



## PROBING

BY RABBI NACHMAN (NEIL) WINKLER

Faculty, OU Israel Center

## THE PROPHETS

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The very opening of Sefer Malachi that we are privileged to read this Shabbat makes it clear why Chazal chose this perek as the haftarah for Parashat Toldot. Just as the Torah reading describes the essential differences between Eisav and his twin brother Ya'akov and, while doing so, includes Hashem's choice of Ya'akov over his twin to carry on the mission that He charged Avraham and Yitzchak, so too our haftarah powerfully expresses that choice by stating: "Hahlo ach Eisav l'Ya'akov.... va'ohav et Ya'akov....V'et Eisav saneiti..."

It is this choice of Ya'akov and his descendants to go and spread the message of Hashem's sovereignty over the universe that sets the theme of the haftarah. Malachi sees the corruption of the leadership of Yehuda – especially as found within the Kohanim themselves – as an undermining of that mission. Therefore, the bulk of the haftarah is focused on the navi's message to the Kohanim that, unless they set the proper example to Israel, the nation could never live up to the divine mission given to their ancestors.

Interestingly, Rav Soloveitchik also points to the very opening word of the Sefer (and our haftarah) as a source of challenge and of inspiration for us all. The word

"massa", "burden" is also used as a synonym for "prophecy", as it is used here. The Rambam in the Moreh Nevuchim (2: 37) explains that prophecy truly IS a "burden". He writes:

*"In experiencing his divine vision, the prophet encounters a sublime truth that others have not. He is compelled to share this vision with others, to impart the information so they will know what he knows. Hashem's revelation is a "burden" weighing on his consciousness. Sharing his vision may place him in grave danger.....yet the burden of prophecy gives him no rest. He must repeat what he hears from G-d, whatever the consequences."*

These words find prophetic expression in the statement of the navi Amos (Amos 3; 8): "Hashem Elokim dibber – mi lo yinavei?" –Hashem has spoken – Who cannot prophesy?

## How can we avoid revealing this to our children?

The Rav then expands on this idea, saying that when we are presented with a great truth – whether it be Torah or tradition, we should be unable to withhold the knowledge. It should feel as a "burden" that we

MAZAL TOV to

Avigayil and the entire Bass family  
on her marriage to Yuval Charuvi

Mazal Tov to

Sharon & Roi Blumberg and family  
on the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter, Sara

must unload by telling others, teaching others, inspiring others. As the Rav adds: “The message springs out of the mouth spontaneously – the pressure is too strong; he is unable to suppress his words.”

This should be our inspiration – but it is also our challenge. Applying this thought to parents, Rav Soloveitchik explains that, if we wish to have the divine message truly internalized by our children, we, too, must consider the message to be a “massa”, a burden. If we have experienced a Shabbat, if we have understood the Tanach or if we have studied the depths of the Oral Law, how can we avoid revealing this to our children? We should feel compelled to convey this information to the next generation.

Indeed, if we hope to effectively convey our mission to our future, we parents and teachers must feel that “massa”! ■



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