

IS THERE A KING WITHOUT A PALACE? HISTORICAL PRECEDENT DRAWN FROM TANACH

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It is well known that the Rebbe wanted to have a palace built for him in Kfar Chabad. When examining the details of this matter — how and when this directive was given, we can understand what the Rebbe sought to accomplish with the idea of building a palace, as will be explained below.

[Here R' Lifsh recounted the basic story of the armon as in the above article.]

At first glance, it may be asked why the Rebbe needed a palace, and if indeed it was necessary, why until 5752 did he answer repeatedly that the time had not yet come? What happened in 5752 that made the Rebbe agree to the construction of the Palace?

**If the Rebbe wanted a palace built,
why did he instruct to delay until 5752?**

The explanation for this:

In Sefer Yeshaya (32:14-15), it says the following regarding the destruction of the Holy Temple: “For the Palace has been forsaken, the multitude of the city has been abandoned, rampart and tower are amidst ruins forever, a joy for wild donkeys, a pasture for flocks. Until a spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the desert shall become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest.”

The commentators explain that the meaning of the words “the Palace will be forsaken” is that “the King’s Palace will be deserted because the King of Judah will have to abandon it.” In other words, the prophet prophesies that part of the desolation will be that the Palace of the King from the House of Judah will need to be abandoned, and the Holy Temple will be destroyed and turned into ruins.

How long will this desolation last? The prophet himself explains: “Forever.” The *Metzudas David* explains, “Forever – he means for a long time.” Rashi’s commentary adds more detail, “Until the time of the end.” Continuing with the next verse: “Until a spirit is poured upon us from on high,” the *Metzudas David* explains, “He means to say that it will be desolate until a spirit of will and mercy from on high is poured upon us.” In other words, until the attribute of mercy is awakened upon us, and G-d desires to save us from exile. The Radak puts it thus: “In other words, this desolation will last until G-d wishes to pour His will upon us.” (Radak already wrote in the previous verse, “And the whole section speaks of the days of Moshiach.”). We thus see that one of the prophecies of the Churban is that the palace of the King of the House of David would be desolate “until the time of the end.” This explains why the Rebbe initially instructed that they wait with the building of the Palace: because there is a prophecy that the Palace will not be built until the time of the end [and only Moshiach himself could tell us when that time has arrived].

How did the Rebbe signal that the End has arrived?

From the above, we understand the inverse. From the fact that in the year 5752 the Rebbe agreed to the construction of the Palace, we understand that in the year 5752 the time period in which it was possible to build the Palace finally arrived.

Indeed, in one of the prophecies of the Redemption written in Yermiyahu (30:18), we find that one of the foretold events of the Redemption is that a palace will be rebuilt for the king of the House

of David: “So said the L-rd: ‘Behold I am returning the captivity of the tents of Jacob, and his dwellings I will pity, and the city shall be built on its mound and the Palace on its proper site shall be established.’” The Radak explains that this refers to “the Palace of the King and the Holy Temple.”

We thus see that just as there is a prophecy that during the exile the Palace will be deserted, so is there a prophecy that at the time of the Redemption the Palace will be rebuilt for Melech HaMoshiach. The time when this matter begins is understood from Rashi, who says that the Palace remains desolate “until the time of the end,” meaning that when the end time arrives, it becomes possible to build the Palace.

Indeed, on Shabbas Parshat Tazria-Metzora 5751, the Rebbe revealed to the Jewish people the news that the end time had arrived: “In recent days, literally (with the conclusion of the month of Nissan of the year *Tehei Shnas Avenu Niflaos*) ‘all the “kitzin,” “end dates” have passed’ (both ‘*keitz hayamin*’ and ‘*keitz hayamim*’ in the most literal sense.” In a footnote there, the Rebbe adds, “In addition to the fact that in the times of the Talmud, ‘all the end dates had already passed.’”

It is understood from the above why in the year 5752, the prohibition had been annulled, and the time had come when it was permitted to build the Palace for the King of the House of David. Since the end had already arrived, there was no longer any obstacle to building the Palace.

In light of the above, it can also be understood why the Rebbe instructed specifically that they inquire by the Rov as to whether it was already permitted to build the Palace. Since it required halachic permission [*since building the Armon is not a personal matter but rather impacts and reflects the status of the entire nation*], it was necessary that specifically a Rov who makes halachic decisions should rule that the time had come when there was no [spiritual or physical] obstacle to building the Palace for the King of the House of David.

Now, at the same time that the obstacle to building the Palace has been removed due to the fact that “all the end dates have passed” in the literal sense, the appointment of a king from the House of David took place, as it says in the sicha of Shoftim 5751: “The appointment of David, the anointed King has already occurred, as it says, ‘I have found David My servant, with My Holy Oil I have anointed him.’” From this, we also understand the other side of the coin—(*not only that the obstacle to the construction of the Palace has been removed but*) that since a king from the House of David has been appointed, there is now **a need** to build the Palace.

“Is there a King without a Palace?”

From all of the above, it is understood that there is a connection between the construction of the Palace and the true and complete Redemption, but we still need to explain why the Palace is a very fundamental and essential matter, and what purpose it serves. Indeed, in the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Bo 5751, the Rebbe explains that an essential aspect of the downfall of Saddam Hussein, the king of Babylon (Iraq), was the fall of his palace, the king’s palace, and that this led to victory in the war. In the words of the Rebbe, “Through the breakdown and nullification taking place within the king’s palace and in its inner chambers, his stability and strength are abolished.”

We can explain this with a Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni Tehillim, 619*): “[The verse says], ‘How long, O Lord? Will You forget me [forever]?’ The Congregation of Israel said before the Holy One, blessed be He: ‘Master of the Universe, is there a king without a throne? Is there a king without a crown? Is there a king without a palace? How long, O Lord? Will You forget us forever?’” We see here that an essential aspect of a king is his having a palace.

We find this concept also in the *Rikanti* (Bereishis Chapter 3, citing Midrash Eicha): “[The verse says], ‘Why will You forever forget us (Eicha 5:20)?’ Is there [such a thing as] sitting without a chair, a king without a queen, a bridegroom without a bride, a bride without a canopy, a king without a crown, a king without a palace. Under-

stand all of this.” This means that a king without a palace is like a bridegroom without a bride or like sitting without a chair! Meaning [a king without a palace] is lacking an essential aspect of his kingship. This concept is also found in the Rambam, *Hilchos Melachim* 2:5, where it is written concerning the honor of the king: “The king... sits on the throne of his kingdom *in his Palace* and places a crown on his head.” Here, too, it is implied that an essential part of the king’s honor is specifically when he sits on the throne of his kingdom in his Palace.

This concept is also evident from King David himself, who only considered building the Holy Temple after a palace had been built for him. As it is written in the Prophets (2 Samuel 7:1-2): “Now when the king dwelt in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies round about, the king said to Nassan the prophet: ‘See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of G-d dwells within the curtains.’” As explained by the biblical commentators, only after David had a magnificent palace, “befitting his stature,” did he begin to think, “Is this the suitable house for the Ark of G-d?” and consider the need to build a more magnificent house for G-d.

This concept is also evident from that which is mentioned earlier (Shmuel II, 5:11) where Chiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David, “and cedar-trees, and carpenters, and masons; and they built David a house.” It is evident that the house built by the carpenters and masons especially sent by King Chiram, was not just any house but a splendid palace for the king. Immediately after that, it is written that once Chiram had sent and built a special palace for King David, “David knew that the L-rd had established him as King over Israel and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.” In other words, only after Chiram had built a special palace for David did David understand that the L-rd had established him as king. *All of this demonstrates that the matter of the Palace is an essential aspect of kingship, to the point that only after having such a palace did King David recognize that G-d had established him as king.*

How is Building a Palace Integral to the Final Shlichus the Rebbe Gave Us?

Seemingly, this is also the reason why King David decided to build the Holy Temple only after he had settled in his Palace:

At the beginning of *Hilchos Melachim*, the Rambam writes, “Three commandments were given to the Jewish people when they entered the land: to appoint a king, to wipe out the seed of Amalek, and to build the chosen House.” He continues and enumerates the order of these commandments: “The appointment of a king precedes the war with Amalek... the destruction of the seed of Amalek precedes the building of the [chosen] House, as it says, ‘And it came to pass when the king dwelt in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies round about, the king said to Nassan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar...”’” In other words, specifically after “the L-rd had given him rest from all his enemies,” did David turn his attention to building the Temple.

At first glance, it appears that the Rambam’s quotation from the verse “And it came to pass when the king dwelt in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies, and the king said to Nassan the prophet, ‘See now, I dwell in a house of cedar...”” is lengthy. The Rambam should have concluded his quote with, “And the king said to Nassan the prophet, etc.” (after he already cited the part of the verse that tells us this occurred after “the L-rd had given him rest from all his enemies”). Why does the Rambam also bring the continuation of the verse — i.e., “I dwell in a house of cedar, etc.”? What additional insight does this provide regarding the construction of the Temple?

Perhaps it may be suggested that the Rambam is hinting that not only the destruction of the seed of Amalek precedes the construction of the chosen House, but also the building of the Palace precedes the construction of the chosen House.

Seemingly, the reason for this is as mentioned: the commandment to appoint a king precedes the construction of the Holy Temple; but the king must be a complete king before approaching the construction of the Holy Temple, and the completeness of kingship relates specifically to his having a palace. According to this, it can be said that also with regard to Moshiach there is a special emphasis on his having a palace, for this is a fundamental aspect of kingship.

Perhaps one can add that since David only built the Holy Temple after having a Palace, so too with Moshiach, when he has a Palace, he will have a special empowerment to build the Third Holy Temple. In accordance with this, it is understood why the matter of the palace was initiated by the people, without the Rebbe bringing it to their attention at all (but only agreeing to it and encouraging it after Chassidim initiated it). Since the Palace is connected to the completeness of the king's kingship (as mentioned above), it requires that the people take action, because it is the people who crown the king and produce his kingship.

From the above, it is clear that the matter of building the Palace is indeed a very central aspect of our *only remaining mission*, the welcoming of Moshiach, the meaning of which is the acceptance of his monarchy. Since building the Palace is part of accepting the kingship of the king, it is understood that it is a part of the only remaining mission, "the welcoming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu."



Before flying back to Eretz Yisroel, the Rivkins went for dollars. The Rebbe gave Reb Zushe an extra dollar and said "This is for the building projects!" Turning to Mrs. Rivkin the Rebbe added with a broad smile, "Surely, she also participates in the buildings!"