

## פרקים ד-ה Esther's Development Throughout

1. In 'ב' פרק compare Esther's behavior in כ, טז, טז, כ, כב. פסוקים י, טז, כ, כב.
  - Focus on Esther's character with regard to obedience and passivity.
  - *Why* does she not reveal her origins in 'י' פסוק?
  - Pay attention to the verb form in טז פסוק.
  - When is the first time she is “active?” Is this a change from what we have earlier seen?
2. At the beginning of 'ד' פרק Mordecai again tells Esther what to do.
  - Note the use of language in 'ח' פסוק, and recall ב:ב and ב:כ.
  - What word/root is used in all three places?
3. How does Esther respond in 'י' פסוק? What does this reflect regarding her identity and development?
4. How much time has passed since Esther left Mordechai and married Ahashverosh? (Compare 2:16 with 3:7.)
5. How, by the end of the פרק, have the tables been fully turned? How is 4:17 a reversal of 2:20? In what way does this reflect Esther's identity transformation?
6. Mordecai had told Esther (a) to reveal her identity and (b) to beg the king; see ד:ח.
  - What does she ultimately do? Does she shed her identity and her dignity? How does she present herself to the King? See ה:א.

- Which aspect of Esther *specifically* does Ahashverosh respond to? See ב:ה?

7. What is the literary and symbolic significance of Esther standing at the threshold to the throne room?

Question for thought

Esther's character is undoubtedly changed as she develops and transforms her identity and behavior. Nonetheless, all of it is still Esther just navigating what others want from her. Should she do what Mordecai wants, or be the person that Ahashverosh wants?

**Who is she really? Do we ever find out?**