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מִגִּילַת אֶסְתֵּר

MEGILLAT  
ESTHER

On Purim we read the Megillah, the Scroll of Esther, with great joy and merrymaking. The following blessings are recited before the reading:

Blessed is the Eternal      בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
our God, ruler of the world,  
who made us holy by the mitzvot      אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,  
and commanded us to read the      וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִקְרָא מְגִלָּה.  
Megillah.

Blessed is the Eternal.      בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
our God, ruler of the world,  
who did wonderful things for our      שְׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ,  
ancestors,  
in those days, at this season.      בְּיָמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמַּן הַזֶּה.

Blessed is the Eternal      בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
our God, ruler of the world,  
who kept us alive and well, and      שְׁהַחֲיֵינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ,  
gave us the opportunity to      וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמַּן הַזֶּה.  
celebrate this occasion.

## INTRODUCTION

"This happened during the days of King Ahchashverosh" — thus the Book of Esther begins the breathtaking story of intrigue, ruthlessness, and deliverance in the ancient land of Persia over 2,000 years ago.

The simple parchment scroll brings to life the rich images of the participants in this exciting Jewish historical drama.

Esther, the heroine, feminine in beauty, risks her life to save the Jews of Persia from a genocidal massacre.

Mordechi, her uncle, God-fearing and resolute in the face of impending disaster.

Haman, the demonic vizier of Persia, who decides to annihilate the Jews and use their property and wealth to further his own political aims.

King Ahchashverosh, the licentious, hard-drinking, indecisive monarch, who gives Haman permission to destroy the Jews.

The story of Esther is the eternal story of hatred which has been repeated in different countries in almost every generation to the present time.

Over the centuries, community and family Purims have been set aside to commemorate localized deliverances from great evils and tyrants. They were celebrated with festivities and often with the reading of a scroll telling the story of their particular deliverance.

At times, there were no miracles. There was no Purim for the Jews of Europe during the Nazi period. Under the diabolical leadership of Hitler, six million innocents were murdered, gassed and burned in the death camps of Germany.

Today, Purim is the merriest holiday of the Jewish year. It is celebrated with Shalach Manot, carnivals, parties, masquerades, eating, carousing, and even silliness.

It is the one day of the year when even drunkenness is tolerated. The Talmud declares: "A person is obligated to drink enough on Purim so that he cannot distinguish between 'Blessed is Mordechi' and 'Cursed is Haman.'" Interestingly enough, the numerical value of both of these Hebrew phrases is identical — 502.

For 2,000 years the story of Esther has been like an oasis in the desert which again and again springs to life and gives us hope and strength in times of duress. The festival of Purim offers Jews a lesson of courage and faith. In darkest moments the festivities cheered the Jews and inspired them with hope of final victory over their enemies, just as Esther and Mordechi triumphed over Haman.

# CHAPTER ONE

# פָּרָק א'

1. This happened during the days of King Ah-chash-ver-osh, who ruled one hundred and twenty-seven provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia.

2. At the time that King Ah-chash-ver-osh ruled over his kingdom from the capital, Shushan, the Fortress,

3. in the third year of his rule, he made a feast for all of his princes, advisors, and army officers.

4. At that party the king showed off his great riches and the glory of his kingdom. This grand celebration lasted for 180 days.

5. When the celebration was over, the king made another feast for the people of Shushan, great and small, a feast which lasted seven days. This feast took place in the court of the garden of the king's palace.

6. The palace was decorated with white, green and blue curtains tied with ribbons of linen and purple, on rods of silver and pillars of marble; benches of gold and silver stood upon a floor covered with red, white, yellow and black marble.

7. The guests drank great quantities of wine from golden cups in many shapes and forms,

8. for the King commanded that no man was to be forced to drink too much, but only as much as they wanted.

9. Queen Vashti also made a feast for the women. This celebration took place in the palace of King Ah-chash-ver-osh.

10. On the seventh day of the feast, when the king was a bit drunk with wine, he commanded his seven closest servants, the eunuchs Mehuman, Bizzetha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carcas,

11. to bring Queen Vashti, dressed in her royal crown so that the people could see how beautiful she was.

12. But Queen Vashti refused to parade before the drunken guests; this refusal made the king very angry.

13. The angry king called a meeting of his experts on Persian law, as was customary.

14. The experts were: Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memuchan — seven of the most important princes of Persia and Media.

1:1 Today, the Jews of India are called "B'nai Israel" and those of Ethiopia are called "Falashas."

1:1 Achashverosh is usually identified as Xerxes, or Khshayarsha, the son of Doryavash (486–465 B.C.E.). According to Greek sources, Xerxes — Achashverosh — was a powerful but temperamental ruler, a character that fits the king in the Book of Esther.

א א ויהי בימי אחשורוש הוא אחשורוש המלך מהדו ועד-פוש  
שבע ועשרים ומאה מדינה: ב בימים ההם נשבת א המלך  
אחשורוש על כסא מלכותו אשר בשושן הבירה: ג בשנת שלוש  
למלכו עשה משתה לכל-שריו ועבדיו תיל א פגס ומדי הפרתמים  
ושרי המדינות לפניו: ד בהראתו את-עשר כבוד מלכותו ואת-יקר  
תפארת גדולתו ימים רבים שמונים ומאת יום: ה ובמלואת א  
הימים האלה עשה המלך לכל-העם הנמצאים בשושן הבירה  
למגדול ועד-קטן משתה שבעת ימים בחצר גנת ביתן המלך:  
ו תור א ברפס ותכלת אחוה בחבלי-בוץ וארגמן על-גלילי כסף  
ועמודי שש מטוח א זקב וכסף על רצפת בהט-ושש ודר וסחרת:  
ז והשקות בכלי זקב וכלים מבלים שונים ויין מלכות רב פיך  
המלך: ח והשתיה כדת אין אגס פי-כן א יסד המלך על כל-רב ביתו  
לעשות כרצון איש- ואיש: ט גם ושתי המלכה עשתה משתה  
נשים בית המלכות אשר למלך אחשורוש: י ביום השביעי כטוב  
לב-המלך ביין אמר למהומן בזתא חרבונא בגתא ואבגתא ותר  
וכרפס שבעת הסריסים המשרתים את-פני המלך אחשורוש:  
יא להביא את-נשתי המלכה לפני המלך בכתר מלכות להראות  
העמים והשרים את-יפהי פי-טובת מראה היא: יב ותמאן המלכה  
ושתי לבוא בדבר המלך אשר פיך הסריסים ויקצר המלך מאד  
ונחמתו בערה בו: ס יג ויאמר המלך לחכמים ידעי העתים פי-כן  
דבר המלך לפני כל- ידעי גת ודין: יד ותקרב אליו ברשנא שתר  
אדמתא תרשיש מרס מרסנא ממוכן שבעת שרי א פגס ומדי ראלי

1:2 The Persian king resided in Shushan (Susa) only during the winter. The royal court moved to Persepolis for the summer months, when the heat of Shushan became unbearably hot.

1:6 At Persepolis, archeologists have unearthed the remains of several stone Persian palaces. One of them has an elaborately decorated throne room 200 feet by 200 feet. A huge room of this size can hold thousands of people.

1:8 As a sign of loyalty, numerous toasts were offered to the health and welfare of the king. After three years of rule, the king now felt very secure. Refusal to participate and drink to each toast did not offend him.

15. He asked what he should do to Queen Vashti, who had disobeyed him.

16. Memuchan answered on behalf of the others. "Not only has Queen Vashti disobeyed the king, but she has also offended all the princes and people in everyone of the king's provinces.

17. For the news of her behavior will spread throughout the kingdom, and all the women will join her in disobeying their husbands. They will say, 'The king commanded Queen Vashti to appear before him and she refused to come.'

18. At this moment, the wives of the princes of Persia and Media are answering their husbands the same way Vashti answered you: that kind of attitude will cause family dissension.

19. If the king agrees, let him issue a royal order, a Persian decree that can never be changed. Send Vashti into exile and choose a new queen to replace her.

20. When the king's decision is publicized, wives throughout the kingdom will not rebel against their husbands and will treat them with more respect."

21. The king and his advisors were pleased with the suggestion, so Ah-chash-ver-osh followed Memuchan's advice.

22. The king sent orders to every one of his provinces, each in its language and script, directing that all husbands were to be masters of their homes.

## CHAPTER TWO

1. Sometime later, when King Ah-chash-ver-osh calmed down, he realized how severely Vashti had been punished in relation to what she had done.

2. To quiet him, his advisors suggested, "Let us search for the most beautiful girls in the kingdom;

**1:15** Achashverosh called the legal experts and hoped that they could find a loophole and save his beloved Vashti. They could not restore her to the throne, but they saved her life and exiled her.

**1:19** Every year the eunuchs selected a new batch of beauties for the king's harem.

**1:22** At that time there were several official languages in Persia: Elamite, Babylonian, Aramaic, and, of course, Persian.

Official documents were recorded in Persian and then translated into the language or dialect of the people for whom the communication was intended.

פְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיְשָׁבִים רֵאשֶׁנָּה בַּמְּלָכוֹת: טו כָּדַת מֵה־לַּעֲשׂוֹת בַּמְּלָכָה וְשָׂתִי עַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָשְׂתָה אֶת־מֵאֲמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרוֹשׁ בְּיַד הַסָּרִיסִים: ס טז וַיֹּאמֶר מוֹמְכָן (ממוכן קרי) לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַשָּׂרִים לֹא עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לְבָדוֹ עֲוֹתָהּ וְשָׂתִי הַמְּלָכָה כִּי עַל־כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים וְעַל־כָּל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרוֹשׁ: יז כִּי־יֵצֵא דְבַר־הַמְּלָכָה עַל־כָּל־הַנְּשִׂים לְהַבְּזוֹת בְּעֲלֵיהֶן בְּעִינֵיהֶן בְּאִמְרֵם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרוֹשׁ אָמַר לְהִבְיֵא אֶת־וְשָׂתִי הַמְּלָכָה לְפָנָיו וְלֹא־בָּאָה: יח וְהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה תֵּאֲמַרְנָה א שְׂרוֹת פָּרֶס־וּמְדֵי אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־דְּבַר הַמְּלָכָה לְכָל שְׂרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וּכְדֵי בְּזִיוֹן וְקֶצֶף: יט אִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יֵצֵא דְבַר־מְלָכוֹת מְלִפְנֵיו וַיִּכְתַּב בְּדַתִּי פָּרֶס־וּמְדֵי וְלֹא יַעֲבֹר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תָבוֹא וְשָׂתִי לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרוֹשׁ וּמְלָכוֹתָהּ יִתֵּן הַמֶּלֶךְ לְרַעֲוֹתָהּ הַטּוֹבָה מִמֶּנָּה: כ וְנִשְׁמַע פְּתָגָם הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה בְּכָל־מְלָכוֹתָיו כִּי רַבָּה הִיא וְכָל־הַנְּשִׂים יִתְּנוּ יָקָר לְבַעֲלֵיהֶן לְמַגְדוֹל וְעַד־קָטָן: כא וַיִּיטֹב הַדָּבָר בְּעִינֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַשָּׂרִים וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּדַבְּרֵי מוֹמְכָן: כב וַיִּשְׁלַח סָפְרִים אֶל־כָּל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה בְּכַתְּבָהּ וְאֶל־עַם וְעַם כָּל־שׁוֹנוֹ לְהִיזוֹת כָּל־אִישׁ שֶׁרָר בְּבֵיתוֹ וּמְדַבֵּר בְּלִשׁוֹן עַמּוֹ: ס

## פָּרָק ב'

ב א אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כִּשְׁךָ חֲמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרוֹשׁ זָכַר אֶת־וְשָׂתִי וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר־נִגְזַר עָלֶיהָ: ב וַיֹּאמְרוּ וַעֲרֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׂרָתָיו יִבְקָשׁוּ לְמֶלֶךְ נְעָרוֹת בְּתוּלוֹת טוֹבוֹת מֵרָאֵה:

**2:1** The now sober king was despondent at the loss of his queen, Vashti. The advisors were fearful that the king would accuse them of offering the wrong advice. So they decided to divert the king with a beauty contest to choose a new queen.

3. Let the king send beauty scouts throughout the kingdom who will bring pretty, unmarried girls to the king's harem in Shushan, to Hegai, the harem keeper, who will dress them in royal clothing and beautify them.

4. And the girl whom the king chooses will become queen in place of Vashti." This plan pleased the king and he approved it.

5. There was a Jew in Shushan named Mordechi, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjaminite;

6. Mordechi had been carried into exile from Jerusalem with the captives who were exiled with Jeconiah, the king of Judah, by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon.

7. Mordechi raised Hadassah, whose Hebrew name was Esther, his cousin, for she had no father and mother; Mordechi adopted beautiful Esther as his own daughter.

8. When the king's order was publicized, many beautiful young girls were brought to the king's harem in Shushan and placed in Hegai's care. Esther was taken into the palace, and placed under the care of Hegai, the keeper of the harem.

9. She made an excellent impression upon Hegai; so he rushed her beauty treatment and gave her seven servants and the best apartment in the harem.

10. Esther followed Mordechi's instructions and told no one that she was Jewish.

11. Meantime, Mordechi was worried about Esther. Each day he stationed himself near the harem to find out what was happening to her.

12. Before the girls were paraded before King Achashverosh, they were given a full year of beauty treatments.

13. The girl who came before the king was dressed in special clothing and jewels.

2:5 Our sages say that Kish was the father of King Saul. The generations between Kish and Mordechi are not mentioned. Haman was a descendant of Agag, the Philistine king captured by Saul and killed by Samuel.

2:5 This is the first of the four verses said aloud in the synagogue by the congregation during the reading of the Megillah.

2:6 After months of strenuous fighting, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia captured Jerusalem in 581 B.C.E. King Jeconiah, the royal household, a portion of the upper class, and numerous craftsmen were marched off as captives to Babylonia.

2:7 The Hebrew name Hadassah means "myrtle." Her Babylonian name, Esther, is perhaps derived from the Babylonian goddess "Ishtar."

ג וַיִּפְקֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ פְּקִידִים בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת מְלָכוֹתָו וַיִּקְבְּצוּ אֶת־כָּל־  
נְעָרָה־בְּתוּלָה טוֹבַת מְרָאָה אֶל־שׁוֹשֵׁן הַבְּיָרָה אֶל־בֵּית הַנְּשִׁים אֶל־יָד  
הַגָּא סָרִיס הַמֶּלֶךְ שֶׁמֶר הַנְּשִׁים וְנִתּוֹן תְּמַרְקִיתָן: ד וְהַנְּעָרָה אֲשֶׁר  
תֵּיטֵב בְּעֵינֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּמְלֹךְ תַּחַת וְשִׁתִּי וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ  
וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן: ה אִישׁ יְהוּדִי הָיָה בְּשׁוֹשֵׁן הַבְּיָרָה וּשְׁמוֹ מֹרְדֵכַי בֶּן־יָאִיר  
בֶּן־שִׁמְעִי בֶן־קַיִשׁ אִישׁ יְמִינִי: ו אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִם־הַגְּלָה  
אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָתָה עִם יְכַנְיָה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ  
בָּבֶל: ז וַיְהִי אִמֵּן אֶת־הַדֹּסָה הִיא אֶסְתֵּר בַּת־יָדוּ כִּי אֵין לָהּ אָב וְאָם  
וְהַנְּעָרָה יִפְתָּ־תְּאֹר וְטוֹבַת מְרָאָה וּבָמוֹת אֲבִיהָ וְאִמָּהּ לְקַחְתָּ מֹרְדֵכַי  
לֹ לְבַת: ח וַיְהִי בְּהַשְׁמַע דְּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ וּבְהַקְבִּץ נְעָרוֹת רַבּוֹת  
אֶל־שׁוֹשֵׁן הַבְּיָרָה אֶל־יָד הַגָּי וַתִּלְקַח אֶסְתֵּר אֶל־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־יָד  
הַגָּי שֶׁמֶר הַנְּשִׁים: ט וַתֵּיטֵב הַנְּעָרָה בְּעֵינָיו וַתִּשָּׂא תָסֵד לְפָנָיו וַיְבַהֵל  
אֶת־תְּמַרוּקִיתָהּ וְאֶת־מְנוּחָתָהּ לְתַת לָהּ וְאֵת שִׁבְעַ הַנְּעָרוֹת הַרְּאִיּוֹת  
לְתַת־לָהּ מִבֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁנֶנָּה וְאֶת־נְעָרוֹתֶיהָ לְטוֹב בֵּית הַנְּשִׁים:  
י לֹא־הִגִּידָה אֶסְתֵּר אֶת־עַמָּהּ וְאֶת־מּוֹלַדְתָּהּ כִּי מֹרְדֵכַי צִנְנָה עָלֶיהָ  
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִגִּיד: יא וּבְכָל־יּוֹם וַיּוֹם מֹרְדֵכַי מִתְּהַלֵּךְ לְפָנָי חָצַר בֵּית־  
הַנְּשִׁים לְדַעַת אֶת־שְׁלוֹם אֶסְתֵּר וּמַה־יַּעַשֶׂה בָּהּ: יב וּבְהִגִּיעַ תֵּר  
נְעָרָה וְנְעָרָה לְבוֹא וְאֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶחָשְׁוֶרוֹשׁ מִקֵּץ הַיּוֹת לָהּ כָּבַת  
הַנְּשִׁים שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר חֳדָשׁ כִּי כֵן יִמְלְאוּ יְמֵי מְרוּקִיתָן שִׁשָּׁה חֳדָשִׁים  
בְּשִׁמּוֹן הַמֶּר וְשִׁשָּׁה חֳדָשִׁים בְּבִשְׂמִים וּבְתְּמַרוּקֵי הַנְּשִׁים: יג וּבַיּוֹם

2:8 "Esther was taken," she did not go of her own free will.

2:10 Esther conducted herself with dignity, even in difficult situations, as Mordechi had taught her. Being taken to the palace and being chosen by Achashverosh were the challenges of her life.

2:10 The rabbis suggest that Esther did not reveal her origin so that she could secretly observe the Sabbath and the mitzvot.

2:10 Why did Mordechi advise Esther to hide her Jewishness? Perhaps to deflect from her the hate and distrust which Persians held for foreigners, especially Jews.

2:13 The chosen girl spent the whole night with the king.

14. She was brought to the king in the evening and in the morning was placed in the second harem where the king's wives lived. The second harem was in the charge of Shaashgaz. That girl never saw the king again unless he wished for her and especially called for her by name.

15. When Esther's turn came, she asked for nothing special except what Hegai, the keeper of the harem, had advised. Everyone in the harem was dazzled by Esther.

16. And Esther was brought to king Ah-chash-ver-osh, to his palace, in the tenth month, the month of Tevet, in the seventh year of his reign.

17. The king loved Esther more than anyone and he crowned her queen in place of Vashti.

18. The king made a great big feast for all his princes and advisors in honor of Esther; Ah-chash-ver-osh distributed numerous gifts and cancelled many taxes.

19. When the beautiful girls were assembled for the second time, Mordechi was sitting near the king's gate.

20. She did not tell anyone that she was Jewish. Even though she was a queen, Esther continued to follow Mordechi's instructions.

21. One day, as Mordechi was sitting at the palace gate, two rebellious officers, Bigthan and Theresh, were plotting to kill the king.

22. Mordechi got wind of the plot, told Esther about the plot and Esther immediately told the king in Mordechi's name.

23. The plotters were questioned and they confessed. The plotters were then executed, and the details of this incident were officially recorded in the king's historical records.

### CHAPTER THREE

1. Sometime later, King Ah-chash-ver-osh promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, to prime minister.

2. The king ordered everyone to honor and to bow down to Haman. Everyone bowed down except Mordechi.

3. The king's servants asked Mordechi, "Aren't you afraid to disobey the king's order?"

2:14 The girls who were not chosen by the king remained in the royal harem for the rest of their lives.

2:15 Esther trusted and relied upon the advice of the eunuch Hegai.

2:21 Why would the Persians allow Mordechi to sit in or near the King's Gate? Esther, as a sign of gratitude to Uncle Mordechi, probably arranged to have him appointed to an official position, and thus he was allowed to "sit in the King's Gate."

הַנְּעִרָהּ בָּאָה אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר יִנְתֵּן לָהּ לָבוֹא עִמָּהּ  
מִבֵּית הַנָּשִׁים עַד-בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ: י בְּעֶרְבֹה הִיא בָּאָה וּבְבֹקֶר הִיא שָׁכְחָה  
אֶל-בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים שְׁנֵי אֶל-יָד שֶׁעָשְׂגוּ סָרִיס הַמֶּלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר הַפִּילִגְשִׁים  
לֹא-תָבוֹא עוֹד אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי אִם- חֲפִיץ בָּהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְנִקְרָאָה בְּשֵׁם:  
ט וּבַהֲגִיעַ תֵּר-אֶסְתֵּר בַּת-אֲבִיתָיִל וְיָד מְרֹדֶכִי אֲשֶׁר לָקַח-לּוֹ לְבַת  
לָבוֹא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ לֹא בִקְשָׁה דְבָר כִּי אִם אֶת-אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הַגִּי סָרִיס-  
הַמֶּלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר הַנָּשִׁים וַתְּהִי אֶסְתֵּר נִשְׂאֵת חֵן בְּעֵינָי כָּל-רֵאִיָּה:  
טו וַתִּלְקַח אֶסְתֵּר אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחְשֻׁרוּשׁ אֶל-בֵּית מַלְכוּתוֹ בַּחֹדֶשׁ  
הָעֲשִׂירִי הוּא- חֹדֶשׁ טֵבֵת בְּשַׁנַּת-שֶׁבַע לְמַלְכוּתוֹ: יז וַיֵּאָהֵב הַמֶּלֶךְ  
אֶת-אֶסְתֵּר מִכָּל-הַנָּשִׁים וַתִּשְׂאֵתֵן וַתְּחַסַּד לְפָנָיו מִכָּל-הַבָּתוּלוֹת וַיִּשֶׂם  
כְּתֹר-מַלְכוּת בְּרֵאשִׁיָּה וַיִּמְלִיכָהּ תַּחַת וְשָׂתִי: יח וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁתֵּה  
גָּדוֹל לְכָל- שָׂרָיו וְעַבְדָּיו אֶת מִשְׁתֵּה אֶסְתֵּר וְהַנְּחִיחָה לְמַדְיָנוֹת עֲשֵׂה  
וַיִּתֵּן מִשְׂאֵת כִּי־ הַמֶּלֶךְ: יט וּבַהֲקִבֵץ בַּתוּלוֹת שְׁנֵית וּמְרֹדֶכִי יָשֵׁב  
בְּשַׁעַר- הַמֶּלֶךְ: כ אֵין אֶסְתֵּר מַגִּדַת מוֹלְדָתָהּ וְאֶת-עִמָּהּ כָּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה  
עֲלֶיהָ מְרֹדֶכִי וְאֶת-מֵאֵמַר מְרֹדֶכִי אֶסְתֵּר עֲשֵׂה כָאֲשֶׁר הִיָּתָה בְּאֵמָנָה  
אִתּוֹ: ס כא בְּיָמַימֵי הָהֵם וּמְרֹדֶכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ קִצֵּף בְּגוֹתָן  
וַתִּרְשׁ שְׁנֵי-סָרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמֵרֵי הַסֶּף וַיִּבְקָשׁוּ לְשַׁלַּח יָד בַּמֶּלֶךְ  
אַחְשֻׁרוּשׁ: כב וַיִּנְדַע הַדְּבָר לְמְרֹדֶכִי וַיִּגִּד לְאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וַתֹּאמֶר  
אֶסְתֵּר לְמֶלֶךְ בְּשֵׁם מְרֹדֶכִי: כג וַיִּבְקָשׁ הַדְּבָר וַיִּמְצָא וַיִּתְּלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם  
עַל-עֵץ וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּסֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: ס

### פָּרָק ג'

ג א אַתֵּר ו הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה גִּדְּלִי הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחְשֻׁרוּשׁ אֶת-הַמֶּן בֶּן-  
הַמְּדַתָּא הָאֲגָגִי וַיִּנְשָׂאֵהוּ וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת-כְּסָאוֹ מֵעַל כָּל-הַשָּׂרִים אֲשֶׁר  
אִתּוֹ: ב וְכָל-עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר-בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ כְּרָעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים  
לְהֶמֶן כִּי-כֵן צִוָּה-לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וּמְרֹדֶכִי לֹא יִכְרַע וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה:  
ג וַיֹּאמְרוּ עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר-בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְמְרֹדֶכִי מִדּוּעַ אַתָּה עוֹבֵר  
אֶת מְצֻנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ: ד וַיְהִי בְּאֵמָרָם (כַּאֲמַרם קרי) אֲלֵיו יוֹם נְיוֹם וְלֹא

3:3 The writers of the Megillah describe a confrontation between two old enemies. Saul, the king of the Hebrews, is represented by his descendant, Mordechi. Agag, king of the Amalekites, is represented by his descendant, Haman.

4. Day after day the officials continued to warn him but Mordechi still refused. They agitated Haman about Mordechi to see whether Mordechi the Jew would prevail.

5. Haman was very furious because Mordechi the Jew was the only one who refused to bow down to him.

6. When Haman learned that Mordechi was Jewish, he decided to punish him as well as all the Jews in the kingdom.

7. In the twelfth year of the reign of Ah-chash-ver-osh — in the month of Nissan — lots (*pur*) were cast by Haman, to choose the day and the month for a pogrom; the month of Adar was chosen.

8. Then Haman slyly said to Ah-chash-ver-osh, “There is a group of people scattered throughout your kingdom whose customs are different from everyone else’s and who do not obey the king’s laws. It doesn’t make any sense to tolerate them.

9. I will be able to pay the treasury 10,000 silver talents if you will issue a decree that they be destroyed.”

10. The king agreed and gave his signet ring to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews, with which to seal and sign the order.

11. The king said to Haman, “You can keep the money and still have my permission to do anything you want with them.”

12. In the first month, on the thirteenth day, Haman dictated orders to all governors and princes, to every province

3:4 The king’s servants tried to impress Mordechi with the seriousness of his crime, but Mordechi persists and refuses to bow down.

3:4 The palace gate was a very busy thoroughfare, and Haman apparently did not notice Mordechi. Now the other officials bring Mordechi’s offense to Haman’s attention.

3:7 The Jews adopted the Babylonian names for the months of the year. Even the names “Mordechi” and “Esther” are Babylonian.

3:8 Notice that Haman did not tell the king that his victims were to be the Jews.

3:8 Haman’s accusations were false. Rabbinic law instructs Jews to obey the rules of the host country. “The civil laws of the country in which you live are valid as law.”

3:9 The destruction of the Jews will be an object lesson to the other conquered subjects in the kingdom who dare defy Persian rule.

שָׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּגִּדוּ לְהִמָּן לְרֹאוֹת הַנֶּעֱמָדוֹ דְּבַרְי מְרֻדְכִי כִּי־הִגִּיד  
לָהֶם אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יְהוּדִי: ה וַיֵּרָא הִמָּן כִּי־אֵין מְרֻדְכִי כֹרַע וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה  
לּוֹ וַיִּמְלֵא הִמָּן חֲמָה: ו וַיִּבֹז בְּעֵינָיו לְשַׁלַּח יָד בְּמְרֻדְכִי לְבַדּוֹ כִּי־  
הִגִּידוּ לוֹ אֶת־עַם מְרֻדְכִי וַיִּבְקַשׁ הִמָּן לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶת־כָּל־הַיְהוּדִים  
אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־מְלָכוֹת אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ עִם מְרֻדְכִי: ז בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן הוּא־  
חֹדֶשׁ נִסָּן בְּשָׁנָה שְׁתַּיִם עָשָׂרָה לַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ הַפִּיל פּוֹר הוּא  
הַגּוֹרֵל לִפְנֵי הִמָּן מִיּוֹם י לַיּוֹם וַיִּמְחַדֵּשׁ לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ  
אָדָר: ט ה וַיֹּאמֶר הִמָּן לַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ יֵשְׁנוּ עִם־אֶחָד מִפְּזָר  
וּמִפְּרָד בֵּין הָעַמִּים בְּכָל מְדִינוֹת מְלָכוֹתָ וַדְּתִיֵּהֶם שְׁנוֹת מִכָּל־עַם  
וְאֶת־דְּתֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵינָם עֹשִׂים וְלַמֶּלֶךְ אֵין־שׁוּהָ לְהַנִּיחָם: ט אִם־עַל־  
הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יִכְתֹּב לְאַבְדָּם וְעֲשֶׂרֶת אֲלָפִים כֶּפֶר־כֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁקוּל עַל־יָדִי  
עֲשֵׂי הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהִבְיָא אֶל־גִּנּוּזֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: י וַיִּסֵּר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־טַבַּעְתּוֹ  
מֵעַל יָדוֹ וַיִּתְּנָהּ לְהִמָּן בֶּן־הַמְּדַתָּא הָאֲגָגִי צֶרֶר הַיְהוּדִים: יא וַיֹּאמֶר  
הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהִמָּן הַכֶּסֶף גְּתוּן לָךְ וְהָעַם לַעֲשׂוֹת בּוֹ כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ:  
יב וַיִּקְרְאוּ סִפְרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּשִׁלּוּשָׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם בּוֹ  
וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה הִמָּן אֶל אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשְׁפַּנֵּי־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶל־הַפְּחָחוֹת  
אֲשֶׁר | עַל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וְאֶל־שָׂרֵי עַם וְעַם מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה בְּכַתְּבָהּ  
וְעַם וְעַם כָּל־שׁוֹנֵי בָשָׂם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ נִכְתָּב וְנִחַתָּם בְּטַבַּעַת

3:9 Haman offered 10,000 talents of silver for permission to kill the Jews. In today’s money it would amount to about \$20,000,000, and perhaps much, much more. This enormous sum was a leverage rub-out. The Jews were a well-to-do class of people in the Persian Empire. Their property and wealth would make the pogrom into a very profitable, though bloody, “cash cow.”

How could Haman possibly kill all of them, collect their property, and recoup his \$20,000,000 investment? In all probability, Haman, second to the king, had a group of soldiers under his personal command. The storm troopers would do the killing and then collect the property of the victims for Haman’s personal treasury.

Under the Nazis, wealthy Jewish homes, factories, businesses, and art treasures became the personal property of the ruling Nazi clique. The mob got the leftovers.

3:10 The king had complete trust in Haman’s judgment. He did not inquire as to the identity of his victims.

3:12 Haman was a sadist and wished to prolong the agony of the Jews. So he published his decree eleven months in advance.

in its own script and every people in its own language; the order was written and sealed with the king's own signet ring.

13. Runners carried the decree of extermination to all the provinces in the kingdom. All Jews were included in it; young and old, children and women were to be killed on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of Adar and were to be plundered of all their possessions.

14. This order was to be publicized in all the provinces so that the people would be prepared to carry out the decree at the appointed time.

15. At the king's command, the runners raced away and the extermination order was first posted in Shushan, the capital. Then the king and Haman sat down to drink while the city of Shushan fell into panic and confusion.

## CHAPTER FOUR

1. When Mordechi became aware of all that had taken place, he went into mourning, tore his clothing, put on sackcloth and began to weep and moan.

2. No one in mourning was allowed in the king's palace, so Mordechi stood outside the palace gate.

3. All the Jews throughout the kingdom were in mourning, fasting and weeping, and the Jews wore sackcloth and ashes in public.

4. Esther was very distressed when her maids informed her that Mordechi was in sackcloth and ashes; so she sent new clothing to Mordechi, which he refused.

5. Then Esther sent Hathach, whom the king had appointed to serve her, to find out what the problem was.

6. Hathach found Mordechi outside the palace gates.

7. Mordechi told Hathach about the extermination decree and about the money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasury for the right to destroy the Jews.

8. Mordechi gave Hathach a copy of the decree and asked him to show it to Esther; and to tell her to plead with the king to save her people from extermination.

9. Hathach told Esther what Mordechi had said.

3:13 Official letters, written on papyrus, were tied with a ribbon or a piece of string. Then a lump of wet clay or wax was placed over the knot and sealed and stamped with a signet ring.

הַמֶּלֶךְ: יי וְנִשְׁלַחַת סְפָרִים בְּיַד הַרְצִיִם אֶל-כָּל-מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְג וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת-כָּל-הַיְהוּדִים מִנְעַר וְעַד-נָקָן טָף וְנָשִׁים בָּיּוֹם אֶחָד בְּשָׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם-עָשָׂר הוּא-חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר וְשָׁלְלֵם לְכוּז: יי פְּתֻשְׁגֹן הַכֶּתֵב לְהַנְתֵּן דָּת בְּכָל-מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה גְלוּי לְכָל-הָעַמִּים לְהָיוֹת עֲתֻדִים לְיוֹם הַזֶּה: טו הַרְצִיִם יֵצְאוּ דְחוּפִים בְּדָבָר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָדָת נִתְּנָה בְּשׁוֹשֶׁן הַבִּירָה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּן יֵשְׁבוּ לְשִׁתּוֹת וְהָעִיר שׁוֹשֶׁן גְּבוּכָה: ס

## פֶּרֶק ד'

ד א וּמְרֹדֶכִי יָדַע אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר גַּעֲשָׂה וַיִּקְרַע מְרֹדֶכִי אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וַיִּלְבַּשׁ שָׂק וַיֵּצֵא וַיִּצְעַק וַיִּזְעַק וַיַּעֲקֶה גְדוּלָה וַיִּמְרָה: ב וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד לְפָנָי שַׁעַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי אֵין לְכוּא אֶל-שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלְבוּשׁ שָׂק: ג וּבְכָל-מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה מְקוּם אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ וְנָתַן מִגִּיעַ אֲבָל גְּדוּלָה לַיְהוּדִים וְצוּם וּבְכִי וּמִסְפַּד שָׂק וַיֵּצֵא לְרֵבִים: ד וַתָּבוֹאוּ אֵינָה (וּתְבוּאוּנָה קרי) גַּעֲרוֹת אֲסָתֵר וְסָרִיסָיָה וַיִּגִּידוּ לָהּ וְתַתְּחַלְתַּל הַמֶּלֶכָה מֵאֵד וְתַשְׁלַח בְּגָדִים לְהַלְבִּישׁ אֶת-מְרֹדֶכִי וּלְהַסִּיר שָׂקוֹ מֵעָלָיו וְלֹא קָבַל: ה וְתַקְרָא אֲסָתֵר לְהַתֵּךְ מִסָּרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר הָעַמִּיד לְפָנָיָה וְתַצְוֶהוּ עַל-מְרֹדֶכִי לְרַעַת מֵה-זֶה וְעַל-מֵה-זֶה: ו וַיֵּצֵא הַתֵּךְ אֶל-מְרֹדֶכִי אֶל-רְחוֹב הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר לְפָנָי שַׁעַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ: ז וַיִּגִּד-לוֹ מְרֹדֶכִי אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר קָרָהוּ וְאֵת א פְּרִשְׁת הַכֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁר אָמַר הַמֶּן לְשָׂקוֹל עַל-גִּבּוֹי הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּיְהוּדִים (בַּיהוּדִים קרי) לְאַבְדֵם: ח וְאֶת-פְּתֻשְׁגֹן כְּתָב-הַדָּת אֲשֶׁר-נָתַן בְּשׁוֹשֶׁן לְהַשְׁמִידֵם גִּתָּן לוֹ לְהַרְאוֹת אֶת-אֲסָתֵר וּלְהַגִּיד לָהּ וּלְצַנּוֹת עָלֶיהָ לְכוּא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַתְּחַנֵּן-לוֹ וּלְבַקֵּשׁ מִלְּפָנָיו עַל-עַמָּה: ט וַיָּבֹאוּ הַתֵּךְ וַיִּגֵּד לְאַסָתֵר אֵת דְּבַרֵי מְרֹדֶכִי:

3:15 All the residents of Shushan were in a turmoil. Now, for no reason, Haman and his band of murderers had received permission to kill the Jews. When they finished with the Jews, whom would they attack next?

4:1 Wearing sackcloth and ashes is a traditional rite of expressing grief and mourning.



10. Esther sent Hathach back to Mordechi with the following message,

11. "Everyone knows that anyone who comes into the king's presence without a special invitation is put to death, unless the king holds out his golden scepter; and I have not even seen the king in the last month."

12. Hathach relayed Esther's message to Mordechi.

13. Then Mordechi sent this answer to Esther, "Do you for one second believe that just because you are a queen you will escape the extermination decree?"

14. If you do not intervene, I am positive that help for the Jews will come from somewhere else; but you and all your relatives will perish. I believe that you were specifically brought to this palace just for this emergency."

15. Then Esther sent this message to Mordechi.

16. "Gather together all the Jews in Shushan and fast for me for three days and three nights. I and my servants will also fast. In three days I will visit the king unannounced; and if I die, I die."

17. Mordechi left and did exactly as Esther had told him to do.

## CHAPTER FIVE

1. Three days later, Esther entered the throne room dressed in her royal robes.

2. When the king saw Esther, he held out his golden scepter and signaled her to approach. Esther approached and touched the tip of his scepter.

3. Then the king said to her: "Queen Esther, tell me what is troubling you? Even if you ask for half of my kingdom, it shall be yours."

4. And Esther said, "Your majesty, if the king agrees, let him and Haman come to a banquet which I have prepared."

5. And then the king said to his aides, "Hurry, bring Haman so we can attend Esther's banquet." The king and Haman came to the banquet which Esther prepared.

6. As the king was drinking his wine, he said, "Esther, tell me what is troubling you? Even if you ask for half of my kingdom, it shall be granted."

4:13 Eventually they will find out that you are Jewish and you too will be killed.

4:13 Mordechi firmly believed that Esther was chosen by God and placed in her influential position to save the Jews.

וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר לְהַתְּדָו וּתְצַנְהוּ אֶל־מֶרְדֵּכַי: יֵאָמֵר עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְעַם מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ יִדְעוּ אֲשֶׁר כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר־יָבֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הַחֲצַר הַפְּנִימִית אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְרָא אֹתָהּ דָּתוֹ לְהָמִית לְבָד מֵאֲשֶׁר יוֹשִׁיט־לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־שַׂרְבִיט הַזֶּה וְחָיָה וְנָאֵנִי לֹא נִקְרָאתִי לְבֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ זֶה שְׁלוֹשִׁים יוֹם: יב וַיִּגִּדּוּ לְמֶרְדֵּכַי אֵת דְּבָרֵי אֶסְתֵּר: יג וַיֹּאמֶר מֶרְדֵּכַי לְהָשִׁיב אֶל־אֶסְתֵּר אֶל־תְּדַמִּי בְּנִפְשֶׁךָ לְהַמְלִיט בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִכָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים: יד כִּי אִם־הִתְחַרַּשׁ תַּחֲרִישִׁי בְּעַת הַזֹּאת רַחֵם וְהַצֵּלָה יַעֲמֹד לַיהוּדִים מִמְּקוֹם אַחֵר וְאֵת וּבֵית־אֲבִיךָ תִּאֲבָדוּ וְמִי יוֹדֵעַ אִם־לֵעַת כְּזֹאת הַגְּעָתָ לַמְּלָכוֹת: טו וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר לְהָשִׁיב אֶל־מֶרְדֵּכַי: טז לֵךְ כְּנוֹס אֶת־כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּשׁוֹשַׁן וְצוּמוּ עָלַי וְאֶל־תֵּאֱכְלוּ וְאֶל־תִּשְׁתּוּ שְׁלֹשַׁת יָמִים לַיְלָה וַיּוֹם גַּם־אֲנִי וְנַעֲרָתִי אֲצִיּוֹם כֶּן וּבִכֵּן אָבֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־כָדָת וְכֹאֲשֶׁר אֲבַדְתִּי אֲבַדְתִּי: יז וַיַּעֲבֹר מֶרְדֵּכַי וַיַּעַשׂ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוְּתָהּ עָלָיו אֶסְתֵּר:

## פֶּרֶק ה'

ה א וַיְהִי אִ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַתִּלְבַּשׁ אֶסְתֵּר מְלָכוֹת וַתַּעֲמֹד בַּחֲצַר בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּנִימִית וְנִכַּח בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא מְלָכוֹתוֹ בְּבֵית הַמְּלָכוֹת נִכַּח פֶּתַח הַבַּיִת: ב וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־אֶסְתֵּר הַמְּלָכָה עֹמֶדֶת בַּחֲצַר נִשְׁאַה חֵן בְּעֵינָיו וַיִּוָּשֵׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר אֶת־שַׂרְבִיט הַזֶּה וְהִזְהִיב אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ וַתִּקְרַב אֶסְתֵּר וַתִּגַּע בְּרֹאשׁ הַשַּׂרְבִיט: ג וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־לָּךְ אֶסְתֵּר הַמְּלָכָה וּמַה־בְּקִשְׁתְּךָ עַד־חֲצִי הַמְּלָכוֹת וַיִּגְתֹּן לָּהּ: ד וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר אִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יָבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמֵן הַיּוֹם אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתָּה אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתִי לוֹ: ה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־רוּ אֶת־הָמֵן לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־דְּבַר אֶסְתֵּר וַיָּבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמֵן אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתָּה אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה אֶסְתֵּר: ו וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר בְּמִשְׁתָּה הַיּוֹם מַה־שָּׂאלְתְּךָ וַיִּגְתֵּן לָּהּ וּמַה־בְּקִשְׁתְּךָ עַד־חֲצִי הַמְּלָכוֹת וְחַעֲשׂ: ז וַתַּעַן

4:16 Esther, her servants and the Jews of Persia fast for three days.

Jewish fasts such as Yom Kippur and Tisha B'av etc. are always accompanied by prayers. Although the Megillah contains no mention of God or prayer, the reliance on God is presumed by this act.

5:6 The king understood that Esther had something very specific in mind. So he says, "Now that we're together, tell me what you want, Esther."

7-8. Then Esther answered and said, "If the king is pleased with me and if he wishes to grant my request, then let the King and Haman come to another banquet tomorrow. At this party I will explain my problem."

9. Haman left Esther's banquet a very happy man; but then he saw Mordechi at the king's gate and his joy turned to anger because, as usual, Mordechi did not bow down to him.

10. But Haman kept his composure and went home and sent for his friends and his wife, Zeresh.

11. Haman boasted to them about his riches, his many children and the honors which the king had bestowed upon him, and how he was now second to the king.

12. And Haman boasted: "Queen Esther even invited the king and I to a banquet in her palace. And tomorrow I will attend still another banquet in her palace."

13. But these honors mean nothing to me when I see Mordechi, the Jew, sitting in the gate of the king's palace."

14. Then his wife, Zeresh, and his friends said to him: "Build a gallows seventy feet high and in the morning ask the king to permit you to hang Mordechi from it: and then you will enjoy your banquet with the king and queen." This advice made sense to Haman and he ordered the gallows erected.

## CHAPTER SIX

1. That night the king could not sleep and he decided to read the historical records of his kingdom.

2. He read how Mordechi had discovered the assassination plot of Bigthan and Theresh, and saved the king's life.

3. And the king said, "How have we rewarded Mordechi for saving my life?" And the king's aides replied, "Nothing has been done for him."

4. And the king continued, "Which of my officials are in the palace?" Now Haman had just arrived to ask the king to hang Mordechi on the gallows that he had just had built.

5:7 Esther decides that the time is not ripe to reveal her request. Perhaps she wishes to heighten the suspense.

5:8 "You have continually asked about my race and parentage. At the feast I will reveal my heritage."

6:1 His secretaries were instructed to keep an accurate record of every significant event in the Persian Empire.

אָסֶתֶר וַתֹּאמֶר שְׂאֲלֵתִי וּבִקְשָׁתִי: ה אִם־מְצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב לְתַת אֶת־שְׂאֲלֵתִי וְלַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־בִּקְשָׁתִי יָבוֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמֶן אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה לָהֶם וּמִתֵּר אֶעֱשֶׂה כְּדַבַּר הַמֶּלֶךְ: ט וַיֵּצֵא הָמֶן בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא שְׂמֵחַ וְטוֹב לֵב וְכִרְאוֹת הָמֶן אֶת־מְרֹדֶכִי בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלֹא־קָם וְלֹא־נָע מִמֶּנּוּ וַיִּמְלֵא הָמֶן עַל־מְרֹדֶכִי חֲמָה: י וַיִּתְאַפֵּק הָמֶן וַיָּבוֹא אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וַיִּשְׁלַח וַיִּבְרָא אֶת־אֶהֱבִיּוֹ וְאֶת־זֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ: יא וַיְסַפֵּר לָהֶם הָמֶן אֶת־כְּבוֹד עֲשָׂרוֹ וְרַב בְּנָיו וְאֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר גָּדְלוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר נִשְׂאוֹ עַל־הַשָּׁרִים וְעַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: יב וַיֹּאמֶר הָמֶן אֵף לֹא־הִבִּיאָהּ אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה עִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה כִּי אִם־אוֹתִי וְגַם־לְמִתֵּר אֲנִי קְרוֹא־לָהּ עִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ: יג וְכַל־זֶה אֵינְנוּ שׁוֹה לִי בְּכָל־עֵת אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי רֹאֶה אֶת־מְרֹדֶכִי הַיְהוּדִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ: יד וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ זֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ וְכָל־אֶהֱבִיּוֹ יַעֲשׂוּ־עִץ גְּבוּהַ חֲמֵשִׁים אַמָּה וּבִבְקָר אֶמָּר לְמֶלֶךְ וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת־מְרֹדֶכִי עָלָיו וְכֹא עִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה שְׂמֵחַ וַיִּטֵּב הַדָּבָר לְפָנֵי הָמֶן וַיַּעַשׂ

הַעֵץ: ט

## פֶּרֶק ו'

ו א בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא נִדְּדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר לְהִבִּיא אֶת־סֵפֶר הַזְכֵּרֹנוֹת דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים וַיְהִי וַנִּקְרְאוּ לְפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: ב וַיִּמְצָא כְּתוּב אֲשֶׁר הִגִּיד מְרֹדֶכִי עַל־בְּגַתָּנָא וְחֹרֶשׁ שְׁנֵי סְרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמֵרֵי הַסֵּף אֲשֶׁר בָּקָשׁוּ לְשַׁלַּח לְד בַּמֶּלֶךְ אֶחָשְׁוֶרוּשׁ: ג וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מִה־נַּעֲשֶׂה יָקָר וּגְדוּלָה לְמְרֹדֶכִי עַל־זֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁרָתָיו לֹא־נַעֲשֶׂה עִמּוֹ דָּבָר: ד וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מִי בְּחָצֵר וְהָמֶן בָּא לְחָצֵר בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַתִּיצוֹנָה לֵאמֹר לְמֶלֶךְ לְתַלוֹת אֶת־מְרֹדֶכִי עַל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־הִכִּין לוֹ:

6:1 According to the Talmud, the following thought ran through the mind of Achashverosh: "Why is Esther inviting Haman? Are they conspiring against me to kill me?"

He thought again, "If so, is there no man who is my friend and who would tell me?" Then he thought again, "Perhaps there is some man who has done me a good turn and not been rewarded. That's why people refrain from informing me." Immediately, he commanded his servants to bring the Book of Chronicles.

5. And the king's servants said, "Haman is in the palace." And the king said, "Bring him in immediately."

6. As Haman entered the king said to him, "What shall I do for a man whom I wish to honor?" And Haman thought: "I am the most important person in the kingdom. Of course, the king wants to honor me."

7-8. Haman replied, "For the man whom the king wishes to honor, bring a royal robe which the king has worn and a horse which the king has ridden and place a royal crown on his head."

9. And instruct one of your nobles to enrobe the person whom the king wishes to honor and lead him on your horse through Shushan, proclaiming, 'This is the way the king honors those who serve him well.'

10. Then the king said to Haman: "Hurry, take my royal robes and my horse and do exactly as you have suggested to Mordechi, the Jew who now sits in the palace gate."

11. And Haman robed Mordechi in the king's robes, mounted him on the king's horse and led him through the streets of Shushan shouting, "This is the way the king rewards those he wishes to honor."

12. Then Mordechi returned to his post at the palace gate and Haman sadly and shamefully crept back to his house.

13. When Haman told his wife Zeresh and his friends what had happened, they warned him, "If Mordechi is a Jew, you will never defeat him once he has gotten the upper hand: in the end you yourself will have a great fall."

14. While they were talking, the king's guards arrived to escort him to Esther's banquet.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

1. The king and Haman came to Queen Esther's banquet.

2. Once again, the king asked Esther, "What is your wish, Queen Esther? Even if you ask for one half of my kingdom, it shall be yours."

3. Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in the king's eyes, and if it pleases the king, save my life and the lives of my people."

6:7 Notice that Haman did not mention the king's crown. The crown was a "no-no". Haman was cautious not to reveal his true intentions.

6:10 In the Persian Empire, as in most ancient monarchies, conspiracies and plots against reigning monarchs were frequent. It is not surprising that Persian rulers showered honors upon loyal followers, and especially those who saved their lives.

Xerxes (Achashverosh) was assassinated in his bedroom by one of his aides. Interestingly enough, this conspiracy originated in the harem.

ה וַיֹּאמְרוּ גַּעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלָיו הִנֵּה הֵמָּן עֹמֵד בְּחֹצֵר וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ  
יָבוֹא: ו וַיָּבֹא הֵמָּן וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה-לַּעֲשׂוֹת בְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ  
חָפֵץ בִּיקְרָו וַיֹּאמֶר הֵמָּן בְּלִבּוֹ לֵמִי יִחְפֹּץ הַמֶּלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת יָקָר יוֹתֵר  
מִמּוֹנִי: ז וַיֹּאמֶר הֵמָּן אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרָו:  
ח זָבִיאוּ לְבוֹשׁ מַלְכוּת אֲשֶׁר לְבִשְׁבוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְסוּס אֲשֶׁר רָכַב עָלָיו  
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְנֹאשֶׁר נִתַּן בְּתֵר מַלְכוּת בְּרֵאשׁוֹ: ט וַנִּתֵּן הַלְבוֹשׁ וְהַסּוּס עַל-  
יָד-אִישׁ מִשְׁרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּרָתָמִים וְהַלְבִּשׁוּ אֶת-הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ  
חָפֵץ בִּיקְרָו וְהִרְפִּיבֵהוּ עַל-הַסּוּס בְּרִחוּב הָעִיר וְקָרְאוּ לִפְנֵי בָכָה  
יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרָו: י וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהֵמָּן מֵהֵרָ  
קַח אֶת-הַלְבוֹשׁ וְאֶת-הַסּוּס בְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ וַעֲשֶׂה-כֵן לְמֹרְדֵכִי הַיְהוּדִי  
הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-תִּפְּל דָּבָר מְפַל אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ: יא וַיִּקַּח הֵמָּן  
אֶת-הַלְבוֹשׁ וְאֶת-הַסּוּס וַיִּלְבַּשׁ אֶת- מֹרְדֵכִי וַיַּרְפִּיבֵהוּ בְּרִחוּב הָעִיר  
וַיִּקְרָא לִפְנֵי בָכָה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרָו: יב וַיֵּשֶׁב  
מֹרְדֵכִי אֶל-שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהֵמָּן נִדְתָּף אֶל- בֵּיתוֹ אָבֵל וְחַפּוּי רֹאשׁ:  
יג וַיְסַפֵּר הֵמָּן לְזֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ וּלְכָל-אֶהָבָיו אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר קָרְהוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ  
לוֹ חַכְמָיו וְזֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ אִם מִזְרַע הַיְהוּדִים מֹרְדֵכִי אֲשֶׁר תְּחַלּוֹת  
לְנַפְל לִפְנֵי לֹא-תוּכַל לוֹ כִּי-נִפּוּל תִּפּוּל לִפְנֵיו: יד עוֹדָם מְדַבְּרִים  
עִמּוֹ וְקָרִיטֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הִגִּיעוּ וַיִּבְהִלּוּ לְהִבְיֵא אֶת-הֵמָּן אֶל-הַמְּשֻׁטָה  
אֲשֶׁר-עָשְׂתָה אֶסְתֵּר:

## פֶּרֶק ז'

ז א וַיָּבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהֵמָּן לְשִׁתּוֹת עִם-אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה: ב וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ  
לְאֶסְתֵּר גַּם בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁנִי בְּמִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן מַה-שְּׂאֵלְתְּךָ אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה  
וְהַנָּתַן לְךָ וּמַה-בְּקִשְׁתְּךָ עַד-חֲצֵי הַמַּלְכוּת וְחַעֲשׂ: ג וַתַּעַן אֶסְתֵּר  
הַמַּלְכָּה וַתֹּאמֶר אִם- מְצֵאתִי תָן בְּעֵינֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאִם-עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב

6:13 At first, the friends advised Haman to hang Mordechi. Now they changed their advice and warned him about the danger of pulling out the rug from under the Persian Jews. Obviously, the Persian Jews were no easy pushovers.

4. For I and my people have been sold to those who wish to exterminate us. If we had been sold as slaves, I would have remained silent, but this decree will create many problems for the king."

5. Then King Ah-chash-ver-osh said to Queen Esther: "Who is this evil schemer and where is he?"

6. And Queen Esther said: "There sits our enemy, wicked Haman." Haman trembled in terror before the king and queen.

7. The king arose in anger and went into the garden for some air, while Haman stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life, for he saw that his fate was sealed by the king.

8. When the king returned, he found Haman lying across the foot of Esther's couch where she was reclining. The king roared, "This evil man intends to rape my queen in my own palace right in front of my eyes." As the king spoke, his guards covered Haman's head.

9. Then Harbona, one of the aides, said, "Sire, the gallows which Haman has constructed for Mordechi stands in his courtyard." "Hang Haman on his own gallows," ordered the king.

10. So they hung Haman on the gallows which he had constructed for Mordechi, and the king's anger was cooled.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

1. On that day, King Ah-chash-ver-osh gave the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Esther the Queen. Mordechi was brought before the king, for Esther had told the king what he was to be.

7:4 Until this point Achashverosh was still unaware that Esther was a Jewess. Now he knew that the extermination order could also be applied to his beloved queen, Esther.

7:5 The word וַיֹּאמֶר ("he said") is repeated twice to indicate great respect for King Achashverosh.

7:8 Achashverosh returned to the banquet and found Haman sprawled across Esther's couch begging for his life. The king now turned this scene to his own advantage and yelled, "Do you also want to rape my queen?"

Haman had many followers and they could cause severe political problems for the king. But as a rapist, even on a trumped-up charge, Haman could command no loyalties or followers.

7:8 Achashverosh cleverly sorted out the evidence against Haman and decided that he was a threat to his crown and also to his beloved Esther.

1. Haman had unconsciously revealed his secret ambition to become king of Persia by suggesting that "the man whom the king wishes to honor" wear the king's clothing, and ride the king's horse.

תָּנַחַן לִי נַפְשִׁי בְּשִׂאלֹתַי וְעַמִּי בְּבִקְשָׁתַי: ד כִּי נִמְכַרְנוּ אֲנִי וְעַמִּי  
לְהִשָּׁמֵד לְהִרוּג וּלְאֵבֶד וְאֵלֹו לְעַבְדִּים וְלִשְׁפָחוֹת נִמְכַרְנוּ הַחַרְשָׁתִּי  
כִּי אֵין הַצָּר שְׁנָה בְּנֹזֵק הַמֶּלֶךְ: ט ה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ וַיֹּאמֶר  
לְאַסְתֵּר הַמֶּלֶכָה מִי הוּא זֶה וְאֵי-נֹה הוּא אֲשֶׁר-מְלָאוּ לְבֹו לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן:  
ו וַתֹּאמֶר אֲסֵתֶר אִישׁ צָר וְאוֹיֵב הֵמֶן הִרְעֵה הַיְהוָה וְהֵמֶן נִבְצַעַת מִלִּפְנֵי  
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּלֶכָה: ז וְהַמֶּלֶךְ קָם בַּחֲמָתוֹ מִמִּשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן אֶל-גִּנַּת הַבַּיִת  
וְהֵמֶן עָמַד לְבִקֵּשׁ עַל-נַפְשׁוֹ מֵאַסְתֵּר הַמֶּלֶכָה כִּי רָאָה כִּי-כָלְתָה אֵלָיו  
הִרְעָה מֵאֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ: ח וְהַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁב מִגִּנַּת הַבַּיִת אֶל-בַּיִת מִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן  
וְהֵמֶן נָפַל עַל-הַמִּטָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲסֵתֶר עָלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ הֲגַם לְכַבֹּשׁ  
אֶת-הַמֶּלֶכָה עַמִּי בַּבַּיִת הַדָּבָר יֵצֵא מִפִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ וּפְנֵי הֵמֶן חָפוּ:  
ט וַיֹּאמֶר תְּרַבּוּנָה אֶחָד מִן-הַסְּרִיטִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ גַּם הַגָּה-הָעֵץ  
אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה הֵמֶן לְמַרְדֵּכִי אֲשֶׁר הִבְרִיטוֹב עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ עֹמֵד בַּבַּיִת הֵמֶן  
גְּבֹהַ חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּלְהוּ עָלָיו: י וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת-הֵמֶן  
עַל-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-הִכִּין לְמַרְדֵּכִי וַחֲמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁכְכָה: ט

## פֶּרֶק ח'

ח א ביום ההוא נתן המלך אחשורוש לאסתר המלכה את-בית  
הממן צרר היהודיים (היהודים קרי) ומרדכי בן אפני המלך כִּי-הִגִּידָהּ

2. Haman, second to the king, controlled an organization of strategically positioned storm troopers who were ready to kill the Jews. This army could also be used to overthrow the monarchy.

3. Haman initially did not tell the king that he wanted to kill the Jews of Persia. The Jews were no threat to Achashverosh since they had no political base of their own.

Wasn't it Mordechi the Jew who had saved his life? What other lies had Haman told him?

4. Achashverosh loved Esther. She was a Jewess. Would Haman kill her too?

Achashverosh quickly made his decision. When he went into the garden it was to tell his guards to prepare the death hood for Haman.

7:9 Haman has committed another misdeed against the king. He has constructed a gallows on which to hang Mordechi the Jew, the very same Mordechi who had saved the king's life.

2. The king gave his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordechi; Esther appointed Mordechi supervisor in charge of Haman's estate.

3. Once again Esther came before the king and begged him to stop the extermination plot against the Jews.

4. The king raised his golden scepter, and Esther arose and stood before the king.

5. Esther said, "If it pleases the king, and if you love me, send out a decree reversing Haman's order to exterminate the Jews in all the provinces of the king.

6. How can I look on while my people are being butchered?"

7. Then King Ah-chash-ver-osh said to Queen Esther and Mordechi the Jew, "I have already given Haman's estate to Esther and have hanged him because he tried to destroy your people.

8. Now, I authorize you and Mordechi to issue new orders regarding the Jews and to seal your decree with my signet ring and in my name; for any decree with the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring may not be revoked."

9. Immediately, the king's secretaries were summoned, and on the twenty-third day of the month of Sivan, a decree dictated by Mordechi was sent to the Jews and the governors and princes of the provinces. From India to Ethiopia — one hundred and twenty-seven in all, this decree was written in many languages.

10. Mordechi wrote the order in the name of King Ah-chash-ver-osh and sealed it with the king's signet ring, and the order was carried by speedy riders on horses, camels and mules.

11. The king allowed the Jews to band together, to defend themselves, and to destroy those who would attack and rob them, also their children and their women, and to take their possessions.

8:4 Only special individuals and high officials were privileged to "come before the king."

8:5 The king's decree could not be altered. To alter the king's decree would call his wisdom into question.

8:5 The king's decree could not be revoked, but decrees by other officials could be changed. Esther subtly suggests that the extermination order was decreed by Haman and therefore could be revoked.

אֶסְתֵּר מִה הוּא-לָהּ: ב וַיִּסַּר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-טַבַּעְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱבִיר מִהֶמֶן  
וַיִּתְּנָהּ לְמֶרְדֳּכַי וַתִּשֶׂם אֶסְתֵּר אֶת-מֶרְדֳּכַי עַל-בֵּית הַמֶּן: ג וַתּוֹסֶרֶף  
אֶסְתֵּר וַתְּדַבֵּר לְפָנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתִּפְּל לְפָנָי רַגְלָיו וַתִּבְרַךְ וַתִּתְחַנֵּן-לוֹ  
לְהַעֲבִיר אֶת-רַעַת הַמֶּן הָאֲגָגִי וְאֵת מַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁב עַל-  
הַיְהוּדִים: ד וַיּוֹשֶׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר אֵת שַׂרְבֵּט הַזָּהָב וַתִּקַּם אֶסְתֵּר  
וַתַּעֲמֵד לְפָנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ: ה וַתֹּאמֶר אִם-עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב וְאִם-מִצְּאֵתִי תֵן  
לְפָנָי וְכִשֶׁר הִדְבַּר לְפָנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְטוֹבָה אֲנִי בְעֵינָיו יִכְתֹּב לְהָשִׁיב אֶת-  
הַסְּפָרִים מַחֲשַׁבֶּת הַמֶּן בֶּן-הַמְּדִתָּא הָאֲגָגִי אֲשֶׁר כָּתַב לְאַבְדֹת אֶת-  
הַיְהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל-מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ: ו כִּי אֵיכָכָה אוֹכַל וְרֵאִיתִי בְּרַעַה  
אֲשֶׁר-יִמְצָא אֶת-עַמִּי וְאֵיכָכָה אוֹכַל וְרֵאִיתִי בְּאַבְדֵּן מוֹלְדֹתָי: ס  
ז וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרוּשׁ לְאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וּלְמֶרְדֳּכַי הַיְהוּדִי הַגֵּזֶה  
בֵּית-הַמֶּן נִתְּמִי לְאֶסְתֵּר וְאֵתוֹ תָּלוּ עַל-הָעֵץ עַל אֲשֶׁר-שָׁלַח יָדוֹ  
בְּיְהוּדִים (בִּיהוּדִים קרי): ח וְאַתֶּם כְּתַבּוּ עַל-הַיְהוּדִים כִּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם  
בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ וַחֲתֹמוּ בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי-כָתַב אֲשֶׁר-נִכְתַּב בְּשֵׁם-הַמֶּלֶךְ  
וְנִחְתָּוּם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵין לְהָשִׁיב: ט וַיִּקְרְאוּ סִפְרֵי-הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּעֵת-  
הַהִיא בַּחֲדָשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי הוּא-חֲדָשׁ סִיוֹן בְּשָׁלוֹשָׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים בּוֹ וַיִּכְתַּב  
כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה מֶרְדֳּכַי אֶל-הַיְהוּדִים וְאֵל הָאֲחַשְׁדַּרְפָּנִים וְהַפְּחוֹת  
וְשָׂרֵי הַמְּדִינֹת אֲשֶׁר מִקְּדוּ וְעַד-כּוּשׁ שִׁבְעַת וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה  
מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה כִּכְתָּבָה וְעַם וְעַם כָּל-שָׁנוֹ וְאֵל-הַיְהוּדִים כִּכְתָּבָם  
וּכְלֻשׁוֹנָם: י וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרוּשׁ וַיִּחְתָּם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ  
וַיִּשְׁלַח סִפְרִים בְּיַד הַרְצִים בְּסוּסִים רַכְבֵּי הָרֶכֶשׁ הָאֲחַשְׁתַּרְפָּנִים בְּנֵי  
הַרְמְכִים: יא אֲשֶׁר נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ לַיְהוּדִים | אֲשֶׁר | בְּכָל-עִיר וְעִיר  
לְהַקְהִיל וּלְעַמֵּד עַל-נַפְשָׁם לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְג וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת-כָּל-חַיִּל עַם  
וּמְדִינָה הַצָּרִים אֲתָם טָף וְנָשִׁים וְשָׁלָלָם לְכוּז: יב בַּיּוֹם אֲתָד בְּכָל-

8:10 The efficient control of the far-flung Persian Empire depended upon an effective and efficient communication network. The Persians operated a "pony express" delivery service. The couriers relayed the mail from station to station, where the changeover of animals and riders took place.

8:11 Under Persian law, Achashverosh could not rescind his first extermination decree. So he issued a new decree permitting the Jews to defend themselves against their enemies.

12. Mordechi's decree was to take effect on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar.

13. The order was to be publicized to all the people and enforced in every province, so that the Jews could avenge themselves against their enemies.

14. Messengers rushed out on speedy horses at the king's command and the decree was also published in the capital, Shushan.

15. Mordechi left the king's presence dressed in royal blue and white robes, a golden crown and a cape of purple linen, while the city of Shushan celebrated joyfully.

16. Now there was light and joy, gladness and honor for the Jews of Persia.

17. In every city, as soon as the king's decree arrived, the Jews declared a holiday, filled with joy and gladness: and many of the people converted to Judaism, since they did not want to be harmed.

## CHAPTER NINE

1. And on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month — Adar — the day the enemies of the Jews had chosen for their extermination, the opposite happened, and now the Jews were victorious.

2. The Jews in all the provinces of King Ah-chash-ver-osh gathered together to avenge themselves against their enemies and no one opposed them because they were afraid.

3. And all the government officials elevated the Jews to high office because they feared Mordechi.

4. Mordechi had much influence and power in the palace and his fame was growing.

5. And the Jews defeated all their foes by the sword, destroying their enemies.

6. The Jews defeated their enemies and killed 500 enemies in Shushan.

7. and Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha,

8. and Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha,

9. and Parmashta and Arissai, and Aridai, and Vaizatha.

10. They killed the ten sons of Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, but they did not steal any of their property.

8:15–16 These are the second and third verses said aloud in the synagogue by the congregation during the reading of the Megillah.

מדינות המלך אחשוורוש בשלושה עשר לחודש שנים-עשר הוא-  
חדש אדר: י פתשגן הכתב להגותן דת בכל-מדינה ומדינה גלוי  
לכל-העמים ולהיות היהודיים עתודים (היהודים עתידים קרי) ליום הנה  
להנקם מאיביהם: יי הרצים וכבי הרקש האחשתרנים יצאו  
מבגלים ודחופים בדבר המלך והדת נתנה בשושן הבירה: ס  
טו ומרדכי יצא | מלפני המלך בלבוש מלכות תכלת וחור ועטרת  
זהב גדולה ותכריז בויז וארגמן והעיר שושן צהלה ושמחה:  
טז ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששן וקור: יז ובכל-מדינה  
ומדינה ובכל-עיר ועיר מקום אשר דבר-המלך ודתו מגיע שמחה  
וששון ליהודים משתה ויום טוב ורבים מעמי הארץ מתנהלים כי-  
נפל פחד-היהודים עליהם:

## פֶּרֶק ט'

ט א ובשנים עשר חודש הוא-חדש אדר בשלושה עשר יום בו  
אשר הגיע דבר-המלך ודתו להעשות ביום אשר שברו איבי  
היהודים לשלוט בהם ונהפוך הוא אשר ישלטו היהודים הפה  
בשנאייהם: ב נקהלו היהודים בעריהם בכל-מדינות המלך  
אחשוורוש לשלח יד במבקשי רעתם ואיש לא-עמד בפניהם כי-  
נפל פחדם על-כל-העמים: ג וכל-שרי המדינות והאחשתרפנים  
והפחות ועשי המלאכה אשר למלך מנשאים את-היהודים כי-נפל  
פחד-מרדכי עליהם: ד כי-גדול מרדכי בגינת המלך ושמו הולך  
בכל-המדינות כי-האיש מרדכי הולך וגדול: ה ויפו היהודים בכל-  
איביהם מפת-תרב והרג ואבדן ויעשו בשנאייהם כרצונם:  
ו ובשושן הבירה הרגו היהודים ואבד חמש מאות איש: ז ואת |  
פרשגתא ואת | דלפון ואת | אספתא: ח ואת | פורתא ואת | אדלגא  
ואת | ארידתא: ט ואת | פרמשתא ואת | אריסי ואת | ארידי ואת |  
נתתא: י עשרת בני המן בן-המנתא צרר היהודים הרגו ובבזה לא

Rabbi Johanan said, "The vav of Vaizatha must be lengthened like a boat-pole, since they were all hanged together on one long pole."

9:10 Rabbi Adda of Joppa said, "The ten sons of Haman and the word 'ten' should be said in one breath." What is the reason? Because all their souls departed together.

11. That day, the king learned how many people were killed in the capital of Shushan.

12. Then the king said to Queen Esther: "The Jews have killed 500 enemies and the ten sons of Haman in the capital of Shushan alone; just imagine what they have done in my other provinces! Now, what else do you want? Tell me and I will do it!"

13. Then Esther said, "If it pleases your majesty, allow the Jews in Shushan to do tomorrow what they did today, and let Haman's sons be hanged on the gallows as an object lesson for all to see."

14. And the king commanded that it should be done; and the decree was issued in Shushan, and the ten sons of Haman were hanged.

15. And on the fourteenth day of Adar the Jews in Shushan killed 300 more of their enemies, but they did not steal any of their property.

16. Meanwhile, the Jews in the other provinces gathered together to defend themselves against their enemies; they killed 75,000 of those who hated them, but they did not steal any of their property.

17. On the thirteenth day of the month of Adar they rested, and on the fourteenth day they celebrated their victory with feasting and with joy.

18. The Jews in Shushan assembled on the thirteenth and fourteenth days of the month, and on the fifteenth day they celebrated their victory with feasting and joy.

19. Therefore the Jews who live in the villages celebrate the fourteenth day of Adar with joyous feasting and by exchanging gifts (*shalach manot*).

20. Mordechi recorded these events; he sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, to all the provinces of the king,

21. urging them to celebrate the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar every year as a holiday.

22. It was on those historic days that the Jews were saved from their enemies, and it was the month when their sorrow was changed to joy, and their mourning to happiness, making them into days of feasting and joy, and of exchanging gifts (*shalach manot*), and giving *tzedakah* to the poor.

9:13 Pockets of Haman's army of anti-Semites still existed. So Esther asked for another day in which to annihilate the killers.

שָׁלְחוּ אֶת־יָדָם: יא בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא בָּא מִסְפֵּר הַהַרְוִיגִים בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה לְפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: יב וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה הַרְגוּ הַיְהוּדִים וְאַפְדֹ חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת אִישׁ וְאֵת עֶשְׂרֵת בְּנֵי־הַמֶּן בְּשָׂאֵר מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ מִה עָשׂוּ וּמִה־שָׂאֲלַתְךָ וַיַּגִּדְתָּ לָךְ וּמִה־בִּקְשָׁתְךָ עוֹד וַחֲעָשׂ: יג וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר אִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יִגְדַּלְתָּ גַם־מִחַר לַיהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּשׁוֹשַׁן לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּדַת הַיּוֹם וְאֵת עֶשְׂרֵת בְּנֵי־הַמֶּן יַחֲלוּ עַל־הָעֵץ: יד וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן וַתִּגְדַּלְתָּ דַת בְּשׁוֹשַׁן וְאֵת עֶשְׂרֵת בְּנֵי־הַמֶּן תָּלוּ: טו וַיִּקְהָלוּ הַיְהוּדָיִים (וַהֲיְהוּדִים קרי) אֲשֶׁר־בְּשׁוֹשַׁן גַּם בַּיּוֹם אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ אֲדָר וַיַּהַרְגוּ בְּשׁוֹשַׁן שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אִישׁ וּבְבִגְדָה לֹא שָׁלְחוּ אֶת־יָדָם: טז וּשְׂאֵר הַיְהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּמְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ נִקְהָלוּ | וַעֲמַד עַל־נַפְשָׁם וְנֹחַ מֵאִיבֵיהֶם וְהַרוּג בְּשִׁנְאֵיהֶם חֲמִשָּׁה וּשְׁבַעִים אָלֶף וּבְבִגְדָה לֹא שָׁלְחוּ אֶת־יָדָם: יז בַּיּוֹם־שְׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ אֲדָר וְנֹחַ בְּאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וַעֲשָׂה אֹתוֹ יוֹם מְשֻׁתָּה וְשִׁמְחָה: יח וַהֲיְהוּדָיִים (וַהֲיְהוּדִים קרי) אֲשֶׁר־בְּשׁוֹשַׁן נִקְהָלוּ בְּשְׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וּבְאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וְנֹחַ בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וַעֲשָׂה אֹתוֹ יוֹם מְשֻׁתָּה וְשִׁמְחָה: יט עַל־כֵּן הַיְהוּדִים הַפְּרוּזִים (הַפְּרוּזִים קרי) הִישָׁבִימ׃ בְּעָרֵי הַפְּרוּזוֹת עֹשִׂים אֵת יוֹם אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ אֲדָר שִׁמְחָה וּמְשֻׁתָּה וַיּוֹם טוֹב וּמְשַׁלַּח מְנוּחַ אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ: כ וַיִּכְתֹּב מְרַדְכֵי אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּשְׁלַח סְפָרִים אֶל־כָּל־הַיְהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרוּשׁ הַקְּרוּבִים וְהַקְּרוּקִים: כא לְקַיֵּם עֲלֵיהֶם לְהַיּוֹת עֹשִׂים אֵת יוֹם אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ אֲדָר וְאֵת יוֹם־חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ בְּכָל־שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה: כב בְּיָמֵים אֲשֶׁר־נָחֲוּ בָהֶם הַיְהוּדִים מֵאִיבֵיהֶם וַחֲחֹדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר נִהְפָּךְ לָהֶם מִיָּגוֹן

9:15 The Jews did not steal any of the property from their enemies. The money and property went into the king's treasury.

Contrast this with the Hamanites, who wanted to steal Jewish property for themselves.

9:19 The law of "Shusan Purim," celebrating Purim on the fifteenth day of Adar, is not specifically mentioned in the Megillah. The rabbis derived the law of "Shusan Purim" from verses 19 and 21.

23. And they adopted Mordechi's suggestion and made it a yearly custom.

24. Because Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, plotted to exterminate the Jews just by a throw of the dice (pur).

25. But when Queen Esther brought it to the king's attention, he issued an official decree that Haman's evil extermination plan should be on his own head and that he and his ten sons should be hung.

26. So today, we call this holiday Purim, because of the word pur, which means "throwing the dice," because of the contents of the letter, and because of what had happened to them.

27. The Jews agreed to celebrate the holiday of Purim and pass it on to their children; they also decided to observe these two days every year.

28. And the days should be remembered and observed by each family in every generation, in every city and province, so that the memory of the days of Purim never cease among their descendants.

29. Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abichail and Mordechi the Jew, wrote a second letter confirming the establishment of the holiday of Purim.

30. And he sent letters to all the Jews in the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, with messages of goodwill and peace.

31. to confirm that they observe the days of Purim, on the correct date, as Mordechi and Esther had decreed and as they had set for themselves and for their descendants, including the rules for the fast and the Purim prayers.

32. And Esther's decree officially confirmed the holiday of Purim in writing —

9:27 Those who became Jews and those who, in the future, would become Jews.

9:28 The word "memory" refers to the reading of the Megillah.

לְשִׁמְחָהּ וּמֵאֲבָל לַיּוֹם טוֹב לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם יָמֵי מְשִׁחָהּ וְשִׁמְחָהּ  
וּמְשַׁלַּח מְנוּחַ אִישׁ לְרַעְיוֹהוּ וּמִתְנַנּוֹת לְאַבְיָנוּם: כג וְקִבֵּל הַיְהוּדִים אֶת  
אֲשֶׁר-הִחֲלוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר-כָּתַב מְרֹדֶכֶי אֲלֵיהֶם: כד כִּי הָמֵן בְּן-  
הַמֶּדְתָּא הָאֲגָגִי צִירָר כָּל-הַיְהוּדִים חָשַׁב עַל-הַיְהוּדִים לְאַבְדָּם וְהִפֵּל  
פּוּר הוּא הַגּוּרָל לְהִטָּם וּלְאַבְדָּם: כה וּבְבֹאֶה לְפָנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ אָמַר עִם-  
הַסֵּפֶר יָשׁוּב מִחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ הִרְעָה אֲשֶׁר-חָשַׁב עַל-הַיְהוּדִים עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ  
וְתָלוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת-בָּנָיו עַל-הַעֵץ: כו עַל-כֵּן קָרְאוּ לַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה פּוּרִים  
עַל-שֵׁם הַפּוּר עַל-כֵּן עַל-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הָאֲגָרָת הַזֹּאת וּמָה-רָאוּ עַל-כִּכָּה  
וּמָה הִגִּיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם: כז קִיְמוּ וְקִבְּלוּ (וּקְבִלוּ קרי) הַיְהוּדִים | עֲלֵיהֶם | וְעַל-  
זְרָעָם וְעַל כָּל-הַנּוֹלָדִים עֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יַעֲבֹר לְהִזְיוֹת עֲשִׂים אֶת-שְׁנֵי  
הַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּכַתְּבָם וּכְזִמְנָם בְּכָל-שָׁנָה וּשְׁנָה: כח וְהַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה  
נִזְכָּרִים וְנַעֲשִׂים בְּכָל-דּוֹר וְדוֹר מִשְׁפָּחָהּ וּמִשְׁפָּחָהּ מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה  
וְעִיר וְעִיר וַיָּמֵי הַפּוּרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֹא יַעֲבְרוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַיְהוּדִים וְזָכְרָם  
לֹא-יִסּוּף מִזְרָעָם: ס וְתִכְתֹּב אֶסְתֵּר הַמֶּלְכָּה בַת-אַבְיָתָיִל וּמְרֹדֶכֶי  
הַיְהוּדִי אֶת- כָּל-תְּהִלָּתָהּ לְקִיָּם אֶת-אֲגָרָת הַפָּרִים הַזֹּאת הַשְּׁנִית:  
ז וַיִּשְׁלַח סְפָרִים אֶל-כָּל-הַיְהוּדִים אֶל-שְׁבַע וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה  
מִלְּכוּת אַחַשְׁוֵרֹשׁ דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹם וְאַמֶּת: לא לְקִיָּם אֶת-יָמֵי הַפָּרִים  
הָאֵלֶּה בְּזִמְנֵיהֶם כְּאֲשֶׁר קִיָּם עֲלֵיהֶם מְרֹדֶכֶי הַיְהוּדִי וְאַסְתֵּר הַמֶּלְכָּה  
וּכְאֲשֶׁר קִיְמוּ עַל-נַפְשָׁם וְעַל-זְרָעָם דְּבָרֵי הַצּוּמֹת וְזַעֲקָתָם:  
לב וּמֵאֲמַר אֶסְתֵּר קִיָּם דְּבָרֵי הַפָּרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְנִכְתַּב בְּסֵפֶר: ס

9:29 At first, only Mordechi promoted the festival of Purim and the religious obligations to observe it. But since that did not persuade all the Jews in the Persian Empire, both Esther and Mordechi wrote the second letter about the religious obligation to observe the new holiday of Purim.

9:31 The Nazis forbid the reading of the Megillah for fear that it might spark hope and resistance. However, the Jews in the extermination camps wrote and read the Megillah from memory despite the threat of instant executions.

9:32 Esther requested the wise men of her generation to record the events of the period. This record is the Megillah.



## CHAPTER TEN

1. And the king set a tax on his kingdom and the islands which belonged to him.

2. His mighty deeds, on account of the greatness of Mordechi, and the honor bestowed upon him by the king are all recorded in the history of the kings of Media and Persia.

3. For Mordechi the Jew was second in power to King Ah-chash-ver-osh. He was respected by the Jews, and revered by great numbers of his countrymen; he constantly worked for the welfare of his people and for the goodwill of all their descendants.

THE END

**10:3** Mordechi, the new grand vizier, projected Persian power beyond its traditional and historical boundaries.

Even countries not included in the Persian Empire paid taxes to King Achashverosh.

**10:3** This is the last verse among the four verses read aloud by the congregation during the reading of the Megillah.

The Megillah reader then repeats the verses.

*After the reading of the Megillah, the following blessing is recited:*

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who heard our plea and passed judgment on our behalf, avenging us by punishing our mortal foes and bringing punishment upon our bitter enemies. Blessed are You, Lord, who delivers the people of Israel from all their enemies, for you are God who saves.

## פָּרָק י'

א וַיִּשֶׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ (אחשורש קרי) א מִסְּעַל הָאָרֶץ וְאֵי הַיָּם:  
ב וְכָל-מַעֲשֵׂה תְקוּפֹת וּגְבוּרָתוֹ וּפְרָשֵׁת גְּדֻלַּת מְרֻדְכָי אֲשֶׁר גִּדְּלוֹ  
הַמֶּלֶךְ הַלְוֵא-הֵם כְּתוּבִים עַל-סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי מְדֵי וּפְרָס:  
ג כִּי א מְרֻדְכָי הִיְהוּדִי מִשְׁנֵה לַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ וְגָדוֹל לַיְהוּדִים וְרָצוּי  
לְרֹב אֲחֵיו דְּרֵשׁ טוֹב לְעַמּוֹ וְדָבַר שְׁלוֹם לְכָל-יִרְעָיו:

חזק

**10:3** Not only did Mordechi help people who came to him with requests but he searched for ways to ease the life of his fellow Jews.

*After the reading of the Megillah, the following blessing is recited:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. הָרַב אֶת-רִיבֵנוּ. וְהִדֵּן אֶת-  
דִּינֵנוּ. וְהַנּוֹקֵם אֶת-נַקְמָתֵנוּ. וְהַנִּפְרָע לָנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ. וְהַמְשַׁלֵּם גְּמוּלָה  
לְכָל-אוֹיְבֵי נַפְשֵׁנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי הַנִּפְרָע לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְכָל-  
צָרֵיהֶם. הָאֵל הַמּוֹשִׁיעַ: