



Dedicated by Frances and Moishe Goldstein in memory of Frances's mother,
Anne Woznica, Hencha bat David Zev v' Rivka z"l, whose 36th yahrtzeit is *bo bayom*

1. Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:2

שְׁלֹשָׁה מְלָכִים וְאַרְבָּעָה הַדְּיוֹטוֹת אֵין לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא. שְׁלֹשָׁה מְלָכִים, יָרָבֶעַם, אַחָב, וּמְנַשֶּׁה.

Three kings and four commoners have no share in the World to Come. The three kings are: Yaravam, Achav, and Menasheh.

2. Talmud, Sanhedrin 102b

אחאב אח לשמים אב לעבודת כוכבים אח לשמים דכתיב (משלי יז, יז) אח לצרה יולד אב לעבודת כוכבים דכתיב (תהלים קג, יג) כרחם אב על בנים...א"ר יוחנן מפני מה זכה אחאב למלכות כ"ב שנה? מפני שכיבד את התורה שניתנה בכ"ב אותיות.

Achav as a brother [*ach*] to Heaven and a father [*av*] for idol worship. He was a brother to Heaven, as it is written: "And a brother is born for adversity" (Proverbs 17:17) [and in desperate times, he turned to Heaven]. He was a father for idolatry. [This is the highest level of attachment,] as it is written: "As a father has compassion for his children" (Psalms 103:13)...Rabbi Yochanan says: For what virtue was Achav privileged to ascend to the monarchy and rule for twenty-two years? It is due to the fact that he respected the Torah, which was given with twenty-two letters. (Davidson translation)

3. I Kings 19:1-2 (Artscroll Tanach, page 860)

וַיַּגֵּד אַחָב לְאֵלִיָּהוּ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹהֵיו וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר הִרְגָה אֶת־כָּל־הַנְּבִיאִים בְּחֶרֶב: וַתִּשְׁלַח אֵלִיָּהוּ מַלְאָךְ אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר כֹּה־יַעֲשֶׂוּן אֱלֹהִים [חול] וְכֵה יוֹסֵפוּן כִּי־כַעַת מָה־ר אֲשֶׁר־אֶתְנַפְשֶׁךָ כִּנְפֹשׁ אַתָּה מֵהֶם.

When Achav told Izevel all that Eliyahu had done and how he had put all the prophets to the sword. Izevel sent a messenger to Eliyahu, saying, "Thus and more may the gods do if by this time tomorrow I have not made you like one of them." (JPS translation)

4. Malbim שם

השאלות: למה לא הרגה אותו תיכף, ותשלח איזבל ראתה כי לב אחאב נוטה אל אליהו ומצדיקו ולא ערב לבה להרגו תיכף וחשבה כי בלילה תהפך לב אחאב לשוב אל רשעו.

Why did she [Izevel] not kill him [Eliyahu] immediately? She saw that Achav's heart was favourable toward Eliyahu and considered him righteous, whereas her heart was not conflicted to kill him immediately. She thought that by night time, Achav's heart would turn over to return to his wickedness.

5. I Kings 20:5-9 (Artscroll Tanach, page 862)

וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כֹּה אָמַר בְּנֵה־חַדָּד כַּסְפֶּךָ וְזָהָבֶךָ לִי־הוּא וְנָשִׂיךָ וּבָנֶיךָ הַטּוֹבִים לִי־הֵם: בִּנְעוּ מִלֶּחֶד־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר בְּדַבְּרֶךָ אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ לֵךְ אֲנִי וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לִי: וַיִּשְׁבְּוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֹּה־אָמַר בְּנֵה־חַדָּד לֵאמֹר כַּסְפֶּךָ וְזָהָבֶךָ וְנָשִׂיךָ וּבָנֶיךָ לִי תְמוּ: וְכִי אִם־כַּעַת מָה־ר אֲשֶׁלַּח אֶת־עַבְדִּי אֵלֶיךָ וְחִפְשִׁי אֶת־בֵּיתְךָ וְאֵת בְּתוּי עַבְדֶּיךָ וְהִנֵּה כָל־מַחְמַד עֵינֶיךָ יִשְׂמוּ בְיָדָם וְלִקְחוּ: וַיִּקְרָא מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכָל־זִמְזָנָיו הָאֶרֶץ וַיֹּאמֶר דַּעֲוֹנָא וּרְאוּ כִי רָעָה זֶה מִבְּקֹשׁ כִּי־שָׁלַח אֵלַי לְנָשִׂי וּלְבָנַי וּלְכַסְפִּי וּלְזָהָבִי וְלֹא מִנְעַמִּי מִמֶּנּוּ: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו כָּל־הַזִּמְזָנִים וְכָל־הָעָם אֶל־תִּשְׁמַע וְלֹא תֵאבְדָה: וַיֹּאמֶר לְמַלְאָכָי בְּנֵה־חַדָּד אֲמַרוּ לְאֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַחְתָּ אֵלֶי־עַבְדְּךָ כִּרְאשֹׁנָה אֲעֲשֶׂה וְהַדְּבָר הַזֶּה לֹא אוּכַל לַעֲשׂוֹת וַיִּלְכוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים וַיִּשְׁבְּהוּ דָבָר.

Then the messengers came again and said, "Thus said Ben-hadad: When I sent you the order to give me your silver and gold, and your wives and children. I meant that tomorrow at this time I will send my servants to you and they will search your house and the houses of your courtiers and seize everything you prize and take it away." Then the king of Israel summoned all the elders of the land, and he said, "See for yourselves how that man is bent on evil! For when he demanded my wives and my children, my silver and my gold, I did not refuse him." All the elders and all the people said, "Do not obey and do not submit!" So he said to Ben-hadad's messengers, "Tell my lord the king: All that you first demanded of your servant I shall do, but this thing I cannot do." The messengers went and reported this to him. (JPS)

6. Talmud, Sanhedrin 102b

מאי מחמד עיניך לאו ס"ת

What is "the delight of your eyes" [that Ahab refused to give Ben-Hadad after agreeing to give him his wives and his gold?] Is it not a Torah scroll? [Ahab treated the Torah with deference.] (Davidson)

7. I Kings 21:7 (Artscroll Tanach, page 868)

וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֵיזָבֵל אֲשֶׁתּוֹ אִמָּה עָתָה תַעֲשֶׂה מְלוּכָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל קוּם אֲכַל־לֶחֶם וַיֵּטֵב לָבָד אֲנִי אֲתֵן לָךְ אֶת־כָּרֶם נִבְזוֹת הַיְזַרְעֵאל. וַתִּכְתֹּב סְפָרִים בְּשֵׁם אַחָב וַתִּתְּנֶם בְּחֶמְקוֹ וַתִּשְׁלַח הַסְּפָרִים [סְפָרִים] אֶל־הַזִּמְזָנִים וְאֶל־הַחֲרִים אֲשֶׁר בְּעִירוֹ הַיְשָׁבִים אֶת־נִבְזוֹת.

His wife Izevel said to him, “Now is the time to show yourself king over Israel. Rise and eat something, and be cheerful; I will get the vineyard of Navot the Jezreelite for you.” So she wrote letters in Achav’s name and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who lived in the same town with Navot. (JPS)

8. I Kings 21:21 (Artscroll Tanach, page 868)

הַגִּי מִבֵּי [מְבִיא] אֵלַיךָ רָעָה וּבְעֵרְתִי אַחְרָיִךְ וְהִכְרַתִּי לְאַחְזָב מִשְׁתֵּינִי בְקִיר וְעֶצֶר וְעֶזְבִּי בִישָׁרְאֵל.

And I will excise from Achav every man, and him that is shut up and him that is abandoned in Israel. I will bring disaster upon you. I will make a clean sweep of you, I will cut off from Israel every male belonging to Achav, bond and free. (JPS)

9. I Kings 21:25 Artscroll Tanach, page 870)

רַק לֹא־הָיָה כְּאַחְזָב אֲשֶׁר הִתְמַמֵּר לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ה' אֲשֶׁר־הִסְתֶּה אֹתוֹ אִיזָבֵל אִשְׁתּוֹ.

Indeed, there never was anyone like Achav, who committed himself to doing what was displeasing to G-d, at the instigation of Izevel, his wife.

10. Malbim שם

רק ר"ל בכל המלכים הרשעים לא היה אחד כאחאב, כי כולם עשו הרע מדעת עצמם, והוא התמכר לרצון אחרים יען שהסתה אותו איזבל.

“Only...” Meaning, of all the other wicked kings, there was none like Achav, as all of them did evil on their own accord. However, Achav was seduced by the will of others and could not resist the incitement of Izevel.

11. Talmud, Sanhedrin 102b

אמר ר"ג אחאב שקול היה שנאמר (מלכים א כב, ב) ויאמר ה' מי יפתה את אחאב ויעל ויפול ברמות גלעד ויאמר זה בכה וזה אומר בכה מתקיף לה רב יוסף מאן דכתב ביה (מלכים א כא, כה) רק לא היה כאחאב אשר התמכר לעשות הרע בעיני ה' אשר הסתה אותו איזבל אשתו ותנינא בכל יום היתה שוקלת שקלי זהב לעבודת כוכבים ואת אמרת שקול היה אלא אחאב וותרן בממונו היה ומתוך שההנה תלמידי חכמים מנכסיו כיפרו לו מחצה.

Rav Nachman says: Achav was balanced [in terms of the mitzvot and transgressions that he performed] as it is stated: “And the Lord said, who shall entice Achav that he may ascend and fall at Ramot Gil’ad? And this one said in this manner, and that one said in that manner” [(I Kings 22:20), indicating that it is unclear whether or not he was a full-fledged transgressor]. Rav Yosef objects to this statement: This is the person about whom the prophet wrote: “But there was none like Achav who devoted himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, whom Izevel his wife had incited” (I Kings 21:25). And we learn in a *baraita*: Every day she would weigh gold shekels [equal to Achav’s weight] for idol worship. And you say he was balanced? Rather, Achav was generous with his money, and since he also benefited Torah scholars with his property [the heavenly court] expiated half [his sins] for him. [The result was a balance between mitzvot and transgressions.] (Davidson)

12. I Kings 21:15-19 (Artscroll Tanach, page 868)

וַיְהִי כִשְׁמַע אִיזָבֵל כִּי־סָקַל נָבוֹת וַתֹּאמֶר אִיזָבֵל אֶל־אַחְזָב קוּם רִשׁ אֶת־בָּרֶם וּנְבוֹת הַיִּזְרְעֵאלִי אֲשֶׁר מֵאֵן לְתַתֵּלֶךָ בְּכֶסֶף כִּי אֵין נָבוֹת חַי כִּי־מָתָּה: וַיְהִי כִשְׁמַע אֶחְזָב כִּי מָת נָבוֹת נִקְּם אֶחְזָב לְרֵדֶת אֶל־בָּרֶם נְבוֹת הַיִּזְרְעֵאלִי לְרִשְׁתּוֹ: וַיְהִי דְבַר־ה' אֶל־אֵלֶיָּהוּ הַתְּשֻׁבִי לֵאמֹר: קוּם רֵד לְקַרְאֵת אֶחְזָב מִלְּדֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְרוֹן הִנֵּה בְּבָרֶם נְבוֹת אֲשֶׁר־יָרַד שָׁם לְרִשְׁתּוֹ: וְדַבַּרְתָּ אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר ה' הַרְצֵחֶתָּ וְגַם־יָרַשְׁתָּ וְדַבַּרְתָּ אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר ה' בְּמִלּוֹם אֲשֶׁר לָקְחוּ הַכְּלָבִים אֶת־נְבוֹת יִלְקוּ הַכְּלָבִים אֶת־דַּמְךָ גַּם־אֶתֶּהּ. וַיֹּאמֶר אֶחְזָב אֶל־אֵלֶיָּהוּ הַמְצַאֲתָנִי אִיבִי וַיֹּאמֶר מְצַאֲתִי יַעַן הִתְמַכְרְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ה'

As soon as Izevel heard that Navot had been stoned to death, she said to Achav, “Go and take possession of the vineyard which Navot the Jezreelite refused to sell you for money; for Navor is no longer alive, he is dead.” When Achav heard that Navot was dead, Achav set out for the vineyard of Navot the Jezreelite to take possession of it. Then the word G-d came to Eliyahu the Tishbite. “Go down and confront King Achav of Israel who [resides] in Samaria. He is now in Navot’s vineyard; he has gone down there to take possession of it. Say to him, ‘Thus said G-d: Would you murder and take possession? Thus said G-d: In the very place where the dogs lapped up Navot’s blood, the dogs will lap up your blood too.’” Achav said to Eliyahu, “So you have found me, my enemy?” “Yes, I have found you,” he replied. “Because you have committed yourself to doing what is evil in the sight of G-d. (JPS)

13. Malbim שם

שהתמכרת לעשות הרע וכאילו אתה נמכר לאיזבל אשתך לענין עשות הרע שבזה אתה עבד לה לעשות פקודתה, וכל אשר עשתה יחשב כאילו עשיתו אתה.

That you have become addicted to doing evil, and as if you were sold to Izevel your wife for the purpose of doing evil in which you worked for her to do her command, and all that she did is considered as if you did it.