

פרק א'

(א) וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ הוּא אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ מְהֵדוּ וְעַד-כוּשׁ שָׁבַע וָעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה:

The first of something is like an introduction for what comes after. This is certainly true of the possuk in the Torah and even the first word of בראשית – like a seed or DNA that contains all the future within itself. וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ – *It was in the days of Achashverosh*. The first possuk here introduces us to one of the main characters of the Purim story. It says in Pirkei Avos (4:3) that there is no man that does not have a time when he is successful. We also find that when a person is on a winning streak, to be careful of him¹. In this Megila we find how king Achashverosh achieved success (and the same later applied to Haman and then switched to Mordechai and Esther). Achashverosh's success came in stages as seen in the first possuk.

The Gemora in Megila (10b) says that when it says וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם – *It was in the days of*, it always means an expression of צער, *sorrow*. The sorrow here is הוּא אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ – Rashi here – *he was the same Achashverosh* from beginning to end. He was a constant pursuer of wealth², honor and fame. הַמֶּלֶךְ – *he reigned*, he became king through buying this position with his wealth. It started by him becoming king over one country. He then extended this to becoming king over another province מְהֵדוּ וְעַד-כוּשׁ – *from Hoidu to Kush* two provinces next to each other. This then expanded to שָׁבַע – *seven* provinces, וָעֶשְׂרִים – *another twenty* and then מְדִינָה – *a* further *one hundred*³, making him a king over the whole world⁴.

(ב) בַּיּוֹמִים הָהֵם כָּשְׁבַת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ עַל כִּסֵּא מַלְכוּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה:

All these happenings took place בַּיּוֹמִים הָהֵם – *In those days, when King Achashverosh sat on the throne of his kingdom* as Chazal say – *מי שיש לו מנה רוצה* – *someone who has one hundred zuz wants to have two hundred*, double it. Similarly, אוהב כסף לא ישבע כסף (Koheles 5:9) – *someone who loves money, will never be satisfied* and will always continue the pursuit for more money. Achashverosh had money and wanted to invest it into something that would provide dividends. He did this in the form of seeking to get more honor and fame by building a duplicate to King Shlomo's throne⁵. Thus, it was in those days when the throne had been completed, and he was finally able to sit on it.

¹ see Gemora Megila 6b that when an evil person is successful, do **not** openly oppose him.

² See later (10:1) and the commentary there, that once Achashverosh knew Esther's nation, he reimposed taxes on the countries to get more money.

³ This answers why the order of the numbers is from smallest to the largest – 7, 20 and 100 as opposed to the reverse 100, 20 and 7 like we find with the **same** number at the beginning of Parshas Chayei Soro where it says she lived 100, 20 and 7 as here it is a build up while there it is a reflection backwards on the different stages of her life.

⁴ Gemora Megila 11a

⁵ Targum Sheini here. He did not dare trying to go onto Shlomo's real throne as Paro had tried doing so and got kicked by the lion and became lame, earning him his name נכה, *Paro the lame*.

שִׁוּשָׁן הַבִּירָה – *which was in Shushan the capital*, It started being built in שִׁוּשָׁן הַבִּירָה *Shushan the capital* (either because that it was where the materials were available or where the workmen resided) and was meant upon completion to be moved to the long established capital in Bavel. However, when the throne could not be moved, he wanted the throne so much that he moved the years old capital to שִׁוּשָׁן הַבִּירָה *Shushan the capital*, all in order to be able to show off sitting on this impressive throne! Alternatively, feeling on a high, the king wanted to change place of his capital **voluntary** with the idea of מְזַל שִׁנּוּי, *the change in place can change the Mazal*, for making even better his current successes.

(ג) בַּשָּׁנָה שְׁלֹשׁ לְמָלְכוֹ עָשָׂה מִשְׁתֶּה לְכָל־שָׂרָיו וְעַבְדָּיו חֵיל פָּרַס וּמַדֵּי הַפְּרָתִים וְשָׂרֵי הַמְּדִינֹת לִפְנָיו:

In the third year of his reign, he made a feast for all his princes and his servants, the army of Persia and Media, the nobles - Specifically, **three** years later he makes the feast, after having three successful years as king with no problems, making this a Chazoko, *an established thing that we assume will continue*. He starts off with a lavish feast for those close to him in positions of power and who work in the palace thereby expressing his appreciation for them being loyal to him. וְשָׂרֵי הַמְּדִינֹת לִפְנָיו *and the princes of the provinces [who were] before him* – Who were these people? Rashi in Melochim I (2:14) brings that these were princes from all the other countries that were taken to be close to the ruling king to act like guarantors that the other countries would not rebel.

(ד) בִּהְרָאֵתוֹ אֶת־עֹשֶׁר כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ וְאֶת־יָקָר תַּפְאָרַת גְּדוּלָּתוֹ יָמִים רַבִּים שְׁמוֹנִים וּמֵאָה יוֹם:

When he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the splendor of his excellent majesty – Perhaps, there is the idea that there are **six** expressions in this possuk that speak about his great wealth, doing a feast for one month paralleling each expression! יָמִים רַבִּים שְׁמוֹנִים וּמֵאָה יוֹם *many days, one hundred and eighty days* – Again, the purpose of this was to show off his wealth to many others and therefore he made the feast last long enough to enable people from far away to travel and still be able to participate. 180 days is almost half a year, six months (consisting of thirty days). It does not say when in the year he made the feast for everyone, but presumably it was in the summer months when people could travel and this might also explain why he only did it for this amount of time, a half year in the summer months, as during the rest of the year, the winter months, it would be harder for people to travel. The extra words of יָמִים רַבִּים *many days* are superfluous since it then says clearly the length of 180 days. It adds these to show that there were literally “many days” meaning just that each day was unique with different displays of wealth and different menus and there were many of these types of unique days!

(ה) וּבַמְּלֹאֲתַיִם הָאֵלֶּה עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ לְכָל־הָעָם הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּשִׁוּשָׁן הַבִּירָה לְמַגְדֹּל וְעַד־קֶטָן מִשְׁתֶּה שְׁבַעַת יָמִים בַּחֲצֵר גִּנַּת בֵּיתֵן הַמֶּלֶךְ:

And when these days were over – The word מלא means “filled” and the emphasis here is that this new feast was not a replacement for the 180-day feast as this one

would only start when the other one had been **completed** to its fullest⁶ as that was the major feast to show off to the world and impress **all** the people.

עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ לְכָל־הָעָם הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּיָּרָה *the king made for all the people present in Shushan the capital* - He wanted to impress the locals in שׁוּשַׁן הַבִּיָּרָה who would be in the capitol of the king to guarantee that they remain forever impressed by him. This was to impress לְמִגְדוֹל וְעַד־קָטָן *from old until young*. It starts with inviting and impressing the parents who would then be happier to also bring their children. It is also emphasizing that different foods appeal to people of different ages and therefore here the catering was with all these different foods so that it would be enjoyed and remembered by old and young alike!

מִשְׁתֵּה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים – *a feast for seven days*. He arranged just for them an exclusive party for seven days – one for each day of the week. Presumably this was with a different menu so that each weekday they would remember that day and its menu that they had eaten in the palace. Additionally, making it for seven days means that one of these days would be on Shabbos and he wanted the Yiden to choose his type of meal over their usual Shabbos type of meal at home⁷.

To show off as well as to show them how much he valued them, he enabled them to get an inside view of his private castle and their grounds – בְּחִצְרֵי גִּנַּת בֵּיתֵן הַמֶּלֶךְ – *in the courtyard, garden of the king's palace*, to get to see all these different areas. From the courtyard to the gardens and even to inside the palace! This also expressed how the king liked his subjects and wanted to get their loyalty to him.

(ו) חוּר כַּרְפֵּס וּתְכֵלֶת אַחֲזוּ בְּחִבְלֵי־בּוּץ וְאַרְגָּמָן עַל־גְּלִילֵי כֶסֶף וְעִמּוּדֵי זָהָב וְכֶסֶף עַל רִצְפַּת בִּהַט־וְשֵׁשׁ וְדָר וְסֻהָרֹת:

[*There were spreads off*] *white, fine cotton, and blue, embroidered with cords of linen and purple, on silver rods and marble columns, couches of gold and silver, on a pavement of green, white, shell, and onyx marble.* – He showed off so much wealth, not only on a few items but all around the palace, both on the furnishings and from the ceiling down until the floors. Not just all one type of wealth but many different expensive items.

(ז) וְהַשְׂקוֹת בְּכֵלֵי זָהָב וְכֵלִים מַכְלִים שׁוֹנִים וַיֵּין מַלְכוּת רַב כֶּיֶד הַמֶּלֶךְ:

and *royal wine*⁸ *was plentiful according to the bounty of the king* - Not only did he show off with the expensive look of what great wealth he had, but he also wanted

⁶ See a similar idea in Rashi Divrei Hayomim I (17:11) that Shlomo would only become King after the days of King Dovid had been **completed**.

⁷ See Gemora Megila 12b that compares the different events, atmosphere and discussion that takes place by non-Jews meals and the Shabbos meals of the Yiden. The Yiden have Torah discussions, eat and drink and praise Hashem while the non-Jews feast away and the discussion can turn to lewd things as happened here. Similar idea is brought in Kitzur Shulchan Oruch 76:14 in the reason why by Shabbos Mincha we say the possuk of 'עַתָּה רְצוֹן וְכוּ' *But, as for me, may my prayer to You, Hashem, be in an acceptable time etc* (Tehilim 69:14) comparing what we do by our meals.

⁸ The Gemora Sanhedrin 70a brings from Rav Chonin that wine was created in this world either for the Yiden to comfort the Aveilim, mourners, to drown their sorrows or as a reward in this world for enjoyment to the wicked that they get their reward for good actions now in this world. Thus, the מִשְׁתֵּה, feast, came for the gentiles as an enjoyment for reward in this world and this is why they would have these feasts very often (to use up their good deeds that accumulated over the days)!

the people to participate in the types of delicacies and expensive food and drink that **he**, as **king**, ate and drank. Since he invited them to a משתה מלשון שתיה, the word for “*feast*” comes from the root “*drink*” – the focus of this function was the drinking and not the food – meaning the option of more **drink** than food (although of course there was plenty food as befits a king)⁹. “More” in both the sense of quality and quantity. והשקות בכלי זהב וכלים מפלים. *And they gave them to drink in golden vessels, and the vessels differed from one another* - He wanted to give them the whole experience – from the cup, the container, until the wine, the contents. Hence, he gave them the wine in gold cups from a variety of old and special wines usually reserved solely for the king. Some say he gave them the wine that was their age or even older. Perhaps the wines were superior in that they were purer being only taken from the first drop of the ripest grapes without impurities¹⁰. Unlike other foods and drinks, wine gets better with age. Also, the cups themselves were of different types of gold¹¹ and of different designs.

ח) והשתיה כדת אין אגס כייכן יסד המלך על כל־רב ביתו לעשות כרצון איש־ואיש: *And the drinking was according to the law [with] no one forcing* – Usually such a wine party involved people forcing guests to drink the entire contents of their cup. Therefore, here the king had to issue a special proclamation that this law did **not** apply to these feasts. The command, המלך יסד כייכן, *for so had the king established* was issued not only to the overseer but to each waiter that oversaw each area, על כל־רב ביתו, *upon every steward of his house*, that he was to do לעשות כרצון איש־ואיש *to do according to every man's wish* – what the people wanted without force, **willingly**. Included in this was the prohibition against trying to convince and encourage others into drinking more.

ט) גם ושתיה המלכה עשתה משתה נשים בית המלכות אשר למלך אחשורוש: *Also, Vashti the queen made a feast for the women* – This feast with **wine** was predominantly for the men run by the king himself. What about the women? Therefore, Queen Vashti made a special feast for the women – this would mean liquors and drinks drunk by **women** as opposed to wine. This was to also impress them to remain loyal to the king and therefore took place בית המלכות אשר למלך אחשורוש *in the royal house of King Achashverosh* – in the king’s palace as she was not trying to compete with the king but was coming to **complement** – only she was catering for the ladies.

י) ביום השביעי כטוב לב־המלך ביין אמר למהומן בנתא חרבונא בגתא ואבגתא זמר וכרפס שבעת הסריסים המשרתים את־פני המלך אחשורוש:

⁹ Gemora Megila that the feast here unusually had more food than drink like meals had by Yiden. This perhaps was in order to lure the Yiden to come and participate.

¹⁰ See Rashi beginning of Parshas Tetzave that we find this idea by the olives for oil for the Menorah.

¹¹ The Gemora Yoma 44b-45a states that there are seven types (or grades) of gold.

¹² See the Gemora Sanhedrin 93b that brings two explanations why ministers are called סריסים. The one that makes sense here is like Rashi there explains, that it comes from the word סריס that means “castrate” in order that they should not get married and be totally dedicated to the services of the king.

ביום השביעי *On the seventh day* – this is the **last** day of the seven day feast and therefore was the climax. It also meant that כָּטוֹב לִב־הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּיּוֹם *when the king's heart was merry with wine* – the king was **more** intoxicated as a result of the build-up of many days of wine coupled with his happiness seeing how everything was going according to plan. He therefore erred and acted without thinking things through properly¹³.

The Gemora¹⁴ says that a person can be recognized for who they really are when they are in a state of drunkenness. The king did not pick his ordinary servants or attendants for his mission to send for Vashti, but וְכָרַס שְׁבַעַת הַפָּרִיסִים הַמְשָׁרְתִּים אֶת־ *he said to Mehuman, Bizzesa, Charvona, Bigsa and Avagsa, Zesar, and Charkas, the seven chamberlains who ministered in the presence of King Achashverosh* – he asked very high up officials, from his inner circle. Not just one of them but שְׁבַעַת הַפָּרִיסִים *the seven chamberlains who ministered in the presence of King Achashverosh* – all **seven** of them making this matter very public and high profile as he wanted to **show off** (which is one of the stages that happens when a person gets drunk¹⁵). However, this meant that refusal to heed their advice would be extremely damaging to the impression that the king was coming to project to the masses about his authority.

שְׁבַעַת הַפָּרִיסִים הַמְשָׁרְתִּים אֶת־פָּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֶרוֹשׁ *the seven chamberlains who ministered in the presence of King Achashverosh* – We find that Paro had **three** advisors (Sota 10b) – like a small Beis Din of three to cover the three possible options – one to say guilty, the other innocent, and the third to tilt to one direction, making a majority. Why then do we find Achashverosh with **seven** advisors? We find in the Gemora Sanhedrin 10b a process of deciding whether it will be a leap year that starts with three, then has the discussion with five and ends off with seven deciding. Perhaps according to this, the seven were the **full** set of advisors, but sometimes the matter would be decided by three if easy, or five is more difficult. Alternatively, the larger the number of such high-ranking people, was to show the importance attached to that particular mission. Hence, the possuk brings all the names of the seven that would be available should they all be needed in a most complex or important situation.

(יא) לְהִבִּיא אֶת־נִשְׁתֵּי הַמֶּלֶכָה לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּכֶתֶר מַלְכוּת לְהִרְאוֹת הָעַמִּים וְהַשָּׂרִים אֶת־יָפְיָהּ כִּי־טוֹבַת מְרָאָה הִיא:

¹³ which is why in halacha a Rov cannot pasken new (not simple) questions after drinking even a smallish amount of wine, the amount of a reviyis – see Gemora Eruvin 64a.

¹⁴ Eruvin 65b says that בְּכֹסוֹ וּבְכַעְסוֹ אָדָם נִכָּר בְּכִסּוֹ *a person's inner personality is seen through how they spend money, how they act when they are drunk and when they get angry*.

¹⁵ The Yalkut Shemoni Noach 61 on the words וַיִּטַּע כֶּרֶם *and he planted a vine*, brings a fascinating reason behind the different stages of getting drunk: וַיִּטַּע כֶּרֶם בָּא לְקִרְאָתוֹ הַשֹּׁטֵן א"ל רְצוֹן שֶׁנִּטְעָנָה יַחְדוֹ אֲנִי וְאַתָּה א"ל הֵן מִיד הִבִּיא תַחֲלָה רַחֲלָה אַחַת וְשַׁחְטָהּ עַל הַגֶּפֶן וְאַחֵר כֵּךְ הִבִּיא אֲרִיָּה אֶחָד וְשַׁחְטוֹ עַל אוֹתוֹ הַגֶּפֶן וְאַחֵר כֵּךְ חֲזִיר אֶחָד וְשַׁחְטוֹ עַל אוֹתוֹ הַגֶּפֶן. מִפְּנֵי מָה עָשָׂה כֵּן הַשֹּׁטֵן כְּשֶׁאָדָם שׁוֹתָה כּוֹס אֶחָד הוּא כִרְחֵלָה עֵנִי וְשֹׁפֵל רוּחַ וְכִשְׁהוּא שׁוֹתָה שְׁתֵּי כּוֹסוֹת מִיד נִעֲשֶׂה גִבּוֹר כְּאִרִי וּמִתְחִיל לְדַבֵּר גְּדוּלוֹת וְאוֹמֵר מִי כְמוֹנִי וְכִשְׁהוּא שׁוֹתָה ג' אוֹ ד' מִיד הוּא נִעֲשֶׂה כַחֲזִיר שֶׁמִּתְלַכֵּךְ – The Soton made a partnership with Noach in the growing of the vine tree, the only one saved and taken into the tayva and now was planted. He first brought a sheep and slaughtered it so that its blood fertilized the ground. He then did the same with a lion and pig. This had an impact on the grapes produced as seen in the stages a person goes through when drinking more and more wine. First, they become sheepish and shy, and the next stage is when they become loud and bold like a lion and then sick up and roll around in the dirt like a pig.

To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the royal crown, to show the peoples and the princes her beauty, for she was of beautiful appearance – In his intoxication he asked to bring her in a non-tzniyus state to show off her external beauty. The Gemora in Megila 15a brings that she was one of the four most beautiful women in history! This is because non-Jews who only believe in the physical world, their focus is only on physicality, externality and the pleasures of the human body and this is what is important to them.

(יב) וְתִמְאַן הַמֶּלֶכָה וְשִׁתִּי לְבוֹא בְּדִבְרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בִּיַּד הַסֵּרִיסִים וַיִּקְצֹף הַמֶּלֶךְ מְאֹד וְתִמְתּוּ בָּעֶרָה בּוֹ:

Vashti was not drunk and therefore thought through things logically and how such an action would be negative and a lack of *מלכות*, *honor to the kingdom* (even though the Gemora Megila 12a implies that she personally would have wanted to do so as an individual).

However, as a **Queen** and role model of the people this would be the wrong thing to do – *But Queen Vashti refused to come*, hence she refused.

The result of this decision was that not only was she refusing the **king** – *at the king's word*, but she was also declining following instructions from important **messengers** from the kings' inner circle – *which was [brought] by the hand of the chamberlains*. This resulted in two types of anger – anger on behalf of all the seven messengers – *and the king became very angry*, outward anger, and *וְתִמְתּוּ בָּעֶרָה בּוֹ* *and his anger burnt within him* – an **inner** anger for going against him as a husband. The Gemora Megila 12b brings, that it was also as a reaction to the personal hurtful insults she threw against him (that he did not come from royalty and was behaving as such) that he did not want to outwardly respond to and thereby corroborate it!

(יג) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לַחֲכָמִים יִדְעֵי הָעֵתִים כִּי־כֵן דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ לִפְנֵי כָל־יִדְעֵי דֵּת וְדִין:

The king was in a quandary. On the one hand, the Queen publicly went against him, and this was a matter of going against the king of the country as a public figure representing them and therefore an affront to them as he was their representative. On the other hand, as a wife to her husband, he could forgive her on a personal basis. He therefore went, not to his ordinary advisors, but to *And the king said to the wise men who knew the times- for so was the king's word, [to present the case] before all who knew law and judgment* – wise men that could take **all** matters into consideration and not necessarily going according to this the strict letter of the law but also bearing in mind of the clause allowing for *an exceptional law for that particular time*, taking the king's personal matters also into account and allowing for an override clause.

(יד) וְהַקָּרִב אֵלָיו כְּרִשְׁנָא שֶׁתָּר אֲדָמְתָא תְּרִשִּׁישׁ מֶרְס מֶרְסָנָא מְמוּכָן שְׁבַעַת שְׁרִי פֶרַס וּמְדֵי רֵאִי פְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיִּשְׁבִּים רֵאשֶׁנָּה בְּמַלְכוּת:

Again, there were **seven** judges to this court. These were not random people but were **וְהַקָּרִב** *and the nearest to him were Carshena, Shesar, Admasa, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memuchan, the seven princes of Persia and Media* – the king specially handpicked people who liked him and he felt close to. He knew they would do what the king hinted to as the outcome that he wanted. Hence, they were *who saw the king's face*, present and often seen by the king. They therefore were also given privileges *who sat first in the kingdom*, being the first and closest advisors of the king.

(טו) כִּדְת מַה־לַּעֲשׂוֹת בַּמֶּלֶכָה וְשָׂתִי עַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָשְׂתָה אֶת־מֶאֱמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ בְּיַד הַסְּרִיסִים:

They were charged with the task of a unique case almost unknown before in their history – *According to the law, what shall be done to Queen Vashti, with the queen on trial.* The two charges against her were: *על אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָשְׂתָה אֶת־מֶאֱמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ inasmuch as she did not comply with the order of the king – not carrying out the instruction of the king, and בְּיַד הַסְּרִיסִים [brought] by the hand of the chamberlains – refusing the high officials who were the messengers.*

(טז) וַיֹּאמֶר מְמוּחָן לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַשָּׂרִים לֹא עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לְבַדּוֹ עֲוֹתָהּ וְשָׂתִי הַמֶּלֶכָה כִּי עַל־כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים וְעַל־כָּל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־מְדִינוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ:

Then Memuchan declared before the king and the princes – Before they had a chance to discuss it in depth, Memuchan, the youngest and lowest of all seven and being newish did not know the protocol of sensing what the king wanted, (see the order of names in 1:14 where he comes last), says aloud his opinion throwing in a knockout blow to the hopes of the king to save Vashti. *לֹא עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לְבַדּוֹ עֲוֹתָהּ וְשָׂתִי הַמֶּלֶכָה Not against the king alone has Vashti the queen done wrong –* there is no longer any place for personal considerations as it is now a **national** matter that involves not only the king but the ripple effects to the people – *כִּי עַל־כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים וְעַל־כָּל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל־מְדִינוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ – but against all the princes and all the peoples that are in all King Achashverosh 's provinces.* The King and Queen are role models and as such all their actions are analyzed and can be copied.¹⁶

(יז) כִּי־יֵצֵא דְבַר־הַמֶּלֶכָה עַל־כָּל־הַנָּשִׁים לְהַכְזוֹת בַּעֲלֵיהֶן בְּעֵינֵיהֶן בְּאֶמְרָם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ אָמַר לְהָבִיא אֶת־וְשָׂתִי הַמֶּלֶכָה לִפְנָיו וְלֹא־בָאָה:

Do not push aside this consideration and say its effect is minimal since **כִּי־יֵצֵא דְבַר־הַמֶּלֶכָה עַל־כָּל־הַנָּשִׁים** *For the word of the queen will spread to all the women, to make them despise their husbands in their eyes,* *אָמַר לְהָבִיא אֶת־וְשָׂתִי הַמֶּלֶכָה בְּאֶמְרָם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ when they say, 'King Achashverosh ordered to bring Vashti the queen before him, but she did not come.'* – its message will be taken by **all** women to follow suit and act against their husbands, not only in secrecy behind his back (and at home) but even **לְהַכְזוֹת בַּעֲלֵיהֶן בְּעֵינֵיהֶן** *to make them despise their husbands in their eyes* – in front of them (and even in public) showing a level of brazenness.

(יח) וְהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה תֹּאמַרְנָה שָׂרוֹת פָּרְס־וּמְדֵי אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶכָה לְכָל שָׂרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכַדִּי בָזִיוֹן וְקֶצֶף:

And this day, the princesses of Persia and Media who heard the word of the queen will say [the like] to all the princes of the king, and [there will be] much disgrace and anger – This effect will not only happen by the general populace but will also be felt in higher circles of the nobles – *אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶכָה לְכָל שָׂרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ who heard the word of the queen will say [the like] to all the princes of the king, making it even more disgraceful for the king if he does not nip it in the*

¹⁶ This is so true for all peoples in positions of power and authority and is their responsibility to bear this in mind and act accordingly. The same to the Jewish Nation making sure to always act in public correctly making a Kiddush Hashem and not the opposite as we are all the ambassadors of Hashem.

bud and act now and show a severe punishment for such actions with a no tolerance policy that will be seen and felt by all the people – from the nobles and downwards.

(ט) אם-על-המלך טוב יצא דבר-מלכות מלפניו ויכתב בדתי פרס-ומדי ולא יעבור אשר לא-תבוא ונשתי לפני המלך אחשורוש ומלכותה יתן המלך לרעותה הטובה ממנה:

אם-על-המלך טוב *If it please the king* – this phrase comes several times in the Megila and expresses that if the king wants to act according to what is straight according to the law. יצא דבר-מלכות מלפניו *let a royal law go forth from before him* – words alone in the form of a speech from the king are not good enough, but it needs to be a **law** that is issued from the king. In addition,¹⁷ not only does the bad act need to be publicly punished and put down but it also needs stricter guidelines ולא יעבור פרס-ומדי and *let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media and let it not be revoked* – to be written into law to prevent it even possibly reoccurring. אשר לא-תבוא ונשתי לפני המלך אחשורוש *that Vashti shall not come before King Achashverosh* – that the queen refused the command of the king, and the severe punishment being ומלכותה יתן המלך לרעותה הטובה ממנה *and let the king give her royal position to her peer who is better than her*, losing the role of queen. However, that alone would not be enough of a punishment. The real punishment would be felt when her position would be given away with a replacement as this would show Vashti that there was no way for her to get back this position. So long as there was no replacement, she could still imagine that she would get reinstated, but once replaced, this was a confirmation of it no longer being a possibility.

(כ) ונשמע פתגם המלך אשר-יעשה בכל-מלכותו כי רבה היא וכל-הנשים יתנו יקר לבעליהן למגדול ועד-קטן:

And *let the verdict of the king be heard throughout his entire kingdom* – What happened in the palace was the model for everywhere else in the kingdom¹⁸. Hence, when a change was made there it needed to be made known everywhere else. כי רבה היא *because it is great* – this change was a big deal.

The intention of this decree is to return more forcefully the power in the house to the husband ruling over his wife. This applies on all levels – וכל-הנשים יתנו יקר לבעליהן *and all the women shall give honor to their husbands*, not only to the nobles, like happened to the king, but also to the local populace – למגדול ועד-קטן *from both old and young*, no matter whether the wife was older or younger than her husband, the husband was still to be in charge.

(כא) ויטיב הדבר בעיני המלך והשרים ויעש המלך כדבר ממוכן:

And *the matter pleased the king and the princes* – This decision was good before the king – בעיני המלך *in the eyes of the King* – as the king had to do so, in order to reinstate the people's confidence in the kings' power over all his people. בעיני והשרים *in the eyes of the princes* – that **their** advice was taken and the king stood up for **their** honor when the Queen refused **their** message. Based on all this the decision was made and followed

¹⁷ like the first Mishna in Pirkei Avos (1:1) says ונעשו סִיג לתורה make additional fences to protect the Torah. See the Gemora Sanhedrin 46a examples of how Chachomim gave disproportional punishments as a deterrent to prevent reoccurrences.

¹⁸ A similar idea we find in the Gemora Taanis 17 why a Jewish King needs to have a haircut every day in order to look presentable wherever he is seen – as he is seen by different people each day.

through – *and the king did according to the word of Memuchan*. The credit for the good or bad of this decree was traced to originating from Memuchan.

כב) וַיִּשְׁלַח סְפָרִים אֶל־כָּל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה בְּכַתְּבָהּ וְאֶל־עַם וְעַם כְּלָשׁוֹנוֹ לְהִיּוֹת כָּל־אִישׁ שֶׁרָר בְּבֵיתוֹ וּמְדַבֵּר כְּלָשׁוֹן עִמּוֹ:

The king needed to publicize this decision and new decrees to all the people. This was some job as it could not simply be one letter written and handed out. It needed *אֶל־כָּל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ* *And he sent letters to all the king's provinces* – to be sent to faraway distances, *אֶל־מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה בְּכַתְּבָהּ וְאֶל־עַם וְעַם כְּלָשׁוֹנוֹ* *to every province according to its script, and to every nationality according to its language* – being written in many different languages to many different nations. By going to all this effort, the king was showing the importance of this message. *לְהִיּוֹת כָּל־אִישׁ שֶׁרָר בְּבֵיתוֹ* *that every man dominate in his household* – that the man was the decision maker in the home to the extent *וּמְדַבֵּר כְּלָשׁוֹן עִמּוֹ* *and speak according to the language of his nationality* – that the language spoken in the house would be the husband's language.
