

A Taste of Text: Source based learning for Shabbat

This weekly sheet is brought to you by Rabbi Dr. Moshe Freedman of the New West End United Synagogue in conjunction with Shapell's/Darché Noam

PARSHAT VAYECHI

DVAR TORAH: MY SWORD AND BOW

Targum Unkelos explains Yaakov's words to Yosef: "That I took (Shechem) from the Emorites *בחרבי ובקשתי* – with my sword and bow" (Bereishit 48:22) as "*בצלותי ובבעותי* – with my prayer and supplication."

Why were these two weapons chosen as the analogy for prayer?

Harav Azaryah Figo, זצ"ל (the rav of the Sefardic community in Venice, 1579-1647), in his book of derashot, *Binah Le'itim*, addresses this, as does the Brisker Rov, Harav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik, זצ"ל (born in Volozhin, Belarus, in 1886, and passed away in Yerushalayim in 1959), in his commentary on the Chumash. Each one highlights one of the differences between the two weapons.

A sword is good to fight an enemy who is close by, says Harav Azaryah, and a bow and arrow is good for attacking someone from afar. We are up against a unique enemy who, says Reish Lakish (quoted in Bava Batra 16a) takes three forms: the Yetzer Hara-Evil Inclination; the Satan-Accuser; and the Malach Hamavet-Angel of Death. "*יורד ומתעה ועולה ומרגיז נוטל רשות ונוטל נשמה*" – "He goes down and leads a person astray, goes up to Heaven and arouses anger against the person, then gets permission to take the person's life." Fighting this force demands a weapon that can deal with an enemy who is both close and far, that combines the powers of both a sword and a bow and arrow. That weapon is prayer.

Prayer forces us to transform ourselves from within, for we must stand humbly before G-d and prepare ourselves internally for the encounter with the Divine. This fights the enemy within, the Yetzer Hara, like a sword. Then, like a bow and arrow, our prayers go up before the Heavenly Throne, defending us and the People of Israel against the accusations of the forces of negativity.

The Brisker Rov underscores another difference between a sword and a bow. The sword is so sharp that even someone who is not so strong can cause harm with it, but the efficacy of a bow and arrow depends on the strength of the archer. A powerful archer can pull the bow back farther than a weak one, causing the arrow to fly much farther when he releases it.

There are two types of prayer: a standard daily fixed prayer the Targum calls *צלותא*; and a personal supplication called *בעותא*. The fixed prayers, says the Brisker Rov, are powerful even when said by the rank and file. Like sharp swords they are effective even when used by people who might be spiritually relatively weak. But supplications, personal prayers, are likened to a bow and arrow. When it comes to special requests for Divine Mercy the prayer of a tsaddik or talmid chacham can shoot further than that of an ordinary person. This explains Rabbi Pinchas bar Chama's teaching, that we should ask a wise chacham to pray on behalf of a sick person (Bava Batra 116a). Even great Tannaim like Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai and Rabban Gamliel asked the tsaddik Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa to pray for their relatives when they were ill (Berachot 34b).

When fighting a dangerous enemy, prayer gives us a powerful collection of weapons.

SOURCE GUIDE: ROYALTY ON CONDITION

David Hamelech's last words to his son Shlomo Hamelech, recorded in this week's haftarah, include a warning that royalty for David's descendants is conditional. Only if righteous will the Davidic kings stay in power. Why should מלכות, royalty, differ from כהונה, priesthood, which, the Midrash says, was given unconditionally to Aharon and his descendants?

A. The Beginning of Our Haftarah

<p>1. Melachim I 2:1-4</p> <p>(1) The days of David's death approached, and he commanded his son Shlomo saying: (2) I am going the way of all the earth, and you should be strong and be a man. (3) You should keep the charge of Hashem your G-d, to go in His ways and to keep His laws, commandments, statutes, and testimonies, as it says in the Torah of Moshe – in order that you should succeed in all that you do and anywhere you turn. (4) In order that Hashem should keep His word that he told me, saying: If your children will keep their path, to walk before Me in truth with all of their heart and soul, saying – no man will be cut off from the throne of Israel.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">מלכים א ב:א-ד</p> <p>(א) ויקרבו ימי דוד למוות ויצו את שלמה בנו לאמר. (ב) אנכי הולך בדרך כל הארץ ותזקת והיית לאיש. (ג) ושמרת את משמרת ה' אלקיך ללכת בדרךיו לשמר חקתיו מצותיו ומשפטי וְעֲדוֹתָיו כַּפְתּוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה לְמַעַן תִּשְׁכִּיל אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה וְאֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר תִּפְנֶה שָׁם. (ד) לְמַעַן יָקִים ה' אֶת דְּבָרֹוֹ אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עָלַי לֵאמֹר אִם יִשְׁמְרוּ בְנֵיךָ אֶת דְּרָכָם לִלְכֹת לִפְנֵי בְּאֵמַת בְּכָל לְבָבָם וּבְכָל נַפְשָׁם לֵאמֹר לֹא יִכָּרֵת לְךָ אִישׁ מֵעַל כִּסֵּא יִשְׂרָאֵל.</p>
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This last line, "If your children will ... walk before Me in truth ... no man will be cut off from the throne of Israel," indicates that whether King David's descendants continue to rule depends on whether they keep Hashem's mitzvot.

B. Conditional Royalty vs. Unconditional Priesthood

That is stated explicitly by the following midrash:

<p>2. Mechilta Yitro 2</p> <p>Three things were given on condition: the Land of Israel, the Temple, and the royal line of the House of David. This comes to exclude the Sefer Torah and the covenant of Aharon that were not given conditionally ... And what is the source that the royal line of House of David is conditional? It is the following verse: "If your children will keep My covenant ..." (Tehillim 132:12). And if not, "I will visit their sin upon them with the staff" (Tehillim 89:33) ... And what is the source that the covenant with Aharon was not given conditionally? It is the following verse: "It is an eternal covenant of salt" (Bamidbar 18:19). "It should be for him and his offspring after him an eternal covenant of priesthood" (Bamidbar 25:13).</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">מכילתא פרשת יתרו פרשה ב</p> <p>שלושה דברים נתנו על תנאי: ארץ ישראל ובית המקדש ומלכות בית דוד, חוץ מספר תורה ובריתו של אהרן שלא נתנו על תנאי ... ומלכות בית דוד מניין? שנאמר, "אם ישמרו בניך את בריתי וגו'" (תהלים קל"ב:יב). ואם לאו, "ופקדתי בשבט פשעם" (תהילים פ"ט:לג) ... ומניין לבריתו של אהרן שלא נתנה על תנאי? שנאמר, "ברית מלח עולם היא" (במדבר י"ח:יט). "והיתה לו ולזרעו אחריו ברית כהונת עולם" (במדבר כ"ה:יג).</p>
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This is the reason, says Harav Yechiel Michel Stern, שליט"א, (הגדה כפשוטה, p. 137) that we need to pray for their restoration in Birkat Hamazon:

<p>3. Birkat Hamazon</p> <p>Have mercy, Hashem our G-d, on Israel Your nation, and on Yerushalayim Your city, and on Tzion the dwelling place of Your Glory, and on the kingdom of the House of David Your anointed one, and on the great and holy House upon which Your Name is proclaimed ...</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">ברכת המזון</p> <p>רחם נא ה' אלקינו על ישראל עמך, ועל ירושלים עירך, ועל ציון משכן כבודך, ועל מלכות בית דוד משיחך, ועל הבית הגדול והקדוש שנקרא שמך עליו ...</p>
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But why is David Hamelech and his descendants' royalty conditional and Aharon Hakohen and his descendants' priesthood unconditional? Harav Zev Hoberman, זצ"ל, (USA, 1930-2012) answers:

4. Ze'ev Yitraf, p. 63

The Land of Israel and the Holy Temple and the royal line of the House of David – all three of them are qualities, benefits, high levels given to Israel and to David, but their bodies were not sanctified with them and they did not become part of their bodies (David's body is not a royal body; rather, he had the quality of being the king). But the covenant of priesthood was given to Aharon as a bodily acquisition; his body received the sanctity of priesthood. Just as his body was not given conditionally (for one lives even if he sins) – to have it removed if he doesn't live up to the condition – so the sanctity, the kedushah of his body that becomes one with him is unconditional and isn't taken away for not keeping a condition. The same is true for the Sefer Torah; it becomes one with the body of Israel, for Israel and the Torah are one ...

זאב יטרף עמוד סג

ארץ ישראל ובית המקדש ומלכות בית דוד, כל שלשתן רק מעלות הן שניתנו לישראל ולדוד אבל גופן לא נתקדשו בהן ולא נעשו חלק מגופן. אמנם בריתו של אהרן ניתנה לו כהונתה בקנין הגוף שגופו נתקדש בקדושת כהונה, וכשם שגופו לא שייך להתנות עליו תנאי וליטלו ממנו אי עובר על התנאי, כך קדושת גופו שנעשית אחת עמו בלתי אפשר להתנות עליו תנאי וליטלה ממנו אי לא מקיים התנאי. והוא הדין והיא המדה, ספר תורה נעשה חד עם גופן של ישראל דישראל ואורייתא חד הוא ...

This theme is developed by the Maharal (Derech Hachaim on Pirkei Avot 4:14):

5. Derech Chaim on Avot 4:14

You should know that the three crowns given by G-d to Israel mentioned here – Torah, royalty, and priesthood – correspond to different aspects of man. For a man has three components: one is his intellect, the second is his being, and the third is his body. These comprise the entire person and these three crowns correspond to them. For the crown of Torah corresponds to the intellect and the crown of priesthood to the body. Priesthood is a high level attained by the body that sanctifies it, for we see that the sanctity of a Kohen is dependent on being the seed of a Kohen. This is the difference between priesthood on the one hand, and the crown of royalty and the crown of Torah. For the crown of priesthood involves the holiness of the body – and therefore it comes through birth through the body and a Kohen's child will become sanctified unless he defiles his offspring. This is not the case for the king, for it is possible for a king to have a son that is not a king. This is all the more so the case for Torah, that the son of a Torah scholar is certainly not necessarily a Torah scholar.

דרך חיים - אבות ד:י"ד

ויש לך לדעת כי אלו ג' כתרים שזכרו כאן שנתן הש"י לישראל תורה ומלכות וכהונה הם כנגד האדם, כי יש באדם ג' חלקים, החלק האחד הוא השכל שבאדם, החלק הב' הוא הנפש, החלק הג' הוא הגוף, אלו ג' חלקים הם כל חלקי האדם. וכנגד אלו הם ג' כתרים אלו, כי כתר תורה הוא כנגד השכל, וכתר כהונה כנגד הגוף כי הכהונה היא מעלת וקדושת הגוף שהרי הכהן הוא נולד בקדושה והכהונה תולה בטפה שנולד מן הכהן, וזה ההפרש שיש בין הכהונה ובין כתר מלכות ובין כתר תורה, כי כתר כהונה היא קדושת הגוף ולפיכך הנולד מן הגוף הוא גם כן קדוש רק אם חלל זרעו, ולא כן המלך כי אפשר שאין בנו מלך, ומכ"ש אצל התורה שאין בנו של ת"ח בודאי בעל תורה.

This explains the puzzle of why Kohanim are invalidated through the מומים, physical blemishes, listed in Parshat Emor. Why should physical blemishes disqualify them for service in the Temple? The Maharal answers that the sanctity of Kohanim is bodily sanctity, קדושת הגוף, and necessitates a set of rules pertaining to the body itself. A king has the quality of royalty and the Torah scholar has an elevated spirit and intellect, but the Kohen has a sanctified body. Royalty is therefore conditional, but priesthood is not.

C. The Eternal Covenant with King David

Even though the Land of Israel, the Temple, and the Davidic dynasty are conditional on keeping our covenant with G-d, they are only temporarily eclipsed. The Torah tells us that Israel will repent and return to the covenant with G-d. Hashem will bring the Melech Hamashiach from the House of David; the entire People of Israel will return to their land; and the Beit Hamikdash will be rebuilt on the Mount Moriah in Yerushalayim.

“הלא לכם לדעת פי ה' אלקי ישראל נתן ממלכה לדוד על ישראל לעולם לו ולבניו ברית מלח” דברי הימים ב' יג:ה

“You should have known that Hashem the G-d of Israel gave royalty to David to rule over Israel forever, he and his descendants as a covenant of salt (an eternal covenant)” (Divrei Hayamim II 13:5).

HIDING THE END OF DAYS BY RABBI YITZCHAK LERNER

Yaakov gathers his children together before his death and wants to reveal what will happen to them in the end of days. Rashi, quoting the Gemara in Pesachim (56a), tells us that when Yaakov wanted to reveal when the ultimate redemption will come, the Divine Presence left him and he could not tell them. Yaakov was worried. Was it because, like his fathers before him, he also had a child who was not worthy to pass on the Jewish people's legacy? Avraham had Yishmael; Yitzchak had Esav. Did he too have a son with similar traits?

The children, sensing their father's concern, together in unison recited "שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד": Just like in your heart, father, Hashem is one, so too in each of our hearts, Hashem is one. We all have the same Jewish outlook. Yaakov then responded with "ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד" – "Blessed be the honor of His Kingdom forever."

The original question still remains, though. Why did the Divine Presence leave Yaakov? Why did Hashem decide not to let Yaakov reveal the end of days? Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky, זצ"ל, in his sefer *ליעקב*, explains that Yaakov's objective in revealing the time of the ultimate redemption was to strengthen their belief that a true גאולה, a true redemption will actually happen. Hashem, though, did not want it to be revealed because He knew it would not happen for centuries. Since it would be so far away, Bnei Yisrael might have lost hope.

Yaakov, rather, found a different way to strengthen the resolve of his children for the future. Yaakov gave each of his sons their own mission, their own role in Klal Yisrael to prepare them for the ultimate redemption. We see from Yaakov's blessings that each one of the brothers has a unique nature and each one has a different purpose. Klal Yisrael is not destined to be a unified group where everyone thinks the same. Rather, says Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, we are destined to be a unified group where the individuals that make up the klal think differently, and have different missions that bring about a common goal.

The key is to respect and to grant importance to the people who are not in your group. This is why, says Rav Yaakov, all of the brothers were present when each of the other brothers received their brachah. They all had to know that each brother has an individual mission. Hopefully, following their lead, we can ourselves bring unity to Klal Yisrael, each of us retaining independence while still being part of the group.

Dedicate the daf keshet in honor or in memory of a loved one.
Please contact Emuna Diamond at emuna@darchenoam.org for details.

*This publication is compiled by the staff and Rabbonim at **Shapells/Yeshivat Darché Noam** for men and **Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya Seminary** for women in Jerusalem. Find out more about the **married couples' programme** and the **Pathways Israel** and **Pathways Plus** programmes offered at www.darchenoam.org +972-2-651-1178, 5 Beit Hakerem Street, Jerusalem.*

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