



THE BOOK OF ESTHER IN THE SEPTUAGINT

Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 88a

ויתיצבו בתחתית ההר, אמר רב אבדימי בר חמא בר חסא: מלמד שכפה הקדוש ברוך הוא עליהם את ההר כגיגית, ואמר להם: אם אתם מקבלים התורה - מוטב, ואם לאו - שם תהא קבורתכם.

Rav Avdimi son of Chama, son of Chasa, said: 'This teaches that the Holy Blessed One held the mountain over them like a pail, and said to them: "If you accept the Torah - good. If not, this will be your grave."'

אמר רב אחא בר יעקב: מכאן מודעא רבה לאורייתא.

Rav Acha son of Ya'akov said: 'From here is a great declaration of protest against the Torah!'

אמר רבא: אף על פי כן, הדור קבלוה בימי אחשוורוש.

Rabba said: 'Even if it were so, the generation of Ahashverosh accepted [the Torah]. As it is written: 'The Jews ordained and accepted [upon themselves]' (Esther 9.27) that which they had already accepted [under duress].'

Esther (Septuagint) Addition A:1-17

In the second year when Artaxerxes the Great was king, on the first day of Nisa, Mardochoaios the son of Iairos son of Semeias son of Kisaaios, from the tribe of Benjamin, saw a dream. He was a Judean man dwelling in the city of Sus, a great man, serving in the court of the king. Now he was one of the group of exiles which Nabouchodonosor, king of Babylon, took captive from Ierousalem with Iechonias, the king of Judea. And this was his dream: Look! Shouts and confusion! Thunder and earthquake! Chaos upon the earth! Look! Two dragons came forward, both ready to fight, and a great noise arose from them! And at their sound every nation prepared for war, to fight against a nation of righteous people. Look! A day of darkness and gloom! Affliction and anguish! Oppression and great chaos upon the earth! And the whole righteous nation was in chaos, fearing the evils that threatened themselves, and they were ready to perish. Then they cried out to God, and from their cry, as though from a small spring, there came a great river, abundant water; light, and the sun rose, and the lowly were exalted and devoured those held in esteem.

Then when Mardochoaios, who had seen this dream and what God had determined to do, awoke, he had it on his heart and sought until nightfall to understand it in every detail. And Mardochoaios took his rest in the courtyard with Gabatha and Tharra, the two eunuchs of the king who guarded the courtyard. He both overheard their deliberations and inquired into their ambitions, and learned that they were preparing to lay hands on Artaxerxes the king, and he told the king about them. Then the king interrogated the two eunuchs, and when they confessed, they were led away. And the king wrote these things in the record, and Mardochoaios wrote concerning these things. And the king ordered Mardochoaios to serve in the court and gave him gifts for these things. But Haman son of Hamadathos, a Bougean, was highly esteemed by the king, and he sought to harm Mardochoaios and his people because of the two eunuchs of the king.

Esther (Masoretic Text) 2:21-23

בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וּמַרְדֵּכַי יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ קִצְּףָּ בְּגִתָּן וְתֵרֶשׁ שְׁנֵי-סְרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמָרֵי הַסֶּף וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ לְשַׁלַּח יָד בְּמֶלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרֶשׁ: וַיִּוְדַע הַדָּבָר לְמַרְדֵּכַי וַיַּגִּד לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר לְמֶלֶךְ בְּשֵׁם מַרְדֵּכַי: וַיִּבְקֶשׁ הַדָּבָר וַיִּמָּצֵא וַיִּתְּלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עַל-עֵץ וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּסֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

At that time, when Mordechai was sitting in the palace gate, Bigtan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the threshold, became angry and plotted to do away with King Ahashverosh. 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 before the king.

Esther (Septuagint) 2:21-23

The two eunuchs who were the king's chief bodyguards were irritated because Mardochoaios was promoted, and they sought to kill Artaxerxes the king. But the matter became known to Mardochoaios, and he alerted Esther, and she explained to the king the details of the plot. So the king interrogated the two eunuchs and hanged them. Then the king ordered to make an entry as a memorial in the royal archive in commendation of Mardochoaios's loyalty.

Esther (Septuagint) 4:17, Addition C:1-30

And Mardochoaios went and did what Esther had commanded him.

Then he petitioned the Eternal, remembering all the works of the Eternal. And he said, 'Eternal, Eternal, Sovereign of all powers, for the universe is subject to your authority, and there is no one who can oppose you when it is your will to save Israel, because you have made heaven and earth and every wonderful thing in what is under heaven. You are the Eternal of all, and there is no one who can withstand you, the Eternal. You know all things; You know, O Eternal, that it was not in insolence nor pride nor for any love of glory that I did this, namely to refuse to do obeisance to this prideful Haman, for I would have been willing to kiss the soles of his feet for Israel's safety! but I did this so that I might not set human glory above divine glory, and I will do no obeisance to anyone but You, my Eternal, and I will not do these things in pride. And now, O Eternal God, Sovereign, God of Abraham, spare your people, for they are looking to ruin us, and they desired to destroy the inheritance that has been Yours from the beginning. Do not neglect Your portion, which you redeemed for Yourself out of the Land of Egypt. Hear my petition, and have mercy upon Your allotment; turn our mourning into feasting, that we may live and sing hymns to your name, O Eternal; do not silence the mouth of those who praise you.'

And all Israel cried out from their strength, because their death was before their eyes.

Then Esther the queen fled to the Eternal, seized with the agony of death. Taking off the garments of her glory, she put on the garments of distress and mourning, and instead of costly perfumes she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she utterly humbled her body; every part that she loved to adorn she covered with her tangled hair. Then she petitioned the Eternal, God of Israel, and said, 'O my Eternal, You alone are our Sovereign; help me, I who am alone and have no helper except You, because my danger is in my hand. I have heard from my birth in the tribe of my family that You, O Eternal, took Israel out of all the nations and our ancestors from among all their forebears, to be an everlasting inheritance, and you did for them all that you said. And now we have sinned before you, and you have delivered us into the hand of our enemies, because we have honoured their gods. You are righteous, O Eternal! And now they were not satisfied that we are in bitter slavery, but they have put their hands into the hands of their idols, to annul the stipulation of Your mouth and to destroy your inheritance and to stop the mouths of those who praise You and to extinguish the glory of Your house and Your altar, to open the mouth of the nations for the mighty deeds of vain things, and that a mortal king be admired forever.

'O Eternal, do not surrender Your scepter to those who don't exist, and do not let them laugh at our downfall, but turn their plan against them, and make a public example of him who began this against us. Remember, O Eternal; make Yourself known in a time of our affliction, and embolden me, O Sovereign of the gods and Master of all dominion! Put eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate the one who fights against us so that there may be an end of him and those who agree with him. But save us by Your hand, and help me, who am alone and have no one except You, O Eternal. You have knowledge of everything, and you know that I hate the glory of the lawless and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of any foreigner. You know my predicament – that I abhor the sign of my proud position that is upon my head on days when I appear in public. I abhor it like a menstrual cloth, and I do not wear it on the days when I am in private. And your slave has not eaten at Haman's table, and I have not honoured the king's banquet nor drunk the wine of libations. Your slave has not rejoiced since the day of my change until now, except in You, O Eternal, God of Abraham. O Eternal who has power over all things, hear the voice of those who despair, and save us from the hand of evildoers. And save me from my fear!

Esther (Septuagint) Addition D:1-16

And it happened on the third day, as she ceased praying, she took off the garments of service and put on her glory. Then, when she had become majestic, after calling upon the all-seeing God and saviour, she took along two of her attendants; on one she leaned gently for support, while the other followed, holding her train. She was radiant with the full flush of her beauty, and her face looked happy as if she were cheerful, but her heart was in anguish from fear. When she had gone through all the doors, she stood before the king. He was seated on the throne of his kingdom, clothed in the full array of his splendour, all covered with gold and precious stones. And he was most terrifying.

And when he raised his face inflamed with glory, he gazed at her in the full flush of anger. The queen staggered, her colour turned pale from faintness, and she collapsed on the head of her attendant who went before her. Then God changed the spirit of the king to gentleness, and

alarmed, he jumped from his throne and took her in his arms until she was quieted. He kept comforting her with soothing words and said to her, 'What is it, Esther? I am your brother. Take heart! You shall not die, for our ordinance is only for the common person. Come here.'

Then he lifted the golden rod and placed it on her neck; he welcomed her and said, 'Speak to me.' She said to him, 'I saw you, Lord, like a divine angel, and my heart was shaken from fear of your glory. For you are marvellous, Lord, and your face is full of grace.' And while she was speaking, she fell from faintness. Then the king and all his servants were troubled, and he reassured her.

Esther (Septuagint) Addition F:1-11

And Mardocheios said, 'From God these things have come. For I remember about the dream that I saw concerning these matters, for not even a word of them has failed to be fulfilled. There was a little spring that became a river, and there was light and sun and abundant water; Esther is the river, whom the king married and made queen. The two dragons are myself and Haman. The nations are those that gathered to destroy the name of the Judeans. And my nation, that is Israel, who cried out to God and were saved. The Eternal has saved God's people, and the Eternal has rescued us from all these evils, and God has done signs and great wonders that have not happened among the nations. And God remembered God's people and vindicated God's own inheritance.

'And these days in the month of Adar, on the fourteenth and fifteen of that same month, will be observed by them with a gathering and joy and rejoicing before God, from generation to generation forever among his people Israel.'

In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who said he was a Priest and a Levite, and Ptolemy his son brought the above letter about Phourai, which they said existed, and Lysimachus son of Ptolemy, one of those in Jerusalem, translated it.