

Bamidbar, 5773

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In this week's haftarah, the Navi [Prophet] Hoshei'a (2:1-2:2) reveals the indescribable love that HaShem has for our people. The Navi opens with warm words of blessing and says, "The Jewish people will be likened to the sand of the sea that cannot be counted or measured." He then continues and says, "And in place of not being recognized as My nation, they will be regarded as 'the sons of HaShem'". This passage indicates that, prior to this Nevu'ah, they experienced serious rejection. In the previous chapter it is recorded that they temporarily forfeited their status of Am HaShem. It states in (1:9) "Declare them no longer as My nation because they are not Mine and I am not theirs". Yet a little further we find HaShem blessing His people in an unlimited capacity and even bestowing upon them the elevated status of "Ammi"-My nation" It is this amazing and drastic change of attitude that I would like to discuss.

We see this happening in our own calendar life cycle. Last week we read the Tochacha, the admonition and punishments that we will have to endure if we are not faithful to the Torah. Next week, on the sixth of Sivan we will read about the great display of love that HaShem bestows upon us on Mount Sinai at the time of Kabbalat HaTorah. This vacillation has a rationale and concept.

Chazal address this vacillation with a story (Sifrei- Parashat Balak). A king was enraged by his wife's behavior and immediately summoned a Sofer [scribe] to prepare her Get [Divorce document]. In the meantime, while the Sofer is writing, the king calms down, thinks it over, and decides not to divorce her. However, he faced a serious dilemma because he was unwilling to cancel the Sofer and reveal his drastic change of heart. He finally resolved his problem and ordered the Sofer to rewrite his Ketuvah, doubling its previous financial commitment. Chazal conclude that the same was true with HaShem. After instructing Hoshei'a to deliver sharp words of reprimand, HaShem retracts them. However, instead of canceling the initial prophecy HaShem tempered it with warm words of praise and blessing. These words were so uplifting that they reflected our people in a newly gained status of "Ammi"

The end result was that the queen understood her husband's compassionate response to her poor behavior. Instead of totally rejecting her he actually increased his commitment to her. She sensed this as his way of securing their relationship even after her previous conduct. This unbelievably kind response evoked similar

feelings from her and she reciprocated with her fullest expression of appreciation to him.

The Tochacha of parashat Bechukotei came as a stern warning to our entire nation of Israel; this week's parasha of Bamidbar is our buffer zone of reflection. To correct that what need be corrected and enter the Yom Tov of Shavu'ot with happiness and confidence. And the lesson for our personal lives is that after reconciling with our spouse following a domestic dispute, or with our friends or/and family, our new relationship should be more positive and intense with love, care and devotion than ever before. With a little extra effort-it can be done.