



PROBING

THE PROPHETS

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“Sos Asis BaShem”!! The glorious cry of Knesset Yisrael (the body politic) to the nation (or, the nation to Jerusalem) urging them to rejoice over Hashem’s soon-to-be redemption, is understood both as “I shall rejoice intensely *with* Hashem” as well as “*in* Hashem” – and both are correct! Israel will rejoice *IN* Hashem, that is, *THROUGH* His redemption and deliverance of His people and *WITH* Hashem, who will join His children in their joy and their celebration. This joyful exclamation is a most fitting opening to the last of seven haftarat of consolation, expressing Israel’s full acceptance of – and faith in – G-d’s comforting promises.

Yet, as powerful and as emotional as our haftarah’s initial words are, it is important to realize that they are not found in the *beginning* of the 61st chapter of Sefer Yishayahu but in the final verses. Given the passionate expression of joy spoken by the long-suffering nation, we might expect the collective cry to precede the chapter describing the glorious future that awaits Israel. The fact that it does not, begs us to study the earlier p’sukim in that perek – those *not* included in the haftarah – in order to learn what it was that had the nation respond with such overwhelming joy expressed in these rapturous words. Upon doing so, we find these earlier p’sukim replete with Divine promises regarding the years to come – as earlier chapters are as well. But unique to these

promises is that they stand in clear contrast to the prophecies of doom and disaster. Yishayahu opens his address by clarifying the purpose of his latest message:

He begins his prophetic message by telling the people: “G-d has anointed me...to bind the brokenhearted”, and then starts to enumerate missions upon which Hashem had sent him, including:

- “proclaiming freedom for the captives...”
- “releasing the imprisoned from bondage...”
- “comforting all who grieve...”
- “and bringing “splendor in place of ashes to all mourners of Zion.”

As in the many earlier prophecies of comfort, the navi continues describing the future glory, success and fame that awaits the nation – but now he also gives assurances to the nation that G-d would “remove the shame” that years of suffering and exile had caused them. Additionally, Yishayahu assures them: “brit olam echrot lahem”, that Hashem would seal a “new”, eternal covenant with Israel, creating a new relationship to repair the one that Israel had abused and ignored. I would propose that it was these promises that struck the hearts of the humbled nation, and bring Knesset Yisrael to burst forth in their cry of **“Sos Asis BaShem!”**, to rejoice intensely in/with G-d.

Given this “prequel” to this haftarah,

we can better appreciate the message that follows in the haftarah itself. After sharing Hashem's promises with the people, the navi makes his own promise as well: "L'ma'an Tziyon lo echeshch..." "I (too) will not remain silent for the sake of Tziyon!" Yishayahu promises the nation that **he** would pray to G-d for the welfare of Yerushalayim and continues by presenting a most remarkable challenge to the people. Just take a look at the 6th and 7th verses of the 62nd perek – read those words that, I'm sure, are well-known to many: "Al chomotayich, Yerushalayim, hifkadti shomrim.." – the navi tells us that guards have been appointed over the walls of Yerushalayim all day and night. But who appointed these guards? And who are the "guards"? And what was their job?

How beautifully does Rav Yigal Ariel explain that it was Yishayahu himself, he

who pledged that he would not remain silent for Tziyon, it is HE who appointed the guards; the "guards" included all of those who mourned for Jerusalem (Ibn Ezra, Radak); their mission was "al domi lachem" – not to remain silent – as the prophet promised HE wouldn't – "Ad shey'chonen v'ad sheyasim et Yerushalayim tehilla ba'aretz" – until G-d establishes and makes Yerushalayim a source of praise in the world!

REMARKABLE!! Yishayahu charges us all to continue praying to G-d for Yerushalayim.

- Don't be silent!!!
- Don't be passive!!
- Don't leave G-d alone;
- Keep "bothering" Him!!!

This is precisely what the navi promised to do himself.

That is precisely what the psalmist meant when he penned "Im eshcachech Yerushalayim...."

And this is precisely what we should keep in mind each time we ask Hashem "Uv'nai Yerushalayim, or "HaMachazir shecinato l'Tziyon".

We are fulfilling the charge that Yishayahu set before us

....and we are doing G-d's will. ■

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