

What It Will Be Like

This week's Haftora¹ is read twice during the year. Once with parshas Noach (Noah) and again as the fifth Haftora of consoling, with parshas Ki Seitzei.

The Haftora has a double theme. First, that when Moshiach comes, things will be so good, that we will forget the hardships of the exile. Second, that the redemption will be final, never to be followed by another exile.

The Haftora begins, "Sing, barren one, who hasn't given birth."² Who is the barren one?

The simple explanation is that Hashem is talking to the city of Jerusalem, which feels like a barren woman, who hasn't given birth. Because she is desolate during this long exile. Hashem tells her to sing, as now that Moshiach is here, her streets are once again filled with her children, the Jewish people, she doesn't feel barren any more.

On a deeper level, Hashem is talking to the Jewish person who claims that the Jewish people are barren and have not given birth to him. Meaning, he has totally disassociated himself from the Jewish nation. Hashem is saying, that even he will sing the "Shir Chadash," the New Song, the song we'll sing when Moshiach comes.

The revelation will be so great that we will break out in song, just as we did at the splitting of the sea. Every Jewish person will be included, even the "barren" one, who is in the darkest place. The revelation and

transformation will be so great, that he too will break out in song.³

The exile will then seem as a fleeting dream as the Haftora says, "For a brief moment I forsook you."⁴ And as it says in Tehilim, when Hashem returns the exiles of Zion, "Hayinu k'cholmim, we will have been as dreamers."⁵ like a dream it feels real, but when you wake up it fades away. This will be because, as the verse continues, "with great compassion I will gather you."⁶ The next verse continues,⁷ "With a little wrath, I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness, I will have compassion on you..."⁸

What is clear from these verses, is that when Moshiach comes, it will be so good, that the exile will feel like a brief moment.

Now the Haftora says, "Like the waters of Noach, this is to me, just as I swore to never again cover the earth with the waters of Noach, so have I sworn not to be wrathful with you and not to rebuke you (ever again)."⁹ This verse is self explanatory, except that Hashem calls the flood "the waters of Noach." Why? Because the word Noach is like the word nachas,¹⁰ indicating that it is positive, because it changed the world for good. The same is true about this exile. When Moshiach comes, we will see how everything we went through in this exile, directly made the world ready for Moshiach. We will see the positive in it all.¹¹

³ Sichos Kodesh 5731a pp. 460-461.

⁴ Isaiah 54:7.

⁵ Psalms 126:1.

⁶ Isaiah 54:7.

⁷ Isaiah 54:8.

⁸ Torahs Menachem Hisvaduyos 5751b p. 139.

⁹ Isaiah 54:9.

¹⁰ The Rebbe uses the word "naicha," I changed it to "nachas," because everyone is familiar with this word. The concept is still the same, that the flood was ultimately a positive thing.

¹¹ Torahs Menachem Hisvaduyos 5751a p. 237.

¹ Chabad and Sefardic communities read Isaiah 54:1-10. Ashkenazic communities read Isaiah 54:1-55:5.

² Isaiah 54:1.

The Haftora finishes, that when Moshiach comes "... My kindness will never depart from you, and my covenant of peace will never falter..."¹²

Like bookends, this Haftora is read before and after the holidays, which sets the tone for the whole year. Because bringing Moshiach is at the core of our mission as the Jewish people. Like beacons of light, it is read at the beginning and end of the year, to remind us that though our work is difficult and the exile is dark, what we are accomplishing is tremendous and our reward is even greater.

(Ashkenazi communities continue on further, it is the same as the Haftora of Parshas Re'ei.)

the Haftora continues. Hashem says, that when Moshiach comes, "I will make your windows from kadmah (a kind of gemstone)."¹³

What kind of gemstone is a kadmah?

The Talmud tells us,¹⁴ "Rabbi Shmuel son of Nachmeini said, 'it is a dispute between two angels in heaven, Michael and Gavriel... one says it is a shoham and the other says it is a yashfei. Hashem says to them, "let it be kidayn u'kidayn, like this one and like that one (together)."' Kadmah is a play on the words kidayn kidayn.

Now that we know that kadmah means shoham and yashfei together, we need to know, what is a shoham and what is a yashfei? In other words, what exactly are these two angels arguing about?

There are precious stones that produce their own light from within. Then there are others that if you cut and polish them well, they will reflect light in the most beautiful way. The shoham gives its own light, while the yashfei reflects light.

The debate between the angels, is about the reward we will receive when Moshiach will come. One says yashfei, it will be based on our work, effort and accomplishments. Just like a yashfei reflects light, based on how well it is polished. The other says shoham, which gives its own light. Meaning, that the reward will not be based on our accomplishments, rather, it will be Hashem's infinite revelation as a gift from above. Hashem says that we will get both, the reward for our efforts, and He will also bestow upon us his infinite revelation as a gift.

¹⁵

Perhaps it is your effort, your mitzvah, that will finally tip the scale and bring Moshiach.

May he come soon.

¹² Isaiah 54:10.

¹³ Isaiah 54:12.

¹⁴ Baba Basra 75a.

¹⁵ Lekutei Torah Devarim parshas Re'ei p. 24d