



REBBETZIN DR. ADINA SHMIDMAN



Join me as we explore themes and ideas of our prophets through their words in the weekly Haftorah. Each week we will take a closer look at a particular verse or theme, taking messages from our past to impact our tomorrow.

YESHAYAHU 27:6 - 28:13 29:22-23

This week's Haftorah is not connected to the parsha in an obvious way. Our parsha primarily focuses on the descent of the Jewish people into Egyptian slavery and the rise of Moshe as their leader. The navi's major emphasis is on the downward spiral of the kingdoms of Ephraim and Yehuda.

The Navi Yeshaya describes how the Jewish people will fail to properly study, observe and live the Torah. He famously decries a time when the Torah will have to be taught to them:

"צו לצו צו לצו קו לקו זעיר שם זעיר שם"

“Commandment by commandment and commandment by commandment, measuring line by measuring line and measuring line by measuring line, a bit here and a bit there.”

Prima facie, this seems positive, not negative. It would seem that for us to learn the Torah commandment by commandment, line by line and bit by bit, would be a way to assure that we study the Torah in its

entirety and get to know all of its minutiae.

Rav Kook observes that the Torah is supposed to be understood, appreciated and lived in a holistic manner. When we engage in halachic reductionism and slice and dice the Torah into teeny bits we fail to appreciate the scope of its grandeur and the depth of its eternal truth. Yeshaya bemoans a generation that is not only ignorant of Torah information, but more importantly of its beauty.

The connection of Yeshaya to Shemos is now more obvious. The Jews in Egyptian times had not yet received the Torah and had nothing to turn to for inspiration and encouragement. The generation of Yeshaya had it, but did not look to it for guidance.

We are blessed to have the Torah. We must study and observe it carefully. We must also look at its greatness to guide us in times of difficulty and despair. May we always value the magnificence of the Torah and merit to see the fulfillment of the beginning of the Haftorah:

"הבאים ישרש יעקב יציץ ופרח ישראל ומלאו פני תבל

תנובה"

“Days are coming when Yaakov will take root, Yisroel will bud and blossom and fill the face of the earth like fruit.” ■

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