



Megillat מגילת אסתר • Esther



The Meaning of Purim Silliness

On Purim we recall an existential threat to the Jewish people, a threat overcome through courage and conviction. Celebrating Mordecai's convictions and Esther's courage, on Purim we laugh, mock, dress in costumes, and act silly. Why?

We find the answer by considering what happens at the decisive moment of Purim's story as told in the Book of Esther, Megillat Esther. "...but Mordecai would not kneel or bow low...for he explained to them that he was a Jew." (3:2-4)

"When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel or bow low to him, Haman was filled with rage. But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone; having been told who Mordecai's people were, Haman plotted to do away with all the Jews, Mordecai's people, throughout the kingdom of Ahasuerus." (3:5-6)

Mordecai is the first person the Bible labels "a Jew." Our ancient rabbis ask why. Rabbi Yohanan explains. By not bowing down to Haman, Mordecai "repudiated idolatry." A Jew is distinctive. Someone who repudiates idolatry. Idolatry falsifies. Idolatry fools. Idolatry forgets. We who are Jews, and we all who are caring human beings, speak truth, seek wisdom, and remember what is right.

"Haman then said to King Ahasuerus, 'There is a certain people, scattered and dispersed among the other peoples in all the provinces of your realm, whose laws are different from those of any other people and who do not obey the king's laws; and it is not in Your Majesty's interest to tolerate them.'"

The Book of Esther is among our earliest diaspora tales. A story written about and for the 4th century B.C.E. Jews of Persia. A success story of Jewish acculturation and pride in Jewish identity. Mordecai and Esther are at home in Persia. Mordecai has access to the royal court. He knows his heritage and honors the Jewish religion. In this context Haman's hatred exists. Mordecai refuses to bow down. Haman wonders. Who are these people of different religious expression living among us?

It's a story of ancient times and today. A story of the role we Jews can and do play in the societies we call home. A story of the irrational malicious curiosity our success, achievement, and mere presence seem to provoke.

After Haman describes the Jews as being different, he offers the king lots of money for permission to kill them. The king's answer is perplexing. Prior to this moment we know nothing of his feelings about the Jews of his realm.

"If it please Your Majesty, let an edict be drawn for their destruction, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the stewards for deposit in the royal treasury.

Thereupon the king removed his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the foe of the Jews. And the king said, 'The money and the people are yours to do with as you see fit.'" (3:8-11)

At the end of the tale, Queen Esther identifies herself to King Ahasuerus as a Jew. She asks that her life and the lives of her people be spared. The king becomes enraged at what might be. He takes out his anger against Haman. (7:3-6)

Proudly and clearly, we embrace our precious identity. We are a people whose religious customs are different. We affirm our Jewish tradition's moral vision and cultural heritage. Which is why we laugh and act silly on Purim.

We rejoice in the possibility of living significant and meaningful lives. We delight in the promise and pride of Jewish identity. We celebrate our memories of the past and our hopes for the future. We are glad to pursue our goals and our dreams. To work toward our purposes in life and for the betterment of our world. Our best response, not our defense, to antisemitism is to laugh at that craziness. To be happy for the privilege of being Jews.

In life, our goal is to do more than survive. Our goal is to thrive. To live well. To do good. To be happy. To laugh at the absurd. Humor protects us. It helps us cope. It nurtures our souls. Purim humor transforms the scourge of antisemitism into the joy of celebrating Judaism.

One of the most famous verses in Megillat Esther tells how days of grief and mourning became days of festive joy. "The Jews enjoyed light and gladness, happiness and honor." (8:16)

On Purim we take respite from all that is difficult. A very good way to be in life. Rejoice. Laugh. Be silly. Care. Defend. Celebrate. This is the meaning of Purim silliness.

Commentaries written by Rabbi Ron Shulman.

B'rakhot before reading the Megillah

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh haOlam

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the Universe

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ

asher kid-sha'nu b'mitz-votav v'tzi-vanu

Whose commandments sanctify us as a people, and commanded us

עַל מִקְרָא מְגִלָּה.

al mikra Megillah.

to read the Megillah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh haOlam,

Blessed are You Eternal, our God Sovereign of the Universe,

שְׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵי הַיּוֹם.

sh'a-sah nisim la'avo-tei-nu ba-yamim ha-hem baz'man ha-zeh.

who performed miracles for our ancestors during these days at those times.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh haOlam,

Blessed are You Eternal, our God Sovereign of the Universe,

שֶׁהֵחַיָּנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי הַיּוֹם.

sh'he-he-ya-nu v'ki-y'ma-nu v'hi-gi-a-nu laZ'man haZeh.

for the gift of our lives, for all that sustains us and for enabling us to reach this season.

מגילת אסתר

Megillat Esther

פרק א' / Chapter 1

Esther 1:1-22

(1) Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus—this is Ahasuerus who reigned, from India to Ethiopia, over a hundred and seven and twenty provinces — (2) that in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the castle, (3) in the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the army of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him; (4) when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty, many days, even a hundred and fourscore days. (5) And when these days were fulfilled, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the castle, both great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace; (6) there were hangings of white, fine cotton, and blue, bordered with cords of fine linen and purple, upon silver rods and pillars of marble; the couches were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of green, and white, and shell, and onyx marble. (7) And they gave them drink in vessels of gold—the vessels being diverse one from another—and royal wine in abundance, according to the bounty of the king. (8) And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel; for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they

אסתר א' א'-כ"ב

(א) ויהי בימי אחשוורוש הוא אחשוורוש המלך מהדו ועד-כוש שבע ועשרים ומאה מדינה: (ב) בימים ההם כשבת ו המלך אחשוורוש על כסא מלכותו אשר בשושן הבירה: (ג) בשנת שלוש למלוו עשה משתה לכל-שריו ועבדיו חיל ו פרס ומדי הפרתמים ושרי המדינות לפניו: (ד) בהראתו את-עשר כבוד מלכותו ואת-יקר תפארת גדולתו ימים רבים שמונים ומאת יום: (ה) ובמלואת ו הימים האלה עשה המלך לכל-העם הנמצאים בשושן הבירה למגדול ועד-קטן משתה שבעת ימים בתצר גנת ביתו המלך: (ו) חור ו כרפס ותכלת אהיו בתבלי-בוץ וארגמן על-גלילי כסף ועמדי שש מטות ו זהב וכסף על רצפת בהט-ושש וזר וסחרת: (ז) והשקות בכלי זהב וכלים מפלים שונים ונין מלכות רב כי המלך: (ח) והשתיה כדת אין אגס כייכו ו יסד המלך על כל-רב ביתו לעשות כרצון איש-ואיש: (ט) גם ושתי המלכה עשתה משתה נשים בית המלכות אשר למלך אחשוורוש: (ס) (י) ביום השביעי כטוב לבי-המלך בניו אמר למהומן בזתא חרבוניא בגתא ואבגתא זתר וכרפס שבעת הסריסים המשרתים את-פני המלך אחשוורוש: (יא) להביא את-ושתי המלכה





should do according to every man's pleasure. (9) Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus. (10) On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Bizzetha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that ministered in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, (11) to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to show the peoples and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to look on. (12) But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by the chamberlains; therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him. (13) Then the king said to the wise men, who knew the times—for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment; (14) and the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who saw the king's face, and sat the first in the kingdom: (15) 'What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, forasmuch as she hath not done the bidding of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?' (16) And Memucan answered before the king and the princes: 'Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the peoples, that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. (17) For this deed of the queen will come abroad unto all women, to make their husbands contemptible in their eyes, when it will be said: The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. (18) And this day will the princesses of Persia and Media who have heard of the deed of the queen say the like unto all the king's princes. So will there arise enough contempt and wrath. (19) If it please the king, let there go forth a royal commandment from him, and

לפני המלך בכתר מלכות להראות העמים
והשרים את־יפיה כִּי־טובת מראה היא:
(יב) ותמאן המלכה ושתִּי לבוא בדבר
המלך אשר בנד הסריסים ויקצף המלך
מאד וחמתו בערה בו: (יג) ויאמר המלך
לחכמים ידעי העתים כִּי־כן דבר המלך
לפני כל־ידעי דת ודיון: (יד) והקרב אליו
כרשנא שתר אדמתא תרשִׁיש מרס מרסנא
ממוכן שבעת שרי ו פרס ומדי ראי פני
המלך הישבים ראשנה במלכות: (טו) כדת
מה־לעשות במלכה ושתִּי על ו אשר
לא־עשתה את־מאמר המלך אחשוורוש
בנד הסריסים: (ס) (טז) ויאמר מומכן
[ממוכן] לפני המלך והשרים לא
על־המלך לבדו עושה ושתִּי המלכה כי
על־כל־השרים ועל־כל־העמים אשר
בכל־מדינות המלך אחשוורוש: (יז) כִּי־יצא
דבר־המלכה על־כל־הנשים להבנות
בעליהן בעיניהן באמרם המלך אחשוורוש
אמר להביא את־ושתִּי המלכה לפני
ולא־באה: (יח) והיום הנה תאמרנה ו
שרות פרס־ומדי אשר שמעו את־דבר
המלכה לכל שרי המלך וכדי בזיון וקצף:
(יט) אם־על־המלך טוב יצא דבר־מלכות
מלפניו ויכתב בדתִי פרס־ומדי ולא יעבור
אשר לא־תבוא ושתִּי לפני המלך
אחשוורוש ומלכותה יתן המלך לרעותה
הטובה ממנה: (כ) ונשמע פתגם המלך
אשר־יעשה בכל־מלכותו כי רבה היא
וכל־הנשים יתנו יקר לבעליהן למגדול
ועד־קטן: (כא) ויטב הדבר בעיני המלך
והשרים ויעש המלך בדבר ממוכן: (כב)
וישלח ספרים אל־כל־מדינות המלך
אל־מדינה ומדינה ככתבה ואל־עם ועם
כלשונו להיות כל־איש שרר בביתו
ומדבר כלשון עמו: (כג)

let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, that Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus, and that the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. (20) And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his kingdom, great though it be, all the wives will give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.' (21) And the word pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan; (22) for he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and speak according to the language of his people.



Bezalel Art School (Maker)
Height: 8.67 in. (22 cm)
Diameter: 1.97 in. (5 cm)
Silver
Israel, Early 20th Century

The fine and intricate Megillah case showcases some of the finest work of the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, the most celebrated artistic school in Jerusalem of the early 20th Century. This Megillah, or scroll case containing the Book of Esther, represents a particularly fine example of the early era of Bezalel. It is cylindrical in form and built from ornate filigree silver, a technique involving the interweaving of small threads of silver, popular among Asian metalworkers because it achieves the intricate effect of lace. The case is decorated extensively with scrolling patternwork, with the Star of David featured to the centre, and the top of the case formed as a crown. The scroll can be pulled out to reveal the Book of Esther written in Hebrew script, and can be rewound by twisting the handle.



פרק ב' / Chapter 2

Esther 2:1-23

(1) After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was assuaged, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. (2) Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him: 'Let there be sought for the king young virgins fair to look on; (3) and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the castle, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hegai the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their ointments be given them; (4) and let the maiden that pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti.' And the thing pleased the king; and he did so. (5) There was a certain Jew in Shushan the castle, whose name was Mordecai the son of Jair the son of Shimeai the son of Kish, a Benjamite, (6) who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives that had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had

אסתר ב' / א' - כ"ג

(א) אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה פָּשַׁף חֲמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֶחְשׂוּרוֹשׁ זָכַר אֶת-וַשְׁתִּי וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשְׂתָה
וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר-נִגְזַר עָלֶיהָ: (ב) וַיֹּאמְרוּ
בְּעַרְיֵי-הַמֶּלֶךְ מְשַׁרְתָּיו יִבְקְשׂוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ נְעוּרוֹת
בְּתוּלוֹת טוֹבוֹת מֵרָאָה: (ג) וַיִּפְקֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ
פְּקִידִים בְּכָל-מְדִינוֹת מְלְכוּתוֹ וַיִּקְבְּצוּ
אֶת-כָּל-נְעוּרֵי הַבְּתוּלוֹת טוֹבוֹת מֵרָאָה
אֶל-שׁוּשָׁן הַבִּירָה אֶל-בֵּית הַנְּשִׂים אֶל-יֶד
הַגָּא סְרִיס הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁמֵר הַנְּשִׂים וַנְּתוֹן
תְּמָרוּקֵיהֶן: (ד) וְהַנְּעוּרָה אֲשֶׁר תִּיטֵב בְּעֵינֵי
הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּמְלֹךְ תַּחַת וְשְׁתֵּי וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי
הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן: (ה) אִישׁ יְהוּדִי הָיָה
בְּשׁוּשָׁן הַבִּירָה וּשְׁמוֹ מָרְדֳּכָי בֶּן יָאִיר
בֶּן-שִׁמְעִי בֶּן-קִישׁ אִישׁ יְמִינִי: (ו) אֲשֶׁר
הִגִּיל מִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִם-הַגָּלָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָתָהּ
עִם יְכָנְיָה מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָהּ
נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל: (ז) וַיְהִי אִמּוֹן
אֶת-הַדּוֹפָה הִיא אֶסְתֵּר בַּת-דָּוִד כִּי אִין לָהּ
אָב וְאָם וְהַנְּעוּרָה יִפְתֹּתָאֵר וְטוֹבַת מֵרָאָה



carried away. (7) And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter; for she had neither father nor mother, and the maiden was of beautiful form and fair to look on; and when her father and mother were dead, Mordecai took her for his own daughter. (8) So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was published, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the castle, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was taken into the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. (9) And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her ointments, with her portions, and the seven maidens, who were meet to be given her out of the king's house; and he advanced her and her maidens to the best place in the house of the women. (10) Esther had not made known her people nor her kindred; for Mordecai had charged her that she should not tell it. (11) And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what would become of her. (12) Now when the turn of every maiden was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that it had been done to her according to the law for the women, twelve months—for so were the days of their anointing accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six month with sweet odours, and with other ointments of the women — (13) when then the maiden came unto the king, whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. (14) In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, who kept the concubines; she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and she were called by name. (15) Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her

ובָּמוֹת אֲבִיהָ וְאִמָּהּ לְקַחָהּ מֵרֹדְכַי לֹו לְבַת:
(ח) וַיְהִי בַּהֲשָׁמֵעַ דְּבַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ וּבַהֲקַבְּלֵי
וְעָרוֹת רַבּוֹת אֶל-שׁוֹשׁוּן הַבֵּיטָה אֶל-יַד הַגִּי
וּתְלַקַּח אֶסְתֵּר אֶל-בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-יַד הַגִּי
שֹׁמֵר הַנָּשִׁים: (ט) וַתִּיטֵב הַנְּעָרָה בְּעֵינָיו
וַתֵּשֶׂא חֶסֶד לְפָנָיו וַיְבַהֵל אֶת-תְּמָרְוָקִיָּה
וְאֶת-מְנוּחָה לְתַת לָהּ וְאֵת שְׁבַע הַנְּעָרוֹת
הָרְאִיּוֹת לְתַת-לָהּ מִבֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁנֶה
וְאֶת-נְעָרוֹתֶיהָ לְטוֹב בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים: (י)
לֹא-הִגִּידָה אֶסְתֵּר אֶת-עַמָּהּ וְאֶת-מִוְלָדָתָהּ
כִּי מֵרֹדְכַי צָנְהָ עָלֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִגִּיד: (יא)
וּבְכָל-יּוֹם וַיּוֹם מֵרֹדְכַי מִתְּהִלָּה לְפָנָי חֲצָר
בֵּית-הַנָּשִׁים לְדַעַת אֶת-שְׁלוֹם אֶסְתֵּר
וּמַה-יַּעֲשֶׂה בָּהּ: (יב) וּבַהֲגִיעַ תּוֹרֵן נְעָרָה
וַנְּעָרָה לְבוֹא | אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרֹשׁ מִקִּץ
הַיּוֹת לָהּ כְּדַת הַנָּשִׁים שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ כִּי
כֵן יִמְלֹאוּ יַמֵּי מְרוֹקִיָּהוּ שְׁשֵׁה חֳדָשִׁים
בְּשִׁמּוֹ הַמֶּר וּשְׁשֵׁה חֳדָשִׁים בְּבִשְׂמִים
וּבַתְּמָרְוָקִיָּה הַנָּשִׁים: (יג) וּבַיּוֹם הַנְּעָרָה בָּאָה
אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמֵר יִגְתֶּן לָהּ
לְבוֹא עִמָּהּ מִבֵּית הַנָּשִׁים עַד-בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ:
(יד) בְּעָרֵב | הִיא בָּאָה וּבְבֹקֶר הִיא שָׁכָה
אֶל-בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים שְׁנַיִ אֶל-יַד שְׁעֵשְׂגַז סְרִיס
הַמֶּלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר הַפְּלִגְשִׁים לֹא-תְבוֹא עוֹד
אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי אִם-חֲפָז בָּהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ וַנְּקָרָאָהּ
בָּשֵׁם: (טו) וּבַהֲגִיעַ תּוֹרֵן-אֶסְתֵּר בַּת-אֲבִיחַיִל
דָּד מֵרֹדְכַי אֲשֶׁר לָקַח-לוֹ לְבַת לְבוֹא
אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ לֹא בְקִשָּׁה דְּבָר כִּי אִם אֶת-אֲשֶׁר
יֹאמֵר הַגִּי סְרִיס-הַמֶּלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר הַנָּשִׁים וַתְּהִי
אֶסְתֵּר נְשִׂאת חֹן בְּעֵינָי כָּל-רְאִיָּה: (טז)
וּתְלַקַּח אֶסְתֵּר אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרֹשׁ
אֶל-בֵּית מַלְכוּתוֹ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָעֲשִׁירִי הוּא-חֹדֶשׁ
טַבַּת בְּשַׁנְת־שְׁבַע לְמַלְכוּתוֹ: (יז) וַיֵּאָהֵב
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-אֶסְתֵּר מִכָּל-הַנָּשִׁים וַתֵּשֶׂא-יָתֵן
וַחֲסֵד לְפָנָיו מִכָּל-הַבָּתּוּלֹת וַיִּשֶׂם
כְּתֵר-מַלְכוּת בְּרֹאשָׁהּ וַיִּמְלִיכָהּ תַּחַת וְשֵׁתִי:
(יח) וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁתָּה גְּדוֹל לְכָל-שָׂרָיו
וַעֲבָדָיו אֵת מִשְׁתָּה אֶסְתֵּר וַהֲנַחָה לְמַדִּינֹת

for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. (16) So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. (17) And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. (18) Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the bounty of the king. (19) And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, and Mordecai sat in the king's gate— (20) Esther had not yet made known her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her; for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him— (21) in those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those that kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus. (22) And the thing became known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther told the king thereof in Mordecai's name. (23) And when inquisition was made of the matter, and it was found to be so, they were both hanged on a tree; and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

עֲשֵׂה ויִתֵּן מִשָּׂאת כִּיֵּד הַמֶּלֶךְ: (יט) וּבְהַקְבִּיץ
 בְּתוֹלוֹת שְׁנֵית וּמְרַדְכֵי יֵשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ:
 (כ) אֵין אֶסְתֵּר מִגִּדַת מוֹלְדָתָהּ וְאֶת-עַמָּהּ
 פִּאֲשֶׁר צָנְהָ עָלֶיהָ מְרַדְכֵי וְאֶת-מֵאֵמֶר
 מְרַדְכֵי אֶסְתֵּר עֲשֵׂה פִּאֲשֶׁר הֵייתָה בְּאִמְנָה
 אִתּוֹ: (ס) (כא) בְּיָמִים הֵהֵם וּמְרַדְכֵי יֵשֵׁב
 בְּשַׁעַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ קֶצֶף בְּגִתּוֹ וְתָרֵשׁ שְׁנֵי-סְרִיסֵי
 הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמַרְי הַסֹּף וַיִּבְקָשׁוּ לְשַׁלַּח יָד
 בְּמֶלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרֵשׁ: (כב) וַיִּגְדַע הַדָּבָר לְמְרַדְכֵי
 וַיִּגֵּד לְאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וְתֵאֵמֶר אֶסְתֵּר לְמֶלֶךְ
 בְּשֵׁם מְרַדְכֵי: (כג) וַיִּבְקֶשׁ הַדָּבָר וַיִּמְצָא
 וַיִּתְּלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עַל-עֵץ וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּסֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי
 הַיָּמִים לְפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: (פ)



Illustrations in color accompany the text throughout, depicting every major scene in the Esther-Mordecai Ahasuerus-Haman drama. The illuminations, drawn with a naive charm, are appropriate to the biblical narrative which at its heart is history recounted in the form of a folk tale. The costumes worn by the actors in the drama, and the illustrations depicting celebrants indicate an early eighteenth-century Italian provenance for this charming manuscript on vellum, Scroll on Parchment, Illuminated, Italy eighteenth century Hebraic Section.



Esther 3:1-15

(1) After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. (2) And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed down, and prostrated themselves before Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not down, nor prostrated himself before him. (3) Then the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai: 'Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?' (4) Now it came to pass, when they spoke daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew. (5) And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not down, nor prostrated himself before him, then was Haman full of wrath. (6) But it seemed contemptible in his eyes to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had made known to him the people of Mordecai; wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai. (7) In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. (8) And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus: 'There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from those of every people; neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it profiteth not the king to suffer them. (9) If it please the king, let it be written that they be destroyed; and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those that have the charge of the

אסתר ג': א'-ט"ו

(א) אחר | הדברים האלה גדל המלך
אחשוורוש את-המן בן-המדתא האגגי
וינשאהו וישם את-כסאו מעל כל-השרים
אשר אתו: (ב) וכל-עבדי המלך
אשר-בשער המלך כרעים ומשתחוים
להמן כייבן צוה-לו המלך ומרדכי לא
יכרע ולא ישתחוה: (ג) ויאמרו עבדי
המלך אשר-בשער המלך למרדכי מדוע
אתה עוֹבֵר את מצַנַת המלך: (ד) ויהי
באמרם [כְּאִמְרָם] אליו יום ויום ולא שמע
אליהם ויגידו להמן לראות היעמדו דברי
מרדכי כיי-הגיד להם אשר-הוא יהודי: (ה)
וירא המן כיי-איו מרדכי כרע ומשתחוה לו
וימלא המן חמה: (ו) ויבז בעיניו לשלח יד
במרדכי לבדו כיי-הגידו לו את-עם מרדכי
ויבקש המן להשמיד את-כל-היהודים
אשר בכל-מלכות אחשוורוש עם מרדכי:
(ז) בתדש הראשון הוא-תדש ניסן בשנת
שתיים עשרה למלך אחשוורוש הפיל פור
הוא הגורל לפני המן מיום | ליום ומתדש
לתדש שנים-עשר הוא-תדש אדר: (ח) (ט)
ויאמר המן למלך אחשוורוש ישנו עם-אחד
מפּוֹר ומפּוֹרֵד בין העמים בכל מדינות
מלכותך ודתיהם שנות מפל-עם ואת-דתי
המלך אינם עשים ולמלך אין-שנה
להניחם: (ט) אם-על-המלך טוב יכתב
לאבדם ועשרת אלפים כפר-כסף אשקול
על-ידי עשי המלאכה להביא אל-גנני
המלך: (י) ויסר המלך את-טבעתו מעל ידו
ויתנה להמן בן-המדתא האגגי צרר
היהודים: (יא) ויאמר המלך להמן הכסף
נתון לך והעם לעשות בו כטוב בעיניך:
(יב) ויקראו ספרי המלך בתדש הראשון
בשלושה עשר יום בו ויכתב
בכל-אשר-צנה המן אל אחשדרפני-המלך
ואל-הפארות אשר | על-מדינה ומדינה



king's business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.' (10) And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. (11) And the king said unto Haman: 'The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.' (12) Then were the king's scribes called in the first month, on the thirteenth day thereof, and there was written, according to all that Haman commanded, unto the king's satraps, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the princes of every people; to every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and it was sealed with the king's ring. (13) And letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. (14) The copy of the writing, to be given out for a decree in every province, was to be published unto all peoples, that they should be ready against that day. (15) The posts went forth in haste by the king's commandment, and the decree was given out in Shushan the castle; and the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

וְאֶל־שָׂרֵי עַם וְעַם מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה כְּכַתְּבָהּ
וְעַם וְעַם כְּלִשׁוֹנָו בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרֶשׁ
נִכְתָּב וְנִחְתָּם בְּטַבְעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ: (יג) וְנִשְׁלַח
סְפָרִים בְּיַד הַרְצִיִם אֶל־כָּל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ
לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְגַּ וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת־כָּל־הַיְהוּדִים
מִנְעַר וְעַד־זָמָן טַף וְנָשִׁים בְּיוֹם אֶחָד
בְּשִׁלּוּשָׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר
הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר וּשְׁלָלָם לְבוּז: (יד) פְּתִישְׁגֹן
הַכְּתָב לְהַגִּתּוֹ דָּת בְּכָל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה גְלוּי
לְכָל־הָעַמִּים לְהַיּוֹת עֲתִדִים לְיוֹם הַזֶּה: (טו)
הַרְצִיִם יֵצְאוּ דְחוּפִים בְּדָבָר הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַזֶּה
נִתְּנָה בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבֵּיטְרָה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמֹן יִשְׁבוּ
לְשָׂתוֹת וְהָעִיר שׁוֹשַׁן נְבוֹכָה: (פ)



Height: 6.3 in. (16 cm)D
Diameter: 1.38 in. (3.5 cm)
Hand-Crafted Silver, Enamel,
Parchment Paper
Georgia. Late 19th Century (1880)

The book of Esther is known as the only Bible book, besides the Song of Songs, that does not explicitly mention God. In this Megillah it seems that the sofer (the Jewish scribe of religious writings) was determined to show that the name of God does appear in the text, thus he accented in bold various letters from the text, which combined will read as various names of God. The scribe has also added small pointing hand symbols to the first column, to guide the reader to finding the 'hidden message'. Manuscript on vellum, text arranged in 14 lines, housed in an elaborately handwork with a handle for rolling the Megillah up in the container. The entire silver Megillah case is decorated with enamel work of Star of David, flower and beads. Engraved with Hebrew: "Megilat Esther".





Esther 4:1-17

(1) Now when Mordecai knew all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; (2) and he came even before the king's gate; for none might enter within the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. (3) And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. (4) And Esther's maidens and her chamberlains came and told it her; and the queen was exceedingly pained; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai; and to take his sackcloth from off him; but he accepted it not. (5) Then called Esther for Hathach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and charged him to go to Mordecai, to know what this was, and why it was. (6) So Hathach went forth to Mordecai unto the broad place of the city, which was before the king's gate. (7) And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and the exact sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. (8) Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given out in Shushan to destroy them, to show it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her; and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him, for her people. (9) And Hathach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. (10) Then Esther spoke unto Hathach, and gave him a message unto Mordecai: (11) 'All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law for him, that he be put to death, except such to

אסתר ד': א'-י"ז

(א) ומרדכי ידע את-כל-אשר נעשה ויקרע מרדכי את-בגדיו וילבש שק ואפר ויצא בתוך העיר ויזעק ויעקה גדלה ומרה: (ב) ויבוא עד לפני שער-המלך פי און לבוא אל-שער המלך בלבוש שק: (ג) ובכל-מדינה ומדינה מקום אשר דבר-המלך ודתו מגיע אכל גדול ליהודים וצום ובכי ומספד שק ואפר יצע לרבים: (ד) ותבואינה נערות אסתר וסריסיה ויגידו לה ותתחלת המלכה מאד ותשלח בגדים להלביש את-מרדכי ולהסיר שקו מעליו ולא קבל: (ה) ותקרא אסתר להתו מסריסי המלך אשר העמיד לפניה ותצוהו על-מרדכי לנעת מה-נה ועל-מה-נה: (ו) ויצא התו אל-מרדכי אל-רחוב העיר אשר לפני שער-המלך: (ז) ויגדלו מרדכי את כל-אשר קרהו ואת פרשת הכסף אשר אמר המלך לשקול על-גנני המלך ביהודיים [ביהודים] לאבדם: (ח) ואת-פתשגן כתב-הדת אשר-נתן בשושן להשמדם נתן לו להראות את-אסתר ולהגיד לה ולצוות עליה לבוא אל-המלך להתחנן לו ולבקש מלפניו על-עמה: (ט) ויבוא התו ויגד לאסתר את דברי מרדכי: (י) ותאמר אסתר להתו ותצוהו אל-מרדכי: (יא) כל-עבדי המלך ועם-מדינות המלך יודעים אשר כל-איש ואשה אשר יבוא אל-המלך אל-החצר הפנימית אשר לא-יקרא אחת דתו להמית לבד מאשר יושיט-לו המלך את-שרביט הזהב ותגה ואני לא נקראתי לבוא אל-המלך זה שלוש יום: (יב) ויגידו למרדכי את דברי אסתר: (פ) ויאמר מרדכי להשיב אל-אסתר אל-תדמי בנפשו להמלט בית-המלך מכל-היהודים: (יד) כי אם-התרוש תחרישי בעת הזאת

whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live; but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.’ (12) And they told to Mordecai Esther’s words. (13) Then Mordecai bade them to return answer unto Esther: ‘Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house, more than all the Jews. (14) For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father’s house will perish; and who knoweth whether thou art not come to royal estate for such a time as this?’ (15) Then Esther bade them return answer unto Mordecai: (16) ‘Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.’ (17) So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

רוח והצללה יעמוד ליהודים ממקום אחר
 ואת ובית-אביה תאבדו ומי יודע אם-לעת
 כזאת הגעת למלכות: (ט) ותאמר אסתר
 להשיב אל-מרדכי: (טז) לך כנוס
 את-כל-היהודים הנמצאים בשושן וצומו
 עלי ואל-תאכלו ואל-תשתו שלשת ימים
 לילה ויום גם-אני ונעתי אצום כן וכך
 אבוא אל-המלך אשר לא-כדת וכאשר
 אבדתי אבדתי: (יז) ויעבר מרדכי ויעש
 ככל אשר-צוהה עליו אסתר: (ס)



Commentary on Chapter 4

When Queen Esther learns from her uncle Mordecai, “that Haman had offered to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews,” she decides she must respond. Esther sends Mordecai a message. Anyone who comes into the king’s inner court without being summoned can be put to death. “Only if the king extends the golden scepter to him may he live. Now I have not been summoned to visit the king for the last thirty days.”

Sometimes we interpret this scene to mean Esther is refusing to speak with King Ahashueros on behalf of her people. She doesn’t understand the responsibility of her position. But, that makes no sense. We can imagine as his wife, Esther has opportunities to speak with her husband.

Professor Adele Berlin comments. Esther is outlining a daring plan whereby she can carry out Mordecai’s appeal to the king on behalf of her people. “She risks losing her own life, which is not only a problem for her but, more to the point of the dialogue, means that she would then be unable to plead for the Jews.”

Esther understood. She has to worry about the evil of Haman’s wicked desire. But, she was only willing to do so in a public way, in a way that would not compromise her own personal integrity. She wanted to stand publicly before the king, imperiled like each and every member of Shushan’s Jewish community, and protest the injustice that threatened them all.

Esther 5:1-14

(1) Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house; and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the entrance of the house. (2) And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre. (3) Then said the king unto her: 'What wilt thou, queen Esther? for whatever thy request, even to the half of the kingdom, it shall be given thee.' (4) And Esther said: 'If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.' (5) Then the king said: 'Cause Haman to make haste, that it may be done as Esther hath said.' So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. (6) And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine: 'Whatever thy petition, it shall be granted thee; and whatever thy request, even to the half of the kingdom, it shall be performed.' (7) Then answered Esther, and said: 'My petition and my request is— (8) if I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request—let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do tomorrow as the king hath said.' (9) Then went Haman forth that day joyful and glad of heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, Haman was filled with wrath against Mordecai. (10) Nevertheless Haman refrained himself, and went home; and he sent and fetched his friends and Zeresh his wife. (11) And Haman

אסתר ה': א'-י"ד

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



recounted unto them the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and everything as to how the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. (12) Haman said moreover: 'Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow also am I invited by her together with the king. (13) Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.' (14) Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him: 'Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon; then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet.' And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

רָאָה אֶת־מֶרְדֵּכַי הַיְהוּדִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ: (יב) וְתֹאמַר לוֹ יְרֵשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ וְכָל־אֲהָבָיו יַעֲשׂוּ־עִץ גְּבוּהָ חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה וּבִבְקָר | אָמַר לַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת־מֶרְדֵּכַי עָלָיו וּבֹא־עִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל הַמִּשְׁתֶּה שְׂמַח וַיִּטֵּב הַדָּבָר לִפְנֵי הַמֶּן וַיַּעַשׂ הָעֵץ: (יג)

פרק ו' / Chapter 6

Esther 6:1-14

(1) On that night could not the king sleep; and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles, and they were read before the king. (2) And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, of those that kept the door, who had sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus. (3) And the king said: 'What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?' Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him: 'There is nothing done for him.' (4) And the king said: 'Who is in the court?'—Now Haman was come into the outer court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.— (5) And the king's servants said unto him: 'Behold, Haman standeth in the court.' And the king said: 'Let him come in.' (6) So Haman came in. And the king said unto him: 'What shall be done unto the man whom the king

אסתר ו' א'–י"ד

(א) בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא נִדְרָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר לְהָבִיא אֶת־סֵפֶר הַזְּכָרֹנוֹת דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים וַיְהִי וַיִּקְרָאִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: (ב) וַיִּמְצָא כְּתוּב אֲשֶׁר הִגִּיד מֶרְדֵּכַי עַל־בִּגְתָנָא וְתֵרֶשׁ שְׁנֵי סְרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמָרֵי הַסֶּף אֲשֶׁר בְּקִשְׁרוּ לְשַׁלַּח לְדָד בַּמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֻׁרוּשׁ: (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־נַּעֲשֶׂה יָקָר וַיִּגְדוּלָה לְמֶרְדֵּכַי עַל־זֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מְשַׁרְתָּיו לֹא־נַעֲשֶׂה עִמּוֹ דָּבָר: (ד) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מִי בַחֲצָר וְהַמֶּן בָּא לַחֲצָר בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַחֲיִצוֹנָה לֹאמֵר לַמֶּלֶךְ לְתִלּוֹת אֶת־מֶרְדֵּכַי עַל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־הִכִּינוּ לוֹ: (ה) וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלָיו הִנֵּה הַמֶּן עֹמֵד בַּחֲצָר וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ יָבוֹא: (ו) וַיְבוֹא הַמֶּן וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־לַּעֲשׂוֹת בְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּן בְּלִבּוֹ לָמִי יַחֲפֵץ הַמֶּלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת יָקָר יוֹתֵר מִמֶּנִּי: (ז) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּן אֵל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ: (ח) יָבִיאוּ





delighteth to honour?’—Now Haman said in his heart: ‘Whom would the king delight to honour besides myself?’— (7) And Haman said unto the king: ‘For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, (8) let royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and on whose head a crown royal is set; (9) and let the apparel and the horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that they may array the man therewith whom the king delighteth to honour, and cause him to ride on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him: Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.’ (10) Then the king said to Haman: ‘Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king’s gate; let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.’ (11) Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and caused him to ride through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him: ‘Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.’ (12) And Mordecai returned to the king’s gate. But Haman hastened to his house, mourning and having his head covered. (13) And Haman recounted unto Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him: ‘If Mordecai, before whom thou hast begun to fall, be of the seed of the Jews, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.’ (14) While they were yet talking with him, came the king’s chamberlains, and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

לְבוּשׁ מַלְכוּת אֲשֶׁר לְבִשְׁבוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְסוּס
אֲשֶׁר רָכַב עָלָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֲשֶׁר נָתַן בְּתֹר
מַלְכוּת בְּרֵאשׁוֹ: (ט) וְנָתַן הַלְבוּשׁ וְהַסּוּס
עַל־יַד־אִישׁ מִשָּׂרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּרָתָמִים
וְהַלְבִּישׁוּ אֶת־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ
בִּיקְרוֹ וְהַרְפִּיבֵהוּ עַל־הַסּוּס בְּרִחוּב הָעִיר
וְקִרְאוּ לְפָנָיו בְּכֹה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ
חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ: (י) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהֵמָּן מֵהֵרָ
קַח אֶת־הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת־הַסּוּס כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ
וַעֲשֵׂה־כֵן לְמֹרְדֵכָי הַיְהוּדִי הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־תִּפְּל דָּבָר מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ: (יא)
וַיִּקַּח הֵמָּן אֶת־הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת־הַסּוּס וַיִּלְבַּשׁ
אֶת־מֹרְדֵכָי וַיַּרְפִּיבֵהוּ בְּרִחוּב הָעִיר וַיִּקְרָא
לְפָנָיו בְּכֹה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ
בִּיקְרוֹ: (יב) וַיֵּשֶׁב מֹרְדֵכָי אֶל־שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ
וְהֵמָּן נִדְחָף אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ אֲבֵל וְחַפּוּי רֹאשׁ: (יג)
וַיְסַפֵּר הֵמָּן לְזֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ וְלְכָל־אֲהֻבָּיו אֶת
כָּל־אֲשֶׁר קָרָהוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ חֲכָמָיו וְזָרָשׁ
אִשְׁתּוֹ אִם מִזֶּרַע הַיְהוּדִים מֹרְדֵכָי אֲשֶׁר
הַחַלּוֹת לְנַפְּל לְפָנָיו לֹא־תוּכַל לוֹ כִּי־נִפּוּל
תִּפּוּל לְפָנָיו: (יד) עוֹדֵם מִדְּבָרִים עִמּוֹ
וְסָרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הִגִּיעוּ וַיְבַהֲלוּ לְהַבִּיא
אֶת־הֵמָּן אֶל־הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר־עֲשָׂתָה אֶסְתֵּר:

Commentary on Chapter 6

One of the most precious moments parents and children share with each other is the quiet routine of bedtime. Some nights it is difficult to fall asleep, or to sleep restfully. There are too many things on our minds. We're filled with excitement and anticipation. Or, we aren't feeling good. Things are happening in other places that concern or disturb us.

King Ahashueros has such a night in the story of Purim. We read on the night following the first feast Queen Esther throws for King Ahashueros and Haman, "sleep deserted the king, and he ordered the book of records, the annals to be brought; and it was read to the king." Reading the record, King Ahashueros discovers Esther's uncle Mordecai has not been rewarded for saving Ahashueros' life. He orders this honor is to be carried out by Haman, and things begin to change for the Jews of Shushan.

Jewish tradition sees something more taking place in this scene. Judaism's moral imagination describes. King Ahashueros was not able to sleep because of everything happening around him. Esther was involved with planning and preparing her next feast. Haman was busy building gallows. Mordecai was upset, praying and wearing sackcloth.

How can anyone sleep, our tradition seems to wonder, when people are in peril? How can we find rest while others are weary, nervous, or even awaiting their redemption? For you and me it seems so easy. We crawl into bed, turn off the news, and... it's quiet all around us. Or, at least it seems that way. Do we really turn off our consciences so easily? Do we actually stop being aware of everything we will awaken to the next morning?

Probably not. Even King Ahashueros seems to understand he needs to find a way to respond. He is unable to calm himself. He can't rest on that fateful night. According to some voices in Jewish tradition, what most disturbed Ahasheuros was whether or not someone had "asah li tovah - done something good for me." A good deed he had not properly acknowledged.

What a beautiful way to end a day. Did I fail to recognize any goodness today? Is there something I can do about it now or tomorrow? The difficult, the troubling, all that disturbs startles us from our sleep. That's human nature. But what of goodness? How do we reflect and remember the caring and kindness of our days?

King Ahashueros has a sleepless night. Why can't he sleep? He is disturbed because something good might have been done for him to which he had not properly responded. What a beautiful way to end a day.



Height: 8.67 in. (22 cm)
Diameter: 1.58 in. (4 cm)
Hand-Crafted Silver, Parchment Paper
Balkan Peninsula
Late 19th Century (circa 1880)

Manuscript on vellum, text arranged in 19 lines, in Hebrew Sephardic script, housed in an elaborately silver container of impressive and extraordinary handwork with a handle for rolling the megillah up in the container. Hammering, cutting and scalpel work of vegetation and flowers.



Esther 7:1-10

(1) So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. (2) And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine: 'Whatever thy petition, queen Esther, it shall be granted thee; and whatever thy request, even to the half of the kingdom, it shall be performed.' (3) Then Esther the queen answered and said: 'If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request; (4) for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my peace, for the adversary is not worthy that the king be endamaged.' (5) Then spoke the king Ahasuerus and said unto Esther the queen: 'Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?' (6) And Esther said: 'An adversary and an enemy, even this wicked Haman.' Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. (7) And the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman remained to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. (8) Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the couch whereon Esther was. Then said the king: 'Will he even force the queen before me in the house?' As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. (9) Then said Harbonah, one of the chamberlains that were before the king: 'Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman hath made for Mordecai, who spoke good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman.' And the king said: 'Hang him thereon.' (10) So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath assuaged.

אסתר ז' א-י

(א) ויבא המלך והמון לשמות עם-אסתר המלכה: (ב) ויאמר המלך לאסתר גם ביום השני במשחה היו מה-שאלתה אסתר המלכה ותנתן לך ומה-בקשתה עד-חצי המלכות ותעש: (ג) ותעז אסתר המלכה ותאמר אם-מצאתי חן בעיניך המלך ואם-על-המלך טוב תנתן-לי נפשי בשאלתי ועמי בבקשתי: (ד) כי נמכרנו אנכי ועמי להשמיד להרוג ולאבד ואלו לעבדים ולשפחות נמכרנו החרשתי כי אין הצד שנה בגנוק המלך: (ה) ויאמר המלך אחשוורוש ויאמר לאסתר המלכה מי הוא זה ואינה הוא אשר-מלאו לבו לעשות כן: (ו) ותאמר-אסתר איש צר ואוליב המון הרע הגה והמון גבעת מלפני המלך והמלכה: (ז) והמלך קם בתמתו ממשחה היו אל-גנת הביתו והמון עמד לבקש על-נפשו מאסתר המלכה כי ראה כי-קלתה אליו הרעה מאת המלך: (ח) והמלך שב מגנת הביתו אל-בית משחה היו והמון נפל על-המטה אשר אסתר עליה ויאמר המלך הגם לכבוש את-המלכה עמי בבית הדבר יצא מפי המלך ופני המון חפז: (ט) ויאמר חרבונה אחד מו-הסריסים לפני המלך גם הנה-העז אשר-עשה המון למרדכי אשר דבר-טוב על-המלך עמד בבית המון גבה חמשים אמה ויאמר המלך תלהו עליו: (י) ויתלו את-המון על-העץ אשר-הכין למרדכי ותמת המלך שקכה: (פ)



Esther 8:1-17

(1) On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her. (2) And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. (3) And Esther spoke yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to remove the evil of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews. (4) Then the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre. So Esther arose, and stood before the king. (5) And she said: 'If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews that are in all the king's provinces; (6) for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?' (7) Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew: 'Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews. (8) Write ye also concerning the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.' (9) Then were the king's scribes called at that time, in the third month, which is the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews, even to the satraps, and the governors and princes of the provinces which are from India unto

אסתר ח': א'-י"ז

(א) ביום ההוא נתן המלך אחשוורוש לאסתר המלכה את־בית המן צרר היהודיים [היהודים] ומרדכי בא לפני המלך כי־הגידה אסתר מה הוא־לה: (ב) ויסר המלך את־טבעתו אשר העביר מהמן ויתנה למרדכי ותשם אסתר את־מרדכי על־בית המן: (פ) (ג) ותוסף אסתר ותדבר לפני המלך ותפל לפני רגליו ותבק ותתחנן־לו להעביר את־רעת המן האגגי ואת מחשבתו אשר חשב על־היהודים: (ד) ויושט המלך לאסתר את שרבת הזהב ותקם אסתר ותעמד לפני המלך: (ה) ותאמר אם־על־המלך טוב ואם־מצאתי חן לפניו וכשר הדבר לפני המלך וטובה אני בעיניו יכתב להשיב את־הספרים מחשבת המן בן־המדתא האגגי אשר כתב לאבד את־היהודים אשר בכל־מדינות המלך: (ו) כי איככה אוכל וראיתי ברעה אשר־ימצא את־עמי ואיככה אוכל וראיתי באבדן מולדתי: (ז) (ח) ויאמר המלך אחשוורוש לאסתר המלכה ולמרדכי היהודי הנה בית־המן נתתי לאסתר ואתו תלו על־העץ על אשר־שלח ידו ביהודיים [ביהודים]: (ח) ואתם כתבו על־היהודים בטוב בעיניכם בשם המלך וחתמו בטבעת המלך כי־כתב אשר־נכתב בשם־המלך ונחתום בטבעת המלך אין להשיב: (ט) ויקראו ספרי־המלך בעת־ההיא בהחדש השלישי הוא־חדש סיון בשלושה ועשרים בו ויכתב בכל־אשר־צוה מרדכי אל־היהודים ואל האחשדרפנים והפחות ושרי המדינות אשר | מהדו ועד־כוש שבע ועשרים ומאה מדינה מדינה ומדינה ככתבה ועם ועם כלשגו ואל־היהודים ככתבם וכלשונם: (י) ויכתב בשם המלך אחשוורוש ויחתם





Ethiopia, a hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. (10) And they wrote in the name of king Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, riding on swift steeds that were used in the king's service, bred of the stud; (11) that the king had granted the Jews that were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, and to slay, and to cause to perish, all the forces of the people and province that would assault them, their little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey, (12) upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. (13) The copy of the writing, to be given out for a decree in every province, was to be published unto all the peoples, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. (14) So the posts that rode upon swift steeds that were used in the king's service went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment; and the decree was given out in Shushan the castle. (15) And Mordecai went forth from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a rob of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan shouted and was glad. (16) The Jews had light and gladness, and joy and honour. (17) And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had gladness and joy, a feast and a good day. And many from among the peoples of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews was fallen upon them.

בְּטַבְעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁלַח סִפְרָיִם בְּיַד הָרָצִים
בְּסוּסֵים רַכְבֵּי הָרָכָשׁ הָאֲחַשְׁתָּרְנִים בְּנֵי
הָרַמְקִים: (יא) אֲשֶׁר נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ לַיהוּדִים |
אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־עִיר־וְעִיר לְהִקְהִל וְלַעֲמֹד
עַל־נַפְשָׁם לְהַשְׁמִיד וְלְהַרְגַּ וְלֶאֱבֹד
אֶת־כָּל־חַיִּל עַם וּמְדִינָה הַצָּרִים אֹתָם טָף
וְנָשִׁים וְשָׁלָלָם לְבוֹז: (יב) בְּיוֹם אֶחָד
בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲחַשְׁוֵרֹשׁ בְּשִׁלּוּשָׁה
עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר הוּא־חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר:
(יג) פְּתֻשְׁגֹן הַכְּתָב לְהַנְתֹן דָּת בְּכָל־מְדִינָה
וּמְדִינָה גְלוּי לְכָל־הָעַמִּים וְלִהְיוֹת הַיְהוּדִים
[הַיְהוּדִים] עַתּוּדִים [עַתִּידִים] לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
לְהִנָּקֵם מֵאִיְבֵיהֶם: (יד) הָרָצִים רַכְבֵּי הָרָכָשׁ
הָאֲחַשְׁתָּרְנִים יֵצְאוּ מִבְּהֵלִים וּדְחוּפִים בְּדָבָר
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָדַת נִתְּנָה בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה: (פ) (טו)
וּמֶרְדֵּכַי יָצָא | מִלִּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלְבוּשׁ מְלָכוּת
תְּכֵלֶת וְחֹר וְעֻטְרַת זָהָב גְּדוּלָה וְתַכְרִיף
בוֹץ וְאַרְגָּמָן וְהָעִיר שׁוֹשַׁן צָהֳלָה וְשִׁמְחָה:
(זט) לַיהוּדִים הִיָּתָה אֹנְרָה וְשִׁמְחָה וְשׁוֹשַׁן
וַיִּקָּר: (יז) וּבְכָל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וּבְכָל־עִיר
וְעִיר מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דְּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ מָגִיעַ
שִׁמְחָה וְשׁוֹשׁוֹן לַיהוּדִים מִשְׁתָּה וַיּוֹם טוֹב
וְרַבִּים מֵעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ מִתְיַהֲדִים כִּי־נִפְל
פַּחַד־הַיְהוּדִים עָלֵיהֶם:

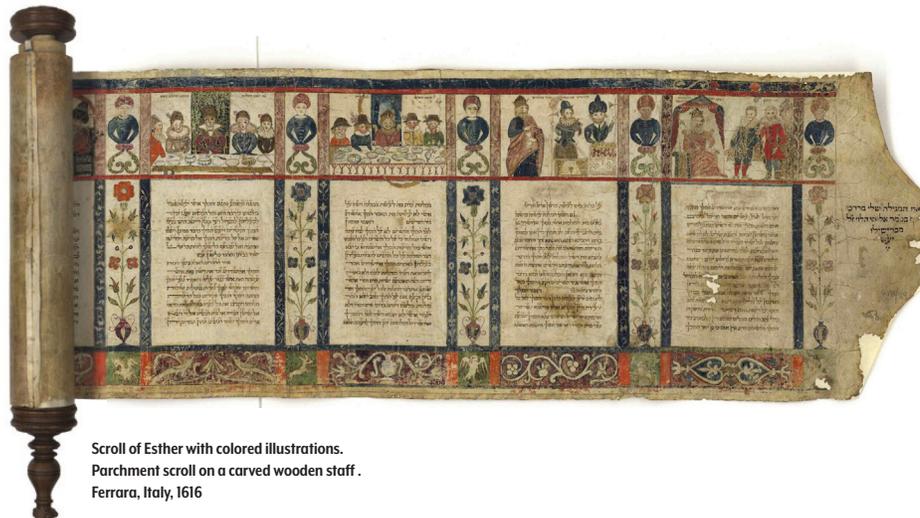
Commentary on Chapter 8

The Scroll of Esther is the only book of the Bible that makes no mention of God. Megillat Esther is also the source of the only sentence in our prayerbook describing us as Jews, rather than as the people Israel. “For the Jews there was light and joy, gladness and honor.” We say these same words each and every Saturday night when Shabbat ends and we recite the Havdalah prayers.



Height: 9.45 in. (24 cm)
Diameter: 1.58 in. (4 cm)
Hammered Silver, Parchment Paper
Balkan Peninsula
Late 19th Century (circa 1880)

The scribe has also added small pointing hand symbols to the first column, to guide the reader to finding the 'hidden message'. Manuscript on vellum, text arranged in 17 lines, housed in an elaborately silver container of impressive and extraordinary handwork with a handle for rolling the Megillah up in the container. Hammering, cutting and scalpel work of vegetation and flowers. The Megillah case is topped with a coral.



Scroll of Esther with colored illustrations.
Parchment scroll on a carved wooden staff.
Ferrara, Italy, 1616



Esther 9:1-32

(1) Now in the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have rule over them; whereas it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them; (2) the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt; and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them was fallen upon all the peoples. (3) And all the princes of the provinces, and the satraps, and the governors, and they that did the king's business, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai was fallen upon them. (4) For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went forth throughout all the provinces; for the man Mordecai waxed greater and greater. (5) And the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and with slaughter and destruction, and did what they would unto them that hated them. (6) And in Shushan the castle the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men. (7) And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, (8) and Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha, (9) and Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vaizatha, (10) the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Jews' enemy, slew they; but on the spoil they laid not their hand. (11) On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the castle was brought before the king. (12) And the king said unto Esther the queen: 'The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the castle, and the ten sons of Haman; what then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces! Now whatever thy petition, it shall be granted

אסתר ט':א'-ל"ב

(א) ובשנים עשר חודש הוא-חודש אדר בשלושה עשר יום בו אשר הגיע דבר-המלך ודתו להעשות ביום אשר שפרו איבי היהודים לשלוט בהם ונהפוך הוא אשר ישלטו היהודים המה בשנאייהם: (ב) נקהלו היהודים בעריהם בכל-מדינות המלך אחשוורוש לשלח יד במבקשי רעתם ואיש לא-עמד לפנייהם כיי-נפל פחדם על-כל-העמים: (ג) וכל-שרי המדינות והאחשדרפנים והפחות ועשי המלאכה אשר למלך מנשאים את-היהודים כיי-נפל פחד-מרדכי עליהם: (ד) כיי-גדול מרדכי בבית המלך ושמו הולך בכל-המדינות כיי-האיש מרדכי הולך וגדול: (ה) ויפו היהודים בכל-איביהם מפת-תורב והרג ואבגו ויעשו בשנאייהם כרצונם: (ו) ובשושן הבירה הרגו היהודים ואבד חמש מאות איש: (ז) ואת אספתא: (ח) ואת אדלגא: (ט) ואת ארמשתא ואת אריסי ואת ארדי ואת ויזתא: (י) ועשרת בני המן בן-המדתא צרר היהודים הרגו ובבזה לא שלחו את-יהם: (יא) ביום ההוא בא מספר ההרוגים בשושן הבירה לפני המלך: (יב) ויאמר המלך לאסתר המלכה בשושן הבירה הרגו היהודים ואבד חמש מאות איש ואת עשרת בני-המן בשאר מדינות המלך מה עשו ומה-שאלתו ויגתו לו ומה-בקשתו עוד ותעש: (יג) ותאמר אסתר אם-על-המלך טוב ינתן גם-מחר ליהודים אשר בשושן לעשות כדת היום ואת עשרת בני-המן יתלו על-העץ: (יד) ויאמר המלך להעשות כן ותנתן דת בשושן ואת עשרת בני-המן תלו: (טו)



thee; and whatever thy request further, it shall be done.' (13) Then said Esther: 'If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews that are in Shushan to do to-morrow also according unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.' (14) And the king commanded it so to be done; and a decree was given out in Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons. (15) And the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men in Shushan; but on the spoil they laid not their hand. (16) And the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of them that hated them seventy and five thousand—but on the spoil they laid not their hand— (17) on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, and on the fourteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. (18) But the Jews that were in Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness and they ate. (19) Therefore do the Jews of the villages, that dwell in the unwall'd towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another. (20) And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far, (21) to enjoin them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly, (22) the days wherein the Jews had rest from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor. (23) And the Jews took upon

וַיִּקְהָלוּ הַיְהוּדִים [הַיְהוּדִים] אֲשֶׁר-בְּשׁוּשָׁן
גַּם בַּיּוֹם אַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ אָדָר וַיַּהַרְגוּ
בְּשׁוּשָׁן שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אִישׁ וּבְבִזָּה לֹא שָׁלְחוּ
אֶת-יָדָם: (טז) וּשְׂאֵר הַיְהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר
בְּמִדְיָנוֹת הַמְּלָךְ נִקְהָלוּ וְעָמְדוּ עַל-נַפְשָׁם
וְנוֹחַ מֵאֲיִבֵיהֶם וְהָרַג בְּשָׂנְאֵיהֶם חֲמֵשֶׁה
וּשְׁבָעִים אָלֶף וּבְבִזָּה לֹא שָׁלְחוּ אֶת-יָדָם:
(יז) בַּיּוֹם-שֶׁלִּשְׁתֵּי עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ אָדָר וְנוֹחַ
בְּאַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וַעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ יוֹם מְשֻׁתָּה
וּשְׂמֻחָה: (יח) וְהַיְהוּדִים [הַיְהוּדִים]
אֲשֶׁר-בְּשׁוּשָׁן נִקְהָלוּ בְּשִׁלְשֵׁי עָשָׂר בּוֹ
וּבְאַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר בּוֹ וְנוֹחַ בְּחֲמֻשֵׁי עָשָׂר בּוֹ
וַעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ יוֹם מְשֻׁתָּה וּשְׂמֻחָה: (יט) עַל-כֵּן
הַיְהוּדִים הַפְּרוּזִים [הַפְּרוּזִים] הֵיטְבִים
בְּעָרֵי הַפְּרוּזוֹת עֲשִׂים אֶת יוֹם אַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר
לְחֹדֶשׁ אָדָר שְׂמֻחָה וּמְשֻׁתָּה וְיוֹם טוֹב
וּמְשֻׁלוֹחַ מְנוֹחַ אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ: (כ) וַיִּכְתָּב
מֹרְדֳכַי אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּשְׁלַח סְפָרִים
אֶל-כָּל-הַיְהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל-מִדְיָנוֹת הַמְּלָךְ
אֲחֻשׁוּרוֹשׁ הַקְּרוּבִים וְהַרְחוּקִים: (כא) לְקַיֵּם
עֲלֵיהֶם לַהֲנוּחַ עֲשִׂים אֶת יוֹם אַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר
לְחֹדֶשׁ אָדָר וְאֵת יוֹם-חֲמֻשֵׁי עָשָׂר בּוֹ
בְּכָל-שָׁנָה וּשְׁנָה: (כב) בַּיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר-נָחַו
בָּהֶם הַיְהוּדִים מֵאֲיִבֵיהֶם וְהַחֹדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר
נִהְפָּךְ לָהֶם מִיָּגוֹן לְשְׂמֻחָה וּמֵאֲכָל לַיּוֹם טוֹב
לְעִשׂוֹת אוֹתָם יְמֵי מְשֻׁתָּה וּשְׂמֻחָה וּמְשֻׁלוֹחַ
מְנוֹחַ אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ וּמִתְּנוּחַ לְאֲבִיוָנִים: (כג)
וּקְבַל הַיְהוּדִים אֶת אֲשֶׁר-הִחֲלוּ לְעִשׂוֹת וְאֵת
אֲשֶׁר-כָּתַב מֹרְדֳכַי אֲלֵיהֶם: (כד) כִּי הָמֵן
בְּדֹ-הַמְּדֻתָּא הָאֲגָגִי צִרַר כָּל-הַיְהוּדִים חָשָׁב
עַל-הַיְהוּדִים לְאַבְדָּם וְהַפִּיל פּוֹר הוּא
הַגּוֹרֵל לְהָמָם וּלְאַבְדָּם: (כה) וּבְבֹאֵה לְפָנָי
הַמְּלָךְ אָמַר עִם-הַסֵּפֶר יֵשׁוּב מִחֻשְׁבֹתוֹ
הַרְעָה אֲשֶׁר-חָשָׁב עַל-הַיְהוּדִים עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ
וְתָלוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת-כַּנּוֹ עַל-הַעֵץ: (כו) עַל-כֵּן
קָרְאוּ לַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה פּוּרִים עַל-שֵׁם הַפּוּר
עַל-כֵּן עַל-כָּל-דְּבַרֵי הָאֲגֵרָה הַזֹּאת
וּמֵה-רָאוּ עַל-כִּכָּה וּמֵה הִגִּיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם: (כז)





them to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them; (24) because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast pur, that is, the lot, to discomfit them, and to destroy them; (25) but when as he came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he had devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head; and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. (26) Wherefore they called these days Purim, after the name of pur. Therefore because of all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and that which had come unto them, (27) the Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to the writing thereof, and according to the appointed time thereof, every year; (28) and that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed. (29) Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote down all the acts of power, to confirm this second letter of Purim. (30) And he sent letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth, (31) to confirm these days of Purim in their appointed times, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had ordained for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry. (32) And the commandment of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

קִיְמוּ וּקְבַל [וְקַבְלוּ] הַיְהוּדִים | עֲלֵיהֶם |
וְעַל-זֶרְעָם וְעַל כָּל-הַנְּלוּיִם עֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא
יִעֲבֹר לְהַיּוֹת עֲשִׂים אֶת שְׁנֵי הַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה
כַּכְתָּבְכֶם וְכַזְמַנְכֶם בְּכָל-שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה: (כח)
וְהַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה נִזְכָּרִים וְנַעֲשִׂים בְּכָל-דָּוָר
וְדוֹר מְשֻׁפָּחָה וּמְשֻׁפָּחָה מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וְעִיר
וְעִיר וַיִּזְכְּרוּ הַיְהוּדִים הָאֵלֶּה לֹא יִעָבְרוּ מִתּוֹךְ
הַיְהוּדִים וְזָכְרוּ לֹא-יִסּוּף מִזֶּרְעָם: (ס) (כט)
וְתַכְתֵּב אֶסְתֵּר הַמֶּלֶכָה בֵּת-אֲבִיתָיִל וּמְרַדְבֵּי
הַיְהוּדִי אֶת-כָּל-תַּקְוָה לְקַיֵּם אֶת אֲגֻרַת
הַיְהוּדִים הַזֹּאת הַשְּׁנִיית: (ל) וַיִּשְׁלַח סְפָרִים
אֶל-כָּל-הַיְהוּדִים אֶל-שִׁבְעַת וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה
מְדִינָה מְלֻכּוֹת אַחַשְׁוֵרֶשׁ דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹם
וְאַמֻּת: (לא) לְקַיֵּם אֶת-יְמֵי הַפְּרִים הָאֵלֶּה
בְּזִמְנֵיהֶם כְּאֲשֶׁר קִיְמוּ עֲלֵיהֶם מְרַדְבֵּי הַיְהוּדִי
וְאֶסְתֵּר הַמֶּלֶכָה וְכַאֲשֶׁר קִיְמוּ עַל-נַפְשָׁם
וְעַל-זֶרְעָם דְּבָרֵי הַצְּמֻת וְזַעֲקָתָם: (לב)
וּמֵאִמָּר אֶסְתֵּר קַיֵּם דְּבָרֵי הַפְּרִים הָאֵלֶּה
וְנִכְתָּב בַּסֵּפֶר: (פ)

פרק י' / Chapter 10

Esther 10:1-3

(1) And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea. (2) And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai, how the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? (3) For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren; seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his seed.

אסתר י': א'-ג'

(א) וישם המלך אהשרש [אחשוורוש |]
מס על־הארץ ואיני הים: (ב) וכל־מעשה
תקפו וגבורתו ופרשת גדלת מרדכי אשר
גדלו המלך הלו־א־הם כתובים על־ספר
דברי הימים למלכי מדי ופרס: (ג) כי |
מרדכי היהודי משנה למלך אחשוורוש
וגדול ליהודים ורצוי לרב אֶת־יו דַּרְשׁ טוֹב
לְעַמּוֹ ודַּבֵּר שְׁלוֹם לְכָל־זָרְעוֹ:



B'rakhah after reading the Megillah

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הָרַב אֶת רִיבֵנוּ, וְהִדִּן אֶת דִּינֵנוּ,
וְהִנּוּקֵם אֶת נַקְמָתֵנוּ, וְהַמְשִׁילֵם גָּמוּל לְכָל אֹיְבֵי נַפְשֵׁנוּ, וְהַנְּפָרֵעַ לָנוּ
מִצָּרֵינוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הַנְּפָרֵעַ לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל צָרֵיהֶם, הָאֵל הַמּוֹשִׁיעַ.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh haOlam

*haRav et ree-ve-nu, ve-hadan et dee-ne-nu, ve-ha-nokem et neek-matenu,
ve-ham-shalem g'mool le-khol oi-y-veh naf-shenu, ve-haneefrac lanu meetzarenu.
Barukh Atah Adonai haneef-ra le-ammo yisrael mee-kol tzareihem, ha-el hamosheah.*

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the Universe
who champions our cause, avenges the wrongs done to us,
liberates us from our enemies, and brings retribution upon our persecutors.
Blessed are You, Eternal our God, who executes judgment upon Israel's oppressors.



Songs

A-Nee Purim

*A-nee Purim, a-nee Purim
sa-may-ach um'va-day-ah
Ha-lo rak pa-am ba'sha-nah
a-vo l'hit-a-ray-ach.*

La, la, la...

*Hei-dad Purim, Hei-dad Purim,
ha-ku tofum-tzil-ta'yim
Hoi, mi yi-tain u'va Purim,
l'hodesh l'hod-sha-yim.*

La, la, la...

*Ra-bee Purim, ra-bee Purim,
e'mor na li ma-du'ah
Ma-du'ah lo ya-chul Purim
pa-a-ma'yim ba'sha-vu-ah*

La, la, la...

I am Purim! Rejoice and make merry!
I come as a guest only once a year.
Hurray for Purim! Beat the Drum!
Sound the Cymbals!
O that Purim would come every month!
O Purim why do you not come twice a week?

U-Tzu Ei-Tzah

*U-tzu ei-tzah v'tu-far;
Dab-ru da-var v'lo a-kum;
Ki, I-ma-nu El.*

Plan a conspiracy, it will be annulled;
Speak your wicked idea and it shall not stand;
For God is with us.

אני פורים

אני פורים, אני פורים
שמח ומבדח
הלא רק פעם בשנה
אבוא להתארח

לה לה לה...

הידד פורים, הידד פורים
הכו תוף ומצילתיים
הו מי יתן ובא פורים
לחודש לחודשיים

לה לה לה...

רבי פורים, רבי פורים
אמור נא לי מדוע
מדוע לא יחול פורים
פעמיים בשבוע

לה לה לה...

עצו· עצה

עצו· עצה, ותפר
דברו דבר ולא יקו
כי עמנו אל

Hag Purim

*Hag Purim, hag Purim,
hag gadol la'yehudim.
Ma-say-khot, ra-a-sha-nim,
shi-rim u'ri-kudim.*

*Ha-va na-ree-sha, rash, rash, rash, (3)
ba-ra-a-sha-nim.*

*Hag Purim, hag Purim,
Zeh el zeh sholhim manot.
Mach-ma-dim, mam-ta-kim,
tu-fee-nim u'mig-da-not.*

*Ha-va na-ree-sha, rash, rash, rash, (3)
ba-ra-a-sha-nim.*

Holiday of Purim!
A big holiday for the Jewish people.
Mask, noise makers, songs and dance.
Treats, sweets, gifts and games.
So, let's make noise...in celebrating Purim!

O, Once There Was a Wicked, Wicked Man

O, once there was a wicked,
wicked man, and Haman was his name, sir.
He lied and lied about the Jews,
though they were not to blame, sir.

Chorus:

*O today we'll merry, merry be (3)
and nosh some Hamantaschen!*

And Esther was the lovely queen
of King Ahashueros.
When Haman said he'd hurt us all,
o my how he did scare us.
(Chorus)

But Mordecai her uncle bold, said,
"What a dreadful man, sir!"
Our Esther is a clever queen,
her people she will save, sir!
(Chorus)

חג פורים

חג פורים, חג פורים
חג גדול ליהודים
מסכות, רעשנים
שירים וריקודים

הבה נרעישה, רש רש רש
הבה נרעישה, רש רש רש
הבה נרעישה, רש רש רש
ברעשנים

חג פורים, חג פורים
זה אל זה שולחים מנות
מחמדים, ממתקים
מגד מיגדנות

הבה נרעישה, רש רש רש (3)
ברעשנים

When Esther speaking to the king of
Haman's plot made mention,
"Ha, Ha," said he, "O no he won't!
I'll spoil his bad intention."
(Chorus)

The guest of honor he shall be,
this clever Mr. Smarty.
And when he comes into the room,
we'll have quite a little party.
(Chorus)

Of all his cruel and unkind ways
this little joke did cure him.
And don't forget we owe him thanks
for this happy feast of Purim.
(Chorus)





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