

Behar-Be'chukotei 5772
Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

We read at end of 26:5-“*Vi'shavtem Lavetach Be'Ar'tze'chem*”, [And you will dwell securely in your Land], and the next pasuk begins, “*Ve'natati Shalom Ba'Aretz*,” I will provide peace in the land]. Usually one thinks that first we must have peace in the Land and only then can we live securely. Comes the Torah and teaches us otherwise. Having a peace agreement with our neighborly “cousins” does not guarantee our security. One never know what can trigger off a “disagreement”, leading to a war, so we must always be on guard and never relax into a false feeling of tranquility. However, if we feel and are indeed secure in our Land because HaShem is with us and our neighbors fear us, then we can expect to fully dwell in peace.

The formula for peace in this Land is not through negotiations and compromises but rather through a firm commitment of trust and faith in HaShem. The Navi Yirmiyahu introduces the Haftarah [16:19] by proclaiming, “*HaShem Uzi U'ma'uzi*” [HaShem is my strength, my stronghold, my refuge in the day to come]

The Malbim, (R' Meir Leib ben Yechiel Mechel, 1809-1879) in his commentary on this Haftarah explains that the Navi discusses three approaches to one's faith in HaShem. Yirmiyahu showers praise and blessing upon one who places his total trust in HaShem. Although this person undoubtedly involves himself in security by having a strong army he realizes that HaShem is ultimately his true Protector. A second prevalent attitude comes from those of dual allegiance, who place their trust in HaShem and in their personal efforts. Although this is not a supreme form of faith and trust, and doesn't receive words of praise it is nonetheless acceptable. There exists yet a third attitude amongst some, one that is totally unacceptable and condemned by the Navi. Yirmiyahu curses one who places total trust in his own military prowess without even including HaShem as a factor in the equation.

This Parasha a Haftarah is a key element in understanding the basic conflict in our country today. Whether or not yeshiva student should be drafted, how important do we view the concept to Torah learning for the well being of our country and how significant of a role does religion play in the army of the Israel Defense Forces. As one who has just returned from serving in the army for a week, let me share with you one example of religion in the Israeli Army. If a soldier on an army base needs to say Kaddish, it becomes the responsibility of the commanding officer to make sure there is a Minyan available on base. If not, then he must bring in soldiers from another base to make that this one Chayal does not miss a Kaddish. Where else but in the Israeli Army! Yirmiyahu is shepping nachat from us.