



## PROBING

BY RABBI NACHMAN (NEIL) WINKLER

Faculty, OU Israel Center

## THE PROPHETS

I have always felt a special connection to the haftarah that we read this week. This selection from Sefer Yechezkel (28: 25 – 29: 21) was the haftarah that I read on the occasion of my bar mitzvah. Although my primary focus at that time was to chant the haftarah correctly I did get a “sense” of what the navi was teaching. The connection between the haftarah and the parasha was quite obvious. Yechezkel describes the punishments that would befall Egypt for her perfidy in abandoning Judea in her time of need while the parasha centers around the punishment that befell ancient Egypt during the time of Moshe Rabbeinu, punishments that were brought upon her due to her continued persecution of Israel and their refusal to recognize Hashem and heed His demand to release B’nai Yisra’el.

Some years ago, we pointed out that this selection should have opened with the first verse of the 29<sup>th</sup> perek which begins to detail the coming punishments that Egypt would suffer. That perek details the sins of Egypt and the approaching punishments she would suffer, the obvious connection to our parasha. And

yet, Chazal saw fit to start our haftarah with the final two psukim of the 28<sup>th</sup> perek, verses that have nothing to do with the theme of the haftarah. The opening verses do not condemn Israel for her sins that led to Churban Bayit, and the subsequent exile, a theme that runs throughout Sefer Yechezkel. Instead, these introductory remarks speak of a glorious future for Israel, a time when “b’kabtzi et beit Yisrael”, G-d promises He would gather Israel back to their land – a more than curious addition, given the main theme of the parasha.

Although one might explain our Rabbis decision to begin the haftarah in this fashion by pointing to the fact that, in the parasha, Hashem promises Israel that He would take them from Egypt and bring them to the Land of Israel – parallel to the idea expressed in the opening words of the haftarah, I would like to share with you the thoughts of HaRav Soloveitchik, zt”l, regarding this peculiar opening, thoughts that, perhaps will not explain their connection to the parasha, but that are, nonetheless, connected to us today.

The Rav powerfully argues that the opening words reveal a truth that most of us would not have realized at first glance. “B’kabtzi et Beit Yisra’el”, “when I gather Israel from the foreign lands and bring them to the Land of Israel”,

### Dr. Eliezer Rosenblum

NYS Licensed and Board Certified

### Chiropractor

Offices in Jerusalem, Ramat Beit Shemesh

052-662-4658

“V’nikdashti bam l’inei hagoyim”, “And, through them, I will be sanctified in the eyes of all the nations”, teaches us a basic truth, the Rav says. And he continues:

When Hashem brings the Jews back to Eretz Yisrael from their many years in Galut, He will demonstrate that the words of His nevi'im were correct and true. Kibbutz Galuyot, the ingathering of the exiles, is an ultimate act of Kiddush Hashem, a sanctification of G-d's name, for it proves to the entire world that the prophets referred to only ONE nation – the JEWISH nation, the CHOSEN nation - that would survive and be brought back to the Land of Israel.

The Rav then related a most moving personal experience he had:

“I used to travel from Boston to New York and was accosted many times by missionaries (especially in the 1940s) who confronted me... ....and said, (G-d forbid): ‘The words of the “New” Testament are coming true! The Jews will be completely annihilated and destroyed!’ They would approach other Jews and tell them; ‘You see, G-d has abandoned you and allowed the complete destruction of the Jewish People!’ The chilul HaShem, the desecration of G-d's honor was horrible.....and I used to cry not only for the churban but also for the chilul HaShem.

“For me,” the Rav continued, “what is important about Medinat Yisrael - in addition to everything else – is that it has silenced ... - these false arguments. No missionary has approached me since the

## Ramat Beit Shemesh BEST INVESTMENT

**NEW!** 4 room, very large balcony,

**1.500.000nis**

Pentcottage, 5 room with storageroom  
and parking, **1.890.000nis**

Pay 20% now and 80% at key

**Lemkin Realty 02-9995727**

**www.aliyahrealty.com**

State of Israel was established. This is the main merit (“z’chus”) of Medinat Yisrael. It is the product of Divine Providence, hashgacha from HaKadosh Baruch Hu.”

I need add very little to the words of the Rav. But let me just remind you that the next time we pray for our heroes who sacrificed their lives on behalf of the State of Israel, and we refer to them as those who died “al Kiddush HaShem,” it is not a simple expression of respect. Everyone and anyone who dies to build, preserve or defend Medinat Yisrael is certainly one who has died sanctifying G-d's name. It was, and is, the GREATEST act of Kiddush Hashem that one can perform today. And all because Yechezkel told us: “B’kabtzi et Beit Yisrael,” when I bring the Jewish nation back to Israel after two thousand years (!!!!!) “V’nikdashti bam l’inei hagoyim...” I will be sanctified before all of mankind!

Can there be any greater act of Kiddush Hashem? ■

*Rabbi Winkler's popular Jewish History lectures can be viewed by visiting the OU Israel Video archive: <https://www.ouisrael.org/video-library/>*