

## Esther 7, 2-4

וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאַסְתֵּר גַּם בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי בְּמִשְׁתֵּה הַיַּיִן מִה־  
שְׂאֵלְתְּךָ אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וּתְנִתְּנִי לָךְ וְיִמָּה בְּקִשְׁתְּךָ עַד־חֲצִי  
הַמַּלְכוּת וְתַעֲשִׂי:

On the second day, the king again asked Esther at the wine feast, "What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."

וְתַעֲנֵן אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וְתֹאמֶר אִם־מִצְאֵתִי חֹן בְּעֵינֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ  
וְאִם־עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב תִּתְּנֵנִי לִי נַפְשִׁי בְּשְׂאֵלְתִי וְעַמִּי  
בְּבִקְשָׁתִי:

Queen Esther replied: "If Your Majesty will do me the favor, and if it pleases Your Majesty, let my life be granted me as my wish, and my people as my request.

כִּי נִמְכַרְנוּ אֲנִי וְעַמִּי לְהַשְׂמִיד  
לְהַרְגוֹ וּלְאַבֵּד וְאֵלּוּ לְעַבְדִּים  
וּלְשִׁפְחוֹת נִמְכַרְנוּ הַחַרְשָׁתִּי כִּי  
אֵין הַצָּר שְׁנָה בְּנֶזֶק הַמֶּלֶךְ: (ס)

For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, massacred, and exterminated. Had we only been sold as bondmen and bondwomen, I would have kept silent; for the adversary is not worthy of the king's trouble."

## In honor of International Women's Day

"Don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own."

–Michelle Obama

## "Hope" is the thing with feathers By Emily Dickinson

"Hope" is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul  
And sings the tune without the words  
And never stops at all

And sweetest in the Gale is heard  
And sore must be the storm  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm

I've heard it in the chilliest land  
And on the strangest Sea  
Yet never in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb of me.

## Thought Starters

The Book of Esther is one of two books in the Tanakh that don't explicitly mention God, what does that tell us about the agency with which we are forced to reckon in difficult circumstances?

When considering the idea of hope as an agent of strategy, how can we push against the narrative of hope as a nebulous feeling of simply wishing for a saviour or an unlikely outcome?

Even in positive circumstances, hope can be viewed as an unrealistic, perhaps even toxic, concept, putting it at odds with social constructs that reject willfulness as strength. What path is there for hope to be symbolic of strength rather than frivolity?

**Bring on the Rain**  
**Jo Dee Messina**

Another day has almost come and gone  
Can't imagine what else could go wrong  
Sometimes I'd like to hide away somewhere and lock the door  
A single battle lost but not the war

'Cause, tomorrow's another day  
And I'm thirsty anyway  
So bring on the rain

It's almost like the hard times circle 'round  
A couple drops and they all start coming down  
Yeah, I might feel defeated and I might hang my head  
I might be barely breathing but I'm not dead, no

'Cause, tomorrow's another day  
And I'm thirsty anyway  
So bring on the rain

I'm not gonna let it get me down  
I'm not gonna cry  
And I'm not gonna lose any sleep tonight

'Cause, tomorrow's another day  
And I'm thirsty anyway  
So bring on the rain

'Cause, tomorrow's another day  
And I'm thirsty anyway  
So bring on the rain

Bring on, bring on the rain

No I'm not gonna let it get me down  
I'm not gonna cry  
So bring on the rain

Bring on, bring on the rain  
Bring on the rain  
Bring on the rain