

The Koren Podcast Season 2 Episode 6: But it's Only a Midrash!

What follows are the sources for Simi Peters' favorite midrashim, it was such a pleasure talking to Simi about the use of midrash when, learning Tanakh. To learn more from Simi check out the notes in the episode description.

בראשית רבה פ"ה:ב'

(ב) וַיְהִי בַעֲת הַהוּא, וְלֹא הָיָה צָרִיךְ קָרִיָּה לְמִימַר אֱלֹא (בראשית לט, א): וַיּוֹסֵף הַיּוֹרֵד מִצְרַיִמָּה, וּמִפְּנֵי מָה הִסְמִיךְ פְּרָשָׁה זוֹ לְזוֹ, רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר וְרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן, רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר כִּדִּי לְסַמֵּךְ יְרִידָה לִירִידָה. רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר כִּדִּי לְסַמֵּךְ הֶכֶר לְהֶכֶר. רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָן אָמַר כִּדִּי לְסַמֵּךְ מַעֲשֵׂה תַמָּר לְמַעֲשֵׂה אִשְׁתּוֹ שֶׁל פּוּטִיפֶר, מָה זוֹ לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם אָף זוֹ לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם, דָּאָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לִוִּי רוֹאֵה הֵיטֵה בְּאֶסְטְרוֹלוֹגִין שְׁלָה שְׁהִיא עֲתִידָה לְהַעֲמִיד מִמֶּנּוּ בֶּן, וְלֹא הֵיטֵה יוֹדַעַת אִם מִמֶּנָּה אִם מִבִּתָּהּ, הֲדָא הוּא דְכָתִיב (ישעיה מו, יג): מוֹדִיעִים לְחֻדְשִׁים מֵאֲשֶׁר יִבְאוּ עָלֶיךָ. רַבִּי אֵיבּוֹ אָמַר מֵאֲשֶׁר וְלֹא כָּל אֲשֶׁר, וְדְכּוֹתָהּ (בראשית ב, כה): וְלֹא יִתְבַּשְׁשׁוּ, (בראשית ג, א): וְהִנָּחַשׁ הָיָה עָרוֹם, לֹא הָיָה צָרִיךְ קָרָא לְמִימַר אֱלֹא (בראשית ג, כא): וַיַּעַשׂ ה' לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּגו', רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן קַרְחָה אָמַר לְהוֹדִיעַךְ מֵאִיזָה חֲטָא קִפְץ עֲלֵיהֶם אוֹתוֹ רָשָׁע, מִתּוֹךְ שָׂרָאָה אוֹתָן מִתְעַסְקִין בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶרֶץ נִתְאַוָּה לָהֶם. אָמַר רַבִּי יַעֲקֹב דְּכִפְר חֲנִין, שְׁלֵא לְהַפְסִיק בְּפִרְשָׁתוֹ שֶׁל נָחֶשׁ, וְדְכּוֹתָהּ (דניאל ד, לד): וְדִי מֵהֲלֹכִין בְּגוּה יָכֹל לְהַשְׁפִּילָהּ, (דניאל ה, א): בְּלִשְׂאֶצֶר מִלְכָּא, (דניאל ו, א): וְדִרְיוֹשׁ מְדָאָה, וְהִיכָן הוּא אוֹיִל מְרוֹדֵךְ, רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר כִּדִּי לְסַמֵּךְ רָשָׁע אֶל רָשָׁע, קוֹצֵץ לְקוֹצֵץ, גִּיּוֹתָן לְגִיּוֹתָן. רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָן אָמַר כִּדִּי לְסַמֵּךְ הַפְּסִק מִלְכוּת לְהַפְּסִק מִלְכוּת. וְדְכּוֹתָהּ (דניאל ה, ל): בַּהּ בְּלִילִיָּא קִטִּיל בְּלִשְׂאֶצֶר מִלְכָּא כְּשִׂדָּאָה (דניאל ו, א): וְדִרְיוֹשׁ מְדָאָה וּגו', וְהֵן הוּא (דניאל ח, א): בְּשִׁנַּת שְׁלֹשׁ לְמִלְכוּת בְּלִשְׂאֶצֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ, רַב הוּנָא אָמַר שְׁלֵא יֵאמְרוּ דְבִרֵי פִּיּוּטִין הִם, כִּדִּי שִׂידְעוּ הַכֹּל שְׂאֶמְרוּ בְרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ. רַבִּנָּן אָמְרֵי כִדִּי לְסַרְגַּ עַל הַסֵּפֶר כְּלוּ שְׂאֶמְרוּ בְרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ, אָף הֵכָא נָמִי מִתְבַּעֵי מִימַר וַיּוֹסֵף הַיּוֹרֵד מִצְרַיִמָּה, וְכָתִיב וַיֵּרֵד יְהוֹדָה מֵאֵת

אָחיו, אָמַר בּוֹאוּ וּנְפִיז עֲצֵמְנוּ, שְׂכַל זְמַן שְׂאֲנוּ מִכְּנָסִין הַשְּׂטֵר מְצוּי לְהַגְבוֹת, אָמַר לָהֶם הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה בְּנֵי אָדָם שְׂנֵמְצָאוּ בְּגִנְבָה אֵין אַחַד נִתְפָּס עַל יְדֵי כָלָם, וְכִיוֹן שְׂנֵמְצָאוּ בְּגִבְיֵעַ, אָמְרוּ (בראשית מד, טז): הַיְאֵלֵהִים מְצָא אֶת עֹן עֲבָדֶיךָ, אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק מְצָא בַּעַל חוֹב מְקוֹם לְגִבוֹת שְׂטֵר חוֹבוֹ. אָמַר רַבִּי לִוִי כֹּהָה שֶׁהוּא מִמְצָא אֶת הַחֲבִית וּמַעֲמִיד אוֹתָהּ עַל שְׁמֵרִיהָ. רַבֵּנָן אָמְרִי בּוֹאוּ וּנְפִרְנִים עֲצֵמְנוּ, לְשַׁעֲבֵר הִיא זְקוּק לְהַשְׂיֵאֲנוּ נְשִׁים, וְעַכְשָׁיו הוּא עָסוּק בְּשִׂקוֹ וּבִתְעֵנִיתוֹ, אֵינּוּ בִּדִין שְׂיֵהָא עָסוּק לְהַשְׂיֵאֲנוּ נְשִׁים. אָמְרוּ לוֹ לִיהוּדָה וְלֹא אֶת הוּא הָרֵאשׁ שֶׁל כְּלָנוּ, עֵמֵד אֶתָּה וּפְרִינִים אֶת עֲצֵמְךָ, מִיָּד וַיֵּרֵד יְהוּדָה, יְרִידָה הִיא לוֹ שְׂנַשְׂא לְגוּיָהּ, יְרִידָה הִיא לוֹ שְׂקַבֵּר אֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ וּבְנָיו.

Bereishit Rabbah 85:2

(2) What is written above the matter? "And the Midianites sold him to Egypt" [and then it interrupts with the story of Yehuda and Tamar:] "And it was at that time." And the reading (narrative) only required it to [immediately] say "And Yosef was taken down to Egypt" (Genesis 39:1) And because of what was this section made proximate to that? Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Yochanan [answered this]: Rabbi Elazar said, "In order to make one descent proximate to the other descent." Rabbi Yochanan said, "In order to make [one use of the word,] "recognize," proximate to [another use of the word,] "recognize." Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman said, "In order to make the story of Tamar proximate to the story of Potiphar's wife; [to tell you that] just as that one (the incident of Tamar) was for the sake of Heaven, so too this one (the incident of Potiphar's wife) was meant for the sake of Heaven." As Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said, "She saw through her astrology that she was destined to raise a child from him (Yosef), but she did not know if [it would be] from her or from her daughter." This is [the meaning of] what is written (Isaiah 47:13), "let the diviners of months inform you from that which will come to you" - Rabbi Eibo said, "'From that' and not 'all that.'" And similar to it is [the sequence of], "and they were not embarrassed. And the snake was sly" (Genesis 2:25-3:1). And the reading (narrative) only required it to [immediately] say "And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife, etc." (Genesis 3:21). Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karcha said, "[It is] to let you know from which sin that evildoer (the snake) jumped upon them: from that which he saw them engaging in 'the way of the world,' he desired them." Rabbi Yaakov of Kefar Chanin said, "[It is] to not begin a [separate] section of the snake."

And similar to it is [the sequence of], "and the one who walks in pride, He is able to abase (which are the final words of Nevuchadnetsar). Balshatsar the king [...] And Daryavesh the Mede" (Daniel 4:34-5:1, 6:1). And where is Ehvil Merodach (who came between Nevuchadnetsar and Balshatsar)? Rabbi Elazar said, "In order to make [one] evildoer proximate to the other, a destroyer to a destroyer, a proud one to a proud one." Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman said, "In order to make the interruption of [one] kingdom proximate to the interruption of [another] kingdom." And similar to it is [the sequence of] "And on that very night, Balshatsar the Chaldean king was killed. Daryevesh the Mede" (Daniel 5:30-6:1). [And yet later], "And in the third year of the rulership of Balshatsar the king" (Daniel 8:1). Rav Huna said, "That they not say they are [just] words of poetry; so that they should all know that he wrote it with holy spirit." Our rabbis said, "In order to weave it into the entire book, that he said it with holy spirit." Here too, it should have said, "And Yosef was taken down to Egypt." And it is written, "And Yehuda went down from his brother": He said, "Let us disperse ourselves, [since] the whole time we are together, the contract is found (*matsui*) for collection." The Holy One, blessed be He, said to them, "Ten men that are found stealing, are they not all caught when one is caught?" And once they were found with the goblet, they said, "The Lord has found (*matsa*) the sin of your servants." Rabbi Yitschak said, "Like the one that empties out (*mematseh*) the barrel and leaves it with its sediments." Our rabbis said, "[Yehuda said], 'Let us take care of ourselves; in the past [Yaakov] was required to get us wives to marry, but now that he is involved in his sackcloth and in his fasting, it is not appropriate that he get us wives to marry.' [The brothers] said to Yehuda, 'Are you not our head? Get up and take care of yourself.' Immediately, 'And it was at that time.'"

סנהדרין ק"ז א:ט"ו-י"ח

דרש ר' דוסתאי דמן בירי למה דוד דומה לסוחר כותי אמר דוד לפני הקב"ה רבש"ע (תהלים יט, יג) שגיאאות מי יבין [א"ל] שביקי לך ומנסתרות נקני שביקי לך גם מזודים חשוך עבדך שביקי לך אל ימשלו בי אז איתם דלא לישתעו בי רבנן שביקי לך ונקיתי מפשע רב שלא יכתב סרחוני אמר לו א"א ומה יו"ד שנטלתי משרי עומד

וצווח כמה שנים עד שבא יהושע והוספתי לו שנאמר (במדבר יג, טז) ויקרא משה
להושע בן נון יהושע כל הפרשה כולה עאכ"ו ונקיתי מפשע רב אמר לפניו רבש"ע
מחול לי על אותו עון כולו אמר כבר עתיד שלמה בנך לומר בחכמתו (משלי ו, כז)
היחתה איש אש בחיקו ובגדיו לא תשרפנה אם יהלך איש על הגחלים ורגליו לא
תכוינה כן הבא על אשת רעהו לא ינקה כל הנוגע בה א"ל כל הכי נטרד ההוא גברא
א"ל קבל עליך יסורין קבל עליו אמר רב יהודה אמר רב ששה חדשים נצטרע דוד
ונסתלקה הימנו שכינה ופירשו ממנו סנהדרין נצטרע דכתיב (תהלים נא, ט)
תחטאני באזוב ואטהר תכבסני ומשלג אלבין נסתלקה הימנו שכינה דכתיב
(תהלים נא, יד) השיבה לי ששון ישעך ורוח נדיבה תסמכני ופרשו ממנו סנהדרין
דכתי' (תהלים קיט, עט) ישובו לי יראיך וגו' ששה חדשים מנלך דכתי' (מלכים א ב,
יא) והימים אשר מלך דוד על ישראל ארבעים שנה
בחברון מלך שבע שנים ובירושלים מלך שלשים ושלוש שנים וכתוב (שמואל ב ה,
ה) בחברון מלך על יהודה שבע שנים וששה חדשים וגו' והני ששה חדשים לא
קחשיב ש"מ נצטרע אמר לפניו רבש"ע מחול לי על אותו עון מחול לך (תהלים פו, יז)
עשה עמי אות לטובה ויראו שונאי ויבושו כי אתה ה' עזרתני ונחמתני א"ל בחיך
איני מודיע אבל אני מודיע בחיי שלמה בנך בשעה שבנה שלמה את בית המקדש
ביקש להכניס ארון לבית קדשי הקדשים דבקו שערים זה בזה אמר עשרים וארבעה
רננות ולא נענה אמר (תהלים כד, ז) שאו שערים ראשיכם והנשאו פתחי עולם ויבא
מלך הכבוד מי זה מלך הכבוד ה' עוזו וגבור ה' גבור מלחמה ונאמר (תהלים כד, ט)
שאו שערים ראשיכם ושאו פתחי עולם ויבא מלך הכבוד וגו' ולא נענה כיון שאמר
(דברי הימים ב ו, מב) ה' אלהים אל תשב פני משיחך זכרה לחסדי דויד עבדך מיד
נענה באותה שעה נהפכו פני שונאי דוד כשולי קדירה וידעו כל ישראל שמחל לו
הקב"ה על אותו העון

Sanhedrin 107a:15-18

Rabbi Dostai from Biri taught: To what is David comparable? He is comparable to a Samaritan merchant, who incrementally lowers the price until

the buyer agrees to purchase the merchandise. **David said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe: “Who can discern his errors”** (Psalms 19:13), i.e., forgive me for the unwitting sins that I committed. **God said to him: They are forgiven for you.** David asked more: **“Cleanse me from hidden faults”** (Psalms 19:13), i.e., pardon me for transgressions that I committed in private, even if I performed them intentionally. **God said to him: They are forgiven for you.** David requested: **“Keep back your servant also from intentional sins”** (Psalms 19:14). **God said to him: They are forgiven for you.** David requested: **“Let them not have dominion over me, then I shall be faultless”** (Psalms 19:14), and I further request **that the Sages will not speak of me** and condemn me. **God said to him: They are forgiven for you.** David requested: **“And I shall be clear from great transgression”** (Psalms 19:14), meaning **that my transgression** with Bathsheba and Uriah **will not be written** in the Bible. **God said to him: That is impossible. And just as the letter *yod* that I removed from the name of Sarai,** wife of Abraham, when I changed her name to Sarah, was **standing and screaming several years** over its omission from the Bible **until Joshua came and I added the *yod* to his name, as it is stated: “And Moses called Hosea, son of Nun, Joshua [Yehoshua]”** (Numbers 13:16); **the entire portion** of your transgression, which is fit to be included in the Bible, **all the more so** it cannot be omitted. The verse states: **“And I shall be clear from great transgression”** (Psalms 19:14). **David said before God: Master of the Universe, pardon me for that entire sin.** **God said to him: Your son Solomon is already destined to say with his wisdom: “Can a man take fire in his lap and his garments not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? So too one who lies with his neighbor’s wife; anyone who touches her shall not go unpunished”** (Proverbs 6:27–29). **David said to Him: Will that man, David, be expelled for that entire transgression, with no remedy? God said to David: Accept upon yourself afflictions, and that will atone for your sins. He accepted afflictions upon himself. Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: For six months David was afflicted with leprosy and the Divine Presence abandoned him and the members of the Sanhedrin dissociated themselves from him. He was afflicted with leprosy, as it is stated: “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”** (Psalms 51:9), indicating that he required purification like a leper. **The Divine Presence abandoned him, as it is stated: “Restore me to joy of Your**

salvation; and uphold me with a willing spirit” (Psalms 51:14). And the members of the Sanhedrin dissociated themselves from him, as it is stated: “Let those who fear You turn to me, and those who have known Your testimonies” (Psalms 119:79). From where do we derive that this lasted for six months? It is derived as it is written: “And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years;

in Hebron he reigned seven years, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years” (I Kings 2:11). And it is written: “In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months and in Jerusalem he reigned for thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah” (II Samuel 5:5). And those six months, the prophet **did not tally** them as part of the forty years of King David’s reign. **Conclude from it** that there were six months that he was not considered king because he **was afflicted with leprosy**. David said before Him after this: **Master of the Universe, pardon me for this sin**. God said to him: **It is forgiven for you**. David requested: “Perform on my behalf a sign for good, that they that hate me may see it and be put to shame” (Psalms 86:17); show me a sign in my lifetime so that everyone will know that You have forgiven me. God said to him: **In your lifetime I will not make it known** that you were forgiven, **but I will make it known in the lifetime of your son, Solomon**. The Gemara explains: **When Solomon built the Temple and sought to bring the Ark into the Holy of Holies, the gates clung together and could not be opened. Solomon uttered twenty-four songs of praise, and his prayer was not answered. He said: “Lift up your heads, you gates, and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle” (Psalms 24:7–8). And it is stated: “Lift up your heads, you gates, yea, lift them up, you everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who then is the King of glory? The Lord of hosts; He is the King of glory. Selah” (Psalms 24:9–10), and he was not answered. Once he said: “O Lord God, turn not away the face of Your anointed; remember the good deeds of David Your servant” (II Chronicles 6:42), he was immediately answered, and the gates opened (II Chronicles 7:1). At that moment, the faces of all of David’s enemies turned dark like the charred bottom of a pot. And all of the Jewish people knew that the Holy One, Blessed be He, had forgiven him for that sin, as it was only by David’s merit that Solomon’s prayer was answered.**