

### Book of Failure? 11:00 AM: Shaul 1: Would You Wait For Me?

BET MORASH ZICHRO

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Dedicated in memory of HaRav Pesach ben Avraham Moshe HaKohen

Dedicated by Rikki Blitt in honor of Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Dedicated by Jeffrey Silver in celebration of the birth of his granddaughter, Sarena Bayla

# 1. Moshe Halbertal and Stephen Holmes, The Beginning of Politics, pg. 26

Turning worthy ends into disposable means, including the instrumentalization of religion and the sacred by rivals for power, is a central theme in Samuel, and it surfaces already in this short and harsh encounter. An offering has to be sacrificed before the battle. The king, who in the new dispensation has been divested of any significant religious role, has been made dependent on the comings and goings of the prophet, who had insisted that he must preside personally over the offering. The prophet's claim to an exclusive role in religious ritual became a tool to be used in a competitive struggle manipulated by the personally embittered prophet. Samuel used this presumptive monopoly over ritual sacrifices to shake the throne of the anointed king.

2. Audio recordings on the Book of Shemuel <a href="https://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=81072&collection=7391">https://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=81072&collection=7391</a>

### **Background**

### 3. Devarim 17:14-15

כִּי תָבא אָל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ד' אלקיך נֹתֵן לָךּ וִירְשְׁתָּהּ וְיָשַׁבְתָּה בָּהּ וְאָמַרְתָּ אָשִׁימָה עָלִי מֶלֶךְ כְּכֶל הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתִי: שׁוֹם תָּשִׁים עָלֶיךּ מֶלֶר... אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ד' אלקיך בּוֹ מִקֶּרֶב אַחֶיךּ תָּשִׁים עָלֶידְ מֶלֶךְ...

When you arrive in the land Hashem your Gd is giving you, and you take it and settle in it, and you shall say: I will place a king upon myself, like all of the nations around me. You shall surely place upon yourself a king whom Hashem your Gd will choose. From among your brethren you shall place a king upon yourself...

### 4. Rabbeinu Nisim, Derashot haRan 11

שהם ראו שמה שצריך לסידור המדיני, יהיה מתוקן כשימשך מצד המלכות משימשך מצד השופט... ואילו שאלו להם מלך בסתם שיאמרם "שימה לנו מלך", או שיבקשוהו לסיבת תיקון מלחמותיהם, לא ימצא להם בדבר הזה עון או חטא, אבל מצוה. אך היה חטאתם באמרם "שימה לנו מלך לשפטנו ככל הגוים," שרצו שיהיו משפטיהם נמשכים מצד המלכות, לא מצד שופטי התורה. ויורה על זה מה שכתוב אחריו (שם ו) "וירע הדבר בעיני שמואל כאשר אמרו תנה לנו מלך לשפטנו," לא אמר "כאשר אמרו תנה לנו מלך בלבד... ומפני זה אמר ד' לשמואל "לא אותך מאסו כי אותי מאסו ממלוך עליהם" (שם ז), כי הם בוחרים בתיקון ענינם הטבעי, משיחול בהם ענין האלקי. Had they asked for a king in general, saying, "Place a king upon us," or had they asked for the sake of battle, there would have been neither guilt nor sin in this, but a mitzvah. Their sin was only in saying, "Place a king upon us to judge us, like all of the nations," wanting their judgment to flow from the throne, not from judges of Torah. We see this in 8:6, in which it did not say, "As they said: Place a king upon us" alone... And therefore Gd said to Shemuel, "They did not reject you, but they rejected Me from reigning over them," for they chose natural running of their affairs, as opposed to Divine control.

#### 5. Shemuel 19:2

:וְלוֹ הָיָה בֵן וּשְׁמוֹ שָׁאוּל בָּחוּר וָטוֹב וְאֵין אִישׁ מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל טוֹב מִמֶּנוּ מִשְׁלְה גָּבֹהַ מִכְּל הָעָם: And [Kish] had a son named Shaul – choice and good, and no Israelite man was better, from his shoulders and up he was taller than the entire nation.

### 6. Shemuel I 10:8

:וְיָרַדְתָּ לְפָנֵי הַגִּלְגָּל וְהְנֵּה אָנֹכִי יֹרֵד אֵלֶיךּ לְהַעֲלוֹת עֹלוֹת לוְבַּח זַבְחֵי שְׁלָמִים שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תּוֹחֵל עַד בּוֹאִי אֵלֶיךּ וְהוֹדַעְתִּי לְךּ אֵת אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה. And you shall descend before me to Gilgal, and I will descend to you to elevate burnt offerings, to slaughter *shelamim*. Seven days you shall wait until I come to you, and I will tell you what you shall do.

### The Scene of the Crime

## 7. Shemuel I 13:8-14 (tr. JPS 1985, from sefaria.org)

(ח) וַיּוֹחֶל שָׁבְעַת יָמִים לַמּוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר שְׁמוּאֵל וְלֹא בָא שְׁמוּאֵל הַגּּלְגָּל וַיָּפֶץ הָעָם מֵעָלִיו: (ט) וַיּאמֶר שָׁאוּל הַגִּשׁוּ אֵלֵי הָעֹלָה וְהַשְּׁלָמִים וַיַּעַל הָעֹלָה: (י) וַיְּהֹי פְּכַלֹּתוֹ לְהַעֲלוֹת הָעֹלָה וְהָנֵּה שְׁמוּאֵל בָּא וַיֵּצֵא שָׁאוּל לְקְרָאתוֹ לְבָרְכוֹ: (יא) וַיּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל מָה עָשִׁית שָׁאוּל כִּי רָאִיתִי כִי נָפַץ הָעָם מֵעָלִי וְאַהָּה לֹא בָאתָ לְמוֹעֵד הַיָּמִים וּפְלִשְׁתִּים נָאֱסָפִים מִכְמָשׁ: (יב) וָאֹמֵר עַהָּה וֵרְדוּ פְלִשְׁתִּים אֵלִי וְּפָנֵי ד' לֹא חִלִּיתִי וָאֶתְאַפַּק נָא שְׁמִלְכִתְּהְ אֶׁל שָׁאוּל נָסְכָּלְתָּ לֹא שָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת מִצְוַת ד' אֱלֹקֵיךְ אֲשֶׁר צְּוָּךְ כִּי עַתָּה הַכִין ד' אֶת מִמְלַכְתְּהְ אֵל יִשְׁרָאֵל עַד עוֹלְם: (יִר) וַעַּהָה מֵמְלַכְתִּהְ לֹא תַקּוֹם בִּקְשׁ ד' לוֹ אִישׁ כִּלְבַבוֹ וַיִצְנָהוּ ד' לְנַגִיד עַל עַמוֹ כִי לֹא שַׁמְרָתְּ אָת אֲשֵׁר צְוָךְ ד':

He waited seven days, the time that Samuel [had set]. But when Samuel failed to come to Gilgal, and the people began to scatter, Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the sacrifice of well-being"; and he presented the burnt offering. He had just finished presenting the burnt offering when Samuel arrived; and Saul went out to meet him and welcome him. But Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul replied, "I saw the people leaving me and scattering; you had not come at the appointed time, and the Philistines had gathered at Michmas. I thought the Philistines would march down against me at Gilgal before I had entreated the Lord, so I forced myself to present the burnt offering." Samuel answered Saul, "You acted foolishly in not keeping the commandments that the Lord your Gd laid upon you! Otherwise the Lord would have established your dynasty over Israel forever. But now your dynasty will not endure. The Lord will seek out a man after His own heart, and the Lord will appoint him ruler over His people, because you did not abide by what the Lord had commanded you."

### 8. Abarbanel to Shemuel I 13:11-12

האחת לפי שהוא שמואל לא בא "למועד הימים", והוא מועד השבעת ימים אשר אמר לו שיוחיל עד בואו. והשנית שפלשתים נאספים מכמש והעם היה נפץ מעליו. הסבה השלישית שפחד אולי ירדו פלשתים אליו הגלגל, ולפי שפני ד' לא חלה והיה מוכן להענש אם לא יתדבק בקל יתברך, לכן העלה העולות, כי היו הקרבנות אמצעי וסבה גדול להדבק בד' יתברך.

First, because he, Shemuel, did not come "on the appointed day," the occasion of the seven days he had told him to wait for his arrival. Second, the Plishtim were gathering in Michmas, and the nation was scattering from him. And third, he feared that the Plishtim might descend to him in Gilgal, and because he had not appealed to Gd and he was set to be punished if he would not stick to Gd, therefore he brought the korbanot; the korbanot were a medium and great catalyst for sticking to Gd.

#### Who failed?

### 9. Shemuel I 15:35

יַלא יָסַף שְׁמוּאֵל לְרְאוֹת אֶת שָׁאוּל עַד יוֹם מוֹתוֹ כִּי הָתְאַבֵּל שְׁמוּאֵל אָל שָׁאוּל וַד' נָחָם כִּי הִמְלִיךְ אֶת שָׁאוּל עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל: And Shemuel did not see Shaul anymore, until the day of his death, for Shemuel mourned Shaul...

### 10. Rashi to Shemuel I 13:14

שכן אמר משה בתורה "לבלתי סור מן המצוה ימין ושמאל למען יאריך ימים וגו" (דברים י"ז כ') - הא אם סר לא יאריך ימים. For so said Moshe, "Not to stray from the mitzvah, right or left, so that he will have a long reign etc." (Devarim 17:20) – so if he strayed, he would not have a long reign.

## 11. Abarbanel to Shemuel I 13:13

ולפי שעבר על דברי הנביא היה חייב מיתה, כמו שאמר (דברים י"ח י"ט) "והיה האיש אשר לא ישמע אל דברי הנביא אשר ידבר בשמי אנכי אדרוש מעמו," כל שכן שהיה סבת זה אליו מיעוט האמנה והנטיה ממצות הקל יתברך. והענין דומה לענין עוזא ששלח ידו בארון האלהים

Because he violated the words of the prophet, he was liable for death, as Devarim 18:19 says, "And the one who does not listen to the words of the prophet who speaks in My Name, I will punish him." Certainly when this was caused by lack of faith and straying from the command of Gd. It is like Uza, when he extended his hand to the Ark of Gd...

### **Review Questions**

What was Shaul's mistake? What was Shaul's justification? Why was Shaul punished so harshly?