



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

BY REBBETZIN DR. ADINA SHMIDMAN



Hearing the Clarion Call

YESHAYAHU

27:6-28:13; 29:22-23

In this week's Haftorah we read:

וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא יִתְקַע בְּשׂוֹפָר גָּדוֹל וּבָאֵר
הָאֲבָדִים בְּאֶרֶץ אַשּׁוּר וְהַנִּדְחִים בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לַיהוָה בְּהַר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בִּירוּשָׁלַם:

And on that day, a great ram's horn shall be sounded; and the strayed who are in the land of Assyria and the expelled who are in the land of Egypt shall come and worship the LORD on the holy mount, in Jerusalem.

Why are the countries of Ashur and Mitzrayim chosen to represent the global community when describing the dramatic ingathering of the Jewish people in Messianic times? Rav Shimon Schwab in his commentary on prayer suggests that the two places mentioned in Yeshayahu are not just physical places but can be understood in the metaphorical sense as well. The two sources of pain we have experienced in exile are that of plenty and pain. The land of Ashur represents the experience of plenty, from the Hebrew word "osher". The impact of living with affluence and tranquility has caused many to be lost, "ovdim". The alternative exile experience, Mitzrayim, has been one of great difficulty and pain, from the word "tzar".

Our nation has suffered greatly with many pushed away, "nidachim", due to the pain of philosophical angst and religious doubt.

While the Navi addresses us on a national level, these words can also be understood on a personal level. We often feel disconnected with Hashem in a "Goldilocks" way - when things are too good or too bad. The Navi is telling us that whether we are distanced because of Ashur, when things are easy and comfortable or because of Mitzrayim, when things are so painful, ultimately we have the capacity to reconnect when we hear the shofar - Hashem's heavenly call. Perhaps our greatest challenge is neither that of Ashur nor that of Mitzrayim. Rather, our greatest challenge is to open our ears to Hashem's clarion call from the shofar beseeching us to turn to Him. ■

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