



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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At the Threshold

Jen Airley, whose son Binyamin ט״ח was killed while serving in Gaza, shared a story this week that touched me profoundly. Jen had gone to pay a shivah visit to Smadar Katz, whose husband Oren ט״ח was killed in the Beit Shemesh missile attack.

Smadar was sitting shivah when her sixteen-year-old son Yosef returned to their damaged home to gather a few belongings. On the floor, partly pinned beneath a rock, he noticed a folded page and brought it back to his mother.

The next day, Rav Yisrael Meir Lau came to the house. When he examined the page, he saw that on one side appeared the story of B'not Tzelofchad. When he turned it over, the other side contained a passage about the Arei Miklat — the Cities of Refuge.

He explained to Smadar that someone who fled to an Ir Miklat remained there until the

death of the Kohen Gadol, and only then were they able to leave.

Smadar listened and then said something remarkable.

“My husband Oren was a Kohen,” she said. “Perhaps he is the Kohen whose passing now allows us to leave the miklat.”

She repeated with conviction: Moshe emet, Torato emet. Moshe is truth and His Torah is truth. Profound faith in such trying times.

Before leaving the shivah house, Jen shared with Smadar that on the very day Yosef discovered that page about the Arei Miklat, thousands of women around the world were studying the same subject through Torat Imecha Nach Yomi. That day's chapter was Yehoshua, Perek Chaf — the chapter describing the Cities of Refuge.

A torn page of Torah, discovered in the ruins of a home, carries a powerful symbolism. It appeared at the very threshold of grief — at the doorway between loss and faith.

That image brings to mind a striking scene in this week's Haftorah of HaChodesh. Yechezkel describes a special offering brought on the first day of the month of Nissan. The Kohen

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takes from the blood of the offering and places it on the doorposts of the Mikdash:

וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִדָּמֵם הַחֹטְאֹת וַיָּנִתֵן אֶל-מְזוּזֹת הַבַּיִת

“The Kohen shall take from the blood of the offering and place it upon the doorposts of the House.” (Yechezkel 45:19)

The image immediately recalls the first Pesach in Egypt, when the Jewish people placed the blood of the Korban Pesach on the doorposts of their homes. At the birth of the nation, the doorposts of Jewish homes were marked. In Yechezkel’s vision of redemption, the doorposts of the Mikdash are marked again.

The doorway becomes the place where protection and promise meet.

In that shivah house, a grieving woman held a torn page of Torah and declared: Moshe emet, Torato emet. And on that very day, thousands of women were learning that same chapter of Nach.

Sometimes the signs appear at the doorway — on a mezuzah, on a page of Torah — reminding us that even in the darkest chapters of our story, Torah is still present, and Hashem’s hand is never far from the threshold of our lives. ■

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