

For a fuller discussion of this story <https://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=81072&collection=7733>

### 1. Yeshayahu 38:1

בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם חָלָה חִזְקִיָּהוּ לְמוֹת וַיְבֹא אֵלָיו יֵשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶן אֲמוֹץ הַנְּבִיא וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו פֶּה אָמַר ד' צו לְבִיתְךָ כִּי מֵת אַתָּה וְלֹא תִחְיֶה:  
In those days, Chizkiyahu became deathly ill. And the prophet Yeshayahu ben Amotz came to him, and said to him: So says Hashem! Instruct your house, for you will die and you will not live.

### 2. Talmud, Berachot 10a

אמר ליה: השתא הב לי ברתך אפשר דגרמא זכותא דידי ודידך ונפקי מנאי בנין דמעלה! אמר ליה: כבר נגזרה עליך גזירה. אמר ליה: בן אמוץ, כלה נבואתך וצא! כך מקובלני מבית אבי אבא, אפילו חרב חדה מונחת על צוארו של אדם אל ימנע עצמו מן הרחמים.  
[Chizkiyah] said to [Yeshayahu]: Then let me marry your daughter, and our combined merit may cause me to produce good children! [Yeshayahu] replied: The decree is already declared upon you. [Chizkiyah] retorted: Son of Amotz, complete your prophecy and depart! I have a tradition from my grandfather's house that even if a sharp sword rests on a person's neck, still he should not refrain from prayer.

### The Story

#### 3. Talmud, Sanhedrin 94a

ביקש הקב"ה לעשות חזקיהו משיח וסנחריב גוג ומגוג, אמרה מדת הדין לפני הקב"ה, רבש"ע! ומה דוד מלך ישראל שאמר כמה שירות ותשבחות לפניך לא עשיתו משיח, חזקיה שיעשית לו כל הנסים הללו ולא אמר שירה לפניך תעשהו משיח? לכך נסתתם.  
Gd wanted to make Chizkiyahu into Mashiach and Sancherev into Gog uMagog. Justice said before Gd: Master of the Universe! David, King of Israel, sang many praises before You and You did not make him Mashiach; You performed all of these miracles for Chizkiyahu and he did not sing before You, shall You make him Mashiach? And so it was sealed.

#### 4. Melachim I 18:3-7 (adapted from Koren Jerusalem Bible, c/o sefaria.org)

(ג) וַיַּעַשׂ הַיְשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי ד' כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה דָּוִד אָבִיו: (ד) הוּא הִסִּיר אֶת הַבָּמוֹת וְשִׁבַּר אֶת הַמַּצְבֵּת וְכָרַת אֶת הָאֲשֵׁרָה וְכָתַת נְחֹשׁ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מֹשֶׁה כִּי עַד הַיָּמִים הַהֵמָּה הָיָה בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקַטְרִים לוֹ וַיִּקְרָא לוֹ נְחֹשֶׁתָן: (ה) בְּד' אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּטַח וְאַחֲרָיו לֹא הָיָה כְּמֹהוּ בְּכֹל מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לְפָנָיו: (ו) וַיִּדְבַּק בֵּה' לֹא סָר מֵאַחֲרָיו וַיִּשְׁמַר מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ד' אֶת מֹשֶׁה: (ז) וְהָיָה ד' עִמּוֹ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא וַיִּשְׁכַּל וַיִּמְרֹד בְּמֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר וְלֹא עָבְדוּ:

And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and broke the pillars, and cut down the ashera, and broke in pieces the brazen serpent that Moshe had made: for until that time the children of Yisrael did burn incense to it: and he called it Nechushtan. He trusted in the Lord Gd of Yisrael; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Yehuda, nor among those that were before him. For he held fast to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moshe. And the Lord was with him; and he prospered wherever he went out: and he rebelled against the king of Ashur, and served him not.

#### 5. Divrei haYamim II 29-31

- 29 Renewal of the service in the Beit haMikdash
- 30 Renewal of the korban pesach (in Iyar)
- 31:1-2 Eliminating idolatry, establishing the kohanim and leviyim
- 31:3-21 Restoring proper tithing

#### 6. Talmud, Sanhedrin 94b

"והיה ביום ההוא יסור סבלו מעל שכמך ועלו מעל צוארך וחבל על מפני שמן (ישעי' י:כז)" אמר רבי יצחק נפחא חובל עול של סנחריב מפני שמנו של חזקיהו, שהיה דולק בבתי כנסיות ובבתי מדרשות. מה עשה? נעץ חרב על פתח בית המדרש ואמר "כל מי שאינו עוסק בתורה ידקר בחרב זו." בדקו מדן ועד באר שבע ולא מצאו עם הארץ, מגבת ועד אנטיפרס ולא מצאו תינוק ותינוקת איש ואשה שלא היו בקיין בהלכות טומאה וטהרה.

"And on that day his burden will leave your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be destroyed before oil/strength. (10:27)" Rabbi Yitzchak Nafcha said: The yoke of Sancherev was destroyed before the oil of Chizkiyahu, burning in the synagogues and study halls. What did he do? He planted a sword at the entrance of the study hall, and said, "Anyone who doesn't study Torah will be stabbed with this sword." They examined from Dan to Beer Sheva and did not find anyone who was ignorant, from Gevet to Antiphres and did not find a boy or girl, man or woman, who was not expert in the laws of *tumah* and *taharah*.

#### 7. Sections in Yeshayahu which may predict Chizkiyahu as Mashiach

4:2-6, 9:5-6, 11:1-5, 19:23-25, 28:16-17, 32:1-5

#### 8. Yeshayahu 38:1-6

(א) בַּיָּמִים הַהֵם חָלָה חִזְקִיָּהוּ לְמוֹת וַיְבוֹא אֵלָיו יְשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶן אֲמוֹץ הַנְּבִיא וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר ד' צוּ לְבֵיתְךָ כִּי מֵת אַתָּה וְלֹא תִחְיֶה: (ב) וַיִּסָּב חִזְקִיָּהוּ פָּנָיו אֶל הַקִּיר וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל ד': (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר אָנָּה ד' זָכַר נָא אֶת אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאֵמֶת וּבְלֵב שְׁלֵם וְהַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי וַיִּבְרַךְ חִזְקִיָּהוּ בְּכִי גָדוֹל:

(ד) וַיְהִי דְבַר ד' אֶל יְשַׁעְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: (ה) הֲלוֹךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל חִזְקִיָּהוּ כֹּה אָמַר ד' אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אָבִיךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶת תְּפִלָּתְךָ רְאִיתִי אֶת דַּמְעֹתֶיךָ הַגְּנִי יוֹסֵף עַל יָמֶיךָ חֲמֵשׁ עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה: (ו) וּמִכַּף מְלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר אֶצִּילְךָ וְאֵת הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְגַנּוּתִי עַל הָעִיר הַזֹּאת:

In those days, Chizkiyahu became deathly ill. And the prophet Yeshayahu ben Amotz came to him, and said to him: So says Hashem! Instruct your house, for you will die and you will not live. And Chizkiyahu turned his face to the wall, and he prayed to Gd. And he said, "Where, Gd? Remember now how I walked before You in truth and a complete heart, and I did that which was good in Your eyes!"

And the word of Gd came to Yeshayahu: Go tell Chizkiyahu, "So says Hashem, Gd of your ancestor David: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears. Behold, I will add fifteen years to your days. And I will save you and this city from the hand of the King of Assyria, and I will protect this city."

#### Why strike down Mashiach?

#### 9. Yeshayahu 22:8-11 (adapted from Koren Jerusalem Bible, c/o sefaria.org)

...וַתִּבְטַח בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֵל נֶשֶׁק בֵּית הַיְעָר: (ט) וְאֵת בְּקִיעֵי עִיר דָּוִד רְאִיתָם כִּי רַבּוּ וַתִּקְבְּצוּ אֶת מֵי הַבְּרֶכֶה הַתְּחַתּוֹנָה: (י) וְאֵת בְּתֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם סָפַרְתָּם וַתַּחַצּוּ הַבְּתִים לְבַצֵּר הַחֹמָה: (יא) וּמְקוֹה עֲשִׂיתָם בֵּין הַחֲמֹתַיִם לְמֵי הַבְּרֶכֶה הַיְשָׁנָה וְלֹא הִבְטַחְתָּם אֶל עֲשִׂיָּה וַיִּצְרָה מִרְחוֹק לֹא רְאִיתָם:

...And you did look on that day to the armour of the house of the forest. You saw also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and you gathered together the waters of the lower pool. And you numbered the houses of Yerushalayim, and the houses you broke down to fortify the wall. You made also a pond between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but you did not look to Him who made it, nor did you see Him that fashioned it long ago.

#### 10. Talmud, Berachot 10b

ששה דברים עשה חזקיהו המלך, על שלשה הודו לו ועל שלשה לא הודו לו. על שלשה הודו לו: גנז ספר רפואות והודו לו, כתת נחש הנחשת והודו לו, גירר עצמות אביו על מטה של חבלים והודו לו. ועל שלשה לא הודו לו: סתם מי גיחון ולא הודו לו, קצץ דלתות היכל ושגרם למלך אשור ולא הודו לו, עבר ניסן בניסן ולא הודו לו.

Chizkiyahu did six things; the sages approved three, and did not approve three.

They approved three: 1) He hid the book of cures, and they approved; 2) He cut up the copper serpent, and they approved; 3) He dragged his father's bones on a bed of ropes, and they approved.

They did not approve three: 1) He sealed the Gichon, and they did not approve; 2) He cut down the doors of the Sanctuary and sent them to the Assyrian king and they did not approve; 3) He added a month in Nisan, and they did not approve.

#### 11. Melachim II 18:16

בַּעַת הַהִיא קָצַץ חִזְקִיָּהוּ אֶת דְּלֹתוֹת הַיִּכָּל ד' וְאֵת הָאֲמֹנוֹת אֲשֶׁר צָפָה חִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה וַיִּתְּנֵם לְמֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר:

At that time Chizkiyah cut down the doors of the Sanctuary of Gd, and the columns which Chizkiyah, king of Yehudah had covered [in gold], and he gave them to the king of Assyria.

## The Divine Goal

12. Sand, Strang, Milberg, *Dying cancer patients' experiences of powerlessness and helplessness*, Supportive Care in Cancer 16:7 (July 2008) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18026998/>

Impending death, symptoms, loss of control and autonomy, ignorance, isolation and uncertainty constituted the basis for powerlessness and helplessness, but each factor was reinforced by the occurrence of suddenness, high intensity and/or lengthiness. In total, 65% reported definite experiences of powerlessness and helplessness. These feelings also held a deeper meaning, involving aspects such as existential loneliness and hopelessness...

13. Kneier, Rosenbaum, Rosenbaum, *Coping with Cancer: Ten Steps Toward Emotional Well-Being*, Stanford Center for Integrative Medicine, <https://med.stanford.edu/survivingcancer/coping-with-cancer/coping-with-cancer.html>

There are many ways that the experience of cancer can harm a person's self-esteem. One of these is the stigma of having cancer—the belief that it can imply something bad about the person who has it. In addition, many of the sources of your self-esteem can be threatened by cancer and the effects of medical treatments: your appearance, your physical abilities and activity level, your personal attributes (such as being healthy and independent), and your role and identity within your family or in your work life... Perhaps it has been difficult for you to depend on others because your independence has been overly important...

14. Pagnini, Bercovitz, Langer, *Perceived Control and Mindfulness: Implications for Clinical Practice*, Journal of Psychotherapy Integration 26:2 (2016) <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/features/int-int0000035.pdf>

Perceived control refers to an individual's belief about his or her own capability of exerting influence on internal states and behaviors, as well as one's external environment (Langer, 1977; Lefcourt, 1966; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Wallston, Wallston, Smith, & Dobbins, 1987). The sense of control that one can exert over life events is one of psychology's most explored constructs. Starting in the 1960s, it became clear that the effects of aversive events and distress could be mitigated by the perception of being in control (Glass, Siger, & Friedman, 1969; Langer & Saegert, 1977; Pervin, 1963). Following these original studies, researchers discovered that increasing perceived control in a more general sense facilitated wellbeing (Langer, 1977; Langer, 1983; Langer, Janis, & Wolfer, 1975)...

15. Yeshayahu 39 (adapted from Koren Jerusalem Bible, c/o sefaria.org)

(א) בעת ההוא שלח מֶרְדַּךְ בִּלְאָדָן בֶּן בִּלְאָדָן מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל סְפָרִים וּמִנְחָה אֶל חִזְקִיָּהוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע כִּי חָלָה וַיִּחַזַּק: (ב) וַיִּשְׁמַח עֲלֵיהֶם חִזְקִיָּהוּ וַיִּרְאֵם אֶת בֵּית גָּלְתוֹ אֶת הַכֶּסֶף וְאֶת הַזָּהָב וְאֶת הַבְּשָׂמִים וְאֶת הַשָּׁמֶן הַטוֹב וְאֶת כָּל בֵּית כְּלָיו וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא בְּאֶצְרָתָיו לֹא הָיָה דָבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָרְאֵם חִזְקִיָּהוּ בְּבֵיתוֹ וּבְכָל מַמְשִׁלְתּוֹ:

(ג) וַיָּבֹא יִשְׁעָיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא אֶל הַמֶּלֶךְ חִזְקִיָּהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מָה אָמְרוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה וּמֵאֵינִי יָבֹאוּ אֵלֶיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר חִזְקִיָּהוּ מֵאֶרֶץ רְחוֹקָה בָּאוּ אֵלַי מִבָּבֶל:

(ד) וַיֹּאמֶר מָה רָאוּ בְּבֵיתְךָ וַיֹּאמֶר חִזְקִיָּהוּ אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵיתִי רָאוּ לֹא הָיָה דָבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָרְאִיתִים בְּאוֹצְרוֹתַי:

(ה) וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׁעָיָהוּ אֶל חִזְקִיָּהוּ שְׁמַע דְּבַר ד' צְבָאוֹת: (ו) הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים וְנִשְׂאָ כָּל אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵיתְךָ וְאֲשֶׁר אֶצְרֹו אֲבֹתֶיךָ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה בְּכָל לֹא יִנְתָּר דְּבַר אֶמֶר ד': (ז) וּמִבְּנֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאוּ מִמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר תוֹלִיד יִקְחוּ וְהָיוּ סְרִיסִים בְּהִיכַל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל:

(ח) וַיֹּאמֶר חִזְקִיָּהוּ אֶל יִשְׁעָיָהוּ טוֹב דְּבַר ד' אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי יִהְיֶה שְׁלוֹם וְאַמֶּת בְּיָמָי:

At that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Bavel, sent letters and a present to Chizkiyahu: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. And Chizkiyahu was glad of them, and showed them the house of his treasures, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Chizkiyahu did not show them.

Then Yeshayahu the prophet came to king Chizkiyahu, and said to him, What said these men? and from where did they come to you? And Chizkiyahu said, They are come from a far country to me, from Bavel. Then said he, What have they seen in your house? And Chizkiyahu answered, All that is in my house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them.

Then said Yeshayahu to Chizkiyahu, Hear the word of the Lord of hosts: Behold, days are coming that all that is in thy house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Bavel: nothing shall be left, says the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Bavel.

Then Chizkiyahu said to Yeshayahu, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, But there shall be peace and truth in my days.

16. Midrash, Avot d'Rabbi Natan II 45

"ד' שגו ברואה אלו הן. אדם. וקין. בלעם. וחזקיהו... ובסוף הענין מהו אומר? "ויאמר חזקיהו אל ישעיהו, טוב דבר ד' אשר דברת [וגו']".  
Four people erred regarding the Seer: Adam, Kayin, Bilam and Chizkiyahu... And what did it say in the end? "And Chizkiyahu said to Yeshayahu: The word of Gd you have conveyed is good."

Review Questions

- 1> What are some of Chizkiyahu's great deeds, that cause Gd to be "with him"?
- 2> What was Yeshayahu's constant message to kings?
- 3> How do we see reliance on Gd become problematic for Chizkiyahu?
- 4> How does Yeshayahu respond to Chizkiyahu's failings?
- 5> What might be Gd's goal in making Chizkiyahu ill?