

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter IX: Vayeishev (Gen. 37:1–40:23)

Essay 11. Judah and Joseph sanctified G-d's Name

Tamar was married to Judah's firstborn son, Er. He died childless, and she entered into a Levirate marriage with Er's brother, Onan. He too died childless. Judah promised that she would enter into another Levirate marriage with his son Shelah. When he reneged on that promise, Tamar disguised herself and pretended to be a prostitute, and had relations with Judah. He gave her some items as a pledge until he could arrange payment, but she left, taking the pledged items with her. Judah later received a report that Tamar had become pregnant. Because she was legally still obligated to enter into a Levirate marriage with one of her first husband's relatives, and assuming that she had become pregnant by a stranger, he ruled that she should be subject to the death penalty for adultery.

“As she was being brought out, she sent this message to her father-in-law, ‘I am with child by the man to whom these belong.’ And she added, ‘Examine these: whose seal and cord and staff are these?’ Judah recognized [them], and said, ‘She is more in the right than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah.’ And he was not intimate with her again.” (Gen. 38:25–26).

That is, Judah realized that he was the one who had impregnated her, and he admitted it. Thus, she was not guilty of adultery, as that also counted as a Levirate marriage.

סוטה פרק קמ"א "ויבשר יהודה ויאמר צדקה ממני" היינו דאמר רב חנן בר בוןא וכו' יוסף שקדש שם שמים בסתר זכה והוסיפו לו אות משמו של הקב"ה דכתיב "עדות ביהוסף שמו", יהודה שקדש שם שמים בפרהסיא זכה ונקרא כולו על שמו של הקב"ה ע"כ.

In tractate **Sotah**, the first chapter:

“Judah recognized [the pledged items], and said, ‘She is more in the right than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah.’ ” (Gen. 38:26). **This is as** [היינו] [*hainu*] **Rav Chanin bar Bizna said** that Rabbi Shimon Chasida says: **Joseph, who sanctified the name of Heaven in private** [by not committing adultery with Potiphar's wife], **merited that one letter from the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He**, [viz, the *heh*] **was added to his name, as it is written: “He appointed it in Joseph** [ביהוסף] [*bihosef*] **for a testimony in his name** [when He

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went forth against the land of Egypt]” (Ps. 81:6). **Judah, who sanctified the name of Heaven in public, merited that his entire name is called by the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He.**

- Sotah 10b

That is, the Tetragrammaton is *yud, heh, vav, heh*, and all four letters were present from birth in Judah’s name (with the addition of a *dalet*). Only two of the four letters, the *yud* and *vav*, were present from birth in Joseph’s name (with the addition of a *samech* and *peh sofit*), but when the Book of Psalms was written, one of the two *heh*’s from the Tetragrammaton was added to Joseph’s name, as a sign via prophecy that Heaven had recognized Joseph’s action as a sanctification of G-d’s Name.

קשה דבשלמא אציל יוסף שייך לומר זכה, שאחר שעשה מעשה הטוב ניתן לו שכרו. אבל יהודה קראו אותו כן בעת הלידה ולא שייך לומר בו לשון זכה. ועוד מהו היינו דאמר רב חנני?

A difficulty is that granted, with regard to Joseph, it is appropriate to say “he merited [that one letter be added to his name from the Tetragrammaton],” for after he did this good deed [refusing Potiphar’s wife], he was given this reward.¹ But they called Judah thus from the time of his birth, and it was not appropriate to speak in his case in the term of merit. I.e., if his name from birth included all the letters of the Tetragrammaton, how could it be said that he merited that as an adult? Also, what is this language, “This is as [היינו] [*hainu*] Rav Chanin said . . .”

וגש לומר שאף שנקרא שמו בעת לידתו נקרא זכה (ועיין בחידושינו לקמן במגילת אסתר על ההיא דבזו באדר מת משה, ובזו באדר נולד מה שכתבנו שם בשם ספר החסידים) שהרי פתיב "ויבטרום מצא מרחם הקדושתיה", ועוד אמרינו אשר קדש ידיד מבטון, שזו היתה כמו נבואה שנקרא שמו יהודה, וכל האמהות נביאות היו פדאימא במדרש רבה סוף פרשת תולדות, וקראו לו יהודה לפי שהיה עתיד לזכות בקידוש השם.

It can be said that even though [Judah] was called by that name from the time of his birth, it can be said that he merited it. (See our novelties below for Megillat Esther, essay 12, since on the seventh of Adar, Moses died, and on the seventh of Adar, he was born, as we have written there in the name of the Sefer haChasidim.) For it is written, “Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you, and before you came forth out of the womb, I sanctified you; I have appointed you a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:5). It is also said, “Who made the beloved one [Isaac] holy from the belly,”² for this was like a prophecy that [his mother] called his name Judah, and all the matriarchs were prophetesses, as is brought in the Midrash Rabbah at the

¹ Actually, the reward came centuries afterwards, when the Book of Psalms was written.

² Shabbat 137b and Yerushalmi Berachot 66a identify this as a prayer during a circumcision.

end of parshat Toldot,³ and they called him Judah because he was destined to merit a sanctification of [G-d's] Name.

וביִוסֵף לֹא הָיוּ יְכוּלִים לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן, שֶׁהוֹאִיל שִׁקִּידֵשׁ שֵׁם שְׁמַיִם בְּסִתְרָא לֹא הָיָה נוֹדֵעַ לְנוּ שִׁקִּידֵשׁ שֵׁם שְׁמַיִם אִם לֹא עַל יְדֵי שִׁהוּסִיפּוֹ לֹא אוֹת, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַב הַעֵיּוֹן יַעֲקֹב שֶׁעַל יְדֵי שִׁינּוּי שְׁמוֹ יִשְׁאַלּוּ הָעוֹלָם הַטַּעַם שֶׁל שִׁינּוּי זֶה וְנִבְאוּ לְדַעַת שִׁקִּידֵשׁ שֵׁם שְׁמַיִם, וְאִם הָיָה נִקְרָא כֶּךָ בְּעֵת לִידָתוֹ לֹא הָיוּ מְרַגְּשִׁים כָּלֵל, שֶׁהָרִי אוֹתוֹ מַעֲשֵׂה הָיָה בְּסִתְרָא מִמֶּשׁ כְּמוֹ הַסּוּטָה דְּכַתִּיב בָּהּ "וְנִסְתָּרָה וְהָיָא נְטִמְאָה", וּמִכַּל שְׂכַח שֶׁבְּמַעֲשֵׂה הָיָה הִתְמָה אֲשֶׁת פּוֹטִיפָר מְכַחֶשֶׁת. וּמִשּׁוֹם הַכִּי הוֹצֵרָה לְחִיזוּק גָּדוֹל כְּדֵי לְפָרְסָם הָאֱמֶת, אֲבָל יְהוּדָה שִׁקִּידֵשׁ שֵׁם שְׁמַיִם בְּפָרְהֶסְיָא הִפֵּל יוֹדְעִים בּוֹ הָיוּ יְכוּלִים לְקַרְוֹתוֹ כֶּךָ מִלִּידָתוֹ.

But for Joseph, it was not possible to do this, to add the letter *heh* before he was born, for the sanctification of the name of Heaven in private would not have been known to us as a sanctification of the name of Heaven, if not for the addition of a letter for him. This is as the Iyun Ya'akov⁴ wrote, that because of the change of his name, the world asked the reason for this change, and they came to know that he sanctified the name of Heaven. If he had been called this from the time of his birth, they would not have recognized this at all. For this incident was done in secret, like the *sotah*, the Jewish wife who was secluded with a man other than her husband and suspected of adultery, for it was written concerning her, "in that a man has had carnal relations with her unbeknown to her husband, and she keeps secret the fact that she has defiled herself without being forced, and there is no witness against her" (Num. 5:13), and furthermore, in this incident, Potiphar's wife denied it.⁵ Because of this, a great strengthening was needed to publicize the truth.

That is, the Torah doesn't tell us whether Potiphar's wife ever retracted her charge against Joseph. Perhaps she did after his release from prison and his rise to greatness, or perhaps it remained during his lifetime as a blot on his record. But two centuries later, after the Torah was given on Mount Sinai, the truth of the incident became known, and people could understand for themselves that Joseph had acted honorably. They may have considered it a sanctification of G-d's Name, and this was confirmed four centuries later, when the Book of Psalms was written, when prophecy revealed that a *heh* should be added to Joseph's name. The Revelation of the Torah and the later incorporation of the Book of Psalms was the great strengthening that allowed the world to understand the truth of Joseph's actions.

But with Judah, who sanctified the name of Heaven in public, everyone knew of this during his lifetime; they were able to call him this from his birth.

³ Gen. Rabbah 67:9.

⁴ Jacob ben Joseph Reischer (Bechofen) (1661–1733), Austrian rabbi. His sefer, Iyun Ya'akov (Wilmersdorf, 1729) is a commentary on the Ein Ya'akov.

⁵ Gen. 39:12–18.

האי דקאמר, הנינו דאמר רב חנו, משום דלאו הכא עיקר מילתא דרב חנו, אלא לקמן בפרק אלו נאמרין איתמרה באנפי נפשא אמר רב חנו וכו', ונתם עיקר משום דקנימא לן דאין קידוש השם בפרהסיא אלא דוקא בפני עשרה מישראל, כדכתיב "ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל" כדאיתא בסנהדרין ובשלחן ערוך יורה דעה (סימן קנ"ז), ובאותו קידוש השם היו שם כל ישראל סמוך לשפת הים, אבל כן לא היה שם עשרה מישראל, ומשום הכי קאמר הנינו, דנתם עיקר ונתם לאו עיקר.

The fact that he mentioned, “This is as [הנינו] [*hainu*] Rav Chanin said . . .” Because here, it’s not the primary matter of Rav Chanin, rather later in the 7th chapter of Sotah, entitled, “These are recited,” it was stated independently, Rav Chanin said, “that Rabbi Shimon Chasida says: Joseph, who sanctified the name of Heaven in private, had one letter of the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, [the letter *heh*], added to his [name]. Judah, who sanctified the name of Heaven in public, had his entire [name] called by the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He,”⁶ and the interpretation of Rabbi Yehuda is that upon the splitting of the Red Sea, the tribe of Judah was the first to enter.⁷

There, in chapter 7 of Sotah, the principal is that we maintain that the only sanctification of the Name in public is in front of ten from the Children of Israel, as it is written, “You shall not profane My holy name, that I may be sanctified in the midst of the Israelite people—I the L-rd who sanctify you” (Lev. 22:32), as is brought in tractate Sanhedrin 74a and in the Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah (siman 157, se’if 1). In this same sanctification of G-d’s Name as discussed in chapter 7 of tractate Sotah, all of Israel were present, adjacent to the shore of the sea. But here, in chapter 1 of tractate Sotah, when Judah himself admitted to having been who impregnated Tamar, there were not ten from the Children of Israel present. Because of this it says, “this is as” [הנינו] [*hainu*], for there in chapter 7 is the primary matter but here in chapter 1 is not the primary matter.

Thus, the name “Judah” was given not in the merit of the man himself, for his admission that he impregnated Tamar, but rather in the merit of his descendants, for their willingness to be the first to enter the Red Sea.

ואם תאמר אי הכי לאו הנינו דרב חנו שיקרי כן לא נקרא פרהסיא שלא היו עשרה מישראל, ויש לומר דמכל מקום בסתר לא מיקרי הואיל שהיו שם אותם שהגידו ליהודה שתמר זינתה. ועוד שיהודה אמר "הוציאנה ותשרף" דמשמע שהיו שם לפחות שלשה בני אדם דמיקרו רבים אף על פי שלא היו שם עשרה מישראל. ועוד אפשר שיהודה גייר גיורים ונתם היו בית דינו של יהודה ונתם שם עשרה, אלא שאינו כל כך ברור כמו שהיא דקריעת ים סוף. והאי דסמיה דרשא זו לפסוק זה, הנינו כמו שכתב מהרש"א שיהיה לו לומר "תמיה" כמו שכתב לעיל, אי נמי "ניכרה נאמר" וכו' כמו "ניכרה נאמר" כתנת בני".

Perhaps you’ll say, “If so, it was not as Rav Chanin said, for here with Tamar, it is not [to be] called ‘public,’ for there were not ten from the Children of Israel present. But it can be

⁶ Sotah 36b. Here the Gemara gives the speaker’s name as “Rav Chana bar Bizna.” While Chana is typically a female name, it also appears as a nickname of the male name Chanan.

⁷ Sotah 37a.

said that in any event, unlike the case with Joseph and Potiphar's wife, it should not be said that Judah sanctified G-d's Name "in private," for there were present those who told Judah that Tamar had acted as a harlot, as she had become visibly pregnant.

Furthermore, after being informed of her pregnancy and before realizing that he was the one who had impregnated her, Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned" (Gen. 38:24), which means that there were at least three people present, who would be called "many," even though there were not ten from the Children of Israel there.

Furthermore, it's possible that Judah had converted converts, and that they were a court of law for Judah and there were, in fact, ten Jews present, but it is not so clear that ten Jews were present at the incident with Tamar, as this is certain with the splitting of the Red Sea.

This reliance on this midrash for this verse, Gen. 38:26, is as the Maharsha⁸ wrote in the Chidushei Halachot on Sotah, page 10b, at "And he recognized [them]," that [Scripture] should have said "her father-in-law," as it had written above for the previous verse, or otherwise it could have said "He recognized it and said," as Jacob had said, "He recognized it, and said, 'my son's tunic!'" (Gen. 37:33). That is, Gen. 38:25, states, "As she was being brought out, she sent this message to her father-in-law . . ." Then Gen. 38:26 states, "Judah recognized [them], and said . . ." As we knew that her father-in-law was Judah, it seems superfluous to give him name. The Maharsha suggested that it should have paralleled the previous verse, by saying, "Her father-in-law recognized them, and said . . .," or it could have simply said, "He recognized them, and said . . ." The Maharsha believed that the inclusion of Judah's name in Gen. 38:26 is what led Rav Chanin to expound that Judah's actions constituted a sanctification of G-d's Name, earning him the right to have letters from the Name incorporated into his own name.

ועוד יש לומר דביהודה לא היו יכולים לעשות כמו שעשו ליוסף שהוסיפו לו אות אחת כשקידש השם, שהרי יהודה קידש השם שתי פעמים והיה צריך להוסיף לו שתי אותיות, ולפי שכל השתי פעמים היו בפרהסיא או ברבים היו צריכים שתי אותיות אחרות. וגנאי הוא שיהיה כל השם בתוספת, ולכן קראו לו בן מתחלה כדי שיהיה כל השם עיקר שמו.

Furthermore, it can be said that for Judah, it was not possible to act as was done for Joseph, that they added for him one letter when he sanctified [G-d's] Name. It was impossible because Judah sanctified the Name twice, and it would have been necessary to add two letters to his name, as both times that he sanctified the Name, it was in public or before many people, and thus two other letters would have been required. It would have been a disgrace to have the entire Name, i.e., all four letters, with additional letters from the Name, and therefore they called him Judah from the beginning in order that the entire Name would be the principal of his name.

⁸ Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Eidels (1555–1631), Polish rabbi famous for his Talmud commentaries, Chiddushei Halachot and Chiddushei Agadot.

וּעֲדִינִין יֵשׁ לְדַקְדָּק עַל הַלְשׁוֹן, "נִקְרָא כְּלוֹ עַל שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקַּב"ה", שֶׁהִנֵּה לוֹ לֹאמֹר "זְכָה" שֶׁהִנֵּה לוֹ בְּשֵׁמוֹ כֹּל שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקַּב"ה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר בְּיוֹסֵף. וַיֵּשׁ לֹאמֹר שֶׁכְּתֹב שֵׁם מִהֲרֵשׁ"א שְׁבִיחַ הַוָּדָה יֵשׁ בּוֹ כֹּל שֵׁם הוִי"ה וְהַד' נוֹסֶפֶת לְרִמּוּז עַל לְשׁוֹן הַוָּדָה וְכוּ' עַכ"ל. וַיֹּתֵר נִרְאֶה שֶׁהַש"ס בָּא לֹאמֹר שֶׁאֲפִילוֹ הַדָּל"ת נִקְרָאת עַל שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקַּב"ה וּמִשּׁוֹם הֵכִי נִקְטַ הַלְשׁוֹן "זְכָה" וְ"נִקְרָא כְּלוֹ עַל שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקַּב"ה", דְּאִיתָא בְּזוֹהַר (ח"ב דף ק"ד) יְהוּדָה: נוֹקְבָא בְּהַדְיָה דְּכֹוֹרָא מִתְדַבְּקָת, יְהו"ו, דָּא דְּכֹוֹרָא. ד"ה, דָּא נוֹקְבָא וְדו"ק.

We still have to investigate the language of Sotah, “his entire [name] is called by the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He,” for it could have said, “he merited that within his name would be the entire name of the Holy One, Blessed be He.” It can be said that the **Maharsha writes here** in the Chidushei Halachot (on Sotah, page 10b, at “is called by”) **that for the name Judah, it has within it the entire “Name of Existence” [i.e., the Tetragrammaton],⁹ and the *dalet* is additional to hint at the language of admission [הוֹדָאָה] [*hoda’a*], for Judah admitted his involvement with Tamar.**

Further, it appears that the Talmud¹⁰ comes to say that even the *dalet* was called after the Name of the Holy One, Blessed be, and because of this, it used the language of “merited” and “his entire name is called by the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He.” For it is brought in the Zohar (part II, page 104a), “Yehuda: The feminine force [*nukvah*] with the masculine clinging; the first half of the name, with the *yud*, the first *heh*, and *vav*—this is masculine. The second half of the name, with the *dalet* and the second *heh*—this is feminine.

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⁹ The author writes many of the names of G-d in this work, but he does not write out the Tetragrammaton. Instead, the anagram הוִי"ה, the “Name of Existence,” is used to represent the Tetragrammaton.

¹⁰ Literally, “the Shas,” an acronym for *Shisha Sedarim* [שֵׁשֶׁה סְדָרִים], the “six orders” of the Mishna and Talmud.