

The Surprising Connection Between Haman & The Garden of Eden

Source 1: Talmud Hulin 139b

המן מן התורה מנין? [בראשית ג, יא](#) המן העץ

They also asked [Rav Mattana](#): **From where in the Torah** can one find an allusion to the hanging of **Haman**? He replied: The verse states after Adam ate from the tree of knowledge: “**Have you eaten of [hamin] the tree**, about which I commanded you that you should not eat?” ([Genesis 3:11](#)). *Hamin* is spelled in the same manner as Haman: *Heh, mem, nun*.

אסתר מן התורה מנין [דברים לא, יח](#) ואנכי הסתר אסתיר מרדכי מן התורה
מנין דכתיב [שמות ל, כג](#) מר דרור ומתרגמינן מירא דכיא :

From where in the Torah can one find an allusion to the events involving **Esther**? He replied to them that the verse states: “Then My anger shall be kindled against them on that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall come upon them; so that they will say in that day: Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us? **And I will hide [haster astir]** My face on that day for all the evil which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned to other gods” ([Deuteronomy 31:17-18](#)). They also asked him: **From where in the Torah** can one find an allusion to the greatness bestowed upon **Mordecai**? He replied: **As it is written** with regard to the anointing oil in the Tabernacle: “And you shall also take the chief spices, of **flowing myrrh [mor deror]**” ([Exodus 30:23](#)); **and we translate** *mor deror* into Aramaic as: *Mira dakhya*, which resembles the name Mordecai.

1b) Rashi:

מנין - למעשה המן

המן העץ - יתלה על העץ

Source 2: Bereishit Ch. 3

- ט וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, אֶל-הָאָדָם; וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ, אַיֶּכָּה. 9 And the LORD God called unto the man, and said unto him: 'Where art thou?'
- י וַיֹּאמֶר, אֶת-קִלְדָּךְ שָׁמַעְתִּי בְּגֶן; וַאֲרָא כִּי-עִירָם אָנֹכִי, וַאֲחָבֵא. 10 And he said: 'I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.'
- יא וַיֹּאמֶר--מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ, כִּי עִירָם אָתָּה; הַמֶּן-הָעֵץ, אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לְבַלְתִּי אֲכֹל-מִמֶּנּוּ--אֲכַלְתָּ. 11 And He said: 'Who told thee that thou wast naked? **Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?**'
- יב וַיֹּאמֶר, הָאָדָם: הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי, הִוא נָתַנָּה-לִּי מִן-הָעֵץ וָאֲכַל. 12 And the man said: 'The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.'

Source 3: Rav Avraham Abba Weingart

ויש להבין מה הקשר בין המן הרשע והפסוק "ויאמר מי הגיד לך כי עירום אתה, המן העץ אשר צויתך לבלתי אכל ממנו אכלת בראשית ג', י"א. ורש"י עצמו כבר הדגיש שאין כאן רק משחק מילים, וע"כ כותב הוא על השאלה המן מן התורה מנין: "למעשה המן". ועל התשובה: המן העץ, כותב רש"י: "יתלה על העץ", כלומר הוא מבין שבאים להשוות בין הסיפור עם הנחש, אדם וחווה והסיפור של פורים, ונקודת ההשוואה - שבשניהם מדובר בעץ. אך עדיין לא מובן מה הקשר בין העץ שבגן עדן, והעץ שעליו תלו את המן הדבר הזה מצריך הסבר, כי אם המן נתלה על עץ, קשה להניח שזה דבר כל כך חשוב. הרי הוא מת ומדוע כל כך חשוב כיצד הוא מת? אם זה כך, נראה שצריך למצוא משמעות עמוקה יותר לדרשה הזאת.

Source 4: Bereishit Ch. 2

- טו וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, אֶת-הָאָדָם; וַיִּנְחֵהוּ בְּגֶן-עֵדֶן, לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ. 15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.
- טז וַיִּצַו יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, עַל-הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר: מִכָּל עֵץ-הַגֶּן, אָכַל תֹּאכַל. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying: 'Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat;
- יז וּמֵעֵץ, הַדְּעִית טוֹב וְרָע-- לֹא תֹאכַל, מִמֶּנּוּ: כִּי, בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְהָ מִמֶּנּוּ--מוֹת תָּמוּת. 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.'

Source 5: Bereishit Ch. 3

- ד וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּחָשׁ, אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה: לֹא-מוֹת, תָּמוּתוּן. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman: 'Ye shall not surely die;
- ה כִּי, יָדַע אֱלֹהִים, כִּי בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְכֶם מִמֶּנּוּ, וּנְפָקוּ עֵינֵיכֶם; וְהִייתֶם, כְּאֱלֹהִים, יֹדְעֵי טוֹב וְרָע. 5 for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.'

R. David Fohrman

1. *What exactly was the nature of the tree?*
2. *How could we have failed such an easy test?*
3. *Why did God put the tree there if He doesn't want us to eat from it?*

Source 6: Talmud, Berachot 35a

אָלָא סְבֵרָא הוּא : אָסוּר לוֹ לְאָדָם שְׂיִהְיֶה מִן הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּלֹא בְרָכָה.

Rather, all previous attempts at deriving this *halakha* are rejected. The fundamental obligation to recite a blessing over food is founded on **reason: One is forbidden to derive benefit from this world without a blessing.**

אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר שְׁמוּאֵל : כָּל הַנִּהְיֶה מִן הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּלֹא בְרָכָה כְּאִילוֹ נִהְיֶה מְקַדְּשֵׁי שָׁמַיִם, שְׁנֵאמַר : "לֵה' הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָהּ". רַבִּי לִי רִמִּי : כְּתִיב "לֵה' הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָהּ", וְכְתִיב "הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם לֵה' וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לְבְנֵי אָדָם!"
לֹא קִשְׂיָא כָּאֵן קוּדְם בְּרָכָה, כָּאֵן לְאַחַר בְּרָכָה .

Similarly, Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: **One who derives benefit from this world without a blessing, it is as if he enjoyed objects consecrated to the heavens, as it is stated: "The earth and all it contains is the Lord's, the world and all those who live in it"** (Psalms 24:1). Rabbi Levi expressed this concept differently. **Rabbi Levi raised a contradiction: It is written: "The earth and all it contains is the Lord's," and it is written elsewhere: "The heavens are the Lord's and the earth He has given over to mankind"** (Psalms 115:16). There is clearly a contradiction with regard to whom the earth belongs. He himself resolves the contradiction: This is **not difficult. Here**, the verse that says that the earth is the Lord's refers to the situation **before a blessing** is recited, and **here**, where it says that He gave the earth to mankind refers to **after a blessing** is recited.

Rav Fohrman:

When you give a gift to a child, the two things you want to see is:

(a) You want to see the kid enjoying the toy

(b) The second is, I want you to understand that it came from me. Sometimes that understanding is conveyed by saying thank you, but it doesn't have to be by saying thank you. I really don't even need you to say thank you, I just need you, when you play with the toy, to understand that that was a gift from me

The first positive command in the Torah, enjoy all these trees. He just wants us to understand that the trees came from Him. How do we convey that understanding? There's one tree that's His; by honoring the prohibition not to partake of God's own tree, that's the way we convey our understanding that we're guests in the Garden, that we're not the owners, that we're there at God's pleasure. That what He's given us with all these trees are His gifts, and when we enjoy them, we're enjoying what He has lovingly bestowed to us.

Source 7: Midrash Bereishit Rabba Ch. 8

Rabbi Hoshaya said: When the Holy One of Blessing created the first ADAM, the Ministering Angels erred and wanted to say the kedusha before him. A parable: A king and his governor were in a chariot and the people of the realm wanted to say "Domine" to the king, but didn't know which [was the king]. So what did the king do? He shoved [the governor] and ejected him from the chariot and everyone knew [that one] was the governor. So too, when the Holy One of Blessing created the first ADAM, the Ministering Angels erred and wanted to say the kedusha before him. What did the Holy One of Blessing do? He caused slumber to fall upon him so everyone knew [that one] was the ADAM, as it is written: "Withdraw from the ADAM who has breath in his nostrils, for how little is he to be esteemed" ([Isaiah 2:22](#))

י אמר רבי הושעיא בשעה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא אדם הראשון טעו מלאכי השרת ובקשו לומר לפניו קדוש, משל למלך ואפרכוס שהיו בקרוכין והיו בני המדינה מבקשין לומר למלך דומינו ולא היו יודעין איזהו, מה עשה המלך דחפו והוציאו חוץ לקרוכין, וידעו הכל שהוא איפרכוס, כך בשעה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את אדם הראשון, טעו בו מלאכי השרת ובקשו לומר לפניו קדוש, מה עשה הקדוש ב"ה הפיל עליו תרדמה וידעו הכל שהוא אדם, הדא הוא דכתיב (ישעיה ב) חדלו לכם מן האדם אשר נשמה באפו כי במה נחשב הוא .

Source 8: Sefer Hapelia

Hevel's Korban aimed to re-affirm that despite the creation of Adam, Hashem is the one Master of the Universe

אבל הבל תפס דרך אביו ופייס הדינים על דעת לקרבן למקום עלויים כי הבל נולד מכח חזרת אביו בתשובה שהיה הרחמים במילוי והקריב קרבן... להודיע בקרבנו יחוד השם בעולם וקרבתנו קרבן תודה שהוא להתאחד ולהודות הש"י על כח הקיום שהמציא בו ועל כח הדבר שהמשילו לעליונים בדמות וצלם. שכיון שראו אדם הראשון שהוא בצלם אלהים היו סבורין שהאדם בראם לפיכך הוצרך היה להקריב קרבן להודיעם שהקב"ה אדון יחידי בעולם ואין לו שני וממנו הכל

In answering question #2, Rav Fohrman says:

The temptation was to see yourself as the owner of the Garden. You know, it's not so convenient to acknowledge you're a guest. If I'm a guest, it can all be taken away from me at some point. If I'm a guest, I owe gratitude, I'm indebted to you, it's not so comfortable to always feel like I'm indebted to you. It's much more fun to be able to pretend that it's all mine. The temptation to eat from that one last tree is the temptation to masquerade as God, as the owner of the Garden, to pretend if only for a moment that it's all mine, that it can't be taken away, that I'm not beholden to the giver. It's the temptation to play God.

Source 9: Bereishit Ch. 1

ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, יִקְוּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל-מָקוֹם אֶחָד, וַיִּתְרָאֶה, הַיַּבֵּשָׁה; וַיְהִי-כֵן.

9 And God said: 'Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so.

י וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיַבֶּשֶׁת אֶרֶץ, וּלְמִקְוֵה הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים; וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים, כִּי-טוֹב. 10 And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas; **and God saw that it was good.**

יא וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, תִּדְשָׂא הָאָרֶץ דְּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע, עֵץ פְּרִי עֹשֶׂה פְּרִי לְמִינוֹ, אֲשֶׁר זָרְעוּ-בוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ; וַיְהִי-כֵן. 11 And God said: 'Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit-tree bearing fruit after its kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth.' And it was so.

יב וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דְּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע, לְמִינֵהוּ, וְעֵץ עֹשֶׂה-פְּרִי אֲשֶׁר זָרְעוּ-בוֹ, לְמִינֵהוּ; וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים, כִּי-טוֹב. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed after its kind, and tree bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after its kind; **and God saw that it was good.**

Source 10: Bereishit Ch. 2

יח וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, לֹא-טוֹב הֵיئֶתֶר הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ; אֶעֱשֶׂה-לוֹ עֵזֶר, כְּנֶגְדּוֹ. 18 And the LORD God said: 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.'

Rav Fohrman:

One of the great mistakes we make when we read this story is that we overthink it. Yes, there's this Godly knowledge, so we have to think about very deep, theological issues, we have to imagine how a being outside of space and time, who we can't touch, can't feel, would see good and evil. But that's very hard to do.

There's another very simple way, and it's to assume that the Torah gives you all the facts you need to know to understand it right here. So let's assume that that's true for a minute. Let's ask ourselves, here I am, I'm

reading just the first couple of chapters of the Book of Genesis_ and I get to the story of the Tree of Knowledge, what are the only things I really know about God? I really only know two things about Him, I know that He's the Creator, and I know that He's the one who keeps on saying Tov and Lo Tov - good and not good. Yes, after every day of creation; Vayar Elokim ki tov - and God saw that it was good. And, when God created man; Lo tov heyot adam levado - it's not good for a man to be alone. God really is the knower of good and not good, that's the only thing He ever says in the process of creation.

Source 11: Bereishit Ch. 6

ה וַיִּרְא יְהוָה, כִּי רַבָּה רָעַת
הָאָדָם בְּאָרֶץ, וְכָל-יֶצֶר
מַחְשַׁבַת לִבּוֹ, רַק רַע כָּל-
הַיּוֹם.

5 And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

ז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה, אֶמְחָה אֶת-
הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָאתִי מֵעַל פְּנֵי
הָאֲדָמָה, מֵאָדָם עַד-בְּהֵמָה,
עַד-רֶמֶשׂ וְעַד-עוֹף
הַשָּׁמַיִם: כִּי נַחַמְתִּי, כִּי
עָשִׂיתֶם.

7 And the LORD said: 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and creeping thing, and fowl of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them.'

Rav Fohrman:

Seeing something as bad if you're the Creator means I'm not going to keep it around anymore, I'm going to get rid of it. Seeing something as good as I'm the Creator, says yeah, I'll keep it. Seeing something as Lo Tov - not good enough,

means it needs improvement... Those are the three possible grades: good, not good enough and bad. If you think about those grades, that's the responsibility of a Creator towards its creation ... Should I keep it around? Should I get rid of it? Should I change it? That's Godly knowledge, though, it's not human knowledge, it's the business of a Creator to do that, it's not the business of a creature of the created.

You know, there are certain decisions you get to make as a creature, as the created one, but one of them isn't this is the way things should be, this is the way the world should be...

...What does eating from the tree do for you? It gives you the feeling that you see things as a Creator does. That you too can make judgments, this is the way the world should be and this is the way it shouldn't be. You have the power to pronounce Tov and Rah, as the Creator does.

... there's a confusion here, because we human beings - there's another kind of Tov and Rah that we're familiar with, the Tov and Rah of desire. See, Tov and Rah have two meanings, Tov can mean good in the sense of moral right and just, but it could also mean good, as in, the way I like it, the way I desire things. The macaroni and cheese is 'good' doesn't mean that its nutritional value is good, necessarily, it means that I like it, it comports with my desire. The broccoli is 'bad' is not a judgment about the broccoli in any objective kind of way, it's a judgment about me, what I like and what I don't like. ... Human beings, well, we're very familiar with the Tov and Rah of desires, but when we think we can pronounce Tov and Rah as in the way things should be, we can very easily confuse the two and mix up one for the other.

Source 12: BPS Research Digest



Research Digest

Tom Stafford

We all know someone who is convinced their opinion is better than everyone else's on a topic – perhaps, even, that it is the only correct opinion to have. Maybe, on some topics, *you* are that person. No psychologist would be surprised that people who are convinced their beliefs are superior think they are better informed than others, but this fact leads to a follow on question: are people *actually* better informed on the topics for which they are convinced their opinion is superior? This is what Michael Hall and Kaitlin Raimi set out to check in a series of experiments in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

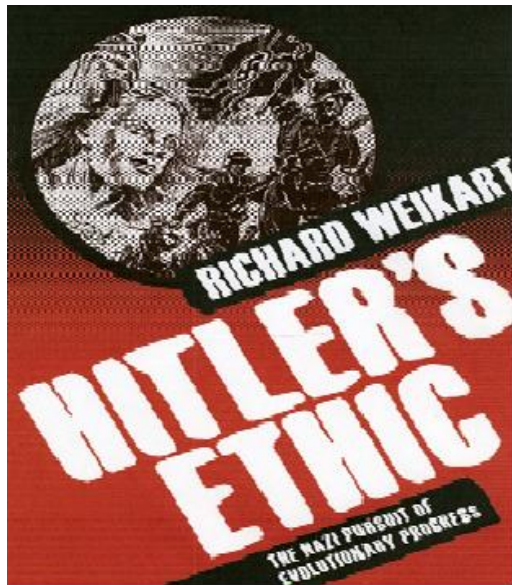
The researchers distinguish “belief superiority” from “belief confidence” (thinking your opinion is correct). **Belief superiority is relative – it is when you think your opinion is more correct than other people's; the top end of their belief superiority scale is to indicate that your belief is “Totally correct (mine is the only correct view)”**.

The pair set out to find people who felt their beliefs on a variety of controversial political issues (things like terrorism and civil liberties, or wealth redistribution) were superior, and to check – using multiple choice quizzes – how well they were informed on the topics about which they held these superiority beliefs.

Across five studies Hall and Raimi found that those people with the highest belief superiority also tended to have the largest gap between their perceived and actual knowledge – the belief superior consistently suffered from the illusion that they were better informed than they were. As you might expect, those with the lowest belief superiority tended to underestimate how much they knew.

As well as simple background knowledge, the researchers were also interested in how people with belief superiority sought out new information relevant to that belief. They gave participants a selection of news headlines and asked them to select which articles they'd like to read in full at the end of the experiment. **Categorising headlines as belief-congruent or belief incongruent, the researchers observed that those participants with higher belief-superiority were more likely to select belief congruent headlines. In other words, despite being badly informed compared to their self-perception, these participants chose to neglect sources of information that would enhance their knowledge.**

Source 13: Synopsis of Hitler's Ethic: The Nazi Pursuit of Evolutionary Progress by Richard Weikart



In Hitler's Ethic Weikart helps unlock the mystery of Hitler's evil by vividly demonstrating the surprising conclusion that Hitler's immorality flowed from a coherent ethic. Hitler was inspired by evolutionary ethics to pursue the utopian project of biologically improving the human race. Hitler's evolutionary ethic underlay or influenced almost every major feature of Nazi policy: eugenics (i.e., measures to improve human heredity, including compulsory sterilization), euthanasia, racism, population expansion, offensive warfare, and racial extermination. Hitler also believed that morality was biologically innate, so he thought that eliminating the "evil" Jews would bring moral progress.

Source 14: Ch. 4 Bereishit

ו וַתֵּרָא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב
 הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל וְכִי תֵאָוֶה-
 הוּא לְעֵינַיִם, וְנַחְמַד הָעֵץ
 לְהַשְׂכִּיל, וַתִּקַּח מִפְּרִיו,
 וַתֹּאכַל; וַתִּתֵּן גַּם-לְאִישָׁהּ
 עִמָּהּ, וַיֹּאכַל. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree
 was good for food, and that it was a
 delight to the eyes, and that the tree was
 to be desired to make one wise, she took
 of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she
 gave also unto her husband with her, and
 he did eat.

Source 15: Haketav V'Hakabala *What the snake said to Chava*

(ה) והייתם כאלהים. כשופט וכמנהיג... וטעמו כאן מעצמיכם תהיו ביכלתכם לשפוט מהו טוב ותבחרו בו ומהו רע ותמנעו ממנו, ולא תהיו דומים לשאר בע"ח שהם מוכרחים במעשיהם, ואין להם כח השפיטה והנהגה להתנהג מכח עצמם בבחירה ורצון. ובכונה זו יתבאר ג"כ מלת כאלהי מענין תוקף ויכולת, כלומר תהיו בעלי היכולת לבחור מדעתכם את הטוב מבין הרע, ולא תצטרכו אל המצוה עליכם.

Note the parallel between the language the Torah uses to describe Chava's perception of the tree and its fruit, and the language of the Torah in the creation *story*...

Source 16: Rav Shimshon R. Hirsch –Bereishit 2:9

Had the whole conception of moral good and bad been lacking to Man, God could not have given him any prohibition and could not have called him to account and punished him for transgressing it. Both must assume that the one, to whom the prohibition is issued, has the knowledge of duty, of what is in accordance with right and what is wrong; and that is nothing else but the knowledge of good and evil, a knowledge which does indeed belong to the faculty of practical and not theoretical decision. But rather the tree *הָרֵעַ טוֹב וְרָע*, was so designated — as so often *עַל שֵׁם טוֹב*, already beforehand according to the final result — as the tree by which the decision of the knowledge of good and evil was made, through which the man would decide how he wished to recognise what was good or bad. There is only one condition for the earth to be able to form a paradise for us, and the condition is this, that we only call *that* good, which God stamps as being good, and bad, which He declares as such. But not that we leave the decision between good and bad to our senses. If we place ourselves under the dictate of our senses, the gates of Paradise are closed to us and only by a long way round can Man regain admittance thereto. Yea the tree could have been called the "Tree of Knowledge of good and evil" inasmuch as it was to represent to Man what good and evil was to be to him, what he was to recognise as good or bad. The tree, as we shall see later, was endowed with every attraction for taste, for the imagination, sight, and reasoning judgment, all one's senses declared it "good", that it should be eaten, and yet God had forbidden it to be eaten, was accordingly designated "bad" for Man. The tree, accordingly, was constantly to remind him of the teaching on which the realisation of the whole purity and height of his calling depends. The teaching that, according to the judgement of his bodily senses, his mind and understanding, a thing may appear absolutely good, yea the very best, and still to take it may be contrary to the high calling of Man, may still be judged by God as a capital crime. The teaching that Man is to recognize what is good and bad, not by the judgement of his senses or his own mind, but by accepting the will of God when it has been revealed to him, and that he must take such judgement of God as the one guide he is to follow, if he wishes to fulfil his mission on earth and remain worthy for the world to be a Paradise for him.

Source 17: Benno Jacob

What is this knowledge? Why is the tree forbidden and the consequence death? The meaning of good and evil should be understood according to Deut. 30:15ff, "See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil... I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments... I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse, therefore choose life." The "good" is love of God shown by obedience to His commandments and it brings life and blessing, the "evil" is disobedience and it brings curse and death.

The first man reaches this knowledge by his experience with the prohibition. As he trespasses, he will afterwards know that he has chosen "evil" and will recognize the difference from "the good" which obedience would have preserved for him. The tree is a touchstone for the distinction between the prohibited and permitted, between good and evil, between life and death. This is quite independent of the content of the prohibition. The will to obey shows itself even more clearly if uninfluenced by any consideration of practical profit or loss, it only submits to the lawgiver.

Man is given a prohibition that he may know that he is not God and has a master. The fruit of the tree was neither injurious nor poisonous; otherwise no penalty needed to be threatened; on the contrary it was "good for food". Merely the prohibition makes the fruit harmful...

Let's return now, to sources 1-4; after studying these sources, we can proceed to Source #18

Source 18: Esther Ch. 5:9-13

- ט** וַיֵּצֵא הָמָן בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, שְׂמֵחַ וְטוֹב לֵב; וַכְּרָאוֹת הָמָן אֶת-מָרְדֳּכָי בְּשַׁעַר הַמְּלָךְ, וְלֹא-קָם וְלֹא-זָע מִמֶּנּוּ-- וַיִּמְלֵא הָמָן עַל-מָרְדֳּכָי, חֲמָה.
- 9** Then went Haman forth that day joyful and glad of heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, Haman was filled with wrath against Mordecai.
- י** וַיִּתְאַפֵּק הָמָן, וַיָּבֹא אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ; וַיִּשְׁלַח וַיִּבֵּא אֶת-אֶהֱבָיו, וְאֶת-זֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ.
- 10** Nevertheless Haman refrained himself, and went home; and he sent and fetched his friends and Zeresh his wife.
- יא** וַיִּסְפֹּר לָהֶם הָמָן אֶת-כְּבוֹד עֲשָׂרוֹ, וְרֹב בָּנָיו; וְאֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר גָּדְלוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר נִשְׂאוֹ, עַל-הַשָּׂרִים וְעַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ.
- 11** And Haman recounted unto them the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and everything as to how the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.
- יב** וַיֹּאמֶר, הָמָן--אֵף לֹא-הִבִּיֵּאָה אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה עִם-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂיתָה, כִּי אִם-אוֹתִי; וְגַם-לְמַחֵר אֲנִי קָרוּא-לָהּ, עִם-הַמֶּלֶךְ.
- 12** Haman said moreover: 'Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow also am I invited by her together with the king.
- יג** וְכָל-זֶה, אֵינְנוּ שׂוֹה לִי: ּבְכָל-עֵת, אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי רֹאֶה אֶת-מָרְדֳּכָי הַיְּהוּדִי--יּוֹשֵׁב, בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ.
- 13** Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.'

Source 19: Rav Chaim Meir Har-Lavan

הָמֶן הרשע היה ראש השרים, זכה לבנים רבים, לעושר אגדי, ושלט בכל רחבי הממלכה, על מאה עשרים ושבע מדינות! אין נכבד ממנו, המלך והמלכה ערכו משתה עבירו ולכבודו, ובכל זאת הוא החליט לצאת למהלך – שהביא עליו את קיצו – להשמיד את היהודים, וזאת מפני שאיש אחד

ויחיד, מרדכי היהודי, ממיליוני הנתונים אינו משתחוה לו. בהתייעצו עם אשתו, חכמיו ויועציו, הוא מצהיר בפניהם (אסתר ה, יג): "וְכָל זֶה אֵינְנוּ שׁוֹה לִי בְּכָל עֵת אֲשֶׁר אָנִי רוֹאֶה אֶת מְרַדְּכֵי הַיְּהוּדִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמְּלָךְ!"

"וְכָל זֶה" לא שווה מאומה, כיוון שבן אדם אחד – מרדכי היהודי - לא משתחוה לו, והוא מתמלא חמה, והסוף ידוע.

על זאת נשאל רב מְתָנָה – היכן השורש של המידה המגונה הזו, שאדם שיש לו הכל אינו מסוגל ליהנות ממה שיש לו רק בגלל נקודה זעירה שהוא מתעקש להציב מול עיניו עד שתסתיר את כל מה שיש לו?

השיה להם רב מְתָנָה: "הָמֶן הָעֵץ" – אבי כל האנושות, אדם הראשון, כבר אצלו התגלתה תכונה זו. ה' השניח אותו בגן עדן, מלאכים צלו עבירו בשר ומזגו לו יין! ה' התיר לו לאכול מכל עצי הגן, והגביל אותו רק בעץ אחד (בראשית ב, טז-יז): "מִכָּל עֵץ הַגֵּן אָכַל תֹּאכֵל. וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ" – אך הוא חשק רק את העץ אותו אסור היה לו לאכול והוא לה היה מסוגל לשאת זאת, עד שנכשל בחטא שהמיט מיתה עליו ועל האנושות כולה לדורות עולם.

זהו היצר הרע, המצליח לתעתע באדם כי כל מה שיש לו אינו שווה כלום, ורק אם ישיג נקודה פלונית מיד ישתנו חייו לטובה.

Rav Fohrman: This is the Adam situation with the forbidden fruit. I have everything, but it means nothing because there's one thing I can't have.

What was the pinnacle of everything for Haman? It was how he was called to dine with the king. You know that was just like Adam too. Adam's great gift is the ability to dine with the King, the King of Kings, he's there in God's Garden, and has all these fruits, all these trees that God made. If he would eat of them in God's presence in the Garden, what he's really doing? He's dining with the King. Both of these people are in exactly the same position, but it all means nothing to them because of the one thing they can't have, how sad.

What does Zeresh, his wife, recommend?

Source 20: Megilat Esther Ch. 5

<p>יָד וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ זֶרֶשׁ אִשְׁתּוֹ וְכָל- אֶהְבֵּיו, יַעֲשׂוּ-עֵץ גָּבֹהַ חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה, וּבִבְקָר אָמַר לְמֶלֶךְ וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת-מָרְדֳּכָי עָלָיו, וּבֹא-עִם- הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-הַמְּשֻׁתָּה שְׂמֵחַ; וַיֵּיטֵב הַדָּבָר לְפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, וַיַּעַשׂ הָעֵץ. {ס}</p>	<p>14 Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him: 'Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon; then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet.' And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made. {S}</p>
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You'll have the one thing that's so far eluded you. What does that remind you of in the Garden? Adam was offered the fruit – the forbidden fruit, the one thing he couldn't have – by Eve, and now Haman's wife Zeresh tells him, well why don't you just

have the one thing that you haven't been able to have? But isn't it interesting what the gallows are called in Hebrew? Ya'asu eitz – literally an Eitz is not a gallows, you know what it is? It's a tree. It's the tree of knowledge all over again, it's the one thing you can't have, she's offering him the fruit.

ו וַתִּרְאֵהָ הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב
 הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל וְכִי תִאְוָה-
 הוּא לְעֵינַיִם, וְנִחְמַד הָעֵץ
 לְהִשְׂכִּיל, וַתִּקַּח מִפְּרִיו,
 וַתֹּאכַל; וַתִּתֵּן גַּם-לְאִישָׁהּ
 עִמָּהּ, וַיֹּאכַל. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree
 was good for food, and that it was a
 delight to the eyes, and that the tree was
 to be desired to make one wise, she took
 of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she
 gave also unto her husband with her, and
 he did eat.

What are the ramifications of eating the fruit in Gan Eden?

יז וַיֹּמַעַץ, הַדְּעַת טוֹב וְרָע--
 לֹא תֹאכַל, מִמֶּנּוּ: כִּי, בַּיּוֹם
 אֲכַלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ-- מוֹת תָּמוּת. 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of
 good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; **for**
in the day that thou eatest thereof
thou shalt surely die.'

Source 21: Ramban – you will become mortal:

ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות - בעת שתאכל ממנו תהיה בן מות.

What happens to Haman following this advice?

Source 22: Megilat Esther Ch. 6

- וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ, מִי בַחֲצַר ; וְהָמוֹן
בָּא, לַחֲצַר בֵּית-הַמֶּלֶךְ הַחִיצוֹנָה,
לֵאמֹר לַמֶּלֶךְ, לְתַלּוֹת אֶת-מֶרְדֵּכַי
עַל-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-הֵכִין לוֹ.
- 4 And the king said: 'Who is in the court?'--Now Haman was come into the outer court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.--
- ה וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, אֵלָיו--
הִנֵּה הָמוֹן, עֹמֵד בַּחֲצַר ; וַיֹּאמֶר
הַמֶּלֶךְ, יָבֹא.
- 5 And the king's servants said unto him: 'Behold, Haman standeth in the court.' And the king said: 'Let him come in.'
- ו וַיָּבֹא, הָמוֹן, וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ,
מֵה-לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ
חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ ; וַיֹּאמֶר הָמוֹן, בְּלִבּוֹ,
לְמִי יַחְפֹּץ הַמֶּלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת יָקָר,
יֹתֵר מִמֶּנִּי.
- 6 So Haman came in. And the king said unto him: 'What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?'--Now Haman said in his heart: 'Whom would the king delight to honour besides myself?'--
- ז וַיֹּאמֶר הָמוֹן, אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ : אִישׁ,
אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ.
- 7 And Haman said unto the king: 'For the man whom the king delighteth to honour,
- ח יָבִיאוּ לְבוּשׁ מַלְכוּת, אֲשֶׁר
לְבָשׁ-בוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ ; וְסוּס, אֲשֶׁר רָכַב
עָלָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְאֲשֶׁר נָתַן כֶּתֶר
מַלְכוּת, בְּרֹאשׁוֹ.
- 8 let royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and on whose head a crown royal is set;
- ט וְנָתַן הַלְבוּשׁ וְהַסּוּס, עַל-יַד-
אִישׁ מִשָּׂרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַפְּרָתָמִים,
וְהַלְבִּישׁוּ אֶת-הָאִישׁ, אֲשֶׁר הַמֶּלֶךְ
חָפֵץ בִּיקְרוֹ ; וְהִרְכִּיבֵהוּ עַל-
- 9 and let the apparel and the horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man therewith whom the king delighteth to

הַסּוֹס, בְּרִחוּב הָעִיר, וְקָרְאוּ
 לְפָנָיו, כִּכָּה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
 הִמְלִיךְ חֲפֶז בִּיקָרוֹ. honour, and cause him to ride on
 horseback through the street of the
 city, and proclaim before him: Thus
 shall it be done to the man whom
 the king delighteth to honour.'

י וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהֶמֶן, מַהֲרָה קַח
 אֶת-הַלְבוּשׁ וְאֶת-הַסּוֹס כַּאֲשֶׁר
 דִּבַּרְתָּ, וַעֲשֵׂה-כֵן לְמֹרְדֵכַי
 הַיְהוּדִי, הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר
 הַמֶּלֶךְ: אֶל-תִּפֹּל דְבָר, מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר
 דִּבַּרְתָּ. **10** Then the king said to Haman:
 'Make haste, and take the apparel
 and the horse, as thou hast said,
 and do even so to Mordecai the Jew,
 that sitteth at the king's gate; let
 nothing fail of all that thou hast
 spoken.'

Rav Fohrman: What's the reason why you reach for the one thing you can't have? So you can pretend that you have no restrictions. So you can pretend that you are king. The act of building the gallows for Mordechai is in effect the same thing as wanting to be king. It's wanting to be entirely unrestricted. So it's no wonder in the very next scene that Haman's obsession with being king simply can't be contained.

....There's a reason why you want it to all be yours. There's a subtle but precious prize here to be gotten. You know what's really in it for you? What's really in it for you is that if it's all yours, if you're really the owner of the garden, if you could really pretend you're king, then there's no distinction anymore between the two kinds of good; between good in the sense of

what I want, and good in the sense of the way things should be.

Source 23: Megilat Esther Ch. 7

ח וְהַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁב מִגִּנַּת הַבַּיִתן אֶל-בַּיִת מִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן, וְהָמוֹן נָפַל עַל-הַמֶּטֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶסְתֵּר עָלֶיהָ, וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ, הֲגַם לְכַבּוֹשׁ אֶת-הַמְּלָכָה עִמִּי בַּבַּיִת; הַדָּבָר, יֵצֵא מִפִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ, וַיִּכְסֵי הָמוֹן, חָפוּ.

8 Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the couch whereon Esther was. Then said the king: 'Will he even force the queen before me in the house?' As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

ט וַיֹּאמֶר חַרְבוֹנָה אֶחָד מִן-הַסְּרִיסִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, גַּם הִנֵּה-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה הָמוֹן לְמַרְדְּכַי אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר-טוֹב עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ עִמָּד בַּבַּיִת הָמוֹן--גְּבֵה, חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה; וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ, תִּלְהוּ עָלָיו.

9 Then said Harbonah, one of the chamberlains that were before the king: 'Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman hath made for Mordecai, who spoke good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman.' And the king said: 'Hang him thereon.'

R. Fohrman's Audacious Suggestion

Rewinding to the Beginning of the Megilah:

Source 24: Esther Ch. 2

א אַחֲרַי, הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, כְּשֶׁדָּ, חֲמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶחְשׂוּרוֹשׁ--זָכַר אֶת-וַשְׁתִּי וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂתָה, וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר-נִגְזַר עָלֶיהָ.

1 After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was assuaged, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.

ב וַיֹּאמְרוּ נְעָרֵי-הַמֶּלֶךְ, מִשְׁרָתָיו : יִבְקָשׁוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ נְעָרוֹת בְּתוּלוֹת, טוֹבוֹת מֵרְאָה. 2 Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him: 'Let there be sought for the king young virgins fair to look on;

ג וַיִּפְקֹד הַמֶּלֶךְ פְּקִידִים, בְּכָל-מְדִינֹת מַלְכוּתוֹ, וַיִּקְבְּצוּ אֶת-כָּל-נְעָרָה-בְּתוּלָה טוֹבַת מֵרְאָה אֶל-שׁוּשַׁן הַבֵּיָרָה אֶל-בַּיִת הַנָּשִׁים, אֶל-הַגָּא סְרִיס הַמֶּלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר הַנָּשִׁים ; וַנָּתוּן, תַּמְרִקִּיהוּ. 3 and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the castle, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hegai the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their ointments be given them;

ד וְהַנְּעָרָה, אֲשֶׁר תִּיטֵב בְּעֵינַי הַמֶּלֶךְ--תִּמְלֹךְ, תַּחַת וְשָׂתִי ; וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינַי הַמֶּלֶךְ, וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן. {ס} 4 and let the maiden that pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti.' And the thing pleased the king; and he did so. {S}

טז וַתִּלְקַח אֶסְתֵּר אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ, אֶל-בַּיִת מַלְכוּתוֹ, בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָעֲשִׂירִי, הוּא-חֹדֶשׁ טֵבֶת--בְּשָׁנַת-שֶׁבַע, לְמַלְכוּתוֹ. 16 So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

יז וַיֶּאֱהָב הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-אֶסְתֵּר מִכָּל-הַנָּשִׁים, וַתִּשָּׂא-חֹן וְחֶסֶד לְפָנָיו מִכָּל-הַבְּתוּלוֹת ; וַיִּשֶׂם כֶּתֶר-מַלְכוּת בְּרֹאשָׁהּ, וַיִּמְלִיכָהּ תַּחַת וְשָׂתִי. 17 And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour 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.

יח וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁתֶּה גְדוֹל, לְכָל-שָׂרָיו וְעַבְדָּיו--אֵת, מִשְׁתֶּה אֶסְתֵּר; וְהִנָּחָה לַמְּדִינֹת עֲשָׂה, וַיִּתֵּן מִשְׂאֵת פִּיֵּד 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.

Q: What has happened here? What were the chances (for the Jewish people) that Esther would be selected? Who “made” this match?

It was necessary, since it was not good for the King to be alone!

In describing the procedure leading up to the selection:

יד בַּעֲרֵב הָיָא בָּאָה, וּבִבְקָר הָיָא שָׁבָה אֶל-בֵּית הַנְּשִׁים שְׁנִי, אֶל-יָד שְׁעֵשְׂגָז סָרִיס הַמֶּלֶךְ, שֹׁמֵר הַפְּיֻלְגָּשִׁים: לֹא-תָבוֹא עוֹד אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ, כִּי אִם-חֹפֶץ בָּהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְנִקְרְאָה בְּשֵׁם.

14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, who kept the concubines; **she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and she were called by name.**

Source 25: Bereishit Ch. 5

יח וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, לֹא-טוֹב הָיֹתָ הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ; אֶעֱשֶׂה-לוֹ עֵזֶר, כְּנֶגְדּוֹ.

18 And the LORD God said: 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.'

יט וַיִּצְרַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן-הָאָדָמָה, כָּל-חַיֵּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת כָּל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם, וַיָּבֵא אֶל-הָאָדָם, לְרְאוֹת מֶה-יִקְרָא-לוֹ;

19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them; and whatsoever

וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא-לוֹ הָאָדָם נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, הוּא שְׁמוֹ. the man would call every living creature, that was to be the name thereof.

כ וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁמוֹת, לְכָל-הַבְּהֵמָה וְלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְלִכְלָל, חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה; וְלָאָדָם, לֹא-מָצָא עֹזֵר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ. **20** And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him.

כא וַיִּפֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים תְּרִדְמָה עַל-הָאָדָם, וַיִּישָׁן; וַיִּקַּח, אֶחָת מִצִּלְעֹתָיו, וַיִּסְגֹר בָּבֶשֶׂר, תַּחַתְּנָה. **21** And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the place with flesh instead thereof.

כב וַיִּבֶן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַצֶּלַע אֲשֶׁר-לָקַח מִן-הָאָדָם, לְאִשָּׁה; וַיְבָאָהּ, אֶל-הָאָדָם. **22** And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from the man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man.

כג וַיֹּאמֶר, הָאָדָם, זֹאת הַפֶּעַם עֵצָם מֵעַצְמִי, וּבֶשֶׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי; לְזֹאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה, כִּי מֵאִישׁ לָקַחָהּ-זֹאת. **23** And the man said: 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'

Chava/Eve is created....life is unrestricted...but...both she and Adam cannot partake of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge...

Source 26: Megilat Esther Ch. 2

י לֹא-הִגִּידָה אֶסְתֵּר, אֶת-עַמָּהּ וְאֶת-מוֹלַדְתָּהּ: כִּי מְרַדְכַי 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.

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

Compare with the language of Bereishit Ch. 2

טז וַיִּצַו יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, עַל-
הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר: מִכָּל עֵץ-הַגָּן,
אָכַל תֹּאכַל. 16 And the LORD God commanded
the man, saying: 'Of every tree of the
garden thou mayest freely eat;

So Mordechai is sort of playing the equivalent of Hashem's role in commanding Esther about forbidden knowledge...Take a look at this language parallel:

Source 27: Megilat Esther Ch. 2

יא וּבְכָל-יוֹם וְיוֹם--מְרֻדְכַי
מִתְהַלֵּךְ, לִפְנֵי חֲצַר בַּיִת-
הַנְּשִׂים: לְדַעַת אֶת-שְׁלוֹם אֶסְתֵּר,
וּמַה-יַּעֲשֶׂה 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.

Rav Fohrman: Mithalech is a Hitpa'el form of walk, and it's a very unusual form to describe a person walking. What it sort of means, that he took himself for a walk. This is the last time the word Mithalech is ever used in the Hebrew Bible. You know when the first time it's used is?

Source 28: Bereishit Ch. 3

ח וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה
אֱלֹהִים, מִתְהַלֵּךְ בַּגֶּן--לְרוּחַ
הַיּוֹם; וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם
וְאִשְׁתּוֹ, מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים,
בְּתוֹךְ, עֵץ הַגָּן. 8 And they heard the voice of the LORD
God walking in the garden toward the
cool of the day; and the man and his wife
hid themselves from the presence of the
LORD God amongst the trees of the
garden.

But the Megilah is famous for ונהפוך הוא – it's Topsy-Turvy!

Source 29: Megilat Esther Ch. 4

ח וְאֶת-פִּתְשָׁגֹן כְּתַב-הַדָּת
 אֲשֶׁר-נָתַן בְּשׁוּשָׁן לְהַשְׁמִידם,
 נָתַן לוֹ--לְהִרְאוֹת אֶת-
 אֶסְתֵּר, וּלְהַגִּיד לָהּ; וּלְצַוֹת
 עָלֶיהָ, לָבוֹא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ
 לְהִתְחַנֵּן-לוֹ וּלְבַקֵּשׁ מִלְּפָנָיו--
 עַל-עַמָּהּ. 8 Also he gave him the copy of the
 writing of the decree that was given out
 in Shushan to destroy them, to show it
 unto Esther, and to declare it unto her;
 and to charge her that she should go in
 unto the king, to make supplication
 unto him, and to make request before
 him, for her people.

Esther: The act of conveying that forbidden knowledge will lead to my death!

יא כָּל-עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְעַם-מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ
 יָדְעִים, אֲשֶׁר כָּל-אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר
 יָבוֹא-אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-הַחֲצַר הַפְּנִימִית,
 אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִקְרָא אַחַת דָּתוֹ לְהָמִית,
 לְבַד מֵאֲשֶׁר יוֹשִׁיט-לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-
 שֵׁרְבִיט הַזָּהָב, וְחָיָה; וְאֲנִי, לֹא
 נִקְרָאתִי לָבוֹא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ--זֶה,
 שְׁלוֹשִׁים יוֹם. 11 'All the king's servants, and the people
 of the king's provinces, do know, that
 whosoever, whether man or woman, **shall
 come unto the king into the inner court,
 who is not called, there is one law for
 him, that he be put to death**, except such
 to whom the king shall hold out the golden
 sceptre, that he may live; but I have not
 been called to come in unto the king these
 thirty days.'

Mordechai: Now it's the opposite:

יד כִּי אִם-הִחַרְשׁ
 תַּחֲרִישִׁי, בְּעֵת הַזֹּאת--רוּחַ
 וְהַצִּלָּה יַעֲמוּד לְיְהוּדִים
 מִמְּקוֹם אַחֵר, וְאֶת וּבֵית-
 אָבִיךָ תֵּאבְדוּ; וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ--
 אִם-לָעַת כָּזֹאת, הִגַּעַת
 לְמַלְכוּת. 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?'

One more הוא הפוך :

טו וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר, לְהָשִׁיב אֵל-
מֶרְדֳּכָי. **15** Then Esther bade them return answer
unto Mordecai:

טז לֵךְ כְּנוֹס אֶת-כָּל-הַיְהוּדִים
הַנִּמְצְאִים בְּשׁוּשָׁן, וְצוּמוּ עָלַי וְאֶל-
תֹּאכְלוּ וְאֶל-תִּשְׁתּוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים לִילָה
וַיּוֹם--גַּם-אֲנִי וְנַעֲרֹתַי, אֲצוּם כֵּן; וּבְכֵן
אָבוֹא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-כַדָּת,
וְכִאֲשֶׁר אֲבִדְתִּי, אֲבִדְתִּי. **16** 'Go, gather together all the Jews that are
present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and
neither eat nor drink three days, night or
day; I also and my maidens will fast in like
manner; and so will I go in unto the king,
which is not according to the law; and if I
perish, I perish.'

יז וַיַּעֲבֹר, מֶרְדֳּכָי; וַיַּעַשׂ, כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-
צִוְתָהּ עָלָיו אֶסְתֵּר. **17** So Mordecai went his way, and did
according to all that Esther had
commanded him.

Rav Fohrman: Way back in the Garden, Eve gave Adam that fruit and the results were disastrous, now you need to find a way to give him the forbidden knowledge in order to avert a disaster. If she finds a way to accomplish this task she will redeem that original tree of knowledge story, she will go through the exact same act that Eve did when she gave the forbidden fruit to Adam. Using the medium of food, and just like Eve at a banquet, she's going to give knowledge that's very, very dangerous to her. She's going to impart this knowledge to her husband. Except that act, instead of being destructive, will be the most compassionate, saving thing in the world. It will not kill, it will save us all.

Source 30: Esther Ch. 5

- ג וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ, מִה-לָּךְ אֶסְתֵּר
הַמַּלְכָּה; וּמִה-בְּקִשְׁתְּךָ עַד-חֲצֵי הַמְּלָכוֹת,
וַיִּנָּתֶן לָךְ. 3 Then said the king unto her: 'What wilt
thou, queen Esther? for whatever thy
request, even to the half of the kingdom, it
shall be given thee.'
- ד וַתֹּאמֶר אֶסְתֵּר, אִם-עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב--
יָבוֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמָן הַיּוֹם, אֶל-הַמִּשְׁתֶּה
אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂיתִי לוֹ. 4 And Esther said: 'If it seem good unto
the king, let the king and Haman come
this day unto the banquet that I have
prepared for him.'
- ה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ--מִהֲרוּ אֶת-הַמֶּן, לַעֲשׂוֹת
אֶת-דְּבַר אֶסְתֵּר; וַיָּבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמָן, אֶל-
הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר-עָשְׂתָה אֶסְתֵּר. 5 Then the king said: 'Cause Haman to
make haste, that it may be done as
Esther hath said.' So the king and Haman
came to the banquet that Esther had
prepared.
- ו וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר בְּמִשְׁתֶּה הַיַּיִן,
מִה-שְּׂאֵלְתְּךָ וַיִּנָּתֶן לָךְ; וּמִה-בְּקִשְׁתְּךָ עַד-
חֲצֵי הַמְּלָכוֹת, וְתַעֲשׂ. 6 And the king said unto Esther at the
banquet of wine: 'Whatever thy petition,
it shall be granted thee; and whatever
thy request, even to the half of the
kingdom, it shall be performed.'
- ז וַתַּעַן אֶסְתֵּר, וַתֹּאמֶר: שְׂאֵלְתִּי,
וּבְקִשְׁתִּי. 7 Then answered Esther, and said: 'My
petition and my request is--
- ח אִם-מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְאִם-עַל-
הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב, לָתֵת אֶת-שְׂאֵלְתִּי, וְלַעֲשׂוֹת
אֶת-בְּקִשְׁתִּי--יָבוֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמָן, אֶל-
הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה לָהֶם, וּמָחָר אֶעֱשֶׂה,
כַּדְּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ. 8 if I have found favour in the sight of
the king, and if it please the king to
grant my petition, and to perform my
request--let the king and Haman come to
the banquet that I shall prepare for them,
and I will do to-morrow as the king hath
said.'

Source 31: Esther Ch. 7 – Esther gives the King the Forbidden Knowledge!

- א וַיָּבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהָמָן, לְשִׁתּוֹת עִם-אַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה.** 1 So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen.
- ב וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר גַּם בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי, בְּמִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן--מִה-שְּׂאֵלְתֶךָ אַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה, וְתִנָּתֶן לְךָ; וּמִה-בְּקִשְׁתֶּךָ עַד-חֲצֵי הַמַּלְכוּת, וְתַעֲשֶׂה.** 2 And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine: 'Whatever thy petition, queen Esther, it shall be granted thee; and whatever thy request, even to the half of the kingdom, it shall be performed.'
- ג וַתַּעַן אַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה, וַתֹּאמֶר--אִם-מָצָאתִי חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְאִם-עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב: תִּנָּתֶן-לִי נַפְשִׁי בְּשִׂאֵלְתִּי, וְעַמִּי בְּבִקְשָׁתִּי.** 3 Then Esther the queen answered and said: 'If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request;
- ד כִּי נִמְכַּרְנוּ אֲנִי וְעַמִּי, לְהִשָּׁמִיד לְהָרוּג וּלְאֵבֶד; וְאֵלּוּ לְעֲבָדִים וּלְשִׁפְחוֹת נִמְכַּרְנוּ, הֲחָרַשְׁתִּי--כִּי אֵין הַצָּר שׁוֹה, בְּנֹזֵק הַמֶּלֶךְ. {ס}** 4 for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my peace, for the adversary is not worthy that the king be endamaged.' {S}
- ה וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוּשׁ, וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה: מִי הוּא זֶה וְאֵי-זֶה הוּא, אֲשֶׁר-מָלְאוּ לְבוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן.** 5 Then spoke the king Ahasuerus and said unto Esther the queen: 'Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?'
- ו וַתֹּאמֶר אַסְתֵּר--אִישׁ צָר וְאוֹיֵב, הָמָן הָרָע הַזֶּה; וְהָמָן נִבְעַת, מִלְּפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמַּלְכָּה.** 6 And Esther said: 'An adversary and an enemy, even this wicked Haman.' Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

Q: Where does the decree against the Jews stand at this point in the story?

Source 32: Esther Ch. 8

ד וַיּוֹשֶׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר, אֵת
שָׂרְבֵט הַזָּהָב; וַתִּקָּם אֶסְתֵּר,
וַתַּעֲמֵד לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ.

4 Then the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre. So Esther arose, and stood before the king.

ה וַתֹּאמֶר אִם-עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב
וְאִם-מִצְּאֵתִי חוֹן לִפְנֵי, וְכֹשֶׁר
הַדָּבָר לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְטוֹבָה אֲנִי,
בְּעֵינָיו--יִכְתֹּב לְהִשִּׁיב אֶת-
הַסְּפָרִים, מִחֲשַׁבֵּת הַמֶּן בֶּן-
הַמֶּדְתָּא הָאֲגָגִי, אֲשֶׁר כָּתַב לְאַבְד
אֶת-הַיְהוּדִים, אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל-מְדִינֹת
הַמֶּלֶךְ.

5 And she said: 'If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, **and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes**, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews that are in all the king's provinces;

ו כִּי אֵיכָכָה אוֹכֵל, וְרֵאִיתִי,
בְּרָעָה, אֲשֶׁר-יִמְצָא אֶת-עַמִּי;
וְאֵיכָכָה אוֹכֵל וְרֵאִיתִי, בְּאַבְדּוֹן
מוֹלְדֹתַי. {ס}

6 for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?' {S}

Rav Fohrman: ...once she reveals the truth, I'm from the lowest of the low, the dregs of society, and now look me in the eye king, do you still love me? If you look at me – v'tovah ani b'ainav – and I am still good in your eyes. If you still care for me as indeed you must, because you killed Haman and you preserved me, then I'm going to extend this argument and use it to have you recognize not just my humanity but the humanity of my people. In effect, she's really taking him to the following place: If you've accepted my identity, if it is my humanity that you were willing to accept despite my being one of them, then whether you like it or not, you have to tolerate and accept them as basic human beings too. You have to keep them alive. Save my people.

It's at that moment that Esther finally redeems the story of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. She has found a way to convey forbidden knowledge, dangerous knowledge, knowledge that by rights should kill her, to her husband, and has found a way to bring moral clarity to his vision.

Source 33: Rabbi S. Benyosef, *The Light of Ephraim*, p. 339

If she behaves in an antagonistic way, she is giving him the chance to rectify his character defects. The fact that they are together means that God entrusted the two of them with a *tikkun* (completion) that they can bring to fruition only when they are together, a job that he can do only with her.

Source 34: Jonathan Rosenblum, "In Praise of Marriage" from *Jerusalem Post*, March 27, 2009

In Jewish thought, the purpose of life is to subject one's screaming id ("I want") to a higher command ("I should"). Marriage, in that view, is the best school for self-improvement, for it cannot work unless one is prepared to take account of another's needs and desires. The Torah describes one's spouse as an "ezer k'negdo" – both as a helpmate and in opposition. Sometimes the greatest help is that oppositional element.