

Megillat Esther

with a new annotated translation

by Neima Novetsky

<https://mg.alhatorah.org/Tanakh/Esther/1.1#m7e1nf>



Dura Europos Synagogue Esther Panel

This annotated translation is dedicated in honor of

Mrs. Julia Koschitzky

in gratitude for and admiration of all of her manifold contributions toward spreading Torah and Mitzvot in so many different ways throughout the world.

May הקב"ה bless her and her family and all of their endeavors on behalf of Am Yisrael.

נוסח המקרא במהדורה זו מבוסס על מהדורת [מקרא על פי המסורה](#) (CC BY-SA 3.0)

פרק א – Chapter 1

(1) In the days of Achashverosh, this is Achashverosh¹ who reigned from India to Ethiopia,² over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces,

(א) וַיְהִי בַיָּמֵי אַחַשְׁוֶרוֹשׁ הוּא אַחַשְׁוֶרוֹשׁ
הַמֶּלֶךְ מֵהִדּוּ וְעַד־כּוּשׁ שֶׁבַע וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה
מְדִינָה:

(2) in those days, when King Achashverosh sat on his royal throne³ which was in Shushan the castle,⁴

(ב) בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם כָּשָׁבַתָּהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֶרוֹשׁ עַל
כִּסֵּא מַלְכוּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה:

(3) in the third year of his reign, he made a feast for all his officers and servants, the army of Persia and Media, the nobles⁵ and officers of the

(ג) בְּשָׁנָה שְׁלוֹשׁ לְמַלְכוּתוֹ עָשָׂה מִשְׁתֵּה לְכָל
שָׂרָיו וְעַבְדָּיו חֵילוֹ פָּרְס וּמְדֵי הַפָּרְתָּמִים וְשָׂרֵי

¹ **this is Achashverosh** | הוּא אַחַשְׁוֶרוֹשׁ – See Lekach Tov and Ibn Ezra (2nd commentary) that the elaboration comes to distinguish this Achashverosh from a different person with the same name, the Achashverosh mentioned in Daniel 9:1 who was the father of Darius the Mede. According to them, this Darius ruled before or simultaneously with Cyrus, when Babylonia was first conquered by Persia-Media, while the Achashverosh of the Megillah, in contrast, reigned after Cyrus and before Darius the Persian (See Bavli Megillah 11b). As such, the story takes place after the nation was permitted to return to Israel, but before the Temple was rebuilt in the sixth year of Darius the Persian (Ezra 6:1-14). Modern scholars, in contrast, date the story later, identifying Achashverosh with Xerxes I who reigned in 486 BCE, about thirty years after the rebuilding of the Temple. They point to the similar sounding names (especially the spelling אחשרש in 10:1) and note that during Xerxes' reign there was a royal official named Marduk. In addition, the depiction of Xerxes by the Greek historian Herodotus matches the Megillah's depiction of Achashverosh. Both were lustful kings who reigned in Shushan over an empire from India to Ethiopia. [Others identify Achashverosh with Artaxerxes II who reigned in 404 BCE. See the Septuagint and Josephus, Antiquities 11:6:1, who both refer to Achashverosh as Artaxerxes.]

² **from India to Ethiopia** | מֵהִדּוּ וְעַד כּוּשׁ – These represent the two ends of the Persian empire, India on the east and Ethiopia on the west.

³ **sat on his royal throne** | עַל כִּסֵּא מַלְכוּתוֹ – See Rashi and R. Yosef Kara that the phrase indicates that the story opens after Achashverosh's kingdom had been stabilized. As such, it was only in the third year of his reign that "he sat on his throne". [Cf. the Targumim to Esther and Esther Rabbah who understand the phrase literally, suggesting that initially Achashverosh wanted to use Shelomo's throne but was supernaturally prevented from doing so, leading him to make an imitation throne. This, though, took three years, and so it was only then that "he sat on his throne".]

⁴ **castle** | בִּירָה – See Ibn Ezra who distinguishes between "שׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה" (Shushan the castle) and "הָעִיר שׁוּשַׁן" (the city Shushan), noting that elsewhere in Tanakh "בִּירָה" refers to a fortified palace complex (see Nechemyah 2:8 and Divrei HaYamim I 29:1,19). It might be a loanword from either Akkadian where "birtu" means "castle" or "fort" (CAD, "birtu") or from Persian, where "bâru" means "rampart" or "bulwark" (BDB, "בִּירָה"). Alternatively: "the capital city" (Rashbam), but this might be a more modern understanding of the word.

⁵ **nobles** | הַפָּרְתָּמִים – This word appears only in the books of Esther and Daniel and commentators debate whether it is a loan word from Persian (Rashi, Ibn Ezra) or a Hebrew word (Hoil Moshe). Modern scholars assume the former, connecting it to the Old Persian "fratama", meaning "first" (BDB, "פָּרְתָּמִים"). As such, the word might be equivalent in

provinces being before him,

הַמְּדִינֹת לִפְנֵיו:

(4) when he displayed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honor⁶ of his splendid majesty, for many days, one hundred and eighty days.

(ד) בְּהִרְאֹתוֹ אֶת־עֹשֶׁר כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ וְאֶת־יָקָר תַּפְאֶרֶת גְּדוּלָּתוֹ יָמִים רַבִּים שְׁמוֹנִים וּמֵאָת יוֹם:

(5) And when these days were complete, the king made a feast for all the people who were present in Shushan the castle, from great to small,⁷ seven days, in the courtyard of the garden of the king's house.⁸

(ה) וּבְמָלוּאתָ הַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ לְכָל הָעָם הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּשׁוּשָׁן הַבִּירָה לְמַגְדוֹל וְעַד קָטָן מִשְׁתֶּה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בְּחֶצֶר גֶּנֶת בֵּיתֵן הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(6) White,⁹ fine cotton,¹⁰ and blue, fastened¹¹

(ו) תּוֹרוֹ כָּרֶפֶס וּתְלַלָּת אָחוּז בְּחַבְלֵי־בֹוץ

meaning to the term "הַיֹּשְׁבִים רֹאשָׁנָה בְּמַלְכוּת" (v.14), referring to important governors (see Rashi). Alternatively: "those of royal descent" (Ibn Ezra, based on the word's usage in Daniel 1:3), or perhaps: "chariot officers" (Hoil Moshe, connecting the word to the Hebrew root "רתם", to bind, which is used in the context of tying horses to chariots in Mikhah 1:13).

⁶ **honor** | יָקָר – The word "יָקָר" can sustain both the meaning of "honor" and that of "precious objects", as the parallel to "עֹשֶׁר", riches, indicates. Similarly, in the earlier clause, the word "כְּבוֹד" can mean both "wealth" and "glory" (see its usage in Bereshit 31:1). In both cases, it is likely that the choice is intentional, as both meanings are implied and meant to be understood by the reader.

⁷ **from great to small** | לְמַגְדוֹל וְעַד קָטָן – This is a merism (where two words representing extremes are meant to convey the totality of all that is between them), meant to highlight how all were invited to the feast, noble and commoner alike, and everyone in between.

⁸ **house** | בֵּיתֵן – This word appears only in Esther, always in the context of the garden. It appears to relate to the word "בית", house, and might come to highlight that the garden spoken of was close to the palace (R. Yosef Kara). Alternatively: "inside", as in the phrase "מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ" (Rashbam, Ibn Ezra), perhaps suggesting that this was an inner garden. The word might be related to the Akkadian "bitanu", which can mean "interior" or "inner quarter of a house or temple" or might refer to a specific building in a palace complex (See CAD, "bitanu"). Cf. Rashi who translates: "orchard" and the GR"A who suggests: "garden pavilion".

⁹ **white** | חוּר – The word appears only here and in Esther 8:15 and from context appears to refer to a color or a colored cloth, likely white. (See Ibn Ezra who points to the similar Aramaic and to the verb "תָּוַר" (Yeshayahu 29:22) which means to grow pale.) The verse opens without a verb and appears to be a continuation of verse 4, comprising a list of some of the glories of Achashverosh's kingdom mentioned there (Ibn Ezra).

¹⁰ **fine cotton curtains** | כָּרֶפֶס – This word is a hapax legomenon, appearing only in our verse. It might be a loan word from Persian, originally from Sanskrit, where "karpāsa" refers to cotton or fine linen (BDB, "כרפס"). See Rashbam that the verse likely refers to some type of curtain that was spread around the courtyard. Alternatively, the word refers to a color, perhaps green (Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, relating it to the green vegetable named "כָּרֶפֶס" (celery or parsley). Cf. Bavli Megillah 12a and R. Yosef Kara that "כָּרֶפֶס" might be composed of two words, "כרים של פסים", striped pillows.

¹¹ **fastened** | אָחוּז – Alternatively: "embroidered" (Rashi, R. Yosef Kara, and Rashbam).

with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rods and marble¹² pillars; couches of gold and silver upon a floor of alabaster, marble, pearl¹³, and black onyx.¹⁴

וְאֶרְגָּמָן עַל-גִּלְגִּילִי כֶסֶף וְעִמּוּדֵי שֵׁשׁ מִטּוֹת | זָהָב
וְכֶסֶף עַל רִצְפַּת בַּהֲטָוֶשֶׁשׁ וְדָר וְסַחֲרֹת:

(7) And he gave them to drink in golden vessels, vessels of all different types,¹⁵ and the royal wine was in abundance, in accord with the king's power.¹⁶

(ז) וְהַשְׁקוֹת בְּכֵלֵי זָהָב וּכְלִים מְכֻלִּים שׁוּנִים
וַיִּין מַלְכוּת רַב כְּיַד הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(8) And the drinking was according to the law;¹⁷ there was no coercion, for so the king had instituted, that all the officers of his house¹⁸ should do according to every man's desire.

(ח) וְהַשְׁתִּיָּה כְדֶת אֵין אֲנִס כִּי־כֹן | יִסַּד הַמֶּלֶךְ
עַל כָּל־רַב בֵּיתוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּרָצוֹן אִישׁ־אִישׁ:

(9) Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house of King Achashverosh.

(ט) גַּם וַשְׁתִּי הַמַּלְכָּה עָשְׂתָה מִשְׁתֵּה נָשִׁים
בֵּית הַמַּלְכוּת אֲשֶׁר לַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֶרוֹשׁ:

¹² **marble** | שֵׁשׁ – See Rashbam and Ibn Ezra that this might be a variant of the word "שֵׁשׁ", marble or alabaster (Divrei HaYamim I 29:2).

¹³ **pearl** | דָּר – The word "דור" in Arabic refers to a pearl, leading some to identify "דָּר" as such (see the Septuagint).

¹⁴ **alabaster, marble, pearl, and black onyx** | בַּהֲטָוֶשֶׁשׁ וְדָר וְסַחֲרֹת – All these terms, besides "שֵׁשׁ", do not appear elsewhere in Tanakh, making them difficult to define. Many commentators suggest that they refer to types of precious stones, but their exact identities are debated and the translation given here is not definitive. Other possibilities include porphyry for "בַּהֲטָוֶשֶׁשׁ", mother of pearl for "דָּר", or that each word refers to a marble of a different color. Cf. Rav in Bavli Megillah 12b who suggests that "דָּר" and "סַחֲרֹת" are not names of stones but rather refer to the pattern in which they were set on the floor.

¹⁵ **vessels of different types** | וּכְלִים מְכֻלִּים שׁוּנִים – Literally: "and vessels of different vessels". See Rashi that there was an assortment of vessels, each different from the other. Alternatively: "changing vessels", with the verse highlighting how at each stage of the meal, new, fancier utensils were brought, with none needing to be reused (R. Yosef Kara, Rashbam). Alternatively, the word "שׁוּנִים" here means "unique"; see Bavli Megillah 11b-12a, that Achashverosh had used the vessels taken from the Beit HaMikdash.

¹⁶ **in accord with the king's power** | כְּיַד הַמֶּלֶךְ – See Ibn Ezra and R. Yosef Nachmias. Literally: "by the king's hand" but "hand" is often used metaphorically to connote strength. Alternatively: "in accord with the king's generosity" (see Metzudat David on Melakhim I 10:13 where the same phrase appears), or: "by the king's directive" (Rashbam, pointing to Shemuel II 14:19).

¹⁷ **according to the law** | כְּדֶת – This word appears only in the later books of Tanakh and is likely a loan word from Persian where "dâta" means law or decree (See Shadal on Devarim 33:2 regarding the word "אֶשׁ דֶּת" and BDB, "דת").

¹⁸ **all the officers of his house** | כָּל רַב בֵּיתוֹ – See Yirmeyahu 39:9, 41:1 and Daniel 1:3 where the word "רב" refers to a chief officer or captain. In Akkadian the similar term "rab biti" refers to administrators in charge of households (CAD, "rab-bitutu").

(10) On the seventh day, when the king's heart was merry with wine, he said to Mehuman, Bizzeta, Charvona, Bigta, Avagta, Zetar, and Carcas, the seven eunuchs¹⁹ who served King Achashverosh,

(11) to bring Vashti the queen before the king in the royal crown, to show the people and the officers her beauty, for she was beautiful.

(12) But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's word conveyed by the eunuchs; and the king was very angry, and his wrath burned within him.

(13) The king said to the wise men who knew the times,²⁰ for so was the king's custom to consult with²¹ all who knew law and judgment,

(14) and those close to him were Carshena, Shetar, Admata, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memukhan, the seven officers of Persia and Media, those who saw the king's face²² and sat first²³ in the kingdom,

(י) בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי כְּטוֹב לִבְהַמֶּלֶךְ בַּיּוֹם אָמַר
לְמַהוּמָן בִּזְזֵטָא חַרְבוֹנָא בְּגָתָא וְאַבְגֵּתָא זֵטָר
וְכַרְכָּס שִׁבְעַת הַסָּרִיסִים הַמְשָׁרְתִּים אֶת־פְּנֵי
הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ:

(יא) לְהָבִיא אֶת־וַשְׁתִּי הַמַּלְכָּה לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
בְּכֹתֵר מַלְכוּת לְהַרְאוֹת הָעַמִּים וְהַשָּׂרִים אֶת־
יָפְיָהּ כִּי־טוֹבַת מְרָאָה הִיא:

(יב) וַתִּמָּאֵן הַמַּלְכָּה וַשְׁתִּי לְבוא בְּדִבְרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֲשֶׁר בֵּיד הַסָּרִיסִים וַיִּקְצֹף הַמֶּלֶךְ מְאֹד וַחֲמָתוֹ
בָּעָרָה בוֹ:

(יג) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְחַכְמָיִם יָדְעֵי הָעֵתִים כִּי־כֵן
דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ לִפְנֵי כָל־יָדְעֵי דָת וְדִין:

(יד) וְהַקְרָב אֵלָיו כְּרִשְׁנָא שֶׁתָּר אֲדַמְתָּא
תַּרְשִׁישׁ מְרֵס מְרִסְנָא מְמוּכָן שְׁבַלְת שְׂרִי פְרִס
וּמְדִי רֵאִי פְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיֹּשְׁבִים רֵאשְׁנָה
בַּמַּלְכוּת:

¹⁹ **eunuchs | הַסָּרִיסִים** – The word might relate to the verb "סָרַס", to cut. Alternatively, "סָרִיס" might be a loan word from Akkadian, where "ša rêši" can refer to a eunuch, but also to any royal official (CAD, "resu", in "sa resi"). Shadal (Bereshit 37:26) suggests that the term might have originally referred only to eunuchs, but since many of the royal officers were eunuchs, it was later adopted for all. In the book of Esther, where the officials referred to as "סָרִיסִים" are often those who interact with women specifically, it is likely that the term refers to actual eunuchs.

²⁰ **who knew the times | יָדְעֵי הָעֵתִים** – This might refer to astrologers (Ibn Ezra, Ralbag) or to historians and chroniclers who were familiar with past history and could apply that knowledge to the present (Ibn Ezra). Alternatively, it simply refers to wise men who were able to advise according to the circumstances of the time (Rashbam, pointing to the similar term in Divrei HaYamim I 12:33, Hoil Moshe).

²¹ **so was the king's custom to consult with | כִּי כֵן דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ לִפְנֵי** – The words "to consult" are not in the Hebrew, but see Rashi, R. Yosef Kara, and Rashbam, that this is the implication of the text..

²² **saw the king's face | רֵאִי פְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ** – This might imply that these officers had direct or constant access to the king, while the majority of people needed to first be called and invited (see Esther 4:11).

²³ **sat first | הַיֹּשְׁבִים רֵאשְׁנָה** – This might mean that they were senior officers, serving in the kingdom from the very beginning (Malbim), or that, due to their importance, they would sit in the first row before the king (Rashi, Rashbam).

(15) "According to law, what shall we do to Queen Vashti, since she has not done the bidding of King Achashverosh conveyed by the eunuchs?"

(16) Memukhan answered before the king and the officers, "Not against the king alone has Vashti the queen sinned, but also against all the officers and all the peoples that are in all the provinces of King Achashverosh.

(17) For the queen's word will go out to all the women, causing them to view their husbands with contempt,²⁴ saying, 'King Achashverosh said to bring Vashti the queen before him, but she did not come.'

(18) And this day, the noble woman of Persia and Media who heard the queen's word will say likewise²⁵ to all the king's officers, and there will be more than enough²⁶ scorn and anger.

(19) If it pleases the king, let a royal edict go forth from him, and let it be written among the laws of Persia and Media, that it not be revoked, that Vashti not come²⁷ before King Achashverosh, and that the king give her royal crown²⁸ to another that is better than she.

(טו) כָּדַתְּ מִהֲלַעֲשׂוֹת בַּמֶּלֶכָה וְשִׁתִּי עַל אֲשֶׁר
לֹא־עָשְׂתָה אֶת־מֶאֱמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ בֵּיד
הַסְּרִיסִים:

(טז) וַיֹּאמֶר [מְמוּכָן] (מוֹמְכָן) לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְהַשָּׂרִים לֹא עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לְבַדּוֹ עֹתָהּ וְשִׁתִּי
הַמֶּלֶכָה כִּי עַל־כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים וְעַל־כָּל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר
בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ:

(יז) כִּי־יֵצֵא דְבַר־הַמֶּלֶכָה עַל־כָּל־הַנָּשִׁים לְהַבְזֹת
בְּעֵלֶיהֶן בְּעֵינֵיהֶן בְּאִמְרָם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ
אָמַר לְהָבִיא אֶת־וְשִׁתִּי הַמֶּלֶכָה לִפְנֵי וְלֹא
בָּאָה:

(יח) וְהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה תֵּאֲמַרְנָה שָׂרוֹת פְּרִסְיָמָדִי
אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶכָה לְכָל שָׂרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְכָדִי בְזִיוֹן וְקֶצֶף:

(יט) אִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יֵצֵא דְבַר־מַלְכוּת
מִלִּפְנֵי וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּדַתִּי פְּרִסְיָמָדִי וְלֹא יַעֲבֹר
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תָבוֹא וְשִׁתִּי לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ
וּמַלְכוּתָהּ יִתֵּן הַמֶּלֶךְ לְרַעֲיוֹתָהּ הַטּוֹבָה מִמֶּנָּה:

²⁴ **view their husbands with contempt** | לְהַבְזֹת בְּעֵלֶיהֶן בְּעֵינֵיהֶן – Literally: "to scorn their husbands in their eyes".

²⁵ **will say likewise** | תֵּאֲמַרְנָה – The word "likewise" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is assumed and added for clarity. See Rashi that the verse is a "מקרא קצר" (an abbreviated verse).

²⁶ **more than enough** | וְכָדִי – See the anonymous Northern French commentary which understands the term in this manner. Alternatively: "much" (Rashi), "no end" (Rashbam), or "sufficient" (Ibn Ezra, understanding the full phrase to mean: "there was sufficient contempt in Vashti's deed to justify the king's anger").

²⁷ **not come** | לֹא תָבוֹא – See Rashi that this is a euphemism and the connotation is that she was to be killed. Cf. R. Yosef Kara (and Rashbam similarly) who disputes Rashi's reading, understanding the verse literally, that Vashti was no longer to come to the king. He notes that if Vashti was killed, what would be the point of emphasizing that the law not be revoked?

²⁸ **her royal crown** | וּמַלְכוּתָהּ – See Rashbam. More literally: "her royalty" or "her kingdom", perhaps referring to her royal estate.

(20) And the king's decree²⁹ which he shall make, shall be heard throughout his kingdom, though it is vast,³⁰ and all the wives will give honor to their husbands, from great to small."

(21) And the words pleased the king and the officers; and the king did according to the word of Memukhan.

(22) He sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province according to their writing, and to each people according to their language, that each man should rule in his own house and speak according to the language of his people.³¹

(כ) וְנִשְׁמַע פֶּתֶקֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה בְּכָל מַלְכוּתוֹ כִּי רַבָּה הִיא וְכָל־הַנָּשִׁים יִתְּנוּ יָקָר לְבַעֲלֵיהֶן לְמַגְדֹּל וְעַד־קָטָן:

(כא) וַיִּיטֹב הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַשָּׂרִים וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ כְּדָבָר מְמוּכָן:

(כב) וַיִּשְׁלַח סָפְרִים אֶל־כָּל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה כְּכַתְּבָהּ וְאֶל־עַם וְעַם כְּלָשׁוֹנוֹ לְהִיּוֹת כָּל־אִישׁ שֹׁרֵר בְּבֵיתוֹ וּמַדְבֵּר כְּלָשׁוֹן עַמּוֹ:

פרק ב – Chapter 2

(1) After these things, when the wrath of King Achashverosh had abated, he remembered Vashti and what she had done, and what had been decreed upon her.

(2) The king's attendants, those who served him, said, "Let them seek for the king young, beautiful virgin women.

(3) And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, and they will gather

(א) אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כָּשָׁךְ חָמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרוּשׁ זָכַר אֶת־וַשְׁתִּי וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂתָה וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר־נִגְזַר עָלֶיהָ:

(ב) וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשִּׁרְתָּיו יִבְקְשׁוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ נְעוּרוֹת בְּתוּלוֹת טוֹבוֹת מְרָאָה:

(ג) וַיִּפְקֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ פְּקִידִים בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת מַלְכוּתוֹ וַיִּקְבְּצוּ אֶת־כָּל־נְעֹרֵה־בְּתוּלָה טוֹבַת מְרָאָה אֶל־

²⁹ **decree** | פֶּתֶקֶם – This word appears only here and in Kohelet 8:11. It might be a loan word from Persian where "patigâma" refers to a command, matter, or edict. It might have made its way into Hebrew via the Aramaic, פִּתְגָמָא, matter, which appears in both Daniel and Ezra (BDB, "פֶּתֶקֶם").

³⁰ **though it is vast** | כִּי רַבָּה הִיא – See Ibn Ezra and R. Yosef Nachmias that Memukhan is emphasizing the importance of having the edict heard throughout the entire kingdom, despite its vastness. Alternatively: "for it is vast", referring either to the kingdom (Rashbam) or to the magnitude of Vashti's transgression (anonymous Northern French commentary, Hoil Moshe).

³¹ **speak according to the language of his people** | וּמַדְבֵּר כְּלָשׁוֹן עַמּוֹ – The implication might be that if the wife spoke a different language than the husband, he should force her to learn his language (Rashi and see Nechemyah 13:23-24). Cf. Ralbag who suggests that the decree refers not specifically to language but to any native customs of the husband, language being but one example. Alternatively, these words are not part of the decree at all, but describe the messenger who was to publicize the decree in each province in the language spoken there (R. Yosef Kara).

every young, beautiful virgin woman to Shushan the castle, to the house of the women,³² to the charge of Hegeh³³ the king's eunuch, keeper of the women, and their ointments³⁴ shall be given³⁵ to them.

(4) And the young woman who pleases the king shall be queen instead of Vashti." The matter pleased the king, and he did so.

(5) A Judean man³⁶ was in Shushan the castle,³⁷ and his name was Mordechai,³⁸ the son of Yair, the son of Shimi, the son of Kish, a Benjaminite,

שׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה אֶל־בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים אֶל־יָד הַגָּא
סָרִיס הַמֶּלֶךְ שֶׁמֶר הַנָּשִׁים וְנָתַן תַּמְרָקִיהֶן:

(ד) וְהַנְּעִלָה אֲשֶׁר תִּיטֵב בְּעֵינַי הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּמְלֹךְ
תַּחַת וְשִׁתִּי וְיִיטֵב הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינַי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן:

(ה) אִישׁ יְהוּדִי הָיָה בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה וְשֵׁמוֹ
מֶרְדֳּכָי בֶן יָאִיר בֶּן־שִׁמִּי בֶן־קִישׁ אִישׁ יְמִינִי:

³² **house of the women** | בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים – In other words, they were to be brought into the harem of the king.

³³ **Hegeh** | הֶגָּא – This appears to be the same individual who is later called Hegai (see Esther 2:8 and 15).

³⁴ **ointments** | תַּמְרָקִיהֶן – The noun appears only once outside of Esther, in Mishlei 20:30. It relates to the verb "מרק" which means to scour or polish.

³⁵ **shall be given** | וְנָתַן – See Rashbam that this is a passive form of the verb. Alternatively: "they will give" (Hoil Moshe in the name of Shadal. He notes that the verb is in the infinitive (normally translated as "to give"), but he explains that sometimes if there is a previous verb in the verse, the infinitive that follows might be assumed to take the same conjugation as the earlier one. For several of many other possible examples of the phenomenon in Esther, see: "וְנִשְׁלַח" in 3:13, "וְנִחַתוּם" in 8:8, "וְנִהְפְּדוּ" in 9:1, "וְנִאֲבֹד" in 9:6, "וְנִנְחַ" and "וְנַעֲשֶׂה" in 9:17-18.

³⁶ **a Judean man** | אִישׁ יְהוּדִי – These words do not mean that Mordechai was from the tribe of Yehuda (as the verse later explicitly says that he was from Binyamin), but only that he had been living in the kingdom of Judea before he was exiled.

³⁷ **in Shushan the castle** | בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה – See Ibn Ezra that Mordechai had an important position in the government (see 2:19) and therefore lived in the palace complex.

³⁸ **Mordechai** | מֶרְדֳּכָי – The meaning of this name is debated. See Bavli Megillah 10b that the name is an Aramaic rendering of "מר דרור", pure myrrh (מרי דכי in Aramaic). Alternatively, it is Babylonian in origin, and recalls the name of the foreign god, Marduk, head of the Babylonian pantheon. The two possibilities have ramifications for how one views Mordechai's Religious Identity. See: https://alhatorah.org/Mordechai's_Religious_Identity.

(6) who had been exiled³⁹ from Jerusalem, with the exiles that had been exiled with Yechonyah, king of Yehuda, whom Nevuchadnetzar, king of Babylonia, had exiled.

(7) He raised Hadassah, who is Esther,⁴⁰ his uncle's daughter, for she had no father or mother. And the young woman was shapely and beautiful, and with the death of her father and her mother, Mordechai took her to him as a daughter.⁴¹

(8) When the king's word and his law were heard, and when many young women were gathered to Shushan the castle, to the charge of Hegai, Esther was taken to the king's house, to the charge of Hegai, keeper of the woman.

(9) The young woman pleased him and won his grace.⁴² He hurried⁴³ to provide her ointments

(ו) אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם עַם־הַגָּלָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה עִם יְכָנְיָה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל:

(ז) וַיְהִי אִמָּן אֶת־הַדָּסָה הִיא אֶסְתֵּר בַּת־דָּדֹו כִּי אֵין לָהּ אָב וְאִם וְהַנַּעֲרָה יִפְתִּיתָאֹר וְטוֹבַת מְרֹאֶה וּבָמוֹת אֲבִיהָ וְאִמָּהּ לְקַחָהּ מֶרְדֳּכַי לוֹ לְבַת:

(ח) וַיְהִי בַּהֲשָׁמַע דְּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ וּבַהֲקַבֵּץ נְעוּרוֹת רַבּוֹת אֶל־שׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה אֶל־יַד הַגִּי וְתַלְקָה אֶסְתֵּר אֶל־בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־יַד הַגִּי שֹׁמֵר הַנָּשִׁים:

(ט) וַתֵּיטֵב הַנַּעֲרָה בְּעֵינָיו וַתִּשָּׂא חֶסֶד לִפְנָיו

³⁹ **who had been exiled** | אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה – It is unclear if the phrase refers back to Mordechai (Bavli Megillah 13a and many medieval commentators) or to Kish (Hoil Moshe and modern scholars). This is partially dependent on how one dates the story of Megillat Esther, as discussed in footnote 1. According to those scholars who identify Achashverosh with Xerxes I (486–465 BCE), if Mordechai was among those exiled with Yechonyah in 597 BCE (eleven years before the Temple's destruction – see Melakhim 24:15-18), he would have been at least 110 years old during the story. As this seems unlikely, the Kish option would be preferred. In contrast, according to Bavli Megilla 11b, which has Achashverosh reign between Cyrus and Darius, if Mordechai was among those exiled, he could potentially be only a bit over sixty when the story opens and the phrase could refer to Mordechai himself.

⁴⁰ **Hadassah, who is Esther** | הַדָּסָה הִיא אֶסְתֵּר – See Hoil Moshe that Hadassah was Esther's Hebrew name, while Esther was her Persian name. The former is connected to the word הָדַס, myrtle, while the latter means "star". Others associate the name Esther with Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess. Cf. Ibn Ezra that Esther is simply the Persian equivalent of Hadassah. Opinions in Bavli Megillah 13a instead suggest that both names are Hebrew. R. Meir posits that Esther was her real name, but she was called Hadassah since the righteous are compared to myrtles, while R. Yehuda claims that Hadassah was her real name, but she was called Esther since she hid (הִסְתִּירָה) her identity. Cf. R. Yosef Kara who suggests that "הַדָּסָה" might not be a name at all, but was simply the way young woman were referred to in Shushan (and would be the equivalent of the word "נַעֲרָה"). The various opinions might relate to how one views Esther's Religious Identity and whether she had assimilated into Persian society. See: https://alhatorah.org/Esther's_Religious_Identity.

⁴¹ **as a daughter** | לְבַת – Cf. Bavli Megillah 13a who read "בַּת" as if written "בֵּית" (a house), a reference to one's wife, suggesting that Mordechai and Esther were married. See, though, Ibn Ezra and R. Yosef Nachmias who argue against this reading, pointing out that Achashverosh gathered only virgins, not married women.

⁴² **won his grace** | וַתִּשָּׂא חֶסֶד לִפְנָיו – Literally: "carried grace (or: kindness) before him".

and her portions and the seven maidens whom she was entitled to be given to her⁴⁴ from the house of the king, and he favored her⁴⁵ and her maidens in the house of women.⁴⁶

(10) Esther did not tell⁴⁷ of her people or her family,⁴⁸ for Mordechai commanded her not to tell.

(11) And every day Mordechai would walk before the courtyard of the women's house to know how Esther fared and what was to be done to her.

(12) And when each young woman's turn came to go to King Achashverosh, after she had been, according to the law of women, twelve months – for so were completed the days of their anointing, six months in oil of myrrh and six months in perfumes and women's ointments –

(13) so would the young woman come to the king: all that she said would be given her to take

וַיְבַהֵל אֶת־תַּמְרוּקֶיהָ וְאֶת־מְנוּחָהָ לָתֵת לָהּ
וְאֶת־שִׁבְעַת הַנְּעוּרוֹת הָרְאוּיֹת לָתֵת־לָהּ מִבֵּית
הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁנֶה וַיִּשְׁנֶה וְאֶת־נְעוּרוֹתֶיהָ לְטוֹב בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים:

(י) לֹא־הִגִּידָה אֶסְתֵּר אֶת־עַמָּהּ וְאֶת־מִוְלַדְתָּהּ כִּי
מֶרְדֳּכַי צִוָּה עָלֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִגִּיד:

(יא) וּבְכָל־יוֹם וְיוֹם מֶרְדֳּכַי מֵתֵהֵלֵךְ לִפְנֵי הַחֲצַר
בֵּית־הַנָּשִׁים לְדַעַת אֶת־שְׁלוֹם אֶסְתֵּר וּמַה
יַעֲשֶׂה בָּהּ:

(יב) וּבַהֲגִיעַ תֹּרֵן נְעִרָה וְנַעֲרָה לָבוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֲחֻשׁוֹרוֹשׁ מִקֵּץ הַלַּיִל לָהּ כְּדַת הַנָּשִׁים שְׁנַיִם
עָשָׂר חֳדָשׁ כִּי כֵן יִמְלֹאוּ יָמֵי מְרוּקֶיהָ שְׁשָׁה
חֳדָשִׁים בְּשֶׁמֶן הַמֶּר וְשְׁשָׁה חֳדָשִׁים בַּבִּשְׁמִיִּם
וּבִתְמָרוּקֵי הַנָּשִׁים:

(יג) וּבִזְמַן הַנְּעִרָה בָּאָה אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר
תֹּאמַר יִנָּתֵן לָהּ לָבוֹא עִמָּה מִבֵּית הַנָּשִׁים עַד

⁴³ **hurried** | וַיְבַהֵל – Though in earlier books of Tanakh, this root means "to be frightened," in Esther, Mishlei, Kohelet, and Divrei HaYamim, it refers also to "hurrying".

⁴⁴ **was entitled to be given to her** | הָרְאוּיֹת – The word "רְאוּיֹת" does not appear elsewhere in Tanakh, but in Rabbinic literature it takes the meaning "proper" or "fitting" (see Ibn Ezra). It stems from the root "ראה" (see), so a more literal translation might read: "who were seen to be given to her". Alternatively: "to give her the seven worthy (or: chosen) maidens".

⁴⁵ **he favored her** | וַיִּשְׁנֶה... לְטוֹב – The phrase is somewhat difficult and reads literally: "he changed her... for the best", which might imply that Hegai treated Esther differently (and better) than the other women (Yosef Lekach and see R. Yosef Kara less explicitly) or that he somehow improved her lot. Thus, Ibn Ezra suggests that he "changed her portions and maids", while others posit that he bettered her lodgings: "he transferred her to the best quarters" (several modern translations).

⁴⁶ **in the house of the women** | בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים – The word "in" is assumed by the text (Rashbam, Ibn Ezra).

⁴⁷ **did not tell...** | לֹא הִגִּידָה – The text does not share what motivated this silence. For discussion of a range of possibilities, see: https://alhatorah.org/Why_Conceal_Esther's_Nationality.

⁴⁸ **her family** | מִוְלַדְתָּהּ – See Ibn Ezra that "עַמָּה" refers to her nationality, and "מִוְלַדְתָּהּ" to her tribe or family. Cf. Hoil Moshe on Esther 8:6, who assumes that the two words are basically synonymous, explaining "מולדת" to mean: "the nation to which one is born". Elsewhere some have translated the word as "place of birth", but as the verses imply that Esther was born in Persia, it would be odd that she was supposed to hide this.

with her from the women's house to the house of the king.

(14) In the evening she would come and in the morning she would return to the second⁴⁹ women's house, to the charge of Shashgaz, the king's eunuch, keeper of the concubines. She would not come again to the king unless the king desired her and she was called by name.

(15) And when the turn of Esther, daughter of Avichayil, the uncle of Mordechai, whom he had taken to him as a daughter, came to come to the king, she did not request anything except that which Hegai the king's eunuch, keeper of the women, said. And Esther won favor⁵⁰ in the eyes of all who saw her.

(16) Esther was taken to King Achashverosh, to his royal house, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tevet, in the seventh year of his reign.

(17) The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won favor and grace before him more than all the virgins, and he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

(18) The king made a great feast for all his officers and servants, the feast of Esther, and he made a release⁵¹ for all the provinces and gave gifts in accord with the king's power.⁵²

(יד) בערב היא באה ובבקר היא שבה אל בית הנשים שני אליד שעשגז סריס המלך שמר הפילגשים לאתבוא עוד אל המלך כי אם-חפץ בה המלך ונקראה בשם:

(טו) ובהגיע תראסתה בת-אביחיל דד מרדכי אשר לקחלו לבת לבוא אל המלך לא בקשה דבר כי אם את-אשר יאמר הגי סריס-המלך שמר הנשים ותהי אסתה נשאת חן בעיני כל ראייה:

(טז) ותלקח אסתה אל המלך אחשוורוש אל בית מלכותו בחדש העשירי הוא-חדש טבת בשנת-שבע למלכותו:

(יז) ויאהב המלך את-אסתה מכל-הנשים ותשא-תן וחסד לפניו מכל-הבתולות וישם כתר-מלכות בראשה וימליכה תחת ושתי:

(יח) ויעש המלך משתה גדול לכל-שריו ועבדיו את משתה אסתה והנחה למדינות עשה ויתן משאת כיד המלך:

⁴⁹ **second** | שני – See Rashbam that there were two harems, one for the virgins and the other for concubines. Alternatively: "a second time" (Ibn Ezra).

⁵⁰ **won favor** | נשאת חן – This seems to be somewhat equivalent to the much more prevalent idiom "מצא חן" (found favor). The formulations "נשא חסד" and "נשא חן" appear only in Esther.

⁵¹ **release** | והנחה – Most commentators understand this to refer to a reduction in taxes. Alternatively, it might refer to a holiday from work (Ralbag).

⁵² **in accord with the king's power** | כיד המלך – See the note on Esther 1:7.

(19) When the virgins were gathered a second time,⁵³ Mordechai was sitting at the king's gate.

(יט) וּבְהַקְבֵּץ בְּתוּלוֹת שְׁנִית וּמֵרֶדְכַּי יֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(20) Esther would not tell of her family and her people, as Mordechai had commanded her. And Esther did Mordechai's bidding as she had when she was raised with him.

(כ) אֵין אֶסְתֵּר מַגִּידַת מוֹלְדוֹתָהּ וְאֶת־עַמָּהּ כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה עָלֶיהָ מֵרֶדְכַּי וְאֶת־מֶאֱמַר מֵרֶדְכַּי אֶסְתֵּר עָשָׂה כְּאֲשֶׁר הִיתָה בְּאֻמָּנָה אֹתוֹ:

(21) In those days, while Mordechai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigtan and Teresh, two eunuchs of the king, from those who guarded the door, grew angry and sought to send forth their hand against King Achashverosh.

(כא) בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וּמֵרֶדְכַּי יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ קִצְף בְּגִתּוֹ וְתֹרֵשׁ שְׁנֵי־סְרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמָרֵי הַסֵּף וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ לְשַׁלַּח יָד בַּמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ:

(22) The matter became known to Mordechai and he told Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in Mordechai's name.

(כב) וַיִּוָּדַע הַדָּבָר לְמֵרֶדְכַּי וַיַּגֵּד לְאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וְתֹאמַר אֶסְתֵּר לַמֶּלֶךְ בְּשֵׁם מֵרֶדְכַּי:

(23) The matter was investigated and found to be so, and both of them were hanged on a post;⁵⁴ and it was written in the book of chronicles before the king.

(כג) וַיִּבְקֶשׁ הַדָּבָר וַיִּמָּצֵא וַיִּתְּלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עַל־עֵץ וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּסֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

פרק ג – Chapter 3

(1) After these things,⁵⁵ King Achashverosh

(א) אַחֲרַי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה גָּדַל הַמֶּלֶךְ

⁵³ **a second time** | שְׁנִית – According to Rashi, after Esther was chosen as queen, but refused to reveal her full identity, Achashverosh once again initiated a search for virgin women, hoping to make Esther jealous so she would share her identity. Alternatively, this "second gathering" refers to the gathering of virgins during which Esther was chosen, while the first gathering had been years before, when Vashti had been selected (Ibn Ezra). Cf. Rashbam who translates: "when they gathered the virgins [to find] a second".

⁵⁴ **post** | עֵץ – See Hoil Moshe who suggests that the verse refers to crucifixion and "עֵץ" means a wooden post rather than a tree. [Crucifixion was a form of capital punishment practiced extensively by the Persians.] Alternatively: "gallows".

⁵⁵ **After these things** | אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה – As a reader tends to assume that the events of one chapter follow those of another, the term may seem redundant. See Rashbam on Bereshit 22:1 that the phrase serves to connect the content (rather than the timing) of two events. In our chapter, it highlights the irony of the situation. After Mordechai saves the king's life, it is Haman, rather than Mordechai, who is promoted. Cf. Bavli Megillah 13b which suggests that the phrase is underscoring how Hashem set up the cure (Mordechai having saved the king's life), before the plague (Haman's plot). For further discussion of the term, see: [https://alhatorah.org/LiteraryIndicators of Achronology](https://alhatorah.org/LiteraryIndicators%20of%20Achronology).

promoted Haman the son of Hammedata, the Agagite, and exalted him, placing his seat above all the officers⁵⁶ who were with him.

אֲחֲשׁוּרוֹשׁ אֶת־הָמָן בֶּן־הַמֶּדְתָּא הָאֲגָגִי
וַיִּנְשְׂאֵהוּ וַיָּשֶׂם אֶת־כִּסְאוֹ מֵעַל כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים
אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ:

(2) And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate would kneel and bow⁵⁷ to Haman, for so the king had commanded regarding him;⁵⁸ but Mordechai would not kneel or bow.

(ב) וְכָל־עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ כֹּרְעִים
וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים לְהָמָן כִּי־כֵן צִוָּה־לּוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וּמֹרְדֵכַי
לֹא יִכְרַע וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה:

(3) The king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordechai, "Why are you transgressing the king's command?"

(ג) וַיֹּאמְרוּ עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ
לְמֹרְדֵכַי מִדּוֹעַ אַתָּה עוֹבֵר אֶת מִצְוַת הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(4) When they said this to him day after day, and he did not listen to them, they told Haman to see whether Mordechai's words would stand,⁵⁹ for he had told them that he was a Judean.⁶⁰

(ד) וַיְהִי [כְּאֶמְרָם] (בְּאִמְרָם) אֵלָיו יוֹם וָיוֹם
וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּגִּדוּ לְהָמָן לְרֹאוֹת הַיַּעֲמָדוֹ
דְּבָרֵי מֹרְדֵכַי כִּי־הִגִּיד לָהֶם אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יְהוּדִי:

(5) Haman saw that Mordechai would not kneel or bow to him, and Haman was filled with wrath.

(ה) וַיֵּרָא הָמָן כִּי־אֵין מֹרְדֵכַי כֹּרַע וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לוֹ
וַיִּמָּלֵא הָמָן חֶמָה:

(6) But he viewed it as contemptible to send forth his hand against Mordechai alone, for they had

(ו) וַיִּבֶזַע בְּעֵינָיו לְשַׁלַּח יָד בְּמֹרְדֵכַי לְבַדּוֹ כִּי
הִגִּידוּ לוֹ אֶת־עַם מֹרְדֵכַי וַיִּבְקֶשׁ הָמָן לְהַשְׁמִיד

⁵⁶ **placing his seat above all the officers** | **וַיָּשֶׂם אֶת־כִּסְאוֹ מֵעַל כָּל הַשָּׂרִים** – See R. Yosef Kara, Rashbam, and Ibn Ezra that this might refer to the physical placement of Haman's chair in the royal palace; the more important one was, the closer to the king one sat. Alternatively, it is simply a metaphor for how Haman was given authority over the other officers (Malbim).

⁵⁷ **kneel and bow** | **כֹּרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים** – The root "כרע" is often mentioned together with "כרכנס", knees, suggesting that it refers to kneeling (rather than prostrating one's self). This might be a sign of either submission or worship (Hoil Moshe). For discussion of why Mordechai refused to bow to Haman, see: <https://alhatorah.org/Mordechai's Refusal to Bow>.

⁵⁸ **regarding him** | **לוֹ** – See Rashbam and Ibn Ezra who note that, in context, "לוֹ" means "concerning him" rather than "to him".

⁵⁹ **whether the words of Mordechai would stand** | **הַיַּעֲמָדוֹ דְּבָרֵי מֹרְדֵכַי** – In other words, they wanted to see whether Mordechai's resolve would hold (Rashbam).

⁶⁰ **he was a Judean** | **אֲשֶׁר הוּא יְהוּדִי** – Alternatively: "he was a Jew". The two possibilities relate to how one understands Mordechai's refusal to bow; was it motivated by religious or national concerns? [For discussion, see: <https://alhatorah.org/Mordechai's Refusal to Bow>.] However, even if the former is true, referring to someone in the Persian period as a "Jew" might be anachronistic. See also Esther 8:17 and the related verb "מִתְיַהֲדִים", which many translate as "became Jews", but might also mean "passed themselves off as Judean".

told him Mordechai's people, so Haman sought to destroy all the Judeans⁶¹ who were throughout the kingdom of Achashverosh, the people of Mordechai.

(7) In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Achashverosh, he cast a pur,⁶² which is a lottery, before Haman, from day to day and from this month to the twelfth month,⁶³ which is the month of Adar.

(8) Haman said to King Achashverosh, "There is one people,⁶⁴ scattered and divided⁶⁵ among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom, and their laws are different from every nation, and they do not keep the king's laws.⁶⁶ It is not worthwhile⁶⁷ for the king to leave them.

(9) If it pleases the king, let it be written to

אֶת־כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־מְלָכוֹת אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ
עִם מֶרְדֳּכָי:

(ז) בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן הוֹאִיחֲדָשׁ נִסָּן בִּשְׁנַת
שְׁתַּיִם עָשָׂרָה לַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ הָפִיל פּוּר הוּא
הַגּוֹרֵל לִפְנֵי הָמָן מִיּוֹם א' לַיּוֹם וּמֵחֹדֶשׁ לַחֹדֶשׁ
שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר הוֹאִיחֲדָשׁ אָדָר:

(ח) וַיֹּאמֶר הָמָן לַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ יֵשְׁנוּ עִם־
אֶחָד מִפְּזָר וּמִפֶּרֶד בֵּין הָעַמִּים בְּכָל מְדִינַת
מְלָכוֹתָךְ וְדַתִּיהֶם שְׁנוֹת מִכָּל־עַם וְאֶת־דַּתִּי
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵינָם עֹשִׂים וְלַמֶּלֶךְ אֵין־שׂוֹה לְהַנִּיחָם:

(ט) אִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יִכְתֹּב לְאַבְדָּם וְעֲשֶׂתָּ

⁶¹ **the Judeans** | הַיְּהוּדִים – Alternatively: "the Jews". See note on verse 4.

⁶² **pur** | פּוּר – Ibn Ezra suggests that the word is Persian in origin, leading Tanakh to provide the Hebrew equivalent. It might stem from the Akkadian "puru", meaning "stone" or "lot" (BDB, "פּוּר").

⁶³ **and from this month to the twelfth month** | וּמֵחֹדֶשׁ לַחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר – See R. Yosef Kara. Alternatively: "and from month to month [to] the twelfth [month]".

⁶⁴ **one people** | עַם אֶחָד – The verse might imply that Haman never revealed to Achashverosh the identity of the people he wanted destroyed, referring to them only as "one people". For discussion and how this might impact one's understanding of Achashverosh's deeds throughout the book, see:

<https://alhatorah.org/Achashverosh's Shock and Fury>.

⁶⁵ **divided** | וּמִפְּרֵד – See Ibn Ezra that Haman was implying that even within the Jewish nation, the people were divided one from another, finding each other intolerable. Alternatively: "separated" (Hoil Moshe, presenting Haman as implying that the nation intentionally set itself apart from others) or "dispersed", with this word being somewhat synonymous with "מִפְּרֵד", and Haman emphasizing the danger that the nation presented; being scattered it could easily sway all those around them to rebel (Ralbag).

⁶⁶ **do not keep the king's laws** | אֶת דַּתִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵינָם עֹשִׂים – See Rashi and others that Haman was implying that they did not pay taxes to the king.

⁶⁷ **it is not worthwhile** | אֵין שׂוֹה – Similarly: "there is nothing to be gained" or: "there is no benefit" (Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Ralbag).

annihilate them; and I will weigh out ten thousand talents of silver to the workmen,⁶⁸ to bring to the king's treasury."

(10) The king removed his ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the son of Hammedata, the Agagite, enemy of the Judeans.

(11) The king said to Haman, "The silver is given to you, and the nation, to do with it as you see fit."

(12) The king's scribes were called in the first month, on the thirteenth day; and it was written according to all that Haman had commanded the king's satraps,⁶⁹ the governors of each province, and the officers of each people, each province according to its writing and each people according to its language. It was written in the name of King Achashverosh and sealed with the king's ring.

(13) Letters were sent⁷⁰ by the runners to all the provinces of the king, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Judeans, from young to old, little ones and women, in one day, the thirteenth of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their spoils.

אֶלְפִים כְּכַרְכָּסָף אֲשֶׁקוּל עַל־יְדֵי עֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה
לְהָבִיא אֶל־גִּנְזֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(י) וַיִּסֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־טַבַּעְתּוֹ מֵעַל יָדוֹ וַיִּתְּנָהּ
לְהָמָן בֶּן־הַמֵּדָתָא הָאֲגָגִי צֶרֶר הַיְּהוּדִים:

(יא) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהָמָן הַכֶּסֶף נָתַן לְךָ וְהָעָם
לַעֲשׂוֹת בּוֹ כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ:

(יב) וַיִּקְרְאוּ סֹפְרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן
בְּשִׁלּוּשֵׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם בּוֹ וַיִּכְתֹּב כָּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה
הָמֶן אֶל אַחֲשֶׁדְרָפְנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶל־הַפְּחוֹת אֲשֶׁר
עַל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וְאֶל־שָׂרֵי עָם וְעַם מְדִינָה
וּמְדִינָה כְּכַתְּבָהּ וְעַם וְעַם כָּל־שׁוֹנֵי בָשִׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ
אַחֲשֶׁר־שָׁכְנוּ וְנִכְתָּב וְנִחְתָּם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(יג) וַנְּשַׁלַּח סֹפְרִים בְּיַד הָרָצִים אֶל־כָּל־מְדִינֹת
הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְגַּ וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת־כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים
מִנְּעַר וְעַד־קֶזֶן טָף וְנָשִׁים בְּיוֹם אֶחָד בְּשִׁלּוּשֵׁה
עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנֵים־עָשָׂר הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר וּשְׁלָלָם
לְבוֹז:

⁶⁸ **to the workmen** | **עַל יְדֵי עֹשֵׂי הַמְּלָאכָה** – Literally: "by the hands of those who did the work". The phrase might refer to those in charge of minting the king's currency (Ibn Ezra), to goldsmiths and silversmiths (Rashbam), or to the king's treasurers (anonymous Northern French commentator, understanding the phrase to be a general term referring to any who worked diligently for the king, and not only craftsmen).

⁶⁹ **the king's satraps** | **אַחֲשֶׁדְרָפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ** – This word appears only in the books of Esther and Ezra and appears to be a Persian loanword, from "khshatrapâvan," meaning "protector of the realm" (BDB, "אַחֲשֶׁדְרָפֶן", and see also Ibn Ezra and Hoil Moshe). Cf. Radak, Sefer HaShorashim, citing his father, who suggests that the word is composed of three distinct Aramaic words (אחשי דרי פנים), meaning: "high officials of the king's inner circles".

⁷⁰ **were sent** | **וַנְּשַׁלַּח** – Rashbam notes that though the verb is formulated in the infinitive, it should be understood as if written "ונשלח" (were sent), for the word is really an abbreviation of the phrase "נשלח נשלח", a doubled form whose purpose is to intensify the verb. Cf. Hoil Moshe on 2:3 (and see the note there), that sometimes if there is a previous verb in the verse, it can be assumed that an infinitive that follows takes the same conjugation.

(14) A copy of the text⁷¹ to be given as law in each province was revealed⁷² to all the peoples, that they should be prepared⁷³ for that day.

(יד) פִּתְשָׁנוּ הַכְּתָב לְהַנִּתֵּן דָּת בְּכָל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה גָּלוּי לְכָל־הָעַמִּים לִהְיוֹת עֲתִידִים לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

(15) The runners left, pressed⁷⁴ by the king's word, and the law was given in Shushan the castle. The king and Haman sat to drink, but the city of Shushan⁷⁵ was in turmoil.

(טו) הָרָצִים יָצְאוּ דְחוּפִים בְּדַבַּר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָדָת נִתְּנָה בְּשׁוּשָׁן הַבִּירָה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמֵן יָשְׁבוּ לְשִׁתּוֹת וְהָעִיר שׁוּשָׁן נְבוֹכָה:

פרק ד – Chapter 4

(1) Mordechai knew all that had been done, and Mordechai tore his garments and dressed in sackcloth and ashes. He went out into the middle of the city and cried a loud and bitter cry.

(א) וּמֹרְדֳּכַי יָדַע אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה וַיִּקְרַע מִרְדֳּכַי אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וַיִּלְבַּשׁ שָׂק וַאֲפֹר וַיֵּצֵא בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר וַיִּזְעַק זַעֲקָה גְדוֹלָה וּמְרָה:

(2) He came up to the front of the king's gate, for one may not enter the king's gate dressed in sackcloth.

(ב) וַיָּבֹא עַד לִפְנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי אֵין לָבוֹא אֶל־שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ בִּלְבוּשׁ שָׂק:

(3) And in every province, wherever the king's word and his law reached, there was great mourning among the Judeans, and fasting and

(ג) וּבְכָל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ מָגִיעַ אֲבָל גְּדוֹל לַיהוּדִים וְצוֹם וּבְכִי וּמִסְפָּד שָׂק וַאֲפֹר יָצַע לְרַבִּים:

⁷¹ **the copy of the writing** | פִּתְשָׁנוּ הַכְּתָב – The word "פִּתְשָׁנוּ" appears only in the book of Esther and is likely a Persian loanword which made its way into Hebrew via the Aramaic "פִּרְשָׁנוּ", mentioned in Ezra 4:11 (BDB, "פִּרְשָׁנוּ").

⁷² **revealed** | גָּלוּי – R. Yosef Kara explains that since the letter was written in the language of each province, all were aware of its contents. Cf. R. Reggio and Malbim who suggest that verses 13 and 14 speak of two different documents. The first letter, which explicitly mentioned the annihilation, was sealed and meant only for the nobles, whereas the second letter which spoke only in general terms of preparing for war was meant for the masses and thus open. Haman, thereby, hoped to keep his full plans a secret until the last minute. For elaboration, see: <https://alhatorah.org/Achashverosh's Shock and Fury>.

⁷³ **be prepared** | עֲתִידִים – See Ibn Ezra and R. Yosef Nachmias, and compare Mishlei 24:7.

⁷⁴ **pressed** | דְּחוּפִים – The word connotes an action done in haste, under pressure and urgency (Ibn Ezra, Hoil Moshe). The verb appears only once more outside of Esther, in Divrei HaYamim II 26:20. The related noun, "מִדְחָפָה" (Tehillim 140:12) appears to mean "thrust".

⁷⁵ **city of Shushan** | וְהָעִיר שׁוּשָׁן – See Rashi and Ibn Ezra that the verse refers specifically to the Jews within the city. Cf. Ralbag and Hoil Moshe who posit that upon hearing Haman's cruel decree uncertainty might have befallen everyone, Jew and non-Jew alike. According to R. Reggio and Malbim, too, all were in a state of confusion, for according to them the decree of annihilation was sealed, and no one knew what was going on (see the note on verse 14).

weeping and lamentation. Sackcloth and ashes were laid out⁷⁶ for the multitudes.⁷⁷

(4) Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her; and the queen was very anguished.⁷⁸ She sent garments to clothe Mordechai and to remove his sackcloth from him, but he did not accept them.

(5) Esther called Hatakh, one of the king's eunuchs whom he had set before her, and she commanded him to go to⁷⁹ Mordechai to know what this was about and why it was.⁸⁰

(6) Hatakh went out to Mordechai, to the city square⁸¹ which was before the king's gate.

(7) Mordechai told him about all that had happened to him, and the account of⁸² the silver that Haman had said to weigh to the king's treasuries for the annihilation of the Judeans.⁸³

(ד) [וְתָבוּאָנָהּ] (ותבואינה) נְעֻלוֹת אֶסְתֵּר וְסָרִיסֶיהָ וַיִּגִּדּוּ לָהּ וַתַּחֲלֹחַל הַמֶּלֶכָה מְאֹד וַתִּשְׁלַח בְּגָדִים לְהַלְבִּישׁ אֶת־מֶרְדֳּכָי וּלְהַסִּיר שָׁקוֹ מֵעָלָיו וְלֹא קִבֵּל:

(ה) וַתִּקְרָא אֶסְתֵּר לְהַתָּךְ מִסָּרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר הָעֶמִיד לִפְנֶיהָ וַתִּצְוֶהוּ עַל־מֶרְדֳּכָי לָדַעַת מַה־זֶּה וְעַל־מַה־זֶּה:

(ו) וַיֵּצֵא הַתָּךְ אֶל־מֶרְדֳּכָי אֶל־רְחוֹב הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(ז) וַיִּגְדְּלוּ מֶרְדֳּכָי אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר קָרָהוּ וְאֵת פֶּרֶשֶׁת הַכֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁר אָמַר הָמֵן לְשָׁקוֹל עַל־גִּנְזֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ [בִּיהוּדִים] (ביהודיים) לְאַבְדֵם:

⁷⁶ **were laid out** | יָצַע – See Ralbag that sackcloth was given out to many, either to wear or to lie upon. [The word "יָצַע" relates to "מצע", a bed or couch, so the verse might refer to lying on (not in) sackcloth.]

⁷⁷ **for the multitudes** | לְרַבִּים – Alternatively: "for the elite" (Hoil Moshe in the name of Shadal, understanding "רב" to refer to important people).

⁷⁸ **anguished** | וַתַּחֲלֹחַל – See Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, and others who suggest that the word stems from the root "חול" or "חיל", to writhe in anguish, a word often associated with labor pangs. Cf. Rashi who connects it to the verb "חלה", to be sick.

⁷⁹ **commanded him to go to** | וַתִּצְוֶהוּ עַל – The words "to go" are added for clarity, though they are not found in the Hebrew. Cf. Hoil Moshe who suggests that the formulation "צוה על" (in contrast to "צוה אל", command to) implies that the command contained within it also a warning and request.

⁸⁰ **what this was about and why it was** | מַה זֶּה וְעַל מַה זֶה – Esther questioned both what calamity led to Mordechai's show of mourning and what happened to cause that calamity (Rashbam).

⁸¹ **city square** | רְחוֹב הָעִיר – Though today the word "רְחוֹב" means street, in Tanakh it likely refers to a wide open space, from the root "רחב", broad. See, for example, Ezra 10:9 where it refers to an area within the Temple complex.

⁸² **the account of** | וְאֵת פֶּרֶשֶׁת – This word appears only here and in Esther 10:2, but is related to the verb "פרש" which means to explain, to distinguish, or to declare (Sefer HaShorashim of Ibn Janach); hence: "the account of". Alternatively: "an explanation of" (Rashi), "the sum of" (R. Yosef Kara), or "the separation of" (anonymous Northern French commentary).

⁸³ **annihilation of the Jews** | בִּיהוּדִים לְאַבְדֵם – More literally: "for the Jews, to annihilate them".

(8) And he gave him the copy of the text⁸⁴ of the law that was given in Shushan for their destruction, to show it to Esther and to tell her, and to command her to go to the king to implore him and to plead before him for her people.

(9) Hatakh came and told Esther Mordechai's words.

(10) Esther said to Hatakh, and commanded him to say to Mordechai,⁸⁵

(11) "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that every man or woman who comes to the king, to the inner courtyard, who is not called, there is but one law for him, to be killed; only he to whom the king extends⁸⁶ his golden scepter⁸⁷ will live. And I have not been called to come to the king these thirty days."

(12) They told⁸⁸ Mordechai Esther's words.

(13) Mordechai said to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine⁸⁹ to yourself that you shall escape in the

(ח) וְאֶת־פִּתְשָׁן כְּתַב־הַדָּת אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן בְּשׁוּשָׁן לְהַשְׁמִיד־ם נָתַן לוֹ לְהִרְאוֹת אֶת־אֶסְתֵּר וּלְהַגִּיד לָהּ וּלְצִנּוֹת עָלֶיהָ לָבוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהִתְחַנֵּן לוֹ וּלְבַקֵּשׁ מִלְּפָנָיו עַל־עַמָּהּ:

(ט) וַיָּבֹא הָתָךְ וַיַּגִּד לְאֶסְתֵּר אֶת דְּבָרֵי מֶרְדֳּכָי:

(י) וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר לְהָתָךְ וַתְּצַוֶּהוּ אֶל־מֶרְדֳּכָי:

(יא) כָּל־עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְעַם־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ יָדְעִים אֲשֶׁר כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר יָבֹא־אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הַחֲצֵר הַפְּנִימִית אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְרָא אַחַת דָּתוֹ לְהַמִּית לְבָד מֵאֲשֶׁר יוֹשִׁיט־לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־שַׁרְבִיט הַזֶּהב וְחָיָה וְאִנִּי לֹא נִקְרָאתִי לָבוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ זֶה שְׁלוֹשִׁים יוֹם:

(יב) וַיַּגִּידוּ לְמֶרְדֳּכָי אֶת דְּבָרֵי אֶסְתֵּר:

(יג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֶרְדֳּכָי לְהַשִּׁיב אֶל־אֶסְתֵּר אֶל־תְּדַמֶּי

⁸⁴ **copy of the text** | פִּתְשָׁן כְּתַב – See the note on 3:14.

⁸⁵ **commanded him to say to Mordechai** | וַתְּצַוֶּהוּ אֶל מֶרְדֳּכָי – See Hoil Moshe that the words "to say" are assumed by the text.

⁸⁶ **extend** | יוֹשִׁיט – This word appears only in the book of Esther. From context and the similar Aramaic word, it seems to mean to extend or hold out (Ibn Ezra).

⁸⁷ **scepter** | שַׁרְבִיט – This word appears only in the book of Esther. Hoil Moshe suggests that it is a variation of the word "שבט", staff. [Cf. Ibn Ezra who agrees that the two words are identical in meaning, but implies that they are not etymologically related.]

⁸⁸ **They told** | וַיַּגִּידוּ לְמֶרְדֳּכָי – As Esther has been speaking only to Hatakh, one would have expected, "he told". See Malbim that perhaps Hatakh sent messengers to Mordechai (to avoid detection). Cf. First Targum of Esther that Hatakh had already been detected and killed by Haman; as such, the angels Michael and Gavriel relayed Esther's message to Mordechai.

⁸⁹ **Do not imagine** | אֶל תְּדַמֶּי – See Ibn Ezra. Others translate similarly: "do not think". Alternatively: "do not be silent", perhaps relating the word to the root "דמם", to be quiet, rather than to the root "דמה" (Rashbam). If so, Mordechai is warning Esther, "do not be silent, escaping into the palace, away from the Jewish people".

king's house⁹⁰ more than all the Judeans.

בְּנִפְשׁוֹ לְהַמְלִיךְ בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִכָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים:

(14) For, if you will indeed remain silent at this time, relief and salvation will arise for the Judeans from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Who knows if for a time such as this you attained royalty?"⁹¹

(יד) כִּי אִם־הִחַרְשׁ תִּחְיִישִׁי בְּעֵת הַזֹּאת רָחוּץ וְהִצָּלָה יַעֲמֹד לַיְּהוּדִים מִמָּקוֹם אֲחֵר וְאַתָּה וּבֵית־אָבִיךָ תִּאבְדּוּ וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ אִם־לָעֵת כְּזֹאת הִגַּעְתָּ לַמְּלָכוּת:

(15) Esther said to reply to Mordechai:

(טו) וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר לְהָשִׁיב אֶל־מָרְדֳּכָי:

(16) "Go and assemble all the Judeans who are present in Shushan and fast for me. Do not eat and do not drink for three days, night and day. I and my maids, too, will fast so. And thus I will go to the king, against the law. And if I perish, I perish."⁹²

(טז) לָךְ כְּנוֹס אֶת־כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּשׁוּשָׁן וְצוּמוּ עָלַי וְאַל־תֹּאכְלוּ וְאַל־תִּשְׁתּוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים לַיְלָה וַיּוֹם גַּם־אֲנִי וְנַעֲרֹתַי אֲצוּם כֵּן וּבִלָּן אָבוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־כֻדַּת וְכֹאֲשֶׁר אֲבָדְתִּי אֲבָדְתִּי:

(17) Mordechai passed,⁹³ and he did all that Esther had commanded him.

(יז) וַיַּעֲבֹר מָרְדֳּכָי וַיַּעַשׂ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוְתָהּ עָלָיו אֶסְתֵּר:

פרק ה – Chapter 5

(1) On the third day, Esther dressed in royalty⁹⁴

(א) וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַתִּלְבַּשׁ אֶסְתֵּר מַלְכוּת

⁹⁰ **in the king's house** | בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ – See Rashbam and Ibn Ezra that the word "in" is assumed.

⁹¹ **who knows... attained royalty** | הִגַּעְתָּ לַמְּלָכוּת ... וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ – See Ibn Ezra. Alternatively: "who knows if at this time next year you will still be part of the royal house", reading "הִגַּעְתָּ" as if written in the future (Rashi and R. Yosef Kara). According to the latter possibility, Mordechai is telling Esther that, due to the fickle nature of Achashverosh, she cannot wait until Adar to act for by then she might be deposed.

⁹² **If I perish, I perish** | וְכֹאֲשֶׁר אֲבָדְתִּי אֲבָדְתִּי – See Rashbam here and on Bereshit 43:14. Literally: "as I have perished, I have perished" (with both verbs in the past tense), but often Tanakh employs a past tense even though a future is implied. Cf. Ibn Ezra "Just as I have perished (being taken away from my nation), so, too, will I (completely) perish (if killed by the king)", and see opinions in Bavli Megillah 15b that Esther was thinking of implicating herself with Haman, assuming both would be killed. Compare to the similar doubled formulation in Bereshit 43:14 "כֹּאֲשֶׁר שָׁכַלְתִּי" and see commentators there.

⁹³ **passed** | וַיַּעֲבֹר – This might mean that Mordechai left the kings' gate (Hoil Moshe), passed through the city to gather the Jews (Rashbam), or that he "passed a proclamation" (anonymous Northern French commentary).

⁹⁴ **royalty** | מַלְכוּת – In other words, she dressed in royal garb (Rashi, R. Yosef Kara, and others). The verse might also imply that she had an air of royalty. Cf. Bavli Megillah 14b that the "she donned the holy spirit".

and stood in the inner courtyard of the king's house, facing the king's house,⁹⁵ and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the royal house,⁹⁶ facing the entrance of the house.

(2) When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the courtyard, she won favor in his eyes, and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Esther came near, and she touched the top of the scepter.

(3) The king said to her, "What troubles you,⁹⁷ Queen Esther? What is your request? Up to half the kingdom, and it will be granted to you."

(4) Esther said, "If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman⁹⁸ come today to the feast which I have prepared for him."

(5) The king said, "Have Haman hurry⁹⁹ to do Esther's word!" The king and Haman came to the feast which Esther had prepared.

(6) The king said to Esther at the wine feast,

וַתַּעֲמֵד בַּחֲצַר בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּנִימִית נֹכַח בֵּית
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא מַלְכוּתוֹ בְּבֵית
הַמַּלְכוּת נֹכַח פֶּתַח הַבַּיִת:

(ב) וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה
עֹמֶדֶת בַּחֲצַר נִשְׂאָה חֵן בְּעֵינָיו וַיֹּשֶׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ
לְאֶסְתֵּר אֶת־שִׁרְבִיט הַזֶּהבִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ וַתִּקְרַב
אֶסְתֵּר וַתִּגַּע בְּרֹאשׁ הַשִּׁרְבִיט:

(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־לָּךְ אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה
וּמַה־בִּקְשָׁתְךָ עַד־חֲצֵי הַמַּלְכוּת וְיִנָּתֶן לָךְ:

(ד) וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר אֶם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יָבוֹא
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּן הַיּוֹם אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתִי
לִי:

(ה) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־רוֹ אֶת־הֶמֶן לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־
דְּבַר אֶסְתֵּר וַיָּבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּן אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה
אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה אֶסְתֵּר:

(ו) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר בְּמִשְׁתֶּה הַלַּיִל מַה־

⁹⁵ **king's house** | בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ – Cf. Malbim and Hoil Moshe who suggest that in this verse the word "בית" refers to rooms rather than the palace as a whole, with Malbim positing that the phrase refers to the king's private chambers.

⁹⁶ **royal house** | בְּבֵית הַמַּלְכוּת – It is not clear how this differs from "בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ" (the king's house); perhaps it refers to a specific branch of the palace or a certain majestic hall. Earlier in the book, the term is mentioned as being the venue of Vashti's party (1:9) and the location of Esther's first encounter with Achashverosh (2:16). Cf. Malbim who suggests that "בֵּית הַמַּלְכוּת" refers to the king's throne room (as supported by mention of the throne). All together there is a six-fold repetition of the root "מלך" in the verse, underscoring the power of the king and the threat it presented to Esther.

⁹⁷ **What troubles you** | מַה לָּךְ – Literally: "What to you?" Alternative translations might include: "What would you like?", "What is it?" or the like.

⁹⁸ **and Haman** | וְהַמֶּן – See Bavli Megillah 15b for various possibilities as to why Esther invited also Haman to the party.

⁹⁹ **Have Haman hurry** | מַה־רוֹ אֶת־הֶמֶן – See Ibn Ezra that it is unclear whether the word "מהרו" is a transitive verb (taking a direct object), meaning: "rush Haman", or an intransitive one, in which case one must posit that an additional verb is assumed: "Hurry, get Haman..."

"What is your wish? It shall be granted to you. And what is your request?¹⁰⁰ Up to half the kingdom, and it shall be done."

(7) Esther answered and said, "My wish and my request –

(8) If I have found favor in the king's eyes, and if it pleases the king to grant me my wish and to fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come to the feast which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said.¹⁰¹

(9) Haman left that day, happy and merry of heart, but when Haman saw Mordechai at the king's gate, and he did not rise and did not tremble¹⁰² before him, Haman was filled with wrath against Mordechai.

(10) Haman restrained himself and came to his house. He sent and brought to him all his supporters¹⁰³ and his wife, Zeresh.

(11) Haman recounted to them his glorious riches, and his many sons, and all about how the king had promoted him and how he exalted him above the king's officers and servants.

(12) Haman said, "Queen Esther did not even

שְׁאַלְתָּךְ וַיִּנָּתֶן לְךָ וּמַה־בִּקְשָׁתְךָ עַד־חֲצִי
הַמְּלָכוֹת וְתַעֲשֶׂה:

(ז) וַתַּעַן אֶסְתֵּר וַתֹּאמֶר שְׁאַלְתִּי וּבִקְשָׁתִי:

(ח) אִם־מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ
טוֹב לָתֵת אֶת־שְׁאַלְתִּי וְלַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־בִּקְשָׁתִי
יָבוֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֵּן אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה
לָהֶם וּמָחָר אֶעֱשֶׂה כְּדִבְרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(ט) וַיֵּצֵא הַמֵּן בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא שִׂמְחָ וְטוֹב לֵב
וְכִרְאוֹת הַמֵּן אֶת־מֶרְדֳּכָי בַּשַּׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלֹא־קָם
וְלֹא־זָע מִמֶּנּוּ וַיִּמְלֵא הַמֵּן עַל־מֶרְדֳּכָי חֲמָה:

(י) וַיִּתְאַפֵּק הַמֵּן וַיָּבוֹא אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וַיִּשְׁלַח וַיָּבֵא
אֶת־אֶהֱבִיו וְאֶת־זֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ:

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

(יב) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֵּן אֶף לֹא־הִבִּיָּאָה אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה

¹⁰⁰ **your wish... your request** | שְׁאַלְתָּךְ ... בִּקְשָׁתְךָ – The difference in meaning between these two words is not clear. See Malbim that a "שאלה" refers to an inconsequential request of little import, while "בקשה" refers to a large or important request. Alternatively, he suggests that a "שאלה" refers to the actual request and "בקשה" to the underlying issue leading to the request. Cf. Ibn Ezra that Achashverosh might be asking Esther both if she wished to undo something from the past and if she desired something for the future.

¹⁰¹ **as the king has said** | כְּדִבְרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ – More literally: "according to the word of the king". Esther tells the king that tomorrow she will do his bidding and share her wish and request.

¹⁰² **tremble** | זָע – The word appears only a handful of times in Tanakh. See Chavakkuk 2:7 and Kohelet 12:3 where the context suggests that it refers to trembling and fear. Alternatively: "he did not budge", that Mordechai made no movement at all, refusing to show either honor or fear (Hoil Moshe).

¹⁰³ **supporters** | אֶהֱבָיו – Literally: "those who loved him", but the term is often used in Tanakh to refer to loyal followers or friends (see Shemuel II 19:7, Yirmeyahu 20:4-6).

bring with the king anyone to the feast which she prepared except for me; and tomorrow, too, I am invited to her with the king.

(13) Yet, all this is worthless to me every time that I see Mordechai, the Judean, sitting at the king's gate."

(14) His wife, Zeresh, and all his supporters said to him, "Let them make a post, fifty cubits high, and in the morning tell the king and let them hang Mordechai on it, and then go happily with the king to the feast." The matter seemed good to Haman and he made the post.

עם־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה כִּי אִם־
אוֹתִי וְגַם־לְמָחָר אֲנִי קְרוּאָה עִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(יג) וְכָל־זֶה אֵינֶנּוּ שׁוֹה לִי בְּכָל־עֵת אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי
רֹאה אֶת־מֶרְדֳּכָי הַיְּהוּדִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(יד) וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ זֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ וְכָל־אֲהָבָיו יַעֲשׂוּ
עָץ גָּבוֹה חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה וּבִבְקָרָא אָמַר לַמֶּלֶךְ
וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת־מֶרְדֳּכָי עָלָיו וּבֹאֲעִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־
הַמִּשְׁתֶּה שְׂמֵחַ וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר לִפְנֵי הָמֶן וַיַּעַשׂ
הָעֵץ:

פרק 6 – Chapter 6

(1) That night the king's sleep was restless,¹⁰⁴ and he said to bring the book of records, the chronicles,¹⁰⁵ that they be read before the king.

(2) It was found written that Mordechai had told of Bigtana¹⁰⁶ and Teresh, two eunuchs of the king, from those who guarded the door, that they sought to send forth their hand against King Achashverosh.

(א) בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא נִדְדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר
לְהָבִיא אֶת־סֵפֶר הַזְכָּרֹנוֹת דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים וַיְהִי
נִקְרָאִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(ב) וַיִּמָּצֵא כְּתוּב אֲשֶׁר הִגִּיד מֶרְדֳּכָי עַל־בִּגְתָּנָא
וַתִּרְשׁ שְׁנֵי סְרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמַרְי הַסֵּף אֲשֶׁר
בִּקְשׁוּ לְשַׁלַּח יָד בַּמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ:

¹⁰⁴ **the king's sleep was restless** | נִדְדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ – The root "נדד" can mean to wander or flee. In context, it can thus mean either that the king's sleep was disturbed, and he tossed and turned, or perhaps that sleep eluded him totally. Compare the similar phrase, "וַתִּדְדֵּן שְׁנַתִּי מִעֵינִי" in Bereshit 31:40.

¹⁰⁵ **the book of records, the chronicles** | סֵפֶר הַזְכָּרֹנוֹת דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים – Above in Esther 2:23, the book in which the assassination attempt was recorded is described only as "the book of chronicles", leading Malbim to suggest that our verse refers to a different book, not the formal chronicles of the kingdom, but the king's personal records (literally: "remembrances"). The phrase "סֵפֶר הַזְכָּרֹנוֹת" appears nowhere else, though the similar "סֵפֶר זְכָרוֹן" is mentioned in Malakhi 3:16, referring to a (likely metaphoric) heavenly book of records.

¹⁰⁶ **Bigtana** | בִּגְתָּנָא – He is referred to as Bigtan in Esther 2:21.

(3) The king said, "What great honor¹⁰⁷ was bestowed on Mordechai for this?" The king's attendants, those who served him, said, "Nothing was done with him."

(4) The king said, "Who is in the courtyard?" Now, Haman had come to the outer courtyard of the king's house to speak to the king about hanging Mordechai on the post that he had prepared for him.

(5) The king's attendants said to him, "Behold, Haman is standing in the courtyard." The king said, "Have him come."

(6) Haman came, and the king said to him, "What shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor?" Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

(7) Haman said, "The man whom the king desires to honor,

(8) let them bring royal clothing, that the king has worn,¹⁰⁸ and the horse upon which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown was placed,¹⁰⁹

(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מִהֲנִעֲשֶׂה יָקָר וְגִדּוּלָה לְמַרְדֳּכַי עַל־זֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁרָתָיו לֹא־נִעֲשֶׂה עִמּוֹ דָּבָר:

(ד) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מִי בַחֲצֵר וְהֵמָּן בָּא לַחֲצֵר בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַחִיצוֹנָה לֵאמֹר לַמֶּלֶךְ לְתִלּוֹת אֶת־מַרְדֳּכַי עַל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־הֵכִין לוֹ:

(ה) וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלָיו הִנֵּה הֵמָּן עֹמֵד בַּחֲצֵר וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ יָבֹוא:

(ו) וַיָּבֹוא הֵמָּן וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִהֲלַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר הֵמָּן בְּלִבּוֹ לִמִּי יַחֲפֹץ הַמֶּלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת יָקָר יוֹתֵר מִמֶּנִּי:

(ז) וַיֹּאמֶר הֵמָּן אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ:

(ח) יָבִיאוּ לְבוֹשׁ מַלְכוּת אֲשֶׁר לְבִשְׁבוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְסוֹס אֲשֶׁר רָכַב עָלָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֲשֶׁר נָתַן כְּתֹר מַלְכוּת בְּרֹאשׁוֹ:

¹⁰⁷ **great honor** | יָקָר וְגִדּוּלָה – Accordingly, the phrase is a hendiadys, and the pair of words יָקָר וְגִדּוּלָה express only a single idea. Literally: "honor and greatness." Alternatively: "honor and wealth" (Ibn Ezra) or perhaps, "honor and position", presenting Achashverosh as wondering whether Mordechai had been promoted (and see 3:1, where the same root "גדל" describes Haman's promotion immediately after Mordechai's saving of the king).

¹⁰⁸ **that the king has worn** | אֲשֶׁר לְבִשׁ בּוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ – See R. Yosef Kara and Rashbam that the verse refers to the garments the king wore on the day of his coronation.

¹⁰⁹ **and on whose head a royal crown was placed** | וְאֲשֶׁר נָתַן כְּתֹר מַלְכוּת בְּרֹאשׁוֹ – See Ibn Ezra that the words "his head" refer back to the horse; noting that there was a practice to place a crown on the king's horse to mark it is as his. Alternatively: "when the royal crown was placed on his head", reading "אֲשֶׁר" as "כֹּאשֶׁר" (R. Yosef Nachmias). A third reading suggests: "and the royal crown that was put on his head" (Ibn Janach and Rashbam, who switch the word order to present Haman as suggesting that the man also be adorned with the royal crown). According to this last reading it is surprising that the crown is not mentioned in the continuation. One could explain that it is simply assumed, or that though the king agreed to the other suggestions of Haman, he was not willing for someone else to wear his crown.

(9) and let the clothing and the horse be given into the hand of one of the king's noble¹¹⁰ officers, and they shall dress the man whom the king desires to honor and lead him on horseback through the city square and call before him, 'So shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.'"

(10) The king said to Haman, "Hurry, take the clothing and the horse, as you spoke, and do so to Mordechai the Judean who sits in the king's gate. Do not omit¹¹¹ anything from all that you have spoken!"

(11) Haman took the clothing and the horse, and he dressed Mordechai and led him through the city square; and he called before him, "So shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor."

(12) Mordechai returned to the king's gate, but Haman pushed himself¹¹² to his house, mournful, and with covered head.¹¹³

(13) Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his supporters all that had happened to him, and his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "Truly,¹¹⁴ since Mordechai, before whom you

(ט) וְנָתַן הַלְבוּשׁ וְהַסּוּס עַל־יַד־אִישׁ מִשָּׂרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּרָתִימִים וְהַלְבִּישׁוּ אֶת־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ וְהִרְכִּיבֵהוּ עַל־הַסּוּס בְּרִחוּב הָעִיר וְקִרְאוּ לִפְנֵיו כָּכָה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ:

(י) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהִמָּן מָה־רַח קַח אֶת־הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת־הַסּוּס כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ וַעֲשֵׂה־כֵן לְמֹרְדֵּכַי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲלִתְפַּל דָּבָר מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ:

(יא) וַיִּקַּח הִמָּן אֶת־הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת־הַסּוּס וַיִּלְבָּשׁ אֶת־מֹרְדֵּכַי וַיְרִכִּיבֵהוּ בְּרִחוּב הָעִיר וַיִּקְרָא לִפְנֵיו כָּכָה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ:

(יב) וַיֹּשֶׁב מֹרְדֵּכַי אֶל־שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהִמָּן נִדְחָף אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ אָבֵל וְחָפוּי רֹאשׁ:

(יג) וַיְסַפֵּר הִמָּן לְזֵרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ וּלְכָל־אֹהֲבָיו אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר קָרָהוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ חֲכָמָיו וְזֵרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ אִם מִזֶּרַע הַיְּהוּדִים מֹרְדֵּכַי אֲשֶׁר הַחֲלוּת לְנַפְלָא

¹¹⁰ **king's noble officers** | מִשָּׂרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּרָתִימִים – See the note on Esther 1:3.

¹¹¹ **Do not omit** | אַל תִּפֹּל – Literally: "do not let fall".

¹¹² **pushed himself** | נִדְחָף – Literally: "was pushed", but see Ibn Ezra, R. Yosef Nachmias and others that Haman pushed himself, hurrying due to his great shame.

¹¹³ **covered head** | חָפוּי רֹאשׁ – Haman covered his face in shame and embarrassment, hoping no one would recognize him (Rashbam and Ibn Ezra).

¹¹⁴ **Truly** | אִם – See R. Yosef Nachmias and R. Yosef ibn Yachya who point to Bereshit 47:18 and Shemot 22:24 for similar usages of the word. They note that the more common understanding of "if" is not tenable here, since Haman's supporters knew that Mordechai was of Judean origin, for Haman had told them so (5:13). Others maintain the meaning "if", but suggest that Haman's supporters were questioning whether Mordechai was a convert or had been born Jewish (Ralbag).

have begun to fall, is of Judean descent,¹¹⁵ you will not prevail over him, for you will surely fall before him.

לִפְנֵי לֹא־תוּכַל לוֹ כִּי־נִפּוֹל תִּפּוֹל לִפְנָיו:

(14) While they were still speaking with him, the king's eunuchs came and hurried to bring Haman to the feast that Esther prepared.

(יד) עוֹדִם מְדַבְּרִים עִמּוֹ וְסִרְסִי הַמֶּלֶךְ הִגִּיעוּ וַיָּבִיאוּ לְהָבִיא אֶת־הֶמָּן אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר עָשְׂתָה אֶסְתֵּר:

פרק ז – Chapter 7

(1) The king and Haman came to drink with Queen Esther.

(א) וַיָּבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהֶמָּן לִשְׁתּוֹת עִם־אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה:

(2) The king asked Esther on the second day, too, at the wine feast, "What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Up to half the kingdom, and it shall be done."

(ב) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר גַּם בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי בְּמִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן מִה־שְּׁאַלְתְּךָ אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וַתִּנָּתֶן לָךְ וּמִה־בִקְשֶׁתְּךָ עַד־חֲצֵי הַמַּלְכוּת וַתַּעַשׂ:

(3) Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, the king, and if it pleases the king, may my life be given as my wish and my people as my request.

(ג) וַתַּעַן אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וַתֹּאמֶר אִם־מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב תִּנָּתֶן־לִי נַפְשִׁי בְּשִׁאלַתִּי וְעַמִּי בְּבִקְשָׁתִּי:

(4) For we have been sold, I and my nation, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated; had we been sold as slaves and maidservants, I would be quiet, for the distress¹¹⁶ is not worth the trouble¹¹⁷ to the king."

(ד) כִּי נִמְכַּרְנוּ אֲנִי וְעַמִּי לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְגוֹ וּלְאַבְדּוֹ וְאֵלּוּ לְעַבְדִּים וּלְשִׁפְחוֹת נִמְכַּרְנוּ הַחֲרָשְׁתִּי כִּי אֵין הַצָּר שׁוֹה בְּנֹזֶק הַמֶּלֶךְ:

¹¹⁵ **Judean descent** | מִזֶּרַע הַיְּהוּדִים – Literally: "of the seed of the Judeans".

¹¹⁶ **the distress** | הָצָר – See R. Yosef Kara and Ibn Ezra; and see Iyyov 15:24 and Tehillim 4:2, 119:143 for similar usage of the word. Alternatively: "adversary" or "foe", as used in Bereshit 14:20 and Bemidbar 10:9 (Rashi, Rashbam). According to the latter translation, the clause reads: "for the foe did not find it worthwhile [to worry] about the damage to the king". [Had he cared, instead of decreeing annihilation, he would have sold the nation into slavery, making a profit for the king.]

¹¹⁷ **the trouble** | בְּנֹזֶק – This word appears only here and might relate to the Akkadian "nazaku", meaning "to worry" or "be upset" (CAD, "nazaku"). Alternatively: "damage" or "injury", related to the Aramaic root "נזק", which appears in both Daniel 6 and Ezra 4.

(5) King Achashverosh said —, and he said¹¹⁸ to Queen Esther, "Who is this and which is he¹¹⁹ who has presumed¹²⁰ to do so!?"

(ה) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ וַיֹּאמֶר לְאֶסְתֵּר הַמֶּלֶכָה מִי הוּא זֶה וְאִיזָה הוּא אֲשֶׁר־מָלָא לְבּוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן:

(6) Esther said, "An adversary and an enemy! This evil Haman! And Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

(ו) וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר אִישׁ צָר וְאוֹיֵב הֵמֶן הָרָע הַזֶּה וְהֵמֶן נִבְעַת מִלִּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּלֶכָה:

(7) The king rose in his wrath from the wine feast to the house garden,¹²¹ and Haman remained to plead for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that the king had determined to do him evil.¹²²

(ז) וְהַמֶּלֶךְ קָם בַּחֲמָתוֹ מִמִּשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן אֶל־גֻּן הַבַּיִת וְהֵמֶן עָמַד לִבְקֹשׁ עַל־נַפְשׁוֹ מֵאֶסְתֵּר הַמֶּלֶכָה כִּי רָאָה כִּי־כָלְתָה אֵלָיו הָרָעָה מֵאֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(8) The king returned from the house garden to the house of the wine feast, and Haman was falling¹²³ on the couch¹²⁴ upon which Esther was. The king said, "Would you also¹²⁵ assault¹²⁶ the

(ח) וְהַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁב מִגֻּן הַבַּיִת אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ מִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן וְהֵמֶן נָפַל עַל־הַמֶּטֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶסְתֵּר עָלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ הֲגַם לִכְבוֹשׁ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶכָה עִמִּי

¹¹⁸ **he said** | וַיֹּאמֶר – The doubling of the word "וַיֹּאמֶר" (said) might come to convey the great wrath of the king, who in his anger is initially unable to even formulate his sentence, or who angrily repeats the same thing again and again (see Ibn Ezra). Alternatively, the doubling might indicate that Achashverosh asked his question first to the courtiers in general and then to Esther herself (Ralbag). Cf. R. Yosef Kara who suggests that each "he said" corresponds to one of the two questions asked by Achashverosh.

¹¹⁹ **and which is he** | וְאִי זֶה הוּא – See Ibn Ezra that the two questions are identical in meaning and the repetition is a sign of anger. Alternatively: "and where is he" (R. Yosef Kara) or: "and what is the reason he..." (Malbim).

¹²⁰ **has presumed** | מָלָא לְבּוֹ – Literally: "who has filled his heart". See R"Y ibn Yachya who understands "מלא" to mean "complete" or "perfect", suggesting that Achashverosh wondered who saw himself as so perfect that he dared do such a thing. [In informal English one might say, "Who is so full of himself that he dare do so..."] Cf. Hoil Moshe who understands the phrase to refer to one who is totally consumed by an idea (leaving no room for other, rational thought).

¹²¹ **the house garden** | גֻּן הַבַּיִת – See the note on Esther 1:5.

¹²² **king... do him evil** | כָּלְתָה אֵלָיו הָרָעָה מֵאֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ – More literally: "the evil was determined against him by the king". See similar phraseology in Shemuel I 20:7, 9, 33 and Shemuel I 25:17.

¹²³ **was falling** | נָפַל – See Ibn Ezra that, due to fear, Haman had literally fallen before the queen when Achashverosh entered. Alternatively, the verse might refer to his having prostrated himself in submission before Esther to plead for his life (Rashbam). The present tense might indicate continuity of action. [Cf. Bavli Megillah 16a which suggests that an angel kept pushing Haman onto the couch.]

¹²⁴ **couch** | הַמֶּטֶה – It was Persian custom to recline on couches when dining; see Esther 1:6 as well (Rashi).

¹²⁵ **Would you also** | הֲגַם – Literally: "To also...", though the intent is: "Would you also...".

¹²⁶ **assault** | לִכְבוֹשׁ – Achashverosh might refer to rape (Rashi, Ibn Ezra) or murder (Malbim). Cf. R"Y Ibn Yachya who

queen with me in the house?!" The words left the king's mouth and Haman's face was covered.¹²⁷

(9) Charvonah, one of the eunuchs who were before the king, said, "Behold also the post that Haman has made for Mordechai who spoke well of the king which stands in Haman's house, fifty cubits high!" The king said, "Hang him on it"

(10) They hanged Haman on the post that he had prepared for Mordechai, and the king's wrath abated.

בְּבֵית הַדָּבָר יָצָא מִפִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ וּפְנֵי הָמָן חִפּוּ:

(ט) וַיֹּאמֶר חַרְבוֹנָה אֶחָד מִן־הַסְּרִיסִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ גַּם הִנֵּה־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה הָמָן לְמֹרְדֳּכָי אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־טוֹב עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ עִמָּד בְּבֵית הָמָן גְּבוּהַ חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּלְהוּ עָלָיו:

(י) וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת־הָמָן עַל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־הֵכִין לְמֹרְדֳּכָי וַחֲמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁכְכָה:

פרק ח – Chapter 8

(1) On that day, King Achashverosh gave Queen Esther the house¹²⁸ of Haman, enemy of the Judeans. And Mordechai came before the king because Esther had told him what he was to her.

(2) He took off his ring which he had removed from Haman and gave it to Mordechai, and Esther set Mordechai over the house of Haman.

(3) Esther spoke again¹²⁹ before the king; she fell at his feet and cried, imploring him to remove the evil of Haman, the Agagite, and the plot which he

(א) בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶחָשְׁוֶרֶשׁ לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה אֶת־בֵּית הָמָן צָרָר [הַיְּהוּדִים] (הַיְּהוּדִים) וּמֹרְדֳּכָי בָּא לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי־הִגִּידָה אֶסְתֵּר מָה הוּא־לָהּ:

(ב) וַיִּסֶּר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־טַבַּעְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הָעֵבִיר מֵהָמָן וַיִּתְּנָהּ לְמֹרְדֳּכָי וַתִּשֶׂם אֶסְתֵּר אֶת־מֹרְדֳּכָי עַל־בֵּית הָמָן:

(ג) וַתּוֹסֶף אֶסְתֵּר וַתְּדַבֵּר לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתִּפֹּל לִפְנֵי רַגְלָיו וַתִּבְךְּ וַתִּתְחַנֵּן־לּוֹ לְהַעֲבִיר אֶת־רַעַת הָמָן הָאֲגָגִי וְאֶת־מַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁב עַל־

uniquely suggests that the term means to "forgive", pointing to its usage in in Mikhah 7:19: "יָשׁוּב יִרְחָמֵנוּ יִכְבֹּשׁ עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ". Achashverosh couldn't believe Haman's audacity in pleading for mercy and forgiveness from the queen while he was still so filled with anger.

¹²⁷ **was covered** | חִפּוּ – See Ibn Ezra that it was a custom in Persia for servants to cover the face of one who had angered the king so that he would no longer be seen by the king. Alternatively, the verb is intransitive and means: "fell" (Radak, Sefer HaShorashim, explaining that he looked down out of shame).

¹²⁸ **the house of Haman** | בֵּית הָמָן – See Malbim that the verse refers to Haman's estate, noting that the possessions of those killed by the king belonged to him. Alternatively: "the household of Haman" (R. Yosef Kara and Rashbam, who suggest that Esther was given the members of Haman's family to be her personal servants).

¹²⁹ **spoke again** | וַתִּדְבֹּר ... וַתּוֹסֶף – The word "again" highlights how the danger had not yet passed. In addition to her plea in Chapter 7, Esther must plea again here, for although Haman was hanged, his decree of annihilation was still in effect (Ibn Ezra).

had devised against the Judeans.

(4) The king extended the golden scepter to Esther, and Esther rose and stood before the king.

(5) She said, "If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor before him, and the matter is proper before the king, and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters containing the plot of Haman the son of Hammedata, the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Judeans who are throughout the king's provinces.

(6) For how can I endure¹³⁰ if I see the evil that will befall¹³¹ my nation; and how can I endure if I see the annihilation of my family?"

(7) King Achashverosh said to Queen Esther and Mordechai the Judean, "Behold I have given Haman's house to Esther and they have hanged him on the post because he sent forth his hand against the Judeans.

(8) As for you,¹³² write concerning the Judeans as you see fit, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring, for a text that was written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring may not be revoked."¹³³

(ד) וַיֹּשֶׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר אֶת שֵׁרְבֵט הַזָּהָב וַתָּקָם אֶסְתֵּר וַתַּעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(ה) וַתֹּאמֶר אֶם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב וְאִם־מִצָּאִיתִי חַן לִפְנֵי וְכָשֶׁר הַדָּבָר לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְטוֹבָה אֲנִי בְּעֵינָיו יִכְתֹּב לְהָשִׁיב אֶת־הַסְּפָרִים מִחֲשָׁבַת הָמָן בֶּן־הַמֵּדָתָא הָאֲגָגִי אֲשֶׁר כָּתַב לְאַבֵּד אֶת־הַיְּהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(ו) כִּי אֵיכָכָה אוֹכֵל וְרֹאֲיָתִי בְּרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־יִמָּצֵא אֶת־עַמִּי וְאֵיכָכָה אוֹכֵל וְרֹאֲיָתִי בְּאַבְדֹן מוֹלַדְתִּי:

(ז) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וּלְמֹרְדֵּכַי הַיְּהוּדִי הִנֵּה בֵית־הָמָן נִתְּתִי לְאַסְתֵּר וְאֵתוֹ תָּלוּ עַל־הָעֵץ עַל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח יָדוֹ [בַּיְּהוּדִים] (בִּיהוּדִים):

(ח) וְאַתֶּם כָּתְבוּ עַל־הַיְּהוּדִים כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ וַחֲתֹמוּ בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי־כָתַב אֲשֶׁר־נִכְתָּב בְּשֵׁם־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְנִחַתּוּם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵין לְהָשִׁיב:

¹³⁰ **endure** | אוֹכֵל – See Rashbam and Ibn Ezra that Esther is saying that she will not be able to live with herself if she stands by as all are destroyed. Alternatively: "How can I bear to watch the evil...".

¹³¹ **will befall** | יִמָּצֵא – Literally: "will find".

¹³² **As for you** | וְאַתֶּם – See Rashbam that Achashverosh emphasizes "you", since, being the king, he could not retract his own word, and thus he advised that they instead try to circumvent the original decree (see the next note). See R. Yosef ibn Yachya similarly, that it would be beneath the king's dignity to write an alternative edict.

¹³³ **may not be revoked** | אֵין לְהָשִׁיב – See R. Yosef Kara that the implication is not that the law could not be revoked at all, only that a new signed decree was necessary to do so. Cf. Rashbam and Ibn Ezra that the old decree could not be retracted, and that the new letters attempted to circumvent (not revoke) it. This is why they speak of the Judeans attacking their enemies and not simply of their own salvation.

(9) The king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty third; and it was written according to all that Mordechai had commanded the Judeans, the satraps, the governors, and the officers of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty seven provinces, each province according to its writing and each people according to its language, and to the Judeans according to their writing and their language.¹³⁴

(10) He wrote in the name of King Achashverosh and sealed it with the king's ring, and he sent letters by the runners on horseback, those that rode on the royal¹³⁵ steeds,¹³⁶ bred of the herd,¹³⁷

(11) that the king gave permission to the Judeans in every city to gather and stand up for their

(ט) וַיִּקְרְאוּ סֹפְרֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּעֵת־הַהִיא בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ סִיּוֹן בִּשְׁלוֹשָׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים בּוֹ וַיִּכְתֹּב כָּל־אַשְׁרֵצָנָה מִדָּדִכִּי אֶל־הַיְּהוּדִים וְאֶל־הָאֲחַשְׁדָּרְפָּנִים וְהַפָּחוֹת וְשָׂרֵי הַמְּדִינֹת אֲשֶׁר־מִתְּנוּ וְעַד־כּוֹשׁ שֶׁבַע וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה כְּכַתְּבָהּ וְעַם וְעַם כָּל־שָׁנָה וְאֶל־הַיְּהוּדִים כְּכַתְּבָם וְכָל־שׁוֹנָם:

(י) וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ וַיַּחֲתֶם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁלַח סֹפְרִים בִּיד הָרָצִים בְּסוּסִים לִכְבֵּי הָרָכָשׁ הָאֲחַשְׁתְּרָנִים בְּנֵי הָרָמָכִים:

(יא) אֲשֶׁר נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ לַיְּהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־עִיר וְעִיר לְהִקָּהֵל וְלַעֲמֹד עַל־נַפְשָׁם לְהַשְׁמִיד וְלַהֲרֹג

¹³⁴ **their language** | וְכָל־שׁוֹנָם – This verse is almost linguistically identical to Esther 3:12, highlighting how Haman's scheme was undone and reversed. For discussion of the many other contrasting parallels which highlight this theme, see [https://alhatorah.org/Plot Reversals in Esther](https://alhatorah.org/Plot_Reversals_in_Esther).

¹³⁵ **royal** | הָאֲחַשְׁתְּרָנִים – This word is unique to here and might be a loanword from Persian, where "khshat'ra" means "belonging to the kingdom" (BDB, "אֲחַשְׁתְּרָן"). Alternatively: "swift" (Lekach Tov, apparently relating the word to the root "חוש", to make haste). It is also possible that the word does not modify "הָרָכָשׁ" but is rather a noun, "mules", connected to the following phrase "בְּנֵי הָרָמָכִים", so that the full clause reads "mules, bred of mares" (Ibn Janach, R"Y Kimchi in his Sefer HaGalui, Radak in his Sefer HaShorashim, "רָמַךְ", and Ibn Ezra). R"Y Kimchi suggests that "אֲחַשְׁתְּרָנִים" is a compound word with the Persian prefix "אחש" meaning great, and "תרנים" standing for "תרי מינים" ("two species"), a hybrid.

¹³⁶ **steeds** | הָרָכָשׁ – See Sefer HaShorashim of Ibn Janach, Rashbam, and others. Outside of our chapter, the word appears only in Melakhim I 5:8 and Mikhah 1:13, where it is connected to royal horses or chariots, implying that such horses were of high quality or especially fast. Alternatively: "property" (Ibn Ezra, relating the word to the noun "רכוש"), or: "swift camels" (Rashi and see Radak in his Sefer HaShorashim that, since the word appears alongside "horses", it must refer to a different species of animal).

¹³⁷ **bred of the herd** | בְּנֵי הָרָמָכִים – The word "רָמָכִים" appears only here and might be a loan word, related either to the Middle Persian "ramak" or the Syriac "ܪܡܚܐ", meaning "a herd of horses" (BDB, "רָמַךְ", and see also Sefer HaArukh, pointing to the word's usage in Bavli Taanit 23a). The connotation would be that these horses were from the royal stables, bred for the king. Alternatively: "bred of mares" (Radak, Sefer HaShorashim, and Ibn Ezra who connect "רָמַךְ" to the similar Arabic, where it refers to a female horse; see also Mishna Kilayim 8:5), or: "riders of the mares" (understanding "בְּנֵי" to refer to a group of people).

lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate every army, people, and province who attack¹³⁸ them, little ones and women, and to plunder their spoils,

(12) on one day, in all the provinces of King Achashverosh, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

(13) A copy of the text to be given as law in every province was revealed to all the peoples, that the Judeans should be prepared for that day, to take vengeance on their enemies.

(14) The runners, riders of the royal steeds,¹³⁹ left in haste, pressed by the king's word; and the law was given in Shushan the castle.

(15) And Mordechai went out from before the king in royal clothing: blue and white,¹⁴⁰ a great golden crown,¹⁴¹ and a robe¹⁴² of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan shouted¹⁴³ and was happy.

(16) There was light and happiness, and

וּלְאַבֹּד אֶת־כָּל־חַיִּיל עִם וּמְדִינָה הַצָּרִים אֹתָם
טַף וְנָשִׁים וְשָׁלָלָם לְבוֹז:

(יב) בְּיוֹם אֶחָד בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ
בְּשִׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנֵים־עָשָׂר הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ
אָדָר:

(יג) פִּתְשָׁנוּ הַפָּתָב לְהַנִּתֵּן דָּת בְּכָל־מְדִינָה
וּמְדִינָה גְלוּי לְכָל־הָעַמִּים וְלִהְיוֹת [הַיְּהוּדִים]
[הַיְּהוּדִים] [עֲתִידִים] (עֲתוּדִים) לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
לְהִנָּקֵם מֵאִיְבֵיהֶם:

(יד) הָרָצִים וְכָבִי הָרָכָשׁ הָאֲחַשְׁתָּרְנִים יָצְאוּ
מִבְּהֵלִים וְדַחוּפִים בְּדַבַּר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַדָּת נִתְּנָה
בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה:

(טו) וּמֶרְדֵּכָי יָצָא מִלִּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלְבוּשׁ
מַלְכוּת תְּכָלֶת וְחֹזֶר וְעֹטֶרֶת זָהָב גְּדוּלָּה
וְתִכְרִיף בּוּץ וְאַרְגָּמָן וְהָעִיר שׁוֹשֶׁן צָהֳלָה
וְשִׂמְחָה:

(טז) לַיְּהוּדִים הִיטָה אוֹרָה וְשִׂמְחָה וְשָׁשׂוּ

¹³⁸ **attack them** | הַצָּרִים – Alternatively: "who had attacked them", in the past. If so, the decree did not simply grant permission to the Judeans to defend themselves, but also gave them the right to take revenge on those who had previously proven to be their enemies (Ibn Ezra and cf. Rashbam on "וְלַעֲמֹד עַל נַפְשָׁם").

¹³⁹ **riders of the royal steeds** | רָכָבִי הָרָכָשׁ הָאֲחַשְׁתָּרְנִים – See the notes on verse 10.

¹⁴⁰ **white** | וְחֹזֶר – See the note on Esther 1:6.

¹⁴¹ **golden crown** | וְעֹטֶרֶת זָהָב – Cf. R. Yosef ibn Yachya who uniquely suggests that the verse refers to a canopy upon which lay a large golden crown. When Mordechai walked through the streets four people would accompany him, carrying the canopy.

¹⁴² **and a robe** | וְתִכְרִיף – The word appears only this once in Tanakh, but is found several times in Rabbinic literature. Commentators assume that here it refers to some type of garment which is wrapped, either a cloak or shawl (Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and others) or a turban (Ralbag).

¹⁴³ **shouted** | צָהֳלָה – Alternatively: "shone" (Ibn Ezra on vs. 16, noting how verse 16 mentions "light and happiness"; see Tehillim 104:15 for this usage of the root).

rejoicing¹⁴⁴ and honor for the Judeans.

(17) And in every province and in every city, wherever the king's word and his law reached, there was happiness and rejoicing among the Judeans, feasting and celebration.¹⁴⁵ And many from the people of the lands were passing themselves off as Judean,¹⁴⁶ because fear of the Judeans had fallen upon them.

(יז) וּבְכָל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וּבְכָל־עִיר וְעִיר מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דְּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ מָגִיעַ שְׂמֵחָה וְשִׂשׂוֹן לַיהוּדִים מִשְׁתָּה וַיּוֹם טוֹב וְרַבִּים מֵעַמִּי הָאֲרָץ מִתְיָהִדִּים כִּי־נָפַל פַּחַד־הַיהוּדִים עֲלֵיהֶם:

Chapter 9 – פרק ט

(1) In the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, when the time came for the king's word and his law to be enacted, on the day that the enemies of the Judeans had hoped to rule over them, but it was the opposite,¹⁴⁷ that the Judeans ruled over those who hated them,

(א) וּבִשְׁנֵי עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר בְּשִׁלוּשֵׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם בּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִגִּיעַ דְּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ לְהַעֲשׂוֹת בַּיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר שָׁבְרוּ אֹיְבֵי הַיהוּדִים לְשָׁלוֹט בָּהֶם וְנִהְפָּךְ הוּא אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלֹטוּ הַיהוּדִים הֵמָּה בְּשִׁנְאֵיהֶם:

(2) the Judeans gathered in their cities throughout the provinces of King Achashverosh to send forth their hand against those who sought their harm, and no one could stand before them because fear of them had fallen upon all the peoples.

(ב) נִקְהָלוּ הַיהוּדִים בְּעָרֵיהֶם בְּכָל־מְדִינוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ לְשַׁלַּח יָד בַּמְבַקְשֵׁי רַעְתָּם וְאִישׁ לֹא־עָמַד לִפְנֵיהֶם כִּי־נָפַל פַּחַדָּם עַל־כָּל־הָעַמִּים:

¹⁴⁴ **happiness, and rejoicing** | וְשִׂמְחָה וְשִׂשׂוֹן – These two words are somewhat synonymous and often appear together, making it difficult to determine how, if at all, they differ. Ibn Ezra posits that "שְׂמֵחָה" is the internal emotion of joy, while "שִׂשׂוֹן" is the external expression thereof.

¹⁴⁵ **celebration** | וַיּוֹם טוֹב – Outside of Esther, the phrase appears only once, in Shemuel I 25:8, in the context of Naval's sheep shearing festivities. Thus, in contrast to the modern usage of the term (where it refers to religious festivals), in Tanakh it need not have a religious connotation. Literally: "a good day".

¹⁴⁶ **were passing themselves off as Judean** | מִתְיָהִדִּים – See Ibn Ezra. Alternatively: "were becoming Jews" or: "were passing themselves off as Jews" (Rabag).

¹⁴⁷ **it was the opposite** | וְנִהְפָּךְ הוּא – More literally: "but it was turned around". For a discussion of the many plot reversals in the book and how these are highlighted through linguistic contrasting parallels, see <https://alhatorah.org/Plot-Reversals-in-Esther>.

(3) And all the officers of the provinces, the satraps,¹⁴⁸ the governors, and the king's workmen were supporting¹⁴⁹ the Judeans because the fear of Mordechai had fallen upon them.

(ג) וְכָל־שָׂרֵי הַמְּדִינֹת וְהָאֲחֻשְׁדָּרָפָּנִים וְהַפָּחוֹת וְעַשֵּׂי הַמְּלָאכָה אֲשֶׁר לַמֶּלֶךְ מִנְּשָׂאִים אֶת־ הַיְּהוּדִים כִּי־נָפַל פַּחַד־מֶרְדֵּכָי עֲלֵיהֶם:

(4) For Mordechai was great¹⁵⁰ in the king's house, and his fame was spreading throughout the provinces; for the man Mordechai was becoming greater and greater.¹⁵¹

(ד) כִּי־גָדוֹל מֶרְדֵּכָי בְּבֵית הַמֶּלֶךְ וְשִׁמְעוֹ הוֹלֵךְ בְּכָל־הַמְּדִינֹת כִּי־הָאִישׁ מֶרְדֵּכָי הוֹלֵךְ וְגָדוֹל:

(5) The Judeans smote their enemies, a strike of the sword, of killing and annihilation. They did as they desired to those who hated them.

(ה) וַיַּכּוּ הַיְּהוּדִים בְּכָל־אֹיְבֵיהֶם מִכַּת־חֶרֶב וַהֲרֹג וְאַבְדָּן וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְּשִׂנְאֵיהֶם כְּרָצוֹנָם:

(6) And in Shushan the castle, the Judeans killed and annihilated five hundred men,

(ו) וּבְשׁוּשָׁן הַבִּיָּלָה הָרְגוּ הַיְּהוּדִים וְאַבְדּוּ חֲמִשָּׁה מֵאוֹת אִישׁ:

(7) and Parshandata, and Dalfon, and Aspata,

(ז) וְאֶת | פַּרְשַׁנְדָּתָא וְאֶת | דַּלְפֹּן וְאֶת | אֶסְפָּתָא:

(8) and Porata, and Adalia, and Aridata

(ח) וְאֶת | פּוֹרְתָא וְאֶת | אַדְלָיָא וְאֶת | אַרִידָתָא:

(9) and Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vaizata.

(ט) וְאֶת | פַּרְמִשְׁתָּא וְאֶת | אַרִיסַי וְאֶת | אַרְדַּי וְאֶת | וַיְזָתָא:

(10) They killed the ten sons of Haman, son of Hammedata, enemy of the Judeans, but they did not send forth their hand¹⁵² on the spoils.

(י) עֲשֶׂרֶת בְּנֵי הָמָן בֶּן־הַמֶּדְתָּא צֶרֶר הַיְּהוּדִים הָרְגוּ וּבְבִזָּה לֹא שְׁלַחוּ אֶת־יָדָם:

¹⁴⁸ **the satraps** | וְהָאֲחֻשְׁדָּרָפָּנִים – See the note on Esther 3:12.

¹⁴⁹ **were supporting** | מִנְּשָׂאִים – Similarly: "were assisting" (Malbim and Hoil Moshe, and see similar usage of the root in Melakhim I 9:11). Alternatively: "exalting", "currying their favor," or: "showing partiality" (Lekach Tov, comparing the word to the phrase "נשא פנים" in Vayikra 19:15 or Devarim 28:50).

¹⁵⁰ **great** | גָּדוֹל – Here, the word might mean important or powerful.

¹⁵¹ **becoming greater and greater** | הוֹלֵךְ וְגָדוֹל – See R"Y ibn Yachya. Often, when the word "הולך" or "הולך" is paired with another verb (or adjective), it indicates a continuous action or intensification. For other examples, see Shemot 19:19 ("קול השפיר הולך וְחֹזֵק"), Shemuel II 15:12 ("וְהָעָם הוֹלֵךְ וְרַב"), and Yonah 1:11 ("הָיָם הוֹלֵךְ וְסֹעֵר").

¹⁵² **did not send forth their hand** | לֹא שְׁלַחוּ אֶת יָדָם – This is the same phrase used to describe how the Judeans attacked their enemies (verse 2), highlighting how the Judeans only fought against their foes, but did not partake of the spoils. R. Yosef Kara notes that even though they were permitted to do so, they refrained so that no one would say

(11) On that day the number of those killed in Shushan the castle came before the king.

(12) The king said to Queen Esther, "In Shushan the castle, the Judeans killed and annihilated five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman; what must they have done¹⁵³ in the rest of the king's provinces! What is your wish? It shall be granted to you. And what is your further request? It shall be done.

(13) Esther said, "If it pleases the king, let it be permitted for the Judeans in Shushan to do also tomorrow according to the law of today, and let them hang the ten sons of Haman on the post.

(14) The king said to do so, and the law was given in Shushan; and they hanged the ten sons of Haman.

(15) The Judeans that were in Shushan gathered also on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and they killed three hundred men in Shushan, but they did not send forth their hand on the spoils.

(16) And the rest of the Judeans that were in the king's provinces gathered to stand up for their lives¹⁵⁴ and to find rest from their enemies,¹⁵⁵

(יא) בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא בָּא מִסְפַּר הַהֲרוּגִים בְּשׁוּשָׁן
הַבִּירָה לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

(יב) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה בְּשׁוּשָׁן
הַבִּירָה הֲרָגוּ הַיְּהוּדִים וְאַבְדוּ חֲמִשָּׁה מֵאוֹת אִישׁ
וְאֵת עֶשְׂרֵת בְּנֵיהֶֽמָן בְּשָׂאֵר מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ מֶה
עָשׂוּ וּמִה־שְׂאֵלָתְךָ וַיִּנָּתֶן לָךְ וּמִה־בִקְשֶׁתְּךָ עוֹד
וְתַעֲשִׂי:

(יג) וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר אִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יִנָּתֶן גַּם־
מֵחֹר לַיהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּשׁוּשָׁן לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּדַת הַיּוֹם
וְאֵת עֶשְׂרֵת בְּנֵיהֶֽמָן יִתְּלוּ עַל־הָעֵץ:

(יד) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן וַתִּנָּתֶן דָּת
בְּשׁוּשָׁן וְאֵת עֶשְׂרֵת בְּנֵיהֶֽמָן תָּלוּ:

(טו) וַיִּקְהָלוּ [הַיְּהוּדִים] (הַיְּהוּדִים) אֲשֶׁר־
בְּשׁוּשָׁן גַּם בַּיּוֹם אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ אֲדָר
וַיַּהֲרֹגוּ בְּשׁוּשָׁן שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אִישׁ וּבְבִזָּה לֹא
שָׁלְחוּ אֶת־זָדָם:

(טז) וּשְׂאֵר הַיְּהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּמְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ
נִקְהָלוּ וַעֲמָד עַל־נַפְשָׁם וְנוּחַ מֵאִיְבֵיהֶם וְהֲרוּגִ

that they killed only for profit. Ibn Ezra suggests that they brought the spoils to the king's treasury, hoping that in so doing they would curry more favor with the king.

¹⁵³ **what must they done** | מֶה עָשׂוּ – See Lekach Tov, R. Yosef Kara, and others that Achashverosh's statement is a rhetorical question, based on an a priori argument. If in the castle, where fear of the king was great, nonetheless so many stood against the Jews and were killed, how many more must have fought and been killed elsewhere! Alternatively: "What have they done...", with Achashverosh asking a real question (however, the fact that Esther does not answer the question supports the first reading).

¹⁵⁴ **to stand up for their lives** | וַעֲמָד עַל נַפְשָׁם – Others translate more loosely: "to defend themselves" or, in the past tense: "defended themselves" (see the note on 2:3). Cf. R. Yosef Kara that the phrase is short for: "to stand against [those that sought] their lives".

¹⁵⁵ **to find rest from their enemies** | וְנוּחַ מֵאִיְבֵיהֶם – See R. Yosef Kara. Alternatively: "they rested", and see Ibn Ezra that, if so, one must understand the last clause of the verse to have happened earlier, for the people would only have

killing seventy-five thousand of those who hated them – but they did not send forth their hand on the spoils –

(17) on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and they rested on the fourteenth and made it a day of feasting and happiness.

(18) And the Jews that were in Shushan gathered on the thirteenth and the fourteenth, and they rested on the fifteenth and made it a day of feasting and happiness.

(19) Therefore the Judean villagers, who dwell in unwallied towns, make the fourteenth of the month of Adar a day of happiness¹⁵⁶ and feasting, of celebration and sending of portions one to another.

(20) Mordechai wrote these things,¹⁵⁷ and he sent letters to all the Judeans who were throughout the provinces of King Achashverosh, near and far,

(21) to establish for themselves¹⁵⁸ to observe the fourteenth of the month of Adar and the fifteenth, every year,

(22) as the days in which the Judeans had rested from their enemies, and the month which had turned from grief to sorrow and from mourning to celebration, to make them days of feasting and

בְּשֵׁנָאֵיהֶם חֲמֵשָׁה וּשְׁבַעִים אֶלֶף וּבְבִזָּה לֹא שָׁלְחוּ אֶת־יָדָם:

(יז) בְּיוֹם־שְׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ אָדָר וְנָחוּ בְּאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וַעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ יוֹם מְשֻׁתָּה וְשִׂמְחָה:

(יח) [וְהַיְּהוּדִים] (וְהַיְּהוּדִים) אֲשֶׁר־בְּשׁוּשָׁן נִקְהָלוּ בְּשְׁלוֹשָׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וּבְאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וְנָחוּ בַּחֲמֵשָׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וַעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ יוֹם מְשֻׁתָּה וְשִׂמְחָה:

(יט) עַל־כֵּן הֵיהוּדִים [הַפְּרָזִים] (הַפְּרוּזִים) הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּעָרֵי הַפְּרָזוֹת עָשִׂים אֶת יוֹם אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ אָדָר שִׂמְחָה וּמְשֻׁתָּה וְיוֹם טוֹב וּמְשַׁלַּח מָנוֹת אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ:

(כ) וַיִּכְתֹּב מֶרְדֳּכָי אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּשְׁלַח סִפְרִים אֶל־כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־מְדִינוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ הַקְּרוּבִים וְהַרְחוֹקִים:

(כא) לְקִיָּם עֲלֵיהֶם לִהְיוֹת עָשִׂים אֶת יוֹם אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ אָדָר וְאֶת יוֹם־חֲמֵשָׁה עָשָׂר בּוֹ בְּכָל־שָׁנָה וּשְׁנָה:

(כב) כִּימִים אֲשֶׁר־נָחוּ בָהֶם הַיְּהוּדִים מֵאִיְבֵיהֶם וְהַחֹדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר נִהְפָּךְ לָהֶם מִיָּגוֹן לְשִׂמְחָה וּמֵאֲבֵל לְיוֹם טוֹב לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם יְמֵי מְשֻׁתָּה

rested after the fighting. The verse would read: "they rested from their enemies, having had killed..." [See Shemot 16:20 and Ibn Ezra there for other examples of words which should be understood as if written in the past perfect.]

¹⁵⁶ **a day of happiness** | שִׂמְחָה – The words "a day of" are assumed by the text and do not appear in the Hebrew.

¹⁵⁷ **these things** | אֶת הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה – See Rashi that the phrase refers to the writing of the Book of Esther. Alternatively, it refers merely to the mitzvot of Purim and the brief summary of events mentioned in the following verses (GR"A, Malbim).

¹⁵⁸ **to establish for themselves** | לְקִיָּם עֲלֵיהֶם – See Hoil Moshe. Alternatively: "enjoining them". See also verse 31 where the phrase is again similarly ambiguous.

happiness, of sending of portions one to another and gifts to the poor.

(23) And the Judeans accepted upon themselves to do as they had begun and that which Mordechai had written to them.

(24) For Haman the son of Hammedata, the Agagite, enemy of the Judeans, had plotted against the Jews to annihilate them, and he cast a pur, which is a lottery, to disorient¹⁵⁹ and annihilate them.

(25) And when it came¹⁶⁰ before the king, he said, "Despite the letter,¹⁶¹ the evil plot that Haman devised against the Jews shall return on his own head", and they hanged him and his sons on a post.

(26) Therefore they call these days Purim, after the pur. Therefore, on account of all the words of this epistle,¹⁶² and what they had seen regarding this, and what had happened to them,¹⁶³

(27) the Judeans established and accepted on

וּשְׂמֵחָהּ וּמְשַׁלַּח מְנוּחַת אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ וּמִתְּנוּת לְאֲבִינִים:

(כג) וְקִבְּלוּ הַיְּהוּדִים אֶת אֲשֶׁר־הֻחְלוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר־כָּתַב מֶרְדֵּכַי אֲלֵיהֶם:

(כד) כִּי הָמָן בֶּן־הַמֶּדְתָּא הָאֲגָגִי צִרָר כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים חֶשֶׁב עַל־הַיְּהוּדִים לְאַבְדֵם וְהִפֵּל פּוּר הוּא הַגּוֹרֹל לְהַמָּם וּלְאַבְדֵם:

(כה) וּבִבְאָה לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אָמַר עַם־הַסֵּפֶר יָשׁוּב מִחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר־חֶשֶׁב עַל־הַיְּהוּדִים עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וְתָלוּ אוֹתוֹ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו עַל־הָעֵץ:

(כו) עַל־כֵּן קָרְאוּ לַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה פּוּרִים עַל־שֵׁם הַפּוּר עַל־כֵּן עַל־כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הָאֲגִירָת הַזֹּאת וּמָה רָאוּ עַל־כֶּכָּה וּמָה הִגִּיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם:

(כז) קִיָּמוּ [וְקִבְּלוּ] (וּקְבַל) הַיְּהוּדִים | עֲלֵיהֶם |

¹⁵⁹ **to disorient** | **לְהַמָּם** – See Ibn Ezra and Hoil Moshe that part of Haman's strategy was to disorient and disquiet the people when they heard of the decree, demoralizing them so that they would not be able to defend themselves when the day came for it to go into effect.

¹⁶⁰ **when it came** | **וּבִבְאָה** – See Ibn Ezra and Malbim that the verse refers to Achashverosh becoming aware of Haman's plot and true intentions. Alternatively: "when she came", referring to Esther's coming to the king to plead for mercy (Rashi, R. Yosef Kara, Rashbam).

¹⁶¹ **despite the letter** | **עַם הַסֵּפֶר** – See Shadal (cited by Hoil Moshe) that the verse refers to the first letters sent out by Haman with the decree of destruction and that "עַם" means "despite" (see Nechemyah 5:18 for similar usage). Alternatively: "with the letter" or "by means of the letter", referring to the second letter which allowed the Jews to defend themselves (Malbim), "besides the letter", also referring to the second letter (Rashbam), or: "by the letter", with the verse reading: "Achashverosh commanded by letter", i.e. in writing (Rashi and cf. Ibn Ezra).

¹⁶² **epistle** | **הָאֲגִירָת** – This word appears only in the later books of Tanakh (Esther, Nechemyah, and Divrei HaYamim) and might be a loan word from the Akkadian, "egirtu", via the Aramaic אֲגִירְתָּא (BDB).

¹⁶³ **what had happened to them** | **וּמָה הִגִּיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם** – Alternatively: "and what they had heard" (Ibn Ezra). Literally: "what had reached them".

themselves and on their offspring, and on all those who join them,¹⁶⁴ that they would not cease to observe these two days as written and as set in their times, every year.

(28) And these days are to be remembered and observed in every generation, in every family, in every province and in every city. And these days of Purim shall not cease from the Judeans, and the memory of them shall not end¹⁶⁵ from among their offspring.

(29) Queen Esther, the daughter of Avichayil, and Mordechai the Judean wrote with all their powers¹⁶⁶ to establish this second¹⁶⁷ epistle of Purim.

(30) He sent letters to all the Judeans, to the one hundred and twenty seven provinces of the kingdom of Achashverosh, words of peace and truth,

(31) to establish these days of Purim in their

ועל־זרעם ועל כל־הנָּלִיִּם עֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יַעֲבֹר
לְהִיטּוֹת עֲשִׂים אֶת שְׁנֵי הַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה כְּכַתְּבָם
וְכַזְּמָנָם בְּכָל־שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה:

(כח) וְהַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה נִזְכָּרִים וְנַעֲשִׂים בְּכָל־דּוֹר
וְדוֹר מִשְׁפָּחָהּ וּמִשְׁפָּחָהּ מְדִינָהּ וּמְדִינָהּ וְעִיר
וְעִיר וְיָמֵי הַפּוּרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֹא יַעֲבֹרוּ מִתּוֹךְ
הַיְּהוּדִים וְזַכָּרָם לֹא־יִסּוּף מִזֶּרַע:

(כט) וְתַכְתֵּב אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה בִּתְּאֻבֵּיתָא
וּמֶרְדֵּכַי הַיְּהוּדִי אֶת־כָּל־תִּקְוָה לְקַיֵּם אֶת אֲגֻרַת
הַפָּרִים הַזֹּאת הַשְּׁנִית:

(ל) וַיִּשְׁלַח סְפָרִים אֶל־כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים אֶל־שֶׁבַע
וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה מַלְכוּת אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ דְּבָרֵי
שָׁלוֹם וָאֻמָּת:

(לא) לְקַיֵּם אֶת־יְמֵי הַפָּרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּזִמְנֵיהֶם

¹⁶⁴ **who join them** | הַנָּלִיִּם עֲלֵיהֶם – This might refer to any who would convert to Judaism in the future (Rashi and others).

¹⁶⁵ **end** | יִסּוּף – See Rashi and Ibn Ezra, noting that the word's root is "סוף" (to end) which is similar to, but should not be confused with, the root "ספה" (to wipe out).

¹⁶⁶ **with all their powers** | אֶת כָּל תִּקְוָה – See Malbim that Esther wrote the epistle with the power of her royal position, so as to ensure that its content was established as law. [According to him, "אֶת" here means "with" and is not being used to mark a direct object.] Similarly: "she wrote forcefully" (see R"Y ibn Yachya and Hoil Moshe). Alternatively: "about all the power", referring to the power of the miracles that had occurred (Rashi, Rashbam).

¹⁶⁷ **second** | הַשְּׁנִית – Rashbam maintains that this "second letter" stands in contrast to the first letter written by Mordechai and Esther in Chapter 8, which gave the Judeans permission to fight against their enemies. Alternatively, this is a second letter about observance of the holiday, in addition to the one written by Mordechai (Ibn Ezra, who posits that after several years the people had become lax about observance). Malbim, in contrast, suggests that this second epistle contained the entire Book of Esther, in contrast to Mordechai's first letter which was a much briefer account (see also Yosef Lekach and the GR"A). Cf. Rashi who agrees that the verse refers to the Book of Esther, but he thinks this is identical to what Mordechai wrote and that it was sent out in consecutive years, explaining "הַשְּׁנִית" to mean: "in the second year".

times, as Mordechai the Judean and Queen Esther had established for them,¹⁶⁸ and as they had established the matters of their fasts¹⁶⁹ and their cries for themselves and their offspring.

(32) And Esther's bidding¹⁷⁰ established these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.¹⁷¹

כָּאֲשֶׁר קִים עֲלֵיהֶם מֶרְדֵּכַי הַיְּהוּדִי וְאֶסְתֵּר
הַמֶּלֶכָה וְכָאֲשֶׁר קִימוּ עַל־נַפְשָׁם וְעַל־זֶרְעָם
דְּבִרֵי הַצּוּמוֹת וְזַעֲקָתָם:

(לב) וּמֵאֲמַר אֶסְתֵּר קִים דְּבִרֵי הַפְּרִים הָאֵלֶּה
וְנִכְתָּב בַּסֵּפֶר:

פרק י – Chapter 10

(1) King Achashverosh placed a tax upon the land and the isles of the sea.

(2) And all his powerful and mighty deeds, and the account of the greatness of Mordechai, whom the king had promoted, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

(3) For Mordechai the Judean was second to King Achashverosh, and great among the Judeans, and pleasing to the multitudes of his brothers,¹⁷²

(א) וַיִּשֶׂם הַמֶּלֶךְ [אַחַשְׁוֶרוֹשׁ] (אחַשְׁרֹשׁ) | מִס
עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְאֵי הַיָּם:

(ב) וְכָל־מַעֲשֵׂה תִקְפוֹ וּגְבוּרָתוֹ וּפְרָשֵׁת גְּדֻלָּת
מֶרְדֵּכַי אֲשֶׁר גָּדְלוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ הִלּוּאֵיהֶם כְּתוּבִים
עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבִרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי מְדִי וּפָרַס:

(ג) כִּי מֶרְדֵּכַי הַיְּהוּדִי מִשְׁנֶה לְמֶלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֶרוֹשׁ
וְגָדוֹל לַיְּהוּדִים וְרָצוּי לְרֹב אֶחָיו דִּרְשׁ טוֹב

¹⁶⁸ **had established for them** | קִים עֲלֵיהֶם – See Hoil Moshe that according to those that suggest that Esther had needed to re-establish the holiday (see the note on verse 29), this refers to Mordechai's original establishment thereof; otherwise, it could refer to Esther and Mordechai's personal acceptance of the holiday. Alternatively: "had enjoined them".

¹⁶⁹ **fasts** | הַצּוּמוֹת – This refers either to the nation's fasting at Esther's request and the annual fast in its commemoration (R"Y ibn Yachya) or to the four fast days which commemorate of the destruction of the Temple (Ibn Ezra, Ralbag). Esther says that just as the nation accepted upon itself to mourn on those days, so too it should accept upon itself to celebrate on these days.

¹⁷⁰ **Esther's bidding** | וּמֵאֲמַר אֶסְתֵּר – In other words: "Esther's command". The word "מֵאֲמַר" appears only three times in all of Tanakh, all in the Book of Esther, in 1:15 when Vashti does not do Achashverosh's bidding, in 2:20 when Esther does Mordechai's bidding, and here, where Esther's bidding ratifies the holiday.

¹⁷¹ **in the book** | בַּסֵּפֶר – See Ibn Ezra that the verse refers to an actual book or scroll (rather than a letter), which has since been lost. Alternatively, it refers to the Book of Esther which was accepted as part of the Biblical canon (Rashi and see Bavli Megillah 7a).

¹⁷² **to the multitudes of his brothers** | לְרֹב אֶחָיו – Similarly: "his many brothers" (Rid and Hoil Moshe). Alternatively: "most of his brothers", implying that some were displeased (Bavli Megillah 16b, Rashi). For discussion and the

seeking the good of his people and speaking for
the welfare of all his offspring.¹⁷³

לְעַמּוֹ וְדִבֵּר שְׁלוֹם לְכָל־זֶרְעוֹ:

ramifications of each reading, see: [https://alhatorah.org/Mordechai's Legacy](https://alhatorah.org/Mordechai's%20Legacy) – ורצוי לרב אחיו.

¹⁷³ **speaking for the welfare...** | וְדִבֵּר שְׁלוֹם לְכָל־זֶרְעוֹ – See Rashbam that this clause is parallel in meaning to the previous one. Alternatively: "speaking peace to all...", meaning either that, despite his exalted position, he was humble enough to greet all with "Shalom" (Ibn Ezra), or that he reassured others, promising them peace (Shadal, cited by Hoil Moshe).