

ACHSAH BAT CALEV: SOME USEFUL SOURCES

1. **JOSHUA** ^{15:13} In accordance with the LORD's command to Joshua, Caleb son of Jephunneh was given a portion among the Judites, namely, Kiriath-arba—that is, Hebron. ([Arba] was the father of Anak.) ¹⁴ Caleb dislodged from there the three Anakites: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, descendants of Anak. ¹⁵ From there he marched against the inhabitants of Debir—the name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher—¹⁶ and Caleb announced, “I will give my daughter Achsah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher.”

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2. **JOSHUA** <sup>14:6</sup> The Judites approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: “You know what instructions the LORD gave at Kadesh-barnea to Moses, the man of God, concerning you and me. <sup>7</sup> I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I gave him a forthright report. <sup>8</sup> While my companions who went up with me took the heart out of the people, I was loyal to the LORD my God. <sup>9</sup> On that day, Moses promised on oath, ‘The land on which your foot trod shall be a portion for you and your descendants forever, because you were loyal to the LORD my God.’ <sup>10</sup> Now the LORD has preserved me, as He promised. It is forty-five years since the LORD made this promise to Moses, when Israel was journeying through the wilderness; and here I am today, eighty-five years old. <sup>11</sup> I am still as strong today as on the day that Moses sent me; my strength is the same now as it was then, for battle and for activity. <sup>12</sup> So assign to me this hill country as the LORD promised on that day. Though you too heard on that day that Anakites are there and great fortified cities, if only the LORD is with me, I will dispossess them, as the LORD promised.”

<sup>13</sup> So Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and assigned Hebron to him as his portion.

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3. **BABYLONIAN TALMUD, SOTAH 11B-12A**

“And Caleb, the son of Hezron, begot children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth, and these were her sons: Jeshu, and Shobab, and Ardun” (I Chronicles 2:18). ‘The son of Hezron’? He was the son of Jephunneh! — [Rather it means] that he was a son who turned [*sheppanah*] from the counsel of the spies. Still, he was the son of Kenaz, as it is written: *And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it!* — Raba said: He was the stepson of Kenaz. There is also evidence for this, since it is written, [*And Caleb the son of Jephunneh*] the Kenizzite.

4. **GENESIS RABBAH 60:3**

Four asked improperly: three were granted their request in a fitting manner, and the fourth, in an unfitting manner. They are: Eliezer, Caleb, Saul, and Jephthah. Eliezer: SO LET IT COME TO PASS, THAT THE DAMSEL (Genesis 24:14) – even a bondmaid! Yet God prepared Rebekah for him

and granted his request in a fitting manner. Caleb... Saul: *And it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter* (1 Samuel 17:25) – it might even be a slave! But God prepared David for him. Jephthah asked in an unfitting manner, and God answered him in an unfitting manner. He asked in an unfitting manner, as it says, *And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said: Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth... it shall be the Lord's and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering* (Judges 11:30f). Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to him: “Then had a camel or an ass or a dog come forth, thou wouldst have offered it up for a burnt-offering!” What did the Lord do? He answered him unfittingly and prepared his daughter for him, as it says, *And Jephthah came... and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him* (ib. 34).

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#### 5. BABYLONIAN TALMUD, KIDDUSHIN 41A

The Mishna (Kiddushin 2:1) teaches: **A man can betroth his daughter to a man when she is a young woman.** The Gemara infers: **When she is a young woman, yes,** he can betroth her; **when she is a minor, no,** he cannot betroth her. This statement **supports** the opinion of Rav, as Rav Yehuda says that Rav says, and some say it was said by Rabbi Elazar: **It is prohibited for a person to betroth his daughter to a man when she is a minor, until such time that she grows up and says: I want to marry so-and-so.**

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6. JOSHUA ^{15:17} His kinsman Othniel the Kenizzite captured it; and Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah in marriage.

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#### 7. GENESIS RABBAH 60:3

Four asked improperly: three were granted their request in a fitting manner, and the fourth, in an unfitting manner. They are: Eliezer, Caleb, Saul, and Jephthah... Caleb: *He that smiteth Kiriath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife* (Judges 1:12) – it might even be a slave! But God chose Othniel for him.

8. JUDGES <sup>3:7</sup> The Israelites did what was offensive to the LORD; they ignored the LORD their God and worshiped the Baalim and the Asheroth. <sup>8</sup> The LORD became incensed at Israel and surrendered them to King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharaim; and the Israelites were subject to Cushan-rishathaim for eight years. <sup>9</sup> The Israelites cried out to the LORD, and the LORD raised a champion for the Israelites to deliver them: Othniel the Kenizzite, a younger kinsman of Caleb. <sup>10</sup> The spirit of the LORD descended upon him and he became Israel's chieftain. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram into his hands. He prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim, <sup>11</sup> and the land had peace for forty years. When Othniel the Kenizzite died, <sup>12</sup> the Israelites again did what was offensive to the LORD.

#### 9. BABYLONIAN TALMUD, TEMURAH 16A

It has been taught: A thousand and seven hundred *kal vahomer* and *gezerah shawah* and specifications of the Scribes were forgotten during the period of mourning for Moses. Said R. Abbuha: Nevertheless Othniel the son of Kenaz restored [these forgotten teachings] as a result of his sharp dialectics, as it says: *And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. ...*

A Tanna taught: Othniel is the same as Jabez. He was called Othniel because God answered him [*ana'o El*], and Jabez because he counselled and spread [*ya'atz veribetz*] Torah in Israel. And what was his [real] name? Judah the brother of Simeon. And from where do we derive that God answered him? — Since it says: *And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed and enlarge my border, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested* (1 Chronicles 4:10).

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10. BABYLONIAN TALMUD, TEMURAH 16A

The *baraita* adds: **And why is she called Achsah?** The reason is **that anyone who sees her became angry [ko'es] about his own wife**, who was not as beautiful as Achsah.

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11. JOSHUA <sup>15:17-19</sup> His kinsman Othniel the Kenizzite captured it; and Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah in marriage. <sup>18</sup> When she came [to him], she induced him<sup>e</sup> to ask her father for some property. She dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb asked her, “What is the matter?” <sup>19</sup> She replied, “Give me a present; for you have given me away as Negeb-land, so give me springs of water.” And he gave her Upper and Lower Gullath.

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12. MISHNAH KETUBOT 1:2

A virgin, her marriage contract is two hundred dinars, and a widow is one hundred. A virgin who is a widow, a divorcée, or a *ḥalutza* from betrothal [before marriage and before consummation of the marriage]: their marriage contract is two hundred dinars, and they are subject to a claim concerning their virginity. A female convert, or a captive woman, or a maidservant, who were ransomed or who converted, or who were freed, at less than three years and one day old, their marriage contract is two hundred.

13. RASHI ON BABYLONIAN TALMUD, KIDDUSHIN 3B

[With an item worth less than the value of one *peruta*, a woman] does not render herself acquired: [because] it is a disgrace to her; therefore the method of *chalifin* is abolished for her when doing kiddushin.

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#### 14. BABYLONIAN TALMUD, TEMURAH 16A

**“And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she persuaded him to ask of her father a field; and she alighted from off her donkey”** (Joshua 15:18). The Gemara asks: **What** is the meaning of: **“And she alighted [vatitznah: or ‘and she cried out’]”**? Rava says that Rabbi Yitzhak says: Achsah said to Caleb: **Just as in the case of this donkey, when it has no food in its trough it immediately cries out, so too a woman, when she has no produce in her house she immediately cries out.**

The Gemara cites yet another verse involving Achsah: **“And she said: Give me a blessing; for that you have set me in the land of the South [negev]”** (Joshua 15:19). She said to her father: You have given me **a home dried [menugav] of all goodness. “And you have given me springs of water”**: **a man who has nothing other than Torah**, which is metaphorically called water. But as he is unable to provide me with food, how can I live? **“And gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.”** Caleb said to her: Does someone learned in Torah, who dwells in the **upper worlds and the lower worlds, require that sustenance be requested for him?**

#### 15. BABYLONIAN TALMUD, KETUBOT 61A

[Of a woman and the man she marries:] She rises with him but does not go down with him. What, said R. Huna, is the Scriptural proof? — *For she is a man's wife* (v'hi b'ulat ba'al - Genesis 20:3), [she is to participate] in the rise of her husband but not in his descent. R. Eleazar said, [The proof is] from here: *Because she was the mother of all living* (Genesis 3:20) she was given [to her husband] to live but not to suffer pain.

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16. JUDGES ^{1:10} The Judites marched against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron, and they defeated Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi... ¹¹ From there they marched against the inhabitants of Debir (the name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher). ¹² And Caleb announced, “I will give my daughter Achsah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher.” ¹³ His younger kinsman, Othniel the Kenizzite, captured it; and Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah in marriage. ¹⁴ When she came [to him], she induced him to ask her father for some property. She dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb asked her, “What is the matter?” ¹⁵ She replied, “Give me a present, for you have given me away as Negeb-land; give me springs of water.” And Caleb gave her Upper and Lower Gullath.