



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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Can a Mother Forget?

YESHAYAHU 49:14–51:3

Now that Tisha B'Av has passed, how are we expected to move on from the mourning of the Nine Days? Can mourning be turned on and off like a light switch?

We spend seven weeks reading Haftarat of consolation. Perhaps Chazal understood that genuine comfort cannot be rushed. Just as our national mourning unfolds gradually, so too does our healing. While weddings celebrations have begun, we refrain from initiating court cases because the shadow of the Churban still lingers. If we are truly mourning, consolation cannot come overnight. It must be rebuilt, one step at a time.

That is precisely where this week's Haftorah begins — not with redemption, but with raw emotion. Zion cries, *עָזַבְנִי ה', וְה' שָׁכַחְנִי*, Hashem has abandoned me; Hashem has forgotten me. The progression is striking. To feel abandoned is painful; to feel forgotten is even more so. Abandonment suggests distance. Forgetting

suggests that the relationship itself has been lost.

Hashem does not answer with an explanation. Instead, He responds with the strongest relationship we know: *הַתִּשְׁכָּח אִשָּׁה עוֹלָה, מֵרָחֵם בְּכִנּוּהָ? Can a woman forget her nursing child, cease to have compassion on the child she bore?*

The Malbim notes that the verse deliberately describes two dimensions of motherhood. “עוֹלָה” is the nursing infant, wholly dependent on its mother in the present. “בְּכִנּוּהָ” is the child she carried in her womb, recalling a bond that began long before birth. Together, they encompass the deepest attachment a human being can experience. Hashem offer His reassurance: *גַּם אִלּוּ תִשְׁכַּחְנָה, וְאֵנֹכִי לֹא אֶשְׁכַּח. Even if such a thing were possible, I will never forget you.*

Perhaps this is the purpose of the *Shivah D'Nechemta*. Healing does not begin by erasing our grief, but by restoring our trust. Before the navi speaks of redemption, he first restores our confidence in the relationship itself. The journey back to Zion begins with the assurance that, even in exile, Hashem has never forgotten His people. ■

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