

B”H

Parsha and Manuscript: Va’etchanan

‘The power of prayer’

Deuteronomy 3:23-25:

I entreated (*Va’etchanan*) the Lord at that time, saying, "O Lord God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand, for who is [like] God in heaven or on earth who can do as Your deeds and Your might? Pray let me cross over and see the good land that is on the other side of the Jordan, this good mountain and the Lebanon."

Midrash Sifrei (Deuteronomy 26:6-7):

1. Two goodly leaders rose up for Israel — Moses and David king of Israel — and they could have asked for reward on the basis of their good deeds, but they asked of the Holy One Blessed be He only that He "grace" them, (this being the thrust of "*chaneini*" and of "*va’etchanan*"). Now does this not follow a fortiori, viz.: If these two who could have asked for reward on the basis of their good deeds, asked of the Holy One Blessed be He only that He "grace" them, then we, who are not even a thousandth of the thousands and ten thousands of his disciples, how much more so should we ask of the L-rd only that He "grace" us!

2. Variantly: Prayer (*tefillah*) is called by ten names: *ze'akah*, *shav'ah*, *ne'akah*, *rinah*, *pegiah*, *nipul*, *pilul*, *atirah*, *chilui*, and *chinun*: *ze'akah* — ‘And it was in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel moaned under the toil, and they cried out (*vayizaku*).’¹ ‘*shav'ah*’ — ‘and their outcry (*shavatham*) ascended.’² ‘*ne'akah*’ — ‘And G-d heard their outcry (*na'akatham*).’³ ‘*rinah*’ — ‘and do not raise for them an outcry (*rinah*).’⁴ ‘*pegiah*’ — ‘and do not entreat (*tifg'u*) Me.’⁵ ‘*nipul*’ — ‘And I prostrated myself (*va'ethnapal*) before the L-rd as at first.’⁶ ‘*pilul*’ — ‘And I prayed (*va'etpallel*) to the L-rd.’⁷ ‘*atirah*’ — ‘And Isaac entreated (*vaye'tar Yitzchak*) the L-rd for his wife.’⁸ ‘*chilui*’ — ‘And Moses prayed’ (*Vayechal Mosheh*).’⁹ ‘*chinun*’ — ‘And I entreated (*va’etchanan*) the L-rd.’¹⁰

¹ Exodus 2:23.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. 24.

⁴ Jeremiah 7:16.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Deuteronomy 9:18.

⁷ Ibid. 26.

⁸ Genesis 25:21.

⁹ Exodus 32:11.

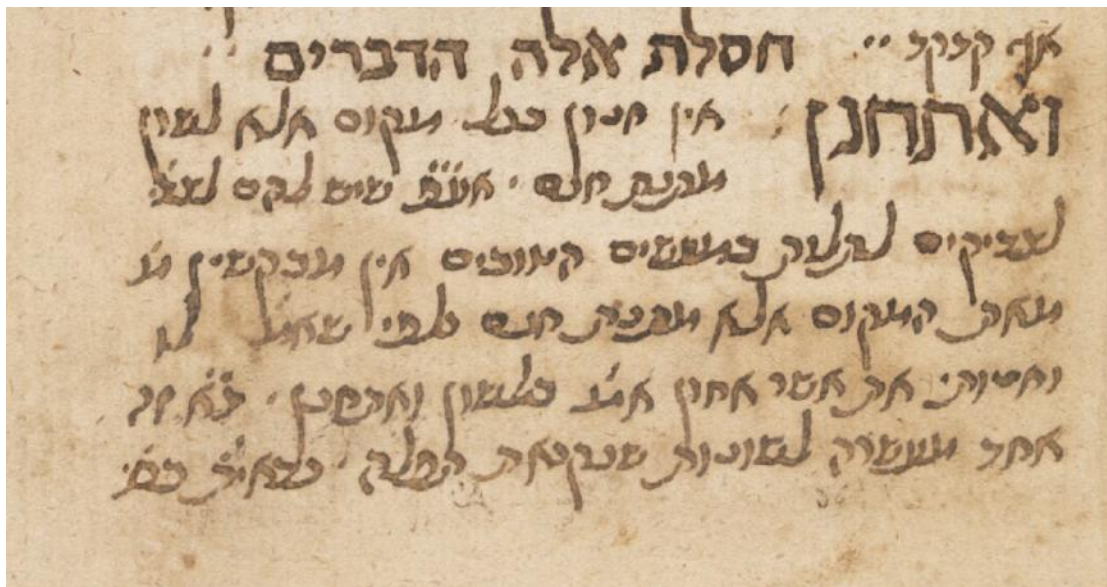
¹⁰ Deuteronomy 3:23

Rashi

1. I entreated: The word *chanun* and its derivatives in all cases is an expression signifying requesting a free gift. Even though the righteous may base a request on the merit of their good deeds, they request only a free gift of the Omnipresent. (Addition:) Because G-d had said to Moses, “and I will favor (*v'chanoti*) when I wish to favour (*achon*),”¹¹ Moses spoke to G-d, using the expression *va'etchanan*.’
2. Another explanation: This is one of ten terms which denote prayer as stated in the *Sifrei*.

Manuscripts

MS. Huntington 425 (1403)¹² - as printed edition - with additional words: ‘Because G-d had said to Moses, “and I will favour (*v'chanoti*) when I wish to favour (*achon*),”¹³ Moses spoke to G-d, using the expression *va'etchanan*.’

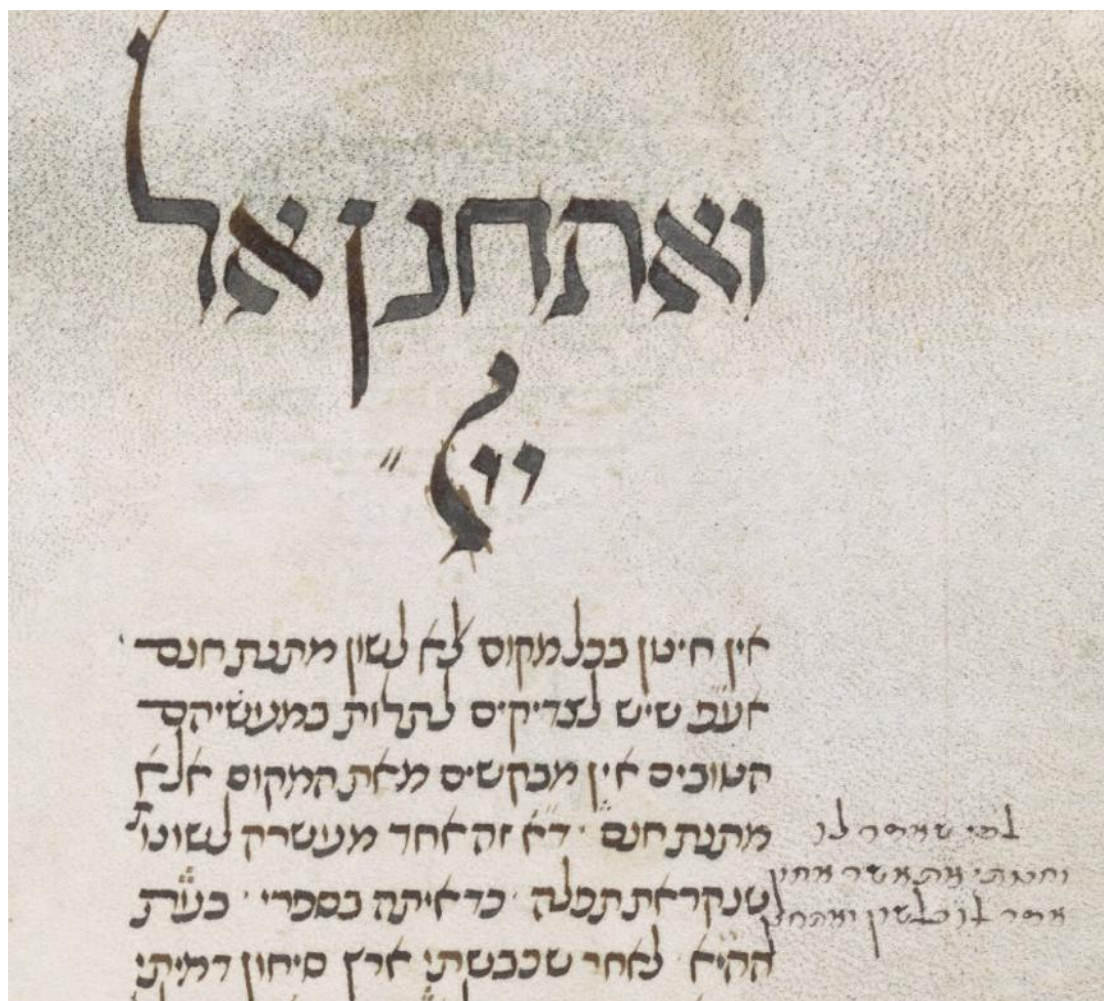


¹¹ Exodus 33:19.

¹² Fol. 83.

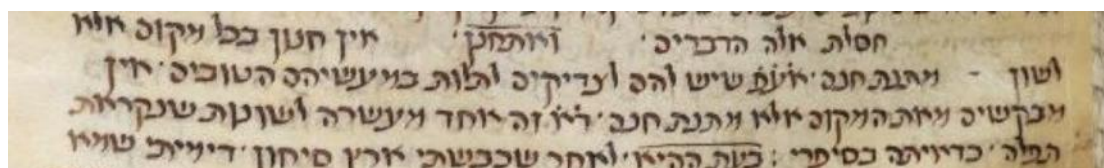
¹³ Exodus 33:19.

MS. Canon. Or. 81 (1396)¹⁴ - additional words can be found in margin.

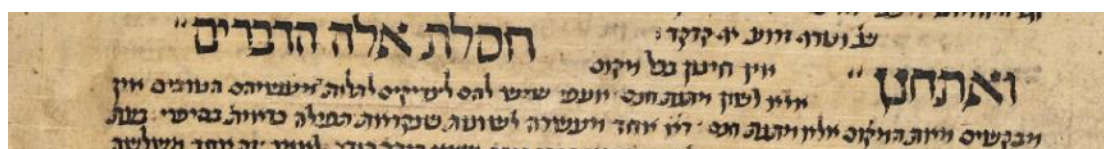


Additional words are omitted:

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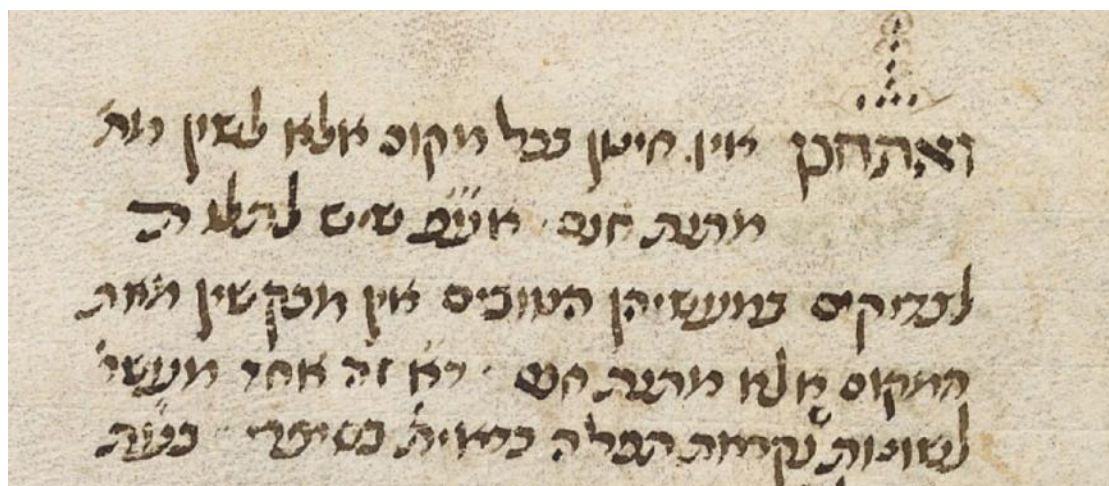
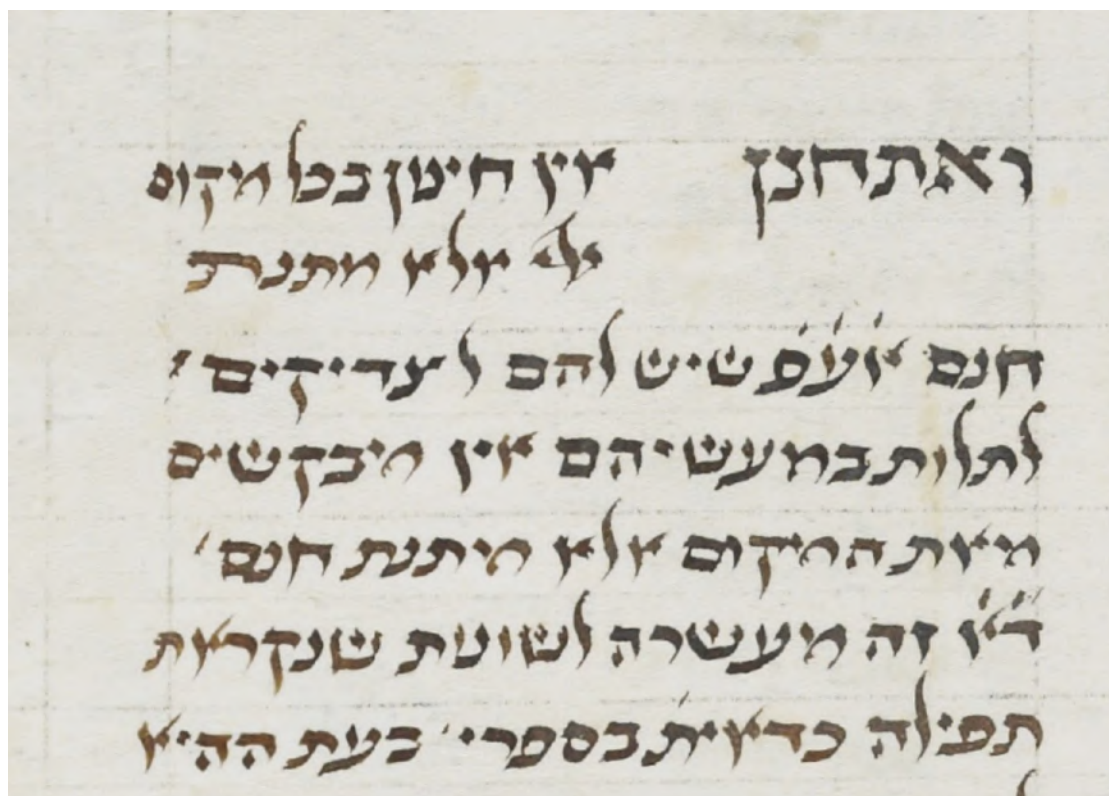
MS. Oppenheim 34 (1201-1225)¹⁶



¹⁴ Fol. 163.

¹⁵ Fol. 130.

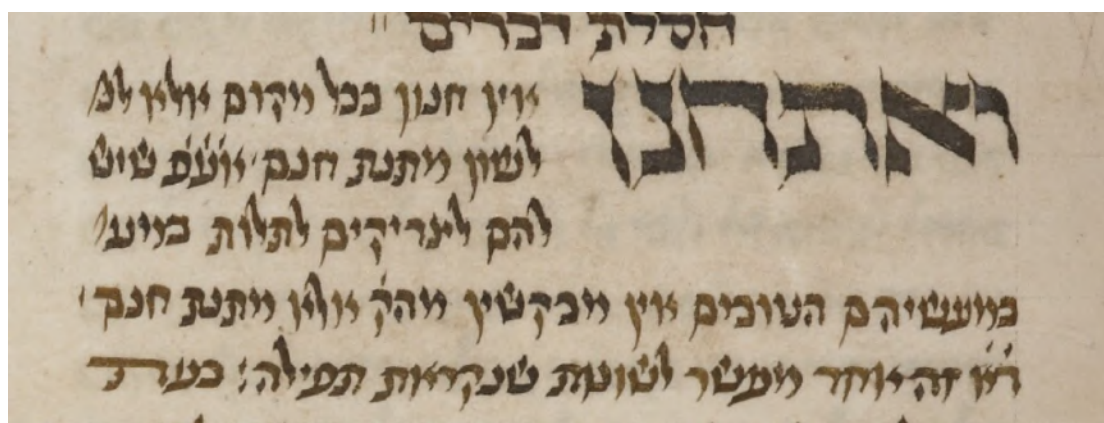
¹⁶ Fol. 100.



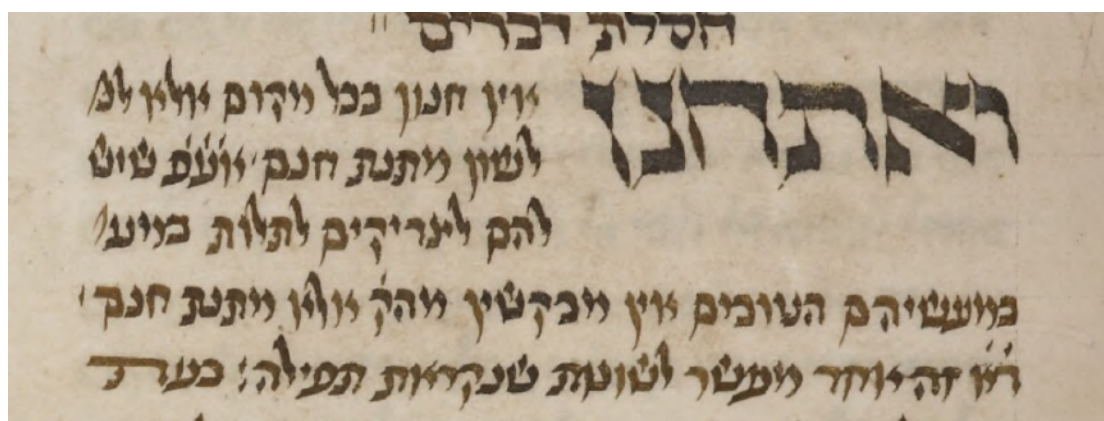
¹⁷ Fol. 122.

¹⁸ Fol. 121.

MS. Canonici Or. 35 (1401-1425)¹⁹



MS. Oppenheim 35 (1408)²⁰



¹⁹ Fol. 200.

²⁰ Fol. 93.