



## SEFER YIRMIYAHU

2019-2020 Shiur  
Rabbi Reuven Travis

### CHAPTER NINE

#### ➤ Chapter 9 – A continuation thematically of the previous chapter contextualized

- Very much a continuation of the previous chapter, both thematically and as well as being part of the Haftorah on Tisha B'Av.
- The prophet seems to have given up hope that the people will accept his message and repent. In many ways, this chapter reads like a “kinah,” a lament, so much so that the chapter opens with the longing of the prophet “to leave my people, To go away from them.”

מִי־תִתְנֶנִּי בַמִּדְבָּר מְלוֹן אֲרָחִים וְאֶעֱזֹבָה אֶת־עַמִּי וְאֶלְכָה מֵאַתֶּם כִּי כָלֵם מִנְאֻפִּים עֲצַרְתָּ בְגָדֶיךָ:

- Rav Hirsch describes the prophet’s feelings thusly: “The prophet has stopped weeping and wailing. He shouts it out in the passionate rage of a pure and noble man wounded to the very depths of his soul: You saw me weep, you have heard my lamentations. Do you still think that I have no feelings for you and remain indifferent while your blood is being shed?”

#### ➤ Verses 6 – 8: Return to the imagery of a silver smith

- Hashem declares that he must “I shall smelt and assay them,” for what else can He do?
- Hashem makes His case even more strongly in verse 8: “Shall I not punish them for such deeds? —says the LORD— Shall I not bring retribution on such a nation as this?”

#### ➤ Verse 13: Worship of the Baal god

- Rabbi Leibtag describes this type of idolatry as a “what’s in it for me” form of worship. The people did not relate to the Baal god. They needed (so they thought) the false god for something. If they worshipped a rain god, it was because they needed rain. A fertility god, so as to have children. And so on.
- Rabbi Leibtag thinks that the people brought this same attitude to their ritual worship in the Temple. They worshipped Hashem because of what they needed or wanted from Him, be it in economic or military matters, not in order to serve Him. (Remember that in Chapter 7, verse 9, Jeremiah claims that the people are worshipping Baal even as they offer sacrifices in the Temple!)
- This, argues Rabbi Leibtag, is what Jeremiah has in mind when he mentions the worship of the Baal god in verse 13 here. The prophet cannot be referring to literal idol worship, maintains Rabbi Leibtag, because the Baal idols themselves were all destroyed during the reign of King Hizkiyyahu.

- This notion of misdirected worship of Hashem is also hinted at in verse 12, where the prophet proclaims: “The LORD replied: Because they forsook the Teaching [תּוֹרָה] I had set before them.” Rabbi Leibtag sees the word here as a reference to Devarim chapters 5 – 26, which are described as תּוֹרָה and which spell out how the people are to know Hashem, to serve Him, and to represent Him as His nation.

➤ **Verses 16 – 19: Jeremiah specifically appeals to the women**

- Why do you think he does so?

➤ **Verses 22 – 23: The key message**

- In verse 22, the prophet declares that wisdom, strength, and riches are not ends in themselves, but rather should be seen as means to a Jew’s real purpose in life, which is (as verse 23 states) to know Hashem.

כִּי אִם-בָּזָאת יִתְהַלֵּל הַמִּתְהַלֵּל הַשֶּׁכֶל וְיִגְדַע אוֹתוֹ׃ כִּי אֲנִי י-יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה תְּסֹד מִשְׁפָּט וְצְדָקָה בְּאֶרֶץ כִּי-בְאֵלֶּה חִפְצֹתַי נְאֻם-יְיָ:

- And what does know Hashem allow us to do? “[To] act with kindness, Justice, and equity in the world” That is what Hashem wants, says the prophet. It is these things that bring delight to Hashem

כִּי אִם-בָּזָאת יִתְהַלֵּל הַמִּתְהַלֵּל הַשֶּׁכֶל וְיִגְדַע אוֹתוֹ׃ כִּי אֲנִי י-יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה תְּסֹד מִשְׁפָּט וְצְדָקָה בְּאֶרֶץ כִּי-בְאֵלֶּה חִפְצֹתַי נְאֻם-יְיָ:

*We want to acknowledge and thank Seth and Sheila Jutan  
for their generosity in sponsoring sefarim for this shiur!*