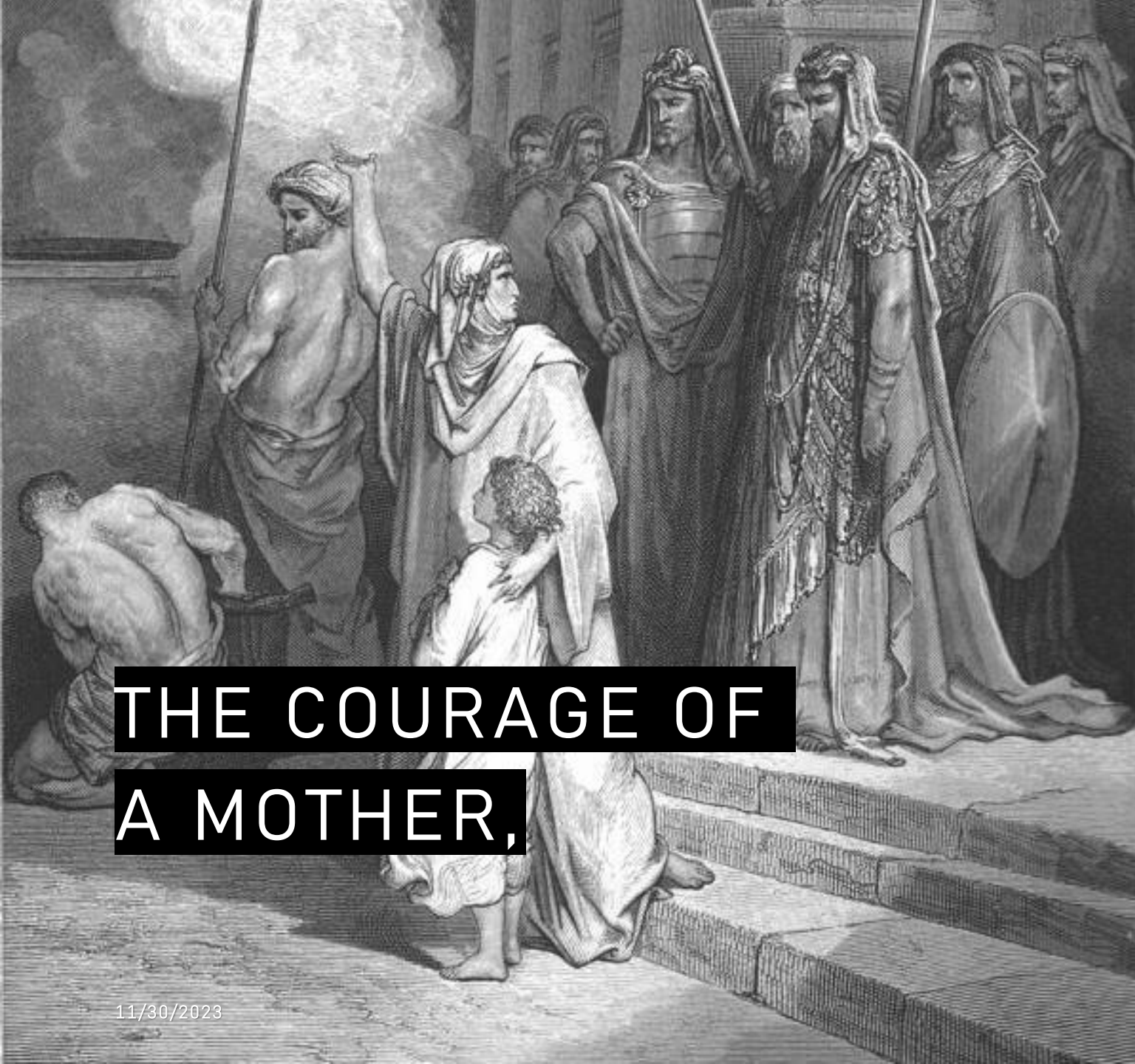




THE HANUKKAH STORY OF "CHANA" AND HER SEVEN SONS

Marty Lockshin

Torah in Motion, 2023



**THE COURAGE OF
A MOTHER,**

Gustav Doré
(1832-1883)

מערת
בעל חובת הלבבות
רבינו בחיי בן ר' יוסף
אבן פקודה

THE BURIAL CAVE?

צפת



חנה
ושבעת
בניה
היד

MIDRASH EIKHAH RABBA 1

מעשה במרים בת נחתום [ס"א
תנחום], שנשבית היא ושבעת
בניה. נטלן קיסר ונתנן לגיו מן
שבעה קנקלין. הביא את
הראשון ואמר לו: השתחוה
לצלם. אמר לו: חס ושלום, איני
משתחוה לצלם.

There was an incident involving Miriam, daughter of the baker [or the daughter of Tanhum], who was taken captive with her seven sons. The emperor took them and placed them behind seven partitions. He brought the first and said to him: 'Prostrate yourself to the idol.' He said to him: 'God forbid, I will not prostrate myself to the idol.' . . .

RAMBAM, *IGGERET HA-SHEMAD*

דע כי בכל מקום שאמרו בו
חז"ל יהרג ואל יעבור אם יהרג
כבר קדש את השם ואם היה
בעשרה מישראל כבר קדש את
השם ברבים כמו חנניה מישאל
ועזריה ודניאל ועשרה הרוגי
מלכות ושבעת בני חנה

Know that whenever the rabbis said, “let them be killed and not transgress,” if they are killed then they have performed *kiddush hashem*. And if it was in the presence of ten Jews—like Hananiah, Michael and Elazar, and like Daniel, and like Chana’s seven sons—then then they performed public *kiddush hashem*

MARTYRDOM IN FIRST MACCABEES (6)

Now a part of the king's army was spread out on the high hills, and some troops were on the plain, and they advanced steadily and in good order. All who heard the noise made by their multitude, by the marching of the multitude and the clanking of their arms, trembled, for the army was very large and strong. But Judas and his army advanced to the battle, and six hundred of the king's army fell. Now Eleazar, called Avaran, saw that one of the animals was equipped with royal armor. It was taller than all the others, and he supposed that the king was on it. **So he gave his life to save his people and to win for himself an everlasting name.**

MARTYRDOM IN SECOND MACCABEES (6)

Eleazar, one of the scribes in high position, a man now advanced in age and of noble presence, was being forced to open his mouth to eat swine's flesh. But he, welcoming death with honor rather than life with pollution, went up to the rack of his own accord, spitting out the flesh, as all ought to do who have the courage to refuse things that it is not right to taste, even for the natural love of life.

... [As he died a horrible death,] he groaned aloud and said, "It is clear to the Lord in his holy knowledge that, though I might have been saved from death, I am enduring terrible sufferings in my body under this beating, but in my soul, I am glad to suffer these things because I fear him."

**FOURTH MACCABEES
(SOMETIMES CALLED "ON
THE SUPREMACY OF
REASON")**

1st century C.E.

FOURTH MACCABEES

Chapter 1: The subject that I am about to discuss is most philosophical, that is, whether devout reason is sovereign over the emotions. So, it is right for me to advise you to pay earnest attention to philosophy.

Chapter 4: They were righteous and self-controlled... in the case of none of them were the various tortures [described in painful detail in this book] enough to pervert her reason.

FOURTH MACCABEES 18

The speech of the mother to her sons:

A happy man was he [your father], who lived out his life with good children, and did not have the grief of bereavement. While he [your father] was still with you, he taught you the law and the prophets. He read to you about Abel slain by Cain, and Isaac who was offered as a burnt offering, and about Joseph in prison. He told you of the zeal of Phinehas, and he taught you about Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael in the fire. He praised Daniel in the den of the lions and blessed him. He reminded you of the scripture of Isaiah (43:2), which says, “Even though you go through the fire, the flame shall not consume you.”

ISAIAH 43:2

כִּי תַעֲבֹר בַּמַּיִם אֶתְּךָ אֲנִי
וּבַנְּהָרוֹת לֹא יִשְׁטָפוּךָ כִּי
תֵלֵךְ בְּמוֹ אֵשׁ לֹא תִכְוֶה
וְלִהְבֵּה לֹא תִבְעַר בְּךָ.

When you pass through water, I will be with you; through streams, they shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through fire, you shall not be scorched; through flame, it shall not burn you.

RAMBAM, *IGGERET HA-SHEMAD*

דע כי בכל מקום שאמרו בו
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SOCRATES' SPEECH IN PLATO'S

"APOLOGY" (4TH CENTURY BCE)

You do not speak well, Sir, if you think a man in whom there is even a little merit ought to consider danger of life or death, and not rather regard this only, when he does things, whether the things he does are right or wrong and the acts of a good or a bad man.

For according to your argument [that it is preferable to stay alive even if it means compromising a principle] all the demigods would be bad who died at Troy, including the son of Thetis [=Achilles], who so despised danger, in comparison with enduring any disgrace, that when his mother (and she was a goddess) said to him, as he was eager to slay Hector, something like this, I believe, "My son, if you avenge the death of your friend Patroclus and kill Hector, you yourself shall die; for straightway, after Hector, is death appointed unto you;"

SOCRATES (CONT.)

... he, when he heard this, made light of death and danger, and feared much more to live as a coward and not to avenge his friends, and said, “Straightway may I die, after doing vengeance upon the wrongdoer, that I may not stay here, jeered at beside the curved ships, a burden of the earth.” Do you think he considered death and danger?

For thus it is, men of Athens, in truth; wherever a man stations himself, thinking it is best to be there, or is stationed by his commander, there he must, as it seems to me, remain and run his risks, considering neither death nor any other thing more than disgrace.

JEWS AND GREEKS:

The Irony of Influence