

ROSH HASHANAH DAY 1

משה קבל תורה מסיני, ומסרה ליהושע, ויהושע לזקנים, וזקנים לנביאים, ונביאים מסרוה לאנשי כנסת הגדולה.

Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transferred it to Joshua. Joshua [transferred it] to the elders, the elders to the prophets, and the prophets transferred it to the Men of the Great Assembly... (Avot 1:1)

Having passed from the Torah (Moses) through the Books of Joshua and Judges (“the elders”), we enter the era of the prophets with the Book of Samuel.

1 SAMUEL 1

Some of what we read at the beginning of this book is familiar. Once again, our lead character lives on Mt. Ephraim, and, once again, there are traces of a link to Bethlehem in his designation as Ephrati (v.1), a title used elsewhere to identify natives of Bethlehem (cf. Ruth 1:2). He is married to two women and in a narrative manner reminiscent of the birth of Moses (Exodus 2), the father (here—Elkanah, there—Amram) recedes far into the background, leaving the women (here—Hannah and Peninah, there—Jochebed and Miriam) to dictate the course of events.

(1) Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of the hill-country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. (2) And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. (3) And this man went up out of his city from year to year to worship and to sacrifice to Hashem of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests to Hashem, were there. (4) And it came to pass upon a day, when Elkanah sacrificed, that he gave portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and her daughters, (5) but to Hannah he gave a double portion; for he loved Hannah, but Hashem had shut up her womb.

(א) ויהי איש אחד מן הרמתים צופים מהר אפרים ושמו אלקנה בן ירחם בן אליהוא בן תחו בן צוף אפרתי. (ב) ולו שתי נשים שם אחת חנה ושם השנית פננה ויהי לפננה ילדים ולחנה אין ילדים. (ג) ועלה האיש ההוא מעירו מימים ימימה להשתחוות ולזבח ל"י צבאות בשלה ושם שני בני עלי חפני ופנחס כהנים ל"י. (ד) ויהי היום ויזבח אלקנה ונתן לפננה אשתו ולכל בניה ובנותיה מנות. (ה) ולחנה יתן מנה אחת אפים כי את חנה אהב ו"י סגר רחמה.

Of particular interest here is the nature of the relationship between Elkanah’s wives as described in verse 6: **וְכַעֲסָתָהּ צָרָתָהּ גַם כָּעַס בְּעֵבֹר הָרַעְמָה כִּי סָגַר י"י בְּעַד רַחְמָה**: “And her rival vexed her sore, to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb” (JPS 1917), which can be read in two completely different ways. According to the conventional reading, Peninah mocked Hannah’s infertility increasing her despair. This is reflected in the first half of Rashi’s commentary (ad loc): “She would say to her, ‘Did you buy your older son a cloak today, or your younger son, a shirt?’” The unconventional reading, however, reflected in the continuation of that same commentary, imputes to Peninah a nobler intent: “In order to make her complain. Our Rabbis explain (Baba Batra 16a), 'in order to make her storm' (רעם) that she pray. Penina had good intentions.”

TORAH IN MOTION—MOSHE SOKOLOW

<p>(6) And her rival provoked her severely, to make her fret, because Hashem had shut up her womb. (7) And as he did so year by year when she went up to the house of Hashem, so she provoked her; therefore she wept and would not eat. (8) And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" (9) So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon his seat by the door-post of the temple of Hashem. (10) She was in bitterness of soul, and she prayed to Hashem and wept bitterly. (11) And she vowed a vow and said, "O Hashem of Hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Your handmaid, but will give to Your handmaid a child, then I will give him to Hashem all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."</p>	<p>(ו) וְכַעֲסָתָהּ צָרָתָהּ גַם כָּעַס בְּעִבּוּר הַרְעֵמָה כִּי סָגַר יְיָ בְּעַד רַחֲמָהּ. (ז) וְכֵן יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה מִדֵּי עֲלֹתָהּ בְּבַיִת יְיָ כִּן תִּכְעַסְנָה וְתִבְכֶּה וְלֹא תֹאכַל. (ח) וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ אֱלֹקָנָה אִישָׁה חֲנָה לָמָּה תִבְכִּי וְלָמָּה לֹא תֹאכְלִי וְלָמָּה יָרַע לְבַבְךָ הַלּוֹא אֲנֹכִי טוֹב לָךְ מֵעֶשְׂרָה בָּנִים. (ט) וְתִקַּם חֲנָה אַחֲרַי אֲכַלֶּה בְּשִׁלָּה וְאַחֲרַי שְׂתֵה וְעָלִי הִכְהֵן יֹשֵׁב עַל הַכִּסֵּא עַל מְזוֹזֹת הַיֵּכָל יְיָ. (י) וְהִיא מָרַת נַפְשָׁהּ וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל עַל יְיָ וּבָכָה תִּבְכֶּה. (יא) וַתִּדְרֹךְ נֹדֶר וַתֹּאמֶר יְיָ צְבָאוֹת אִם רָאָה תִרְאֶה בְּעֵינַי אֲמַתְךָ וְזָכַרְתָּנִי וְלֹא תִשְׁכַּח אֶת אֲמַתְךָ וְנָתַתָּה לְאֲמַתְךָ זָרַע אֲנָשִׁים וְנָתַתִּיו לְיְיָ כָּל יְמֵי חַיָּיו וּמוֹרָה לֹא יֵעָלֶה עַל רֹאשׁוֹ.</p>
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So our hero, Samuel, seems to be the product of a kind of domestic tension we have seen previously. First, it matches the circumstances out of which Isaac emerged: a patriarchal father figure (Abraham), a favorite wife who is without child (Sarah), and a second wife (Hagar) whose fecundity makes a mockery of her rival's infertility. And it is also reminiscent of the situation of Jacob whose favorite, Rachel, was vexed by the fertility of her rival, Leah.

New lyrics, but an old score.

<p>(12) And it came to pass, as she prayed long before Hashem, that Eli watched her mouth. (13) Now Hannah, she spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice could not be heard. Therefore, Eli thought she was drunk. (14) And Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put away your wine from you." (15) And Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before Hashem. (16) Do not count your handmaid for a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation I have spoken until now." (17) Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him." (18) And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate; and her countenance was not sad any more. (19) And they rose up early in the morning and worshipped before Hashem, and they returned and came to their house to Ramah; and Elkanah knew Hannah, his wife, and Hashem remembered her. (20) And it came to pass, when the time was come about, that Hannah conceived and bore a son; and she called his name Samuel, "because I have asked him of Hashem."</p>	<p>(יב) וְהָיָה כִּי הִרְבֵּתָהּ לְהִתְפַּלֵּל לִפְנֵי יְיָ וְעָלִי שָׁמַר אֶת פִּיהָ. (יג) וְחֲנָה הָיָה מְדַבְּרַת עַל לִבָּהּ רַק שִׁפְתֶיהָ נִעוֹת וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע וַיַּחֲשֹׁבֶהָ עָלָי לְשִׁכְרָה. (יד) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ עָלִי עַד מָתַי תִּשְׁתַּכְּרִין הַסִּירִי אֶת יַיִנְךָ מֵעַלֶיךָ. (טו) וַתַּעַן חֲנָה וַתֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲדַנִּי אִשָּׁה קִשְׁת רִיחַ אֲנֹכִי וַיִּנֵּן וְשִׁכַר לֹא שְׁתִּיתִי וְאֲשַׁפֵּךְ אֶת נַפְשִׁי לִפְנֵי יְיָ. (טז) אֵל תָּתֵן אֶת אֲמַתְךָ לִפְנֵי בֵּת בְּלִיעֵל כִּי מְרִב שִׁיחִי וְכַעֲסִי דְבַרְתָּי עַד הַנְּהָ. (יז) וַיַּעַן עָלַי וַיֹּאמֶר לְכִי לְשִׁלּוֹם וְאֵלֶיהָ יִשְׂרָאֵל יִתֵּן אֶת שְׁלֹתְךָ אֲשֶׁר שְׁאַלְתָּ מֵעַמּוֹ. (יח) וַתֹּאמֶר תִּמְצָא שִׁפְחָתְךָ חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְתִלְךָ הָאִשָּׁה לְדֹרְכָהּ וְתֹאכַל וּפְנֵיהָ לֹא הִיוּ לָהּ עוֹד. (יט) וַיִּשְׁכַּמוּ בְּבֹקֶר וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לִפְנֵי יְיָ וַיֵּשְׁבוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל בֵּיתָם הִרְמִתָהּ וַיִּדַע אֱלֹקָנָה אֶת חֲנָה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַיִּזְכְּרָה יְיָ. (כ) וְהָיָה לְתַקְפוֹת הַיָּמִים וַתֵּהָרֵם חֲנָה וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת שְׁמוֹ שְׁמוּאֵל כִּי מִיְיָ שְׁאַלְתִּיו.</p>
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(21) And the man Elkanah and his entire house went up to offer to Hashem the yearly sacrifice and his vow. (22) But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "Not until the child is weaned, then I will bring him, that he may appear before Hashem and abide there forever." (23) And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Do what seems good to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only may Hashem establish His word." So the woman waited and nursed her son until she weaned him. (24) And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her with three bullocks and one ephah of meal and a bottle of wine, and brought him to the house of Hashem in Shiloh; and the child was young. (25) And when the bullock was slain, the child was brought to Eli. (26) And she said, "Oh, my lord, as your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman that stood by you here, praying to Hashem. (27) For this child I prayed; and Hashem has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. (28) Therefore I also have lent him to Hashem; as long as he lives he is lent to Hashem." And he worshipped Hashem there.

(כא) ויעל האיש אלקנה וכל ביתו לזבח ל'י את זבח הימים ואת נדרו. (כב) ויחנה לא עלתה כי אמרה לאישה עד יגמל הנער והבאתיו ונראה את פני 'י וישב שם עד עולם. (כג) ויאמר לה אלקנה אישה עשי הטוב בעיניך שבי עד גמלך אתו אך יקם 'י את דברו ותשב האשה ותינק את בנה עד גמלה אתו. (כד) ותעלהו עמה כאשר גמלתו בפרים שלשה ואיפה אחת קמח ונגבל יין ותבאהו בית 'י שלו והנער נער. (כה) וישחטו את הפר ויבאו את הנער אל עלי. (כו) ותאמר בי אדני חי נפשך אדני אני האשה הנצבת עמכה בזה להתפלל אל 'י. (כז) אל הנער הזה התפללתי ויתן 'י לי את שאלתי אשר שאלתי מעמו. (כח) וגם אנכי השאלתהו ל'י כל הימים אשר היה הוא שאול ל'י וישתחו שם ל'י.

1 SAMUEL 2:1-10

(1) And Hannah prayed, and said, "My heart exults in Hashem; my horn is exalted in Hashem. My mouth is enlarged over my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation. (2) There is none holy as Hashem, for there is none beside You. Neither is there any rock like our God. (3) Do not continue to speak so proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth. For Hashem is a God of knowledge, and by Him, actions are weighed. (4) The bows of the mighty men are broken; and they that stumbled are girded with strength. (5) Those that were full have hired themselves out for bread; and those that were hungry have ceased. **While the barren has born seven; she that had many children has languished.** (6) The Lord kills, and makes live; He brings down to the grave, and brings up. (7) The Lord makes poor, and makes rich; He brings low, He also lifts up. (8) He raises up the poor out of the dust. He lifts up the needy from the dung-hill, to make them sit with princes, and inherit the throne of glory. For the pillars of the earth are Hashem's, and He has set the world upon them. (9) He will guard the feet of His holy ones, but the wicked shall be put to silence in darkness. For, not by strength shall man prevail.

(א) ותתפלל חנה ותאמר עלץ לבי ב'י רמה קרני ב'י רחב פי על אויבי כי שמחתי בישועתך. (ב) אין קדוש כ'י כי אין בלתך ואין צור כאלהינו. (ג) אל תרבו תדברו גבהה גבהה יצא עתק מפיכם כי אל דעות 'י [ולו] (ולא) נתכנו עללות. (ד) קשת גברים חתים ונכשלים אזורו חיל. (ה) שבעים בלחם נשכרו ורעבים חדלו עד עקרה ילדה שבעה ורבת בנים אמללה. (ו) 'י מקיית ומחיה מוריד שאול ויעל. (ז) 'י מוריש ומעשיר משפיל אף מרומם. (ח) מקים מעפר דל מאשפת ירים אביון להושיב עם נדיבים וכסא כבוד ינחלם כי ל'י מצקי ארץ וישת עליהם תבל. (ט) רגלי חסידו ישמר ורשעים בחשך ידמו כי לא בלח יגבר איש. (י) 'י יחתו מריבו עלו בשמים ירעם 'י ידין

(10) Those that strive with Hashem shall be broken to pieces; against them He will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the

ends of the earth. He will give strength to His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed."

אֶפְסֵי אֶרֶץ וַיִּתֵּן עֹז לְמַלְכוֹ וַיְרַם קַרְן מְשִׁיחוֹ.

In the previous chapter, Hannah's request of God for a child is repeatedly called a prayer (v.10, 12, 27). Here, her thanksgiving song in celebration of his birth is identified the same way (v.1). Small wonder, then, that the Talmud (*Berakhot*, *passim*) regards Hannah's prayer as so exemplary that it becomes a paradigm for Jewish prayer, in general.

A quick perusal of that song reveals that up to the end of its final verse, its theme, fittingly, is the reversal of fortunes. Just as the childless Hannah was blessed with a son ("the barren bore seven," v.5), so can the poor anticipate riches (7-8), the pious can expect rescue from the hands of the wicked (9), and even the dead can foresee resurrection (according to an admittedly clumsy reading of v.6: "The Lord takes life and [then] grants it"). The conclusion, however, appears to be out of sorts. How does the birth of Samuel connect with "He will give strength unto His king, and exalt the strength of His anointed" (10)?

Since the Book of Samuel follows that of Judges, we already have an answer. The concluding verse of that book, "In those days there was no king in Israel" (בימים ההם אין מלך בישראל), links the final portion of Judges to the Book of Samuel. Samuel was destined to be the catalyst to redress the state of anarchy into which he was born, hence, his mother's (intuitive? prophetic?) allusion to an Israelite king (God's anointed).

תהלים קי"ג

<p>(א) הָלְלוּ יְהוָה הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְיָ הַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יְיָ. (ב) יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבָרַךְ מְעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. (ג) מִמְזֶרֶח שָׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבוֹאוֹ מְהַלֵּל שֵׁם יְיָ. (ד) רָם עַל כָּל גּוֹיִם יְיָ עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ. (ה) מִי כִי־י אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַמְגַבִּיהֵי לְשִׁבְתָּ. (ו) הַמְשַׁפִּילֵי לְרֵאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ. (ז) מַקְיָמֵי מַעְפָּר דָּל מְאֻשְׁפֵת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן. (ח) לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עִם נְדִיבִים עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ. (ט) מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֲקֶרֶת הַבַּיִת אִם הַבָּנִים שְׂמֵחָה הַלְלוּ יְהוָה.</p>	<p>(ה) שְׁבַעִים בְּלַחֵם נִשְׁכְּרוּ וּרְעֵבִים חִדְלוּ עַד עֲקָרָה יִלְדָה שְׁבַעִה וְרַבַּת בָּנִים אִמְלָלָה. (ו) יְיָ מִמִּית וּמַחִיָּה מוֹרִיד שְׁאוֹל וַיַּעַל. (ז) יְיָ מוֹרִישׁ וּמַעֲשִׂיר מְשַׁפִּיל אֶף מְרוֹמָם. (ח) מַקְיָמֵי מַעְפָּר דָּל מְאֻשְׁפֵת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן לְהוֹשִׁיב עִם נְדִיבִים וְכֹסֵא כְבוֹד יִנְחֵלֵם כִּי לִי־י מִצְּקֵי אֶרֶץ וַיִּשֶׁת עֲלֵיהֶם תִּבְּל. שמואל א פרק א: ח הלוא אנכי טוב לך מְעַשְׂרָה בָּנִים:</p>
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תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף כט עמוד א

הני תשע דראש השנה כנגד מי? אמר רבי יצחק דמן קרטיגנין: כנגד תשעה אזכרות שאמרה חנה בתפלתה, דאמר מר: בראש השנה נפקדה שרה רחל וחנה.

To what do the nine [*berakhot*] said on New Year [Musaf Tefillah] correspond? Isaac from Kartignin said: To the nine times that Hannah mentioned the Divine Name in her prayer. [Yerushalmi adds: And her prayer concludes with אֶפְסֵי אֶרֶץ וַיִּתֵּן עֹז לְמַלְכוֹ וַיְרַם קַרְן מְשִׁיחוֹ.]