

# Source Sheet for Shiur on Hanukkah and Cheese

Community Education – December 10, 2020/24 Kislev, 5781

## Source 1 – Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 23a

אשה ודאי מדליקה, דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: נשים חייבות בנר חנוכה, שאף הן היו באותו הנס.

A woman certainly kindles [the Hanukkiah on Hanukkah], as Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said, 'women are obligated to light the Hanukkah candle, for even they, too, were a part of the same miracle.'

## Source 2 – Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Megillah 4a

אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: נשים חייבות במקרא מגילה, שאף הן היו באותו הנס.

Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said, 'women are obligated to read the Megillah, for even they, too, were a part of the same miracle.'

## Source 3 – Tosafot to Tractate Megillah 4a

שאף הן היו באותו הנס - פירש רשב"ם שעיקר הנס היה על ידן: בפורים על ידי אסתר, בחנוכה על ידי יהודית, בפסח שבזכות צדקניות שבאותו הדור נגאלו. וקשה דלשון "שאף הן" משמע שהן טפלות. ולפירושו היה לו לומר "שהן". לכך נראה לי שאף (בפורים) הן היו בספק דלהשמיד ולהרוג; וכן בפסח שהיו משועבדות לפרעה במצרים; וכן בחנוכה הגזירה היתה מאד עליהן.

'For even they, too, were a part of the same miracle.' – Rashbam explains that the essence of the miracles was brought about by women. On Purim, it was Esther to whom the miracle is attributed; on Hanukkah, it was Judith to whom the miracle is attributed; on Pesah, it was because of the righteous women in that generation that the nation was redeemed. What is difficult is the language 'even they, too', as if to say that they are an afterthought in the story. To make Rashbam's comment make total sense, the Talmud should have reported 'they were [an equal] part of the miracle.' Thus, it seems to me that certainly on Purim they were destined to be annihilated [just like the men]; and on Pesah, the women were enslaved [just like the men]; and on Hanukkah the decree was directed very much toward the women.

## Source 4 – Rashi's commentary to Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 23a

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היו באותו הנס - שגזרו יוונים על כל בתולות הנשואות להיבעל לטפסר תחלה, ועל יד אשה נעשה הנס.

'They were a part of the same miracle.' The Greeks decreed that all virgins about to be married first had to have sex with the 'tafsar' (high ranking general), and it was at the hands of a woman that the miracle [of Hanukkah] took place.

Source 5 – Shulchan Aruch (Yosef Karo – 16<sup>th</sup> century Spain), OH 675

אשה מדלקת נר חנוכה, שאף היא חייבת בה.

A woman may kindle the Hanukkah candle, for she, too, is obligated.

Source 6 – Shulchan Aruch (Rema Gloss – 16<sup>th</sup> century Poland) OH 670:2

הג"ה: יש אומרים שיש לאכול גבינה בחנוכה לפי שהנס נעשה בחלב שהאכילה יהודית את האויב.

There are those who say that one should eat cheese on Hanukkah because the miracle happened with milk/curds which Judith fed the enemy.

Source 7 – Mishnah Berura (Yisrael Meir Hachohen Kagen – 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century Russia) OH 675:10

שאף היא חייבת בה - שהנס היה גם להן שהגזירה היתה על כל בתולה הנישאת שתבעל להגמון תחלה וגם התשועה נעשה ע"י אשה שבת יוחנן כ"ג חתכה ראשו של ראש הצוררים.

'She, too, is obligated.' The miracle affected the women as well, for the decree was on all of the virgins about to be married, that they first had to have sex with the army general, and the salvation took place at the hands of a woman, the daughter of Yochanan the high priest who cut off the head of the leader of the enemies.

Source 8 – Mishnah Berura 670:10

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שהאכילה יהודית - היא היתה בתו של יוחנן כ"ג והיתה גזירה שכל ארוסה תבעל לטפסר תחלה והאכילה לראש הצוררים גבינה לשכרותו וחתכה את ראשו וברחו כולם:

'Which Judith fed [the enemy].' She was the daughter of Yochanan the high priest. There was a decree that all engaged women first have sex with the 'tafsar', and she fed the head of the enemies cheese to get him drunk and cut off his head and [the enemies] all fled [in terror].

Source 9 – Judges 4:17-21

(יז) וְסִסְרָא נָס בְּרַגְלָיו אֶל אֹהֶל יַעֲלֵ אִשֶּׁת חֶבֶר הַקֵּינִי כִּי שָׁלוֹם בֵּין יִבִּין מֶלֶךְ חֲצוֹר וּבֵין בֵּית חֶבֶר הַקֵּינִי: (יח) וַתֵּצֵא יַעֲלֵ לִקְרֹאת סִסְרָא וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו סוּרָה אֲדֹנִי סוּרָה אֵלַי אֵל תִּירָא וַיָּסֵר אֵלָיָהּ הָאֹהֶל וַתִּכְסֶּהוּ בְּשִׁמְכָהּ: (יט) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיָהּ הַשְׁקִינִי נָא מַעֲט מַיִם כִּי צָמֵאתִי וַתִּפְתַּח אֶת נְאוֹד הַחֹלֶב וַתִּשְׁקֶהוּ וַתִּכְסֶּהוּ: (כ) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיָהּ עֲמֹד פְּתַח הָאֹהֶל וְהִיא אִם אִישׁ יָבוֹא וְשָׁאַלְךָ וְאָמַר הֲיֵשׁ פֹּה אִישׁ וְאָמַרְתְּ אֵין: (כא) וַתִּקַּח יַעֲלֵ אִשֶּׁת חֶבֶר אֶת יָתֵד הָאֹהֶל וַתִּשֶּׂם אֶת הַמַּקְבֵּת בַּיָּדָה וַתָּבוֹא אֵלָיו בְּלֹאט וַתִּתְקַע אֶת הַיָּתֵד בְּרִקְתּוֹ וַתַּצֵּנַח בְּאַרְץ וְהוּא נֶרְדָּם וַיַּעַף וַיָּמָת:

17. Sisera, meanwhile, had fled on foot to the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was friendship between King Jabin of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite. 18. Jael came out to greet Sisera and said to him, "Come in, my lord, come in here, do not be afraid." So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket. 19. He said to her, "Please let me have some water; I am thirsty." She opened a skin of milk and gave him some to drink; and she covered him again. 20. He said to her, "Stand at the entrance of the tent. If anybody comes and asks you if there is anybody here, say 'No.'" 21. Then Jael wife of Heber took a tent pin and grasped the mallet. When he was fast asleep from exhaustion, she approached him stealthily and drove the pin through his temple till it went down to the ground. Thus he died.

Source 10 – Book of Judith 14

1 It grew late and his staff hurried away. Bagoas closed the tent from the outside, having shown out those who still lingered in his lord's presence.

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They went to their beds wearied with too much drinking, 2 and Judith was left alone in the tent with Holofernes who had collapsed wine-sodden on his bed. 3 Judith then told her maid to stay just outside the bedroom and wait for her to come out, as she did every morning. She had let it be understood she would be going out to her prayers and had also spoken of her intention to Bagoas. 4 By now everyone had left Holofernes, and no one, either important or unimportant, was left in the bedroom. Standing beside the bed, Judith murmured to herself: Lord God, to whom all strength belongs, prosper what my hands are now to do for the greater glory of Jerusalem; 5 now is the time to recover your heritage and to further my plans to crush the enemies arrayed against us. 6 With that she went up to the bedpost by Holofernes' head and took down his scimitar (curved sword); 7 coming closer to the bed she caught him by the hair and said, 'Make me strong today, Lord God of Israel!' 8 Twice she struck at his neck with all her might, and cut off his head. 9 She then rolled his body off the bed and pulled down the canopy from the bedposts. After which, she went out and gave the head of Holofernes to her maid 10 who put it in her food bag. The two then left the camp together, as they always did when they went to pray. Once they were out of the camp, they skirted the ravine, climbed the slope to Bethulia and made for the gates. 11 From a distance, Judith shouted to the guards on the gates, 'Open the gate! Open! For the Lord our God is with us still, displaying his strength in Israel and his might against our enemies, as he has done today!'

Source 11 – 1 Book of Maccabees 7:43-50

43 The armies met in battle on the thirteenth day of the month Adar. Nicanor's army was crushed, and he himself was the first to fall in the battle. 44 When his army saw that Nicanor had fallen, they threw down their weapons and fled. 45 The Jews pursued them a day's journey from Adasa to near Gazara, blowing the trumpets behind them as signals. 46

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From all the surrounding villages of Judea people came out and outflanked them. They turned them back, and all the enemies fell by the sword; not a single one escaped. 47 Then the Jews collected the spoils and the plunder; they cut off Nicanor's head and his right arm, which he had lifted up so arrogantly. These they brought and displayed in the sight of Jerusalem. 48 The people rejoiced greatly, and observed that day as a day of much joy. 49 They decreed that it should be observed every year on the thirteenth of Adar. 50 And so for a few days the land of Judah was at rest.