

Yismakh Moshe

יִשְׁמַח מֹשֶׁה בְּמַתְּנַת חֶלְקוֹ, כִּי עֶבֶד נְאֻמָּן קָרָאתָ לוֹ.
כְּלִיל תִּפְאָרֶת בְּרֵאשׁוֹ נָתַתָּ בְּעֵמְדוֹ לְפָנֶיךָ עַל הַר סִינַי.
וּשְׁנֵי לִיחוֹת אֲבָנִים הוֹרִיד בְּיָדוֹ, וְכָתוּב בָּהֶם שְׁמִירַת שַׁבָּת. וְכֵן כָּתוּב בְּתוֹרָתְךָ:

Yis-makh mo-she b'mat-nat khel-ko, ki e-ved ne-e'man ka-ra-ta lo. K'lil tif-e-ret b'ro-sho na-ta-ta, b'om-do l'fa-ne-kha al har si-nai. Ush-nei lu-khot a-va-nim ho-rid b'ya-do, v'kha-tuv ba-hem sh'mi-rat sha-bat, v'khein ka-tuv b'to-ra-te-kha.

Moses rejoiced in the gift of his portion; for You called him a faithful servant. A crown of glory You placed on his head when he stood before You on Mount Sinai. He brought down two stone tablets in his hand, on which is inscribed the observance of the Sabbath. And so it is written in Your Torah.

D'rash

Moses rejoiced in the gift of his portion—*That even as a child he was given the opportunity to ask Pharaoh to grant a day of rest to the Jewish slaves, to serve both God and Am Yisrael. For You called him a faithful servant*—*He was chosen not to author but to receive, record, and disseminate the teachings of Torah, which was enough to shower him with honor ever since. A crown of glory You placed on his head when he stood before You on Mount Sinai*—*He was invested with the Torah's wisdom (righteous judgment) to be a leader and judge, responsibilities that are undermined more often by moral and ethical lapses than deficiency in worldly knowledge or skill. He brought down two stone tablets in his hand, on which is inscribed the observance of the Sabbath*—*Because the people had gone beyond idolatrous worship to incest and the murder of Hur, jeopardizing the very survival of their newly acquired peoplehood by wholesale rejection of Torah, he cast down the first set of tablets and smashed them. The people were unworthy of the Torah, their rejection of its gifts had already broken its spirit among them, so by smashing the tablets Moses compelled them to confront what they had forsaken. And so it is written in Your Torah*—*"The people Israel shall observe Shabbat, to make Shabbat an eternal covenant throughout their generations," and although Moses broke the first set of tablets beneath the mount, in the precinct of the holy place in which they had been given by God, so clear was his purpose and his knowledge that the tablets were only a symbol, that neither God nor Torah nor Shabbat could in any way be diminished by shattering them but, on the contrary, could only be strengthened.*

Iyun Tefilla

GLADDEN MY HEART

Did Moses
Dream his way
Down the mountain,
Happy just
Thinking of
The sweet gift
He would bring
To gladden their hearts
Like a bridegroom
With a bouquet of roses?
And did he dream

The gift
Would reach
To my heart too?
Let me rejoice now
In my portion—
The gift of
This Shabbat.
May it enter my heart
And the heart of
This home.

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