



## Mastering Our Moments: Our Journey from Slavery to Sovereignty

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**1 אסתר א:א**

וַיְהִי בַיָּמֵי אַחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ הוּא אַחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ מֵהַדּוּ וְעַד כּוּשׁ שִׁבְעַת עָשָׂרִים וַיִּמָּאָה מְדִינָה.

Now it came to pass in the days of Achashveirosh - he was Achashveirosh who reigned from Hodu to Cush, one hundred twenty-seven provinces.

**How many kingdoms did Achashveirosh rule over? Where else do we find this number?**

**2 בראשית כג:א**

וַיְהִיו חַיֵּי שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעָשָׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעַת עָנִים שְׁנַי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה.

And the life of Sarah was one hundred years and twenty years and seven years; [these were] the years of the life of Sarah.

**What root word appears four times in this passuk?**

**3 רש"י שם**

שְׁנַי חַיֵּי שָׂרָה. כֻּלָּן שְׁוִין לְטוֹבָה:

"The years of the life of Sarah" - All of them equally good.

**According to Rashi, what is the Torah teaching us with this extra repeated word?**

**4 בראשית רבה נח:ג**

רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא הָיָה יוֹשֵׁב וְדוֹרֵשׁ וְהִצְבּוֹר מִתְנַמְנָמִים בְּקֶשֶׁת לְעוֹרְרָן אָמַר מָה רָאִתָּה אֶסְתֵּר שֶׁתִּמְלֹךְ עַל שִׁבְעַת עָשָׂרִים וַיִּמָּאָה מְדִינָה, אֲלָא תְּבוּאָה אֶסְתֵּר שֶׁהִיְתָה בֵּת בְּתָה שֶׁל שָׂרָה שֶׁחִיְתָה מֵאָה וְעָשָׂרִים וְשִׁבְעַת וְתִמְלֹךְ עַל מֵאָה וְעָשָׂרִים וְשִׁבְעַת מְדִינוֹת.

Rabbi Akiva was once sitting and lecturing and the audience began to doze off. He wanted to wake them up. He said: 'Why was Esther seen fit to reign over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces? [The explanation is]: Let Esther, who was a descendant of Sarah, who lived one hundred and twenty-seven years, come and reign over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces.'

**What did Rabbi Akiva say to help his students stay awake during the class?**

**How would this help keep them awake?!?**

Can you imagine students sleeping during the class of Rabbi Akiva?!

The **חדושי הר"ם** is quoted as explaining that Rabbi Akiva was reminding his students about something very important. Sarah was an incredible woman who, as Rashi explained, appreciated and made the most of every moment Hashem had given her. Hashem awarded Sarah tremendously for each moment of her life.





Let's do the math: For each year of Sarah's 127 year life, Esther, Sarah's descendant, ruled over another country, making for a total of 127 countries that she ruled over! This means that for each month of Sarah's life, Esther was given the gift of kingship over an entire city (a country contains at least 12 cities.) Also, for each week of Sarah's life, Esther was rewarded with a town (a city has at least four towns), AND for each day of Sarah's life Esther was rewarded with a neighborhood or section of the town. Finally, If we break it down even further, for every second of Sarah's life, Esther was rewarded with an entire block!

If that is the incredible reward for Sarah using her time well, what can we accomplish with our time? How much reward does Hashem have in store for us? Each moment Hashem grants us in this world is precious beyond words containing infinite potential!



*Did you know?*

**The Chidushei Ha'Rim (Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Alter, 1799–1866)** was the founder of the Ger Chassidus in Poland, the largest Chasidic group in Poland before the Holocaust. He was also a student of the Kotzker Rebbe and a descendant of Rashi!

### The Source of Our Gift of Time

5 שמות יבב:

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשִׁית חֳדָשִׁים רֵאשִׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה.

This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months; it shall be the first of the months of the year for you.

**Which mitzva was Hashem giving to בני ישראל here?**

**Based on the third word in this פסוק who do you think is in charge of setting the calendar?**

**Did you know? This was the very first mitzva that בני ישראל received as a nation!**

6 ספורנו שם

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשִׁית חֳדָשִׁים. מִכָּאן וְאֵילָךְ יִהְיוּ הַחֳדָשִׁים שְׁלָכֶם, לַעֲשׂוֹת בָּהֶם כְּרִצּוֹנְכֶם, אֲבָל בְּיָמֵי הַשְּׁעָבוּד לֹא הָיוּ יָמֵיכֶם שְׁלָכֶם, אֲבָל הָיוּ לַעֲבוּדַת אֲחֵרִים וְרִצּוֹנָם, לְפִיכֶךָ רֵאשִׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה, כִּי בּוֹ הִתְחִיל מְצִיאוֹתְכֶם הַבְּחִירָאִי.

"This month shall be for you the beginning of months." From here on, the months shall be yours - to use them as you wish. But in the days of bondage, your days were not your own; they were for the labor and will of others. Therefore, it shall be the first for you among the months of the year, for in it began the reality of your chosen (free) existence.



**Why do you think Rosh Chodesh was the first mitzva given to בני ישראל?**

**Do slaves have their own time to think about life? What was now beginning to change as בני ישראל were in the process of transitioning out of their slavery mindsets?**



## 7 אבות ד:יז

הוא היה אומר: יפה שעה אחת בתשובה ומעשים טובים בעולם הזה, מפל חיי העולם הבא, ויפה שעה אחת של קורת רוח בעולם הבא, מפל חיי העולם הזה.  
 He (Rabbi Yaakov) would say: A single moment of repentance and good deeds in this world is greater than all of the World to Come. And a single moment of bliss in the World to Come is greater than all of the present world.

**Why do you think תשובה and מעשים טובים may be even more important than all of עולם הבא?**

**Discussion: In what ways can we be like שרה אמנו and make the most of each moment Hashem gives us?**

## Kids' Kollel Torah Riddle Time

**How many Hebrew letters are in the names of all the people who attended the משתה that אסתר put together?**

**Remember that on Purim we erase the memory of עמלק and all his descendants!**

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