



## HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

BY REBBETZIN DR. ADINA  
SHMIDMAN  
DIRECTOR,  
OU WOMEN'S INITIATIVE



# Lovers and Learners

This week's haftarah, the third of the Shiva D'Nechemta, paints a vision of healing and promise: ורב שלום בניך, *All your children will be students of Hashem, and great will be the peace of your children* (Yeshayahu 54:13). The *Midrash Rabba* on Parshat Naso draws our attention to another pasuk: שלום רב לאוהבי תורתך ואין למו מכשול, *Abundant peace belongs to the lovers of Torah, and there is no stumbling for them* (Tehillim 119:165).

The *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* (Shelah HaKadosh) explores the relationship between these two pesukim. Why does the first speak of Torah learners, while the second speaks of lovers of Torah? Why does one promise peace without stumbling, while the other omits that assurance? And what is the meaning behind the different phrase orders — שלום רב vs ורב שלום?

The Shelah explains that there are two

kinds of Torah engagement. One is rooted in deep personal love — a desire to understand, connect, and grow. These are the אוהבי תורה, the lovers of Torah. The other is a merit inherited — learning that comes from being born into a home or community that values Torah, but where the personal passion may be less developed. These are the לומדי תורה, the learners of Torah.

Those who love Torah often face more obstacles. Their desire drives them deeper, and with depth comes complexity and the risk of stumbling. Yet this is precisely why they are promised אין למו מכשול — not because they will never trip, but because their love ensures that those stumbles become stepping stones. As the Gemara (Gittin 43a) teaches: אין אדם עומד על דברי תורה אלא אם כן נכשל בהם — *a person cannot truly understand Torah unless they've first stumbled in it*. The peace they receive is hard-earned and therefore enduring.

In contrast, learners who merit Torah through the actions of their ancestors may walk a smoother path. But because their engagement may be more surface-level, they are not promised the same freedom from stumbling. Their peace is present, but less transformative.

The Shelah goes one step further: the posuk in Tehillim says שלום רב — abundant peace. But the posuk in Yeshayahu reverses the phrase: ורב שלום בניך — *and great will be the peace of your children*. He reads this not just as a promise of quantity, but of leadership.



One who immerses in Torah can become a רב שלום — a leader, a master of peace; not just a recipient of peace, but a creator of it.

In a time when peace feels distant — globally, communally, and often personally — this teaching offers a blueprint for restoring it. It reminds us that true peace is not passive. Peace isn't only the absence of conflict, but the product of deep engagement — struggles, stumbles, and sincere effort in the pursuit of truth.

Whether one learns Torah because of personal yearning or inherited merit, the Torah offers peace. But it is the love of Torah that refines us through our challenges, leading to an internal clarity that radiates outward. In the words of the Shelah, we don't merely find peace — we become its bearers.

May we merit to be both learners and lovers of Torah, so that we too can become builders of enduring peace: ורב שלום בניך. ■



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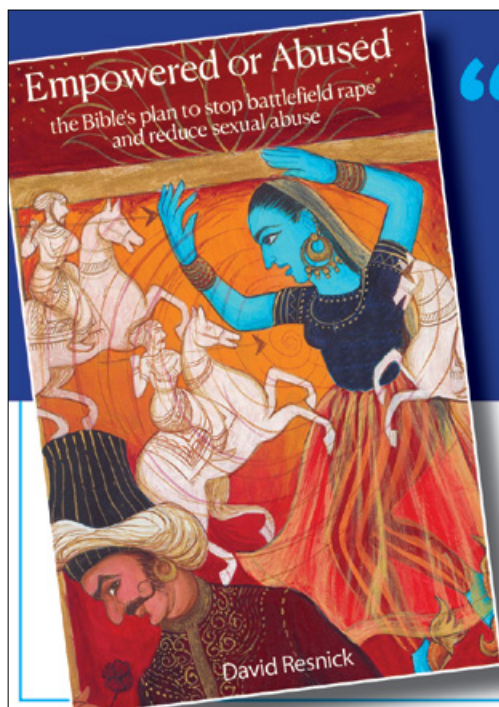
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