

# WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

## PARSHAT TZARIA

### Haftora: Appreciating The Miracles In Our Lives

The Haftora for Parshas Tazria is not read often, because, in most years, Tazria and Metzora are read together, and when that happens, the Haftora for Metzora is read. Even in a leap year, when Tazria is read by itself, it is often also Parshas Hachodesh and the Haftora for Hachodesh is read instead.

The Haftora tells of two miracles of our prophet Elisha.

In the first miracle, a man brought Elisha 20 bread rolls made of the barley flour that recently ripened. Elisha told his helper to give it to his students whom he supported. His helper asked him, "How can I give this to a hundred men (it's simply not enough)?" Elisha responded, "Give it to the people to eat, for Hashem said, 'They will eat and have left over.'" He gave it to them, they ate, and there was leftovers, just as Hashem said.

**LIFE'S MOST  
PROFOUND  
MIRACLES  
OFTEN COME  
DISGUISED AS  
THE MUNDANE,  
WAITING TO BE  
UNVEILED BY  
OUR CURIOSITY  
AND WONDER.**

The second miracle was how he cured Naaman from Tzaraas. Naaman was the commander of the king of Aram's army. He was very well respected because Hashem gave him many victories, but now he couldn't go out to war because he was afflicted with Tzaraas.

One of Aram's raiding parties captured a young

girl from Israel, and she became a servant to Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "If my master's request will be brought before the prophet in Shomron (Elisha), then he will cure him of his Tzaraas." We see here the power of a young Jewish girl's simple faith in the Tzadik of the time, which brought about such a beautiful miracle and positive geopolitical ramifications as well, as we will soon see.

Naaman went and told the king what the young girl said. The king told him to go to the prophet, and that he would send a letter to the king of Israel, telling him to instruct the prophet to cure Naaman.

Naaman took a tremendous amount of silver, gold, and garments as a gift for the prophet and he brought the letter to the king of Israel. When the king read the letter, he rended his garments because he was afraid that it was a trick and that the king of Aram was using this as a pretext to go to war. Aram was the superpower of the region at that time, so the mere thought of going to war with them was terrifying.

When Elisha heard that the king rended his garments, he sent a message to him, "Why did you rend your garments? Let him come to me, and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel."

Naaman came with a whole entourage to Elisha's house and stood at the door. Elisha didn't come out to meet him; he just sent a messenger to tell him to wash in the Jordan seven times, his skin will be restored, and he will be ritually pure.

Naaman got angry and left. He expected Elisha to honor him by coming out to greet him, call out to Hashem, wave his hand over the Tzaraas, and it would miraculously go away. But instead, he told him to bathe in the Jordan. He said that the rivers in Damascus are better than any of the waters in Israel - he often bathed in them - and it didn't help him.

His servants approached him and respectfully suggested that if the prophet would have told him to do something difficult, he would surely have listened to him, so now that he said to do something easy, shouldn't he try it? He took their advice and bathed in the Jordan seven times like Elisha said, and his skin became like that of a young boy.

Naaman and his entourage returned to Elisha. Naaman stood before him and said, "Now I know that there isn't any G-d in the whole world other than in Israel. Now, please accept a gift from your servant." But Elisha refused to take anything. He said, "By the Living G-d before Whom I stood (as a soul in the higher realms, before entering into the body), I can't accept (any gift)." Naaman begged him to take something, but he refused. Then he asked for two mule loads of earth from Israel so that he could make it into an altar for Hashem, and he proclaimed, "For your servant will no longer offer



burnt offerings or sacrifices to other gods, but only to Hashem!"

Then he asked for forgiveness in advance because he will have to go with his king when he goes to serve his idols, and he won't have a choice but to bow with him. He said, "May Hashem please forgive your servant for this." And Elisha said to him, "Go in peace." From here we learn that a gentile who accepted upon himself to serve only Hashem and to keep the Seven Laws that were given to the Children of Noah is not obligated to sacrifice his life to sanctify Hashem. If he would be obligated, Elisha would have told him so and that he could not bow. Instead, he just told him to "go in peace."

This, of course, was a great geo-political victory for the Jewish people. Because now Naaman, the commander of the most powerful army in the region, became an ally to Israel. Also, I am sure that the story of the miracle reverberated throughout the region and was a great sanctification of Hashem's name.

The second miracle seems to connect well with the parsha. Parshas Tazria talks mostly about the laws of the Metzora, and the miracle was how Elisha cured Naaman, a Metzora, from Tzaraas. But how does the first miracle, about the loaves of bread, connect to our parsha?

Rashi and the Radak provide the explanation. Rashi says that it was "During Pesach when the grain ripens." The Radak says, "It was from the first barley that was harvested; it was the time of the barley harvest." The Raibag, Metzudas David, and Metzudas Tzion say similar things. In this instance, the Haftora is also connected with the time of year.

Whenever Tazria is read by itself, it is in the month of Nissan, before Pesach, or on the Shabbos before, when we bless the month of Nissan. The month of Nissan is a time of miracles, the time when the barley ripens and is harvested, and on Pesach, the Omer offering, which was from barley, was brought in the Temple. The first miracle is about barley in the month of Nissan.

This also adds more meaning to the second miracle because Tazria doesn't have anything to do with open miracles. So how does the miracle aspect connect to the parsha? It doesn't necessarily, rather, it is connected to the time of year, Nissan, a time of miracles.

I use the term "open miracles" because, of course, Tazria speaks about pregnancy and birth, which are miracles, but they are the kind of miracles that Hashem put into nature. Also, Tzaraas was not a natural ailment; it was not leprosy. It was a spiritual condition that came because of spiritual reasons. So, in a way, it was a miracle as well. But being that it was more common, it was not like an open miracle. However, though these kinds of miracles are more common, they are still miracles, and perhaps the Haftora is highlighting the point of miracles to let us know that we should see and value the miracles in

nature and the more common miracles we experience every day.

We are left with a question. Why did Elisha refuse Naaman's gift? We have rules about when one may accept tzedakah from an idol worshipper; generally, we shouldn't, but there are certain situations where we can accept it secretly, and in certain dire situations, one is permitted to take it openly. However, Naaman wasn't an idol worshipper; he proclaimed openly that he will only serve Hashem. The Rambam says that from this kind of person, you can accept tzedakah and distribute it even to Jewish needy. So why didn't he accept it?

From the Rambam's words, "If... He gave, we accept it," we understand that only after the fact do we accept it, but to begin with, we don't. The Rambam also says there, "If he wants to do a mitzvah... in order to receive merit, we don't stop him." Again, we don't stop him, but to begin with, if he wants to make it a regular thing, we would not allow it, because it is as if he is creating a new religion, and the Rambam says that this is not allowed.

And perhaps, the miracle and the whole experience was all the more powerful, and a greater sanctification of Hashem's name, because he didn't take the gift. And therefore, it had a greater effect on Naaman and all that heard what transpired.

May we experience and value the miracles in our daily lives. And may we merit to experience the greatest miracle of all, the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon.

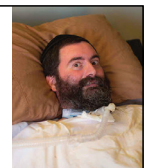
*"Dear Rabbi Yitzi,*

*I hope you're doing well. I'll never forget how happy Isaac was when he got to meet you. Your song 'shine a little light meant so much to him. My family has lost so much, but we all must keep going and gain chizuk from each other. All the best!"*

- Eli S, Passaic

RABBI YITZI WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! SEND YOUR MESSAGE TO:  
(937) 770-4802 | TORAHFROMMYEYES@GMAIL.COM

Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



DEDICATED IN HONOR OF  
**RABBI MOSHE AHARON  
GEISINSKY Z"l**  
• BY HIS FAMILY •

SPONSOR AN EDITION OF TORAH FROM MY EYES: (937) 770-4802 | TORAHFROMMYEYES@GMAIL.COM

