



Parshat
Haazinu

By: Rabanit
K. Sarah Cohen

**THE MESSAGE OF THE
MIGHTY WATERS**
"Maftir Yonah"

The most coveted honor in shul is *Maftir Yonah*. It relates the story of Yonah Ha'navi, which is read in the Minchah service of Yom Kipur.

The Rashab (a"h) stated that reciting this Haftorah will bring berachot of prosperity in the coming year. But what is the message of this reading and why is Yonah singled out as the Navi whose words are read on this holy day? What are the unique qualities possessed by Yonah and the singular mission with which he was charged?

The Navi Yonah is associated with the pasuk in Tehilim, "Those who go down to the sea in ships, who perform tasks in mighty waters" (107:23).

The term "mighty waters" is an analogy for the many challenges and obstacles that our material existence presents for our souls. There are certain people whose life task is to set forth on these mighty waters, even when - as in the case of Yonah's journey - the waters are stormy and beset with danger, for the sake of other individuals.

The Baal Shem Tov (a"h) explains that these people lead their lives, not for their own gain, not even for the sake of spiritual attainments, but solely for the

purpose of assisting others.

There is a difficulty with this concept. The reason Yonah set out to sea was because he was fleeing from Hashem's presence. Why then is his connection with the sea considered favorable? There is an added difficulty in that Yonah was a Navi. He was not a simple person, but one to whom Hashem's word had been directly revealed. How could such an individual refrain from carrying out Hashem's command? Indeed, failing to communicate a prophecy is a severe sin, punishable by death. What virtue is there in such conduct?

In Pirkei De'Rabee Eliezer, Rabee Eliezer ben Horkenus (a"h) explains the motivation for Yonah's flight. He knew the people of Ninveh would repent when he communicated his prophecy to them. This was his fear. The repentance of the inhabitants of Ninveh would not predict favorable tidings for Am Yisrael.

Many Neviim were sent to the Jewish people without being able to evoke a change in their conduct. What would be the reaction in the spiritual realms after the gentiles repent as soon as they receive a message from Hashem, while the Jews continue their unfavorable conduct despite the many warnings?

Rather than cause such repercussion, Yonah chose to flee to Tarshish. Yonah was aware of the workings of hasgachah peratit and understood that Hashem would

REFUAH SHLEIMAH
&
HATZLACHAH

Yonah bat Henya
 Michael ben Yonah
 Ro'ee ben Rachel
 May bat Ilana
 Ben Tzvi ben Ilana
 Gidon ben Esther
 Esther bat Mazal
 Yosef ben Devorah
 Yaffa bat Rivka
 Baruch Chai ben Zoya
 Rivkah bat Malkah
 Nissan ben Liza
 Gavriel ben Toviyo
 David ben Liza
 Baila Chava
 bat
 Sorka
 Freida Leah
 bat
 Pesha Rachel
 Yehoshuah Mordechai
 ben
 Leah Gita
 Chaim Yehudah
 ben
 Aidel
 Efrat
 bat
 Shifra Tanya
 Irin
 bat
 Sonya



use other emissaries to communicate His message. With or without his own involvement, Hashem's *nevuah* would reach Ninveh, and its inhabitants would repent. Yonah also knew the punishment for failing to deliver a prophecy. Despite the inevitable outcome, he was willing to accept such a fate, rather than be the one to create unfavorable consequences for the Jewish people.

This is precisely the type of person who can "perform tasks in mighty waters." A person who loves every one of his fellow men and is willing to sacrifice everything, his spiritual qualities, and even his life for their sake, possesses the ability to help others reveal the virtues lying dormant within them.

Within Yonah's name is also an allusion to the message that will arouse these hidden positive qualities. Yonah is described as *ben Amitai*. Literally, this phrase means "son of Amitai," but figuratively, it can be interpreted as "a man of truth."

By communicating the truth of our existence and spreading awareness of the Divine life-force that permeates all beings, it is possible to lift people out of their preoccupation with material concerns and enable them to focus on their purpose in life. Such insights can serve as a beacon of light that guides all people, even those struggling within the "mighty waters" of our contemporary society, to a life of meaning, happiness, and inner peace.

The story of Yonah's mission is particularly relevant in the present times, as the climate throughout the world is turbulent, with "mighty winds" and "fierce storms" changing the face of society at an unprecedented pace.

Every one of us should think that "this great storm is because of me," - the upheavals we are witnessing throughout the world are intended to foster a realization of the imminence of the real transition that our own lives will soon undergo.

The natural disasters that have been unfolding are on an epic scale. Cities and countries around the world remain paralyzed. Scientists are concluding that the storms and earthquakes are the biggest on record.

As we continue to daven for the safety and wellbeing of all the people affected

by these natural disasters, we cannot help but turn our attention to the Gemara of Yevamot (63a) that proclaims that disasters come to the world only because of Am Yisrael.

Rashi Ha'kadosh (a"h) on the Gemara explains that catastrophes occur so that Bnei Yisrael will come to fear Hashem, which will bring them to do *teshuvah*. The Gemara cites a *pasuk* in Tzefanya (3:6) as a source for this statement. Tzefanyah Ha'navi (a"h) says that the ultimate reason why Hashem will do this is so that we will await His kingship.

The Rambam (a"h) in *Hilchos Melachim* explains that one of the fundamental principles of the Jewish monarchy is that the king's constituents fear him. In order for us to accept Hashem as our king we must first have *yirat shamayim*. One of the main principles of Rosh Hashanah, which we recently commemorated, is that we officially accept Hashem as our King. We prepare for this the entire month of Elul, and witnessing Hashem's might and power on display with storms and earthquakes such as the one that wreaked havoc in Texas, Puerto Rico, Florida, and Mexico is intended to inspire us with awe.

The Chafetz Chaim (a"h) in his sefer, *Leket Eimurim* writes concerning several earthquakes that occurred in his time that if there would be prophets alive today, they would be going to everyone, warning them to do *teshuvah*. Since we do not have *Neviim*, Hashem is sending us the messengers of nature. Through the winds, rains, and the shaking of the earth, we understand the message from above.

On Rosh Chodesh we recite the words, "*Oseh malachav ruchot* - He makes His messengers the strong winds - *Mesharetav esh lohet* - his servants are the scorching fires." Storms and natural calamities are Hashem's messengers, sent to warn Bnei Yisrael to do wake up and do *teshuvah*.

The first step in order to accept Hashem's message is to realize that these abnormal events are messages for us. If we would speak about them in a different light, we would realize that it

YONAH

Continued

is Hashem that is storming - not Harvey, not Maria, or Jose. It is Hashem! We should not attribute the storms and natural disasters to global warming, climate change, hurricane season or any other factor, as many have done. Whether you believe in climate change or not, by claiming that some climate factor caused these disasters, you take away from the fact that it was caused by the One who runs the world. He decided to bring this storm. Speaking about the storm correctly would strike its intended fear in us: the fear of Hashem.

Yirmiyah Ha'navi states: "O House of Yisrael, can I not deal with you like this potter? - says Hashem. Just like the clay in the hands of the potter, so are you in My hands, O House of Yisrael" (18:6).

In the week leading up to the eclipse, many Israeli reporters ran a series of articles exploring the prophetic implications of the rare phenomenon. At the time, Hurricane Harvey was not considered a threat. But in the aftermath of the two events, spiritual world leaders and news reporters revisited the prophetic predictions surrounding the eclipse, contacting the prominent rabbis interviewed in the eclipse series.

The first article cited the *Yalkut Moshe*, written by Rabbi Moshe ben Yisrael Benyamin (a"h) in Tzefat in 1894. Rabbi Benyamin wrote that when a solar eclipse occurs at the beginning of the Hebrew month of Elul, as this one did, "It is a bad sign for the other nations, bringing great damage to the kings of the East, and bringing great storms."

At the time, the developing political storm between North America and North Korea seemed much more



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threatening than the clouds over the Atlantic. But Rabbi Yosef Berger, the rabbi of David Hamelech's kever in Yerushalayim, suggested that the nevuah was referring specifically to Kim Jong Un, the supreme leader of the rogue Asian nation. Though the section of the prophecy concerning the 'kings of the east' is still developing, and recently intensified after North Korea fired a missile over Japanese airspace. But the part of the prophecy predicting major storms has fully materialized in dramatic fashion. We see the Yad Hashem clearly guiding these past week's events.

With all these amazing natural phenomenon happening one right after the other, it is clear that this is a divine occurrence and this is precisely what the nevuot are referring to.

The word Olam (world), comes from the root of the word for 'hidden' (he'elem). Chachamim teach that Hashem hides Himself behind nature, but occasionally, He pulls the curtain aside just enough so that we get a glimpse of Him acting directly with His world. Hashem is giving us an opportunity to be witness to all of this so that we can strengthen our belief. The reason why prophecy exists, the reason why chachamim wrote about these future events, is that when it happens as clearly as it has been happening, it is undeniable proof that Hashem's word is true.

The *Zohar Ha'kadosh* states that a nation has a berachah until it fulfills its "*seah*," its divinely-determined limit of immoral behavior. Although America has a lot of zechuyot, especially given its role in the development of the state of Israel - but, given its current moral decline, one has to wonder if that limit is being reached. What we are witnessing now is a prelude to Mashiach.

The Era of Redemption is no longer a dream of the distant future, but a pressing reality. We are on the threshold of the Geulah and we are in the process of crossing that threshold. At such a time, the self-sacrifice of Yonah and the message of truth that he communicated is increasingly necessary to allow more and more individuals to "live in the spirit of the Geulah," and to experience a taste of the awareness we will be granted in that era. This in turn will serve as a catalyst to precipitate the actual coming of the redemption. Yehi ratzon we should merit to see it taking place in the immediate future.

WHERE DO WE BELONG?

Yom Kipur

There is a custom to bless our children on Erev Yom Kipur. Many parents show deep emotions when blessing their children and the children do not understand the depth behind the wellspring of emotions.

As a young bachur, Rabbi Yechiel Spero would often go home to eat the Seudah Ha'mafseket on Erev Yom Kipur. He looked forward to being blessed. He yearned to feel his father's hand on his head and hear about the dreams and aspirations that he had for him along with his siblings. He heard the words, "Vi'hi cheshkecha ba'Torah - may your craving be for Torah." And finally, the way his father deliberately enunciated the words "Va'tikatev, ve'techatem le'chaim tovim ve'arukim - and may you be inscribed and sealed for a good, long life," - was something he would always remember. How treasured those moments were. He waited for them then with avid anticipation as he still does now - as a father who himself blesses his own children on this day.

He still yearns to sense the touch of his father's hand on his head, the caress of his hand on his cheek. He loved to hear him say those words, "we are so proud of you..." His eyes welled up with tears as he would recall these precious moments.

With his father's permission, he adopted his father in law's minhag to bless the children every Friday night. It is special to him. Though Rabbi Spero often wonders, if his children feel the way he did as a child, when he gives them a berachah. Perhaps we all take it for granted.

One Friday night, not too long ago, he was privileged to be with a friend who had just had his first child after many years of marriage. As the new father walked out of shul, Rabbi Spero turned to him and said, "What would I give to be in the room when you you're your child a berachah tonight!"

Later that evening, Rabbi Spero walked to the man's home for the Shalom Zachor and as you can imagine, it was a lively and happy occasion. The singing and dancing were memorable. After the crowd settled down, the new father began to speak. At first, he mentioned a perek of Tehilim (150) in which David Hamelech (a"h) praises Hashem "...be'tof u'machol, be'minim ve'ugav - with drum and dance, with organ and flute."

He posed the question, "Why does David Hamelech have to praise Hashem in so many different ways and with so many different instruments?" His answer was unforgettable.

"Maybe David Hamelech composed this perek for someone like me. I don't know where to begin! I have such a deep hakarat hatov to Boreh Olam that I don't know how I can express it adequately. Should I beat a drum or strum a guitar? Should I play the flute or blow a trumpet? I will try anything! I just want to tell the Ribono Shel Olam how grateful I am."

And then he proceeded to quote Rabbi Spero's earlier comment. He spoke about their conversation in shul and how he had mentioned to him "what I wouldn't give to be in the room when you you're your child a beracha tonight." He recounted those incredible few moments in which he blessed his child for the very first time and then he broke down crying.

"I wish all of you could experience for a moment - just one time in your life, the feeling that I had tonight."

Rabbi Spero wondered to himself, "But I bless my children every Friday night and yet I don't feel this way!" The Rav realized how monotony is so very dangerous. We take so much for granted. Our daily lives, our parnasah, our parents and our children, receiving berachot from our parents every week - and giving berachot to our children.

The tables have turned and now Rabbi Spero is the father who places his trembling hands, lovingly on his children's heads on Erev Yom Kipur. It is HIS voice that quivers as he is transformed through the deep, internal emotions. It is HIS eyes that well up with tears.

It is one of the most overwhelming and humbling moments of the year. It is Erev Yom Kipur. In a few hours we will be yearning to feel the hand of our Father and we will be anxious for HIS love and warmth. There is nothing more precious in the world than the privilege of being a son to the FATHER of all fathers. All we yearn for is to hear his whisper "My son, I am so proud of you!"

Let us discover what it is that we are seeking through these blessings. What dreams and aspirations do we have for our children and what will make us proud of them?

**ATTENTION LADIES**

Call us to host a learning group in your community.

(347) 430-5700

Rabanit K. Sarah Cohen will be speaking on the following dates:

Date: Sep 27, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY
Special Aseret Yemei Teshuvah Program

Date: Oct 18, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: Oct 31, 2017

Time: 7:45pm

Place: To Be Announced

**SPECIAL GATHERING IN HONOR OF
RACHEL IMEINU'S YAHRTZEIT**

Date: Nov 15, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: Motzei Shabat, Nov. 18, 2017

Time: 8:00pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY
**Special Melaveh Malkah In Honor Of
Rosh Chodesh Kislev**

Date: Nov 29, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: Dec 18, 2017

Time: 7:45pm

Place: To Be Announced

**CHANUKAH PARTY IN HONOR OF
ROSH CHODESH KISLEV**

Date: Dec 27, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

ANNOUNCEMENT

Audio-visual shiurim of

Rabanit

Kineret Sarah Cohen

Are Now Available For Viewing At

www.torahanytime.com

Instructions: Register for free and click on the "Ladies" tab at the top of the Home Page. Scroll down and look for Rabanit K. Sarah Cohen. Underneath the image for the Rabanit, click on the "**follow**" tab if you want to be notified via email or text about a shiur that has become available for viewing.

Shiur To Post Sun. Sep. 24, 2017

Yom Kipur

The Calling Of The Shofar

Log on and enjoy the live lectures and be inspired.



THOUGHT OF THE DAY

How you respond to a request for a favor reveals your feelings about the one asking.

"Okay" - says that you will do it but reluctantly.

"No Problem" - means that you do not mind doing it.

"My Pleasure" - says that you are happy that you were asked and will enjoy doing it for the other person.

INTERESTING FACT

On the 10th of Tishrei of the year 2449 from creation, 82 days after Bnei Yisrael betrayed their newly entered covenant with Hashem by worshipping a Golden Calf and after Moshe Rabeinu (a"h) twice spent 40 days on of Har Sinai pleading on their behalf, "G-d restored His goodwill with the Jewish people gladly and wholeheartedly, saying to Moses 'I have forgiven, as you ask', and gave him the Second Luchot" - thereby establishing the day as a time for atonement, forgiveness and teshuvah for all generations.

I would like to wish you all a gmar chatimah tovah. A year filled with berachot and yeshuot. May we merit to experience Hashem's kindness and compassion. May we merit to be filled with His light so that our road towards Torah and mitzvot is clear.

May we enjoy a year of joy as we usher in a new era of redemption and witness the coming of Mashiach this year B'ezrat Hashem.

With All My Love,
R. Sarah Cohen



SPECIAL DEDICATION

This week's newsletter is dedicated in memory of my dear and holy grandfather -

Amram ben Mochluf (a"h)

May all the good work we do, all the inspiration spread and absorbed bring him much nachat in shamayim. May his good name and deeds be the driving force of our organization and may he merit to see generations of grandchildren and great grandchildren following in his ways of kindness and compassion.

May he have an aliyat neshamah on his yahrtzeit
(Yom Kipur)
and may he be a melitz yosher to all Am Yisrael.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

** "The spiritual life does not remove us from the world - but leads us deeper into it."
**

** "The highest knowledge is to know that we are surrounded by mystery. Neither knowledge nor hope for the future can be the pivot of our life or determine its direction. It is intended to be solely determined by our allowing ourselves to be gripped by G-d, who reveals Himself in us, and by our yielding our will to His."

SUKOT PACKAGES



Ohel Sara would like to deliver a Yom Tov Package to boost the spirits of so many women who are unfortunately entering the chag feeling dejected and alone.

Help us to bring simchah to these women while simultaneously donating to our worthy organization.

The Sukot Packages consist of a bottle of wine, a bottle of honey, two candles, two rolls, a Tefilat Todah, and a warm and encouraging letter from me.

Each package is **\$36 (twice chai)** and will be delivered throughout Aseret Yemei Teshvah and after Yom Kipur.

Help us bring a smile to another Bat Melech

To Donate A Package Follow The Instructions Below:

1. Log onto **www.ohelsara.com** and click on the "Donate" button of your choice
2. Call our offices at **(347) 430-5700** to donate via credit card



Newsletter Dedication

Sara Bat Mimon Ha'Kohen (A"H)

Ohel Sara is named after this tzadikah (my grandmother). May the inspiration that women draw from this weekly newsletter benefit her neshamah in Gan Eden and may we all be redeemed as a result.



Ohel Sara wishes all it's readers a Shabbat Shalom u'Mevorach!

Candlelighting Time

6:23PM



**You can now make a donation
to Ohel Sara through Paypal:**

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Ohel Sara Congregation

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