

# LUMINARIES

Personalities  
in the  
Rebbe's Torah

By:  
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לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' יוסף ברוך הכהן  
וזוגתו מרת מחלה רבקה  
ומשפחתם  
שיחיו  
פרידמאן

## Shmuel Hanavi

Shmuel Hanavi was the leader of the Jewish nation at the conclusion of the Shoftim era, following Eli HaKohen. Shmuel anointed the B'nei Yisroel's first king, Shaul Hamelech, and inaugurated the royal line of Dovid Hamelech which will continue to Moshiach Tzidkeinu, Moshiach ben Dovid.

The tale of Shmuel's birth already told of his saintly stature and the amazing impact he would have. His righteous mother, Chana beseeched Hashem for a child, authoring one of our most famous Tefilos, and promised to devote her child to serve in the house of Hashem.

Shmuel would grow to be one of our people's greatest leaders and *Nevi'im*, compared by the *possuk*, as Chazal point out, to Moshe and Aharon combined, "*Moshe Ve'Aharon bechohanav, U'Shmuel b'kor'ei shemo.*"

After traveling throughout Jewish cities and communities, leading the people and teaching them the ways of Hashem, Shmuel appointed Shaul Hamelech as the first king of the Jewish people.

Shmuel continued to guide Shaul Hamelech and bring him the word of Hashem. After Shaul's mistakes and Hashem's decision to replace him, Shmuel anointed a new king - Dovid Hamelech.

While Shmuel's life was not very long, the part he played in the formation and establishment of the Jewish people and the royal dynasty, impacts us till today and carries us toward the days of Moshiach.

## The Birth of Shmuel Hanavi

Shmuel Hanavi was born in the year 2830 (314 years after Yehoshua's passing) in Ramasayim Tzofim, to Elkanah and Chana, prominent Levi'im who were descended from the sons of Korach.

Elkanah, Shmuel's father, was a Navi and a respected leader of his people. The Midrash relates that Elkanah would travel to the Mishkan in Shiloh several times a year, each time by a different route. He would encourage the Jews he met on the way to join the pilgrimage to the holy Mishkan, inspiring his generation, family by family, to connect to Hashem at the holiest place on earth.<sup>1</sup>

Shmuel's mother, Chana was one of the seven *Nevios*, and a devoted mother. Her petition entered history as a monumental and exemplary tefillah and gives us important background to the life of Shmuel.

Chana was married to Elkanah for several years and had still not been blessed with children. On one of their trips to Shiloh, Chana went to the Mishkan and, with tears running down her face, davened for a child, promising that she would dedicate the child to the service of Hashem and would not allow a razor to touch his head.

Eli the Kohen Gadol was surprised by her whispered prayer, it was not the way people davened in those days. He admonished Chana for her seemingly drunk behavior. Chana explained her predicament, and Eli blessed her with a child. Chana went home with her husband and soon, after a shorter-than-usual pregnancy, she gave birth to a baby boy, whom she named Shmuel because he was Shaul – borrowed (taken) from Hashem.

Chana's tefillah is read in all shuls as the Haftara on Rosh Hashanah, because Chazal tell us that it was on Rosh Hashanah that Chana was "remembered" by Hashem and blessed with a child. The Rebbe explained that the tefillah was unique because she wasn't only blessed with a child, but was granted exactly what she had requested, a son who was spiritually "*Zera Anoshim*," who would fit in with the people and be compared to Moshe and Aharon.

Chana also davened that her son stay on the path on which she would raise him and continue to be a Nazir in the house of Hashem "*Ad Olam*", for his entire life. It was this tefillah that set the course for Shmuel's life.

With her heartfelt prayer, Chana drew down the holy

*neshama* of her son Shmuel, who would have an outsize impact on the Jewish people.

The Rebbe quotes Kisvei Ha'Arizal that following the incident of Yaakov Avinu and Esav's Malach, the concept of *nevuah* was not complete until Shmuel Hanavi. At the skirmish between Yaakov and the Malach, the "*Yerech*" (thigh) was attacked, and the corresponding *Sefiros* of *Netzach* and *Hod* were affected. These *Sefiros* parallel the concept of *nevuah*, which was therefore stunted. The Rebbe explains that the *vision* of *nevuah* was intact but the power to communicate it to others – the "*dibbur*" was lacking.

Until Shmuel Hanavi. Shmuel was called *Raban Shel Kol Hanevi'im* – the greatest of the *Nevi'im*, who restored *nevuah* to its true level and was able to communicate Hashem's message to the world. Shmuel's power was not just as a greater Navi, it was in the impact he had on his generation and all of Jewish history.<sup>2</sup>

Just a few days after Rosh Hashanah, when *Tefilas Chana* is read, comes Vov Tishrei, yahrtzeit of the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana. Over the years, the Rebbe discussed the tefillah several times and derived lessons from Chana and Shmuel Hanavi. In one *sicha* the Rebbe explained the importance of having children, as seen in Chana's passionate prayer and in the name Shmuel that she gave to her son.

The name Shmuel comes from "*Shaul MeiHashem*" (borrowed from Hashem) and "*LaHashem Sheilituhu*" (to Hashem I have lent/given him). This teaches us an invaluable lesson in how to view children. A parent should realize that Hashem 'lends' them children. They are really Hashem's precious children and must be treated that way. Additionally, the parent should know that even when the child is dedicated to and



PAINTING DEPICTING ELI HAKOHN SPEAKING WITH CHANA, BY JAMES TISSOT CIRCA 5660.

engrossed in Hashem's service, the child is only "borrowed," and the deep connection between child and parent does not go away.<sup>3</sup>

## Shmuel's Youth

At the age of two, Chana brought Shmuel to the Mishkan in Shiloh, where he would be raised by Eli the Kohen Gadol. Shmuel was a Levi, and as such, it was appropriate for him to be raised at the Mishkan, in preparation for his responsibilities in the House of Hashem.

Shmuel also grew up as a *Nazir*, as his mother had promised in her tefillah before his birth. The Rebbe explains that Shmuel's *nezirus* truly began when Shmuel grew up and affirmed the *nezirus* that his mother had trained him in. He didn't need to do anything *new* to become a *Nazir*, he just needed to continue behaving the way his mother raised him.

The Rebbe continues that Shmuel's *nezirus* did not come from his father's *neder* or his mother's promise. It wasn't forced on him. Rather, this was how his mother raised him, how she taught and explained to him the correct way to behave. It was her warm and empowering *chinuch* that caused Shmuel to choose the life of *nezirus* when he grew up and the choice became his.

Even as a *Nazir*, while staying detached from the pleasures and vices of this world, Shmuel did not remove himself from his people. His *nezirus* led him to be a judge and guide to the nation, caring for the people of his generation and leading them in the ways of Hashem.<sup>4</sup>

Shmuel grew up in the Mishkan under the tutelage of Eli, the fifteenth Shofet of the people and his generation's link in the *mesorah* from Moshe Rabbeinu. Eli transmitted the *mesorah* to his beloved *talmid*, Shmuel. The Navi tells us that when Eli grew old, his sons Chofni and Pinchas did not administer the Mishkan properly. Shmuel lived alongside them but did not learn from their ways. The Navi describes Shmuel as a lad wearing an "*Eifod bad*" – a linen cloak that showed his service and devotion to Hashem.

As Shmuel was guarding the *Azarah* one night, a *nevuah* came to him. Hearing a voice calling his name, he thought it was his teacher Eli calling, and he ran to him. After this happened twice, Eli told him that the voice must be a *nevuah* and he should listen to what it said. *Nevuah* was very uncommon at this time, but after Shmuel's initial *nevuah*, many more came to him during his time at the Mishkan.

Shmuel's *nevuah* foretold the demise of the house of Eli

and a catastrophe that would befall the Jewish people. This came to pass in a war with the Plishtim. The holy *Aron Habris* was captured by the enemy, and the sons of Eli, Chofni and Pinchas, were killed. When Eli, blind and frail, heard the news, he fell off his chair and passed away. He was 98 years old.

At the time of Eli's passing, Shmuel was almost forty years old. He would lead the Jewish people for about a decade. Shmuel had already begun leading the people during the days of Eli, especially in Eli's later years, but only after his mentor's passing did Shmuel Hanavi become a Shofet in his own right. This would go on until he anointed Shaul Hamelech as the first king of the Jewish people.

## Shmuel's Leadership

Shmuel was the fifth link in the chain of the *mesorah* from Moshe Rabbeinu. He received the tradition from Eli, who received from Pinchas, who in turn received from his grandfather Aharon Hakohen. Aharon heard everything firsthand from Moshe Rabbeinu. Shmuel served as *Av Beis Din*, and led the people through his teachings, his *nevuos*, his *Beis Din*, and his travels amongst his brethren.

Shmuel began answering questions and teaching the *dinim* of Torah during Eli's lifetime. He even taught things that Eli had not known, and while Eli was yet Shofet, people started coming to Shmuel with questions, especially after *nevuah* had come to him instead of Eli. Before he became the official *Av Beis Din*, he would answer from Torah and *nevuah*, but after he was appointed Shofet and *Av Beis Din*, he was able to use the *Urim V'tumim* as well.<sup>5</sup>



APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE GATE TO THE CITY OF EVEN EZER, WHERE ELI HAKOHEN PASSED AWAY AFTER RECEIVING THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF HIS SONS IN BATTLE WITH THE PLISHTIM.

After Shmuel became Shofet, he inspired the Yidden to do teshuva and fight back against the Plishtim. The Yidden destroyed and cleared out their *avoda zara*, and waged war against their other foes, lifting the threat for the remaining days of Shmuel's leadership.<sup>6</sup>

The Navi tells us that Shmuel would travel to the towns and villages to judge the people and care for them, something which we do not find in many of the Shoftim. The Gemara teaches that his home was wherever he went, meaning that he would bring his essentials with him on the road and not take gifts or favors from anyone. The Rebbe taught a lesson from Shmuel 'taking his home with him', that we must take our home – the place we make for Hashem, and bring it wherever we go, radiating G-dliness to the world around us no matter where we are.<sup>7</sup>

## Shmuel with the Kings

As Shmuel grew in age, he got weaker, and his sons were chosen to assist him in leading the people. As they did not follow in his path, the Yidden came to Shmuel requesting a king. Shmuel was reluctant to grant them their wish, since their desire stemmed from the wish to be like the nations of the world. Hashem, however, told him to oblige them, and after warning them about the rights and duties of a king, he promised to appoint a king over them.

The first king of the Yidden that Hashem chose was Shaul, a bashful young man from Binyomin. Shaul initially came to Shmuel looking for his missing donkeys. Upon meeting him, Shmuel understood that this was the man who was to be the king. Shmuel explained to him the role of king that he would soon fill and anointed him with *shemen hamishcha*. Shmuel soon presented him to the nation as king, and after

some initial difficulties, Shaul was accepted by all.

During the first year of Shaul's kingdom, Shmuel led the people together with him. Then, for the last two years of his life, Shaul led the people on his own, while Shmuel served on as Navi. Shmuel cared deeply for Shaul. He educated him and supported him. When Hashem decided to appoint Dovid in Shaul's stead, Shmuel davened for Shaul. Yet as a servant of Hashem, he carried out Hashem's wishes and harshly rebuked Shaul when necessary.

After Shaul erred with the Amalekim and kept their livestock and king alive, Shmuel came to Shaul's camp and killed King Agag. Shmuel told Shaul that Hashem had decided to take the kingdom away from him and appoint a new king. The Navi tells us that Shmuel did not visit Shaul after this encounter. He was saddened and upset over what had happened to his beloved protégé and could not bear to see him again.

Chassidus expounds on the inner meaning of this story. Shaul represents *Binah* – comprehension and understanding, and so he approached the battle with Amalek from an intellectual standpoint. Shmuel symbolizes *Netzach* and *Hod* (*Nevuah*). He explained to Shaul that one's intellect must affect and transform the *middos*. When one remains in the realm of intellect with only minimal impact on *middos*, they become "*ma'us*" (as Shmuel said to Shaul, "*ma'asta es dvar Hashem*") - abhorrent and repulsive to others.<sup>8</sup>

Following Hashem's decision, Shmuel was sent to Beis Lechem to anoint the new king from the family of Yishai. The youngest son of Yishai, a shepherd boy, seemed like an unlikely choice, but that is who Hashem had chosen. Soon, Dovid arrived at the king's court and made a name for himself, while Shmuel went back home to Ramah.

Shmuel and Dovid's paths crossed again when Dovid escaped to Shmuel for refuge. Shaul had begun to envy Dovid and see him as a threat. Fleeing Shaul's men, Dovid made his way to Shmuel's yeshiva for *nevi'im* in Nayos, near Ramah. Shaul came to apprehend him, but instead joined the *nevi'im* and began saying *nevuah* himself. Dovid got away and later succeeded to the throne after Shaul was killed in battle.

Shmuel's connection to the house of Dovid and the *geulah* brought by Moshiach ben Dovid can already be seen in his mother Chana's *nevuah* at the beginning of the story, when she sang "*Veyarem Keren Meshicho*" [and He (Hashem) will raise the horn of his anointed – Moshiach]. Another Moshiach element we find in Shmuel is *nevuah*. He was referred to as "*Haroeh*" [the seer] and is most famous for that. When Moshiach comes, we will all be *nevi'im* – seeing G-dliness



THE CLOTH COVERING KEVER SHMUEL HANAVI, CONTAINING THE WORDS:  
מִשָּׁה וְאַהֲרֹן בְּכֹהֲנָיו וְשִׁמוּאֵל בְּקִרְיַיִם שָׂמוּ

here in this world, like Shmuel the “*Roeh*.”<sup>9</sup>

The Rebbe points to the connection between Shmuel Hanavi, the Rebbe Maharash (Shmuel), and Moshiach, highlighting the *Lechatchila Aribet* theme they shared, and the quote from the *nevuah* after the birth of Shmuel, “*Veyorem Keren Meshicho*”.<sup>10</sup>

At the age of fifty-two, four months before the passing of his *talmid* Shaul, Shmuel Hanavi passed away. While his life was short, his legacy goes on forever. The *possuk* says that Shmuel would live by the Mishkan “*Ad Olam*” [forever]. While some explain it to mean the *Yovel* — fifty years from when he was brought to the Mishkan until his passing - the Rebbe says that this must also be taken literally. The impact and influence that he had on Klal Yisrael carries on forever.<sup>11</sup>

## The Greatness of Shmuel

Shmuel is counted as one of the *Shmonah Nesichei Adam*—the eight princes who lead the Jewish people.

In Tehillim, as mentioned above, Dovid Hamelech equates Shmuel to Moshe and Aharon, as the *possuk* says, “*Moshe v’Aharon bechohanov u’Shmuel b’kor’ei Shmo*” [Moshe and Aharon are of his Kohanim, and Shmuel is with those who call out His name]. Rabbi Yochanan explained that Shmuel was compared to Moshe and Aharon combined, possessing the *maalos* of both.

The Rebbe explains that Moshe and Aharon represent *Emes* and *Chessed*. Moshe, champion of *Emes*, symbolizes Torah — a manifest of energy from above, unapologetic and straightforward. Aharon, on the other hand, shone in his interaction with the world, bringing people close with *Chessed*, ultimately leading them to the Torah given by Moshe. While they each combined both elements, the primary *avodah* of each was in only one of these paths.<sup>12</sup>

In another *sicha*, in slightly different words, the Rebbe presents the difference between Moshe and Aharon as Torah and *Avodah*. Moshe brings down the Torah focusing on the Hashem-to-world connection, while Aharon’s main *Avodah* is *Korbanos* – uplifting the physical through the work of man. The Rebbe goes on to explain that these two are interconnected and can be found in one person.<sup>13</sup>

Shmuel Hanavi clearly combined *Chessed* and *Emes* in his leadership of the Jewish people. He traveled to the Jews in their cities, bringing them the words of Hashem, and stood up strong and proud for Hashem’s honor, rebuking and educating the people, leading them on the right path.



700-YEAR OLD COMPOUND NEAR THE SITE WHERE SHMUEL HANAVI WAS LAID TO REST.

The Rebbe explains that this fusion of *Chessed* and *Emes* is found in Moshiach (from the house of Dovid – anointed by Shmuel), and in all the *Nesi'im* leading up to the time of Moshiach from the Alter Rebbe and on – *Rabboiseinu Nesieinu*.<sup>14</sup>

The Rebbe often highlighted the connection between Shmuel Hanavi and the Rebbe Maharash whose name was Shmuel. While the Rebbe Maharash was named after a water carrier from Polotzk named Shmuel, in essence, the name goes back to the first bearer of the name — Shmuel Hanavi. We find that when the Rebbe Maharash was ill, the Tzemach Tzedek said, that he wishes that he would live at least as long as Shmuel Hanavi.

The connection between the Rebbe Maharash and Shmuel is deeper than just their name. The Rebbe explained that the *derech* of the Rebbe Maharash and Shmuel Hanavi were both unconventional, outstanding, and revolutionary.

Shmuel’s life was exceptional from its very beginning. He was born as a result of a *bracha* from Hashem after his mother was childless for many years. He was raised from the age of two at the Mishkan, in the service of Hashem. The Rebbe compares this to the Rebbe Maharash’s famous adage “*Lechatchila Aribet*” and, in his Chassidus, to the revolutionary innovation of the “*hemshech*”. The Rebbe presents these aspects as the *Avodah* of Baalei Teshuva – leaping over the confines of straight and narrow *avodah*.<sup>15</sup> **T**

# IN HIS TORAH

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל הֲחִפְּץ לֵה' בְּעֹלוֹת וּזְבָחִים כְּשֹׁמֵעַ בְּקוֹל ה' הֲנֵה שְׁמוֹעַ מִזְבַּח  
טוֹב לְהִקְשִׁיב מִחֶלֶב אֵילִים: שְׁמוּאֵל-א' טו, כב

“And Shmuel said, ‘Has Hashem (as much) desire in burnt offerings and peace-offerings, as in obeying the voice of Hashem? Behold, to obey is better than a peace-offering; to hearken (is better) than the fat of rams.’”

The timeless response from Shmuel Hanavi to Shaul Hamelch after he claimed that “*Hakimosi es Dvar Hashem*” [I have fulfilled the will of Hashem] comprises one of the greatest precepts in *Avodas Hashem*. The supremacy of *Kabolas Ol* (unequivocal acceptance of Hashem’s will) over *avodah Be’taam ve’daas* (*avodah* based on reason).

As the highlighted quote from the Shaul and Shmuel story, and the heart of the Haftara of Parshas Zachor, this *posuk* is quoted, referenced, and explained countless times in Chassidus, spanning Maamorim and Sichos from each and every one of the Rabbeim.

Chassidus explains that there really is benefit and value to “*Zevach Tov*” [good offering] and “*Chelev Eilim*” [fat of rams]. *Avodas Hashem* must come with understanding and feeling, with passion and physical investment. One cannot understate the transformative property of *Korbanos*, and the utilization of the physical world for G-dliness. Shaul sincerely felt that he was fulfilling the will of Hashem by attempting to sanctify the animals of Amalek. His perspective stemmed from *kedusha*, but he nevertheless missed the point.

Shmuel tells him, “*Shmoia*” to listen, “*Lehakshiv*” to follow, this is the basis of the service of Hashem. The *kabbalas ol* that a person must have to follow what Hashem says is more valuable and more precious to Hashem than the spiritual thoughts and feelings of the person if they are missing this basic tenet.

Hashem wants *bittul*. One connects to Him primarily, not by growing higher and greater, even in spiritual ways, but through *bittul*.<sup>16</sup>

It is no coincidence that this story happened in connection to our nation’s everlasting battle against Amalek and is read every year on Parshas Zachor. Amalek represents a basic resistance and opposition to G-dliness and spirituality. Amalek can’t be wooed by holiness, and, therefore, can’t be overcome with intellect or passion. Amalek needs to be uprooted by unflinching, suprarational devotion to Hashem, following His ways with *bittul* and *kabbalas ol*.<sup>17</sup>

1. Pirkei D’rebbe Eliezer, 8:1.

2. Sicha Vov Tishrei 5729; Toras Menachem pg. 46.

3. Sicha Yud Gimmel Tishrei 5744; Hisvaaduyos p. 158.

4. Sicha Yud Beis Tammuz 5725; Toras Menachem pg. 73.

5. Reshimos Choveres 95.

6. Shmuel I, Perek Vov.

7. Sicha Simchas Torah 5734; Sichos Kodosh pg. 8.

8. Reshimos Choveres 184, pg. 396.

9. Sicha Shabbos Parshas Haazinu 5752; Hisvaaduyos pg. 73.

10. Sefer Hasichos 5751 vol. 1 p. 14.

11. Hisvaaduyos 5746 vol. 4, pg. 480.

12. Sicha Shabbos Parshas Va’era 5723, Toras Menachem pg. 62.

13. Sicha Vov Tishrei 5730, Sichos Kodosh pg. 28.

14. Sicha Shabbos Parshas Va’era 5723, *ibid*.

15. Sicha Yud Gimmel Tishrei 5750; Hisvaaduyos pg. 113.

16. Likkutei Sichos vol. 3, Parshas Zachor, pg. 914.

17. Hisvaaduyos 5749, Vayikra, pg. 419, fn. 28. See also Reshimos Choveres 184, pg. 396.