

## The Power to Accomplish Our Destiny

<sup>1</sup> My son, do not forget my teaching (Torah), but let your heart keep my mitzvot. <sup>2</sup> For length of days and years of life, and shalom they will add to you. <sup>3</sup> Let kindness and truth (chesed v'emet) never leave you—bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. <sup>4</sup> Then you will gain favor (chen) and a good name in the eyes of God and man...<sup>1</sup> A good name is to be chosen rather than great wealth, and grace (chen or favor), rather than silver or gold. (Prov. 3:1-4, 22:1)

Scripture clearly establishes that favor (chen) gave Esther the power to accomplish her destiny (“for such a time as this”). We are to be excited for and love His favor. It is more important than money and fame. It is more important than hardly anything I know at this time. We are to gain favor with Him and favor with the people around us. Our future and our success depend on this. The concluding paragraph of the *Amidah* says: ♪“Sim shalom tovah u'b'racha, chen vachessed v'rachamim, aleinu ve-al kol Yisrael amecha”♪ In English: “Grant peace everywhere goodness and blessing, favor, lovingkindness and mercy to us and unto all Israel, Your people.”

<sup>15</sup> When the turn came for Esther, the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his daughter, to go to the king, she did not ask for anything except what Hegai the king's eunuch, the guardian of the women, advised. And Esther won favor (chen) in the eyes of all who saw her.

<sup>2</sup> When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the courtyard, she found favor (chen) in his eyes, so the king held out to Esther the golden scepter in his hand and Esther approached and touched the top of the scepter...<sup>8</sup> if I have found favor (chen) in the king's eyes & if it pleases the king to grant my petition and my request, then let the king & Haman come tomorrow to the banquet that I will prepare for them—and then I will do as the king requests.”

<sup>3</sup> So Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor (chen) in the eyes of the king, and if it pleases the king, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare the life of my people—this is my request! (Esther 2:15, 5:2, 8, 7:3)

For Esther's people in Persia, life turned bleak overnight. Because of a wicked plan conceived in the anti-Semitic mind of Haman (a descendant of *Amalek*), every Jew in the nation was suddenly living on borrowed time. Before the year was out, their bodies would lie in the mass graves of genocide, interred by none other than their Gentile neighbors (same thing happened in WWII). We see the diabolical plan set in motion in Esther 3:8-15. The capital city was thrown into a state of confusion. For decades, since Cyrus the Great, the Persian policy toward foreigners had been one of tolerance. Was this new edict the beginning of hostilities toward all races? Our Jewish people, of course, were particularly stunned by the news. Could the royal edict really be true? Could there be no appeal? Couldn't anyone change the plan? Amend it? Delay it? Abolish it?

The edict devastated our people and they cried out to God. When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly. He went as far as the king's gate, for no one was to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth. In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among our Jewish people, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes (*Esther 4:1-3*).

To this day people of Eastern cultures do not restrain their grief. Funeral processions are public times of loud wailing and weeping. No one hides his or her sorrow at tragic events, and Mordecai didn't either. It was common in those days to wear loose-fitting, dark-colored, coarsely-woven garments made of goat's hair to signify repentance; sitting in a pile of ashes was a way of showing bitter remorse. So for Mordecai and the Jews, doing these things was an acknowledgment that they were in utter ruin and that only God could restore them.

Esther, however, lived in another world, a world of silks and satins' sheltered from the sorrow in the street. That is, until news of her people's mourning reached her. Then Esther's maidens and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen writhed in great anguish (*Esther 4:4*).

Seeking a reliable source to explain this outburst of sorrow among her people, Esther sent a servant to question her uncle Mordecai. And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai that he might remove his sackcloth

from him, but he did not accept them. Then Esther summoned *Hatach* from the king's eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn the *what* and *why*. *Hatach* went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king's gate and he told him all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict that had been issued in Susa for their destruction (*Esth. 4:5-8*).

We can see how carefully Mordecai passed on the information to Esther. He didn't hide the truth, but neither did he exaggerate. He didn't estimate numbers; he was exact. He didn't pass on rumors; he provided her with documented information. Mordecai wanted the queen to be well informed and he wanted her to get involved. In fact, through *Hatach* he ordered her *“to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people”*.

Undergirding Mordecai's plea for Esther's involvement was the belief that one person can make a difference. But Esther churned at the request. Yes, there were her people to think about, but there was also her own life. Then Esther spoke to *Hatach* and ordered him to reply to Mordecai: *“I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days...”* Upon hearing her response, Mordecai was faced with a dilemma. Should he back off or add pressure? With parental frankness, he sent a second appeal:

*“<sup>13</sup> Mordecai told them to reply to Esther with this answer, “Do not think in your soul that you will escape in the king’s household more than all the Jews. <sup>14</sup> For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place—but you and your father’s house will perish. Who knows whether you have attained royal status for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:13-14)*

Follow the lines of his reasoning: First, if you do nothing, sooner or later they will find out that you are a Jew and you, too, will be destroyed. Second, the Jews will survive, for God's promise to His people is greater than your willingness to be involved—if He has to, God will simply use someone else (see Gen. 12:1-3). Third, this threat to God's people could explain why you were elevated to such a high position. Esther had the same opportunity the British people had during World War II. If she chose to stand, this could be her finest hour.

*<sup>15</sup> Esther sent this to reply to Mordecai, <sup>16</sup> “Go! Gather together all the Jews who are in Shushan and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast in the same way. Afterwards, I will go in to the king, even though it is not according to the law. So if I perish, I perish!” (Esther 4:15-16)*

The king had chosen her to be queen on the basis of her beauty; God had chosen her on the basis of her character. And now her character was rising to the occasion with heroic resolve: *“If I perish, I perish.”* And not only did Esther rise to heroism but to leadership as well. Esther's entire outlook shifted in the space of this chapter: from fear to faith; from reluctance to resolve; from concern for her personal safety to the concern for the safety of her people; and from respect for Mordecai's leadership to the emergence of her own. A new leader is now on the scene!

Treasure his favor. This continues to be what we need in *KS*. It is not to be taken for granted. It is part of the *last days’ revival*. I believe that it is *Adonai’s* pleasure to give it to us and He WILL and it will take us to the next level. His favor will cause us to delight in Him and keep us in the center of His Will. It will result in our joyful abundant life and help us live up to our name: *Kol Simcha*—the sound/voice of joy and gladness. We shall not only call the Shabbat a “delight” but we ourselves will be His delight (*hepsiba*)...*KS*, a delightful congregation. ♪*“Sim shalom tovah u’b’racha, chen vachessed v’rachamim, aleinu ve-al kol Yisrael amecha”* ♪