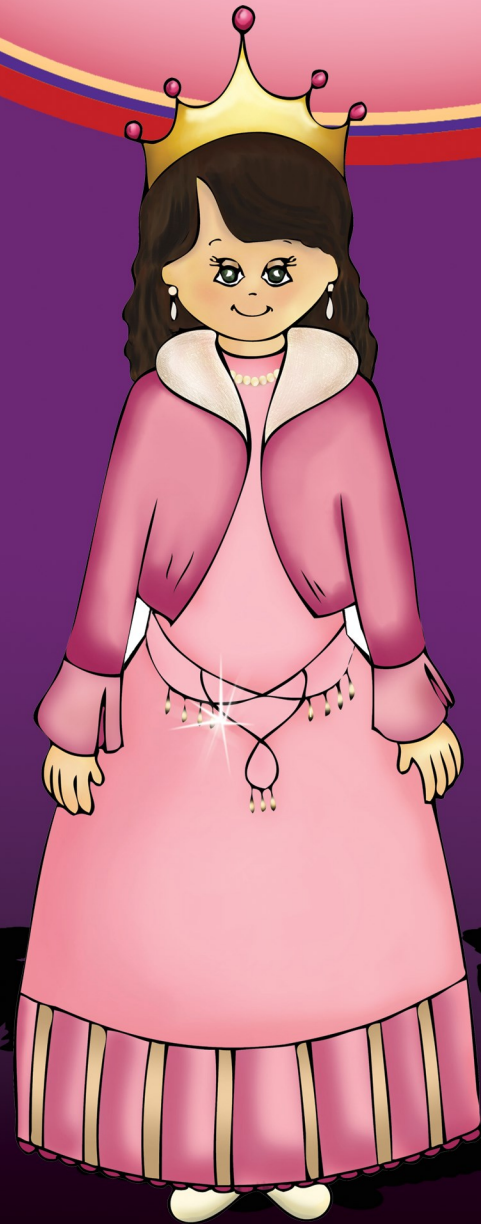


THE STORY OF

ספר





The story of פורים takes place after the first בית המקדש was destroyed. The Yidden were living then in בבל for almost seventy years. During this time there lived a מלך named אחשורוש. He ruled over 127 מדינות from הודו all the way to כוש! The מלכה of אחשורוש was ושתי המלכה. The palace of אחשורוש was in שושן הבירה, the capitol city of Persia.

אחשורוש was very proud of his kingdom! During the third year of his מלכות, אחשורוש decided to make a big משתה. He invited all of the important people who worked in his kingdom. אחשורוש wanted to show everyone how great, mighty and rich he was. This special משתה lasted for 180 days!

After this משתה, אחשורוש made another משתה for all the people of שושן. It lasted for 7 days. אחשורוש made this משתה especially beautiful. He set the table with fancy dishes and golden goblets. He even used the special כלים from the בית המקדש. Can you imagine such a terrible thing?

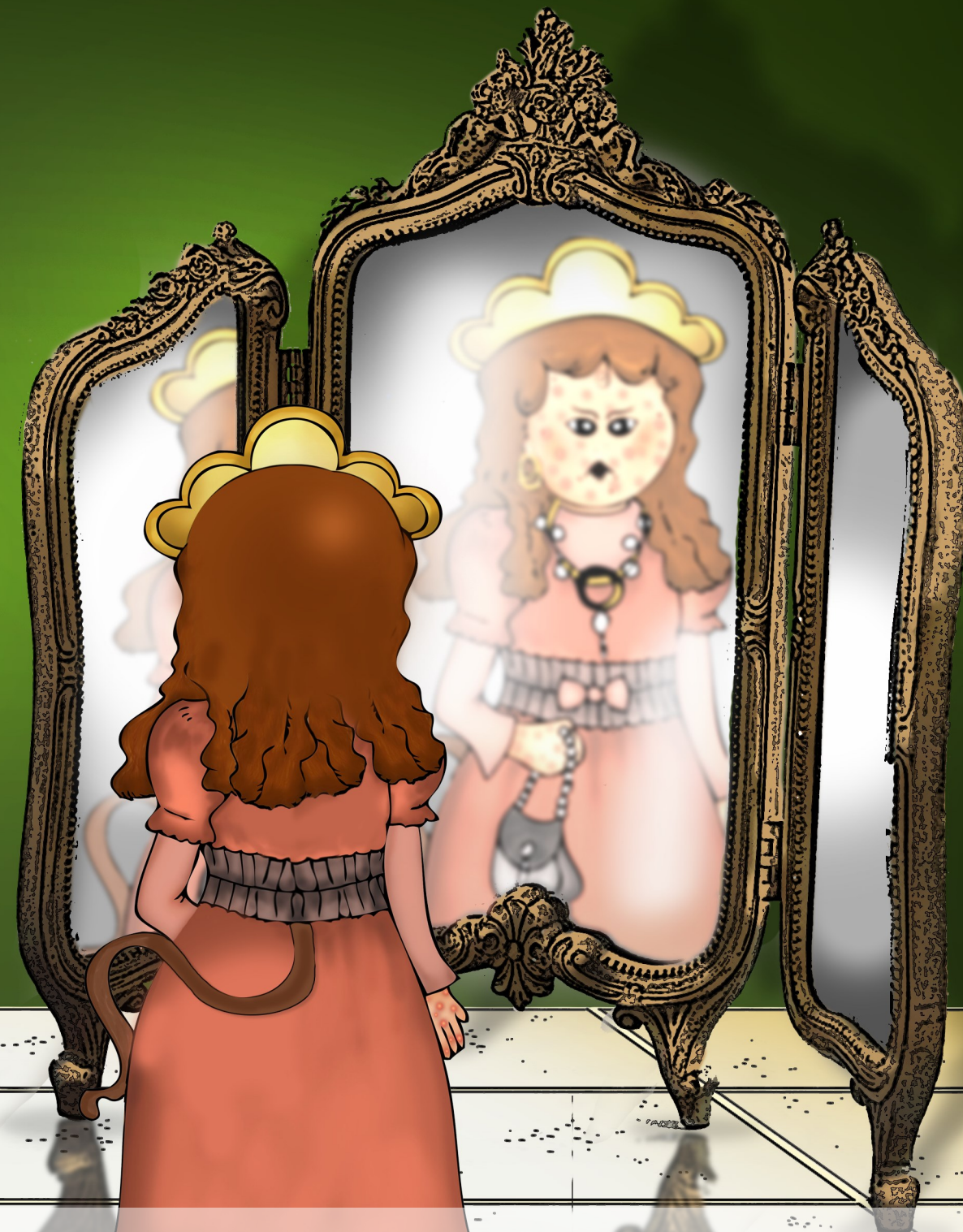
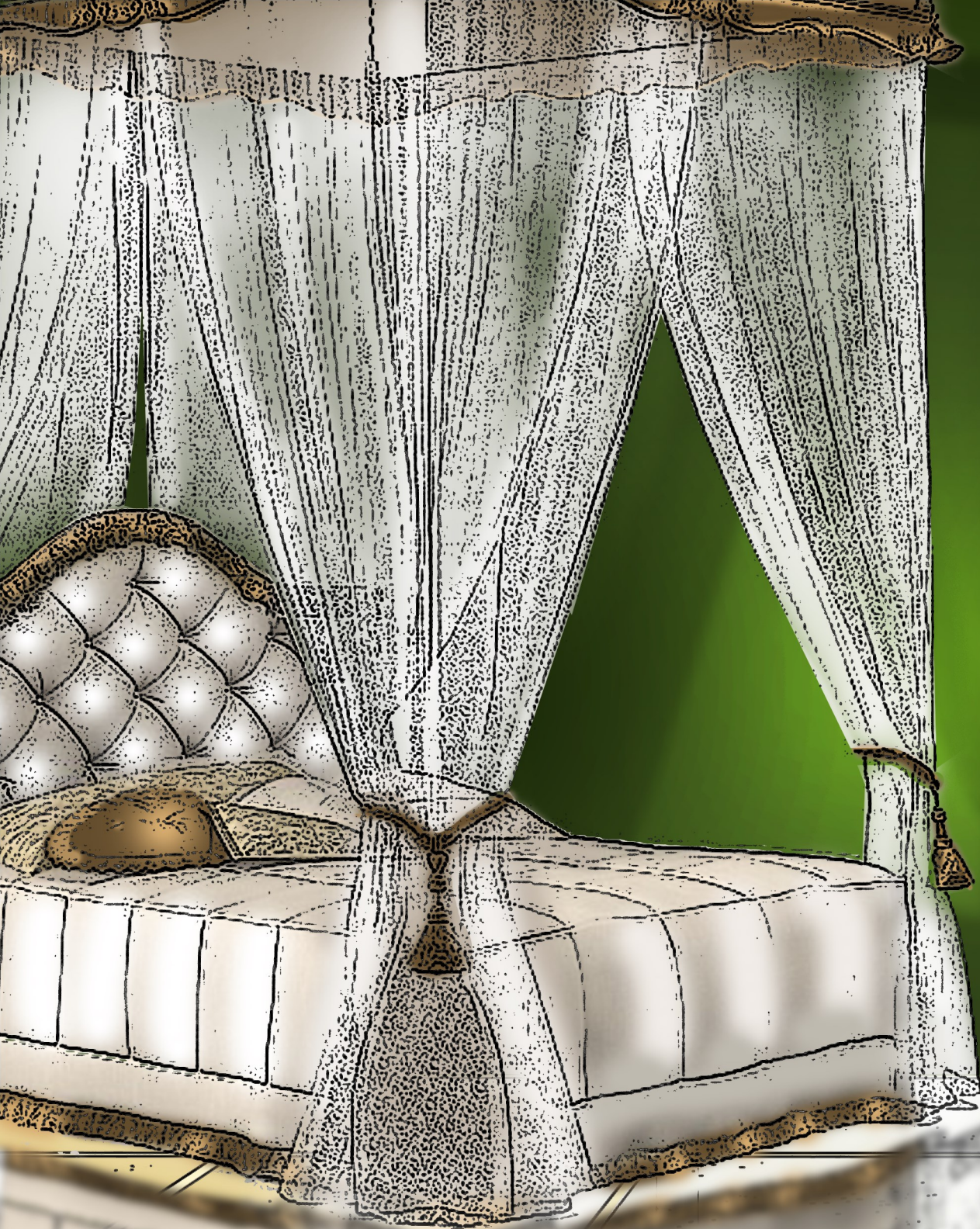




דע לפני מי אתה עומד

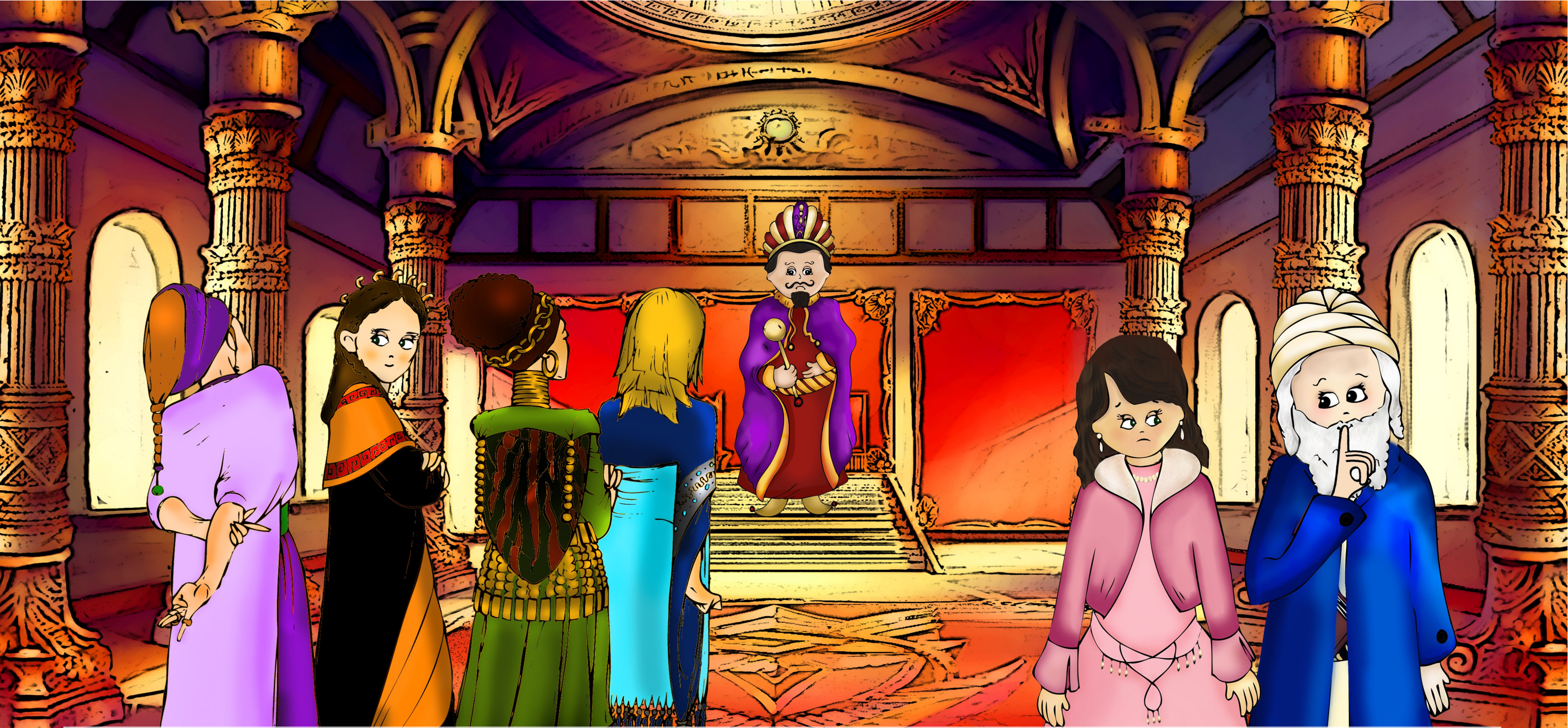
שונה
יחון
לנגדי תמיד

A big **צדיק** by the name of **מרדכי** lived in **שושן הבירה**. **מרדכי** told the Yidden not to go to the **משתה** of **אחשורוש** because the food was not kosher, and the special **כלים** from the **בית המקדש** were being used. Also, the people at the **משתה** would not be behaving or speaking properly. The Yidden did not belong there! Sadly, the Yidden did not listen to **מרדכי**, and they went to the **משתה** anyhow. **ושתי המלכה** also made a **משתה** in the palace for all the ladies to attend.



On the seventh day of the **משתה**, when **אחשורוש** was very drunk, he asked that **ושתי** be brought to his own **משתה**. **ושתי** did not want to go! Do you know why? Because she woke up in the morning with a lot of ugly pimples, and she had grown a tail. She was embarrassed to be seen like that at **אחשורוש's משתה**!!

אחשורוש was very angry at **ושתי** for refusing to come to his **משתה**. His officer **המן** advised **אחשורוש** to kill **ושתי** as a punishment for not obeying the **מלך**. Do you know why this happened to **ושתי**? Because she was very mean to her Yiddishe maids. She forced them to work on **שבת!!!**



A short while later אחשורוש became very sad that he didn't have a מלכה! He was very lonely. The מלך's servants decided to help אחשורוש find a new מלכה. They gathered all the suitable girls living among the 127 מדינות. The girls were brought to שושן הבירה. הגי was put in charge of having each girl meet אחשורוש. The girl that אחשורוש liked best would become the new מלכה!

מרדכי הצדיק had a cousin by the name of אסתר. She did not have a mother or a father. She lived in מרדכי's house, and מרדכי took care of her. אסתר was also taken to the palace to meet אחשורוש. מרדכי commanded אסתר not to tell anyone in the palace that she was a Yid. She had to keep it a secret!

אסתר was beautiful. She also had beautiful מדות which made her appear even more beautiful! אחשורוש liked אסתר more than all the other girls who were brought to his palace. He placed the royal crown, the כתר מלכות, on her head. אסתר became the new מלכה of אחשורוש!

מרדכי would come to the courtyard of the palace every day to see how **אסתר** was doing. One day, when **מרדכי** was sitting at the gate of the palace, he overheard a conversation between **בגתן** and **תרש**. They were servants of **אחשורוש**. **בגתן** and **תרש** were angry at **אחשורוש**, and they were planning to kill him.

בגתן and **תרש** were speaking to each other about this plan in a foreign language - so that nobody around them would understand what they were saying. Little did they know that **מרדכי**, who was sitting near them, was able to understand everything that they said about **אחשורוש**. Do you know why **מרדכי** understood their language? Because **מרדכי** was able to speak seventy languages! The language that **בגתן** and **תרש** were speaking was one of those seventy languages! **מרדכי** wanted to save **אחשורוש**'s life. He sent a message about **בגתן** and **תרש** to **המלכה אסתר**. **אסתר** told **אחשורוש** in the name of **מרדכי** about **בגתן** and **תרש**'s plan. **בגתן** and **תרש** were punished before they could kill **אחשורוש**. This story was recorded in the king's diary, the **ספר דברי הימים** of **אחשורוש**.

אחשוורוש appointed המן to be the Prime Minister. המן was a big רשע! (He came from עמלק, who was very mean to בני ישראל). Everyone was commanded to bow down to המן. מרדכי refused to bow down to him. המן wore a פסל on his robe. מרדכי knew that a Yid is not allowed to bow down to a person wearing a פסל. המן became very angry at מרדכי for refusing to bow down to him. המן decided to not only kill מרדכי, but to also kill ALL of the Yidden living in אחשוורוש's entire kingdom! המן הרשע decided to choose a month that he would kill all of the יהודים. He made a פור (lottery). The פור came out to אדר חדש.



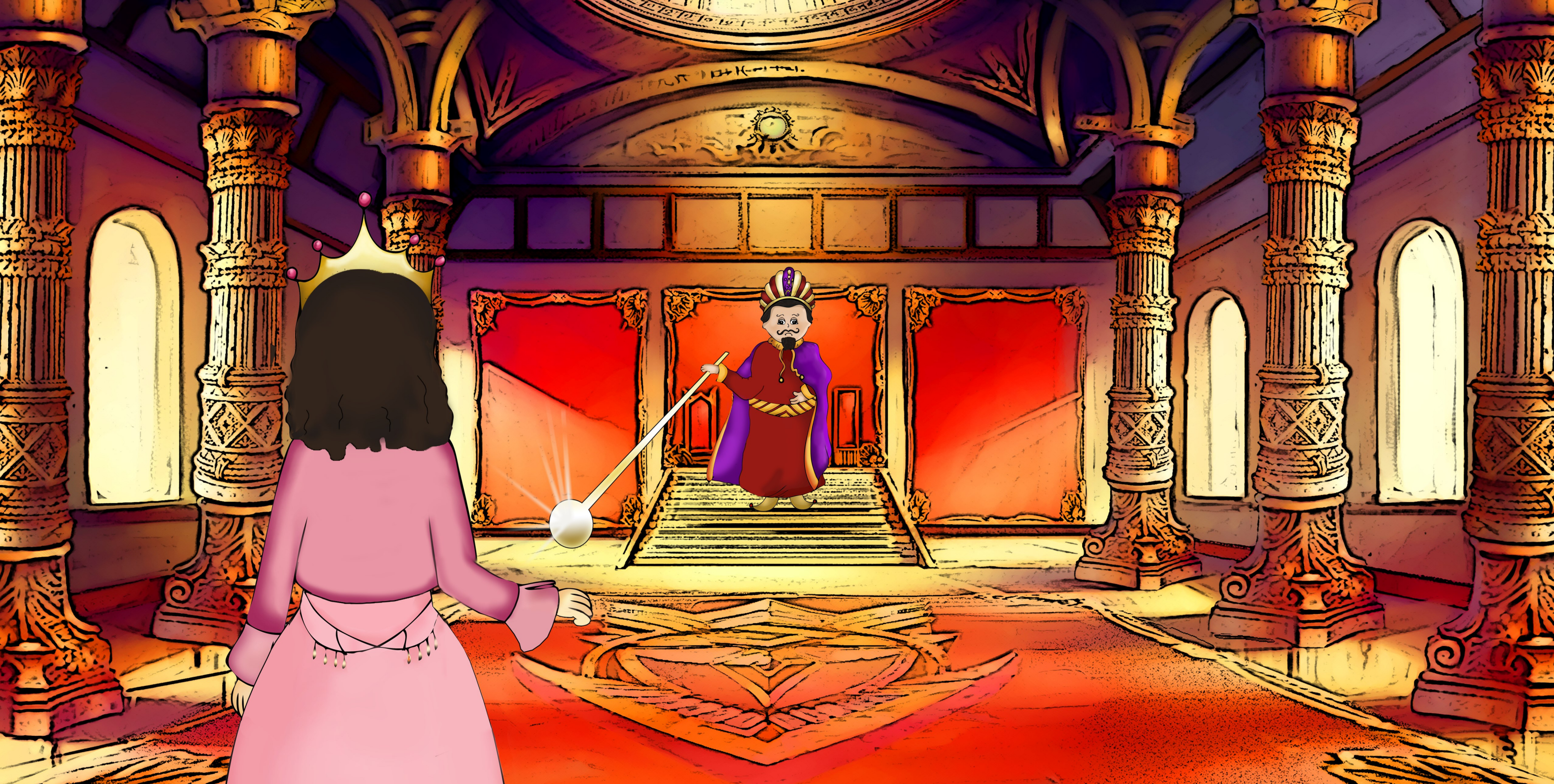


המן then went to אַחשוּרושׁ to get permission from the מלך to carry out his plan to kill מרדכי and all of the Yidden in אדר. המן knew that he had to give a reason to אַחשוּרושׁ for wanting to kill the Yidden. He therefore told אַחשוּרושׁ that the Yidden do not listen to the rules of his kingdom and that they are very bad. Sadly, אַחשוּרושׁ granted המן permission to kill all the Yidden. He even gave המן his own טבעת. This meant that המן was allowed to do whatever he wanted to the Yidden! Letters were sent to all 127 מדינות of אַחשוּרושׁ that the thirteenth day of אדר was chosen to be the day that all Yidden were to be killed. This letter was even stamped with the טבעת of אַחשוּרושׁ! המן and אַחשוּרושׁ were happy.

מרדכי found out about **המן**'s terrible plan to kill the Yidden. He became so sad that he tore his clothes and put ashes on his head as a sign of his sadness. He cried bitter tears about the terrible plan of **המן**. All of the Yidden cried with **מרדכי**. They were so scared! **מרדכי** wished that the Yidden would have listened to him when he commanded them not to go to the **משתה** of **אחשוורוש**. Now the Yidden would have to daven to **ה'** and do **תשובה**.



אסתר's servants told **אסתר** that **מרדכי** was very very sad. She sent a messenger, **התך**, to **מרדכי** to find out what was bothering him and why he was so sad. **מרדכי** told **התך** everything that had happened. **מרדכי** wanted **אסתר** to go to **אחשוורוש** and beg him to change his mind about allowing **המן** to kill the Yidden on the thirteenth day of **אדר**! **אסתר** was very scared to go to speak to **אחשוורוש**. She was only allowed to go to **אחשוורוש** if he called to her, and he hadn't called her in thirty days! **מרדכי** told **אסתר** to go to **אחשוורוש** anyway. All of the Yidden in **שושן** gathered together and fasted for three days and nights. **אסתר** also fasted. Everyone davened to **ה'** and begged **ה'** to listen to the cries of the Yidden and to help them. They davened that **אחשוורוש** should allow **אסתר** to come and speak to him.



On the third day of the fast, אסתר המלכה went to speak to אחשורוש. אחשורוש was happy to see אסתר. אחשורוש extended his special שרביט הזהב (golden scepter) to אסתר המלכה. אסתר then touched the שרביט. This meant that אחשורוש was not angry at אסתר for coming without being called. He asked אסתר what it was that she wanted from him. אחשורוש was ready to give אסתר whatever she wished for! אסתר replied that she would like to invite אחשורוש together with המן to a משתה that she prepared for them. She told אחשורוש that she would tell him at the משתה what she wants from him.

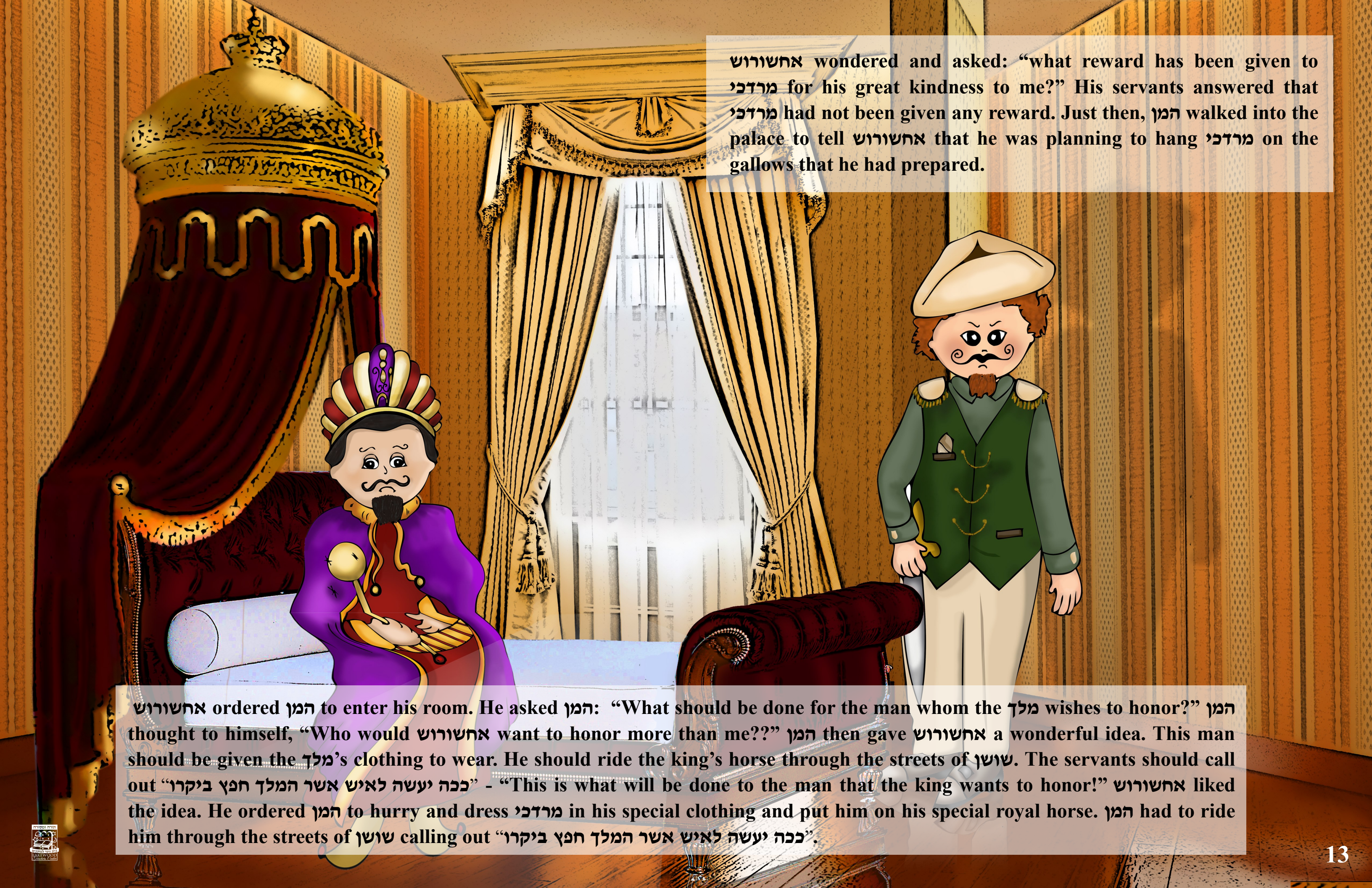


אחשורוש and המן both came to the משתה. During the משתה, אחשורוש asked אסתר what it is that she would like to ask from him. She replied that she wants אחשורוש and המן to come to a second משתה tomorrow. She told אחשורוש that she will tell him at the משתה what she really wants! Oh! המן was so excited to be invited to this private special משתה with אחשורוש. He couldn't wait! However, when המן walked out of the palace and saw מרדכי, who refused to bow down to him, he became very angry. המן went home and told his friends and his wife how great he is that he was invited to the משתה of אסתר המלכה and אחשורוש. He felt so proud of himself! But all of his glory was not worth anything to him as long as he saw מרדכי at the gate of the palace each day!



המן's wife and friends listened to what he said. They thought of a great idea! A gallows 50 אמות high would be prepared. המן would go the next morning to אחשורוש to ask him permission to hang מרדכי on it. המן liked this idea, and he ordered the gallows to be made.

That night, אחשורוש couldn't sleep. He decided that someone should read to him from his ספר הזכרונות. Maybe that would help him fall asleep. One of המן's sons, שמשי, began reading from the ספר הזכרונות to אחשורוש. He reached the page that talked about מרדכי saving אחשורוש's life from the plot of בגתן and תרש. Oy! שמשי did not want to read anything nice about מרדכי to אחשורוש!! Maybe then אחשורוש would like מרדכי and reward him, but his father המן wants to kill him! שמשי tried to turn the page and read something else but it did not work. That happened because the מלאך kept flipping the ספר הזכרונות back to the page about מרדכי! שמשי had no choice but to actually read to אחשורוש about how מרדכי had saved his life.



אחשורוש wondered and asked: “what reward has been given to מרדכי for his great kindness to me?” His servants answered that מרדכי had not been given any reward. Just then, המן walked into the palace to tell אחשורוש that he was planning to hang מרדכי on the gallows that he had prepared.

המן ordered אחשורוש to enter his room. He asked המן: “What should be done for the man whom the מלך wishes to honor?” המן thought to himself, “Who would אחשורוש want to honor more than me??” המן then gave אחשורוש a wonderful idea. This man should be given the מלך’s clothing to wear. He should ride the king’s horse through the streets of שושן. The servants should call out “ככה יעשה לאיש אשר המלך חפץ ביקרו” - “This is what will be done to the man that the king wants to honor!” אחשורוש liked the idea. He ordered המן to hurry and dress מרדכי in his special clothing and put him on his special royal horse. המן had to ride him through the streets of שושן calling out “ככה יעשה לאיש אשר המלך חפץ ביקרו”.



Of course **המן** did not want to do this, but he had no choice! **אחשוורוש** did not let him change his mind. And so **המן**, with his head to the ground, pulled **מרדכי** through the streets of **שושן** calling out “ככה יעשה לאיש אשר המלך חפץ ביקרו”. **המן**'s daughter looked out the window and saw the sight. She thought her father was the lucky one on the horse. She thought **מרדכי** was the one pulling the horse. She wanted to punish **מרדכי** and embarrass him. Do you know what she did? She opened the window and threw a lot of garbage right over his head. “That will teach him a lesson!” she thought. Then she realized her **BIG** mistake. She had thrown the garbage on her father **המן**!



המן returned home very sad and full of garbage on his head. Shortly after, המן was brought to the palace to attend the second משתה of אסתר המלכה. אסתר again asked המלכה what she wanted from him. He was willing to give her whatever she wanted. אסתר told אהשוורוש that she wants her life and the lives of her nation to be saved, for there is "someone" who plans on destroying her and all of her people! אהשוורוש wondered who this could possibly be, who plans to kill his מלכה and all of her people!! He said: "מי הוא זה ואיזה הוא אשר מלאו לבו לעשות כן?" "who is this who dared to do so?" אסתר pointed to המן and answered "איש צר ואויב המן הרע הזה!" "This enemy! This wicked המן!" המן started to tremble. He felt very scared in front of אהשוורוש. אהשוורוש was so angry at המן! He got up and left the משתה. He went to take a stroll in the palace garden so that he could calm down. When he returned to the משתה, he found המן begging אסתר המלכה to forgive him and save him from אהשוורוש's anger.



אחשוורוש didn't know what to do to **המן**! Just then, **חרבונה**, a servant of **אחשוורוש**, thought of a good punishment for **המן**. He told **אחשוורוש** about the gallows 50 **אמות** high that **המן** had prepared for hanging **מרדכי**. He suggested that **המן** be hanged on it instead! **אחשוורוש** listened and **המן** was hanged on the gallows!

What a **נס**! **המן**, who wanted to kill all the Yidden on the 13th day of **אדר**, was no longer alive. That was very good for the Yidden!! That day, **אחשוורוש** gave his **טבעת** over to **מרדכי**. **מרדכי** was now going to be the new **למלך משנה** (prime minister) for **אחשוורוש**. He donned royal clothing and a golden crown. The Yidden in **שושן** were so happy and so full of joy about this!! "לִיהוּדִים הִיְתָה אוֹרָה וְשִׂמְחָה וְשִׁשׂוֹן וִיקָר"



אחשורוש allowed מרדכי and אסתר to write a NEW letter (instead of המן's letter) that would be sent to all of the 127 מדינות. The letter was sealed with the טבעת המלך! מרדכי wrote in the letter that now the Yidden will be able to fight back at all the enemies who wanted to destroy them. What a big נס! The 13th day of חדש אדר was supposed to be so sad and scary for the Yidden. Now it was a complete turnaround! Instead of המן and all the enemies destroying the Yidden, the Yidden were able to destroy המן and win over their enemies!

“ונהפך הוא אשר ישלטו היהודים המה בשנאיהם”

המן was not the only one who was hanged on the gallows. His ten sons were also all hanged on the 14th day of אדר.

מרדכי commanded all of the Yidden to make the 14th day of אדר a very special day. י"ד אדר would become a יום טוב that the Yidden celebrate every year! This day will be a day full of שמחה, a day to make a משתה, and a day to send משלוח מנות to friends. It will also be a day to give מתנות לאביונים – צדקה to poor people. Do you know what מרדכי named this יום טוב? He named it פורים to remember the פור that המן had chosen as the time to destroy the Yidden.

Each year, as we prepare for פורים and as we celebrate this special יום טוב, we thank ה' for saving the Yidden from the hands of the wicked המן!!

