

Tell a story
Rosh Hashanah First Day
by Julie Zhuk on 2022-09-24

Comments

There is a heavy concentration on Samuel's parents in this part. There are four parts to summarize the current reading. Starting with Elkana who had a knack for teaching a lot of Jews how to perform mitzvos in the right way. He had more than one wife, which was common back then. It was not common for women to have more than one husband. He was married to a woman named Chana, and eventually, they had a baby boy his name was Samuel. His birth and delivery happened because of G-d. Chana couldn't get pregnant for a long time, but then she did. She sang a lot of praises to G-d. Some of her praises are telling the future generation of the Jews, that nothing happens by chance. G-d reverses a person's fate. The last part of the song she sings for G-d ultimately says that the tzaddikim will ultimately prevail. The reason for the choice of the Haftara for the Jewish New Year is well known. It's because of Chana, she was considered to be one of three righteous women who were barren for a long time. Her mazal was changed by a Heavenly decree that came from G-d.

One of the other women was Sara and the third woman was known as Rachel. The Haftara for the Jewish New Year is connected to the Torah reading, it relates to the birth of Yitzchak. There is a further link to the Torah reading saying that our Sages compare Elkana to Avraham. Both of them thought of original ways to draw their fellow Jewish men to provide service for G-d. The Haftara for the Jewish New year deals with other themes such as Jewish laws that regard prayer from the time when Chana reached out to G-d. Her prayer required a lot of devotion from her heart. Chana's songs of praises that she sang focused on G-d's control over every detail of someone's life. G-d has a reckoning of all of anyone's deeds. There is a central theme for the Jewish New Year, in terms of people's fortunes for the year and when they are decreed. This is based on their past actions. For Chana, she mentioned G-d's Four Letter Name about nine times in the course of her song. Jews now recite nine blessings when saying the Mussaf shemone esray during the time of the Jewish New Year.

When we say this, we are referring to what is known as malchiyos. This relates to Chana because G-d gave her a son, Samuel. G-d blessed Samuel, saying, May He give strength to His king. That is dealing with G-d's sovereignty. Another part of this particular shemone esray is zichronos. It is discussing G-d's remembrance of all deeds of mankind. The last part of the shemone esray is known as Shofaros. It is dealing with the Giving of the Torah and other occasions. Shofaros is also referring to the times when Jews blow and hear the shofar on different occasions. In the verse using the word Shofaros there is a quote referring to G-d. It says, May He raise the horn of His anointed. When we think of Zichronos we know that G-d remembered what Chana was praying for and granted her a son. Chana's song ends by saying that, G-d judges the ends of the earth. The Midrash tells us that is a direct reference to the Jewish New Year. Chana wasn't the only one who was so special in G-d's eyes. G-d thought very highly of Elkana. Elkana was considered to be very worthy of benefitting from Avraham's honor and this is hinted at in the word remembered her in the book of Samuel, 1:19. It has the same gematriya as Avraham had when he was alive.

Going back to Elkana and all of his wives, there was a point at the end of the period when the Judges lived. There was an exceptionally well-known tzaddik and Torah scholar, his name was Elkana. He wasn't just the greatest man of his generation. He was also a prophet. Elkana was a descendant of Korach's son Elkana, whose name he took on. The name, Elkana was very appropriate because it signified the one who acquired G-d. He acquired G-d because he studied His ways and he emulated G-d as well. Back then, the leviyim didn't own farmland in Israel. Instead, they lived in designated Levite cities throughout the land. Elkana's residence was in Rama, on Mount Efrayim. It was a town that was inhabited by numerous families of prophets. During the time Elkana was alive, that place produced as many as two hundred prophets whose names and messages were never discovered. They weren't significant for the coming generations.

Elkana's wife, Chana was a prophetess as well, in fact, her name, Chana, comes from the word Chan. It can be referred to as prophecy and grace as well. There was a time that a dark cloud was hovering over this very extraordinary couple of Elkana and Chana. They weren't blessed to have children at the time. After ten years of waiting, it was Chana who finally decided, to advise her husband to marry another woman. G-d responded to Chana that she was being so selfless and took her rival into her home. This plan she decided to take on, included her husband because he would have children. G-d planned to reward Chana with a child as well. Elkana listened to his wife and married a Jewish woman named Penina. She gave him children, but she also caused some unnecessary drama for Chana. Penina was known to be a woman of stature. Her name means pearl and it alludes to her wisdom, just as the Torah described her as being more precious than pearls. We find that in Mishlai 3:15. As soon as Elkana married Penina, she started having a lot of children. She had no problems having children, so he gave Elkana many children.

Elkana was constantly on the move to elevate himself in the service of G-d. He had so much love for G-d, he yearned to draw all the other Jews to be closer to G-d. There was a major problem that started during the period of the Judges. The Jews who lived in remote towns of Israel didn't have frequent contact with the nation's spiritual leaders. It was at this time that the Mishkan was located in Shilo, the hometown of the leader of the generation, Eli. Even though the Mishkan was a spiritual center, many of the Jews didn't travel there for yom tov. Part of the reason why many Jews didn't want to travel to the town of Shilo was Eli's sons, who officiated as kohanim, were considered disreputable. Elkana felt differently, he felt that visiting Shilo for the yom tov would gain the Jews not only merit of the mitzva, but also would result in more contact between the nation's great men and its ordinary Jews. This was how many of the learned Jews would influence and inspire and instruct others on how to lead true Torah lives. Elkana himself traveled on a regular basis. He took his wives and children, even though the obligation was only for men to visit the Sanctuary on the yom tov. Elkana brought his family not only to strengthen their faith but also because his happiness on yom tov would be incomplete without them being there. Unlike Elkana, how was another Jewish man convincing other men to travel to Shilo.

Elkana knew it was not a convenient thing for other men to do this, unlike the others he lived not far from the Mishkan. It was located in the territory of the tribe of Efrayim. Elkana told his family to pack provisions and bedding for an extended trip. He deliberately chose a roundabout and

lengthy route. At night, he would set up camp in public. He would invite questions from curious people passing by as to his destination. Elkana used this opportunity to teach the men, while his wives and sisters explained the same to the women. Elkana and Chana explained the importance of visiting the Mishkan in Shilo and urged local residents to join in as well. In every town they passed they sparked people's interest in joining the pilgrimage. When they made it to Shilo, the group consisted of hundreds of families. For the next year's yom tov, Elkana chose a different route than before. Once again, they spent the nights in outdoors and he taught everywhere they traveled. He was introducing a lot more families to journey with them.

Elkana was very successful in attracting thousands and eventually tens of thousands of Jews to follow his example. Eventually, the whole Jewish nation was familiarized with the mitzva of visiting the Mishkan in Shilo. Everyone was learning more Torah and observing the mitzvos a lot more. G-d reached out to Elkana and told him because he single-handedly educated the Jewish nation to reach a higher level of Torah learning and mitzva, and observance, he will be rewarded. You will get a son and he will do what you did. Your son, Samuel will do what you are doing. He will help more Jews come back to G-d. It came true, Samuel, spent his entire life traveling around the country teaching Jews, a duty that the previous judges had neglected. This was really important, it caused a tremendous wave of teshuva, Samuel truly was a worthy son to his father. Elkana marrying Penina did give him more children, but it stirred up a lot of anguish in Chana. That domestic tranquility in Elkana's home with Chana was now shattered. Penina never missed a chance to poke fun at Chana. She would constantly ask her if she already bought more clothing for her children. Penina would ask Chana if her oldest son would need a sweater and if her second child would need a robe. In the morning, she would come over to Chana and tease her. She would say, it is time to wash your children's faces so that they will be ready for yeshiva!

Then in the evening Penina would proclaim to Chana, why don't you get ready to welcome your children home from yeshiva? When they would all sit down to eat including Elkana, he gave a large portion of food to Penina. This way Penina could serve her children, it also drew attention to her each one individually.

Penina insisted that Elkana personally serve each child and so every meal became a horrible experience for Chana. Her life was so hard now, even throughout her years of not having children. Things escalated into a nightmare, she was robbed of peace of mind by both day and night. Penina was constantly reminding Chana of how she wasn't able to have children. The Jewish Sages explain that Penina's motivation came from G-d. She was reasoning in the right way, that if Chana was to pray in a much more intense way and cry as well, G-d would surely accept her prayers. Penina had an aim to aggravate Chana so much that she would storm up to the Heavens in prayer. Penina did finally succeed because G-d declared that Chana just as thunder is followed by rain, so will your thunderous entreaties be rewarded and you will have a child. Penina may have been trying to be noble, but her method was highly questionable.

She constantly humiliated Chana, and by assuming the role of a heartless tyrant, she became very insensitive to Chana's pain. G-d saw everything that was happening, He for sure saw what Penina was doing. G-d was very upset with Penina. People could have thought from what Penina was doing that it was allowed to poke fun at a woman who wasn't able to have children. Penina would intensify her heartless teasing of Chana. She did this whenever the family was visiting Shilo, she was hoping that Chana's prayers in that holy place would be more intense.

There is an example of one yom tov in Shilo, when Chana was in tears the whole time. Elkana used to share the meat of the shelamim sacrifices first with Penina and then her sons. After that, he would serve Chana. Chana's portion was on purposed delayed so as not to vex Penina. Chana got the bigger portion and she got the choice of meat, because Elkana was trying to compensate for his beloved wife going through her grief. This particular time, his thoughtful gesture wasn't affected by cheering her. Chana refused to touch the food, Elkana who was seated next to her, noticed it and reprimanded her in a kind manner. He said that our Matriarchs Sara and Rivka didn't have children for a long time, but they didn't spend all their time crying.

Rachel helped take care of Bilha's children as if they were her own. Now he was asking Chana, why she wasn't helping Penina with her children. Elkana was so concerned with getting as many Jews to study Torah, that he was completely oblivious to what his second wife was doing. He didn't realize how hurt Chana was feeling by all the teasing Penina was causing. Elkana's last words to Chana on yom tov was to not be sad that particular day. He told her to remember a woman is not obligated by the Torah to be fruitful and multiply. He thought for sure, G-d was aware of what was best for Chana. This was Elkana's way of thinking about why G-d deprived Chana of children. He told her that if she was so concerned for her soul and that was why she wanted a child who is going to study Torah, to not worry. Elkana felt that all of his learning would compensate for that of ten sons. For him having these children with Penina didn't bother or make a difference, but it did for Chana. That is because these other children he would father were not coming from Chana.

His words did somehow bring comfort to Chana. She grew calmer and started to nibble at her food. In the afternoon that day, she went over to the courtyard of the Mishkan and prayed there. She always did this when she was in Shilo. She also intended to ask Eli who had been appointed on that day as kohen gadol to give her a blessing. It was because of G-d that Eli sat close to the entrance of the courtyard that afternoon. It was for Chana's sake, but she didn't know this at the time. The purpose for him to sit close to the courtyard was in Eli's honor to aid her prayers and be available later to speak to her. Chana felt heartbroken, but it wasn't about her personal pain. She was a prophetess afterall and had forged a close bond with G-d. Her mind was so focused on the grief she was feeling coming from the presence of G-d. She was aware that G-d was there and could feel everyone's pain intensely. She desired to have a son so much and in order to gain this through this son she wanted to give a greater share in G-d's service. She was also thinking about the hope of providing the Jewish nation with a future Torah leader. Chana poured her heart out to G-d and accompanied her words with constant crying. She had different names for G-ds, Hashem and Master of Hosts. She was being encouraging and said from the myriad of souls You have created in Your world is it difficult to give me just one? In her prayer, she was referring to herself as a maidservant of G-d. She used that term three times. She wished to be intimate with G-d She was saying, at the time of childbirth, a woman's deeds are scrutinized in Heaven. Regarding the three special mitzvos that apply to her. These are: the laws of family purity, separating challa from the dough, and lighting Shabbat candles. There is commentary that explains Chana's name is an acronym of the begging letters where one separates dough. This separation of the dough is set aside for challah. Keeping the laws of family purity and kindling Shabbat candles indicate Chana has fulfilled these mitzvos to perfection.

If the woman is found to be neglectful in these mitzvos, she could potentially die in childbirth. Chana told G-d that she had been a very faithful maid-servant in all of these mitzvos. She ended her prayer to G-d saying He didn't need to withhold childbirth from her anymore. Maybe

she thought that was going to be the end of her prayer, but she came up with something else. She made a vow as tzaddikim did in times of distress. She promised G-d that she would devote her future son to G-d's service all the days of his life. She planned to consecrate him to be a lifelong nazir. That prayer was very strong and it was just what G-d wanted to hear, because He listened to her. He gave her what she wanted. Finally the prayer she made reached the deepest of the Heavens. This happened for a few reasons, her prayer was far more intense this time than ever before. She was crying and "the Heavenly gates through which tears enter are never locked." She was praying in a holy place and made a vow. After the prayer was done, she felt so sanctified and pure that now she was fit to give birth to a saintly son.

Eli was sitting at a distance of a little more than eight feet from where Chana had been praying. Being a kohen gadol he was allowed to sit in the courtyard where everyone else would need to stand. He observed her and thought her behavior was strange. He concluded that she had drunk way too much wine at the yom tov meal. He thought she was a drunk that night on yom tov. The Jewish Sages say that his reasons for this was he was suspicious of Chana's lips moving a lot. She wasn't making any sounds not that he heard of so he didn't understand how she could really be praying. The Jewish law is that a person has to hear their own words while they are praying. It was possible for Eli to be used to hearing people raise their voices for at least some part of a lengthy prayer, and considered it strange when Chana prayed in silence for such a long time. There was another view, Eli saw her gesticulating wildly as she was praying, she was pointing her fingers to her heart in a seemingly absurd manner. What he didn't know is in reality, Chana was really arguing with G-d. She was telling G-d that He created every part of the human body with a purpose. Feet are meant for walking, hands for grasping, and so on. She felt that G-d provided a woman with breasts to nurse children. She was asking G-d as she was praying, what her breasts were for if she didn't have children? She was pointing to herself. For someone like Eli, it seemed very strange she was pointing to her own breasts.

Eli didn't want to interrupt Chana, while she was praying. Out of respect for the holiness of the Mishkan. When she finished praying, he felt the need to go over to her and reprimand her. Eli came over to Chana and he already knew her husband Elkana. Eli regarded Elkana very highly. He was aware that Chana was a special woman, but he was under the impression that currently she had strayed away. He decided to admonish her and he asked her how long will she stay drunk? Chana felt she was being falsely accused had to clarify the matter. She turned to him, "No, my master, you have misjudged me.; the spirit of G-d has left you regarding this matter. I come here a lot and you should have known I would never dare to pray while under the influence of alcohol. She went on to say that if a person who is drunk is praying they can come off as an idol worshiper. That is if he is in an inebriated state, he is not being clear as to Whom he is turning to. Chana explained that she was a childless woman, and just like Sara and our other matriarchs did, she prayed for a long time. Chana was pouring out her heart before G-d, Chana felt she was not drunk from wine, but from having sorrow. She felt brokenhearted, because her husband had another wife. The other wife was constantly vexing Chana. Chana felt her heart was overflowing with pain.

We learn that this scenario was decreed upon Chana by G-d. Eli had falsely accused Chana, and that last bit of anguish was necessary to fill her measure of suffering before G-d would bring her relief. This also obligated Eli to bless her, for when a Jew groundlessly suspects a fellow Jew he must appease him and should also bless him. Eli did come up to Chana and blessed her saying go in peace. He told her "May G-d grant you a son as you requested." The commentary says that Eli had accused Chana after he consulted with the urim vetumim. The letters were lighting up on the kohen gadol's breastplate, and he combined with his own spirit of G-d to decipher the answer. When trying to reply the question regarding Chana being drunk there were some letters that were illuminated. Eli combined these letters to spell a drunken woman. What it

was really spelling was Chana was in the same situation as Sara had once been, a childless woman. Chana replied sharply, she realized that there was a lack of spirit coming from G-d.

Not having the spirit of G-d caused Eli to interpret the message he was given from the urim vetumim. Another source in the commentary says that Chana benefited from being accused falsely. Chana did have Samuel. In a different book after the Five Books Of Moses, Jews will read about Tamar. Tamar was also wrongly suspected of immorality by Yehuda. She gave birth to Peretz and Zerach. They were ancestors of kings and prophets. When Chana was praying, she was very quiet because she didn't want anyone except for G-d to hear her. She thought maybe G-d wouldn't hear her and it was why she secluded herself with a man other than her husband. She would later be tested with the bitter waters of a sota and when discovered that she is innocent, she would be compensated by G-d. He would give her a blessing to have children. These statements she was saying to G-d with a low voice, Eli was not incorrect of thinking Chana's behavior was strange. He suspected Chana to be drunk, because back then people would always pray extremely loudly. It is hard for us to understand since the Jewish law is that one can't raise one's voice during shemone esray The source Sefer Nachlas Shimon says that Tzlach explains one can pray loudly in the presence of others who are also praying there. No one was praying when Chana was talking to G-d. Eli was surprised that even though she was alone, she didn't raise her voice. It wasn't mandatory. It would have helped her to concentrate better.

Chana thanked Eli and left. She felt consoled by his words. Her face had been very much contorted with grief. Now she felt it was beautifully serene. There is a Midrashic opinion, Chana was about a hundred and thirty years old at the time. It was after Eli's blessing, that she was miraculously rejuvenated as Sara had been. Chana and Elkana remained in Shilo overnight. This was the requirement after offering a korban. The next morning they got up and ready to go back home to Rama. It was that Jewish New Year, G-d had decreed up in Heaven that Chana would have a son. In the seventh month of her being pregnant, she gave birth to a healthy boy. She named him Samuel. She explained that she had made a request from G-d and wanted incorporate the name. Samuel came from Chana requesting from G-d for her to have a son. Samuel the son, was known as the Requested One. Maybe Chana, who was a prophetess, foresaw with her spirit of G-d that the first king, Shaul, was going to fall by the sword. Maybe this was why Chana didn't want her son to bear an illfated name and changed it. Chana may have inserted the letter "Mem" in hebrew. This letter in her son's name, was to allude to the fact that in some respects Samuel would be just as great as Moses and Aaron were when they guided the Jewish people for forty years. The gematriya for the letter Mem is forty.

Chana foresaw that Samuel, too, would lead the Jews for forty years. It was another reason for her choice of the name Samuel may have been that in the years before he was born. There was a Heavenly voice that announced there will be a great tzaddik by the name of Samuel will be born. Many mothers started naming their newborn sons Samuel. As these children grew up, it became evident that the Divine prediction wasn't talking about them. Chana was hoping her son would prove to be this special child. Indeed that was the case, from the day that Samuel was born, the voice was no longer heard. Commentary shares a perspective from another Midrash. It states that Chana was waiting nineteen years to have a baby. The opinion that is cited in the text isn't generally accepted.

Chana would have already been past the age of childbearing at her marriage. Penina wouldn't have tormented her for the purpose of causing her to have a baby in a miraculous way. When Chana had her baby Samuel, Elkana still traveled to Shilo just as he did before. His schedule of traveling didn't change, he kept doing it to attract more Jews to reach out to G-d as he was doing. He was on a mission to get every Jew to visit the Mishkan. We have to remind ourselves that on these travels he took his family along with him. There was a time, when Chana asked

him to please stay home. She explained that her baby was very sensitive and she feared it would be too hard for the baby to travel. She wanted to nurse the baby and when the baby would be weaned they would travel for sure to Shilo again. She wanted to thank G-d for the baby boy. Chana told Elkana that when they went to Shilo again, Samuel would stay there. This way Samuel could serve G-d. Elkana was flexible with Chana's request. He told her to do what she felt was right. Elkana told Chana, May G-d grant Samuel to grow up to be a tzaddik whose birth was predicted by the Heavenly Voice. Chana did nurse Samuel for about two years, even though he was still pretty weak she didn't delay her promise to take him to Shilo.

Maybe Chana undertook the trip with Samuel alone, without her husband. This is all based on the fact that there is no further mention of Elkana in the remainder of the Haftara. Chana took with her three oxen for shelamim sacrifices. She also took flour for a micha offering and wine for poured offerings. These animals were presented to Eli, and he ordered to have a kohen slaughter the animals as sacrifices. Even though a non-kohen is allowed to do this, Eli was pretty stringent in requesting a kohen in order to bring greater honor to G-d. Eli attended to other matters while the leviyim looked for a kohen. There was no kohen to be found and time was passing. The little boy was a child prodigy and well-versed in Torah. Samuel the child came to the conclusion everyone came up with is it wasn't a good idea to use only kohanim for the slaughtering of these animals. In the case where a kohen was not available, the time set for sacrificing certain sacrifices could pass. The korban would be offered too late and that would not be allowed. The commentary about this from Sefer Nachalas Shimon says that Samuel had decided that if using a kohen involved postponement of the mitzva it would be better to slaughter through a non-kohen. This follows the opinion that, in general, the advantage of performing a mitzva early will override waiting in order to complete it with some enhancement. Another source called Yefai Nof on Midrash Samuel says, Eli himself didn't perform the slaughtering since this was not fitting for a kohen gadol.

The Midrash tells us that if Samuel was more mature, he could have discussed this point with Eli. Samuel was so young at the time and he was very inexperienced, but also brilliant. Samuel bluntly instructed to the leviyim: "Why are you waiting for a kohen? Anyone could slaughter a sacrifice. Hearing all of this the leviyim was very startled. Samuel was brought before Eli, and he asked him how did he know this. Little Samuel correctly cited the pertinent verses in Vayikra that teach the kohanim's avoda starts with the receiving of the blood. Any act before this may also be performed by a non-kohen. Eli realized that he was dealing with an unusual child. Eli told him the words, "Well spoken, my son, you are right. At the same time when it comes to a Jewish law teaching decisions in front of one's Torah Teacher is an offense. It is also punishable by death at the hands of Heaven and I declare that this will be your fate"! Eli was also referring to anyone making a Jewish law decision in front of a Torah Sage of the generation.

Chana heard what Eli said about Samuel's fate. She begged Eli to please forgive him, she said please remember it is me, I am the woman who stood here and prayed for a child! This is the son whom G-d gave me. She was speaking of Samuel being so precious to her and that he was irreplaceable. She was also saying how he was wise and righteous and that she dedicated Samuel to G-d. He belongs to G-d, not to Eli. Please do not punish him! I am asking you to forgive him just as you forgave me when I stood and prayed at length leaving you feeling inconvenienced. Eli relented his words, but he forgave Samuel. He accepted Samuel as a servant in the Mishkan. Samuel bowed down to thank G-d for that privilege. From that day on Samuel became Eli's personal attendant. Samuel imbibed Eli's vast Torah knowledge.

Samuel observed Eli on a daily basis and in this way was able to develop into becoming a great prophet and judge. He was a future leader of the next generation. We are reminded that when Chana was standing at the Mishkan, she prophetically composed and recited a song to thank G-d. She was thanking Him for the son He gave her. Being given this son predicted many events in her son's life as well as the future of the Jewish nation. Chana prayed to say, how her heart exults in G-d. Her horn (she was meaning the symbolic of strength) had been raised by G-d. Her mouth was wide open against her enemies. She was talking about having the ability to rebut them because she was going to rejoice in the salvation G-d gave her. There was a simple level, she expressed her happiness at finally being able to refute the constant teasing Penina gave her. T

he Midrash tells us Jews now, that there was a deeper connotation for Chana was so delighted. It was a kiddush Hashem, which resulted from the birth of Samuel. She emphasized three times in this verse that her elation was not due to personal triumph. Instead, she was so happy because it was all in the honor of G-d. Her heart rejoiced in G-d. Her horn by G-d because she was feeling the salvation of G-d. She was saying that any enemies of Hashem who denied His existence, His power, or His providence, would now be silenced. At the same time, these words alluded to the future victory of her son Samuel, over the Pelishtim. Chana said that her horn was raised, this hints that Samuel was going to one day anoint David to be king. Samuel would use the oil from a fragile jar. It would symbolize the temporary nature of his reign.

Chana was telling G-d that there is none holy like Him. For there is none of your caliber besides Him. There was no rock like our G-d. The Jewish Sages say that these words that Chana used to thank G-d, it was because of this she was granted a child. The most skilled artisan can't produce a statue that speaks or reproduces itself. G-d on the other hand can fashion a live human being within another person. Or miraculously sustain it in its mother's womb and bring it forth into the world. After this introduction, which it describes G-d's greatness and holiness not being able to be compared, Chana went on to show how G-d is closely involved in every aspect of a human's life. Chana believed these next words and Jews continue to learn from her. She believed that nothing happened by chance. She taught the Jews to not increase in speaking arrogantly. We shouldn't let bold speech leave our mouth. G-d is an omniscient and this means He knows our thoughts. He knows all of our deeds they are all registered before Him. This verse is referred to Penina and her actions. She was always boasting about her children. Chana was reprimanding all those who deny G-d's providence. Chana alludes to the Babylonian emperor named Nevuchadnetzar and his nation.

This included his enemies of the Jewish people, who arrogantly blasphemed G-d and denied His power. The people like the Babylonians and anyone who did these things would be brought to justice in the future. There is an expression that denotes of G-d knowing in advance everything that will ever happen. The actualization of any plan depends solely on Him. There is an explanation that is expressed by the *keri ukesiv*. The *keri* is pronounced form to Him. It informs us that all deeds are attributed to G-d. The *kesiv*, the written form (with the lamed and aleph/not) intimates that plans become null and void. This is if G-d does not want these plans to be realized. The bows of the mighty ones are broken, while those who stumbled are girded with strength. Chana expressed the idea that G-d often weakens strong people. At the same time, G-d will give strength to people who are weak.

Chana was also hinting at the mighty Syrian-Greek armies. They were defeated by the puny forces of the Chashmonoamim. If G-d allows it, the rich people who are satiated with food will become impoverished so they will need to hire themselves out. The hungry ones will stop being hungry, and become wealthy instead. So far does His providence extend that the women who can't have children will give birth to seven at once? At the same time, many of these children will become dejected because she loses them. The question is who are those that will feel satiated at the beginning and hungry at the end? Chana was speaking about Haman's sons who ended up begging for bread. And the simile of the barren woman is in reference to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is likened to a childless woman right now, but one day she will overflow with Jews.

As Jerusalem will be overflowing with Jews, Edom's population will be totally destroyed. The Midrash tells us about this verse, describing what happened to the children belonging to Penina. After giving birth to Samuel, Chana went on to have four more children. At the same time, there was a terrible fate that happened to Penina's sons. Every time Chana had children, two of Penina's children died. This implied in the words, that a woman with a lot of children becomes downcast. That is because she has lost those children. When Penina had two children left, she humbly entreated Chana. She told her that she knew how she had wronged her! She was coming to ask for forgiveness and asked Chana to pray to G-d on Penina's behalf. Chana graciously said she would do this, that was how two of Penina's children were saved. There is a quote that the barren woman gives birth to seven children, five of her own and two of Penina's.

The Midrash is confusing, we have already learned how Penina's intentions of hurting Chana was in the merit of G-d. If this is the case, why did she deserve such a severe punishment? The reason for this was in addition that she caused a disgrace to G-d, and her character was possibly adversely affected by her actions over the course of time. A person's actions profoundly influence their innermost character. Playing the role of a heartless tormentor for so many years will leave its mark upon her soul. It means she developed feelings of superiority over Chana. That became part of her psyche. It helps us readers now understand why only after eight of her children had passed away did Penina finally come to Chana and ask for forgiveness. It was hard for Penina to act in a humble manner towards the woman she had treated with disdain for a long time.

Only the fear of actually losing all of her children ultimately was what broke her pride. These kinds of events didn't happen by accident. G-d kills the sons of the woman who has many children and gives life to those of the barren woman. He brings down to the grave and He devastates the one who had many children. At the same time, He raises the barren woman out of her misfortune. The verse has a reference to bringing people back from the dead. Meaning the future revival of the dead. After G-d takes a person's life, he will revive him; after bringing him down to the grave, He will raise him back to life. Our Sages explain that with these words, Chana was begging G-d to grant Korach and his followers a share in the future world. G-d put a decree that Korach and his followers would be denied a share in the world to come.

The verse says that the earth covered them, referring to this world and they were lost from the midst of the community. The community is being referred to as the future world. Korach and his followers descended into the abyss, they were transported straight to Gehinnom. They were alive as they went to Gehinnom. This is some form of existence that is not known to us. They

had been brought up before G-d's throne for judgment once a month, after which they returned to Gehinnom for further purification. Chana knew that there was a contributing factor to Korach's confidence when he was rebelling. His rebellion had been prophetic awareness of the greatness of her son, Samuel, who would be descended from him.

Samuel considered himself to be worthy of a position of authority. Chana felt part of herself responsible for Korach's fate and in this verse of her song she encourages G-d to please release Korach and his followers from Gehinnom. And to allow them to have a portion in the World to Come! Chana's words did move G-d to have mercy, and He did grant her request. G-d makes wealthy people become poor. He makes paupers rich. He brings down those who are in power and will raise the downtrodden ones. A poor or downtrodden person shouldn't ever despair, because He can always change the situation the person is in. G-d has been known to elevate the poor from the dust and raises the beggar from the dumps, to seat him with nobles.

He gives them a throne of honor, for the foundations of the earth, belong to G-d and He placed the world upon them. The phrase: He gives them a throne of honor might refer to rich and poor people being together. It is suggesting at that some point they will become equal, if not in this world, then in the next, where material riches don't count. The Midrash is asking us on which foundations of the earth did G-d place the world. This term is referring to G-d's providence. Without his providence, the world couldn't survive even for an instant. Our Jewish Sages say the foundations of the earth are the spiritual giants in whose honor the universe exists. Since G-d was aware of the number of tzaddikim in the history of mankind would be limited. He distributed them throughout the generations to ensure that the world wouldn't be without spiritual foundations. Our forefathers are also known as "the foundations of the world."

It is in their honor that G-d is going to ultimately seat the Jews "On the throne of honor." There is commentary explaining Chana's prayer. It transferred to the souls of Korach and his followers from Gehinnom to a lower section of Gan Eden. Although they are still being judged once a month, also they will receive a portion in the world to come. According to a different view, the sinners' souls remained in Gehinnom even after Chana's prayer, but she was assured that they would eventually receive a share in the world to come. We learn from the Midrash about G-d acting with justice. He guards the feet of his pious ones so that they don't fall into traps. The wicked people will perish in darkness; for it is not through the strength that a man prevails. The person is completely dependent on the Will of G-d. If a person didn't sin for most of his life, G-d is going to guard him against sinning for the rest of it.

We learn this from the assurance which may be interpreted as, if a man is used to abstaining from sin, then G-d will protect him. This applies only to someone who is inadvertently exposed to temptation.

One who deliberately seeks to forsake the Torah path is not guaranteed protection, though G-d may make it harder for the person to stray. An example is Yosef, he withstood the enticements of Potifar's wife day after day. Eventually, he was saved by Divine Providence from committing adultery, when the trial was particularly hard. The kesiv was written form of the word, His pious ones in the singular hinting that the world may exist even in the honor of only one tzaddik. When the word darkness is mentioned will the wicked people perish? It is the darkness of Gehinnom where all the evil is ultimately punished. G-d said may Samuel's adversaries be broken! Chana could tell into the future that the Pelishtim would attack the Jews during Samuel's leadership. Chana's request was fulfilled when the Pelishtim became bewildered by the thunder that G-d

brought upon them - Samuel 1. G-d please grant that my son will judge the ends of the Land! This too came too pass, because Samuel passed throughout Israel to judge the people. Samuel said May G-d give strength to His king, meaning Shaul who was the first Jewish king. And may G-d raise the horn, meaning strengthen or provide glory of his anointed king. This is referring to David who was anointed by Samuel. Samuel used oil from a horn.

G-d had adversaries and they were saying, May G-d thunder at each of them. May it be G-d who will judge the ends of the earth. The kesiv of His adversary in the singular is hinting that even a great number of them will fall with ease as if they were only one. Even if the adversaries will go up to heaven, G-d will bring them down. The explanation that is used in the Midrash here, is Chana prophesied about the end of days: G-d will punish Gog and Magog and the other nations with him granting dominion to Mashiaich. The phrase, "He will judge the ends of the earth" may be a reference to the Great Day of Judgment. Chana started her song with the word it exults and ended by describing the end of days. Both of these words have the same gematriya in the numerical value of one hundred and ninety. Even though sometimes it is challenging to see that G-d is controlling the events in the universe, in the end, it will become clear to all that He does, and at that time there will be general rejoicing. Chana's song included many fundamental principles of our faith. One of these was G-d's control of man's fate and the future battle of Gog and Magog, which will be followed by the universal acknowledgment of G-d's sovereignty. Chana was one of the seven famous prophetesses and her song ranked among the greatest ever sung to G-d. The Zohar states that there were two women who composed songs and praises to G-d. These were unequaled by any man, these women were Chana and Devora.