

# Why Did Esther Hide Her Identity?

*Based on an article by R. Avraham Shama*

## Source 1: Esther 2:9-11

**ט** וַתִּיטֵב הַנַּעֲרָה בְּעֵינָיו, וַתִּשָּׂא חֶסֶד לִפְנָיו, וַיְבַהֵל אֶת-תַּמְרוּקֶיהָ וְאֶת-מְנוּחָהּ לְתֵת לָהּ, וְאֶת שִׁבַּע הַנַּעֲרוֹת הָרֵאיוֹת לְתֵת-לָהּ מִבֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ; וַיִּשְׁנֶה וְאֶת-נַעֲרוֹתֶיהָ לְטוֹב, בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים.

**9** And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her ointments, with her portions, and the seven maidens, who were meet to be given her out of the king's house; and he advanced her and her maidens to the best place in the house of the women.

**י** לֹא-הִגִּידָה אֶסְתֵּר, אֶת-עַמָּהּ וְאֶת-מוֹלְדוֹתֶיהָ: כִּי מָרְדֳּכָי צִוָּה עָלֶיהָ, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִגִּיד.

**10** Esther had not made known her people nor her kindred; for Mordecai had charged her that she should not tell it.

**יא** וּבְכָל-יוֹם וָיוֹם--מָרְדֳּכָי מִתְהַלֵּךְ, לִפְנֵי חֲצַר בֵּית-הַנָּשִׁים: לִדְעוֹת אֶת-שְׁלוֹם אֶסְתֵּר, וּמִה-יַעֲשֶׂה בָּהּ.

**11** And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what would become of her.

## 1b) Esther 2:18-20

**יח** וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁתֶּה גָדוֹל, לְכָל-שָׂרָיו וְעַבְדָּיו--אֵת, מִשְׁתֶּה אֶסְתֵּר; וַהֲנִיחָהּ לַמְּדִינוֹת עֲשָׂה, וַיִּתֵּן מִשְׁאֵת כֶּיֶד הַמֶּלֶךְ.

**18** Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the bounty of the king.

**יט** וּבַהֲקָבֹץ בְּתוֹלוֹת, שְׁנִית; וּמָרְדֳּכָי, יָשָׁב בְּשַׁעַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ.

**19** And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, and Mordecai sat in the king's gate--

כ אין אֶסְתֵּר, מִגִּדַּת מוֹלְדֹתָהּ 20 Esther had not yet made known her  
וְאֶת-עַמָּהּ, כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה עָלֶיהָ, kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had  
מִרְדֵּכָי; וְאֶת-מֵאֲמַר מִרְדֵּכָי charged her; for Esther did the  
אֶסְתֵּר עָשָׂה, כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה commandment of Mordecai, like as  
בְּאִמְנָה אֶתּוֹ. {ס} when she was brought up with him-- {S}

How does Mordechai present himself? **Source 2: Esther Ch. 3**

ג וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲבָדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, 3 Then the king's servants, that were in  
אֲשֶׁר-בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ-- the king's gate, said unto Mordecai: 'Why  
לְמִרְדֵּכָי: מִדּוּעַ אַתָּה עוֹבֵר, transgressest thou the king's  
אֶת מִצְוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ. commandment?'

ד וַיְהִי, בֹאֲמָרָם (כְּאִמְרָם) 4 Now it came to pass, when they spoke  
אֵלָיו יוֹם יוֹם, וְלֹא שָׁמַע, daily unto him, and he hearkened not  
אֲלֵיהֶם; וַיִּגִּדּוּ לְהָמָן, unto them, that they told Haman, to see  
לְרֹאוֹת הֲיִעָמְדוּ דְבָרָי whether Mordecai's words would stand;  
מִרְדֵּכָי--כִּי-הָיָה לְהֵם, for he had told them that he was a Jew.  
אֲשֶׁר-הוּא יְהוּדִי.

**Source 3: Rashi's commentary on the first time Mordechai tells Esther not to reveal anything about her origins**

(ו) אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִגִּיד - כְּדִי שִׂיאֲמָרוּ שֶׁהִיא מִמִּשְׁפַּחַּה בְּזוּיָה וְיִשְׁלַחוּהָ שָׂאֵם יִדְעוּ  
שֶׁהִיא מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת שְׂאוּל הַמֶּלֶךְ הָיוּ מַחֲזִיקִים בָּהּ

'She should not tell' - in order that they would assume that she was from a lowly family and would send her away, for if they knew that she was a descendant of the family of King Shaul, they would hold on to her."

*There seems to be a worry here that she will actually be selected as queen. Mordechai does not want her to become queen!*

**Where is there a hint in the text that Esther could be  
- or was - taken by force?**

**Source 4: Esther Ch. 2** - Esther seems to be taken by force...This precedes the first instruction by Mordechai not to say anything about her religious origin.

**ח ויהי, בהשמע דבר- המלך ודתו, ובהקבץ נערות רבות אל-שושן הבירה, אל-יד הגי; ותלקח אסתר אל-בית המלך, אל-יד הגי שמר הנשים.** 8 So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was published, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the castle, to the custody of Hegai, **that Esther was taken into the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.**

#### Source 5a) : Commentary of Malbim on Megilat Esther

(ח) ויהי, ח) נוסף על כל אלה כבר היה שנשמע דבר המלך ודתו, כי שתי פקודות יצאו מן המלך, תחלה יצאה הפקודה שיבקשו למלך נערות ממי שימסרם ברצון, וזה קרא דבר המלך, ואחר כך יצאה הפקודה השנית, שיקבצו נערות בע"כ [כנ"ל פסוק ב' וג'] וזה קרא דתו, כי עם הפקודה השנית ודאי חייבו להעובר ומסתיר את בתו משפט מות

**טו ובהגיע תר-אסתר בת-אביחיל דד מרדכי אשר לקח- לו לבת לבוא אל-המלך, לא בקשה דבר--כי אם את-אשר יאמר הגי סריס-המלך, שמר הנשים; ותהי אסתר נשאת חן, בעיני כל-ראיה.** 15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, **she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed.** And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

#### 5b) Malbim

מה שלקחה מן המלך מצדו, שמצד זה תבא ברצונה בלי אונס לא בקשה דבר, כי הראית בפועל שהיא אנוסה ואינה מתרצית אליו, וע"כ אמר ובהגיע תור אסתר לבא, שרק התור לחצה ואנסה לזה, ולא לבח התרצה לבא, ולכן לא רצתה מאומה רק מה שנתן לה הגי בעצמו, שזה הכריחה לקחת

## Challenges with Rashi's explanation:

A) Why according to Rashi - does Esther then continue to hide her lineage even after she becomes the new queen?

B) Nowhere is Esther described as a descendant of the house of Shaul. Firstly, Mordechai's ancestor Kish is not necessarily the father of Shaul.

See, for example, **Source 6a) Commentary of Ibn Ezra** when the Megilah introduces Mordechai in Chapter 2:

5 There was a certain Jew in Shushan the castle, whose name was Mordecai the son of Jair the son of Shimei the son of Kish, a Benjamite,  
 הָאִישׁ יְהוּדִי, הָיָה בְּשׁוּשָׁן הַבִּיָּרָה; וְשֵׁמוֹ מֶרְדֳּכַי, בֶּן יָאִיר בֶּן-שִׁמְעִי בֶן-קִישׁ--אִישׁ יְמִינִי.

**בן קיש** - היה גדול כאבותיו ואילו היה אבי שאול היה מזכיר שאול כי הוא מלך ולא אביו על כן לא נודע אם מרדכי היה מבני שאול אם לא

B) Even if he is indeed Shaul's father, the text does not seem to emphasize Esther's connection to Shaul, since it is Mordechai whose genealogy is being traced rather than Esther

### 6b) Commentary of Ibn Ezra

**יש אומרים** כי מרדכי לא עשה נכונה שצוה על אסתר שלא תגיד עמה כי פחד שלא יקחנה המלך לאשה אם ידע שהיא מהגולה

i. "Some say that Mordechai was wrong to command Esther not to reveal her identity, for he feared that the king would not take her as a wife if he knew that she was from the [Jewish] captivity."

**ואחרים אמרו** כי בדרך נבואה או בחלום ידע שתבא תשועה על ידה לישראל

ii. "Others say that through prophecy or a dream he knew that salvation would come through her to Israel."

**והנכון בעיני** כי עשה זה מרדכי בעבור שתשמור תורת השם בסתר שלא תאכל נבילות ותשמור השבתות ולא ירגישו המשרתים כי אם יודע הדבר שמא המלך יכריחנה או יהרגנה כי בעל כרחיה נתפשה

[The explanation] that seems correct in my eyes is that Mordechai acted thus in order that she could observe God's Torah in secret; that she would not eat forbidden meat and would observe Shabbat in such a way that the servants would not become aware of it, for if the matter became known then perhaps the king would force her [to act contrary to her religious beliefs] or kill her, for [after all,] she was captured against her will.



## Evaluating the Ibn Ezra's approaches - Rav Avraham Shama:

**Approach #1:** This explanation makes two claims: firstly, that Mordechai's aim was to ensure that she would be queen; secondly, that this purpose is evaluated in a negative light. It is difficult to find support for this interpretation in the text, and the description of Esther as being "taken" to the royal palace without any apparent effort on her part appears to contradict it.

**Approach #2:** This explanation is built on the previous one. Both agree as to Mordechai's purpose in commanding Esther not to reveal her identity, but they differ when it comes to evaluating this behavior. It does seem more plausible to evaluate Mordechai's motivation favorably, since the text introduces him in a very positive light: he is a Jewish man of noble lineage, a Jerusalemite, and a man of outstanding kindness who has raised an orphan in his own home. **The behavior attributed to him by this explanation - promoting Esther to the station of royalty at the price of handing her over to Achashverosh - cannot be considered worthy unless it was a one-time, exceptional decision taken for the purpose of saving Israel. This, in turn, would have to be based on some form of prophecy.**

Hints that Mordechai may have had some sort of נבואה/prophecy:

### Source 7: Esther Ch. 4

**יג** וַיֹּאמֶר מָרְדֳּכָי, לְהָשִׁיב  
אֶל-אֶסְתֵּר: 'אֵל-תִּדְמִי  
בְּנַפְשְׁךָ, לְהַמְלִיט בֵּית-הַמֶּלֶךְ  
מִכָּל-הַיְּהוּדִים.

**13** Then Mordecai bade them to return answer unto Esther: 'Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

**יד** כִּי אִם-הִחַרְשׁ תִּחְרִישִׁי,  
בְּעֵת הַזֹּאת--רִנָּח וְהַצָּלָה  
יַעֲמֹד לַיהוּדִים מִמָּקוֹם  
אַחֵר, וְאֶת וּבֵית-אָבִיךָ  
תֵּאבְדוּ; וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ--אִם-לָעֵת  
כְּזֹאת, הִגַּעְתָּ לַמְּלָכוֹת.

**14** For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish; and who knoweth whether thou art not come to royal estate for such a time as this?'

*But can we say that if he had this "sense" now - that it was in his mind all along?*

## Source 8: Rav Shama on Ibn Ezra's conclusion:

### Approach #3:

Support for this view is to be found in the positive presentation of Mordechai in the Megilla, as well as in the problems related to the previous explanations. *However, these elements do not amount to proof of this explanation, for in the literal reading of the text there is no hint of Esther's care not to eat forbidden foods and to observe Shabbat. Even if all this is true, the text conceals it. On the contrary, the text would seem to suggest that Esther lives like any other member of the royal household.*

*An alternative approach. Let's review the two references to Esther not revealing her religion / Jewishness back in Chapter 2:*

What do both instances have in common? What is the key element behind Esther's behavior? What is Mordechai's concern in the first reference?

### Compare to Miriam's behavior back in

#### Source 9: Shemot Ch. 2

ג וְלֹא-יָכְלָה עוֹד, הִצְפִּינוּ, וַתִּקַּח-לוֹ תֵּבֶת גִּמְאָ, וַתַּחַמְרָה בַּחֲמֹר וּבִזְּפָת; וַתִּשֶׂם בָּהּ אֶת-הַיֶּלֶד, וַתִּשֶׂם בְּסוּף עַל-שִׁפְתַּת הַיָּאָר. 3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

ד וַתִּתְּצַב אַחֲתוֹ, מֵרָחוֹק, לִדְעָה, מַה-יַּעֲשֶׂה לוֹ. 4 And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

This first concern reaches a crescendo when she is taken to the king, before she is crowned queen: **Source 10: Repeat of Esther 2:15** with a different emphasis:

טו וּבְהִגִּיעַ תֹּר-אֶסְתֵּר בֵּית-אֲבִיחַיִל דָּד מֶרְדֳּכַי אֲשֶׁר לָקַח-לוֹ לְבֵית לָבוֹא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ, לֹא בִקְשָׁה דְבָר--כִּי אִם אֶת- 15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the

אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הַגִּי סָרִיס-הַמֶּלֶךְ, שֹׁמֵר הַנָּשִׁים; וַתְּהִי אֶסְתֵּר נִשְׂאֵת חֵן, בְּעֵינֵי כָל-רְאִיָּהּ. **king**, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

### Source 11: A Purim Afterthought - Rabbi Dr. Ari Zivotofsky

...the relationship between Mordechai and Esther is explicitly described twice in the book of Esther. In [Esther 2:7](#) the characters of Mordechai and Esther are introduced, and Esther is described as Mordechai's *bat dodo*<sup>3</sup>—his uncle's daughter, i.e., Mordechai's first cousin. In [Esther 2:15](#), when Esther is called to the king's palace, her lineage is given as: Esther, the daughter of Avichayil, Mordechai's uncle, i.e., she was Mordechai's first cousin. The Targum Sheni elaborates further by specifying that it was Mordechai's father and Esther's father who were brothers.

There is an additional relationship found in the *midrash*. Rashi (on [Esther 2:7](#)) cites the Talmudic ([Megillah 13a](#)) exegesis that Mordechai not only raised, but later married, [Esther](#).<sup>4</sup> The Talmud ([Megillah 13b](#)) further derives from [Esther 2:20](#) that they actually lived as husband and wife even subsequent to Esther's being taken to the royal residence, up until the time she voluntarily went to Achashverosh.<sup>5</sup>

But Mordechai's worries seem to be overshadowed by a feeling of Hashgacha/Divine Providence.... **Source 12: Esther Ch. 2**

טו ... וַתְּהִי אֶסְתֵּר נִשְׂאֵת חֵן, בְּעֵינֵי כָל-רְאִיָּהּ. **15 ... And Esther found favor in the sight of all them that looked upon her.**

יז וַיֶּאֱהָב הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-אֶסְתֵּר מִכָּל-הַנָּשִׁים, וַתִּשָּׂא-חֵן וַחֲסֵד לְפָנָיו מִכָּל-הַבָּתּוּלוֹת; וַיָּשֶׂם כֶּתֶר-מַלְכוּת בִּרְאשָׁהּ, וַיְמַלִּכָהּ תַּחַת וְשֹׁתִי. **17 And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she found grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.**

## Source 13: Bereishit Ch. 39

- א** וַיֹּסֶף, הוּרַד מִצְרָיִמָּה; וַיִּקְנֶהוּ פוֹטִיפָר סָרִיס פַּרְעֹה שֶׁר הַטְּבָחִים, אִישׁ מִצְרִי, מִיַּד הַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִים, אֲשֶׁר הוּרְדָּהוּ שָׁמָּה. **1** And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hand of the Ishmaelites, that had brought him down thither.
- ב** וַיְהִי יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹסֵף, וַיְהִי אִישׁ מְצַלִּיחַ; וַיְהִי, בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרִי. **2** And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.
- ג** וַיֵּרָא אֲדֹנָיו, כִּי יְהוָה אִתּוֹ; וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-הוּא עֹשֶׂה, יְהוָה מַצְלִיחַ בְּיָדוֹ. **3** And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.
- ד** וַיִּמָּצֵא יוֹסֵף חֵן בְּעֵינָיו, וַיִּשְׁרֹת אֹתוֹ; וַיַּקְדֵּהוּ, עַל-בֵּיתוֹ, וְכָל-יָש-לוֹ, נָתַן בְּיָדוֹ. **4** And Joseph found favour in his sight, and he ministered unto him. And he appointed him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.
- כ** וַיִּקַּח אֲדֹנָי יוֹסֵף אֹתוֹ, וַיִּתְּנֶהוּ אֶל-בֵּית הַסֵּהר--מְקוֹם, אֲשֶׁר-אֲסוּרֵי (אֲסִירֵי) הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲסוּרִים; וַיְהִי-שָׁם, בְּבֵית הַסֵּהר. **20** And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were bound; and he was there in the prison.
- כא** וַיְהִי יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹסֵף, וַיְהִי אִישׁ מְצַלִּיחַ; וַיְהִי חֵן, בְּעֵינֵי שֹׂרֵב בֵּית-הַסֵּהר. **21** But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed kindness unto him, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

## Parallels:

- Just as in Bereishit Yosef is sold against his will and contrary to his interests, so here Esther is taken against her will and contrary to her interests.
- Just as Yosef - a boy of Jewish descent, a stranger in the land to which he has been sold - succeeds in all his endeavors because God is with him, likewise Esther - a young girl of Jewish descent, exiled from her homeland - finds favor in the eyes of all around her because God causes her to succeed.
- Just as the Freer of Prisoners brings Yosef to the position of second-in-command to Pharaoh, so He who raises up the lowly causes the crown to be placed on Esther's head.



*Maybe Esther's rise to prominence itself was an 'echo' of Yosef's, and just as Yosef was to help save the House of Jacob, so, too would Esther's...*

#### Source 14: Esther Ch. 4

**יד** כִּי אִם-הַחֲרָשׁ תַּחֲרִישׁ, **14** For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at  
בָּעֵת הַזֹּאת--רוּחַ וְהַצֵּלָה  
יָעֲמוּד לַיהוּדִים מִמָּקוֹם  
אַחֵר, וְאַתָּה וּבֵית-אָבִיךָ  
תֵּאבְדוּ; וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ--אִם-  
לָעֵת כְּזֹאת, הִגַּעְתָּ לְמַלְכוּת.  
who knoweth whether thou art not come  
to royal estate for such a time as this?'

*Combination of Rashi (Esther did not want to be selected); Ibn Ezra #2 (Mordechai knew that some redemption would come through her) - but Mordechai's knowledge did not precede her being taken to the women's house...It's only his reflection after she was chosen Queen!*

*Question: Once Esther is selected as Queen, why does Mordechai still want her to hide her identity?*

Mordechai served as an advisor to Esther. Best if it was NOT revealed that she was a Jew, because her behavior could be interpreted as serving something other than the best interests of the kingdom.

**Source 15: Rav Shama:** It is true that Mordechai's national identity seems to be quite open and well-known: after all, he is an adult, and has some standing amongst his people. For instance, upon hearing of Haman's plan, Mordechai tears his clothes and wears sackcloth and ashes. Then we are told that in every place where the king's word reaches the Jews, there is great mourning and sackcloth and ashes are seen in public ([Esther 4:1-3](#)). The text apparently means to demonstrate that Mordechai's behavior serves as an example to the entire nation.

## Source 16: Esther Ch. 2

**י לא-הגידה אסתר,** 10 Esther had not made known her  
**את-עמה ואת-** people nor her kindred; for  
**מולדתה:** כי מרדכי צוה Mordecai had charged her that she  
**עליה, אשר לא-תגיד.** should not tell it.

**כ אין אסתר, מגדת** 20 Esther had not yet made known her  
**מולדתה ואת-עמה, באשר** kindred nor her people; as Mordecai  
**צוה עליה, מרדכי; ואת-** had charged her; for Esther did the  
**מאמר מרדכי אסתר עשה,** commandment of Mordecai, like as  
**באשר היתה באמנה** when she was brought up with him--  
**אתו. {ס}** {S}

**Rav Shama:** The first time, the verb is negative in the past tense ("did not reveal" - lo higida), while the second time it is a medial negative ("would not reveal" - ein magedet). This is because the first phrase describes only what happened during the limited time that lapsed between being taken to the women's house and being taken to the royal palace. The second phrase describes her regular, fixed behavior from when she becomes queen onwards.

**Question:** Is there a hint to this approach in the order of the two aspects of Esther's identity in the respective passages?

### The Incident of Bigtan and Teresh - the connection...

**Source 17: End of Chapter 2, following Esther's selection as Queen:**

**כא בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם, וּמַרְדֳּכָי יוֹשֵׁב** 21 in those days, while Mordecai sat in  
**בְּשַׁעַר-הַמֶּלֶךְ; קֶצֶף בִּגְתָן וְתֶרֶשׁ שְׁנֵי-** the king's gate, two of the king's  
**סְרִיסֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, מִשְׁמָרֵי הַסֵּף, וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ** chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of  
**לְשַׁלַּח יָד, בַּמֶּלֶךְ אֲחַשְׁוֵרֶשׁ.** those that kept the door, were wroth, and  
 sought to lay hands on the king  
 Ahasuerus.

**כב וַיִּוָּדַע הַדָּבָר לְמַרְדֳּכָי, וַיֵּגֵד** 22 And the thing became known to  
**לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה; וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר** Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the  
 queen; and Esther told the king thereof in

לְמַלְכָּךְ, בְּשֵׁם מֶרְדֵּכָי. Mordecai's name.

**כג** וַיִּבְקֹשׁ הַדָּבָר וַיִּמָּצֵא, וַיִּתְּלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עַל-עֵץ; וַיִּכְתֹּב, בְּסֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים--לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ. {ס} 23 And when inquisition was made of the matter, and it was found to be so, they were both hanged on a tree; and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king. {S}

### After the fall of Haman...Source 18: Esther Chapter 8

**א** בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶחְשֵׁירוֹשׁ לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה, אֶת-בֵּית הָמֶן, צֶרֶר הַיְּהוּדִים (הַיְּהוּדִים); וּמֶרְדֵּכָי, בָּא לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ--כִּי-הִגִּידָה אֶסְתֵּר, מַה הוּא-לָהּ. 1 On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her.

**ח** וְאַתֶּם כְּתֹבוּ עַל-הַיְּהוּדִים כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם, בְּשֵׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְחַתְמוּ, בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ: כִּי-כָתֹב אֲשֶׁר-נִכְתָּב בְּשֵׁם-הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְנִחַתּוֹם בְּטַבַּעַת הַמֶּלֶךְ--אִין לְהִשְׁיב. 8 Write ye also concerning the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.'

### Source 19: Esther Ch. 10

**א** וַיִּשֶׂם הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶחְשֵׁרֶשׁ (אֶחְשֵׁירוֹשׁ) מַס עַל-הָאָרֶץ, וְאֵי הַיָּם. 1 And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea.

**ב** וְכָל-מַעֲשֵׂה תְקָפוֹ, וְגִבּוֹרָתוֹ, וּפְרִשְׁת גְּדֻלַּת מֶרְדֵּכָי, אֲשֶׁר גָּדְלוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ--הֵלּוּא-הֵם כְּתוּבִים, עַל-סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים, לְמַלְכֵי, מְדֵי וּפָרְס. 2 And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai, how the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

**ג** **כִּי מֵרֹדֶכַי הַיְּהוּדִי, מְשֻׁנָּה** **3 For Mordecai the Jew was next**  
**לְמֶלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ, וְגָדוֹל** **unto king Ahasuerus, and great**  
**לַיְּהוּדִים, וְרָצוּי לְרֹב אֶחָיו--** **among the Jews, and accepted of**  
**דֶּרֶשׁ טוֹב לְעַמּוֹ, וְדֹבֵר שָׁלוֹם** **the multitude of his brethren;**  
**לְכָל-זֶרְעוֹ. {ש}** **seeking the good of his people and**  
**{ש}** **speaking peace to all his seed. {P}**

#### Source 20: Ibn Ezra

**וְהִזְכִּיר זֶה הַכְּתוּב לַהּוֹדִיעַ כִּי הַצְלִיחַ בְּכָל דַּרְכָּיו**  
**וְנִרְאָתָה גְבוּרָתוֹ אַחֵר הָיִית מֵרֹדֶכַי לוֹ לְמִשְׁנָה**

The text mentions this in order to teach that [Achashverosh] succeeded in all his ways and his greatness became apparent [only] after Mordechai became his second-in-command.

#### Source 21: Bereishit Ch. 41

**נ** **הָ וַתִּרְעַב כָּל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם,** **55 And when all the land of Egypt**  
**וַיִּצְעַק הָעָם אֶל-פַּרְעֹה** **was famished, the people cried to**  
**לֵאמֹר; וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה לְכָל-** **Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said**  
**מִצְרַיִם לָכוּ אֶל-יוֹסֵף, אֲשֶׁר-** **unto all the Egyptians: 'Go unto**  
**יֹאמַר לָכֶם תַּעֲשׂוּ.** **Joseph; what he saith to you, do.'**

**נ** **וַהֲרָעַב הָיָה, עַל כָּל-פְּנֵי** **56 And the famine was over all the**  
**הָאֶרֶץ; וַיִּפְתַּח יוֹסֵף אֶת-כָּל-** **face of the earth; and Joseph opened**  
**אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶם, וַיִּשְׁבֹּר לְמִצְרַיִם,** **all the storehouses, and sold unto the**  
**וַיַּחֲזִק הָרָעַב, בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.** **Egyptians; and the famine was sore in**  
**the land of Egypt.**

**נ** **וְכָל-הָאֶרֶץ בָּאוּ מִצְרַיִמָּה,** **57 And all countries came into Egypt**  
**לִשְׁבֹּר אֶל-יוֹסֵף: כִּי-חָזַק** **to Joseph to buy corn; because the**  
**הָרָעַב, בְּכָל-הָאֶרֶץ.** **famine was sore in all the earth.**