

TANACH

BOOK OF ILLNESS AND HEALING

ILLNESS AS EDUCATION

- 9:30 AM **Illness as Punishment?**
Rabbi Alex Hecht
- 10:00 AM **The Humbling of King Chizkiyahu**
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner
- 10:30 AM **Yaakov Will Never Walk Alone**
Netanel Klein
- 11:00 AM **When Miriam had to Quarantine**
Miriam Bessin

ACTS OF HEALING

- 11:30 AM **Bittersweet Medicine**
Rabbi Sammy Bergman
- 12:00 PM **When Eliyahu Cured Shaul**
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner
- 12:30 PM **The Healer and the Healed**
Mrs. Lori Grysman

ROYAL ILLNESS

- 7:00 PM **Saul: Interface of Psychology and Theology**
Rabbi Dr. Moshe Yeres
- 7:30 PM **King Asa – the Doctor King?**
Rabbi Chaim Metzger
- 8:00 PM **Nevuchadnezzar: Man, Tree, Beast**
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD

- 8:30 PM **The Ark Affliction**
Rabbi Sammy Bergman
- 9:00 PM **Biblical Blindness and Benevolent Blessings**
Rabbi Seth Grauer
- 9:30 PM **The Healing Power of the Jordan?**
Ezer Diena



Sunday, December 27, 2020 9:30 AM–1 PM & 7–10 PM

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ILLNESS AS EDUCATION

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- 11** 10:30 AM **Yaakov Will Never Walk Alone** *Netanel Klein*
- 18** 11:00 AM **When Miriam Had to Quarantine** *Miriam Bessin*

ACTS OF HEALING

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- 25** 12:00 PM **When Eliyahu Cured Shaul** *R' Mordechai Torczyner*
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ROYAL ILLNESS

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THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD

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9:30 AM

ILLNESS AS PUNISHMENT?

R' Alex Hecht ahlecht@torontotorah.com



ILLNESS IN THE TOCHACHAH

1. Vayikra 26:15-16 (Judaica Press translation)

(טו) וְאִם בְּחִקְתִּי תִמְאָסוּ וְאִם אֶת מִשְׁפָּטַי תִּגְעַל נִפְשְׁכֶם לְבַלְתִּי עֲשׂוֹת אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתַי לְהַפְרֹכֶם אֶת בְּרִיתִי: (טז) אִף אֲנִי אֶעֱשֶׂה זֹאת לָכֶם וְהִפְקַדְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם בְּהִלָּה אֶת הַשְּׁחִפָּת וְאֶת הַקְּדַחַת מְכֻלוֹת עֵינַיִם וּמַדִּיבַת נֶפֶשׁ וְזִרְעַתֶּם לְרִיק וְזִרְעֵכֶם וְאֶכְלָהוּ אֲבִיכֶם.

And if you despise My statutes and reject My ordinances, not performing any of My commandments, thereby breaking My covenant, then I too, will do the same to you; I will order upon you shock, consumption, fever, and diseases that cause hopeless longing and depression. You will sow your seed in vain, and your enemies will eat it.

2. Devarim 28:58-60 (Judaica Press translation)

(נח) אִם לֹא תִשְׁמָר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת כָּל דְּבַרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת הַכְּתוּבִים בְּסֵפֶר הַזֶּה לִירְאָה אֶת הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבָּד וְהַנּוֹרָא הַזֶּה אֶת יְקֹנֶךָ אֶלְקִיךָ: (נט) וְהִפְלֵא יְקֹנֶךָ אֶת מַכְתָּרְךָ וְאֶת מַכּוֹת זִרְעֶךָ מַכּוֹת גְּדֻלַּת וְנֹאֲמָנוֹת וְחִלִּים רַעִים וְנֹאֲמָנִים: (ס) וְהִשִּׁיב בְּךָ אֶת כָּל מַדּוּה מִצָּרִים אֲשֶׁר יִגְרֹת מִפְּנֵיהֶם וְדָבְקוּ בְּךָ.

If you do not observe to fulfill all the words of this Torah, which are written in this scroll, to fear this glorious and awesome name, the Lord, your G-d, Then the Lord [will bring upon] you and your offspring uniquely [horrible] plagues, terrible and unyielding plagues, and evil and unyielding sicknesses. And He will bring back upon you all the diseases of Egypt which you dreaded, and they will cling to you.

3. Rashi to Devarim 28:59 (Judaica Press translation)

“הִפְלֵא יְקֹנֶךָ אֶת מַכְתָּרְךָ” - מַפְלְאוֹת וּמַכְבְּדוֹת מִשְׁאָר מַכּוֹת.

“Then the Lord will bring upon you... plagues” - [The Lord will bring upon you plagues which are more] remarkable and different from any other plagues.

“וְנֹאֲמָנוֹת” - לִיִּסְרָף, לְקִיָּם שְׁלִיחוֹתָן.

“Unyielding” - [Literally, “faithful.” I.e., these plagues will “faithfully”] chastise you in order to fulfill their mission.

4. Rashi to Devarim 28:60 (Judaica Press translation)

“אֲשֶׁר יִגְרֹת מִפְּנֵיהֶם” - מִפְּנֵי הַמַּכּוֹת. כְּשֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל רוֹאִין מַכּוֹת מִשְׁנוֹת הַבָּאוֹת עַל מִצְרַיִם, הָיוּ יִרְאִים מֵהֶם שְׁלֵא יָבֹאוּ גַם עֲלֵיהֶם. תִּדְעַ שְׁכֵן כְּתוּב “אִם שָׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמַע וְגו'” כָּל הַמַּחְלָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא אֲשִׁים עֲלֵיךָ” (שְׁמוֹת ט”ו) – אִין מִירְאִין אֶת הָאֲדָם אֶלָּא בְּדָבָר שֶׁהוּא יְגוֹר מִמֶּנּוּ.

“Which you dreaded” - [You dreaded] those diseases [not that you dreaded Egypt]. When Israel saw the extraordinary plagues that befell Egypt, they were afraid of them, i.e., they were afraid that these plagues would befall them too. You should know, [that the Israelites dreaded the plagues of Egypt,] because it is written, “If you hearken... all the sickness that I have visited upon Egypt, I will not visit upon you” (Shemot 15:26) [implying that if you do not hearken, I will place them upon you! Since Israel feared those plagues, G-d used them as a threat, because] one can instill fear into a person only through something he fears.

NO DEATH WITHOUT SIN?

5. Talmud, Shabbat 55a (Koren translation)

אָמַר רַב אַמִּי: אִין מִיתָה בְּלֹא חַטָּא, וְאִין יְסוּרִין בְּלֹא עוֹן.

Rav Ami said: There is no death without sin, and there is no suffering without iniquity.

6. Talmud, Shabbat 55b (Koren translation)

אָמְרוּ לוֹ: וְהֵלֵא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן שֶׁקִּיְמוּ כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כְּלָהּ, וּמֵתוּ! אָמַר לָהֶם: "מִקְרָה אֶחָד לְצַדִּיק וְלְרָשָׁע לְטוֹב וְגוֹ!"

[The ministering angels] said to Him: Didn't Moses and Aaron, who observed the whole Torah in its entirety, nevertheless die? [G-d] said to them [citing the verse: "All things come alike to all;] there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good..." (Kohelet 9:2).

7. Talmud, Shabbat 55b (Koren translation)

הוּא דְאָמַר כִּי הָאִי תִנָּא, דְתַנִּיא, רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן אֶלְעָזָר אוֹמַר: אִפִּי מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן בְּחַטָּאָם מֵתוּ, שְׁנֵאמַר: "יַעַן לֹא הֶאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי". הָא הֶאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי — עֵדִין לֹא הִגִּיעַ זְמַנְכֶם לִפְטֹר מִן הָעוֹלָם...

[Rav Ami] stated [his position] in accordance with this *tanna*, as it was taught in a *baraita*: Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said: Even Moses and Aaron died due to their sin, as it is stated: "...Because you did not believe in Me..." (Bamidbar 20:12). Had you believed in Me [and spoken to the rock as commanded], your time would not have come to leave the world...

8. Talmud, Shabbat 55b (Koren translation)

מִיִּתְיָבִי: אַרְבָּעָה מֵתוּ בְּעֵטִיו שֶׁל נָחֵשׁ, וְאֵלוּ הֵן: בְּנֵימִין בֶּן יַעֲקֹב, וְעַמְרָם אֲבִי מֹשֶׁה, וְיִשָּׁי אֲבִי דָוִד, וְכִלָּב בֶּן דָּוִד...

[The Gemara] raises an objection: Four [people] died due to [Adam's sin with] the serpent [in the wake of which death was decreed upon all of mankind, although they themselves were free of sin]. And they are: Binyamin, son of Yaakov; Amram, father of Moshe; Yishai, father of David; and Kilav, son of David...

וּתְיִבָּתָא דְרַב אַמֵּי — תְּיִבָּתָא.

[This is a] conclusive refutation [of the opinion] of Rav Ami.

ILLNESS: A CALL TO SELF-EXAMINATION

9. Talmud, Berachot 5a (Koren translation)

אָמַר רַבָּא, וְאִיתִימָא רַב חֲסִידָא: אִם רוּאָה אָדָם שְׁיִסוּרֵין בְּאִין עָלְיוּ — יִפְשָׁפֵשׁ בְּמַעֲשָׂיו, שְׁנֵאמַר: "נִחַפְּשָׁה דְרַכֵּינוּ וְנִחַקְרָה וְנִשׁוּבָה עַד ה'". פִּשְׁפֹּשׁ וְלֹא מִצָּא — יִתְלָה בְּבִטּוֹל תּוֹרָה, שְׁנֵאמַר: "אֲשֶׁרִי הִגְבַּר אֲשֶׁר תִּיִסְרְנוּ קֵה וּמִתּוֹרַתְךָ תִּלְמָדְנוּ".

Rava, and some say Rav Chisda, said: If a person sees that suffering has befallen him, he should examine his actions, as it is stated: "We will search and examine our ways, and return to G-d" (Eichah 3:40). If he examined [his ways and] found no [transgression for which that suffering is appropriate], he may attribute [his suffering] to dereliction [in the study] of Torah, as it is stated: "Happy is the man whom You punish, Lord, and teach out of Your law" (Tehillim 94:12).

AFFLICTIONS OF LOVE?

10. Talmud, Berachot 5a (Koren translation)

וְאִם תִּלָּה וְלֹא מִצָּא — בְּיָדוּעַ שְׁיִסוּרֵין שֶׁל אַהֲבָה הֵם, שְׁנֵאמַר: "כִּי אֶת אֲשֶׁר יֶאֱהַב ה' יוֹכִיחַ".

And if he did attribute [his suffering to dereliction in the study of Torah], and did not find [this to be so], he may be confident that these are afflictions of love, as it is stated: "For whom the Lord loves, He rebukes..." (Mishlei 3:12)

11. Rashi, Berachot 5a

יסורין של אהבה - הקב"ה מייסרו בעוה"ז בלא שום עון כדי להרבות שכרו בעולם הבא יותר מכדי זכותיו.

Afflictions of love - G-d afflicts him in this world, despite him not having sinned, in order to increase his reward in the World to Come greater than his merits warrant.

12. Rabbi Saadiah Gaon, Emunot v'Deiot 5:3

כי אני מוצא יסורי הצדיקים בעולם הזה על שני דרכים, אחד מהם על חטאים מעטים... והשני התחלת רעה יביאה הבורא עליהם, כשידע מהם שהם סובלים אותה, ואחר כן יגמלם עליה טובה, כמ"ש (תהלים י"א ה') "ה' צָדִיק יִבְחֶן..." ולא נהג לעשות כן עם מי שאינו סובל, מפני שאין בו תועלת.

I have found two approaches to the affliction of the righteous in this world:

1. On account of their few sins.
2. The Creator brings evil upon them, so that it will be known that they bear [their suffering]; and afterwards, G-d will reward them, as it is written (Tehillim 11:5): "G-d tests the righteous..." He would not do this to one who could not bear it, because it would serve no purpose.

13. Rabbi Yaakov Yehoshua Falk, Pnei Yehoshua, Berachot 5a

הבוחן לבות מביא אותן היסורים עצמן על הצדיק שיקבלם באהבה לטובת ישראל.

The Prober of Hearts brings afflictions upon the righteous person, so that he will accept them with love, for the benefit of [all] Israel.

ACCEPTING AFFLICTIONS WITH LOVE: THEORY VS. PRACTICE

14. Talmud, Bava Metzia 85a (Koren translation)

אמר רבי: "חביבין יסורין." קבל עליה תליסר שני; שית בצמירתא, ושבע בצפרנא. ואמרי לה שבעה בצמירתא ושית בצפרנא.

[When he heard that the greatness of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, was due to his suffering], Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi said to himself: Afflictions are [evidently] precious. He accepted thirteen years [of afflictions] upon himself; six years of stones in the kidneys and seven years of scurvy [bitzfarna]. And some say it was seven years of stones in the kidneys and six years of scurvy.

15. Talmud, Berachot 5b (Koren translation)

רבי חייא בר אבא חלש. על לגביה רבי יוחנן אמר ליה: חביבין עליך יסורין? אמר ליה: לא הן ולא שכרן. אמר ליה: הב לי ידך. יהב ליה ידו, ואוקמיה.

Rabbi Chiyya bar Abba fell ill. [Rabbi Yochanan] entered to [visit] him, and said to him: Is your suffering dear to you? [Rabbi Chiyya] said to him: [I welcome] neither [this suffering] nor its reward. [Rabbi Yochanan] said to him: Give me your hand. [Rabbi Chiyya bar Abba] gave him his hand, and [Rabbi Yochanan] stood him up [and restored him to health].

16. Talmud, Berachot 5b (Koren translation)

רבי יוחנן חלש. על לגביה רבי חנינא. אמר ליה: חביבין עליך יסורין? אמר ליה: לא הן ולא שכרן. אמר ליה: הב לי ידך. יהב ליה ידו, ואוקמיה.

Rabbi Yochanan fell ill. Rabbi Chanina entered to [visit] him, and said to him: Is your suffering dear to you? [Rabbi Yochanan] said to him: [I welcome] neither [this suffering] nor its reward. [Rabbi Chanina] said to him: Give me your hand. He gave him his hand, and [Rabbi Chanina] stood him up [and restored him to health].

RECOGNIZING THE LIMITS OF OUR UNDERSTANDING

17. Rabbeinu Nissim of Gerona, Derashot haRan 8 (R' Silverstein translation)

כל עוד שיהיה עולם כמנהגו נוהג, יחולו באיש הטוב ענינים מכאיבים מצערים. אבל כאשר תכלית הגמול וסופו הוא שכר הנפש בעוה"ב לא תשאר בכאן קושיא, כי כל המעשה יבא שם לבית החשבון... רצה שסדר הגמול והעונש בעוה"ז נוהג בענין מתמיה לא יעמוד האדם בו על צדק משפטי הש"י אבל יהיה בו כבער וכבהמה נחשב, עד אשר יבא ויעיין במה שהקדים הש"י והכין לצדיקים ולרשעים ויבין לאחריתם, כי שם נגלה גמול הצדיקים ועונש הרשעים לא בעולם הזה.

So long as the world follows its natural pattern, the good man will be visited with pain and suffering. Since, however, the ultimate, essential requital is that for the soul in the world to come, no dilemma remains here, for every deed will there be brought to “the accounting house.” ...

That is, the distribution of reward and punishment in this world is confounding. One cannot discern in it the justice of the Blessed One’s judgments, but must remain foolish, beast-like, in contemplating them — until he comes and sees what the Blessed One has stored away for the righteous and for the wicked, at which time he will understand their end. For it is there, and not in this world, that the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked is revealed.

DON'T BE INSENSITIVE!

18. Talmud, Bava Metzia 58b (Koren translation)

אם היו יסורין באין עליו, אם היו חלאים באין עליו, או שהיה מקבר את בניו, אל יאמר לו כדרך שאמרו לו חבריו לאיוב “הלא יראתך כסלתך, תקונתך ותם דרכיך? זכר נא מי הוא נקי אבד?”

If torments are afflicting [a person], if illnesses are afflicting him, or if he is burying his children, one may not speak to him in the manner that the friends of Iyov spoke to him: “Is not your fear your foolishness, your hope and the sincerity of your ways? Remember now, who was innocent that perished?” (Iyov 4:6–7).

19. Rabbi Shlomo Kluger, Siach Shlomo (R’ Torczyner translation)

אכן שוד ושבר אם יקרו ויאתיו על איש ועל בני אדם יחד... אז אין להאיש ההוא אף כי פגעי הזמן נחתו בו יתר מבזולתו להרגיע את רוחו לבל יצר לו בצרת אחרים... באמרו כי מקבל הוא על עצמו באהבה, זאת היא מדה מגונה ודרך מכוערה דאין לקבל באהבה מכאוב, צער וצרת אחרים, והעושה ככה חולה על ראשו קללת חכמנו ז”ל, “ת”ר בזמן שישראל שרויין בצער ופירש אחד מהם באים שני מלאכי השרת ומניחים ידיהם על ראשו, פלוני זה שפירש מן הצבור אל יראה בנחמת הצבור...”

But if harm comes upon a person and upon others... then that person, who may even suffer more than others, may not calm himself and avoid feeling the pain of others... saying that he accepts it upon himself with love. This is a repugnant trait and an ugly path; one may not accept with love the ailment, pain and trouble of others! One who does so is subject to the curse of our sages, “When Israel is in pain and one of them separates from the community, two ministering *malachim* place their hands on his head and say, ‘So-and-so who separated from the community shall not see the comfort of the community.’”

DON'T ASK “WHY?” ASK “WHAT?”

20. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Kol Dodi Dofek p. 8 (R’ Gordon translation)

We do not wonder about the ineffable ways of the Holy One, but instead ponder the paths man must take when evil leaps up at him. We ask not about the reason for evil and its purpose, but rather about its rectification and uplifting.

*For more on “Afflictions of Love,” see my article in [Toronto Torah, Parshat Ki Tavo 5779](https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/932631) (<https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/932631>)



10:00 AM

THE HUMBLING OF KING CHIZKIYAHU

R' Mordechai Torczyner torczyner@torontotorah.com



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

1. Yeshayahu 38:1

בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם חָלָה חִזְקִיָּהוּ לְמוֹת וַיְבוֹא אֵלָיו יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן אֲמוֹץ הַנְּבִיא וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר ד' צוּ לְבֵיתְךָ כִּי מֵת אַתָּה וְלֹא תַחֲיֶה:

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 דמעלו! 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 ששעית 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 הַיִּשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵינֵי ד' כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה דָּוִד אָבִיו: (ד) הוּא הִסִּיר אֶת הַבַּמֹּת וְשִׁבַר אֶת הַמִּצְבֹּת וְכָרַת אֶת הָאֲשֵׁרָה וְכָתַת נְחֹשׁ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מֹשֶׁה כִּי עַד הַיָּמִים הָהֵמָּה הָיוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקַטְרִים לוֹ וַיִּקְרָא לוֹ נְחֹשֶׁת: (ה) בַּד' אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּטַח וְאַחֲרָיו לֹא הָיָה כְּמֹהוּ בְּכָל מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לְפָנָיו: (ו) וַיִּדְבֹּק בַּד' לֹא סָר מֵאַחֲרָיו וַיִּשְׁמַר מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ד' אֶת מֹשֶׁה: (ז) וְהָיָה ד' עִמּוֹ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא יִשְׁפִּיל 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 צווארך 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 בקיאים 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) בימים ההם חלה חזקיהו למות ויבוא אליו ישעיהו בן אמוץ הנביא ויאמר אליו כה אמר ד' צו לבייתך כי מת אתה ולא תחיה:
(ב) ויסב חזקיהו פניו אל הקיר ויתפלל אל ד': (ג) ויאמר אנה ד' זכר נא את אשר התהלכתי לפניך באמת ובלב שלם והטוב בעיניך עשיתי ויבה חזקיהו בכי גדול:

(ד) ויהי דבר ד' אל ישעיהו לאמר: (ה) הלוף ואמרת אל חזקיהו כה אמר ד' אלקי דוד אביך שמעתי את תפלתך ראיתי את דמעך הנני יוסף על ימיה חמש עשרה שנה: (ו) ומכף מלך אשור אצילך ואת העיר הזאת וגנותי על העיר הזאת:

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)

...ותבט ביום ההוא אל נשק בית היער: (ט) ואת בקיעי עיר דוד ראיתם כי רבו ותקבצו את מי הברכה התחוננה: (י) ואת בתי ירושלים ספרתם ותתצו הבתים לבצר החומה: (יא) ומקוה עשיתם בין החמתים למי הברכה הישנה ולא הבטתם אל עשייה ויצרה מרחוק לא ראיתם:

...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: גנו 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 חִזְקִיָּיָה אֶת דְּלֹתוֹת הַיֵּכֶל ד' וְאֶת הָאֲמֻנֹת אֲשֶׁר צָפָה חִזְקִיָּיָה 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-int000035.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) בַּעַת הַהִיא שָׁלַח מֶרְדֵּךְ בְּלֹאֲדָן בֶּן בְּלֹאֲדָן מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל סָפְרִים וּמְנַחֵה אֶל חִזְקִיָּיָה וַיִּשְׁמַע כִּי חָלָה וַיִּחַזֵּק: (ב) וַיִּשְׁמַח עֲלֵיהֶם חִזְקִיָּיָה וַיִּרְאֵם אֶת בֵּית נְכוֹתוֹ אֶת הַכֶּסֶף וְאֶת הַזָּהָב וְאֶת הַבְּשָׂמִים וְאֶת הַשְּׁמֹן הַטּוֹב וְאֶת כָּל בֵּית כְּלָיו וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא בְּאֶצְרָתָיו לֹא הָיָה דָבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָרְאֵם חִזְקִיָּיָה בְּבֵיתוֹ וּבְכָל מִמְשַׁלְתּוֹ:

(ג) וַיָּבֵא יִשְׁעֵיהֶוּ הַנְּבִיא אֶל הַמֶּלֶךְ חִזְקִיָּיָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מָה אָמְרוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה וּמֵאֵין יָבֵאוּ אֵלַי וַיֹּאמֶר חִזְקִיָּיָה מֵאֲרֵץ רְחוֹקָה בָּאוּ אֵלַי מִבָּבֶל: (ד) וַיֹּאמֶר מָה רָאוּ בְּבֵיתְךָ וַיֹּאמֶר חִזְקִיָּיָה אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵיתִי רָאוּ לֹא הָיָה דָבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָרְאִיתִים בְּאֶצְרָתִי:

(ה) וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׁעֵיהֶוּ אֶל חִזְקִיָּיָה שְׁמַע דְּבַר ד' צְבָקוֹת: (ו) הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים וְנִשְׂאָ כָּל אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵיתְךָ וְאֲשֶׁר אֶצְרָו אֲבֹתֶיךָ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה בְּכָל לֹא יוֹתֵר דְּבַר אָמַר ד': (ז) וּמִבְּנֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאוּ מִמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר תוֹלִיד יִקְחוּ וְהָיוּ סְרִיסִים בְּהֵיכַל מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל:

(ח) וַיֹּאמֶר חִזְקִיָּהוּ אֶל יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ טוֹב דְּבַר ד' אֲשֶׁר דִּבְרַת 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. 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?



10:30 AM

YAAKOV WILL NEVER WALK ALONE

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1. Bereishit 32:23-33 (Chabad tr.)

23 And he arose during that night, and he took his two wives and his two maidservants and his eleven children, and he crossed the ford of [the] Jabbok.

כג ויקם בלילה הוא ויקח את שתי נשיו ואת שתי שפחתיו ואת אחד עשר ילדיו ויעבר את מעבר יבק.

24 And he took them and brought them across the stream, and he took across what was his.

כד ויקחם ויעברם את הנחל ויעבר את אשר לו.

25 And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn.

כה וייתר יעקב לבדו ויאבק איש עמו עד עלות השחר.

26 When he saw that he could not prevail against him, he touched the socket of his hip, and the socket of Jacob's hip became dislocated as he wrestled with him.

כו וירא כי לא יכל לו ויגע בכף ירכו ותקע כף ירף יעקב בהאבקו עמו.

27 And he (the angel) said, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking," but he (Jacob) said, "I will not let you go unless you have blessed me."

כז ויאמר שלחני כי עלה השחר ויאמר לא אשלחה כי אם ברכתני.

28 So he said to him, "What is your name?" and he said, "Jacob."

כח ויאמר אליו מה שמך ויאמר יעקב.

29 And he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, because you have commanding power with [an angel of] G-d and with men, and you have prevailed."

כט ויאמר לא יעקב יאמר עוד שמך כי אם ישראל כי שרית עם אלקים ועם אנשים ותוכל.

30 And Jacob asked and said, "Now tell me your name," and he said, "Why is it that you ask for my name?" And he blessed him there.

ל וישאל יעקב ויאמר הגידה נא שמך ויאמר למה זה תשאל לשמי ויברך אותו שם.

31 And Jacob named the place Peniel, for [he said,] "I saw an angel face to face, and my soul was saved."

לא ויקרא יעקב שם המקום פניאל כי ראיתי אלקים פנים אל פנים ותנצל נפשי.

32 And the sun rose for him when he passed Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh.

לב ויזרח לו השמש כאשר עבר את פנואל והוא צלע על ירכו.

33 Therefore, the children of Israel may not eat the displaced tendon, which is on the socket of the hip, until this day, for he touched the socket of Jacob's hip, in the hip sinew.

לג על כן לא יאכלו בני ישראל את גיד הנשה אשר על כף הירך עד היום הזה כי נגע בכף ירף יעקב בגיד הנשה.

2. Judaism in China, www.chinasage.info/judaism.htm

Discovering a Jewish synagogue in [Kaifeng](http://www.chinasage.info/judaism.htm) came as a great surprise to Europeans in the 19th century. Although the synagogue was built in Chinese traditional style it had a copy of the Torah and was following traditional Jewish teachings. It opened up all sorts of intriguing possibilities. Could the scriptures of an ancient, isolated community provide answers to key questions in Christianity as well as Judaism? Was the Jewish community a long last tribe with origins going back to Biblical times? How could have an isolated mono-theistic society have survived in China for so long?

The Chinese regarded the Jews (犹太 Yóu tài) as belonging to a branch of Islam and called them 'blue Muslims' because of the color of headdress and shoes. For centuries, the Chinese considered all three [Abrahamic religions](#) as sects of a single religion. The Jews were also known as 'extract tendon teaching' (挑筋教 Tiǎo jīn jiào) as a description of the way that meat was prepared by removing any tendons to conform with the Torah.

3. Rashi, Bereishit 32:25 (M. Rosenbaum and A.M. Silbermann tr.) [Northern France, 1040-1105]

ויותר יעקב. שכח פפים קטנים וחזר עליהם (חולין צ"א)

He had forgotten some small jars and he returned for them (Chullin 91a).

ויאבק איש. מנחם פי' ויתעפר איש, לשון אבק, שהיו מעלים עפר בגליהם ע"י נענועם. ולי נראה שהוא לשון ויתקשר, ולשון ארמי הוא, בתר דאביקו ביה, ואביק ליה מיבק - לשון עניבה, שכן דרך שנים שמתעצמים להפיל איש את רעהו, שחובקו ואובקו בזרועותיו. ופרשו רז"ל שהוא שרו של עשו (בראשית רבה):

Menachem (ben Seruk) explains: "a man covered himself with dust". It would mean that they were raising the dust with their feet through their movements. I, however, am of the opinion that it means "he fastened himself on", and that it is an Aramaic word, as in (Sanhedrin 63b) "after they have joined (אביקו) it", and (Menachot 42a) "and he twined (the "Fringes") with loops". It denotes "intertwining", for such is the manner of two people who make strong efforts to throw each other — one clasps the other and twines himself round him with his arms. Our Rabbis of blessed memory explained that he was Esau's guardian angel (Genesis Rabbah 77:3).

WAS THIS A REAL ENCOUNTER?

4. Rambam, Moreh Nevuchim 2:42 (Friedlander tr.) [Spain-Morocco-Egypt, 1135-1204]

כבר בארנו כי כל מקום שנזכרה בו ראית 'מלאך' או דבורו שזה אמנם הוא 'במראה הנבואה' או 'בחלום' - יבואר בהם או לא יבואר הכל שוה כמו שקדם. ודע זה והבנהו מאד מאד! ואין הפרש בין שיכתוב תחילה שהוא ראה 'המלאך' או יהיה הנראה מן המאמר תחילה - שהוא חשבו איש מבני אדם ואחר כן בסוף הענין התבאר לו שהוא 'מלאך' - אחר שתמצא סוף הענין כי זה אשר נראה ודיבר היה מלאך תדע ותאמת שמתחלת הענין היה 'מראה הנבואה' או 'חלום של נבואה'. וזה שב'מראה הנבואה' או 'בחלום של נבואה' פעמים יראה הנביא האלוהי ידבר עמו כמו שנבאר ופעמים יראה מלאך ידבר עמו ופעמים ישמע מי שידבר עמו ולא יראה איש מדבר ופעמים יראה איש מבני אדם שידבר עמו ואחר כן יתבאר לו שזה המדבר - 'מלאך'; ובכמו זה המין מן הנבואה יזכור שהוא ראה איש יעשה או יאמר ואחר זה ידע שהוא 'מלאך':

We have already shown that the appearance or speech of an angel mentioned in Scripture took place in a vision or dream; it makes no difference whether this is expressly stated or not, as we have explained above. This is a point of considerable importance. In some cases, the account begins by stating that the prophet saw an angel; in others, the account apparently introduces a human being, who ultimately is shown to be an angel; but it makes no difference, for if the fact that an angel has been heard is only mentioned at the end, you may rest satisfied that the whole account from the beginning describes a prophetic vision. In such visions, a prophet either sees G-d who speaks to him, as will be explained by us, or he sees an angel who speaks to him, or he hears someone speaking to him without seeing the speaker, or he sees a man who speaks to him, and learns afterwards that the speaker was an angel. In this latter kind of prophecies, the prophet relates that he saw a man who was doing or saying something, and that he learnt afterwards that it was an angel.

...והבן הענין הזה עוד כי הוא טוד מן הסודות: וכן אומר עוד בענין יעקב באמרו "ויאבק איש עמו" - שהוא בצורת הנבואה אחר שהתבאר באחרונה שהוא 'מלאך'. והוא כענין אברהם בשוה אשר הקדים ספור כללי "וירא אליו ה' וגו'" אחרי כן התחיל לבאר איך היה זה. וכן ביעקב אמר "ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלוקים" ואחר כן התחיל לבאר איך קרה עד ש'פגעו בו' - ואמר שהוא שלח שלוחים ופעל ועשה "ויותר יעקב לבדו וגו'" - וזהו 'מלאכי אלוקים' הנאמר עליהם תחילה 'ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלוקים'; וזה ההתאבקות והדיבור כולו - 'במראה הנבואה'.

...Note this well, for it is one of the great mysteries [of the Law]. The same, I hold, is the case when it is said in reference to Jacob, "And a man wrestled with him" (Gen. 32:25); this took place in a prophetic vision, since it is expressly stated in the end (ver. 31) that it was an angel. The circumstances are here exactly the same as those in the vision of Abraham, where the general statement, "And the Lord appeared to him," etc., is followed by a detailed

description. Similarly the account of the vision of Jacob begins, “And the angels of G-d met him” (Gen. 32:2); then follows a detailed description how it came to pass that they met him; namely, Jacob sent messengers, and after having prepared and done certain things, “he was left alone,” etc., “and a man wrestled with him” (ibid. ver. 24). By this term “man” [one of] the angels of G-d is meant, mentioned in the phrase, “And angels of G-d met him”; the wrestling and speaking was entirely a prophetic vision.

5. Ramban, Bereishit 18:1 (Sefaria tr.) [Spain-Israel, 1194-1270]

וכן אמר (שם) בענין “ויאבק איש עמו” (להלן לב כה) שהכל מראה הנבואה ולא ידעתי למה היה צולע על ירכו בהקיץ ולמה אמר (להלן לב לא) כי ראיתי אלוקים פנים אל פנים ותנצל נפשי כי הנביאים לא יפחדו שימותו מפני מראות הנבואה...

And [the Guide there] also said about the matter of “and a man wrestled with him” (Genesis 32:25), that it was all a prophetic vision. And [if so,] I don’t know why he limped on his thigh when he woke up, and why he said (Genesis 32:31), “For I have seen G-d face to face, and He saved my soul”; as the prophets did not fear that they would die because of prophetic visions...

6. Abarbanel, Bereishit 32:25 [Portugal-Spain-Italy, 1437-1508]

ואמנם אם היה הענין הזה במראה הנבואה או בהקיץ כבר ידעת דעת הרב המורה בפ”מג ח”א שהיה זה כלו במראה הנבואה... והנה הרמב”ן הקשה עליו ואמר אם היה זה במראה הנבואה איך בבקר היה צולע על ירכו? ואני כבר כתבתי כי אותו ספק אין התיירו ממה שיקשה לפי שכבר נראה התפעל כלי הנפש מהדמיונים שהם יגיעו כלי הנפש להנעה... ואחר שהוא נופל ממקום גבוה ויתנועעו איבריו כלם תנועה חזקה בשינה עד שיקץ מאותה תנועה וכל זה יראה מן החוש לכן לא ירוחק שבהיות יעקב בחלום נבואתו רואה ההתאבקות ההוא ושנגע בכף ירכו התפעל כל כך טבעו ומפני הרושם שעשה בו דמיונו באותו חלום שהכלים הגופהים נפגעו בזה ונשאר צולע על ירכו...

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INJURY:

7. Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvah 3 (Sefaria tr.) [Spain, 13th century]

משרשי מצוה זו, כדי שתהיה רמז לישראל, שאף על פי שיסבלו צרות רבות בגלות מיד העמים ומיד בני עשו, יהיו בטוחים שלא יאבדו, אלא לעולם יעמד זרעם ושמם, ויבא להם גואל ויגאלם מיד צר. ובזכרם תמיד ענין זה על יד המצוה שתהיה לזכרון, יעמדו באמנתם ובצדקתם לעולם. ורמז זה הוא לפי שאותו מלאך שנלחם עם יעקב אבינו, שבא בקבלה (בר”ר עח) שהיה שרו של עשו, רצה לעקרו ליעקב מן העולם הוא זרעו ולא יכול לו, (שם לב כו) וצערו בנגיעת הירך. וכן זרע עשו מצער לזרע יעקב, ולבסוף תהיה להם תשועה מהם. וכמו שמצינו (שם שם לב) באב שזרחה לו השמש לרפאתו ונושע מן הצער, כן יזרח לו השמש של משיח וירפאנו מצערנו ויגאלנו במהרה בימינו, אמן.

It is from the roots of this commandment [that it is to serve as] a hint to Israel that though they will suffer many troubles in the exile by the hand of the nations and by the hand of the [descendants] of Esav, [the Jews] should trust that they will not perish, but rather that their descendants and name will stand firm forever, and that their redeemer will come and redeem them from their oppressor. And in continually remembering this idea through the commandment that serves as a reminder, they will stand firm in their faith and righteousness forever. And this hint [stems from the fact that] that the angel who fought with Yaakov our forefather - who according to tradition (Bereishit Rabbah 78) was the guardian angel of Esav - wished to eliminate Yaakov from the world, he and his descendants; but he could not [get the better] of him, (Genesis 32:26) but anguished him in injuring his thigh. Likewise, Esav’s seed anguishes the seed of Yaakov; but in the end, [the latter] will be saved from them. As we find (Genesis 32:32) with respect to [our] forefather that the sun shone to heal him and he was saved from pain, so will the sun of the messiah shine and he will heal us from our pain and redeem us speedily in our days, amen!

8. Radak, Bereishit 32:33 (Eliyahu Munk tr.) [France, 1160-1235]

בני יעקב אסרוהו על עצמן לכבוד אביהם שלקה בו והם צוו לבניהם... ונאסר להם ולבניהם ולבני בניהם עד עולם, וכתבו משה רבינו בתורה על פי ה’, אבל לפירז”ל בסיני נצטוו וכתבה במקומו להודיע הטעם שנאסר בעבורו.

The children of Yaakov adopted this prohibition for themselves in commemoration of their father whose thigh

muscle had been injured. They in turn commanded their children to abstain from eating this part of any animal. This continued until the Torah was given and it became law... Moses recorded the custom of the Israelites not to eat this organ as one of the 613 commandments. Although the Torah does not generally consider it necessary to justify G-d's legislation with a reason, in this case, since this law had been observed as a Jewish tribal custom for so many hundreds of years prior to the giving of the Torah, we are told how the custom which became enshrined in Torah law originated.

9. **Bechor Shor, Bereishit 32:33 (Sefaria tr.) [France, 12th century]**

להיות להם לזכרון כי אביהם נלחם עם המלאך ולא יכול לו ולכך נגע בכף יריכו במקום שגיד הנשה שם והיא זכרון כבוד וגדולה:

It is to be a commemoration for them that their forefather fought with the angel, and [the latter] could not subdue him. And so [the angel] pressed him on the hollow of his thigh, in the place where there is the sciatic nerve. And it is a commemoration of glory and greatness.

10. **Chizkuni, Bereishit 32:33 (Eliyahu Munk tr.) [France, 1250-1310]**

אעפ"י שהבטיחו הקב"ה ושמרתיך בכל אשר תלך הזיקו המלאך לפי שנתירא מעשו כדכתיב ויירא יעקב מאד...

The angel succeeded to injure Yaakov despite G-d's assurances to him that "I will protect you wherever you go;" because Yaakov allowed himself to be frightened of Esau in spite of G-d's assurances. [This was a lack of faith in G-d's promise. Ed.] ...

על כן לא יאכלו כמו והוא לא כן ידמה, כלומר בדין הוא שיש לקנוס ולענוש בני ישראל מאכילת גיד הנשה שהניחו את אביהם הולך יחידי כדכתיב ויותר יעקב לבדו. והן היו גבורים והיה להם להמתין אביהם ולסייעו אם יצטרך והם לא עשו לו לוייה והזוק על ידם ומכאן ואילך יהיה להם לזכר ויהיו זריזים במצות לוייה...

ד"א על כן שיכול יעקב לעמוד נגד המלאך לא יאכלו בני ישראל את גיד הנשה להיות להם לזכרון ולתפארת כי אביהם נלחם עם המלאך. ד"א על כן שהזוק יעקב בגיד הנשה קבלו עליהם בניו משם ואילך שלא יאכלו ממנו. משל לאדם שחש בראשו או באחד מאיבריו, שמקבל עליו שלא לאכול מאותו אבר מעולם כדי שיהא לו אותו האבר לרפואה.

... It would be right and proper to punish the Israelites not to eat that particular sinew as they should not have allowed their founding father to be exposed to hostile forces at night. Yaakov's sons were physically strong, and they should have been at hand to assist their father if the need arose to do so. Seeing that they failed to do this, the blame for the injury sustained by their father was theirs. From now on they would have learned their lesson and would practice the commandment to accompany their father, or for that matter, any older and wiser person, especially at night...

A different approach to the verse above: as a result of their father Yaakov having stood up to the protective celestial force of Esau, his sons stopped eating the part of the body that the angel had been able to injure. They did this out of a feeling of pride in their founding father.

A third approach to this verse: due to their father Yaakov having sustained an injury, his descendants voluntarily decided not to eat the part of the body of an animal that had been injured in their father's body. This has to be understood better by the use of a parable; a person suffered from a headache or from pains in a different part of his body. As a reminder of that pain, he decides not to eat that part of the body of an animal as a symbol of his having been healed from that pain, so that it (abstention) would serve as a remedy for them (preventive medicine) in the future.

11. **Rashbam, Bereishit 32:25,28 (Eliyahu Munk tr.) [France, 1085-1158]**

ויותר יעקב לבדו - כלומר: שהעביר כל אשר לו שלא היה עוד לעבור אלא הוא לבדו ורצה לעבור אחריהם, כדי לברוח דרך אחרת שלא יפגשונו עשו נתכווין.

After he had transferred all his belongings to the other side of the river, so that the only one still to be brought across was he himself. The reason that he wanted to cross only after everyone else had already crossed was that he intended to flee in a different direction so as to avoid a face-to-face encounter with Esau.

ויאבק - מלאך עמו שלא יוכל לברוח ויראה קיום דברו של הקב"ה שלא יזיקהו עשו.

There wrestled an angel with him, so that he could not flee, and so that fulfillment of the word of the Holy One, blessed be He, would be seen, that Esav would not harm him.

כי שרית - ומה שלקה יעקב ונצלע, לפי שהקב"ה הבטיחו והוא היה בורח.

And the fact that Ya'akov was struck and was lamed was because the Holy One, blessed be He, promised him yet he fled.

12. Kli Yakar, Bereishit 32:33 (Sefaria tr.) [Poland-Czech Republic, 1550-1619]

מצינו לרז"ל שדברים עמוקים שהשגתם קשה, נמשלו לגידיו... ורמזו במצוה זו לדורות למנוע מישראל החקירה בנסתרות כמ"ש (חגיגה יג.) אין לך עסק בנסתרות, כי יש לחוש פן יהרסו שכלם ויבואו לידי אפיקורסות, כי לא רבים יחכמו להבין כל הסודות על מתכונתם, מצד היות שכלם עובר בעמק עכור כי הבלי העולם הזה וחמדותיו מבלבלין שכל האדם... ואם ליעקב השלם קרה מכשול זה לפי שעה כשנטה קצת מדרך השווי, מה יעשו אזובי קיר אשר רוב עסקיהם בהבלי העה"ז וחמדותיו, על כן לא יהיה להם עסק בנסתרות כ"א יחידי סגולי הדור כר"ש בן יוחאי ודוגמתו, אשר קצו ומאסו בהבלי העה"ז...

We find in [statements of] the Rabbis, may their memory be blessed, that deep things, the comprehension of which are difficult, are compared to tendons... And this commandment is a hint for the [future] generations to prevent Israel from hidden (mystical) investigations; as [Ben Sira] said, "You have no businesses in hidden things." For one should be concerned [about this], lest their minds be destroyed, and they come to heresy. As the many will not have the wisdom to understand the secrets properly, because their minds travel through the muddied valley. [This is] because the vanities of this world and its pleasures confuse the mind of man... And if this setback temporarily occurred to the perfect Jacob when he veered a little from the even path, what will the 'hyssop of the wall' (average people) - whose primary occupation is with the vanities of this world and its pleasures - do? Therefore, they should not be occupied with hidden things, except for the special few, like R. Shimon Bar Yochai and his those like him - who become repulsed by, and renounce, the vanities of this world.

13. Tur HaAroch, Bereishit 32:26,33 (Eliyahu Munk tr.) [Germany-Spain, 1269-1343]

וי"מ שכיון לעשותו בעל מום לפוסלו מן העבודה על שלקח הבכורה מעשו כיון שעבוד' בבכורים:

Some commentators claim that the angel tried to inflict a disabling blow on Yaakov, one that would disqualify him from performing service on the altar, as a penalty for his having taken the birth right from Esau, i.e., Esau's privilege to perform such service for G-d. on the altar. Prior to the building of the Tabernacle all such service was performed by the firstborn of each Jewish household.

כאדם שמתענה ביום שמת בו אביו. ד"א כדי שיזכרו הנס.

The Jews not eating this sinew are comparable to sons who make a point of fasting on the anniversary of their father's death. Another way of looking at this law: In the future, the Jewish people would be commanded not to eat this sinew in order that they should remain aware of the miracle which had occurred when a mortal man, their ancestor Yaakov, had been able to prevail against a celestial force trying to wrestle him to the ground.

14. Abarbanel, Bereishit 32:25 [Portugal-Spain-Italy, 1437-1508]

...והיה ההתאבקות הזה שדרך האנשים הצוחקים ומתאבקים זה בזה בידיהם וזרועותיהם לראות איזה יגבר... ולפי שהגבורים בהתאבקות הידים יגברו או ביכולת ועצמה שיקחו את המנגד בזרועותיהם ויפילוהו ארצה או יגברו עליו בערמה שיכו ברגליהם ברגלי המנגדים או בשוקיהם באופן שיכשלו ויפולו... כי היה יעקב אמיץ ממנו ואז בקש לזה ערמה ותחבולה לגעת בכף ירכו של יעקב באופן שיכשל יעקב ויפול לפניו... וכאשר התארך הזמן כל כך שכבר עלה עמוד השחר אמר ליעקב שלחני כי עלה השחר רוצה לומר ואתה צריך ללכת לדרך כי עשו יבא במהרה על כן להנאתך ולטובתך איעצך שתשלחני ותלך לדרך. אבל יעקב השיבו לא אשלחך כי אם ברכתני וענין הברכה הזאת הוא שיודה שהוא היה מנוצח ממנו ויעקב היה מנצחו כי זאת היא הברכה בין המתאבקים או שיפיל האחד את חבירו ארצה ואז הוא הגובר עליו או שחבירו יברכהו ויודה שהוא גבור ממנו שאז אין צריך התאבקות עוד וילך לו... והנה ראה יעקב ג"כ לשאול מה שמו... והנה אמר זה לפי שדרך הלוחמים כשינצחו ויתפשו זה את זה שיהיה המנוצח משתעבד ונכנע למנוצח אותו וכאשר יתן לו המנוצח רשות ללכת לדרך הנה המנוצח יודיעהו שמו כדי שיוכל המנוצח לקראו בכל עת שירצה ויהי' המנוצח חייב לבא לפניו כשיקראהו...

15. Rabbi Sacks, Vayishlach 5780 [England, 1948-2020]

<https://rabbisacks.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CC-5780-No-Longer-Shall-You-Be-Called-Jacob-Vayishlach-5780-1-1.pdf>; <https://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation-5768-vayishlach-jacob-wrestling/>

The fact that Jacob and Esau were twins is fundamental. Their relationship is one of the classic cases of sibling rivalry. Key to understanding their story is what Rene Girard called mimetic desire: the desire to have what someone else has, because they have it. Ultimately, this is the desire to be someone else.

That is what the name Jacob signifies. It is the name he acquired because he was born holding on to his brother Esau's heel. That was consistently his posture during the key events of his early life. He bought his brother's birthright. He wore his brother's clothes. At his mother's request, he took his brother's blessing. When asked by his father, "Who are you, my son?" He replied, "I am Esau, your firstborn."

Jacob was the man who wanted to be Esau. Why so? Because Esau had one thing he did not have: his father's love. "Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebecca loved Jacob."

All that changed in the great wrestling match between Jacob and the unknown stranger. Our Sages teach us that this stranger was an angel in disguise. After they fight, he tells Jacob that his name would now be Israel. The stated explanation of this name is: "for you have wrestled with G-d and with man and have prevailed." It also resonates with two other senses. *Sar* means "prince, royalty." *Yashar* means "upright." Both of these are in sharp contrast with the name "Jacob," one who "holds on to his brother's heel."

How then are we to understand what, first the stranger, then G-d, said to Jacob? *Not as a statement, but as a request, a challenge, an invitation.* Read it not as, "You will no longer be called Jacob but Israel." Instead read it as, "Let your name no longer be Jacob but Israel," meaning, "Act in such a way that this is what people call you." *Be a prince. Be royalty. Be upright. Be yourself. Don't long to be someone else.* This would turn out to be a challenge not just then but many times in the Jewish future.

Often, Jews have been content to be themselves. But from time to time, they have come into contact with a civilisation whose intellectual, cultural and even spiritual sophistication was undeniable. It made them feel awkward, inferior, like a villager who comes to a city for the first time. Jews lapsed into the condition of Jacob. They wanted to be someone else.

The first time we hear this is in the words of the Prophet Ezekiel: "You say, 'We want to be like the nations, like the peoples of the world, who serve wood and stone.' But what you have in mind will never happen" (Ez. 20:32). In Babylon, the people encountered an impressive empire whose military and economic success contrasted radically with their own condition of exile and defeat. Some wanted to stop being Jews and become someone else, anyone else.

We hear it again in the days of the Greeks. Some Jews became Hellenised. We recognise that in the names of High Priests like Jason and Menelaus. The battle against this is the story of Chanukah. Something similar happened in the days of Rome. Josephus was one of those who went over to the other side, though he remained a defender of Judaism.

It happened again during the Enlightenment. Jews fell in love with European culture. With philosophers like Kant and Hegel, poets like Goethe and Schiller, and musicians like Mozart and Beethoven. Some were able to integrate this with faithfulness to Judaism as creed and deed – figures like Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch and Nehemiah Nobel. But some did not. They left the fold. They changed their names. They hid their identity. None of us is entitled to be critical of what they did. The combined impact of intellectual challenge, social change, and incendiary antisemitism was immense. Yet this was a Jacob response, not an Israel one.

It is happening today in large swathes of the Jewish world. Jews have overachieved. Judaism, with some notable exceptions, has underachieved. There are Jews at or near the top of almost every field of human endeavour today, but all too many have either abandoned their religious heritage or are indifferent to it. For them, being Jewish is a slender ethnicity, too thin to be transmitted to the future, too hollow to inspire.

We have waited so long for what we have today and have never had simultaneously before in all of Jewish history: independence and sovereignty in the state of Israel, freedom and equality in the diaspora. Almost everything that a hundred generations of our ancestors prayed for has been given to us. Will we really (in Lin-Manuel Miranda's

phrase) throw away our shot? Will we be Israel? Or will we show, to our shame, that we have not yet outlived the name of Jacob, the person who wanted to be someone else? Jacob was often fearful because he was not sure who he wanted to be, himself or his brother. That is why G-d said to him, "Let your name not be Jacob but Israel." When you are afraid, and unsure of who you are, you are Jacob. When you are strong in yourself, as yourself, you are Israel.

The fact that the Torah and tradition still use the word Jacob, not just Israel, tells us that the problem has not disappeared. Jacob seems to have wrestled with this throughout his life, and we still do today. It takes courage to be different, a minority, countercultural. It's easy to live for the moment like Esau, or to "be like the peoples of the world" as Ezekiel said.

I believe the challenge issued by the angel still echoes today. Are we Jacob, embarrassed by who we are? Or are we Israel, with the courage to stand upright and walk tall in the path of faith?

16. Venisgav, Mordechai Ben David Kumzitz

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QRI8vqD_Ss



11:00 AM

WHEN MIRIAM HAD TO QUARANTINE



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1. Bamidbar 12: 1-15 (tr. JPS Tanakh 1985)

א ותדבר מרים ואהרן במשה על אדות האשה הכשית אשר לקח כי אשה כשית לקח. ב ויאמרו הרק אף במשה דבר ה' הלא גם בנו דבר וישמע ה'. ג והאיש משה ענו [עניו] מאד מכל האדם אשר על פני האדמה. ד ויאמר ה' פתאום אל משה ואל אהרן ואל מרים צאו שלשתכם אל אהל מועד ויצאו שלשתם. ה וירד ה' בעמוד ענן ויעמד פתח האהל ויקרא אהרן ומרים ויצאו שניהם. ו ויאמר שמעו נא דברי אם יהיה נביאכם ה' במראה אליו אתנדע בחלום אדבר בו. ז לא כן עבדי משה בכל ביתי נאמן הוא. ח פה אל פה אדבר בו ומראה ולא בחידת ותמנת ה' יביט ומדוע לא יראתם לדבר בעבדי במשה. ט ויחר אף ה' בם וילקח י והענן סר מעל האהל והנה מרים מצרעת כשילג ויפן אהרן אל מרים והנה מצרעת. יא ויאמר אהרן אל משה בי אדני אל נא תשת עלינו חטאת אשר נואלנו ואשר חטאנו. יב אל נא תהי כמת אשר בצאתו מרחם אמו ויאכל חצי בשו. יג ויצעק משה אל ה' לאמר אל נא רפא נא לה. יד ויאמר ה' אל משה ואביה ירק ירק בפניה הלא תכלם שבעת ימים תסגר שבעת ימים מחוץ למחנה ואחר תאסף. טו ותסגר מרים מחוץ למחנה שבעת ימים והעם לא נסע עד האסף מרים. טז ואחר נסעו העם מחצרות ויחנו במדבר פארן.

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married: "He married a Cushite woman!". They said, "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" The LORD heard it. Now Moses was a very humble man, more so than any other man on earth. Suddenly the LORD called to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the Tent of Meeting." So the three of them went out. The LORD came down in a pillar of cloud, stopped at the entrance of the Tent, and called out, "Aaron and Miriam!" The two of them came forward; and He said, "Hear these My words: When a prophet of the LORD arises among you, I make Myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; he is trusted throughout My household. With him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles, and he beholds the likeness of the LORD. How then did you not shrink from speaking against My servant Moses!" Still incensed with them, the LORD departed. As the cloud withdrew from the Tent, there was Miriam stricken with snow-white scales! When Aaron turned toward Miriam, he saw that she was stricken with scales. And Aaron said to Moses, "O my lord, account not to us the sin which we committed in our folly. Let her not be as one dead, who emerges from his mother's womb with half his flesh eaten away." So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "O G-d, pray heal her!" But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father spat in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut out of camp for seven days, and then let her be readmitted." So Miriam was shut out of camp seven days; and the people did not march on until Miriam was readmitted.

2. Rashi 12: 1

ותדבר - אין דבור בכל מקום אלא לשון קשה

The term דיבור always connotes harsh talk

ותדבר מרים ואהרן - ומנין היתה יודעת מרים שפרש משה מן האשה? רבי נתן אומר מרים היתה בצד צפורה בשעה שנאמר למשה אלדד ומידד מתנבאים במחנה, כיון ששמעה צפורה, אמרה אוי לנשותיהן של אלו אם הם נזקקים לנבואה שיהיו פורשין מנשותיהן כדרך שפרש בעלי ממני, ומשם ידעה מרים והגידה לאהרון

How did Miriam know that Moshe had separated from his wife? R' Natan says: Miriam was beside Tziporah when Moshe was told that Eldad and Meidad were prophesying in the camp. When Tziporah heard this, she said- woe to their wives if they are required to prophesy, for they will separate from their wives just as my husband separated from me. From this, Miriam knew and told Aaron.

האשה הכושית - מגיד שהכל מודים ביפיה, כשם שהכל מודים בשחרותו של כושי

Moshe's wife was a Midianite, not a Cushite, but Scripture teaches that everyone acknowledged her beauty just as everyone acknowledged a Cushite's blackness.

Hasn't he spoken to us too and yet we have not abstained from marital relations?

3. Bechor Shor 12: 1-2 (tr. Sefaria.org)

על דבר אשה כושית אשר לקח- לפי הפשט שהיו אומר וכי לא מצא משה אשה מבנות ישראל שיקח לו לאשה שהלך לקחת לו מבנות הכושים שהם ערלים וכי בשביל שה" מדבר עמו מתגאה שאינו רוצה לישא אשה מבנות ישראל שבקש אשה במרחק הלא גם בנו דבר ונשאנו מישראל ולא נתגאנו בכך

And Moshe did not find a woman from the children of Israel to take as a wife, that he went to take one from the daughters of Cush, who are uncircumcised? And was it because Hashem spoke with him that he became haughty such that he did not want to marry a woman from the daughters of Israel and sought a woman from far away? Did He not also speak with us, and we married from within Israel and did not become haughty about this?

3b)

	רש"י	בכור שור
Who was the woman?	Tzipporah	A woman from כוש
What did /מרים/ מהרין speak about?	That Moshe separated from Her because he speaks to Hashem	That Moshe thought too much of himself- because he spoke to Hashem- and therefore had to look elsewhere for a wife
Why were they upset?	They also speak to Hashem and they don't separate	They also speak to Hashem and they married Jewish spouses

4. Shmot 4:6 (tr. JPS Tanakh 1985)

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לוֹ עוֹד הִבֵּאתָ יָדְךָ בְּחִיקְךָ וַיָּבֵא יָדוֹ בְּחִיקוֹ וַיּוֹצֵאָהּ וְהִנֵּה יָדוֹ מְצֻרֶת כַּשֵּׁלֶג:

“And He said put your hand back into your bosom. He put his hand into his bosom and when he took it out, his hand was encrusted with snowy scales”

4b) Rashi Shmot 4:6

מצרעת כשלג- אף באות זה רמז שלשון הרע סיפר באומרו (פסוק א) לא יאמינו לי, לפיכך הלקהו בצרעת, כמו שלקתה מרים על לשון הרע

By this sign, it's indicated that he spoke slanderously when he said- they will not believe me. It is for this reason that He struck him with tzaraat just as Miriam was struck for speaking slanderously

5. Rashi 12:1

ותדבר מרים ואהרון- היא פתחה בדבור תחילה, לפיכך הקדימה הכתוב תחילה

She spoke first, therefore her name is mentioned first

6. Or HaChaim 12:10

והיא מצורעת- לא היה צריך לומר הדבר אחר שכבר אמר והנה מרים מצורעת וגו' ולפי דבריהם ז"ל (ספרי) שאמרו שגם אהרון נצטרע ירצה לומר הנה היא עדיין מצורעת ולא פרוחה ממנה כאהרון

There was no need to repeat this seeing the Torah had already mentioned it in the first half of our verse. According to Sifri who claims that Aaron too had been afflicted, the repetition could mean that whereas Aaron had already been cured, Miriam continued to be afflicted.



11:30 AM

BITTERSWEET MEDICINE



Shemot Chapter 15

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THE SWEETENING OF BITTER WATERS

1. Shemot Chapter 15:22-26

כב וַיִּסַּע מֹשֶׁה אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּם סוּף וַיֵּצְאוּ אֶל מִדְבַּר שׁוּר וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים בְּמִדְבַּר וְלֹא מָצְאוּ מַיִם. כַּג וַיָּבֹאוּ מֵרְתֵּהּ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְשַׁתֵּת מַיִם מִמֶּרְהָ כִּי מְרִים הֵם עַל פֶּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ מְרָה. כד וַיֵּלְנוּ הָעָם עַל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר מָה נִשְׁתָּה. כה וַיִּצְעַק אֵל ה' וַיֹּרְהוּ ה' עֵץ וַיִּשְׁלַךְ אֵל הַמַּיִם וַיִּמְתְּקוּ הַמַּיִם שֵׁם לֹ חֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט וְשֵׁם נִסְהוּ. כו וַיֹּאמֶר אִם שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמַע לְקוֹל ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִישָׁר בְּעֵינֶיךָ תַעֲשֶׂה וְהִזְנַת לְמִצְוֹתָיו וְשִׁמְרַת כָּל חֻקָיו כָּל הַמִּחְלָה אֲשֶׁר שִׁמְתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם לֹא אֲשִׁים עֲלֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי ה' רֹפְאֶךָ.

Moshe had Israel travel from the Sea of Reeds and they went to the desert of Shur, they traveled for three days in the desert and found no water. They came to Marah and couldn't drink water from Marah because the [water] was bitter, therefore they called its name Marah. They complained to Moshe and Aharon and said: What shall we drink? He cried out to Hashem, Hashem showed him a tree, he threw it into the water and the water was sweetened. There he set up for him statutes and rules and there he tested him. He said if you will listen to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, and do what is straight in His eyes, and pay heed to His mitzvot, and guard His statutes- **all the afflictions I placed upon Egypt, I will not place upon you, for I am Hashem your Healer.**

2. Don Isaac Abravanel (15th century Spain), Commentary on Shemot 15

מדוע התחיל הקדוש ברוך הוא במסע הזה במדבר להביא את ישראל לחסרון מים בהיות המים דבר הכרחי מאד כל שכן לעם רב כמוהו ואיך יוכלו ללכת שבעת ימים מבלי מים ומרה תהיה באחרונה שהביאם מרתה ושם מצאו מים אבל מרים הם... באמרו שם שם לו חוק ומשפט ושם נסהו. כי מה היה הנסיון הזה ולמי נסה אם לעם והם היו מבקשי מים לצורכם ראוי היה להם להתלונן. ואם היה הנסיון שנסה החוק והמשפט ראוי לבאר ענינם בזה:

כי איך יאמר שאם ישמעו בקולו וישמרו מצותיו יהיה שכרם שלא תחול עליהם המחלה שחלה על מצרים כי מצרים היה אויב חרף ה' ואיך יהיה שכר העובד שלא יענוש בעונש המורדים. ומה ענין כי אני ה' רופאך כי במקום שאין מחלה אין צריך רופא

Why did the Holy One Blessed Be He begin this journey to bring Israel to a lack of water if water is very necessary- all the more so for a great nation? How can they have traveled for seven days without water [to arrive] at bitterness in the end, that he brought them to Marah and there they found water, but it was bitter?!

When it says: "There he set up for him statutes and rules and there he tested him", what is this test and whom did he test? If it was the nation- they wanted water for their needs – **it was appropriate for them to complain!** If the test was of the statutes and rules, this needs to be explained...

How can it say that if they listen to His voice, and guard His commandments their reward will be that the afflictions that befell Egypt would not befall them? For [the nation of Egypt] was the enemy who blasphemed G-d! How can the reward be for the servant that they won't be punished with the punishment of rebels? What is the idea of "I am Hashem your healer? If there is no affliction, no healer is necessary.

APPROACH #1- IF YOU DEDICATE YOURSELF TO HIM, G-D WILL HEAL YOU

3. Don Isaac Abravanel (15th century Spain), Abravanel on Shemot 15

והיותר נכון בעיני הוא שמפני שהיה הקב"ה עתיד לתת להם בסיני תורה ומצות הוצרך במסעות הראשונות האלה להביאם בצרות ומצוקות באופן שיתחננו לפניו והוא ימלא את צורכם וידעו כי יש אלקים בישראל שהוא המוציא נזולים מסלע וגם לחם יוכל תת כי הכל בידו כחומר ביד היוצר ובזה יקנו למוד מועיל שבצר להם ישחרונהו וימצא להם. הנה א"כ להדריכם בשלמות האמונות והדבקות עמו ית' צריכים לקבול התורה והביאם בנסיונות אלה ומפני זה לא קבלו עונש כלל על דבריהם אשר דברו בזה לפי שמרוב שיחם וכעסם דברו.

The most correct [interpretation] in my eyes is that because Hashem was destined to give them Torah and mitzvot as Sinai, these first journeys were needed to bring them through difficulties and travails so they would supplicate in front of Him and He would fulfill their needs, and [they would] know that there is a G-d in Israel who can bring out flowing water from the rock and can provide bread, for everything in His hand is like clay in the hand of the crafter. In this way, they would acquire a productive lesson that during difficult times they should seek Him, and He will find them. It follows that He brought them through these trials to direct them in the perfect belief and connection to him which are necessary to accept the Torah. Therefore, they didn't receive any punishment for their words which they spoke in anger...

4. Rabbi Bahya Ibn Asher (13th century Spain), Commentary on Shemot 15:26

ויאמר הכתוב אם אתה מקיים כל זה תהיה נשמר מכל חולי, אין צריך לומר שתהיה נשמר מכל מיני מחלת מצרים... כי אף מן החולי הבא לאדם מחולי בטבע, ובנוהג שבעולם תהיה נשמר "כי אני ה' רופאך", אשמור בריאותך שלא יבא שום חולי עליך כלל.

The verse says if you fulfill all of this you will be guarded from all sickness, certainly from the afflictions of Egypt... but even from natural sickness which is the way of the world- for I am Hashem your healer, I will guard **your health so that no sickness befalls you at all.**

5. Shemot 23:25 (JPS Tanakh 1985 translation)

וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּבֵרַךְ אֶת-לֶחְמֶךָ וְאֶת-מִימֵיךָ וְהִסְרֵתִי מִכָּל-מַקְרָבְךָ:

You shall serve the LORD your G-d, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will remove sickness from your midst.

6. Rabbi Moshe Nachmanides (13th century Spain on Vayikra Chapter 26

הכלל כי בהיות ישראל שלמים והם רבים, לא יתנהג ענינם בטבע כלל, לא בגופם, ולא בארצם, לא בכללם, ולא ביחיד מהם, כי יברך השם לחמם ומימם, ויסיר מחלה מקרבם, עד שלא יצטרכו לרופא ולהשתמר בדרך מדרכי הרפואות כלל, כמו שאמר (שמות טו כו) כי אני ה' רופאך. וכן היו הצדיקים עושים בזמן הנבואה, גם כי יקרה עון שיחלו לא ידרשו ברופאים רק בנביאים, כענין חזקיהו בחלותו (מ"ב כ ב ג). ואמר הכתוב (דהי"ב טז יב) גם בחליו לא דרש את ה' כי ברופאים, ואילו היה דבר הרופאים נהוג בהם, מה טעם שיוזכר הרופאים, אין האשם רק בעבור שלא דרש השם. אבל הוא כאשר יאמר אדם, לא אכל פלוני מצה בחג המצות כי אם חמץ: אבל הדורש השם בנביא לא ידרוש ברופאים. ומה חלק לרופאים בבית עושי רצון השם, אחר שהבטיח וברך את לחמך ואת מימך והסירותי מחלה מקרבך, והרופאים אין מעשיהם רק על המאכל והמשקה להזהיר ממנו ולצוות עליו...

The principle is that when there are many **perfectly [righteous] people among Israel**, He will not direct them through nature at all, not their bodies, nor their land, not the community, nor an individual among them. Rather, Hashem will bless their bread and water and remove affliction from their midst such that they will not need doctors or to be vigilant in the path of medicine at all, as it says: I am Hashem your healer (Shemot 15:26). This is how the righteous would act during the time of prophecy, even when a sin caused their sickness, they would not seek doctors but rather prophets, as was the case with Hezekiah when he became ill (Kings II 20:2-3). So too the verse says (Divrei HaYamim 16:12) "when he [King Asa] was ill, he didn't seek Hashem, but [sought] the doctors. If seeking doctors was common, why does it mention the doctors? The sin lies only in the fact that he didn't seek Hashem. Rather it is parallel to a person who says: "So and so didn't eat matzah during Passover but ate chametz. **But one who seeks Hashem through a prophet shouldn't consult doctors.** What portion do doctors have in the house of those who do the will of Hashem, since he promised: "and He will bless your bread and your water, and I will remove affliction from your midst. All doctors do is give instructions regarding food and drink.

APPROACH #2 – TORAH LIFE AS MEDICINE

7. Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (11th century France) on Shemot 15:26

ולפי פשוטו כי אני ה' רופאך ומלמדך תורה ומצוות למען תנצל מהם, כרופא הזה האומר לאדם אל תאכל [דבר זה פן יביאך לידי חולי זה] וכן הוא אומר (משלי ג ח) רפאות תהייע לשרך:

According to its simple explanation: “For I am Hashem your Healer” and [I] teach you Torah and mitzvot so that you will be saved from them, like this doctor who tells a person: “don’t eat this thing lest it bring upon you this sickness”. So too it says: “It shall be a healing for your navel” (Mishlei 3:8).

8. Mechilta of Rabbi Yishmael on B’shalach

ומה ת”ל כי אני ה’ רופאך אמר לו הקב”ה למשה אמור להם לישראל דברי תורה שנתתי לכם רפואה הם לכם חיים הם לכם שני’ כי חיים הם למוצאייהם ולכל בשרו מרפא () ואו’ רפאות תהי לשריך ושיקוי לעצמותיך (שם ג).

What does the Torah mean when it says: “For I am Hashem your healer? The Holy One Blessed be He said to Moshe: Tell Israel that the **words of Torah that I am giving to you are a healing for you, they are life for you** as it says: “They are life for all who find them and a cure for all his flesh...it shall be a healing for your navel and a marrow for your bones”.

9. Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (11th Century France), Rashi on Shemot 15:25 (tr. M. Rosenbaum and A.M Silberman)

שם שם לו. במרה נתן להם מקצת פרושיות של תורה שיתעסקו בהם, שבת ופרה אדמה ודינין
HERE HE MADE FOR THEM [A STATUTE AND AN ORDINANCE) — At Marah He gave them a few sections of the Torah in order that they might engage in the study thereof; viz., the sections containing the command regarding the sabbath, the red heifer and the administration of justice (Mekhilta d’Rabbi Yishmael 15:25; Sanhedrin 56b).

10. Talmud, Eruvin 54a (William Davidson Edition Translation)

אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: המהלך בדרך ואין עמו לוייה — יעסוק בתורה, שנאמר: “כי לויית חן הם.”
חש בראשו — יעסוק בתורה, שנאמר: “כי לויית חן הם לראשך.”
חש בגרונו — יעסוק בתורה, שנאמר: “וענקים לגרגרותיך.”
חש במעייו — יעסוק בתורה, שנאמר: “רפאות תהי לשרך.”
חש בעצמותיו — יעסוק בתורה, שנאמר: “ושקוי לעצמותיך.”
חש בכל גופו — יעסוק בתורה, שנאמר: “ולכל בשרו מרפא.”
אמר רב יהודה ברבי חייא: בא וראה, שלא כמדת הקדוש ברוך הוא מדת בשר ודם. מדת בשר ודם: אדם נותן סם לחבירו — לזה יפה, ולזה קשה. אבל הקדוש ברוך הוא אינו כן: נתן תורה לישראל — סם חיים לכל גופו, שנאמר: “ולכל בשרו מרפא.” אמר רב אמאי דכתיב “כי נעים כי תשמרם בבטנה יכוננו יחדיו על שפתיך”, אימתי דברי תורה נעימים — בזמן שתשמרם בבטנה, ואימתי תשמרם בבטנה — בזמן שיכוננו יחדיו על שפתיך.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: One who is walking along the way without a companion and is afraid should engage in Torah study, as it is stated with regard to the words of Torah: “For they shall be a graceful wreath [livyat hen] for your head, and chains about your neck” (Proverbs 1:9).

One who feels pain in his head should engage in Torah study, as it is stated: “For they shall be a graceful wreath for your head.”

One who feels pain in his throat should engage in Torah study, as it is stated: “And chains about your neck.”

One who feels pain in his intestines should engage in Torah study, as it is stated: “It shall be health to your navel” (Proverbs 3:8).

One who feels pain in his bones should engage in Torah study, as it is stated: “And marrow to your bones” (Proverbs 3:8).

One who feels pain in his entire body should engage in Torah study, as it is stated: “And health to all their flesh” (Proverbs 4:22).

Rav Yehuda, son of Rabbi Hiyya, said: Come and see that the attribute of flesh and blood is unlike the attribute of the Holy One, Blessed be He. The attribute of flesh and blood is that when a person gives a drug to his fellow, it is good for this part of his body and it is harmful to that other part of his body. But the attribute of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is not so; He gave the Torah to the Jewish people, and it is a drug of life for one's entire body, as it is stated: “And health to all their flesh.” ... Rav Ami said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you; let them be firmly attached together to your lips” (Proverbs 22:18)? When are words of Torah pleasant? **When you keep them within you and know them. And when will you keep them within you? When they will be attached together to your lips**

11. Rabbi Yehuda Loew (16th Century Prague), Netiv HaTorah Chapter 1

שכל אשר הוא חולה יוצא מן הסדר, יעסוק בתורה, שהיא סדר העולם, ואז האדם אשר היה מקבל חולי, שהוא שנוי, יחזור אל הסדר, שהוא בריאותו. ואמר עוד “חש בראשו וכו’”, כי כאשר יבא שנוי לגוף... על ידי התורה, שהיא סדר העולם, מחזרת את הגוף שהיה בו שנוי אל סדר שלו. כי אל סדר התורה נמשך הכל

Anyone ill and has veered from the order, should engage in Torah, which is the order of the world, and then the person who was suffering from illness, which is a deviation, will return to the order, which is his health. It continues: “If he feels pain in his head...”, for when a deviation comes to the body, through the Torah which is the order of the world, it returns the body which has a change to its order, for everything flows from the order of the Torah.

12. Rabbi Moses Maimonides (12th Century Egypt), Guide For the Perplexed 3:27

The true Law, which as we said is one, and beside which there is no other Law, viz., the Law of our teacher Moses, has for its purpose to give us the twofold perfection. **It aims first at the establishment of good mutual relations among men by removing injustice and creating the noblest feelings.** In this way the people in every land are enabled to stay and continue in one condition, and everyone can acquire his first perfection. Secondly, it seeks to train us in faith, and to impart correct and true opinions when the intellect is sufficiently developed.

13. Rabbi Shlomo Luntschitz (16th Century Prague), Kli Yakor on Shemot 15:26

כשם שענייכם הרואות שבידי לרפאות דבר מר בדבר מר כיוצא בו, מעתה תקבל עליך לשמוע בקול ה' ולעשות הישר בעיניו, ואע"פ שהתורה והמצות נראים בתחילתם קשים ומרים מ"מ סופם מתוקים כי הם מרפא לעצם ורפאות לשריך והם מצילין אותך מן כל המחלה אשר שמתני במצרים, הן חולי הגופות הן חולי הנפשות מענין קישוי ערפם, ואם אין אתה מרגיש בסגולת התורה שתהיה לך לתרופה על זה האופן הנה אני ה' רופאיך ורק הרופא לבד צריך לידע סגולת של הדברים המרפאים, אבל הנרפא אינו צריך לידע זה רק יאמין אל הרופא הנאמן.

Just as your eyes see, that it is in My hand to heal bitterness with something bitter and the like, now accept upon yourselves to listen to the voice of Hashem and to do what is straight in his eyes. Even though the Torah and mitzvot originally seems difficult and bitter, nevertheless ultimately, they are sweet. For they are a cure for the bones, and medicine for the navel and they save you from the affliction I placed upon Egypt, whether physical sickness or spiritual sickness from their stubbornness. **If you don't feel the power of Torah which will be a treatment for you in this way, behold “I am Hashem your healer”**, and only the doctor needs to know the power of the medicine, but the patient doesn't need to know but rather to believe in the faithful doctor.

APPROACH #3 – HASHEM IS YOUR DOCTOR BUT YOU MAY NOT ENJOY THE MEDICINE

14. Rabbi Meir Levush Wisser (19th century Ukraine)

ו"ש שכל המחלה אשר שמתני במצרים שהיה תכליתה כדי להכות, לא אשים עליך, כי אם אכה אותך, יהיה זה מצד שאני ה' רופאך, יהיה זה לרפואה אל חולי הנפש. והנה הודיע להם שהתורה והמצוות שצוה ה' לבני ישראל לא היו הצווים כדרך האדון המצוה אל עבדו, רק כדרך הרופא המצוה את החולה, רצוני שהאדון המצוה אל עבדו באו הצווים לצורך האדון המצוה שיעבוד עבודתו, ואם יעבור על פקודתו ויעניש אותו, אין העונש מקושר עם חטאו, רק העונש תלוי ברצון האדון וחרון אפו בו על שלא עבד עבודתו הראוי, אבל הרופא המצוה את החולה באו הצווים לצורך החולה שנצטוה, ואם יעבור על פקודתו העונש רצוף בהחטא עצמו לא בהרופא, וכן המצוות שצוה ה' אותנו אינם לצרכו רק לצרכנו לרפאות חולי נפשנו, ואם נעבור על מצותיו העונש רצוף בהעברה עצמה

This is the meaning of "all the afflictions I have placed upon Egypt" the purpose of which was to punish, I will not place upon you, **for if I do strike, it will only be because "I am Hashem your healer, it will be for healing of the sickness of the soul.** Behold, he informed them that the Torah and mitzvot that Hashem commanded to the children of Israel were not commandments in the way of a master who commands his servant, but in the way of a doctor who commands the sick [patient]. I mean that [when] the master commands his servant the instructions come for the master who commands that his service is performed, if [the servant] violates the command and [the master] punishes him, the punishment isn't connected with his sin. Rather, the punishment is contingent upon the will of the master and his anger with him for not performing his service properly. However [when] the doctor instructs the patient, the instructions come for the sick patient, and if he violated [the doctor's] instructions the punishment is connected to the sin itself, not the doctor. So too, regarding the mitzvot which Hashem commanded us, they aren't for His needs but for our needs, to heal the sickness of our souls, and if we violate His mitzvot the punishment is connected to the sin itself.

15. Rabbi Zadok ha-Kohen Rabinowitz of Lublin (19th Century Poland) Pri Tzadik on Tazria Chapter 1

והיינו שיהיה החשק לשמוע ד"ת וזהו אם שמוע תשמע וגו' והאזנת למצותיו שעכ"פ יהיה לכם חשק להיות טוב אף שתקלקלו במעשה בפועל מ"מ הבטוח להם הקב"ה כל המחלה אשר שמתני במצרים לא אשים עליך, ששם במצרים היו המכות להם רק לעונש שנקרא נגע...וזה לא אשים עליך כי אני ה' רופאך, שאף שלפעמים צריך לבא המכה כנגעים יהיה רק דרך רפואה שיהיה מזבח כפרה

That is the desire to listen to the words of Torah, this is the meaning of "if you will listen...and heed his mitzvot", that either way you should have the desire to good, **even if you practically falter**, nevertheless the Holy One Blessed be He assures you that "all of the afflictions I have put upon Egypt, I will not place upon you, for in Egypt, the plagues were for a punishment which is called a "plague"...this is what it means I will not place upon you for I am Hashem your healer, that although sometimes the punishment needs to come like a plague, it will only be in the way of healing such that it will be an altar of atonement...



12:00 PM



WHEN ELIJAHU CURED SHAUL

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1. Shemuel I 15:12-21 (JPS 1985 translation c/o sefaria.org, very lightly edited)

(יב) וַיִּשְׁכַּם שְׂמוּאֵל לְקִרְיַת שָׁאוּל בְּבֹקֶר וַיִּגְדַּל לְשְׂמוּאֵל לֵאמֹר בָּא שְׂאוּל הַפְּרָמְלָה וְהִנֵּה מְצִיב לִי יָד וַיִּסָּב וַיַּעֲבֹר וַיֵּרֵד הַגִּלְגָּל: (יג) וַיִּבֵּא שְׂמוּאֵל אֶל שָׁאוּל וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ שְׁאוּל בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה לַד' הַקִּימְתִּי אֶת דְּבַר ד':

(יד) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂמוּאֵל וּמָה קוֹל הַצֹּאן הַזֶּה בְּאָזְנִי וְקוֹל הַבָּקָר אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי שֹׁמֵעַ: (טו) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאוּל מִמַּעַמְלֵקִי הֵבִיאוּם אֲשֶׁר חָמַל הָעָם עַל מֵיטֵב הַצֹּאן וְהַבָּקָר לְמַעַן זָבַח לַד' אֶלְקִיָּה וְאֵת הַיֹּתֵר הַחֲרָמְנוּ:

(טז) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂמוּאֵל אֶל שְׂאוּל הֲרָף וְאִגִּידָה לָּךְ אֵת אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ד' אֵלַי הַלִּילָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ דְּבַר: (יז) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂמוּאֵל הֲלוֹא אִם קָטַן אַתָּה בְּעֵינַיִךְ רֹאשׁ שְׁבִטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתָּה וַיִּמְשַׁחֲךָ ד' לְמֶלֶךְ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל: (יח) וַיִּשְׁלַחֲךָ ד' בְּדֶרֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר לָךְ וְהַחֲרַמְתָּה אֶת הַחֲטָאִים אֶת עַמְלֵק וְנִלְחַמְתָּ בּוֹ עַד כְּלוּתָם אִתָּם: (יט) וְלָמָּה לֹא שִׁמַּעְתָּ בְּקוֹל ד' וַתַּעֲטֵ אֶל הַשָּׁלַל וַתַּעֲשׂ הֲרַע בְּעֵינַי ד':

(כ) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאוּל אֶל שְׂמוּאֵל אֲשֶׁר שִׁמַּעְתִּי בְּקוֹל ד' וְאַלְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְנִי ד' וְאָבִיָּא אֶת אַגַּג מֶלֶךְ עַמְלֵק וְאֵת עַמְלֵק הַחֲרַמְתִּי: (כא) וַיִּקַּח הָעָם מִהַשָּׁלַל צֹאן וּבָקָר רֹאשִׁית הַחֶרֶם לְזָבַח לַד' אֶלְקִיָּה בְּגִלְגָּל:

Early in the morning Samuel went to meet Saul. Samuel was told, "Saul went to Carmel, where he erected a monument for himself; then he left and went on down to Gilgal."

When Samuel came to Saul, Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have fulfilled the Lord's command." "Then what," demanded Samuel, "is this bleating of sheep in my ears, and the lowing of oxen that I hear?" Saul answered, "They were brought from the Amalekites, for the troops spared the choicest of the sheep and oxen for sacrificing to the Lord your Gd. And we proscribed the rest."

Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night!" "Speak," he replied. And Samuel said, "You may look small to yourself, but you are the head of the tribes of Israel. The Lord anointed you king over Israel, and the Lord sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and proscribe the sinful Amalekites; make war on them until you have exterminated them.' Why did you disobey the Lord and swoop down on the spoil in defiance of the Lord's will?"

Saul said to Samuel, "But I did obey the Lord! I performed the mission on which the Lord sent me: I captured King Agag of Amalek, and I proscribed Amalek, and the troops took from the spoil some sheep and oxen—the best of what had been proscribed—to sacrifice to the Lord your Gd at Gilgal."

ELIJAHU ON MOUNT CARMEL

2. Divrei haYamim II 18:3-7

(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר אַחֲזָב מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יְהוֹשֻׁפֵט מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה הַתֵּלַף עִמִּי רִמַת גִּלְעָד וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כְּמוֹנִי כְמוֹךָ וְכַעֲמֶךָ עִמִּי וְעַמְּךָ בְּמִלְחָמָה: (ד) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁפֵט אֶל מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל דָּרֵשׁ נָא כִּיּוֹם אֵת דְּבַר ד': (ה) וַיִּקְבֹּץ מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַנְּבָאִים אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם הִנֵּלְךָ אֶל רִמַת גִּלְעָד לְמִלְחָמָה אִם אֶחָדָל וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲלֵה וַיִּתֵּן הָאֲלֹקִים בְּיַד הַמֶּלֶךְ: (ו) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁפֵט הֲאִין פֹּה נִבִּיא לַד' עוֹד וְנִדְרָשָׁה מֵאֲתָנוּ: (ז) וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יְהוֹשֻׁפֵט עוֹד אִישׁ אֶחָד לְדְרוֹשׁ אֶת ד' מֵאֲתָנוּ וְאִנִּי שְׁנֵאתִיהוּ כִּי אִנְנוּ מִתְנַבֵּא עָלַי לְטוֹבָה כִּי כָל יְמֵי לְרַעָה הוּא מִיְכִיָּהוּ בֶן יִמְלָא וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁפֵט אֶל יֹאמֵר הַמֶּלֶךְ בֶּן:

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?" And the king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, "There is one more man through whom we can inquire of the Lord; but I hate him, because he never prophesies anything good for me but always misfortune. He is Micaiah son of Imlah." Jehoshaphat replied, "Let the king not say such a thing.

3. Melachim I 18:19-24, 18:30

(יט) ועתה שלח קבץ אלי את כל ישראל אל הר הפרמל ואת נביאי הבעל ארבע מאות וחמשים ונביאי האשרה ארבע מאות אכלי שלחן איזבל: (כ) וישלח אחאב בכל בני ישראל ויקבץ את הנביאים אל הר הפרמל: (כא) ויגש אליהו אל כל העם ויאמר עד מתי אתם פסחים על שתי הסעפים אם ד' האלקים לכו אחריו ואם הבעל לכו אחריו ולא ענו העם אתו דבר: (כב) ויאמר אליהו אל העם אני נותרתי נביא לד' לבדי ונביאי הבעל ארבע מאות וחמשים איש: (כג) ויתנו לנו שנים פרים ויבחרו להם הפר האחד וינתהו וישמו על העצים ואש לא ישמו ואני אעשה את הפר האחד ונתתי על העצים ואש לא אשים: (כד) וקראתם בשם אלהיכם ואני אקרא בשם ד' והיה האלהים אשר יענה באש הוא האלהים ויען כל העם ויאמרו טוב הדבר: ... (ל) ויאמר אליהו לכל העם גשו אלי ויגשו כל העם אליו וירפא את מזבח ד' ההרוס:

(19) And now, gather all of Israel to me, to Mount Carmel, and four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of Asheirah, who dine at Izevel's table. (20) And Achav sent throughout the nation of Yisrael, and he gathered the prophets to Mount Carmel.

(21) And Eliyahu went forth to the nation and he said, "Until when will you hop upon the two sides? If you are for Gd, go after Him. If you are for Baal, go after him." And the nation did not reply at all. (22) And Eliyahu said to the nation, "I remain, alone, a prophet for Gd. The prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty men. (23) Let them give us two bulls, and they will pick a bull for themselves, and they will cut it up and they will place it on the wood, and they will not place fire. And I will prepare one bull, and I will place it on the wood, and I will not place fire. (24) And you will call in the name of your G-d, and I will call in the name of Gd, and the Gd who will answer with fire is Gd." And the entire nation responded, saying, "This is good..."

(30) And Eliyahu said to the entire nation, "Come forward to me," and the entire nation came forward to him, and he healed the ruined altar.

ELIYAHU HEALS SHAUL'S ALTAR?

4. Radak to Shemuel I 15:12

ובדרש בונה לו מזבח שם בכרמל והוא המזבח שנאמר באליהו וירפא את מזבח ד' ההרוס:

And in midrash, he built an altar there for himself in Carmel. This is the altar mentioned regarding Eliyahu (Melachim I 18:30), "And he healed the ruined altar of Gd."

5. Ralbag to Shemuel I 15:12

ידמה שיהיה הרצון בזה שהוא היה מציב לו מקום לשבת בו ולעבוד הש"י שם ולתת לו תודה על כל הטובה אשר הטיב לישראל והנה היה המקום שהיה מציב לו יד בו הגלגל כי שם היו נקבצים ישראל תמיד על כל הדברים הגדולים ולזה אמר ויסב ויעבר וירד הגלגל:

It appears that this meant that he set up a place there to sit and serve Gd and give thanks for all of the good Gd had provided for Israel. This place where he set up the *yad* was Gilgal, for Israel always gathered there for all of the great moments. Thus it said, "And he turned and crossed to Gilgal."

HEALING SHAUL

6. Radak to Shemuel I 15:20

ואביא את אגג - כלומר אם לא המיתיו עם האחרים לא שלחתי לנפשו כי הנה הביאותיו ויומת:

“And I brought Agag” – Meaning: Even though I didn’t kill him with the others, I did not set him free. I have brought him, and he will die.

7. Ralbag to Shemuel I 15:13

אפשר שחשב שאול שאם יזבחו לד' מן השלל שהוא לא יקשה בעיני הש"י אחר שאינם נהנים בשללם ולחולשת ההתנצלות הזו יחסו אל העם.

Perhaps Shaul thought that if they would slaughter for Gd from the spoils, this would not upset Gd, since they had not benefited from their spoils. And because this was a weak excuse, he attributed the decision to the nation.

8. Abarbanel to Shemuel I 15:20

איך תאמר "ולמה לא שמעת בקול ד'" כי הנה אני שמעתי בקול ד', והצווי לא היה בעצם וראשונה כי אם על עמלק ועמו לא על הבעל חי, כי עמלק היה החוטא והוא אשר בא להלחם בישראל לא הצאן והבקר.

How can you say, “Why didn’t you listen to Gd’s voice?” I listened to Gd’s voice, and the command was only, essentially and from the start, for Amalek and his nation, and not on the animals. For Amalek was the sinner, and he was the one who came to battle Israel – not the sheep and cattle.

9. Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak haKohen Kook, Orot haTeshuvah 9:5

צריך לברר את הטוב הנמצא בעומק הרע ולחזק אותו - באותו הכח עצמו שבורחים מן הרע, כדי שתהיה התשובה כח פועל לטובה, המהפכת ממש את כל הזדונות לזכיות.

One must filter out the good that is found in the depths of bad, and strengthen the good via that energy with which he flees from the bad, so that teshuvah will function for the good, actually converting intentional sins into merits.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How did Shaul defy Shemuel’s orders?
- 2 How can Shaul say he still listened to Gd, after defying Shemuel’s instructions?
- 3 What was Achav’s goal in Israel?
- 4 What was Achav’s attitude toward prophets?
- 5 Why would Eliyahu have chosen to “heal” Shaul’s altar by using it opposite Achav’s defiance?



12:30 PM

THE HEALER AND THE HEALED



אליהו ובן האלמנה, מלכים א, פרק יז

Lori Grysman

1. Background • Melachim I, Perek 16 (tr. JPS Tanakh 1985)

כט ואחאב בן-עמרי, מלך על-ישראל... ל ויעש אחאב בן-עמרי הרע, בעיני ה'--מכל, אשר לפניו... לד בנימיו בנה חיאל, בית האלי--את-יריחה: באבירם בכרו יסדה, ובשגיב (ובשגוב) צעירו הציב דלתיה, כדבר ה', אשר דבר ביד יהושע בן-נון.

Ahab son of Omri became king over Israel ... Ahab son of Omri did what was displeasing to the LORD, more than all who preceded him... During his reign, Hiel the Bethelite fortified Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of Abiram his first-born, and set its gates in place at the cost of Segub his youngest, in accordance with the words that the LORD had spoken through Joshua son of Nun.

2. Opening • Perek 17 (tr. JPS Tanakh 1985)

א ויאמר אליהו התשבי מתשבי גלעד, אל-אחאב, חי-ה' אלקי ישראל אשר עמדתני לפניו, אם-יהיה השנים האלה טל ומטר--פי, אם-לפי דברי.

Elijah the Tishbite, an inhabitant of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD lives, the G-d of Israel whom I serve, there will be no dew or rain except at my bidding."

3. א תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין דף קיג עמוד א (tr. William Davidson Edition)

אחאב שושביניה הוה, אתא איהו ואליהו למשאל בשלמא בי טמיא... אמר ליה: השתא לווטתא דמשה לא קא מקיימא, דכתב וסרתם ועבדתם וגו' וכתב וחרה אף ה' בכם ועצר את השמים וגו', וההוא גברא אוקים ליה עבודה זרה על כל תלם ותלם, ולא שביק ליה מיטרא דמיזל מיסגד ליה, לווטתא דיהושע תלמידיה מקיימא? מיד ויאמר אליהו התשבי מתשבי גלעד חי ה' אלקי ישראל... אם יהיה... טל ומטר וגו', בעי רחמי והבו ליה אקלידא דמטרא, וקם ואזל...

Ahab was Hiel's close friend and groomsman. He and Elijah came to inquire about Hiel's welfare in the house of mourning [bei tamyā] ... Ahab said to Elijah: Now the curse of Moses is not fulfilled, as it is written: "And you go astray and worship other gods," and it is written: "Then the Lord's anger will flare against you, and He will close the heavens, and there will be no rain" (Deuteronomy 11:16–17). And that man, referring to himself, established an object of idol worship on each and every furrow in the kingdom of Israel, and the rain is so plentiful that it does not allow him to go and worship it; will the curse of his student, Joshua, be fulfilled? The verse relates Elijah's reaction: **Immediately: "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab: As the Lord G-d of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew or rain these years, but according to my word" (I Kings 17:1). Elijah prayed for mercy and they gave him the key to rainfall enabling him to dictate when it would rain, and he arose and went.**

4. Story 1 • Perek 17 (tr. JPS Tanakh 1985)

ב ויהי דבר-ה', אליו לאמר. ג לך מזה, ופנית לך קדמה; ונסתרת בנחל פריית, אשר על-פני הירדן. ד והיה, מהנחל תשתה; ואת-הערבים צייתי, לכלפלה שם. ה וילך ויעש, כדבר ה'; וילך, וישב בנחל פריית, אשר על-פני הירדן. ו והערבים, מבאים לו לחם ובשר בבקר, ולחם ובשר, בערב; ומן-הנחל, ישתה. ז ויהי מקץ ימים, וייבש הנחל: כי לא-היה גשם, בארץ.

The word of the LORD came to him: "Leave this place; turn eastward and go into hiding by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. You will drink from the wadi, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." He proceeded to do as the LORD had bidden: he went, and he stayed by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat every morning and every evening, and he drank from the wadi. After some time the wadi dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

5. Metzudat David, Melachim I, Perek 17 Pasuk 7

ואת העורבים וכו' - בכדי להעיר רוחו לבל יתאכזר על ישראל בראותו כי העורבים האכזרים יחמלו עליו לכלכלו ואיך לא יחמול הוא על ישראל:

To inspire him to not be cruel to Bnei Yisrael when he saw that the (normally) cruel ravens had mercy on him to provide his food and how could he not have mercy on Bnei Yisrael?

6. Rashi, Melachim I, Perek 17

(ז) ויבש הנחל - כדי שידע צורך הגשמים ויטריח לגלות שהיה קשה בעיני הקדוש ברוך הוא שישראל שרוין ברעב:

The brook dried up. In order that he realize the need for rain and trouble himself to go into exile, for it was displeasing to the Holy One Blessed Is He, that Bnei Yisrael should be living in hunger.

7. Alshich, Melachim I, Perek 17

אך עיקר הענין הוא למען יראה במקום שהוא צרת אלמנה ויתום אשר הוא יתברך מרחמם ומזהיר על ענויים שאלמלא הוא, מתו גם שניהם כדברה אליו: ... ומהם יראה כי כמה וכמה כיוצא בהם בכל המון ישראל אשר יתמו ברעב לחם, באופן שטוב הוא יבקש עליהם רחמים ויהיה טל ומטר לפי דברו.

The main point was for him to see, at that place, the suffering of the widow and her orphan, for whom Hashem has mercy and warns against their mistreatment, because if not for Eliyahu, they would both die, as she said to him... and from them he would see how many others like them among the masses of Israel were dying from hunger, so that it would be good for him to seek mercy for them and bring rain and dew according to his word.

8. Story 2 • Perek 17 (tr. JPS Tanakh 1985)

ח ויהי דבר-ה', אליו לאמר. ט קום לך צרפתה אשר לצידון, וישבת שם; הנה צייתי שם אשה אלמנה, לכלכלך. י ויקום וילך צרפתה, ויבא אל-פתח העיר, והנה-שם אשה אלמנה, מקששת עצים; ויקרא אליה ויאמר, קחי-נא לי מעט-מים בכלי ואשתה. יא ותלך, לקחת; ויקרא אליה ויאמר, לקחי-נא לי פת-לחם בידך. יב ותאמר, חי-ה' אלקיך אם-יש-לי מעוג, כי אם-מלא כף-קמח ביד, ומעט-שמן בצפחת; והנני מקששת שנים עצים, ובאתי ועשיתייהו לי ולבני, ואכלנהו, ומתנו. יג ויאמר אליה אליהו אל-תיראי, באי עשי כדברך; אך עשי-לי משם עגה קטנה בראשנה, והוצאת לי, ולך ולבנך, תעשי באחרנה. יד כי כה אמר ה' אלקי ישראל, כד הקמח לא תכלה, וצפחת השמן, לא תחסר: עד יום תתן- (תת-), ה', גשם--על-פני האדמה. טו ותלך ותעשה, כדבר אליהו; ותאכל הוא-והיא (היא-והוא) וביתה, ימים. טז כד הקמח לא כלתה, וצפחת השמן לא חסר--כדבר ה', אשר דבר ביד אליהו.

And the word of the LORD came to him: "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon, and stay there; I have designated a widow there to feed you." So he went at once to Zarephath. When he came to the entrance of the town, a widow was there gathering wood. He called out to her, "Please bring me a little water in your pitcher, and let me drink." As she went to fetch it, he called out to her, "Please bring along a piece of bread for me." "As the LORD your G-d lives," she replied, "I have nothing baked, nothing but a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am just gathering a couple of sticks, so that I can go home and prepare it for me and my son; we shall eat it and then we shall die." "Don't be afraid," said Elijah to her. "Go and do as you have said; but first make me a small cake from what you have there, and bring it out to me; then make some for yourself and your son. For thus said the LORD, the G-d of Israel: The jar of flour shall not give out and the jug of oil shall not fail until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the ground." She went and did as Elijah had spoken, and she and he and her household had food for a long time. The jar of flour did not give out, nor did the jug of oil fail, just as the LORD had spoken through Elijah.

9. Story 3 • Perek 17 (tr. JPS Tanakh 1985)

יז ויהי, אחר הדברים האלה, חלה, בן-האשה בעלת הבית; ויהי חליו חזק מאד, עד אשר לא-נותרה-בו נשמה. יח ותאמר, אל-אליהו, מה-לי ולך, איש האלקים: באת אלי להזכיר את-עוני, ולהמית את-בני. יט ויאמר אליה, תני-לי את-בנך; ויקחהו מחיקה, ויעלהו אל-העליה אשר-הוא ישב שם, וישכבהו, על-מטתו. כ ויקרא אל-ה', ויאמר: ה' אלקי--הגם על-האלמנה אשר-אני מתגורר עמה הרעות, להמית את-בנה. כא ויתמדד על-הילד שלש פעמים, ויקרא אל-ה' ויאמר: ה' אלקי, תשב נא נפש-הילד הזה על-קרבו. כב וישמע ה' בקול אליהו; ותשב נפש-הילד על-קרבו, וחי. כג ויקח אליהו את-הילד, וירדהו מן-העליה הביתה, ויתנהו, לאמו; ויאמר, אליהו, ראי, חי בנך. כד ותאמר האשה, אל-אליהו, עתה זה ידעתי, כי איש אלקים אתה; ודבר-ה' בפיה, אמת.

After a while, the son of the mistress of the house fell sick, and his illness grew worse, until he had no breath left in him. She said to Elijah, "What harm have I done you, O man of G-d, that you should come here to recall my sin and cause the death of my son?" "Give me the boy," he said to her; and taking him from her arms, he carried him to the upper chamber where he was staying, and laid him down on his own bed. He cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my G-d, will You bring calamity upon this widow whose guest I am, and let her son die?" Then he stretched out over the child three times, and cried out to the LORD, saying, "O LORD my G-d, let this child's life return to his body!" The LORD heard Elijah's plea; the child's life returned to his body, and he revived. Elijah picked up the child and brought him down from the upper room into the main room, and gave him to his mother. "See," said Elijah, "your son is alive." And the woman answered Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of G-d and that the word of the LORD is truly in your mouth."

10. Rav Elchanan Samet, Pirkei Eliyahu, p.67

ילד רך אינו מוסיף בריאות ואון בקיום אורח חיים כזה. בעת בצורת ורעב, גוברת החולשה בעולם, ומחלות ומגפות שונות פורצות בנקל. לא ייפלא, כי בן האלמנה החלוש והרעב, חלה אף הוא " וְיִהְיֶה חֲלֵיו חֲזָק מְאֹד, עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-נִוְתָרָה-בּוֹ נֶשְׁמָה".

A young child does not gain health and strength in this kind of existence. At a time of drought and famine in the land, weakness is increased, and plagues and illnesses break out easily. It is not surprising, then, that the weak and hungry son of the widow also got sick and his sickness was very strong, to the point that he died.

11. Radak, Melachim I, Perek 17

(כ) הגם אל האלמנה - כלומר אפילו על האלמנה פקדת העון כמו שאתה פוקד היום עונם לישראל בעצירת הגשמים ואפי' על זאת האלמנה פקדת עונה להמית את בנה לא תחייהו בזכותי שאני מתגורר עמה ...

That is, even regarding the widow You remember (punish) sin just as You remember today the sin of Bnei Yisrael as You stopped the rains, and even regarding this widow You remembered (punished) her sin to kill her son? You will not even revive him because of my merit as I am living with her?

12. א. עמוד דף קיג עמוד א (tr. William Davidson Edition) תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין דף קיג עמוד א

...וכתיב ויהי אחר הדברים האלה חלה בן האשה בעלת הבית. בעא רחמי למיתן ליה אקלידא דתחיית המתים, אמרי ליה: שלש מפתחות לא נמסרו לשליח: של חיה, ושל גשמים, ושל תחיית המתים. יאמרו: שתיים ביד תלמיד ואחת ביד הרב! אייתי הא ושקיל האי, דכתיב לך הראה אל אחאב [ואתנה] מטר.

And it is written: "And it came to pass after these matters, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick" (I Kings 17:17). Elijah prayed for mercy, for G-d to give him the key to the resurrection of the dead. They said to him from Heaven: Three keys were not typically passed to an agent: The key to a woman in childbirth, the key to rainfall, and the key to the resurrection of the dead. You already have the key to rainfall; do you also request the key to the resurrection of the dead? People will say: Two keys are in the possession of the student and one key is in the possession of the Master. Bring Me this key to rainfall, and take this key to the resurrection of the dead. Due to Elijah's request, he was forced to revoke his oath, as it is written: "Go, appear before Ahab; and I will give rain" (I Kings 18:1).

13. Rav Yaaqov Medan, המקראות המתחדשים- עיונים בנביאים ובכתובים, p.454

הצרפית ודאי אינה סבורה שאליהו הוא חלילה נביא שקר. היא ראתה את קיום דבר ה' מפיו בכד הקמח שלא כלה ובצפחת השמן שלא חסרה, ועדיין טוענת האישה כלפי אליהו שאם כל שליחותו אינה אלא מזכרת עוון, שליחות של מידת הדין, של מוות ושל חורבן, אין זו האמת שבדבר ה' ודבר ה' שבפיו אינו אמת. אמיתו של הקב"ה קשורה בבניין, בחיים ובשמחה. רק משהחיה אליהו את בנה, ידעה האישה שדבר ה' בפיו אמת.

The Tzarfit does not think, G-d forbid, that Eliyahu is a false prophet. She saw the fulfillment of the word of G-d from his mouth in the container of flour that was never empty and the pitcher of oil that was not lacking, but she still claims that if his whole mission is nothing but the reminder of sin, a mission of the mida of judgment, of death and destruction, then this is not the truth of the word of G-d and the word of G-d in his mouth is not true.

The truth of G-d is connected to building, to life and to joy. Only when Eliyahu revived her son, did the woman know that the word of G-d in his mouth was true.



7:00 PM



SAUL: INTERFACE OF PSYCHOLOGY AND THEOLOGY

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SAMUEL L 1 שְׁמוּאֵל 1 CHAPTER 16

יג וַיִּקַּח שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת-קַרְן הַשֶּׁמֶן, וַיִּמְשַׁח אֹתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב אֶחָיו, וַתִּצְלַח רוּחַ-ה' אֶל-דָּוִד, מִהַיּוֹם הַהוּא וּמִעַלְהָ; וַיִּקָּם שְׁמוּאֵל, וַיֵּלֶךְ הָרָמָתָה.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

יד וְרוּחַ ה' סָרָה, מֵעַם שָׁאוּל; וּבִעַתְתּוֹ רוּחַ-רָעָה, מֵאֶת ה'.

14 Now the spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrified him.

טו וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲבָדֵי-שָׁאוּל, אֵלָיו: הֲנֵה-נָא רוּחַ-אֱלֹקִים רָעָה, מִבְּעַתָּה.

15 And Saul's servants said unto him: 'Behold now, an evil spirit from G-d terrifieth thee.

טז יֹאמֶר-נָא אֲדֹנָי, עֲבָדֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ--יִבְקֶשׁוּ, אִישׁ יָדַע מִנְּגֵן בַּכִּנּוֹר; וְהָיָה, בַּהֲיִוֹת עָלֶיךָ רוּחַ-אֱלֹקִים רָעָה--וַיִּנְגַן בְּיָדוֹ, וְטוֹב לָךְ. {פ}

16 Let our lord now command thy servants, that are before thee, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall be, when the evil spirit from G-d cometh upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.' {P}

כג וְהָיָה, בַּהֲיִוֹת רוּחַ-אֱלֹקִים אֶל-שָׁאוּל, וַלְקַח דָּוִד אֶת-הַכִּנּוֹר, וַיִּנְגַן בְּיָדוֹ; וְרוּחַ לְשָׁאוּל וְטוֹב לוֹ, וְסָרָה מֵעָלָיו רוּחַ הָרָעָה. {פ}

23 And it came to pass, when the [evil] spirit from G-d was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand; so Saul found relief, and it was well with him, and the evil spirit departed from him. {P}

SAMUEL L 1 שְׁמוּאֵל 1 CHAPTER 18

ו וַיְהִי בְּבֹאֵם, בְּשׁוֹב דָּוִד מִהַכּוֹת אֶת-הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, וַתִּצְאָנָה הַנָּשִׁים מִכָּל-עָרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְשׁוֹר (לְשִׁיר) וְהַמְּחֹלוֹת, לְקִרְאוֹת שָׁאוּל הַמֶּלֶךְ-בְּתַפִּים בְּשִׂמְחָה, וּבְשִׁלְשִׁים.

6 And it came to pass as they came, when David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with timbrels, with joy, and with three-stringed instruments.

ז וַתִּזְעַנְינָה הַנָּשִׁים הַמְּשֻׁחָקוֹת, וַתֹּאמְרוּ: הֲפֹה שָׁאוּל בְּאַלְפּוֹ, וְדָוִד בְּרַבְבָּתָיו.

7 And the women sang one to another in their play, and said: Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

ח וַיַּחַר לְשָׁאוּל מְאֹד, וַיִּרַע בְּעֵינָיו הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה, וַיֹּאמֶר נִתְּנוּ לְדָוִד רַבְבוֹת, וְלִי נִתְּנוּ הָאֲלָפִים; וְעוֹד לוֹ, אֵף הַמְּלוֹכָה.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and this saying displeased him; and he said: 'They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands; and all he lacketh is the kingdom!'

ט וַיְהִי שָׁאוּל, עוֹן (עוֹיֵן) אֶת-דָּוִד, מִהַיּוֹם הַהוּא, וְהִלָּאָה. {ס}

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. {S}

י וַיְהִי מִמָּחָרָת, וַתִּצְלַח רוּחַ אֱלֹקִים רָעָה אֶל-שָׁאוּל וַיִּתְנַבֵּא בְּתוֹךְ-הַבַּיִת, וְדָוִד מִנְּגֵן בְּיָדוֹ, כִּיּוֹם בְּיוֹם; וְהַחֲנִית, בְּיַד-שָׁאוּל.

10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that an evil spirit from G-d came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house; and David played with his hand, as he did day by day; and Saul had his spear in his hand.

יא ויטל שאול, את-החנית, ויאמר, אכה בדוד ובקיר; ויטב דוד מפניו, פעמים.

יב וירא שאול, מלפני דוד: כי-היה ה' עמו, ומעם שאול סר.

יג ויסרהו שאול מעמו, וישמהו לו שר-אלף; ויצא ויבא, לפני העם. {ס}

יד ויהי דוד לכל-דרכו, משכיל; וה', עמו.

טו וירא שאול, אשר-הוא משכיל מאד; ויגר, מפניו.

טז וכל-ישראל ויהודה, אהב את-דוד: כי-הוא יוצא ויבא, לפניהם. {פ}

יז ויאמר שאול אל-דוד, הנה בתי הגדולה מרב אתה אתן-לך לאשה--אף היה לי לכן-חיל, והלחם מלחמות ה'; ושאול אמר, אל-תהי ידי בו, ותהי-בו, יד-פלשתים. {ס}

יח ויאמר דוד אל-שאול, מי אנכי ומי חיי, משפחת אבי, בישראל--כי-אהיה חתן, למלך.

יח וירא שאול וידע, כי ה' עם-דוד; ומיכל בת-שאול, אהבתהו.

כט ויאסף שאול, לרא מפני דוד--עוד; ויהי שאול איב את-דוד, כל-הימים. {פ}

11 And Saul cast the spear; for he said: 'I will smite David even to the wall.' And David stepped aside out of his presence twice.

12 And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.

13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. {S}

14 And David had great success in all his ways; and the LORD was with him.

15 And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in awe of him.

16 But all Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them. {P}

17 And Saul said to David: 'Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife; only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD'S battles.' For Saul said: 'Let not my hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.' {S}

18 And David said unto Saul: 'Who am I, and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?'

28 And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David; and Michal Saul's daughter loved him.

29 And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul was David's enemy continually. {P}

SAMUEL L 1 שמואל CHAPTER 19

ט ותהי רוח ה' רעה, אל-שאול, והוא בביתו ישב, וחניתו בידו; ודוד, מנגן ביד.

י ויבקש שאול להכות בחנית, בדוד ובקיר, ויפטר מפני שאול, ויף את-החנית בקיר; ודוד נס וימלט, בלילה הוא. {פ}

יא וישלח שאול מלאכים אל-בית דוד, לשמרו, ולהמיתו, בבקר; ותגד לדוד, מיכל אשתו לאמר, אם-אינך ממלט את-נפשך הלילה, מחר אתה מומת.

יב ותרד מיכל את-דוד, בעד החלון; וילך ויברח, וימלט.

9 And an evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing with his hand.

10 And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the spear; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the spear into the wall; and David fled, and escaped that night. {P}

11 And Saul sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning; and Michal David's wife told him, saying: 'If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain.'

12 So Michal let David down through the window; and he went, and fled, and escaped.

SAMUEL L 1 שמואל CHAPTER 22

ז ויאמר שאול, לעבדיו הנצבים עליו, שמעו-נא, בני ימיני: גם-לכלכם, יתן בן-ישי שדות וכרמים--לכלכם ישים, שרי אלפים ושרי מאות.

7 And Saul said unto his servants that stood about him: 'Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds;

ח כי קשרתם כלכם עלי, ואין-גלה את-אזני בכרת-בני עם-בן-ישי, ואין-הלה מכם עלי, וגלה את-אזני: כי הקים בני את-עבדי עלי לארב, כיום הזה. {ס}

יב ויאמר שאול, שמע-נא בן-אחיתוב; ויאמר, הנני אדני.

יג ויאמר אלו, שאול, למה קשרתם עלי, אתה ובן-ישי--בתתך לו לחם וחרב, ושאול לו ב אלקים, לקום אלי לארב, כיום הזה. {ס}

יד ויען אחימלך את-המלך, ויאמר: ומי בכל-עבדיך כדוד נאמן, וחתן המלך וסר אל-משמעתך ונכבד בביתך.

טו היום החלתי לשאול- (לשאול-) לו באלקים, חלילה לי: אל-ישם המלך בעבדו דבר, בכל-בית אבי--כי לא-ידע עבדך בכל-זאת, דבר קטן או גדול.

טז ויאמר המלך, מות תמות אחימלך: אתה, וכל-בית אביך.

יז ויאמר המלך לרצים הנצבים עליו סבו והמיתו כהני ה', כי גם-ידם עם-דוד, וכי ידעו פי-ברח הוא, ולא גלו את-אזנו (אזני); ולא-אבו עבדי המלך, לשלח את-ידם, לפגע, בכהני ה'. {ס}

יח ויאמר המלך, לדויג (לדואג), סב אתה, ופגע בכהנים; ויסב דויג (דואג) האדמי, ויפגע-הוא בכהנים, וימת ביום ההוא שמנים וחמשה-עשר, נשא אפוד בד.

SAMUEL I 1 שמואל CHAPTER 21

יג וישם דוד את-הדברים האלה, בלבבו; וירא מאד, מפני אכיש מלך-גת.

יד וישנו את-טעמו בעיניהם, ויתהלל בידם; ויתו על-דלתות השער, ויורד רירו אל-זקנו. {ס}

טו ויאמר אכיש, אל-עבדיו: הנה תראו איש משתגע, למה תביאו אותו אלי.

טז חסר משגעים, אני, כי-הבאתם את-זה, להשתגע עלי; הזה, כבוא אל-ביתי. {פ}

8 that all of you have conspired against me, and there was none that disclosed it to me when my son made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or discloseth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?' {S}

12 And Saul said: 'Hear now, thou son of Ahitub.' And he answered: 'Here I am, my lord.'

13 And Saul said unto him: 'Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of G-d for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?' {S}

14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said: 'And who among all thy servants is so trusted as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and giveth heed unto thy bidding, and is honourable in thy house?

15 Have I to-day begun to inquire of G-d for him? be it far from me; let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father; for thy servant knoweth nothing of all this, less or more.'

16 And the king said: 'Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.'

17 And the king said unto the guard that stood about him: 'Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew that he fled, and did not disclose it to me.' But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. {S}

18 And the king said to Doeg: 'Turn thou, and fall upon the priests.' And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and he slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.

13 And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

14 And he changed his demeanour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. {S}

15 Then said Achish unto his servants: 'Lo, when ye see a man that is mad, wherefore do ye bring him to me?

16 Do I lack madmen, that ye have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?'

EXODUS CHAPTER 7

ג וְאֲנִי אֶקְשֶׁה, אֶת-לֵב פַּרְעֹה; וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֶת-אֹתוֹתַי וְאֶת-מוֹפְתָי, בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם. 3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.

EXODUS CHAPTER 9

יב וַיִּחַזַק ה' אֶת-לֵב פַּרְעֹה, וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֲלֵהֶם: כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ה', אֶל-מֹשֶׁה. {ס} 12 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses. {S}

EXODUS CHAPTER 10

א וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, בֹּא אֶל-פַּרְעֹה: כִּי-אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת-לִבּוֹ, וְאֶת-לֵב עֲבָדָיו, לְמַעַן שְׁתִּי אֹתוֹתַי אֵלָה, בְּקִרְבּוֹ. 1 And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Go in unto Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these My signs in the midst of them;

DEVARIM CHAPTER 28

כח יִכָּהֵן ה', בְּשִׁגְעוֹן וּבְעִוְרוֹן; וּבְתִמְהוֹן, לִבְּךָ. 28 The LORD will smite thee with madness, and with blindness, and with astonishment of heart.

כט וְהָיִיתָ מְמַשֵּׁשׁ בְּצַהָרִים, כַּאֲשֶׁר יִמְשֵׁשׁ הָעוֹר בְּאֶפְלָה, וְלֹא תִצְלִיחַ, אֶת-דַּרְכֶיךָ; וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ עֹשׂוֹק וְגָזוּל, כָּל-הַיָּמִים--וְאִין מוֹשִׁיעַ. 29 And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not make thy ways prosperous; and thou shalt be only oppressed and robbed alway, and there shall be none to save thee.

לד וְהָיִיתָ, מְשֻׁגָּע, מִמַּרְאֵה עֵינֶיךָ, אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה. 34 so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

מז וּבָאוּ עָלֶיךָ כָּל-הַקְּלָלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה, וּרְדָפוּךָ וְהִשְׁיִגוּךָ, עַד הַשְׁמָדָךְ: כִּי-לֹא שָׁמַעְתָּ, בְּקוֹל ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ--לְשִׁמּוֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו, אֲשֶׁר צִוָּךָ. 45 And all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou didst not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy G-d, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded thee.

סו וְהָיוּ חַיֶּיךָ, תְּלָאִים לְךָ מִנְּגִד; וּפְחַדְתָּ לַיְלָה וַיּוֹמֶם, וְלֹא תֵאֱמִין בְּחַיֶּיךָ. 66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have no assurance of thy life.

סז בִּבְקֹר תֹאמַר מִי-יִתֵּן עִרְב, וּבְעֵרֵב תֹאמַר מִי-יִתֵּן בִּקֹר--מִפְּחַד לִבְּךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּפְחָד, וּמִמַּרְאֵה עֵינֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה. 67 In the morning thou shalt say: 'Would it were even!' and at even thou shalt say: 'Would it were morning!' for the fear of thy heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

SHAUL HAMELECH & THE RUACH RA'AH:

- a. Tanach references
- b. Diagnoses
- c. Epilepsy
- d. Paranoia
- e. Depression
- f. Bipolar Disorder
- g. Work-Related Stress
- h. Post Trauma Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- i. Theo-somatic; Tochecha

14. Liubov (Louba) Ben-Noun; What was the Mental Disease that Afflicted King Saul?

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Abstract

In this article, the author discusses the case of the biblical King Saul, the first King of Israel, who ruled the country 3,000 years ago. Evaluation of the passages referring to King Saul's disturbed behavior indicates that he was afflicted by a mental disorder. Among many disorders that could have affected the King, manic episode with psychotic phases, major depression with psychotic features, mixed episode, bipolar disorder I, dysthymic disorder later developed into bipolar disorder, or nonspecific psychotic disorder are the most likely. And among these diagnoses, bipolar disorder I is the most acceptable. The author suggests in this article that the roots of contemporary psychiatry can be traced back to biblical times.



7:30 PM

KING ASA – THE DOCTOR KING?



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1. Kings I Chapter 15 (JPS 1917 translation)

ט ובשנת עשרים לירבעם מלך ישראל מלך אסא מלך יהודה. י וארבעים ואחת שנה מלך בירושלם ושם אמו מעכה בת אבישלום. יא ויעש אסא הישר בעיני ה' כדוד אביו. יב ויעבר הקדשים מן הארץ ויסר את כל הגללים אשר עשו אבותיו. יג וגם את מעכה אמו ויסרה מגבירה אשר עשתה מפלצת לאשרה ויכרת אסא את מפלצתה וישרף בנחל קדרון. יד והבמות לא סרו רק לבב אסא היה שלם עם ה' כל ימיו. טו ויבא את קדשי אביו וקדשו [וקדשין] בית ה' כסף וזהב וכלים. טז ומלחמה היתה בין אסא ובין בעשא מלך ישראל כל ימיהם. יז ויעל בעשא מלך ישראל על יהודה ויבן את הרמה לבלתי תת יצא ויבא לאסא מלך יהודה. יח ויקח אסא את כל הכסף והזהב הנותרים באוצרות בית ה' ואת אוצרות בית מלך [המלך] ויתנם ביד עבדיו וישלחם המלך אסא אל בן הדד בן טברמן בן חזיון מלך ארם הישב בדמשק לאמר. יט ברית ביני ובינך בין אבי ובין אביך הנה שלחתי לך שחד כסף וזהב לך הפרה את בריתך את בעשא מלך ישראל ויעלה מעלי. כ וישמע בן הדד אל המלך אסא וישלח את שרי החלים אשר לו על ערי ישראל ויף את עיניו ואת דן ואת אבל בית מעכה ואת כל כנרות על כל ארץ נפתלי. כא ויהי כשמע בעשא ויחדל מבנות את הרמה וישב בתרצה. כב והמלך אסא השמיע את כל יהודה אין נקי וישאו את אבני הרמה ואת עציה אשר בנה בעשא ויבן בם המלך אסא את גבע בנימן ואת המזפחה. כג ויתר כל דברי אסא וכל גבורתו וכל אשר עשה והערים אשר בנה הלא המה כתובים על ספר דברי הימים למלכי יהודה רק לעת זקנתו חלה את רגליו. כד וישכב אסא עם אבותיו ויקבר עם אבותיו בעיר דוד אביו וימלך יהושפט בנו תחתיו.

9 And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Asa to reign over Judah. **10** And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom. **11** And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father. **12** And he put away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. **13** And also Maacah his mother he removed from being queen, because she had made an abominable image for an Asherah; and Asa cut down her image, and burnt it at the brook Kidron. **14** But the high places were not taken away; nevertheless the heart of Asa was whole with the LORD all his days. {S} **15** And he brought into the house of the LORD the things that his father had hallowed, and the things that himself had hallowed, silver, and gold, and vessels. **16** And there was war between Asa and Baasa king of Israel all their days. **17** And Baasa king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. **18** Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants; and king Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Aram, that dwelt at Damascus, saying: **19** 'There is a league between me and thee, between my father and thy father; behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasa king of Israel, that he may depart from me.' **20** And Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-beth-maacah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. **21** And it came to pass, when Baasa heard thereof, that he left off building Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah. **22** Then king Asa made a proclamation unto all Judah; none was exempted; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasa had builded; and king Asa built therewith Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah. **23** Now the rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. **24** And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father; and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead. {P}

2. Divrei HaYamim II Chapter 16 (JPS 1917 translation)

י ובעת ההיא בא חנני הראה אל אסא מלך יהודה ויאמר אליו בהשענך על מלך ארם ולא נשענת על ה' אלקיך על כן נמלט חיל מלך ארם מידך. ח הלא הכושים והלובים היו לחיל לרב לרכב ולפרשים להרבה מאד ובהשענך על ה' נתנם בידך. ט כי ה' עיניו משטטות בכל הארץ להתחזק עם לבבם שלם אליו נספלת על זאת כי מעתה יש עמך מלחמות. י ויכעס אסא אל הראה ויתנהו בית המהפכת כי בזעף עמו על זאת וירצץ אסא מן העם בעת ההיא. יא והנה דברי אסא הראשונים והאחרונים הנם כתובים על

ספר המלכים ליהודה וישראל. יב ויחלא אסא בשנת שלושים ותשע למלכותו ברגליו עד למעלה חליו וגם בחליו לא דרש את ה' כי ברפאים. יג וישכב אסא עם אבתיו וימת בשנת ארבעים ואחת למלכו. יד ויקברהו בקברתיו אשר פרה לו בעיר דויד וישקיבהו במשכב אשר מלא בשמים וזנים מרקחים במרקחת מעשה וישרפו לו שרפה גדולה עד למאד.

7 And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him: 'Because thou hast relied on the king of Aram, and hast not relied on the LORD thy G-d, therefore is the host of the king of Aram escaped out of thy hand. 8 Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim a huge host, with chariots and horsemen exceeding many? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, He delivered them into thy hand. 9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is whole toward Him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; for from henceforth thou shalt have wars.' 10 Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in the prison-house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time. 11 And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 12 And in the thirty and ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet; his disease was exceeding great; yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians. 13 And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. 14 And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had hewn out for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds [of spices] prepared by the perfumers' art; and they made a very great burning for him. {P}

WHY WAS KING ASA PUNISHED?

3. Sotah 10a (Davidson Edition translation)

דרש רבא מפני מה נענש אסא? מפני שעשה אנגריא בתלמידי חכמים שנאמר (מלכים א טו, כב) והמלך אסא השמיע את כל יהודה אין נקי מאי אין נקי אמר רב יהודה אמר רב אפילו חתן מחדרו וכלה מחופתה

Rava taught: For what reason was Asa punished in his feet? Because he made Torah scholars perform forced labor [angarya], as it is stated: "Then King Asa made a proclamation unto all Judah; none was exempted; and they carried away the stones of Ramah and the timber thereof, with which Baasa had built, and King Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah" (I Kings 15:22). The superfluous expression "unto all" indicates that the proclamation was issued to **everyone, including** Torah scholars. The Gemara asks: **What** is the meaning of the next phrase in the verse: **"None was exempted [ein naki]"**? **Rav Yehuda says that Rav says:** This includes **even a bridegroom from his chamber and a bride from her canopy**, as the verse states with regard to a bridegroom: "He shall be free [naki] for his house one year" (Deuteronomy 24:5).

אסא ברגליו דכתיב (מלכים א טו, כג) רק לעת זקנתו חלה את רגליו ואמר רב יהודה אמר רב שאחזתו פדגרא א"ל מר זוטרא בריה דרב נחמן לרב נחמן היכי דמי פדגרא א"ל כמחט בבשר החי מנא ידע איכא דאמרי מיחש הוה חש ביה ואיכא דאמרי מרביה שמע ליה וא"ד (תהלים כה, יד) סוד ה' ליראיו ובריתו להודיעם

Asa was stricken in his feet, as it is written: "Now the rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? **But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet**" (I Kings 15:23). **And Rav Yehuda says that Rav says:** This indicates **that gout [padagra] grabbed hold of him. Mar Zutra, son of Rav Nahman, said to Rav Nahman: What are the circumstances of gout?** What pain does it involve? **He said to him:** It feels **like a needle inserted into living flesh.** The Gemara asks: **From where did he know this?** The Gemara answers: **Some say** that he himself **suffered from this** condition, **and some say** that he **heard it from his teacher, and some say** that he knew it through divine inspiration, as it stated: **"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and His covenant, to make them know it"** (Psalms 25:14).

4. Ralbag Kings I (Gersonides - Levi ben Gershon (1288 – 1344) France)

במה ששלח אל בן הדד מלך ארם ולא בטח בה' אשר הפיל מחנה הכושיים לפניו ואחשוב שלזאת הסבה חלה את רגליו לעת זקנתו כי הוא שלח זה אל בן הדד כאילו לא היו לו רגלים ללכת במלחמה ולזה סבב השי"י שחלש כח רגליו לעת זקנתו:

Because he sent to Ben-Hadad, as he himself did not believed in G-d who had struck down the Cushites before so I

think this is the reason he had a sickness in his feet in his old age because he sent for aid from Ben-Hadad it was as if he didn't have legs to go to war so G-d made him weak in his legs.

5. Yirmiyahu Chapter 41: 9 (JPS 1985 translation)

(ט) וְהַבּוֹר אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁלִיךְ שָׁם יִשְׁמַעְאֵל אֶת כָּל־פְּגְרֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הָפֵה בְיַד־גְּדַלְיָהוּ הוּא אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ אָסָא מִפְּנֵי בַעֲשָׂא מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֹתוֹ מִלֵּא יִשְׁמַעְאֵל בֶּן־נְתַנְיָהוּ חָלְלִים:

The cistern into which Ishmael threw all the corpses of the men he had killed in the affair of Gedaliah was the one that King Asa had constructed on account of King Baasha of Israel. That was the one which Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled with corpses.

6. Rabbi Alex Israel, *I Kings: Torn in Two* (pages 206-207)

A more serious critique emerges from an incidental reference in the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah describes the treacherous assassination of Gedaliah, the Jewish governor appointed by in the aftermath of the Temple's destruction and killed by Jewish political opponents. This terrible act of violence precipitates a mass flight of the surviving Jewish population from the land of Israel, intensifying the devastation of the land after the destruction. From the Talmud's perspective, this assassination is a national calamity, warranting the institution of an annual fast day (Tzom Gedalia). In recording the murder, Jeremiah writes:

The cistern into which Ishmael threw all the corpses of the men he had killed in the affair of Gedaliah was **the one King Asa had constructed on account of King Baasha of Israel (Jer. 41:9)**

Gedaliah's corpse and those of his associates are thrown into the moat that was dug in this standoff between Baasha and Asa. Jeremiah's pedantic intertextual reference links these two awful events. The prophet groups the assassination of Gedaliah together with the dreadful conflict of Asa and Baasha, establishing them in Jewish history as twin landmarks of heinous killing and devastating infighting.

BUT WAS THAT ALL KING ASA DID WRONG?

7. Divrei HaYamim II 16: 12 (JPS 1985 translation)

(יב) וַיִּחַלֵּא אָסָא בְּשָׁנַת שְׁלוֹשִׁים וְתֵשַׁע לְמַלְכוּתוֹ בְּרַגְלָיו עַד־לְמַעְלֵה חָלָיו וְגַם־בְּחָלְיוֹ לֹא־דָרַשׁ אֶת־יְקֹוֹק כִּי בְּרֹפְאִים:

12 And in the thirty and ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet; his disease was exceeding great; yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the *physicians*.

8. Ramban Vayikra 26:11

ואמר הכתוב (דהי"ב טז יב) "גם בחליו לא דרש את ה' כי ברופאים," ואילו היה דבר הרופאים נהוג בהם, מה טעם שיזכיר הרופאים, אין האשם רק בעבור שלא דרש השם ... אבל הדורש השם בנביא לא ידרוש ברופאים

The verse states, "yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians." If this was something that could be addressed by the doctors why mention doctors? Then the only problem would be not seeking G-d. Rather one who seeks out G-d through prophets shouldn't seek out doctors for G-d's will.

9. Malbim DH: II 16:12 (Rabbi Meir Leibush b"r Yehiel Michel Weiser 19th century, Ukraine)

גם בזה חטא שסמך עצמו על אמצעיים טבעיים שזה מורה שלא היה בטחונו שלם:

He also sinned in that he relied on natural means which shows his faith wasn't complete.

10. Metzudat David Divrei Hayamim II 16:12 (Rabbi David Altschuler of Prague (1687-1769))

לא דרש - להתפלל אל ה': כי ברופאים - בטחונו ברופאים לבדם:

Did not seek out - Did not pray to G-d. Rather to the doctors – he believed in doctors *alone*

11. Jastrow Dictionary (Rabbi Marcus Jastrow 1829-1903, America)

אָסא

1 to heal, v. אָסִי.

(.f) I אָסא, אָסא

2 (?) (infin. of אָסִי, as noun) *healing, remedy*. Targ. Jer. XIV, 19 (Regia אָסו). Targ. II. Chr. XXI, 18 דְּלִית א' *incurable*

(.m) II אָסא², אָסא

3 (preced.) physician. Targ. O. Ex. XV, 26 (אָסָף); Y. אָסָף אָסָף; Y. אָסָף thy &c. V. אָסִי, אָסִי.

(.m) III אָסא

1 (contr. of אָדסא, v. הָדס) *myrtle*. Targ. II, Esth. II, 7; a. e. R. Hash. 23a א' הָדס *hadas* (Is. XLI, 19) is *asa*. Pes. 56a א' רדא' Ar., Ms. O. (ed. דרא) fresh (moist) myrtle. Ber. 9b וכו' דאמטיית א' וכו' you had to carry a myrtle-tree to the palace (when forced into public labor, v. אָנְגְרִיא). Snh. 44a (prov.) א' דקאי ביני וכו' a myrtle between willows still is a myrtle by name, and people call it a myrtle.—Pl. אָסִיא. Targ. Esth. VIII, 15.—Nidd. 37a (Rashi, sing.)

2. 12. Gemara Shabbat 56b (Davidson Edition translation)

אֵלָא כְּדִתְנִינָא, רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר: "וְאֵת הַבְּמוֹת אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם אֲשֶׁר מִימִין לְהַר הַמְּשֻׁחָה אֲשֶׁר בְּנָה שְׁלֹמֹה מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשֹׂתָתָת שִׁקְץ צִידִינִים וְגו'".

Rather, this verse should be understood as it was taught in a *baraita* that **Rabbi Yosei says**: The verse states: "And the altars that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the Mount of Olives, which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoret the abomination of the Zidonim, and for Kemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milkom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile" (II Kings 23:13). All these were destroyed by Josiah.

אֲפֹשֶׁר בָּא אָסָא וְלֹא בִיעָרָם, יְהוֹשֻׁפֵט וְלֹא בִיעָרָם, עַד שֶׁבָא יֵאֱשִׁיָהּ וּבִיעָרָם? וְהֲלֹא כָל עֲבוּדָה זָרָה שֶׁבְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל אָסָא וְיְהוֹשֻׁפֵט בִּיעָרוּם! אֵלָא מִקִּישׁ רֵאשׁוֹנִים לְאַחֲרוֹנִים, מָה אַחֲרוֹנִים לֹא עָשׂוּ וְתִלָּה בָּהֶן לְשִׁבַת, אִף רֵאשׁוֹנִים לֹא עָשׂוּ וְתִלָּה בָּהֶן לְגִנְאִי.

The Gemara asks: **Is it possible that the righteous king Asa came and did not destroy them**, and the righteous king **Jehosaphat came and did not destroy them until Josiah came and destroyed them? Didn't Asa and Jehosaphat destroy all the idolatry in Eretz Yisrael? Rather, the verse juxtaposes the earlier ones**, i.e., Solomon, **to the later ones**, i.e., Josiah. **Just as the later ones**, Josiah, **did not effect** the destruction of the altars, as it was done by his predecessors, **and nevertheless the verse attributes it to him to praise him** as if he had destroyed all those altars, **so too, the earlier ones**, Solomon, **did not effect** the construction, **and nevertheless the verse attributes it to him to disgrace him** as he did not prevent their construction.



8:00 PM

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: MAN, TREE, BEAST



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For more on the Book of Daniel: www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=81072&category=0,235002

1. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 6:5

וכן המצריים כל אחד ואחד מאותן המצירים והמריעים לישראל אילו לא רצה להרע להם הרשות בידו, שלא גזר על איש ידוע אלא הודיעו שסוף זרעו עתיד להשתעבד בארץ לא להם...

And so too the Egyptians, each of those who pained and harmed Israel, had he wished not to harm them, he would have had the freedom for this. [Gd] did not decree upon a particular person, but only informed [Avraham] that his children would, in the end, be enslaved in a foreign land...

2. Melachim II 25:7

וְאֵת בְּנֵי צִדְקִיָּהוּ שָׁחַטוּ לְעֵינָיו וְאֵת עֵינֵי צִדְקִיָּהוּ עָוַר וַיֹּאסְרֵהוּ בְּנִחְשָׁתִים וַיְבִאֵהוּ בְּבָל:

And they slaughtered the sons of Tzidkiyahu before his eyes, and they blinded the eyes of Tzidkiyahu, and they bound him in chains and they brought him to Babylon.

3. Daniel 2:5

עָנָה מֶלֶכָא וְאָמַר לְכַשְׁדָּאֵי מַלְתָּא מְנִי אֲזָדָא הֵן לָא תְהוּדְעוּנִי חֶלְמָא וּפְשָׁרָהּ הִדְמִין תִּתְעַבְדוּן וּבְתִיכּוֹן נְגֻלֵי יְהִשְׁמוּן:

The king declared to the Chaldeans: The word has one forth from me! If you do not tell me the dream and its meaning, you shall be torn into pieces, and your homes will be turned into ruins.

THE STORY

4. Daniel 3:31-4:34 (JPS 1917 translation, c/o hareidi.org)

'Nebuchadnezzar the king, to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; peace be multiplied to you. It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders that G-d Most High has wrought toward me. How great are His signs! and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.

I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. I saw a dream which made me afraid; and imaginings upon my bed and the visions of my head frightened me. Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. Then came in the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers; and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known to me the interpretation thereof. But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and I told the dream before him: O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no secret causes you trouble, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof. Thus were the visions of my head upon my bed: I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached to heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was food for all; the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the branches thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven. He cried aloud, and said thus: Hew down the tree, and cut off its branches, shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from its branches. Nevertheless leave the stump of its roots in the earth,

even in a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth; Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given to him; and let seven times pass over him. The matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will, and sets up over it the lowest of men. This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen; and you, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you.'

Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while, and his thoughts frightened him. The king spoke and said: 'Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation, frighten you.' Belteshazzar answered and said: 'My lord, the dream be to them that hate you, and the interpretation thereof to your adversaries. The tree that you saw, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached to the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was food for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation; it is you, O king, that are grown and become strong; for your greatness is grown, and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the end of the earth. And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying: Hew down the tree, and destroy it; nevertheless leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even in a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him — this is the interpretation, O king, and it is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king, that you shall be driven from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and you shall be made to eat grass as oxen, and shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you; till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will. And whereas it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be sure to you, after that you shall have known that the heavens do rule. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you, and break off your sins by almsgiving, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.'

All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he was walking upon the royal palace of Babylon. The king spoke, and said: 'Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for a royal dwelling-place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?' While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven: 'O king Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom is departed from you. And you shall be driven from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; you shall be made to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over you; until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will.' The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair was grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. 'And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes to heaven, and mine understanding returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that lives for ever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom from generation to generation; And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He does according to His will in the host of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say to Him: What doest You? At the same time mine understanding returned to me; and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and my splendour returned to me; and my ministers and my lords sought to me; and I was established in my kingdom, and surpassing greatness was added to me.

Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven; for all His works are truth, and His ways justice; and those that walk in pride He is able to abase.'

5. Abarbanel, Maayan 6, Tamar 5

והיה אמתת זה שגברה בו על דרך הפלא פתאום מרה שחורה בשיעור מופלג שהוא מעצמו היה מואס בני אדם ובורח מהם ושוכן במדברות והיה מואס מאכלי המלכים והיכליהם מטות זהב וכסף ובוחר ללכת יחידי מתנכר לרגלו בשדה כל היום וכל הלילה עד שחשך זיוו ותוארו ושערו וצפרניו גדלו מאד והיה מאכלו עשב השדה כמו הבעלי חיים כי כן יאכלו הולכי מדברות בהיותם יחידים מתבודדים. וגם לבו שהיה מקודם לב חכם בחליו ותגבורת השחורה בו מלב האנשים נשתנת לפי שלא היה לבו ומחשבותיו כבן אדם ולא כ"ש כמלך אבל היה לבו בקרבו כלב חיה אחת נמשך לתאותו בלתי חושש לא אל השכל העיוני ולא אל השכל המעשי.

In truth: miraculously, suddenly, extraordinary quantities of black bile overcame him, such that he rejected human society and fled from it, dwelling in the wilderness, rejecting royal food and palaces, sofas of gold and silver. He elected to travel alone all day and all night, estranged, in the fields, to the point that his radiance and appearance darkened, his hair and nails grew very long, and his food was the grass of the field as the food of beasts, and as solitary wanderers in the wilderness eat.

His heart, which had once been wise, was changed from the heart of human beings through his illness and the growth of darkness in him. His heart and thoughts were not those of people, certainly not those of a king. His heart was like that of a beast in him, drawn to his desires, without any concern for intellectual or pragmatic thought.

6. Abarbanel, Maayan 6, Tamar 5

התשובה האמיתית בזה היא שנ"נ כאשר הכיר בעונשו וידע חטאתו אשר חטא שם על לבו לעשות תשובה שלמה והוא ראה שהיה עונו בחלול ד' בחשבו לבטל הגזירה ולשדד יכלתו ושעל כן באה עליו הצרה הזאת ושהיה דרך התשובה שלמה על עון חלול ד' לקדש שמו ברבים... ולי עוד בזה סבה שנית והיא שנ"נ לפי שראה עצמו מגורש מבני אדם ויצא קול בכל מלכותו שנגזר עליו מן השמים העדר מלכותו ובטול ממשלתו לפי שנמשל כבהמות נדמה, לכן חשש אולי בקצוות ארץ ממשלתו יקומו אנשים בני בליעל לפרוק מעליהם עול סובלו ויהיו מורדים במלכותו ויקומו עבדים מתפרצים מאדוניהם באמרם המלך נ"נ כבר מת או בטל מן העולם נשבר מטה עוזו נגדע מקל תפארתו. הנה בעבור זה כדי לישב לבבות בני אדם האומות והלשונויות וכל איש על מקומו יבא בשלום ולא ירים את ידו ואת רגלו נגד מלכותו כתב לכל העמים והלשונויות ספור הענין איך היה להודיעם איך היה ענינו מום עובר ושעדין הוא בגבורתו וחזקו ורוב דעתו

The truth is that Nevuchadnezzar, when he recognized his punishment and knew his sin, turned his heart to repent. He saw that his sin was in desecrating Gd's Name by thinking to cancel the [Divine decree] and thwart His will, and that this was why the trouble had come upon him. He realized that the way to repent fully for the sin of desecrating Gd's Name would be to sanctify His Name publicly...

A second reason also appears correct, that Nevuchadnezzar saw himself exiled from the company of man, and word had circulated throughout his empire that the loss of his reign and end of his power had been decreed upon him, for he had become as a beast. He worried that in the outlying areas of his empire, evil men would rise up to cast off the burden of his yoke, and they would rebel against his reign. Slaves would rise up against their master, saying, 'King Nevuchadnezzar is already dead or lost from the world, the rod of his might is broken, the staff of his splendour is cut off.' Therefore, to settle the hearts of men, nations and tongues, each person coming to his place in peace, and no one raising a hand or foot against his reign, he wrote to every nation and tongue of what had happened, to inform them that his fate had been a passing blemish, that he retained his might and intellect.

WHY NOT KILL HIM?

7. Abarbanel, Maayan 6, Tamar 4

בהיות האדם אמצעי בין השכלים הנבדלים ובין הבעלי חיים הבלתי מדברים כפי השכלתו, כאשר התגאה ויצא ממחיצתו ואמר אדמה לעליון היה מענשו שלא לבד יבצר ממנו מה שביקש והוא לעלות למדרגת עליונים אבל גם מה שהיה לו ראשונה שהיה במדרגה ממוצעת לא ישאר בו

Man is intermediate, his intellect situated between the lofty intellects and the mute creatures. When he became arrogant and he left his space, saying (Isaiah 14:14), "I will be like the higher beings," his punishment was not only that his goal of ascending to the levels of the higher ones was kept from him, but also that the intermediate state he had originally occupied no longer remained to him.

8. Abarbanel, Maayan 6, Tamar 5

והוא חשב בלבו לבטל הגזירה העליונה ההיא ולסדר עניני מלכיות הארץ באופן שיהיו נכנעים ומשועבדים לו ולזרעו לעולם... ומפני הגאווה ההוללת הזאת נגזר עליו לטרדו מבני אדם וללכת כעיר פרא בין החיות...

He thought that he would erase the heavenly decree and arrange the earthly empires such that they would be humbled and enslaved before him and his seed forever... Due to this empty arrogance, it was decreed that he would be chased from human society, to travel like a wild donkey among the beasts...

9. Abarbanel, Maayan 6, Tamar 5

והראו לו שהאדם עץ השדה ושהוא היה כאותו אילן הגדול והגבוה והיפה אבל צומח הווה נפסד בהכרח

They showed him that man is a tree of the field. He is like that great, tall, beautiful tree, but he must [likewise] grow, exist, and then be destroyed.

10. Abarbanel, Maayan 6, Tamar 5

ולא נעדר ממלכותו בהחלט כפי רשעתו כפי שאמר 'עיקר שרשוהי בארעא שבוקו', לסבות: ראשונה לפי שלא תתבטל גזירת הקל יתברך שגזרה מלכות נ"נ כל ימי חייו ובנו ובן בנו שבעים שנה כמו שאמר ירמיהו "ועבדו אותו ואת בנו ואת בן בנו עד בא עת ארצו." והסבה השנייה היא שהחזיר הקב"ה דעתו ומלכותו כדי שיתפרסם לבני אדם גבורותיו ואם היה מת או נעדר ממלכותו כדרך כל הארץ לא היה נמשך ממנו שבח הקל יתברך ופרסום גבורותיו

He was not removed from his empire entirely, as would have suited his wickedness – as it said, 'Leave the essence of his roots in the ground' – for [two] reasons. First, due to the Divine decree that the monarchy of Nevuchadnezzar, his lifetime and those of his son and grandson, would be seventy years, as Yirmiyahu said, "And they will serve him, his son and his grandson, until the time for his land comes." And the second reason is that Gd restored his mind and reign so that Divine might could be publicized. Had Nevuchadnezzar died or disappeared from his empire in the way of the land, praise of Gd and publicity of His might would not have resulted.

11. 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...

12. Midrash Aggadah to Shemot 14:28

לא נשאר בהם עד אחד. זה פרעה שנשאר מהם ולא מת, כדי לספר גדולתו של הקב"ה, כמו שנא' "ואולם בעבור זאת העמדתך" (שמות ט טז)...

"None remained from them, up to one." This is Pharaoh, who remained from them and did not die, to inform of Gd's greatness, as Shemot 9:16 says, "But for this purpose I have established you [to show you My honour, and to tell of My name throughout the land]."

13. Ibn Ezra to Daniel 4:3

יספר כל המעשה שעבר ונכתב ככה בעבור כבוד דניאל שכתב המלך ככה לכל מדינות מלכותו ותפארת גדולה היתה לישראל. It tells the entire story that happened, and it was written thus [here] in honour of Daniel, for the king wrote thus to all of the lands of his reign, and it was a great source of splendour for Israel.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What were some of Nevuchadnezzar's terrible deeds?
- 2 What image represented Nevuchadnezzar in his dream?
- 3 What are three standard approaches explaining why Gd did this to Nevuchadnezzar?
- 4 How might Nevuchadnezzar's illness have been like death?
- 5 What can we learn from this insight into illness?

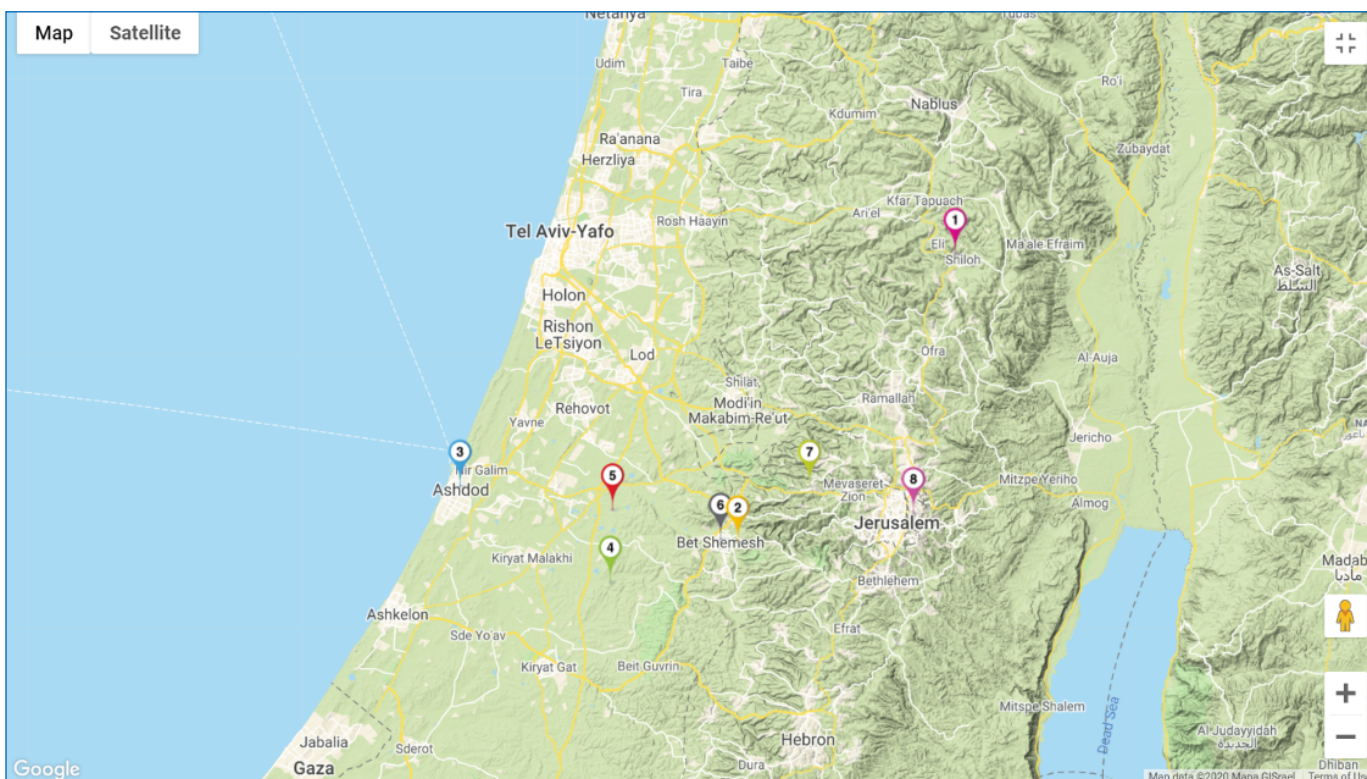
THE ARK AFFLICTION

Shemuel I Chapter 5-6

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A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN DEITIES: THE ARON OF G-D VS. DAGON

1. Map of The Aron's Journey • <https://theisraelbible.com/journey-aron-ark-covenant/>



2. Shemuel I 5:1-5 (JPS Tanakh 1985 Translation)

א וּפְלִשְׁתִּים לָקְחוּ אֶת אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹקִים וַיְבִיאוּהוּ מֵעֵבֶר-עֶזֶר אֶת אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹקִים וַיְבִיאוּ אֹתוֹ בֵּית דָּגוֹן וַיִּצְיִגּוּ אֹתוֹ אֶצֶל דָּגוֹן. ג וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ אֲשֻׁדּוֹדִים מִמַּחֲרַת וְהִנֵּה דָגוֹן נֹפֵל לְפָנָיו אַרְצָה לְפָנֵי אֲרוֹן ה' וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת דָּגוֹן וַיִּשְׁבּוּ אֹתוֹ לְמִקְוָמוֹ. ד וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַבֹּקֶר מִמַּחֲרַת וְהִנֵּה דָגוֹן נֹפֵל לְפָנָיו אַרְצָה לְפָנֵי אֲרוֹן ה' וְרֹאשׁ דָּגוֹן וּשְׁתֵּי כַפּוֹת יָדָיו כְּרֻתוֹת אֶל הַמַּפְתָּן רַק דָּגוֹן נִשְׂאָר עָלָיו. ה עַל כֵּן לֹא יֵדְרֹכוּ כֹהֲנֵי דָגוֹן וְכָל הַבָּאִים בְּיַד דָּגוֹן עַל מַפְתָּן דָּגוֹן בְּאֲשֻׁדּוֹד עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

When the Philistines captured the Ark of G-d, they brought it from Eben-ezer to Ashdod. The Philistines took the Ark of G-d and brought it into the temple of Dagon and they set it up beside Dagon. Early the next day, the Ashdodites found Dagon lying face down on the ground in front of the Ark of the LORD. They picked Dagon up and put him back in his place; but early the next morning, Dagon was again lying prone on the ground in front of the Ark of the LORD. The head and both hands of Dagon were cut off, lying on the threshold; only Dagon's trunk was left intact. That is why, to this day, the priests of Dagon and all who enter the temple of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod.

3. Rabbi David Altschuler (17th century Prague), Metzudat David on Shemuel I 5:4

רק דגון. גוף העבודה זרה העשוי בדמות דג:

The body of the idol made in the shape of the fish

4. Rabbi Levi ibn Gershon (14th century France), Rablag on Shemuel I 5:4

והנה על צד המופת עשה הש"י לכבודו שהפיל דגון ארצה לפני ארון ה' להעיר כי אין עוד מלבדו ואולי חשבו הפלשתים שכבר היה זה על דרך המקרה לא מאת הש"י ולזה לקחו את דגון והשיבו אותו למקומו ולא השתדלו להסיר משם ארון האלקים, וביום השני מצאו דגון נופל לפני ארון ה' וראש דגון ושתי כפות ידיו כרותות על המפתן רק הנשאר מדגון היה נשאר אצל ארון ה' נופל ארצה ולזה היו כומרי דגון נשמרי' מלדרוך על מפתן דגון כי חשבו שיהיה המקום קדוש מצד מה שמצאו שם ראש דגון ושתי כפות ידיו, ולא הספיק לש"י השפטים שעשה באלהיהם אבל הכה האשדודים ושוממים ותמהים על המכות שבאו להם בדרך שלא היו יכולים לאמר שיהיה חדוש זה המקרה להם אם לא מפני מה שהסבו אליהם ארון האלקים:

Hashem performed a miracle for His honour and felled Dagon to the ground in front of the Aron of Hashem to show that there is none but Him. Maybe the Philistines thought that this happened by chance and wasn't from Hashem. Therefore, they took Dagon and returned it to its place and didn't try to remove the Ark of G-d. On the 2nd day, they found Dagon lying in front of the Ark of G-d, and the head of Dagon and his two hands were cut off on the threshold. The remnants of Dagon lied opposite the Ark of Hashem fallen to the ground. Therefore, the priests of Dagon were careful not to step on the threshold for **they thought that the place was holy in that they found the head of Dagon and its two palms there.** The punishments Hashem meted out to their gods wasn't sufficient and he struck the Ashdodites and decimated them and left them bewildered by the plagues in a way that they couldn't say it happened by chance to them, had it not been for what the Ark of G-d has caused them.

WHEN THE PHILISTINES HOUSED THE ARON

5. Shemuel I 5:6-12 (JPS Tanakh 1985 Translation)

וַתִּכְבַּד יְד ה' אֶל הָאֲשְׁדּוּדִים וַיִּשְׁמֵם וַיִּף אֶתְּם בַּעֲפָלִים [בְּטַחְרִים] אֶת אֲשְׁדּוּד וְאֶת גְּבוּלֵיהָ. ז וַיִּרְאוּ אֲנָשֵׁי אֲשְׁדּוּד כִּי כֵן וַאֲמָרוּ לֹא יֵשֵׁב אַרְוֹן אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּנוּ כִּי קִשְׁתָּהּ יָדוּ עָלֵינוּ וְעַל דָּגוֹן אֱלֹקֵינוּ. ח וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ וַיֹּאסְפוּ אֶת כָּל סַרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים אֲלֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֶה נַעֲשֶׂה לְאַרְוֹן אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ גַת יֵסֵב אַרְוֹן אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְבּוּ אֶת אַרְוֹן אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ט וַיְהִי אַחֲרַי הִסְבּוּ אֹתוֹ וַתְּהִי יָד ה' בְּעִיר מְהוּמָה גְּדוּלָה מְאֹד וַיִּף אֶת אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר מִקֶּטֶן וְעַד גְּדוֹל וַיִּשְׁתְּרוּ לָהֶם [עֲפָלִים] טַחְרִים. י וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶת אַרְוֹן הָאֱלֹקִים עֲקָרוֹן וַיְהִי כְּבֹא אַרְוֹן הָאֱלֹקִים עֲקָרוֹן וַיִּזְעְקוּ הָעֲקָרָנִים לֵאמֹר הִסְבּוּ אֵלַי אֶת אַרְוֹן אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַמִּיתֵנִי וְאֶת עַמִּי. יא וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ וַיֹּאסְפוּ אֶת כָּל סַרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים וַיֹּאמְרוּ שְׁלְחוּ אֶת אַרְוֹן אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּשֶׁב לְמִקְמוֹ וְלֹא יִמִּית אֹתִי וְאֶת עַמִּי כִּי הִיְתָה מְהוּמַת מוֹת בְּכָל הָעִיר כְּבִדָּה מְאֹד יָד הָאֱלֹקִים שָׁם. יב וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר לֹא מָתוּ הָכּוּ בַעֲפָלִים [בְּטַחְרִים] וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעֵת הָעִיר הַשָּׁמַיִם.

The hand of the LORD lay heavy upon the Ashdodites, and He wrought havoc among them: He struck Ashdod and its territory with hemorrhoids. When the men of Ashdod saw how matters stood, they said, "The Ark of the G-d of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand has dealt harshly with us and with our G-d Dagon." They sent messengers and assembled all the lords of the Philistines and asked, "What shall we do with the Ark of the G-d of Israel?" They answered, "Let the Ark of the G-d of Israel be removed to Gath." So they moved the Ark of the G-d of Israel [to Gath]. And after they had moved it, the hand of the LORD came against the city, causing great panic; He struck the people of the city, young and old, so that hemorrhoids broke out among them. Then they sent the Ark of G-d to Ekron. But when the Ark of G-d came to Ekron, the Ekronites cried out, "They have moved the Ark of the G-d of Israel to us to slay us and our kindred." They too sent messengers and assembled all the lords of the Philistines and said, "Send the Ark of the G-d of Israel away, and let it return to its own place, that it may not slay us and our kindred." For the panic of death pervaded the whole city, so heavily had the hand of G-d fallen there; and the men who did not die were stricken with hemorrhoids. The outcry of the city went up to heaven.

6. Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (11th century France), Rashi on Shemuel I 5:8 (Metsudah Translation)

בטחורים. חלחולת, כרכשא, מכת הנקב, עכברים נכנסין בנקביהם ושומטין בני מעיהם, ויוצאין:

With hemorrhoids. The mesentery of the large intestine, a plague of the rectum. Mice would enter their recta, disembowel them, and crawl out.

7. Don Isaac Abravanel (15th century Spain), Abravanel on Shemuel I Chapter 5

והנה נשאר לדעת בזה שני דברים. האחד למה הכה הארון בפלשתים מכה רבה? ולמה היתה המכה באותו חולי ולא בחולי אחר? ומה שראוי שיאמר בזה הוא, כי לפי שהפלשתים ראו שנלקח ארון האלקים היו חושבים שכחם ועוצם ידם עשה להם את החיל הזה, ושארון האלקים היה כלי אין חפץ בו, ומפני זה ראה הקב"ה לעשות ביניהם מופתים חזקים כדי שיראו ויכירו כי יד ה' עשתה זאת ושברצונו לוקח הארון, והוא אשר הכה בישראל והוא המכה גם כן בפלשתים, והיה זה גם כן לסבה שנית, והיא כדי שימהרו לשלח את ארון האלקים, כי אם לא היה מכה בהם היו מחזיקים בו שנים רבות. והנה בחר להכותם בעפולים, לפי שהם נתגאו בכחם ובגבורתם וחשבו שנפלו ישראל לפנייהם לחרב לחולשתם ולכן לקחו מהם ארון הברית, ומפני זה הכם השם בעפולים שהוא החולי הנבזה והנמאס אשר יתדמו בו האנשים לנשים כאבים באותו מקום וביציאת הדם מהם כדרך נשים, ובזה העיר שלא בכחם נצחו את ישראל (כי דרך נשים להם אם ירצה האלקים), אבל יד השם היה בהם להומום ולאבדם.

And here it remains to know two things: 1. Why did the Ark strike the Philistines so hard? 2. And why was the blow to that specific sickness and not to another sickness? And what should be said in this is that because the Philistines saw that the Ark of G-d was taken they thought that their strength and power made for them this force, and the Ark of G-d was a vessel without any power to it, and therefore G-d saw to make powerful wonders among them so that they would see and recognize that the hand of Hashem did this, and it was His will that the Ark was taken, and He who struck in Israel and He also struck the Philistines. It was also for another reason, and that is so that they would hasten to send the Ark of G-d, for if he had not struck them, they would have held it for many years. He chose to strike them with hemorrhoids, for they were arrogant about their power and bravery, and they thought that Israel had fallen before them to the sword and due to their weakness and therefore took from them the Ark of the Covenant. Because of this, Hashem struck them with hemorrhoids which is a despicable and humiliating sickness in which the men will liken to women to suffer in that place and the shedding of blood from them in the way of women, and in way He showed that they had not defeated Israel in their power (because they would have the way of women to them if G-d wills it), but the hand of G-d was in them to stun and eradicate them.

DISASTER STRIKES IN BEIT SHEMESH

8. Shemuel I 6:11-7:2 (JPS Tanakh 1985 Translation)

יא וישמו את ארון ה' אל העגלה ואת הארגז ואת עכברי הזֶהָב ואת צלמי טחריהם. יב וישרנה הפרות בדרך על דרך בית שמש במסלה אחת הלכו הלה וגעו ולא סרו ימין ושמאל וסרני פלשתים הלכים אחריהם עד גבול בית שמש. יג ובית שמש קצרים קציר חטים בעמק וישאו את עיניהם ויראו את הארון וישמחו לראות. יד והעגלה באה אל שדה יהושע בית השמשי ותעמד שם ושם אבן גדולה ויבקעו את עצי העגלה ואת הפרות העלו עלה לה. טו והלויים הורידו את ארון ה' ואת הארגז אשר אתו אשר בו כלי זהב וישמו אל האבן הגדולה ואנשי בית שמש העלו עלות וזבחו זבחים ביום ההוא לה'. טז וחמשה סרני פלשתים ראו וישבו עקרון ביום ההוא.

יז ואלה טחרי הזֶהָב אשר השיבו פלשתים אשם לה' לאשדוד אחד לעזה אחד לאשקלון אחד לגת אחד לעקרון אחד. יח ועכברי הזֶהָב מספר כל ערי פלשתים לחמשת הסרנים מעיר מבצר ועד כפר הפרזי ועד אבן הגדולה אשר הניחו עליה את ארון ה' עד היום הזה בשדה יהושע בית השמשי.

יט ויהי באנשי בית שמש כי ראו בארון ה' ויהי בעם שבעים איש חמשים אלה איש ויתאבלו העם כי הכה ה' בעם מכה גדולה. כ ויאמרו אנשי בית שמש מי יוכל לעמד לפני ה' האלקים הקדוש הזה ואל מי יעלה מעלינו. כא וישלחו מלאכים אל יושבי קרית יערים לאמר השבו פלשתים את ארון ה' רדו העלו אתו אליכם. א ויבאו אנשי קרית יערים ויעלו את ארון ה' ויבאו אתו אל בית אבינדב בגבעה ואת אלעזר בנו קדשו לשמר את ארון ה'. ב ויהי מיום שבת הארון בקרית יערים וירבו הימים ויהיו עשרים שנה וינהו כל בית ישראל אחרי ה'.

They placed the Ark of the LORD on the cart together with the chest, the golden mice, and the figures of their hemorrhoids. The cows went straight ahead along the road to Beth-shemesh. They went along a single highroad, lowing as they went, and turning off neither to the right nor to the left; and the lords of the Philistines walked behind them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh. The people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley. They looked up and saw the Ark, and they rejoiced when they saw [it]. The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and it stopped there. They split up the wood of the cart and presented the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. A large stone was there; and the Levites took down the Ark of the LORD and the chest

beside it containing the gold objects and placed them on the large stone. Then the men of Beth-shemesh presented burnt offerings and other sacrifices to the LORD that day. The five lords of the Philistines saw this and returned the same day to Ekron.

The following were the golden hemorrhoids that the Philistines paid as an indemnity to the LORD: For Ashdod, one; for Gaza, one; for Ashkelon, one; for Gath, one; for Ekron, one. As for the golden mice, their number accorded with all the Philistine towns that belonged to the five lords—both fortified towns and unwalled villages, as far as the great stone on which the Ark of the LORD was set down, to this day, in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh.

[The LORD] struck at the men of Beth-shemesh because they looked into the Ark of the LORD; He struck down seventy men among the people [and] fifty thousand men. The people mourned, for He had inflicted a great slaughter upon the population. And the men of Beth-shemesh asked, “Who can stand in attendance on the LORD, this holy G-d? And to whom shall He go up from us?” They sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim to say, “The Philistines have sent back the Ark of the LORD. Come down and take it into your keeping.” The men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the Ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill; and they consecrated his son Eleazar to have charge of the Ark of the LORD. A long time elapsed from the day that the Ark was housed in Kiriath-jearim, twenty years in all; and all the House of Israel yearned after the LORD.

9. Talmud, Sotah 35a-35b (William Davidson Edition)

(שמואל א ו, יט) ויך באנשי בית שמש כי ראו בארון משום דראו ויך רבי אבהו ורבי אלעזר חד אמר קוצרין ומשתחווים היו וחד אמר מילי נמי אמור מאן אמריך (להא) דאימריית ומאן אתא עלך דאיפיסת (שמואל א ו, יט) ויך בעם שבעים איש וחמשים אלף איש רבי אבהו ורבי אלעזר חד אמר שבעים איש היו וכל אחד ואחד שקול כחמשים אלף וחד אמר חמשים אלף היו וכל אחד ואחד שקול כשבעים סנהדרין

“And He smote of the men of Beit Shemesh because they had gazed upon the Ark of the Lord” (I Samuel 6:19). The Gemara asks: Because they gazed upon it, G-d smote them? Why did their action warrant this punishment? Rabbi Abbahu and Rabbi Elazar disagreed with regard to the interpretation of the verse. One says that they were punished because they were reaping their crops and prostrating themselves at the same time; they did not stop working in reverence for the Ark. And one says that they also spoke denigrating words: Who angered you, i.e., the Ark, so much that you became so angry that you gave yourself into captivity? And who came to you to appease you? The verse states: “And He smote of the people seventy men, fifty thousand men” (I Samuel 6:19). Rabbi Abbahu and Rabbi Elazar disagree over the interpretation of the verse. One says that there were seventy men, and each and every one of them was equivalent to fifty thousand men. And one says that there were fifty thousand men, and each and every one was equivalent to the seventy men in the Sanhedrin.

10. Bamidbar 20:4

וְלֹא יָבֹאוּ לְרִאֲוֹת כְּבֹלַע אֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּמָתוּ.

They shouldn't come to see when the holy is exposed and die

11. Don Isaac Abravanel (15th century Spain), Abravanel on Shemuel I Chapter 6

והיה מהיושר האלקי שימותו אלה על חטאתם, כי אחרי שהפלשתים שלא ראו אור התורה והאמת מתו על אשר נגעו בארון הברית, כל שכן שהיו בני ישראל אשר נכשלו בכיוצא בו מהעון חייבי מיתה...

ואפשר עוד לומר שהשבעים איש אשר מתו מאנשי בית שמש היתה מיתתם לפי שכאשר באה הארון אצלם והיו יודעים מה שעשה בקרב הפלשתים אמרו הם, (כ) מי יוכל לעמוד לפני האלקים הקדוש הזה ואל מי יעלה מעלינו, ר"ל מי יוכל לעמוד לפניו, כי הארון בהיותו חוץ מהמשכן עושה מכת חרב והרג ואבדן, ואם נמות כאשר מתו הפלשתים בסבתו אל מי יעלה מעלינו, ר"ל לאי זה עיר נשלחוהו כמו ששלחוהו הפלשתים מעיר אל עיר, (כא) ולכן מזה הפחד והמחשבה שלחו אנשים מלאכים לקרית יערים להודיעם שהפלשתים השיבו את ארון ה' לאמר רדו העלו אותו אליכם:

It was out of divine justice that they should die for their sins. For after the Philistines who didn't see the light of Torah and truth died because they touched the Ark of the Covenant, certainly when the children of Israel stumbled in a similar way from this sin were liable for death. . .

It is also possible to say that the seventy people that died who were citizens of Beit Shemesh their death was because when the Ark came to them and they knew what it did in the war against the Philistines they said (6:20) **Who can stand in front of this holy G-d, and to whom can we bring it up from us?** Meaning, to which city can we send it as the Philistines sent it from city to city. Therefore, because of this fear and thought they sent messenger to Kiryat Yearim to tell them the Philistines returned the Ark of Hashem, meaning: Come down and take it up yourselves!



9:00 PM



BIBLICAL BLINDNESS AND BENEVOLENT BLESSINGS

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1. [Genesis 27:1](#)

(1) When Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see, he called his older son Esau and said to him, “My son.” He answered, “Here I am.”

בראשית כ"ז:א'

(א) ויהי כִּי־זָקֵן יִצְחָק וַתִּכְהֶינּוּ עֵינָיו מִרְאֵת וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־עֵשָׂו בְּנוֹ הַגָּדֹל וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בְּנִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הֲנִנִּי:

2. [Genesis 29:23-26](#)

(23) When evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to him; and he cohabited with her.— (24) Laban had given his maidservant Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her maid.— (25) When morning came, there was Leah! So he said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? I was in your service for Rachel! Why did you deceive me?” (26) Laban said, “It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the older.

בראשית כ"ט:ג-כ"ו

(כג) וַיְהִי בְעֶרְבַי וַיִּקַּח אֶת־לֵאָה בִּתּוֹ וַיָּבֵא אֵלָיו וַיָּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ: (כד) וַיִּתֵּן לָבָן לָהּ אֶת־זִלְפָּה שֹׁפְחֹתוֹ לְלֵאָה בִּתּוֹ שֹׁפְחָהּ: (כה) וַיְהִי בַבֶּקֶר וַהֲנִיחָהּ הוּא לְאָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־לָבָן מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לִּי הֲלֹא בְרַחֵל עֲבַדְתִּי עִמָּךְ וְלָמָּה רָמִיתָנִי: (כו) וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן לֹא־יַעֲשֶׂה כֵן בְּמִקְוֵמֵנוּ לְתַתּוֹ הַצְעִירָה לְפָנֵי הַבְּכִירָה:

3. [Genesis 48:10](#)

(10) Now Israel's eyes were dim with age; he could not see. So [Joseph] brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them.

בראשית מ"ח:י'

(י) וַעֲיִנַי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּבְדוּ מִזְקֵן לֹא יוּכַל לְרְאוֹת וַיִּגַּשׁ אֹתָם אֵלָיו וַיִּשַׁק לָהֶם וַיַּחְבֵּק לָהֶם:

4. [Genesis 48:8-19](#)

(8) Noticing Joseph's sons, Israel asked, “Who are these?” (9) And Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom G-d has given me here.” “Bring them up to me,” he said, “that I may bless them.” (10) Now Israel's eyes were dim with age; he could not see. So [Joseph] brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. (11) And Israel said to Joseph, “I never expected to see you again, and here G-d has let me see your children as well.” (12) Joseph then removed them from his knees, and bowed low with his face to the ground. (13) Joseph took the two of them, Ephraim with his right hand—to Israel's left—and Manasseh with his left hand—to Israel's right—and brought them close to him. (14) But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head—thus crossing his hands—although Manasseh was the first-born. (15) And he blessed Joseph, saying, “The G-d in whose ways my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The G-d who has been my shepherd from my birth to this day—

בראשית מ"ח:ח'-י"ט

(ח) וַיִּרְא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֵלֶּהּ: (ט) וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אָבִיו בְּנֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן־לִי אֱלֹקִים בְּזֶה וַיֹּאמֶר קְחֵם־נָא אֵלַי וְאֲבָרְכֵם: (י) וַעֲיִנַי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּבְדוּ מִזְקֵן לֹא יוּכַל לְרְאוֹת וַיִּגַּשׁ אֹתָם אֵלָיו וַיִּשַׁק לָהֶם וַיַּחְבֵּק לָהֶם: (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יוֹסֵף רְאֵה פָנֶיךָ לֹא פָלַגְתִּי וְהִנֵּה הִרְאָה אֹתִי אֱלֹקִים גַּם אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ: (יב) וַיּוֹצֵא יוֹסֵף אֹתָם מֵעַם בְּרַכְּוֹ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לְאַפְּיוֹ אֶרְצָה: (יג) וַיִּקַּח יוֹסֵף אֶת־שְׁנֵיהֶם אֶת־אֶפְרַיִם בְּיָמֵינוּ מִשְׁמָאל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־מְנַשֶּׁה בְּשִׁמְאֹלוֹ מִיְמִין יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו: (יד) וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יָמֵינוּ וַיִּשֶׁת׀ עַל־רֹאשׁ עַל־רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וְהוּא הַצְעִיר וְאֶת־שִׁמְאֹלוֹ עַל־רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה שִׁכַּל אֶת־יְדָיו כִּי מְנַשֶּׁה הַבְּכוֹר: (טו) וַיְבָרֵךְ אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֱלֹקִים אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלַּכְוּ אֲבֹתַי לְפָנָיו אֲבָרְכֶם וַיִּצְחָק הָאֱלֹקִים הִרְעָה אֹתִי מֵעוֹדֵי עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

(16) The Angel who has redeemed me from all harm— Bless the lads. In them may my name be recalled, And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, And may they be teeming multitudes upon the earth.” (17) When Joseph saw that his father was placing his right hand on Ephraim’s head, he thought it wrong; so he took hold of his father’s hand to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s. (18) “Not so, Father,” Joseph said to his father, “for the other is the first-born; place your right hand on his head.” (19) But his father objected, saying, “I know, my son, I know. He too shall become a people, and he too shall be great. Yet his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall be plentiful enough for nations.”

5. [Numbers 24:3](#)

(3) Taking up his theme, he said: Word of Balaam son of Beor, Word of the man whose eye is true,

6. [Judges 16:20-21](#)

(20) She cried, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” And he awoke from his sleep, thinking he would break loose and shake himself free as he had the other times. For he did not know that the LORD had departed from him. (21) The Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza and shackled him in bronze fetters, and he became a mill slave in the prison.

7. [I Samuel 3:2](#)

(2) One day, Eli was asleep in his usual place; his eyes had begun to fail and he could barely see.

8. [I Kings 14:4](#)

(4) Jeroboam’s wife did so; she left and went to Shiloh and came to the house of Ahijah. Now Ahijah could not see, for his eyes had become sightless with age;

9. [II Kings 25:7](#)

(7) They slaughtered Zedekiah’s sons before his eyes; then Zedekiah’s eyes were put out. He was chained in bronze fetters and he was brought to Babylon.

10. [Deuteronomy 34:7](#)

(7) Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated.

11. [Deuteronomy 28:28-29](#)

(28) The LORD will strike you with madness, blindness, and dismay. (29) You shall grope at noon as a blind man gropes in the dark; you shall not prosper in your ventures, but shall be constantly abused and robbed, with none to give help.

(טז) המלאך הגאל אתי מכל־רע יברך את־הנערים ויקרא בהם שמי ושם אבתי אברהם ויצחק וידגו לרב בקרב הארץ: (יז) וירא יוסף כי־ישית אביו ידימינו על־ראש אפרים וירע בעיניו ויתמך ידי־אביו להסיר אתה מעל ראש־אפרים על־ראש מנשה: (יח) ויאמר יוסף אל־אביו לא־כן אבי כי־זה הבכר שים ימינך על־ראשו: (יט) וימאן אביו ויאמר ידעתי בני ידעתי גם־הוא יהיה־לעם וגם־הוא יגדל ואולם אחיו הקטן יגדל ממנו וזרעו יהיה מלא־הגוים:

במדבר כ"ד:ג'

(ג) וישא משלו ויאמר נאם בלעם בנו בער ונאם הגבר שתם העין:

שופטים ט"ז:כ'-כ"א

(כ) ותאמר פלשתים עליך שמשון ויקץ משנתו ויאמר אצא כפעם בפעם ואנער והוא לא ידע כי ה' סר מעליו: (כא) ויאחזוהו פלשתים וינקרו את־עיניו ויורידו אותו עזתה ויאסרוהו בנחשתים ויהי טוחן בבית האסירים [האסורים]:

שמואל א ג':ב'

(ב) ויהי ביום ההוא ועלי שכב במקומו ועינו [ועיניו] החלו כהות לא יוכל לראות:

מלכים א י"ד:ד'

(ד) ותעש כן אשת ירבעם ותקם ותלך שלה ותבא בית אחיה ויאחיהו לא־יכל לראות כי קמו עיניו משיבו: (ס)

מלכים ב כ"ה:ז'

(ז) ואת־בני צדקיהו שחטו לעיניו ואת־עיני צדקיהו עור ויאסרוהו בנחשתים ויבאהו בכל: (ס)

דברים ל"ד:ז'

(ז) ומשה בן־מאה ועשרים שנה במתו לא־כהתה עינו ולא־נס לחה:

דברים כ"ח:כ'-כ"ט

(כח) יכֶּה ה' בשגעון ובעורון ובתמהון לבב: (כט) והיית ממשש בצִהָרִים כְּאִשֶׁר יִמְשֵׁשׁ הָעוֹר בְּאִפְלָה וְלֹא תִצְלִיחַ אֶת־דְּרָכֶיךָ וְהָיִית אַף עֹשׂוֹק וְגִזּוֹל כְּלִי־הַיָּמִים וְאִין מוֹשִׁיעַ:

12. [Proverbs 30:17](#)

(17) The eye that mocks a father And disdains the homage due a mother— The ravens of the brook will gouge it out, Young eagles will devour it.

משלי ל':י"ז
(יז) עין | תלעג לאב ותבוז ליקהת-אם יקרוה ערבי-נחל ויאכלוה
בני-נשר: (פ)

13. [Exodus 4:11](#)

(11) And the LORD said to him, "Who gives man speech? Who makes him dumb or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"

שמות ד':י"א
(יא) ויאמר ה' אליו מי שם פה לאדם או מי-ישום אלם או חרש
או פקח או עור הלא אנכי ה':

14. [Exodus 21:24](#)

(24) eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

שמות כ"א:כ"ד
(כד) עין תחת עין שן תחת שן יד תחת יד רגל תחת רגל:

15. [Leviticus 24:20](#)

(20) fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The injury he inflicted on another shall be inflicted on him.

ויקרא כ"ד:כ'
(כ) שבר תחת שבר עין תחת עין שן תחת שן כאשר יתן מום
באדם כן ינתן בו:

16. [Deuteronomy 19:21](#)

(21) Nor must you show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

דברים י"ט:כ"א
(כא) ולא תחוס עינך נפש בנפש עין בעין שן בשן יד ביד רגל
ברגל: (ס)

17. [Leviticus 26:16](#)

(16) I in turn will do this to you: I will wreak misery upon you—consumption and fever, which cause the eyes to pine and the body to languish; you shall sow your seed to no purpose, for your enemies shall eat it.

ויקרא כ"ו:ט"ז
(טז) אף-אני אעשה-זאת לכם והפקדתי עליכם בהלה את-
השחפת ואת-הקדחת מכלות עינים ומדיבת נפש וזרעתם לריק
זרעכם ואכלהו איביכם:

18. [Deuteronomy 28:65](#)

(65) Yet even among those nations you shall find no peace, nor shall your foot find a place to rest. The LORD will give you there an anguished heart and eyes that pine and a despondent spirit.

דברים כ"ח:ס"ה
(סה) ובגוים ההם לא תרגיע ולא-יהיה מנוח לכף-רגלך ונתן ה'
לך שם לב רגז וכליון עינים ודאבון נפש:

[Deuteronomy 28:29](#)

(29) You shall grope at noon as a blind man gropes in the dark; you shall not prosper in your ventures, but shall be constantly abused and robbed, with none to give help.

דברים כ"ח:כ"ט
(כט) והיית ממשש בצהרים כאשר ימשש העור באפלה ולא
תצליח את-דרכיך והיית אף עשוק וגזול כל-הימים ואין מושיע:

19. [Leviticus 19:14](#)

(14) You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind. You shall fear your G-d: I am the LORD.

ויקרא י"ט:י"ד
(יד) לא-תקלל חרש ולפני עור לא תתן מכשל ויראת מאלקיך
אני ה':

20. [Deuteronomy 27:18](#)

(18) Cursed be he who misdirects a blind person on his way.—And all the people shall say, Amen.

דברים כ"ז:י"ח
(יח) ארור משגה עור בדרך ואמר כל-העם אמן: (ס)

21. [Job 29:15](#)

(15) I was eyes to the blind And feet to the lame.

איוב כ"ט:ט"ו
(טו) עינים הייתי לעור ורגלים לפסח אני:

22. [Exodus 23:8](#)

(8) Do not take bribes, for bribes blind the clear-sighted and upset the pleas of those who are in the right.

שמות כ"ג:ח'
(ח) ושחד לא תקח כי השחד יעור פקחים ויסלף דברי צדיקים:

23. [Genesis 19:11](#)

(11) And the people who were at the entrance of the house, young and old, they struck with blinding light, so that they were helpless to find the entrance.

24. [Deuteronomy 16:19](#)

(19) You shall not judge unfairly: you shall show no partiality; you shall not take bribes, for bribes blind the eyes of the discerning and upset the plea of the just.

25. [Genesis 19:1-11](#)

(1) The two angels arrived in Sodom in the evening, as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to greet them and, bowing low with his face to the ground, (2) he said, "Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house to spend the night, and bathe your feet; then you may be on your way early." But they said, "No, we will spend the night in the square." (3) But he urged them strongly, so they turned his way and entered his house. He prepared a feast for them and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. (4) They had not yet lain down, when the townspeople, the men of Sodom, young and old—all the people to the last man—gathered about the house. (5) And they shouted to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may be intimate with them." (6) So Lot went out to them to the entrance, shut the door behind him, (7) and said, "I beg you, my friends, do not commit such a wrong. (8) Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you please; but do not do anything to these men, since they have come under the shelter of my roof." (9) But they said, "Stand back! The fellow," they said, "came here as an alien, and already he acts the ruler! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." And they pressed hard against the person of Lot, and moved forward to break the door. (10) But the men stretched out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. (11) And the people who were at the entrance of the house, young and old, they struck with blinding light, so that they were helpless to find the entrance.

בראשית י"ט:י"א

(יא) וְאֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־פָּתַח הַבַּיִת הָיוּ בְּסֻנּוֹרִים מְקַטְנִין וְעַד־גְּדוֹל וַיִּלְאוּ לְמַצָּא הַפֶּתַח:

דברים ט"ז:י"ט

(יט) לֹא־תִטֶּה מִשְׁפָּט לֹא תִפִּיר פָּנִים וְלֹא־תִקַּח שוֹחַד כִּי הַשֹּׁחַד יַעֲוֶר עֵינֵי חֲכָמִים וְיִסְלַף דְּבַר־יְצִדִיקִים:

בראשית י"ט:א'-י"א

(א) וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים סָדְמָה בְּעֶרְבַּ וְלוֹט יָשָׁב בְּשַׁעַר־סְדֹם וַיִּרְאֵה לֹט וַיָּקָם לְקִרְאתָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַפָּיִם אַרְצָה: (ב) וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה נָא־אֲדֹנָי סוּרוּ נָא אֶל־בַּיִת עִבְדְּכֶם וְלִינוּ וְרַחְצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁפַּמְתֶּם וְהִלַּכְתֶּם לְדַרְכְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא כִּי בְּרַחוּב נָלִין: (ג) וַיִּפְצַר־בָּם מְאֹד וַיִּסְרוּ אֵלָיו וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם מִשְׁתֶּה וּמִצּוֹת אָפֶה וַיֹּאכְלוּ: (ד) טָרֶם יִשְׁכְּבוּ וְאֲנָשִׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סְדֹם נִסְבּוּ עַל־הַבַּיִת מִנְעֵר וְעַד־זָקֵן כָּל־הָעָם מִקְצָה: (ה) וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל־לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֵיהָ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה הוֹצִיָאם אֵלֵינוּ וְנִדְעָה אֹתָם: (ו) וַיֵּצֵא אֵלֵהֶם לֹט הַפֶּתַח וְהִדְלִית סָגַר אַחֲרָיו: (ז) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־נָא אַחֵי תִרְעוּ: (ח) הִנֵּה־נָא לִי שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ אִישׁ אוֹצִיָאָה־נָא אֶתְהֶן אֵלֵיכֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶן כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם רַק לְאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵל אֶל־תַּעֲשׂוּ דְבַר כִּי־עַל־כֵּן בָּאוּ בְּצַל קַרְתִּי: (ט) וַיֹּאמְרוּ | גֹּשׁ־הֲלָאָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָאֶחָד בְּאֵלֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁפֹּט שְׁפוֹט עֵתָה נָרַע לָךְ מֵהֶם וַיִּפְצְרוּ בְּאִישׁ בְּלוֹט מְאֹד וַיִּגְשׂוּ לְשֹׁבֵר הַדֶּלֶת: (י) וַיִּשְׁלַחוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֶת־יָדָם וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־לוֹט אֵלֵיהֶם הַבַּיְתָה וְאֶת־הַדֶּלֶת סָגְרוּ: (יא) וְאֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־פָּתַח הַבַּיִת הָיוּ בְּסֻנּוֹרִים מְקַטְנִין וְעַד־גְּדוֹל וַיִּלְאוּ לְמַצָּא הַפֶּתַח:



9:30 PM



THE HEALING POWER OF THE JORDAN?

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1. Melachim Bet, Chapter 5 (JPS 1985 translation)

א: ונעמן שר־צבא מלך־ארם היה איש גדול לפני אֲדֹנָיו ונשא פָּנִים כִּי־בו נתן־יְקוֹק תְּשׁוּעָה לְאַרְם וְהָאִישׁ הָיָה גִבּוֹר חַיִל מִצָּרַע:

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was important to his lord and high in his favor, for through him the LORD had granted victory to Aram. But the man, though a great warrior, was a leper.

ב: וְאַרְם יֵצְאוּ גְדוּדִים וַיִּשְׁבּוּ מֵאַרְץ יִשְׂרָאֵל נַעֲרָה קַטְנָה וְתָהִי לִפְנֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ נְעָמָן:

Once, when the Arameans were out raiding, they carried off a young girl from the land of Israel, and she became an attendant to Naaman's wife.

ג: וְתֹאמֶר אֶל־גְּבֵרְתָהּ אַחֲלֵי אֲדֹנָי לִפְנֵי הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁמְרוֹן אֲזִי יֵאָסֶף אֹתוֹ מִצָּרַעְתּוֹ:

She said to her mistress, "I wish Master could come before the prophet in Samaria; he would cure him of his leprosy."

ד: וַיָּבֵא וַיְגַד לְאֲדֹנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּזֶאת וְכֹזֶאת דְּבָרָה הַנְּעִרָה אֲשֶׁר מֵאַרְץ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

[Naaman] went and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said.

ה: וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ־אַרְם לֶךְ־בָּא וְאֶשְׁלַחְךָ סֵפֶר אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ עֶשֶׂר כִּכָּרֵי־כֶסֶף וְשֵׁשֶׁת אֲלָפִים זָהָב וְעֶשֶׂר חֲלִיפוֹת בְּגָדִים:

And the king of Aram said, "Go to the king of Israel, and I will send along a letter." He set out, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing.

ו: וַיָּבֵא הַסֵּפֶר אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר וְעַתָּה כְּבוֹא הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה אֵלַיךְ הִנֵּה שְׁלַחְתִּי אֵלַיךְ אֶת־נְעָמָן עַבְדִּי וְאֶסְפְּתוֹ מִצָּרַעְתּוֹ:

He brought the letter to the king of Israel. It read: "Now, when this letter reaches you, know that I have sent my courtier Naaman to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy."

ז: וַיְהִי כִּקְרָא מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַסֵּפֶר וַיִּקְרַע בְּגָדָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאֵלֵקִים אֲנִי לְהַמִּית וְלְהַחַיֹּת כִּי־זֶה שְׁלַח אֵלַי לְאָסֹף אִישׁ מִצָּרַעְתּוֹ כִּי אַךְ־דָּעוּ־נָא וְרָאוּ כִּי־מִתְאַנֶּה הוּא לִי:

When the king of Israel read the letter, he rent his clothes and cried, "Am I G-d, to deal death or give life, that this fellow writes to me to cure a man of leprosy? Just see for yourselves that he is seeking a pretext against me!"

ח: וַיְהִי כִּשְׁמַע | אֵלִישָׁע אִישׁ־הָאֵלֵקִים כִּי־קָרַע מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵאמֹר לְמָה קָרַעְתָּ בְּגָדֶיךָ יְבִיא־נָא אֵלַי וַיַּדַּע כִּי יֵשׁ נְבִיא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:

When Elisha, the man of G-d, heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, he sent a message to the king: "Why have you rent your clothes? Let him come to me, and he will learn that there is a prophet in Israel."

ט: וַיָּבֵא נְעָמָן בְּסוּסוֹ [בְּסוּסָיו] וּבְרֶכְבוֹ וַיַּעֲמֵד פֶּתַח־הַבַּיִת לְאֵלִישָׁע:

So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and halted at the door of Elisha's house.

י: וַיִּשְׁלַח אֵלָיו אֵלִישָׁע מִלְּאָף לֵאמֹר הֲלוֹךְ וְרַחֲצֵת שִׁבְע־פְּעָמִים בַּיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּשְׁבַּב בְּשֹׂרְךָ לֶךָ וְטִהַר:

Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go and bathe seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean."

יא: וַיִּקְצַף נְעָמָן וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה אֲמַרְתִּי אֵלַי | יֵצֵא יְצִאוֹ וַעֲמֵד וְקָרָא בְּשֵׁם־יְקוֹק אֶלְקֵיו וְהִנִּיף יָדוֹ אֶל־הַמְּקוֹם וְאָסֹף הַמִּצָּרַע:

But Naaman was angered and walked away. "I thought," he said, "he would surely come out to me, and would stand and invoke the LORD his G-d by name, and would wave his hand toward the spot, and cure the affected part.

יב: הֲלֹא טוֹב אַבְנֵה [אֲמֹנָה] וּפְרַפְרֵ נְהַרוֹת דַּמְשָׁק מִכָּל מַיִמי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲלֹא־אֲרַחֵץ בָּהֶם וְטִהַרְתִּי וַיִּפֶן וַיֵּלֶךְ בַּחֲמָה:

Are not the Amanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? I could bathe in them and be clean!" And he stalked off in a rage.

יג: וַיָּגִשׁוּ עֲבָדָיו וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵבִי דָבָר גָּדוֹל הִנְבִּיאַת דְּבַר אֵלֶיךָ הֲלוֹא תַעֲשֶׂה וְאַף כִּי־אָמַר אֵלֶיךָ רַחֵץ וְטַהֵר:

But his servants came forward and spoke to him. "Sir," they said, "if the prophet told you to do something difficult, would you not do it? How much more when he has only said to you, 'Bathe and be clean.'"

יד: וַיֵּרַד וַיִּטְבַּל בִּיַרְדֵּן שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים כְּדִבַּר אִישׁ הָאֱלֹקִים וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּשָׂרוֹ כְּבֶשֶׂר נֶעַר קֶטָן וַיִּטְהַר:

So he went down and immersed himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of G-d had bidden; and his flesh became like a little boy's, and he was clean.

טו: וַיָּשֶׁב אֶל־אִישׁ הָאֱלֹקִים הוּא וְכָל־מַחֲנֵהוּ וַיָּבֵא וַיַּעֲמֵד לְפָנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־נָא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אֵין אֱלֹקִים בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ כִּי אִם־בִּישְׂרָאֵל וַעֲתָה קַח־נָא בְּרִכָּה מֵאֵת עֲבָדֶיךָ:

Returning with his entire retinue to the man of G-d, he stood before him and exclaimed, "Now I know that there is no G-d in the whole world except in Israel! So please accept a gift from your servant."

טז: וַיֹּאמֶר חִי־יִקְוֶה אֲשֶׁר־עַמְדַּתִּי לְפָנָיו אִם־אֶקַּח וַיִּפְצַר־בוּ לְקַחַת וַיִּמָּאֵן:

But he replied, "As the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept anything." He pressed him to accept, but he refused.

יז: וַיֹּאמֶר נַעֲמֹן וְלֹא יִתֶּן־נָא לְעַבְדְּךָ מִשָּׂא צֶמֶד־פָּרָדִים אֲדַמָּה כִּי לֹא־יַעֲשֶׂה עוֹד עֲבָדֶיךָ עֲלֶיהָ וְזָבַח לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים כִּי אִם־לִיקוּק:

And Naaman said, "Then at least let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will never again offer up burnt offering or sacrifice to any god, except the LORD.

יח: לְדַבַּר הַזֶּה יִסְלַח יְקֹוֶק לְעַבְדְּךָ בְּבוֹא אֲדֹנָי בֵּית־רִמּוֹן לְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת שָׁמָּה וְהוּא | נִשְׁעֵן עַל־יָדַי וְהַשְׁתַּחֲוִיתִי בֵּית רִמּוֹן בְּהַשְׁתַּחֲוִיתִי בֵּית רִמּוֹן יִסְלַח־נָא יְקֹוֶק לְעַבְדְּךָ בְּדַבַּר הַזֶּה:

But may the LORD pardon your servant for this: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to bow low in worship there, and he is leaning on my arm so that I must bow low in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow low in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD pardon your servant in this."

יט: וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לָךְ לְשָׁלוֹם וַיֵּלֶךְ מֵאֵתוֹ כְּבֵרֵת־אָרֶץ: (ס)

And he said to him, "Go in peace." When he had gone some distance from him,

כ: וַיֹּאמֶר גִּיחִזִּי נֶעַר אֱלִישָׁע אִישׁ־הָאֱלֹקִים הִנֵּה | חֹשֶׁף אֲדֹנָי אֶת־נַעֲמָן הָאֲרָמִי הַזֶּה מִקַּחַת מִיָּדוֹ אֶת אֲשֶׁר־הֵבִיא חִי־יְקֹוֶק כִּי־אִם־רַצְתִּי אֲחִירָיו וְלִקְחַתִּי מֵאֵתוֹ מֵאוֹמָה:

Gehazi, the attendant of Elisha the man of G-d, thought: "My master has let that Aramean Naaman off without accepting what he brought! As the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him."

כא: וַיִּרְדֵּף גִּיחִזִּי אַחֲרָי נַעֲמָן וַיִּרְאֶה נַעֲמָן רֶץ אַחֲרָיו וַיִּפֹּל מֵעַל הַמָּרְכָבָה לְקִרְאָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר הַשָּׁלוֹם:

So Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw someone running after him, he alighted from his chariot to meet him and said, "Is all well?"

כב: וַיֹּאמֶר | שָׁלוֹם אֲדֹנָי שְׁלַחְנִי לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה עֲתָה זֶה בָּאוּ אֵלַי שְׁנֵי־נְעָרִים מֵהָר אֶפְרַיִם מִבְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים תְּנֶה־נָא לָהֶם כֶּכֶר־כֶּסֶף וּשְׁתֵּי חֲלָפוֹת בְּגָדִים:

"All is well," he replied. "My master has sent me to say: Two youths, disciples of the prophets, have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing."

כג: וַיֹּאמֶר נַעֲמָן הוּאֵל קַח כֶּכֶרִים וַיִּפְרֹץ־בוּ וַיִּצַר כֶּכֶרִים כֶּסֶף בְּשָׁנֵי חֲרָטִים וּשְׁתֵּי חֲלָפוֹת בְּגָדִים וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־שְׁנֵי נְעָרָיו וַיֵּשְׂאוּ לְפָנָיו:

Naaman said, "Please take two talents." He urged him, and he wrapped the two talents of silver in two bags and gave them, along with two changes of clothes, to two of his servants, who carried them ahead of him.

כד: וַיָּבֵא אֶל־הָעֶפְלָ וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיִּפְקֹד בְּבֵית וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיֵּלְכוּ:

When [Gehazi] arrived at the citadel, he took [the things] from them and deposited them in the house. Then he dismissed the men and they went their way.

כה: וְהוּאֵל בָּא וַיַּעֲמֵד אֶל־אֲדֹנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֱלִישָׁע מֵאֵן [מֵאֵין] גִּחִזִּי וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא־הֵלֶךְ עֲבָדֶיךָ אָנָּה וְאָנָּה:

He entered and stood before his master; and Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" He replied, "Your servant has not gone anywhere."

כו: ויאמר אליו לא-לבי הלה כאשר הפך-איש מעל מרכבתו לקראתך העת לקחת את-הכסף ולקחת בגדים וזיתים וכרמים וצאן ובקר ועבדים ושפחות:

Then [Elisha] said to him, “Did not my spirit go along when a man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this a time to take money in order to buy clothing and olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves?

כז: וצרת נעמן תדבק-בך ובזרעך לעולם ויצא מלפניו מצרע כשָׁלֵג: (ס)

Surely, the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever.” And as [Gehazi] left his presence, he was snow-white with leprosy.

2. Ralbag to Melachim Bet 5:6

ואספתו מצרעתו – רוצה לומר: שתרפאהו מצרעתו ונקרא הרפואה מהצרעת אסיפה כי הצרעת תעשה מהאחד רבים כי מפני תגבורת החום העפושי יחלש מאד החום הטבעי הקושר איברי הבעלי חיים ומשים אותם אחד ולזה תמצא במצורע שכבר יפלו אבריו...

And you shall gather him from his *tzara'at* – meaning to say, that you should heal him from his *tzara'at*. The healing of *tzara'at* is referred to as *asifah*, since the *tzara'at* makes one into many, as since the heat of decay (?) strengthens, the natural heat, which connects the body parts of living beings and makes them one, decreases. For this reason, the limbs of a leper fall off...

3. www.leprosymission.org.uk/about/faqs/

How does leprosy affect the body?

If left untreated, leprosy progresses and the nerve damage spreads. Lacking sensation in their hands and feet, people with leprosy can injure themselves. And these injuries can lead to ulcers, infection and permanent disability.

Leprosy can cause muscle paralysis, resulting in clawed fingers and foot drop. This makes it difficult for people to walk or use their hands. It can also damage nerves in the face, causing the eyelid muscles to stop working. As the eyes are no longer protected by blinking, they are easily damaged, leading to sight loss and blindness.

Some people experience reactions to the leprosy bacteria in their body, even when the bacteria are no longer active and treatment is underway. These reactions can cause pain, sickness, swelling of the skin and fever.

4. Metzudat David to Melachim Bet 5:1

גבור חיל מצורע – כאומר, הנה בהיותו גבור חיל, חשק לרדת בכל עת אל המלחמה, ומפני צרעתו מנע, והיה מיצר בעבור זה.

A mighty warrior, a *metzarah* – as if it was saying, since he was a mighty warrior, he desired to descend into battle at all times, but he withheld himself due to his *tzara'at*, and he was pained because of this.

5. Rabbi Alex Israel, Shiur #7: Chapter 5 – Curing Na’aman, www.etzion.org.il/en/shiur-07-chapter-5-curing-na'man

In considering this scene, further questions need to be addressed: Why does the king of Aram send a letter to the king of Israel? Why does he not send Na’aman directly to the prophet? And why does Elisha need to inform the king to “send him to me?” Why would the king not have thought of that?

“The king of Aram sent the letter to the king of Israel ... for he thought that it was contingent upon him and that the prophet would not function unless under his instructions.” (Malbim)

The king of Aram assumes that prophets function in Israel as in Syria, whereby they are underlings of the king and controlled by his directives. Israel, however, is an environment in which the prophet operates independently, answerable to no one but G-d, frequently critiquing royalty and certainly unwilling to bend to its authority. The king of Aram could not conceive of a situation in which the prophet would not be fundamentally in service of the king, and so he sought the prophet by means of the king. In contrast, the king of Israel couldn't imagine a scenario in which the prophet would be under his control, and so he failed even to entertain the prospect of appealing to Elisha!

6. Malbim to Melachim Bet 5:1

היה גבור חיל מצורע רצה לומר שלא היתה הצרעת בסבת איזה חולי כי עם צרעתו היה גבור חיל, באופן שלא היתה צרעת טבעי בסבת איזה הפסד בגוף רק עונשיי, וחכמינו זכרונם לברכה אמרו שנענש על שארם יצאו גדודים וישבו מארץ ישראל נערה קטנה, שהיה בפקודת נעמן.

He was a mighty warrior, a *metzarah*, meaning to say that he did not have the *tzara'at* due to any illness, because despite his *tzara'at* he was a great warrior, in a manner that the *tzara'at* was not natural, due to some deficiency in the body, rather, [the *tzara'at* came as] a punishment, and our Sages of blessed memory said that he was punished since Aram went out raiding and kidnapped a young girl from the land of Israel, which was under the command of Na'aman.

7. Malbim to Melachim Bet 5:8

אמנם באר שמה שרוצה שיבא אליו הוא כדי שידע שיש נביא בישראל – שזה מורה על השראת השכינה ודבוקו עמהם.

However, he explained that he wanted [Na'aman] to come to him in order that he should know that there is a prophet in Israel – which shows the [presence] of the Shechinah and its connection to them.

8. Bamidbar Rabbah 7:5 (R' Israel translation)

ועל גסות הרוח זה נעמן, שנאמר (מלכים ב ה, א): ונעמן שר צבא מלך ארם היה איש גדול, מהו גדול, שהיתה רוחו גסה מפני שהיה גבור חיל, ועל ידי כך נצטרע.

Excessive pride: This refers to Na'aman, as it states, “Na'aman, the captain of the army of the king of Aram was a great man” (5:1). What is “great?” He was filled with pride due to his military prowess, and this is the reason he was struck with leprosy.



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