

Tazria: Achor Vakedem, and Parshat HaChodesh

- Nisson Shulman.

For Tazria, and/or Parshat HaChodesh, the relationship of past and future becomes important. The Midrash that true blessing comes when we build the future on the lessons of the past. ACHOR VAKEDEM TZARTANI VATASHET ALAY KAPECHA. The significance of the VAV that changes the tense, so that VAYEHI BIYEMEI signifies TZAROT and VEHAYA signifies great blessing.

Tazria: Achor Vakedem

The Midrash, at the beginning of this week's Torah reading, begins with the passage of Tehilim, ACHOR VAKEDEM TZARTANI, VATASHET ALAY KAPECHA. There are many interpretations, among them the Midrash that declares a reward for the person who is worthy in this world and in the next, and punishment for he who is not worthy.

But I suggest that the most appropriate reading of this verse in Tehilim 139:5 for our time, is that every human being is created with the ability to look ahead and to look back. In fact, the human is the only creature with a consciousness of history, the only creature who can look back. And if he can look back to learn lessons of the past and apply them to the future, then he is immensely blessed.

The Gemara declares that wherever we find the verse VAYEHI BIYEMEY, it signifies TZAROT; such as VAYEHI BIYEMEY AHASUEROS – HAVI HAMAN, VAYEHI BIYEMEY SHEFOT HASHOFTIM, VAYEHI RAAV BAARETZ, and so forth (Megillah 10b, Vayikra Rabba 11:7).

And yet, all the great prophecies of the future, and the promises of after-days begin with the word, VEHAYA; VEHAYA BEACHARIT HAYAMIM, NACHON YIHIYE HAR BET HASHEM BEROSH HEHARIM...

What is the difference between VAYEHI BIYEMEI that signifies trouble and VEHAYA which offers the greatest hope and promise? Aren't both phrases using the same word, HAYA, "to be", YEHI, "will be"?

There is a world of difference. The difference is in the VAV, the letter that switches the meaning of the word from future to past and past to future. VAYEHI BIYEMEI: "It was in the days". VEHAYA, "And it will come to pass".

If you take the future and all you can see in it is the past, without hope and promise; if all you can do is look back on greatness that once was and do not see how it can come to be in the future, that is TZAROT. But if you take the past, and on it build a glorious future, that is hope, vision, all the promises of the fulfillment of the destiny of our people.

We are living at a time when we must lean on the heroism of our people in the past, on the

sacrifices they willingly made many times for faith and land, and turn it into the future, creating that glorious time that will be blessed by the Almighty, the time of peace and tranquillity, the time of greatness, when NACHON YIHIYE HAR BET HASHEM BEROSH HEHARIM... AMEN VEAMEN.

(FOR PARSHAT HAHODESH) The yearly renewal of the beginning of our people has meaning only if we build on our glorious past to create a more glorious future, and this is an important lesson of PARSHAT HAHODESH.