

THE CHAZAN ON YOMIM NORAIM

A tough job but someone's got to do it

1 Melachim Kings 2 Chapter 4

*One day Elisha visited Shunem. A wealthy woman lived there, and she urged him to have a meal; and whenever he passed by, he would stop there for a meal. Once she said to her husband, "I am sure it is a holy man of God who comes this way regularly. Let us make a small enclosed upper chamber and place a bed, a table, a chair, and a lampstand there for him, so that he can stop there whenever he comes to us." One day he came there; he retired to the upper chamber and lay down there. He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call that Shunammite woman." He called her, and she stood before him. He said to him, "Tell her, 'You have gone to all this trouble for us. What can we do for you? Can we speak in your behalf to the king or to the army commander?'" She replied,
"I live among my own people."*

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶלְיָשָׁע אֶל-שׁוּנֵם וְשָׁם אִשָּׁה
גְּדוֹלָה וַתַּחֲזֶק-בּוֹ לְאָכֹל-לֶחֶם וַיְהִי מִדְּי עֹבְרוֹ יֹסֵר
שָׁמָּה לְאָכֹל-לֶחֶם:
וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל-אִישָׁהּ הֲנֵה-נָא יֵדְעֵתִי כִּי אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים
קָדוֹשׁ הוּא עֹבֵר עָלֵינוּ תָּמִיד:
נַעֲשֶׂה-נָּא עֲלֵית-קִיר קִטְנָה וְנָשִׂים לוֹ שֵׁם מִטָּה
וְשִׁלְחָן וְכִסֵּא וּמִנּוּכָה וְהָיָה בָּבֵאוּ אֵלֵינוּ יֹסֹר שָׁמָּה:
וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיָּבֵא שָׁמָּה וַיֹּסֵר אֶל-הָעֲלִיָּה וַיִּשְׁכַּב-
שָׁמָּה:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-גִּחְזִי נַעֲרוֹ קְרָא לְשׁוֹנַמִּית הַזֹּאת וַיִּקְרָא-
לָהּ וַתַּעֲמֵד לְפָנָיו:
וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אָמַר-נָּא אֵלַיִךְ הֲנֵה חָרַדְתָּ אֶת-
כָּל-הַחֲרָדָה הַזֹּאת מָה לַעֲשׂוֹת לָךְ הֲיֵשׁ לְדַבֵּר-לָךְ
אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אוֹ אֶל-שָׂר הַצָּבָא וַתֹּאמֶר
בְּתוֹךְ עַמִּי אָנֹכִי יוֹשֶׁבֶת

2 This prayer is said by the Chazzan before the Musaf Service.

Behold, I stand here, impoverished in good deeds, perturbed and frightened in fear [of Him,] Who is enthroned upon the praises of Yisrael. I have come to stand and to plead before You in behalf of Your people, Yisrael, who have appointed me their messenger; even though I am not worthy or qualified for the task. I therefore beseech You, God of Avraham, God of Yitzchak and God of Yaakov; Hashem, Hashem, Almighty, Compassionate and Gracious, G-d of Yisrael, Shakkai, Eminent and Awesome, please, help me succeed in the mission which I have undertaken to stand [before You] and to seek mercy for myself and for those who have appointed me. Do not hold them responsible for my sins, nor condemn them for my iniquities, as I am a sinner and a transgressor. Let them not be disgraced through my transgressions; may they not be ashamed of me, nor may I be ashamed of them. Accept my prayer as the prayer of one who is mature and experienced [in prayer], and as one who is respected, whose beard is full-grown, whose voice is pleasant, and who is pleasing to his fellow man. Rebuke Satan that he not accuse me, and may our assembling [be acceptable] to You with love; and may all [our] transgressions be covered over with [Your] love. All our troubles and afflictions; please turn them for us and all Yisrael into happiness and joy, life and peace. May they love truth and peace, and may there be no impediment in my prayer. And may it be Your will, Hashem, G-d of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, the Almighty, the Great, the Powerful, the Awesome, most high, Almighty, [Who is known by the Name]: “I am that I am” that all the angels who convey prayers, may they bring my prayers to the presence of Your glorious throne, and present them to You for the sake of all those who are righteous, pious and upright, and for the sake of Your glorious Name, [which is] great and awesome; for You hear the prayers of Your people, Yisrael, with compassion. Blessed are You Who hears prayers.

הַנְּבִי הָעֲנִי מִמַּעַשׂ נִרְעַשׁ וְנִפְחָד
מִפְחָד יוֹשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּאֵתִי
לְעַמֵּד וְלִהְתַּחַנֵּן לְפָנֶיךָ עַל עִמְךָ
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְוִנִי אִי עַל פִּי
שְׂאִינִי כְּדָאִי וְהִגִּוֵן לְכַף לְכֹן אֲבִקֶשׁ
מִמֶּךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהִם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק
וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב ה' אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנוּן
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׂדֵי אִיּוֹם וְנוֹרָא הִיָּה נָא
מִצְלִיחַ דְרָכֵי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ לְעַמֵּד
וּלְבַקֵּשׁ רַחֲמִים עָלַי וְעַל שׁוֹלְחֵי נָא
אֵל תִּפְשִׁיעַם בְּחַטָּאתַי וְאַל תַּחֲיִבֵם
בְּעוֹנוֹתַי כִּי חוֹטֵא וּפּוֹשֵׁעַ אָנֹכִי וְאַל
יִכְלְמוּ בְּפִשְׁעֵי וְאַל יְבוֹשׁוּ הֵם בִּי וְאַל
אֲבוֹשׂ אֲנִי בְּהֵם וְקַבֵּל תְּפִלָּתִי
כְּתְּפִלַת זָקֵן וְרִגְלֵי וּפְרָקוּ נָא וְזָקֵנוּ
מִגְדָּל וְקוֹלוֹ נְטִים וּמַעֲרָב בְּדַעַת עִם
הַבְּרִיּוֹת וְתַגְעֵר בְּשִׁטְן לְבַל יִשְׁטִיבֵנִי
וְיִהִי נָא דְלוֹגְנוּ עָלֶיךָ אֲהַבָּה וְעַל כָּל
פְּשָׁעִים תִּכְסֶה בְּאַהֲבָה וְכָל צְרוֹת
וְרַעוֹת הַפֶּךָ נָא לָנוּ וּלְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְשִׁשׁוֹן וּלְשִׁמְחָה לְחַיִּים וּלְשִׁלוֹם
הָאֲמֵת וְהַשְׁלוֹם אֲהַבּוּ וְלֹא יִהִי שׁוֹם
מִכְשׁוֹל בְּתְּפִלָּתִי. וְיִהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה'
אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהִם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב הָאֵל
הַגְּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנוֹרָא אֵל עֲלִיוֹן אֲהִיָּה
אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה שְׁכַל הַמַּלְאָכִים שְׁהֵם
מַעֲלֵי תְּפִלוֹת יִבְיֵאוּ תְּפִלָּתִי לְפָנֶיךָ כִּסֵּא
כְּבוֹדְךָ וְיַצִּיגוּ אוֹתָהּ לְפָנֶיךָ. בְּעִבּוֹר כָּל
הַצְּדִיקִים וְהַחֲסִידִים וְהַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִים
וּבְעִבּוֹר כְּבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ הַגְּדוֹל וְהַנוֹרָא כִּי
אֲתָה שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלַת עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּרַחֲמִים בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה

3 Repetition of Musaph on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur

Invoking the doctrines of our wise and understanding Sages, and with the teachings [acquired] from their perceptive intuition, I open my mouth in prayer and supplication to plead and seek favor before the presence of the King, the King of kings—the Master of masters.

מְסוּדָה חֲכָמִים
וְנְבוֹנִים וּמְלָמֵד
דַּעַת מְבִינִים
אֶפְתָּחָהּ פִּי
בְּתַפְלָה
וּבְתַחֲנוּנִים
לְחַלּוֹת וּלְחַנּוּן
פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי
הַמְּלָכִים וְאֲדוֹנֵי
הָאֲדוֹנִים

4. Kings I 21

[The following events] occurred sometime afterward: Naboth the Jezreelite owned a vineyard in Jezreel, adjoining the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. 2 Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard, so that I may have it as a vegetable garden, since it is right next to my palace. I will give you a better vineyard in exchange; or, if you prefer, I will pay you the price in money.” 3 But Naboth replied, “The LORD forbid that I should give up to you what I have inherited from my fathers!” 4 Ahab went home dispirited and sullen because of the answer that Naboth the Jezreelite had given him: “I will not give up to you what I have inherited from my fathers!” He lay down on his bed and turned away his face, and he would not eat. 5 His wife Jezebel came to him and asked him, “Why are you so dispirited that you won’t eat?” 6 So he told her, “I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and proposed to him, ‘Sell me your vineyard for money, or if you prefer, I’ll give you another vineyard in exchange’; but he answered, ‘I will not give my vineyard to you.’” 7 His wife Jezebel 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 Naboth the Jezreelite for you.” 8 So she wrote letters in Ahab’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 Naboth. 9 In the letters she wrote as follows: “Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the front of the assembly. 10 And seat two scoundrels opposite him, and let them testify against him: ‘You have reviled God and king!’ Then take him out and stone him to death.” 11 His townsmen—the elders and nobles who lived in his town—did as Jezebel had instructed them, just as was written in the letters she had sent them: 12 They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the front of the assembly. 13 Then the two scoundrels came and sat down opposite him; and the scoundrels testified against Naboth publicly as follows: “Naboth has reviled God and king.” Then they took him outside the town and stoned him to death. 14 Word was sent to Jezebel: “Naboth has been stoned to death.” 15 As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, “Go and take possession of the vineyard which Naboth the Jezreelite refused to sell you for money; for Naboth is no longer alive, he is dead.” 16 When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab set out for the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take possession of it.

5. Yalkut Shimoni Commentary on Kings

The verse in Kings states that Navot the Yizre'eli had a vineyard. The verse also states in Proverbs to honour Hashem with your substances which is homiletically interpreted to to honour from that which He favoured you. For if you have a pleasant voice use it to lead to sing in the Service. Chiya the nephew of Elazar HaKafar had a pleasant voice and Elazar said to him 'Chiya honour G-d with that which he favoured you'. Navot had a pleasant voice and he went up to Jerusalem and all the people gathered to hear him. Once he did not go up and it was then that people of disrepute reported on him and caused his imminent demise. What caused his downfall? It was because Navot did not attend the Jerusalem pilgrimage of G-d to honour Him with that which he had been favoured. As it states that no other will covet your land to dispose you of it, it is if you keep to the law of pilgrimage.

Every Person Must Realize "I with all my abilities, potentials and talents both physical and spiritual, am unique in the universe. Amongst all those alive today there is no other me. In past generations too there was no other me, and until the end of time there will be no other me. And if so, the Master of the Universe certainly has sent me here on a special mission that could be fulfilled by no one else but me - with all my uniqueness."
Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe (1914-2005)