

O' nations – sing the praises of His people, for He will avenge the blood of His servants. (32:43)

Shiras Haazinu ends with the promise that with the advent of the Final Redemption, the world will see *Klal Yisrael* restored to its original glory, its enemies punished for the suffering that they caused for us. The nations of the world will recognize our greatness and will venerate us as G-d's People. *Ramban* views *Shiras Haazinu* as a historical perspective for us to follow, from which we should learn how to live. It depicts the truth about how we were quick to take Hashem's favors, but --when we had enough-- we rebelled. Our lack of fidelity incurred Heavenly punishment in the form of: famine; predatory beasts; cruel, despotic attackers; and ultimate exile. Our exile was far from being a bed of roses. We experienced persecution and hatred on an almost daily basis. The trials and tribulations increased with our sins. In a way, the anti-Semitism worked to our benefit. As long as they hated us, we could not intermarry or indulge in their aberrative behavior. We were just not "good enough" for them. This song foreshadows the misery and travail that would accompany us throughout our exile, but it also guarantees our survival and the downfall of all our enemies.

The Torah giants of each generation would view the adversity to which they were subjected as a source of faith, a living proof of the Torah's predictions. One of the greatest Torah luminaries of the previous generation, **Horav Mordechai Pogremansky, zl**, experienced the Holocaust with its unspeakable horrors. He viewed it as proof that Hashem guides the world, and, without Him, we are unable to exist for even a moment. He once turned to a group of students from Slabodka. They were physically and emotionally broken, having suffered pain and privation during their stay in the Kovno ghetto: "What do you think that Hashem wants of us now? We have all suffered greatly at the hands of these inhuman soldiers. Our bodies are broken; our minds lack the emotional stamina to think properly. What can Hashem possibly expect of us in this darkness?"

Rav Pogremansky responded in his brilliant, insightful manner: "Take a look at the electrified fence. There are guards walking back and forth, armed to the teeth, their finger poised on the trigger, just waiting for the slightest opportunity to shoot us. Their hatred for us is beyond words. Our blood is ownerless. To kill a Jew is absolutely nothing. If so, I ask you, why does he not raise his gun and shoot us for the slightest pretense? Obviously, we are not *hefker*, ownerless chattel. Hashem is here with us, and He is not permitting the Nazi beast to hurt us. Is there a greater proof of *Hashgacha Pratis*, Divine Providence?"

Without Hashem, we cannot survive for a moment. With Hashem, nothing stands in our way. This was *Rav Pogremansky's* attitude. His life was one long story of *emunah* and *bitachon*, faith and trust, in the Almighty. He would often say, "I do not see Germans (Nazi soldiers); I do not see Partisans. I see the *pesukim* of the Torah (in the *Parsha* of the *Tochecha*, Admonition, in which the ninety-eight curses to befall the Jewish People are detailed). The *pesukim* of the Torah surround the ghetto..." He would go on to read specific verses in the Torah which foreshadowed their

present experiences in the ghetto. He added, “The letters flew out of their black containment (black ink) and entered into (our nation’s) life.” (The letters became alive, as part of the prophecy predicted in the Torah.)

I was always bothered about how a prediction foretelling the future of our people, with its many adversities, could be called a *shirah*, song. What can we sing about? When we use it as a source of *emunah* in Hashem, as a foreshadowing for *bitachon* in His salvation, it becomes a song of faith – and that is something to sing about!