



PROBING THE PROPHETS

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Arise and Shine!

Throughout these post-Tish'a B'Av weeks, we find the prophetic words of consolation and their visions of redemption being increasingly powerful and optimistic in each subsequent haftarah - a point made by the Tosafot (Megilla 31b). Today's reading, the sixth of the seven haftarot, does not disappoint us, for it opens with the prophet's joyful call to Israel: "Kumi Ori!", "Arise! Shine!", a promise that Hashem's glory will shine upon them.

Indeed, so much of Chazal's view of the geula is based upon the descriptions found in this sixtieth perek. The navi's message includes the depiction of "shivat tziyon", the massive return of the Jews to their land, it includes the promise of eliminating "sh'ibud malchuyot" - the enemies' oppression of Israel - as well as the prophetic vision of the

world's acceptance of Tziyon as Hashem's Holy City. Additionally, Yish'ayahu assures the nation that, together with the spiritual awakening, there will also be an economic recovery, a promise expressed in the words: "Tachat han'choshet avi zahav..." "In place of the copper I shall bring gold and in place of iron I will bring silver..."

However, the most moving part of the haftarah might well be the final words where G-d proclaims: "Ani Hashem," "I am G-d," "b'itah achishena," "in its (proper) time, I will hasten it". These last two words are understood by Chazal (in Sanhedrin 98a) as describing two possibilities regarding the arrival of the Mashiach: either "In its time" or "I will hasten it." The Rabbis explain that, if we fail to do t'shuva, and thereby not deserve redemption, then "b'itah"-we will have to wait until its "proper time." But if we do respond to G-d's demands, if we heed the prophets' warnings and improve our ways, then "achishena," Hashem will hasten his arrival, even before its "proper time."

The Talmudic interpretation is fully understandable, in light of the place and time where and when they were written. Jews were living in the exile of Bavel, often under the oppressive rule of the Persians and, later, the Romans. The Rabbinic interpretation became a hopeful message to the Diaspora that **they** could hasten the arrival of the Mashiach and it also served as a call to return to G-d - certainly an especially fitting message for this time of year.



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But it is the simple translation of this phrase that speaks to our generation quite powerfully. “In its time,” - when G-d decides that it is the time for **Mashiach**, - “I will hasten it,” He will not delay or postpone redemption, but rather, will usher in the era quickly.

We stand as witnesses to the dizzying speed of impactful, even world-changing events that have redefined our history over these past 100 years. We have marched from defenseless victims, dependent upon an often-heartless world who watched as one third of our people were slaughtered, to a strong, independent existence, as a State whose medical, technological, military and economic success is the envy of the world.

Hashem may have decided that His nation’s repentance has merited the arrival of the **Mashiach** or, perhaps the centuries of unending suffering has G-d decided that “b’itah achishena!” Ge’ulah is coming because HKB”H is hastening His Redeemer.

Yes! “Kumi, Ori!”. It is truly a time for us to Arise and Shine! For it is a time that we can rightfully believe that Hashem is hastening our redemption! ■

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