

Imagining King David in the Babylonian Talmud

Rabbi David Silber, Drisha Fall 2020

Shabbat 55a:2-9

The Gemara relates: **Rav Yehuda was sitting before Shmuel** when **this woman came** and **cried before Shmuel** about an injustice that had been committed against her, **and Shmuel paid no attention to her**. **Rav Yehuda said to Shmuel: Doesn't the Master hold** in accordance with the verse: **"Whoever stops his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard"** (Proverbs 21:13)? **He said to him: Big-toothed one, your superior, i.e., I, your teacher, will be punished in cold water. The superior of your superior will be punished in hot water. Mar Ukva, who sits as president of the court, is responsible for those matters. And from where is it derived that this responsibility is incumbent upon the house of the Exilarch? As it is written: "House of David, so says the Lord: Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is robbed out of the hand of the oppressor, lest My fury go forth like fire, and burn so that none can quench it because of the evil of your doings"** (Jeremiah 21:12). The Exilarch is a direct descendant of the house of David. With regard to the issue of reprimand, it was related that **Rabbi Zeira said to Rabbi Simon: Let the Master reprimand** the members of **the house of the Exilarch**, as Rabbi Simon had some influence over them. **Rabbi Simon said to him: They will not accept reprimand from me. Rabbi Zeira said to him: Let my master reprimand them even if they do not accept it. As Rabbi Aha, son of Rabbi Hanina, said: Never did a promise manifesting a good attribute emerge from the mouth of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and He later retracted it and rendered it evil, except with regard to this matter, as it is written: "And the Lord said to him: Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark [tav] upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry on account of all the abominations that are done in her midst"** (Ezekiel 9:4). **The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to the angel Gabriel: Go and inscribe a tav of ink on the foreheads of the righteous as a sign so that the angels of destruction will not have dominion over them. And inscribe a tav of blood on the foreheads of the wicked as a sign so that the angels of destruction will have dominion over them. The attribute of justice said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, how are these different from those? He said to that attribute: These are full-fledged righteous people and those are full-fledged wicked people. The attribute of justice said to Him: Master of the Universe, it was in the hands of the righteous to protest the conduct of the wicked, and they did not protest. He said to that attribute: It is revealed and known before Me that even**

שבת נ"ה א:ב'-ט'

רב יהודה הנה יתיב קמיה דשמואל. אתאי
ההיא איתתא קא צווחה קמיה, ולא הנה משגח
בה. אמר ליה: לא סבר ליה מר: "אוטם אָזְנו
מזעקת דל גם הוא יקרא ולא יענה?" אמר
ליה: נשיננא, רישף בקרירי, רישא דרישף
בְּחַמִּימִי. הא יתיב מר עוקבא אב בית דין.
דְּכַתִּיב: "בית דוד פה אמר ה' דינו לבקר
משפט והצילו גזול מיד עושק פן תצא כאש
חמתי ובערה ואין מכבה מפני רוע מעלליהם
וגו'". אמר ליה רבי זירא לרבי סימון:
לֹכְחִינְהוּ מֵר לְהַגִּי דְבֵי רִישׁ גְּלוּתָא. אמר ליה:
לא מקבלי מינאי. אמר ליה: אף על גב דלא
מקבלי לֹכְחִינְהוּ מֵר. דאמר רבי אחא ברבי
חנינא: מעולם לא יצתה מדה טובה מפִּי
הקדוש ברוך הוא וְחִזַּר בָּהּ לְרַעָה חוץ מדבר
זֶה, דְּכַתִּיב: "ויאמר ה' אליו עבור בתוך העיר
בתוך ירושלים והתויתָ תו על מצחות הנאנשים
הנאנחים והנאנקים על כל התועבות הנעשות
בתוכה וגו'". אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא
לגבריאֵל: לך ורשום על מצחן של צדיקים
תיו של דיו שלא ישלטו בהם מלאכי חבלה.
ועל מצחם של רשעים תיו של דם כְּדֵי
שִׁישְׁלְטוּ בָהֶן מְלָאכֵי חַבְלָה. אמרה מדת הדין
לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבוננו של עולם! מה
נשתנו אלו מאלו? אמר לה: הקלו צדיקים
גמורים והקלו רשעים גמורים. אמרה לפניו:
רבוננו של עולם! הקה בידם למחות ולא מיחו!
אמר לה: גלוי וידוע לפני שאם מיחו בהם לא
יקבלו מהם. (אמר) [אמרה] לפניו: רבוננו של
עולם! אם לפניך גלוי, להם מי גלוי? והיננו

Imagining King David in the Babylonian Talmud

Rabbi David Silber, Drisha Fall 2020

had they protested the conduct of the wicked, they would not have accepted the reprimand from them. They would have continued in their wicked ways. The attribute of justice said before Him: Master of the Universe, if it is revealed before You that their reprimand would have been ineffective, is it revealed to them? The Holy One, Blessed be He, retracted His promise to protect the righteous and decided that those who failed to protest would also be punished. And that is the meaning of that which is written: “Slay utterly old and young, both maid, and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My Sanctuary” (Ezekiel 9:6). And it is written in that same verse: “Then they began with the elderly men who were before the house.” Rav Yosef taught: Read not: My Sanctuary [*mikdashi*], rather: Those sanctified to Me [*mekudashai*]. These are people who observed the whole Torah in its entirety from *alef* through *tav*. And immediately: “And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lies toward the north, and every man with his weapon of destruction in his hand; and one man among them was clothed in linen, with a writer’s inkwell by his side; and they went in and stood beside the bronze altar” (Ezekiel 9:2).

דְּכַתִּיב: “זָקֵן בְּחֹר וּבְתוּלָה טָף וְנָשִׁים תַּהַרְגוּ לְמִשְׁחֵית וְעַל כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו הַתּוֹ אֶל תִּגְשׁוּ וּמִמְקֻדְשֵׁי תַחֲלוּ.” וְכַתִּיב: “וַיִּחְלוּ בְּאֲנָשִׁים הַזְּקֵנִים אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי הַבַּיִת.” תַּנִּי רַב יוֹסֵף: אֵל תִּקְרִי “מִקְדָּשִׁי” אֶלָּא “מְקוּדְשָׁי” — אֵלּוּ בְנֵי אָדָם נְשַׁקְיָמוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה כְּלָהּ מֵאֲלֶף וְעַד תָּיִו. וּמֵיָד: “וַהֲיָה נְשֵׂאָה אֲנָשִׁים בָּאִים מִדְּרֹךְ שַׁעַר הָעֶלְיוֹן אֲשֶׁר מִפְּנֵי צְפוֹנָה וְאִישׁ כָּלִי מִפְּצוּ בִידוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּתוֹכְכֶם לְכֶשׁ הַבַּדִּים וְקִסֵּת הַסּוּפֵר בְּמַתְנָיו וַיָּבֵאוּ וַיַּעֲמְדוּ אֶצְלֵ מִזְבֵּחַ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת.”

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Shabbat 55b:12-19

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said that Rabbi Yonatan said: **Anyone who says that the sons of Eli sinned is nothing other than mistaken, as it is written: "And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Pinehas, were there priests of the Lord"** (I Samuel 1:3). The Gemara explains: Rabbi Yonatan holds in accordance with the opinion of Rav, as Rav said: **Pinehas did not sin.** And the verse juxtaposes Hophni to Pinehas; just as Pinehas did not sin, so too Hophni did not sin. The Gemara asks: **How, then, do I establish the meaning of the verse: "Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did to all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the Tent of Meeting"** (I Samuel 2:22), which indicates otherwise? The Gemara answers: **Since the sons of Eli delayed sacrificing the bird-offerings of women who had given birth, a pair of doves brought as part of the purification process, and this delay caused the women not to go to their husbands in timely fashion, the verse ascribes to Hophni and Pinehas liability as if they had lain with them.** They were guilty of nothing more than negligence and carelessness. The Gemara now examines the matter itself of Rav's statement cited in the course of the previous discussion. **Rav said: Pinehas did not sin, as it is stated: "And Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Pinehas, the son of Eli, was the Lord's priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod"** (I Samuel 14:3). **Is it possible that sin came to Pinehas' hand and, nevertheless, the verse traces the lineage of his grandson, Ahijah, back to him? Wasn't it already stated with regard to those who engage in promiscuous relations: "The Lord will cut off from the man that does this, him that is awake and him that answers from the tents of Jacob, or any to present an offering to the Lord of hosts"** (Malachi 2:12). The Sages interpreted the verse homiletically: **If the sinner is an Israelite, he will not have among his descendants one who is sharp and awake among the Sages, or even one among their disciples who can answer questions. And if he is a priest, he will not have a son who will present a meal-offering.** If Pinehas had sons and grandsons serving as priests, **conclude from it that Pinehas did not sin.** The Gemara asks: **However, isn't it written: "And how they lay [yishkevun] with the women."** The verb *yishkevun* is in the plural, indicating that both sons were guilty. The Gemara answers: **It is written without a vav so that it can be read as yishkeven in the singular, i.e., how he lay, indicating that only one of them sinned.** The Gemara asks further: **Isn't it written that Eli said: "No, my sons [bana'i]; for it is not a good report that I hear; you make the Lord's people to transgress"** (I Samuel 2:24). The fact that Eli referred to his sons in the plural indicates that they both sinned. **Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said: It is written in a manner that can be read as my son [beni] in the singular.** The Gemara raises another question: **Isn't it written: "You make the Lord's people to transgress [ma'avirim] in the plural, indicating that both sons were guilty. Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, said: Here too, the word is written without a yod so that it can be read as: You cause the Lord's people to transgress [ma'aviram] in the singular, indicating that only one of them sinned.** The Gemara raises one last challenge: **Isn't it written: "Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels; they knew not the Lord"** (I Samuel 2:12), indicating that they were both sinners. The Gemara answers: **Since Pinehas should have protested Hophni's conduct, but he did not protest, the verse ascribes to him liability as if he too had sinned.**

שבת נ"ה ב:י"ב-י"ט

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן:
כל האומר בני עלי חטאו אינו אלא טועה,
שנאמר: "וְנָשָׂא מִבְּנֵי עֲלִי עִם אֲרוֹן בְּרִית
הָאֱלֹקִים חֲפְנֵי וּפְנִחָס כַּהֲנִים לֵה"'. סבר לה
כרב, דאמר רב: פנחס לא חטא. מקיש חפני
לפנחס: מה פנחס לא חטא — אף חפני לא
חטא. אלא מה אני מקיים "אשר ישכבן את
הנשים" — מתוך ששהו את קיניהן, שלא
הלכו אצל בעליהן, מעלה עליהן הכתוב
כאילו שכבום. גופא, אמר רב: פנחס לא
חטא, שנאמר: "וְאֶחָזְיָה בֶן אַחֲטוּב אָחִי אִי
כבוד בן פנחס בן עלי כהן ה' וגו'" —
אפשר חטא בא לידו והכתוב מייחסו? והלא
כבר נאמר: "יְכַרְתֶּם ה' לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂנָה עַר
וְעִנָּה מֵאֲהָלֵי יַעֲקֹב וּמִגִּישׁ מִנְחָה לֵה'
צְבָאוֹת". אם ישראל הוא — לא יהיה לו ער
בחכמים ולא עונה בתלמידים. ואם כהן הוא
— לא יהיה לו בן מגיש מנחה. אלא לאו
שמע מינה: פנחס לא חטא. אלא הא כתיב
"אשר ישכבן"! — "ישכבן" כתיב. והכתיב:
"אל בני כי לא טובה השמעה"! אמר רב
נחמן בר יצחק: "בני" כתיב. והכתיב
"מעברים"! אמר רב הונא בריה דרב
יהושע: "מעברים" כתיב. והכתיב "בני
בליעל"! מתוך שהיה לו לפנחס למחות
לחפני ולא מיחה, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו
חטא.

Imagining King David in the Babylonian Talmud

Rabbi David Silber, Drisha Fall 2020

Sanhedrin 107a

who did eat of my bread, has lifted his heel against me” (Psalms 41:10). Bread is a metaphor for Torah knowledge. § Apropos Ahithophel, the Gemara relates the events that led to his death. **Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: A person should never bring himself to undergo an ordeal, as David, king of Israel, brought himself to undergo an ordeal and failed.** David said before God: **Master of the Universe, for what reason does one say in prayer: God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, and one does not say: God of David?** God said to David: **They have undergone ordeals before Me, and you have not undergone an ordeal before Me.** David said before Him: **Examine me and subject me to an ordeal, as it is stated: “Examine me, Lord, and subject me to an ordeal; try my kidneys and my heart” (Psalms 26:2).** God said to him: **I will subject you to an ordeal, and I will perform a matter for you that I did not perform for the Patriarchs, as for them, I did not inform them of the nature of the ordeal, while I am informing you that I will subject you to an ordeal involving a matter of a married woman, with whom relations are forbidden. Immediately, it is written: “And it came to pass one evening that David rose from his bed” (II Samuel 11:2).** Rav Yehuda says: Once David heard the nature of his ordeal, he sought to prevent himself from experiencing lust. **He transformed his nighttime bed into his daytime bed, i.e., he engaged in intercourse with his wives during the day, in an attempt to quell his lust. But a halakha, i.e., a Torah statement, escaped him: There is a small limb in man that he employs in sexual intercourse. If he starves the limb, and does not overindulge, it is satiated; but if he satiates the limb and overindulges in sexual intercourse, it is starving, and desires more.** Therefore, his plan had the opposite effect. The verse states: **“And he walked upon the roof of the king’s house; from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very fair to look upon” (II Samuel 11:2).** Bathsheba was shampooing her head behind a beehive, which concealed her from sight. **Satan came and appeared to David as a bird. David shot an arrow at the bird, the arrow severed the beehive, Bathsheba was exposed, and David saw her. Immediately, it is written: “And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said: Is not this Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was purified from her impurity, and then she returned to her house” (II Samuel 11:3–4).** And that is the meaning of that which is written: **“You have proved my heart; You have visited me in the night: You have tried me, but You find nothing; let no presumptuous thought pass my lips” (Psalms 17:3).** David said: **Oh, that a muzzle would have fallen upon the mouth of the one who hates me, a euphemism for his own mouth, and I would not have said anything like that and I would have withstood the ordeal.** Rava taught: **What is the meaning of that which is written: “To the leader, of David. In the Lord I put my trust; how can you say to my soul: Flee like a bird to your mountain” (Psalms 11:1)?** David said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: **Master of the Universe,**

סנהדרין ק"ז א

אוכל לחמי הגדיל עלי עקב אמר רב יהודה
אמר רב לעולם אל יביא אדם עצמו לידי
נסיון שהרי דוד מלך ישראל הביא עצמו
לידי נסיון ונכשל אמר לפניו רבש"ע מפני
מה אומרים אלקי אברהם אלקי יצחק
ואלקי יעקב ואין אומרים אלקי דוד אמר
אינהו מינסו לי ואת לא מינסית לי אמר
לפניו רבש"ע בחנני ונסני שנאמר (תהלים
כו, ב) בחנני ה' ונסני וגו' אמר מינסנא לך
ועבידנא מילתא בהדך דלדידהו לא
הודעתניהו ואילו אנא קא מודענא לך
דמנסנא לך בדבר ערוה מיד (שמואל ב
יא, ב) ויהי לעת הערב ויקם דוד מעל
משכבו וגו' אמר רב יהודה שהפך משכבו
של לילה למשכבו של יום ונתעלמה ממנו
הלכה אבר קטן יש באדם משביעו רעב
ומרעיבו שבע (שמואל ב יא, ב) ויתהלך
על גג בית המלך וירא אשה רוחצת מעל
הגג והאשה טובת מראה מאד בת שבע הוה
קא חייפא רישא תותי חלתא אתא שטן
אידמי ליה כציפרתא פתק ביה גירא פתקה
לחלתא איגליה וחזייה מיד (שמואל ב יא,
ג) וישלח דוד וידרוש לאשה ויאמר הלא
זאת בת שבע בת אליעם אשת אוריה החתי
וישלח דוד מלאכים ויקחה ותבא אליו
וישכב עמה והיא מתקדשת מטומאתה
ותשב אל ביתה והיינו דכתיב (תהלים יז,
ג) בחנת לבי פקדת לילה צרפתי בל
תמצא זמותי בל יעבר פי אמר איכו זממא
נפל בפומיה דמאן דסני לי ולא אמר כי הא
מילתא דרש רבא מאי דכתיב (תהלים יא,

Imagining King David in the Babylonian Talmud

Rabbi David Silber, Drisha Fall 2020

pardon me for that sin with Bathsheba so that the wicked people will not say: The mountain that is among you, i.e., the luminary of the generation, David, was driven from the world due to a bird that led to his transgression. Rava taught: What is the meaning of that which is written: "Against You, only You, have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your eyes; that You are justified when You speak, and right when You judge" (Psalms 51:6)? David said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: It is revealed and known before You that if I sought to suppress my evil inclination, I would have suppressed it; but I said: I will sin, so that they will not say a servant overcame his master and withstood the ordeal even though God said that he would not. Rava taught: What is the meaning of that which is written: "For I am ready to stumble [*letzela*] and my pain is always before me" (Psalms 38:18)? Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, was designated as fit for David from the six days of Creation. Rava interprets that the term *letzela* is referring to Eve, who was taken from the side [*tzela*] of Adam, the first man, and explains that she was destined for him, just as Eve was destined for Adam. But she came to him through pain. And likewise, the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, was designated as fit for David, but he partook of her unripe, before the appointed time. David would have ultimately married her in a permitted manner after the death of Uriah. Rava taught: What is the meaning of that which is written: "And when I limped they rejoiced and gathered, the wretched gather themselves together against me, and those whom I know not; they tore and did not cease [*dammu*]" (Psalms 35:15)? David said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe. It is revealed and known before you that if my enemies were to tear my flesh, my blood [*dami*] would not flow to the ground, due to excessive fasting (see II Samuel 12:16–17). David continued: Moreover, my enemies torment me to the extent that at the time when they are engaged in the public study of the *halakhot* of the four court-imposed death penalties they interrupt their study and say to me: David, concerning one who engages in intercourse with a married woman, his death is effected with what form of execution? And I said to them: Concerning one who engages in intercourse with a married woman before witnesses and with forewarning, his death is by strangulation, and he has a share in the World-to-Come. But one who humiliates another before the multitudes has no share in the World-to-Come. The transgression of those who humiliated David is clearly more severe than the transgression of David himself. Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: Even during the time of his illness he fulfilled the mitzva of conjugal rights for eighteen wives, as it is stated: "I am weary with my groaning; every night I speak in my bed; I melt away my couch with tears" (Psalms 6:7). Even when he was weary and groaning he still spoke in his bed, a euphemism for sexual intercourse. And Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: David sought to engage in idol worship during Absalom's coup, as it is stated: "And it came to pass when David was at the top [*rosh*] of the ascent, where he would bow to God" (II Samuel 15:32), and *rosh* means nothing other than idol worship, as it is

(א) למנצח לדוד בה' חסיתי איך תאמרו
לנפשי נודי הרכם צפור אמר דוד לפני
הקב"ה רבש"ע מחול לי על אותו עון שלא
יאמרו הר שבכם צפור נדדתו דרש רבא
מאי דכתיב (תהלים נא, ו) לך לבדך
חטאתי והרע בעיניך עשיתי למען תצדק
בדברך תזכה בשפטך אמר דוד לפני
הקב"ה גליא וידיעא קמך דאי בעיא
למכפייה ליצרי הוה כייפינא אלא אמינא
דלא לימרו עבדא זכי למריה דרש רבא
מאי דכתיב (תהלים לח, יח) כי אני לצלע
נכון ומכאובי נגדי תמיד ראויה היתה בת
שבע בת אליעם לדוד מששת ימי בראשית
אלא שבאה אליו במכאוב וכן תנא דבי רבי
ישמעאל ראויה היתה לדוד בת שבע בת
אליעם אלא שאכלה פגה דרש רבא מאי
דכתיב (תהלים לה, טו) ובצלעי שמחו
ונאספו נאספו עלי נכים [ולא ידעתי] קרעו
ולא דמו אמר דוד לפני הקב"ה רבש"ע
גלוי וידוע לפניך שאם היו קורעין בשרי
לא היה דמי שותת ולא עוד אלא בשעה
שהם עוסקין בארבע מיתות ב"ד פוסקין
ממשנתן ואומרים לי דוד הבא על אשת
איש מיתתו במה אמרתי להם הבא על
אשת איש מיתתו בחנק ויש לו חלק
לעוה"ב אבל המלבין פני חבירו ברבים אין
לו חלק לעולם הבא אמר רב יהודה אמר
רב אפילו בשעת חליו של דוד קיים שמנה
עשרה עונות שנאמר (תהלים ו, ז) יגעתי
באנחתי אשחה בכל לילה מטתי בדמעתי
ערשי אמסה ואמר רב יהודה אמר רב בקש
דוד לעבוד ע"ז שנאמר (שמואל ב טו, לב)

Imagining King David in the Babylonian Talmud

Rabbi David Silber, Drisha Fall 2020

stated: "As for that image, its head [*reisher*] was of fine gold" (Daniel 2:32). It is written: "Behold Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent and earth upon his head" (II Samuel 15:32). Hushai said to David: Shall they say a king like you will engage in idol worship? David said to him: Is it preferable that they say with regard to a king like me, known to be righteous, that his son will kill him? David continued, referring to himself in third person: It is preferable that he shall engage in idol worship and the name of Heaven shall not be desecrated in public through the murder of a righteous king in this manner. Hushai said to him: What is the reason that you married a beautiful woman, the mother of Absalom? David said to him: With regard to a beautiful woman, the Merciful One permitted marrying her. Hushai said to him: But you did not interpret the juxtaposed verses, as juxtaposed to the portion of the beautiful woman is the portion beginning: "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son" (Deuteronomy 21:18). From that juxtaposition it is derived: Anyone who marries a beautiful woman has a stubborn and rebellious son. Therefore, even if Absalom kills you, there will be no desecration of God's name, as the people will attribute his actions to his mother. Rabbi Dostai from Biri taught: To what is David comparable? He is comparable to a Samaritan merchant, who incrementally lowers the price until the buyer agrees to purchase the merchandise. David said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe: "Who can discern his errors" (Psalms 19:13), i.e., forgive me for the unwitting sins that I committed. God said to him: They are forgiven for you. David asked more: "Cleanse me from hidden faults" (Psalms 19:13), i.e., pardon me for transgressions that I committed in private, even if I performed them intentionally. God said to him: They are forgiven for you. David requested: "Keep back your servant also from intentional sins" (Psalms 19:14). God said to him: They are forgiven for you. David requested: "Let them not have dominion over me, then I shall be faultless" (Psalms 19:14), and I further request that the Sages will not speak of me and condemn me. God said to him: They are forgiven for you. David requested: "And I shall be clear from great transgression" (Psalms 19:14), meaning that my transgression with Bathsheba and Uriah will not be written in the Bible. God said to him: That is impossible. And just as the letter *yod* that I removed from the name of Sarai, wife of Abraham, when I changed her name to Sarah, was standing and screaming several years over its omission from the Bible until Joshua came and I added the *yod* to his name, as it is stated: "And Moses called Hosea, son of Nun, Joshua [*Yehoshua*]" (Numbers 13:16); the entire portion of your transgression, which is fit to be included in the Bible, all the more so it cannot be omitted. The verse states: "And I shall be clear from great transgression" (Psalms 19:14). David said before God: Master of the Universe, pardon me for that entire sin. God said to him: Your son Solomon is already destined to say with his wisdom: "Can a man take fire in his lap and his garments not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? So too one who lies with his neighbor's wife; anyone who touches her shall not go

ויהי דוד בא עד הראש אשר ישתחוה שם לאלקים ואין ראש אלא ע"ז שנאמר (דניאל ב, לב) והוא צלמא רישיה די דהב טב (שמואל ב טו, לב) והנה לקראתו חושי הארכי קרוע כתנתו ואדמה על ראשו אמר לו לדוד יאמרו מלך שכמותך יעבוד ע"ז אמר לו מלך שכמותי יהרגנו בנו מוטב יעבוד ע"ז ואל יתחלל שם שמים בפרהסיא אמר מאי טעמא קנסיבת יפת תואר א"ל יפת תואר רחמנא שרייה א"ל לא דרשת סמוכין דסמיך ליה (דברים כא, יח) כי יהיה לאיש בן סורר ומורה כל הנושא יפת תואר יש לו בן סורר ומורה דרש ר' דוסתאי דמן בירי למה דוד דומה לסוחר כותי אמר דוד לפני הקב"ה רבש"ע (תהלים יט, יג) שגיאות מי יבין [א"ל] שביקי לך ומנסתרות נקני שביקי לך גם מזדים חשוך עבדך שביקי לך אל ימשלו בי אז איתם דלא לישתעו בי רבנן שביקי לך ונקיתי מפשע רב שלא יכתב סרחוני אמר לו א"א ומה יו"ד שנטלתי משרי עומד וצווח כמה שנים עד שבא יהושע והוספתי לו שנאמר (במדבר יג, טז) ויקרא משה להושע בן נון יהושע כל הפרשה כולה עאכ"ו ונקיתי מפשע רב אמר לפניו רבש"ע מחול לי על אותו עון כולו אמר כבר עתיד שלמה בנך לומר בחכמתו (משלי ו, כז) היחתה איש אש בחיקו ובגדיו לא תשרפנה אם יהלך איש על הגחלים ורגליו לא תכוונה כן הבא על אשת רעהו לא ינקה כל הנוגע בה א"ל כל הכי נטרד ההוא גברא א"ל קבל עליך

Imagining King David in the Babylonian Talmud

Rabbi David Silber, Drisha Fall 2020

unpunished” (Proverbs 6:27–29). David said to Him: Will that man, David, be expelled for that entire transgression, with no remedy? God said to David: Accept upon yourself afflictions, and that will atone for your sins. He accepted afflictions upon himself. Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: For six months David was afflicted with leprosy and the Divine Presence abandoned him and the members of the Sanhedrin dissociated themselves from him. He was afflicted with leprosy, as it is stated: “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Psalms 51:9), indicating that he required purification like a leper. The Divine Presence abandoned him, as it is stated: “Restore me to joy of Your salvation; and uphold me with a willing spirit” (Psalms 51:14). And the members of the Sanhedrin dissociated themselves from him, as it is stated: “Let those who fear You turn to me, and those who have known Your testimonies” (Psalms 119:79). From where do we derive that this lasted for six months? It is derived as it is written: “And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years;

יסורין קבל עליו אמר רב יהודה אמר רב ששה חדשים נצטרע דוד ונסתלקה הימנו שכינה ופירשו ממנו סנהדרין נצטרע דכתיב (תהלים נא, ט) תחטאני באזוב ואטהר תכבסני ומשלג אלבין נסתלקה הימנו שכינה דכתיב (תהלים נא, יד) השיבה לי ששון ישעך ורוח נדיבה תסמכני ופרשו ממנו סנהדרין דכתי' (תהלים קיט, עט) ישובו לי יראיך וגו' ששה חדשים מנלן דכתי' (מלכים א ב, יא) והימים אשר מלך דוד על ישראל ארבעים שנה

Sanhedrin 107b:1-4

in Hebron he reigned seven years, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years” (I Kings 2:11). And it is written: “In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months and in Jerusalem he reigned for thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah” (II Samuel 5:5). And those six months, the prophet did not tally them as part of the forty years of King David’s reign. Conclude from it that there were six months that he was not considered king because he was afflicted with leprosy. David said before Him after this: Master of the Universe, pardon me for this sin. God said to him: It is forgiven for you. David requested: “Perform on my behalf a sign for good, that they that hate me may see it and be put to shame” (Psalms 86:17); show me a sign in my lifetime so that everyone will know that You have forgiven me. God said to him: In your lifetime I will not make it known that you were forgiven, but I will make it known in the lifetime of your son, Solomon. The Gemara explains: When Solomon built the Temple and sought to bring the Ark into the Holy of Holies, the gates clung together and could not be opened. Solomon uttered twenty-four songs of praise, and his prayer was not answered. He said: “Lift up your heads, you gates, and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle” (Psalms 24:7–8). And it is stated: “Lift up your heads, you gates, yea, lift them up, you everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who then is

סנהדרין ק"ז ב:א'-ד'

בחרון מלך שבע שנים ובירושלים מלך שלשים ושלש שנים וכתיב (שמואל ב ה, ה) בחרון מלך על יהודה שבע שנים וששה חדשים וגו' והני ששה חדשים לא קחשיב ש"מ נצטרע אמר לפניו רבש"ע מחול לי על אותו עון מחול לך (תהלים פו, יז) עשה עמי אות לטובה ויראו שונאי ויבושו כי אתה ה' עזרתני ונחמתני א"ל בחייך איני מודיע אבל אני מודיע בחיי שלמה בנך בשעה שבנה שלמה את בית המקדש ביקש להכניס ארון לבית קדשי הקדשים דבקו שערים זה בזה אמר עשרים וארבעה רננות ולא נענה אמר (תהלים כד, ז) שאו שערים ראשיכם והנשאו פתחי עולם ויבא מלך הכבוד מי זה מלך הכבוד ה' עזוז וגבור ה' גבור מלחמה ונאמר (תהלים כד, ט) שאו שערים ראשיכם ושאו פתחי עולם ויבא מלך הכבוד וגו' ולא נענה כיון שאמר (דברי הימים ב ו, מב) ה' אלקים אל תשב פני משיחך זכרה לחסדי דויד עבדך מיד נענה

Imagining King David in the Babylonian Talmud

Rabbi David Silber, Drisha Fall 2020

the King of glory? The Lord of hosts; He is the King of glory. Selah” (Psalms 24:9–10), and he was not answered. Once he said: “O Lord God, turn not away the face of Your anointed; remember the good deeds of David Your servant” (II Chronicles 6:42), he was immediately answered, and the gates opened (II Chronicles 7:1). At that moment, the faces of all of David’s enemies turned dark like the charred bottom of a pot. And all of the Jewish people knew that the Holy One, Blessed be He, had forgiven him for that sin, as it was only by David’s merit that Solomon’s prayer was answered.

באותה שעה נהפכו פני שונאי דוד כשולי קדירה וידעו כל ישראל שמחל לו הקב"ה על אותו העון

II Samuel 12:13

שמואל ב י"ב:י"ג

(13) David said to Nathan, “I stand guilty before the LORD!” And Nathan replied to David, “The LORD has remitted your sin; you shall not die.

(יג) וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל-נָתָן חַטָּאתִי לָהּ (ס) וַיֹּאמֶר נָתָן אֶל-דָּוִד גַּם-ה' הֶעֱבִיר חַטָּאתְךָ לֹא תָמוּת:

I Samuel 2:17

שמואל א ב':י"ז

(17) The sin of the young men against the LORD was very great, for the men treated the LORD’s offerings impiously.

(יז) וַתְּהִי חַטָּאת הַנְּעָרִים גְּדוֹלָה מְאֹד אֶת-פְּנֵי ה' כִּי נִאֲצוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֶת מִנְחַת ה':

I Samuel 2:22-25

שמואל א ב':כ"ב-כ"ה

(22) Now Eli was very old. When he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who performed tasks at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, (23) he said to them, “Why do you do such things? I get evil reports about you from the people on all hands. (24) Don’t, my sons! It is no favorable report I hear the people of the LORD spreading about. (25) If a man sins against a man, the LORD may pardon him; but if a man offends against God, who can obtain pardon for him?” But they ignored their father’s plea; for the LORD was resolved that they should die.

(כב) וַעֲלֵי זָקֵן מְאֹד וַשְּׁמַע אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּן בְּנָיו לְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר-יִשְׁכְּבוּן אֶת-הַנְּשִׁים הַצְּבָאוֹת פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: (כג) וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם לָמָּה תַעֲשׂוּן כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי שֹׁמֵעַ אֶת-דְּבָרֵיכֶם רָעִים מֵאֵת כָּל-הָעָם אֵלֶּה: (כד) אֵל בְּנֵי כִי לוֹא-טוֹבָה הַשְּׁמֵעָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי שֹׁמֵעַ מֵעֲבָרִים עִם-ה': (כה) אִם-יִחַטָּא אִישׁ לְאִישׁ וַיִּפְּלוּ אֱלֹקִים וְאִם לָה' יִחַטָּא-אִישׁ מִי יִתְפַּלֵּל-לוֹ וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ לְקוֹל אָבִיהֶם כִּי-חָפַץ ה' לְהַמִּיתָם:

Psalms 51

תהילים נ"א

(1) For the leader. A psalm of David, (2) when Nathan the prophet came to him after he had come to Bathsheba. (3) Have mercy upon me, O God, as befits Your faithfulness; in keeping with Your abundant compassion, blot out my transgressions. (4) Wash me thoroughly of my iniquity, and purify me of my sin; (5) for I recognize my transgressions, and am ever conscious of my sin. (6) Against You alone have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight; so You are just in Your sentence, and right in Your judgment. (7) Indeed I was born with iniquity; with sin my mother conceived me. (8) Indeed You desire truth about that which is hidden; teach me wisdom about secret things. (9) Purge me with hyssop till I am pure; wash me till I am whiter than snow. (10) Let me hear tidings of joy and gladness; let the bones You have crushed exult. (11) Hide Your face from my sins; blot out all my iniquities. (12) Fashion a pure heart for me, O God; create in me a steadfast spirit. (13) Do not cast me out of Your presence, or take Your holy spirit away from me. (14) Let me again rejoice in Your help; let a vigorous spirit sustain me. (15) I will teach transgressors Your ways, that sinners may return to You. (16) Save me from bloodguilt, O God, God, my deliverer, that I may sing forth Your beneficence. (17) O Lord, open my lips, and let my mouth declare Your praise. (18) You do not want me to bring sacrifices; You do not desire burnt offerings; (19) True sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit; God, You will not despise a contrite and crushed heart. (20) May it please You to make Zion prosper; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. (21) Then You will want sacrifices offered in righteousness, burnt and whole offerings; then bulls will be offered on Your altar.

(א) לַמְנַצֵּחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד: (ב) בָּבוֹא-אֵלָיו נָתַן הַנָּבִיא כְּאֲשֶׁר-רָבָא אֶל-בֶּת-שֶׁבַע: (ג) חַנּוּנִי אֱלֹהִים כְּחַסְדֶּךָ כָּרַב רַחֲמֶיךָ מִחַה פְּשָׁעַי: (ד) הַרְבֵּה [הָרַב] כִּבְסוּנֵי מַעֲוֹנַי וּמַחֲטָאתֵי טְהַרְנֵנִי: (ה) כִּי-פָשַׁעִי אָנֹכִי אֲדַע וְסִטְאתִי נִגְדֵי תָמִיד: (ו) לָךְ לְבַדְּךָ אֶחֱטָאתִי וְהִרְעֵ בְעֵינַיִךְ עֲשִׂיתִי לְמַעַן תִּצְדַּק בְּדַבְּרֶךָ תִּזְכֶּה בְשִׁפְטֶיךָ: (ז) הוֹ-בְעֲוֹנוֹן חוֹלַלְתִּי וְבַחֲטָא יִחַמְתַּנִּי אֱמִי: (ח) הוֹ-אֲמַת חִפְצָתָ בְטַחֲחוֹת אֲבִסְתֶּם חֲכֻמָּה תוֹדִיעֵנִי: (ט) תִּחֲטָאֲנִי בְּאֲזוּב וְאַטְהַר אֶת־כַּבֹּסוּנֵי וּמִשְׁלַג אֶלְבִּי: (י) תִּשְׁמִיעֵנִי שִׁשׁוֹן וְשִׁמְחָה תִּגְלֶנָּה עֲצָמוֹת דַּכִּיתִּ: (יא) הִסְתַּר פְּנֵיךָ מִחֲטָאֵי וְכָל-עֲוֹנוֹתֵי מִחָה: (יב) לֵב טָהוֹר בָּרָא-לִי אֱלֹהִים וְרוּחַ נָכוֹן חִנַּשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי: (יג) אֶל-תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ וְרוּחַ קְדוֹשְׁךָ אֶל-תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי: (יד) הַשִּׁיבָה לִי שִׁשׁוֹן יִשְׁעֶךָ וְרוּחַ נְדִיבָה תִּסְמְכֵנִי: (טו) אֲלַמְּדָה פִּשְׁעִים דַּרְכֶיךָ וְחֲטָאִים אֶלֶיךָ יָשׁוּבוּ: (טז) הַצִּילֵנִי מִדְּמַיִם אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים תִּשׁוּעָתִי תִרְגַּן לְשׁוֹנֵי צְדָקָתְךָ: (יז) אֲדוּשֵׁם שִׁפְתֵי תִפְתַּח רִפִּי נִגִּיד תְּהַלְתֶּךָ: (יח) כִּי אֶל-תַּחֲפֹץ זָבַח וְאַתָּנָה עוֹלָה לֹא תִרְצֶה: (יט) זָבַחִי אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ נִשְׁפָּרָה לִב-נִשְׁפָּר וְנִדְכָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִבְזֶה: (כ) הִיטִיבָה בְּרָצוֹנָךְ אֶת-צִיּוֹן תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם: (כא) אֲזו תַחֲפֹץ זָבַחֵי-צֶדֶק עוֹלָה וְכִלְיִל אֲזו יַעֲלוּ עַל-מִזְבְּחֶךָ פָּרִים: