

CHANA: MOTHER OF PRAYER

Source Materials
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1 BIRTH OF SAMUEL 1:1-28

¹ There was a certain man from Ramathaim-zophim, from Mount Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah, son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, from the land of Ephraim. ² He had two wives; one's name was Hannah and the second's name was Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. ³ This man would ascend from his city from year to year to prostrate himself and to bring offerings to HASHEM, Master of Legions, in Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli — Hophni and Phinehas — were Kohanim to HASHEM.

⁴ It happened on the day that Elkanah brought offerings that he gave portions to Peninnah, his wife, and to all her sons and daughters. ⁵ But to Hannah he gave a double portion, for he loved Hannah and HASHEM had closed her womb. ⁶ Her rival [Peninnah] provoked her again and again in order to irritate her, for HASHEM had closed her womb. ⁷ This is what he would do year after year, and whenever [Peninnah] would go up to the house of HASHEM, she would provoke her; she would cry and not eat. ⁸ Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you cry and why do you not eat? Why is your heart broken? Am I not better to you than ten children?"

⁹ Hannah arose after eating in Shiloh and after drinking; and Eli the Kohen was sitting on the chair, near the doorpost of the Sanctuary of HASHEM. ¹⁰ She was feeling bitter, and she prayed to HASHEM, weeping continuously. ¹¹ She made a vow and said, "HASHEM, Master of Legions, if You take note of the suffering of Your maidservant, and You remember me, and do not forget Your maidservant, and give Your maidservant male offspring, then I shall give him to HASHEM all the days of his life, and a razor shall not come upon his head."

¹² It happened as she continued to pray before HASHEM that Eli observed her mouth. ¹³ Hannah was speaking to her heart — only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard — so Eli thought she was drunk. ¹⁴ Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Remove your wine from yourself!" ¹⁵ Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord. I am a woman of aggrieved spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, and I have poured out my soul before HASHEM. ¹⁶ Do not deem your maidservant to be a base woman — for it is out of much grievance and anger that I have spoken until now." ¹⁷ Eli then answered and said, "Go in peace. The God of Israel will grant the request you have made of Him." ¹⁸ She said, "May your maidservant find favor in your eyes." ¹⁹ Then the woman went on her way and she ate, and no longer had the same look on her face.

¹⁹ They arose early in the morning and prostrated themselves before HASHEM; then they returned and came to their home, to Ramah. Elkanah knew Hannah his wife and HASHEM remembered her. ²⁰ And it happened with the passage of the period of days that Hannah had conceived, and she gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, for [she said,] "I requested him from HASHEM."

²¹ The man Elkanah ascended with his entire household to bring to HASHEM the annual offering and his vow. ²² But Hannah did not ascend, as she told her husband, "When the child is weaned, then I will bring him, and he shall appear before HASHEM and shall settle there forever." ²³ Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what is good in your eyes; remain until you wean him — but may HASHEM fulfill His word." ²⁴ So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him.

birth (Radak).

1:23. Hannah had been told prophetically that Samuel the promise be fulfilled (Malbim).

^א ויהי איש אחד מן הרמתיים צופים מדר אפרים ושמו אלקנה בן ירימם בן אליהוא בן יהוחי בן צוח אפרתי; ולו שתי נשים שם אחת חנה חנה ושם השנית פנינה ויהי לפנינה ולחנה אין ולחים. ועלה האיש הווא מעירו מימים ימימה להשתחות ולזבוח ליהוה צבאות בשילה ושם שני בני-עלי חפני ופנחס בנים ליהוה; ויהי היום ויזבח אלקנה ונתן לפנינה אשתי ולכל בניה ובנותיה מנות; ולחנה יתן מנה אחת אפים כי את חנה ויהי סגר רחמה; וכן יעשה שנה בשנה מדר עליה בבית יהוה כי סגר יהוה בעד רחמה; וכן יעשה שנה בשנה מדר עליה בבית יהוה כן תכעסה ותכבה ולא תאכל; ויאמר לה אלקנה אישה חנה למה תבכי ולמה לא תאכלי ולמה ירע לבך הלא אנכי טוב לך מעשרה כל היום; ותקם חנה אחרי אכלה בשילה ואחרי שתה ועלי הכהן ישב על הכסא על מזוזות הבית יהוה; והיא נפשה ותתפלל על יהוה וזכרה תבכה; ותדר דרך ותאמר יהוה צבאות אם יראה לבעני אמתך וזכרתי ולא תשכח את אמתך ונתתה לאמתך זרע אנשים ונתתיו לידיה; כל ימי חיי ומורה לא יעלה עלי ראשו; והיה כי הרבתי להתפלל לפני יהוה ועלי שמר את פיה; וחנה היא מדרת על לבה רק שפתיה נעות וקולה לא ישמע ותחשבה עלי לשכרה; ויאמר אלי עלי ער-מתי תשתכרין הסיר את יינך מעלך; ותמן חנה ותאמר לא אדני אשה קשת-רוח אנכי ויון ושכר לא שתיתי ואשפך את נפשי לפני יהוה; אל תחן את אמתך לפני בת בלעל כי מרב שיחי וכעסי דברתי ער-הנה; ויען עלי ויאמר לך לשלום ואלהי ישראל יתן את-שלחך אשר שאלת מעמו; ותאמר חמצא שפחהך הן בעיניך ותלך האשה לזרחה ותאכל ופניה לא יהי-לה עוד; וישכמו בבקר וישתחו לפני יהוה וישבו ויבאו אל ביתם הרממה וידע אלקנה את חנה אשתי ויזכרה יהוה; ויהי לחקפות הימים ותהר חנה ותלך בן ותקרא את שמו שמואל כי מידוה שאלתי; ויעל האיש אלקנה וכל ביתו לזבוח ליהוה את-זבח הנמים ואת-נדרו; וחנה לא עלתה כי-אמרה לאישה ער יגמל הנער והבאתיו ונראה את-פני יהוה וישב שם ער-עולם; ויאמר לה אלקנה אישה עשי הטוב בעיניך שכי ער-גמלך אהו אך יקם יהוה את דברו ותשכ האשה ותזין את בנה ער-גמלה אתו;

1:1. Elkanah, a Levite, lived in the territory of Ephraim.

His complete lineage is recorded in / Chronicles 6:18-23.

1:16. Peninnah taunted her by saying such things as,

"Have you bought something new for your baby?" She meant to provoke Hannah to pray, but was punished for doing so in a cruel manner.

1:11. He would be a nazirite, who is forbidden to cut his hair. See Numbers 6:5.

1:18. To pray for the fulfillment of your blessing

1:20. The name combines the words *אָמַל* (request) and *אֵל* (God) (Radak).

1:21. He had vowed an offering in gratitude for Samuel's

EARLY PROPHETS

Samuel's
dedication
as a servant
of God

²⁴ She brought him up with her when she weaned him, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a flask of wine; she brought him to the house of HASHEM in Shiloh, though the child was still tender. ²⁵ They slaughtered the bull, and brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ She said, "Please, my lord! By your life, my lord, I am the woman who was standing by you here praying to HASHEM. ²⁷ This is the child that I prayed for; HASHEM granted me my request that I asked of Him. ²⁸ Furthermore, I have dedicated him to HASHEM — all the days that he lives he is dedicated to HASHEM." He* then prostrated himself to HASHEM.

2

HANNAH'S
SONG OF
PRAYER
2:1-10

¹ Then Hannah prayed and said: *
My heart exults in HASHEM, my pride has been raised through HASHEM;
my mouth is opened wide against my antagonists,
for I rejoice in Your salvation.

² There is none as holy as HASHEM, for there is none besides You,
and there is no Rock like our God.

³ Do not abound in speaking with arrogance upon arrogance,
let not haughtiness come from your mouth;

⁴ For HASHEM is the God of thoughts, and [men's] deeds are accounted by Him,
while the foundering are girded with strength.

⁵ The sated ones are hired out for bread,
while the hungry ones cease to be so;
while the barren woman bears seven,
while the one with many children becomes bereft. *

⁶ HASHEM brings death and gives life, He lowers to the grave and raises up.
HASHEM impoverishes and makes rich, He humbles and He elevates.

⁸ He raises the needy from the dirt, from the trash heaps He lifts the destitute,
to seat [them] with nobles and to endow them with a seat of honor —
for HASHEM's are the pillars of the earth, and upon them He set the world.

⁹ He guards the steps of his devout ones, but the wicked are stilled in
darkness; for not through strength does man prevail.

¹⁰ HASHEM — may those that contend with him be shattered,
let the heavens thunder against them.

May HASHEM judge to the ends of the earth;

may He give power to his king and raise the pride of his anointed one. *

¹¹ Elkanah then went to Ramah, to his house, while the boy served HASHEM
before Eli the Kohen. * ¹² The sons of Eli were lawless men; they did not recognize
HASHEM.

¹³ This was the practice of the Kohanim with the people: When any person
would slaughter a sacrifice the Kohen's attendant would come while the meat was
cooking, with a three-pronged fork in his hand. ¹⁴ He would thrust it into the pot
or the cauldron or the pan or the kettle, and everything the fork would bring up the
Kohen would take with it. This is what they would do with all the Israelites who
would come there, to Shiloh. ¹⁵ Even before they would burn the fat [upon the
Altar] the Kohen's attendant would come and say to the man who was bringing
the offering, "Give some meat for roasting for the Kohen; he will not take cooked
meat from you, but only raw [meat]." ¹⁶ The man would say, "Let them first burn
the fat [upon the altar] and then take for yourself whatever your soul desires." But
[the attendant] would say, "No; give it now, or else I will take it by force." *

Shortcomings
of Eli's sons

SAMUEL'S
YOUTH
2:11-3:21

The end was that Hannah would bear many children,
while most of Peninah's would die.

2:10. Her prayer was prophetic. May God crush Sa-
muel's Philistine enemies, and bless Saul and David, the
two kings he would anoint.

2:11. Samuel served Eli, yet the verse states that he
"served HASHEM"; this teaches that serving righteous
scholars is tantamount to serving God Himself (Rashi).

2:12-16. These lawless priests intimidated the people
into giving them larger portions than those apportioned
to them by the Torah.

2:5. Hannah alluded to Pennah's arrogant taunts (1:6)

1:28. Either Elkanah or Samuel prostrated himself in
assent to Hannah's decision.

2:1-10. Hannah's lyrical expression of gratitude is re-
garded by the Sages as one of history's great prophetic
songs. Its theme is the acknowledgment that triumph
and defeat, wealth and poverty, grandeur and degrada-
tion are not permanent conditions. God apportions them
according to what people deserve or need, therefore,
good deeds and prayer can cause changes in the human
condition.

2:5. Hannah alluded to Pennah's arrogant taunts (1:6)

נביאים ראשונים

כד ותעלהו עמה כאשר גמלתו בפרים שלשה ואיפה אחת קמח ונגל

כה יין וחבאוו בית יהודה שלו והנער נער: וישתטו את הפך היבואו

כו את הנער אל-עלי: ותאמר כי אדני חי נפשו אדני אני האשה

כו הנצבת עמכה כזה להחפץ אל-יהודה: אל-הנער הזה התפללתי

כח ויתן יהודה לי את-שאלתי אשר שאלתי מעמו: וגם אנכי השאלתיו

ליהודה כל-הנמים אשר היה הוא שאול ליהודה וישתחו שם

א ליהודה: ותתפלל חנה ותאמר עלץ לבי ביהודה

ב רמה קרני ביהודה רחב פי על-אויבי כי שמחתי בישועתך: אין קדוש

ג ביהודה כי-אין בלתיך ואין צור כאלהינו: אל-תרבו תדברו גבורה

ד גבורה יצא עתק מפיכם כי אל רעות יהודה ולא [ולו] ג נחבנו עללות:

ה קשת גברים חתים ונכשלים אורו חול: שבעים בלחם נשפור ורעבים

ו חדלו ער-עקרה ילדה שבעה ורבת פנים אמללך: יהודה ממית

ז ומחיה מוריד שאול יעל: יהודה מוריש ומעשיר משפיל אף-מרוקם:

ח מקים מעפר לל מאשפת ירים אביון להושיב עס-גריבים וכסא

ט כבוד ינחלם כי ליהודה מצאן ארץ וישת עליהם תבל: רגלי חסידו

י [וחסידיו] ישמר ורשעים בחשך ידמו כי-לא בכח יגבר-איש: יהודה

יחזו מריבו [ומריבו] עלו [ועליו] ב'שמים ירעם יהודה ידון

אפסי-ארץ ויתן-עז למלכו ויהם קרו משיחו:

יא הילך אלמנה הרממה על-ביתו והנער היה משורת את-יהודה את-פני

יב-י על הבתן: ובני עלי בני בלעל לא ידעו את-יהודה: ומשפט הבתנים

יג את-העם כל-איש ובה ובה ובה נער הבתן כבשל הבשר והמולג

יד שלש-השנים בידו: והכה בכור או בדר או בקלחת או בפרור

טו כל אשר יעלה המולג יקח הבתן בו ככה יעשו לכל-ישראל הבאים

טו שם בשלה: גם בטרם יקטרו את-החלב ובה נער הבתן ואמר לאיש

הובח תנה כשר לעלות לבתן ולא יקח ממך בשר מבשל כי אס-תי:

טו ויאמר אליו האיש קטר יקטירו ביום החלב וקח לך כאשר תאוו:

נפשו ואמר לו [לא] כי. כי עתה תתן ואם-לא לקחתי כחוקי:

BEREISHIT ① בראשית (10:1)

.. ותרא רחל כי לא ילדה ליעקב ותקנא
רחל באחיה ותאמר אל יעקב הבה לי בנים ואם אין מתה אנכי
ב ויחר אף יעקב ברחל ויאמר התחת אלהים אנכי אשר מנע ממך
ב פרי בטן: ותאמר הנה אמת בלתי בא אליה ותלד על ברכי ואבנה
ב גם אנכי ממנה: ותתן לו את בלתי שפחה לאשה ויבא אליה

¹ Rachel saw that she had not borne children to Jacob, so Rachel became envious of her sister; she said to Jacob, "Give me children — otherwise I am dead."*

² Jacob's anger flared up at Rachel, and he said, "Am I instead of God Who has withheld from you fruit of the womb?"

MALBIM ② מלבים (11:1)

. (ח) ויאמר לה, ספר שפעס אחד ראה חלקה לנחמה, ויען ראה ממנה שלש
בנים, [ח] שבעה, לכן אמר למה חבכי, [ב] ולא חבלי, לז"ל ולמה לא תאכלי, [ג] גם כעת
לזה אמר ולמה ירע לבבך, אמר אליה הלא סבת בעדס כזה הוא מלך החסלות הממנה ש"ה שחקי
לנים ולא בלתי חקוד לכן חזרי נעוד, מה נכך, הלא גם שם חסידי מלוד (כי גם הוא כקר טל)

זו מזה) הלא אנכי טוב לך מעשרה בנים. כי
האשה אינה מעוה על פניה ורביה ולי דנעית חוטר
לידה ומלך לקבוצה הלא אנכי טוב לעזר ולמנון :

PSIKTA RABBASI ③ פסיקתא רבתי (פ' נז)

דבר אחר כי פקד ה' את חנה מה כתב למעלה מן העניין וכעסותה צרתה גם כעס (שמואל א' ו') שהיתה
פנינה מכעס [את] חנה כעס בתוך כעס, ומה היתה עושה, אמר רבי נחמן בר אבא היתה פנינה משכמת
ואומרת לחנה אין את עומדת ומרחצת פניהם של בנייך כדי שילכו לפני הספר, ובשש שעות היתה
אומרת אין את עומדת ומקבלת את בנייך שבאו מבית הספר, זה וכעסותה צרתה גם כעס, אמר רבי
תנחומא בר אבא היו יושבים לאכול והיה אלקנה נותן לכל אחד ואחד מן בניו חלקו, מה היתה פנינה
עושה, מתכוונת להכעיס את חנה היתה אומרת לאלקנה תן לזה בני חלקו ולזה בני לא נתתה חלקו, למה,
בעבור הרעימה (שם שמואל א' א'). (לטובה) דבר אחר בעבור הרעימה [על האלהים לטובתה], אמר
(להם) [לה] הקדוש ברוך הוא את מתרעמת אותה עלייך שאין רעמים שאין אחריהם מטר (ממך) [מיד]
אני (פוקדת) [פוקדה] כי פקד ה' את חנה ותהר ותלד שלשה בנים ושתי בנות

☐ Her rival vexed her (I Samuel 1:6). Peninah would rise early and say to Hannah, "Aren't you going to get up and wash your children's faces so they can go to school?" And at midday [Peninah] would say, "Aren't you preparing to welcome your children home from school?" When they sat down to eat, [Peninah] would say to Elkanah, "Give this son of mine his portion . . . You did not give that son of mine his portion" (Pesikta Rabbasi end of ch. 43).

BAVA BASRA ④ בבא ברא (56)

The intentions of the Satan and Peninah were for the sake of – R' Levi said: – אמר רבי לוי

Heaven. – שטן כיון דחזי להקדוש ברוך הוא – When the Satan saw that the Holy One, Blessed is He, – דנטיה דעתיה בתי איוב –
אמר חס ושלום מינשי ליה לרחמנותיה דאברהם – was partial to Job, – אמר חס ושלום מינשי ליה לרחמנותיה דאברהם – he said to himself, "God forbid that He will forget^[15] the
mercy of Abraham."^[16] Therefore, he set out to demonstrate Job's failings. – פנינה דכתיב – Peninah too had honorable
motives, as it is written: – ובכעסיה צרתה גם כעס בעבור הרעימה – And [Chanah's] co-wife [Peninah] angered her repeatedly, to
make her fret [about her childlessness].^[17] It was Peninah's intent

RASHI (5) ר"י (1142)

כמו שמר את הדבר (בראשית לו). לא תשמור על חטאתי
(איוכי'ד): (יג) ויחשבה ע"י לשכורה. שלא היו רגילין
להתפלל בלחש: (טו) לא אדוני. לא אדון אלה בדבר הזה
גלית בשלמך שאין רוח הקודש שורה עליך שתדע שאני שכורה
יין: (טז) אל תתן את אמתך. כלפי שמרנו דבר קשה

MAHARSHA (6) מהרש"א (דרכי מלך):

מכאן שאסור להתפלל כו'. שראה בחפלה שהיו שפחיה
נעוץ ומה שחשבה לשכורה פירש"י שם שלא היו רגילין להתפלל בלחש עכ"ל ואין נראה כן מחוץ הסוגיא
דקאמר מכאן שאסור להגביה קולו וכי היו רגילים לעשות שלא כדין ולמה חשבה לשכורה כיון שכדין
עשה אלא די"ל שחשבה לשכורה משום דהרבחה להתפלל וכמ"ש לה עד מחי חשכרין וגו' וכ"ה במדרש
ע"י שהרבחה בחפלה קלרה ימיו של שמואל שנאמר וישב שם עד עולם כו' וע"ז השיבה קשת רוח אנכי
ובעי אפשי ברחמים כדאמר' בר"פ דהות מרירה לבה טובא וק"ל :

MIDRASH (7) מדרש שו"ת טור

טעמה כי-טוב סחרה לא-יכבה בלילה נרה:
... זו חנה שטעמה טעם תפלה לפיכך זכתה ויצא ממנה בן שהיה זווג למשה
ואהרן שהיו מאירין לישראל דורות הללו כדכתיב (תהלים לו) משה ואהרן
בכהניו ושמואל בקוראי שמו קוראים אל יי והוא יענם.

HA' CHAIM NEFESH (8) נפש החיים (16)

ומדרגת חנה היתה, ששפכה בתפלתה לפניו ית"ש "כל
נפשה", לכן אמרה "ואשפך את נפשי" כו', ושפכה פרושו לגמרי,
כידוע בש"כ. (והינו שלא נשאר לה שום רצון לעניני עולם הזה,
כי נפש פרושו רצון, כמ"ש (שמואל א' כ') "מה תאמר נפשך
ואעשה לך", ורצון הכללי קשור בכלל הנפש):

והנה, כל הנ"ל בענין התפלה, שעקרה שפיכת הנפש לדבקה
לו יתברך בכל תבה, הינו, שפיכת 'כלל' הנפש לו יתברך, בלא
פונה והבחנה בבחינת 'הפרטים' הכלולים בנפש.

אמנם יש מדרגה יותר גבוהה בזה, והוא לכוון בבחינת הפרטים
(י) הכלולים בנפש. אלא שצריך חנוך להרגיל עצמו ממדרגה
למדרגה. שאחר שקבר הרגל בתפלתו איזה זמן בענין שפיכת
והתדבקות כלל הנפש, אחר זה יעתיק עצמו לכוון בבחינת הפרטים
שנפשו כלולה מהם:

MEGILLA (9) מגילה (13)

The Gemara stated previously that seven prophetesses prophe-
sied to Israel. The Gemara now enumerates them:
Who were these seven prophetesses?
Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Avigail, Chuldah and Esther.

RAOAK (10) כִּסְוָה (כ: 3)

סעטיו אפרודוסה שזה הוא ח"ש יקס'ה' את דברו: (כד) בפרים שלשה, מהם לאכול ומהם לזבח לה' וכן ואיפה אח' קבח לאכול ולהקריב ממנה מנחה וכן ונבל יין לשותות ולהסיד מסנו לפיכך אמר וישחשו את הפר ולא אמר הפרים ר"ל הפר שהקריבו לה': והנער נער. כלומר עורנו נער קסן ורך ואעפ"י כן לא המתינה לו עד שיתחזק אלא כיון שנמלתו כלו' שהשלימה לו יניקתו לקוף כ"ד חרשים שגולד מיד העלתה עמה בית ח' וי"ת ורביה תה' יניק ואין ר"ל שחיה יונק עדיין שהרי אומר כאשר נסתה ששלמח יניקתו אלא יניק ר"ל נער קסן כי כן לשון ארמי קוראין לנער יניק כמו שמצאנו בדברי רז"ל יניק וחכים סר ינוקא ופר קשישא, וי"ם והנער נער חריף ידוע בין טוב לרע כמו הסנער שמנער את הפסולת מן הפשתן

ר' (11) נכר נאליהו (30)

תפלת חנה

וכעין זה מצאנו בחנה, שהיתה עקרה בטבע, היינו שלא היה בחלקה כלל גילוי על ידי בנים; להיפך, חלקה היה לקבל באהבה את הצער הגדול של חוסר בנים ושל "וכעסתה צרתה גם כעס בעבור הרעימה". והנה חנה חיתה בסוף תקופת השופטים; ועיין רד"ק (שופטים יח. ל) שכתב שבעת ההיא קרו שני המעשים הנוראים פסל מיכה ופילגש בגבעה, ולא היתה עוד אפשרות להמשיך בתקופת שפוט השופטים, כי ירדה אל שפל המדרגה במלחמת השבטים עם בנימין שכמעט כלה שבט ישראל, והיה ברור שכל סדרי הגילויים היו עומדים להשתנות.

בעת ההיא עמדה חנה והתפללה על בן, ואמרו ז"ל "חנה הטיחה דברים כלפי מעלה שנאמר ותתפלל חנה על ה'" (ברכות לא:), פירוש, שדיברה כביכול דברים קשים במר נפשה; עיין מהרש"א דהיינו שאמרה "רבוננו של עולם, אם ראה, מוטב, ואם לאו, תראה וכו'" (שם למעלה), או "דדים הללו שנתת על לבי למה? וכו'" (שם). ונראה עוד לומר שהכוונה למה שאמרה "רבוננו של עולם, מכל צבאי צבאות שבראת בעולמך קשה בעיניך שתתן לי בן אחד... משל... למלך... שעשה סעודה... בא עני אחד... ולא השגיחו עליו, דחק ונכנס אצל המלך, אמר לו, אדוני המלך, מכל סעודה שעשית קשה בעיניך ליתן לי פרוסה אחת?" (שם למעלה).

וכבר ביארנו (כרך ב, עמ' 184) שגדר "דיבור קשות" של הצדיק בתפלתו היינו שאינו יכול לסבול את ההסתר. ולולא שהצדיק טהור לגמרי מכל פנייה עצמית ומצטער על צער השכינה לבד, הרי דבר זה מסוכן מאד, כמובן; וכן מצאנו בגמרא (תענית כה). שאדם גדול אחד הטיח דברים כלפי מעלה ונענש, היינו לוי, תלמידו של רבנו הקדוש, שהתפלל על הגשמים ולא נענה, אמר לפניו: "רבוננו של עולם, עלית וישבת במרום ואין אתה מרחם על בניך", ונענה, אבל נענש אחר כך. והנה חנה הצדקת לא התפללה על עצמה אלא על צער השכינה ותיקון הדור; והיינו מה שאמרה "ונתתיו לה' כל ימי חייו" (ש"א א, יא), שהתכוונה שכל עניינו של הבן יהיה אך ורק רוחניות הדור ותיקונו. וזאת רואים אנו גם מדברי נבואתה (שם ב, א-י).

שמדברת על ענייני כלל ישראל ותיקון הדורות ותחיית המתים, ומסיימת "ויתן עוז למלכו וירם קרן משיחו". והיינו שהיא דיבקה את עצמה בתפלתה למקום קביעת המזל, בשאפה לתקן מה שהחסירו אחרים בחלקם. וכיון שסדרי הגילויים היו עומדים להתחלף היא התפללה שתוכה בחלק זה העומד להתחדש. ותפלתה נענתה, כי בעת כזאת מועילה תפלה גם לשינוי מול עליון כמו שביארנו לעיל.

ב+ ותתפלל חנה, מכאן אנו למדין שנשים חייבות בתפלה שכן חנה היתה מתפללת י"ח ברכות רמה קרני בה' - מגן אברהם. ה' ממית ומחיה - מחיה המתים. אין קדוש כה' - האל הקדוש. כי אל דעות ה' - אתה חונן. ונכשלים (בעונם) אזורי חיל - הרוצה בתשובה, מוריד שאול ויעל - המרבה לסלוח. שמחתי בישועתך - גואל ישראל. מקימי מעפר דל - רופא חולים. שבעים בלחם - מברך השנים. רגלי חסידיו ישמור - מקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל. ה' ידיו אפסי ארץ - אוהב צדקה ומשפט. ורשעים בחשך ידמו - מכניע זדים. ויתן עוז למלכו - בונה ירושלים. וירם קרן משיחו - את צמח דוד. ואין צור כאלהינו - שומע תפלה. אל תרבו תדברו גבוהה - שאותך לבדך ביראה [נעבוד]. יצא עתק מפיכם - הטוב שמך ולך נאה להודות. ויתן עוז למלכו - עושה השלום. הרי שמונה עשרה ברכות שהתפללה:

BERACHOT (13) ברכות (ל"א:)

The Gemara now proceeds to selectively analyze the verses that describe Hannah's prayer and the resulting conversation with Eli HaKohen, a phrase of which was quoted above, for their halachic implications:

- (A) Rav Hamnuna said: כמה הלכתא גברותא - איכא למשמע מהני קראי דחנה - How many important laws can be learned from these verses relating to Hannah!^[41]
 Now Hannah, she was speaking from here we learn that one who prays must direct his heart towards God.
 Only her lips moved - from here we derive that one who prays must pronounce the words with his lips.^[42]
 but her voice was not heard - from here we derive that it is forbidden to raise one's voice during his prayers.^[43]
 so Eli thought her a drunkard - from here we derive that a drunkard is not permitted to pray.^[44]

The Gemara continues with interpretations of the passage regarding Hannah by other Amoraim, some of which are halachic in nature while others are aggadic:

- (D) And Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? etc." - R' Elazar said: From here we learn that one who observes in his friend

something improper, is obligated to reprove him.^[41]

Hannah responds to Eli's accusation:

And Hannah answered and said, "No, my master." - Ulla said, and some say it was R' Yose the son of R' Chanina: She said to him: "You are not a master in this matter" - and the Divine Spirit does not rest upon you - that you suspect me of this thing (i.e. of praying while intoxicated).^[42]

A second version of Hannah's response:

There are those who say that thus she said to him: "Are you not a master?" - Is not the Shechinah and the Divine Spirit with you - that you judged me unfavorably and did not judge me favorably? - Did you not know that I am a woman of aggrieved spirit?^[43]

R' Elazar continues his exposition of the verses:

and I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink." - R' Elazar said: מכאן לנחשד - בדבר שאין בו שצריך להודיע

innocent that he should inform [his accuser] of this fact, in order to clear himself.^[44]

"Take not your maid-servant to be a base woman [bas bliyaal]." - R' Elazar said: מכאן לשכור שמתפלל כאלו עובד עבודה זרה - From here we learn concerning a drunkard who prays that it is as if he worships idols. לפני כת-בליעל" - and it is written here: to be a "bas bliyaal" - and it is written elsewhere: "Lawless men (bnei bliyaal) have emerged from your midst saying, 'Let us go and worship the gods of others.'"^[45] מה להלן עבודה זרה אף - Just as there (in the latter verse) the expression bnei bliyaal is an indication of idol worship, so here (in the earlier verse) there is an indication of idol worship.^[46]

Eli accepts Hannah's explanation:

And Eli answered and said, "Go in peace." - R' Elazar said: מכאן לחושד את - From here we learn that one who suspects his friend of something he has not committed is required to placate him.^[47] - And not only that, but he must bless him, אלא שצריך לברכו - שגאמר - for it is stated that Eli concluded: "and may the God of Israel grant your request."

Ⓜ – And she made a vow and said, “Hashem, Master of Legions.” – R' Elazar said: From the day that the Holy One, Blessed is He, created His universe, לא היה אדם שקרא להקדוש ברוך הוא שבאותו חנה וקראתו צבאות – there was no man who called the Holy One, Blessed is He, “Master of Legions,” until Hannah arrived and called Him “Master of Legions.”^[9] What did she intend with this form of address? Hannah said before the Holy One, Blessed is He: “Master of the Universe! – רבונו של עולם – From all the legions upon legions of creatures that You have created in Your universe, is it difficult in Your eyes to grant me one son?”

The Gemara comments:

By way of an analogy, to what is the matter comparable? – למלך בשר ודם שעשה סעודה לעבדיו – To a king of flesh and blood who made a feast for his servants. A poor person came and stood by the door. – בא עני אחר ועמד על הפתח – He said to them: “תנו לי פרוסה אחת” – He said to them: “Give me one piece of bread.” – ולא השגיחו עליו – He pushed his way in and entered until he was in the proximity of the king. – אמר לו – He said [to the king]: “My lord, the king! Out of the entire feast that you have made, is it difficult in your eyes to give me one piece of bread?”

Hannah's prayer continues:

Ⓜ – If You take note [ra'oh sir'eh] of the suffering of Your maidservant. Why the repetitive phrase ra'oh sir'eh?^[10] – אמר רבי אלעזר – Said R' Elazar: Hannah said before the Holy One, Blessed is He: “Master of the Universe! – רבונו של עולם – If You take note [ra'oh] of my suffering and grant me a child, fine. – ואם לאו תראה – But if not, then You will take note [tir'eh], i.e. I will take steps to force that outcome. – אלך ואסתתר – I will go and seclude myself with another man, in front of my husband Elkanah, provoking him into suspecting me of infidelity and warning me against secluding myself with that man again.”^[11]

– And when I again seclude myself with him in the presence of two witnesses, they will give me to drink the water of the sotah. – ואי אתה עושה תורתך פלסתר – And surely You will not belie Your Torah, שנאמר – for in the Torah it is stated with regard to an innocent woman who drinks the waters of the sotah: “ונתתה ונורעה נרע” – then she shall be proven innocent and she shall bear seed.^[12]

The Gemara challenges this interpretation:

It is well according to the one who says that the verse regarding an innocent woman means that if she was barren, she will be remembered and will bear a child, for then, fine, the interpretation of Hannah's reiteration stands. – היתה אם היתה – However according to the one who says that the verse means that if she was accustomed to give birth with difficulty, she will give birth with ease; נקבות – if she was wont to give birth to females, she will bear males; – שחורים יולדת לבנים – if swarthy ones, she will bear fair ones; – קצרים יולדת ארוכים – if short ones, she will bear tall ones; – מאי איבא למימר – what is there to say? How are we to interpret Hannah's repetitive phrasing?^[13]

The Gemara cites the controversy just alluded to:

– For it was taught in a Baraisa: “ונתתה ונורעה נרע” – THEN SHE SHALL BE PROVEN INNOCENT AND SHE SHALL BEAR SEED – THIS TEACHES THAT IF SHE WAS BARREN, SHE WILL BE REMEMBERED and will bear a child; – these are THE WORDS OF R' YISHMAEL. – אמר – R' AKIVA SAID TO HIM: – אם כן – IF SO, i.e. if there is truly a commitment in the Torah that such women will bear children, then – וכלו כל העקריות כולן ויסתתרו – ALL BARREN WOMEN WILL GO AND SECLUDE THEMSELVES in a manner that will enable them to drink of the sotah waters, – AND THE ONE WHO DID NOT SIN WILL BE REMEMBERED and bear a child!^[14] – אלא מלמד שאם היתה יולדת בצער יולדת ברינה – RATHER, [THE VERSE] TEACHES THAT IF SHE WAS ACCUSTOMED TO GIVE BIRTH WITH DIFFICULTY, SHE WILL GIVE BIRTH WITH EASE; – if she was wont to bear SHORT children, SHE WILL BEAR TALL ONES; – שחורים יולדת לבנים – if SWARTHY ONES, SHE WILL BEAR FAIR ONES; – אחר יולדת שנים – if ONE child at a time, SHE WILL BEAR TWO.^[15] – ? –

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9. While God is referred to in Scripture as Master of Legions numerous times, and, in fact, the appellation is utilized earlier in this very same chapter (see *I Samuel* 1:3), nevertheless Hannah was the first person to employ this term (*Radak* ad loc.; *Maharsha*).

10. Instead of simply stating תראה, Scripture uses repetitive language, אם תראה תראה.

11. *Maharsha*.

12. *Numbers* 5:28. The sotah and her ordeal are described in *Numbers* 5:11-31. Briefly, a sotah is a wife whose husband has warned her against secluding herself with a particular man. If she subsequently does seclude herself with that man in the presence of two witnesses, but there is no proof of either guilt or innocence, the Torah provides a miraculous process, involving the drinking of the bitter waters, that will either prove that she sinned and cause her death, or show conclusively that she was faithful and thereby restore trust and love to the marriage. In the latter instance the Torah declares: then she shall be proven innocent and she shall bear seed (v. 28), which, in its simple meaning, promises that she will give birth to a child. Hannah threatened to act as a sotah, without actually cohabiting with the man with whom she would seclude herself, thereby “compelling” God, as it were, to cause her to bear seed so as not

seclude herself with another man, an act which is Biblically forbidden for a married woman. Also, how could she have been willing to cause the sublime Name of God to be erased for no reason (the bitter waters contain ink erased from a parchment on which the Name of God is written)?

Pnei Yehoshua therefore concludes that Hannah was merely employing a rhetorical device. She said, in effect: If You grant me my prayer as a gift, fine. If not, then I will mount a compelling argument. I will say: Were I, in truth, a licentious woman, it would be possible for me to “compel” You to grant me a child by secluding myself with a man and drinking the bitter waters. Because I am a modest woman, should I lose out?

13. [R' Elazar's interpretation rests upon the assumption that an innocent, barren woman will be rendered fertile by the bitter waters. According to those who reject that interpretation of the verse and she shall bear seed, taking it to mean merely that the process and the progeny will be qualitatively improved for fertile women, how are we to explain the repetitive phrase ra'oh sir'eh?]

14. It is inconceivable that the Torah would set up a situation in which a licentious woman would be rewarded for her licentiousness while a modest woman, who refused to seclude herself with a strange man, would receive no reward (see alternate reading of our Baraisa in *Sotah* 26a).
15. *M. Sotah* 27a says that R' Akiva could be confronted

Having established that not all agree that the drinking of the *sotah* waters by an innocent woman will result in her bearing children, the Gemara returns to its question:

“מאי, ..אם-כִּי תִרְאֶה תִּרְאֶה” – What accounts for the repetitive language, *im ra'oh si'reh*, according to R' Akiva?

The Gemara responds:

– The Torah spoke according to the language of men.^[16]

The Gemara continues with its interpretation of the verse:

“..בְּעֵינֵי אִמְתְּךָ” (אל) לא-תשכח את-אִמְתְּךָ” ..וְנִתְּתָה לְאִמְתְּךָ” – *Of the suffering of Your “maidservant,” do not forget Your “maidservant,” and give Your “maidservant.”* אמר רבי יוסי – Said R' Yose the son of R' Chanina: שלש אִמְתוֹת – Why this threefold repetition of the term “maidservant”? Hannah said before the Holy One, Blessed is He: – רבונו של עולם – Master of the Universe! – שלשה בדקי מיתה בראת באשה – Three ‘inspectors’ of death have You created in regard to a woman,^[17] – ואמרי לה – and as others say it, – שלשה דבקי מיתה – three ‘bonds’ of death,^[18] – ואלו הן נדה וחלה והרלקת הנגר – and these are they: *niddah*,^[19] *challah*^[20] and the kindling of the Sabbath light.^[21] – Have I ever violated one of them?^[22]

The Gemara continues its examination of the verse:

“..וְנִתְּתָה לְאִמְתְּךָ זָרַע אֲנָשִׁים” – *And give Your maidservant male offspring.* – מאי, ..זָרַע אֲנָשִׁים” – What is meant by the phrase “male offspring”?^[23]

Several interpretations are offered:

– Rav said: – גִּבְרָא בְּגוּבְרִין – A man among men.^[24]

Another interpretation:

– זָרַע שְׁמוּשָׁה שְׁנֵי אֲנָשִׁים – And Samuel said: – *And Samuel said: And offspring who anoints two men as kings.* – ומאן אינון – And who are they? – שאול ודוד – Saul and David.^[25]

A third interpretation:

– זָרַע שְׁשִׁקוּל כְּשְׁנֵי אֲנָשִׁים – And R' Yochanan said: – *And R' Yochanan said: And offspring who is the equal of two men.* – ומאן אינון – And who are they? – משה ואהרן – Moses and Aaron. – שנאמר – As it is stated: – “..משה ואהרן בכהניו ושמואל בקראי שמו” – *Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among those who invoke His Name.*^[26]

A fourth interpretation:

– זָרַע אֲנָשִׁים” – *Male offspring* means: – זָרַע שְׁמוּבֵלַע בֵּין אֲנָשִׁים – offspring that is “absorbed,” i.e. inconspicuous, among people.

The Gemara elaborates on this last interpretation:

– When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael, he said in explanation: – לא ארוך ולא גוץ – Neither tall nor short; – ולא קטן ולא אלם – neither thin nor stocky; – ולא צהור – neither pallid nor ruddy,^[27] – ולא חכם ולא טפש – neither brilliant nor foolish.^[28]

Hannah's prayer and Eli's blessings were fulfilled. Hannah returned home and gave birth to Samuel. The Gemara's exegesis resumes at the point that the Scriptural text relates Hannah's interchange with Eli upon her return to the Tabernacle in Shiloh.^[29] – *I am the woman who stood with you here praying to Hashem.* – אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי – R' Yehoshua ben Levi said: – מכאן שאסור לישב בתוך ארבע אמות – From here we derive that it is prohibited to sit

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women, however, in their desperation to have children, might go to any lengths.

16. The repetition does not indicate anything special: The verse merely expresses itself in the common idiom of people, which employs such repetitive phrases.

17. I.e. sins for which a woman is “inspected” at times of danger to determine if she is deserving of death.

18. According to this version she called these three sins “bonds of death,” i.e. factors that can cause premature death to “bond” itself to a woman (*Rashi* to *Shabbos* 32a ר"ה רבקי). [See the Gemara there for the practical difference between these two versions.]

The term for *your maidservant*, אִמְתְּךָ, is homiletically interpreted to be equivalent to *death* (*Rashi*). The threefold repetition, therefore, suggests three causes of death.

[*Maharsha*, however, proposes that the homily is derived from the simple meaning of the text. Why is the term *maidservant* repeated three times? It is to suggest that with regard to the three mitzvos that are special to women, I am your loyal maidservant. I carefully observed them and should not be punished.]

19. A woman will be at risk if she fails to adhere to the laws of *niddah* during the menstrual period (see *Yoreh Deah* 183-201.)

20. The Torah (*Numbers* 15:17-21) commands that from every batch of dough, a portion – commonly known as *challah* – be removed and given to the Kohen. [The many laws governing the separation of *challah* are set forth in *Yoreh Deah* 322-330.]

21. These three mitzvos bear a special connection to women. Women are entrusted to properly observe the *niddah* laws, and since they generally have charge over domestic affairs, the taking of *challah* and the kindling of Sabbath lights fall in their domain as well (*Rashi* to *Shabbos* 32a ר"ה ריני, *Ritva MHK* ed. there).

22. Hannah argued as follows: Perhaps I have been denied children for my own benefit. After all, childbirth places a woman at mortal risk. But

ment meted out for the violation of these three commandments (*Rashi*).

23. Why the unusual terminology זָרַע אֲנָשִׁים [which literally means *seed of men*]? If Hannah's intent was to request male, rather than female, children, she should have used the more common form, זָכָרִים [males] (*Maharsha*).

24. A man who is unique among his fellows (*Tosafos*), i.e. an outstanding man.

25. Her words thus constituted a prophecy [for indeed Samuel ultimately anointed Saul (*I Samuel* 10:1) and David (*I Samuel* 16:13)].

26. *Psalms* 99:6. The verse concludes: *they called to Hashem and He answered them*. Thus we learn that Samuel was the equal of Moses and Aaron in that his prayers were as effective as theirs (*Maharsha*).

27. [Translation follows *Rashi*, as amended by marginal note in the *Vilna Shas*.]

28. Hannah wished that her son not be a genius so as not to engender astonishment in his contemporaries. If he would be the constant object of the conversation, he would be the subject of an evil eye (*Rashi*). (See Schottenstein edition of *Bava Metzta*, 84a note 16, for two opinions as to the mechanism through which the “evil eye” operates.)

[This request that Samuel be of average ability was apparently granted, for Hannah later declared (v. 27): *For this child did I pray; Hashem granted my request that I asked of Him*. Yet this child of average capability grew up to become Samuel the Prophet! This proves that there is no limit to the potential for accomplishment of any person. Even a man of only average endowment can rise to the greatest of heights (*R' Chaim Shmulevitz, Sichos Mussar*, 5731 §18; see there 5731 §27 for a different interpretation, cf. *Hagahos Yavetz*).]

29. The relevant passage, which recounts how Hannah brought the young Samuel to the Tabernacle together with an offering, reads (vs. 24-27): וַתְּבִיאָהּ בֵּית־ה' שָׁלוֹם... וַתִּשְׁחַט אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן וַתִּבְרָא אֶת־הַנֶּזֶךְ אֶל־עֲלֵי נְחֹמָם בֶּן־אֲדָנִי חֵי וַתִּשְׁחַט אֲדָנִי אֶת־הַנֶּזֶךְ עִמָּהּ כִּדְבַר ה' הַחֲפִלֵּל אֶת־ה' לֵאמֹר וַתִּבְרָא אֶת־הַנֶּזֶךְ אֶל־עֲלֵי נְחֹמָם בֶּן־אֲדָנִי חֵי וַתִּשְׁחַט אֲדָנִי אֶת־הַנֶּזֶךְ עִמָּהּ כִּדְבַר ה' הַחֲפִלֵּל אֶת־ה' לֵאמֹר and she brought him to the house of

within four *amos* of one who is engaged in prayer.^[30]

Hannah continued:

“אל-הנער הזה התפללתי” – *For this child did I pray*. What did Hannah mean by emphasizing “this” child? – אמר רבי אלעזר – Samuel was Said R' Elazar: שמואל מורה הלכה לפני רבו היה – guilty of having rendered a legal decision in the presence of his teacher, שגאמר – for it states: “וַיִּשְׁחָטוּ אֶת-הַפָּר וַיָּבִיאוּ אֹתוֹ” – *And they slaughtered the bull and brought the child to Eli*. Now the question arises: “Because they slaughtered the bull, they brought the child to Eli? Wherein lies the connection?” – אלא – Eli said to them: “Summon a Kohen and let him come and slaughter the sacrifice.” – מהדרי בתר כהן למישחט – Samuel saw them going about after a Kohen to perform the slaughter. – אמר להו – He said to them: “Why do you go about after a Kohen to slaughter? – שחיטה כזו כשרה – Slaughter of a sacrificial animal by a non-Kohen is valid!” – אמר ליה מנא לך הא – They brought [the child] before Eli.^[31] – [Eli] said to him: “From where is this matter [that a non-Kohen is valid for slaughtering] known to you?” – אמר ליה – He said to [Eli]: “Is it written ‘and the Kohen shall slaughter’?” – והקריבו... הכהנים כתיב – *And... the Kohanim shall bring near* is what is written.^[32] This implies that from the receiving of the blood and onward is a commandment of the Kehunah, i.e. is required to be carried out by Kohanim. – מכאן לשחיטה שכשרה כזו – From here we derive that the slaughter of the offering, which precedes the receiving of the blood, is valid even when performed by a non-Kohen.^[33] – אמר ליה – [Eli] said to him: מימר שפיר קא

– “You have spoken well, i.e. the law is indeed as you say. Nevertheless, you have rendered a legal decision in the presence of your teacher, and anyone who renders a legal decision in the presence of his teacher is liable to death.”^[34] Overhearing this exchange, Hannah approached and cried out before [Eli]: “אני האשה הנצבת – *I am the woman who stood with you here* etc.” Recall how fervently I prayed for a child! Forgive his sin and do not take him away from me! – אמר לה – [Eli] responded to her: “Allow me to punish him (i.e. not to pardon him, which would spare him from punishment), and I will beseech God for mercy and He will grant you [a son] who is greater than this one.” – אמרה – She said to him: “אל-הנער הזה התפללתי” – *For ‘this’ child did I pray*.^[35]

The Gemara reverts to an exposition of the verses that relate to Hannah's original prayer:

– *Now Hannah, she was speaking* אמר רבי אלעזר משום רבי יוסי בן זמרא – *upon [al] her heart*.^[36] על – R' Elazar related in the name of R' Yose ben Zimra: Hannah's plea made reference to matters that were physically upon her heart. – אמרה לפניו – She said before Him: כל מה שבקראת באשה – *Master of the Universe!* – רבונו של עולם – Of all that You created in a woman, You did not create a single thing for naught. – עינים לראות – and ears to hear; You created eyes to see, ואזנים לשמוע – פה לזכר דברים לעשות בהם מלאכה – a nose to smell, חוטם להריח – a mouth to speak, hands with which to do work, רגלים – and דרים להניק בהן – feet with which to walk, להלך בהן

NOTES

30. The phrase *who stood with you*, indicates that they both stood (*Rashu*; cf. *Tosafos* עמכה *Rosh*). The term *with you* indicates that they were within four *amos* of each other, because four *amos* is considered to be a person's “place.” Since it is forbidden to sit within four *amos* of one praying, Eli stood (*Rabbeinu Yonah*).

The reason for the prohibition is in order to demonstrate respect for the *Shechinah*, which permeates the four *amos* surrounding one engaged in prayer (*Ritva*). Alternatively, by sitting idly next to a neighbor who is engaged in acknowledging God's kingship, one gives the impression that he does not care to do the same (*Tur*, *Orach Chaim* 102). Cf. *Meiri*.

The restriction on sitting is limited to a person who is himself not engaged in prayer. If he is also praying, however (for example if he is reciting the *Shema* or its blessings), he may sit (*Tosafos* citing the *Geonim*; *Shulchan Aruch* 102:1).

31. [Thus the juxtaposition of the verse: *They slaughtered the bull*, and, as a result, *they brought the child to Eli*.]

32. *Leviticus* 1:5.

33. In describing the procedure to be followed when bringing an *olah*, the Torah states (*Leviticus* 1:5): *And he shall slaughter the bull before Hashem, and the sons of Aaron, the Kohanim, shall bring the blood near and throw the blood on the Altar*. Now there are four critical steps in the offering of an animal sacrifice: *shechitah* (slaughtering), *kabbalah* (receiving the blood in a vessel as it pours forth from the incision), *holachah* (conveying the blood to the Altar) and *zerikah* (throwing the blood on the Altar). Yet although it is generally only the Kohen who may perform the *avodah* in the Temple, the verse mentions “the sons of Aaron, the Kohanim” only after discussing the slaughtering of the animal, when speaking of the receiving of the blood and bringing it to the Altar. From this we learn that the slaughter of the animal may be

which rests on the chain of tradition stretching from its proximate teachers all the way back to Moses at Sinai. One who unilaterally renders a decision in his teacher's presence commits an unpardonable sin, for he thereby threatens the integrity of this chain (R' Chaim Shmulevitz, *Sichos Mussar* 5732.35). [See *Yad David* for a discussion of how Samuel could have violated this prohibition.]

The commentators (*Tzlach*, *Rashash*, *Meromei Sadeh*) explain that Eli was certainly aware of the ruling, in force since the time of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, that a non-Kohen is eligible for slaughter. However, it is preferred that a Kohen perform this procedure. Samuel saw, however, that they were exerting themselves overly much to locate a Kohen, to the point that the mitzvah of sacrificing the bull was being inordinately delayed. He therefore made his comment. Eli questioned Samuel not because the law was new to him, but because he wished to examine Samuel, a very young boy at the time, to see if he was aware of the import of his words, in order to know if he should be held liable for rendering a decision in front of his teacher.

The commentators also ask how Eli could be considered Samuel's teacher when they encountered each other for the first time on this occasion. *Tosafos* respond that Eli had the status of Samuel's teacher because he was the leading rabbi of his generation and Samuel had come to learn from him. See *Terumas HaDeshen* 138 and *Yad David*.

[*Ritva*, however, maintains that this entire incident took place at a much later point in time, after Samuel had grown up and was indeed a full-fledged student of Eli, for Samuel was far too young to be held accountable for his actions when Hannah brought him to Eli (he had just been weaned at that time and was approximately two years old). The Gemara is merely using these verses as a homiletic device with which to evoke the later incident (cf. *Maharsha*).]

35. I want *this* child for whom I prayed, not another that you will pray for (*Maharsha*).

breasts with which to nurse. נָדִים הָלָלוּ שְׁנֵתָּה עַל לְבִי לָמָּה – These breasts that you have placed upon my heart, what are they for? – לֹא לְהִנִּיק בָּהֶן – Are they not to nurse with? – תֵּן לִי בֶן וְאֶנִּיק בָּהֶן – Grant me a child that I may nurse with them.”

Having cited a homily by R' Elazar in the name of R' Yose ben Zimra, the Gemara quotes another, unrelated teaching by these same Amoraim:

וְאָמַר רַבִּי אֱלֶזָּר מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי יוֹסִי בֶן זִמְרָא – And R' Elazar related in the name of R' Yose ben Zimra: כָּל הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּתַעֲנִית בַּשַּׁבָּת – Whoever engages^[37] in fasting on the Sabbath, קוֹרְעִין לוֹ גֹּזֶר – they [the Heavenly tribunal] annul^[38] on his behalf a decree of even seventy years of evil.^[39] וְאִם עַל פִּי כֵן – Nevertheless, despite the meritoriousness of his deed, חוֹרְטִין – they return and exact punishment from him for the offense of neglecting to delight in the Sabbath.^[40] מַאי תַּקְנִיתָ – What is his rectification? I.e. how can he make amends for this sin? – אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן בַּר יִצְחָק – Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak said: לִיתֵּיב תַּעֲנִיתָ לַחֲעִנִּיתָ – He should observe an additional fast on the following day to atone

for his fast on the Sabbath.^[41]

The Gemara returns to its exposition of Hannah's prayer: חָנָּה הִטִּיחָה דָּבָרִים כְּלָפִי – And R' Elazar said: וְאָמַר רַבִּי אֱלֶזָּר – Hannah flung words upward toward Heaven, מַעֲלָה – as it is stated: “וַתַּחֲפֹל עַל-ה'” – and she prayed “against” [al] Hashem.^[42] – מִלְמַד שֶׁהִטִּיחָה דָּבָרִים כְּלָפִי מַעֲלָה – This teaches that she flung words upward toward Heaven, without proper respect.^[43]

The Gemara cites another who “flung words”: אֱלִיָּהוּ הִטִּיחַ דָּבָרִים כְּלָפִי – And R' Eliezer said: וְאָמַר רַבִּי אֱלֶזָּר – Elijah flung words upward toward Heaven, מַעֲלָה – as it is stated: “וַיָּאֲתָה הַסִּבָּת אֶת-לִבָּם אַחֲרֵנִית” – and You have turned their hearts backwards.^[44] You allowed them room to turn away from You. I.e. it was within Your power to direct their hearts to You.^[45]

The Gemara continues: אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר ר' יִצְחָק – R' Shmuel bar R' Yitzchak said: מִנֵּין שְׁחֹר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְהוֹדָה לוֹ לְאֱלֹהֵיוּ – From where do we derive that the Holy One, Blessed is He, returned and concurred with Elijah?^[46]

NOTES

37. Literally: sits.

38. Literally: tear up.

39. I.e. even if a decree was issued that he would suffer his entire life (an average lifetime is seventy years), it will be repealed (see *Rashi*).

Fasting on the Sabbath has a more powerful effect than fasting on the weekdays because it is so difficult for one to deprive himself while those surrounding him enjoy the Sabbath pleasures (*Rashi*). Thus, if one who sinned and wishes to return to God with his whole heart regrets his sins and fasts when others are enjoying themselves, he surely has performed complete repentance and deserves to have any evil decree pending against him revoked (*Ritva*).

Alternatively, the Gemara refers to one who fasts in response to an ominous dream he had the night before. [The Gemara in *Taanis* 12b teaches that fasting in response to a frightening dream is as effective in nullifying the dream's evil portents as fire is consuming the tow of flax] (*Tosafos* in the name of *Rabbeinu Chananel*).

Although it is generally forbidden to fast on the Sabbath, as it conflicts with the requirement of *oneg Shabbos* (taking pleasure on the Sabbath), in this case where the fast relieves the person's anxiety over his sins or quells his fear of the materialization of a foreboding dream, fasting is deemed a “pleasurable” activity (*Rashba*, *Ritva*).

40. Although fasting in repentance or after a disturbing dream is “pleasurable” in that it relieves one of his anxiety (see previous note), it is nonetheless somewhat sinful when performed on the Sabbath, due to the affliction it engenders. Therefore, an additional fast is required as an atonement (*Rashba*, *Ritva*).

41. See *Rashba* who states that while fasting the following day is preferred, it is not required. Thus if one finds it difficult to fast two days

the *Shemoneh Esrei*. Cf. *Rashba*.]

42. *I Samuel* 1:10.

43. The verse should have read ה' אל ה', “to Hashem.” אל ה' implies “against Hashem.”

The Gemara refers to the arguments that Hannah used, described above in the Gemara, such as the argument in which she invoked the use of the *sotah* waters, or her complaint that her breasts served no function (*Maharsha*).

44. *I Kings* 18:37. The majority of Jews of Elijah's time had strayed after the pagan deity Baal. As a test to prove who was the true god, Baal or God, Elijah had challenged Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, to assemble the prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel. They and he (Elijah) would each offer up a bull on an altar but would not apply fire to it. Whichever side's bull would be miraculously consumed by fire would be shown to possess the true belief.

The prophets of Baal went first. With all of Israel watching, they placed the pieces of their slaughtered bull on the altar and cried out to Baal to consume it, but, of course, there was no response. Elijah's turn came. He too placed his bull on an altar, and then stepped forward to plead with God to accept his offering. “Answer me, Hashem,” Elijah prayed, “answer me, and let this people know that You, Hashem, are the God, and it is You who have turned their hearts backward!”

45. *Rashi* to *I Kings* 18:37.

Alternatively, *Rambam* (*Hil. Teshuvah* 6:3) explains that it is possible for a man to sin so greatly that God punishes him by withholding from him the ability to repent. As an example of this, *Rambam* cites the Jewish people in the time of Elijah. Due to their many sins, they could not, as hard as they might try, find it within their hearts to repent. Thus Elijah cried. “It is You, Hashem, Who have