



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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רְפְּאֵנִי ה' וְאֶרְפָּא הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי וְאִנְשְׁעָה כִּי תִהְלֹתִי אִתָּה:
*Heal me, O LORD, and let me be healed;
Save me, and let me be saved; For You are
my glory.* (Yirmiyahu 17:14)

The words of Yirmiyahu are familiar to us as they are used as the basis of the bracha of Refainu in our daily Shemoneh Esrei. Our Sages reformulated the personal request of Yirmiyahu to reflect the beseeching of a community asking for healing. These words resonate so deeply during these times. We've faced a pandemic with unprecedented illness and loss and continue to turn to Hashem in prayer to cure our friends and family and heal our world.

Rabbeinu Bachaya makes an interesting observation as he explains the words in the verse in Shemot 21:9, וְרָפָא יִרְפָּא, *and he shall surely heal*. This verse sanctions man to heal another human being. While the root (ר-פ-א) is the same in both Shemot and in our verse in Yirmiyahu, there is a slight difference in the words. In Shemot and in other places in Tanach (e.g., Yirmiyahu 51:9), when discussing man's treatment of the sick, the letter פ (Pey) is used. However, when we request that Hashem heal man, the letter פ (Fey) is used as seen in

the Posuk in our Haftorah, רְפְּאֵנִי ה' וְאֶרְפָּא, *heal me and I shall be healed*, as well is in other places (e.g., Tehillim 147:3). Rabbeinu Bachaya explains that the פ (Pey) is a harsher sound, suggesting that medical treatment often can be difficult and painful. The dot in the פ (Pey) alludes to the pricking and poking, the invasive acts that often must be done in order to cure illness. By contrast, when G-d heals us, the letter used is פ (Fey) which is a softer sound. We ask Him to heal us gently and kindly and use measures that are as unobtrusive as possible.

These words, “רְפְּאֵנִי ה' וְאֶרְפָּא הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי וְאִנְשְׁעָה, כִּי תִהְלֹתִי אִתָּה,” *Heal me, O L-rd, and let me be healed; Save me, and let me be saved; For You are my glory*, are used in our daily Tefillah. We beseech Hashem at this time, and always, that He will cure those who are ill with His love and kindness, that the sick won't have to suffer needlessly and that our world is cured from illness for all time. ■

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