

**THE 14 HINENIS IS THE BIBLE:**  
**OUR WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO OTHERS**  
**C. SAMUEL AND ISAIAH**

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# C1. 1 Samuel 3:4

NEVI'IM I SAMUEL

**3** Young Samuel was in the service of the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; prophecy was not widespread. <sup>2</sup>One day, Eli was asleep in his usual place; his eyes had begun to fail and he could barely see. <sup>3</sup>The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the LORD where the Ark of God was. <sup>4</sup>The LORD called out to Samuel, and he answered, "I'm coming." <sup>5</sup>He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But he replied, "I didn't call you; go back to sleep." So he went back and lay down. <sup>6</sup>Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" Samuel rose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But he replied, "I didn't call, my son; go back to sleep."—<sup>7</sup>Now Samuel had not yet experienced the LORD; the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.—<sup>8</sup>The LORD called Samuel again, a third time, and he rose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup>And Eli said to Samuel, "Go lie down. If you are called again, say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening.'" And Samuel went to his place and lay down.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD came, and stood there, and He called as before: "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant is listening."

<sup>11</sup>The LORD said to Samuel: "I am going to do in Israel such a thing that both ears of anyone who hears about it will tingle. <sup>12</sup>In that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I spoke concerning his house, from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup>And I declare to him that I sentence his house to endless punishment for the iniquity he knew about—how his sons committed sacrilege <sup>a</sup>—at will—<sup>a</sup>—and he did not rebuke them. <sup>14</sup>Assuredly, I swear concerning the house of Eli that the iniquity of the house of Eli will never be expiated by sacrifice or offering."

a-a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Septuagint reads "against God."

**ג** והנער שמואל משרת את־יהוה לפני עלי ודבר־יהוה היה יקר בימים ההם אין חזון נפרץ: <sup>2</sup> ויהי ביום ההוא ועלי שכב במקומו ועינו ועיניו החלו כהות לא יוכל לראות: <sup>3</sup> ונר אלהים טרם יכבה ושמואל שכב בהיכל יהוה אשר־שם ארון אלהים: <sup>4</sup> ויקרא יהוה אל־שמואל ויאמר הנני: <sup>5</sup> ויירץ אל־עלי ויאמר הנני כי־קראת לי ויאמר לא־קראתני שוב שכב וילך וישכב: <sup>6</sup> וינסף יהוה קרא עוד שמואל ויקם שמואל וילך אל־עלי ויאמר הנני כי קראת לי ויאמר לא־קראתני בני שוב שכב: <sup>7</sup> ושמואל טרם ידע את־יהוה וטרם יגלה אליו דבר־יהוה: <sup>8</sup> וינסף יהוה קרא שמואל בשלשית ויקם וילך אל־עלי ויאמר הנני כי קראת לי ויבן עלי כי יהוה קרא לנער: <sup>9</sup> ויאמר עלי לשמואל לך שכב והיה אם־יקרא אליך ואמרת דבר יהוה כי שמע עבדך וילך שמואל וישכב במקומו:

<sup>10</sup> ויבא יהוה ויתיצב ויקרא בפעם שמואל ויאמר שמואל דבר כי שמע עבדך: <sup>11</sup> ויאמר יהוה אל־שמואל הנה אנכי עשה דבר בישראל אשר כל־שמעו תצלילה שתי אזניו: <sup>12</sup> ביום ההוא אקים אל־עלי את כל־אשר דברתי אל־ביתו הקל וכלה: <sup>13</sup> ויהדתי לו כי־שפט אני את־ביתו עד־עולם בעון אשר־ידע כי־מקללים להם בניו ולא כהה בם: <sup>14</sup> ולכן נשבעתי לבית עלי אם־יתכפר עון בית־עלי בזבח ובמנחה עד־עולם:

C.1a Comments based on  
Yehudah Keel, ~~Sefer~~ Shmuel  
I Samuel 3:5-6

[If Eli, who has spent his whole life serving God, cannot conceive that God has called, then Samuel surely is unable to understand what is happening. Samuel simply believes that Eli has called his name. Like Samuel, we frequently make the same mistake: We think that it is the other people in our lives whose voices cry out, when, in fact, it is the Divine reaching out to us. Little do we know that when we think we are responding to those close to us, or even to the strangers we meet, we are actually responding to the highest call in the universe. God calls to us through people.]

So when the biblical text tells us that Samuel served God in the Temple at Shiloh *lifney Eli*, literally "before Eli," meaning "under his tutelage," Samuel is serving both Eli and God at the same time. He is in God's presence, standing before the *Shekhinah*, each time he serves Eli, the priest. To respond to other human beings, to act on their behalf, is tantamount to responding to the Divine in the world. But it takes sensitivity, introspection, and understanding to come to this recognition.]

## Ca. Isaiah 65:1-2

1 נִדְרַשְׁתִּי לִלְוֹא שְׁאֵלוֹ נִמְצָאתִי לֹלֵא בְקִשְׁנִי אֶמְרָתִי הִנְנִי הִנְנִי אֶל־גּוֹי לֹא־קָרָא  
בְּשִׁמִּי:

I responded to those who did not ask, I was at hand to those who did not seek Me; I said, "Here I am, here I am," To a nation that did not invoke My name.

2 פָּרַשְׁתִּי יָדַי כָּל־הַיּוֹם אֶל־עַם סוֹרֵר הַהֹלְכִים הַדֶּרֶךְ לֹא־טוֹב אַחֲרֵי  
מַחֲשַׁבְתֵּיהֶם:

I constantly spread out My hands To a disloyal people, Who walk the way that is not good, Following their own designs;

3 הָעָם הַמְּכַעֲסִים אוֹתִי עַל־פְּנֵי תָמִיד זֹבְחִים בַּגִּזְוֹת וּמִקְטָרִים עַל־הַלְבָּנִים:

The people who provoke My anger, Who continually, to My very face, Sacrifice in gardens and burn incense on tiles;

1 נדרשתי ללא שאלו. הקב"ה משיבו א"א שלא להנקם מהם כי נדרשתי  
מהם להוכיחם על ידי נביאי והם לא היו שואלים:

I allowed Myself to be sought by those who did not ask The Holy One,  
blessed be He, replies to him, It is impossible not to avenge Myself on them,  
for I allowed Myself to be sought by them by reproving them through My  
prophets, but they did not ask.

2 אמרתי הנני הנני. שובו אלי והנני מוכן לקבל:

I said, "Here I am; here I am!" Return to Me, and I am ready to accept you.

3 אל גוי לא קורא בשמי. אשר לא היה חפץ להיות נקרא על שמי:

to a nation not called by My name That did not wish to be called by My  
name.

1 פרשתי ידי. כדי לקבלם בתשובה:

I spread out My hands in order to accept them with repentance.

2. Another comment on *Why standest Thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest Thou Thyself in times of trouble?* (Ps. 10:1). Consider what Scripture says elsewhere: *And it came to pass that, as He called, and they would not hear . . .* (Zech. 7:13) [R. Jonathan taught that for three and a half years the Presence announced and had it proclaimed: *Seek ye the Lord while He may be found* (Isa. 55:6), and no one heeded. As God said: *I would be sought of them that ask not for Me, I would be found of them that seek Me not* (Isa. 65:1). R. Hanina told a parable of a traveler journeying on the highway. As it grew dark, he came to a military post. The commander said to him: "Come into the post away from wild beasts and away from robbers!" But the traveler replied: "It is not my custom to go into a military post." As he went on his way, midnight and thick darkness overtook him, and he returned to the post and cried and prayed to the commander that he open up for him. The commander answered: "It is not customary for a military post to be opened at night, nor is it the commander's custom to receive at such an hour. When I asked you in, you were unwilling; now I cannot open up for you." Even so, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to the children of Israel: *Return, O backsliding children* (Jer. 3:14, 22), and *Seek ye the Lord while He may be found* (Isa. 55:6), but not one of them was willing to turn to Him. Whereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said: *I will go and return to My former place* (Hos. 5:15). Then, when the children of Israel were surrendered to the kingdoms and to the principalities, they cried out to God: *Why standest Thou afar off, O Lord?* The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: "When I sought you, you did not heed me. Now that you seek Me, I will not hear you. Measure for measure!" Hence it is said *It came to pass that, as He called, and they would not hear; so they shall call, and I will not hear, said the Lord of hosts* (Zech. 7:13). Will not hear for ever? By God's mercy, no! <sup>3</sup> Only *Until a time and times and half a time* (Dan. 7:25).

קרא בגרון אל־תחשך פֿשוֹפֿר הָרֵם קוֹלְךָ וְהִגַּד לְעַמִּי פְשָׁעָם וּלְבֵית יַעֲקֹב  
חטאתם:

Cry with full throat, without restraint; Raise your voice like a ram's horn!  
Declare to My people their transgression, To the House of Jacob their sin.

וְאוֹתֵי יוֹם יוֹם יִדְרֹשׁוּן וְיָדַעַת דְּרָכֵי יַחֲפָצוֹן כְּגֹי אֲשֶׁר־צִדְקָה עָשָׂה וּמִשְׁפָּט  
אֱלֹהֵיוֹ לֹא עָזַב יִשְׁאָלוּנִי מִשְׁפָּטֵי־צֶדֶק קִרְבַּת אֱלֹהִים יַחֲפָצוֹן:

To be sure, they seek Me daily, Eager to learn My ways. Like a nation that does  
what is right, That has not abandoned the laws of its God, They ask Me for the  
right way, They are eager for the nearness of God:

לָמָּה צָמְנוּ וְלֹא רָאִיתָ עֲנִינוּ נַפְשֵׁנוּ וְלֹא תִדְעַה הֵן בְּיוֹם צָמְכֶם תִּמְצְאוּ־חֶפֶץ  
וְכָל־עַצְבֵיכֶם תִּנְגָּשׁוּ:

"Why, when we fasted, did You not see? When we starved our bodies, did You  
pay no heed?" Because on your fast day You see to your business And oppress  
all your laborers!

הֵן לְרִיב וּמִצָּה תִצְמוּ וּלְהִכּוֹת בְּאִגְרָף רָשָׁע לֹא־תִצְמוּ כִּי־לֵהֲשִׁיעַ בְּמָרוֹם  
קוֹלְכֶם

Because you fast in strife and contention, And you strike with a wicked fist!  
Your fasting today is not such As to make your voice heard on high.

- 5 הכזה יהיה צום אבחרהו יום ענות אדם נפשו הלכף כאגמן ראשו ושק  
ואפר יציע הלזה תקרא-צום ויום רצון ליהוה

Is such the fast I desire, A day for men to starve their bodies? Is it bowing the head like a bulrush And lying in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call that a fast, A day when the LORD is favorable?

- 6 הלוא זה צום אבחרהו פתח חרצבות רשע התר אגדות מוטה ושלח רצוצים  
חפשים וכל-מוטה תנתקו

No, this is the fast I desire: To unlock fetters of wickedness, And untie the cords of the yoke To let the oppressed go free; To break off every yoke.

- 7 הלוא פרס לרעב לחמך ועניים מרודים תביא בית כיתראה ערם וכסיתו  
ומבשרך לא תתעלם

It is to share your bread with the hungry, And to take the wretched poor into your home; When you see the naked, to clothe him, And not to ignore your own kin.

- 8 אז יבקע כשחר אורך וארכתך מהרה תצמח והלך לפניך צדקך כבוד יהוה  
יאספך

Then shall your light burst through like the dawn And your healing spring up quickly; Your Vindicator shall march before you, The Presence of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

- 9 אז תקרא ויהוה יענה תשוע ויאמר הגני אמ-תסיר מתוכך מוטה שלח  
אצבע ודבר-און

Then, when you call, the LORD will answer; When you cry, He will say: Here I am. If you banish the yoke from your midst, The menacing hand, and evil speech,



## C3a. Reflection on Isaiah 58

### WHEN WE REACH OUT TO OTHERS, GOD WILL RESPOND TO US

The prophet, in calling for the people to respond to the needs of the downtrodden members of the community, asserts a view of life that grew out of the Israel's experience of being liberated from Egyptian bondage. It is the paradigm of God's promise to Israel—that the Divine would ensure their liberation as a people, nurture them through the aridity of the desert, and ultimately guarantee their survival as a free people on their own land—that fuels the prophet's demand that they do the same for those in need among them.<sup>10</sup> In

demanding that the Israelites of his day “let the oppressed go free” and “break off every yoke,” Isaiah harkens back to God's very acts in the Exodus: “I the Lord am Your God who brought you out from the land of the Egyptians to be their slaves no more, who broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect” (Leviticus 26:13).

In modeling ourselves after the Divine, not only must we, too, help break the yoke of subservience that treats human beings as beasts of burden, but we are obligated to nurture those less fortunate than we. Undoing “the fetters of wickedness” is only the first step; we must then sustain those who are hungry with our own bread and bring the needy into our own houses.<sup>11</sup>

Our obligation extends to all those in the wider community who are in need. All poor and oppressed individuals should be our concern. Yet, the prophet emphasizes that we have a primary responsibility to take care of our own kin and fellow Jews. We simply cannot ignore those closest to us.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, each of us needs to hear the call of the others in our lives. As Isaiah underscores, we cannot ignore our own family members, those who mean so much to us. And it is often easier to hear and respond to the faceless needy, people whom we will never meet, rather than reaching out to our parents, children, spouses, siblings, and partners, since our relationships can carry so much baggage. Their needs are camouflaged by layers of shared experiences and defensiveness.

But when we hear their calls and act righteously, we experience a sense of reward and fulfillment in our lives. When we truly give of ourselves to others, when our goodness is evident, we experience God's presence in our lives. Isaiah asserts: “[When] your righteousness shall march before you, the Presence of the Lord shall be your

- 1 עורי עורי לבשי עגור ציון לבשי | בגדי תפארתך ירושלם עיר הקדוש כי לא יוסית יבא-בך עוד ערל וטמא:

Awake, awake, O Zion! Clothe yourself in splendor; Put on your robes of majesty, Jerusalem, holy city! For the uncircumcised and the unclean Shall never enter you again.

- 2 התנערי מעפר קומי שבי ירושלם התפתחו [התפתחי] מוסרי צוארך שביה בת-ציון: (ס)

Arise, shake off the dust, Sit [on your throne], Jerusalem! Loose the bonds from your neck, O captive one, Fair Zion!

- 3 כי-כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה חֲנָם נִמְכַּרְתֶּם וְלֹא בְכֶסֶף תִּגָּאֲלוּ:

For thus said the LORD: You were sold for no price, And shall be redeemed without money.

- 4 כי כֹה אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה מִצְרַיִם יִרְדּוּ-עִמִּי בְרֹאשָׁנָה לְגֹר שָׁם וְאַשׁוּר בְּאַפָּס עֵשְׂקוּ:

For thus said the Lord GOD: Of old, My people went down To Egypt to sojourn there; But Assyria has robbed them, Giving nothing in return.

- 5 וְעַתָּה מִי־לִי [מֵה-] [לִי-] כֹה נֹאם-יְהוָה כִּי-לָקַח עִמִּי חֲנָם מִשְׁלוּ [מִשְׁלִי] יְהִלִּילוּ נֹאם-יְהוָה וְתָמִיד כָּל-הַיּוֹם שְׁמִי מִנֶּאֱזָר:

What therefore do I gain here? —declares the LORD— For My people has been carried off for nothing, Their mockers howl —declares the LORD— And constantly, unceasingly, My name is reviled.

- 6 לָכֵן יֵדַע עַמִּי שְׁמִי לָכֵן בְּיוֹם הַהוּא כִּי-אֲנִי-הוּא הַמְדַּבֵּר הַנִּנִּי:

Assuredly, My people shall learn My name, Assuredly [they shall learn] on that day That I, the One who promised, Am now at hand.

- 7 מֵה־נֶּאֱזָאוּ עַל-הַהָרִים רַגְלֵי מְבַשֵּׂר מְשֻׁמֵּעַ שְׁלוֹם מְבַשֵּׂר טוֹב מְשֻׁמֵּעַ יְשׁוּעָה אָמַר לְצִיּוֹן מִלֶּךְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

How welcome on the mountain Are the footsteps of the herald Announcing happiness, Heraldng good fortune, Announcing victory, Telling Zion, "Your God is King!"

- 8 קוֹל צִפִּיּוֹר נִשְׁאָו קוֹל יַחַד וְיִרְנְנוּ כִּי עִין בְּעֵינָם יֵרָאוּ בְשׁוֹב יְהוָה צִיּוֹן:

Hark! Your watchmen raise their voices, As one they shout for joy; For every

**Rav Hana bar Aḥa said that the Sages in the school of Rav say:** There are **four** creations that **the Holy One, Blessed be He**, created, yet He, as it were, **regrets that He created them**, as they do more harm than good. **And these are they: Exile, Chaldeans, and Ishmaelites, and the evil inclination.** Exile, as it is written: “Now therefore, for what am I here, says the Lord, seeing that **My people is taken away for naught**” (Isaiah 52:5). God Himself is asking: For what am I here? **Chaldeans**, as it is written: “Behold the land of the Chaldeans, this is the **people that was not**” (Isaiah 23:13), meaning, if only they never were.

## C4.b A Reflection: Recognizing the Enduring Presence of the Other

[God's *hineini* on that day is a response to the very question uttered by the Divine, "What therefore do I gain here?" God's inability to suffer the exile of the people of Israel is the guarantee that God will eventually assert the powerful Divine presence and redeem them.<sup>14</sup> It is as if the words of Isaiah should be read as saying, "I am the One who now speaks (*ha-medabber*), saying to you Israel, '*Hineini*' (I am here)." Though hurt by the people of Israel's sinfulness, God is now ready to restore their covenanted relationship because they have come to recognize the Divine.

God's *hineini* here is a challenge to all of us to think about how we act within our own relationships. When the other in our lives finally responds to us, are we able to open ourselves, perhaps after being hurt by that very person before? Do we have the capacity to bridge the gap that has existed between us and our parent, spouse, lover, sibling, or child, even when we have not been the cause of it? Can we forgive and rekindle these relationships? ]