

Beyond Behaviour - Abi Hartuv

Hannah

1	ולמה נטל שתי נשים בשביל ויהי לפנינה ילדים ולחנה אין ילדים (שמ א' ט"ו ב') כיון שראתה חנה שלא ילדה אמרה אומר לו שיכניס צרתי לביתי ומתוך זה יראה הקב"ה שהכנסתי צרתי לביתי ויפקוד אותי אמר לה הקדוש ברוך הוא חייך (את) חנה הפקדת אצלי נפשות [נפשות] אני משלם (לידך) [ליך] כי פקד ה' את חנה	And why did he (Elkanah) take two wives? Because "<i>Peninah had children, but Hannah had no children</i>" (1 Samuel 1:2). When Hannah saw that she was not giving birth, she said: "I will tell him (Elkanah) to bring my rival-wife into my home. Through this, the Holy One will see that I welcomed my rival into my own house, and He will remember me and grant me a child." The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her: "By your life, Hannah! You have entrusted souls to Me; I will reward you. As it is said: '<i>The Lord remembered Hannah</i>'. " (Peskita Rabbati 43)
2	והיתה פנינה מכעסת אותה והיתה בוכה ולא אוכלת כמה שכתב וכן יעשה שנה בשנה מדי עלותה בית ה' כן תכעיסנה ותבכה ולא תאכל (שם שם ז) ויאמר לה אלקנה אישה למה תבכי (שם ח') אמר לה שרה שהיתה עקרה כך היתה יושבת ובוכה כל היום [ולמה לא תאכלי] (שם) אלא רבקה שהיתה עקרה כך היתה עושה למה ירע לבבך (שם) אלא רחל שהיתה עקרה כך היתה יושבת בינה לבין (עצמה) הלא אנכי טוב לך מעשרה בנים (שם)	"Her husband Elkanah said to her, 'Hannah, why are you crying and why aren't you eating? Why are you so sad?'" The midrash learns from the triple usage of "why" that her husband tried to console her with the stories of the three barren Matriarchs. He told her: "Would Sarah, who was childless, sit and cry all the day? Would Rebekah, who was barren, not eat? Would Rachel, who was childless, sit by herself, depressed?" (Midrash Shmuel 1:7)
3	מלמד שבאותו היום מנו אותו כהן גדול. והיא מרת נפש ותתפלל על ה' ובכה תבכה (שם שם י'). כל מעשה חנה בכפלים, כעסה בכפלים, וכעסתה צרתה גם כעס, מנתה בכפלים, ולחנה יתן מנה אחת אפים, בכיתה בכפלים, ובכה תבכה, ראייתה בכפלים, אם ראה תראה, נדרה בכפלים, ותדר נדר. Midrash Shmuel 1:9	"It teaches that on that very day they appointed him as High Priest. '<i>And she was bitter of soul, and she prayed to the Lord and wept exceedingly</i>' (1 Samuel 1:10). All of Hannah's actions were doubled: her anguish was doubled — '<i>and her rival provoked her grievously, to irritate her</i>'; her portion was doubled — '<i>but to Hannah he gave a double portion</i>'; her weeping was doubled — '<i>and she wept and wept</i>'; her request was doubled — '<i>if You will surely see</i>'; and her vow was doubled — '<i>and she</i>

		<i>vowed a vow.”</i>
4	א"ר שמואל בר נחמן שלשה פעמים כתוב בפסוק זה אמתך אמתך אמתך כנגד שלש מצות ששנו רבותינו שהנשים זקוקים להם בנדה בחלה ובהדלקת הנר אמרה חנה רבונו של עולם לא הייתה אמתך זהירה בשלשתם מהו וזכרתי בזכרים ולא תשכח את אמתך בנקיבות הה"ד כי פקד ה' את חנה ותהר	Three times in this verse the word ‘<i>Your maidservant</i>’ (אמתך) appears. These correspond to the three mitzvot that our Sages taught women are obligated in: niddah, challah, and lighting Shabbat candles. Hannah said: ‘Master of the Universe! Has Your maidservant not been careful in all three of them? What, then, is (the meaning of the verse) ‘<i>and You shall remember me</i>’ — (that You should remember me) with sons, and ‘<i>do not forget Your maidservant</i>’ — with daughters?’ As it is said: ‘For the Lord remembered Hannah, and she conceived.’” (Peskita Rabbati 43) This section also refers to the potential death of women who didn’t fulfill these three mitzvot.
5		<i>Bold is a direct translation, not bold is context.</i> “And her voice could not be heard,” the <i>halakha</i> that one is forbidden to raise his voice in his Amida prayer as it must be recited silently. From the continuation of the verse here: “So Eli thought her to be drunk,” the <i>halakha</i> that a drunk person is forbidden to pray. That is why he rebuked her. On the subject of Eli’s rebuke of Hannah, as it is stated: “And Eli said to her: How long will you remain drunk? Remove your wine from yourself” (I Samuel 1:14); Rabbi Elazar said: From here the <i>halakha</i> that one who sees in another an unseemly matter, he must reprimand

		him, is derived. “And Hannah answered and she said no, my master, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit, and I have drunk neither wine nor liquor, but I pour out my soul before the Lord” (I Samuel 1:15). Regarding the words: “No, my master,” Ulla, and some say Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Hanina, said that she said to him, in an allusion: With regard to this matter, you are not a master, and the Divine Spirit does not rest upon you, as you falsely suspect me of this. Some say another version of her response. She said to him, questioning: Aren’t you a master? Aren’t the Divine Presence and Divine Spirit with you that you judged me to be guilty, and you did not judge me to be innocent? Didn’t you know that I am a woman of distressed spirit? BT Brachot 31a-b
6		Incidental to this discussion of Hannah’s prayer, the Gemara explores related topics. In her prayer, Hannah said: “And she swore an oath and said, Lord of Hosts [Tzeva’ot] if You will indeed look upon the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant and will give Your maidservant a male child, I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall be no razor come upon his head” (I Samuel 1:11). Rabbi Elazar said: From the day that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created His world, there was no person who called the Holy One, Blessed be He, Lord of Hosts until Hannah came and called Him Lord of Hosts. This is the first time in the Bible that God is referred to by this name.

Eli

7.	וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ עָלֵי לְשׁוֹכְרָה — אָמַר רַבִּי לֵוִי: מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָיוּ בָנָיו שָׁל עָלֵי מְשַׁחְתִּים אוֹרַח בֵּית ה', וְהָיָה מִכִּיר בְּדַבְרֵי שְׁכָרוֹת וּמַעֲשֵׂיהֶם. לְפִיכָךְ חָשַׁד בְּצַדִּיקָתָהּ .	“And Eli thought she was drunk’ — Rabbi Levi said: Because Eli’s sons corrupted the ways of the House of the Lord, he became accustomed to
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		hearing drunkenness and seeing its deeds. Therefore he suspected the righteous woman.” Yalkut Shimoni, Shmuel I, Remez 78
8	וַיֵּבֶן עָלָיו כִּי ה' קָרָא לְנָעַר — אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: מִכָּאן שֶׁעָלִי הָיָה מְלַמֵּד לְשִׁמְוֵאל דֶּרֶךְ תַּפְלָה וְעֲנִיָּה. אָמַר לוֹ: קִשְׁתִּיקְרָא שְׁנִית, אָמַר 'דְּבַר ה' כִּי שָׁמַע עַבְדְּךָ'.	‘And Eli understood that the Lord was calling the boy’ — Rabbi Yehudah said: From here we learn that Eli taught Samuel the way of prayer and how to answer. He said to him: ‘When you are called again, say: Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.’” (Midrash Shmuel)
9	וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־עָלִי... הִנְנִי פֹרַע מִבֵּיתְךָ — לְפִי נִשְׁלָא מַחָה בְּבָנָיו, נִתְפָּס עֹנָם עָלָיו. . וְהָיָה עָלַי מִתִּירָא לְפָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וּמִתְבַּיֵּשׁ מִפְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל .	“And the Lord said to Eli... ‘Behold, I will punish your house’ — Because he did not rebuke his sons, their sin was held against him. And Eli became afraid before God and ashamed before Israel.” (Midrash Tanhuma 8:1)
10	וְעָלִי יוֹשֵׁב עַל־הַכִּסֵּא מְשַׁמֵּר פֶּתַח הַיֵּכָל ה'. אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים: מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָיָה עָלָיו שׁוֹמֵר אוֹתָהּ מִן הַפְּרִיצִים וּמִן הַשְּׂכוּרִים — לְפִיכָךְ חָשַׁד בְּחַנָּה.	“And Eli sat on the chair, guarding the entrance of the Temple of the Lord. The Sages said: Because Eli guarded it from the immoral and from the drunkards — therefore he suspected Hannah.” (Midrash Shmuel 1)



