



*This series is sponsored by Rhoda Waxman to honour the memory of her grandparents, Robert and Ida Kurtz z"l*

### Hebrew-related questions asked last time

- 1:20 - How does **שאלתיהו** lead to **שמואל**? Shouldn't his name be **שאול**?
  - People aren't that precise in naming (Ralbag)
  - He is named for "I asked for him **שאל**" and "He is from Gd **מן ד'**" (Radak)
  - I asked for him, and Gd placed him in me – **שמו קל** (Abarbanel)
  - I asked for him, and he is from Gd – **מקל** (Abarbanel)
  - I asked for him; His Name is Gd – **שמו קל** (Abarbanel)
  - It was a pre-existing name, which Chanah adopted here (Prof. Yehuda Kil)
- 1:28 – Does **השאלתיהו** mean Hannah is "lending him to Gd"?
  - I am returning that which was lent to me by Gd (Radak)
  - I asked for him from Gd in order to give him to Gd (Malbim)

### Lessons of Hannah's Prayer

#### 3. Talmud, Berachot 31a

Rav Hemnuna said: How many mighty laws we can learn from the verses of Hannah!

- "Hannah spoke upon her heart" – we see that one who prays must focus his heart.
- "Only her lips moved" – we see that one who prays must form [words] with his lips.
- "Her voice was not heard" – we see that one may not elevate his voice in prayer.

#### 4. Maimonides, Laws of Prayer 4:16

What is *kavvanah*? To clear one's mind of all [extraneous] thoughts, seeing himself as though standing before Gd.

#### 5. Rabbi Menachem Meiri, Commentary to Berachot 31a

So that one's speech will be clear to him, and so his focus will be more readily available.

### Why is silent prayer better?

#### 6. Zohar, Genesis pg. 209b

One who prays before his Master should not raise his voice in his prayer; one who raises his voice in his prayer will not be audible. Why? Because prayer is not the voice that is audible... And so one need not make his voice audible in his prayer, but pray silently, in the voice that is not audible. This is the prayer that is always accepted.

#### 7. Kings I 19:9-12

And he came there [Mount Horeb], to the cave, and he rested there, and the word of Gd came to him, saying to him, "Why are you here, Elijah?" And he said, "I have been zealous for Gd, Master of multitudes, for the children of Israel have left Your covenant, they have ruined Your altars, they have killed Your prophets, and only I remain, and they seek to take my life." And He said, "Depart, and stand upon the mountain before Gd." Gd passed before him, and [there was] a great and mighty wind before Gd, breaking mountains and smashing stones, and Gd was not in the wind. And after the wind came an earthquake, and Gd was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake came a fire, and Gd was not in the fire. And after the fire, a voice, silent, small.

*Rashi*: The voice of those who praise in silence.

#### 8. Psalms 89:10

אתה מושל בגאות הים בשוא גליו אתה תשכחם:

You reign over the might of the sea; when its waves rise up, You make them still.

## Review Questions

- 1> What three lessons does the Talmud deduce from the biblical description of Hannah's prayer?
- 2> What are some reasons to pray aloud?
- 3> What are some reasons to pray in a low voice?
- 4> What lesson can we draw from the "small, still voice" that Elijah heard?

## Hannah the Prophetess

### 9. Talmud, Megilah 14a

Who were the seven prophetesses? Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Chuldah and Esther.

### 10. Samuel I 2:1-10 (adapted from JPS 1917 translation)

<sup>1</sup>And Hannah prayed, and said: my heart exults in Gd, my horn is exalted in Gd; my mouth is enlarged over my enemies; because I rejoice in Your salvation. <sup>2</sup>There is none holy as Gd, for there is none beside You; neither is there any rock like our Gd. <sup>3</sup>Multiply not exceeding proud talk; let not arrogance come out of your mouth; for Gd is a Gd of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. <sup>4</sup>The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. <sup>5</sup>They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry have ceased; while the barren has birthed seven, she that had many children has languished. <sup>6</sup>Gd kills, and brings to life; He brings down to the grave, and brings up. <sup>7</sup>Gd makes poor, and makes rich; He brings low, He also lifts up. <sup>8</sup>He raises up the poor out of the dust, He lifts up the needy from the dung-hill, to make them sit with princes, and inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the earth are Gd's, and He has set the world upon them. <sup>9</sup>He will keep the feet of His holy ones, but the wicked shall be silenced in darkness; for not by strength shall man prevail. <sup>10</sup>They that strive with Gd shall be broken to pieces; against them will He thunder in heaven; Gd will judge the ends of the earth; and He will give strength to His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed.

### 11. Rabbi David Kimchi (Radak), Commentary to Samuel I 2:5

Our view regarding this passage, and the entire song, is that Hannah said: All of the affairs of this world, and all human needs, depend upon the hand of the blessed Creator and His will. He supervises groups and individuals and does to them according to His will. Even if it seems to people that Gd does something which is against their will and desire, they should pray to Him with all of their spirits as I did, and He will fulfill their request and desire in every area of their desire and need, for His supervision below is as it is above, as she said at the end...

### 12. 2:6 Death and then Life?

- Problems and Relief (Radak)
- Gehennom and the Garden of Eden (Talmud Rosh HaShanah 16b-17a)
- Resurrection of the Dead (Talmud Sanhedrin 92b)

### 13. A reversal of silence and thunder 2:1, 2:3, 2:10

### 14. Roots of King David's songs

2:2 and Psalms 75:6

2:4 and Psalms 18

2:6 and Psalms 30:4

2:8 and Psalms 113:7-8

2:9 and Psalms 37:28; Psalms 97:10

2:10 and Samuel II 22:51

## Hannah as Prophet

### 15. Midrash Shemuel 3:6

At that moment, Divine inspiration blossomed in her: As long as Samuel lives, Saul will live.

### 16. Samuel I 2:21

For Gd recalled Hannah, and she conceived and she birthed three sons and two daughters. And the youth Samuel matured with Gd.

#### 17. Talmud, Megilah 14a

Hannah [was a prophetess] as it is written: And Hannah prayed and said, 'My heart exults in Gd, my horn is raised.' 'My horn is raised,' my jug is not raised. David and Solomon were anointed with the horn and their monarchy endured; Saul and Yehu were anointed with a jug and their monarchy did not endure.

#### 18. Targum Yonatan to 2:1

And Hannah prayed with a Divine prophetic spirit, and she said: Samuel my son will be a prophet over Israel, in his days they will be redeemed from the hand of the Philistines, and via him miracles and mighty deeds will be performed. Therefore, my heart is strong in the portion Gd has given me. Also, Heiman son of Yoel, son of my son Samuel will arise, with his fourteen sons, to sing with stringed instruments with their Levite brethren, offering praise in the Temple. Therefore, my horn is raised with the gift Gd has apportioned for me. Also [I praise Gd for] the miraculous punishment which will happen to the Philistines, who will bring the Ark of Gd in a new wagon, with a guilt offering. So will the nation of Israel say, "I open my mouth to speak mighty words upon my enemies, for I rejoice in Your salvation."

#### 19. The opening story as catalyst/prophecy

The sins of Eli's sons – the curse of Eli – destruction of Nov – Evyatar in Adoniyahu's rebellion – Evyatar condemned  
Hannah's song – anointing of Shaul – anointing of Dovid

#### Review Questions

- 1> Who are the seven prophetesses identified in Tanach, as recorded in the Talmud?
- 2> What is the overall theme of Hannah's song?
- 3> Why did Hannah put death before life in 2:6?
- 4> Where do we see prophecy in Hannah's song?