

## **Va'eschanan 5770**

### **Rabbi Aharon Ziegler**

After three weeks of partial mourning, nine days of more intensive mourning, culminated with a Tisha B'Av of extremely strenuous mourning, we need a break. That break begins with Parshat Va'et'chanan.

According to Rav Soloveitchik, Parshat Va'et'chanan begins a unit of several Parshi'ot within the book of Devarim where Moshe is teaching us how to live a life of peace and Bracha in the future, climaxed by Ha'azinu and Vezot HaBracha. It is part of the promise that after the great tragedies of Jewish history, we would return to the Land, restore it, and be reconciled with HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Many of us see this beginning to happen in our time in a daily glorious way before our eyes. All this is, of course, very appropriate for Shabbat Nachamu.

Moshe, then, is not only Rabbeinu, (our great teacher) not only the Greatest Navi, but also the first prophet to foretell about Ge'ulah (redemption) at the ending of days. He could very well have been called the prophet of Ge'ulah. So why, then was this role delegated to Eliyahu HaNavi?

At the Pesach Seder we tell stories and sing songs about Eliyahu HaNavi. Malachi declares that Eliyahu HaNavi will bring the hearts of parents to children and the hearts of children to parents (*VE'HEISHIV LEV AVOT AL BANIM*). It is Eliyahu who will answer questions that are still open in the Mishna and Gemara (*TEIKU, TISHBI YE'TARETZ.*)

Why was Eliyahu chosen to be the prophet of redemption of the future, and why was Moshe overlooked? Furthermore, Eliyahu's prophecies were not even of the future! He was concerned with his own times! Yeshayahu prophesied redemption, Malachi spoke of the Great Day (*YOM HA'GADOL*) of the future, Moshe led us from Mitzrayim, but there is not one prophecy of redemption from Eliyahu! Not even good news, only harsh words! The answer is, that Eliyahu was taught and he learned a lesson, which is necessary for all of us to note and bear in mind.

Both Moshe and Eliyahu were men of justice and zealousness. Moshe killed the Egyptian, and Eliyahu had all the prophets of Ba'al killed. Moshe stood before Par'oh and Eliyahu stood before the king and accused him of murder. Neither one was afraid. But there was one quality of Moshe that Eliyahu did not have-at first. That was the quality of patience.

Moshe's main role was to prepare the Children of Israel to receive and to become committed to the Revelation. Moshe was the shepherd, the *RO'EH NE'EMAN*, the

teacher, and even the nurse. He was the lamb in the desert for forty years, with the willingness to sacrifice himself in defense of the people. These were Moshe's qualities, *KA'ASHER YISA HA'OMEN ET HA'YONEK*, (Bamidbar 11:12). That quality was necessary for Eliyahu to learn.

The lesson came with the vision in the cave, that you can't change a people in one generation. Moshe worked at it for forty years, and then Yehoshua, and neither of them lost their patience. Eliyahu had to learn that lesson. The interesting thing is that immediately upon learning it, his first task was to appoint and anoint Elisha, who would ultimately follow him. Although Eliyahu would yet serve for many more years, but for now Eliyahu realizes that it won't happen on one generation, and it will take never ending patience.

HaShem seeks as the prophet of redemption, one who had to struggle and learn these lessons the hard way. Otherwise people may think that these qualities were inborn in Moshe's character, and he was unique- no one can compare to. So HaShem shows us a man, Eliyahu, who was not born with these qualities, but he learned them. Precisely because he had to learn them, he is the one held up as an example by our sages, and not Moshe.

We too can learn this lesson. In our Jewish world today, we have a large capacity for zeal and Kana'ut. Sometimes these practices bring results, but that is not the quality that will bring the Ge'ulah (redemption). It is the patience, the tolerance and the love for our fellow Jew that will truly count. Moshe had it, Eliyahu learned it, and so can we.