

”וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהִמָּן הַכֹּסֶף נִתּוּן לְךָ
וְהָעָם לְעִשׂוֹת בּוֹ כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ”, אָמַר
רַבִּי אֲבָא:

Ahasuerus responded to Haman’s request: “And the king said to Haman: The silver is given to you; the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you” (Esther 3:11). Rabbi Abba said:

Perek I
Daf 14 Amud a

מִשָּׁל דְּאִתְשׁוּרוּשׁ וְהָמָן לָמָּה הִדְבָּר
דּוּמָה? לְשֵׁנֵי בְּנֵי אָדָם, לְאֶחָד הָיָה לוֹ
תֵּל בְּתוֹךְ שָׂדֵהוּ, וְלְאֶחָד הָיָה לוֹ חֲרוּץ
בְּתוֹךְ שָׂדֵהוּ. בְּעַל חֲרוּץ אָמַר: מִי יִתֵּן לִי
תֵּל זֶה בְּדָמַי! בְּעַל הַתֵּל אָמַר: מִי יִתֵּן
לִי חֲרוּץ זֶה בְּדָמַי!

The actions of Ahasuerus and Haman can be understood with a parable; to what may they be compared? To two individuals, one of whom had a mound in the middle of his field and the other of whom had a ditch in the middle of his field,^N each one suffering from his own predicament. The owner of the ditch, noticing the other’s mound of dirt, said to himself: Who will give me this mound of dirt suitable for filling in my ditch; I would even be willing to pay for it with money, and the owner of the mound, noticing the other’s ditch, said to himself: Who will give me this ditch for money, so that I may use it to remove the mound of earth from my property?

לְיָמִים נִדְוָגוּ זֶה אַצֵּל זֶה, אָמַר לוֹ בְּעַל
חֲרוּץ לְבַעַל הַתֵּל: מִכּוֹר לִי תֵּלְךָ! אָמַר
לוֹ: טוֹל אוֹתָהּ בַּחֲנָם, וְהִלְוִיאִי!

At a later point, one day, they happened to have met one another. The owner of the ditch said to the owner of the mound: Sell me your mound so I can fill in my ditch. The mound’s owner, anxious to rid himself of the excess dirt on his property, said to him: Take it for free; if only you had done so sooner. Similarly, Ahasuerus himself wanted to destroy the Jews. As he was delighted that Haman had similar aspirations and was willing to do the job for him, he demanded no money from him.

”וַיֹּסֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת טַבַּעְתּוֹ”. אָמַר רַבִּי
אֲבָא בַר כְּהֵנָּא: גְּדוּלָּה הִסְרַת טַבַּעַת
יֹתֵר מֵאַרְבָּעִים וְשִׁמּוֹנָה נְבִיאִים וְשִׁבְעַת
נְבִיאֹת שֶׁנִּתְּנָבְאוּ לָהֶן לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׂבוּלוֹן
לֹא הִחְזִירוּם לְמוֹטֵב, וְאֵילּוּ הִסְרַת
טַבַּעַת הִחְזִירוּם לְמוֹטֵב.

§ The verse states: “And the king removed his ring from his hand” (Esther 3:10). Rabbi Abba bar Kahana said: The removal of Ahasuerus’s ring for the sealing of Haman’s decree was more effective^N than the forty-eight prophets and the seven prophetesses who prophesied on behalf of the Jewish people. As, they were all unable to return the Jewish people to the right way, but the removal of Ahasuerus’s ring returned them to the right way, since it brought them to repentance.

תָּנוּ רַבָּנֵי: אַרְבָּעִים וְשִׁמּוֹנָה נְבִיאִים
וְשִׁבְעַת נְבִיאֹת נִתְּנָבְאוּ לָהֶם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְלֹא פָּחַתּוּ וְלֹא הוֹתִירוּ עַל מַה שֶּׁכְּתוּב
בְּתוֹרָה, חוּץ מִמְּקָרָא מְגִילָה.

The Sages taught in a *baraita*: Forty-eight prophets^N and seven prophetesses prophesied on behalf of the Jewish people, and they neither subtracted from nor added^N onto what is written in the Torah, introducing no changes or additions to the mitzvot except for the reading of the Megilla, which they added as an obligation for all future generations.

NOTES

The parable of a mound and a ditch – משל לתל ולחרוץ: Some commentaries explain the deep meaning of the parable, that it indicates that although both Ahasuerus and Haman hated the Jews, they did so for different reasons. Ahasuerus saw them as a mound, viewing them as too large and successful, and therefore he wanted to destroy them. Haman, however, saw them as inferior, as a ditch that was lower than the other nations. In this way the parable excellently explains their two approaches (*Bina Lettim; Gevul Binyamin; Hatam Sofer*).

The removal of Ahasuerus’s ring was more effective – גדולה: Haman’s decree alone did not overly concern the Jews, as they were already aware that they had enemies. However, when the king agreed to give Haman his full backing and allowed him to do as he saw fit, the removal of the ring proved to the Jews that they were facing a grave calamity (Maharsha).

Forty-eight prophets – ארבעים ושימונה נביאים: Rashi provides a different list of the prophets from that of Rabbeinu Hananel, whose opinion is accepted by the *Sefer Halakhot Gedolot* and most later authorities. According to Rabbeinu

Hananel, the list includes, among others: Moses; Aaron; Assir, Elkana, and Abiasaph, who were sons of Korah; Joshua; Pinehas; Samuel; Elkanah, his father; Gad; Nathan; Asaph; Heman; Jeduthun; David; Ahijah the Shilonite; Shemaiah; Iddo the seer; Azariah, the son of Oded; Hanani; Jehu, the son of Hanani; Elijah; Micaiah, the son of Zephaniah; Jeremiah; Isaiah; Ezekiel; Daniel; Baruch, the son of Neriah; Seraiah; Mordecai; Bilshan; Hosea; Amos; Micah; Joel; Nahum; Haggai; Zechariah; and Malachi.

Furthermore, there are a number of disputes in connection with the actual lists, as Rashi himself mentions that he is certain about only forty six of the prophets, and is unsure who the last two prophets are. Although Rashi mentions David and Solomon in the list, the *Sefer Halakhot Gedolot* does not. There is also a discussion about Daniel, as the Gemara says that he is not counted among the prophets. Others remove Mordecai and Seraiah from the list and in their place some list Shem and Eber (*Asara Ma’amarot*); Eldad and Medad (*Ramat Shmuel*); Elazar the son of Aaron, and Elihu the son of Barachel (*Turei Even*); Chenaniah, chief of the Levites; the elder prophet from Bethel; Zechariah, who had understanding in the vision of God; and Hanan the son of Igdaliah (Rav Ya’akov Emden). In

the work *Zikkaron BaSefer* it is suggested to include Bari, the father of Hosea, to whom a prophecy is attributed in the book of Hosea.

Neither subtracted from nor added – ולא הותירו ולא פחתו: Rashi explains that although there were other rabbinically ordained positive mitzvot, such as the obligation to light Hanukkah candles, they were enacted after prophecy ceased, while Purim was established toward the end of the prophetic era. See the Rambam’s discussion with regard to the prohibition against a prophet establishing *halakha* based on prophecy (*Sefer HaMadda, Hilkhot Yesodei HaTorah* 9:1–2). The Ran elaborates on Rashi’s comment, explaining that although there are numerous other rabbinic enactments, both positive mitzvot and prohibitions, they are all intended to safeguard Torah law, unlike reading the Megilla, which was enacted as an independent mitzva by rabbinic law. Some note that the *Sefer Halakhot Gedolot* lists reading the Megilla as one of the 613 mitzvot, seemingly viewing it as an actual addition to the Torah (*Zikhron Terua*). Conversely, the Rid simply explains that the prophets did not add public readings, other than reading the Megilla.

The reading of the Megilla is *hallel* – קרייתא זו הלילא – The Meiri states that according to this opinion, one who does not have a Megilla can fulfill his obligation by reciting *hallel* (see *Birkei Yosef* and *Hatam Sofer*).

מאי דרוש? אָמַר רַבִּי חֵיְיָא בַּר אֲבִין
אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן קֶרְחָה וּמָה
מַעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵירוֹת אֲמַרִּינָן שִׁירָה –
מִמִּיתָה לְחַיִּים לֹא כָּל שָׁבָן?!

The Gemara asks: **What exposition** led them to determine that this was a proper mode of action? On what basis did they add this mitzva? **Rabbi Hiyya bar Avin said that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa said** that they reasoned as follows: **If**, when recalling the exodus from Egypt, in which the Jews were delivered **from slavery to freedom, we recite songs of praise, the Song of the Sea and the hymns of hallel**, then, in order to properly recall the miracle of Purim and commemorate God's delivering us **from death to life**, is it **not all the more so** the case that we must sing God's praise by reading the story in the Megilla?

אִי הֵבִי הֵלֵל נִמְי גִּימָא לְפִי שְׂאִין
אוֹמְרִים הֵלֵל עַל גַּם שְׁבַחוּצָה לְאַרְצָא.
יִצְאֵת מִצְרַיִם דְּנָס שְׁבַחוּצָה לְאַרְצָא.
הֵיכִי אֲמַרִּינָן שִׁירָה?!

The Gemara asks: **If so**, our obligation should be at least as great as when we recall the exodus from Egypt, and **let us also recite hallel** on Purim. The Gemara answers: *Hallel* is not said on Purim, **because hallel is not recited on a miracle that occurred outside Eretz Yisrael**. The Gemara asks: **If so**, with regard to **the exodus from Egypt as well, which was a miracle that occurred outside Eretz Yisrael, how are we able to recite songs of praise?**

בְּדַתְנִיא: עַד שְׁלֹא נִכְנְסוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְאַרְצָא הַיְבֻשָׁתוֹ כָּל אֲרָצוֹת לִוְמָר
שִׁירָה. מִשְׁנִכְנְסוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאַרְצָא לֹא
הַיְבֻשָׁתוֹ כָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת לִוְמָר שִׁירָה.

The Gemara answers: **As it is taught in a baraita: Prior to the time when the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisrael, all lands were deemed fit for songs of praise to be recited for miracles performed within their borders, as all lands were treated equally. But after the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisrael, that land became endowed with greater sanctity, and all the other lands were no longer deemed fit for songs of praise to be recited for miracles performed within them.**

רַב נַחֲמָן אָמַר: קְרִייתָא זוּ הַלִּילָא.
רַבָּא אָמַר: בְּשִׁלְמָא הָתָם "הֵלֵלוּ
עֲבָדֵי ה'" – וְלֹא עֲבָדֵי פְרַעֲוֹה, אֶלָּא
הָכָא "הֵלֵלוּ עֲבָדֵי ה'" וְלֹא עֲבָדֵי
אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ? אֶפְתֵּי עֲבָדֵי אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ
אַנְן.

Rav Nahman said an alternative answer as to why *hallel* is not recited on Purim: **The reading of the Megilla itself is an act of reciting hallel.**^N Rava said a third reason why *hallel* is not recited on Purim: **Granted** that *hallel* is said **there**, when recalling the exodus from Egypt, as after the salvation there, they could recite the phrase in *hallel*: **"Give praise, O servants of the Lord"** (Psalms 113:1); after their servitude to Pharaoh ended with their salvation, they were truly servants of the Lord **and not servants of Pharaoh. But** can it be said **here**, after the limited salvation commemorated on Purim: **"Give praise, O servants of the Lord,"** which would indicate that after the salvation the Jewish people were only servants of the Lord **and not servants of Ahasuerus?** No, even after the miracle of Purim, **we were still the servants of Ahasuerus**, as the Jews remained in exile under Persian rule, and consequently the salvation, which was incomplete, did not merit an obligation to say *hallel*.

בֵּין לְרַבָּא בֵּין לְרַב נַחֲמָן קָשְׁיָא: וְהָא
תַּנְיָא, מִשְׁנִכְנְסוּ לְאַרְצָא לֹא הַיְבֻשָׁתוֹ
כָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת לִוְמָר שִׁירָה, בֵּין שְׁגָלוֹ –
תְּזוּרוּ לְהַכְשִׁירָן הָרֵאשׁוֹן.

The Gemara asks: **Both according to the opinion of Rava and according to the opinion of Rav Nahman, this is difficult. Isn't it taught in the baraita cited earlier: After the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisrael, that land became endowed with greater sanctity, and all the other lands were no longer deemed fit for songs of praise to be recited for miracles performed within them.** Therefore, there should be no *hallel* obligation on Purim for the miracle performed outside of the land of Israel, and Rav Nahman's and Rava's alternative explanations are incorrect. The Gemara answers: They understood differently, as it can be argued that **when the people were exiled from Eretz Yisrael, the other lands returned to their initial suitability, and were once again deemed fit for reciting hallel on miracles performed within them.**

וְתוּ לִיכָא? וְהַכְּתִיב "וַיְהִי אִישׁ אֶחָד
מִן הָרַמְתִּים צוֹפִים" – אֶחָד מִמְּאִתַּיִם
צוֹפִים שְׁנַתְנַבְּאוּ לָהֶם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל!

With regard to the statement that forty-eight prophets and seven prophetesses prophesied on behalf of the Jewish people, the Gemara asks: **Is there no one else? Isn't it written** with regard to Samuel's father, Elkanah: **"And there was a certain [ehad] man from Ramathaim-zophim"** (1 Samuel 1:1), which is expounded as follows to indicate that Elkanah was a prophet: He was one [ehad] of two hundred [mata'im] prophets [tzofim] **who prophesied on behalf of the Jewish people.** If so, why was it stated here that there were only forty-eight prophets?

Double the number of Israelites who left Egypt – כַּפְלִים – כִּי־צִאִי מִצְרַיִם: To a certain degree it is possible to view as prophets all the Jews who left Egypt, as they witnessed the revelation of God at the Red Sea, and experienced an even greater revelation at Mount Sinai (Rav Ya'akov Emden).

Who stood at the height of the world – שְׁעוּמְדֵינָא בְרוּמוֹ שְׁלַ – עוֹלָם: Due to the fact that they benefited from this open miracle, as all the others were swallowed up by the ground and they remained in their place, it is stated that they stood at the height of the world (*Hiddushei Aggadot LaRashba*).

Hearken to her voice – שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ: The Gemara's comment is derived from the apparently superfluous term "to her voice" (*Maharsha*). It is stated in *Bereshit Rabba* that "her voice" also refers to the voice of prophecy, the voice of God that is heard through her mouth.

Make wicks – עוֹשֶׂה פְתִילוֹת: It is written that Deborah would glorify this mitzva by making the wicks the size of torches [*lappidot*], and therefore she was called "the wife of Lappidoth." Since Deborah was more famous than her husband, and the name Lappidoth is unknown, nothing is gained by mentioning it unless it is intended to describe Deborah's deeds (*Maharsha*).

מִיְהוּדָה טוֹבָא הוּוּ. כִּדְתַנִּינָא: הַרְבֵּה נְבִיאִים עָמְדוּ לְהֵם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, כַּפְלִים כִּי־צִאִי מִצְרַיִם. אֲלֵא, נְבוֹאָה שְׁהוֹצְרָכָה לְדוֹרוֹת – נִבְתְּבָה, וְשִׁלָּא הוֹצְרָכָה – לֹא נִכְתְּבָה.

רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר: אֲדָם הֵבֵא מִשְׁתֵּי רָמוֹת שְׁצוּפוֹת זוֹ אֶת זוֹ. רַבִּי חֲנִנִּי אָמַר: אֲדָם הֵבֵא מִבְּנֵי אֲדָם שְׁעוּמְדֵינָא בְרוּמוֹ שְׁלַ עוֹלָם. וּמֵאֵן מִנְהוּ – בְּנֵי קֹרַח. דְּכַתִּיב – וּבְנֵי קֹרַח לֹא מָתוּ. תַּנְּאֵי מִשּׁוּם רַבִּינּוּ: מְקוֹם נִתְבָּצַר לְהֵם בְּגִיְהֵנָם, וְעָמְדוּ עָלָיו.

שֶׁבַע נְבִיאוֹת מֵאֵן מִנְהוּ? שָׂרָה, מֵרִים, דְּבוֹרָה, חַנָּה, אֲבִיגַיִל, חוּלְדָה, וְאֶסְתֵּר. שָׂרָה – דְּכַתִּיב "אֲבִי מִלְכָּה וְאֲבִי יִסְכָּה", וְאָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: יִסְכָּה זוֹ שָׂרָה. וְלָמָּה נִקְרָא שְׁמָהּ יִסְכָּה – שֶׁסָּכְתָה בְרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "כָּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֲלֶיךָ שָׂרָה שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ". דְּבַר אַחֵר: יִסְכָּה – שֶׁהִבֵּל סוֹכֵינָא בְיוֹפֶיהָ.

מֵרִים – דְּכַתִּיב "וַתִּקַּח מֵרִים הַנְּבִיאָה אַחֹת אֶהֱרֹן" וְלֹא אַחֹת מֹשֶׁה? אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר רַב: שְׁהִיתָה מִתְנַבְּאָה כְּשֶׁהִיא אַחֹת אֶהֱרֹן, וְאוֹמֶרֶת: עֲתִידָה אֲמִי שְׁתֵּלֵד בֵּן שְׁיוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל. וּבְשָׁעָה שְׁנוּלֵד נִתְמַלֵּא כָּל הַבַּיִת כּוֹלֵוֹ אוֹרָה, עָמַד אֲבִיָּה וְנִשְׁקָה עַל רֹאשָׁהּ, אָמַר לָהּ: בְּתִי נִתְקַיְּמָה נְבוֹאָתֶיךָ.

וּכְיֵן שְׁהִשְׁלִיכוּהוּ לְיָאֹר – עָמַד אֲבִיָּהּ וְטַפְחָהּ עַל רֹאשָׁהּ, וְאָמַר לָהּ: בְּתִי, הֵיכָן נְבוֹאָתֶיךָ? הֵינֵן דְּכַתִּיב "וַתִּתְעַב אַחֹתוֹ מִרְחוֹק לְדַעָה" – לְדַעָת מַה יְהֵא בְסוּף נְבוֹאָתָהּ.

דְּבוֹרָה – דְּכַתִּיב "וְדְבוֹרָה אִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה אִשָּׁת לַפִּידוֹת". מֵאִי "אִשָּׁת לַפִּידוֹת" – שְׁהִיתָה עוֹשֶׂה פְתִילוֹת לְמִקְדָּשׁ.

The Gemara answers: In fact, there were more prophets, as it is taught in a *baraita*: Many prophets arose for the Jewish people, numbering double the number of Israelites who left Egypt.^N However, only a portion of the prophecies were recorded, because only prophecy that was needed for future generations was written down in the Bible for posterity, but that which was not needed, as it was not pertinent to later generations, was not written. Therefore, the fifty-five prophets recorded in the Bible, although not the only prophets of the Jewish people, were the only ones recorded, due to their eternal messages.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said another explanation of the verse "And there was a certain man from Ramathaim-zophim": A man who comes from two heights [*ramot*] that face [*tzofot*] one another. Rabbi Hanin said an additional interpretation: A man who descends from people who stood at the height of [*rumo*] the world.^N The Gemara asks: And who are these people? The Gemara answers: These are the sons of Korah, as it is written: "But the sons of Korah did not die" (Numbers 26:11), and with regard to them it is taught in the name of our teacher, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi: A high place was set aside for them in Gehenna, as the sons of Korah repented in their hearts, and were consequently not propelled very far down in Gehenna when the earth opened to swallow Korah and his followers; and they stood on this high place and sung to the Lord. They alone stood at the height of the lower world.

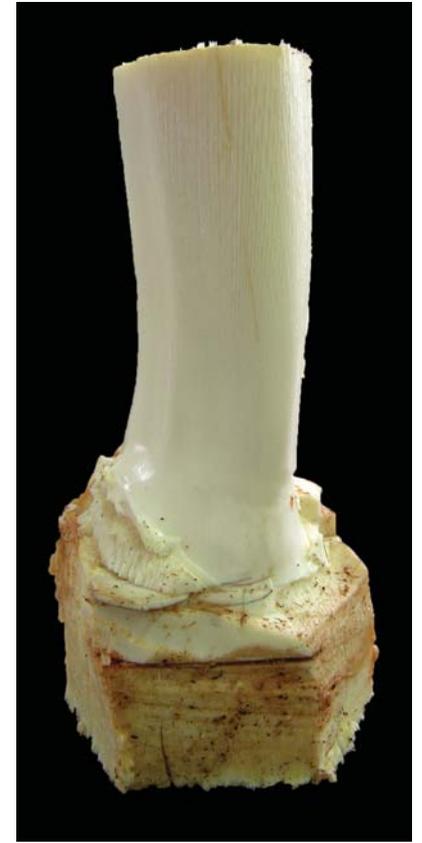
§ The Gemara asks with regard to the prophetesses recorded in the *baraita*: Who were the seven prophetesses? The Gemara answers: Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah, and Esther. The Gemara offers textual support: Sarah, as it is written: "Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah" (Genesis 11:29). And Rabbi Yitzhak said: Iscah is in fact Sarah. And why was she called Iscah? For she saw [*sakhta*] by means of divine inspiration, as it is stated: "In all that Sarah has said to you, hearken to her voice" (Genesis 21:12).^N Alternatively, Sarah was also called Iscah, for all gazed [*sokhin*] upon her beauty.

Miriam was a prophetess, as it is written explicitly: "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand" (Exodus 15:20). The Gemara asks: Was she the sister only of Aaron, and not the sister of Moses? Why does the verse mention only one of her brothers? Rav Nahman said that Rav said: For she prophesied when she was the sister of Aaron, i.e., she prophesied since her youth, even before Moses was born, and she would say: My mother is destined to bear a son who will deliver the Jewish people to salvation. And at the time when Moses was born the entire house was filled with light, and her father stood and kissed her on the head, and said to her: My daughter, your prophecy has been fulfilled.

But once Moses was cast into the river, her father arose and rapped her on the head, saying to her: My daughter, where is your prophecy now, as it looked as though the young Moses would soon meet his end. This is the meaning of that which is written with regard to Miriam's watching Moses in the river: "And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him" (Exodus 2:4), i.e., to know what would be with the end of her prophecy, as she had prophesied that her brother was destined to be the savior of the Jewish people.

Deborah was a prophetess, as it is written explicitly: "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth" (Judges 4:4). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of "the wife of Lappidoth"? The Gemara answers: For she used to make wicks^N for the Sanctuary, and due to the flames [*lappidot*] on these wicks she was called the wife of Lappidoth, literally, a woman of flames.

One heart – לב אחד – Unlike most trees, the date palm does not have typical branches; its fronds emanate directly from the trunk without being differentiated into secondary branches. For this reason the Jewish people are compared to a date palm, which grows in only one direction and whose center, the heart of palm, is a singular, undifferentiated trunk.



Heart of palm

NOTES

My horn is exalted, and not, My pitcher is exalted – רִמָּה קִרְנִי וְלֹא רִמָּה פִּי: The simple explanation is that a pitcher is made of earthenware and is therefore breakable, indicating a monarchy that will not last. However, a horn is not easily broken, indicating a prolonged monarchy (Maharsha).

“וְהָיָה יוֹשֵׁבֵת תַּחַת תּוֹמֵר” מאי שנא תחת תומר? אמר רבי שמעון בן אבשלום: משום יחוד. דבר אחר: מה תמר זה אין לו אלא לב אחד – אף ישראל שבאותו הדור לא היה להם אלא לב אחד לאביהן שבשמים.

חנה – דכתיב “וּתְתַלֵּל חֲנָה וְתֹאמַר עֲלֵי לְבִי בַּה' רִמָּה קִרְנִי בַּה'” רמָה קִרְנִי וְלֹא רִמָּה פִּי. דוד ושלמה שנמשחו בקרן נמשכה מלכותן, שאול ויהוא שנמשחו בכף – לא נמשכה מלכותן.

“אֵין קָדוֹשׁ כַּה' כִּי אֵין בְּלִתְךָ” אמר רב יהודה בר מנשיא: אל תקרי “בלתך” אלא “לבולתך”. שלא כמדת הקדוש ברוך הוא מדת בשר ודם; מדת בשר ודם – מעשה ידיו מבלין אותו, אבל הקדוש ברוך הוא – מבלה מעשה ידיו.

“וְאֵין צוּר כַּאֲלֵהֵינוּ” אין צויר כאלהינו. אדם צר צורה על גבי הכותל ואינו יכול להטיל בה רוח ונשמה קרבים ובני מעים, אבל הקדוש ברוך הוא צר צורה בתוך צורה, ומטיל בה רוח ונשמה קרבים ובני מעים.

אביגיל – דכתיב “וְהָיָה הִיא רֹכֶבֶת עַל הַחֲמֹר וַיִּרְדֵת בְּסֵתֵר הָהָר” “בְּסֵתֵר הָהָר” מן הָהָר מִיַּעֲנֵי לִיָּה!

אמר רבה בר שמואל: על עסקי דם הבא מן הסתרים. נטלה דם והראתה לו. אמר לה: וכי מראין דם בלילה? אמרה לו: וכי דנין דיני נפשות בלילה? אמר לה:

With regard to Deborah, it says: “And she sat under a palm tree” (Judges 4:5). The Gemara asks: What is different and unique with regard to her sitting “under a palm tree” that there is a need for it to be written? Rabbi Shimon ben Avshalom said: It is due to the prohibition against being alone together with a man. Since men would come before her for judgment, she established for herself a place out in the open and visible to all, in order to avoid a situation in which she would be secluded with a man behind closed doors. Alternatively, the verse means: Just as a palm tree has only one heart,⁸ as a palm tree does not send out separate branches, but rather has only one main trunk, so too, the Jewish people in that generation had only one heart, directed to their Father in Heaven.

Hannah was a prophetess, as it is written: “And Hannah prayed and said, My heart rejoices in the Lord, my horn is exalted in the Lord” (1 Samuel 2:1), and her words were prophecy, in that she said: “My horn is exalted,” and not: My pitcher is exalted.⁹ As, with regard to David and Solomon, who were anointed with oil from a horn, their kingship continued, whereas with regard to Saul and Jehu, who were anointed with oil from a pitcher, their kingship did not continue. This demonstrates that Hannah was a prophetess, as she prophesied that only those anointed with oil from a horn will merit that their kingships continue.

Apropos the song of Hannah, the Gemara further explains her words: “There is none sacred as the Lord; for there is none beside You [biltekha]” (1 Samuel 2:2). Rav Yehuda bar Menashya said: Do not read it as biltekha, “beside You,” but rather read it as levalotekha, to outlast You. As the attribute of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is unlike the attribute of flesh and blood. It is an attribute of man that his handiwork outlasts him and continues to exist even after he dies, but the Holy One, Blessed be He, outlasts His handiwork, as He exists eternally.

Hannah further said: “Neither is there any rock [tzur] like our God” (1 Samuel 2:1). This can be understood as saying that there is no artist [tzayyar] like our God. How is He better than all other artists? Man fashions a form upon a wall, but is unable to endow it with breath and a soul, or fill it with innards and intestines, whereas the Holy One, Blessed be He, fashions a form of a fetus inside the form of its mother, rather than on a flat surface, and endows it with breath and a soul and fills it with innards and intestines.

Abigail was a prophetess, as it is written: “And it was so, as she rode on the donkey, and came down by the covert of the mountain” (1 Samuel 25:20). The Gemara asks: Why does it say: “By the covert [beseter] of the mountain”? It should have said: From the mountain.

The Gemara answers that in fact this must be understood as an allusion to something else. Rabba bar Shmuel said: Abigail, in her attempt to prevent David from killing her husband Nabal, came to David and questioned him on account of menstrual blood that comes from the hidden parts [setarim] of a body. How so? She took a blood-stained cloth and showed it to him, asking him to rule on her status, whether or not she was ritually impure as a menstruating woman. He said to her: Is blood shown at night? One does not examine blood-stained cloths at night, as it is difficult to distinguish between the different shades by candlelight. She said to him: If so, you should also remember another halakha: Are cases of capital law tried at night? Since one does not try capital cases at night, you cannot condemn Nabal to death at night. David said to her:

HALAKHA

Is a rebel against the throne – מורד במלכות הוא – The king may execute anyone who rebels against his authority or does not obey his decrees. The king is permitted to use extra-judicial means to execute the rebel, including punishing him without warning or without the testimony of witnesses (Rambam *Sefer Shofetim*, *Hilkhot Melakhim UMilhemoteihem* 3:8, 10).

NOTES

Is a rebel against the throne – מורד במלכות הוא – See *Tosafot* (s.v. *mored*), who discuss this matter. The *Turei Even* explains at length, similar to the commentary of *Tosafot* in tractate *Sanhedrin*, that even though one who rebels against the throne does not need to be convicted by the usual twenty-three-member court that adjudicates capital offenses, a small court is still required to ascertain the facts and clarify if he rebelled or not. The *Radbaz* explains in his responsa that from the time David was anointed by Samuel he had the status of king, and therefore he felt that anyone who rebelled against his authority was subject to being executed. Abigail, however, told him that although his rule had begun, his kingship had not been completely established, and therefore he should not execute those who rebelled against his kingship.

Your seal [tivakha] ... across the world – טבֵּעַךְ בְּעוֹלָם – The word for seal is derived from the Aramaic *tiv'a*, meaning coin. Minting coins with the name of a ruler acts as a public proclamation of independent rule. Furthermore, if the coins are accepted by the society as currency, they indicate that the leader's rule has been accepted as an established fact.

Damim indicates two – דָּמִים תִּרְתִּי מִשְׁמַע – Rabbi Levi ben H̄aviv explains that the terminology “coming to bloodguiltiness” is not commonly used to indicate spilling blood, and therefore it was interpreted to indicate that it would involve having relations with a menstruating woman.

Yet the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bond of life – הַיְהִי־נַפְשׁ אֲדוֹנִי צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוֹר הַחַיִּים – The *Maharsha* and others question why this additional verse is mentioned in the Gemara. Some later commentaries explain, and alternative texts bear out their interpretation, that Abigail said to him that even though he will stumble in the future with regard to the incident of Bathsheba, he will repent, and therefore, “Yet the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bond of life.”

מורד במלכות הוא, ולא צריך למדייניה. אמרה לו: עדיין שאול קיים, ולא יצא טבֵּעַךְ בעולם. אמר לה: “ברוך טעמך וברובה את אשר בליתני [היום הזה] מבא בדמים.”

דמים תרתי משמע! אלא מלמד שגילתה את שוקה, והלך לאורה שלש פרסאות. אמר לה: השמיעי לי! אמרה לו: “לא תהיה זאת לך לפוקה,” “זאת” – מקבל דאיכא אחריתי, ומאי ניהו – מעשה דבת שבע, ומסקנא הכי הואי.

“והיתה נפש אדוני צרוּרָה בצִרוֹר הַחַיִּים” כי הוות מפטרטא מיניה אמרה ליה “והטיב ה' לאדוני וזכרת את אמתך.”

אמר רב נחמן: היינו דאמרי אינשי: איתתא בהדי שותא פילכא. איכא דאמרי: שפיל ואזיל בר אווא ועינוהי מיטפי.

חולדה – דכתב ויגלך חלקיהו הכהן ואחיקם ועבבור וגו'. ובמקום דקאי ירמיה הכי מתנבא איהי? אמרי בי רב משמיה דרב: חולדה קרובת ירמיה היתה, ולא הוה מקפיד עליה.

Nabal, your husband, is a rebel against the throne,^{HN} as David had already been anointed as king by the prophet Samuel, and Nabal refused his orders. And therefore there is no need to try him, as a rebel is not accorded the ordinary prescriptions governing judicial proceedings. Abigail said to him: You lack the authority to act in this manner, as Saul is still alive. He is the king in actual practice, and your seal [tivakha] has not yet spread across the world,^N i.e., your kingship is not yet known to all. Therefore, you are not authorized to try someone for rebelling against the monarchy. David accepted her words and said to her: “And blessed be your discretion and blessed be you who have kept me this day from coming to bloodguiltiness [damim]” (1 Samuel 25:33).

The Gemara asks: The plural term *damim*, literally, bloods, indicates two.^N Why did David not use the singular term *dam*? Rather, this teaches that Abigail revealed her thigh, and he lusted after her, and he went three parasangs by the fire of his desire for her, and said to her: Listen to me, i.e., listen to me and allow me to be intimate with you. Abigail then said to him: “Let this not be a stumbling block for you” (1 Samuel 25:31). By inference, from the word “this,” it can be understood that there is someone else who will in fact be a stumbling block for him, and what is this referring to? The incident involving Bathsheba. And in the end this is what was, as indeed he stumbled with Bathsheba. This demonstrates that Abigail was a prophetess, as she knew that this would occur. This also explains why David blessed Abigail for keeping him from being responsible for two incidents involving blood that day: Abigail's menstrual blood and the shedding of Nabal's blood.

Apropos Abigail, the Gemara explains additional details in the story. Abigail said to David: “Yet the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bond of life^N with the Lord your God” (1 Samuel 25:29), and when she parted from him she said to him: “And when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, and you shall remember your handmaid” (1 Samuel 25:31).

Rav Nahman said that this explains the folk saying that people say: While a woman is engaged in conversation she also holds the spindle, i.e., while a woman is engaged in one activity she is already taking steps with regard to another. Abigail came to David in order to save her husband Nabal, but at the same time she indicates that if her husband dies, David should remember her and marry her. And indeed, after Nabal's death David took Abigail for his wife. Some say that Rav Nahman referred to a different saying: The goose stoops its head as it goes along,^B but its eyes look on from afar to find what it is looking for. So too, Abigail acted in similar fashion.

Huldah was a prophetess, as it is written: “So Hilkiah the priest and Ahikam and Achbor and Shaphan and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess” (II Kings 22:14) as emissaries of King Josiah. The Gemara asks: But if Jeremiah was found there, how could she prophesy? Out of respect for Jeremiah, who was her superior, it would have been fitting that she not prophesy in his presence. The Sages of the school of Rav say in the name of Rav: Huldah was a close relative of Jeremiah, and he did not object to her prophesying in his presence.

BACKGROUND

The goose stoops its head as it goes along – שפיל ואזיל בר אווא: as they seek out food, they remain alert to their surroundings, enabling them to better find food and to be cautious of approaching predators. The eyes of geese are located far to the sides of their heads. Consequently, although their heads are stooped toward the ground

The Jubilee – יובל: The fiftieth year, the one following seven Sabbatical cycles of seven years, has a unique status. All the agricultural *halakhot* that are followed in the Sabbatical year must also be observed in the Jubilee Year. In addition, all Jewish slaves, including those who insisted on continuing in servitude beyond their initial obligation, are freed, and fields that have been sold are returned to their original owners (see Leviticus, chapter 25). The liberation of slaves and the restoration of fields take place after Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur of that year, special prayers are recited and the *shofar* is sounded in a manner similar to that practiced on Rosh HaShana. The Jubilee Year is observed only when the majority of the Jewish people are living in Eretz Yisrael. Consequently, its observance was discontinued during the First Temple period and never renewed.

וְיִאשְׁרֶיהָ גּוֹפִיָּה, הִיכִי שְׂבִיק יְרֵמְיָה וּמִשְׁדָּר לְגַבְהָ? אָמְרֵי דְבֵי רַבֵּי שִׁילָא: מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַנְּשִׂים רַחֲמָנִיּוֹת הֵינּוּ.

The Gemara asks: **But how could Josiah himself ignore Jeremiah and send emissaries to Huldah?** The Sages of the school of Rabbi Sheila say: **Because women are more compassionate, and he hoped that what she would tell them would not be overly harsh.**

רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר: יְרֵמְיָה לֹא הָיָה הֵתָם, שֶׁהֲלֹךְ לְחַזְרוֹת עֲשֶׂרֶת הַשְּׁבֻטִים. וּמִנְּלֹן דְּאֶהְדֹּר – דְּכָתִיב “כִּי הַמּוֹכֵר אֶל הַמִּמְכָּר לֹא יָשׁוּב”, אֲפֹשֶׁר יוֹבֵל בְּטֹל וְנָבִיא מִתְנַבֵּא עָלָיו שִׁיבְטֹל? אֲלֵא מִלְּמַד שִׁירְמִיָּה הַחֲזִירָן.

Rabbi Yohanan said a different answer: **Jeremiah was not there at the time, because he went to bring back the ten tribes from their exile. And from where do we derive that he brought them back? As it is written: “For the seller shall not return to that which he has sold”** (Ezekiel 7:13), i.e., Ezekiel prophesied that in the future the Jubilee Year would no longer be in effect. **Now is it possible that the Jubilee⁸ had already been annulled?** The *halakhot* of the Jubilee Year apply only when all of the tribes of Israel are settled in their respective places, which could not have happened since the exile of the ten tribes more than a century earlier, **but the prophet is prophesying that it will cease only in the future. Rather, this teaches that Jeremiah brought back the ten tribes from their exile.**

וְיִאשְׁרֶיהוּ בֶן אָמוֹן מֶלֶךְ עָלֵיהֶן. דְּכָתִיב “וְיֹאמְרוּ מִה הַצִּיּוֹן הַלֹּז אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי רוֹאֶה וְיֹאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר הַקָּבֵר אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר בָּא מִיְהוּדָה וַיִּקְרָא אֶת הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּבֵית אֵל”. וְכִי מִה טִיבוֹ שֶׁל יִאשְׁרֶיהוּ עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּבֵית אֵל? אֲלֵא מִלְּמַד שִׁיאשְׁרֶיהוּ מֶלֶךְ עָלֵיהֶן. רַב נַחֲמָן אָמַר: מִהֲכָא גַם יְהוּדָה שֶׁת קָצִיר לָךְ בְּשׁוֹבֵי שְׁבוּת עָמִי.

And Josiah the son of Amon ruled over the ten tribes, as it is written: “Then he said: What monument is that which I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things that you have done against the altar of Bethel” (II Kings 23:17). **Now what connection did Josiah, king of Judea, have with the altar at Bethel, a city in the kingdom of Israel? Rather, this teaches that Josiah ruled over the ten tribes of Israel. Rav Nahman said: Proof that the tribes returned may be adduced from the verse here: “Also, O Judah, there is a harvest appointed for you, when I would return the captivity of My people”** (Hosea 6:11), which indicates that they returned to their places.

אֶסְתֵּר – דְּכָתִיב “וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַתִּלְבַּשׂ אֶסְתֵּר מְלֻכוּת”. בְּגָדֵי מְלֻכוּת מִיַּבְעֵי לֵיהּ! אֲלֵא: שְׁלֹבְשָׁתָהּ רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ. כְּתִיב הָכָא “וַתִּלְבַּשׂ” וְכָתִיב הֵתָם “וְרוּחַ לְבָשָׁה אֶת עַמְשֵׁי” וְגו’.

Esther was also a prophetess, as it is written: “And it came to pass on the third day that Esther clothed herself in royalty” (Esther 5:1).ⁿ **It should have said: Esther clothed herself in royal garments. Rather, this alludes to the fact that she clothed herself with a divine spirit of inspiration. It is written here: “And she clothed herself,” and it is written elsewhere: “And the spirit clothed Amasai”** (I Chronicles 12:19). Just as there the reference is to being en clothed by a spirit, so too Esther was en clothed by a spirit of divine inspiration.

אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן: לֹא יָאֵה יְהִירוּתָא לְנִשְׁי תַרְתֵּי נִשְׁי יְהִירָן הַוּוּיָן, וְסַנְיִין שְׁמִיָּהּ, תַּדָּא שְׁמָה זִיבוּרְתָא, וְתַדָּא שְׁמָה בְּרַבּוּשְׁתָּא. זִיבוּרְתָא – כְּתִיב בָּהּ “וַתִּשְׁלַח וַתִּקְרָא לְבָרַק”, וְאִילוּ אִיהִי לֹא אֲזֵלָה לְגַבְיָהּ. בְּרַבּוּשְׁתָּא כְּתִיב בָּהּ “אָמְרוּ לְאִישׁ” וְלֹא אָמְרוּ לְמֶלֶךְ.

An additional point is mentioned with regard to the prophetesses. Rav Nahman said: **Haughtiness is not befitting a woman.** And a proof to this is that **there were two haughty women, whose names were identical to the names of loathsomeⁿ creatures. One, Deborah, was called a hornet, as her Hebrew name, Devorah, means hornet; and one, Huldah, was called a marten, as her name is the Hebrew term for that creature. From where is it known that they were haughty? With regard to Deborah, the hornet, it is written: “And she sent and called Barak”** (Judges 4:6), **but she herself did not go to him. And with regard to Huldah, the marten, it is written: “Say to the man that sent you to me”** (II Kings 22:15), **but she did not say: Say to the king.**

NOTES

Esther clothed herself in royalty – תִּלְבַּשׂ אֶסְתֵּר מְלֻכוּת: Divine inspiration and prophecy are often referred to as royalty in the kabbalistic works (see *Otzar Hakavod* and *Maharsha*). Some question the citation of this verse as proof that Esther was a prophetess, saying that the list of prophets includes only those who had full-fledged prophecy, while this verse may only prove that she, like Amasai, had only divine inspiration. The *Seder Olam*, however,

explains that the real proof for her prophecy is the fact that she wrote the Megilla, a prophetic work, together with Mordecai (Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Chajes).

Whose names were loathsome – וְסַנְיִין שְׁמִיָּהּ: Having been given these names, they should have realized the need to act with humility despite their important status (*Devash LeFi*).

NOTES

The son of Harhas – בן חרחס: Although the description of Huldah as being married to “the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas” is really a description of her husband Shallum’s lineage, nevertheless the Gemara interprets it to be describing Huldah. The reason for this exposition is that nowhere else does the Bible mention the lineage of a woman who is referred to by the name of her husband. Therefore, mentioning an unknown person like Harhas as a point of lineage for Huldah’s husband does not add to the understanding of her husband’s background, and the information must be understood as teaching something else, in this case about Huldah’s deeds (Maharsha).

Descended from Rahab – יצאו מרחב: The fact that priests and prophets descended from Rahab is a matter of interest because it is prohibited for a priest to marry a convert, especially one who was a harlot. A number of commentaries also discuss how Rahab, a member of the Canaanite people, was permitted to marry a Jewish man, albeit a non-priest, after her conversion (see *Tosafot* and *ge'onim*). The *Petaḥ Einayim* and others explain that Joshua married her due to heavenly instruction.

אמר רב נחמן: חולדה מבני בניו של יהושע היתה. פתב הכא “בן חרחס” ובתב התם “בתמנת חרס”.

איתיביה רב עינא סבא לרב נחמן: שמונה נביאים והם כהנים וצאו מרחב הזונה, ואלו הן: נריה, ברוך, ושריה, מחסיה, ירמיה, חלקיה, חנמאל, ושלוש. רבי יהודה אומר: אף חולדה הנביאה מבני בניו של רחב הזונה היתה. פתב הכא “בן תקוה” ובתב התם “את תקות חוט השני”!

אמר ליה: עינא סבא! ואמרי לה: פתיא אוכמא! מיני ומינד הסתיים שמעתא; דאיגירא ונסבה יהושע. ומי הו לייה זרעא ליהושע? והכתב “גון בנו יהושע בנו”! בני – לא הו ליה, בנתן – הו ליה.

Furthermore, Rav Nahman said: Huldah was a descendant of Joshua. An allusion to this is written here: “Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas [harhas]” (II Kings 22:14),^N and it says elsewhere with regard to Joshua: “And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres [heres]” (Judges 2:9), therefore intimating that there is a certain connection between them.

Rav Eina the Elder raised an objection from a *baraita* to Rav Nahman’s teaching. The *baraita* indicates that Huldah was in fact a descendant of Rahab, and seemingly not of Joshua: Eight prophets, who were also priests, descended from Rahab^N the prostitute, and they are: Neriah; his son Baruch; Seraiah; Mahseiah; Jeremiah; his father, Hilkiah; Jeremiah’s cousin Hanamel; and Hanamel’s father, Shallum. Rabbi Yehuda said: So too, Huldah the prophetess was a descendant of Rahab the prostitute, as it is written here with regard to Huldah: “The son of Tikvah,” and it is written elsewhere in reference to Rahab’s escape from the destruction of Jericho: “This cord of [tikvat] scarlet thread” (Joshua 2:18).

Rav Nahman responded to Eina the Elder and said to him: Eina the Elder, and some say that he said to him: Blackened pot, i.e., my colleague in Torah, who has toiled and blackened his face in Torah study, from me and from you the matter may be concluded, i.e., the explanation lies in a combination of our two statements. For Rahab converted and married Joshua, and therefore Huldah descended from both Joshua and Rahab. The Gemara raises a difficulty: But did Joshua have any descendants? But isn’t it written in the genealogical list of the tribe of Ephraim: “Nun his son, Joshua his son” (1 Chronicles 7:27)? The listing does not continue any further, implying that Joshua had no sons. The Gemara answers: Indeed, he did not have sons, but he did have daughters.

Perek I
Daf 15 Amud a

NOTES

One’s name and his father’s name – שמו ושם אביו: As prophets were well known in their own right, there is no reason to mention a prophet’s father other than to indicate that the latter was also a prophet (Maharsha).

It is known that he was from Jerusalem – בידוע שהוא מירושלים: The Maharsha explains that there is an indication to this from a psalm, as it speaks of the praise of Jerusalem: “And of Zion it shall be said: This man and that man was born in her” (Psalms 87:5), signifying that famous people were born there.

בשלמא אינהו – מיפרשי, אלא אבהתייהו מנלן?

The Gemara asks in reference to the eight prophets descended from Rahab: Granted, with regard to them, it is explicit, i.e., the four sons recorded in the list were certainly prophets, as the Bible states this explicitly: Jeremiah was a prophet, his student Baruch was one of the sons of the prophets, his cousin Hanamel came to him at the word of God (see Jeremiah, chapter 32), and Seraiah was his student. But as for their fathers, Hilkiah, Neriah, Shallum, and Mahseiah, from where do we derive that they were prophets?

בדעולא. דאמר עולא: כל מקום ששמו ושם אביו בביאור – בידוע שהוא נביא בן נביא. שמו ולא שם אביו – בידוע שהוא נביא ולא בן נביא. שמו ושם עירו מפורש – בידוע שהוא מאותה העיר, שמו ולא שם עירו – בידוע שהוא מירושלים.

The Gemara answers: As taught by Ulla, as Ulla said: Wherever one’s name and his father’s name^N are mentioned with regard to prophecy, it is known that he was a prophet the son of a prophet, and therefore his father’s name is also mentioned. And wherever his name is mentioned but not his father’s name, it is known that he was a prophet but not the son of a prophet. Similarly, wherever his name and the name of his city are specified, it is known that he was from that particular city, and wherever his name is mentioned but not the name of his city, it is known that he was from Jerusalem.^N

במתנתא תנא: כל שמעשו ומעשה אבותיו סתומין, ופרט לך הכתוב באחד מהן לשבת, כגון “דבר ה’ אשר היה אל צפניה בן בושי בן גדליה” – בידוע שהוא צדיק בן צדיק. וכל שפרט לך הכתוב באחד מהן לגנאי, כגון “ויהי בחדש השביעי בא ושמעאל בן נתניה בן אלישמע” – בידוע שהוא רשע בן רשע.

It was taught in a *baraita*: With regard to anyone whose actions and the actions of his ancestors are obscured and not explained, and the verse mentioned one of them favorably, for example, the way in which Zephaniah the prophet is introduced: “The word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah” (Zephaniah 1:1), it is known that not only was he a righteous man, he was also the son of a righteous man. And conversely, whenever the verse mentioned one of them unfavorably, for example, in the verse that introduces Ishmael as the one who killed Gedaliah, which states: “And it came to pass in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama” (Jeremiah 41:1), it is known that not only was he a wicked man, he was also the son of a wicked man.