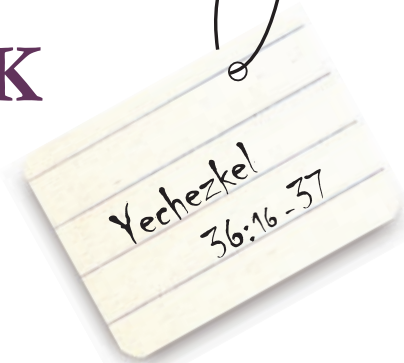


MATAN AL HAPEREK

The Six-Year Online Weekly Tanach Learning Program



Perek 36:16 - 37

Perek 36 begins with words of consolation and redemption for the land and continues with a description of the redemption of the nation. The description of the redemption of the people includes a prophetic-historical survey of the nation of Israel which concentrates on the desecration of God's name in the exile and on the redemption which will follow it.

- 1 The description of the redemption of the nation:
 - a) The description of the redemption in this perek is different from the usual description of the redemption. In order to understand the difference, study the reason for the redemption (22-24), the type of change which the nation will undergo and its source (25-27). What is the reaction of the nation to the redemption (31-32)?
 - b) The redemption is divided into two stages: bringing the nation to the land (24) and the purification of the nation (25-27). Why are these two stages needed to solve the problem of the desecration of God's name among the nations?





2 The purification of the nation: “*And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you will be clean*” (25)

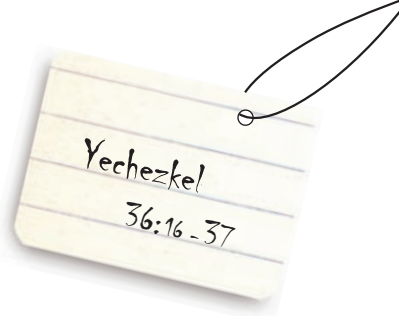
a) The sprinkling of the clean water is an image of the purification and correction of the ways of the nation. Compare this to the description of the sin in the beginning of the prophecy (17). How does this imagery match the general character of the redemption? Use the **Abarbanel** to understand:

And I will sprinkle clean water upon you- Just as a menstruating woman must immerse herself in the mikva in order to purify herself from her uncleanness, so Israel must remove their sins from themselves and become pure and cleansed of them, and God relates this to the process of repentance by saying “*And I will sprinkle...upon you*”, for repentance is not complete without divine assistance, helping the one who repents to return to Him, as it is written “*Restore us to You, O Lord, that we may be restored!*”

See also the words of Rabbi Akiva in **Massechet Yoma**:

R. Akiva says, "How fortunate are you, oh, Israel. Before whom are you being purified? Who is purifying you? Your Father in Heaven, as it is written, 'and I will pour pure water upon you, and you will become pure.

b) The sprinkling of water is mentioned in the Torah in connection with those who have become impure by coming into contact with a dead body (Bamidbar 19:13) In light of this, think of another explanation for the use of this method of purification. Pay attention also to the continuation of the description of the redemption in pasuk 26.



Perek 37

Perek 37 includes two prophecies which describe the stages of the redemption using bold imagery. These are some of the most prominent prophecies in the national consciousness. The first prophecy (1-14) is the vision of the resurrection of the dry bones which is revealed to Yechezkel in the valley. This wonderful vision is a metaphor for the revival of the nation and its redemption. The second prophecy (15-28) is a symbolic prophecy, in which Yechezkel is commanded to join together two sticks which symbolize the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, as an expression of the reunification of the tribes of Israel in the land in the time of the redemption.

- Study the Tannaitic debate before you, and try to understand what the focus of the dry bones prophecy is according to R Yehuda and what the focus of the dry bones prophecy is according to the rest of the Tannaim.

Sanhedrin 92: R. Eliezer said: The dead whom Yechezkel resurrected stood up, uttered song, and [immediately] died... R. Yehudah said: It was truth; it was a parable (Rashi – it was a parable which hinted to the exile, as a dead man returns to life, so Israel will return from the exile)...R. Eliezer the son of R. Yose the Galilean said: The dead whom Yechezkel revived went up to Israel, married wives and begat sons and daughters. R. Judah b. Beteira rose up and said: I am one of their descendants, and these are the tefillin which my grandfather left me [as an heirloom] from them.

See also the **Radak**:

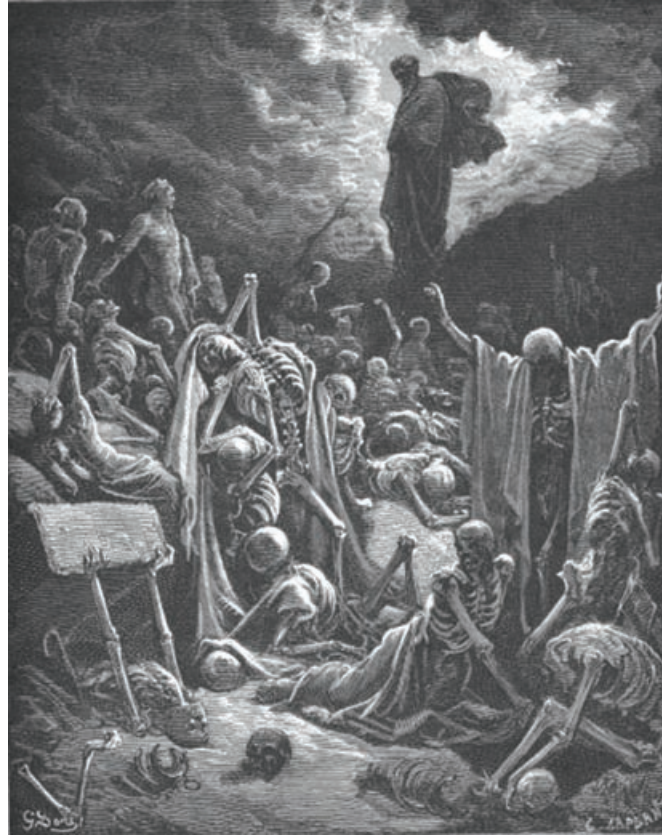
And this was shown to him by the Holy One Blessed be He as a metaphor to show that the children of Israel will come out of the exile that they are in, where they are metaphorically like dry bones. Or perhaps he showed him this to say that in the future there will be a resurrection of the dead of Israel at the time of the salvation, so that they too can see the salvation.



- 4 The vision of the dry bones:
- The vision of the bones has two sections: the allegory (1-10) and its explanation (11-14). Compare the first prophecy about the bones (4-6) to what happened (7-8). What step of the process does not take place in the implementation of the prophecy and why?
 - Why is a separate prophecy about the spirit needed? Compare this to the two stages in the description of the creation of Adam in Bereshit 2:7, and see what the two stages are in the explanation for the allegory (12-13, 14). What is the meaning of dividing the redemption of the nation into two stages?
- 5 The prophecy in pesukim 15-28 deals with the unification of the two kingdoms, and also contains an allegory and its explanation. See the following commentaries to understand what the two sticks represent in the allegory and what the meaning of the unification is according to each commentary:
- RiKa”M (the Radak’s father):** He told him to bring the two sticks together and they would join together to form one stick by a miracle.
- Chanan Porat, Me’at Min HaOr, Bamidbar:** It seems to be... that we are not dealing with boards of wood but rather live trees, and Yechezkel’s act is one of botanic grafting between the lower tree (rootstock) and the upper tree (scion), so that with time they will become one organic tree... The purpose of grafting two varieties of plants from one species is to draw on the special abilities of each variety... the rootstock is taken from a plant with a strong life force, while the more delicate, pampered scion is grafted on to the rootstock and produces a fine fruit. The rootstock and the scion, therefore, need each other...
- 6 There is a verbal and conceptual similarity between the two prophecies in our perek: compare the description of the bones in pasuk 7 with the description of the trees in pasuk 17 as well as the description of the redemption in pasuk 12 with the description in pesukim 21-22. Think about the similarity between the words *etzem* (bone) and *etz* (wood). Try to understand the stages of the redemption of the nation from the combination of the two prophecies.



Appendix



The Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones, Gustav Dore

Taken from Wikipedia

Links to clips about our topic:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nU5L1Y847wU>

A video clip about the prophecy of the dry bones (pictorial with the subtitles of the pesukim from Yechezkel in Hebrew).

<http://flix.tapuz.co.il/v/watch-3661540-.html>

Amir Benayun's song (in Hebrew) using the words of Yechezkel's prophecy of the dry bones.

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מכון תורני לנשים ע"ש שרה בת יצחק יעקב רינגברט
The Sodie Rennet Women's Institute for Torah Studies

המרכז ללימודי תנ"ך