

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

PARSHAT SHEMINI

Serve Hashem With Joy

The Haftora for Parshas Shemini tells of how King David had the Aron, the Holy Ark, brought to Yerushalayim. On the way, Uzza, who was walking alongside the wagon that was carrying the Aron, noticed that the oxen pulling it had slipped. He reached for the Aron, worried that it would fall off the wagon, and Hashem took his life because he should have trusted that Hashem's Aron wouldn't fall.

David stopped the procession, continuing it three months later. This time the Aron was carried, as David realized that putting the Aron on a wagon was a mistake and not allowed. As the Aron proceeded, David danced and leaped before Hashem. His wife, Michal, King Shaul's daughter, saw what he was doing and was displeased, thinking that it would cause him to lose the respect of the people.

Chabad and Sefardic communities conclude with the Aron being settled in Yerushalayim and the celebration that took place. Ashkenazic communities continue with Michal's remarks to David, his response to her, and how David

wanted to build the Beis Hamikdash, but Hashem refused this request.

The connection to the Parsha is that Parshas Shemini speaks of the two sons of Aaron, Nadav

and Avihu, who died during the inauguration of the Mishkan by making a holy judgment error, just as Uzza did, accompanying the Aron to Yerushalayim.

The Haftora tells us that when the Aron was being carried to the City of David (another name for Yerushalayim), that "David danced joyfully with all his strength before Hashem, and David was dressed in a linen apron." When he entered the City of David, it says, "King David leaped and danced joyfully before Hashem." Outside the City of David, it says that he danced joyfully and he wore a linen apron. Inside the City of David, it says that he leaped as well, and it doesn't make mention of his apron. Why the differences? And what is the meaning of the linen apron?

Later, when Michal rebuked him for his actions, he responded, "Before Hashem, Who chose me over your father... I would lower myself even further..." Why did he have to say that Hashem chose him over her father?

The Rambam tells us that this apron was different than the Kohen Gadol's Ephod, which was made out of six different threads, gold, turquoise wool, purple wool, red wool, linen, and goat hair. This one was made out of just linen. He continues to explain that the linen apron was worn by the Bnei Haneviim, who were prophets, and by those who were worthy of having the Divine Presence shine on them. It showed that they reached the level of a Kohen Gadol.

The Talmud Yerushalmi tells us that Nov, which was a city of Kohanim, had 85 Kohanim that wore the linen apron, they weren't Kohanim Gedolim as there can only be one Kohen Gadol, but they were worthy of being one.

One of the ways a prophet readied himself for

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prophecy was by sitting alone in meditation, which was usually done outside the city. So it makes sense that when he was still outside the city, he would be wearing the linen apron.

It also makes sense now why it says that outside the city, "David danced joyfully with all his strength." Because the Divine Presence only rests on someone when he is joyful.

This will also explain why outside the city, he only danced, but inside the city, he leaped and danced. Because outside the city, he danced for a reason, to receive prophecy. Whenever thinking is involved, it curbs the joy. However, when he entered the City of David, his joy was for Hashem, without any personal reason or personal gain in mind, so his joy was unbridled; hence he leaped and Danced.

This will help us understand David's answer to Michal. According to the Talmud, Michal was a very holy woman; she even put on Tefillin. We must conclude that she meant well, and of course, if you think about it, dancing and leaping may very well cause a king to lose some respect.

This is what David was telling Michal. The reason why Hashem took the rulership away from your father is because he followed his reasoning, which, although it was noble, it was not what Hashem wanted. As we saw with Amalek, although Hashem wanted all of Amalek's cattle wiped out, Shaul allowed the best of the cattle to live to offer them as sacrifices to Hashem.

David, on the other hand, did what Hashem wanted, accepting the Divine yoke, despite what he thought. That is why Hashem made him king. Humbling himself before Hashem was the key to his rulership. Therefore he leaped and danced joyfully, beyond reason.

The Rambam brings the verse, "King David leaped and danced joyfully," as proof that every Jewish person should serve Hashem with great joy. In other words, this verse is a lesson to each of us that the way of David over the way of Shaul is preferred. For Hashem, we

have to go beyond our understanding, and one of the ways to break out and get beyond ourselves is through joy.

And as David concludes by saying to Michal that because of this, "I will be (even more) honored" by the people. The same is true for us. When we serve Hashem beyond our understanding and with joy, we gain the respect of those around us.

It is true that David was not able to build the Beis Hamikdash, not because he wasn't worthy, but rather because he fought many wars. Yet although he didn't build it, it bears his name because he was the one who made it possible.

He is also granted, as Hashem said, "Your house and your sovereignty will remain before you forever. Your throne will be firmly established forever."

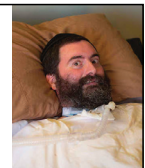
May we merit to see the Third Temple with the coming of Moshiach, heir to the throne of King David. May it happen soon.

"What an inspiration to see Rabbi Yitzi talk and inspire high school kids! Someone like this should still have Simchas HaChaim!"

- Devorah S, Brooklyn

RABBI YITZI WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! SEND YOUR MESSAGE TO:
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Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



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