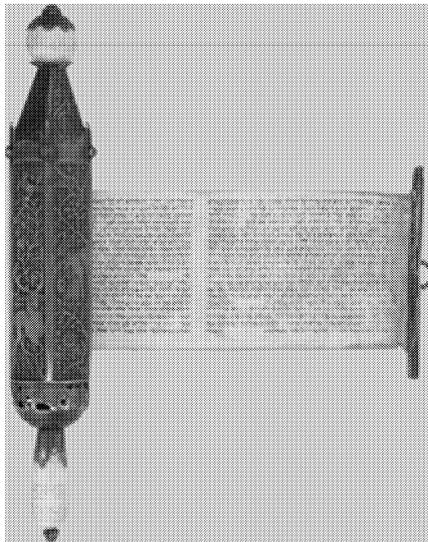




Welcome to Purim at the LJS



מגלת אסתר

The Book of Esther

*The Liberal Jewish Synagogue
St John's Wood
London*

Blessings before the reading of the Megillah

*We praise You, Eternal God,
Sovereign of the universe: You
sanctify us by Your commandments,
and enjoin us to read the Megillah.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל
מִקְרָא מְגִלָּה.

*We praise You, Eternal God,
Sovereign of the universe: You
performed wonders for our
ancestors in days of old, at this
season.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שְׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים
הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה.

*We praise You, Eternal God,
Sovereign of the universe: You have
kept us alive, sustained us, and
enabled us to reach this season.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה.

וַיְהִי בַיָּמִי אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ הוּא אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ מֵהַדָּו וְעַד-כּוֹשׁ שֶׁבַע וְעֶשְׂרִים
 וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה: בַּיָּמִים הֵהֵם כְּשֶׁבַת | הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ עַל כֶּסֶף מַלְכוּתוֹ
 אֲשֶׁר בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה: בַּשָּׁנָה שְׁלוֹשׁ לְמַלְכוֹ עָשָׂה מִשְׁתֵּה לְכָל-שָׂרָיו וְעַבְדָּיו
 חֵיל | פָּרַס וּמְדֵי הַפְּרָתִימִים וְשָׂרֵי הַמְּדִינֹת לְפָנָיו: בְּהִרְאֹתוֹ אֶת-עֶשֶׂר כְּבוֹד
 מַלְכוּתוֹ וְאֶת-יָקָר תְּפָאֶרֶת גְּדוּלְתוֹ יָמִים רַבִּים שְׂמוֹנִים וּמֵאֶת יוֹם:
 וּבְמָלוּאֵת | הַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ לְכָל-הָעַם הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה
 לְמַגְדוֹל וְעַד-קֶטֶן מִשְׁתֵּה שְׁבַעֶת יָמִים בַּחֲצָר גִּנַּת בֵּיתוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ: חוֹר | כְּרֶפֶס
 וְתַכְלֵת אַחוּז בְּחַבְלֵי-בּוּץ וְאַרְגָּמָן עַל-גְּלִילֵי כֶסֶף וְעַמּוּדֵי שֶׁשׁ מִטּוֹת | זָהָב
 וְכֶסֶף עַל רְצֻפֹת בַּהֲטָוֶשֶׁשׁ וְדָר וְסַחֲרֹת: וְהַשְּׁקוֹת בְּכָלֵי זָהָב וְכֵלִים מִכֵּלִים
 שׁוֹנִים וַיֵּין מַלְכוּת רַב כֶּנֶד הַמֶּלֶךְ: וְהַשְּׁתִיָּה כַּדָּת אֵין אֵינֶס כִּי-כֹן | יֶסֶד
 הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל כָּל-רַב בֵּיתוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּרָצוֹן אִישׁ-דָּאִישׁ: גַּם וְשִׁתִּי הַמֶּלֶכָּה עָשְׂתָה
 מִשְׁתֵּה נָשִׁים בַּיֵּת הַמַּלְכוּת אֲשֶׁר לְמֶלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ:

1 It happened in the days of Achashverosh, who reigned over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia. In those days, when King Achashverosh occupied the royal throne in the capital Shushan, in the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet for all the officials and courtiers. For no fewer than a hundred and eighty days he displayed the vast riches of his kingdom. At the end of this period, the king gave a banquet for seven days in the palace garden for all the people who lived in Shushan, high and low alike. Queen Vashti also held a banquet for women in the harem.

On the seventh day, when the king was merry with wine, he ordered his seven eunuchs to bring Queen Vashti before the king wearing the royal crown, to display her beauty to the people and the officials; for she was a beautiful woman. But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command. The king was greatly incensed, and his fury burned within him.

Then the king consulted the sages, his closest advisers, the seven ministers of Persia and Media.

King: *“What shall be done, according to law, to Queen Vashti for failing to obey the command of King Achashverosh conveyed by the eunuchs?”*

Thereupon minister Memuchan declared in the presence of the king and the ministers:

Minister: *“Queen Vashti has committed an offence not only against Your Majesty but also against all the officials and all the peoples in all the provinces. For the queen’s behaviour will make all wives despise their husbands, as they reflect that King Achashverosh himself ordered Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she would not come. This very day the ladies of Persia and Media, who have heard of the queen’s behaviour, will cite it to all Your Majesty’s officials, and there will be no end of scorn and provocation! If it please Your Majesty, let a royal edict be issued by you, and let it be written into the laws of Persia and Media, so that it cannot be abrogated, that Vashti shall never enter the presence of King Achashverosh. And let Your Majesty bestow her royal state upon another who is more worthy than she. Then all wives will treat their husbands with respect, high and low alike.”*

The proposal was approved by the king and the ministers, and the king did as Memuchan proposed. Dispatches were sent to all the provinces and nations of the king, that every man should wield authority in his own home.

2 Some time afterward, when the anger of King Achashverosh subsided, he thought of Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her. The king’s servants who attended him said:

Servant: *“Let Your Majesty appoint officers in every province of your realm to assemble all the beautiful young maidens at the capital Shushan, in the harem. And let the maiden who pleases Your Majesty be queen instead of Vashti.”*

The proposal pleased the king, and he acted upon it.

אִישׁ יְהוּדִי הָיָה בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה וּשְׁמוֹ מֶרְדֵּכַי בֶּן יֶאֱזַר בֶּן-שְׁמַעֲי בֶן-קַיֵּשׁ
 אִישׁ יְמִינִי: אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם עַם-הַגְּלוּהָ אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָתָה עִם יְכַנְיָהּ
 מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה נְבוּכַדְנֶאֱצַר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל: וַיְהִי אִמּוֹן אֶת-הַדָּסָה הִיא
 אֶסְתֵּר בַּת-דָּדּוּ כִּי אֵין לָהּ אָב וְאִם וְהִנְעֶרָה יַפְת־תַּאֲרָ וְטוֹבַת מֵרָאָה
 וּבְמֹת אֲבִיהָ וְאִמָּהּ לְקַחְתָּהּ מֶרְדֵּכַי לֹו לְבַת:

In the capital Shushan lived a Jew by the name of Mordecai, a Benjaminite. [His great grandfather] had been exiled from Jerusalem along with King Jechoniah of Judah, who had been driven into exile by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He was foster father to Hadassah – that is, Esther – his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The maiden was shapely and beautiful; and when her father and mother died, Mordecai adopted her as his own daughter.

When the king’s edict was proclaimed, and when many girls were assembled in the capital Shushan, Esther too was taken into the king’s palace under the supervision of Hagai, guardian of the women. The girl pleased him and won his favour, and he treated her and her maids with special kindness in the harem. Esther did not reveal her people or her kindred, for Mordechai had told her not to reveal it. Every single day Mordechai would walk about in front of the court of the harem, to learn how Esther was faring and what was happening to her.

After a year of preparations, Esther was taken to King Achashverosh, in his royal palace. The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she won his grace and favour more than all the virgins. So he set a royal diadem on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. The king gave a great banquet for all his officials and courtiers, “the banquet of Esther.”

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

אחר | הדברים האלה גדל המלך אחשורוש את המן בן המדתא האגגי וינשאהו וישם את כסאו מעל כל השרים אשר אתו: וכל עבדי המלך אשר בשער המלך כרעים ומשתחוים להמן כי כן צוה לו המלך ומרדכי לא יכרע ולא ישתחוה: ויאמרו עבדי המלך אשר בשער המלך למרדכי מדוע אתה עובר את מצות המלך: ויהי באמרם אליו יום ויום ולא שמע אליהם ויגידו להמן לראות היעמדו דברי מרדכי כי הגיד להם אשר הוא יהודי: וירא המן כי אין מרדכי כרע ומשתחוה לו וימלא המן חמה: ויבז בעיניו לשלח יד במרדכי לבדו כי הגידו לו את עם מרדכי ויבקש המן להשמיד את כל היהודים אשר בכל מלכות אחשורוש עם מרדכי:

3 Some time afterward, King Achashverosh promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite and seated him higher than any of his fellow officials. All the king's courtiers in the palace gate knelt and bowed low to Haman, for such was the king's order; but Mordechai would not kneel or bow low. Then the king's courtiers who were in the palace gate said to Mordechai:

Servant: *“Why do you disobey the king's order?”*

When they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordechai's resolve would prevail; for he had explained to them that he was a Jew. When Haman saw that Mordechai would not kneel or bow low to him, Haman was filled with rage. But he disdained to lay hands on Mordechai alone; having been told who Mordechai's people were, Haman plotted to do away with all the Jews, Mordechai's people, throughout the kingdom of Achashverosh.

In the first month, that is, the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Achashverosh, *pur* – which means “the lot” – was cast before Haman until it fell on the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar. Haman then said to King Achashverosh:

ישנו עם אחד מפזר ומפרד בין העמים בכל מדינות מלכותך ודתיהם שנות מכל עם ואת דתי המלך אינם עשים ולמלך אין שוה להניחם: אם על המלך טוב יכתב לאבדם ועשרת אלפים כפר כסף אשקול על ידי עשיר המלאכה להביא אל גנאי המלך: ויטר המלך את טבעתו מעל

יָדוּ וַיִּתְּנָהּ לְהַמָּן בְּיַד הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַמָּן
הַכֶּסֶף נָתַן לְךָ וְהָעַם לַעֲשׂוֹת בּוֹ כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ:

Haman: *“There is a certain people 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. 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 the foe of the Jews. And the king said:

King: *“The money and the people are yours to do with as you see fit.”*

On the thirteenth day of the first month, a decree was issued, as Haman directed to the officials of every people in every province, in its own script in its own language. The orders were issued in the name of King Achashverosh and sealed with his signet. The instructions were dispatched to all the king’s provinces to exterminate all the Jews, young and old, children and women, on a single day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month – that is, the month of Adar.

4 When Mordechai learned all that had happened he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes. He went through the city, crying out loudly and bitterly, until he came in front of the palace gate; for one could not enter the palace gate wearing sackcloth.

When Esther’s maidens came and informed her she was greatly agitated. She sent clothing for Mordechai to wear, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he refused. Thereupon Esther summoned Hathach, one of the eunuchs whom the king had appointed to serve her, and sent him to Mordechai to learn the why and wherefore of it all.

When Hathach returned and delivered Mordechai's message to Esther, Esther send to Mordechai the following reply:

Esther: *“All the king's courtiers and the people know that if any person, enters the king’s presence in the inner court without having been*

summoned he will be put to death. Only if the king extends the golden sceptre to him may he live. Now I have not been summoned to visit the king for the last thirty days.”

Thereupon Mordechai replied:

אֶל־תִּדְמִי בְנִפְשֶׁךָ לְהַמְלִיט בַּיַּת־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִכָּל־הַיְהוּדִים: כִּי אִם־הִחַרְשׁ תִּחְרִישִׁי בַּעֲת הַזֹּאת רִיחַ וְהִצְלָה יַעֲמֹד לַיְהוּדִים מִמְּקוֹם אַחֵר וְאֶת וּבֵית־אָבִיךָ תֵּאבְדוּ וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ אִם־לָעֵת כְּזֹאת הִגַּעַת לַמְּלָכוֹת: וְתֹאמַר אֶסְתֵּר לְהִשִּׁיב אֶל־מַרְדֳּכָי: לֵךְ כְּלוֹס אֶת־כָּל־הַיְהוּדִים הַנִּמְצְאִים בְּשׁוּשָׁן וְצוּמוּ עָלַי וְאֶל־תֹּאכְלוּ וְאֶל־תִּשְׁתּוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים לַיְלָה וַיּוֹם גַּם־אֲנִי וְנִעַרְתִּי אֲצִוִּים כֵּן וּבְכֵן אָבוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־כָדַת וְכִאֲשֶׁר אָבְדַתִּי אָבְדַתִּי:

Mordechai: *“Do not imagine that you, of all the Jews, will escape with your life by being in the king’s palace. On the contrary, if you keep silent in this crisis, deliverance will come to the Jews from another quarter, while you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows, perhaps you have attained to royal position for just such a crisis.”*

Then Esther sent back this answer to Mordechai:

Esther: *“Go, assemble all the Jews who live in Shushan, and fast on my behalf; do not eat or drink for three days. I and my maidens will observe the same fast. Then I shall go to the king, though it is contrary to the law; and if I am to perish, I shall perish!”*

So Mordechai went about [the city] and did just as Esther had commanded him.

5 On the third day, Esther put on royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king’s palace while the king was sitting on his royal throne. As soon as the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won his favour. The king extended to Esther the golden sceptre which he had in his hand, and Esther approached and touched the tip of the sceptre.

King: *“What troubles you, Queen Esther? And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be granted you.”*

Esther: *“If it please Your Majesty, let Your Majesty and Haman come today to the feast that I have prepared for him.”*

King: *“Tell Haman to hurry and do Esther’s bidding.”*

So the king and Haman came to the feast that Esther had prepared.

At the wine feast, the king asked Esther,

King: *“What is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.”*

Esther: *“My wish and my request if Your Majesty will do me the favour, – let Your Majesty and Haman come to the feast which I will prepare for them; and tomorrow I will do Your Majesty’s bidding.”*

That day Haman went out happy and light-hearted. But when Haman saw Mordechai in the palace gate, and Mordechai did not rise on his account, Haman was filled with rage at him. Nevertheless, Haman controlled himself and went home. He sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh, and Haman told them how the king had promoted him.

Haman: *“What is more, Queen Esther gave a feast, and besides the king she did not have anyone but me. And tomorrow too I am invited by her along with the king. Yet all this means nothing to me every time I see that Jew Mordechai sitting in the palace gate.”*

Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him:

Zeresh: *“Let a stake be put up and in the morning ask the king to have Mordechai impaled on it. Then you can go gaily with the king to the feast.”*

The proposal pleased Haman, and he had the stake put up.

בַּלַּיְלָהָ הָיָה נִדְדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר לְהָבִיא אֶת־סֵפֶר הַזְּכָרֹנוֹת דְּבָרַי הַיָּמִים וַיְהִי נִקְרָאִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: וַיִּמָּצֵא כְּתוּב אֲשֶׁר הִגִּיד מֶרְדֳּכָי עַל־בְּגָתָנָא וְתָרַשׁ שְׁנֵי סָרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמַרֵי הַסֹּף אֲשֶׁר בִּקְשׁוּ לְשַׁלַּח לְדַבְּרָא בְּמֶלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ: וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מִה־נַּעֲשֶׂה יִקָּר וּגְדוּלָהּ לְמֶרְדֳּכָי עַל־זֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁרָתָיו לֹא־נַעֲשֶׂה עִמּוֹ דָּבָר: וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מִי בַחֲצַר וְהָמוֹ בָּא לַחֲצַר בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַחִיצוֹנָה לֵאמֹר לְמֶלֶךְ לְתַלּוֹת אֶת־מֶרְדֳּכָי

עַל־הַעֶץ אֲשֶׁר־הֵכִין לוֹ: וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלָיו הִנֵּה הָמָן עֹמֵד בַּחֲצַר
וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ יָבוֹא: וַיְבוֹא הָמָן וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִה־לַּעֲשׂוֹת בְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר הָמָן בְּלִבּוֹ לִמֵּי יַחֲפֵץ הַמֶּלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת יָקָר יוֹתֵר
מִמֶּנִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר הָמָן אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ: יָבִיאוּ לְבוֹשׁ
מַלְכוּת אֲשֶׁר לְבֶשׂ-בוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְסוּס אֲשֶׁר רָכַב עָלָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֲשֶׁר נָתַן כְּתָר
מַלְכוּת בְּרֹאשׁוֹ: וְנָתַן הַלְבוּשׁ וְהַסּוּס עַל־יַד־אִישׁ מִשָּׂרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּרִתָּמִים
וְהַלְבִּישׁוּ אֶת־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ וְהִרְכִּיבֵהוּ עַל־הַסּוּס בְּרִחוּב
הָעִיר וְקִרְאוּ לְפָנָיו כָּכָה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר
הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהָמָן מִהֵרָ קַח אֶת־הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת־הַסּוּס כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ וַעֲשֵׂה־כֵן
לְמֹרְדֵכָי הַיְּהוּדִי הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־תִּפְּלֵ דָבָר מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ: וַיִּקַּח
הָמָן אֶת־הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת־הַסּוּס וַיִּלְבַּשׁ אֶת־מֹרְדֵכָי וַיִּרְכִּיבֵהוּ בְּרִחוּב הָעִיר
וַיִּקְרָא לְפָנָיו כָּכָה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ:

6 That night, sleep deserted the king, and he ordered the annals, to be brought; and it was read to the king. There it was found written that Mordechai had denounced Bigthan and Teresh, who had plotted to do away with King Achashverosh.

King: *“What honour or advancement has been conferred on Mordecai for this?”*

Servant: *“Nothing at all has been done for him.”*

King: *“Who is in the courtyard?”*

Servant: *“It is Haman standing in the courtyard.”*

King: *“Let him enter.”*

“Haman, what should be done for a man whom the king desires to honour?”

Haman: (to himself) *“Whom would the king desire to honour more than me?”*

So Haman said to the king,

Haman: *“Let royal garb be brought, and a horse on which the king has ridden and on whose head a royal diadem has been set; and let the attire*

and the horse be put in the charge of one of the king's noble courtiers. And let the man whom the king desires to honour be attired and paraded on the horse through the city square, while they proclaim before him: 'This is what is done for the man whom the king desires to honour!''

King: *"Quick, then! Get the garb and the horse, as you have said, and do all this for Mordechai the Jew."*

So Haman took the garb and the horse and arrayed Mordechai and paraded him through the city square; and he proclaimed before him:

Haman: *"This is what is done for the man whom the king desires to honour!"*

7 So the king and Haman came to feast with Queen Esther. The king again asked Esther at the wine feast:

מה־שְׂאֵלְתָּךְ אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וְתַנְתֵּן לָךְ וּמַה־בִּקְשָׁתְךָ עַד־חֲצֵי הַמַּלְכוּת וְתַעֲשֶׂ: וְתַעַן אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וְתֹאמֶר אִם־מְצֹאתִי חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב תַּנְתֵּן־לִי נַפְשִׁי בְּשִׂאֵלְתִּי וְעַמִּי בְּבִקְשָׁתִּי: כִּי נִמְכַּרְנוּ אֲנִי וְעַמִּי לְהַשְׂמִיד לַהֲרוֹג וּלְאַבֵּד וְאֵלּוּ לַעֲבָדִים וְלִשְׂפָחוֹת נִמְכַּרְנוּ הַחַרְשֹׁתִי כִּי אֵין הַצָּר שׁוֹה בְּנִזְק הַמֶּלֶךְ: וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ וַיֹּאמֶר לְאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה מִי הוּא זֶה וְאֵי־זֶה הוּא אֲשֶׁר־מָלְאוּ לְבָבוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן: וְתֹאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר אִישׁ צָר וְאוֹיֵב הָמָן הָרַע הַזֶּה וְהָמָן נִבְעֵת מִלִּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמַּלְכָּה:

King: *"What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."*

Esther: *"If Your Majesty will do me the favour, let my life be granted me as my wish, and my people as my request. For we have been sold, my people and I, to be exterminated. Had we only been sold as slaves, I would have kept silent; for that would not be worthy of the king's trouble."*

King: *"Who is he and where is he who dared to do such a thing?"*

Esther: *"It is this hateful, evil man, this Haman!"*

And Haman cringed in terror before the king and the queen. The king, in his fury, left the wine feast for the garden, while Haman remained to plead

with Queen Esther for his life. When the king returned from the garden to the room, Haman was lying prostrate on the couch on which Esther reclined.

King: *“Does he mean to molest the queen in my own palace?”*

No sooner did these words leave the king’s lips than Harbonah, one of the eunuchs said.

Servant: *“A stake is standing at Haman’s house, which Haman made for Mordechai – the man whose words saved the king.”*

King: *“Impale him on it!”*

So they impaled Haman on the stake which he had put up for Mordechai.

8 That very day Mordechai presented himself to the king, for Esther had revealed how he was related to her. The king slipped off his ring, which he had taken back from Haman, and gave it to Mordechai; and Esther put Mordechai in charge in Haman’s place.

Then Esther spoke to the king, falling at his feet and weeping, and beseeching him to avert the evil plotted by Haman the Agagite against the Jews.

Esther: *“If it please Your Majesty and if I have won your favour – let dispatches be written countermanding those which were written by Haman. For how can I bear to see the destruction of my people and my kindred!”*

Then King Achashverosh said to Queen Esther and Mordechai:

King: *“Haman has been impaled on the stake for scheming against the Jews. And you may further write with regard to the Jews as you see fit. [Write it] in the king's name and seal it with the king’s signet, for an edict that has been written in the king’s name and sealed with the king’s signet may not be revoked.”*

Mordechai left the king’s presence in royal robes with a magnificent crown of gold and a mantle of fine linen and purple wool. And the city of Shushan rang with joyous cries. And in every province and in every city, when the

king's command and decree arrived, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday.

9 And so, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, that is the month of Adar, when the king's decree was to be executed – the very day on which the enemies of the Jews had expected to get them in their power – the opposite happened, and the Jews got their enemies in *their* power.

Mordechai recorded these events. And he sent dispatches to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Achashverosh charging them to observe the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar, every year – to observe them as days of feasting and merrymaking, and as an occasion for sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor.

10 The king then imposed a tax on the empire, and the isles of the sea. All his mighty and powerful acts, and a full account of the greatness to which the king advanced Mordechai, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Media and Persia. For Mordechai the Jew ranked next to King Achashverosh, and was highly regarded by the Jews, and popular with the multitude of his brethren; he sought the good of his people and interceded for the welfare of all his kindred.

וַיִּשֶׂם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ | מִסַּעַל־הָאָרֶץ וְאֵי הַיָּם: וְכָל־מַעֲשֵׂה תְקוּפוֹ
 וּגְבוּרָתוֹ וּפְרָשֶׁת גְּדֻלַּת מְרַדְּכָי אֲשֶׁר גְּדָלוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ הֵלוא־הֵם כְּתוּבִים
 עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי מִדְּי וּפָרְס: כִּי | מְרַדְּכָי הִיְהוּדֵי מִשְׁנָה לְמֶלֶךְ
 אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ וְגָדוֹל לְיְהוּדִים וְרָצוּי לְרַב אַחֲיוֹ דִּרְשׁ טוֹב לְעַמּוֹ וְדָבָר שְׁלוֹם
 לְכָל־זָרְעוֹ: