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**Parsha Rosh Hashana**  
**by Julie Zhuk on 2023-09-16**

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The holiday of Rosh Hashana brings back a story of Elkan and his wife Channa. Many years ago, men were allowed to be married to more than one wife. At the time he was actually seeing Channa and Penina at the same time. He had children from Penina, but none from Channa. As pious of a woman that Channa was for years, she still had no children. Rosh Hashana is an important day because it is the day of Remembrance. What this means is on this day, G-d decides the fate of every human being for the coming year.

Both the Torah reading and the Haftarat for this holiday, are defined by Rosh Hashana. It is on this day that the Torah Reading starts remembering Sara giving birth to Isaac. We have to keep in mind, that for a very long time Sara was not able to have a child. Just like Sarah, we will read in the Haftara the story of Channa who was Elkanan's wife and she too was barren. The Jewish Sages tell us that it was pretty much a blessing for both Sara (Isaac's mother and Channa Elkanan's wife) who were granted who were granted a child on Rosh Hashana. This came to them as a "remembrance of their plight before G-d."

Elkanan and Channa were important people in the Torah, starting with Elkanan because he was a righteous man. He was an important Israelite who was from the tribe of Levi and lived in one of the Levite cities of Ephraim. He was very devoted to spending the obligation of having every Jew visit the Temple during the three important holidays of Passover, Sukkot, and Shavuot. Before the Temple was built, it was known as a Tabernacle and that was constructed under the direction of Moses after the Jews had entered the land of Israel. The Tabernacle was located in Shiloh and Elkanan led this expedition. He brought many Jews along with him and his entire family as well.

Channa was still unable to have children, the Parsha tells us that she was the one who arranged for her husband to marry Penina. That way he would not be completely without children since she couldn't give him children. One year when it was the holiday of Shavuot, her husband Elkanan was on his usual pilgrimage he was doing everything right by both wives and in the eyes of G-d, making sure everyone in his family had enough food on the table. This was also the time when his wife Penina, made fun of Channa for not having children.

Parsha tells us that she had good intentions but acted cruelly towards Channa. Penina was imploring G-d to give Channa a child and in the end, He did give her one. The Jewish Sages teach us that Penina was punished for her actions towards Channa. What she did, and how she acted towards Channa was a grave sin. Elkanan ended up comforting Channa, he told her "Your creator is your lot." Unfortunately, these words didn't do much for Channa. This was the day that Channa decided to take time and pray she no longer be barren. She stood outside the Tabernacle and prayed quietly.

The prophet Eli saw her but didn't believe at first that she was really praying. He thought that she was drunk from alcohol. Of course, he confronted her and she said she didn't consume any alcohol and that she poured out her soul before G-d. She explained all she wanted was to have

a child. Immediately he believed her and something in his tone of voice changed, maybe G-d spoke to him and he was able to change his mind just like that.

Our Sages teach us that if anyone suspects us that another Jew is guilty of doing something, but they really didn't do anything. We can't appease them and instead, we have to bless them. At the end of this story, Channa did get a blessing of what she had been wanting. Channa was able to conceive and she became a mother. She and Elkanan had a baby boy. That is where the story of Samuel comes from.