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Parashat Pinchas 5772 - #241

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Rav Aviner's Eulogy for Yitzchak Shamir z"l quoted in article by  
Caroline Glick of the Jerusalem Post  
<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Article.aspx?id=276442>

## On the Haftarah...

### Love as a Bride

[Yirmiyahu 1:1-2:3 when Masei-Matot are read together]

Much to our distress, the prophet Yirmiyahu's role was not always to express words of comfort and hope to the Nation of Israel. At times, he harshly rebuked the Nation and warned them of impending disaster if they continued to ignore the Divine will. The prophet loved the Nation of Israel, but was forced against his will to deliver the terrible news. Out of great humility, he attempted to decline his role: "Hashem, G-d, I do not know how to speak, I am a young boy" (Yirmiyahu 1:6). But Hashem would not change his plans: "Do not say 'I am a young boy,' rather go wherever I send you and say whatever I command you. Do not fear, for I am with you to save you" (ibid. v. 7-8).

Yirmiyahu's words are not always encouraging. He brings a harsh rebuke, but one that stems from love. His is a last ditch effort to save the rebelling Nation from the impending strike that awaits them. "I see a boiling pot, tilting away from the north" (ibid. v. 13). "From the north, disaster will be poured out on all the inhabitants of the Land. I am about to call all of the families of the northern kingdoms," says Hashem, and they shall come and each of them will set up his thrones in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem. They will come against all her surrounding walls and against all the towns of Yehudah" (ibid. 14-15). "I will pronounce my judgments on them, for they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods" (ibid. v. 16).

According to the Torah and Halachah, an inseparable part of rebuking someone is feeling love for him: "Do not hate your brother in your heart," "You shall surely rebuke your fellow," "Love your fellow as yourself" (Vayikra 19). Rebuke must flow out of love, and true rebuke

leads to true love. Yirmiyahu turned to the Nation in an attacking manner, but the critical starting point of his words and his approach is the deep love and respect he has for them, despite their deviations.

This is the first prophecy which Hashem commanded Yirmiyahu to deliver to the Nation of Israel: "Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem saying: Thus says Hashem: I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love as a bride, your following after Me in the desert, in an unsown land" (ibid. 2:2). This connection between the Nation of Israel and Hashem is a holy, eternal one. The love of the bridal days eternally permeates the relationship, the taste of the honeymoon never dissipates. Despite disputes and betrayals, the original connection will not be erased. The love will not depart. This is the foundation for Yirmiyahu's harsh rebuke of the Nation.

The Nation of Israel's worth is immutable, despite errant behavior. "Israel is holy to Hashem, the first of His produce" (ibid. 2:3). Essential holiness and purity reside in the Jewish soul, even if the Nation of Israel stains itself with all types of corruption. It cannot be erased. This means that when Hashem appoints a Nation to attack us, it is not because Hashem has now chosen them to be the treasured nation, while we are cast aside. It means, rather, that Hashem is using them as his instrument. The wickedness of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians was used by Hashem for a positive purpose: to lead the Nation of Israel back to the proper path. This did not excuse them from responsibility and, in the end, the Babylonians were punished for their cruel behavior towards the Nation of Israel, as Yirmiyahu says: "All who devour him will bear guilt, evil shall come upon them" (ibid.).

It is obvious that being chosen by Hashem does not absolve the Nation of Israel from its ethical obligations. On the contrary, an additional level of responsibility was placed upon the Nation, and if we do not fulfill it, we are punished. But punishment does not at all mean that we have an irreversible relationship with Hashem, as Christian theology claims. The punishment is therapeutic: it is what allows the love between Israel and Hashem to be renewed.

## Rav Aviner on... Don't Hurt Tzahal

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

How fortunate we are to have risen to rebirth and to have an army! In the past we were in the exile, a single lamb amongst seventy wolves, with the nations relentlessly attacking us. Now, thank G-d, we can defend ourselves.

Thank G-d, we've got an army.

It is forbidden for us to hurt that army. Quite the contrary, we have to strengthen it every way possible. We have to exemplify self-sacrifice. This includes self-sacrifice in the army itself. The army is built on that trait. Soldiers sacrifice their lives. There is also the self-sacrifice involved in going to the army – something that isn't easy for everyone, both because of the physical effort required, and because the army doesn't always operate in accordance with the thoughts and opinions of every individual (it being the army of the entire Nation). In our Nation, there are things that don't always operate as each person might wish. Yet that is no reason to boycott it. If the army does not behave the way I want as far as expulsion from

Jewish towns, or as far as women singing, that's no reason to be angry at it, for the result of that will be our Nation's destruction.

We mustn't forget that surrounding us are three hundred million Arabs who want to annihilate us, and they have another one or two billion helpers. It's a matter of life and death. Even in our midst, some of the Arabs are our enemies. We mustn't forget that the Tzahal constitutes the Nation's salvation.

It also constitutes the salvation of the Land: the return to Zion, the rebuilding of the Land, the establishment of the State, and the Nation's rebirth in its Land.

Tzahal also constitutes salvation through the Nation's sanctifying G-d's Name.

When we are smitten by the nations it is a profanation of G-d's Name, and when we are strong it is a sanctification of G-d's Name.

Therefore, we've got to leave the army out of the arguments within the Nation. The army is a place where we unite for the sake of saving the Nation and the Land, and for the sake of sanctifying G-d's Name. Within the Nation there are arguments, and as far as that too we have to be brave and increase our love and brotherhood, peace and friendship. Yet the army must remain outside of the controversies.

In the army we must remain totally united. We mustn't use it as a punching bag to advance our own agendas and our own cultural and nationalist ideals. Our lives are in danger, and when a person's life is in danger, it's not the time to check how religious his physician is.

We should just be happy that he rescues us.

Of course, we can try to improve the army's spiritual level. Everyone should try to make the army suit his own outlook. That's natural. Yet it should all be done out of love and brotherhood, peace and friendship, and not with threats, saying, "Either the army is my cup of tea or I'm boycotting it!"

Rather, first and foremost, everyone should enlist in the army – religious, secular, Charedim, Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Ethiopians, Yemenites, right-wingers and left-wingers. Everyone should go. Afterwards, if problems arise, we'll solve them: with love and brotherhood, peace and friendship.

## Stories of Rabbenu –

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

### Fasting for the Destruction of the Temple

After the Six Day War, our Rabbi stated that we are still obligated to fast since we are not at peace with our neighbors. The fasts were established by the prophets and it is impossible to be lenient (see Rosh Hashanah 18b. Arba'im Le-Binah of Ha-Rav Yitzchak Shilat p. 25).

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