

The Books of Samuel: Grappling with a Status Quo

Rachel Sharansky Danziger * Torah in Motion and 929 English * July 2020

1. The background

Judges 21:25

(25) In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did as he pleased.

שופטים כ"א:כ"ה

(כה) בַּיָּמִים הֵהֵם אֵין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ הַיֵּשֶׁר בַּעֲיֵנָיו יַעֲשֶׂה:

2. A surprising beginning

I Samuel 1:1-3

(1) There was a man from Ramathaim of the Zuphites, in the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. (2) He had two wives, one named Hannah and the other Peninnah; Peninnah had children, but Hannah was childless. (3) This man used to go up from his town every year to worship and to offer sacrifice to the LORD of Hosts at Shiloh.—Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD there.

שמואל א א':א-ג'

(א) וַיְהִי אִישׁ אֶחָד מִן־הַרְמָתִים צוֹפִים מֵהַר אֶפְרַיִם וּשְׁמוֹ אֶלְקָנָה בֶן־יִרְחָם בֶּן־אֵלִיהוּא בֶן־תְּחוּ בֶן־צוּף אֶפְרַתִּי: (ב) וְלוֹ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים שֵׁם אַחַת חַנָּה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית פְּנִינָה וַיְהִי לְפְנִינָה יְלָדִים וּלְחַנָּה אֵין יְלָדִים: (ג) וְעַלֶּה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מַעֲרֹו מִיָּמִים | יְמִימָה לְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת וּלְזַבֵּחַ לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּשִׁלֹּה וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי בְנֵי־עֲלִי חֹפְנִי וּפְנִחָס כֹּהֲנִים לַיהוָה:

3. Reconnecting to the past

Judges 13:2

(2) There was a certain man from Zorah, of the stock of Dan, whose name was Manoah. His wife was barren and had borne no children.

שופטים י"ג:ב'

(ב) וַיְהִי אִישׁ אֶחָד מִצְרָעָה מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת הַדָּנִי וּשְׁמוֹ מָנוּחַ וְאִשְׁתּוֹ עֵקְרָה וְלֹא יָלְדָה:

Judges 17:1

(1) There was a man in the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah.

שופטים י"ז:א'

(א) וַיְהִי־אִישׁ מִהַר־אֶפְרַיִם
וְשֵׁמוֹ מִיכָהוּ:

Judges 19:1-2

(1) In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a Levite residing at the other end of the hill country of Ephraim took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. (2) Once his concubine deserted him, leaving him for her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah; and she stayed there a full four months.

שופטים י"ט:א'-ב'

(א) וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם וּמֶלֶךְ אִין
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי אִישׁ לְוִי גֵר
בִּירְכַתֵי הַר־אֶפְרַיִם וַיִּקְחֶלּוּ
אִשָּׁה פִלְגֶשׁ מִבֵּית לָחֶם
יְהוּדָה: (ב) וַתִּזְנֶה עָלָיו פִּלְגֶשׁוֹ
וַתֵּלֶךְ מֵאִתּוֹ אֶל־בֵּית אָבִיהָ
אֶל־בֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה וַתְּהִי־שָׁם
יָמִים אַרְבַּעַה חֳדָשִׁים:

4. A sanctioned irreverence**I Samuel 1:9-14**

(9) After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah **rose**.—The priest Eli was **sitting** on the seat near the **doorpost** of the temple of the LORD.— (10) In her wretchedness, she **prayed** to the LORD, **weeping** all the while. (11) And she **made this vow**: “O LORD of Hosts, **if** You will look upon the suffering of Your maidservant and will remember me and not forget Your maidservant, and if You will grant Your maidservant a male child, **I will dedicate** him to the LORD for all the days of his life; and no razor shall ever touch his head.” (12) As she kept on praying before the LORD, Eli **watched** her mouth. (13) Now Hannah was praying in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice could not be heard. So Eli **thought** she was drunk. (14) Eli **said** to her, “How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Sober up!”

שמואל א א':ט'-י"ד

(ט) וַתִּקְם חַנָּה אַחֲרֵי אֲכֹלָה
בְּשִׁלָּה וְאַחֲרַי שָׁתָה וְעָלִי הִכְהִין
יָשֵׁב עַל־הַכֹּסֵא עַל־מְזוֹזַת הַיֵּכָל
יְהוָה: (י) וְהִיא מָרַת נַפְשׁ
וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל עַל־יְהוָה וּבְכָה תִבְכֶּה:
(יא) וַתִּדְרֹךְ נִדְרֹךְ וַתֹּאמֶר יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת אִם־רָאָה תִרְאֶה וּבְעֵינַי
אָמַתְךָ וַזְכַּרְתָּנִי וְלֹא־תִשְׁכַּח
אֶת־אֲמַתְךָ וְנָתַתָּה לְאֲמַתְךָ זָרַע
אֲנָשִׁים וְנָתַתִּיו לַיהוָה כְּלַיְמֵי חַיָּיו
וּמִוֶּרֶה לֹא־יַעֲלֶה עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ: (יב)
וְהָיָה כִּי הִרְבֵּתָה לְהִתְפַּלֵּל לְפָנַי
יְהוָה וְעָלִי שָׁמַר אֶת־פִּיהָ: (יג)
וְחָנָּה הִיא מְדַבֶּרֶת עַל־לִבָּהּ רַק
שִׁפְתֶיהָ נִעוֹת וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע
וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ עָלֶי לְשִׁכְרָה: (יד) וַיֹּאמֶר
אֵלֶיהָ עָלִי עַד־מַתִּי תִשְׁתַּכְּרִין
הַסִּירִי אֶת־יַיְנְךָ מֵעַלֶיךָ:

Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*:

The hero is the champion of things becoming, not of things become... He does not mistake apparent changelessness in time for the permanence of Being, nor is he fearful of the next moment... as destroying the permanent with its change. (209)

Robert Grudin, *Time and the Art of Living*, p.17:

What do I mean by “locked in time”? I mean, first of all, that we characteristically view mobile phenomena in immobile terms. We see processes like love and education as established circumstances rather than as complex temporal organisms whose lives depend on regular nourishment and renewal. Conversely, **we tend to accept our own fear, weakness and ignorance as chronic disabilities rather than facing them, as we should, with the awareness that they are temporary and surmountable.** Like still cameras, our minds consistently convert motion into stasis. In our language about time we resort to rocklike absolutisms – *creation, completion, means, end, permanence, annihilation* – terms whose static and extreme implications make them poor approximations of history and experience... We have little use at all for that most subtle and suggestive of words, *renewal*.

5. Samuel's ascension

I Samuel 2:22-26

(22) Now Eli was very old. When he **heard** all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who performed tasks at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, (23) he **said** to them, “Why do you do such things? I get evil reports about you from the people on all hands. (24) Don't, my sons! It is no

שמואל א ב':כ"ב-כ"ז

(כב) וְעָלִי זָקֵן מְאֹד וְשָׁמַע אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּן בְּנֵי לְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁכְּבוּן אֶת־הַנָּשִׁים הַצְּבָאוֹת פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: (כג) וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם לְמָה תַעֲשׂוּן כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי שֹׁמֵעַ אֶת־דְּבָרֵיכֶם רָעִים מֵאֵת כָּל־הָעָם

favorable report I hear the people of the LORD spreading about. (25) If a man sins against a man, the LORD may pardon him; but if a man offends against God, who can obtain pardon for him?” But they **ignored** their father’s plea; for the LORD was resolved that they should die. (26) Young Samuel, meanwhile, **grew** in esteem and favor both with God and with men.

אֱלֹהִים: (כד) אֶל בְּנֵי כִי לֹא-טוֹבָה
הַשְּׁמֵעָה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי שֹׁמֵעַ
מֵעֲבָרִים עִם-יְהוָה: (כה)
אִם-יִחַטָּא אִישׁ לְאִישׁ וּפָלְלוּ
אֱלֹהִים וְאִם לַיהוָה יִחַטָּא-אִישׁ מִי
יִתְפַּלְל-לוֹ וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ לְקוֹל
אֲבֵיהֶם כִּי-חָפֵץ יְהוָה לְהַמִּיתָם:
(כו) וְהַנְּעָר שְׁמוּאֵל הֵלֵךְ וַגְּדַל
וְטוֹב גַּם עִם-יְהוָה וְגַם
עִם-אֲנָשִׁים: (o)

I Samuel 2:35

(35) And I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest, who will act in accordance with My wishes and My purposes. I will build for him an enduring house, and he shall **walk** before My anointed evermore.

שמואל א ב:ל"ה

(לה) וְהִקִּמְתִּי לִי כֹהֵן נֶאֱמָן
כְּאֲשֶׁר בְּלִבִּי וּבְנַפְשִׁי יַעֲשֶׂה
וּבְנִיתִי לוֹ בַּיִת נֶאֱמָן וְהִתְהַלֵּךְ
לְפָנַי-מִשִּׁיחִי כָל-הַיָּמִים:

I Samuel 4:13-18

(13) When he arrived, he found Eli **sitting** on a seat, waiting beside the road—his heart trembling for the Ark of God...(14) And when Eli heard the sound of the outcry and asked, “What is the meaning of this uproar?” the man rushed over to tell Eli...(17) The bearer of the news replied, “Israel fled before the Philistines and the troops also suffered a great slaughter. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the Ark of God has been captured.” (18) When he mentioned the Ark of God, [Eli] fell backward off the **seat** beside the gate, broke his neck and died; for he was an old man and heavy. He had been a chieftain of Israel for forty years.

שמואל א ד:י"ג-י"ח

(יג) וַיְבֹאוּ וְהִנֵּה עָלָי יוֹשֵׁב
עַל-הַכֹּסֵּא יָר [יֵד] דְּרָךְ מְצַפֶּה
כִּי-הִיָּה לְבוֹ חֵרֵד עַל אֲרוֹן
הָאֱלֹהִים... (יד) וַיִּשְׁמַע עָלָי
אֶת-קוֹל הַצִּעֲקָה וַיֹּאמֶר מַה קוֹל
הַהֲמוֹן הַזֶּה וְהָאִישׁ מָהָר וַיָּבֹא
וַיַּגֵּד לְעָלָי... (יז) וַיַּעַן הַמְּבַשֵּׁר
וַיֹּאמֶר נָס יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנָי
פְּלִשְׁתִּים וְגַם מִגִּפָּה גְדוֹלָה
הָיְתָה בָּעַם וְגַם-שְׁנֵי בָנָי מִתּוֹ
חָפְנִי וּפִינְחָס וְאֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים
נִלְקָחָה: (פ) (יח) וַיְהִי כִּהְזָכִירוּ אֶת-אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים יָמִים וַיִּפֹּל
מֵעַל-הַכֹּסֵּא אַחֲרָתָּי בְּעַד יָד
הַשָּׁעָר וַתִּשְׁבֵּר מִפְּרִקְתּוֹ וַיָּמָת
כִּי-זָקֵן הָאִישׁ וְכָבֵד וְהוּא שֹׁפֵט
אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְבַּעַם שָׁנָה:

6. The dangers of kingship

Yoram Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*:

Thus in the ethics of the ancient Near East, **all action was ultimately directed toward the maintenance of the state since all goodness was seen as flowing from it... whatever served to maintain the closed circle of farmer, tax collector, king, soldier and priest was on its face for the good, since it kept the clockwork of the state in motion for another day and another generation, maintaining the mass of people alive and protected...**(129-130)

...biblical ethics proposes to evaluate human action from a completely different point of vantage... associated with the life of the nomad, who observes and evaluates all that goes on in human life **from a perspective that is outside the political state and free of any prior commitment to it... Independence of judgement and action, then, depends on an ability to resist the creeping advance of justified fears and unjustified commitments to human beings and their institutions – which together work to deprive the individual of his freedom to discern what is right and to act in its name.**(133-135)

I Samuel 12:6-25

(6) Samuel said to the people, “The LORD [is witness], He who appointed Moses and Aaron and who brought your fathers out of the land of Egypt. (7) Come, stand before the LORD while I cite against you all the kindnesses that the LORD has done to you and your fathers... (12) But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was advancing against you, you said to me, ‘No, we must have a king reigning over us’—though the LORD your God is your King. (13) “Well, the LORD has set a king over you! Here is the king that you have chosen, that you have asked for. (14) “If you will revere the LORD, worship Him, and obey Him, and will not flout the LORD’s command, if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, [well and good]. (15) But if you do not obey the LORD

שמואל א י"ב:ו'-כ"ה

(ו) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל-הָעָם
יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה
וְאֶת-אַהֲרֹן וְאֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָה
אֶת-אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:
(ז) וְעַתָּה הִתִּיצְבוּ וְאִשְׁפֹּטָה
אֶתְכֶם לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֵת
כָּל-צְדָקוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה
אִתְּכֶם וְאֶת-אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם: .. (יב)
וַתֵּרֶאוּ כִּי-נִחַשׁ מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי-עַמּוֹן
בָּא עֲלֵיכֶם וַתֹּאמְרוּ לִי לֹא
כִּי-מֶלֶךְ יִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ וַיְהִי
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִלְּכֶם: (יג) וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה
הִנֵּה הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בַּחֲרָתֶם
אֲשֶׁר שְׁאַלְתֶּם וְהִנֵּה נָתַן יְהוָה
עָלֵיכֶם מֶלֶךְ: (יד) אִם-תִּירְאוּ
אֶת-יְהוָה וְעַבַּדְתֶּם אֹתוֹ
וּשְׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹלוֹ וְלֹא תִמְרוּ

and you flout the LORD's command, the hand of the LORD will strike you as it did your fathers... (22) For the sake of His great name, the LORD will never abandon His people, seeing that the LORD undertook to make you His people...(25) For if you persist in your wrongdoing, both you and your king shall be swept away."

אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה וְהִיתָם גַּם־אֶתְּ אִם
וְגַם־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר מֶלֶךְ עָלֵיכֶם
אַחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: (טו)
וְאִם־לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ בְקוֹל יְהוָה
וּמְרִיתֶם אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה וְהִיתָה
יַד־יְהוָה בְּכֶם
וּבְאַבְתֵּיכֶם: ... (כב) כִּי לֹא־יִטָּשׁ
יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹ בְּעַבְוֹר שְׁמוֹ
הַגָּדוֹל כִּי הוֹאִיל יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת
אֶתְכֶם לֹו לְעַם: ... (כה)
וְאִם־הִרְעַתְּרֵעוּ גַם־אֶתְּם
גַּם־מִלְּכֶם תִּסָּפוּ:

Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*:

No longer referring the boons of his reign to their transcendent source, the emperor ... is no longer the mediator between the two worlds. Man's perspective flattens to include only the human term of the equation, and the experience of supernal power immediately fails. The upholding idea of the community is lost. Force is all that binds it. The emperor becomes the tyrant ogre... the usurper from whom the world is now to be saved. (299)

7. The king we need

I Samuel 15:24

(24) Saul said to Samuel, "I did wrong to transgress the LORD's command and your instructions; but I was afraid of the troops and I yielded to them.

שמואל א ט"ו:כ"ד

(כד) וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל־שְׁמוּאֵל
חָטָאתִי כִּי־עָבַרְתִּי אֶת־פִּי־יְהוָה
וְאֶת־דְּבָרֶיךָ כִּי יִרְאתִי אֶת־הָעַם
וַאֲשַׁמַּע בְּקוֹלָם:

I Samuel 17:32-51

(32) David said to Saul, "Let no man's courage fail him. Your servant will go and fight that Philistine!" (33) But Saul said to David, "You cannot go to that Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth!" (34) David replied to Saul, "Your

שמואל א י"ז:ל"ב-נ"א

(לב) וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־שָׁאוּל
אֶל־יִפְלֵ יָב־אָדָם עָלָיו עֲבַדְךָ יֵלֶךְ
וְנִלְחַם עִם־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הַזֶּה: (לג)
וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל־דָּוִד לֹא תוּכַל
לָלֶכֶת אֶל־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הַזֶּה לְהִלָּחֵם
עִמּוֹ כִּי־נַעַר אַתָּה וְהוּא אִישׁ

servant has been tending his father's sheep, and if a lion or a bear came and carried off an animal from the flock...(37) The LORD," David went on, "who saved me from lion and bear will also save me from that Philistine." "Then go," Saul said to David, "and may the LORD be with you!" (38) Saul clothed David in his own garment; he placed a bronze helmet on his head and fastened a breastplate on him. (39) David girded his sword over his garment. Then he tried to walk; but he was not used to it. And David said to Saul, "I cannot walk in these, for I am not used to them." So David took them off. (40) He took his stick, picked a few smooth stones from the wadi, put them in the pocket of his shepherd's bag and, sling in hand, he went toward the Philistine... (49) David put his hand into the bag; he took out a stone and slung it. It struck the Philistine in the forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. (50) Thus David bested the Philistine with sling and stone; he struck him down and killed him. David had no sword; (51) so David ran up and stood over the Philistine, grasped his sword and pulled it from its sheath; and with it he dispatched him and cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their warrior was dead, they ran.

II Samuel 12:13

(13) David said to Nathan, "I stand guilty before the LORD!" And Nathan replied to David, "The LORD has remitted your sin; you shall not die.

מִלְחָמָה מִנְעָרָיו: (ס) (לד) וַיֹּאמֶר
 דָּוִד אֶל־שָׁאוּל רַעַה הִיָּה עִבְדְּךָ
 לְאֲבִיו בְּצֹאן וּבֵא הָאֲרִי וְאֶת־הַדּוֹב
 וְנִשָּׂא שָׂה מִהֶעֶדֶר: ... (לז) וַיֹּאמֶר
 דָּוִד יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּילַנִי מִיַּד הָאֲרִי
 וּמִיַּד הַדּוֹב הוּא יִצִּילַנִי מִיַּד
 הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הַזֶּה (ס) וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל
 אֶל־דָּוִד לָךְ וַיהוָה יְהִיָּה עִמָּךְ:
 (לח) וַיִּלְבֹּשׁ שָׁאוּל אֶת־דָּוִד מִדְּיוֹ
 וְנָתַן קֹבֶעַ נְחֹשֶׁת עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ
 וַיִּלְבֹּשׁ אֹתוֹ שֵׁרְיוֹן: (לט) וַיַּחְגֵּר
 דָּוִד אֶת־חַרְבּוֹ מֵעַל לְמַדְיוֹ וַיֹּאֲלֵ
 לְלֶכֶת כִּי לֹא־נִסָּה וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד
 אֶל־שָׁאוּל וְלֹא אוֹכַל לְלֶכֶת בְּאֵלֶּהָ
 כִּי לֹא נִסִּיתִי וַיִּסְרַם דָּוִד מֵעַלְיוֹ:
 (מ) וַיִּקַּח מִקְלָו בְּיָדוֹ וַיִּבְחַר־לוֹ
 חֲמִשָּׁה חֲלָקֵי־אֲבָנִים | מִן־הַנַּחַל
 וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתָם בְּכִלְי הָרַעִים אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ
 וּבִיָּלְקוּט וּקְלָעוֹ בְּיָדוֹ וַיִּגֶשׁ
 אֶל־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי: ... (מט) וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד
 אֶת־יָדוֹ אֶל־הַפֶּיֶלִי וַיִּקַּח מִשָּׁם
 אֶבֶן וַיִּקְלַע וַיַּךְ אֶת־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי
 אֶל־מִצְחוֹ וַתִּטְבַּע הָאֶבֶן בְּמִצְחוֹ
 וַיִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנָיו אֶרְצָה: (נ) וַיַּחֲזִק
 דָּוִד מִן־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי בַקְלָע וּבָאֶבֶן וַיַּךְ
 אֶת־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיִּמִּיתֵהוּ וַחֲרַב אֵין
 בְּיַד־דָּוִד: (נא) וַיִּרְץ דָּוִד וַיַּעֲמֵד
 אֶל־הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיִּקַּח אֶת־חַרְבּוֹ
 וַיִּשְׁלֹפֶה מִתְּעָרָה וַיִּמְתְּתֵהוּ
 וַיִּכְרַת־בָּהּ אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּרְאוּ
 הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי־מַת גְּבוּרָם וַיִּנְסוּ:

שמואל ב י"ב:י"ג

(יג) וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־נָתָן חַטָּאתִי
 לַיהוָה (ס) וַיֹּאמֶר נָתָן אֶל־דָּוִד
 גַּם־יְהוָה הֶעֱבִיר חַטָּאתְךָ לֹא
 תָמוּת:

8. Falling short

II Samuel 11:1-5

(1) At the turn of the year, the season when kings go out [to battle], David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel with him, and they devastated Ammon and besieged Rabbah; David remained in Jerusalem. (2) Late one afternoon, David rose from his couch and strolled on the roof of the royal palace; and from the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, (3) and the king sent someone to make inquiries about the woman. He reported, “She is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam [and] wife of Uriah the Hittite.” (4) David sent messengers to fetch her; she came to him and he lay with her—she had just purified herself after her period—and she went back home. (5) The woman conceived, and she sent word to David, “I am pregnant.”

שמואל ב י"א:א-ה'

(א) וַיְהִי לְתַשׁוּבַת הַשָּׁנָה לָעֵת וַיֵּצֵא דָוִד אֶת-יֹאבֵב וְאֶת-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמּוֹ וַיִּדְרֹסוּ אֶת-אֲמּוֹן וַיִּשְׁחָתוּ אֶת-רַבְבָּה וְדָוִד נִשְׁאַר בִּירוּשָׁלַם: (ב) וַיְהִי אַחֲרָיִם וַיֵּשֶׁב דָּוִד עַל-מִעַל הַמַּלְכוּת וַיֵּרָא אִשָּׁה רַחֲצָה מִעַל הַגֵּג וְהָאִשָּׁה טוֹבַת מְרֵאָה מְאֹד: (ג) וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד וַיְדַרְשׁ לָאִשָּׁה וַיֵּי אֶמְרַת הַלֹּא-זֹאת בִּתְ-נִשְׁבַּע בַּת-אֱלִיעֶם אִשְׁתִּי אֹרְיָה הַחֲתָנִי: (ד) וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד מַלְאָכִים וַיִּקְחֵהָ וַתָּבוֹא אֵלָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב עִמָּהּ וְהִיא מֵתַקְדָּשֶׁת מִטְּמֵאתָהּ וַתֵּשֶׁב אֵל-בֵּיתָהּ: (ה) וַתֵּהָרֵא הָאִשָּׁה וַתִּשְׁלַח וַתִּגְדַּל לְדָוִד וַתֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה אֲנִכִּי:

II Samuel 13:20-22

(20) Her brother Absalom said to her, “Was it your brother Amnon who did this to you? For the present, sister, keep quiet about it; he is your brother. Don’t brood over the matter.” And Tamar remained in her brother Absalom’s house, forlorn. (21) When King David heard about all this, he was greatly upset. (22) Absalom didn’t utter a word to Amnon, good or bad; but Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar.

שמואל ב י"ג:כ-כ"ב

(כ) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ אַבְשָׁלוֹם אַחִי הֲיֵה אֲמִינוֹן אַחִיר הִיָּה עִמָּךְ וְעַתָּה אַחוֹתִי הַחֲרִישִׁי אַחִיר הוּא אֶל-תִּשְׁתִּי אֶת-לִבְךָ לְדַבֵּר הַזֶּה וַתֵּשֶׁב תָּמַר וְשִׁמְמָהּ בֵּית אַבְשָׁלוֹם אַחִיהָ: (כא) וְהַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד שָׁמַע אֶת-כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיַּחַר לוֹ מְאֹד: (כב) וְלֹא-דָבַר אַבְשָׁלוֹם עִם-אֲמִינוֹן לְמַרְעֵ וְעַד-טוֹב כִּי-שָׁנָא אַבְשָׁלוֹם אֶת-אֲמִינוֹן עַל-דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶת-תָּמַר אַחוֹתוֹ: (פ)

II Samuel 18:4-24

(4) And the king said to them, “I will do

שמואל ב י"ח:ד-כ"ד

(ד) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיהֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ

whatever you think best.” So the king stood beside the gate as all the troops marched out by their hundreds and thousands. (5) The king gave orders to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai: “Deal gently with my boy Absalom, for my sake.” All the troops heard the king give the order about Absalom to all the officers... (10) One of the men saw it and told Joab, “I have just seen Absalom hanging from a terebinth.” (11) Joab said to the man who told him, “You saw it! Why didn’t you kill him then and there? I would have owed you ten shekels of silver and a belt.” (12) But the man answered Joab, “Even if I had a thousand shekels of silver in my hands, I would not raise a hand against the king’s son. For the king charged you and Abishai and Ittai in our hearing, ‘Watch over my boy Absalom, for my sake.’... (24) David was sitting between the two gates. The watchman on the roof of the gate walked over to the city wall. He looked up and saw a man running alone.

Genesis 22:9-13

(9) They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. (10) And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son. (11) Then an angel of the LORD called to him from heaven: “Abraham! Abraham!” And he answered, “Here I am.” (12) And he said, “Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me.” (13) When Abraham looked up, his eye fell upon a ram,

אֲשֶׁר־יִיטֵב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם אֶעֱשֶׂה
וַיַּעֲמֵד הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־יַד הַשָּׁעַר
וְכָל־הָעָם יָצְאוּ לְמֵאוֹת וּלְאֲלָפִים:
(ה) וַיֵּצֵאוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת־יֹאבָב
וְאֶת־אֲבִישַׁי וְאֶת־יִטָּי לֵאמֹר
לֹא־טֹרַף לִי לְנַעַר לְאַבְשָׁלוֹם
וְכָל־הָעָם שָׁמְעוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֶת־כָּל־הַשָּׂרִים עַל־דְּבַר
אַבְשָׁלוֹם: ... (י) וַיִּרְא אִישׁ אֶחָד
וַיֵּגֵד לְיֹאבָב וַיֵּאמֶר הִנֵּה רָאִיתִי
אֶת־אַבְשָׁלוֹם תְּלוּי בְּאֵלֶּה: (יא)
וַיֹּאמֶר יֹאבָב לְאִישׁ הַמְּגִיד לֹא
וְהִנֵּה רָאִיתִי וּמִדַּע לֹא־הִכִּיתוּ שָׂם
אֶרְצָה וְעָלִי לְתֵת לְךָ עֲשָׂרָה
כֶּסֶף וְחִגְרָה אַחַת: (יב) וַיֹּאמֶר
הָאִישׁ אֶל־יֹאבָב וְלֹא [וְלֹא] אֲנֹכִי
שָׁקֵל עַל־כֶּפֶי אֶלֶף כֶּסֶף
לֹא־אֲשַׁלַּח יָדִי אֶל־בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי
בְּאֲזְנוֹנוֹ צִוָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶתְךָ
וְאֶת־אֲבִישַׁי וְאֶת־יִטָּי לֵאמֹר
שְׁמְרוּ־מִי בְּנַעַר בְּאַבְשָׁלוֹם: ...
(כד) וְדָוִד יוֹשֵׁב בֵּין־שְׁנֵי הַשָּׁעָרִים
וַיֵּלֶךְ הַצֹּפֶה אֶל־גֵּג הַשָּׁעַר
אֶל־הַחוּמָה וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא
וְהִנֵּה־אִישׁ רֹץ לְבָדוּ:

בראשית כ"ב:ט'-י"ג

(ט) וַיִּבְאוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר
אָמַר־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבְנֶן שָׂם
אֲבְרָהָם אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעֲרֹךְ
אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ
וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתוֹ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִמַּעַל
לְעֵצִים: (י) וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲבְרָהָם
אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הַמֶּאֲכָלֶת
לְשַׁחֵט אֶת־בְּנוֹ: (יא) וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו
מִלֶּאךָ יְהוָה מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר
אַבְרָהָם | אֲבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי:
(יב) וַיֵּאמֶר אֶל־תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ
אֶל־הַנַּעַר וְאַל־תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי
| עֵתָה יָדְ עֵתִי כִּי־יִרְא אֱלֹהִים

caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son.

אֶתְּהָ וְלֹא חִשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנִי
אֶת־יְחִידְךָ מִמֶּנִּי: (יג) וַיִּשָּׂא
אֲבִרְהֵם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא
וְהִנֵּה־אֵיל אַחַר נֶאֱחַז בְּסִבְךָ
בְּקַרְנָיו וַיִּלֶךְ אֲבִרְהֵם וַיִּקַּח
אֶת־הָאֵיל וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ לְעֹלָה תַּחַת
בְּנוֹ:

II Samuel 24:14

(14) David said to Gad, “I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for His compassion is great; and let me not fall into the hands of men.”

שמואל ב כ"ד:י"ד

(יד) וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־גַּד צַר־לִי מְאֹד
נִפְלֵה־נָא בְיַד־יְהוָה כִּי־רַבִּים רַחֲמוֹ
[רַחֲמָיו] וּבְיַד־אָדָם אֶל־אֶפְלָה:

I Samuel 28:15-20

(15) Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me and brought me up?” And Saul answered, “I am in great trouble. The Philistines are attacking me and God has turned away from me; He no longer answers me, either by prophets or in dreams. So I have called you to tell me what I am to do.” (16) Samuel said, “Why do you ask me, seeing that the LORD has turned away from you and has become your adversary? (17) The LORD has done for Himself as He foretold through me: The LORD has torn the kingship out of your hands and has given it to your fellow, to David, (18) because you did not obey the LORD and did not execute His wrath upon the Amalekites. That is why the LORD has done this to you today. (19) Further, the LORD will deliver the Israelites who are with you into the hands of the Philistines. Tomorrow your sons and you will be with me; and the LORD will also deliver the Israelite forces into the hands of the Philistines.” (20) At once Saul flung himself prone on the ground, terrified by Samuel’s words. Besides, there was no strength in him,

שמואל א כ"ח:ט"ו-כ'

(טו) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל־שָׁאוּל
לָמָּה הִרְגַזְתָּנִי לְהַעֲלוֹת אֹתִי
וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל צַר־לִי מְאֹד
וּפְלִשְׁתִּים | נִלְחָמִים בִּי וְאֱלֹהִים
סָר מֵעָלַי וְלֹא־עֲנֵנִי עַד
בְּיַד־הַנְּבִיאִים גַּם־בְּחִלְמוֹת
וְאֶקְרָא לְךָ לְהוֹדִיעַנִי מַה אַעֲשֶׂה:
(טז) (טז) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל וְלָמָּה
תִּשְׁאַלְנִי וַיְהוֶה סָר מֵעָלֶיךָ וַיְהִי
עֲרֹךְ: (יז) וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה לוֹ כְּאֲשֶׁר
דִּבֶּר בְּיַדִּי וַיִּקְרַע יְהוָה
אֶת־הַמַּמְלָכָה מִיָּדְךָ וַיִּתְּנָה לְרַעֲךָ
לְדָוִד: (יח) כְּאֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁמַעַתָּ
בְּקוֹל יְהוָה וְלֹא־עָשִׂיתָ חֲרוֹן־אָפוּ
בְּעַמְלֶק עַל־כֵּן הִדְבַּר הַזֶּה
עָשָׂה־לְךָ יְהוָה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: (יט)
וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה גַּם אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ
בְּיַד־פְּלִשְׁתִּים וּמָחָר אֶתְּהָ וּבְנֵיךָ
עִמִּי גַם אֶת־מַחְנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל יִתֵּן
יְהוָה בְּיַד־פְּלִשְׁתִּים: (כ) וַיִּמְהַר
שָׂאוּל וַיִּפֹּל מִלֵּא־קוֹמָתוֹ אֶרְצָה
וַיִּרָא מְאֹד מִדְּבַרֵי שְׁמוּאֵל גַּם־כִּי
לֹא־הָיָה בּוֹ כִּי לֹא אָכַל לֶחֶם
כָּל־הַיּוֹם וְכָל־הַלַּיְלָה:

for he had not eaten anything all day and all night.

9. Renewal

II Samuel 24:17

(17) When David saw the angel who was striking down the people, he said to the LORD, “I alone am guilty, I alone have done wrong; but these poor sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand fall upon me and my father’s house!”

שמואל ב כ"ד:י"ז

(יז) וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל־יְהוָה בְּרָאֲתוֹ | אֶת־הַמַּלְאָךְ | הַמַּכֵּה בְּעַם וַיֹּאמֶר | הֲנִי אֶנְכִי חַטָּאתִי וְאֶנְכִי הַעֲוִיתִי | וְאֵלֶּה הַצֹּאֵן מָה עָשׂוּ תְּהִי נָא יְדָךְ | בִּי וּבְבֵית אָבִי: (פ)

Robert Grudin, *Time and the Art of Living*, p.39:

To those of us who spend entire days, if not lifetimes, concentrating on a series of brief and insignificant things, the present has barely any meaning at all; we become tiny timorous things, caught in the inch of space between the “in” box and the “out” box. While we may share the common illusions about a mobile present and a free future, we spend most of our lives housecleaning the past – maintaining commitments, counterbalancing errors, living up to expectations, mopping up our own postponements. In this sense, as in others, we shuffle backward into the future, unaware of our enslavement to time or of the simple freedom of new beginnings.