

## ALL ELSE IS COMMENTARY: DEVORAH & YAEL

### Who was Devorah?

#### Metzudat David on Judges 4:4

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| <b>Wife of Lapidot</b> - That is to say, a woman of valour, zealous in her deeds as a torch of fire. | <b>אשת לפידות.</b> רצה לומר, אשת חיל, זריזה במעשיה כלפיד אש. |
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#### Rashi on Judges 4:4

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| <b>Wife of Lapidot</b> - She made wicks [p'tilot] for the sanctuary. | <b>אשת לפידות.</b> שהיתה עושה פתילות למקדש: |
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### Devorah: A Mother in Israel

#### Metzudat David

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| A mother: Like a mother who chastises her son to straighten out his way, so too am I to Israel. | אם. כאם המיסרת את בנה ליישר דרכו, כן אנכי לישראל |
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#### Aderet Eliyahu

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| I arose as a mother in Israel, to judge them and reprove them as a mother who judges and corrects her children, guiding them in the ways of righteousness, as the verse says, 'Do not forsake the <i>torah</i> of your mother.' (Proverbs 1:8) | אז אם בישראל לשפוט אותם ומוכיחת' כדרך האם השופטת ומייסרת את בניה להדריכם בדרכי היושר וכמאמר הכתוב אל תטוש תורת אמך |
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#### Malbim

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| "Until I arose as a mother in Israel:" It can be interpreted as if Israel had ceased being a people, and now they were born anew. She, as the mother, gave birth to the entire nation. | שקמתי אם בישראל: ימליץ כאילו כבר נשבת ישראל מהיות עם ועתה נולדו מחדש והיא האם היולדת את הגוי כולו |
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## Yael the Heroine

### BT Megillah 15b

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| <p>The Sages taught [in a baraita]: Rahab aroused impure thoughts by her name, [i.e., the mere mention of her name would inspire lust for her]; <b>Yael, by her voice</b>; Abigail, by remembering her; Michal, the daughter of Saul, by her appearance.</p> | <p>תנו רבנן: רחב בשמה זינתה, יעל — בקולה, אביגיל — בזכירתה, מיכל בת שאול — בראייתה</p> |
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### Leviticus Rabbah 23:10

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| <p>There were three who fled from transgression and the Holy One Blessed associated Their name with them, and they are: Joseph, Yael, and Palti. Joseph, from where is it derived? As it is stated: “He established it as testimony for Joseph [Yehosef]” (Psalms 81:6). What is Yehosef? The Lord [Yah] attests in [Joseph’s] regard that he did not touch Potiphar’s wife. Yael, from where is it derived? “Yael emerged to meet Sisera...and she covered him with the <i>semikha</i>” (Judges 4:18). What is “with the <i>semikha</i>”? The Rabbis here say: With a cloak. The Rabbis there say: With a tub. Reish Lakish said: We reviewed the entire Bible and did not encounter a utensil whose name is <i>semikha</i>. What is <i>semikha</i>? It is: My name [<i>shemi</i>] is here [<i>ko</i>]; My name attests in her regard that that wicked one did not touch her. Palti, from where is it derived? One verse says: “But Saul had given Mikhal his daughter, David’s wife, to Palti” (I Samuel 25:44), and one verse says: “Paltiel” (II Samuel 3:15). It calls him Palti and it calls him Paltiel. Who married her? Palti. Who gave her</p> | <p>שְׁלֹשָׁה הֵם שִׁפְּרוּ מִן הָעֲבָרָה וְשִׁמְרָה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שָׁמוֹ עִמָּהֶם, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן: יוֹסֵף וְיַעֲל וּפְלִטִי. יוֹסֵף מִנִּין, שְׁנֵאָמַר (תהלים פא, ו): עֵדוּת בִּיהוֹסֵף שָׁמוֹ, מֵהוּ בִּיהוֹסֵף יָהּ מַעֲיֵד עָלָיו שְׁלֹא נָגַע בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ פּוֹטִיפָר. יַעֲל מִנִּין, שְׁנֵאָמַר (שופטים ד, יח): וַתֵּצֵא יַעֲל לְקִרְאֵת סִיסְרָא וַתְּכַסֶּהוּ בְּשִׁמְכָהּ, מֵהוּ בְּשִׁמְכָהּ, רַבָּנָן דְּהִקְאָ אָמְרִי בְּסוּדְרָא, וְרַבָּנָן דְּתַמָּן אָמְרִי בְּמִשְׁכָּלָא, אָמַר רִישׁ לְקִישׁ חֲזַרְנוּ עַל כָּל הַמִּקְרָא וְלֹא מְצִינוּ כְּלִי שֶׁשְׁמוֹ שְׁמִיכָהּ, וּמֵה שְׁמִיכָהּ, שְׁמִי כֹה, שְׁמִי מַעֲיֵד עָלֶיהָ שְׁלֹא נָגַע בָּהּ אוֹתוֹ רָשָׁע. פְּלִטִי מִנִּין כְּתוּב אֶחָד אוֹמֵר (שמואל א כה, מד): וְשָׂאוֹל נָתַן אֶת מִיכָל בִּתּוֹ [אשת דוד] לְפְלִטִי, וְכְתוּב אֶחָד אוֹמֵר (שמואל ב ג, טו): פְּלִטִיאֵל, קָרִי לִיהּ פְּלִטִי וְקָרִי לִיהּ פְּלִטִיאֵל, מִי נָסִיב פְּלִטִי וּמִי יְהִיב פְּלִטִיאֵל, אֶלָּא מַעֲיֵד אָנִי עָלָיו שְׁלֹא נָגַע בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ דְּדוֹד</p> |
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back? Paltiel. Rather, I attest in his regard that he did not touch David's wife.

**BT Nazir 23b**

Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said: Greater is a transgression committed for its own sake, i.e., for the sake of Heaven, than a mitzva performed not for its own sake. The Gemara questions this comparison: But didn't Rav Yehuda say that Rav said: A person should always occupy himself with Torah and mitzvot even not for their own sake, as it is through acts performed not for their own sake that good deeds for their own sake come about? How, then, can any transgression be considered greater than a mitzva not for the sake of Heaven? Rather, one must emend the above statement and say as follows: A transgression for the sake of Heaven is equivalent to a mitzva not for its own sake. The proof is as it is written: "Blessed above women shall Yael be, the wife of Hever the Kenite, above women in the tent she shall be blessed" (Judges 5:24), and it is taught: Who are these "women in the tent?" They are Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. Yael's forbidden intercourse with Sisera for the sake of Heaven is compared to the sexual intercourse in which the Matriarchs engaged. The Gemara asks: How is it derived that Yael engaged in sexual intercourse with Sisera? As Rabbi Yohanan said: That wicked one, Sisera, engaged in seven acts of sexual intercourse with Yael at that time, as it is stated: "Between her feet he sunk, he fell, he lay; between her feet he sunk, he fell; where he sunk, there he fell down

אמר רב נחמן בר יצחק: גדולה עבירה לשמה ממצוה שלא לשמה. והאמר רב יהודה אמר רב: לעולם יעסוק אדם בתורה ובמצוות אפילו שלא לשמן, שמתוך שלא לשמן בא לשמן? אלא אימא: כמצוה שלא לשמה. דכתיב: "תברך מנשים יעל אשת חקר הקיני מנשים באהל תברך". מאן נשים שבאהל — שרה רבקה רחל ולאה. אמר רבי יוחנן: שבע בעילות בעל אותו רשע באותה שעה, שנאמר: "בין רגליה פגע נפל שכב וגו'". והא קא מתהניא מבעילה דליה? אמר רבי יוחנן: כל טובתן של רשעים — אינה אלא רעה אצל צדיקים

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| <p>dead” (Judges 5:27). Each mention of falling is referring to another act of intercourse. The Gemara asks: But Yael at least enjoyed the sexual intercourse with him; why is the verse so effusive in her praise? Rabbi Yohanan said: All the good of the wicked, i.e., anything good received from wicked people, is nothing other than evil for the righteous, and therefore she certainly derived no pleasure from the act.</p> |  |
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### Bereishit Rabbah 48:15

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| <p>“He said: Behold, in the tent” – that is what is written: “Blessed beyond women is Yael, wife of Hever the Kenite; beyond the women in the tent, she shall be blessed” (Judges 5:24). Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahman, Rabbi Elazar said: Beyond the women of the generation of the wilderness, who dwelled in tents, as it is stated: “Each man at the entrance of his tent” (Numbers 11:10). Why should she be more blessed than they were? They bore children and kept the world going, but what use would it have been? Were it not for her, they would have been eradicated. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahman said: Beyond the matriarchs. They bore children, etc., but were it not for her, they would have been eradicated.</p> | <p>וַיֹּאמֶר הַיְהוָה בְּאַהֲלָהּ, הֲדָא הוּא דְכַתִּיב (שופטים ה, כד): תְּבָרַךְ מִנְּשִׁים יַעֲלֵ אִשְׁתֵּי חֶבֶר הַקֵּינִי מִנְּשִׁים בְּאַהֲלֵי תְּבָרַךְ, רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר וְרַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַי נַחֲמָן, רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר מִנְּשִׁי דוֹר הַמְּדָבָר שֶׁהָיוּ שׁוֹבוֹת בְּאַהֲלֵיהֶם, שְׁנַאֲמַר (במדבר יא, י): אִישׁ לִפְתַּח אֶהְלוֹ, וְלָמָּה תְּבָרַךְ מֵהֶם, הֵן יָלְדוּ וְקִיְמוּ אֶת הָעוֹלָם, וְמָה הִיָּה מוֹעִיל לָהֶם שְׁאֵלְמָלָא הִיא כְּבָר הָיוּ אֲבוּדִין. רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַי נַחֲמָן אָמַר מִן הָאֲמָהוֹת, הֵן יָלְדוּ וְכוּ' שְׁאֵלְוִילֵי הִיא כְּבָר הָיוּ אֲבוּדִין</p> |
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### Shemot Rabbah 4:2

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| <p>Another interpretation: “Moses went” – that is what is written: “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Proverbs 17:17). Who is “a friend loves”? This is Yitro, who accepted Moses when he was fleeing from</p> | <p>דְּבָר אַחֵר, וַיִּלְךָ מֹשֶׁה, הֲדָא הוּא דְכַתִּיב (משלי יז, יז): בְּכָל יַעַת אֶהֱבֵהּ הָרַע וְאָח לְצָרָה יוֹלֵד, מִי הִיָּה אֶהֱבֵהּ הָרַע, זֶה יִתְרוֹ, שֶׁקָּבַל לְמֹשֶׁה שֶׁהָיָה בּוֹרַח מִפְּנֵי פְרַעֲזָה, מִכַּאֲן אִתָּה לָמַד מִי שֶׁקָּבַל עַל עֲצָמוֹ</p> |
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| <p>Pharaoh. From here you learn that one who accepts upon himself to perform a mitzva, that mitzva does not cease from his household. Yitro's mitzva was that he accepted into his house a deliverer who fled from an enemy. From his house, one emerged who accepted an enemy who fled from a deliverer, and killed him. Who is that? Sisera, as it is stated: "Sisera fled on foot to the tent of Yael, wife of Hever the Kenite" (Judges 4:17), and it is written: "The children of the Kenite, father-in-law of Moses" (Judges 1:16). Therefore, it says: "A brother is born for adversity" – because Yitro loved Moses and was his friend, therefore his descendants became brethren to Israel in their time of trouble, and Yael killed Sisera.</p> | <p>לַעֲשׂוֹת מִצְוָה, אֵין אוֹתָהּ מִצְוָה פּוֹסְקָת מִבֵּיתוֹ. מִצְוָתוֹ שֶׁל יִתְרוֹ שֶׁקִּבַּל בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ גּוֹאֵל שֶׁבָרַח מִפְּנֵי הַשׂוֹנְאִים, עָמַד מִבֵּיתוֹ שֶׁקִּבַּל לַשׂוֹנְאִים שֶׁבָרַח מִפְּנֵי הַגּוֹאֵל וְהָרְגוֹ, אֵיזָה זֶה סִיסְרָא, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (שׁוֹפְטִים ד, יז): וְסִיסְרָא נָס בְּרַגְלָיו אֶל אֵהָל יַעֲלֵ אִשֶׁת חֶבֶר הַקֵּינִי, וּכְתִיב (שׁוֹפְטִים א, טז): וּבְנֵי קֵינִי חָתָן מִשָּׁה, לְכֹהֵן נֶאֱמַר: וְאֵחַ לְצָרָה יִנְלַד, לְפִי שֶׁאֵהָב יִתְרוֹ לְמִנְשָׁה וְהָיָה לוֹ רֵעַ, לְכֹהֵן נַעֲשׂוּ בְּנָיו אֲחִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵת צָרָתָם וְהָרְגָה יַעֲלֵ לְסִיסְרָא</p> |
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### Ralbag on Judges 4:11

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| <p><b>‘And behold ...’</b> - It is mentioned that Chever the Kenite had separated himself from Cain, of the descendants of Chovav, the father-in-law of Moses. Earlier, it was described that they dwelled with Judah in the wilderness of Judah, and Chever pitched his tent as far as Elon-bezaananim, which is near Kadesh. This indicates the actions of Yael, as it shows that the conduct of Chever the Kenite was similar to that of the other descendants of , following the faith of Israel. For this reason, Yael endeavored to kill Sisera.</p> | <p>וְהִנֵּה זָכַר שֶׁחֶבֶר הַקֵּינִי הָיָה נִפְרָד מִקֵּינֵי מִבְּנֵי חֹבָב חָתָן מִשָּׁה שֶׁסָּפַר לְמַעַלְמַעַל שֶׁיָּשְׁבוּ אֶת יְהוּדָה בְּמִדְבַר יְהוּדָה וְנִטְּהוּ אֵהָלוֹ עַד אֵילוֹן בְּצַעֲנָנִים אֲשֶׁר אֵת קֹדֶשׁ וְיִוְרָה פּוֹעֵל יַעֲלֵ שְׂמֵנָה חֶבֶר הַקֵּינִי הָיָה כְּמִנְהַג שְׂאֵר בְּנֵי חֹבָב לְהִתְנַהֵג בְּדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִזְהַר שֶׁתִּדְלַה יַעֲלֵ לְהַרְגוֹ סִיסְרָא:</p> |
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