

# WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

## PARSHAT BAMIDBAR

### Haftarah: We Are Hashem's Bride

The Haftora for Parshas Bamidbar is from the book of Hoshea (Hosea); it is a prophecy about the time of Moshiach. It begins by telling us that when Moshiach comes, we will be so many, that we will be uncountable and that the two kingdoms of Yehuda and Yisrael will unite under one king. Then, it tells us how we have strayed, worshipping other deities, thinking that they will provide our needs. How we will be punished for straying from Hashem, yet in the end, we will come to our senses, return to Hashem, and we will realize that everything we ever had was really from Him. Then Hashem will renew His bond with us, and we will be connected forever.

The connection to our parsha is that parshas Bamidbar speaks about counting the Jewish people, and it tells how the Jewish camp was organized in the desert, united around the Mishkan. Similarly, the Haftora begins with the count of the Jewish people when Moshiach comes and says that we will unite under one king.

However, that is all covered in the first two verses of the Haftora. How does the rest of the Haftora connect?

Bamidbar is always read before Shavuoth, so there is a connection between the time of the year and the parsha. As we will soon see, the whole Haftora connects to Shavuoth.

### WE ARE ALL ON A JOURNEY TO REVEAL THE HIDDEN LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS, AND OUR FAITH WILL GUIDE US THROUGH.

The Haftora begins, "And the number of the Children of Israel will be as the sand of the sea which can neither be measured nor counted, and it will be, that in the place that it was said to them, 'you are not My nation,' will be said to them, 'children of the Living G-d.'"

There is a question that is asked on this verse. It starts off with "And the number of

the Children of Israel will be," as if they could be counted as a finite number, and it continues to say that they "can neither be measured nor counted," which means infinite. How can they be both finite and infinite?

Another question. Why does it say that "in the place that it was said to them, you are not My nation, will be said to them, children of the Living G-d?" The words "in the place" seem to mean "instead," so why say, "in the place?"

Hashem is infinite, and the world is finite, but being that everything is from Him, and He is infinite, we must conclude

that everything is really infinite, only that in order to have a functioning world, Hashem covered himself so that the world appears finite.

In Jewish law, when a person covers his head with his hand, it is not considered covered because his hand is part of him.

So when Hashem covers His infinite Self, in order that the world will appear finite, it is as if he is covering Himself with a part of Himself, which is not really a cover at all. This means that even what appears to us as finite is really infinite.

The next verse says, "The Children of Yehuda and the Children of Yisrael will gather together and they will appoint for themselves (Moshiach as their) one head and they will go up from the land (to Israel), for great is the day of Yizrael." The meaning of this verse is clear, that we will unite as one under Moshiach and return to our Holy Land. But what is "the day of Yizrael?" And how does it connect to the theme of the Haftora?

This is the lesson we learn from these verses. We are infinite in finite, a Neshama in a body, and our job is to reveal the infinite in the finite. How do we do this? By doing mitzvahs. Even though mitzvahs seem finite, as there are 613 biblical and seven rabbinical mitzvahs, and each one is connected to a physical object, time, and place, and there are exact laws of how to perform them, but being that they are Hashem's will, they are in essence truly infinite. A mitzvah is Hashem planting His infinite Self into the finite physical object, and when we perform the mitzvah, we are revealing the infinite in the finite.

Now we can understand how, on the one hand, we are finite, and on the other, we are infinite. Because the essence of a Jew is to reveal the infinite in the finite.

Now, the words, "in the place," begin to make sense. Because in the same exact place, this physical world, that we were perceived as "not My nation," meaning finite, we will be seen as "the children of the Living G-d," which is infinite.

The words, "Great is the day of Yizrael," also become clear. Yizrael is made up of two words, Yizra E-L, which means Hashem planted. When Moshiach comes, we will clearly see how Hashem planted Himself into creation, infinite into finite. The day will be great, meaning that there won't be any more darkness; everything will be clear. We will see the infinite in the finite, the light hidden in the darkness. We will see how all the pain, suffering, and darkness of the exile was actually a great light in disguise and how our efforts in overcoming the difficulties were the actual acts that brought Moshiach.

It all began with the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. When Hashem Himself descended on the



mountain, infinite into finite, to give us the Torah. It was the first time infinite and finite were experienced as one, and it was teaching us the purpose of our mission, to reveal G-dliness down here in the physical world, the infinite in the finite.

The Haftora continues to tell us how we strayed like an unfaithful wife, hoping to gain from our relationships with other countries and from false deities instead of putting our trust and faith in Hashem. It describes how we will return to Him and recognize that He is the only One we could truly rely on and that everything we ever had was actually from Him. All this is meant to bring us to the part of the Haftora, where Hashem accepts us and renews His bond with us.

The Haftora concludes with Hashem telling us, "I will betroth you (Li) to Me forever, and I will betroth you (Li) to Me with righteousness, justice, lovingkindness and compassion. And I will betroth you (Li) to Me with belief, and you will know Hashem." Why doesn't it just say that I will betroth you to Me forever with righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, compassion, and belief? Why is it divided into three statements? Why does He say "Li, to Me?" Isn't that obvious from the words, "I will betroth you?"

There are two parts to a Jewish marriage ceremony: the betrothal and the chupa. In the betrothal, the groom gives the bride the ring, and by her acceptance, she becomes his betrothed; no one else can have her hand in marriage. Then you have the chupa and the blessings that go with it, the consummation of the marriage, and they begin to live as husband and wife. Although we do them together nowadays, that wasn't always the case. The common custom in days gone by was to have the betrothal and, about a year later, the chupa. The year in between was like an engagement period; she was already considered married, except that they weren't living together.

In the Haftora narrative, Hashem is the groom, and we, the Jewish people, are the bride. This betrothal was at the time of receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, and it will be a completed marriage when Moshiach comes. The words, "I will betroth you," are written in the singular, similar to the Ten Commandments which were said in the singular. When Hashem said, "I Am the Lord your G-d," everyone felt that Hashem was speaking to him or her personally. The same is true here. Hashem is betrothing each of us personally.

There is a rule that whenever Hashem says Li, it means that it will never change. So, our betrothed status is everlasting; nothing can change it. You may ask, but when Moshiach comes, the marriage will be complete? In other words, we will not be betrothed anymore, so how can you say that it won't change?

There is something special about the engagement or betrothal period; the way the groom treats his bride is extra endearing and precious. The verses are saying that even after the completion of the marriage, Hashem will continue to treat us in the special way, usually reserved for the engagement period.

What is the reason he wants to betroth us? For this, there are three reasons, based on the three statements of betrothal. "I will betroth you to Me (leolam) forever" refers to one who has a deep understanding of Hashem and is able to connect at the highest levels.

However, not everybody can reach this level. This is where "I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, and compassion," comes into play. These are connecting to

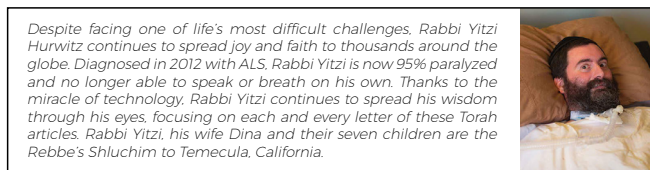
Hashem on an emotional level and through actions, like giving tzedaka, correcting bad traits, and doing acts of kindness and compassion.

Then there are those that are emotionally and monetarily poor. They have nothing to give. For them, Hashem says, "I will betroth you to Me with belief," Emuna. Every Jew believes. We are "believers the children of believers," as we have seen that even Jews that were not observant have sacrificed themselves rather than break their connection with Hashem.

Now, at the end of the exile, the main way to connect to Hashem is through Emuna, belief. About Moshe, it says, "And the man, Moshe, was the humblest of any person that was on the face of the earth." Why was he so humbled? Because he saw our generation, the generation that would bring Moshiach, how void of understanding or even emotional connection we would be, yet our Emuna would be so strong. This humbled him.

Our great Emuna is a key to bringing Moshiach. May we merit to experience the last words of the Haftora, "and you will know Hashem," the completion of our marriage, when we will see the infinite in the finite, with the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon.

*Dedicated to my wonderful daughter Mussie who is celebrating her birthday this week. May Hashem be with you always, and may your smile keep shining; lighting up the world around you.*



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