



## Book of Failure? 2:30 PM: Yehoshaphat: Strange Bedfellows

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*Dedicated in memory of HaRav Pesach ben Avraham Moshe HaKohen  
Dedicated by Shayna & Lazer Friedman in memory of Shayna's father,  
HaRav Yechiel Michel ben HaRav Eliezer Lipa z"l*



### 1. Midrash, Avot d'Rabbi Natan I 9

ואל תתחבר לרשע מלמד שלא יתחבר אדם עם אדם רע ולא עם אדם רשע שכן מצינו ביהושפט שנתחבר עם אחאב ועלה עמו רמות גלעד ויצא עליו קצף מאת ד' [שנאמר "הלרשע לעזור ולשוואי ד' תאהב ובזאת עליך קצף מלפני ד'"] (דה"י ב' י"ט ב') שוב נתחבר לאחזיה ויעשו אניות בעציון גבר [ ופרץ ד' את מעשיו שנאמר בהתחברך עם אחזיה פרץ ד' את מעשיך וישברו אניות (דה"י ב' כ' ל"ז). ]

"And do not join with the wicked" – This teaches that one should not join with a bad person or a wicked person. For so we found with Yehoshaphat that he joined with Achav and ascended with him to Ramot Gilad and Divine anger burst out against him [as Divrei haYamim II 19:2 says, "Would you aid the wicked, and love those who hate Gd? And because of this, Divine wrath is against you." Again, he joined Achaziah and they made boats in Etzion Gaver, and Hashem smashed his creations, as Divrei haYamim II 20:37 says, "'When you joined with Achaziah, Gd smashed your creations,' and the boats were broken."

### Asa, per Divrei haYamim (Chronicles)

#### 2. Divrei haYamim II 14:1-3, 8-10 (tr. JPS 1985, from sefaria.org)

Asa did what was good and pleasing to the Lord his Gd. He abolished the alien altars and shrines; he smashed the pillars and cut down the sacred posts. He ordered Judah to turn to the Lord Gd of their fathers and to observe the Teaching and the Commandment...

Zerah the Cushite marched out against them with an army of a thousand thousand and 300 chariots. When he reached Mareshah, Asa confronted him, and the battle lines were drawn in the valley of Zephath by Mareshah. Asa called to the Lord his Gd, and said, "O Lord, it is all the same to You to help the numerous and the powerless. Help us, O Lord our Gd, for we rely on You, and in Your name we have come against this great multitude. You are the Lord our Gd. Let no mortal hinder You."....

#### 3. Divrei haYamim II 15:1-2, 8-9, 14-15 (tr. JPS 1985, from sefaria.org)

The spirit of Gd came upon Azariah son of Oded. He came to Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin; the Lord is with you as long as you are with Him. If you turn to Him, He will respond to you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you....

When Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage and removed the abominations from the entire land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities that he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim. He restored the altar of the Lord in front of the porch of the Lord. He assembled all the people of Judah and Benjamin and those people of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who sojourned among them, for many in Israel had thrown in their lot with him when they saw that the Lord his Gd was with him....

So they took an oath to the Lord in a loud voice and with shouts, with trumpeting and blasts of the horn. All Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they swore with all their heart and sought Him with all their will. He responded to them and gave them respite on every side....

#### 4. Divrei haYamim II 16:1-3, 7-12 (tr. JPS 1985, from sefaria.org)

In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, King Baasha of Israel marched against Judah and built up Ramah to block all movement of King Asa of Judah. Asa took all the silver and gold from the treasuries of the House of the Lord and the royal palace, and sent them to King Ben-hadad of Aram, who resided in Damascus, with this message: "There is a pact between me and you, as there was between my father and your father. I herewith send you silver and gold; go and break your pact with King Baasha of Israel so that he may withdraw from me."...

At that time, Hanani the seer came to King Asa of Judah and said to him, "Because you relied on the king of Aram and did not rely on the Lord your Gd, therefore the army of the king of Aram has slipped out of your hands. The Cushites and Lybians were a mighty army with chariots and horsemen in very great numbers, yet because you relied on the Lord He delivered them into your hands. For the eyes of the Lord range over the entire earth, to give support to those who

are wholeheartedly with Him. You have acted foolishly in this matter, and henceforth you will be beset by wars." Asa was vexed at the seer and put him into the stocks, for he was furious with him because of that. Asa inflicted cruelties on some of the people at that time. The acts of Asa, early and late, are recorded in the annals of the kings of Judah and Israel. In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa suffered from an acute foot ailment; but ill as he was, he still did not turn to the Lord but to physicians.

Yehoshaphat, per Divrei haYamim (Chronicles)

5. The Jewish Utopia <https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/919012/>

6. Divrei haYamim II 17:1-10 (tr. JPS 1985, from sefaria.org)

His son Jehoshaphat succeeded him as king, and took firm hold of Israel. He stationed troops in all the fortified towns of Judah, and stationed garrisons throughout the land of Judah and the cities of Ephraim which his father Asa had captured. The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the earlier ways of his father David, and did not worship the Baalim, but worshiped the Gd of his father and followed His commandments—unlike the behavior of Israel. So the Lord established the kingdom in his hands, and all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat. He had wealth and glory in abundance. His mind was elevated in the ways of the Lord. Moreover, he abolished the shrines and the sacred posts from Judah. In the third year of his reign he sent his officers Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah throughout the cities of Judah to offer instruction. With them were the Levites, Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah and Tob-adonijah the Levites; with them were Elishama and Jehoram the priests. They offered instruction throughout Judah, having with them the Book of the Teaching of the Lord. They made the rounds of all the cities of Judah and instructed the people. A terror of the Lord seized all the kingdoms of the lands around Judah, and they did not go to war with Jehoshaphat...

7. Divrei haYamim II 18:1-6 (tr. JPS 1985, from sefaria.org)

So Jehoshaphat had wealth and honor in abundance, and he allied himself by marriage to Ahab. After some years had passed, he came to visit Ahab at Samaria. Ahab slaughtered sheep and oxen in abundance for him and for the people with him, and persuaded him to march against Ramoth-gilead. King Ahab of Israel said to King Jehoshaphat of Judah, "Will you accompany me to Ramoth-gilead?" He answered him, "I will do what you do; my troops shall be your troops and shall accompany you in battle." Jehoshaphat then said to the king of Israel, "But first inquire for the word of the Lord." So the king of Israel gathered the prophets, four hundred men, and asked them, "Shall I march upon Ramoth-gilead for battle, or shall I not?" "March," they said, "and Gd will deliver it into the king's hands." Then Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there not another prophet of the Lord here through whom we can inquire?"...

8. Divrei haYamim II 19:1-4 (tr. JPS 1985, from sefaria.org)

King Jehoshaphat of Judah returned safely to his palace, to Jerusalem. Jehu son of Hanani the seer went out to meet King Jehoshaphat and said to him, "Should one give aid to the wicked and befriend those who hate the Lord? For this, wrath is upon you from the Lord. However, there is some good in you, for you have purged the land of the sacred posts and have dedicated yourself to worship Gd." Jehoshaphat remained in Jerusalem a while and then went out among the people from Beer-sheba to the hill country of Ephraim; he brought them back to the Lord Gd of their fathers....

9. Divrei haYamim II 20:1-23, 35-37 (tr. JPS 1985, from sefaria.org)

After that, Moabites, Ammonites, together with some Ammonim, came against Jehoshaphat to wage war. The report was brought to Jehoshaphat: "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Aram, and is now in Hazazon-tamar"—that is, Ein-gedi. Jehoshaphat was afraid; he decided to resort to the Lord and proclaimed a fast for all Judah. Judah assembled to beseech the Lord. They also came from all the towns of Judah to seek the Lord. Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem in the House of the Lord at the front of the new court. He said, "Lord Gd of our fathers, truly You are the Gd in heaven and You rule over the kingdoms of the nations; power and strength are Yours; none can oppose You. O our Gd, you dispossessed the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and You gave it to the descendants of Your friend Abraham forever. They settled in it and in it built for You a House for Your name. They said, 'Should misfortune befall us—the punishing sword, pestilence, or famine, we shall stand before

this House and before You—for Your name is in this House—and we shall cry out to You in our distress, and You will listen and deliver us.’ Now the people of Ammon, Moab, and the hill country of Seir, into whose [land] You did not let Israel come when they came from Egypt, but they turned aside from them and did not wipe them out, these now repay us by coming to expel us from Your possession which You gave us as ours. O our Gd, surely You will punish them, for we are powerless before this great multitude that has come against us, and do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You.” All Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones, their womenfolk, and their children. Then in the midst of the congregation the spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah son of Benaiah son of Jeiel son of Mattaniah the Levite, of the sons of Asaph, and he said, “Give heed, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat; thus said the Lord to you, ‘Do not fear or be dismayed by this great multitude, for the battle is Gd’s, not yours. March down against them tomorrow as they come up by the Ascent of Ziz; you will find them at the end of the wadi in the direction of the wilderness of Jeruel. It is not for you to fight this battle; stand by, wait, and witness your deliverance by the Lord, O Judah and Jerusalem; do not fear or be dismayed; go forth to meet them tomorrow and the Lord will be with you.’” Jehoshaphat bowed low with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem threw themselves down before the Lord to worship the Lord. Levites of the sons of Kohath and of the sons of Korah got up to extol the Lord Gd of Israel at the top of their voices. Early the next morning they arose and went forth to the wilderness of Tekoa. As they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: Trust firmly in the Lord your Gd and you will stand firm; trust firmly in His prophets and you will succeed.” After taking counsel with the people, he stationed singers to the Lord extolling the One majestic in holiness as they went forth ahead of the vanguard, saying, “Praise the Lord, for His steadfast love is eternal.” As they began their joyous shouts and hymns, the Lord set ambushes for the men of Amon, Moab, and the hill country of Seir, who were marching against Judah, and they were routed. The Ammonites and Moabites turned against the men of the hill country of Seir to exterminate and annihilate them. When they had made an end of the men of Seir, each helped to destroy his fellow... Afterward, King Jehoshaphat of Judah entered into a partnership with King Ahaziah of Israel, thereby acting wickedly. He joined with him in constructing ships to go to Tarshish; the ships were constructed in Ezion-geber. Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, “As you have made a partnership with Ahaziah, the Lord will break up your work.” The ships were wrecked and were unable to go to Tarshish.

10. Rabbi Alex Israel, <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/shiur-29-chapter-22-%D6%A0yehoshafat-king-yehuda>

Chapter 17 of Divrei Ha-yamim lists several aspects of Yehoshafat's reign:

- 17:5 Wealth
- 17:7-9 Spreading Torah study nationally
- 17:10-11 Regional Power
- 17:12 Building projects
- 17:13 Industry and GNP
- 17:14-19 A huge, organised army

With all the impressive details, one gains an understanding that Yehoshafat's reign is reminiscent of Shlomo's (except that he didn't fall at all into the trap of avoda zara). Maybe this also explains his desire to unify the nation with his alliance with Achav and later Achazyahu. He saw the country returning to its heyday, and the natural thing to do in this environment was to unify. Hence his son's marriage to Achav's daughter.

11. Midrash, Seder Olam 16

כנגד ל"ו שנה שנתחתן שלמה בבת פרעה מלך מצרים, וכנגד ל"ו שנה שנגזרה על מלכות בית דוד שתחלק, ובאחרונה עתידה שתחזור להם  
Parallel to the 36 years Solomon was married to the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh, and parallel to the 36 years decreed for the monarchy of David's house to be split, in the end to return to them.

### The Impact

12. Yeshayah 7:7-9 (tr. JPS 1985, from sefaria.org)

(ז) פה אָמַר ד' אלקים לא תקום ולא תהיה: (ח) כי ראש אָרָם דְּמִשְׁק וְרֹאשׁ דְּמִשְׁק רְצִין וּבְעוֹד שְׁשִׁים וְחָמֵשׁ שָׁנָה יִסַּח אֲפָרַיִם מֵעַם: (ט) וְרֹאשׁ אֲפָרַיִם שְׁמֵרוֹן וְרֹאשׁ שְׁמֵרוֹן בֶּן רְמִלְיָהוּ אִם לֹא תֵאֱמִינוּ כִּי לֹא תֵאֱמַנּוּ:

Thus said my Lord Gd: It shall not succeed, It shall not come to pass. For the chief city of Aram is Damascus, And the chief of Damascus is Rezin; The chief city of Ephraim is Samaria, And the chief of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. And in another sixty-five years, Ephraim shall be shattered as a people. If you will not believe, for you cannot be trusted..."

13. Rabbis Yoel bin Nun and Benny Lau, **כצפרים עפות** pg. 116

בעיני הנביא, אחז לא היה אלא חוליה בשרשרת. הוא ראה את כיסא דוד לדורותיו ואת הבטחת ד' לדוד כי איש שאינו מזרעו לא ישב על כיסא מלכות בירושלים. הנביא ביקש כעת מאחז, נציג בית דוד, להחזיק בכיסא באמונה. כשם ש"ראש ארם דמשק" ו"ראש אפרים שומרון" כך "ראש יהודה – ירושלים". ירושלים שד' בחר בה תהיה ביתו של מלך מבית דוד, אך ברית זו מותנית במבחן האמונה של היושב על כיסא המלכות: "אם לא תאמינו – כי לא תאמנו."

In the eyes of the prophet, Achaz was only a link in a chain. He saw David's throne across generations, and Gd's promise to David that no one other than his progeny would sit on the throne in Jerusalem. Now the prophet asked of Achaz, representative of the house of David, to hold the throne faithfully. Just as "the head of Aram is Damascus" and "the head of Ephraim is Samaria", so "the head of Judea – is Jerusalem". Jerusalem, which Hashem chose, will be the home of the Davidic monarch, but this covenant is contingent upon the test of faith of the one who sits on the royal throne: "If you will not believe – you will not endure."

### Review Questions

Besides Yehoshaphat, name three kings of Yehudah who pursued alliances with other nations for wealth or war.

What was Chanani the Prophet's criticism of King Asa?

In what three ways did King Yehoshaphat attempt to make alliances with the Northern Kingdom?

What might have been King Yehoshaphat's overall goal for these alliances?