

I. Haftorat Chana: The Text

Samuel I, Chapter 1

1 There was a man from Ramathaim of the Zuphites, in the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.

2 He had two wives, one named Hannah and the other Peninnah; Peninnah had children, but Hannah was childless.

3 This man used to go up from his town every year to worship and to offer sacrifice to the L-rd of Hosts at Shiloh. — Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the L-rd there.

4 One such day, Elkanah offered a sacrifice. He used to give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters;

5 but to Hannah he would give one portion only — though Hannah was his favorite — for the L-rd had closed her womb.

6 Moreover, her rival, to make her miserable, would taunt her that the L-rd had closed her womb.

7 This happened year after year: Every time she went up to the House of the L-rd, the other would taunt her, so that she wept and would not eat.

8 Her husband Elkanah said to her, "Hannah, why are you crying and why aren't you eating? Why are you so sad? Am I not more devoted to you than ten sons?"

9 After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose. — The priest Eli was sitting on the seat near the doorpost of the temple of the L-rd.

10 In her wretchedness, she prayed to the L-rd, weeping all the while.

11 And she made this vow: "O L-rd of Hosts, if You will look upon the suffering of Your maidservant and will remember me and not forget Your maidservant, and if You will grant Your maidservant a male child, I will dedicate



שמואל א: א
 1 וַיְהִי אִישׁ אֶחָד
 מִרְהַרְמְתַיִם צוֹפִים
 מֵהַר אֶפְרַיִם וְשֵׁמוֹ
 אֶלְקָנָה בְּרִירְחָם
 בְּרֵאֵלִיהוּא בְּרִתְחַי
 בְּרִצּוֹף אֶפְרַתִּי:
 2 וְלוֹ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים
 שֵׁם אַחַת חַנָּה
 וְשֵׁם הַשְּׁנִיית פְּנִינָה
 וַיְהִי לַפְּנִינָה יְלָדִים

וְלַחַנָּה אֵין יְלָדִים:
 3 וַעֲלָה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מֵעִירוֹ מִמְּיָם | מִיָּמָה
 לְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת וְלִזְבֹּחַ לַה צֶב־וֹת בְּשִׁלֹּה וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי בָנָי
 עָלֶי חֹפְנֵי וּפְנִיחָס כְּהֹנִים לָהּ:
 4 וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיִּזְבַּח אֶלְקָנָה וַנְתֵן לַפְּנִינָה אֶשְׁתּוֹ
 וְלִכְל־בָּנֶיהָ וּבְנוֹתֶיהָ מִנּוֹת:
 5 וְלַחַנָּה יָתֵן מִנָּה אַחַת אֶפְיָם כִּי אֶת־חַנָּה אָהַב
 וְהָ סָגַר רַחֲמָהּ:
 6 וְכָעֵסֶתָה צָרְתָה גַם־כָּעַס בְּעַבּוֹר הַרְעֵמָה כִּי־סָגַר
 ה' בְּעַד רַחֲמָהּ:
 7 וְכִן יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה מְדֵי עֲלֵתָה בְּבַיִת ה' כִּן
 תִּכְעַסְנָה וְתִבְכֶּה וְלֹא תֹאכַל:
 8 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ אֶלְקָנָה אִישָׁה חַנָּה לָמָּה תִבְכִּי וְלָמָּה
 לֹא תֹאכְלִי וְלָמָּה יָרַע לְבָבְךָ הַלּוֹא אֲנֹכִי טוֹב לָךְ
 מֵעֲשָׂרָה בָּנִים:
 9 וַתִּקַּם חַנָּה אַחֲרָי אֶכְלָה בְּשִׁלֹּה וְאַחֲרָי שָׁתָה
 וְעָלִי הִכְהִן יֹשֵׁב עַל־הַכֹּסֵא עַל־מְזוֹזֹת הַיִּכְלָה:
 10 וְהִיא מָרַת נַפְשׁ וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל עַל ה' וּבְכָה תִבְכֶּה:
 11 וַתִּדְרֹךְ נֶדֶר וַתֹּאמֶר ה' צֶב־וֹת אִם־יֵרְאֶה תִרְאֶה
 בְּעֵנֵי אֲמֹתֶךָ וּזְכַרְתִּנִי וְלֹא־תִשְׁכַּח אֶת־אֲמֹתֶךָ

him to the L-rd for all the days of his life; and no razor shall ever touch his head.”

12 As she kept on praying before the L-rd, Eli watched her mouth.

13 Now Hannah was praying in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice could not be heard. So Eli thought she was drunk.

14 Eli said to her, “How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Sober up!”

15 And Hannah replied, “Oh no, my lord! I am a very unhappy woman. I have drunk no wine or other strong drink, but I have been pouring out my heart to the L-rd.

16 Do not take your maidservant for a worthless woman; I have only been speaking all this time out of my great anguish and distress.”

17 “Then go in peace,” said Eli, “and may the G-d of Israel grant you what you have asked of Him.”

18 She answered, “You are most kind to your handmaid.” So the woman left, and she ate, and was no longer downcast.

19 Early next morning they bowed low before the L-rd, and they went back home to Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah and the L-rd remembered her.

20 Hannah conceived, and at the turn of the year bore a son. She named him Samuel, meaning, “I asked the L-rd for him.”

21 And when the man Elkanah and all his household were going up to offer to the L-rd the annual sacrifice and his votive sacrifice,

22 Hannah did not go up. She said to her husband, “When the child is weaned, I will bring him. For when he has appeared before the L-rd, he must remain there for good.”

23 Her husband Elkanah said to her, “Do as you think best. Stay home until you have weaned him. May the L-rd fulfill His word.” So the woman stayed home and nursed her son until she weaned him.

24 When she had weaned him, she took him up with her;

וַנִּתְּנָהּ לְאַמְתָּךְ זָרַע אַנְשִׁים
וַנִּתְּנִי לָהּ כְּלִימֵי חַיִּיו וּמֹרֶ
רָה לֹא־יַעֲלֶה עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ:
12 וְהָיָה כִּי הִרְבֵּתָה לְהַתְּפַלֵּל
לִפְנֵי ה' וַעֲלִי שֹׁמֵר אֶת־פִּיהָ:
13 וְחִנָּה הִיא מְדַבֵּרֶת עַל־לִבָּהּ
רַק שִׁפְתֶיהָ נְעוּת וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא
שֹׁמֵעַ וַיַּחֲשֹׁבָהּ עָלַי לְשִׁכְרָה:



14 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ עָלַי עַד־מָתַי תִּשְׁתַּכְּרִין הֲסִירִי אֶת־
יַיִךְ מֵעַלְיָךְ:

15 וַתַּעַן חִנָּה וַתֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲדַנִּי אִשָּׁה קִשְׁת־רוּחַ
אֲנֹכִי וַיַּיִן וְשִׁכָר לֹא שָׁתִיתִי וְאֶשְׁפָּךְ אֶת־נַפְשִׁי לִפְנֵי
ה':

16 אֲלִיתָתָן אֶת־אַמְתָּךְ לִפְנֵי בַת־בְּלִיעַל כִּי־מֵרֵב
שִׁיחִי וְכַעֲסִי דַבַּרְתִּי עַד־הִנֵּה:
17 וַיַּעַן עָלַי וַיֹּאמֶר לְכִי לְשִׁלּוֹם וְאַל־קִי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִתֵּן
אֶת־שִׁלְתָּךְ אֲשֶׁר שָׁאַלְתָּ מֵעַמּוֹ:

18 וַתֹּאמֶר תִּמְצָא שִׁפְחָתְךָ חֹן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וַתִּלְךְ הָאִשָּׁה
לְדִרְכָּהּ וַתֹּאכַל וַפְּנִיָּהּ לֹא־הִיוּלָהּ עוֹד:

19 וַיִּשְׁכַּמוּ בַבֶּקֶר וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לִפְנֵי ה' וַיֵּשְׁבוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ
אֶל־בֵּיתָם הֲרַמְתָּה וַיִּדַע אֶלְקָנָה אֶת־חִנָּה אֲשֶׁתּוֹ
וַיִּזְכְּרָהּ ה':

20 וַיְהִי לְתַקְפוֹת הַיָּמִים וַתַּהַר חִנָּה וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן
וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שְׁמוּאֵל כִּי מָה שִׁאֲלִיתִיו:

21 וַיַּעַל הָאִישׁ אֶלְקָנָה וְכָל־בֵּיתוֹ לְזִבְחַת ה' אֶת־זֶבַח
הַיָּמִים וְאֶת־נִדְרוֹ:

22 וְחִנָּה לֹא עָלְתָה כִּי־אָמְרָה לְאִישָׁה עַד יִגְמַל הַנְּעָר
וַתִּבְאֲתִיו וַנִּרְאָה אֶת־פְּנֵי ה' וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם עַד־עוֹלָם:

23 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ אֶלְקָנָה אִישָׁה עָשִׂי הַטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ שְׁבִי
עַד־גְּמֻלְךָ אֹתוֹ אֵךְ יָקָם ה' אֶת־דְּבָרוֹ וַתֵּשֶׁב הָאִשָּׁה
וַתִּינֶק אֶת־בְּנָהּ עַד־גְּמֻלָּהּ אֹתוֹ:

24 וַתַּעֲלֶהוּ עִמָּה כַּאֲשֶׁר גְּמַלְתּוֹ בְּפָרִים שְׁלֶשָׁה
וְאִיפָה אַחַת קָמַח וְנֹבֵל יַיִן וַתִּבְאֶהוּ בֵּיתָהּ שְׁלוֹ

along with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a jar of wine. And though the boy was still very young, she brought him to the House of the L-rd at Shiloh.

25 After slaughtering the bull, they brought the boy to Eli.

26 She said, "Please, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you and prayed to the L-rd.

27 It was this boy I prayed for; and the L-rd has granted me what I asked of Him.

28 I, in turn, hereby lend him to the L-rd. For as long as he lives he is lent to the L-rd." And they bowed low there before the L-rd.

וְהַנֶּעֱרָר נָעַר :

25 וַיִּשְׁחֲטוּ אֶת־הַפָּר וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־הַנֶּעֱרָר אֶל־עֲלִי :

26 וַתֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנָי חַי נַפְשְׁךָ אֲדֹנָי אֲנִי הָאִשָּׁה

הַנִּצְבֶּת עִמָּכָה בְּזֶה לְהַתְּפַלֵּל אֱלֹהִים :

27 אֱלֹהֵי־הַנֶּעֱרָר הַזֶּה הִתְּפַלֵּתִי וַיִּתֶּן ה' לִי אֶת־שְׂאֵלָתִי

אֲשֶׁר שְׂאֵלָתִי מֵעַמּוֹ :

28 וְגַם אֲנֹכִי הִשְׁאֵלְתִּהוּ לֵה' כְּלֵהֲיָמָיו אֲשֶׁר הִנֵּה

הוּא שְׂאוֹל לֵה' וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ שָׁם לֵה' :

II. Haftarat Chana: Commentaries

Verse One

And there was

Megillah 10a

Wherever the word "vayehi" is used indicates that there is a hardship or difficulty involved, as it says, "and there was a man...because he loved Chana and G-d closed her womb."



Verse Three

And this man went out of his city yearly

Rashi

The verse uses the present tense to indicate that he would go regularly, for each holiday, up to Shiloh. And Midrash Aggadah explains that the way he would go up to Shiloh one year, he would not use on another year, in order to teach Israel so that they would do like him.

Verse Five

And to Chana, he gave "a portion of faces"

The commentaries interpret this phrase in various ways: a generous portion (R' Yosef Kara), a choice portion (Rashi), or a "portion [to restore her good] mood." (Radak). Abarbanel connects this with the following, "for it was Chana he loved," and so his mood was downcast because he could give her only one portion.

And G-d closed her womb

Eliyahu Rabba

One time I was travelling and I met an elder. He asked me why is it that the heads of our nation were prevented from having children. I answered him, My son it is because G-d loves them a complete love and rejoices in them and does so in order that they ask for His great mercies. Learn from Avraham and Sara who were barren, similarly Rivka and Rachel and Chana, they did not merit children until they beseeched before G-d.



Verse Six

And her adversary provoked her bitterly to irritate her, because G-d had closed her womb

Rashi

Her Adversary

Penina, her adversary, would provoke her with words.

Another anger

This means to say that she would keep provoking her, many times.

Because G-d had closed her womb

This means to say that this was the area for Penina to anger her. She would say to her mockingly, have you yet bought something for your older son, or what about your younger one. And being that Chana was already bitter about her barrenness, she was easily provoked.

Baba Basra 16a

R. Levi said: The Satan and Penina both intended for the purpose of heaven, as it says: and Penina provoked her bitterly in order to upset her...

Verse Eleven

G-d of Hosts

Rashi

Why does she use this name here? She said, "Master of the Universe, two hosts you have created in your world. The spiritual beings do not reproduce and they do not die. The lower being (physical beings) reproduce and they die. If I am from the lower beings, I should reproduce and die, but if I am from the higher beings, I should not die."

Brochot 11b

R. Elazar said: From the day that G-d created the world, no one called Him, "Tzvako" until Chana came and called Him so. Chana said to G-d, "Master of the Universe, from all the hosts that you have created in Your world, is it difficult for You to provide me with a son?!" To what can it be compared? To a human king who made a feast for his servants, a poor person came and stood at the entrance. He said to them, "Please give me a little piece," but they paid him no heed. He knocked and entered the king's room and said, "My master, my king, from all the feast that you are making, is it difficult to give me a little piece?"

Verse Twelve

As she continued praying very much

Radak

R. Shimon in the name of R. Chalafta and in the name of R. Meir: From here we learn that whoever prays very much is answered...Chana who increased her prayers shortened the days of Shmuel, as it says, "and he will dwell here all his life" (Ibid 22), and the life of a Levi is fifty years (of service) as it says "from fifty years" (Numbers 8:25).



Verse Thirteen

And Chana spoke in her heart: only her lips moved but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought that she was drunk

Rashi

Spoke in her heart:

This means to say quietly, it was not heard by Eli.

Brachot 31a

In her heart

From here we learn that one must focus his heart.

Only her lips moved

From here we learn (that even when praying quietly) one must move his lips and mouth the words (and not merely keep them in mind).

But her voice was not heard

From here we learn that one must not raise his voice.

Therefore Eli thought that she was drunk

From here we learn that someone drunk may not pray.

Verse Fourteen

And Eli said to her

Brochot 31a

From here we learn that someone who sees another doing something inappropriate must reproach him.

Verse Seventeen

Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace; and the G-d of Israel grant you the petition

Brochot 31a

From here we learn that someone who suspects his friend wrongly, must appease him, and not only that, but also bless him, as it says, and the G-d of Israel grant you...

Verse Nineteen

And G-d remembered her

Rosh Hashana 11a

On Rosh Hashana, Sara, Rachel and Chana were remembered.

III. Chana and Eli's Dialogue

1) Difficulties in this reading:

- a) Eli's wisdom and experience
- b) Torah's recording of Eli's error
- c) Connection to Rosh Hashana



2) Understanding the Discussion

- a) Eli's Question
- b) Chana's Response

IV. The Commandment to Pray

Deut. Ch. 10

And now Israel what does G-d ask of you? Only to fear G-d and to go in His path and to love and serve him with all your heart and soul.

Taanit 2a

What is the service of the heart? Let us say this is prayer.

Rambam, Laws of Prayer Ch. 1: 1-2

1) It is a positive commandment to pray every day as it says, "And serve G-d, your G-d." From tradition it is learned that this service is prayer as it says, "and serve G-d with all your heart." The sages said, "What is a service of the heart? This is prayer." The number of how many prayers to pray is not from the Torah, nor is the wording or making a set time from the Torah.

2) Therefore women and slaves are obligated in prayers since from the Torah this is not a mitzvah bound by a certain time period rather the obligation of prayer is such that a person implores and prays every day and tells the praise of G-d and after asks for his needs with imploring and after praises and thanks G-d for the good and abundance that He has given him.

V. A Deeper Perspective on Chana's Prayers

1) Motivation for Physical Desires

Psalms Ch. 107:8

Hungry and thirsty, their soul longs within.

Keter Shem Tov, sec 194

The Baal Shem Tov asks: "Why are they hungry and thirsty? Because their soul longs within." Their souls seek a bond with the G-dly energy contained in the food and drink.



2) Paradox of Prayer

- a) Acknowledge undeserved good; articulation of appreciation; realization that G-d is all good.
- b) Express wants and needs, spiritually and materially.

3) G-d as King and Parent

- a) King: establishes definite boundaries, authority, distance, transcendence
- b) Parent: Avinu Malkeinu; Shechina; immanence, caring for spiritual and material needs.

4) Connection to Rosh Hashana:

- a) Focus of Rosh Hashana: G-d's kingship
- b) Divine Purpose of Creation: A connection to the physical realms
- c) Necessity of the Introspective Process: Eli's questions