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# EZRA-NECHEMIAH

## NECHEMIAH CHAPTER

### 2: NECHEMIAH'S

### APPOINTMENT

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## MEETING THE KING

### (1) NECHEMIAH 2:1-8

(1) It happened in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, when wine was before him, that I took up the wine, and gave it to the king. Now I had not been beforehand sad in his presence. (2) The king said to me, "Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart." Then I was very, very afraid. (3) I said to the king, "Let the king live forever. Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, and its gates are consumed with fire?" (4) Then the king said to me, "For what do you make request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. (5) I said to the king, "If it please the king, and if your servant have found favor in your sight, that you would send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may build it." (6) The king said to me, the queen also sitting by him, "For how long shall your journey be? And when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. (7) Moreover I said to the king, "If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah; (8) and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the castle which appertains to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into." The king granted me, according to the good hand of my God on me.

(א) ויהי בחודש ניסן שנת עשרים לארתחשסתא המלך יין לפניו ואשא את היין ואתנה למלך ולא הייתי רע לפניו. (ב) ויאמר לי המלך מדוע פניך רעים ואתה אינך חולה אין זה כי אם רע לב ואירא הרבה מאד. (ג) ואמר למלך המלך לעולם יחיה מדוע לא ירעו פני אשר העיר בית קברות אבתי חרבה ושעריה אכלו באש. (ד) ויאמר לי המלך על מה זה אתה מבקש ואתפלל אל אלהי השמים. (ה) ואמר למלך אם על המלך טוב ואם ייטב עבדך לפניך אשר תשלחני אל יהודה אל עיר קברות אבתי ואבננה. (ו) ויאמר לי המלך והשגל יושבת אצלו עד מתי יהיה מהלכה ומתי תשוב וייטב לפני המלך וישלחני ואתנה לו זמן. (ז) ואמר למלך אם על המלך טוב אגרות יתנו לי על פתוות עבר הנגר אשר יעבירוני עד אשר אבוא אל יהודה. (ח) ואגרת אל אסף שמר הפרדס אשר למלך אשר יתן לי עצים לקרות את שערי הבירה אשר לבית ולחומת העיר ולבית אשר אבוא אליו ויתן לי המלך כיד אלהי הטובה עלי.

### (2) R' DOV ZAKHEIM, *NEHEMIAH: STATESMAN AND SAGE*, P. 56

It is possible that Nehemiah deliberately chose this moment to drop the jovial mask he had been wearing since receiving Hanani's report. The date of the events appears to have been the first of Nisan, the beginning of the new year for the Persians (and the first Jewish month) at which a feast may have been held. Herodotus reports that the king granted requests that were made to him at his birthday feast. The same custom may also have been practiced at other feasts.

### (3) R' TZVI SINENSKY, "THE FATEFUL REQUEST"

It is unclear why Nehemiah waits to ask. It seems most likely that his hesitancy stems from anxiety. After all, he has no idea what sort of response his request will provoke. There is good reason to suspect that Nehemiah even feared that his life might be on the line. Indeed, this concern is borne out by Artaxerxes' immediate response, in which he essentially accuses Nehemiah of plotting the king's assassination.

Despite his fears, once Nechemia begins his request, his political savvy is on full display. He opens with the obligatory, "May the king live forever" (2:3), and "If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor with you" (2:5). Framing his request as primarily personal – "send me to Judah, the city of my ancestors' graves" (ibid.) – he avoids the impression that he intends to build an independent society that might be less than fully subject to the empire's authority. He gives the king a concrete time frame rather than leaving his trip open-ended. Only after seeing the king's receptiveness to the request does he press further, asking for letters and timber. Not only are these requests granted, but it seems that the king "throws in" additional accompanying officers, a request that had not been granted to Ezra during his *aliya*.

#### (4) RASHI NECHEMIAH 2:1

לא הייתי רע לפניו – ואני לא הייתי רגיל להיות רע לפניו ברוע פנים כי אם שמח וטוב לב ועתה הייתי זועף ברוע פנים.

"And I had never been sad in his presence" - And I was not accustomed to being sad in his presence, to have a sad face, but to be happy and cheerful, but now I was sad with a sad face.

#### (5) DA'AT MIKRA NECHEMIAH 2:1-2

"Bad before him" – in his eyes, meaning that the king was inclined towards him favorably and had never suspected him of evil in his heart.

"Evil heart" – rebellious schemes.<sup>20</sup> "I feared very much" – that the king should not accuse me of anything.

<sup>20</sup>We find these words with this meaning in the Babylonian version of the Hyston inscription.

מִפְרִיד בֵּינָם וּבֵין הַיֹּשְׁבִים לְפָנָיו<sup>18</sup>. רַע לְפָנָיו –  
 בְּעֵינָיו<sup>19</sup>, רְצוֹנוֹ לֹאמַר שֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ נָטָה לוֹ חֶסֶד וְלֹא  
 חָשַׁב מֵעוֹלָם לְרַע לִבּוֹ.  
 (ב) רַע לֵב – מְזֻמָּת מִרָד<sup>20</sup>. וְאִירָא הַרְבֵּה  
 מְאֹד – שְׂלֵא יַעֲלִיל עָלַי הַמֶּלֶךְ עָלֵילָה (רש"י).

20 רע לב – בהוראה זו נמצא בנוסח הנבלי של כתובת בהיסטון ('ביש לבי')

#### (6) MALBIM NECHEMIAH 2:2

והיה זה אם שנכרו על פניו אותות העינוי והצום של הימים האלה, או שהיה בהשגחה שעי"כ ישאלנו המלך...

This was either because the signs of suffering and fasting during this time were visible on his face, or because of Divine supervision such that the king would inquire of him...

### NECHEMIAH'S PRAYER

#### (7) RASHI NECHEMIAH 2:4

ואתפלל – ואמרתי לפני המלך בתפילתי כן יהיה רצון מלפני אלהי השמים שתמלא שאלתי ובקשתי.

"And I prayed" - And I said before the king in my prayer, "May it be Your will, O God of the heavens, that You fulfill my petition and my request."

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## (8) MALBIM NECHEMIAH 2:4

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בתשובה שהשיב אל המלך היה בלבו הדבור אל ד' בדרך תפלה

His response to the king was, in his heart, speech to Gd in the manner of prayer.

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## THE QUEEN?

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## (9) TEHILLIM 45:8-10

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(ח) אָהַבְתָּ צְדָקָה וַתִּשְׁנֵא רָשָׁע עַל כֵּן מָשְׁחָה אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵיךָ שְׁמוֹן שָׁשׂוֹן מִחֲבֵרֶיךָ. (ט) מִרְרָה וְאַלְוֵהוֹת קִצְיֵעוֹת כָּל בְּגָדֶיךָ מִן הַיְכָלִי שֵׁן מִנֵּי שִׁמְחֹה. (י) בָּנוֹת מְלָכִים בְּיִקְרוֹתֶיךָ נִצְבָּה שָׁגַל לִימִינְךָ בְּכֶתֶם אוֹפִיר.

(8) You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows. (9) Myrrh, and aloes, and cassia are all your garments; out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made you glad. (10) Kings' daughters are among your favorites; at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir

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## (10) R' DOV ZAKHEIM, NEHEMIAH: STATESMAN AND SAGE, P. 54

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The queen, Damasias (or Damaspia), was Artaxerxes' "first" wife, that is to say, she was the chief member of his harem... Nehemiah does not give Damasias a speaking part in his memoir, but he notes her presence... she may have been a supporter when he entreated the king for permission to leave the court and travel to Judah.

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## (11) MALBIM NECHEMIAH 2:6

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י"ל שהשגל הזאת היתה אסתר אמו שהיא מהרה בשאלה זאת (שבזה כבר הסכים אל הדבר), באהבתה את עמה ומולדתה.

Some say that this queen was Esther, Darius' mother, who was speedy with this question (for he had already agreed to this), out of her love for her people and her homeland.

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## (12) RALBAG NECHEMIAH 2:6

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היא אשתו המיוחדת לו למשגל.

This was his wife who was designated for intimacy.

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## (13) DEVARIM 28:30

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(ל) אִשָּׁה תֵּאָרֵשׁ וְאִישׁ אַחֵר [יִשְׁכְּבֶנָּה] (ישגלנה) בֵּית תְּבִנָּה וְלֹא תִשָּׁב בּוֹ כָּרֶם תִּטְעַע וְלֹא תִחַלְלֶנּוּ.

(30) You shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her. You shall build a house, and you shall not dwell therein. You shall plant a vineyard, and shall not redeem its fruit.

## (14) R' TZVI SINENSKY, "THE FATEFUL REQUEST"

What are we to make of these striking similarities? Three observations may be offered.

First, the larger picture that emerges is one of appreciation for the support of the Persian monarchs. As opposed to the Babylonians, the Persian kings were supportive toward the Jews and ensured their security. Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, and, ultimately, even the knave Achashverosh were critically important in ensuring the security and success of the Jewish communities under their rule.

Second, Esther, who lived shortly before Nechemia, is presented as a model for later Jewish leaders. Nechemia is following not only in the footsteps of Moshe, Aaron, David, and Shlomo, all of whom his prayer invokes in chapter 1, but also Esther. Esther is not merely the hero of her own work; she casts a wide shadow over the entire era of *Shivat Tzion*.

In what respect does Nechemia follow her model?... In many respects, Nechemia (along with Ezra) lived his life in Esther's image. He too, time and again, exposed himself to extraordinary personal risk in acting on behalf of the Jewish People's interests. By presenting Nechemia's approach to the king in highly similar language to that of Esther, the text hints that the *Shivat Tzion* community was saved not only due to the magnanimity of gentile emperors, but also due to the sacrificial action of outstanding Jewish leaders such as Esther, Ezra, and Nechemia.

Finally, despite the similarities between the two stories, there are two obvious differences. *Nechemia* regularly invokes God's name, whereas His name is famously absent in *Esther*. Our story, moreover, concerns the Jewish community in Israel, whereas Esther's centers on Shushan. Arguably, these two observations are two sides of the same coin. While God will come to the rescue of any Jewish community, whether in Israel or the diaspora, the nature of His presence necessarily will be different. In the diaspora, He remains obscure; in Israel, His name is omnipresent.

## NECHEMIAH ARRIVES AND SCOUTS OUT THE CITY

### (15) NECHEMIAH 2:9-20

(9) Then I came to the governors beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me captains of the army and horsemen. (10) When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly, because a man had come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. (11) So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. (12) I arose in the night, I and some few men with me. I did not tell any man what my God put into my heart to do for Jerusalem; neither was there any animal with me, except the

(ט) וְאָבּוֹא אֶל פְּחוֹת עֶבֶר הַנְּהָר וְאֶתְּנָה לָהֶם אֶת אֲגָרוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּשְׁלַח עִמִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׂרֵי חֵיָל וּפָרָשִׁים. (י) וַיִּשְׁמַע סַנְבַלַּט הַחֲרָנִי וְטוֹבִיָּה הָעֶבֶד הָעַמֹּנִי וַיִּרְעוּ לָהֶם רָעָה גְדוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר בָּא אֲדָם לְבַקֵּשׁ טוֹבָה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. (יא) וְאָבּוֹא אֶל יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאָהִי שָׁם יָמִים שְׁלֹשָׁה. (יב) וְאֶקּוּם לַיְלָה אֲנִי וְאֲנָשִׁים מְעַט עִמִּי וְלֹא הִגַּדְתִּי לְאָדָם מָה אֱלֹהֵי נַתַּן אֵל לְבִי לַעֲשׂוֹת לִירוּשָׁלַם וּבִהְמָה אֵין עִמִּי כִּי אִם הַבְּהֵמָה

animal that I rode on. (13) I went out by night by the valley gate, even toward the jackal's well, and to the dung gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and its gates were consumed with fire. (14) Then I went on to the spring gate and to the king's pool, but there was no place for the animal that was under me to pass. (15) Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall; and I turned back, and entered by the valley gate, and so returned. (16) The rulers didn't know where I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest who did the work. (17) Then I said to them, "You see the evil case that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach." (18) I told them of the hand of my God which was good on me, as also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. They said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good. (19) But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they ridiculed us, and despised us, and said, "What is this thing that you do? Will you rebel against the king?" (20) Then I answered them, and said to them, "The God of heaven, He will make us prosper; therefore we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem."

אֲשֶׁר אָנִי רֹכֵב בָּהּ. (יג) וְאַצְאָה בְּשַׁעַר הַגִּיָּא לְלִקְחָהּ וְאֶל פְּנֵי עֵין הַתְּנִין וְאֶל שַׁעַר הָאֲשָׁפֶת וְאָהֵי שַׁבָּר בְּחֹמַת יְרוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר [הֵם פְּרוּצִים] (המפרוצים) וּשְׁעָרֶיהָ אֶפְלוּ בְּאֵשׁ. (יד) וְאָעָבַר אֶל שַׁעַר הָעֵין וְאֶל בְּרַכַת הַמְּלֶכֶת וְאֵין מְקוֹם לְבִהְמָה לְעָבַר מִתְּחִי. (טו) וְאָהֵי עֵלָה בְּנַחַל לְלִקְחָהּ וְאָהֵי שַׁבָּר בְּחֹמָה וְאָשׁוּב וְאָבֹא בְּשַׁעַר הַגִּיָּא וְאָשׁוּב. (טז) וְהִסְגִּנִים לֹא יָדְעוּ אֲנִי הַלְכָתִי וּמָה אָנִי עֹשֶׂה וְלִיְהוּדִים וְלִפְהֲגִים וְלִזְרָרִים וְלִסְגָנִים וְלִיִּתֶר עֹשֶׂה הַמְּלָאכָה עַד כֵּן לֹא הִגְדַּתִי. (יז) וְאוֹמֵר אֲלֵהֶם אַתֶּם רְאִים הֲרַעָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנַחְנוּ בָּהּ אֲשֶׁר יְרוּשָׁלַם חֲרָבָה וּשְׁעָרֶיהָ נִצְתוּ בְּאֵשׁ לְכוּ וְנִבְנָה אֶת חֹמַת יְרוּשָׁלַם וְלֹא נִהְיָה עוֹד חֲרָפָה. (יח) וְאָגִיד לָהֶם אֶת יְד אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר הִיא טוֹבָה עָלַי וְאֶף דְּבָרֵי הַמְּלֶכֶת אֲשֶׁר אָמַר לִי וַיֹּאמְרוּ נָקוּם וּבְנִינוּ וַיַּחֲזִקוּ יְדֵיהֶם לְטוֹבָה. (יט) וַיִּשְׁמַע סַנְבַלַט הַחֲרָנִי וְטַבְיָה הָעַבְדָּה הָעַמּוֹנִי וְגֶשֶׁם הָעַרְבִי וַיִּלְעָגוּ לָנוּ וַיִּבְזוּ עָלֵינוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ מָה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹשִׂים הֲעַל הַמְּלֶכֶת אַתֶּם מִרְדִּים. (כ) וְאָשִׁיב אוֹתָם דָּבָר וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא יַצְלִיחַ לָנוּ וְאַנְחָנוּ עֲבָדָיו נָקוּם וּבְנִינוּ וְלָכֶם אֵין חֵלֶק וְצִדְקָה וְזַכְרוֹן בִּירוּשָׁלַם.

**(16) ZECHARYAH 3:1 WITH RADAK**

(א) וַיִּרְאֵנִי אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל עֹמֵד לִפְנֵי מְלָאָךְ י"י וְהַשָּׁטָן עֹמֵד עַל יְמִינוֹ לְשֹׂטְנוֹ.

(1) He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Hashem, and Satan standing at his right hand to be his adversary.

ויראני – השטן משל לסנבלט וחבריו שהיו שוטנים אותם ומשביתים ממלאכתם.

“He showed me” – the Satan is a metaphor for Sanballat and his friends, who opposed them and stopped them from their work.

**(17) NACHEMIAH 13:28**

(כח) וּמִבְנֵי יוֹדָע בֶּן אֶלְיָשִׁיב הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל חָתָן לְסַנְבַלַט הַחֲרָנִי וְאַבְרָיִחָהוּ מְעָלִי.

(28) One of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I chased him from me.



## (18) DA'AT MIKRA NECHEMIAH 2:10 N. 1

1 א. סנבלט נזכר – כראש השומרונים גם בגמאי (–פירוסי) יב משנות 411–408. לפי 39, 30 Cowley Pap. היה סנבלט הפחה בשומרון. מגילת היחש שלו נתגלתה בשומרון. ראה עמ' 110–112, Cross FM Bib. Arch. 1963.  
 ב. את השם סנבלט יש גוזרים מסין אל הירח שמרכו פולחנו היה בחרן (פרוש השם באכדית: סין נתן חיים). מסתבר שסנבלט היה בן משפחה שומרנית, מאלה שקבלו את אמונת אלוהי ישראל, כפי שעולה משמות בניו (דליה ושלמיה, הנזכרים בגמאי יב), וכן מקשרי הנשואין שלו עם משפחת הכהן הגדול בירושלם (לקמן יג כח). ולדעת י"מ גרינץ היה סנבלט מחרן (פרקים בתולדות בית שני עמ' 37, הערה 10).

## (19) NECHEMIAH 6:15-19

(טו) נתשלם החומה בעשרים ונחמשה לאלול לחמשים ושנים יום. (טז) ויהי כאשר שמעו כל אויבינו ויראו כל הגוים אשר סביבתינו ויפלו מאד בעיניהם וידעו כי מאת אלהינו נעשתה המלאכה הזאת. (יז) גם בימים ההם מרבים חרי יהודה אגרותיהם הולכות על טוביה ואשר לטוביה פאות אליהם. (יח) כי רבים ביהודה בעלי שבועה לו כי תתן הוא לשכניה בן ארח ויהוהנן בנו לקח את בת משלם בן ברכיה. (יט) גם טובתיו היו אמרים לפני ודברי היו מוציאים לו אגרות שלח טוביה לראני.

(15) So the wall was finished in the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days. (16) It happened, when all our enemies heard of it, that all the nations that were about us feared, and were much cast down in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was worked of our God. (17) Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came to them. (18) For there were many in Judah sworn to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah; and his son Jehohanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah as wife. (19) Also they spoke of his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him. Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.

## (20) DA'AT MIKRA NECHEMIAH 2:10 N. 2

(אנציקלופדיה לחפירות ארכיאולוגיות עמ' 467). ולפי זה אפשר שאין 'העבד' בכתובנו לשון גנאי, אלא לשון 'עבד מלך', כלומר: שר אצל המלך הפרסי (?).  
 3 עי' לעיל עו' ז ט.

Based on this, it is possible that “the slave” in our verse is not disgraceful language, but rather the language of “the king’s servant,” meaning “an officer near the Persian king.”

## (21) R' DOV ZAKHEIM, *NEHEMIAH: STATESMAN AND SAGE*, P. 67-8

The term “servant” in this context indicates that he was a servant of the king, or a royal official... That Tobiah did not approach the king directly appears to indicate that he was a Jew with no formal office or that he was a non-Jewish aristocrat and governor who, through marriage, had undergone a form of conversion and had aligned himself with the Judean upper classes... In contemptuously labelling Tobiah a servant, Nehemiah was indicating that he was a renegade who practiced a syncretic form of Judaism that incorporated idolatrous practices.

(22) EZRA 4:7, 23

(ז) ובימי ארתחששתא כתב בשלם מתרדת טבאל ושאר כנותו על ארתחששתא מלך פרס וכתב הנשתון כתוב ארמית ומתרגם ארמית... (כג) אדון מן די פרשגן נשתונא די ארתחששתא מלכא קרי קדם רחום ושמי ספרא וכנתהון אלו בכהילו לירושלם על יהודגא ובטלו המו באדרע וקיל.

(7) In the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of his companions wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the text of the letter was written in Aramaic, and set forth in Aramaic... (23) Then when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went in haste to Jerusalem to the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power.

(23) DA'AT MIKRA EZRA 4:7

בְּתַחֲלַת מַלְכוּתוֹ, בְּיַמֵּי עֲזָרָא; שְׁהָרִי בִשְׁנַת עֶשְׂרִים	פְּתִיחָה (ו-ח)
לְאַרְתַּחֲשֶׁשְׁתָּא וְעָלָה נְחֶמְיָה וְרִשְׁיֹן מִפָּרֶשׁ בְּיָדוֹ	(ו) כְּתָבוּ שְׁטָנָה – וְלֹא פִרַשׁ מָהִי.
לְבָנוֹת אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. כָּתַב – לְשׁוֹן יְחִיד, כִּי בְּשֵׁלֶם	(ז) וּבְיַמֵּי אַרְתַּחֲשֶׁשְׁתָּא – צָרִיד לֹאמַר שְׁהָיָה זֶה

“In the days of Artachshasta” – We must say that this was in the beginning of his reign, in the days of Ezra, because in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artachshasta, Nechemiah went up with explicit permission in his hand to build Yerushalayim.

(24) DA'AT MIKRA NECHEMIAH 3:11

(יא) וְאָבּוֹא – מִן הָאָמּוֹר לְהֵלֶן וְטו יוֹצֵא שְׁנַת־מִיָּה  
 בָּא לְיְרוּשָׁלַיִם בְּרֵאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ אָב, בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם שָׁבוּ  
 בָּא עֲזָרָא לְפָנָיו.

“I arrived” – from Nechemiah 6:15, it follows that Nechemiah came to Yerushalayim on Rosh Chodesh Av, which was the very day that Ezra arrived before him.

(25) IBN EZRA NECHEMIAH 2:13

ומלשון חכמינו ז"ל סברא והטעם הייתי חושב ומעיין בחומות:

In the words of our Sages, we have “*s'vara*,” and the meaning is that “I thought and examined the walls.”

(26) MALBIM NECHEMIAH 2:13

"ואהי שבר," נראה שרצה לנסות אם החומה הישינה שנשארה חזקה שלא יצטרכו לסותרה, רק למלאות מקומות המפורצים

“And I broke” – It appears that he wished to test whether the remaining original wall was still strong, so that they would not need to demolish it, but only to fill the gaps...



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(27) DA'AT MIKRA NECHEMIAH 2:13 N. 8

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8 וכן בתה' קמו ה. ויש גורסים 'שבר' בשי"ן ימנית ופירושו שובר גושי מפולת כדי לסלול לו מעבר בניהם. ועי' בפירושו של ראב"ע.

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(28) RASHI NECHEMIAH 2:12-3

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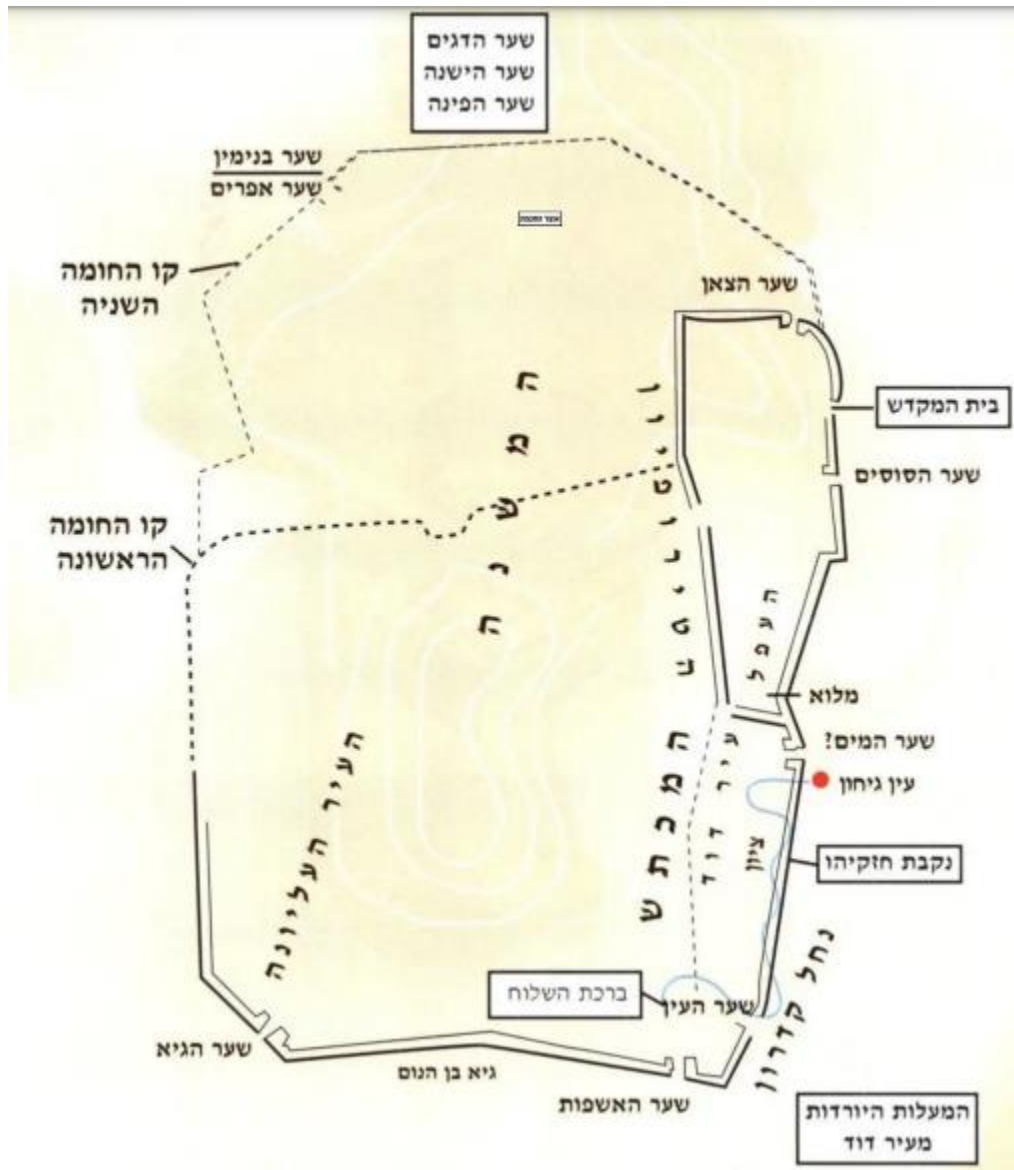
ובהמה אין עמי – כי כל האנשים מועטים אשר עמי הלכו ברגליהם אבל אני לבדי הייתי רוכב על בהמה שלא היו רוצים לרכוב על סוסיהם למען יהיו יוצאים מן העיר בצינעא בלא ידיעת אדם והם הלכו לשבור ולהפיל חומות העיר בלילה ולהרבות פרצותיה למען יהיו בני העיר למחר להוטים ומסכימים בעצה אחת עם נחמיה לבנות חומות העיר, וכן מוכיח המעשה בתוך הפרשה...

והייתי פורץ בחומה והחומה היתה נוחה להפילה ולפרוץ בה לפי שהיתה שרופה באש.

(12) “And there were no animals with me” - The few men who were with me went by foot and I alone rode on an animal. They did not ride their horses because they wanted to leave the city in secret, without anyone knowing. They went to break and cast down the walls of the city at night and to increase their breaches in order that on the morrow, the people of the city would be eager and agree unanimously with Nehemiah to build the walls of the city. So it appears from the text...

And I broke the wall, and the wall was easily cast down and broken because it had been burned with fire.

(29) DA'AT MIKRA ATLAS, P. 317



(30) IBN EZRA NECHEMIAH 2:20

אינכם ראויים שתעשו צדקה בבנין ביתו שתהיו נזכרים לפניו:

You are not worthy that you should do righteousness in building His house, so that you should be mentioned before Him.

## FURTHER READING

### (31) ROSH HASHANAH 4A

(אמר) רב יוסף ואיתימא רבי יצחק מנלו דאחמיץ מהקא {נחמיה ב'ו'} ניאמר לי המלך והשגל יושבת אצלו מאי שגל אמר רבה בר לימא משמיה דרב כלבתא...  
 ...

### (32) TEMPLE PAPYRUS (FROM ELEPHANTINE)

destroyed, and all the men <sup>17</sup> who had sought to do evil to that temple, all *of them*, were killed and we saw (our desire) upon them. Also before this, at the time when this evil <sup>18</sup> was done to us, we sent a letter *to your* lordship and to Johanan the high priest and his colleagues the priests who are in Jerusalem, and to Ostanēs the brother <sup>19</sup> of 'Anani, and the nobles of the Jews. They have not sent any letter to us. Also since the month of Tammuz in the 14th year of Darius the king <sup>20</sup> till this day we wear sack-cloth and fast. Our wives are made widow-like, we do not anoint ourselves with oil <sup>21</sup> and we drink no wine. Also from that (time) till (the present) day in the 17th year of Darius the king, neither meal-offering, incense, nor sacrifice <sup>22</sup> do they offer in that temple. Now your servants Yedoniah and his colleagues and the Jews, all *of them* inhabitants of Yeb, say as follows: <sup>23</sup> If it seem good to your lordship, take thought for that temple to build (it), since they do not allow us to build it. Look upon your <sup>24</sup> well-wishers and friends who are here in Egypt, (and) let a letter be sent from you to them concerning the temple of the God Ya'u <sup>25</sup> to build it in the fortress of Yeb as it was built before, and they shall offer the meal-offering and incense and sacrifice <sup>26</sup> on the altar of the God Ya'u on your behalf, and we will pray for you at all times, we, our wives, our children, and the Jews, <sup>27</sup> all who are here, if they do so that that temple be re-built, and it shall be a merit to you before Ya'u the God of <sup>28</sup> Heaven more than a man who offers to him sacrifice and burnt-offerings worth as much as the sum of a thousand talents. As to gold, about this <sup>29</sup> we have sent (and) given instructions. Also the whole matter we have set forth in a letter in our name to Delaiah and Shelemiah the sons of Sanballat governor of Samaria. <sup>30</sup> Also of all this which was done to us Arsames knew nothing. On the 20th of Marheshwan the 17th year of Darius the king.

### (33) MOREH NEVUCHIM 3:8

I have also a reason and cause for calling our language the holy language—do not think it is exaggeration or error on my part, it is perfectly correct—the Hebrew language has no special name for the organ of generation in females or in males, nor for the act of generation itself, nor for semen, nor for secretion. The Hebrew has no original expressions for these things, and only describes them in figurative language and by way of hints, as if to indicate thereby that these things should not be mentioned, and should therefore have no names; we ought to be silent about them, and when we are compelled to mention them, we must manage to employ for that purpose some suitable expressions, although these are generally used in a different sense. Thus the organ of generation in males is called in Hebrew gid, which is a figurative term, reminding of the

words, "And thy neck is an iron sinew" (gid) (Isa. 48:4). It is also called shupka, "pouring out" (Deut. 23:2), on account of its function. The female organ is called kobah (Num. 25:8), from kobah (Deut. 18:3), which denotes "stomach"; rehem, "womb," is the inner organ in which the foetus develops; zoah (Isa. 28:8), "refuse," is derived from the verb yaʒa, "he went out"; for "urine" the phrase meme raglayim, "the water of the feet" (2 Kings. 18:17), is used; semen is expressed by shikbat zera', "a layer of seed." For the act of generation there is no expression whatever in Hebrew: it is described by the following words only: ba'al, "he was master"; shakab, "he lay"; laḳah, "he took"; gillah 'ervah, "he uncovered the nakedness." Be not misled by the word yishgalannah (Deut. 28:30), to take it as denoting that act: this is not the case, for shegal denotes a female ready for cohabitation. Comp. "Upon thy right hand did stand the maiden" (shegal) "in gold of Ophir" (Ps. 45:10). Yishgalannah, according to the Kethib, denotes therefore "he will take the female for the purpose of cohabitation."

<https://etzion.org.il/en/tanakh/ketuvim/sefer-nechemia/nechemia-chapter-2-fateful-request>

## OUTLINE

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