

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter LVIII: Esther

Essay 13. Why did Haman think he could destroy the Jews?

פְּסוּק "על־כֵּן הִיָּהוּדִים הַפְּרוּזִים [הַפְּרוּזִים]" וְכוּ' "שְׂמֵחָה וּמְשֻׁתָּה יוֹם טוֹב". וְאָמְרוּ ו"ל ד"שְׂמֵחָה וּמְשֻׁתָּה" קָבִילוּ עָלֵיהֶו וְאִילוּ "יוֹם טוֹב" לֹא קָבִילוּ עָלֵיהֶו, כְּדָכְתִּיב בְּתַר הָכִי "לְעִשׂוֹת אוֹתָם יְמֵי מְשֻׁתָּה וְשְׂמֵחָה", וְאִילוּ יוֹם טוֹב לֹא כְּתִיב. יִשׁ לְדַקְדָּק מָה הִיָּתָה סִבְרַת יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלֹא רָצוּ לְקַבֵּל עָלֵיהֶם יוֹם טוֹב, וּמִכָּל שָׂכָר בְּאוֹתָן הַזְּמַנִּים שֶׁהָיוּ כּוֹתְבִים כָּל הַנִּסִּים בְּמַגִּילַת תְּעֵנִית וְעוֹשִׂים אוֹתָם יְמֵים טוֹבִים. וְלָמָּה מְרַדְּכִי וְאֶסְתֵּר לֹא הִכְרִיחוּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל זֶה.

There is a verse, **“That is why village Jews, who live in unwalled towns, observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and make it a day of merrymaking and feasting, and as a holy day [yom tov] and an occasion for sending gifts to one another.”**¹ [The rabbis] of blessed memory said that they accepted upon themselves the merrymaking and feasting, but they did not accept upon themselves the restrictions of a *yom tov*.² After this, it is written, **“They were to observe them as days of feasting and merrymaking,”**³ but **“a yom tov”** is not written.

We need to check what opinion Israel had that they didn’t want to accept a *yom tov* upon themselves, and especially in those times when they wrote all the miracles in the *Megillat Ta’anit*, a listing of days on which fasting and eulogizing are forbidden, and made them into *yom tov*.⁴ That is, besides the universal *yomim tovim*, some communities observed additional days based upon something that happened in their communities.

Also, why didn’t Mordecai and Esther did not force Israel on this point?

וַיּוֹכֵן בְּהַקְדָּיִם קוּשְׁיָא אֶסְתֵּר עַל פְּסוּק "וְכָל־הַנְּשִׂים יִתְּנוּ יָקָר לְבַעֲלֵיהֶו", דְּמָה עֲנָנוּ "יָקָר" לְכָאוּ, שֶׁהָרִי אִם לֹא הָיוּ עוֹשִׂין דִּין בְּנִשְׁתֵּי הָיָה חֲשָׁשׁ פֶּן הַנְּשִׂים תִּהְיֶינָה מְבוֹזוֹת בְּעַלְיָהֶו, שְׁלֹא תִהְיֶינָה רוֹצוֹת לְשִׂמוּעַ בְּקוֹלָם וְלְעִשׂוֹת צִוּוֵי בְּעַלְיָהֶו, וְכִדְכָתִיב "כִּי־יֵצֵא דְבַר־הַמֶּלֶכָה" וְכוּ' "לְהַבְּזוֹת" וְכוּ', "בְּאֶמְרָם" וְכוּ'. וְעַתָּה שְׂיַעֲשׂוּ דִין בְּנִשְׁתֵּי תִלְמִדְתָּה הַנְּשִׂים לְעִשׂוֹת צִוּוֵי בְּעַלְיָהֶו, וּמָה לָנוּ לְהוֹסִיף שִׁי"תְּנוּ יָקָר" אִם זֶה אֵינוֹ נִלְמַד כָּלֵל מִנִּשְׁתֵּי, וְכָלֵל גְּדוֹל בְּיַדְנוּ תִּפְסֹת מוֹעֵט תִּפְסֹת.

This will be understood by advancing another question about the verse, “Then will the judgment executed by Your Majesty resound throughout your realm, vast though it is; and all

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¹ Esther 9:19.

² Megillah 5b.

³ Esther 9:22.

⁴ *Megillat Ta’anit* lists 35 days on which public fasting is forbidden, with public mourning forbidden on 14 of those days.

wives will treat their husbands dearly, high and low alike.”⁵ What relevance does “dearly” have here? If they didn’t exact justice against Vashti, there would be a fear that the women would humiliate their husbands, that they wouldn’t want to listen to their voices and to do the bidding of their husbands. As it is written, “For this deed of the queen will go out to 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.”⁶ But now that justice has been done with Vashti, the women will learn to do the bidding of their husbands. So why do we need to add that they treat their husbands “dearly,” if this is not learned at all from Vashti? It’s a great principal we have that “If you [attempted to] grasp much, you did not [succeed to] grasp anything; [but] if you grasped a little, you [at least succeeded to] grasp something.”⁷ I.e., one should be satisfied to have the wives do the bidding of their husbands; isn’t it overreaching to expect them to treat their husbands “dearly.”

ובכסף נבחר בפרשת בראשית תמה על אותו רשע המן ובמה שכתבו חכמי האמת שנתלבש בו סמאל בעצמו. איך חשב לאבד את ישראל, וכי לא הנה יודע שאין לה דבר שעומד בפני התשובה, ויש בתוכם חסידים ובפרט מרדכי והתה ותלמידיו שיעשו תפלה ותשובה לבטל הגזירה. ולמה הוציא בעדם "עשרת אלפים כפר-כסף", אלא בזה טעה הרשע, שעקר התשובה היא הידוי וחשב שאי אפשר להם לישראל לשוב בתשובה פראוי, שהרי צריך לזכור כל העוונות ואי אפשר שיזכרו כלם ולעולם לא תהנה תשובתם גמורה, ובשביל זה לא תהנה מקובלת, עכ"ל בקיצור.

In the *Kessef Nivchar*,⁸ in parashat Bereisheet, [the author] was astounded about the wicked man, Haman, and about what the sages of truth—the Kabbalists—wrote, that [Haman] became endowed with the angel of Death, Samael himself.

How did he think to destroy Israel, for did he not know that there is nothing that stands in the way of repentance, and that there are among [Israel] pious men, and especially Mordechai and Hatach⁹ and his students, who engaged in prayer and repentance to nullify the decree? Why did he pay “ten thousand talents of silver”¹⁰ for them? Rather, the wicked man erred in this: for the main point of repentance is the confession, and he thought that it was impossible for them, for Israel, to return in repentance properly, as it’s necessary to remember all the sins. But it is impossible that they would remember all of them, and thus their repentance will not be complete, and because of this, it will not be accepted. This is his language, in short.

⁵ Esther 1:20.

⁶ Esther 1:17.

⁷ Rosh Hashanah 4b; Sukkah 5a, 5b; Chagigah 17a; Chullin 138a; Yerushalmi Yoma 2:4.

⁸ Rabbi Josiah ben Joseph Pinto (c. 1565–c. 1648), Syrian rabbi and preacher, a disciple of Rabbi Chaim Vital. His books included *Kessef Nivchar* (Venice 1621), Kabbalistic sermons on the weekly parshayot.

⁹ Esther 4:5: “Thereupon Esther summoned Hatach, 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.” The name “Hatach” is derived from the word “to cut,” and would make sense to refer to a eunuch. However, Megillah 15a identifies Hatach as the prophet Daniel. Rav said that the nickname “Hatach” reflected a negative, because during the reign of Ahasuerus, Daniel was “cut down” from his former position of senior minister to a steward. Shmuel said that the nickname “Hatach” reflected a positive, because the affairs of the kingdom were “cut,” i.e., settled, by Daniel’s word.

¹⁰ Esther 3:9.

ובאמת שלפי פירוש זה, אתי שפיר הפסוק "הלעיטני נא מן האדם האדם הזה", דמהו הכפל. ולמה אמר "הלעיטני", ולא אמר "האכילני". אלא לפי שעשו מכר הבכורה כדי ליטול חלקו בעולם הזה, ואף כשישראל חוטאים, נוטל חלקם של עולם הבא בעולם הזה, על דרך "זכה נוטל חלקו ונתק חבירו" וכי'.

In truth, according to this explanation, the verse is superior, “Please let me gulp down some of this red, red stew,”¹¹ for why is [the wording] doubled? And why does it say “to gulp down,” and not say “to eat”?

Rather, since Esau sold his birthright in order to take his share in this world,¹² and even when Israel sins, their portion in the World-to-Come was taken in this world, in accordance with [the statement that]:

Each and every person has two portions, one in the Garden of Eden and one in Gehenna. If **he merits** to become righteous, **he takes his portion** [of reward] **and** [also] **the portion of his wicked colleague** in the Garden of Eden. If he is found culpable by becoming wicked, he takes his portion [of punishment] and the portion of his colleague in Gehenna. Rav Mesharshiyya said: What is the verse from which it is derived? With regard to the righteous, it is stated: “Therefore in their land they shall possess double;”¹³ whereas with regard to the wicked, it is stated: “And destroy them with double destruction;”¹⁴ therefore, each receives a double portion.

- Chagigah 15a

אלא שהוא אינו יכול ליטול חלקם בעולם הבא, ולכן הוא תמיד מקטרג על ישראל, שהרי כשישראל חוטאים חס ושלום, מוציאים שפע קדוש לקליפות, ומיד הקליפה ממחרת לבלוע אותו החטא הנקרא אדום. כדי שלא יהיה בעולם לזכרון, אלא יהיה נשפך מיד ממי שעשה אותו. וגם זה אינו בולע אותו דרך אכילה, אלא דרך בליעה והלעטה, כי הוא חושש שמא אם יהיה משתהא אינה רגע באכילתו, בין כך ובין כך יתחרט אותו החוטא ולא יהיה עוד זה החטא ברשותו. ולכן בולעו בהלעטה בחיפזון גדול, כדי שיהיה נשפך, ולא יהיה עוד תיקון בתשובה. וזהו "מן האדם האדם הזה", שאינו ממתין לבלוע שנים ביחד, אלא כל אחד ואחד לבדו בפני עצמו. וזהו עננו שלנו ממש, שראשי תבות של "הלעיטני נא מן"—הם אותיות המן.

But [Esau] is not able to take his portion in the World to Come. Therefore, he will always persecute Israel, so that when Israel sins, G-d forbid, it produces an [un]holy abundance for the husks. The husk immediately rushes to swallow that sin, which is called “red”¹⁵ [edom], so that [the sin] won’t be a remembrance in the world. But rather, it will immediately be forgotten by he who committed it, which according to the erroneous thinking of Haman, robbed the sinner of the power of repenting from the forgotten sin.

¹¹ Gen. 25:30.

¹² Yalkut Shimoni, Parshat Toldot, remez 111.

¹³ Isaiah 61:7.

¹⁴ Jer. 17:18.

¹⁵ Zohar II:20a: “The sinner is called ‘red’ [edom].” Compare Isaiah 1:18: “Though your sins be as scarlet [shanim].”

This is not a swallowing in the manner of eating, rather in the manner of devouring and gulping down, because [the husk] fears lest it tarry any time in its eating, the sinner will [experience] regret. Then the sin won't remain any longer in [the husk's] domain, and it would lose the opportunity to swallow it.

Therefore, [the husk] swallows it in a very hasty gulping down, so that it will be forgotten, and there will no longer be a corrective repentance. This is the meaning of “this red, red stew,” that he didn't wait to swallow the two [portions] together, but each and every one alone by itself.

This is exactly our situation, that the initial letters of the words “Please let me gulp down” [ה'לעיטני נ'א מ'ן]—*heh, nun, and mem*, they are rearranged to form the initials of Haman.¹⁶

ובנה נמי ותפ'רש הפסוק "הצילני נא מיד אחי מיד עשו", דמהו הכפל "מיד אחי מיד עשו", ותי'צו דבתפלה צריך לברר השאלה, וקשה ונהלא כמה פעמים אנו מתפללים בדרך כלל ובלא בירור דברים, ורק בראש השנה ויום הכיפורים כתבו הפוסקים דצריך לברר לשון השאלה. אכל הטעם הוא לפי שעשו והמן הכל אחד ויש להם סברא שצריך החוטא להתנדות על כל החטאים דוקא, וממילא שמעינו מינה שצריך לדעתם בירור דברים, ומשום הכי אף יעקב בירר דבריו וחתם בראשי תיבות המן "הצילני נא מיד" כדי להודיע לנו טעם הכפל.

By this, we will also interpret the verse in which Jacob said: “Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau,”¹⁷ for what is the reason for the duplication, “from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau”? This is solved, that in prayer, it is required to clarify the request.¹⁸ This is a difficult solution, for aren't there a few times that we pray in a general manner without clarifying things? It's only on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur that the decisors wrote that it's necessary to clarify the language of the request?¹⁹

But the reason for the duplication is that Esau and Haman are all one, and they each have an opinion that the sinner needs to confess precisely for all the sins, and obviously we hear from this that they need to clearly know the things for which are confessing. Because of this, Jacob clarified his words when he said, “from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau.” As we said above, there in the initial letters, the name Haman appears in the phrase, “Please let me gulp down” [ה'לעיטני נ'א מ'ן]—*heh, nun, and mem*, in order to inform us the reason for the duplication by Jacob.

¹⁶ This was pointed out by Yitzhak bar Yehudah haLevi, *Paneach Razah* (1607, Prague).

¹⁷ Gen. 32:12.

¹⁸ Zohar I:159a.

¹⁹ Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 582 (Magen Avraham, se'if katan 3, and Turei Zahav, se'if katan 20).

וסברא זו של המן שפיר הנה לה על מה לסמוך, שהרי בפרק ח' דיומא פליגי רבי יהודה בן בתירה ורבי עקיבא, דרבי יהודה בן בתירה סבירא ליה צריך לפרט החטא, ורבי עקיבא סבירא ליה שאין צריך לפרט החטא. והרמב"ם וספר מצוות גדול פסקו כרבי יהודה בן בתירה, ואף הרי"ף והרא"ש לפי מסקנת הב"ח, ועיי"ש בדבריו באורח חיים (סימן תר"ז). ובנדאי שלפי זה צריך לפרט את פלם אם רוצה להתפטר, אבל מאן לימא לן שאם ישפח אחד מהם שלא פרטו שלא הנה לו כפרה, מאחר שכבר פרט הרוב, ובכל דוקתא אמרינן רובו ככולו ואזלינן תמיד בתר הרוב.

This opinion of Haman was good in that he had something to rely upon, for in the eighth chapter of tractate Yoma (86b), Rabbi Yehuda ben Betira²⁰ and Rabbi Akiva argued. Rabbi Yehuda ben Betira was of the opinion that it's necessary to detail the sin, and Rabbi Akiva was of the opinion that it was not necessary to detail the sin. The Rambam²¹ and Sefer Mitzvot Hagadol²² rule as Rabbi Yehuda ben Betira, and even the Rif²³ and the Rosh²⁴ rule this way, according to the conclusion of the Bach in reviewing their writings,²⁵ and see there in the words of the Orach Chaim (siman 607). Certainly, according to this, it is necessary to detail all of them that one remembers if one wants to be forgiven. But who will say to us that if one forgets one of them that he did not detail that he will not have forgiveness, after he already detailed the majority. Elsewhere, we say that the majority of an entity is like all of the entity, and we always follow the majority.

ונש' לומר שגם זה הוא מחלוקת רבי מאיר ונחמיהם, דרבי מאיר סבירא ליה תישינן למיעוטא, ואיברא שאנו פוסקים כנחמיהם משום דקתיב "אחרי רבים להטות", אבל מקל מקום בית דין של מעלה פוסקים כדברי היחיד, כדאשכחן בבבא מציעא בתנורו של עכנאי שיצאת בת קול ואמרה שהלכה כרבי אליעזר בכל מקום, אף על גב דרבים פליגי עליה.

But do we always follow the majority? **It can be said that there's also a disagreement between Rabbi Meir and the rabbis, for Rabbi Meir's opinion is that we follow the minority.²⁶ Actually, we rule like the rabbis that we follow the majority, because it is written, "You shall neither side with the mighty to do wrong—you shall not give perverse testimony in a dispute so as to pervert it in favor of the mighty."²⁷ I.e., it's easier for a corrupt party in a case to bribe one judge than to bribe two judges, so we go with the majority opinion.**

But in any case, the Heavenly court rules according to the words of the individual, as we find in tractate Bava Metzia (59b), with the oven of *akhnai* ["a snake"], that a *Bat Kol*, a Heavenly voice, went out and said that the halacha was like Rabbi Eliezer in every case, even though in this case the majority disagreed with him. This case refers to an earthenware oven cut widthwise into segments, with sand placed between each and every segment, so that it resembled a coiled snake. Rabbi Eliezer deemed such an oven ritually pure, as the interposing sand meant

²⁰ Our current edition of Yoma identifies Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava. <https://bavli.genizah.org> shows this is the case for all manuscripts except Oxford 366, which does show Rabbi Yehuda ben Betira. The Yerushalmi also shows Rabbi Yehuda ben Betira in the parallel discussion at 8:7.

²¹ Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance, chapter 2, halacha 5.

²² Moses ben Jacob of Coucy, 13th century French Tosafist, author of *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol* (completed 1247).

²³ Rabbi Isaac ben Jacob Alfasi ha-Cohen (1013–1103) ("Alfasi" or "The Rif"), author of *Sefer haHalachot*.

²⁴ Rabbi Asher ben Jehiel (c. 1250–1327), Talmudist best known for his abstract of Talmudic law.

²⁵ Rabbi Yoel ben Samuel Sirkis (1561–1640), Polish *posek* (decisor).

²⁶ Yevamot 119a.

²⁷ Ex. 23:2.

that the oven did not have the legal status of a complete vessel, and therefore was not susceptible to ritual impurity. But the rabbis deemed it to be ritually impure, being functionally a complete oven. Rabbi Eliezer didn't want to accept defeat, and called for Heavenly signs to show that he was right, but despite all the miraculous signs, including the *Bat Kol*, the rabbis insisted that the majority view should be accepted.

The point made here, though, is that even if the rabbis follow the majority view, perhaps G-d is concerned about the minority. Thus, perhaps Haman had a basis for his thinking, that G-d would care even about one forgotten sin, even if we have specified the majority of the sins.

ועוד הנה לו הוכחה גמורה על זה שכשהיו ישראל יוצאים ממצרים אמר משה "וגם-מקננו ילך עמנו לא תשאר פרסה", דשמע מינה שהקב"ה חניש למיעוטא. וכן במלחמת שאול עם עמלק פתיב "והמתה מאיש עד-אשה מעלל ועד-יונק" וכו', והכי נמי הנה סובר המן שאם ישפח לפרט איזה עון אי אפשר שתהנה לו פפרה הואיל שהקב"ה חניש למיעוטא.

Furthermore, [Haman] had a complete proof about this, for when Israel left Egypt, Moses said to them, “our own livestock, too, shall go along with us—not a hoof shall remain behind,”²⁸ and we hear from this that the Holy One, Blessed be He, was concerned about a minority. Also, in the war of Saul with Amalek, it is written, “Spare no one, but kill alike men and women, infants and sucklings.”²⁹ Thus too, Haman was of the opinion that if one would forget to detail whichever sin he had committed, it would be impossible that he would have forgiveness, since the Holy One, Blessed be He, was concerned about a minority.

ומעתה נבא לנדון דידן של נשתי, ולמה דנקא ממוכן שהוה המן נתן עצמה להרוג את נשתי ולא שום אחר משאר היועצים והתקמים שהיו שם. וצריך לומר שכל האחרים לא הנה נראה להם בנשתי פשע של חיוב מיתה, דדבר קשה הוא לומר שבשביל פעם אחד שהאשה אינה עושה רצון בעלה מיד תהנה חייבת מיתה אף על פי שבכל ימיה שמעה לבעלה בכל מה שאמר לה. ולפי זה לא רצו לדונה למיתה, ואף על גב דכתיב "וייטב הדבר בעיני המלך והשרים", היינו העצה של קתיבת האגרות, לא על מיתת נשתי.

Now we come to our matter of Vashti. Why, specifically, did Memuchan,³⁰ who was Haman,³¹ provide advice to kill Vashti, but no other of the remaining advisors and wise men who were there provided such advice? It must be said that all the others would not have found in Vashti a crime worthy of death, that it is a difficult matter to say that because of one time that a wife doesn't do the will of her husband, she will immediately be liable for death, even though all her days she obeyed her husband in everything he told her. According to this, they

²⁸ Ex. 10:26.

²⁹ I Sam. 15:3.

³⁰ Esther 1:16–20: “Thereupon Memuchan declared in the presence of the king and the ministers: ‘Queen Vashti has committed an offense not only against Your Majesty but also against all the officials and against all the peoples in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. For the queen’s behavior will make all wives despise their husbands, as they reflect that King Ahasuerus 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 behavior, 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 Ahasuerus. And let Your Majesty bestow her royal state upon another who is more worthy than she. Then will the judgment executed by Your Majesty resound throughout your realm, vast though it is; and all wives will treat their husbands dearly, high and low alike.’ ”

³¹ Megillah 12b: “Why is Haman referred to as Memuchan? Because he was prepared [*muchan*] to bring calamity upon the Jewish people.”

didn't want to sentence her to death, and even though it is written, "The proposal was approved by the king and the ministers,"³² this was about the suggestion of writing letters "that Vashti shall never enter the presence of King Ahasuerus," and not about the death of Vashti.

וְהָרְאָהָ שֶׁלֹּא בָּא מְפוֹרָשׁ בְּכַתוּב דִּין מִיָּתֵהּ זֶה, וְנֹאף לְאַחַר שֶׁאָמַר "וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר" וְכֹוּ חִזַּר לֹאמֹר "וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ כְּדַבַּר מְמוּחָן" דְּוָקָא, וְלֹא אָמַר "וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ כֵּן", אֲלֵא וְדַאי שֶׁשָּׂאֵר הַיּוֹעֲצִים לֹא הָיוּ מוֹדִים לְהִמָּן בְּעוֹנֵשׁ הַמִּיתָה שֶׁל וְשָׂתִי. אֲמָנָם הִמָּן שֶׁהוּא הַסְּמָאֵל וְיֵשׁ לוֹ סְבָרָא שֶׁאֲפִילוֹ עוֹן אַחַד שֶׁהוּא גִּשְׁפַח מַעֲפֵב הַתְּשׁוּבָה, מִשּׁוּם דְּחִיָּוִי שִׁינּוּן לְמִיעוּטָא, לְפִי זֶה אֲפִילוֹ בְּשִׁבְלֵי פֶשַׁע אַחַד שֶׁהָאִשָּׁה עוֹשֶׂה לְבַעֲלָהּ תְּהֵינָה חַיִּיבַת מִיָּתֵהּ, וּמִשּׁוּם הָכִי נִתְּן עֲצָה לְהוֹרְגָהּ.

The proof is that Scripture didn't bring an explicit report of this death sentence. Even after it said, "The proposal was approved by the king and the ministers," i.e., talking about the writing of letters, it reverted to say, "and the king did as Memuchan proposed," i.e., talking about ordering Vashti killed. It does not say, "the king did so," which would have been more succinct, if Memuchan and the other ministers had all been talking about the same thing.

Rather, it is certain that the remaining advisors did not agree with Haman with the punishment of the death of Vashti. It's true that Haman is the angel of death, Samael, and he has the opinion that even one sin that is forgotten will prevent repentance, because [G-d] is concerned about a minority. Because of this, even because of one sin that the woman does to her husband, she is deserving of death, and because of this, he gave the advice to kill her.

וְלְפִי סְבָרָא זֶה כָּל אִשָּׁה שֶׁפַּעַם אַחַת לֹא תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל בְּעֻלָּהּ תְּהֵינָה חַיִּיבַת מִיָּתֵהּ, זֶה הוּא מִן הַנִּמְנָע שֶׁהַנְּשִׂים לֹא תְהֵינָה חוֹטְאוֹת אֲפִילוֹ פַּעַם אַחַד עִם בְּעֻלְיָהוּ, וְלֹא שְׂבָקַת חַיִּי לְנָשִׁים, וְלָכֵן נִתְחַכְּסֵם הִמָּן לֹאמֹר "וְכָל־הַנְּשִׂים יִתְּנוּ יָקָר", דְּהֵינּוּ שִׁיתְהֵינָה רְגִילוֹת בְּעֲצָמָן לְחִלּוּק פְּבוֹד גָּדוֹל לְבַעֲלֵיהֶן. וְאִזּוֹ אֵי אֲפִשֶׁר שֶׁתַּעֲבוֹרְנָה עַל דְּבָרֵי בְּעֻלְיָהוּ אֲפִילוֹ פַּעַם אַחַת שֶׁהָרִי יִהְיוּ חֲשׁוּבִים בְּעֵינֵיהֶם כְּאֵדָם גָּדוֹל, שֶׁר וְחֲשׁוּב שֶׁבְּכָל דְּבָר וְדָבָר בְּגַי אֲדָם שׁוֹמְעִין לוֹ, מֵה שָׂאִין כֵּן אִם יִהְיוּ בְּעֻלְיָהוּ חֲשׁוּבִים בְּפִנְיָהוּ כְּמוֹתָן, אִיזֶה פַּעַם לֹא תִשְׁמַעְנָה לוֹ, וְלָכֵן אָמַר "וְכָל־הַנְּשִׂים יִתְּנוּ יָקָר", יָקָר דְּוָקָא.

According to this opinion of Haman, every woman who does not once listen to her husband's voice is deserving of death. This makes women refrain from sinning even once with their husbands, and no woman could survive! Therefore, Haman dealt wisely with them to say, "all women will treat their husbands dearly," which is to say that they will accustom themselves to pay great respect to their husbands. Thus, it's impossible for them to transgress the words of their husbands even one time, for they would be considered in their eyes as a great man, a minister or important figure in that in each and every thing, people listen to him. This would not be the case if their husbands were only as important to them as they really were, i.e., often not very important or highly regarded, for then how often would they not obey him. Therefore, Haman said, "all women will treat their husbands dearly," literally dearly, so that they would accustom themselves to always listen to the husbands and not incur death.

³² Esther 1:21.

והואיל שסבבת המן היתה שאפילו בשביל חטא אחד שלא תתודה עליו אין התשובה מתקבלת, לכן נתחכמה אסתר לשלוח למרדכי "לה כנוס את כל היהודים הנמצאים בשושן", לפי שכלם נהגו מן הסעודה, ולפי סבבת המן אם אחד מהם יתא נעדר מלעשות תשובה לא היתה מתבטלת הגזירה.

Since Haman's opinion was that even for one sin for which one does not confess, his repentance is not accepted, therefore Esther was wise to send to Mordecai, "Go, assemble all the Jews who live in Shushan, and fast on my behalf; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day,"³³ for they had all enjoyed the festive meal.³⁴ The Talmud explains that the Jews had sinned through their eating and drinking there, and had pretended to bow down to an idol that Nebuchadnezzar had made.³⁵ According to Haman's opinion, if one of them was lacking in repenting, the decree of their deaths would not be invalidated.

ומשום הכי לאחר שנעשה להם הנס גזרו לעשות אותו היום כמו יום טוב, שיהיה כלו יום טוב גמור לכל ישראל ולא יהיה תלוי במנהג המקומות, לרמוז לסבבת המן שבשביל מרדכי רצה לאבד את כל היהודים "ונהפוך הוא" ל"שמחה וששון". אבל אחר כך לא רצו לקבל חיוב זה, שלא להפסיד אנפשיהו, ואינם רוצים בסבבא זו לפי שהעולם נידון אחר רובו, והיחיד אחר רוב מעשיו, והתשובה מתקבלת על כל עונותם אף אם ישכחו איזה מהם, ולא רצו לקבל לעשותו יום טוב גמור.

Because of this, after the miracle was performed for them, and they were spared from Haman's plot, they decreed that this day should be as a *yom tov*. They decreed that it should be a complete *yom tov* for all Israel, throughout all time and throughout the world, and not depend on the custom of the different places, i.e., to only be celebrated in those countries in which the Jews had been saved. This would serve to hint at the thinking of Haman, that because of Mordechai, he wanted to destroy all of the Jews, "but the opposite happened,"³⁶ "gladness and joy."³⁷

But afterward, they didn't want to accept this obligation, so as not to lose income from having to abstain from work on that day. They also didn't desire this thinking of Haman that repentance would only be available if every sin was remembered and mentioned, because the world is judged according to its majority, and the individual according to the majority of his actions.³⁸ Repentance is accepted for all of their sins, even if they forget some of them. Regarding acceptance or rejection of a *yom tov*, we certainly follow G-d's instructions as presented in our Torah, but when it comes to rabbinic decrees, "We do not enact a decree upon the community unless a majority of the community is able to live up to it."³⁹ Mordechai wanted to make Purim not only a *chag* but a *yom tov*, **but they didn't want to accept to make it a complete *yom tov*.**

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³³ Esther 4:16.

³⁴ Esther 1:5.

³⁵ Megillah 12a.

³⁶ Esther 9:1.

³⁷ Esther 8:16.

³⁸ Kiddushin 32b.

³⁹ Bava Kamma 79b; Bava Batra 60b; Avodah Zarah 36a.