומכן] לְפָנָי
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַשָּׂרִים לֹא עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ
לְבַדּוֹ עֲוֹתָהּ וְשִׁתִּי הַמֶּלֶכָה כִּי
עַל־כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים וְעַל־כָּל־
הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת
הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ:

17 For this deed of the Queen shall be known to all women, making their husbands despised in their eyes, when they shall say that the King Ahashverosh commanded Vashti the Queen to be brought to his presence, but she did not come.

יז כִּי־יֵצֵא דְבַר־הַמֶּלֶכָה עַל־כָּל־
הַנְּשִׂים לְהַבְזוֹת בְּעֵינֵיהֶן
בְּעֵינֵיהֶן בְּאֶמְרֵם הַמֶּלֶךְ
אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ אָמַר לְהָבִיא
אֶת־וְשִׁתִּי הַמֶּלֶכָה לְפָנָיו
וְלֹא־בָאָה:

18 And this day the noblewomen of Persia and Media who have heard of the deed of the Queen, will cite to the King's officials, and thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath.

יח וְהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה תֹּאמְרָנָה | שָׂרוֹת
פָּרַס־וּמְדֵי אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ
אֶת־דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶכָה לְכָל שָׂרֵי
הַמֶּלֶךְ וּכְדֵי בְזִיוֹן וְקִצְףָּ:



- 10 On the seventh day, when the King was in high spirits from the wine, he ordered Mehuman, Biztha, Harbonah, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven courtiers who served in the presence of Ahashverosh the King, י
- בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי כְּטוֹב לֵב-
הַמֶּלֶךְ בֵּינָן אָמַר לְמַהוּמָן
בְּזֵתָא חֲרוּבוֹנָא בְּגַתָּא וְאַבְגַּתָּא
זֶתָר וְכַרְכָּס שְׁבַעַת הַסְּרִיסִים
הַמְּשָׁרְתִים אֶת-פְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ:
- 11 to bring Vashti the Queen before the King with the royal crown, to show the people and the officials her beauty; for she was beautiful of appearance. יא
- לְהֵבִיא אֶת-וַשְׁתִּי הַמַּלְכָּה
לְפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּכֹתֵר מַלְכוּת
לְהִרְאוֹת הָעַמִּים וְהַשָּׂרִים
אֶת-יְפִיָּהּ כִּי-טוֹבַת מְרֹאֶה
הִיא:
- 12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the King's command as delivered by his courtiers; and the King became very angry, and his anger burned in him. יב
- וַתִּמָּאֵן הַמַּלְכָּה וַשְׁתִּי לְבוֹא
בְּדַבַּר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בִּיד
הַסְּרִיסִים וַיִּקְצֹף הַמֶּלֶךְ מְאֹד
וַחֲמָתוֹ בַּעֲרָה בּוֹ:
- 13 And the King consulted with the wise men, who knew the affairs of times, for so was the King's manner [to turn] to all who knew law and judgment; יג
- וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְחַכְמִים יֹדְעֵי
הָעֵתִים כִּי-כֵן דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ
לְפָנָי כָּל-יֹדְעֵי דַת וְדִין:
- 14 And the closest to him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memuchan, the seven officers of Persia and Media, who had entree to the King, and who sat first in the kingdom; יד
- וְהַקְּרֹב אֵלָיו כְּרִשְׁנָא שֶׁתָּר
אַדְמַתָּא תַרְשִׁישׁ מְרֶס מַרְסְנָא
מְמוּכָן שְׁבַעַת שָׂרֵי | פָּרְס
וּמְדֵי רְאִי פְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיֹּשְׁבִים
רֵאשְׁנָה בַּמְּלְכוּת:



6 There were hangings of white, fine cotton, and blue wool, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple wool, upon silver rods and pillars of marble; the couches were of gold and silver, upon a floor of alabaster, marble, mother of pearl, and precious stones.

חֲוֹר | כַּרְפֵּס וּתְכֵלֶת אָחוּז
בְּחִבְלֵי-בוּץ וְאַרְגָּמָן עַל-
גְּלִילֵי כֶסֶף וְעִמּוּדֵי שֵׁשׁ
מִטּוֹת | זָהָב וְכֶסֶף עַל רִצְפֹת
בַּהֲטָוֶשֶׁשׁ וְדָר וְסֻחָרֹת:

7 And the drinks were given to them in utensils of gold, the utensils being different one from the other, and royal wine in abundance, according to the bounty of the King.

וְהַשְּׁקוֹת בְּכֵלֵי זָהָב וְכֵלִים
מִכֵּלִים שׁוֹנִים וַיִּיז מַלְכוֹת רַב
כִּיד הַמֶּלֶךְ:

8 And the drinking was according to the law; no one was compelled; for the King had instructed all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's desire.

וְהַשְּׁתִּיָּה כַּדַּת אֵין אִנְס כִּי-כֵן |
יִסֵּד הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל כָּל-רַב בֵּיתוֹ
לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּרִצּוֹן אִישׁ-וְאִישׁ:

9 Also Vashti the Queen made a banquet for the women in the royal palace which belonged to King Ahashverosh.

גַּם וַשְׁתִּי הַמַּלְכָּה עָשְׂתָה
מִשְׁתֵּה נָשִׁים בֵּית הַמַּלְכוֹת
אֲשֶׁר לַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ:



PEREK ONE

פרק א

1 **I**T WAS IN THE DAYS OF Ahashverosh, this is Ahashverosh, who reigned, from Hodu to Kush, over one hundred and twenty seven provinces;

א וַיְהִי בַיָּמֵי אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ הוּא אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ מְהוּדוֹ וְעַד-כּוּשׁ שֶׁבַע וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה:

2 In those days, when the King Ahashverosh sat on his royal throne, which was in Shushan the capital,

ב בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם כְּשֶׁבַת | הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ עַל כִּסֵּא מַלְכוּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה:

3 in the third year of his reign, he made a banquet for all his officials and his servants; the army of Persia and Media, the nobles and officials of the provinces, being present;

ג בַּשָּׁנָה שְׁלוֹשׁ לְמַלְכוּ עָשָׂה מִשְׁתֵּה לְכָל-שָׂרָיו וְעַבְדָּיו חֵיל | פָּרַס וּמְדֵי הַפְּרָתָמִים וְשָׂרֵי הַמְּדִינּוֹת לִפְנֵיו:

4 when he displayed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty, for many days, - one hundred and eighty days.

ד בִּהְרָאתוֹ אֶת-עֹשֶׁר כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ וְאֶת-יְקָר תַּפְאֲרָת גְּדוּלָּתוֹ יָמִים רַבִּים שְׁמוֹנִים וּמֵאֵת יוֹם:

5 And when these days were fulfilled, the King made a banquet for all the people who were present in Shushan the capital, from the great to the small, for seven days, in the courtyard of the garden of the King's palace.

ה וּבְמָלוֹאת | הַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ לְכָל-הָעָם הַנִּמְצְאִים בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה לְמַגְדוֹל וְעַד-קָטָן מִשְׁתֵּה שֶׁבַע יָמִים בְּחֶצֶר גִּנַּת בֵּיתֵן הַמֶּלֶךְ:



The Reading of The Megillah

*Prior to the reading of the Megillah,
the baal koreh recites the following blessings:*

Blessed are You Hashem, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
our God, King of the universe, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
Who has sanctified us with his commandments, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
and commanded us about reading the Megillah. וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִקְרָא מְגִלָּה:

Blessed are You Hashem, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
our God, King of the universe, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
Who has done miracles to our forefathers שְׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ
in those days at this time. בְּיָמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְן הַזֶּה:

*At night add:
(One should have for this blessing to cover all the mitzvot of Purim:
The Seuda, Mishloach Manot, and Matanot La'evyonim.)*

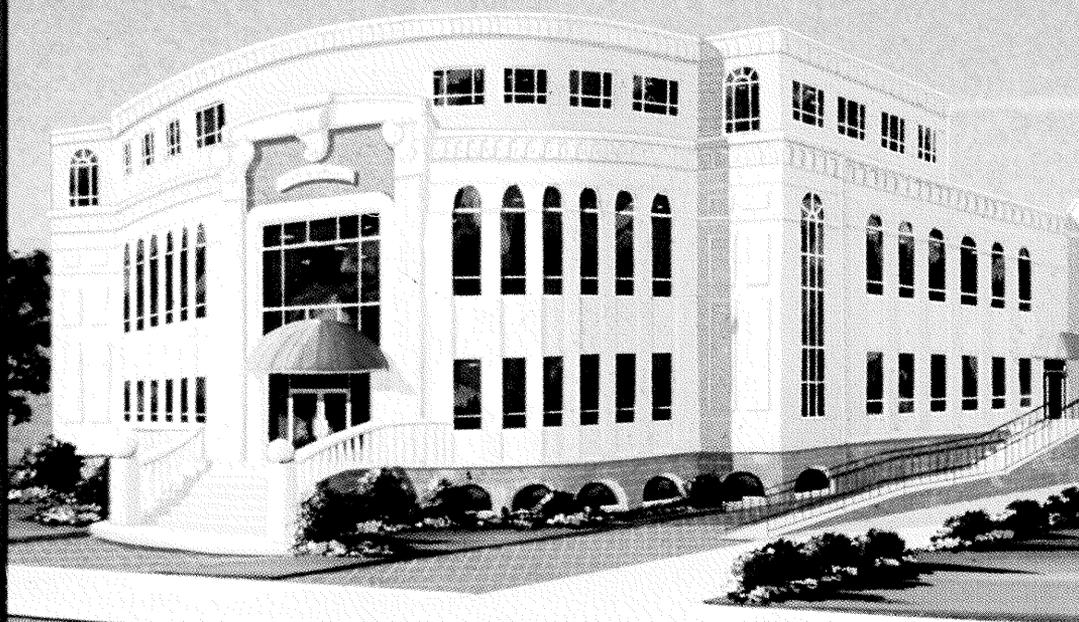
Blessed are You Hashem, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
our God, King of the universe, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
Who has kept us alive, sustained us, שְׁחַחֵנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ
and brought us to this time. וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה:

Congregation Shaare Rahamim Series

Dedicated in honor of Elie and Rachel Rofé by their children

The Shaare Rahamim

Megillah



OUR FUTURE HOME - PRESENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Megillat Esther with an English translation compiled and published by
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