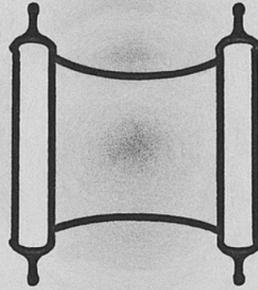


בס"ד

Reb Meir of Premishlan

Divrie Meir

Purim



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In the Piyyut after Megillat Esther, "Shoshanat Yaakov rejoiced and was glad when they saw together the Techelet of Mordechai." And it is difficult—why was Techelet singled out from the rest? After all, Mordechai went out in royal garments of Techelet and white, and a great golden crown, etc. (Esther 8:15).

בפיוט אחריו מגלת אסתר "שושנת יעקב צהלה ושמחה בראותם יחד תכלת מרדכי". וקשה למה הוציא תכלת לבד מהכלל, הלא מרדכי יצא בלבוש מלכות תכלת וחור ועטרת זהב גדולה וכו' (אסתר ת, טו).

Furthermore, was "Techelet of Mordechai" referring to royal garments? Rather, Rabbi Meir of Premishlan explained that when the entire multitude in the street looked at Mordechai riding on the horse and clothed in royal garments, there was a dispute between the common people and the Jews. Some said that Haman was riding the horse, and others said that it was Mordechai.

ועוד, האם "תכלת מרדכי" הנה, הלא הוא לבוש מלכות. ותרגו ורבי מאיר מפרמישלאן פי באשר הביטו כל המון מרחוב על מרדכי רוכב על הסוס ולבוש בלבוש מלכות, הנה פלוגתא בין אנשי עמי הארץ ובני ישראל. הם אומרים פי המן רוכב על הסוס, והם אומרים פי מרדכי הוא.

The Jews brought strong proof, and they rejoiced greatly when he came closer, and they saw the "Techelet of Mordechai"—specifically, his Tzitzit. Then, "Shoshanat Yaakov rejoiced and was glad," for they knew with certainty that it was Mordechai.

והביאו ישראל ראיה חזקה ושחזו מאד באשר נתקרב אליהם מעט וראו "תכלת מרדכי" דוקא – הם הציצית. אז "שושנת יעקב צהלה ושמחה", פי ידעו בטח פי מרדכי הוא.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan explains a puzzling line in the post-Megillah Piyyut: "Shoshanat Yaakov rejoiced... when they saw together the Techelet of Mordechai." Why does the poem highlight only the *Techelet* (blue) when Mordechai was wearing full royal garments? He reveals that during Mordechai's royal procession, a dispute broke out in the crowd—some claimed it was Haman parading, others insisted it was Mordechai. The decisive proof came when the Jews glimpsed the *Techelet*—not the royal robes, but the *Tzitzit* of Mordechai, his distinct Jewish identity. This *Techelet* confirmed beyond doubt that the rider was truly Mordechai, leading to their elated rejoicing.

Practical Takeaway

In moments of confusion and uncertainty, the sign of Jewish fidelity—the mitzvah observance, like *Tzitzit*—becomes the clearest marker of truth. Royal garments may deceive, but the eternal signs of Torah allegiance cut through the fog. One's commitment to mitzvos, even when disguised in worldly garments, is the most authentic proof of who they really are.

Chassidic Story

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, known for his divine vision and uncanny perception, once pointed out a man in the marketplace dressed as a soldier and whispered, "That one—he has not forgotten his *Techelet*." When asked what he meant, he explained, "Though he appears fully immersed in the secular world, his *Tzitzit* are still on

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beneath the uniform. You'll see." Indeed, days later, the man returned in civilian clothes, tearfully revealing he had clung to his *Tzitzit* throughout his years in the army, hidden but never removed. **END NOTE]**

"For Mordechai the Jew was second to King Achashverosh, great among the Jews, and accepted by most of his brethren" (Esther 10:3). And the Sages expounded (Megillah 16b): "'By most of his brethren'—but not all his brethren, for part of the Sanhedrin distanced themselves from him."

פי מרדכי היהודי משנה למלך אחשורוש וגדול ליהודים ורצוי לרב אחיו" (אסתר י, ג). ודרשו תנ"ל (מגילה טז:): "'לרב אחיו' ולא לכל אחיו, שפרשו ממנו מקצת סנהדרין."

I heard from my teacher and master, Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, an interpretation: that the phrase "Mordechai the Jew was second (Mishneh)" has two meanings. One is from the term "Mishneh" as in "the chariot of the second-in-command" (Genesis 41:43), referring to his position as second to King Achashverosh.

שמעתי ממורי ורבי רבי מאיר מפרימישלאן לפרש כי "מרדכי היהודי משנה" פרוש שנהיה בשני אפנים, מלשון "מרפכת המשנה" (בראשית מא, מג), "למלך" ו"אחשורוש".

And "great among the Jews" refers to his status as one close to royalty, with all affairs of the kingdom decided through him. And yet, he was also "great among the Jews" in the sense that he was the foremost among the Sanhedrin.

וגדול ליהודים" שנהיה קרוב למלכות וכל עסקי המדינה היו נתמכין על פיו, וגדול ליהודים שנהיה מבחר שבסנהדרין.

Despite being close to the monarchy, he did not, God forbid, fall from his spiritual level, and he remained "great among the Jews."

ואף על פי שנהיה קרוב למלכות, עם כל זה לא נפל חס ושלום ממדרגתו ונהיה גדול ליהודים

"Accepted by most of his brethren" can be understood from the term "Rav and ruler," meaning that only the great ones among them understood that despite his proximity to the monarchy and his handling of all state affairs, and his fluency in all languages, he remained the foremost of the Sanhedrin.

ורצוי לרב אחיו" מלשון "רב ושלט", רצה לומר שרק הגדולים היו מבינים שאף על פי שהוא קרוב למלכות וכל עסקי המדינה היו נעשים על ידו, ונהיה יודע בכל הלשונות, הנה מבחר שבסנהדרין

"But not all his brethren"—because the common people assumed that since he was close to the monarchy, he must have, God forbid, fallen from his spiritual level. Therefore, he was accepted only by "most of his brethren," meaning the great ones among them.

ולא לכל אחיו", פי האנשים הפשוטים סברו כיון ששהוא קרוב למלכות, בודאי חס ושלום נפל ממדרגתו, ועל פן הנה רצוי "לרב אחיו", הנה להגדולים שבהם

[FOOT NOTE: "It is further stated in his name: 'For Mordechai the Jew was second to the king... and great among the Jews.' He said, may his memory be a blessing, that the lesser members of the Sanhedrin did not understand that this was a great virtue—to save Jewish lives. Mordechai risked his own life and refrained from studying as before; instead, he drew close to the king for the sake of saving Israel. Therefore, some of the Sanhedrin distanced themselves from him, arguing that since he was close to the monarchy, he could no longer engage in Torah study and divine service as before.

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But the great members of the Sanhedrin understood that this was an even greater virtue. This is the meaning of 'For Mordechai the Jew was second'—he embodied two aspects: 'to King Achashverosh' and yet 'great among the Jews.' The great ones of the Sanhedrin recognized that this was even greater than if he had studied Torah day and night. Therefore, 'and accepted by most of his brethren' refers to the great ones. But the lesser members of the Sanhedrin did not comprehend this, which is why the Gemara expounds: 'but not all his brethren.'

However, in truth, it is a tremendously lofty level to sacrifice oneself completely, in every way, for the sake of the collective Jewish people.” **END FN]**

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan offers a layered interpretation of the verse: *"For Mordechai the Jew was second to King Achashverosh, great among the Jews, and accepted by most of his brethren"* (Esther 10:3). The word *"Mishneh"* (second) is understood not only as a political title—second to the king—but also to mean that Mordechai lived a *double identity*: a royal figure in the palace, yet simultaneously the foremost sage in the Sanhedrin. His greatness among the Jews was not just political influence but spiritual excellence, guiding halachic decisions even while navigating royal affairs. However, not everyone saw this duality. The “great ones” recognized his unwavering sanctity, but the common people suspected his proximity to power had spiritually compromised him. Thus, he was accepted by “most” of his brethren—those spiritually discerning enough to see that his elevation in the secular world had not dulled his holiness.

Practical Takeaway

Being involved in worldly matters—government, leadership, or influence—does not inherently compromise spiritual integrity. One can be immersed in royal chambers and still remain a tzaddik of the Sanhedrin. But it requires inner strength and clarity. Don't judge spiritual depth by outward involvement; true greatness may be hidden beneath royal robes.

Chassidic Story

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan was once approached by a wealthy Jewish official who served in the court of a non-Jewish governor. The man was torn: “Have I sold my soul?” Rabbi Meir replied, “Mordechai sat at the king’s gate and never lost himself. Not because of where he sat, but because of Who sat within him.” The man wept. Rabbi Meir continued, “So long as you remember Who you serve, no throne in the world can sway you.” That official went on to discreetly support hidden Torah schools in the region—royal on the outside, righteous on the inside. (Source: Sippurei Tzaddikim, Premishlan section) **END NOTE]**

The holy Rabbi Meir of Premishlan, of blessed memory, said: Behold, Saul sinned by not killing Agag and having mercy on him. Because of his mercy, Haman was born and caused suffering to Israel.

אמר הרב הקדוש רבי מאירל מפרמישלאן ז"ל,
והנה שאול חטא במה שלא הרג את אגג ותמל עליו,
ובתקלתו נולד המן והצר לישראל.

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Esther, the granddaughter of Saul, had the task of rectifying her ancestor's sin—to save Israel and destroy the enemy who tormented them.

ואַסְתֵּר נִכְדַּת שְׂאוּל, עָלֶיהָ הָיָה מִטָּל לְתַגּוֹן חַטָּא וְזַמְנָה, לְהַצִּיל אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל וּלְהַשְׁמִיד הַצָּר הַצּוֹרֵר.

Furthermore, the Sages (Zohar III, 276) said that Esther would send forth a spirit in her place, resembling her, when she was to be with the king.

וְגַם אָמְרוּ חַז"ל (זוה"ק ח"ג רעו.) "כִּי אֶסְתֵּר שְׁלָחָה לְאַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ שְׂדָה בְּמִקוֹמָהּ, שֶׁהִיְתָה דוֹמָה לָהּ." לְהַתְיַחַד עִם הַמֶּלֶךְ.

This is what Mordechai told Esther: Even though you usually send a substitute, "Do not think in your soul"—do not send only a likeness of yourself.

וְזֶה שֶׁאָמַר מְרַדְּכַי לְאַסְתֵּר, כִּי אַף שֶׁתְּמִיד אַתְּ שוֹלַחַת בְּמִקוֹמָהּ שְׂדָה וְדַמְיוֹן, עַכְשָׁו "אַל תִּדְמִי בְּנַפְשֶׁךְ"—אַל תִּשְׁלַחִי אֶלָּיו דַּמְיוֹן בְּנַפְשֶׁךְ.

"For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place"—another angelic force will bring salvation. But "you and your father's house", meaning Saul, your ancestor, who delayed in dealing with this matter, will be lost.

כִּי אִם הַחֲרָשׁ תִּתְחַרְשִׁי בְּעֵת הַזֹּאת רוּחַ וְהַצִּלָּה יֵצְמוּד לְיִהוּדִים מִמְּקוֹם אַחֵר—"הוּא הַמְטָרָא אַתְרָא וְהַשְׂדָּה הִיא תִּסְבֵּב רוּחַ וְהַצִּלָּה לְיִהוּדִים. וְ**אֵת וּבֵית אֲבִיךָ"—הוּא שְׂאוּל אָבִי זַמְנָה שֶׁהִמְתִּין עַל **וְהָ." תִּאֲבָדוּ

Until here are his words, and they are the words of the wise.

עַד כָּאן לְשׁוֹנוֹ, וְדַבְרֵי פִי חֲכָם חָן.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Meir of Premishlan illuminates the deeper message behind Mordechai's rebuke to Esther: *"Do not think in your soul to escape in the king's house..."* (Esther 4:13–14). He explains that Esther, as the descendant of King Saul, bore the responsibility to rectify his failure—Saul's misplaced mercy on Agag, which allowed Haman to be born. Esther's confrontation with Haman thus became a spiritual correction of that original sin. Additionally, the Zohar teaches that Esther often avoided physical defilement by sending a spiritual substitute—a likeness of herself—to Achashverosh. But now, Mordechai urged her: *"Do not think in your soul"*—don't rely on a substitute this time. The danger is real, the mission is yours. If she remained passive, Hashem would send salvation through other means—but she and her ancestral merit would be lost. In other words, if she failed to act, she would forfeit the very opportunity to repair her royal lineage.

Practical Takeaway

There are moments in life when only *you* can act. Delegation, delay, or detachment may have worked in the past, but certain missions are tailor-made for your soul. Avoidance is not humility—it may be evasion. When destiny calls, especially to correct ancestral or personal failings, you must step forward. No substitute can do what only you were born to fix.

Chassidic Story

One Purim, Rabbi Meir of Premishlan saw a man avoiding the reading of the Megillah, claiming, "Others will fulfill it on my behalf." Rabbi Meir gently rebuked him: "There are mitzvos others *can* do for you, and there

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are those Hashem wrote your name on. Esther almost sent someone else. What would have happened if she had?" The man trembled, ran back into the shul, and stood with tears in his eyes for the reading. "That," said Rabbi Meir later, "was *his* day to rise like Esther." **END NOTE]**