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Parashat Behar 5772 - #232

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## On the Haftarah... Historical Patience

[Ashkenazim/Sefardim: Yirmiyahu 32:6-27  
Yemenite Jews: Yirmiyahu 16:19-17:14]

The Talmud tells us that only those prophecies that contain messages for all generations were recorded for posterity (Megillah 14A). So it is clear that this Haftarah - in which Hashem requests from the prophet Yirmiyahu to buy a field in during the collapse of the Kingdom of Yehudah - must also contain a message for us.

Hashem tells Yirmiyahu: Your cousin will ask you buy his field because of his financial hardship, and you should do so (Yirmiyahu 32:6-7). But why should he? Soon no kingdom will even exist?! And Yirmiyahu himself had been warning the Nations for years that all sorts of treaties made with surrounding nations lacked any meaning! The only possibility for salvation would be the ethical and spiritual integrity of the Nation – something which, barring a miracle, seems impossible based on the Nation's current state. But as we know, miracles do not interfere with free will. Yirmiyahu had been predicting the impending disaster for so long that those with a surface view saw him as a prophet of doom, and Babylonia, the enemy of Israel, saw him as a friend. All seemed lost. Hashem therefore had to specifically instruct him to buy the field. But why? It is true that one should help a relative who is mired in financial difficulty by buying his field, but this is with the purpose of working Eretz Yisrael. But here the future was so bleak. What is the point?

At this time Yirmiyahu was in prison - not because of any criminal act, but on account of a "Divine" transgression. His imprisonment resulted from his firm and harsh prophecies, which did not find favor with the political leadership of that period. In order to circumvent his prophecies as well as protect the prophet from the Nation's revenge, King Tzikiyahu bowed to political pressure and imprisoned him. In fact,

following his prophecy regarding the destruction of the Temple, Yirmiyahu was saved from a public lynching at the last moment by Achikam, who was from a pro-Babylonian party (Yirmiyahu 19).

Yirmiyahu was thus in prison when his cousin visited. "Just as Hashem said, my cousin Chanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard. 'Buy my field at Anatot in the territory of Binyamin since it is your right to redeem it and possess it. Buy it for yourself'" (ibid. 32:8). Despite the bizarre nature of the Divine command, the prophet remained a loyal servant and sealed the deal while in jail. "I knew that this was the word of Hashem and I brought the field at Anatot from my cousin Chanamel and paid him seventeen shekels of silver" (ibid. v. 8-9). A deal is a deal, and it had to be completely legal: "I took the deed of purchase -- the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions, as well as the unsealed copy -- and gave this deed to Baruch ben Neriah ben Machseyah, in the presence of my cousin Chanamel and the witnesses who had signed the deed, and of all the Jews sitting in the courtyard of the guard" (ibid. v. 11-12). This was not some mystical ceremony but an actual business deal.

After he fulfilled Hashem's will, the prophet expressed his surprise and pain: "See how the siege ramps are built up to take the city. Because of the sword, famine and plague, the city will be handed over to the Babylonians who are attacking it... And you told me Hashem G-d: 'Buy the field with silver and have the transaction witnessed, and the city being overtaken by the Babylonians'" (ibid. v. 24-25). Is this really the proper time for such a deal? The Nation of Israel is in mortal danger!?

Hashem answers that while Jerusalem will indeed fall to the Babylonians, it is only a temporary tragedy: "I will gather them from all the lands where I banish them in My furious anger and great wrath, I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. They will be My Nation, and I will be their G-d. I will give them one heart and one path to fear Me for all days for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them... I will rejoice in doing them good and will plant them securely in this Land with all My heart and soul" (ibid. v. 37-41).

We must be armed with historical patience. A person cannot stop history from unfolding, despite the difficulties involved. Yirmiyahu was able to accept the Divine plan when he understood that our historical path has direction and meaning.

As we said, only the prophecies required for later generations were recorded (Megillah 14a). The same questions which Yirmiyahu asked are also asked in our time. Many people today are concerned about the demographic demon of the non-Jews in Israel. But the lesson learned from Yirmiyahu is that we are obligated to elevate ourselves above this confused thinking. We must continue to build ourselves in our Land and implant ourselves in it, to buy fields and houses, without consideration for the seemingly unsolvable problems. They will be solved in the

future and we will then see with our own eyes the fulfillment of the eternal prophecy of Yirmiyahu: "For this is what Hashem of Hosts, the G-d of Israel, says: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land' (ibid. v. 15).

Rav Aviner on...

## The Great Rabbi Chaim Druckman – Our Master and Teacher

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Emor 5772 – translated by R. Blumberg]

I am joyous that Ha-Rav Chaim Druckman received the Israel Prize because he is my master and teacher. Obviously he is not just mine, but also the master and teacher of many tens and thousands. When I was a boy I began studying Torah from him and I saw a true Torah scholar, full of fine character traits, fear of G-d, and warmth. And I said to myself, "This is a genuine Torah scholar of Eretz Yisrael. He is pure fire. All should admire him."

Rav Druckman is a normal Torah scholar. He's no extremist. Don't take that description for granted. Rambam writes that the middle road that eschews the extremes is the path of G-d. It is the high road, the path G-d wants us to take, as it says, "Follow His pathways" (Devarim 28:9).

And all this is so because before being a disciple of Moshe – in Torah – Rav Chaim is a disciple of our forefather Avraham – in character refinement.

It is this which makes our master Rav Chaim a true educator, and Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook, in his day, declared that Rav Druckman was "our country's true Minister of Education". He is a magnificent educator, because he sees the good in everyone. He therefore loves everyone and everyone loves him. There isn't one person in our country who could hate him. All the same, this love of his is not an empty gesture or a trick. Rather, very simply, because Rav Druckman doesn't have a drop of malice, because he is total kindness, total goodness, total love for every Jew, as well as for every person who joins the Jewish People, he therefore became the head of Israel's conversion program and has signed on the conversion documents of 50,000 souls who have come under the wings of the Divine presence.

He is the great educator who walks before the camp. Bnei Akiva can lift its eyes to him and say, "This is our master." The yeshiva high schools can raise their heads and say, "This is our master." He has a great claim, as well, as far as the "Hesder Yeshivot", those yeshivot that combine army service with Torah learning.

In his own home, as well, he adopted a child with Down's Syndrome, as if he didn't have enough challenges of his own. Yet if someone embodies kindness, he is kindness all the way. His is the kindness of Torah.

And let us not forget his wife, the Rabbanit Sara, the devoted physician, who certainly on the same level as my master and teacher Rav Chaim.

In the political sphere as well, Rav Chaim was guided by our master Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook, in his holy work of educating the nation. Indeed, a politician is supposed to educate the Nation. That is Rav Chaim: an educator on the individual and national level.

Rav Chaim is a Torah scholar who sanctifies G-d's name on earth, in accordance with our Sages' words at the end of Yoma, and Rambam, Hilchot Yesodei Ha-Torah at the end of Chapter 5: "What constitutes the profanation of G-d's name? It's when a great Torah scholar, renowned for saintliness, commits acts that lead to people mocking him. And even if those acts are not sins, he has still profaned G-d's name. An example would be his buying something in a store without paying for it immediately... or his engaging in much commerce... or his failing to address people gently or to receive them graciously, but rather angrily and argumentatively."

By contrast, "if the Torah scholar scrupulously makes sure to greet all people gently, humbly and graciously, and he suffers insult without insulting in return, if he treats others with respect, even those that treat him lightly, and if he radiates integrity in his business dealings...

until everyone praises him and loves him and appreciates his deeds, then he has sanctified G-d's name. Of him it says, 'You are My servant, Israel in whom I glory' (Yeshayahu 49:3)."

Indeed, Rav Druckman is amongst those who suffer insult without insulting in return.

He really does get insulted and hurt a great deal. It is impossible to describe just how much, and it really does hurt him, but he never returns an insult.

Such is the humble person under discussion. He is an open saint, but a secret saint as well. In other words, his personality is so open, it radiates so fully, it has such a great influence, that one could think that what we see is all there is. Yet that is not the case. There is to his modesty much more than what we see. Don't ask me what. I don't know. Because Rav Chaim is a humble, modest person, who doesn't often reveal what's inside of him.

Yet it's clear that within his spiritual psyche there are entire universes of magnificent holiness of which we see only the periphery.

Well done, Rav Chaim! Go forth with your strength and have courage. Keep up your great and holy work on behalf of our people and our land, because we need you. Continue faithfully occupying yourself with the needs of the community, and G-d will bestow a blessing on your handiwork, and all that you do shall succeed.

## Stories of Rabbenu –

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Stories of our Rabbi

Our Rabbi took great pleasure when Yitzchak Tabenkin (the ideologue of the Labor Zionist movement before the establishment of the State, who was asked in 1947 for his position on the proposed UN Partition Plan) said: "The Land of Israel belongs to the grandfather who is no longer and to the grandson who is yet to be born, it is therefore impossible to relinquish parts of it."

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