



From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva of Ateret Yerushalayim  
**Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"א**

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Parashat Vayakel - #319

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On the Parashah...  
The Wars of Hashem:  
Why King David was not Permitted to Build the Temple  
[Sefer Al Diglo #75]

PART ONE

There are those who explain that our King and Master David was admonished: "You have shed blood abundantly, and have waged great wars. You will not build a house to My Name, because you have shed much blood on the Land before me" (Divrei Ha-Yamim 1 22:8).

But this understanding is surprising, because if this were so – if King David was truly punished on account of his wars - why didn't Israel's prophets instruct him to refrain from wars for the rest of his life? Is it proper that a person sacrifices himself for the Nation of Israel, the Land of Israel and the Kingship of Israel, and is in the end told: "This was a mistake"?! The prophet Avigail in fact praised King David for his wars: "For Hashem will make my master a faithful house because my master fights the wars of Hashem and evil has not been found in you all of your days" (Shmuel 1 25:28). And what about the general principal that it is a Mitzvah to wage an obligatory war? According to the Ramban, this includes conquering the Land of Israel, according to the Rambam it

includes protecting Israel from an enemy. So how can a person be admonished when he is fulfilling a Mitzvah, and – on account of this – be told that he may not build the Temple? Where is it written that a soldier may not build the Temple?

It is true that a Cohain who murders may not recite the Bircat Cohanim, because "When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you, even when you recite many prayers, I will not hear, your hands are full of blood" (Yeshayahu 1:15). Halachic authorities, however, have ruled that this does not apply to a Cohain who is a soldier of Tzahal and kills in war: "And on the contrary, it is proper to say to them: 'May your hands be strengthened and may your power increase'" (Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef in Shut Yehaveh Daat 2:14). And above all, our righteous Messiah himself, as the Rambam says, will both wage the wars of Hashem and build the Temple (Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 11:1).

[Next Week Part Two: Rav Aviner's Answer]

## Rav Aviner on... Yes, you will succeed!

Question: I'm not going to succeed in repenting. Why should I try if I'm doomed to failure? Repentance is too hard for me. Being pure and holy is not for me. I know myself. I'll never succeed! I'm wallowing in a sea of pitfalls and obstacles. As I said, it's too hard for me. Maybe I'll have some small success here and there, but what is that worth? It won't help me. It's a drop in the bucket. A waste of effort. Let me just stay like I am. Maybe that's best.

Answer: You WILL succeed! Everything G-d commanded us to do is possible. It's within our power. Consider the way the Torah allowed Jewish soldiers to marry the beautiful war-captives (Devarim 21:10-14), despite this being an unsavory deed. The Torah understood that the soldier could not withstand this temptation. From this we derive that all the rest that the Torah did not permit is presumably within our ability to avoid. Even the Philosopher Kant said that if G-d obligated us in something, that signifies that we are capable of fulfilling that obligation.

Don't say that some Torah obligation is too great for you, for you, yourself, are great. You are in the image of G-d! You have a Divine spirit – part of G-d above! You are a giant! Only try. Only try and you will see that you have wings to soar up to the heavens. I didn't say it would be easy. It will be hard, but worthwhile – the most worthwhile thing on earth. And if you wish, it won't even be hard. Just move slowly.

There's a story of a Chasid who approached his Rebbe and said, "I'm full of sin! I'm drowning in a sea of sins!"

The Rebbe replied, “Don’t talk too much. Make a written list.” The Chasid made a list. “Now,” said the Rebbe, “order the list from the lightest sin to the heaviest.” The Chasid did so.

“Now,” he added, “divide up the lightest sins into four groups.” He did so.

The Rebbe said, “The most insignificant quarter is your task for the coming week.”

“And what about the rest?” asked the Chasid.

“That’s for later weeks!” answered the Rebbe.

“But this quarter is too insignificant...”

“Don’t say it’s too insignificant!” the Rebbe replied. “With a lot of pennies you can amass a fortune.”

Indeed, every crumb of repentance is infinitely precious.

How fortunate you are to be having penitent thoughts. Your whole comment about being in despair actually signifies faith, fortitude and courage. It says that you have not resigned yourself to your situation. You say you have, in an effort to convince yourself that you’re best off in your lowly state. Yet in vain. Your soul is great, and it will never agree. “The soul is never sated” (Kohelet 6:7). This verse is associated with a parable of a princess who married a wealthy commoner who gave her every gift. But nothing could satisfy her because she missed the palace of her father the king. In the same way, the soul is the king’s daughter, and all the treasures of this world cannot satisfy her. “The soul is never sated.”

Have courage. Repent as much as you can, taking the minor with the major, and you will see that you will succeed in climbing higher and higher.



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