

# Esther

## *Introduction*

A note on the Book of Esther. Five books of the Hebrew Bible are known as the Five Scrolls (Chamesh Megillot). Song of Songs is read on the Shabbos of Passover week (Sepherdim read it on Seder night and Friday afternoons). Ruth is read on Shavuot (Pentecost). Kohelet is read on the Shabbos of the week of Sukkot. Ekhah (Lamentations) is read on the Ninth of Av, a fast commemorating the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. And, finally, the book we are studying, the Scroll of Esther, is read on Purim. Both Esther and Job could certainly be produced as plays or musicals with a high professional production level. In writing a musical, the scenario has to be laid out for the story by identifying the points in the play, visualized as a series of scenes, where the conflicts in each scene rise to a crescendo requiring song and/or choreography. Here are a few ideas on how to organize the telling of Esther's story in this way. A few possible lyric lines for songs have been put in quotation marks. Why not think of how you could write an original play or musical to be presented every Purim? Try your own creative hand — you can polish the ideas below or come up with better ones: Scene: Persian city of Susa (modern Iran). Time: 483 B.C.E. Possible ideas for a scenario with a few song lyric ideas: King Ahasuerus and company (tipsy): “Queen Vashti, you're not acting very pretty.” Queen Vashti could

sing a song to her maidens to go tell the King she is now a “liberated” woman. The chorus made up of King Ahasuerus’s counselors (“wise men [chachamim]” – Esth 1:13) could lament the rebellious female population of the country and how Queen Vashti will start an insurrection in every home. A national domestic revolt is imminent, right in homes of the nation! These wise men could sing, “It’s a scandal! Things are getting out of hand... Queen Vashti refuses to come at the king’s command!” (see Esth 1:12). Purim is to be a time of joy (simcha) and feasting and gladness and yontef (holiday) and a time to send gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor (Esth 9:22). Saddam Hussein, dictator of Iraq, boasted that his scud missiles would burn half of Israel, but then he should have studied the whole megillah of Esther because then he would have understood why his elite Republican Guard tank divisions would suffer a “turkey shoot” from the air and be defeated on Thursday, February 28, 1991 (5751), Adar 14, the very day of Purim (Esth 9:19), proving that any Haman who threatens to destroy Israel can still be brought down by the G-d of Esther. G-d, Whose Name is never mentioned in the text of Esther, is nevertheless a presence felt in every chapter of the story, just as He was a presence felt by that disciple of Amalek, Stalin, Hitler, and Haman – Saddam Hussein – on Purim Day, 1991 – but ironically not on many so-called American believers who are not at all grieved over the ruin of Joseph (Am 6:6), not at all gladdened over the reading of this whole Hebrew megillah, not at all

aware of what the G-d of Israel is doing, even now under our own noses, even, in the case of the U.S. military and Purim, 1991.

### ESTER

<sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass in the yamim of Achashverosh, (this is Achashverosh which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces;)

<sup>2</sup> That in those yamim, when HaMelech Achashverosh sat on his kisse malkhut (*royal throne*), which was in the\* capital, Shushan,

<sup>3</sup> In the shnat shalosh (*third year*) of his reign, he gave a mishteh (*feast, banquet*) unto all his sarim (*princes*) and his avadim (*officials*); the might of Persia and Media, the nobles and sarim (*princes*) of the provinces, being before him;

<sup>4</sup> When he displayed the osher kavod malkhut (*riches of the glorious kingdom*) of his and the yekar (*honor*)† of his tiferet gedulah (*glorious majesty*) yamim rabbim, even a hundred and eighty days.

<sup>5</sup> And when these yamim were expired, HaMelech gave a mishteh (*feast*) unto all the people that were present in the capital of Shushan, both gadol (*great*) and katan (*small*), shivat yamim (*seven days*), in the khatzer (*courtyard*) of the garden of the palace of HaMelech,

<sup>6</sup> Where were white and blue linen curtains, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to rings of silver and pillars of marble; the mittot

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\* 1:2 Persian † 1:4 See 1:20

(*couches*) were of zahav and kesef, upon an inlaid floor of purplish-red exquisite stone and mother-of-pearl and marble.

<sup>7</sup> And they gave them drink in vessels of zahav, the vessels being different one from another, and yayin malkhut (*royal wine*) in abundance, according to the [bountiful] yad HaMelech.

<sup>8</sup> And the drinking was according to the dat ein ones (*rule [which was] not compulsory, restricting*); for so HaMelech had ordered all the wine stewards in his bais, that they should serve kirtzon ish va'ish (*according to the good pleasure of each man*).

<sup>9</sup> Also Vashti HaMalkah gave a mishteh (*feast, banquet*) for the nashim (*women, wives*) in the Beit HaMalkhut (*the royal palace*) which belonged to HaMelech Achashverosh.

<sup>10</sup> On the yom hashevi'i, when the lev of HaMelech was tov with yayin, he commanded Mehuman, Bizta, Charvona, Bigta, and Avagta, Zetar, and Karkas, the shivat hasarisim (*the seven eunuchs*) that served in the presence of HaMelech Achashverosh,

<sup>11</sup> To bring Vashti HaMalkah before HaMelech with the keter malkhut (*royal crown*), to show the people and the sarim (*princes*) her beauty, for she was lovely to behold.

<sup>12</sup> But HaMalkah Vashti refused to come at the devar HaMelech at the agency of his sarisim (*eunuchs*); therefore HaMelech became furious, and his wrath burned in him.

<sup>13</sup> Then HaMelech said to the chachamim, which had da'as of the times; for so was the

custom of HaMelech toward all the meyvinim (*experts*) in dat (*law*) and din (*judgment*),

<sup>14</sup> And the next unto him was Karshena, Shetar, Admata, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memukhan, the shivat sarim (*princes*) of Persia and Media, which had access to HaMelech and which ranked rishonah (*highest*) in the Malkhut (*kingdom*);

<sup>15</sup> What shall we do unto the Malkah Vashti according to dat (*law*), because she hath not performed the commandment of HaMelech Achashverosh at the agency of the sarisim (*eunuchs*)?

<sup>16</sup> And Memukhan answered before HaMelech and the sarim (*princes*), Vashti HaMalkah hath not done wrong to HaMelech only, but also to all the sarim (*nobles*), and to kol haAmim that are in all the provinces of HaMelech Achashverosh.

<sup>17</sup> For this deed of HaMalkah shall spread abroad unto all the nashim (*women, wives*), so that they shall despise their be'alim (*husbands*) in their eyes, when it shall be reported that HaMelech Achashverosh commanded Vashti HaMalkah to be brought in before him, but she came not.

<sup>18</sup> Likewise, when they will have heard of the conduct of HaMalkah, the sarot (*ladies of the nobility*) of Persia and Media shall similarly respond this day unto all the sarim (*nobles*) of HaMelech. Thus shall there arise too much bizzayon (*contempt*) and ketzef (*wrath*).

<sup>19</sup> If it please HaMelech, let there go forth a royal decree from him, and let it be written in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, laws that shall not pass away, that Vashti come no more before

HaMelech Achashverosh; and let HaMelech give her royalty unto another that is better than she.

<sup>20</sup> And when the edict of HaMelech which he shall make shall be published throughout all his Malkhut (*realm*) — for it is great — all the nashim (*women, wives*) shall give to their be'alim (*husbands*) yekar (*honor, respect*), both to gadol and katan.

<sup>21</sup> And the proposal was good in the eyes of HaMelech and the sarim (*nobles*); and HaMelech did according to the devar Memukhan;

<sup>22</sup> For he sent sefarim into all the provinces of HaMelech, into every province according to the script thereof, and to every people after their leshon, that every ish should bear rule in his own bais, and speak in the leshon of his own people.

## 2

<sup>1</sup> After these things, when the wrath of HaMelech Achashverosh was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.

<sup>2</sup> Then said the attendants of HaMelech that ministered unto him, Let there be beautiful ne'arot betulot (*young virgins*) sought for HaMelech;

<sup>3</sup> And let HaMelech appoint pekidim (*overseers*) in all the provinces of his malkhut (*kingdom, realm*), that they may gather together all the beautiful na'arah betulah (*young virgins*) unto Shushan the capital, to the Bais HaNashim (*House of the Women, Harem*), unto the custody of Hegai the Saris HaMelech (*the Eunuch of the King*), the

Shomer HaNashim (*Custodian of the Women*); and let their (*bodily*) rubbings be given them.

<sup>4</sup> And let the na'arah which pleaseth HaMelech be Malkah (*Queen*) instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased HaMelech; and he did so.

<sup>5</sup> Now in Shushan the capital there was an ish Yehudi, shmo Mordechai ben Yair ben Shime'i ben Kish, a Binyamini,

<sup>6</sup> which (*ones*) had been carried away from Yerushalayim in the Golus among those taken captive with Yechanyah Melech Yehudah, whom Nevukhadnetzar Melech Bavel had carried away.

<sup>7</sup> And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Ester, the bat of his dod (*uncle*); for she had neither av nor em, and the na'arah was lovely in form and beautiful in appearance, whom Mordechai, when her av and em were dead, took for the bat of his own.

<sup>8</sup> So it came to pass, when the commandment of HaMelech and his dat (*decree, law*) was heard, and when ne'arot rabbot (*many maidens*) were gathered together unto Shushan the capital, to the custody of Hegai, that Ester was brought also unto the Beis HaMelech, to the custody of Hegai, Shomer HaNashim.

<sup>9</sup> And the na'arah pleased him, and she took up chesed before him; and he speedily had her be given her (*bodily*) rubbings, with her portion of special food; and also he selected sheva hane'arot (*seven maids*) for her from the Beis HaMelech; and he transferred her and her ne'arot to the preferred quarters in the Bais HaNashim.

<sup>10</sup> Ester had not revealed her Am (*People*),\* nor her moledet,† for Mordechai had charged her she should not show it.

<sup>11</sup> And Mordechai walked kol yom vayom before the khatzer Bais HaNashim (*courtyard of the House of the Women, Harem*) to have da'as of the shalom Ester (*welfare of Ester*), and what would become of her.

<sup>12</sup> Now before the turn of every na'arah came to go in to HaMelech Achashverosh, she had to complete the yemei merukeihen (the days of her [bodily] rubbings) which were prescribed for the nashim and which involved shneyim asar chodesh (*twelve months*), shisha chodashim (*six months*) of shemen (*oil*) of myrrh and shisha chodashim (*six months*) of perfumes and beauty treatments for nashim.

<sup>13</sup> Then thus came every na'arah unto HaMelech; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the Bais HaNashim unto the Beis HaMelech.

<sup>14</sup> Ba'erev (*in the evening*) she went, and ba'boker (*in the morning*) she returned to a Bais HaNashim Sheni (*a second House of the Women, Harem*) to the custody of Sha'ashgaz, Saris HaMelech, Shomer HaPilagshim (*Eunuch of the King, Custodian of the Concubines*). She came in unto HaMelech no more, except HaMelech delighted in her, and she were summoned b'shem (*by name*).

<sup>15</sup> Now when the turn of Ester bat Avichayil, dod Mordechai, who had adopted her as his bat, was

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\* **2:10** i.e., the Jewish people    † **2:10** kindred, i.e., her Jewishness



come to go in unto HaMelech, she required nothing but what Hegai, Saris HaMelech, the Shomer HaNashim, suggested. And Ester took up chen (*favor, grace*) in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

<sup>16</sup> So Ester was taken unto HaMelech Achashverosh into his Bais Malkhut (*royal residence*) in the chodesh ha'asiri (*tenth month*), which is the month Tevet, in the shnat sheva (*seventh year*) of his reign.

<sup>17</sup> And HaMelech loved Ester mikol hanashim (*more than all the women*), and she took up chen vachessed (*favor and grace*) in his sight more than kol habetulot (*all the virgins*), so that he set the keter malkhut (*royal crown*) upon her head, and made her Malkah instead of Vashti.

<sup>18</sup> Then HaMelech gave a mishteh gadol (*great feast*) unto all his sarim (*nobles*) and his avadim (*servants, officials*), even Mishteh Ester; and he decreed a holiday throughout the provinces and distributed gifts according to the [bountiful] yad HaMelech.

<sup>19</sup> And when the betulot (*virgins*) were gathered together again, then Mordechai yoshev b'Sha'ar HaMelech (*sat in the King's Gate*).

<sup>20</sup> Ester had not yet revealed her moledet (*kindred*) nor her Am (*people*),<sup>‡</sup> as Mordechai had charged her; for Ester did the commandment of Mordechai, like as when she was brought up with him.

<sup>21</sup> In those yamim, while Mordechai yoshev b'Sha'ar HaMelech, two of the Sarisim of

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<sup>‡</sup> 2:20 i.e., the Jewish people

HaMelech, Bigtan and Teresh, of the Mishomrei HaSaf (*Keepers of the Door; Doorkeepers*), were angry, and conspired to assassinate HaMelech Achashverosh.

<sup>22</sup> And Mordechai came to da'as of the plot, and told it unto Ester HaMalkah; and Ester informed HaMelech thereof b'shem Mordechai.

<sup>23</sup> And when inquiry was made of the matter, it was found true; therefore the two of them were made talui al etz (*hanged on a tree*), and it was written in the sefer of the divrei hayamim before HaMelech.

### 3

<sup>1</sup> After these things did HaMelech Achashverosh promote Haman ben Hamdata the Agagi,\* and advanced him, and set his rank above all the other sarim (*nobles*).

<sup>2</sup> And all the avadim of HaMelech, that were in the Sha'ar HaMelech, bowed, and paid homage to Haman, for HaMelech had so commanded concerning him. But Mordechai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

<sup>3</sup> Then avadim of HaMelech, which were in the Sha'ar HaMelech, said unto Mordechai, Why transgressest thou the mitzvot HaMelech?

<sup>4</sup> Now it came to pass, when they spoke yom vayom unto him, and his was a lo shema (*not listen*) unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordechai's behavior would be tolerated; for he had told them that hu Yehudi (*he was a Jew*).

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\* 3:1 Num 24:7

<sup>5</sup> And when Haman saw that Mordechai ein korei'a (*bowed not*), nor to him mishtachaveh (*would prostrate, worship*),<sup>†</sup> then was Haman full of chemah (*wrath*).

<sup>6</sup> And he scorned to lay hands on Mordechai alone; since they had told him the Am Mordechai; therefore Haman sought to make shmad of kol haYehudim that were throughout the kol Malkhut Achashverosh, even the Am Mordechai.

<sup>7</sup> In the chodesh harishon (*first month*), that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of HaMelech Achashverosh, they cast Pur, that is, the goral (*lot*), before Haman miyom l'yom (*from day to day, every day*), and me'chodesh l'chodesh (*from month to month, every month*) until the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.

<sup>8</sup> And Haman said unto HaMelech Achashverosh, There is Am Echad scattered abroad and dispersed among the amim in all the provinces of thy malkhut (*kingdom, realm*); and their dat (*law*) is different from kol am; neither obey they the datei HaMelech; therefore it is not suitable for HaMelech to tolerate them.

<sup>9</sup> If it please HaMelech, let it be written that they may be killed, and I will weigh ten thousand talents of kesef into the hands of those that are the osei hamelachah (*doers of the work*),<sup>‡</sup> to bring it into genazim (*treasuries*)<sup>§</sup> of HaMelech.

<sup>10</sup> And HaMelech took his taba'at (*signet ring*) from his hand, and gave it unto Haman ben Ham-

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<sup>†</sup> 3:5 Dt 5:9    <sup>‡</sup> 3:9 i.e., the S.S.    <sup>§</sup> 3:9 T.N. see the word genizah here, which is a temporary repository of worn-out Hebrew books considered treasure to be buried

data the Agagi, the tzorer (*vexer; harasser*) of the Yehudim.

<sup>11</sup> And HaMelech said unto Haman, The kesef is given to thee, HaAm also, to do with them as it seemeth good in thine eyes.

<sup>12</sup> Then were the soferim of HaMelech summoned on the shloshah asar yom of chodesh harishon, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded, unto the satraps of HaMelech, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the sarim of every people of every province according to the script thereof, and to every people after their leshon; b'shem HaMelech Achashverosh was it written, and sealed with the taba'at HaMelech (*the signet ring of HaMelech*).

<sup>13</sup> And the sefarim were sent by couriers into all the provinces of HaMelech, to make shmad, to kill, and to annihilate kol HaYehudim, both na'ar and zaken (*young and old*), little children and nashim, on yom echad (*one day*), even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to plunder their possessions.

<sup>14</sup> The copy of the edict to be issued as dat (*law*) in every province was published unto kol ha'amim, that they should be atidim (*ready, prepared*) for yom hazeh (*that day*).

<sup>15</sup> The couriers went out, being hastened by the devar HaMelech, and the dat was issued in Shushan the capital. And HaMelech and Haman sat down to drink, but the city Shushan was in confusion.

## 4

<sup>1</sup> When Mordechai perceived all that was done, Mordechai rent his garments, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a zeakah gedolah umarah (*loud and a bitter wailing*);

<sup>2</sup> And came even before the Sha'ar HaMelech; for none might enter into the Sha'ar HaMelech clothed with sackcloth.

<sup>3</sup> And in every province, whithersoever the Devar HaMelech and his dat (*decree*) came, there was evel gadol (*great mourning*) among the Yehudim, and a tzom, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.

<sup>4</sup> So Ester's na'arot and her sarisim came and told it her. Then was HaMalkah exceedingly distressed; and she sent begadim (*raiment*) to clothe Mordechai, and to take away his sackcloth from him, but he received it not.\*

<sup>5</sup> Then called Ester for Hatach, one of the sarisim of HaMelech, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment about Mordechai, to have da'as of mah zeh (*what is this?*), and al mah zeh (*why is this?*)

<sup>6</sup> So Hatach went forth to Mordechai unto the rechof haIr (*open square of the city*), which was before the Sha'ar HaMelech.

<sup>7</sup> And Mordechai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the parashat hakesef (*exact amount of the money*) that Haman had promised to pay to the genazim of HaMelech for the Yehudim, to destroy them.

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\* 4:4 See Am 6:6

<sup>8</sup> Also he gave him the copy of the edict of the dat (*decree, Final Solution*) that was published at Shushan to make them shmad, to show it unto Ester, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto HaMelech, to make supplication unto him, and to make bakash (*request, pleading*) before him for her Am (*People, the Jewish People*).

<sup>9</sup> And Hatach came and told Ester the divrei Mordechai.

<sup>10</sup> Again Ester spoke unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordechai:

<sup>11</sup> All the avadim of HaMelech, and the people of the provinces of HaMelech have da'as that whosoever, whether ish or isha, shall come unto HaMelech into the pnimiyus khatzer (*innermost courtyard*), who is not called, there is echat dat (*one law*) of his to put him to death, except such to whom HaMelech shall hold out the sharvit hazahav (*golden sceptre*), that he may live. But I have not been called to come in unto HaMelech these shloshim yom.

<sup>12</sup> And they told to Mordechai Ester's words.

<sup>13</sup> Then Mordechai commanded to answer Ester, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the Beis HaMelech, more than kol HaYehudim.

<sup>14</sup> For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there revach (*relief*) and hatzalah (*deliverance*) arise to the Yehudim from another place; but thou and thy bais Avicha (*house of thy father*) shall be destroyed; and who knoweth whether thou art come to the Malkhut for such a time as this?†

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† 4:14 1C 9:16; Ro 1:16

<sup>15</sup> Then Ester bade them return Mordechai this answer,

<sup>16</sup> Go, gather together kol HaYehudim that are found in Shushan, and declare ye a tzom for me, and neither eat nor drink shloshet yamim, lailah vayom. I also and my na'arot will undergo a tzom likewise; and so will I go in unto HaMelech, though it is not according to the dat; and if I perish, I perish.

<sup>17</sup> So Mordechai went his way, and did according to all that Ester had commanded him.

## 5

<sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass on the yom hashelishi, that Ester put on her royal apparel, and stood in the pnimiyus\* of the Beis HaMelech in front of the Beis HaMelech; and HaMelech sat upon his kisse malkhut (*royal throne*) in the Beis Hamalkhut, facing the Petach HaBeis (*Entrance of HaBeis*).

<sup>2</sup> And it was so, when HaMelech saw Ester HaMalkah standing in the Khatzer (*Court*), that she took up chen (*favor, grace*) in his sight, and HaMelech held out to Ester the sharvit hazahav (*golden sceptre*) that was in his hand. So Ester drew near, and touched the top of the sharvit (*sceptre*).

<sup>3</sup> Then said HaMelech unto her, What wilt thou, Ester HaMalkah? And what is thy bakash (*request*)? It shall be given thee even to the chatzi HaMalchut (*half of the kingdom*).

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\* **5:1** khatzer

<sup>4</sup> And Ester answered, If it seem tov unto HaMelech, let HaMelech and Haman come today unto the mishteh that I have prepared for him.

<sup>5</sup> Then HaMelech said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Ester hath said.

So HaMelech and Haman came to the mishteh that Ester had prepared.

<sup>6</sup> And HaMelech said unto Ester at the mishteh hayayin (*feast*), What is thy she'elah (*petition*)? And it shall be granted thee. And what is thy bakash (*request*)? Even to chatzi HaMalchut it shall be granted.

<sup>7</sup> Then answered Ester, and said, My she'elah and my bakash is:

<sup>8</sup> If I have found chen (*favor; grace*) in the sight of HaMelech, and if it is tov to HaMelech to grant my she'elah, and to perform my bakash, let HaMelech and Haman come to the mishteh that I shall prepare for them, and I will do makhar (*tomorrow*) as HaMelech hath said.

<sup>9</sup> Then went Haman forth that day sameiach (*joyful, happy*) and with a tov lev; but when Haman saw Mordechai in the Sha'ar HaMelech, that he stood not up, nor trembled because of him, he was full of chemah (*indignation, rage*) against Mordechai.

<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless Haman restrained himself, and when he came home, he sent and called for his ohavim (*friends*), and Zeresh his isha.

<sup>11</sup> And Haman told them of the kavod of his osher, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein HaMelech had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the sarim (*princes*) and avadim of HaMelech.



<sup>12</sup> Haman said moreover, Yea, Ester HaMalkah did let no man come in with HaMelech unto the mishteh that she had prepared but myself; and makhar (*tomorrow*) am I invited unto her also with HaMelech.

<sup>13</sup> Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordechai HaYehudi sitting at the Sha'ar HaMelech.

<sup>14</sup> Then said Zeresh his isha and all his ohavim (*friends*) unto him, Let an etz (*hanging tree*) be made of fifty cubits high, and baboker (*in the morning*) speak thou unto HaMelech that Mordechai may be hanged thereon;† then go thou samei'ach (*joyfully*) with HaMelech unto the mishteh. And the thing was tov to Haman; and he caused HaEtz to be built.

## 6

<sup>1</sup> On that night HaMelech's sleep fled away, and he commanded to bring the sefer of records of the chronicles; and they were read before HaMelech.

<sup>2</sup> And it was found written, that Mordechai had told of Bigtan and Teresh, two of the sarisim of HaMelech, the Mishomrei HaSaf (*Keepers of the Door, the Doorkeepers*) who conspired to assassinate HaMelech Achashverosh.

<sup>3</sup> And HaMelech said, What yekar (*honor*)\* and what recognition hath been done to Mordechai for this? Then said the servants of HaMelech that ministered unto him, Nothing has been done for him.

<sup>4</sup> And HaMelech said, Who is in the khatzer (*court*)? Now Haman was come into the Khatzer

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† 5:14 See Lk 23:21      \* 6:3 See 1:4,20

HaKhitzonah (*Outer Court*) of the Beis HaMelech, to speak unto HaMelech lit'lot (*to hang*)<sup>†</sup> Mordechai on HaEtz that he had erected for him.<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>5</sup> And the servants of HaMelech said unto him, Hinei, Haman standeth in the khatzer. And HaMelech said, Let him come in.

<sup>6</sup> So Haman came in. And HaMelech said unto him, What shall be done unto the ish whom HaMelech delighteth to show yekar?<sup>§</sup> Now Haman thought in his lev, To whom would HaMelech delight to do yekar more than to myself?

<sup>7</sup> And Haman answered HaMelech, For the ish HaMelech delighteth to show yekar (*honor*),

<sup>8</sup> Let the levush malkhut (*royal robe, clothing*) be brought which HaMelech has worn, and the sus (*horse*) that HaMelech rideth upon, and the keter malkhut (*royal crown, crest*) which is set upon its head,

<sup>9</sup> And let this levush and sus be delivered to the hand of one of the most noble sarim (*princes*) of HaMelech, that they may array the ish therewith whom HaMelech delighteth to show yekar,\* and bring him on horseback through the rechof of the ir, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the ish whom HaMelech delighteth to show yekar.

<sup>10</sup> Then HaMelech said to Haman, Make haste, and take the levush and the sus, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordechai HaYehudi, that sitteth at the Sha'ar HaMelech; leave nothing un-

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<sup>†</sup> 6:4 See Esth 2:23    <sup>‡</sup> 6:4 T.N. See Moshiach Ben Dovid hanging on a tree 2Sm 18:10 as well as the specter of the same fate for this descendant of the first royal family of Israel    <sup>§</sup> 6:6 See 1:4,20; 6:3

\* 6:9 See 1:4,20; 6:3,6

done of all that thou hast spoken.

<sup>11</sup> Then took Haman the levush and the sus, and arrayed Mordechai, and brought him on horseback through the rehov of the ir, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the ish whom HaMelech delighteth to show yekar.

<sup>12</sup> And Mordechai came again to the Sha'ar HaMelech. But Haman hastened to his bais, having his head covered in evel (*mourning*).<sup>†</sup>

<sup>13</sup> And Haman told Zeresh his isha and all his ohavim everything that had befallen him. Then said his chachamim and Zeresh his isha unto him, If Mordechai be of the zera of the Yehudim, before whom thy downfall hast begun, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt nafol tipol (*surely fall*) before him.<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>14</sup> And while they were yet talking with him, came the sarisim of HaMelech, and hastened to bring Haman unto the mishteh (*banquet*) that Ester had prepared.

## 7

<sup>1</sup> So HaMelech and Haman came to banquet with Ester HaMalkah.

<sup>2</sup> And HaMelech said again unto Ester on the yom hasheni (*second day*) at the mishteh hayayin (*feast*), What is thy she'elah (*petition*), Ester HaMalkah? And it shall be granted thee; and what is thy bakash (*request*)? And it shall be performed, even to chatzi HaMalchut.

<sup>3</sup> Then Ester HaMalkah answered and said, If I have found chen (*favor*) in thy sight, O HaMelech,

<sup>†</sup> 6:12 See 4:3    <sup>‡</sup> 6:13 See Mt 27:19

and if it is tov to HaMelech, let nafshi (*my life*) be given me at my she'elah (*petition*), and my Am at my bakash (*request*);

<sup>4</sup> For we are sold, Ani (*I*) and Ami (*my People*), to be made shmad, to be slain, and to be annihilated. But if we had been sold for avadim and shfakhot, I would have held my tongue, since then the tzoros would not have been such as to injure the interests of HaMelech.

<sup>5</sup> Then HaMelech Achashverosh answered and said unto Ester HaMalkah, Who is he, and where is he, who dares to presume in his lev to do such?

<sup>6</sup> And Ester said, HaTzar (*the foe*) and the oyev (*enemy*) is this Haman HaRah (*Vile Haman*). Then Haman was terrified before HaMelech and HaMalkah.

<sup>7</sup> And HaMelech, arising in his wrath from the mishteh hayayin, went into the palace garden; and Haman stood up to make bakash (*request*) for his nefesh (*life*) to Ester HaMalkah; for he saw that harm was determined against him by HaMelech.

<sup>8</sup> Then HaMelech returned out of the palace garden into the Bais Mishteh HaYayin, and Haman was fallen upon the mittah (*couch*),\* whereon Ester was. Then said HaMelech, Will he ravish HaMalkah also before me in the bais? As the davar (*word*) went out of the mouth of HaMelech, they covered Haman's face.

<sup>9</sup> And Charvona, one of the sarisim, said before HaMelech, Hinei, also, HaEtz fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordechai, who has spoken tov for HaMelech, standeth in the Bais Haman. Then HaMelech said, Hang him thereon.

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\* **7:8** See 1:6 mittot, couches

<sup>10</sup> So they hanged Haman on HaEtz that he had prepared for Mordechai. Then was the wrath of HaMelech pacified.†

## 8

<sup>1</sup> On that day did HaMelech Achashverosh give the Bais Haman Tzoror HaYehudim (*the estate of Haman the Vexer, Harasser, Enemy of the Jews*) unto Ester HaMalkah. And Mordechai came before HaMelech; for Ester had told what he was unto her.

<sup>2</sup> And HaMelech took off his taba'at (*signet ring*), which he had reclaimed from Haman, and gave it unto Mordechai. And Ester set Mordechai over the Bais Haman.

<sup>3</sup> And Ester spoke yet again before HaMelech, and fell down at his feet, and she wept and made supplication to him to avert the rah of Haman HaAgagi and the machshevet of him (*his scheme*),\* that he had devised against the Yehudim.

<sup>4</sup> Then HaMelech held out the sharvit hazahav (*golden sceptre*) toward Ester. So Ester arose, and stood before HaMelech,

<sup>5</sup> And said, If it is tov to HaMelech, and if I have found chen (*favor, grace*) in his sight, and the thing seem kosher (*fit, right, proper*) before HaMelech, and I be tovah (*pleasing*) in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the seferim machashevet Haman (*letters devised by Haman*) ben Hamdata the Agagi, which he wrote to destroy the Yehudim which are in all the provinces of HaMelech;

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† 7:10 Ps 24:10; Isa 53:11      \* 8:3 i.e., final solution plan

<sup>6</sup> For how can I endure to see the ra'ah that shall come unto Ami (*my people*)? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my moledet (*kindred, Jewish kinsmen*)?

<sup>7</sup> Then HaMelech Achashverosh said unto Ester HaMalkah and to Mordechai HaYehudi, Hinei, I have given Ester the Bais Haman, and him they have hanged upon the etz, because he laid his hand against HaYehudim.

<sup>8</sup> Write ye also in behalf of HaYehudim, as you please, b'shem HaMelech, and seal it with the taba'at (*signet ring*) of HaMelech; for the writing which is written b'shem HaMelech, and sealed with the taba'at (*signet ring*) of HaMelech may no man reverse.

<sup>9</sup> Then were the soferim of HaMelech summoned at that time in the chodesh hashelishi, that is, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and according to all that Mordechai ordered it was written unto HaYehudim, and to the satraps, and the governors and nobles of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the script thereof, and unto every people after their leshon, and to the Yehudim according to their script, and according to their leshon.

<sup>10</sup> And he wrote b'shem HaMelech Achashverosh, and sealed it with the taba'at of HaMelech, and sent seferim by couriers on horseback riding thoroughbred royal steeds;

<sup>11</sup> Wherein HaMelech granted the Yehudim which were in every city to assemble themselves together, and to engage in self-defense,

to make shmad, to slay and to annihilate, any chayil (*armed force*) of any people or province that would attack them, both little ones and nashim, and to plunder their property,

<sup>12</sup> On yom echad in all the provinces of HaMelech Achashverosh, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.

<sup>13</sup> A copy of the edict was to be issued as dat (*law*) in every province and was galui (*made known*) unto kol ha'amim (*all nationalities*), and that the Yehudim should be atidim (*ready, prepared*),<sup>†</sup> for yom hazeh to avenge themselves on their oyvim (*enemies*).

<sup>14</sup> So the couriers that rode upon royal steeds went out, being hastened and pressed on by the devar HaMelech. And the dat (*decree*) was given at Shushan the capital.

<sup>15</sup> And Mordechai went out from the presence of HaMelech in levush malkhut (*royal robe, clothing*) of blue and white, and with an ateret zahav gedolah (*a great crown of gold*), and with a tachrich (*garment, robe*),<sup>‡</sup> of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan celebrated and rejoiced.

<sup>16</sup> The Yehudim had orah (*light*), and simcha, and sasson, and yekar (*honor*).

<sup>17</sup> And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the devar HaMelech and his dat came, the Yehudim had simcha and sasson, a mishteh (*feast*) and a yontef. And many of the people of the land mityahadim (*became Yehudim*); for the pachad HaYehudim fell upon them.

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<sup>†</sup> 8:13 See 3:14    <sup>‡</sup> 8:15 See Mt 27:59

## 9

<sup>1</sup> Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the devar HaMelech and his dat drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the oyvei HaYehudim hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Yehudim had rule over them that hated them);

<sup>2</sup> The Yehudim assembled themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of HaMelech Achashverosh, to lay hands on such as sought their hurt, and no man could withstand them, for the pachad of them fell upon all people.

<sup>3</sup> And all the nobles of the provinces, and the satraps, and the governors, and officials of HaMelech helped the Yehudim; because the pachad of Mordechai fell upon them.

<sup>4</sup> For Mordechai was gadol in the Bais HaMelech, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces; for haish Mordechai grew more and more powerful.

<sup>5</sup> Thus the Yehudim struck all their oyvim with makkat cherev, slaughter, destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them.

<sup>6</sup> And in Shushan the capital the Yehudim slew and destroyed 500 men.

<sup>7</sup> And Parshandata, Dalphon, Aspata,

<sup>8</sup> Porata, Adalya, Aridata,

<sup>9</sup> Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizata,

<sup>10</sup> The aseret bnei Haman ben Hamdata, tzorer (*enemy of*) HaYehudim; but on the plunder laid they not their hand.



<sup>11</sup> On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the capital was brought before HaMelech.

<sup>12</sup> And HaMelech said unto Ester HaMalkah, The Yehudim have slain and destroyed 500 men in Shushan the capital, and the ten bnei Haman. What have they done in the rest of the provinces of HaMelech? Now what is thy she'elah (*petition*)? And it shall be granted thee. Or what is thy bakash further? And it shall be done.

<sup>13</sup> Then said Ester, If it be tov to HaMelech, let it be granted to the Yehudim which are in Shushan to do tomorrow also according unto the dat of this day, and let the aseret bnei Haman be hanged upon haetz.\*

<sup>14</sup> And HaMelech commanded it so to be done; and the dat (*decree*) was given at Shushan; and they hanged aseret bnei Haman.

<sup>15</sup> For the Yehudim that were in Shushan assembled themselves together on the 14<sup>th</sup> day also of the month Adar, and slew 300 men at Shushan; but on the plunder they laid not their hand.

<sup>16</sup> But the she'ar (*remainder, remnant*) of the Yehudim that were in the provinces of HaMelech assembled themselves together, engaged in self-defense, got relief from their oyvim, slew of those hating them 75,000, but they laid not their hands on the plunder.

<sup>17</sup> This was on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the month Adar, and on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the same rested they, and made it a yom mishteh and simcha.

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\* **9:13** See Esth 6:4

<sup>18</sup> But the Yehudim that were at Shushan assembled together on the 13<sup>th</sup> day thereof, and on the 14<sup>th</sup> thereof, and on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the same they rested, and made it a yom mishteh and simcha.

<sup>19</sup> Therefore the Yehudim of the villages, that dwelt in the unwall'd towns, made the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month Adar a simcha and mishteh, and a yontef, and of sending presents each one to his neighbor.

<sup>20</sup> And Mordechai wrote these things, and sent seferim unto all the Yehudim that were in all the provinces of HaMelech Achashverosh, both near and far,

<sup>21</sup> To establish this among them, that they should keep the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, shanah v'shanah,

<sup>22</sup> As the yamim wherein the Yehudim got relief from their oyvim, and the month which was turned unto them from yagon (*sorrow*) to simcha (*joy*), and from evel (*mourning*) into yontef; that they should make them yemei mishteh v'simcha, and of sending presents one to another, and matanot (*gifts*) to the evyon (*needy, poor*).

<sup>23</sup> And the Yehudim undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordechai had written unto them;

<sup>24</sup> Because Haman ben Hamdata, the Agagi, the tzorer kol HaYehudim, had devised against the Yehudim to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the goral (*lot*), to utterly defeat them, and to destroy them;

<sup>25</sup> But when Ester came before HaMelech, he commanded by hasefer that his wicked machashevah, which he devised against the Yehudim,

should return upon his own head, and that he and his banim should be hanged on the etz.

<sup>26</sup> Wherefore they called these yamim Purim after the shem of the Pur. Therefore for all the words of this iggeret (*letter*), and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had happened unto them,

<sup>27</sup> The Yehudim established, and took upon them, and upon their zera, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time shanah v'shanah;

<sup>28</sup> And that these yamim should be remembered and kept dor v'dor (*throughout every generation*), in every mishpachah, every province, and every city; and that these yemei HaPurim should never cease from among the Yehudim, nor the memorial of them perish from their zera.

<sup>29</sup> Then Ester HaMalkah, the bat Avichayil, and Mordechai HaYehudi, wrote with kol tokef (*all authority*),<sup>†</sup> to confirm this second iggeret (*letter of*) Purim.

<sup>30</sup> And he sent seferim unto all the Yehudim, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the malchut of Achashverosh, with words of shalom and emes,

<sup>31</sup> To confirm these yemei HaPurim in their times appointed, according as Mordechai HaYehudi and Ester HaMalkah had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves

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<sup>†</sup> 9:29 See Yn 1:12-13

and for their zera, the matters of the tzomot (*fasts*) and their ze'akah (*lamentation*).

<sup>32</sup> And the decree of Ester confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the sefer.

## 10

<sup>1</sup> And HaMelech Achashverosh laid a tribute upon the land, even to its distant shores.

<sup>2</sup> And all the acts of his authority and of his might, and the parashat gedulat Mordechai (*full account of the greatness of Mordechai*), whereunto HaMelech advanced him, are they not written in the sefer of the divrei hayamim of the kings of Media and Persia?

<sup>3</sup> For Mordechai HaYehudi was next unto HaMelech Achashverosh, and gadol among the Yehudim, and esteemed of the multitude of his achim, seeking the tov of his people, and speaking shalom to all their zera.

# **The Orthodox Jewish Bible**

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