IS GENDER INEQUALITY A BIBLICAL MANDATE



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1. The Garden of Eden

Ha-adam:

ויברא אלהים את <u>האדם</u> בצלמו <u>בצלם אלהים</u> ברא אותו זכר ונקבה ברא אותם : ויברך אותם אלהים ויאמר להם אלהים <u>פרו ורבו</u> ומלאו את הארץ <u>וכבשוה</u>...

God created Ha-adam in His image, in the <u>image of God</u>... male and female did He create them. God blessed them, God said to them: "Be fruitful and increase, fill the earth and conquer it ...

Ha-ishah

וַיָּבֶּן ה' אֱלֹהַיִם| אֱתיהַצֵּלֶע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִרְהָאָדֶם לָ<u>אשֵׁה</u> וַיְבָאֶהָ אֶל־הָאָדֵם :...וַיּאֹמֶר הָאָדָם וְאֹת הַפַּּעַם אֶצֶם מֵעֲצָמַי וּבָשֶׂר מִבְּשָׁרֶי לְזֹאת יִקְּרָא אִשָּׁה <u>כִּי מאָישׁ לַסֵחָה־ זֹּאת</u> : עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזָב־אִישׁ אֶת־אָבֶיו וְאָת־ אִמֶּוֹ וְדָבַק בָּאשִׁתֹּוֹ וְהָיָוּ לְבָשֵּׁר אֶחָד :

God... fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman; and He brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called Woman (ishah), for from man (ish) was she taken." Hence a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, so that they become one flesh.

Eating the fruit:

וּתַּקָח מִפְּרְיֻוֹ וַתּאֹכֵל וַתְּשֻׁ בְּטוֹב ּ הָעֵּץ לְמַאֲכָּל וְכִי תַאֲוָה־הָוּא לָעינִים... וַתַּקַח מִפְּרְיֻוֹ וַתּאֹכֵל וַתְּשֹׁךְ גָּם־לְאִישֶׁהּ עְמֶּהּ עָמֶהּ וַנִּאֹבֶל: וַיֹּאֹמֶר ה' אֱלֹהֶים לָאִשֶּׁה <u>מה־זְּאֹת עֲשֵׁית</u>... בְּעֶצֶב תַּלְדִי בָנִים וְאָל אִישֵׁדְּ תְּשׁוּקְתַדְּ וְהוּא יִמְשָׁל בּדִּ:

The woman <u>saw</u> that the tree was good for eating and a <u>delight to the eyes</u>... she <u>took</u> from its fruit and ate... God said to the woman, "<u>What is this that you have done</u>... in pain shall you bear children. And your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Havvah:

ויקרא האדם שם אשתו חוה כי היא היתה אם כל חי:

The man named his wife Havvah, because she was the mother of all the living.

The expulsion:

: וַיִשַּׁלַחַהוּ יִהֹוָה אֱלֹהִים מִגַּן עֵדֶן לַעֲבֹד אֵת הָאַדָמָה אֲשֵׁר לְקַח מִשָּׁם

So the Lord God sent him off from the Garden of Eden...

2. "She is My Sister": Genesis 12

וְיָהִי רָעָב בָּאֶרֶץ וַיְּרֶדַ אַבְּרֶם מִצְרַיְמָה... וַיֹּאֹמֶר אֶל שְׂרֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ הָגַּה נָא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי <u>אַשְּׁה יְפַת מַרְאָה</u> אָתְּ: וְיָהָיָה בֵּייִרְאָוּ אֹתָדֹּ הַמִּצְרִים וְאָמֶרָוּ <u>אַשְׁתּוֹ</u> זָאת וְהָרְגוּ אֹתָי וְאֹתֶךְ יְחִיּוּ: וּלְאַבְרָם <u>הִיטִיב בּעֲבוּרָה</u> וַיְהִי לוֹ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת הַאשָּׁה כִּי יַפָּה הוא מָאד... וַתִּקּח הָאשָׁה בַּית בַּּרְעֹה: וּלְאַבְרָם הִיטִי<u>ב בּעֲבוּרָה</u> וַיְהִי לוֹ צאן וּבְּקָר וַחֲמֹרִים וַעְּבָּדִים וּשְׁכָּחֹת וַאֲתֹנֹת וּנְמַלִּים: וַיְּאַמֶּר הְנָגַע יְהֹוָה אֶת בַּּרְעֹה נְאָבְּרָם וְשְׁבָּחֹת וֹאָבְרָם וַיִּאֹמֶר וֹנְאַבְּרָם וַיִּאֹמֶר לִי עָשְׁתְּדְּ קְּח לְבְּרָם וִיִּאְמָת בְּיִלְה אָתְּהְ בְּיִלְם וֹיִאְמָת בְּיִלְה לְּאַבְּרָם וִיִּאְמָת בְּיִבְּיִם וּוְאָבְּרָם וֹיִאְבֶּרְם וַיִּאֹמֶר וְעַתָּה הְנֵּה אַשְּׁתְּדְּ קַח וְלֵּדְ... וְיִשְׁלְחוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶתְּ הָּנִי אֲשְׁתְּדְּ קְח וְלֵדְּ... וְיִשְׁלְחוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת הָּאַת הְיִּבְּר לוֹ:

There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt... he said to his wife, Sarai, "Now I know what a beautiful woman you are; when the Egyptians see you and say, 'This one is his wife,' they will kill me and let you live. Please say that you are my sister..." The Egyptians saw how very beautiful the woman was... and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And because of her... Abram acquired sheep, oxen... and camels. But the Lord afflicted

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Pharaoh and his household with mighty plagues on account of Sarai, the <u>wife</u> of Abraham. Pharaoh...said, "<u>What is this you have done to me!</u> Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her as my <u>wife</u>? Now, here is <u>your wife</u>; take her and begone!" And Pharaoh...<u>sent him</u> off with his wife and all that he possessed.

3. A "Beautiful" Man: Genesis 39

ְיִוֹסֵף <u>הוּרָד</u> מִצְרֻיִמָה וַיִּקְנָהוּ פּוֹטִיפַר ...מ<u>יּד</u> הַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִים... וַיִּפְּקְדֵהוּ עַל־בִּי<u>ת</u>וֹ וְכָל־יֶשׁ־לִוֹ נְתָּן בְּיִדְוֹ:... וַיְהִי יוֹמֵף יְוֹסֵף הוּרָדַ מִצְרֻיִמָה וַיִּקְבֹּהוּ פּוֹטִיפַר ...מיִד הַיִּשְׁמְעֵאלִים... וַיִּפְקְדֹהוּ שִׁכְּבָה עִמְּי: וְיִמְאוֹן וַיֹּאמֶּר אֶלִּצְשָׁת אֲשִׁא אֲשֶׁת־אֲדֹבָיו אָת־עִינֵיהְ אֶל־יוֹסֵף וְוֹםוֹ יִוֹם ... וַתִּתְפְּשֵּׂהוּ בְּבִגְּדָוֹ לֵאמָר שִׁרְבֶּה עִמֶּי שִׁרְבָּה עָמֶי וְיִבְּאוֹן וַיִּאמֹן שִׁבְּבָה עִמֶּי וְיִמְלוֹ הְשִׁבְבָּה עִמְּי בְּיִבְּבְּה עִמְי בְּבָּרָה עָמָי וְשָׁף אֹתוֹ וּיִם עָּה בְּבִּית הַסְּבָּר. וַנְיִּלְה וַיְיָבְס... וַתְּקְרָא לְאַבְּעֵּי בִיתָה ... בָּא אֵלֵי לִשְׁבַּב עִמִּי וְאָפְרָא בְּקוֹל גְּדְוֹל...וִיִּקּח הְטָּה בִּית הַסְּהַר.

Joseph was brought down to Egypt and Potiphar bought him... from the hand of the Ishmaelites... (Potiphar) appointed him over his house and gave everything he had into his hand... Joseph was beautiful and good looking... his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." He refused and said to his master's wife... "How can I..." She spoke to Joseph every day... she grabbed his garment saying, "lie with me." He left his garment in her hand and fled... She called her household staff and said... "he came to lie with me and I cried out loud"... Joseph's master placed him in the jail house... the officer of the jail house placed in Joseph's hand all the prisoners in the jail house...

4. A Tale of Two Beautiful Queens: Megillat Esther

Chapter 1

...פְּטָוֹב לֵב־הַפֶּלֶךְ בַּיֵּיֵן אָמַר... לְּהָבִיא אֶת־וַשְּׁתָּי הַמֵּלְכֶּה לְפְגֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּ<u>כְּתָר מַלְכֵּוּת</u> לְהַרְאוֹת הֲעֵמִים וְהַשְּׁרִים <u>אֲתִיפְנִהּ</u> כֵּי־ <u>טוֹבַת מַרְאָה</u> הֵיא : וַתְּמְאֵׁן הַמַּלְכֵּה וַשְּׁתִּי לֶבוֹאֹ... וַיְּאמֶר מְמִלְּרָ... לְא עֵל־הַפְּלֶּךְּ לְבִיּלְיִה וַשְּׁתִּי הַמַּלְבָּה כֵּי עַלֹּ בָּל־הַשְּׁרִים וְעַל־כָּל־הַעְמִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכְל־מְדִינְוֹת הַמֶּלֶדְ... בִּי־יֵצְא דְבַר־ הַמֵּלְכָּה לְּהַבְּלִיהְן בְּעְלֵיהֶן בְּעֵינִיהֶן... וְנִשְׁמַע פִּתְנָם הַמֶּלֶדְ... וְכַל־הַנְּשִׁים יְתְּנָוֹ יְקֶר לְבַעְלֵיהֶן כִּעִינִיהֶן... וְנִשְׁמַע פִּתְנָם הַמֶּלֶדְ... וְכַל־הַנְּשִׁים יִתְּנִוּ יְקָר לְבַעְלֵיהֶן כִּתְּיִבְּיִהְ מְבִּיְבְיֹים הְמָּלֶדְוֹל וְעָד־קַטֵּן:

...when the king was drunk he said... to bring Queen Vashti before the king wearing the crown, to show the nations and officers her beauty, for she was beautiful... Queen Vashti refused to come... Memuchan said... not only against the king has Vashti the queen done wrong, but also against all the officials and all the peoples in the provinces of the King Ahashverosh... when the queen's word goes out to all the women, they will despise their husbands... Let a royal edict be issued (in which)... all wives will treat their husbands with respect, high and low alike.

Chapter 2

ְוָיַפְלֵּד הַמֶּלֶךְ פְּקִידִיםֹ בְּכָל־מְדִינְוֹת מֵלְכוּתוֹ וְיִקְבְּצִוּ אֶת־כָּל־נ<u>ְעֲרֵה־בְּתוּלָה טוֹבַּת מְרְאָה</u>... וְהַנַּעֲרָה <u>יְפִתּ־</u> <u>תֹּאֵר וְטוֹבֵת מִרְאָה... וַתִּלָּקָח</u> אֶסְתֵּר... בָּעֶרֶבּוֹ הֵיא בָאָה וּבַבּּקֶר הֵיא שָׁבָּה אֶל־בֵּי<u>ת הַ</u>נָּשִׁים...שֹׁמֵר הַבֵּּילַגִּשִׁים...

Let the king appoint officers... and gather every good looking virgin maiden... and (Esther) was beautiful and good looking... and Esther was taken ... she would go in the evening she return in the morning to... the women's house... [to the] guardian of the concubines...

Chapter 3

נַיּרָא הָּלֶּו פִּי־אֵין מְרְדָּבַּׁי כּּרֵעַ וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לֵּוֹ וַיִּמְּלֵא הָמֶן חֵמֵה :... וַיְּאֹמֶר הָמֶל... יֶשְׁנְוֹ עַם־אֶחָׁד מְפַּוּּר וּמְפֹּרָד בֵּין הַעַּמִּים בְּּכָל מְדִינְוֹת מַלְכוּתֶךּ וְדָתִיהֶּם שׁנְוֹת מִכְּלֹעִׁם וְאֶת־דָּתֵי הַכֶּּ(לֶךְ אֵינָם עשִׁים וְלַמֶּלֶךְ אֵין־שׁוֶה לְהַנִּיחָם :

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Haman saw that Mordechai would not bow down to him and Haman was enraged... Haman said... "There is a certain people, scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your realm, whose laws are different from those of other people and who not obey the king's laws; and it is not in your majesty's interest to let them live."

Vashti/Esther	Joseph
לְהַרְאוֹת הָעַמִּים וְהַשָּׂרִים אֶת־יָפְיָּהּ בֵּי־ טוֹבָת	: וַיְהָי יוֹשַׁף יְפַה־תָּאַר וִיבָּה מַרְאֶה
: מַרְאֶה הֵיא	
וַתְּמָאֵן הַמַּלְבָּה וַשְׁתִּי	ןיְמֶאֶֿן וּ ַ
וְהַנַּעֲרָה (הדסה-אסתר) יְפַת־תֹּאַר וְטוֹבָת מַרְאֶה	ַויְהָי יוֹםֶׂף יְפַה־תָּאַר וִיבָּה מַרְאֶה :
	.,
ותלקח אסתר	וְיוֹסֵף הוּרַד מִצְרָיִמָּה
ַבָּעֶרֶבו הָיא בָאָה וּבַבּקֶר הַיא שָבָּה	וימאן
ויפקד המלך פקידים בכלמדינות מלכותו	יַגְשֶׂה פַרְעֹה וָיִפְקָד פָּקדִים עַל־הָאָבֶץ וַיִּקְבֵּצְ
<u>וִיקבּצוּ אֶת־כָּלִינְעֲרֶה־בְּתוּלָה טוֹבַת מַרְאֶה</u>	ָאֶת ^י בֶּל־אְׂכֶלו שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים `
כי כן ימלאו ימי מרוקיהו	פי כו ימלאו ימי החנטים

Joseph	Vashti/Esther
Joseph wasgood looking	To show her beauty, for she was good
	looking
He refused	Queen Vashti refused
Joseph was good looking	[Esther] was good looking
Joseph was brought down to Egypt	Esther was taken
He refused	She went in the evening and returned in the
	morning
Let Pharaoh appoint officers on the land	Let the king appoint officers throughout his
He gathered all the food	kingdom And gather every good looking
	virgin
so were completed the days of embalming	So were completed the days of perfuming

Chapter 4

<u>וּלְצְוּוֹת עֲלֶיהַ</u> לָבּוֹא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךּ לְהַתְחַנֶּן־לֶוֹ ... וַתִּאֹמֶר אֶסְתֵּר ... לֵדְּ בְּנוֹס אֶת־כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִּים... וְצְוּמוּ עָׁלֵי ...וַלַּצִשׂ בְּלֶל <u>אַשִּׁר־צוְתָה עַלִיו אֶסְתּר</u> :

<u>Mordechai commanded</u> [Esther] to go to the king and plead for her people... Esther ...responded..."Go, gather all the Jews... and fast for me... and I will go to the king..." and he did as <u>Esther commanded</u> him.

Chapters 7-8

וַתַּצון אֶסְתֵּר הַמֵּלְכָּהֹ... תִּנֶתֶרְלֵי נַפְשִׁל בִּשְׁאֵלְתִּי וְעַמֶּי בְּבַקְשָׁתֵי :כֵּי נִמְכּּרְנוּ אֲנֵי וְעַמִּי לְהַשְּׁמֶיד לַהְרְוֹג וּלְאַבֵּד וְאִלּוּ לַעֲבָדִּים וְלִשְׁבָּחוֹת נִמְכַּרְנוּ <u>הָחֵרְשִׁתִּי</u>... בַּיִּוֹם הַהוּא נָתַוֹ הַמֶּלֶדְ אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ לְאֶסְתֵּר הַמֵּלְכָּה אֶת־<u>בֵּית</u> הָמָן צֹרֵר היהודיים הַיְּהוּדֵים...

Queen Esther said, "let my life be granted as my wish and my people as my request. For we have been sold... to be destroyed, massacred and exterminated. Had we only been sold as bondmen... I would have <u>kept silent</u>... On that day the king Ahasuerus gave the <u>house</u> of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther...

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IS GENDER INEQUALITY A BIBLICAL MANDATE

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Chapter 10

ַוּתַּכְתֹּב אֶסְתֵּׁר הַפַּלְבָּח... וּמָרְדָּבִי הַיְּחוּדָי <u>אָת־כַּל־תִּקֶף</u>...לְקַזֵּם אֶת־יְמֵיּ הַפַּּרִים הָאֵלֶּח... וּמָרְדָּבִי הַיְּחוּדָי <u>אֶת־כַּל־תִּקֶף</u>...לְקַזֵּם אֶת־יְמֵיּ הַפַּּרִים הָאֵלֶּח וְוּלְתָּב בַּפַּפֶּר:

Queen Esther... and Mordecai the Jew <u>wrote a confirmation</u>... to uphold these days of Purim... and <u>Esther's ordinance</u> validating these observances of Purim was recorded on a scroll.

5. Song of Songs

בָּאתִי לְגַנִּיֹ אֲחֹתֵי כַלָּהֹ

I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride...(5:1)

דודי לי ואני לו

My beloved is mine and I am his (2:16)...

אני לדודי ועלי תשוקתו

I am my beloved's and his desire is for me (7:11)...

ָּהַיּוֹשֵׁבֶת בַּגַּנִּים חֲבֶרֵים מַקְשִׁיבֵים לִקוֹלֵךְ הַשְּׁמִיעֵינִי:

O you who dwell in gardens, a lover is listening. Let me hear your voice (8:13)...