YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

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**Understanding the haftarot**

**By Harav Yaakov Medan**

**PARASHAT VAYERA**

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Dedicated in memory of Rabbi Jack Sable *z”l* and Ambassador Yehuda Avner *z”l*,
by Debbie and David Sable

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**Kindness and Faith**

**Text of the *Haftara***

A woman – the wife of one of the brotherhood of the prophets – cried out to Elisha, "Your servant, my husband, is dead! You know that your servant always feared the Lord. Now a creditor has come to take my two children away to be his slaves." "What can I do for you?" said Elisha. "Tell me, what do you have in the house?" "Your servant has nothing at all at home," she said, "except for a jar of oil." "Go out and borrow vessels from all your neighbors," he said to her, "empty vessels – as many as you can. When you come back in, close the door behind you and your sons. Then pour away into all those vessels, setting them aside when they are full." And so she left him. When she closed the door behind her and her sons, they kept bringing vessels to her while she kept pouring. When the vessels were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel," and he said to her, "There are no more vessels" – and the oil stopped flowing. She came and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay off your debt, and you and your sons can live on the rest."

One day, Elisha was passing through Shunem,[[1]](#footnote-1) and a wealthy woman there urged him to have something to eat. So whenever he passed through, he would stop there for some food. She said to her husband, "Look, I am sure that the man who passes through here regularly is a holy man of God. Let us make him a small enclosed upper chamber and provide him with a bed, table, chair, and lamp there, so that whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there." One day, he came by; he turned in to the upper chamber and lay down there. He said to Gechazi, his servant, "Call the Shunamite woman." He called her, and she stood before him. He said to him, "Please say to her, 'You have shown us so much concern. What can we do for you? Shall I speak to the king on your behalf, or to the army commander?'" "I live among my own people," she said. "Then what can be done for her?" he said. "Well, she is childless," said Gechazi, "and her husband is old." "Call her," he said, and he called her, and she stood in the entrance. "At this time next year," he said, "you will be embracing a son." "No, my lord, man of God," she said. "Do not delude your servant." But the woman did conceive, and she bore a son at that time during the following year, just as Elisha had promised her. The child grew up. One day, he went out to his father, who was with the reapers. "My head! My head!" he said to his father, who said to the servant, "Carry him to his mother." He carried him over and brought him to his mother; he sat on her lap until noon, and then he died. She went up and laid him on the man of God's bed, closed the door behind him, and went out. Then she called to her husband. "Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys at once," she said. "I must rush over to the man of God and come right back." "Why are you going to him today?" he said. "It is not the New Moon, nor the Sabbath." "All is well," she said. She saddled the donkey and said to her servant, "Drive! Be off! Do not stop riding on my account unless I tell you." She set out and reached the man of God at Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her in the distance, he said to Gechazi, his servant, "Look, there is that Shunamite woman. Run to meet her straightaway and say to her, 'Are you well? Is your husband well? Is your child well?'" "All is well," she said. But she came up to the man of God at the mountain and grasped his feet. Gechazi came forward to push her away, but the man of God said, "Leave her be, for she is bitter of spirit, and the Lord has hidden this from me and did not tell me." "Did I ask my lord for a son?" she said. "Did I not say, 'Do not lead me on?'" "Hitch up your tunic," Elisha said to Gechazi. "Take my staff in your hand, and set out. If you meet anyone, do not greet them, and if anyone greets you, do not answer them. Place my staff on the boy's face." "As the Lord lives, and by your own life," said the boy’s mother, "I will not leave you." So he followed straight behind her. Gechazi went on ahead of them and placed the staff on the boy’s face, but there was no sound and no response. He went back to meet him and told him, "The boy did not wake." Elisha entered the house, and there was the boy laid out on his bed – dead. He entered and closed the door behind the two of them, and he prayed to the Lord. Then he mounted the bed and lay on top of the boy; he placed his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his palms on his palms, and he bent down over him, and the child’s body became warm. He went back down and paced about the house, back and forth, then he climbed up and crouched down over him. And the boy sneezed – seven times – and the boy opened his eyes. He called to Gechazi and said to him, "Call the Shunamite woman." He called her, and she came to him. "Pick up your son," he said. And she came and fell at his feet and bowed to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out. (II *Melakhim* 4:1-37)

**I. The Connection Between the *Haftara* and the *Parasha***

The first story in the *haftara*, about the woman with the vessels of oil, is not directly related to our *parasha*, but the account of the Shunamite woman and her son relates to the *parasha* at both ends. The story of the Shunamite woman begins with a childless couple, where the man is old.[[2]](#footnote-2) The couple engages in the *mitzva* of hospitality towards the man of God, and for this the Shunamite woman receives the good news that "at this time next year," she will give birth to a child. All this also happened to Avraham and Sara in our *parasha*, when they showed hospitality to God's angels.

Both the *parasha* and the *haftara* highlight the lack of trust that the barren woman shows towards the heralding of a son, voiced in once case by an angel of God and in the other case by a man of God.

So Sara laughed to herself, saying, "Now that I am worn out, can I have this pleasure? With my lord an old man?" Then the Lord said to Avraham, "Why did Sara laugh and say, 'Can I really have a child, now that I am old?' Is anything beyond the Lord’s powers? At the due time next year I will return to you, and Sara will have a son.” (*Bereishit* 18:12-14)

"At this time next year," he said, "you will be embracing a son." "No, my lord, man of God," she said. "Do not delude your servant." (II *Melakhim* 4:16)

"Did I ask my lord for a son?" she said. "Did I not say, 'Do not lead me on?'" (ibid. v. 28)

It should be mentioned that with other barren women – Rivka, Rachel, Manoach's wife, and Chana – there is no hint of this problem.

Is there a connection between the death of the Shunamite woman's son and the "near" death of Yitzchak on the altar, and the lack of trust on the part of their mothers regarding the news of their respective births?

It is later in the story, when it comes to the death of the boy,[[3]](#footnote-3) that the Shunamite woman demonstrates great faith in the power of the prophet, acting in the name of God, to revive the child. She goes to the prophet on Mount Carmel, and from there the decree of his revival is issued. In this, too, there is a similarity to Yitzchak, who was to die at the *Akeida*; on Mount Moriah, he was sentenced to life with the statement: "Do not lift your hand against the boy." Mount Carmel had already resembled Mount Moria in the past, temporarily, when fire from the sky descended on it at Eliyahu's decree just as it descended on Shlomo's altar at the time of the dedication of the Temple.

The double miracle of both children's lives – birth and later revival – is connected to the foundations of kindness and faith. In the *haftara*, kindness is manifested in the first stage, when the Shunamite woman helps the prophet and hosts him, and faith is manifested in the second stage, when she cleaves to him and does not stop trusting that salvation will come from him.

**II. On Elisha’s Miracles in Relation to His Time**

Our *haftara* includes two miracles performed by Elisha for two women, and there are two additional *haftarot* (for *Parashot Tazria* and *Metzora*) that also deal with Elisha's miracles. The very phenomenon of these miracles is unusual in the Bible, and there is good reason to dwell on it.

Elisha delivered few prophecies, and we do not find that he worked to bring the people to repentance. His work was concentrated mostly on miracles, primarily in helping the kingdom of Shomron (as in the *haftara* for *Parashat Metzora*) as well as individual people (as in the two incidents in our *haftara*) or in punishing sinners. How can we understand this quasi-"Rebbe," whose main role is to perform supernatural acts?

Eliyahu's departure from the world heralded disaster and the concealment of God's face from His people. This is what God said to Eliyahu when He informed him of the end of his role:

Whoever escapes the sword of Chazael will be killed by Yehu, and whoever escapes the sword of Yehu will be killed by Elisha. I will leave but seven thousand of Israel: every knee that has not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him. (I *Melakhim* 19:17-18)

Elisha was with the people after Eliyahu's departure, during unbearably difficult times. For example:

In those days, the Lord began to weaken Israel at the edges. Chazael attacked Israel on every front: from east of the Jordan, all the land of the Gilad – the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the Manassites – from Aroer by the Arnon Stream to the Gilad and the Bashan. (II *Melakhim* 10:32-33)

Yehoachaz was left without an army save fifty riders, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers, for the king of Aram had reduced them into dust to be trampled. (Ibid. 13:7)

On the one hand, these were the days following Yehu’s revolution and the eradication of Baal and its worshippers from Israel; on the other hand, there were serious sins then in renewed worship of Yerovam's calves. It was a period of God's concealment from His people and of harsh and humiliating Aramaean subjugation. Reassurance was needed that despite all the sins and punishment, God did not abandon His people. Elisha and his miracles were an island of salvation in the sea of decrees and blows of the years of concealment before God began to save the kingdom of Shomron, after the death of Elisha, in the days of Yehoash, the son of Yehoachaz, and Yerovam his son.

**III. The Wife of One of the Brotherhood of the Prophets, and the Oil**

Rashi, following the Midrash, sheds some light on this mysterious incident:

The wife of one of the brotherhood of the prophets – she was the wife of Ovadya.

A creditor – He was Yehoram the son of Achav, who would lend him at interest what he fed the prophets in the days of his father; in the Midrash of Rabbi Tanchuma. (Rashi, II *Melakhim* 4:1)

This identification of the husband who had borrowed money and died is based on the testimony of the woman:

"Your servant, my husband, is dead! You know that your servant always feared the Lord [*haya yarei et Hashem*]. Now a creditor has come to take my two children away to be his slaves." (II *Melakhim* 4:1)

Ovadya, the disciple of Eliyahu the prophet, was described in the same way:

Achav summoned Ovadyahu, who was in charge of the palace – Ovadyahu had deep reverence for the Lord [*haya yarei et Hashem*]. (I *Melakhim* 18:3)

Ovadyahu held a high office in the royal court of Achav – “in charge of the palace” – similar to the position of Yosef, to whom Pharaoh said: "You shall be in charge of my court, and by your command shall all my people be directed" (*Bereishit* 41:40). How is it possible that he died penniless and with heavy debts? Rashi and the Midrash connect this to the fact that he secretly maintained, for an extended period of time, a hundred prophets who hid in caves to escape Izevel the wife of Achav:

When Izevel was annihilating the prophets of the Lord, Ovadyahu had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty men to a cave, and provided them with food and water. (Ibid. verse 4)

The Sages tell us that Ovadyahu left behind not only heavy debts, but also the interest he had obligated himself to pay for them. Presumably, they learned this from the unusual words "creditor" (*nosheh*) and "your debt" (*nishyekh*) (verses 1 and 7 in our chapter), which recall the Torah's commandment:

If you lend money to one of My people who is poor, do not act with him as a harsh creditor [*ke-nosheh*], and do not charge him interest [*neshekh*]. (*Shemot* 22:24)

The creditor, identified by Rashi as Yehoram the son of Achav, is the one who charges interest – he forcefully demands both payment of the debt of the woman in our chapter and also payment of interest.

The Bible presents Yehoram as a king with both virtues and shortcomings:

Yehoram son of Achav became king over Israel in Shomron… He did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord – though not to the same extent as his father and mother, and he removed the pillar of Baal that his father had made. (II *Melakhim* 3:1-2)

Yehoram helped Ovadyahu save the prophets of God, but he demanded money for this help, and was not willing to waive it.

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Besides her poverty, the widow’s severe distress stemmed from the fact that the creditor intended to collect the debt by taking her children as slaves. In the ancient world, it was customary to sell into slavery those who could not pay their debts – the debtor or his children.[[4]](#footnote-4) To our shame, we find this also among the people of Israel, when the wall of Jerusalem was being built during the period of the return to Zion. The poor were forced to borrow money to pay the taxes imposed by the Persian king, and when they could not pay the debt, the rich took their sons and daughters as slaves:

There was a vehement outcry by the people and their wives against their fellow Jews… And there were some who said, "We have had to borrow money against our fields and vineyards to pay the king's levy… And yet we must force our sons and daughters into servitude, and some of our daughters have already been forced in that way while we stand helplessly by. Our fields and vineyards have gone to others." (*Nechemia* 5:1-5)

The Torah recognizes such a means of collecting a debt, but only for a debt based on criminal theft[[5]](#footnote-5) – a thief who cannot pay the principal of the theft, because he spent the money, is sold into slavery:

A thief must make restitution; if he lacks the means, he shall be sold as a slave to repay his debt. (*Shemot* 22:2)

In any other case, collecting a debt by enslaving the borrower (and all the more so, by enslaving his children or orphans) is a prohibition punishable by death!

Do not take an upper or lower millstone as security for a debt, for that would be taking a person’s livelihood as security. If someone is found to have kidnapped another Israelite, enslaving or selling him, the kidnapper shall die. You must purge the evil from your midst… When you make your neighbor a loan of any kind, do not go into his house to take his pledge. Wait outside while the person to whom you are making the loan brings the pledge out to you. If the person is poor, do not go to sleep with the pledge in your possession. You must return his pledge by sunset, so that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you. This will be accounted to you as a righteous act before the Lord your God. (*Devarim* 24:6-13)

The law that one who kidnaps another person and enslaves or sells him is placed alongside laws dealing with collecting a debt from a poor person. The Torah forbids the creditor to take the millstones with which he grinds the flour for his bread, to enter his house in order to take a pawn, or to take his last piece of clothing.

The wife of the member of the brotherhood of the prophets who gave his life to save God's prophets was worthy of having a miracle performed for her, and Elisha, heir to his master Eliyahu – who had said to the Tzarfati woman, "The jar of flour will not run out, and the jug of oil will never be empty" (I *Melakhim* 17:14), was worthy of a miracle being performed by him.

**IV. The Shunamite Woman and Her Son**

The story of the woman who demonstrated hospitality and was cured of her barrenness, and the story of the revival of her son, speak for themselves. We discussed these incidents briefly in the first section of this study, comparing them to the two parallel incidents in *Parashat Vayera*. In this section, we will consider a person who seems to me to be central to the story – Gechazi, Elisha's servant, whom *Chazal* list in the Mishna (*Sanhedrin* 10:2) as one of four commoners who have no place in the world to come.

The Shunamite woman's behavior is puzzling:

1. When Elisha offers her help and asks: "Shall I speak to the king on your behalf," she does not ask for anything, and does not present her plight as a barren woman.

2. When the prophet promises her a son, she replies in a reserved and joyless way: "No, my lord, man of God, do not delude your servant."

3. She does not tell her husband anything about the child's death or the purpose of her going to Mount Carmel.

4.̣ When Gechazi asks her on his master's orders whether the child is well, she answers, "All is well," and does not say anything about his death.

5. She is skeptical about the solution offered by the prophet, placing his staff on the boy's face, and compels the prophet to follow her home.

Four of these five issues seem to be explainable as reflecting strong reservations about Gechazi, Elisha's servant. With her scrutinizing eye, the Shunamite woman sees a young lad who is doing his job in a deceptive manner, a young lad who is not worthy of filling the role of the prophet's agent – as indeed becomes clear later, in the story of Naaman (later, in chap. 5, which is read not as part of our *haftara* but as a continuation of the *haftara* of *Parashat Tazria*), after which Elisha separates from him:

When he came to attend to his master, Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gechazi?" “Your servant has not gone anywhere," he said. "Was I not with you there in spirit when a man came down from his chariot to meet you?" he said to him. "Is now the time to take silver and to take clothes, and olive groves and vineyards, and sheep and cattle, and servants and maidservants? Now, the blight of Naaman will cling to you and your descendants forever." And he left his presence as a leper, as white as snow. (II *Melakhim* 5:25-27)

Gechazi’s desire for money is revealed in the story of Naaman, and it is possible that the Shunamite woman perceived from his attempt to push her away when she grasped Elisha’s feet (4:27) that he coveted other things as well (forbidden by the prohibition "You shall not covet"),[[6]](#footnote-6) or perhaps other negative qualities. She does not cooperate with him even when he comes on the prophet's mission, and she is even skeptical about the prophet's own promise of a son, as long as Gechazi is involved. It is possible that this is also how she then understood the death of the son who had been given to her miraculously – because Gechazi had also been involved. She does not answer Gechazi on Mount Carmel, does not trust his mission with the staff, and vigorously demands that Elisha come with her and treat the child personally rather than through his messenger.

As stated, it becomes clear in the incident involving Naaman that the Shunamite woman was right. Was God's prophet blind to the defects of his servant prior to that incident?

Perhaps the solution lies in the following *aggada*:

"And Elisha came to Damascus" (II *Melakhim* 8:7). Why did he go? Rabbi Yochanan said: He went to bring Gechazi back to repentance, but he would not repent. (*Sota* 47a; *Sanhedrin* 107b)

It is possible that Elisha retained Gechazi as his messenger, despite his misconduct, in the spirit of his constant request of God to "re-adopt" the people of Israel after Eliyahu the prophet abandoned them because of their behavior and they were led by Yehu and his son Yehoachaz, who had abandoned God's path. During this terrible period of God's concealment, Elisha was the thin thread connecting Israel and God. Elisha endured Gechazi's antics and tried to teach him with endless patience – until Gechazi went too far in the incident involving Naaman, at which point Elisha sent him away. (We will address the rest of Gechazi's antics when we study the *haftara* for *Parashat Metzora*.) Rabbi Yochanan tells us that despite Gechazi's exploits, Elisha did not give up on him, but followed him to Damascus to bring him back in repentance. Gechazi, however, refused.

The Shunamite woman refused to cooperate with Elisha in his attempt to draw Gechazi close. That she was right about this may be alluded to by God's concealing Himself from Elisha while Gechazi was next to him:

Gechazi came forward to push her away, but the man of God said, "Leave her be, for she is bitter of spirit, and the Lord has hidden this from me and did not tell me." (II *Melakhim* 4:27)[[7]](#footnote-7)

**V. The Secondary Characters in the Story of the Shunamite Woman**

1. The Shunamite woman's attitude toward her husband, and his own behavior regarding their shared child, require explanation. Why didn't the Shunamite woman share her grief over the child's death with her husband? Why didn't the father inquire about his child's condition after he felt ill when he was with him in the field, and if he knew the child had died, why was he surprised that his wife wanted to go to the prophet who had heralded the child's birth?

The father acts as if he has other children, apparently from other women. This is reminiscent of how Elkana behaved when he showed little understanding of his wife Chana's distress:

One year, her husband, Elkana, said to her, "Chana, why do you weep? Why do you never eat, and why are you so heartsore? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" (I *Shmuel* 1:8)

Chana's visit to the *Mishkan*, her prayer, her vow, and Eli's promise to her were her affairs, not those of her husband Elkana. We see such distance even more so in the case of the Shunamite woman, who came to the prophet with a demand like no other – that he revive the dead. She could not share this exceptional demand with her husband.

2. The role of the woman's servant and of the donkey in his charge is unclear, and so too the meaning of the obscure order that she gives him. It seems that the donkey and the servant were to speed up the Shunamite woman's journey to the distant Mount Carmel, so as not to leave the child too long in death. This purpose, however, seems to contradict the Shunamite woman's insistence on staying close to the man of God as they travelled from the Carmel to her home in Shunem, to the dead child. It is inconceivable that Elisha rode on the same donkey with the Shunamite woman to her home, and therefore we must conclude that the donkey and the servant accompanied the Shunamite woman only on the way to Mount Carmel, whereas on the way home, the servant brought the donkey back alone and the Shunamite woman went by foot before Elisha.

**VI. The Revival of the Child**

The boy did not wake up after Gechazi placed the staff of the man of God upon him. We might at first think to blame this on Gechazi, because he behaved improperly or because it was inappropriate for the miracle to be performed through him. But it is possible that there is also a criticism here of Elisha, who apparently believed that the miracle of the resurrection of the dead could be performed through his staff alone. Eliyahu, Elisha's master, resurrected the son of the Tzarfati woman only through the power of the prayer he offered next to the boy. Elisha too, when the boy did not wake up because of the staff, came and prayed next to him (verse 33).[[8]](#footnote-8)

Was there a connection between Elisha's staff and his prayer? We may find a similar connection in the words of *Chazal* regarding Moshe, who stood on Mount Chorev with the staff of God in his hand during the battle with Amalek. *Chazal* listened while Moshe held the staff, and they heard the prayer of the Israelites looking at it – as stated in the Mishna:

"And it came to pass, when Moshe held up his hand that Israel prevailed" (*Shemot* 17:11) – And did the hands of Moshe wage war or crush [the enemy]? [No!] Rather, [the text] is saying that so long as Israel looked upward and subjected their hearts to their Father in heaven, they prevailed; if not, they fell. (Mishna *Rosh Ha-shana* 3:8)

In fact, Elisha revived the dead twice: The first time, he revived the son of the Shunamite woman; the second time was after his death, when a random person’s body rolled into his grave:[[9]](#footnote-9)

And Elisha died, and they buried him. Now Moabite bands would raid the land at the start of every year. Once, as they were burying someone, they suddenly saw the band, and they flung the man into Elisha's grave. The moment the man's body touched Elisha's bones, he sprang to life and stood on his feet. (II *Melakhim* 13:20-21)

How can we understand such a great miracle that repeats itself twice? Perhaps there is good news here for the people of Israel at a time of God’s great concealment from them and when they were suffering under predatory Aramaean subjugation, similar to Yechezkel’s vision of dry bones:

I prophesied as He had commanded me, and the breath entered them, and they came to life; they stood upon their feet, a vast army. And He said to me: "Man, these bones are the whole House of Israel. See, they say, 'Our bones are dried out, our hope is lost, and we are completely cut off.'… I will put My breath into you, and you will come to life; I will set you upon your soil, and you will know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord." (*Yechezkel* 37:10-14)

(Translated by David Strauss)

1. The city of Shunem is identified with the village of Solam, which today lies near Afula, south of Givat HaMoreh. This was the city of Avishag the Shunamite, who tended to David in his old age (I *Melakhim* 1). The Philistines camped there in preparation for the war against Shaul and his army at Gilboa (1 *Shmuel* 10). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In both cases, the failure to produce a child is for whatever reason attributed to the husband’s age: in the *parasha*, it is stated:"Now that I am worn out, can I have this pleasure? With my lord an old man?" (*Bereishit* 18:12), and in the *haftara*: "'Well, she is childless,' said Gechazi, 'and her husband is old'" (II *Melakhim* 4:14). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Sefaradim, whose common practice it is to read a shorter *haftara*, omit this section from this week's *haftara*. Seemingly (and only seemingly), they could have omitted the story of the wife of the member of the brotherhood of the prophets, and completed the story of the Shunamite woman. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. I am familiar with reliable evidence of this primarily from the writings of the Greeks. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In my opinion, this law applies primarily with respect to a thief who breaks into a person's house. For more about this, see my book, *Ki Karov Eilekha*, Israel 2014, p. 381. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. As *Chazal* suggest, that Gechazi grabbed her inappropriately in pushing her away (*Berakhot* 10b). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 1. In my opinion, there is a puzzling similarity between the Shunamite woman and the barren Chana, who goes alone to the *Mishkan* and lays out her plight directly before God and before Eli the High Priest, bypassing Eli's wayward sons, Chofniand Pinchas, who were in actual practice in charge of the *Mishkan* and its visitors, and apparently of the prayers recited there as well. Chana's words to Eli, "Do not think your handmaid a daughter of depravity [*al titen et amatekha lifnei bat belial*]" (I *Shmuel* 1:16), sound like "Do not set your handmaid before the sons of depravity [*al titen et amatekha lifnei benei belial*," i.e., before Chofni and Pinchas, who are referred to as *benei belial.* I expanded upon this idea in my article, "*Al Shetei Haftarot ve-al Shetei Akarot*," in *Be-Rosh Ha-Shana Yikateivun*, Alon Shevut 5763, pp. 149-205.

2. For the sake of balance, it should be noted that just as we find a hint of criticism of the prophet, who includes Gechazi in his actions, there is also a hint of criticism of the Shunamite woman, who rejects Gechazi entirely. Elisha sends Gechazi to the Shunamite woman to ask: "What can we do for you? Shall I speak to the king on your behalf, or to the army commander?" But the Shunamite woman rejects the offer and refuses to cooperate: "'I live among my own people,' she said." In the end, however, she does need Gechazi to speak to the king on her behalf: "Now Elisha had told the woman whose son he had revived, 'Leave with your household right away and settle wherever you can, for the Lord has decreed a seven-year famine on the land, and it has already begun.'… At the end of seven years, the woman returned from the land of the Philistines, and she went to appeal to the king about her house and her field. Just then, the king was speaking with Gechazi, the man of God's servant, saying, 'Please, tell me all about the great deeds that Elisha has done.'… 'My lord the king,' said Gechazi, 'this is the very woman, and this is her son whom Elisha revived.' The king questioned the woman, and she told him her story; then the king assigned a eunuch to her, ordering: 'Restore all that belongs to her and all the revenue from her field from the day she left the land until now.'" [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. It should also be noted that Elisha closed the door when the miracle occurred (verse 33), and he had similarly instructed the woman for whom the miracle of the oil was performed to close the door (verse 4). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This is similar to the boy being brought back to life after lying on Elisha's bed. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)