

PURIM READER

**ARBIT, THE BOOK OF ESTHER,
AND TORAH READING
WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION,
HALAKHOT AND COMMENTARIES**



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Purim Reader
Synagogue Edition

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Table of Contents

Halakhot of Purim

Rabbi Moshe Shamah 1

Peshat and Derash in Megillat Esther

Rabbi Hayyim Angel 11

Some Serious Aspects of Hag Purim

Rabbi Ezra Labaton 29

Shabbat Zachor

Rabbi Ralph Tawil..... 36

Halakhot of Purim

Rabbi Moshe Shamah

I. Overview

Subsequent to the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem by the Babylonians (586 B.C.E.) the Persians defeated the Babylonians in war (538 B.C.E.) and became the ascendant power in the Near East. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had already been exiled by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.E. The Southern Kingdom of Israel, essentially the tribe of Judah together with Benjamin, had been exiled from the land of Israel by the Babylonians and now lived in the huge Persian Empire. The setting of Megillat Esther is in the city of Shushan, capital of Persia, during the time period between the Babylonian exile and the Return to Zion (late sixth century B.C.E., perhaps 516 B.C.E.). The megillah contains an account of a major attempt during that epoch to annihilate the Jewish people, men, women and children, undertaken by Haman, chief advisor to King Ahashverosh. In a beautiful narrative it describes Esther's ascension to becoming queen, Haman's reason for his diabolic intent (the steadfast refusal of a Jewish leader, Mordekhai, to bow to him), details of the king's decree, and the amazing confluence of events including Queen Esther's intervention that brought about the miraculous saving of the Jewish People. Their extraordinary victory over their enemies was achieved on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar, days ever since celebrated as Purim.

II. Prior to Purim

1. On the Shabbat before Rosh Hodesh Adar, or on Rosh Hodesh Adar itself when it falls on Shabbat, we read Parashat Sheqalim (Exodus 30: 11-16) after the regular

Torah reading for that day. The portion describes the past requirement of contributing a half-sheqel toward construction of the Mishkan, and subsequently toward the service performed in it. This obligation was later transposed to that of the Temple when it replaced the Mishkan. Since Haman proposed to pay ten thousand sheqalim to the king's treasury to destroy the Jewish people, this mitzvah has been seen as symbolizing our intentions to counteract the negative intentions of the enemies of the nation.

2. On the Shabbat immediately before Purim, after the regular Torah reading, we read Parashat Zakhor (Deut. 25: 17-19). This portion calls upon Israel to remember what Amaleq did to us upon our leaving Egypt, while we were traveling in the desert, fatigued and weary. Unprovoked, Amaleq perpetrated evil acts against Israel, specifically attacking the stragglers and weak, having no fear of G-d. We are told to eliminate Amaleq - understood to represent evil-doers - from the world. (On Shabbatot following Purim we read Parashat Parah and Parashat Hahodesh.)

3. Adar 13, usually the day before Purim, is Ta`anit Esther, a day commemorating the fast the Jewish People observed, according to tradition, to prompt repentance when battling their enemies. When Purim falls on Sunday, the fast is observed on the preceding Thursday, Adar 11.

4. From the entry of the month of Adar, in anticipation of Purim, to be followed by Pesah, we increase joyousness and happy events.

5. One going on a trip to where he does not expect to find a megillah scroll should try to take a megillah with him. If not practical, he may read the megillah from Rosh Hodesh Adar onwards, but without a berakha. Nevertheless, the other mitzvot of Purim should be fulfilled on Purim day.

III. Reading of the Megillah

1. Both men and women are required to read the megillah or hear it read from a kosher megillah scroll twice on Purim, at night and during the day.
2. The mitzvah of reading the megillah is more properly fulfilled in the presence of a congregation in order to participate in publicizing the miracle (*pirsume nissa*). If one cannot come to the synagogue or otherwise participate in a minyan, he/she may read it or hear it read individually.
3. Berakhot: Three blessings are recited on the megillah prior to the evening reading:
 - a) *Al Miqra Megillah* (for the reading itself)
 - b) *She`asah Nissim La'abotenu* (mentioning the miracles Hashem performed for our fathers)
 - c) *Sheheheyanu* (expressing gratitude that Hashem has kept us alive to participate in this occasion). When reciting *Sheheheyanu*, one should also intend to cover the other mitzvot of the day.

One blessing is recited at the conclusion of the reading, *Harab et Ribenu* (acknowledging that it was Hashem who fought our battles). At this point, there are various customs concerning the recital of celebratory statements.

The same blessings are recited for the daytime reading except for *Sheheheyanu*.¹ If one omitted *Sheheheyanu* in the evening it should be recited in the day.

¹ The Ashkenazic custom is to recite *Sheheheyanu* by day as well. According to this custom, the intent to cover the other mitzvot of the day should be with the daytime *Sheheheyanu*.

4. The berakhot before the reading are recited even when the megillah is being read individually (that is to say, without a minyan), whereas the berakha at the conclusion of the reading is only recited in a minyan.

5. The same berakhot are also to be recited by or for women who are reading or hearing the reading without a minyan.² If ten women are hearing the reading together, although it does not constitute a 'minyan' for other rituals, it is *pirsume nissa* and the concluding berakha is also recited.

6. One holding a kosher megillah scroll may read along with the hazzan. One who does not have a kosher megillah scroll should not read along but listen to every word said by the hazzan and have in mind to fulfill his/her obligation. It is important the hazzan be one who enunciates each word clearly.

7. Every person who reads Hebrew should preferably have at least a printed text of the megillah in front of him/her to follow along quietly. If one misses some of the words read by the hazzan, it is permitted to read them from the printed text and catch up providing this is only done with a minority of the megillah.

8. From the recitation of the first berakha until the conclusion of the last berakha there should be no talking or interruptions. Stamping feet during the reading is disturbing and inappropriate and should not be done. Very young children or those with noise-making toys, who will possibly create a disturbance and interfere with the fulfillment of the mitzvah, should not be present in the

² The Ashkenazic custom is that when the megillah is read for or by women, the first berakha is changed to '*Lishmo`ah Miqra Megillah.*'

synagogue during megillah reading. If such children are in the synagogue, a baby-sitter should be provided in another area.

9. Unlike the case with the Torah, it is permissible to directly touch the megillah scroll when reading (with clean hands of course).

10. Since in the megillah the text is termed a “letter,” it is a widespread custom that as a page is read it is not immediately rolled up as is the case with a Torah scroll. At the conclusion of the reading it is rolled up before beginning the concluding blessing.

11. The time for reading the megillah in the evening begins at *set hakokhabim* (the appearance of stars), the time that the fast ends. One should not eat until performing the mitzvah. As the day concluding with *set hakokhabim* is usually Ta`anit Esther, it may be that one is hungry or thirsty. If necessary, one may have a light snack before the reading.

IV. Mahasit Hasheqel

It is customary to give a half-sheqel or half-dollar to charity for each family member before or on Purim, in commemoration of the mitzvah of *mahasit hasheqel*.

V. Mishlo'ah Manot

1. Each man and woman must send a food gift composed of at least two types of food or drink that may be used for that day's festive meal to at least one person. The primary purpose of this mitzvah is to increase friendship between people. To some extent it may also provide for some needy.

2. It is praiseworthy to send *mishlo'ah manot* to many people and to send portions according to the standards of the giver, increasing harmony and amity in the nation.
3. At least the primary food gift that one sends to fulfill the mitzvah must be sent and received during the day of Purim.
4. The mitzvah is not fulfilled by sending money.
5. A mourner is required to fulfill the mitzvah of *mishlo'ah manot*. Others do not send to the mourner but may send to a spouse or other member of the family.

VI. Matanot La'ebyonim

1. In addition to *mishlo'ah manot*, during the day of Purim we must give food, substance or monetary gifts to at least two poor people or their representatives.
2. If one can afford it, it is appropriate to give to many more than the minimum two poor people or their representatives.
3. On Purim, we are not very particular with the recipients of charity – “Whosoever extends his hand, we give him.”

VII. Se`udat Purim

1. Everyone must partake of a festive meal on Purim. This mitzvah is not fulfilled at night but only during the day.
2. As the miracle of Purim came about through festive banquets with drinking of wine, to some extent the Purim *se`uda* should have such a quality, including alcoholic beverages for the adults. The Talmud states that one should become so joyous until he does not know the difference between “Cursed is Haman, blessed is Mordekhai.”

Whatever interpretation is given to this statement, and there are many, it is absolutely clear that one may only drink to the extent that he does not violate a halakha and is able to recite *birkat hamazon* and relevant prayers with proper concentration.

VIII. Purim on Friday

The festive meal celebrating Purim is not to be held at night but at some point during the day. When Purim falls on a Friday, it is necessary to have the meal early enough in the day so as not to interfere with having the Friday night meal of Shabbat with appetite.

Some rabbis have advised having the meal in the morning. When impractical, the meal may be had in the early afternoon. For example, sunset on Purim day in the New York area (2008, when Purim last fell on Friday) was at 7:10 and the standard Friday *minha*-*arbit* services began at 6:40 for *Shir Hashirim* and 6:55 for *minha*. A festive meal beginning at 1 o'clock or 1:30 should allow enough time to have a Shabbat meal with appetite at 8 o'clock. (Those for whom it is practical may choose to pray with a *minha gedola* *minyana* at 1:05 p.m.).

Other rabbis have advised having the Purim meal attached to the Shabbat meal, essentially combining both into one great meal. In this option, the first part of the great meal is had shortly before Shabbat. *Arbit* should not be prayed beforehand. At candlelighting time, the women light the Shabbat candles and Shabbat is accepted by all, a covering is spread over the bread and Shabbat *qiddush* is recited. Assuming the *berakha* had already been said over the wine in the Purim portion of the meal, the *qiddush* is recited without the *berakha* on the wine. Assuming *hamosi* had already been said on bread in the Purim portion of the meal,

that berakha also is not repeated in the Shabbat portion of the meal. In *birkat hamazon*, *`al hanisim* is recited for Purim and *reseh vehahalisenu* for Shabbat.

IX. Prayers

1. In the *amida* of Purim and in *birkat hamazon* we recite *Al Hanissim* followed by *Bimeh Mordekhai VeEsther* in their proper places as specified in all siddurim. If one forgot to recite them, he does not repeat the *amida* or *birkat hamazon*. If one remembered before having mentioned Hashem's name in the berakha following them, he may "return" and say them at that spot and then proceed from there. One who remembered too late, but still is in the *amida* or *birkat hamazon*, should insert them at the end of the *amida* before *oseh shalom* or in the *harahman* portion of *birkat hamazon*.

2. Tefillin are donned on Purim.

3. Hallel is not recited on Purim. Some Talmudic sages say the megillah takes the place of Hallel. Others say Hallel is reserved for miracles that occur in the Land of Israel (subsequent to having originally entered the land). Others explain that we did not achieve freedom on Purim to be fully "servants of the Almighty," but remained under the rule of Ahashverosh in exile.

4. *Tahanunim* are not recited on Purim and Shushan Purim. There is no musaf on Purim.

5. Before arbit and in *shahrit* we recite Psalm 22. Here, the psalmist is in a grievous, life-threatening situation from his enemies and is ill from the troubles besetting him. He recalls G-d's saving intervention on behalf of the nation in the past and His caring for him from birth and is able to

overcome his despair with prayer that obviously leads to salvation. The Sages applied this psalm to Haman's attempt to annihilate the Jewish People and Mordekhai and Esther's endeavors that brought salvation.

6. In arbit, the megillah is read after the amida followed by *ve'ata qadosh*. In *shahrit*, it is read after the Torah, just before *ve'ata qadosh*. (The verse of *ve'ata qadosh* [Psalm 22:4] is from the psalm we read on Purim, and immediately follows the verse which the Talmud links to the halakha of reading the megillah by day and night.) On Saturday night, the blessing *boreh me'oreh ha'esh* is recited before the reading.

7. There are three *olim* to the Torah on Purim. The portion read - from Parashat Beshalah (Ex. 17: 8-16) - speaks of Joshua's battling and weakening Amaleq. As the passage contains only 9 verses, Shulhan Arukh (O.H. 693:4) requires the repetition of the last verse.³ It contains the famous scene of Moshe on the mountaintop. When his hand was raised Israel was ascendant, when lowered, Amaleq was ascendant. The Mishnah (R.H. 3:8) explains this as an allegory meaning that when Bene Yisrael turn their hearts to Hashem, they are successful, otherwise they are not.

X. General Halakhot

1. Purim is celebrated on Adar 14 in most of the world. In order to commemorate the one-day-later celebration of Shushan, where the battle continued for a second day, cities that were walled (like Shushan) when Joshua led the nation into the land of Israel (for example, Jerusalem) celebrate Purim on Adar 15.

³ The Ashkenazic custom is not to repeat the last verse, given that the passage is a complete unit with the 9 verses.

2. It is prohibited to fast or have eulogies on Purim.
3. Public aspects of mourning are suspended for the day similarly to Shabbat. This is one of the cases where Shulhan Arukh codifies the halakha differently in two different chapters. We follow the later, lenient codification.
4. Working is permitted on Purim except in those places that have a specific custom not to work. In any event, doing business by buying and selling merchandise is permitted.
5. It is permitted to have weddings on Purim.

Peshat and Derash in Megillat Esther*

Rabbi Hayyim Angel

Introduction

Elisha ben Avuyah said: one who learns as a child, to what is he compared? To ink written upon a new writing sheet; and one who learns [when] old, to what is he compared? To ink written upon an erased writing sheet. (*Avot* 4:20)

Megillat Esther is among the most difficult biblical books to study anew, precisely because it is so familiar. Many assumptions accompany us through our study of the Megillah, occasionally clouding our perceptions of what is in the text and what is not.

Any serious study of the *peshat* messages of the Megillah must begin with a clear sense of what is explicitly in the text, what can be inferred legitimately from the text, and what belongs primarily in a thematic exposition, using the text as a springboard for important religious concepts. In this essay, we will consider some pertinent examples from Megillat Esther.

Peshat Considerations in the Megillah

A. The Shaul-Agag Rematch

On five occasions in the Megillah, Haman is called an “Agagite.”¹ Several early traditions consider this

* This article appeared originally as a Review Essay of *Hadassah Hi Esther* in *Tradition* 34:4 (Winter 2000), pp. 79-97; and that was reprinted with minor modifications in my book, *Through an Opaque Lens* (NY: Sephardic Publication Foundation, 2006), pp. 307-330. This is a modified version that has not previously been published.

¹ This note and all subsequent notes can be found on page 24 ff.

appellation a reference to Haman's descent from King Agag of Amalek, whom Shaul defeated (I Sam. 15).²

Similarly, several midrashic traditions identify the Kish of Mordekhai's pedigree (2:5—*ben Yair ben Shimi ben Kish*) with King Shaul's father (I Sam. 9:1).³ From this vantage point, Mordekhai's recorded pedigree spans some five centuries in order to connect him and Esther to Shaul. If indeed Haman is of royal Amalekite stock, and Mordekhai and Esther descend from King Shaul, then the Purim story may be viewed as a dramatic rematch of the battle between Shaul and Agag.

However, neither assumption is rooted in the text of the Megillah. The etymology of "Agagite" is uncertain; while it could mean "from King Agag of Amalek," it may be a Persian or Elamite name.⁴ Had the author of the Megillah wanted to associate Haman with Amalek, it could have dubbed him "the Amalekite" explicitly. The same holds true for Mordekhai and Esther's descent from King Shaul (Ibn Ezra). It is possible that the Kish mentioned in the Megillah is Mordekhai's great-grandfather, not a distant ancestor.⁵

Regardless of the historical factuality of the aforementioned identifications, a strong argument can be made for a *thematic* rematch between the forces of good and evil which runs parallel to Shaul's inadequate efforts to eradicate Amalek. In this case, the association can be inferred from the text of the Megillah itself.⁶ Thus, the conflict between Mordekhai and Haman, symbolic of a greater battle between Israel and Amalek, is well taken conceptually. But it is tenuous to contend that the biological connections are manifest in the text of the Megillah itself. However, if the Midrashim had received oral traditions regarding these historical links, we accept them—*ve-im kabbalah hi, nekabbel*.

B. Assimilation

Based on various midrashic readings, it is often argued that the turning point of the Megillah is when the Jews fast (4:1-3, 16-17; 9:31), thereby repenting from earlier assimilationist tendencies demonstrated by their sinful participation in Ahashverosh's party. However, there is no theological explanation of why the Jews "deserved" genocide in the Megillah; on the contrary, the sole textual motivation behind Haman's decree is Mordekhai's refusal to show obeisance to Haman (3:2-8). By staunchly standing out, Mordekhai jeopardizes his own life and the lives of his people.⁷

Moreover, there is no indication in the Megillah that the Jews ever did anything wrong. On the contrary, the references to the Jews display them mourning and fasting,⁸ first spontaneously, and then at Mordekhai's directive (4:1-3, 16-17; 9:31). They celebrate their victory (9:16-28), sending gifts to each other and giving charity to the poor. Moreover, the Jews were given express permission to plunder their adversaries (8:11), yet the Megillah repeatedly stresses that they refrained from doing so (9:10, 15, 16).⁹

Consider also Haman's formulation of his request to exterminate the Jews: "their laws are different from every nation" (3:8). Several Midrashim find in Haman's accusation testimony that the Jews observed mitzvot, and stood distinctly apart from their pagan counterparts.¹⁰

Curiously, the only overt indications of foreign influence on the Jews in the Megillah are the names Mordekhai and Esther, which probably derive from the pagan deities Marduk¹¹ and Ishtar.¹² However, the use of pagan names need not indicate assimilation of Mordekhai and Esther, nor of the community at large.¹³

Perhaps the only implicit indication of Jewish wrongdoing is the fact that the Jews already had been

permitted to return to Israel by Cyrus the Great (538 b.c.e.), yet a majority did not return, comfortably remaining in Babylonia and Persia.¹⁴ Moreover, scholarly consensus recognizes that the Temple already was built (516 b.c.e.) by the probable time of the Purim story (483-474 b.c.e.), magnifying the Jews' misdeed of not returning.¹⁵ But these are inferences not made explicit in the text of the Megillah.

Not only is there no textual evidence of Jewish assimilation—on the contrary, the Megillah consistently portrays Jews positively—but there is no rabbinic consensus on this matter, either. The oft-quoted Gemara used to prove assimilation reads:

R. Shimon b. Yohai was asked by his disciples, Why were the enemies of Israel (a euphemism for the Jews) in that generation deserving of extermination? He said to them: Answer the question. They said: Because they partook of the feast of that wicked one. [He said to them]: If so, those in Shushan should have been killed, but not those in other provinces! They then said, answer the question. He said to them: It was because they bowed down to the image. They said to him, then why did God forgive them (i.e., they really deserved to be destroyed)? He replied: They only pretended to worship, and He also only pretended to exterminate them; and so it is written, "For he afflicted not from his heart." (*Megillah* 12a)¹⁶

R. Shimon b. Yohai's students suggested that the Jews deserved to be destroyed because of their willing participation in Ahashverosh's party, without stating what was wrong with this participation. *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 7:8 states that the Jews sinned at the party by eating non-kosher food. Alternatively, *Esther Rabbah* 7:13 considers prostitution the primary sin at the party.¹⁷

A contrary midrashic opinion is found in *Midrash Panim Aherim* 2, which relates that the Jews specifically

avoided the party. In related sources, the Jews cried and mourned over Ahashverosh's festivities.¹⁸

From the aforementioned rabbinic opinions, we find controversy over what was wrong with the party, and the extent of the Jews' participation (if any). But this entire discussion becomes moot when we consider that R. Shimon b. Yohai *rejects* his students' hypothesis on the grounds that only Shushan's Jewry participated; the Jews in other provinces never attended either of Ahashverosh's parties.¹⁹

R. Shimon b. Yohai then submits his own opinion: the Jews bowed to "the image." Rashi avers that the image refers to the statue of Nebuchadnezzar (see Daniel chapter 3), while Meiri (*Sanhedrin* 74b) quotes an alternative reading of our Gemara, which indicates that the "image" was an idol that Haman wore as people bowed to him.²⁰

Both possibilities present difficulties: According to Rashi, the Jews were to be punished for the transgression of their ancestors, though there is no evidence in the Megillah that they perpetuated this sinful conduct. According to Meiri's alternative reading, the question of R. Shimon b. Yohai against his students simply becomes more acute: only the members of the king's court in Shushan bowed to Haman. Most Jews of Shushan, and all Jews from the outer provinces, never prostrated before Haman.

In any case, the Gemara concludes that the Jews bowed without conviction. God "externally" threatened the Jews in return, i.e., the threat was perceived, not real. Thus, the Gemara never resolves the theological question. The Jews in the Megillah are consistently portrayed in a favorable light, and the Gemara's ambivalence over the theological cause of the Purim story only supports this reading. As a result, we must relegate discussions of assimilation completely to the realm of *derekh ha-derash*, i.e., assimilation is something to be criticized, but the Megillah is not engaged in this condemnation—it has other religious purposes.

C. Religious Observance

The Megillah makes no mention of the distinctly mitzvah-related behavior of the heroes, nor of the nation. Other than the term “*Yehudi(m)*,” there is nothing distinctly Jewish in the Megillah. Most prominent is the absence of God’s Name. Also missing are any references to the Torah or specific mitzvot. The holiday at the end of the Megillah could be viewed as a nationalistic celebration of victory. The only sign of Jewish ritual is fasting; but even that is conspicuously not accompanied by prayer.²¹ The omission of God’s Name and prayer is even more striking when we contrast Masoretic Text with the Septuagint additions—where the Jews pray to God and God intervenes on several occasions. In the Septuagint version of the Megillah, God’s Name appears over *fifty* times²². It appears unmistakable that the author of the Megillah intended to stifle references to God and Jewish religious practice. In the second section of this essay, we will address this question.

D. Mordekhai’s Disobedience

Mordekhai’s rationale for not prostrating involves his Jewishness (3:4), but the Megillah does not explain how. Many biblical figures bow to kings and nobles as a sign of respect, not worship; notably Esther bows to Ahashverosh in 8:3.²³ The text suggests that Mordekhai did not want to honor the *king* and his command (see 3:2-4), but this explanation seems puzzling. Would Mordekhai endanger his own life, and the lives of all Jews²⁴ for this reason? *Esther Rabbah* 6:2 finds it unlikely:

But Mordekhai did not bow down nor prostrate himself before him (3:2). Was Mordekhai then looking for quarrels or disobedient to the king’s command? The fact is that when Ahashverosh ordered that all should bow down to Haman, the latter

fixed an idolatrous image on his breast for the purpose of making all bow down to an idol.²⁵

Other rabbinic sources contend that rather than wearing an idol, Haman considered himself a deity.²⁶

Nevertheless, the text never alludes to idolatry in regard to Haman, nor anywhere else in the Megillah.²⁷ It appears that technical idolatry did not figure into Mordekhai's refusal to bow to Haman. In the second section of this essay, we will consider alternative responses to this question.

To conclude, we find that certain midrashic assumptions are without clear support in the biblical text, and there often is disagreement in rabbinic sources. Both Mordekhai and Esther's biological connection to Shaul and Haman's descent from King Agag of Amalek are debatable. There is no evidence of Jewish assimilation in the Megillah, nor is there testimony to overtly Jewish religiosity. Finally, it is unclear why Mordekhai refused to bow to Haman, which is surprising given the centrality this episode has in the narrative.

Although these ambiguities make an understanding of the Megillah more complicated, they also free the interpreter to look beyond the original boundaries of explanation, to reconsider the text and its messages anew. We now can turn to some of the central messages which do arise from the text of the Megillah.

The Central Messages of the Megillah

A. Ahashverosh as the Main Character

In determining the literary framework of the Megillah, Rabbi David Henshke notes that, viewed superficially, chapter one contributes Vashti's removal, making way for Esther. However, the text elaborately describes the king's wealth and far-reaching power. This lengthy description

highlights the fact that there is a different plot in the Megillah: the king's power is described in detail, because it is central to the message of the Megillah. Moreover the Megillah does not end with the Jews' celebration. It concludes with a description of Ahashverosh's wealth and power, just as it begins. Thus, the Purim story is played out on Ahashverosh's stage.²⁸

The other major characters of the Megillah—Esther, Mordekhai, and Haman—are completely dependent on the good will of the king. For example, the political influence of Esther and Mordekhai ostensibly contributed significantly to the salvation of the Jews. However, the Megillah repeatedly reminds the reader how their authority was subject to the king's moods. Esther knew that Vashti had been deposed in an instant. The king even held a second beauty contest immediately after queening Esther (2:19). Finally, when the moment to use her influence arrived, Esther was terrified to confront the king to plead on behalf of her people. The fact that she had not been summoned for thirty days reminded her of her precarious position (4:11).

Mordekhai, who rose to power at the end of the Megillah, likewise recognized the king's fickleness. Just as the previous vizier was hanged, so too Mordekhai never could feel secure in his new position.

Perhaps the most striking example is the conflict between Haman and Mordekhai. Rabbi Henshke points out that after Haman parades Mordekhai around Shushan (a tremendous moral victory for Mordekhai over his archenemy), Mordekhai midrashically returns to his sackcloth and ashes (see *Megillah* 16a). After Haman is hanged (when the conflict between Mordekhai and Haman should be over), only *the king* is relieved because the threat to his own wife is eliminated (7:10); even after Ahashverosh turns Haman's post over to Mordekhai, Esther still must grovel before the king (8:1-6). The Jews remain

in mortal fear because of the *king's decree*, irrespective of Haman.

B. God and Ahashverosh

The main characters of the Megillah have counterparts: Mordekhai opposes Haman; Esther is contrasted to Vashti (and later Zeresh). On the surface of the Megillah, only Ahashverosh does not have a pair—but behind the scenes, he does: it is God.²⁹ While God's Name never appears in the Megillah, "the king" appears approximately 200 times. It would appear that Ahashverosh's absolute power is meant to occupy the role normally assigned to God elsewhere in the Bible.³⁰

Everyone must prostrate himself to the king's vizier—how much more respect is therefore required for the one who appointed him! And one who enters the throne room without the king's permission risks his or her life—reminiscent of the Jewish law of the gravity of entering the Holy of Holies, God's "throne room." Even the lavish parties at the beginning of the Megillah fit this theme. Instead of all the nations of the world flooding to the Temple in Jerusalem to serve God (Isa. 2:2-4), all the nations of the world flood to the palace in Shushan to see Ahashverosh's wealth and to get drunk.

C. The Megillah as Satire³¹

Although the king's authority and power are demonstrated amply throughout the Megillah, so are his caprice and foolishness. Ahashverosh rules the world, but his own wife does not listen to him. He makes decisions while drunk, and accepts everyone's advice. Rabbi Henshke convincingly argues that the primary point of the Megillah is to display the ostensible power of a human king, while satiring his weaknesses.

The patterns established in chapter one continue throughout the Megillah. Haman is promoted, simply

because the king wants to promote him. This promotion occurs right after Mordekhai saves the king's life and is not rewarded at all. Despite the constant emphasis on the king's laws, giving the impression of orderliness, Ahashverosh readily sells an innocent nation for destruction and drinks to that decision (3:11-15). Later, he still has the audacity to exclaim, "*mi hu zeh ve-ezeh hu!*" ("who is he and where is he," 7:5). Despite the king's indignant proclamation, the reader discerns the answer to Ahashverosh's question: it is the king himself!³²

The striking parallel between Haman's decree (3:11-15) and Mordekhai's (8:7-14) further illustrates the king's inconstancy: both edicts follow the identical legal procedure and employ virtually the same language, yet one allows the Jews to be exterminated while the other permits the Jews to defend themselves. Ahashverosh is subservient to his own decrees to the point where he cannot even retract them himself (1:19; 8:2, cf. Dan. 6:9, 13, 16). Finally, the Bigtan and Teresh incident (2:21-23) serves as a reminder that the king's power itself was precarious, and that his downfall could arise suddenly from within his Empire.³³

D. Mordekhai's Disobedience

What does Haman's parading of Mordekhai add to the plot of the Megillah? Rabbi Henshke responds that this question is based upon the assumption that the Megillah revolves around the conflict between Mordekhai and Haman. However, once it is demonstrated that Ahashverosh is the primary character of the Megillah, the parade becomes vital to the plot. True, Mordekhai had rescued the king; but he had also flouted the king's laws by not bowing to Haman, a dangerous move considering Vashti's fate for a similar crime. Moreover, Mordekhai was still subject to the impending decree against the Jews! Thus, Mordekhai's victory over Haman failed to end the story, so long as he and his people still were subject to the

menacing decree of the king. Haman's parading Mordekhai illustrates the absence of values in Ahashverosh's world.

One should add that the Megillah ascribes great importance to this parade: Zeres and Haman's advisors all recognized that somehow, this parade was the harbinger of Mordekhai's triumph over Haman (6:13)—and they were proven correct.

To summarize: In the surface plot of the Megillah—reflecting the conflict between Mordekhai and Haman, the parade marked the beginning of the victory of Mordekhai over Haman. On a deeper level, the parade is a striking example of the perverse and capricious world of the king.

In a similar vein, we may identify two layers of motivation for Mordekhai's not bowing to Haman: Rabbi Yaakov Medan asserts that Mordekhai does not bow because he needs to send a strong message to Israel: passivity in the face of evil can cause even more harm in the future.³⁴

In light of Rabbi Henshke's analysis, another answer emerges: Mordekhai wishes to oppose the king's command (3:2, 4). Once the king promotes Haman (especially right after Mordekhai had saved the king's life yet received no reward), Mordekhai recognizes the repulsive character of the king. Even further, Mordekhai perceives that Ahashverosh had "replaced" God as the major visible power in Shushan. Thus, Mordekhai finds himself battling on two spiritual fronts. On the surface, he opposes Haman, but he also engages in a spiritual battle against Ahashverosh. Therefore, the text stresses that Mordekhai was violating the king's decree by refusing to prostrate before Haman.

The Gemara lends conceptual support for this dual-battle of Mordekhai: After Mordekhai learns of the decree of annihilation, he begins to mourn:

"And Mordekhai knew all that had been done" (4:1)—what did he say? Rav says: Haman has

triumphed over Ahashverosh. Shemuel says: the higher king has triumphed over the lower king (Rashi: a euphemism for “Ahashverosh has triumphed over God”). (*Megillah* 15a)

According to Rav, Haman was the primary threat to Mordekhai and the Jews. Mordekhai bewails Haman’s manipulation of the weaker Ahashverosh. But according to Shemuel, Mordekhai perceives that Ahashverosh was too powerful. His allowing such a wicked individual to rise to power weakens the very manifestation of God in this world. Rav’s response addresses the surface plot, the conflict between Haman and Mordekhai. Shemuel reaches to the deeper struggle behind the scenes—God’s battle with Ahashverosh.

E. An Alternative to the World of Ahashverosh

Instead of stopping at its satire of the king, the *Megillah* offers an alternative lifestyle to the world of Ahashverosh. As mentioned earlier, the *Megillah* consistently portrays the Jews’ character in a positive light. In 3:8, Haman contrasts the laws of the Jews with the laws of the king. In 4:13-14, Mordekhai challenges Esther to risk her life on behalf of her people, forcing her to choose between “the king’s house” and salvation from “*makom aher* (another place).”³⁵ Thus, the *Megillah* stresses that the Jewish laws and practices are an admirable alternative to the decrepit values represented by Ahashverosh’s personality and society.

Ahashverosh is a *melekh hafakhpakh*, a whimsical ruler. His counterpart in the *Megillah*, God, works behind the scenes to influence the Purim story through the process of *ve-nahafokh hu* (9:1), a primary theme in the *Megillah*. In the world of the *hafakhpakh* everything is arbitrary, self-serving, and immoral. There is no justice: a Haman can be promoted as can a Mordekhai. In contrast, God’s world of *ve-nahafokh hu* is purposeful and just.³⁶ Although the

reader is left wondering why the Jews were threatened in the first place, God had justice prevail in the end.

However, one must note that God does not emerge completely victorious over Ahashverosh. The Megillah concludes with Ahashverosh's power, eclipsing the full manifestation of God's glory:

[Why do we not say Hallel on Purim?...]...Rava said: There is a good reason in that case [of the Exodus from Egypt] because it says [in the Hallel], Praise ye O servants of the Lord, who are no longer servants of Pharaoh — But can we say in this case, Praise ye, servants of the Lord and not servants of Ahashverosh? We are still servants of Ahashverosh! (*Megillah* 14a)

Conclusion

The showdown between Haman and Mordekhai is central to the surface plot of the Megillah, whereas the more cosmic battle between God and Mordekhai against the world of Ahashverosh permeates the very frame of the Megillah from beginning to end.

The reader is left helpless in the face of the question of why the Jews deserved this decree. The Jews appear completely righteous, and it specifically is the religious and national heroism of Mordekhai which endangers them in the first place. Yet, the reader of the Megillah, like Iyyov, is led to confront God honestly, confident by the end that there is justice in the world, even when it is not always apparent to the human eye. This piercingly honest religiosity has been a source of spiritual inspiration throughout the Jewish world since the writing of the Megillah. The Megillah challenges us, and brings us ever closer to God—who is concealed right beneath the surface of the Megillah, battling the insidious and arbitrary world of Ahashverosh.

NOTES

¹ See 3:1, 10; 8:3, 5; 9:24.

² Mishnah *Megillah* 3:4 requires that *Parashat Zakhor* (Deut. 25:17-19) be read the Shabbat preceding Purim. Mishnah 3:6 mandates that the narrative of Amalek's attack on the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex. 17:9-17) be read as the Torah portion of Purim. Josephus (*Antiquities* XI:209) asserts that Haman was an Amalekite.

³ See, for example, *Megillah* 16a.

⁴ Yaakov Klein, Mikhael Heltzer & Yitzhak Avishur et al., *Olam HaTanakh: Megillot* (Tel Aviv: Dodson-Iti, 1996, p. 217) assert that the names Haman, Hamedata, and Agag all have Elamite and Persian roots.

⁵ Cf. Amos Hakham, *Da'at Mikra: Hamesh Megillot* (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1973), in his comments to 2:5.

⁶ Hakham suggests that "Agagite" may be a typological name, intended to associate Haman conceptually with "Amalek," i.e., he acts as one from Amalek (the same way many contemporary Jews refer to anti-Semites as "Amalek," regardless of their genetic origins). Jon D. Levenson (*Old Testament Library: Esther* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997], pp. 56-7) argues similarly, adding that Shaul lost his kingdom to David as a result of not killing Agag; now, Mordekhai will reclaim some of Shaul's glory by defeating Haman the Agagite—while the Davidic kingdom stopped ten years after Jeconiah was exiled (2:6).

⁷ See discussion in R. Hayyim David Halevi, *Mekor Hayyim ha-Shalem* (Hebrew), vol. 4, pp. 347-351.

⁸ Although the Jews' mourning and fasting may indicate that they were repenting from sins, the text avoids any reference to what these sins might have been. These religious acts just as easily could indicate a petition to God in times of distress.

⁹ This emphasis may serve to demonstrate that the Jews were fighting for their very survival (Hakham). On a more conceptual level, the *Megillah* may be contrasting the Jews' behavior with that of Shaul and his soldiers, who plundered Amalek (Gavriel H. Cohn, introduction to *Da'at Mikra: Esther*, p. 14).

¹⁰ See *Esther Rabbah* 7:12; cf. *Megillah* 13b; *Abba Gorion* 26; *2 Panim Aherim* 68; *Aggadot Esther* 30-31; *Esther Rabbah* and *Targum Esther* 3:8. Cf. Carey Moore (*Anchor Bible: Esther* [New York: Doubleday,

1971], p. 39), who translates *mefuzzar u-meforad* as “scattered, yet unassimilated.” Hakham (3:8) suggests this possibility as well.

¹¹ Mordekhai is a variant of “Merodakh” (=Marduk). See Jer. 50:2; cf. II Kings 25:27 (~Jer. 52:31); Isa. 39:1. See *Megillah* 12b; *Esther Rabbah* 6:3; *2 Panim Aherim* 62; *Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer* 50; 1 and 2 Targum Esther 2:5, for midrashic explications of Mordekhai’s name.

¹² See *Megillah* 13a (several alternative midrashic etymologies of the name Esther also are given there as well). Yaakov Klein, Mikhael Heltzer & Yitzhak Avishur et al., *Olam HaTanakh: Megillot* (pp. 238-9) argue that the name Esther derives from the Persian word “star” (meaning “star” in English as well). They reject the derivation from Ishtar, since a *shin* in a Babylonian word (*Ishtar*) would not be transformed into a *samekh* in the Hebrew (*Esther*).

¹³ Even if pagan names suggest assimilation, it is quite possible that their host rulers gave them these names, like Daniel and his friends (Dan. 1:7). Cf. *Megillah* 13a: “the nations of the world called Esther this after Ishtar.” At any rate, it is clear that Esther needed to conceal her Jewish identity, so her using the name Hadassah would have been unreasonable.

¹⁴ Michael Heltzer and Michael Kochman (*Olam HaTanakh: Ezra-Nehemiah* [Tel-Aviv: Dodson-Iti, 1997], p. 142) suggest that the list in Ezra 2 might count only adult males (as in the name list in Ezra 8:1-14), which would bring the total of people – including women and children – to approximately 200,000. Abarbanel (*Mayanei HaYeshu’ah: Ma’ayan* 11, *Tamar* 1) had proposed the same. However, from the fact that some mothers and female singers are included on the list, it appears that roughly 50,000 total people (including servants) came with Zerubbabel and Jeshua.

¹⁵ For an analysis of the relationship between the midrashic sources of the Persian chronology and other historical sources, see Shemuel HaKohen, *Introduction to the Books of the Return to Zion in the Bible* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Bar Ilan University, 1987), pp. 59-79. Cf. Gavriel H. Cohn, introduction to *Da’at Mikra: Esther*, pp. 4-6. For other traditional opinions regarding the Persian chronology, see Simon Schwab, “Comparative Jewish Chronology,” in *Ateret Tzevi: Joseph Breuer Jubilee Volume* (New York: Feldheim, Inc. 1962), pp. 177-197. Hayyim Hefetz, “The Persian and Median Kingdoms in the Second Temple Period and Before: A New Study” (Hebrew), *Megadim* 14 (1991), pp. 78-141; and the introductory essay by R. Yaakov Medan, pp. 47-77. For a book-length analysis and survey of the various rabbinic opinions, see Mitchell First, *Jewish History in Conflict: A Study of the*

Major Discrepancy between Rabbinic and Conventional Chronology (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1997).

¹⁶ Translations of passages from the Talmud and Midrash Rabbah taken from Soncino, with minor modifications.

¹⁷ Cf. *Esther Rabbah* 2:11; *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* 48. Other *Midrashim* look to other eras for theological causes of the Purim decree: *Esther Rabbah* 1:10 turns to the Jews' violation of Shabbat in the time of Nehemiah. *Esther Rabbah* 7:25 considers the threat in the Purim story retribution for the brothers' sale of Yosef; *Esther Rabbah* 8:1 blames Yaakov's deception of Yitzhak.

¹⁸ See Midrashim cited in *Torah Shelemah* I:52, 60, 61.

¹⁹ *Shir Rabbah* 7:8 concludes that even if only a few Jews participated in the party, all of Israel still could be held responsible because of the principle of *arevut*.

²⁰ See e.g., *Esther Rabbah* 6:2.

²¹ Cf. Josh. 7:6; I Sam. 7:6; Jer. 14:12; Joel 2:12; Jon. 3:8; Ez. 8:21-23; Neh. 9:1ff., which all combine fasting and praying.

²² For further discussion of the Septuagint additions, see Carey Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah: The Additions* (Anchor Bible, New York: Doubleday, 1977), pp. 3-16; 153-262.

²³ See Gen. 23:7; 27:29; 33:3; Gen. 42:6; I Sam. 24:8; II Sam. 14:4; I Kings 1:23. Amos Hakham notes that the terms “*keri'ah*” and “*hishtahavayah*” (in Est. 3:2, 5) are collocated exclusively in regard to God, or to pagan deities.

²⁴ Mordekhai is a hero in the Megillah, but it is less evident whether his actions always should be considered exemplary (majority opinion), or whether he should be considered a hero for reacting properly to a problem that he had created in the first place. See Rava's opinion in *Megillah* 12b-13a; *Panim Aherim* 2:3 (quoted in *Torah Shelemah* III:17). One also could argue that Mordekhai was willing to assume personal risk, but did not anticipate a decree of genocide against his people. Cf. Kara (10:3), who argues that some Jews resented Mordekhai even at the end of the Megillah for jeopardizing their lives. For discussion of R. Yitzhak Arama's (*Akedat Yitzhak*) fascinating views on this issue, see Barry Dov Walfish, *Esther in Medieval Garb: Jewish Interpretation of the Book of Esther in the Middle Ages* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), pp. 68-72.

²⁵ See also *Esther Rabbah* 7:5; *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* 50; *Abba Gorion* 22; *Panim Aherim* 46; *Esther Rabbah* 2:5, 3:1-2; *Targum* 3:2; Josephus *Antiquities*, XI, 6.5 and 8; Ibn Ezra; *Tosafot Sanhedrin* 61b, s.v. Rava.

²⁶ *Megillah* 10b, 19a; *Esther Rabbah* 7:8; Rashi. Cf. *Sanhedrin* 61b, with Tosafot ad loc., s.v. Rava.

²⁷ R. Yitzhak Arama was perhaps the first to argue that the reasoning of idolatry is *derekh ha-derash*. See Barry Dov Walfish, *Esther in Medieval Garb*, p. 69. The closest implicit reference to pagan practices in the text is Haman's lottery.

²⁸ R. David Henshke, "Megillat Esther: Literary Disguise" (Hebrew), in *Hadassah Hi Esther* (Alon Shevut: Tevunot, 1999), pp. 93-106.

²⁹ Cf. *Esther Rabbah* 3:10: "Everywhere in the Megillah where it says, 'King Ahashverosh,' the text refers to Ahashverosh; every instance of 'the king' has a dual holy-secular meaning" (i.e., it refers both to God and Ahashverosh).

³⁰ Earlier commentators also address the issue of why God's Name is not mentioned in the Megillah. Ibn Ezra opines that the Megillah would be translated for distribution throughout the Persian Empire; since pagan translators may substitute the name of a pagan deity for God's Name, the author of the Megillah deliberately avoided referring to God. Rama (*Yoreh De'ah* 276) suggests that there was doubt whether the Megillah would be canonized (cf. *Megillah* 7a); therefore, they omitted God's Name anticipating the possibility of rejection, which would lead to the mistreatment of the scrolls. For a more complete survey of medieval responses to this issue, see Barry Dov Walfish, *Esther in Medieval Garb*, pp. 76-79.

³¹ For a thorough analysis of the use of irony in the Megillah, see Moshe D. Simon, "'Many Thoughts in the Heart of Man...': Irony and Theology in the Book of Esther," *Tradition* 31:4 (Summer 1997), pp. 5-27.

³² *Megillah* 16a: "And Esther said, 'the adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman' (7:6)—R. Eliezer says: this teaches that Esther began to face Ahashverosh, and an angel came and forced her hand to point to Haman."

One should not overlook Esther's remark to the king (7:4): were she and her people to be sold into slavery, she wouldn't have protested, indicating that the king and his interests are too important to trouble for anything short of genocide! Cf. 8:1-4, where Ahashverosh turns Haman's wealth over to Mordekhai and Esther, but does nothing to address his diabolical decree. The king's priorities are depicted as incredibly perverse in these episodes. Compare *Megillah* 11a: "'He was Ahashverosh' (1:1)—he was wicked from beginning until his end." This Gemara penetrates beneath the king's ostensible benevolence

towards the Jews at the end of the Megillah, remarking that he was no better than before.

³³ Although Bigtan and Teresh failed in their efforts, King Xerxes was assassinated by other court officials within ten years of the Purim story (465). See Moore (*Esther*), p. 32.

³⁴ R. Yaakov Medan, “Mordekhai Would Not Kneel or Bow Low—Why?” (Hebrew), in *Hadassah Hi Esther* (Alon Shevut: Tevunot, 1999), pp. 151-170.

³⁵ Ibn Ezra (introduction to the Megillah) argues that “*makom*” here does not refer directly to God. But even if this is not literally a reference to God, Mordekhai doubtlessly had God in mind.

³⁶ See R. Avraham Walfish, “An Ordinance of Equity and Honesty” (Hebrew), in *Hadassah Hi Esther* (Alon Shevut: Tevunot, 1999), pp. 107-140.

Some Serious Aspects of Hag Purim

Rabbi Ezra Labaton

Adar is a month of joy and frivolity. We drink, we laugh, we celebrate the holiday of Purim. Yet, one who avoids the serious implications of the holiday flirts with danger and may pay a heavy price for his avoidance. Nowadays, as then, evil is no playful thing, and is very much an item on the world agenda. People in positions of power who call for the destruction of Israel must be taken seriously as perpetrators of evil, as was *Haman* in Persia. Indeed, *Megillat Esther* is a profound reminder of the radical evil that lurks in the hearts of men and the extent of one man's perfidious intentions. The *Megillah* must be studied, absorbed and digested to understand this evil, and more significantly, to learn how to react.

Evil has many faces. There is, for example, the historical aspect of evil, which deals with the most evil men and events in history. There is, as well, a theological dimension to evil, which raises the question: how could *Bore Olam* allow such evil in the world that He benevolently created and supervises. In addition, there is a psychological side to evil, where the student of evil attempts to understand the inner workings of the satanic mind.

Our concern here is not with the history of evil, nor with its theological implications. Rather, we would like to approach the *Megillah* psychologically – trying to penetrate the emotional depths and states of mind of the main characters– emphasizing the evil of *Haman*, though not limiting our analysis to his twisted, perverse perspective. First, we will concentrate on the psychological traits of those who brought about this near tragedy, and then focus on those who accomplished the last minute heroics that

pulled the iron out of the fire. We start with the King of Persia.

What sort of person was *Ahashverosh*? Was he strong and powerful or silly and weak? Did he feel as secure as the Rock of Gibraltar or as insecure as a young teenager on his first date – not really sure what to say or what to do? Rabbi Soloveitchik has suggested that King *Ahashverosh* was the latter: fearful, insecure, and even paranoid. The Rav brings a whole host of textual evidence to support this psychological claim. For example, the Rav asks, what King establishes a policy of immediate death to all those who enter the King’s chambers, unless the King happens to point his royal scepter in their direction (see 4:11)? Paranoia at its best. Indeed, *Haman* knew how to portray the Jews, as a scattered enemy, disloyal to the pronouncements of the throne– yet united (Am Ehad), and thus more threatening– to convince the King that for self-protection, he best do away with them (3:8). The fearful king readily agrees.

And what about *Haman*? How are we to explain this crazed, irrational hatred that possessed him? What sort of man seeks to obliterate every vestige of a people who did him no harm? To kill every man, woman and child is to strike at the core of human decency. It is satanic– anti-Selem Elokim– behavior at its worst. Truth to tell, *Haman* was not the first to engage in such demonic, humanly perverse, behavior; witness his ancestor Amalek. Nor was he the last: Hitler must have been a close relative! We need to probe and ask, what are the underlying psychological causes that motivate such hatred? From what deep recesses does the he who hates draw his energy to hate? We submit that “ego” is not sufficient to explain the behavior of one who reaches to the depths of hell to find models for his actions. Certainly, there were no economic or religious reasons for this hatred, as has been the case throughout history; nor were the Jews a political or military threat.

Why did *Haman* hate the Jews so intensely? Why are we the victims of the world's longest and most intense hatred? It boggles the mind. Satre's masterful essay, "Anti Semite and Jew," is a penetrating exploration of the psychological underpinnings of such hatred and such behavior. To understand *Haman* psychologically- the depths of evil- Satre would be a good first step.

Now, however, we must turn our attention to Esther – the central personality of the *Megillah*. We may begin by asking: Why is she so important? Wherein do we find her greatness? Why do we celebrate this holiday, with her as the pivotal character? Or to pinpoint the issue: Why is the *Megillah* known as *Megillat Esther*, and not *Megillat Mordekhai*? Only a close analysis of the text will reveal what kind of person she was and what kind of person she has to become. In this, we will discover the essence of her greatness.

As is clear from the early chapters of the *Megillah*, Esther plays no role whatsoever in the opening narrative. She is introduced to us, almost parenthetically– though anticipatorily– as the niece of Mordekhai, the more prominent personality. The text first reveals her as *Hadasa*, but quickly records a name change. What is the significance of this change from the Hebrew *Hadasa* to the Babylonian/pagan name Esther (2:7)? Could this change in name reflect a change in her destiny or a change in her own self- perception? Perhaps this change indicates a change in the role she will play in the narrative. As the events unfold, these questions will be answered.

Further, note the word "*vatilaqah*" in 2:8. The word tells us much about Esther's character. At this point, she is a young, naïve woman and is thus "passively" taken to the King's palace – involuntarily. Yet, the impression she makes is profound. All are appreciative of her gentle demeanor; she finds favor in their eyes (2:9,15,17). *Hesed*, the quintessential Jewish characteristic, is her defining

feature. Verse 12, in addition, tells the reader something striking about Esther: although absolute authority was given to all of the women to request and receive whatever they desire – she chooses nothing. Esther follows instructions – whatever Hegai says, she does: passive and obedient. And, of course, she follows the clear cut instructions of Mordekhai – unquestioningly (2:10). A certain naiveté, modesty and innocence characterize her every step. These character traits deeply impress the King as well. How could they not? Her lack of assertiveness makes the insecure King feel secure; her non-concern with power makes *Ahashverosh* feel more powerful. He is carried away by her *Hen* and *Hesed*, and responds with a *Hanaha* – an act of kindness to his subjects. She turns him, at least for the moment, into a better person. The King loves her, trusts her and needs her.

Years pass and all is well, or so we think. Mordekhai feels secure enough to challenge the power of *Haman* and the power of his office. Yet, events take a turn for the worst. Mordekhai does not really understand the corridors of power, nor really understand *Haman's* ego needs or the King's insecurity. *Haman* does, and therefore plays upon this insecurity to secure the King's consent for his evil intention. The evil decree is agreed upon and proclaimed. Chapter 4 verse 1 records Mordekhai's intense involvement in all these happenings and surprisingly notes Esther's complete absence from all these events. His reaction: panic and mourning. He screams the bitter cry of defeat. Further in his depressed state he commands Esther to beg and plead for her nation. But now he is told that her distance is self-protective (4:11). After her initial response, however, there is a perceptible change in personality. No longer do we see the innocent, naïve, withdrawn demeanor of *Hadasa* – she becomes Queen Esther.

Mordekhai speaks in desperate tones. He sees only darkness ahead for his people. Esther perceives more

profoundly, at this point, the needs of the hour. Wild desperate pleas of mercy would fail to turn the cold, cruel heart of *Haman* and the same for the insecure, paranoid king. Esther, however, understands her husband well. Because she has not been summoned to the King for thirty days, her wild entry into the King's presence could only mean death, nothing positive could result. Thus, Esther thinks craftily and pragmatically. A plan must be formulated, rooted in the King's insecurity and need for attention, taking into account *Haman's* arrogance and need for power.

Queen Esther understands her responsibility; the historical role given to her has now become clear. All past events are fully understood in light of the present crisis. But given her understanding of the events as they have unfolded and her uncanny insight into human nature, she knows that Mordekhai's impetuous plan of action is off the mark; her more deliberate formulation begins to take shape. The Queen's command of the situation is total. Now she takes charge and instructs Mordekhai what he must do, while she is galvanized into action. A transition indeed!! The follower becomes the leader, while the leader becomes the follower.

Hadasa has changed. The woman who requested nothing in her first visit to the King, now dresses regally. Her physical appearance will play a role in turning the tide against *Haman*, as does her "*Hen*" – graciousness. *Ahashverosh*, upon seeing his Queen is transfixed and is willing to give her half of his Kingdom. No, all she requests is for the King and *Haman* to attend the next day's party- thereby empowering *Haman*. Note how he reflects upon this attention. "Esther, the Queen, brought no one else to the party with the King but me. And tomorrow I am invited with the King" (5:10). But this invitation with *Haman* must have deepened the King's insecurity. He must have thought, "Why is she inviting *Haman* to this private

party? Is a coup in the making?” The plot thickens. The pieces are all in place – even *Harbona* is properly instructed to play his role.

At the precise moment, once the King has had his fill and is feeling particularly happy with his Queen – offering her once again half the throne – Esther begs for her life, pointing her accusing finger at *Haman*. *Ahashverosh* is enraged, while *Haman*, half drunk and not totally aware of what’s happening, falls on the Queen’s couch. *Harbona*, perfectly placed, feeds the King the right line. *Haman* and his sons are hung. But the now, very aggressive Queen, is not yet finished. *Haman*’s sons must be publicly displayed, while another day is given to the Jews – *Lehinakem Meoyvehem* – to seek revenge from their enemies.

At this point, Mordekhai plays no role at all. Esther has become a powerful person, craftily using her position and womanly charm to save her people. Note how impressed the King is with her “*Hen and Hesed*” - not only at the beginning of their relationship, but years later. (As Esther expresses in 8:5 and the King must have agreed – she puts the right words in his mouth, mind and heart). Esther uses this to turn the King against *Haman*, thereby saving her people. That which was at one point innocent and natural was turned into a political tool to influence events.

Esther has become another person. From the shy, quiet, innocent, and naïve woman we met at the beginning of the *Megillah*, she has become – had to become – a player in the game of political intrigue. Queen Esther has become a powerful, charismatic personality. She takes all the necessary steps of dealing with *Haman*’s family, and all others who rise up against the Jews. Further, the *Megillah* in 9:29 emphasizes that Esther the Queen (mentioned first) writes the narrative of events. She maintains power, not Mordekhai. She is Esther the Queen, while he is characterized as “Mordekhai the Jew.”

This dramatic change in personality was not simple, nor easy. It would have been much simpler and easier to remain under the wings of a protective uncle, passively accepting the events as they unfolded. She chose a different path. When destiny called, she answered – no matter what the price – to act on behalf of her people. Esther is praised by our tradition, not only for the role she played in saving the Jewish people, but for the self change she engineered and endured for the sake of *Am Yisrael*. Evil, once again, is temporarily defeated. We thank *Bore Olam* for such self-sacrificing people.

Shabbat Zachor¹

Rabbi Ralph Tawil

Value: Eradicating Evil

Real evil exists in the world, and it must be rooted out completely. Although this idea has become popular again during the war against terrorism, it has always been a part of the Torah. How can we eradicate evil? How do we define evil? Who does the defining? These are all questions that can confuse the application of this value. This lesson will explore some of these issues.

Background: As a fulfillment of the Torah’s commandment to “remember what Amaleq did to you” and in anticipation of Purim, we read one of the sections of the Torah where the Torah describes the battle against Amaleq. According to most Halakhic authorities, this is the only Torah reading of the year that is *de`oraita* (commanded by the Torah).

Text: Debarim 25:17-19 (NJPS)

Remember what Amaleq did to you on your journey, after you left Egypt—how, undeterred by fear of God, he surprised you on the march when you were famished and weary, and cut down all the stragglers in your rear. Therefore, when the Lord your God grants you safety from all your enemies around you, in the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a hereditary portion, you shall blot out the memory of Amaleq from under heaven. Do not forget!

Analysis: Samuel the prophet defined the term “blotting out the memory of Amaleq” to mean: “Spare no one, but

¹ The following is reprinted from Rabbi Ralph Tawil’s Shabbat-Table Talks for Shabbat Zachor.

kill alike men and women, infants and sucklings, oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys” (1 *Samuel* 15:3). This stands as a most important commandment. The section begins with the commandment to “remember,” and ends with the order “don’t forget.” Yet the value of eradicating evil and its connection to Perashat “Zachor” (the opening Hebrew word of the above section) is somewhat difficult to teach. Of course, everyone agrees that we should eradicate evil. However, it is hard to understand the Torah’s commandments to kill every man, woman and infant of Amaleq. In the period of the war against terrorism that we are presently in, it is somewhat easier to understand it, but not completely. Rambam has mitigated the absoluteness of this law when it comes to practice. In addition, the Torah has limited the practical application of the law to only the nation of Amaleq. Our Rabbinic tradition has already decided that it is impossible, after the Assyrian empire’s mixing up the various nations, to identify any one nation as Amaleq. Still the commandment stands and can be applied towards evil in general. Evil must be eradicated.

Discussion: What did Amaleq do? (This nation attacked Bene Yisrael when they left Egypt. Amaleq attacked the stragglers—the weak and defenseless).

Why is that so bad? (The Torah describes Amaleq as “not fearing God” and as “attacking the stragglers.” These traits are destructive to society. Society is based on fearing God, and not attacking those that are weak. The honesty and integrity and the protection of the weak that define a God-fearing society are essential to have in a cohesive society. Amaleq’s behavior is destructive to society; therefore it must be eradicated.)

How can it be right to kill even Amaleq’s infants? After all, they are innocent? (This question must be addressed, even though there is hardly a very satisfactory answer for it. This is a seeming clash between our sense of right and

wrong and the Torah's commandment—at least, in the way that Samuel the prophet has defined it. What the Torah is teaching is that some nations are so evil, that every person who identifies with that nation must be destroyed. Perhaps, if anyone of that nation is left alive, the evil culture of that nation will resurface and create more problems in the future. We must be aware that the torah's commandment of the total eradication of a nation only applies to the nation of Amaleq, which does not exist today.)

Rambam, when discussing the Torah laws pertaining to war, explained that the law of blotting out the memory of Amaleq only applies if they have not made peace with Bene Yisrael, and have not accepted upon themselves the seven Noahide laws. If they have, then Bene Yisrael is not to go to war against them. From this we could learn that if Amaleq accepted these conditions they have changed their basic culture and are no longer targets for annihilation. The evil culture must be eradicated, either by destroying the people that hold fast to this culture of evil, or by having them change their beliefs and culture. The seven Noahide laws contain within them: respect for God (not to curse God) and the setting up of a legal justice system. An Amaleq nation that accepts these conditions is essentially not Amaleq culturally and therefore not slated for annihilation.

If the nation of Amaleq doesn't exist today, how are we supposed to understand this misvah? (We could understand it as talking about eradicating all evil—not only by killing, but also by educating. Evil exists in the form of taking advantage of the weak, lying, cheating, and stealing. We must develop our society and educate it to the point where these practices are eliminated.)

Evil also exists today in the form of terrorism. Why is terrorism evil? (Because its victims are innocent and defenseless.) Terrorism and those who support it and incite towards it must be eradicated. Yielding to the terrorist's

demands is not the way to accomplish this. Giving in to the demands of terrorists invites more demands and further terrorism. Eradicating terrorism can only be done by an all-out war against terrorists until the people who remain renounce terrorism. It does not require killing of every person, but only those people who commit or support terrorism and those that incite terrorism.

We pray to Hashem that the United States will be successful in eradicating world-wide terrorism, so that we can work together peacefully towards resolving the many problems that face us.

קריאת התורה לשחרית של פורים

שמות יז: ח-טז

(כהן) וַיָּבֹא עִמְלֵק וַיִּלָּחֶם עִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִפְיָדָם: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה וְצָבָא הַלָּחֶם בְּעִמְלֵק מִחֹר אֲנֹכִי נֹצֵב עַל־רֹאשׁ הַגְּבֻעָה וּמִטָּה הָאֱלֹהִים בְּיָדִי: וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר־לוֹ מֹשֶׁה לְהִלָּחֶם בְּעִמְלֵק וּמֹשֶׁה אֶהְרֵן וְחֹר עָלוּ רֹאשׁ הַגְּבֻעָה: (לוי) וַהֲיָה כַּאֲשֶׁר יָרִים מֹשֶׁה יָדוֹ וְגִבֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכַאֲשֶׁר יָנִים יָדוֹ וְגִבֹר עִמְלֵק: וַיְדִי מֹשֶׁה כְּבָדִים וַיִּקְחוּ־אֶבֶן וַיִּשְׂימוּ תַחְתּוֹ וַיֵּשֶׁב עָלֶיהָ וְאֶהְרֵן וְחֹר תָּמְכוּ בְּיָדָיו מִזָּה אֶחָד וּמִזָּה אֶחָד וַיְהִי יָדָיו אֶמוּנָה עַד־בֹּא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ: וַיַּחֲלֵשׁ יְהוָה אֶת־עִמְלֵק וְאֶת־עַמּוֹ לְפִי־חָרָב:

(ישראל) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כָּתֹב זֹאת זִכָּרוֹן בַּסֵּפֶר וְשִׂים בְּאָזְנִי יְהוָה כִּי־מָחָה אֶמְחָה אֶת־זִכְרְ עִמְלֵק מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיִּבֶן מֹשֶׁה מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יְהוָה נָסִי: וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־יָד עַל־כֶּסֶף זֶה מִלְחָמָה לַיהוָה בְּעִמְלֵק מִדֶּרֶךְ דָּר: (ש"ע או"ח תרצ"ג, ד: "כופלין פסוק אחרון") וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־יָד עַל־כֶּסֶף זֶה מִלְחָמָה לַיהוָה בְּעִמְלֵק מִדֶּרֶךְ דָּר:

ערבית לליל פורים

אם חל במוצאי שבת, אומרים פה הברלה
On Saturday night, recite Habdalah here

ראשון לציון הנה הנם, ולירושלם מבשר אתן: כוס
ישועות אשא, ובשם יהנה אקרא: אגא יהנה הושיעה
נא, אגא יהנה הושיעה נא: אגא יהנה הצליחה נא, אגא
יהנה הצליחה נא: הצליחנו, הצליח דרכינו, הצליח
למודינו, ושלה ברכה רוחה והצלחה בכל מעשה
ידינו. כדכתיב ישא ברכה מאת יהוה, וצדקה מאליהי
ישעו: ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששן ויקר: וכתיב
ויהי דוד לכל דרכיו משכיל. ויהוה עמו, כן יהנה
עמנו: ונח מצא חן בעיני יהוה: כן נמצא חן ושכל טוב,
בעיני אלהים ואדם: אלהא דמאיר עננו:

סברי מרנן: (לחיים)

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי
הגפן:

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא מיני
בשמים:

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם, המבדיל בין
קדש לחול ובין אור לחשך, ובין ישראל לעמים, ובין
יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה, ברוך אתה יהוה,
המבדיל בין קדש לחול:

עָלֵינוּ לְשַׁבַּח לְאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל, לְתַת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר
 בְּרֵאשִׁית. שְׁלֹא עֲשָׂנוּ כְּגוֹיֵי הָאֲרָצוֹת, וְלֹא שָׁמְנוּ
 כְּמַשְׁפָּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה. שְׁלֹא שָׁם חָלַקְנוּ כְּהֵם, וְגוֹרְלָנוּ
 כְּכֹל-הַמוֹנִים: שֶׁהֵם מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לְהֶבֶל וְרִיק, וּמִתְפַּלְלִים
 אֶל אֵל לֹא יוֹשִׁיעַ: וְאֲנַחְנוּ מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לְפָנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי
 הַמַּלְכִּים הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: שֶׁהוּא נוֹטֵה שָׁמַיִם וְיוֹסֵד
 אָרֶץ, וּמוֹשֵׁב יָקָרוֹ בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל, וְשֹׁכֵינֵת עִזּוֹ בְּגִבְהֵי
 מְרוֹמִים: הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵין עוֹד אַחֵר, אָמֵת מִלְּכֵנוּ וְאָפֶס
 זוּלָתוֹ, כְּפֶתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה: וַיְדַעַתְּ הַיּוֹם, וַהֲשַׁבַּתְּ אֶל-לְבָבְךָ,
 כִּי יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ
 מִתַּחַת, אֵין עוֹד:

עַל כֵּן נִקְנָה לָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לְרֵאוֹת מְהֵרָה
 בְּתַפְאָרַת עֲזָךְ, לְהַעֲבִיר גְּלוּלִים מִן הָאָרֶץ, וְהַאֲלִילִים
 כְּרוֹת יְכַרְתּוּן, לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדֵי, וְכֹל-בְּנֵי בְּשָׂר
 יִקְרָאוּ בְּשִׁמְךָ, לְהַפְנוֹת אֵלֶיךָ כָּל-רְשָׁעֵי-אָרֶץ: יִכִּירוּ
 וַיְדַעוּ כָּל-יְוֹשְׁבֵי תְּבֵל, כִּי לָךְ תִּכְרַע כָּל-בָּרֶךְ, תִּשָּׁבַע
 כָּל-לְשׁוֹן. לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִכְרְעוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ, וְלִכְבוֹד
 שִׁמְךָ יִקָּר יִתְנוּ. וַיִּקְבְּלוּ כָל־עַל מַלְכוּתְךָ, וְתִמְלֹךְ
 עֲלֵיהֶם מְהֵרָה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, כִּי הַמַּלְכוּת שְׁלָךְ הִיא,
 וְלְעוֹלָמֵי עַד תִּמְלֹךְ בְּכָבוֹד, כְּפֶתוּב בַּתּוֹרָתְךָ: יְהוָה,
 יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. וְנֹאמַר: וַהֲיָה יְהוָה לְמֶלֶךְ
 עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִיָּה יְהוָה אֶחָד וְשָׁמוֹ אֶחָד:
 וּבַתּוֹרָתְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ כְּתוּב לֵאמֹר: שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל,
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְהוָה אֶחָד:

ערבית לליל פורים

תהלים קכד

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת לְדָוִד, לוֹיֵי יְהוָה שִׁהֲיָה לָנוּ, יֹאמְרוּנָא
יִשְׂרָאֵל: לוֹיֵי יְהוָה שִׁהֲיָה לָנוּ, בְּקוֹם עָלֵינוּ אָדָם: אָזִי
חַיִּים בְּלַעֲוֹנוּ, בַּחֲרוֹת אָפֶם בָּנוּ: אָזִי הַמַּיִם שִׁטְפוּנוּ,
נַחֲלָה עָבַר עַל־נַפְשֵׁנוּ: אָזִי עָבַר עַל־נַפְשֵׁנוּ, הַמַּיִם
הַיְדוּנִים: בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה, שְׁלֹא נִתְּנָנוּ טָרֶף לְשִׁנֵּיהֶם: נַפְשֵׁנוּ
כְּצַפּוֹר נִמְלְטָה מִפֶּחַ וְיִקְשִׁים, הַפֶּחַ נִשְׁפָּר וְאֲנַחְנוּ
נִמְלְטָנוּ: עֲזָרְנוּ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה, עֲשֵׂה שְׂמִים וְאַרְצִי:

קדיש יהא שלמא

וַתִּגְדַּל וַיִּתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא: אַמֵּן. בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי־בְרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וַיִּמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ, וַיַּצְמַח בְּרַקְנָהּ, וַיִּקְרַב מְשִׁיחָהּ:
אַמֵּן. בְּחֵיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן, וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֵגְלָא
וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אַמֵּן: אַמֵּן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ, לְעָלְמָא וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא וַתְּבָרַךְ,
וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח, וַיִּתְפָּאֵר, וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם, וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא, וַיִּתְהַדָּר, וַיִּתְעַלֶּה,
וַיִּתְחַלַּל, שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא: אַמֵּן. לְעֵלְא מִן
כָּל־בְּרַכְתָּא, שִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחְמְתָא, דְאִמִּירֵן בְּעֵלְמָא,
וְאִמְרוּ אַמֵּן: אַמֵּן.

יְהֵא שְׁלֵמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׂמֵיָא, חַיִּים, וְשָׁבַע, וַיִּשׁוּעָה,
וְנַחְמָה, וְשִׁיזְבָּא, וְרַפּוּאָה, וְגִאָּלָה, וְסְלִיחָה, וְכַפְרָה, וְרוּחַ
וַתְּצַלָּה לָנוּ וּלְכָל־עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אַמֵּן: אַמֵּן.
עוֹשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא בְּרַחְמָיו, יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ,
וְעַל כָּל־עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אַמֵּן: אַמֵּן.

חזן: בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבָרַךְ:

קהל: בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרַךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

חזן: בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרַךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

ערבית לליל פורים

אַלְהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׁנִשְׁמַר חֻקֶיךָ וּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ בְּעוֹלָם
הַזֶּה, וּנְזַכֶּה, וּנְחַיֶּה, וּנְיַרְשׁ טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה, לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם
הַבָּא: לְמַעַן יִזְמְרֶךָ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יִדָּם, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי לְעוֹלָם
אוֹדֶךָ: יְהוָה חַפֵּץ לְמַעַן צְדָקוֹ, יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וַיֹּאדִיר:
וַיְבַטְחוּ בְךָ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ, כִּי לֹא-עֲזַבְתָּ דַרְשֵׁיךָ יְהוָה:
יְהוָה אֲדַגְנֵנוּ, מִהָאֲדִיר שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ: חֲזַקוּ וַיֵּאמְרוּ
לְבַבְכֶם, כָּל-הַמְּיַחֵלִים לַיהוָה:

קדיש תתקבל

יִתְגַּדֵּל וַיִּתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵךָ רַבָּא: אַמֵּן. בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי-בְרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וַיְמַלִּיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ, וַיַּצְמַח פְּרָקְנָהּ, וַיִּקְרַב מְשִׁיחָהּ:
אַמֵּן. בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן, וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעִנְיָא
וּבְזַמְן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן: אַמֵּן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ, לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא יִתְבָּרַךְ,
וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח, וַיִּתְפָּאֵר, וַיִּתְרוֹמַם, וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא, וַיִּתְהַדָּר, וַיִּתְעַלֶּה,
וַיִּתְהַלַּל, שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא: אַמֵּן. לְעֵלְא מִן
כָּל-בְּרַכְתָּא, שִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחְמָתָא, דְאִמְרִין בְּעֶלְמָא,
וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן: אַמֵּן.

תִּתְקַבַּל צְלוֹתְנָא וּבְעוֹתְנָא, עִם צְלוֹתְהוֹן וּבְעוֹתְהוֹן
דְכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, קַדָּם אַבוּנָא דְבִשְׁמַיָּא וְאַרְעָא, וְאִמְרוּ
אָמֵן: אַמֵּן.

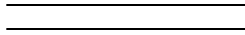
יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, חַיִּים, וְשָׁבַע, וַיְשׁוּעָה,
וְנַחְמָה, וְשִׁיזְבָּא, וְרַפּוּאָה, וְנִגְלִיחָה, וְכַפָּרָה, וְרוּחַ
וְחַצְלָה לְנוּ וּלְכָל-עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן: אַמֵּן.
עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא בְּרַחֲמָיו, יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ,
וְעַל כָּל-עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן: אַמֵּן.

ואתה קדוש יושב תהלות ישראל. וקרא זה אל-זה ואמר: קדוש, קדוש, קדוש יהוה צבאות, מלא כל-הארץ כבודו: בלחש: ומקבלין דין מן-דין ואמרין, קדיש בשמי מרומא עלאה עלאה בית שכינתה, קדיש על ארעא עובד גבורתה, קדיש לעלם ולעלמי עלמיא: יהוה צבאות מליא כל-ארעא זיו יקרה: בקול: ותשאני רוח, ואשמע אחרי קול רעש גדול: ברוך כבוד-יהוה במקומו: בלחש: ונטלתני רוחא. ושמעית בתרי קל זיע שניא דמשבחין ואמרין, בריך יקרא דיהוה מאתר בית שכינתה: בקול: יהוה ימלך לעולם ועד: בלחש: יהוה מלכותה קאים לעלם ולעלמי עלמיא: בקול: יהוה, אלהי אברהם יצחק וישראל אבותינו. שמרה-זאת לעולם, ליצר מחשבות לבב עמך, והכן לבכם אליך: והוא רחום, וכפר עון ולא-ישחית, והרבה להשיב אפוי, ולא-יעיר כל-חמתו: כי-אתה יהוה טוב וסלח, ורב-חסד לכל-קראיך: צדקתך צדק לעולם, ותורתך אמת: תתן אמת ליעקב, חסד לאברהם, אשר-נשבעת לאבותינו מימי קדם: ברוך יהוה, יום יום, יעמס-לנו, האל ישועתנו סלה: יהוה צבאות עמנו, משגב לנו אלהי יעקב סלה: יהוה צבאות, אשרי אדם בטח בך: יהוה הושיעה, המלך יעגנו ביום-קראנו:

ברוך אלהינו שבראנו לכבודו, והבדילנו מן התועים, ונתן לנו תורת אמת, וחי עולם נטע בתוכנו. הרחמן, הוא יפתח לבנו בתורתו, וישים בלבנו אהבתו ויראתו לעשות רצונו ולעבדו בלבב שלם. למען לא ניגע לריק ולא נלד לבהלה. יהי רצון מלפניך יהוה

מגלת אסתר

¹King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the mainland and the islands. ²All his mighty and powerful acts, and a full account of the greatness to which the king advanced Mordecai, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Media and Persia. ³For Mordecai the Jew ranked next to King Ahasuerus and was highly regarded by the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brethren; he sought the good of his people and interceded for the welfare of all his kindred.



מגלת אסתר

פרק י

א וַיִּשֶׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶחָשֶׁרֶשׁ אֶחָשׁוּרֶשׁ | מִסַּעֲלֵה־הָאָרֶץ וְאֵי תַיִם:
ב וְכָל־מַעֲשֵׂה תִקְפּוֹ וּגְבוּרָתוֹ וּפְרָשֵׁת גְּדֻלַּת מְרָדְכִי אֲשֶׁר
ג גִּדְּלוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ הִלּוּאֲתָם כְּתוֹבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים
לְמַלְכֵי מְדֵי וּפָרַס: כִּי | מְרָדְכִי הִיְהוּדִי מִשְׁנֵה לַמֶּלֶךְ
אֶחָשׁוּרֶשׁ וְגָדוֹל לִיהוּדִים וְרָצוּי לְרַב אֶחָיו הִרְשׁ טוֹב
לְעַמּוֹ וְדַבֵּר שָׁלוֹם לְכָל־זָרְעוֹ:

אחר קריאת המגלה, כורכין את המגלה ומברכין

After the reading of the Megillah, roll up the Megillah scroll,
and then say

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הָרַב אֶת רֵיבֵנו,
וְהִדִּין אֶת דֵּינֵנו, וְהַנּוֹקֵם אֶת נַקְמָתֵנו, וְהַמְשַׁלֵּם גְּמוּלָה
לְכָל־אֹיְבֵי נַפְשֵׁנוּ, וְהַנִּפְרָע לָנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְהוָה, הַנִּפְרָע לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל־צָרֵיהֶם, הָאֵל
הַמוֹשִׁיעַ:

בְּרוּךְ מְרָדְכִי	אָרוּר הָמֵן
בְּרוּכָה אֶסְתֵּר	אָרוּרָה זָרַשׁ
בְּרוּכִים כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל	אָרוּרִים הָרָשָׁעִים
זְכוּר לְטוֹב:	וְגַם הָרַבּוּנָה

feasting and merrymaking, and as an occasion for sending gifts to one another and presents to the poor.²³ The Jews accordingly assumed as an obligation that which they had begun to practice and which Mordecai prescribed for them.²⁴ For Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the foe of all the Jews, had plotted to destroy the Jews, and had cast *pur*—that is, the lot—with intent to crush and exterminate them.²⁵ But when [Esther] came before the king, he commanded: ^{b-c}“With the promulgation of this decree,^b let the evil plot, which he devised against the Jews, recoil on his own head!” So they impaled him and his sons on the stake.²⁶ For that reason these days were named Purim, after *pur*. In view, then, of all the instructions in the said letter and of what they had experienced in that matter and what had befallen them,²⁷ the Jews undertook and irrevocably obligated themselves and their descendants, and all who might join them, to observe these two days in the manner prescribed and at the proper time each year.²⁸ Consequently, these days are recalled and observed in every generation: by every family, every province, and every city. And these days of Purim shall never cease among the Jews, and the memory of them shall never perish among their descendants.

^{29c} Then Queen Esther daughter of Abihail wrote a second letter of Purim for the purpose of confirming with full authority the aforementioned one of Mordecai the Jew.³⁰ Dispatches were sent to all the Jews in the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the realm of Ahasuerus with an ordinance of “equity and honesty:”^d ³¹ These days of Purim shall be observed at their proper time, as Mordecai the Jew—and now Queen Esther—has obligated them to do, and just as they have assumed for themselves and their descendants the obligation of the fasts with their lamentations.^e ³² And Esther’s ordinance validating these observances of Purim was recorded in a scroll.

^{b-b} *Meaning of Heb. uncertain.*

^c *Force of vv. 29–31 uncertain in part. Verse 29 reads literally, “Then Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter of Purim.”*

^d *I.e., of new holidays, the instituting of which is linked to love of equity and honesty in Zech. 8.19.*

^e *The Jews had long been observing fast days in commemoration of national calamities; see Zech. 7.5; 8.19.*

מִשְׁתָּה וְשִׂמְחָה וּמְשֻׁלַּח מְנוּחַת אִישׁ לְרַעְהוּ וּמִתְנוּחַת
 כג לְאֲבוֹנִים: וְקִבַּל הַיְהוּדִים אֶת אֲשֶׁר־הִחְלוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת וְאֵת
 כד אֲשֶׁר־כָּתַב מְרַדְּכִי אֲלֵיהֶם: כִּי הָמֵן בֶּן־הַמֶּדְתָּא הָאֲנֹנִי
 צִרַר כָּל־הַיְהוּדִים חָשַׁב עַל־הַיְהוּדִים לְאַבְדָּם וְהִפְלִי
 כה פּוּר הוּא הַגּוּזֵל לְהַמָּס וּלְאַבְדָּם: וּבִבְאֵה לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
 אָמַר עִם־הַסֵּפֶר יָשׁוּב מִחֻשְׁבְּתוֹ הִרְעָה אֲשֶׁר־חָשַׁב עַל־
 כו הַיְהוּדִים עַל־רָאוּשׁוֹ וְתָלוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו עַל־הָעֵץ: עַל־כֵּן
 קָרְאוּ לַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה פּוּרִים עַל־שֵׁם הַפּוּר עַל־כֵּן
 עַל־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הָאֲנִירַת הַזֹּאת וּמִה־רָאוּ עַל־כֹּכָה וּמִה
 כז הַגִּיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם: קִיָּמוּ וּקְבַל וְקִבַּל הַיְהוּדִים | עֲלֵיהֶם |
 וְעַל־זֶרַעַם וְעַל כָּל־הַנְּלֻגִים עֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יַעֲבֹר לַהֲיוֹת
 עֲשִׂים אֵת שְׁנֵי הַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה כִּכְתָּבָם וְכִזְמַנָּם בְּכָל־שָׁנָה
 כח וְשָׁנָה: וְהַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה נִזְכָּרִים וְנַעֲשִׂים בְּכָל־דָּוָר וְדָוָר
 מִשְׁפָּחָה וּמִשְׁפָּחָה מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וְעִיר וְעִיר וַיָּמִי
 הַפּוּרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֹא יַעֲבְרוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַיְהוּדִים וְזִכְרָם
 כט לְאִי־סוּף מִזְרַעַם: וְתִכְתָּב אֶסְתֵּר הַמֶּלֶכָה
 בַּת־אֲבוּתֵיִל וּמְרַדְּכִי הַיְהוּדִי אֶת־כָּל־תִּקְוָה לְקַיָּם אֵת
 ל אֲנִירַת הַפָּרִים הַזֹּאת הַשְּׁנִית: וַיִּשְׁלַח סְפָרִים אֶל־כָּל־
 הַיְהוּדִים אֶל־שִׁבְעַת וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה מַלְכוּת
 לא אַחֲשׁוּרוּשׁ דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹם וְאַמְתָּ: לְקַיָּם אֶת־יָמֵי הַפָּרִים
 הָאֵלֶּה בְּזִמְנֵיהֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר קָבַם עֲלֵיהֶם מְרַדְּכִי הַיְהוּדִי
 וְאַסְתֵּר הַמֶּלֶכָה וְכַאֲשֶׁר קִיָּמוּ עַל־נַפְשָׁם וְעַל־זֶרַעַם
 לב דְּבָרֵי הַצּוּמוֹת וְזַעֲקָתָם: וּמֵאָמַר אֶסְתֵּר קָבַם דְּבָרֵי
 הַפָּרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְנִכְתָּב בַּסֵּפֶר:

to the king, ¹²the king said to Queen Esther, “In the fortress Shushan alone the Jews have killed a total of five hundred men, as well as the ten sons of Haman. What then must they have done in the provinces of the realm! What is your wish now? It shall be granted you. And what else is your request? It shall be fulfilled.” ¹³“If it please Your Majesty,” Esther replied, “let the Jews in Shushan be permitted to act tomorrow also as they did today; and let Haman’s ten sons be impaled on the stake.” ¹⁴The king ordered that this should be done, and the decree was proclaimed in Shushan. Haman’s ten sons were impaled: ¹⁵and the Jews in Shushan mustered again on the fourteenth day of Adar and slew three hundred men in Shushan. But they did not lay hands on the spoil.

¹⁶The rest of the Jews, those in the king’s provinces, likewise mustered and fought for their lives. They disposed of their enemies, killing seventy-five thousand of their foes; but they did not lay hands on the spoil. ¹⁷That was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar; and they rested on the fourteenth day and made it a day of feasting and merrymaking. (¹⁸But the Jews in Shushan mustered on both the thirteenth and fourteenth days, and so rested on the fifteenth, and made it a day of feasting and merrymaking.) ¹⁹That is why village Jews, who live in unwallied towns, observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and make it a day of merrymaking and feasting, and as a holiday and an occasion for sending gifts to one another.

²⁰Mordecai recorded these events. And he sent dispatches to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Ahasuerus, near and far, ²¹charging them to observe the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar, every year—²²the same days on which the Jews enjoyed relief from their foes and the same month which had been transformed for them from one of grief and mourning to one of festive joy. They were to observe them as days of

יב הבירה לפני המלך: ויאמר המלך לאסתר המלכה
 בשושן הבירה הרגו היהודים ואבד חמש מאות איש
 ואת עשרת בני-המן בשאר מדינות המלך מה עשו
 יג ומה-שאלתך וינתן לך ומה-בקשתך עוד ותעש: ותאמר
 אסתר אם-על-המלך טוב ינתן גם-מחר ליהודים אשר
 בשושן לעשות כדת היום ואת עשרת בני-המן יתלו
 יד על-העץ: ויאמר המלך להעשות כן ותנתן דת בשושן
 טו ואת עשרת בני-המן תלו: וינקלו היהודים
 אשר-בשושן גם ביום ארבעה עשר לחדש אדר ויהרגו
 בשושן שלש מאות איש ובבזא לא שלחו את-ידם:
 טז ושאר היהודים אשר במדינות המלך נקלו ויעמד
 על-נפשם ונזח מאיביהם והרוג בשנאייהם חמשה
 יז ושבעים אלה ובבזא לא שלחו את-ידם: ביום-שלושה
 עשר לחדש אדר ונזח בארבעה עשר בו ועשה אתו
 יח יום משתה ושמחה: והיהודים והיהודים אשר-בשושן
 נקלו בשלושה עשר בו ובארבעה עשר בו ונזח
 יט בקמשה עשר בו ועשה אתו יום משתה ושמחה: על-כן
 היהודים הפרוים הפרזים הישבים בערי הפרזות עשים
 את יום ארבעה עשר לחדש אדר שמחה ומשתה ויום
 כ טוב ומשלח מנות איש לרעהו: ויכתב מרדכי את-
 הדברים האלה וישלח ספרים אל-כל-היהודים אשר
 בכל-מדינות המלך אחשוורוש הקרובים והרחוקים:
 כא לקים עליהם להיות עשים את יום ארבעה עשר לחדש
 כב אדר ואת יום-קמשה עשר בו בכל-שנה ושנה: כימים
 אשר-נחו בהם היהודים מאיביהם וחדש אשר נהפך
 להם מיגון לשמחה ומאכל ליום טוב לעשות אותם ימי

Chapter 9

¹And so, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month—that is, the month of Adar—when the king’s command and decree were to be executed, the very day on which the enemies of the Jews had expected to get them in their power, the opposite happened, and the Jews got their enemies in their power. ²Throughout the provinces of King Ahasuerus, the Jews mustered in their cities to attack those who sought their hurt; and no one could withstand them, for the fear of them had fallen upon all the peoples. ³Indeed, all the officials of the provinces—the satraps, the governors, and the king’s stewards—showed deference to the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai had fallen upon them. ⁴For Mordecai was now powerful in the royal palace, and his fame was spreading through all the provinces; the man Mordecai was growing ever more powerful. ⁵So the Jews struck at their enemies with the sword, slaying and destroying; they wreaked their will upon their enemies.

⁶In the fortress Shushan the Jews killed a total of five hundred men. ⁷They also killed^a

Parshandatha,

Dalphon,

Aspatha,

⁸Poratha,

Adalia,

Aridatha,

⁹Parmashta,

Arisai,

Aridai,

and Vaizatha,

¹⁰the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the foe of the Jews. But they did not lay hands on the spoil. ¹¹When the number of those slain in the fortress Shushan was reported on that same day

^a *Moved up from v. 10 for greater clarity.*

א ובשנים עשר חֹדֶשׁ הוּא־תְּחַדֵּשׁ אֶזְרָר בְּשִׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם
 בּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִגִּיעַ דְּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ לְהַעֲשׂוֹת בַּיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר
 שָׁבְרוּ אִיבֵי הַיְהוּדִים לְשָׁלוֹט בָּהֶם וְנִהְפְּזוּ הוּא אֲשֶׁר
 ב יִשְׁלְטוּ הַיְהוּדִים הַמָּחָה בְּשָׁנָאֵיהֶם: נִקְהָלוּ הַיְהוּדִים
 בְּעָרֵיהֶם בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֹׁרוֹשׁ לְשִׁלַּח יָד
 בַּמִּבְקָשִׁי רַעְתָּם וְאִישׁ לְאֶ־עַמֵּד לִפְנֵיהֶם כִּי־נִפְלַ פְּחָדָם
 ג עַל־כָּל־הָעַמִּים: וְכָל־שְׂרֵי הַמְּדִינֹת וְהָאֲחֻשְׁדָּרָפְנִים
 וְהַפְּחוֹת וְעֵשִׂי הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר לַמֶּלֶךְ מִנְּשָׂאִים אֶת־הַיְהוּדִים
 ד כִּי־נִפְלַ פְּחָד־מְרַדְּכִי עֲלֵיהֶם: כִּי־גָדוֹל מְרַדְּכִי בְּבֵית
 הַמֶּלֶךְ וְשָׁמְעוּ הוֹלְךְ בְּכָל־הַמְּדִינֹת כִּי־הָאִישׁ מְרַדְּכִי
 ה הוֹלְךְ וְגָדוֹל: וַיָּבֹו הַיְהוּדִים בְּכָל־אִיבֵיהֶם מִכַּת־תֶּרֶב
 ו וְהָרַג וְאֶבְדָּן וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְּשָׁנָאֵיהֶם כַּרְצוֹנָם: וּבְשׁוֹשָׁן
 ז הַבִּירָה הָרְגוּ הַיְהוּדִים וְאַבְדָּד חֲמֵשׁ מְאוֹת אִישׁ: וְאֵת |
 פֶּרְשֵׁנְדָתָא
 דְּלִפּוֹן
 ח אֶסְפָּתָא:
 פּוֹרְתָא
 אֲדִלְנָא
 ט אַרִידְתָּא:
 פֶּרְמִשְׁתָּא
 אַרִיסִי
 אַרִידִי
 י וַיִּזְחָא:
 עֲשֶׂרֶת
 בְּנֵי הָמֶן בֶּן־הַמְּדִתָּא צָרַר הַיְהוּדִים הָרְגוּ וּבִבְזָה לֹא
 יא שְׁלָחוּ אֶת־יָדָם: בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא בָּא מִסְפָּר הַהֲרוּגִים בְּשׁוֹשָׁן

[Write it] in the king's name and seal it with the king's signet, for an edict that has been written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet may not be revoked."

⁹So the king's scribes were summoned at that time, on the twenty-third day of the third month, that is, the month of Sivan; and letters were written, at Mordecai's dictation, to the Jews and to the satraps, the governors and the officials of the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia: to every province in its own script and to every people in its own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language. ¹⁰He had them written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet. Letters were dispatched by mounted couriers, riding steeds ^aused in the king's service, bred of the royal stud,^a ¹¹to this effect: The king has permitted the Jews of every city to assemble and fight for their lives; if any people or province attacks them, they may destroy, massacre, and exterminate its armed force together with women and children, and plunder their possessions—¹²on a single day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, namely, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar. ¹³The text of the document was to be issued as a law in every single province: it was to be publicly displayed to all the peoples, so that the Jews should be ready for that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. ¹⁴The couriers, mounted on royal steeds, went out in urgent haste at the king's command; and the decree was proclaimed in the fortress Shushan.

¹⁵Mordecai left the king's presence in royal robes of blue and white, with a magnificent crown of gold and a mantle of fine linen and purple wool. And the city of Shushan rang with joyous cries. ¹⁶The Jews enjoyed light and gladness, happiness and honor. ¹⁷And in every province and in every city, when the king's command and decree arrived, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many of the people of the land professed to be Jews, for the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them.

^{a-a} *Meaning of Heb. uncertain*

בְּעֵינֵיכֶם בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ וַחֲתָמוּ בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי־כָתָב
אֲשֶׁר־נִכְתָּב בְּשֵׁם־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַנַּחֲתוּם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵין
לְהָשִׁיב: וַיִּקְרְאוּ סִפְרֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּעֲת־הַהִיא בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי ט
הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ סִינּוֹן בַּשְּׁלוֹשָׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים בּוֹ וַיִּכְתָּב כָּכָל־
אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה מֶרְדֳּכָי אֶל־הַיְהוּדִים וְאֵל הָאֲחַשְׁדָּרְפָּנִים־
וְהַפַּחֲוֹת וְשָׂרֵי הַמְּדִינֹת אֲשֶׁר ׀ מִהַדּוֹ וְעַד־כּוֹשׁ שִׁבְעַ
וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה כִּכְתָּבָהּ וְעַם וְעַם
כָּל־שֵׁנוֹ וְאֶל־הַיְהוּדִים כִּכְתָּבָם וְכָל־שׁוֹנָם: וַיִּכְתָּב בְּשֵׁם י
הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֹרֶשׁ וַיַּחֲתֵם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁלַח סִפְרִים
בְּיַד הָרָצִים בְּסוּסִים רַכְבֵּי הָרֶכֶשׁ הָאֲחַשְׁתָּרְנִים בְּנֵי
הָרַמְכִים: אֲשֶׁר נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ לַיְהוּדִים ׀ אֲשֶׁר ׀ בְּכָל־עִיר־
וְעִיר לְהַקְהֵל וְלַעֲמֹד עַל־נַפְשָׁם לְהַשְׁמִיד וְלַהֲרֹג וְלֹאֲבֹד
אֶת־כָּל־חַיִּל עַם וּמְדִינָה הַצָּרִים אֲתָם טָף וְנָשִׁים וְשָׁלָם
לְבוֹז: בְּיוֹם אֶחָד בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֹרֶשׁ יב
בַּשְּׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר:
בַּתְּשַׁנָּן הַכָּתָב לְהַגִּיתָן דָּת בְּכָל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה גְלוּי יג
לְכָל־הָעַמִּים וְלַהֲיֹת הַיְהוּדִים הַיְהוּדִים עַתּוּדִים עַתִּידִים
לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְהַנְקָם מֵאִיְבֵיהֶם: הָרָצִים רַכְבֵּי הָרֶכֶשׁ יד
הָאֲחַשְׁתָּרְנִים יֵצְאוּ מִבְּהָלִים וּדְחוּפִים בְּדַבַּר הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְהַדָּת נִתְּנָה בְּשׁוֹשֵׁן הַבִּירָה: וּמֶרְדֳּכָי יֵצֵא ׀ טו
מִלְּפָנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלָבוֹשׁ מַלְכוּת תִּכְלֹת וַחֲוֹר וְעַטְרַת זָהָב
גְּדוּלָּה וְתַכְרִיף בּוּיץ וְאַרְגָּמָן וְהַעִיר שׁוֹשֵׁן צְהֻלָּה וְשִׁמְחָה:
לַיְהוּדִים הִיטָה אֹרְחָה וְשִׁמְחָה וְשׁוֹשֵׁן וַיִּקָּר: וּבְכָל־מְדִינָה
וּמְדִינָה וּבְכָל־עִיר וְעִיר מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ
מֵנִיעַ שִׁמְחָה וְשׁוֹשֵׁן לַיְהוּדִים מִשְׁתָּה וַיּוֹם טוֹב וְרַבִּים
מֵעַמֵי הָאָרֶץ מִתִּיהָדִים כִּי־נָפַל פֶּחַד־הַיְהוּדִים עֲלֵיהֶם:

on which Esther reclined. “Does he mean,” cried the king, “to ravish the queen in my own palace?” No sooner did these words leave the king’s lips than Haman’s face ^bwas covered.^{-b} ⁹Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “What is more, a stake is standing at Haman’s house, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai—the man whose words saved the king.” “Impale him on it!” the king ordered. ¹⁰So they impaled Haman on the stake which he had put up for Mordecai, and the king’s fury abated.

Chapter 8

¹That very day King Ahasuerus gave the property of Haman the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther. Mordecai presented himself to the king, for Esther had revealed how he was related to her. ²The king slipped off his ring, which he had taken back from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther put Mordecai in charge of Haman’s property.

³Esther spoke to the king again, falling at his feet and weeping, and beseeching him to avert the evil plotted by Haman the Agagite against the Jews. ⁴The king extended the golden scepter to Esther, and Esther arose and stood before the king. ⁵“If it please Your Majesty,” she said, “and if I have won your favor and the proposal seems right to Your Majesty, and if I am pleasing to you—let dispatches be written countermanding those which were written by Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, embodying his plot to annihilate the Jews throughout the king’s provinces. ⁶For how can I bear to see the disaster which will befall my people! And how can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred!”

⁷Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, “I have given Haman’s property to Esther, and he has been impaled on the stake for scheming against the Jews. ⁸And you may further write with regard to the Jews as you see fit.

^{b-b} *Meaning of Heb. uncertain Emendation yields “blanched”; cf. Ps. 34.6.*

אֲשֶׁר אֶסְתֵּר עָלֶיָּהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ הֲגַם לְכַבּוֹשׁ
 אֶת־הַמְּלָכָה עִמִּי בַּבַּיִת הַדָּבָר יֵצֵא מִפִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ וּפְנֵי הַמֶּן
 חָפוּ: וַיֹּאמֶר חֲרַבּוּנָה אַחַד מִן־הַסָּרִיסִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ גַּם
 תִּגְהַה־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה הַמֶּן לְמַרְדֵּכַי אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־טוֹב
 עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ עַמֵּד בַּבַּיִת הַמֶּן גְּבוּהַ חֲמֹשִׁים אַמָּה וַיֹּאמֶר
 הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּלְהוּ עָלָיו: וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת־הַמֶּן עַל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־הֵכִין
 לְמַרְדֵּכַי וְחַמַּת הַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁכְכָה:

פרק ח

א בְּיוֹם הַהוּא נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶחָשְׁוֵרוּשׁ לְאַסְתֵּר הַמְּלָכָה אֶת־בַּיִת
 הַמֶּן צִבְרָה הַיהוּדִים תִּיהוּדִים וּמַרְדֵּכַי גַּבַּא לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
 ב כִּי־הִגִּידָה אֶסְתֵּר מַה הוּא־לָהּ: וַיִּסַּר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־טַבַּעְתּוֹ
 אֲשֶׁר הָעֵבִיר מִהַמֶּן וַיִּתְּנָה לְמַרְדֵּכַי וַתִּשֶׂם אֶסְתֵּר אֶת־
 ג מַרְדֵּכַי עַל־בַּיִת הַמֶּן: וַתּוֹסֶף אֶסְתֵּר וַתִּדְבַּר
 לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתִּפְּלֵל לִפְנֵי רַגְלָיו וַתִּתְּבַן וַתִּתְחַנֵּן־לּוֹ
 לְהַעֲבִיר אֶת־רַעַת הַמֶּן הָאֲנֹכִי וְאֵת מַחְשַׁבְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁב
 ד עַל־תִּיהוּדִים: וַיּוֹשֶׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר אֵת שְׂרָבֹט הַזָּהָב
 ה וַתִּקַּם אֶסְתֵּר וַתַּעֲמֵד לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: וַתֹּאמֶר אִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ
 טוֹב וְאִם־מִצָּאֵתִי חַן לִפְנָיו וְכִשֶּׁר הַדָּבָר לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
 וְטוֹבָה אֲנִי בְּעֵינָיו יִכְתֹּב לְהַשִּׁיב אֶת־הַסְּפָרִים מִחֲשַׁבֶּת
 הַמֶּן בֶּן־הַמְּדַחָא הָאֲנֹכִי אֲשֶׁר כָּתַב לְאַבְדֹת אֶת־תִּיהוּדִים
 ו אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ: כִּי אֵיכָכָה אוֹכַל וְרֵאִיתִי
 בְּרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־יִמְצָא אֶת־עַמִּי וְאֵיכָכָה אוֹכַל וְרֵאִיתִי
 ז בְּאַבְדֵּן מוֹלַדְתִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶחָשְׁוֵרוּשׁ
 לְאַסְתֵּר הַמְּלָכָה וּלְמַרְדֵּכַי תִּיהוּדִי הִנֵּה בַיִת־הַמֶּן נִתְּתִי
 לְאַסְתֵּר וְאֵתוֹ תִּלְוּ עַל־הָעֵץ עַל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח יָדוֹ
 ח בַּיהוּדִים בַּיְהוּדִים: וְאַתֶּם כְּתַבּוּ עַל־תִּיהוּדִים כַּטּוֹב

the Jew, who sits in the king's gate. Omit nothing of all you have proposed.”¹¹ So Haman took the garb and the horse and arrayed Mordecai and paraded him through the city square; and he proclaimed before him: This is what is done for the man whom the king desires to honor!

¹²Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate, while Haman hurried home, his head covered in mourning.¹³ There Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had befallen him. His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish stock, you will not overcome him; you will fall before him to your ruin.”

¹⁴While they were still speaking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurriedly brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

Chapter 7

¹So the king and Haman came to feast with Queen Esther.
²On the second day, the king again asked Esther at the wine feast, “What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.”³ Queen Esther replied: “If Your Majesty will do me the favor, and if it pleases Your Majesty, let my life be granted me as my wish, and my people as my request.⁴ For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, massacred, and exterminated. Had we only been sold as bondmen and bondwomen, I would have kept silent; for ^athe adversary^a is not worthy of the king's trouble.”

⁵Thereupon King Ahasuerus demanded of Queen Esther, “Who is he and where is he who dared to do this?”⁶ “The adversary and enemy,” replied Esther, “is this evil Haman!” And Haman cringed in terror before the king and the queen.
⁷The king, in his fury, left the wine feast for the palace garden, while Haman remained to plead with Queen Esther for his life; for he saw that the king had resolved to destroy him.
⁸When the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet room, Haman was lying prostrate on the couch

^{a-a} *Emendation yields “a trifle” (hiššar), lit. “little finger.”*

הַיְהוּדִי הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־תִּפְּלֵ דָבָר מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר
 יִבְרָתִי: וַיִּקַּח הַמֶּן אֶת־הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת־הַסּוּס וַיִּלְבַּשׁ אֶת־
 מַרְדֳּכָי וַיִּרְכַּבְהוּ בְּרֻחוֹב הָעִיר וַיִּקְרָא לְפָנָיו בְּכַח
 יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ: וַיָּשָׁב מַרְדֳּכָי אֶל־
 שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּן נִדְחַף אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ אָבֵל וַחֲפוּי רֵאשׁ:
 וַיִּסְפֹּר הַמֶּן לְזָרֵשׁ אֲשֶׁתּוֹ וּלְכָל־אֲהָבָיו אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר
 קָרָהוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ חֲכָמָיו וְזָרֵשׁ אֲשֶׁתּוֹ אִם מִזְרַע הַיְהוּדִים
 מַרְדֳּכָי אֲשֶׁר הִחְלוֹת לְנַפֵּל לְפָנָיו לֹא־תוּכַל לוֹ כִּי־נִפּוּל
 תִּפּוּל לְפָנָיו: עוֹדֵם מִדְּבָרִים עִמּוֹ וְסָרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הִגִּיעוּ
 וַיִּבְהִלוּ לְהַבִּיא אֶת־הַמֶּן אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתָּה אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה אֶסְתֵּר:

פרק ז

וַיָּבֵא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּן לַשָּׁתוֹת עִם־אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה: וַיֹּאמֶר
 הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר גַּם בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי בַּמִּשְׁתָּה תִּיָּן מִה־שְּׂאֵלְתֶךָ
 אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וְתַנַּתְנִן לִּי וּמִה־בִּקְשֶׁתְךָ עַד־חֲצִי
 הַמַּלְכוּת וְתַעֲשׂ: וַתַּעַן אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וַתֹּאמֶר אִם־מִצְאָתִי
 תֵּן בְּעֵינַיִךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב תִּנָּתֵן־לִי נַפְשִׁי
 בְּשֵׂאֵלְתִי וְעַמִּי בְּבִקְשֶׁתִּי: כִּי נִמְכַרְנוּ אֲנִי וְעַמִּי לְהַשְׁמִיד
 לְהַרְגוֹ וּלְאַבֵּד וְאֵלֹהֵי לַעֲבָדִים וְלִשְׁפָחוֹת נִמְכַרְנוּ
 הַחַרְשֵׁתִי כִּי אֵין הַצָּר שָׁנָה בְּנֹזֵק הַמֶּלֶךְ: וַיֹּאמֶר
 הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשׁוּרוּשׁ וַיֹּאמֶר לְאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה מִי הוּא זֶה
 וְאִי־זֶה הוּא אֲשֶׁר־מְלָאוּ לְבוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן: וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר
 אִישׁ צָר וְאוֹיֵב הַמֶּן הָרַע הַזֶּה וְהַמֶּן נִבְעֵת מִלְּפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
 וְהַמַּלְכָּה: וְהַמֶּלֶךְ קָם בְּחִמְתּוֹ מִמִּשְׁתָּה תִּיָּן אֶל־גִּנַּת
 הַבַּיִת וְהַמֶּן עָמַד לְבַקֵּשׁ עַל־נַפְשׁוֹ מֵאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה כִּי
 רָאָה כִּי־כָלְתָה אֵלָיו הָרַעַה מֵאֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ: וְהַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁב
 מִגִּנַּת הַבַּיִת אֶל־בַּיִת מִשְׁתָּה תִּיָּן וְהַמֶּן נָפֵל עַל־הַמִּטָּה

means nothing to me every time I see that Jew Mordecai sitting in the palace gate.”¹⁴ Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, “Let a stake be put up, fifty cubits high, and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai impaled on it. Then you can go gaily with the king to the feast.” The proposal pleased Haman, and he had the stake put up.

Chapter 6

¹That night, sleep deserted the king, and he ordered the book of records, the annals, to be brought; and it was read to the king.
²There it was found written that Mordecai had denounced Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s eunuchs who guarded the threshold, who had plotted to do away with King Ahasuerus.
³“What honor or advancement has been conferred on Mordecai for this?” the king inquired. “Nothing at all has been done for him,” replied the king’s servants who were in attendance on him.
⁴“Who is in the court?” the king asked. For Haman had just entered the outer court of the royal palace, to speak to the king about having Mordecai impaled on the stake he had prepared for him.
⁵“It is Haman standing in the court,” the king’s servants answered him. “Let him enter,” said the king.
⁶Haman entered, and the king asked him, “What should be done for a man whom the king desires to honor?” Haman said to himself, “Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?”
⁷So Haman said to the king, “For the man whom the king desires to honor,
⁸let royal garb which the king has worn be brought, and a horse on which the king has ridden and on whose head a royal diadem has been set;
⁹and let the attire and the horse be put in the charge of one of the king’s noble courtiers. And let the man whom the king desires to honor be attired and paraded on the horse through the city square, while they proclaim before him: This is what is done for the man whom the king desires to honor!”
¹⁰“Quick, then!” said the king to Haman. “Get the garb and the horse, as you have said, and do this to Mordecai

אֵינְנוּ שׁוּחַ לִי בְכָל־עֵת אֲשֶׁר אָנִי רֹאֵה אֶת־מַרְדֵּכִי
 יד תִּיהְיֶה יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ׃ וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ זָרַשׁ אֲשֶׁלּוֹ
 וְכָל־אֲהָבָיו יַעֲשׂוּ־עִץ גִּבֹּהַ חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה וּבִבְקָר ׀ אֹמֵר
 לַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת־מַרְדֵּכִי עָלָיו וּבָא עִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־
 הַמִּשְׁתֶּה שָׂמֵחַ וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר לִפְנֵי הַמֶּן וַיַּעַשׂ הָעֵץ׃

פרק ו

א בלִילָה הַהוּא נִדְדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר לְהָבִיא אֶת־סֹפֵר
 הַזְכָּרֹנוֹת דְּבַרֵי הַיָּמִים וַיְהִינּוּ נִקְרָאִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ׃
 ב וַיִּמְצָא כְּתוּב אֲשֶׁר הִגִּיד מַרְדֵּכִי עַל־בְּגַתְנָא וְתָרַשׁ שְׁנֵי
 סָרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמָרֵי הַסֶּף אֲשֶׁר בִּקְשׂוּ לַשְּׁלַח זָד בַּמֶּלֶךְ׃
 ג אַחֲשֻׁרוּשׁ׃ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־נַּעֲשֶׂה יָקָר וּגְדוּלָה לְמַרְדֵּכִי
 עַל־זֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁרָתָיו לֹא־נַעֲשֶׂה עִמּוֹ דָּבָר׃
 ד וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מִי בַחֲצַר וְהַמֶּן בָּא לַחֲצַר בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ
 הַחִיצוֹנָה לֹאמֵר לַמֶּלֶךְ לְתִלּוֹת אֶת־מַרְדֵּכִי עַל־הָעֵץ
 ה אֲשֶׁר־הִכִּין לוֹ׃ וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלָיו הִנֵּה הַמֶּן עֹמֵד
 ו בַּחֲצַר וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ יָבוֹא׃ וַיָּבוֹא הַמֶּן וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ
 מה־לַּעֲשׂוֹת בְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חִפֵּץ בִּיקְרָו וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּן
 ז בְּלִבּוֹ לְמִי יַחֲפֵץ הַמֶּלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת יָקָר יוֹתֵר מִמֶּנִּי׃ וַיֹּאמֶר
 ח הַמֶּן אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חִפֵּץ בִּיקְרָו׃ יָבִיאוּ
 ט לְבוֹשׁ מַלְכוּת אֲשֶׁר לְבַשְׁבוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְסוּס אֲשֶׁר רָכַב
 עָלָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֲשֶׁר נִתָּן בְּתֵר מַלְכוּת בְּרֹאשׁוֹ׃ וַנִּתְּוֶן
 הַלְבוּשׁ וְהַסּוּס עַל־יַד־אִישׁ מִשְׁרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּרָתָמִים
 וְהַלְבִּישׁוּ אֶת־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חִפֵּץ בִּיקְרָו וְהַרְפִּיבֵהוּ
 עַל־הַסּוּס בְּרִחוּב הָעִיר וְקִרְאוּ לִפְנֵיו כְּכֹה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ
 י אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חִפֵּץ בִּיקְרָו׃ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַמֶּן מִמָּה־קַח
 אֶת־הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת־הַסּוּס כִּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ וַעֲשֶׂה־כֵן לְמַרְדֵּכִי

Chapter 5

¹On the third day, Esther put on royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, facing the king's palace, while the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room facing the entrance of the palace. ²As soon as the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won his favor. The king extended to Esther the golden scepter which he had in his hand, and Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter. ³"What troubles you, Queen Esther?" the king asked her. "And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be granted you." ⁴"If it please Your Majesty," Esther replied, "let Your Majesty and Haman come today to the feast that I have prepared for him." ⁵The king commanded, "Tell Haman to hurry and do Esther's bidding." So the king and Haman came to the feast that Esther had prepared.

⁶At the wine feast, the king asked Esther, "What is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." ⁷"My wish," replied Esther, "my request—⁸if Your Majesty will do me the favor, if it please Your Majesty to grant my wish and accede to my request—let Your Majesty and Haman come to the feast which I will prepare for them; and tomorrow I will do Your Majesty's bidding."

⁹That day Haman went out happy and lighthearted. But when Haman saw Mordecai in the palace gate, and Mordecai did not rise or even stir on his account, Haman was filled with rage at him. ¹⁰Nevertheless, Haman controlled himself and went home. He sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh, ¹¹and Haman told them about his great wealth and his many sons, and all about how the king had promoted him and advanced him above the officials and the king's courtiers. ¹²"What is more," said Haman, "Queen Esther gave a feast, and besides the king she did not have anyone but me. And tomorrow too I am invited by her along with the king. ¹³Yet all this

פרק ה

א ויהי | ביום השלישי ותלבש אסתר מלכות ותעמד
 בחצר בית המלך הפנימית נכח בית המלך והמלך
 יושב על כסא מלכותו בבית המלכות נכח פתח הבית:
 ב ויהי כראות המלך את אסתר המלכה עומדת בחצר
 נשאה חן בעיניו ויושט המלך לאסתר את שרביט הזהב
 אשר בידו ותקרב אסתר ותגע בראש השרביט: ויאמר
 ג לה המלך מה לך אסתר המלכה ומה בקשתך עד חצי
 ד המלכות וינתן לה: ותאמר אסתר אם על המלך טוב
 יבוא המלך והמן היום אל המשתה אשר עשיתי לו:
 ה ויאמר המלך מהרו את המן לעשות את דבר אסתר
 ויבא המלך והמן אל המשתה אשר עשתה אסתר:
 ו ויאמר המלך לאסתר במשתה חינו מה שאלתך וינתן
 ז לה ומה בקשתך עד חצי המלכות ותעש: ותען אסתר
 ח ותאמר שאלתי ובקשתי: אם מצאתי חן בעיני המלך
 ואם על המלך טוב לתת את שאלתי ולעשות את
 ט בקשתי יבוא המלך והמן אל המשתה אשר אעשה להם
 ומחר אעשה כדבר המלך: ויצא המן ביום ההוא שמח
 וטוב לב וכראות המן את מרדכי בשער המלך
 ולא קם ולא זע מפניו וימלא המן על מרדכי חמה:
 י ויתאפק המן ויבוא אל ביתו וישלח ויבא את אחביו
 יא ואת זרש אשתו: ויספר להם המן את כבוד עשרו ורב
 בגיו ואת כל אשר גדלו המלך ואת אשר נשאו על
 יב השרים ועבדי המלך: ויאמר המן אף לא הביאה
 אסתר המלכה עם המלך אל המשתה אשר עשתה כי
 יג אסאותי וגם למחר אני קרוי לה עם המלך: וכל זה

but he refused.

⁵Thereupon Esther summoned Hathach, one of the eunuchs whom the king had appointed to serve her, and sent him to Mordecai to learn the why and wherefore of it all. ⁶Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square in front of the palace gate; ⁷and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and all about the money that Haman had offered to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸He also gave him the written text of the law that had been proclaimed in Shushan for their destruction. [He bade him] show it to Esther and inform her, and charge her to go to the king and to appeal to him and to plead with him for her people. ⁹When Hathach came and delivered Mordecai's message to Esther, ¹⁰Esther told Hathach to take back to Mordecai the following reply: ¹¹"All the king's courtiers and the people of the king's provinces know that if any person, man or woman, enters the king's presence in the inner court without having been summoned, there is but one law for him—that he be put to death. Only if the king extends the golden scepter to him may he live. Now I have not been summoned to visit the king for the last thirty days."

¹²When Mordecai was told what Esther had said, ¹³Mordecai had this message delivered to Esther: "Do not imagine that you, of all the Jews, will escape with your life by being in the king's palace. ¹⁴On the contrary, if you keep silent in this crisis, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another quarter, while you and your father's house will perish. And who knows, perhaps you have attained to royal position for just such a crisis."

¹⁵Then Esther sent back this answer to Mordecai: ¹⁶"Go, assemble all the Jews who live in Shushan, and fast in my behalf; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens will observe the same fast. Then I shall go to the king, though it is contrary to the law; and if I am to perish, I shall perish!" ¹⁷So Mordecai went about [the city] and did just as Esther had commanded him.

ה מֵעַלְיוּ וְלֹא קָבַל: וַתִּקְרָא אֶסְתֵּר לַהֲתִיף מִסְרִיטֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֲשֶׁר הָעֵמִיד לְפָנֶיהָ וַתִּצְוֶהוּ עַל־מַרְדֳּכָי לְדַעַת מַה־זֶּה
ו וְעַל־מַה־זֶּה: וַיֵּצֵא הַתֵּן אֶל־מַרְדֳּכָי אֶל־רְחוֹב הָעִיר
ז אֲשֶׁר לְפָנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ: וַיִּגְדְּלוּ מַרְדֳּכָי אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר
קָרָהוּ וְאֵת | פָּרְשַׁת הַכֹּסֶף אֲשֶׁר אָמַר הֶמֶן לְשָׂקוֹל
ח עַל־גִּנְזֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בִּיהוּדִים בִּיהוּדִים לְאֲבָדָם: וְאֵת־פִּתְשָׁנָן
כְּתֹב־הִדִּית אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן בְּשׁוֹשָׁן לַהֲשִׁמּוֹדָם נָתַן לוֹ לַהֲרֹאוֹת
אֶת־אֶסְתֵּר וּלְהַגִּיד לָהּ וּלְצִוּוֹת עָלֶיהָ לְבֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ
ט לַהֲתַחֲנוֹן־לוֹ וּלְבַקֵּשׁ מִלְּפָנָיו עַל־עַמָּה: וַיָּבֹא הַתֵּן וַיִּגְד
י לְאֶסְתֵּר אֶת דְּבָרֵי מַרְדֳּכָי: וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר לַהֲתִיף וַתִּצְוֶהוּ
יא אֶל־מַרְדֳּכָי: כָּל־עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְעַם מְדִינוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ יָדְעִים
אֲשֶׁר כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר־יָבֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הַחֲצָר
הַפְּנִימִית אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְרָא אַחַת דָּתוֹ לְהַמִּית לְבָד מֵאֲשֶׁר
יֹשֵׁיט־לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־שַׂרְבִּיט הַזֶּהָב וְחִיָּה וְגַאֲנִי לֹא
יב נִקְרָאתִי לְבֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ זֶה שְׁלוֹשִׁים יוֹם: וַיִּגִּידוּ
יג לְמַרְדֳּכָי אֶת דְּבָרֵי אֶסְתֵּר: וַיֹּאמֶר מַרְדֳּכָי לְהָשִׁיב
אֶל־אֶסְתֵּר אֶל־תְּדַמִּי בְּנַפְשֶׁךָ לְהַמְלִיט בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ
יד מִכָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים: כִּי אִם־הִחַרְשׁ תַּחֲרִישִׁי בְּעַת הַזֹּאת רִחוּחַ
וְהַצְלָה יַעֲמֹד לַיְּהוּדִים מִמָּקוֹם אַחֵר וְאֵת וּבֵית־אֲבִיךָ
תֹּאבְדוּ וּבְמִי יוֹדַע אִם־לָעַת כְּזֹאת הִגַּעַת לְמַלְכוּת:
טו וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר לְהָשִׁיב אֶל־מַרְדֳּכָי: לֵךְ כְּנוֹס אֶת־כָּל־
טז הַיְּהוּדִים הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּשׁוֹשָׁן וְצֻמוּ עָלַי וְאֶל־תֹּאכְלוּ
וְאֶל־תִּשְׁתּוּ שְׁלֹשַׁת יָמִים לִילָה וַיּוֹם גַּם־אֲנִי וְנִעַרְתִּי אֲצֻם
כז כֵּן וּבִכֵּן אָבֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־כָדַת וּכְאֲשֶׁר אָבַדְתִּי
אָבַדְתִּי: וַיַּעֲבֵר מַרְדֳּכָי וַיַּעַשׂ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוְּתָהּ עָלָיו
אֶסְתֵּר:

⁹If it please Your Majesty, let an edict be drawn for their destruction, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the stewards for deposit in the royal treasury.” ¹⁰Thereupon the king removed his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the foe of the Jews. ¹¹And the king said, “The money and the people are yours to do with as you see fit.”

¹²On the thirteenth day of the first month, the king’s scribes were summoned and a decree was issued, as Haman directed, to the king’s satraps, to the governors of every province, and to the officials of every people, to every province in its own script and to every people in its own language. The orders were issued in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king’s signet. ¹³Accordingly, written instructions were dispatched by couriers to all the king’s provinces to destroy, massacre, and exterminate all the Jews, young and old, children and women, on a single day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month—that is, the month of Adar—and to plunder their possessions. ¹⁴The text of the document was to the effect that a law should be proclaimed in every single province; it was to be publicly displayed to all the peoples, so that they might be ready for that day.

¹⁵The couriers went out posthaste on the royal mission, and the decree was proclaimed in the fortress Shushan. The king and Haman sat down to feast, but the city of Shushan was dumfounded.

Chapter 4

¹When Mordecai learned all that had happened, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes. He went through the city, crying out loudly and bitterly, ²until he came in front of the palace gate; for one could not enter the palace gate wearing sackcloth.—³Also, in every province that the king’s command and decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing, and everybody lay in sackcloth and ashes.—⁴When Esther’s maidens and eunuchs came and informed her, the queen was greatly agitated. She sent clothing for Mordecai to wear, so that he might take off his sackcloth;

ט אִם-עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יִכְתֹּב לְאַבְדָּם וְעֲשֶׂרֶת אֲלָפִים
 כַּפֶּר-כֹּסֶף אֲשֶׁקוּל עַל-יְדֵי עֲשֵׂי הַמֶּלְאכָה לְהָבִיא
 י אֶל-גִּנְזֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: וַיָּסֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-טַבַּעְתּוֹ מֵעַל יָדוֹ וַיִּתְּנָהּ
 יא לְהֶמֶן בֶּן-הַמְדֵּתָא הָאֲנִי צָרַר הַיְהוּדִים: וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ
 לְהֶמֶן הַכֹּסֶף נָתוּן לָךְ וְהָעַם לַעֲשׂוֹת בּוֹ כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ:
 יב וַיִּקְרְאוּ סִפְרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּחֲדָשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּשָׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם
 בּוֹ וַיִּכְתֹּב כָּכָל-אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה הֶמֶן אֶל אַחַשְׁדֶּרְפָּנִי-הַמֶּלֶךְ
 וְאֶל-הַפַּחֹת אֲשֶׁר ׀ עַל-מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וְאֶל-שָׂרֵי עַם וְעַם
 מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה כַּכְתָּבָה וְעַם וְעַם כְּלִשׁוֹנוֹ בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ
 יג אַחֲשׁוּרֶשׁ נִכְתָּב וְנִחְתָּם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ: וְנִשְׁלַחֻם סִפְרִים
 בְּיַד הַרָצִים אֶל-כָּל-מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְג
 וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת-כָּל-הַיְהוּדִים מִנְּעֵר וְעַד-זָקֵן טָף וְנָשִׁים בָּיּוֹם
 אֶחָד בְּשָׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם-עָשָׂר הוּא-חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר
 יד וּשְׁלָלָם לְבוּז: פִּתְשֻׁנָּן הַכְּתָב לְהַנְתֵּן דָּת בְּכָל-מְדִינָה
 וּמְדִינָה גְלוּי לְכָל-הָעַמִּים לְהִיּוֹת עֲתִידִים לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:
 טו הַרָצִים יֵצְאוּ דְחוּפִים בְּדָבָר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהִדָּת נִתְּנָה בְּשׁוֹשָׁן
 הַבִּירָה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ וְהֶמֶן יֵשְׁבוּ לַשְּׁתוֹת וְהָעִיר שׁוֹשָׁן נְבוֹכָה:

פרק ד

א וּמָרְדֳּכָי יָדַע אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה וַיִּקְרַע מְרֹדֶכִי אֶת-
 בְּגָדָיו וַיִּלְבַּשׁ שָׂק וְאָפַר וַיֵּצֵא בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר וַיִּזְעַק וְזָעַק
 ב גְּדוּלָה וּמָרָה: וַיָּבֹא עַד לַפְּנֵי שַׁעַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי אֵין לָבֹא
 ג אֶל-שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלְבוּשׁ שָׂק: וּבְכָל-מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה מְקוֹם
 אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ וּדְתוֹ מִגִּיעַ אֲבָל גְּדוּלָ לַיְהוּדִים וְצוּם
 ד וּבְכִי וּמִסָּפַד שָׂק וְאָפַר יֵצֵעַ לָרַבִּים: וְהַבּוֹאִינָה וְהַבּוֹאֵנָה
 נִעְרֹת אֶסְתֵּר וְסָרִיסֶיהָ וַיִּנְיָדוּ לָהּ וַתִּתְחַלְחַל הַמֶּלֶכָה
 מְאֹד וַתִּשְׁלַח בְּגָדִים לְהַלְבִּישׁ אֶת-מָרְדֳּכָי וּלְהַסִּיר שָׂקוֹ

²¹At that time, when Mordecai was sitting in the palace gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the threshold, became angry, and plotted to do away with King Ahasuerus. ²²Mordecai learned of it and told it to Queen Esther, and Esther reported it to the king in Mordecai's name. ²³The matter was investigated and found to be so, and the two were impaled on stakes. This was recorded in the book of annals at the instance of the king.

Chapter 3

¹Some time afterward, King Ahasuerus promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite; he advanced him and seated him higher than any of his fellow officials. ²All the king's courtiers in the knelt and bowed low to Haman, for such was the king's order concerning him; but Mordecai would not kneel or bow low. ³Then the king's courtiers who were in the palace gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's order?" ⁴When they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's resolve would prevail; for he had explained to them that he was a Jew.^a ⁵When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel or bow low to him, Haman was filled with rage. ⁶But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone; having been told who Mordecai's people were, Haman plotted to do away with all the Jews, Mordecai's people, throughout the kingdom of Ahasuerus.

⁷In the first month, that is, the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, *pur*—which means "the lot"—was cast before Haman concerning every day and every month, [until it fell on] the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar. ⁸Haman then said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people, scattered and dispersed among the other peoples in all the provinces of your realm, whose laws are different from those of any other people and who do not obey the king's laws; and it is not in Your Majesty's interest to tolerate them.

^a *I.e., that as a Jew he could not bow to a descendant of Agag, the Amalekite king; see 1 Sam. 15, and cf. Exod. 17.14–16; Deut. 25.17–19.*

הָהֵם וּמְרַדְּכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ קָצַף בְּגִזְזוֹן וְתָרַשׁ
 שְׁנֵי־סָרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמַרְי הַסֶּף וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ לְשַׁלַּח יָד
 בַּמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁנְרֶשׁ: וַיִּוָּדַע הַדָּבָר לְמֶרְדֳּכָי וַיִּגֵּד לְאַסְתֵּר
 כַּב
 הַמַּלְכָּה וּתְאֹמַר אֶסְתֵּר לַמֶּלֶךְ בְּשֵׁם מְרַדְּכָי: וַיִּבְקֹשׁ
 כַּג
 הַדָּבָר וַיִּמָּצֵא וַיִּתְּלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עַל־עֵץ וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּסֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי
 הַיָּמִים לַפְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

פרק ג

א אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה גִּדְּלוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרׁוּשׁ אֶת־הַמֶּמְן
 בֶּן־הַמְּדֵתָא הָאֲגָנִי וַיִּנְשָׂאֵהוּ וַיִּשָּׂם אֶת־כֶּסֶּאוֹ מֵעַל
 ב כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים אֲשֶׁר אֵתוֹ: וְכָל־עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־בְּשַׁעַר
 הַמֶּלֶךְ פְּרָעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לְהֶמֶן כִּי־כֵן צִוְּהֵלוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ
 ג וּמְרַדְּכִי לֹא יִכְרַע וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה: וַיֹּאמְרוּ עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
 אֲשֶׁר־בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְמֶרְדֳּכָי מִדַּוְעַת אֲתָה עוֹבֵר אֵת
 ד מִצְוַת הַמֶּלֶךְ: וַיְהִי בֵּאמָרם כְּאִמְרָם אֵלָיו יוֹם וַיּוֹם וְלֹא
 שָׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּגִּידוּ לְהֶמֶן לְרֹאוֹת הַנְּעַמְדוֹ דְּבָרֵי מְרַדְּכִי
 ה כִּי־הִגִּיד לָהֶם אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יְהוּדִי: וַיִּרְא הֶמֶן כִּי־אֵין
 ו מְרַדְּכִי פֹרַע וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לוֹ וַיִּמְלֵא הֶמֶן חֲמָה: וַיִּבְזֵ בְּעֵינָיו
 לְשַׁלַּח יָד בְּמֶרְדֳּכָי לְבַדּוֹ כִּי־הִגִּידוּ לוֹ אֶת־עַם מְרַדְּכָי
 וַיִּבְקֹשׁ הֶמֶן לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶת־כָּל־יְהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־
 ז מַלְכוּת אַחֲשֻׁרׁוּשׁ עִם מְרַדְּכָי: בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ
 נִיֶּסֶן בְּשָׁנַת שְׁתַּיִם עָשָׂרָה לַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרׁוּשׁ הַפִּיל פּוּר
 הוּא הַגּוּרְלִל לַפְּנֵי הֶמֶן מִיּוֹם א לַיּוֹם וּמִחֹדֶשׁ לְחֹדֶשׁ
 ח שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ אֲדָר: וַיֹּאמֶר הֶמֶן
 לַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרׁוּשׁ יִשְׁנֶנּוּ עִם־אֶחָד מִבְּיָר וּמִפְּרָדִי בֵּין
 הָעַמּוּם בְּכָל מְדִינֹת מַלְכוּתְךָ וְדַתִּיחֶם שְׁנֹת מִכָּל־עַם
 וְאֶת־דַּתִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵינָם עֹשִׂים וְלַמֶּלֶךְ אֵין־שׁוּה לְהַנִּיחָם:

and her maids with special kindness in the harem. ¹⁰Esther did not reveal her people or her kindred, for Mordecai had told her not to reveal it. ¹¹Every single day Mordecai would walk about in front of the court of the harem, to learn how Esther was faring and what was happening to her.

¹²When each girl's turn came to go to King Ahasuerus at the end of the twelve months' treatment prescribed for women (for that was the period spent on beautifying them: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with perfumes and women's cosmetics, ¹³and it was after that that the girl would go to the king), whatever she asked for would be given her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace. ¹⁴She would go in the evening and leave in the morning for a second harem in charge of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch, guardian of the concubines. She would not go again to the king unless the king wanted her, when she would be summoned by name. ¹⁵When the turn came for Esther daughter of Abihail—the uncle of Mordecai, who had adopted her as his own daughter—to go to the king, she did not ask for anything but what Hegai, the king's eunuch, guardian of the women, advised. Yet Esther won the admiration of all who saw her.

¹⁶Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, in his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. ¹⁷The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she won his grace and favor more than all the virgins. So he set a royal diadem on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. ¹⁸The king gave a great banquet for all his officials and courtiers, “the banquet of Esther.” He proclaimed a remission of taxes^b for the provinces and distributed gifts as befits a king.

^{19c}When the virgins were assembled a second time, Mordecai sat in the palace gate. ²⁰But Esther still did not reveal her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had instructed her; for Esther obeyed Mordecai's bidding, as she had done when she was under his tutelage.

^b Or “an amnesty.”

^c Meaning of verse uncertain.

י וְאֶת־נַעֲרוֹתֶיהָ לְטוֹב בַּיּוֹם הַנָּשִׁים: לֹא־הִגִּידָה אֶסְתֵּר
 אֶת־עַמָּהּ וְאֶת־מִוֹלְדֹתָהּ כִּי מְרַדְּכִי צִוָּה עָלֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר
 יא לֹא־תִגִּיד: וּבְכָל־יּוֹם וַיּוֹם מְרַדְּכִי מִתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי חֲצַר
 בַּיּוֹם הַנָּשִׁים לְדַעַת אֶת־שְׁלוֹם אֶסְתֵּר וּמִה־יַּעֲשֶׂה בָּהּ:
 יב וּבַהֲנִיעַ תָּרַן נִעְרָה וְנִעְרָה לָבוֹא וְאֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשׁוּרוּשׁ
 מִקֵּץ הַיּוֹת לָהּ כַּדַּת הַנָּשִׁים שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ כִּי כֵן
 יִמְלְאוּ יְמֵי מְרוּקִיהֶן שְׁשֵׁה חֳדָשִׁים בְּשִׁמּוֹן הַמֶּר וּשְׁשֵׁה
 יג חֳדָשִׁים בְּבִשְׂמִים וּבִתְמֻרוּקֵי הַנָּשִׁים: וּבַיּוֹם הַנִּעְרָה בָּאָה
 אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר יִנְתֵּן לָהּ לָבוֹא עִמָּהּ
 יד מִבַּיִת הַנָּשִׁים עַד־בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ: בַּעֲרַב וְהָיָה בָּהּ וּבְבֹקֶר
 הָיָה שָׁבָה אֶל־בַּיִת הַנָּשִׁים שְׁנֵי אֶל־יָד שְׁעָשְׂנוּ סָרִיס
 הַמֶּלֶךְ שִׁמְרַת הַפְּלִגְנָשִׁים לֹא־תָבוֹא עוֹד אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי
 טו אִם־חָפֵץ בָּהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְנִקְרָאָה בְּשֵׁם: וּבַהֲנִיעַ תֵּרֶאֱסֹתָר
 בַּת־אֲבִיתָיִל וְיָד מְרַדְּכִי אֲשֶׁר לָקַח־לוֹ לְבַת לָבוֹא
 אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לֹא בִקְשָׁה דְבָר כִּי אִם אֶת־אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הַנִּי
 סָרִיס־הַמֶּלֶךְ שִׁמְרַת הַנָּשִׁים וּתְהִי אֶסְתֵּר נִשְׂאֵת חֵן בְּעֵינַי
 טז כָּל־רְאִיָּה: וּתִלְקַח אֶסְתֵּר אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשׁוּרוּשׁ אֶל־בַּיִת
 מְלָכוֹתָו בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַעֲשִׂירִי הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ טִבְתָּ בַּשָּׁנָה־שִׁבְעַ
 יז לְמַלְכוּתוֹ: וַיֵּאָהֵב הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־אֶסְתֵּר מִכָּל־הַנָּשִׁים וּתְשֹׂא־
 חֵן וְחֹסֵד לִפְנָיו מִכָּל־הַבְּתוּלוֹת וַיִּשֶׂם כְּתֹר־מְלָכוֹת
 יח בְּרֵאשִׁית וַיִּמְלִיכָהּ תַּחַת וּשְׁתֵּי: וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁתֵּה גְדוֹל
 לְכָל־שָׂרָיו וְעַבְדָּיו אֵת מִשְׁתֵּה אֶסְתֵּר וַתִּנְחַה לַמְּדִינוֹת
 יט עֲשֵׂה וַיִּתֵּן מִשְׂאֵת כֶּנֶד הַמֶּלֶךְ: וּבַהֲקַבֵּץ בְּתוּלוֹת שְׁנֵית
 כ וּמְרַדְּכִי יָשַׁב בְּשַׁעַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ: אֵין אֶסְתֵּר מִגְדַּת מִוֹלְדֹתָהּ
 וְאֶת־עַמָּהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה עָלֶיהָ מְרַדְּכִי וְאֶת־מֵאֲמַר מְרַדְּכִי
 כא אֶסְתֵּר עֲשֵׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר הִיְתָה בְּאִמְנָה אֶתּוֹ: בְּיָמִים

their husbands with respect, high and low alike.”

²¹The proposal was approved by the king and the ministers, and the king did as Memucan proposed. ²²Dispatches were sent to all the provinces of the king, to every province in its own script and to every nation in its own language, that every man should wield authority in his home and speak the language of his own people.

Chapter 2

¹Some time afterward, when the anger of King Ahasuerus subsided, he thought of Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her. ²The king’s servants who attended him said, “Let beautiful young virgins be sought out for Your Majesty. ³Let Your Majesty appoint officers in every province of your realm to assemble all the beautiful young virgins at the fortress Shushan, in the harem under the supervision of Hege, the king’s eunuch, guardian of the women. Let them be provided with their cosmetics. ⁴And let the maiden who pleases Your Majesty be queen instead of Vashti.” The proposal pleased the king, and he acted upon it.

⁵In the fortress Shushan lived a Jew by the name of Mordecai, son of Jair son of Shimei son of Kish, a Benjaminite. ⁶[Kish] had been exiled from Jerusalem in the group that was carried into exile along with King Jeconiah of Judah, which had been driven into exile by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.—⁷He was foster father to Hadassah—that is, Esther—his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The maiden was shapely and beautiful; and when her father and mother died, Mordecai adopted her as his own daughter.

⁸When the king’s order and edict was proclaimed, and when many girls were assembled in the fortress Shushan under the supervision of Hegai,^a Esther too was taken into the king’s palace under the supervision of Hegai, guardian of the women. ⁹The girl pleased him and won his favor, and he hastened to furnish her with her cosmetics and her rations, as well as with the seven maids who were her due from the king’s palace; and he treated her

^a *Identical with Hege in v. 3.*

כא יָקָר לְבַעֲלֵיהֶן לְמַגְדוֹל וְעַד־קָטָן: וַיִּיטֹב הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינַי
 כב הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַשָּׂרִים וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ כְּדַבַּר מְמוֹכָן: וַיִּשְׁלַח
 סָפְרִים אֶל־כָּל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה
 כַּכְתָּבָה וְאֶל־עַם וְעַם כָּל־שָׁנוֹ לְהָיוֹת כָּל־אִישׁ שֹׁרֵר
 בְּבֵיתוֹ וּמְדַבֵּר כָּל־שׁוֹן עִמּוֹ:

פרק ב

א אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כָּשֶׁף חֲמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשַׁגְרוּשׁ זָכָר
 אֶת־וְשֵׁתִי וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר־נִגְזַר עָלֶיהָ:
 ב וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשָּׂרְתָיו יִבְקָשׁוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ נַעֲרוֹת
 ג בְּתוּלוֹת טוֹבוֹת מְרָאָה: וַיִּפְקֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ פְּקִידִים
 בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת מַלְכוּתוֹ וַיִּקְבְּצוּ אֶת־כָּל־נַעֲרֵה־בְּתוּלָה
 ד טוֹבַת מְרָאָה אֶל־שׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה אֶל־בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים אֶל־יַד
 הַגָּא סָרִיס הַמֶּלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר הַנָּשִׁים וְנִתּוֹן תַּמְרוּקֵיהֶן: וַתַּנְעֲרָה
 אֲשֶׁר תִּיטֹב בְּעֵינַי הַמֶּלֶךְ תַּמְלֶךְ תַּחַת וְשֵׁתִי וַיִּיטֹב הַדָּבָר
 ה בְּעֵינַי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן: אִישׁ יְהוּדִי הָיָה
 בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה וְשֵׁמוֹ מְרֹדֶכִי בֶן יָאִיר בֶּן־שִׁמְעִי בֶן־קַיִשׁ
 ו אִישׁ יְמִינִי: אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִם־הַגָּלָה אֲשֶׁר
 הִגְלָתָה עִם יְכָנְיָה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר
 ז מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל: וַיְהִי אִמֵּן אֶת־הַדָּסָה הִיא אֶסְתֵּר בְּתוּדָוּ כִּי
 אֵין לָהּ אָב וְאֵם וַתַּנְעֲרָה וּפְתִיתָאָר וְטוֹבַת מְרָאָה וּבְמֹת
 ח אֲבִיהָ וְאִמָּהּ לְקַחָהּ מְרֹדֶכִי לֹו לְבַת: וַיְהִי בַּהֲשִׁמַּע
 דְּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ וּדְתוֹ וּבַהֲקַבֵּץ נַעֲרוֹת רַבּוֹת אֶל־שׁוֹשַׁן
 הַבִּירָה אֶל־יַד הַגָּי וַתִּלְקַח אֶסְתֵּר אֶל־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־יַד
 ט הַגָּי שֹׁמֵר הַנָּשִׁים: וַתִּיטֹב הַנְּעֲרָה בְּעֵינָיו וַתִּשָּׂא חֶסֶד
 לְפָנָיו וַיְבַהֵל אֶת־תַּמְרוּקֵיהָ וְאֶת־מְנוּחָתָהּ לְתַת לָהּ וְאֶת
 שְׁבַע הַנְּעֲרוֹת הַרְאִיּוֹת לְתַת־לָהּ מִבֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁנֶנָּה

⁹In addition, Queen Vashti gave a banquet for women, in the royal palace of King Ahasuerus.

¹⁰On the seventh day, when the king was merry with wine, he ordered Mehuman, Bizzetha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven eunuchs in attendance on King Ahasuerus, ¹¹to bring Queen Vashti before the king wearing a royal diadem, to display her beauty to the peoples and the officials; for she was a beautiful woman. ¹²But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command conveyed by the eunuchs. The king was greatly incensed, and his fury burned within him.

¹³Then the king consulted the sages learned in procedure.^c (For it was the royal practice [to turn] to all who were versed in law and precedent. ¹⁴His closest advisers were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven ministers of Persia and Media who had access to the royal presence and occupied the first place in the kingdom.) ¹⁵“What,” [he asked,] “shall be done, according to law, to Queen Vashti for failing to obey the command of King Ahasuerus conveyed by the eunuchs?”

¹⁶Thereupon Memucan declared in the presence of the king and the ministers: “Queen Vashti has committed an offense not only against Your Majesty but also against all the officials and against all the peoples in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.

¹⁷For the queen's behavior will make all wives despise their husbands, as they reflect that King Ahasuerus himself ordered Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she would not come.

¹⁸This very day the ladies of Persia and Media, who have heard of the queen's behavior, will cite it to all Your Majesty's officials, and there will be no end of scorn and provocation!

¹⁹“If it please Your Majesty, let a royal edict be issued by you, and let it be written into the laws of Persia and Media, so that it cannot be abrogated, that Vashti shall never enter the presence of King Ahasuerus. And let Your Majesty bestow her royal state upon another who is more worthy than she. ²⁰Then will the judgment executed by Your Majesty resound throughout your realm, vast though it is; and all wives will treat

^c *Lit.* “the times.”

ט גם ושתי המלכה עשתה משתה נשים בית המלכות אשר
י למלך אחשורוש: ביום השביעי כטוב לב המלך בגין
אמר להחזמן בהתא חרבונא בהתא נאבהתא ותר וכרס
שבעת הסריסים המשרתים אתפני המלך אחשורוש:
יא להביא את ושתי המלכה לפני המלך בכתר מלכות
להראות העמים והשרים אתיפיה כיתובת מראה
יב היא: ותמאן המלכה ושתי לבוא בדבר המלך אשר
ביד הסריסים ויקצר המלך מאד וחמתו בערה בו:
יג ויאמר המלך לחכמים ידעי העתים כי כן דבר המלך
יד לפני כל ידעי דת ודין: והקרב אליו פרשנא שתל
אדמתא תרשיש מרס מרסנא ממוכן שבעת שרי ו פרס
טו ומדי ראי פני המלך הישבים ראשנה במלכות: פדת
מה לעשות במלכה ושתי על ו אשר לא עשתה אתמאמר
טז המלך אחשורוש ביד הסריסים: ויאמר
מוכן ממוכן לפני המלך והשרים לא על המלך לבדו
עושה ושתי המלכה כי על כל השרים ועל כל העמים
יז אשר בכל מדינות המלך אחשורוש: פייצא דבר
המלכה על כל הנשים להבנות בעליהן בעיניהן
באמר המלך אחשורוש אמר להביא את ושתי
יח המלכה לפניו ולא באה: והיום הזה תאמרנה ו שרות
פרס ומדי אשר שמעו את דבר המלכה לכל שרי
יט המלך וכדי בגין וקצר: אם על המלך טוב יצא דבר
מלכות מלפניו ויכתב בדי פרס ומדי ולא יעבור
אשר לא תבוא ושתי לפני המלך אחשורוש ומלכותה
כ יתן המלך לרעותה הטובה ממנה: ונשמע פתנם המלך
אשר יעשה בכל מלכותו כי רבה היא וכל הנשים יתנו

Blessings before Reading Megillat Esther

Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the universe,
Who sanctified us with His commandments and
commanded us concerning the reading of the Megillah.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the universe,
Who performed wondrous deeds for our fathers, in
ancient days, at this season.

The Sephardim do not repeat this blessing by day

Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the universe,
for keeping us in life, for sustaining us, and for helping
us reach this moment.

Chapter 1

¹It happened in the days of Ahasuerus—that Ahasuerus who reigned over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia. ²In those days, when King Ahasuerus occupied the royal throne in the fortress^a Shushan, ³in the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet for all the officials and courtiers—the administration of Persia and Media, the nobles and the governors of the provinces in his service. ⁴For no fewer than a hundred and eighty days he displayed the vast riches of his kingdom and the splendid glory of his majesty. ⁵At the end of this period, the king gave a banquet for seven days in the court of the king’s palace garden for all the people who lived in the fortress Shushan, high and low alike. ^{6b}[There were hangings of] white cotton and blue wool, caught up by cords of fine linen and purple wool to silver rods and alabaster columns; and there were couches of gold and silver on a pavement of marble, alabaster, mother-of-pearl, and mosaics. ⁷Royal wine was served in abundance, as befits a king, in golden beakers, beakers of varied design. ⁸And the rule for the drinking was, “No restrictions!” For the king had given orders to every palace steward to comply with each man’s wishes.

^a *I.e., the fortified city.*

^b *Meaning of part of this verse uncertain.*

ברכות קודם קריאת המגלה

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו
במצותיו וצונו, על מקרא מגלה:

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם, שעשה נסים
לאבותינו, בימים ההם בזמן הזה:

הספרדים אינם חוזרים לברך ברכה זו ביום

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחנינו וקיימנו
והגיענו לזמן הזה:

פרק א

א ויהי בימי אחשורוש הוא אחשורוש המלך מהודו
 ב ועד-פוש שבע ועשרים ומאה מדינה: בימים ההם
 כשבת. המלך אחשורוש על כסא מלכותו אשר בשושן
 ג הבירה: בשנת שלוש למלכו עשה משתה לכל-שריו
 ד ועבדיו חיל. פרס ומדי הפרתמים ושרי המדינות
 ה לפניו: בהראתו את-עשר כבוד מלכותו ואת-יקר
 ו תפארת גדולתו ימים רבים שמונים ומאת יום:
 ז ובמלואת הימים האלה עשה המלך לכל-העם
 ח הנמצאים בשושן הבירה למגדול ועד-קטן משתה
 ט שבעת ימים בחצר גנת ביתן המלך: חור. ברפס
 י ותכלת אחוזו בתכלי-בויז וארנמן על-גילי כסף
 יא ועמודי שש מטות. זהב וכסף על רצפת בהטושש ודר
 יב וסחרת: והשקות בכלי זהב וכלים מפלים שונים ונין
 יג מלכות רב כר המלך: והשתיה כדת אין אגס פי-כן.
 יד יסד המלך על כל-רב ביתו לעשות כרצון איש-ואיש:

תפלת ערבית לליל פורים

יֵשֵׁב בְּסִטְרָא עֲלִיּוֹן, בְּצֵל שְׁדֵי יִתְלוּנָן: אָמַר לַיהוָה
מַחְסֵי וּמְצוּדוֹתַי, אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתַי-בּוֹ: כִּי הוּא יִצְיִלְךָ מִפַּח
יָקוּשׁ, מִדְּבַר חַוּוֹת: בְּאֲבָרְתוֹ יִסָּךְ לְךָ וְתַחַת-כְּנָפָיו
תִּחְסֶה, צָנָה וְסִחְרָה אָמְתוֹ: לֹא-תִירָא מִפַּחַד לְיָלֵהּ,
מִחַץ יְעוֹף יוֹמָם: מִדְּבַר בְּאִפְלֵ יְהִלְךָ, מִקְטָב יִשׁוּד
צְהָרִים: יִפֹּל מִצְדָּךְ אֶלְךָ, וּרְבָבָה מִימִינְךָ, אֵלֶיךָ לֹא
יָגֵשׁ: רַק בְּעֵינֶיךָ תְּבִיט, וְשִׁלְמַת רְשָׁעִים תִּרְאֶה: כִּי-
אֲתָה יְהוָה מַחְסֵי, עֲלִיּוֹן שְׁמֹתָ מְעוֹנָךְ: לֹא-תֵאָנֶה אֵלֶיךָ
רָעָה, וְנִגְעַע לֹא-יִקְרַב בְּאַחֲלָךְ: כִּי מִלְּאֲכִיו יִצְוֶה-לְךָ,
לְשִׁמְרֶךָ בְּכָל-דְּרָכֶיךָ: עַל-כַּפַּיִם יִשְׁאוּנְךָ, פֶּן-תִּגַּף בְּאַבָּן
רִגְלֶךָ: עַל-שַׁחַל וּפְתָן תִּדְרֹךְ, תִּרְמָס כְּפִיר וְתַנּוּן: כִּי בִי
חָשַׁק וְאַפְלָטָהוּ, אֲשַׁנְבְּהוּ כִּי-יָדַע שָׁמַי: יִקְרָאֲנִי וְאַעֲנֶהוּ,
עַמּוֹ-אֲנֹכִי בְּצָרָה, אֲחַלְצֶהוּ וְאַכְבֵּדָהוּ: אֶרְךָ יָמִים
אֲשַׁבֵּיעָהוּ, וְאַרְאֶהוּ בִישׁוּעָתִי: אֶרְךָ יָמִים אֲשַׁבֵּיעָהוּ,
וְאַרְאֶהוּ בִישׁוּעָתִי:

If Purim falls on a Saturday night, although Habdalah is not recited until after *Alenu, Boreh Meoreh Haesh* is recited here

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא מאורי האש.

תפלת ערבית לליל פורים

יְהוֹיָדָא רְצוֹן אֲמַר־יָפִי, וְהַגִּיזוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה צוּרִי
וְגוֹאֲלִי:

עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא בְּרַחֲמָיו, יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל־עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרָךְ. מִעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם:
מִמְזוֹרַח־שָׁמֶשׁ עַד־מְבוֹאוֹ. מְהֻלָּל שֵׁם יְהוָה: יְהוָה אֱדֻגֵינוּ.
מִה־אֲדִיר שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ:

וַתִּגְדַּל וַיִּתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֶךָ רַבָּא: אָמֵן. בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי־בְרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וַיְמַלִּיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ, וַיַּצְמַח פְּרָקְנָהּ, וַיִּקְרַב מְשִׁיחָהּ:
אָמֵן. בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן, וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֶגְלָא
וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרָךְ, לְעֵלַם וּלְעֵלְמֵי עֲלַמְיָא וַיְתַבְרַךְ,
וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח, וַיִּתְפָּאֵר, וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם, וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא, וַיִּתְהַדַּר, וַיִּתְעַלֶּה,
וַיִּתְהַלַּל, שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא: אָמֵן. לְעֵלְא מִן
כָּל־בְּרַכְתָּא, שִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמְתָא, דְאָמִירָן בְּעֶלְמָא,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: אָמֵן.

אם חל במוצ"ש, אומרים פה שובה וברכת מאורי האש.

בשאר ימים, ממשיכים בקריאת המגלה בעמוד הבא.

On Saturday night, say *Shuba* followed by *Birkat Ha'esh*.

Otherwise, continue with Megillat Esther.

שׁוּבָה יְהוָה עַד־מָוֶתִי, וְהִנַּחֵם עַל־עֲבֹדְיָךְ: שְׁבַעֲנוּ
בְּבִקְרַח חֲסִדְךָ, וּנְרַנְנָה וְנִשְׁמְחָה בְּכָל־יְמֵינוּ: שְׁמַחְנוּ כִּימוֹת
עֲנִיתָנוּ, שָׁנוֹת רָאִינוּ רַעְיָה: יִרְאֶה אֶל־עֲבֹדְיָךְ פְּעֻלְךָ,
וְהִדְרֶךְ עַל־בְּנֵיהֶם: וַיְהִי נֹעַם אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ,
וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנְנָה עָלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנְנָה:

תפלת ערבית לליל פורים

לְבוֹז. וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים הַפְּרַת אֶת עֲצָתוֹ. וְהַשְׁבוֹתָ
לוֹ גְמוּלוֹ בְּרֹאשׁוֹ, וְתָלוּ אוֹתוֹ וְאֶת בְּנָיו עַל הָעֵץ. וְעֲשִׂיתָ
עִמָּהֶם נְסִים וּנְפִלְאוֹת וְנוֹדָה לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל סְלָה:

וְעַל כָּלֵם יִתְבַּרְךָ וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא תָמִיד שִׁמְךָ
מִלְּכַנּוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, וְכָל־הַחַיִּים יוֹדוּךָ סְלָה.

וַיִּתְלָלוּ, וַיְבָרְכוּ, אֶת־שִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל בְּאַמַּת לְעוֹלָם, כִּי
טוֹב. הָאֵל יִשְׁוּעַתְנוּ וְעֲזַרְתְּנוּ סְלָה הָאֵל הַטוֹב: בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַטוֹב שִׁמְךָ וְלִךָ נָאָה לְהוֹדוֹת:

שִׁים שְׁלוֹם, טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה, חַיִּים, חֵן וְחֶסֶד, צְדָקָה
וְרַחֲמִים, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ. וּבְרַכְנוּ אֲבִינוּ
כְּלָנוּ כְּאָחֵד בְּאוֹר פְּנִיךָ. כִּי בְּאוֹר פְּנִיךָ, נִתְתָּ לָנוּ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ: תוֹרָה וְחַיִּים, אֶהְבָּה וְחֶסֶד, צְדָקָה וְרַחֲמִים,
בְּרָכָה וְשְׁלוֹם. וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרְכֵנוּ וּלְבָרְךָ אֶת־כָּל־
עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרַב־עֵז וְשְׁלוֹם: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמְּבָרְךָ
אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשְׁלוֹם: אָמֵן.

יְהִי־לְרָצוֹן אִמְרֵי־פִי, וְהִגִּיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה צוּרֵי
וְגֹאֲלֵי:

אֱלֹהֵי. נֹצַר לְשׁוֹנֵי מַרְעֵ, וְשִׁפְתוֹתַי מִדְּבַר מַרְמָה,
וְלִמְקַלְלֵי נַפְשֵׁי תוֹדֵם, וְנַפְשֵׁי כְּעֹפֵר לְכָל תְּהִיָּה. פִּתַּח
לִבִּי בְּתוֹרַתְךָ, וְאַחֲרֵי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ תִּרְדֹּף נַפְשִׁי. וְכָל־הַקְּמִים
עָלַי לְרָעָה, מִהֲרָה הֲפֵר עֲצָתָם, וְקַלְקַל מַחְשְׁבוֹתָם:
עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שִׁמְךָ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן יְמִינְךָ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן
תוֹרַתְךָ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן קִדְשֶׁתְךָ. לְמַעַן יִחַלְצוּן יַדֵּי־יְךָ,
הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעַנְנֵי:

תפלת ערבית לליל פורים

שומע תפלות ותחנונים אָתָּה. ומְלַפְּנֵיךָ מְלַכְּנוּ רִיקָם
אֶל־תְּשִׁיבֵנוּ, חַנּוּנוּ וְעַנּוּנוּ וְשָׁמַע תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ, כִּי אַתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ
תְּפִלַּת כָּל־פֶּה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה:

רָצָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּעַמּוּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְלִתְפִלָּתָם שְׁעָה,
וְהִשֵּׁב הָעֲבוּדָה לְדָבִיר בֵּיתְךָ, וְאַשִּׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְתְפִלָּתָם,
מִהָרָה בְּאַהֲבָה תִקְבַּל בְּרָצוֹן, וְתֵהִי לְרָצוֹן תָּמִיד עֲבוּדַת
יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוּךָ:

וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים, תַּחֲפֹץ בָּנוּ וְתִרְצָנֵנוּ, וְתַחֲזִינָה
עֵינֵינוּ בְּשׁוּבְךָ לְצִיּוֹן בְּרַחֲמִים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
הַמְחַזֵּר שְׂכִינָתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן:

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ. שְׂאַתָּה הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֵּהֵי
אַבוֹתֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. צוּרֵנוּ, צוּר חַיֵּינוּ, וּמִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנוּ,
אַתָּה הוּא לְדָר וָדָר, נוֹדָה לָךְ וּנְסַפֵּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ, עַל־חַיֵּינוּ
הַמְסוּרִים בְּיָדְךָ, וְעַל נְשָׁמוֹתֵינוּ הַמְקוּדוֹת לָךְ, וְעַל־נַפְשֵׁיךָ
שֶׁבְכָל־יּוֹם עִמָּנוּ, וְעַל נַפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ שֶׁבְכָל־עֵת,
עָרַב, וּבִקֵּר, וְצַהֲרִים: הַטּוֹב, כִּי־לֹא־כָלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ.
הַמְרַחֵם, כִּי־לֹא תָמוּ חַסְדֶּיךָ. כִּי מַעֲוֹלָם קָנִינוּ לָךְ:

עַל הַנֹּסִים, וְעַל הַפְּרָקָן, וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת. וְעַל
הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת, וְעַל הַנְּפִלְאוֹת, וְעַל הַנְּחֻמּוֹת, שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הַהֵם בְּזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה:

בַּיָּמִי מְרֻד־כִּי וְאַסְתֵּר בְּשׁוֹשֵׁן הַבִּירָה, כְּשֶׁעָמַד עֲלֵיהֶם
הַמֶּן הַרְשָׁע, בִּקֵּשׁ לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרוֹג וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת כָּל
הַיְהוּדִים מִנְעַר וְעַד זָקֵן, טַף וְנָשִׁים בְּיוֹם אֶחָד,
בְּשִׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר הוּא חֹדֶשׁ אֲדָר וּשְׁלָלָם

תפלת ערבית לליל פורים

הַשִּׁיבָה שׁוֹפְטֵינוּ כְּבָרְאֲשׁוֹנָה, וְיִזְעַצְּנוּ כְּבַתְחֻלָּה.
וְהִסֵּר מִמֶּנּוּ צָרָה יְגוֹן וְאֲנָחָה, וּמִלֶּךְ עָלֵינוּ מִהֲרָה אֶתָּה
יְהוָה לְבַדְּךָ, בְּחֹסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים בְּצַדִּיק וּבְמִשְׁפָּט: בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה יְהוָה, מִלֶּךְ אוֹהֵב צַדִּיקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט:

לְמִינִים וּלְמַלְשִׁינִים אֵל תְּהִי תִקְוָה, וְכָל הַזָּדִים
כְּרֹנֵעַ יֵאָבְדוּ, וְכָל-אוֹיְבֶיךָ וְכָל-שׁוֹנְאֵיךָ מִהֲרָה יִכָּרְתוּ,
וּמַלְכוּת הַרְשָׁעָה מִהֲרָה תִעָקֵר, וּתְשַׁבֵּר, וּתְכַלֵּם,
וּתְכַנְיַעֵם בְּמִהֲרָה בְּיַמֵּינוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, שׁוֹבֵר
אוֹיְבִים וּמְכַנְיַע זָדִים:

עַל הַצַּדִּיקִים, וְעַל הַחֲסִידִים, וְעַל שְׂאֵרֵי עַמּוֹךְ בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל זִקְנֵיהֶם, וְעַל פְּלִיטַת בֵּית סוֹפְרֵיהֶם, וְעַל
גְּרֵי הַצַּדִּיק וְעָלֵינוּ, יִהְיוּ נֹא רַחֲמֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְתֵן
שָׂכָר טוֹב לְכָל-הַבּוֹטְחִים בְּשִׁמְךָ בְּאַמֶּת, וְשִׁים חֶלְקֵנוּ
עִמָּהֶם, וּלְעוֹלָם לֹא יִבּוֹשׁ כִּי-בָךְ בְּטַחְנוּ, וְעַל חֲסִדְךָ
הַגָּדוֹל בְּאַמֶּת נִשְׁעַנְנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מִשְׁעֵן וּמְבַטָּח
לְצַדִּיקִים:

תִּשְׁכּוֹן בְּתוֹךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם עִירְךָ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ, וְכִסֵּא
דָּוִד עַבְדְּךָ מִהֲרָה בְּתוֹכָהּ תִּכּוֹן, וּבְנֵה אוֹתָהּ בְּנֵן עוֹלָם
בְּמִהֲרָה בְּיַמֵּינוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, בּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַם:

אֵת צֶמַח דָּוִד עַבְדְּךָ מִהֲרָה תִצְמַיֵחַ, וְקִרְנוֹ תִרּוֹם
בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ, כִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קִנּוּנוֹ וְצַפְּיָנוּ כָּל-הַיּוֹם: בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְצַמֵּיחַ קִרְנֵן יְשׁוּעָה:

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אָב הַרְחֲמֵנוּ, חוּס וּרְחַם
עָלֵינוּ, וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ. כִּי אֵל

תפלת ערבית לליל פורים

סְלַח לָנוּ אֲבִינוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ, מְחוּל לָנוּ מִלְכָּנוּ כִּי
כָּשַׁעְנוּ, כִּי אֵל טוֹב וְסִלַּח אֶתְהָ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, חֲנוּן
הַמְּרַבֵּה לְסִלּוֹחַ:

רֵאה נָא בְּעֵינָיו וְרִיבָה רִיבָנוּ, וּמַהֲר לְנַאֲלָנוּ גְּאֻלָּה
שְׁלֵמָה לְמַעַן שְׂמֹד, כִּי אֵל גּוֹאֵל חֲזַק אֶתְהָ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְהוָה, גּוֹאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

רַפְּאֵנוּ יְהוָה וְנִרְפָּא, הוֹשִׁיעֵנו וְנִשְׁעָה כִּי תִהְלָתָנוּ
אַתָּה, וְתַעֲלֶה אֲרוּכָה וּמְרַפָּא לְכָל-תַּחֲלוּאֵינוּ,
וּלְכָל-מַכְאוּבֵינוּ, וּלְכָל-מַכּוֹתֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל רוֹפֵא רַחֲמָן
וְנִאֲמַן אֶתְהָ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, רוֹפֵא חוֹלֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

בְּרוּךְ עֲלֵינוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֵת הַשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת וְאֵת
כָּל-מִיּוֹ תְבוּאַתָּה לְטוֹבָה, וְתֵן טַל וּמָטָר לְבִרְכָה עַל
כָּל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה, וְרוּחַ פָּנֵי תְבַל, וְשִׁבְעַת אֶת-הָעוֹלָם כְּלוֹ
מִטּוֹבָךְ, וּמִלֵּא יְדֵינוּ מִבְּרֻכּוֹתֶיךָ, וּמִעֲשֵׂר מִתְּנוּת יְדִיךָ,
שְׂמֵרָה וְתַצִּילָה שָׁנָה זוֹ מִכָּל-דָּבָר רָע, וּמִכָּל-מִיּוֹ
מִשְׁחִית, וּמִכָּל-מִיּוֹ פִרְעָנוֹת. וַעֲשֵׂה לָּהּ תַקְנָה טוֹבָה
וְאַחֲרִית שְׁלוֹם, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֶיהָ וְעַל כָּל-תְּבוּאַתָּה
וּפְרוּתֶיהָ, וּבִרְכָה בְּגִשְׁמֵי רְצוֹן בְּרָכָה וּבְנִדְבָה, וְתִהְיֶה
אַחֲרֶיהָ חַיִּים, וְשָׁבַע, וְשָׁלוֹם, כְּשֵׁנִים הַטּוֹבוֹת לְבִרְכָה,
כִּי אֵל טוֹב וּמְטִיב אֶתְהָ וּמְבָרֵךְ הַשָּׁנִים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְהוָה, מְבָרֵךְ הַשָּׁנִים:

תַּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גְּדוֹל לְחֲרוּתָנוּ, וְשֵׂא גִס לְקַבֵּץ
גְּלִיּוֹתֵינוּ, וּקְבָצָנוּ יַחַד מִתְּהָרָה מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנַפּוֹת הָאָרֶץ
לְאַרְצָנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְקַבֵּץ נִדְחֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

תפלת ערבית לליל פורים

והנורא, אל עליון. גומל חסדים טובים, קונה הכל,
וזוכר חסדי אבות, ומביא גואל לבני בניהם, למען שמו
באתה: מלך עוזר ומושיע ומגן: ברוך אתה יהוה, מגן
אברהם:

אתה גבור לעולם, אדני. מחיה מתים אתה. רב
להושיע:

משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם:

מכלכל חיים בחסד, מחיה מתים ברחמים רבים,
סומך גופלים, ורופא חולים, ומתיר אסורים, ומקנים
אמונתו לישני עפר. מי כמוך בעל גבורות ומי דומה
לך, מלך ממית ומחיה ומצמיח ישועה. ונאמן אתה
להחיות מתים: ברוך אתה יהוה, מחיה המתים:

אתה קדוש, ושמוך קדוש, וקדושים בכל-יום
יהללוך סלה: ברוך אתה יהוה, האל הקדוש:

אתה חונן לאדם דעת, ומלמד לאנוש בינה,

במוצאי שבת On Saturday Night אתה חוננתנו יהוה אלהינו מדע
והשכל, אתה אמרת להבדיל בין קדש לחול ובין אור לחשך,
ובין ישראל לעמים, ובין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה.
כשם שהבדלתנו יהוה אלהינו מעמי הארצות וממשפחות
האדמה, כך פדנו והצילנו משטן רע, ומפגע רע, ומכל (מיני)
גזרות קשות ורעות המתרנשות לבא בעולם:

וחננו מאתך חכמה בינה ודעת: ברוך אתה יהוה,
חונן הדעת:

השיבנו אבינו לתורתך, וקרבנו מלכנו לעבודתך,
והחזירנו בתשובה שלמה לפניך: ברוך אתה יהוה,
הרוצה בתשובה:

תפלת ערבית לליל פורים

וְאָמְרוּ: יְהוָה, יִמְלֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. וַיֹּאמֶר: כִּי־פָדָה יְהוָה
אֶת־יַעֲקֹב, וַיִּגְאֹלוּ מִיַּד חֲזַק מִמֶּנּוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, גֹּאֲלֵ
יִשְׂרָאֵל:

הַשְּׂפִיבֵנוּ אֲבוֹנֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם, וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ מִלְּפָנֵינוּ לְחַיִּים
טוֹבִים וּלְשָׁלוֹם. וּפְרוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ סֶפֶת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ, וְתַקַּנְנוּ
מִלְּפָנֵינוּ בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ מִהֲרָה לְמַעַן
שְׁמֶךָ: וְהִגֵּן בְּעַדֵּנוּ. וְהִסֵּר מֵעָלֵינוּ מַכַּת אוֹיֵב, דְּבַר,
חֶרֶב, חֵלִי, צָרָה, רָעָה, רָעַב, וְיָגוֹן, וּמִשְׁחִית, וּמִגְּפָה:
שְׁבוֹר וְהִסֵּר שְׁטָן מִלְּפָנֵינוּ וּמֵאַחֲרֵינוּ, וּבְצֵל כְּנֻפֶיךָ
תִּסְתִּירֵנוּ, וּשְׁמוֹר צְאֲתָנוּ וּבוֹאֵנוּ לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם, מֵעַתָּה
וְעַד עוֹלָם. כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמְרָנוּ וּמְצִילָנוּ אַתָּה מְכַל־דְּבַר רָע
וּמִפְּחַד לַיְלָה: הִנֵּה לֹא־יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל:
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, שׁוֹמֵר אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַד, אָמֵן:

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא: אָמֵן. בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי־כְרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ, וְיַצְמַח פְּרֻקְנָתָהּ, וְיִקְרַב מְשִׁיחָהּ:
אָמֵן. בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן, וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא
וּבְזֵמַן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ, לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא יִתְבְּרַךְ,
וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר, וְיִתְרוֹמֵם, וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא, וְיִתְהַדָּר, וְיִתְעַלֶּה,
וְיִתְהַלָּל, שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא: אָמֵן. לְעֵלְא מִן
כָּל־בְּרַכְתָּא, שִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְאֲמִירָן בְּעֶלְמָא,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: אָמֵן.

אֲדִנִּי, שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח, וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבֹרָהִם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב. הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוֹר

תפלת ערבית לליל פורים

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל־כַּנְּפֵי בְגָדֵיהֶם
לְדָרְתָם וְנָתַנּוּ עַל־צִיצִית הַכַּנָּף פִּתְיֵל תְּכֵלֶת: וְהָיָה לָכֶם
לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה
וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא־תָתְּוֵרוּ אַחֲרַי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם
אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם זִנִּים אַחֲרֵיהֶם: לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם
אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי וְהָיִיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם: אֲנִי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְהַיּוֹת
לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

קהל: אָמֵן.

חזן: יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אָמֵן.

וְאֶמוּנָה, כָּל־זֹאת וְקַיָּם עָלֵינוּ. כִּי הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאֵין זולָתוֹ, וְאֶנְחֵנוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ: הַפּוֹדְנוּ מִיַּד מַלְכִים,
הַגּוֹאֲלֵנוּ מִלְּכָנוּ מִכַּף כָּל־עַרְיָצִים. הָאֵל הַנּוֹפֵרֵע לָנוּ
מִצַּרֵּינוּ, הַמְּשַׁלֵּם גָּמוּל לְכָל־אוֹיְבֵי נַפְשֵׁנוּ: הַשֵּׁם נַפְשֵׁנוּ
בְּחַיִּים, וְלֹא נָתַן לַמוֹט רַגְלָנוּ: הַמְּדַרְיֵכְנוּ עַל בְּמוֹת
אוֹיְבֵינוּ, וַיָּרֶם קַרְנֵנוּ עַל כָּל־שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ: הָאֵל הַעוֹשֶׂה לָנוּ
נִסִּים וְנִקְמָה בַּפְּרָעָה, בְּאוֹתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים בְּאֲדַמַת בְּנֵי
חַם: הַמַּכָּה בַּעֲבָרְתוֹ כָּל־בְּכוֹרֵי מִצְרַיִם, וַיּוֹצִיא אֶת עַמּוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵהוֹסֶם לְחַרוֹת עוֹלָם. הַמַּעֲבִיר בְּנֵיו בֵּין גִּזְרֵי יַם
סוּף, וְאֶת רוֹדְפֵיהֶם וְאֶת שׁוֹנְאֵיהֶם בְּתַהוֹמוֹת טַבַּע: רָאוּ
בָנִים אֶת גְּבוּרָתוֹ, שִׁבְּחוּ וְהוֹדוּ לְשִׁמּוֹ, וּמַלְכוּתוֹ בְּרָצוֹן
קִבְּלוּ עָלֵיהֶם: מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָךְ עָנוּ שִׁירָה בְּשִׂמְחָה
רַבָּה וְאָמְרוּ כָלָם: מִי־כַמְכָה בְּאֵלִים יְהוָה, מִי כַמְכָה
נֶאֱדָר בְּקִדְשׁ, נוֹרָא תַהֲלֹת עֲשֶׂה־פְּלֵא: מַלְכוּתְךָ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ רָאוּ בְנֵיךָ עַל־הַיָּם. יַחַד כָּלָם הוֹדוּ וְהִמְלִיכוּ

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

בלחש: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלֻכּוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

וְאַחַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ
וּבְכָל־מְאֵדְךָ: וְהָיוּ חַדְבָּרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ
חַיִּים עַל־לִבְבְּךָ: וְשִׁנְנֶתָם לְבְנֵיךָ וּדְבַרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ
בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתֶּךָ בְּדַרְךָ וּבְשִׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: וּקְשַׁרְתָּם
לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: וּכְתַבְתָּם
עַל־מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁמַעַתְּ שְׁמֵעוּ אֶל־מְצוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה
אֶתְכֶם חַיִּים לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְעַבְדּוֹ
בְּכָל־לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁכֶם: וְנִתְּתִי מְטֵר־אַרְצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ
יֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאֶסְפֶּתִי דְגַנְךָ וְתִירֹשֶׁךָ וְיִצְהַרְךָ: וְנִתְּתִי
עֵשֶׂב בְּשִׂדְךָ לְבַהֲמֹתֶךָ וְאֶכְלֹתִי וְשָׂבַעְתִּי: הַשְׁמִירוּ לְכֶם
פֶּן־יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסַרְתֶּם וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם: וְחָרָה (בלחש) אַף־יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעָצַר
אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה מְטֵר וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת־יְבוּלָהּ
וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מִחֵרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטְּבִיחָה (בקול רם) אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה
נָתַן לְכֶם: וְשִׁמְתֶם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהַ עַל־לִבְבְּכֶם
וְעַל־נַפְשְׁכֶם וּקְשַׁרְתֶּם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְכֶם וְהָיוּ
לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: וּלְמַדְתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר
בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתֶּךָ בְּדַרְךָ וּבְשִׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ:
וּכְתַבְתֶּם עַל־מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: לְמַעַן יִרְבּוּ יְמֵיכֶם
וְיָמֵי בְנֵיכֶם עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם
לָתֵת לָהֶם כִּי־יָמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

תפלת ערבית לליל פורים

He did not spurn the plea of the lowly; He did not hide His face from him; when he cried out to Him, He listened.²⁶ Because of You I offer praise in the great congregation; I pay my vows in the presence of His worshipers.²⁷ Let the lowly eat and be satisfied; let all who seek the LORD praise Him. Always be of good cheer!²⁸ Let all the ends of the earth pay heed and turn to the LORD, and the peoples of all nations prostrate themselves before You; ²⁹for kingship is the LORD's and He rules the nations.³⁰ All those in full vigor shall eat and prostrate themselves; all those at death's door, whose spirits flag, shall bend the knee before Him.³¹ Offspring shall serve Him; the LORD's fame shall be proclaimed to the generation³² to come; they shall tell of His beneficence to people yet to be born, for He has acted.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בְּדַבְּרוֹ
מֵעֲרִיב עֲרָבִים בְּחִכְמָה, פּוֹתַח שְׁעָרִים בְּתַבּוּנָה, מְשַׁנֵּה
עֵתִים וּמַחְלִיף אֶת הַזְּמַנִּים, וּמְסַדֵּר אֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים
בְּמִשְׁמְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרָקִיעַ כְּרִצּוֹנוֹ. בּוֹרֵא יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה, גּוֹלֵל
אוֹר מִפְּנֵי חֹשֶׁךְ, וְחֹשֶׁךְ מִפְּנֵי אוֹר. הַמַּעֲבִיר יוֹם וּמְבִיא
לַיְלָה, וּמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה. יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ:
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמַּעֲרִיב עֲרָבִים:

אֲהַבֵּת עוֹלָם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ אֲהַבֵּת, תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת
חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים אוֹתָנוּ לַמִּדָּה. עַל כֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
בְּשִׂכְבְּנוּ וּבְקוּמָנוּ נִשְׁיַח בְּחַקֶּיךָ, וְנִשְׂמַח וְנַעֲלוֹז בְּדַבְּרֵי
תִּלְמוּד תּוֹרָתְךָ, וּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְחַקֹּתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. כִּי הֵם
חִיֵּינוּ וְאַרְךָ יָמֵינוּ, וּבָהֶם נִחְנֶה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה. וְאֲהַבֵּתְךָ
לֹא תִסּוּר מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אוֹהֵב אֶת
עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

תפלת ערבית לליל פורים

וְלֹא שִׁמְךָ עֲנוֹת עָנִי וְלֹא־הִסְתִּיר פָּנָיו מִמֶּנּוּ וּבְשׂוּעוֹ אֱלֹהֵי
שְׁמֵעַ: מֵאֲתָךְ תַּחֲלִתִּי בְּקִהְלֵךְ רַב נְדָרַי אֲשֶׁלֶּם נִגְדַּי וְרֵאיוֹ:
יֹאכְלוּ עַנּוּיִם | וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ יִתְּלֵנוּ יְהוָה דְּרִשְׁיוֹ יַחֲיוּ לְבַבְכֶּם
לְעַד: יִזְכְּרוּ | וַיִּשְׁבּוּ אֶל־יְהוָה כָּל־אֲפִסֵּי־אָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ
לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל־מְשַׁפְּחוֹת גּוֹיִם: כִּי לַיהוָה הַמְּלוֹכָה וּמִשְׁלַל
בְּנוֹיִם: אֲכָלוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ | כָּל־דְּשֵׁנֵי־אָרֶץ לְפָנָיו יִכְרְעוּ
כָּל־זוֹרְגֵי עֶפֶר וְנִפְשׂוֹ לֹא חִיָּה: זֶרַע יַעֲבֹדְנוּ וְסֹפֵר
לְאֹדְנֵי לְדוֹר: יִבְאוּ וַיִּגִּידוּ צַדִּיקְתּוֹ לְעַם נוֹלָד כִּי עָשָׂה:

יִתְגַּדֵּל וַיִּתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא: אַמֵּן. בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי־בְרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וַיְמַלִּיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ, וַיַּצְמַח פְּרֻקְנָהּ, וַיִּקְרַב מְשִׁיחָה:
אַמֵּן. בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן, וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא
וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אַמֵּן: אַמֵּן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ, לְעֵלַם וּלְעַלְמֵי עֵלְמֵיָא וּתְבָרַךְ,
וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח, וַיִּתְפָּאֵר, וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם, וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא, וַיִּתְהַדָּר, וַיִּתְעַלֶּה,
וַיִּתְהַלַּל, שְׁמֵהּ דְּקִדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא: אַמֵּן. לְעֵלָא מִן
כָּל־בְּרַכְתָּא, שִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְּאַמִּירָן בְּעֶלְמָא,
וְאִמְרוּ אַמֵּן: אַמֵּן.

וְהוּא רַחוּם יִכְפֹּר עִוֹן, וְלֹא יִשְׁחִית וְהִרְבָּה לְהַשִּׁיב
אָפוֹ, וְלֹא יַעִיר כָּל־חַמְתּוֹ: יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה, הַמְּלִיךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ
בְּיוֹם־קִרְאָנוּ:

חזן: בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבָרַךְ:

קהל: בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרַךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

חזן: בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרַךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

Arbit for the Night of Purim

Mizmor for Purim

22For the leader; on *ayyeleth ha-shahar* A psalm of David. ²My God, my God, why have You abandoned me; why so far from delivering me and from my anguished roaring? ³My God, I cry by day—You answer not; by night, and have no respite. ⁴But You are the Holy One, enthroned, the Praise of Israel. ⁵In You our fathers trusted; they trusted, and You rescued them. ⁶To You they cried out and they escaped; in You they trusted and were not disappointed. ⁷But I am a worm, less than human; scorned by men, despised by people. ⁸All who see me mock me; they curl their lips, they shake their heads. ⁹“Let him commit himself to the LORD; let Him rescue him, let Him save him, for He is pleased with him.” ¹⁰You drew me from the womb, made me secure at my mother’s breast. ¹¹I became Your charge at birth; from my mother’s womb You have been my God. ¹²Do not be far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help. ¹³Many bulls surround me, mighty ones of Bashan encircle me. ¹⁴They open their mouths at me like tearing, roaring lions. ¹⁵My life ebbs away: all my bones are disjoined; my heart is like wax, melting within me; ¹⁶my vigor dries up like a shard; my tongue cleaves to my palate; You commit me to the dust of death. ¹⁷Dogs surround me; a pack of evil ones closes in on me, like lions [they maul] my hands and feet. ¹⁸I take the count of all my bones while they look on and gloat. ¹⁹They divide my clothes among themselves, casting lots for my garments. ²⁰But You, O LORD, be not far off; my strength, hasten to my aid. ²¹Save my life from the sword, my precious life from the clutches of a dog. ²²Deliver me from a lion’s mouth; from the horns of wild oxen rescue me. ²³Then will I proclaim Your fame to my brethren, praise You in the congregation. ²⁴You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you offspring of Jacob, honor Him! Be in dread of Him, all you offspring of Israel! ²⁵For He did not scorn,

ערבית לליל פורים

מזמור לפורים

תהלים כ"ב

לְמַנְצַחַ עַל־אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד: אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי לְמַחַ
עֹבְדֵי רַחֹק מִיְשׁוּעָתִי דְבַרְי שְׁאֲנָתִי: אֱלֹהֵי אֶקְרָא יוֹמָם
וְלַיָּלָא תַעֲנֶנּוּ וְלַיְלָלָה וְלֹא־דַמְיָה לִי: וְאַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ יוֹשֵׁב
תְּהַלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל: בְּךָ בְּטַחֲו אֲבַתִּינוּ בְּטַחֲו וְתַפְלִטְמוֹ:
אֱלֹהֵי זַעֲקוּ וְנִמְלָטוּ בְּךָ בְּטַחֲו וְלֹא־בּוֹשׁוּ: וְאַנְכִי תוֹלַעַת
וְלֹא־אֵישׁ חֲרַפְתָּ אָדָם וּבְנוֹי עָם: כָּל־רְאִי יִלְעָנוּ לִי
יִפְטִירוּ בְּשִׁפְהָ יִנְיֵעוּ רְאֵשׁ: גַּל אֶל־יְהוָה יִפְלִטְהוּ יִצְיִלְהוּ
כִּי חָפֵץ בּוֹ: כִּי־אַתָּה גַחֵי מִבְּטָן מִבְּטִיחִי עַל־שִׁדֵי אִמִּי:
עָלֶיךָ הִשְׁלַכְתִּי מִרְחֹם מִבְּטָן אִמִּי אֱלֹהֵי אֶתָּה: אֶל־תִּרְחַק
מִמֶּנִּי כִּי־צָרָה קְרוּבָה כִּי־אֵין עֹזֶר: סִבְבוּנֵי פָרִים רַבִּים
אֲבִירֵי בָשָׁן פְּתֹרוּנֵי: פָּצוּ עָלַי פִּיהֶם אֲרִיזָה טַרְף וְשֹׁאֵנִי:
כַּמִּים נִשְׁפְּכֹתִי וְהַתְּפָרְדּוּ כָּל־עַצְמוֹתַי הִנֵּה לְבִי כַּדוֹנֵג
נִמְס בְּתוֹךְ מַעֵי: יָבֵשׁ כַּחֲרֹשׁ | פָּחִי וְלִשׁוֹנִי מִדְּבַק
מִלְקוֹחֵי וְלַעֲפַר־מֹת תִּשְׁפְּתֵנִי: כִּי סִבְבוּנֵי כָּלְבִים עֲדַת
מִרְעִים הַקִּיפּוּנֵי כְּאֹרֵי יַדֵּי וְרַגְלֵי: אֲסַפֵּר כָּל־עַצְמוֹתַי
הַמָּה יָבִיטוּ יִרְאוּ־בֵי: יִחַלְקוּ בְּגַדֵי לֵהֶם וְעַל־לְבוּשֵׁי
יִפִּילוּ גֹרֵל: וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֶל־תִּרְחַק אֵיילוֹתַי לְעֹזְרֹתַי
חֹשֶׁה: הַצִּילָה מִחֲרַב נִפְשִׁי מִיַּד־כָּלְב וְיִחַדְתִּי: הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי
מִפִּי אֲרִיזָה וּמִקְרָנֵי רַמִּים עֲנִיתֵנִי: אֲסַפְּרָה שְׁמֶךָ לְאַחֵי
בְּתוֹךְ קָהֵל אֶחְלָלְךָ: יִרְאִי יְהוָה | תִּלְלוּהוּ כָּל־זֶרַע
יַעֲקֹב כַּבְּדוּהוּ וְגֹרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל: כִּי לֹא־בִזָּה

מגלת אסתר

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

עם תפלת ערבית לליל פורים
כפי מנהג עדות המזרח

תבה