

# Haftarah Helper 5781: Shemini

Zachary Beer (Nachshon Project Fellow, The City College of New York) and  
Barry Kornblau (Rabbi, Young Israel of Hollis Hills-Windsor Park, Queens, NY)

## II Samuel 6:1-7:17<sup>1</sup>

After generations of wars with their neighbors under King David and earlier leaders, the nation of Israel is unified and at peace - and David yearns to fulfill his desire builds a permanent house for God in the royal city. His first step is to transport the Ark from the Avinadav family's home in Givah on a wagon guided by two family members, Uzzah and Achiyo, but disaster strikes: Uzzah touches it, and God kills him. ("Avinadav" combines the names of Avihu and Nadav whom God also suddenly strikes down for their trespasses while participating in the Tabernacle's inauguration, as recounted in this week's Parashah.) The Ark spends the next three months in the nearby home of Obed-Edom, whose family is blessed by its presence. With jubilation led by David and trepidation, the Ark is successfully carried by hand to Jerusalem. Afterward, Michal tells her husband, David, that his jubilation degraded the crown. David rejects her criticism - and her, too. Some time later, David tells the prophet, Nathan, that he wants to build a permanent house for God. Nathan approves - but God does not. He instructs Nathan to tell David that his son, not he, will build His Temple. God nonetheless assures David that He will support his royal line forever.

## Haftarah Breakdown

Verses 6:1-5: David sets out to bring the Ark to Jerusalem.

II Samuel 6:2	שמואל ב ו:ב
David and all the people who were with him set out from Baalim of Judah to bring up from there God's Ark called [by] the Name- the name, "Lord of Hosts Enthroned on the Cherubim."	ויקם ויגיד דוד וכל־העם אשר אתו מבְּעֵלֵי יְהוּדָה לְהַעֲלוֹת מִשָּׁם אֶת אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שֵׁם יְשֵׁם ה' צְבָאוֹת יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים עָלָיו:

Verses 6:6-8: Uzzah supports the Ark with his hand and is struck dead...

II Samuel 6:7	שמואל ב ו:ז
The Lord's anger flared against Uzzah. God smote him there for his error, and he died there, at God's Ark.	ויִחַר־אַף ה' בְּעֵזָה וַיַּכֵּהוּ יְשֵׁם הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־הַשָּׁל וַיָּמָת שָׁם עִם אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים:

Verses 6:9-12a:... so David leaves the Ark with Obed-Edom, to whose family it brings blessings for three months.

II Samuel 6:10	שמואל ב ו:י
David would not remove the Lord's ark to him into the city of David. David carried it aside into the house of Obed Edom the Gittite.	וְלֹא־אַבָּה דָּוִד לְהַסִּיר אֵלָיו אֶת־אֲרוֹן ה' עַל־עִיר דָּוִד וַיִּשְׂתֵּהוּ דָּוִד בֵּית עֹבֵד־אֶדוֹם הַגִּיטִי:

Verses 6:12b-19: With sacrifices and dancing jubilation led by David, the Ark is carried to a tent in the royal city.

II Samuel 6:15	שמואל ב ו:ט"ו
David and all the house of Israel brought up the Lord's ark with shouting, and with the sound of the shofar.	וַדָּוִד וְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מְעֵלִים אֶת־אֲרוֹן ה' בְּתִרְנֻעָה וּבְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר:

<sup>1</sup> Sepharadim read only 6:1-19. I Chronicles 13-17 greatly expands upon the Haftarah's narrative.

Verses 6:20-23: Michal, David's wife, criticizes his dancing before the Ark. David rejects her words and her.

II Samuel 6:20	שמואל ב ו:כ
David returned to bless his household. Michal, daughter of Saul, came out to meet David, and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, in that he revealed [himself] today [before] the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the empty fellows reveals [himself]!"	וַיָּשָׁב דָּוִד לְבָרֶךְ אֶת־בֵּיתוֹ וַתֵּצֵא מִיָּקָל בַּת־שָׂאוּל לְקִרְיַת דָּוִד וַתֹּאמֶר מִה־נִּכְבַּד הַיּוֹם מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר נִגְלָה הַיּוֹם לְעֵינֵי אִמָּהוֹת עֲבָדָיו כַּהֲגִלּוֹת נִגְלּוֹת אֶתְדֵּ הַרְקִיָּם:

Verses 7:1-3: Dwelling peacefully in his palace,, David deems it fitting to build a house for the Ark.

II Samuel 7:2	שמואל ב ז:ב
The king said to the prophet Nathan: "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but God's ark dwells within a curtain!"	וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־נָתָן הֲנִיִּיא רֹאֵה הֲאֵ אֲנִי יוֹשֵׁב בַּבַּיִת אֲרָזִים וְאֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים יֹשֵׁב בַּתּוֹךְ הַיְרִיעָה:

Verses 7:4-7: God tells the prophet Nathan that David will not build Him a home...

II Samuel 7:7	שמואל ב ז:ז
Wherever I [God] traveled with all the children of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the rulers of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people, Israel, saying, "Why did you not build Me a house of cedar?"	בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַדָּבָר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶת־אֲחֵי שֹׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי לְרִעוּת אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר לָמָּה לֹא־בְנִיתֶם לִי בַיִת אֲרָזִים:

Verses 7:8-17: ...but David's son will build it. God will support David's royal line forever.

II Samuel 7:13	שמואל ב ז:יג
He [David's son] shall build a house for My name, and I will make firm his kingdom's throne forever.	הוּא יִבְנֶה־בַּיִת לְשִׁמִּי וְכִנְנִיתִי אֶת־כִּסֵּא מַמְלַכְתּוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם:

**Connections**

For Maimonides, David's humble exultation before the Ark exemplifies proper love of God and His precepts.

Mishneh Torah, Shofar, Sukkah and Lulav 8:15	משנה תורה, הלכות שופר וסוכה ולולב ח:ט"ו
The joy of a person rejoicing when performing a precept, and when loving God who commanded us to perform them, is a great act of divine service. Anyone who refrains from this joy deserves punishment, as Scripture (Deut. 28:47) states, "Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and with a good heart." Anyone who is arrogant and glorifies himself, or considers himself glorious, on such occasions is a sinner and a fool. Solomon warned against this, saying (Prov. 25:6), "Do not beautify yourself before the King." Anyone who humbles himself and his body on such occasions is the great and honored one who serves the Lord out of love. Similarly, David, King of Israel, said (II Sam. 6:22), "I would lower myself even more than this; I would be lowly in my own eyes." Greatness and honor are [attained] only by rejoicing before the Lord, as Scripture states (II Sam. 6:16), "King David lept and danced before the Lord."	הַשְּׂמֵחָה שְׂיִשְׂמַח אָדָם בְּעִשְׂיַת הַמִּצְוָה וּבְאַהֲבַת הָאֵל שְׂצִוָה בְּהוֹן. עֲבוּדָה גְּדוּלָה הִיא. וְכָל הַמוֹנֵעַ עֲצָמוֹ מִשְׂמֵחָה זֶה רָאוּי לְהַפְרַע מִמֶּנּוּ שְׂנֵאָמַר (דְּבָרִים כח מז) "תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵבָב". וְכָל הַמְגִיֵּס דַּעְתּוֹ וְחֹלֵק כְּבוֹד לְעַצְמוֹ וּמִתְכַּבֵּד בְּעֵינָיו בְּמִקוֹמוֹת אֱלֹהֵי חוּטָא וְשׁוֹטָה. וְעַל זֶה הִזְהִיר שְׁלֹמֹה וְאָמַר (מְשָׁלִי כה ו) "אַל תִּתְהַדָּר לְפָנַי מְלֶךְ". וְכָל הַמְשַׁפִּיל עֲצָמוֹ וּמִקְלָה גּוֹפוֹ בְּמִקוֹמוֹת אֱלֹהֵי הוּא הַגְּדוֹל הַמְּכַבֵּד הַעוֹבֵד מֵאַהֲבָה. וְכֵן דָּוִד מְלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמַר (שְׁמוּאֵל ב ו כב) "וַיִּנְקַלְתִּי עוֹד מִזֹּאת וְהִיִּיתִי שָׁפֵל בְּעֵינָי". וְאִין הַגְּדֵלָה וְהַכְּבוֹד אֵלָּא לְשִׂמְחָה לְפָנַי ה' שְׂנֵאָ' (שְׁמוּאֵל ב ו טז) "וְהִמְלֶךְ דָּוִד מִפְּנֵוּ וּמִכְרַר לְפָנַי ה' "