



Chavakuk Introduction

Chavakuk Bio

Chavakuk is the eighth of the Trei Asar prophets and is three Perakim long. Chavakuk's prophesying starting during the reign of King Menashe. Chavakuk's contemporaries were Nachum and Yoel. Chavakuk was a student of Yeshaya Hanavi. The Rambam counts Chavakuk as the eighteenth transmitter of the Torah mesorah/tradition, who received the tradition from Nachum Hanavi.

Zohar in Parshas B'Shalach brings that Chavakuk was the child of the Esha Shunamis who was brought back to life by the great Elisha Hanavi, as described in Melachim II, Perek daled. The Esha Shunamis had housed Elisha Hanavi and had built him a special room in which to serve Hashem. Elisha, having gratitude to the Shunamite woman, asked his attendant Geichazi what he could give the woman to show his gratitude. Since the woman was childless, Elisha blessed her with a child.

Since the town of Shunam was located in Efraim, Chavakuk is positively identified as coming from Shevet Efraim.

The Name Chavakuk

Elisha had said to the Esha Shunamis, וַיֹּאמֶר לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה כָּעֵת חֲזָה אֶתִּי [אֶת] חֲבֻקָת בֶּן, *"At this time next year you will 'chovekes' - embrace a child."* This is why his name is Chavakuk, from the word 'chovekes', meaning to 'embrace', because Chavakuk was embraced by his mother, for whom Elisha performed a miracle.

Or alternatively, one can say that Chavakuk was to embrace his mission and go to bat for Klal Yisrael. In perek aleph we find that Chavakuk pleaded to Hashem on behalf of the Jewish nation. It's the job of true tzadikim to find and search out the good in every Jew and pray for them, because every Jew is filled with mitzvos like a pomegranate.

Ramad Walli explains al pi kabbalah that Chavakuk's soul came initially from the Sitra D'Nukva – the feminine side, and had therefore died. When Elisha brought him back to life, his soul was then combined with the Sitra D'Duchra – the masculine side. Therefore, the word Chavakuk comes from the word *Chibuk*, meaning 'a hug', because his soul was embraced and hugged by both the masculine and feminine sides.

The Ramad Walli then goes into a deep kabbalistic explanation about how it should have been fitting for Chavakuk to be named *Chibuk*, meaning *hug*, but for deep kabbalistic reasons he was named Chavakuk instead.

Overview:

There are essentially three parts to Chavakuk's prophecy. 1) The downfall of the kingdom of Ashur. 2) Bavel would rise to power. 3) Bavel would eventually be destroyed.

In contrast to Nachum, Chavakuk's contemporary, who had prophesied the downfall of Ashur, Chabakuk went a step further and prophesied about the rise and fall of Bavel.

To put this in perspective, Nachum's prophecy may have seemed almost humorous to the people of that time since Ashur was the world power. Now, Chavakuk comes along and prophesizes that not only will Ashur not be the world power any longer, but Bavel will be the next world power! And they, too, will fall!

Chavakuk was deeply bothered by the vision of the world being dominated by Bavel which was frightening. Hashem therefore consoled him with a vision of Bavel's downfall.

Chazal

Mikra'os Gedolos' introduction brings that Chavakuk was also a gilgul of Adam harishon. Chavakuk had lived an unusually long life and had actually brought food to Doniel Hanavi when Doniel was thrown into the lion's den. Medrash Sachar Tov brings that Chavakuk was bothered by the fact that Chananya, Misha'el and Azarya were thrown into a furnace and saved, while he witnessed Chananya ben Tradyon thrown into a furnace and burned to death. Chavakuk had screamed out to Hashem, "They are both pure tzadikim! Why does this one live and this one die?!" Hashem responded, "Does it not say that I am the God of faith?" Chavakuk responded, "Hashem you are right. I mistakenly questioned your ways."

Makkos 24A: It was precisely Chavakuk who had the great ability to distill the Torah into one mitzva. בא חבקות והעמידן על אחת שנאמר (חבקות ב, ד) וצדיק באמונתו יחיה – Chavakuk reduced the Torah to one principle of utmost importance: *"The Tzadik shall live with His faith"*. How much do we need to believe in ourselves? It says *"Amcha kulam tzadikim – Your nation is made up entirely of tzadikim!"* And how much do we need to connect with true tzadikim?

As we learn Chavakuk let us try to connect with he who taught us to connect with and have emunah in the true tzadikim - Chavakuk himself. There is no doubt that Chavakuk and all the other prophets were the greatest, most exalted people to ever walk the face of the earth.