ESTHER CHAPTER 4

וּמְרְדֵּכִי יָדַעֹּ אֶת־כְּל־אֲשֶׁר וַיִּזְעֵק זְעֲקָה גְדוֹלָה וּמְרֶבֵי אָת־בְּגָּדִיו וַיִּלְבָּשׁ שֵׁק וָאֲפֶר וַיִּצֵאֹ בְּתִוֹךְ הָעִיר וַיִּזְעֵק זְעֲקָה גְדוֹלָה וּמְרֶב:

When Mordecai learned all that had happened, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes. He went through the city, crying out loudly and bitterly,

וַיַבֿוֹא אַל־שַעַר הַמֵּלֶךְ בִּי אֵין לַבָּוֹא אֵל־שַעַר הַמֵּלֶךְ בִּלְבִוּשׁ שַׂק.

until he came in front of the palace gate; for one could not enter the palace gate wearing sackcloth.—

:וּבְכָל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר דְּבַר־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָתוֹ מֵגִּיע אֲבֶל גָּדוֹל לִיְהוּדִים וְצִוֹם וּבְכִי וּמִסְפֵּד שַׂק וָאֵפֶר יַצַע לֻרבִּים:
Also, in every province that the king's command and decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing, and everybody lay in sackcloth and ashes.—

(ותבואינה) [וُתָּבוֹאנָה] נַעֲרוֹת אֶסְתַּר וְסָרִיסֶׂיהָ נַיּגִּידוּ לָה וַתִּתְּסַלְחַל הַמַּלְבָּה מְאֻד וַתִּשְׁלֵח בְּגָּדִים לְהַלְבֵּישׁ אֵת־מְרְדָּכַי וּלְהָסִיר שַׂקּוֹ מַעָלָיו וְלָא קבֵּל:

When Esther's maidens and eunuchs came and informed her, the queen was greatly agitated. She sent clothing for Mordecai to wear, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he refused.

וַתִּקְרָא אֶסְהַּר לַהְעָדְ מִפָּרִימִי בֹּפֶּלֶדְ אֲשֶׁר הָעֱמִיד לְפָּנֶיהָ וַתְּצוֹּהוּ עֵל־מְרְדֵּכֵי לָדַעַת מַה־זֶּה וְעַל־מַה־זֶּה:

Thereupon Esther summoned Hathach, one of the eunuchs whom the king had appointed to serve her, and sent him to Mordecai to learn the why and wherefore of it all.

וַיַּצֵא הַתַּךְ אֱל־מָרדָּכֵי אֶל־רְחָוֹב הָעִּיר אֲשֶׁר לֹפְנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמֵּלֶךְ:

Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square in front of the palace gate;

וַבּגָּד־לָוֹ מָרְדֵּלֵי אָת כָּל־אָשֶׁר קַרֶהוּ וְאָת וּ פָּרָשַׁת הַכָּּסֶף אֲשֶׁר אָמֵר הָמָן 'לִשְׁקֿוֹל עַל־גּנְזֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ (ביהודיים) [בּיְּהוּדִים] לְאַבָּדַם:

and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and all about the money that Haman had offered to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews.

וְאֶת־פַּתְשֶׁגֶן כְּתָב־הַדָּת אֲשֶׁר־נָמַּן בְּשׁוּשֶׁן לְהַשְׁמִידָם נָתַן לוֹ לְהַרְאָוֹת אֶת־אֶסְתַּר וּלְהַגְּיד לֵהּ וּלְצַוּוֹת עַלֶּיהָ לָבוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּּלֶהּ לְהָתְחַנּוְרַלִוֹ וּלְבַקֵּשׁ מִלְפָנָיו עַל־עַמָּה:

He also gave him the written text of the law that had been proclaimed in Shushan for their destruction. [He bade him] show it to Esther and inform her, and charge her to go to the king and to appeal to him and to plead with him for her people.

וַיַבוֹא הַתַּדְ וַיַּגָּד לְאֵסְתֵּר אַת דְּבְרֵי מַרְדָּבֵי:

When Hathach came and delivered Mordecai's message to Esther,

וַתָּאמֶר אָסְתֵּר לַהַתַּדְ וַתְּצַוָּהוּ אֵל־מַרְבַּכֵי:

Esther told Hathach to take back to Mordecai the following reply:

כָּל־עַבְדֵי הַמֶּׁלֶךְ וְעַם־מְדִינֹוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָּעִים אֲשֶׁר כָּל־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר יָבְוֹא־אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמְּלֶךְ וְעַם־מְדִינֹוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְדָעִים אֲשֶׁר כָּלֹ־אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁר יְוֹשִׁיט־לְוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־שַׁרְבִיט הַזָּהָב וְחָיֵה וַאֲנִי לְאֹ נִקְרֵאתִי לְבָּוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ זָה שְׁלוּשִׁים יְוֹם: "All the king's courtiers and the people of the king's provinces know that if any person, man or woman, enters the king's presence in the inner court without having been summoned, there is but one law for him—that he 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."

וַיַּגִּידוּ לְמַרְדֵּכַי אַת דְּבָרֵי אֵסְתַּר: {פּ}

When Mordecai was told what Esther had said,

וַיָּאֹמֵר מָרדַּבַי לִהָשִׁיב אֶל־אֶסְתַּר אַל־תִּדַמִּי בְנַפְשֶׁׁךְ לְהִמְּלֵט בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ מְכָּל־הַיְּהוּדֵים:

Mordecai had this message delivered to Esther: "Do not imagine that you, of all the Jews, will escape with your life by being in the king's palace.

בָּי אִם־הַחֲרֶשׁ תַּחֲרִישִׁי בַּצֵת הַזּאֹת בֶנַח וְהַצְּלֶּה יַעֲמֶוֹד לִיְהוּדִים מִפְּקוֹם אַחֵׁר וְאַתְּ וּבֵית-דְאָבֶיךְ תֹּאבֵדוּ וּמִי יוֹדֵּע אִם־לְעֵתׁ כֹּזֹאת הַגַּעַת לַמַּלְכִוּת: On the contrary, if you keep silent in this crisis, relief and 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."

וַתָּאמֶר אֵסְתַּר לְהַשִּׁיב אֱל־מֶרדָּכֵי:

Then Esther sent back this answer to Mordecai:

לָהְּ כְּנוֹס אֶת־כָּל־הַיָּהוּדִּים הַנִּמְצָאָים בְּשׁוּשָׁן וְצִוּמוּ עֶׁלֵי וְאַל־תּאַכְלוּ וְאַל־תִּשְׁתֹּי שְׁלְשֶׁת יָמִיםׂ לַיְלָה וָיֹוֹם גַּם־אָנִי וְנַאֲרֹתַי אָצִוּם כֵּן וּבְבֵוֹ אָבָוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֹרֶוֹ אֲשֶׁר לְא־כַדָּת וְכַאֲשֵׁר אָבַדְתִּי אָבֵדְתִּי:

"Go, assemble all the Jews who live in Shushan, and fast in my behalf; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. 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!"

ַןיַּעֲבָר מְרְדֶּכֶי וַיַּעַשׁ כְּכָּל אֲשֶׁר־צִוְּתָה עָלָיו אֶסְתִּר: {ס}

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

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Pirkei Avot 1:14

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אָם אֵין אֲנִי לִי, מִי לִי. וּכְשֶׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אֲנִי. וְאָם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו, אֵימָתִי:

He [also] used to say: If I am not for myself, who is for me? But if I am for my own self [only], what am I? And if not now, when?