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**Haftarah for Beha'aloscha**  
by Julie Zhuk on 2022-06-25

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The parshah started with the commandment from G-d to light the menorah. It was part of the daily services. The haftara in the book of Zecharya, he has a vision that the menorah has a message of encouragement for lighting the menorah and for the future of the Jewish people. In the parsha, Miriam doesn't like how close Moses is capable of getting close to G-d. Maybe she felt not as special, and she spoke poorly about her brother Moses. Therefore, G-d had punished her. Later G-d explained the prophecy of why Moses was ranked higher than other prophets when it came to clarity and directness. There was a contrast between Mosers and the later prophets from the Haftara. Zecharya, who is mentioned in the haftara here needed an angel to help him understand his vision of what the purpose was for the menorah. Zechraya's level was lower than many of the prophets, in the time of the First Bais Hamikdash. After the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed, G-d's presence didn't return. Even after the Bais Hamikdash was rebuilt for the second time, G-d's presence wasn't really there anymore. Therefore, the level of prophecy had gone down and the meaning of these visions for the prophets to see became hard. In this week's haftara there was a special dedication ceremony that the leviyim went through. They did it to underscore the tribe holiness.

The haftara criticizes Joshua for not reprimanding his sons in a way where they would understand how awful their actions were. Joshua was the kohen gadol and he was reprimanded because there were kohanim who didn't marry Jewish women. Maybe the central theme for the haftara is that victories are ultimately won through the spirit of G-d instead of using human strength. These words are a reflection from the Torah. It says "Arise G-d and may Your enemies scatter. The aron was what represented the Jewish people's devotion to studying and the fulfillment of the Torah. All of this had the power that made the opposing forces flee elsewhere. There is some background from the haftara, there were two Jewish people who officiated during the building of the second Holy Temple. These two men were Joshua ben Yehotzadak and Zerubavel ben She'altiel. Yehoshua in this case was the first kohen gadol. Zerubavel was a governor. According to what our Sages had to say, Zerubavel was the famous leader, Nechemya. It was him along with a man named Ezra HaSofer, who happened to bring the Jewish people back to their own land. We know of a prophet named Zecharya and he received prophetic messages.

These messages helped encourage the leaders who faced many hardships in the construction of the second Holy Temple. When the foundation for the second Holy Temple was laid out, the construction for it stopped. There was interference from neighbors that were cruel, these were the Cutheans and Samaritans. They sabotaged the project at every step of building the second Holy Temple. These Cuthean people sent an ugly message to a king by the name of Daryavesh, he was the king of a city known as Media.. The Cutheans were hoping this king would prevent the Jews from building the rest of the Holy Temple. The king didn't listen to the Cutheans and was in favor of the Jewish people finishing their project. The king even offered to finance the project of rebuilding the Holy Temple! He was going to donate animals, grain, wine, and oil for the offerings. Yehoshua and Zerubavel felt they benefited a lot from these prophetic messages that Zecharya explained.

These messages just kept encouraging them with constructing the Holy Temple, even with the problems going on. They trudged along with building the Holy Temple, and four years later it was complete. G-d was happy with what the Jews had done. He told them the daughter of Tzion and that He would join the Jewish people in Jerusalem. The haftara is sharing with us that Zzecharya addressed the Jewish people who were returning from a city called Bavel. They were coming back to build the Second Holy Temple. There was a prophet who may had been depicting the final redemption. There were two prophecies that were related to each other. Our Sages explain to us that the return of the babylonian exile to Jerusalem had the potential of resembling the conquest during the time of Joshua. There were open miracles that could have occurred at the time as well. That would have happened if the Jews had undergone a permanent redemption, but they didn't. The Jewish people failed to do proper repentance and because of that the redemption happened in a natural manner and was but a temporary reprieve from exile. The prophet Zecharya envisioned the final redemption and it could have taken place during his time. Unfortunately, during that time, the Jews were not worthy of getting that final redemption.

G-d let the Jewish people know He would be around them and that the Jews would see G-d's prophecies come true. What the prophecy Zecharya saw did partially come true. There were many non-Jews who chose to convert to Judaism. They witnessed the completion of the marvelous second Holy Temple. We learn that the prophecy will come true entirely, when the final redemption happens. G-d planned to take all of the Jewish people. Sometime earlier it is mentioned how the Jewish people split into two kingdoms and they had separate capital cities. This happened during the time of the First Holy Temple. The haftara tells us that we should be silent in front of G-d. He will rouse Himself from His holy area in the heavens and He will punish His enemies. G-d was no longer going to allow the Babylonians to have more power over the Jewish people. According to the explanation that Zecharya referred to, this was the time of the downfall of the Babylonian empire. The Babylonian empire took place during Zecharya's lifetime. It happened when Bavel was displaced by the Persian empire.

The haftara tells us that Zecharya was able to predict the punishment of the Babylonians in the era of Mashiach. At some point, G-d woke up from His sleep and helped the Jewish people. During those dark days when the Jews were in exile, G-d was a constant concern and care for the Jews was not so visible. The haftara tells us that we will see just how much G-d was concerned and how much He cared for us when it will be the final redemption. Another part in the haftara explains how the return from Bavel and building the second Holy Temple didn't bring the Jews to having a final redemption. There was a serious sin some Jewish people committed, they married outside the faith. This evoked an accusation in the Heavenly court. When some of these men came back to the land of Israel, they had found non-Jewish women to marry. These weren't just any "random Joe's", but Kohanim. In the prophecy that Zecharya explained to the Jews, the Kohanim were to blame for this sin. The Kohanim were seen as the holiest members among the Jewish people. The Kohanim were supposed to set an example for the Jewish people. These non-Jewish women had first converted to Judaism and then married the Jewish men. The haftara explains that many of these women's conversions were not valid according to Jewish law. There were wives who had converted that still practiced idolatry. G-d showed Zecharya in a prophetic vision of Joshua.

Joshua was a kohen gadol. Joshua stood in front of an angel. It was known as the angel of mercy. Satan was considered the accusing angel and he stood at the right to accuse Joshua and have him no longer be a kohen gadol. The angel of G-d looked at Satan and said, "May G-d

reprimand you. May it be G-d who chooses Jerusalem and to reprimand you. He asked Satan how dare he accuse Joshua. The angel of mercy ended the question with another question Is Joshua not the firebrand that was plucked out of the fire itself? The haftara asks us what wrongdoing did Joshua do that Satan was picking on him? There is a Midrash that explains it in a story... There were two evil people who lived in Jerusalem, their names were Achav ben Kolya and Tzidkiyahu ben Ma'asai. Some people considered them to be prophets, but they were false prophets in reality and they were very immoral. When they were exiled to Bavel, they were very happy following their abominable ways. They pretended to be G-d's messengers and physicians as well. By being physicians, they often gained access to the Babylonian women. It was common for them to engage in sinful activity with these women. There was a time when Achav would approach a Babylonian nobleman with information saying G-d had a private message to share with the nobleman's wife.

So the Babylonian allowed Achav to meet with his wife. Achav would face her saying, G-d had informed him in a prophetic message that He would give her children and they would become prophets. Achav explained to the nobleman's wife that these children would be born from his colleague, Tzikiyahu ben Ma'asai. Tzikiyahu ben Ma'asai would perform the same type of service for his friend Achav. People in that area believed these two about the prophecy they mentioned. Sometimes a woman who was pregnant already would come to one of these two false prophets and request for them to predict if she was having a boy or a girl. They would inform her that she is having a son and they would spread a rumor all over the town saying it is a girl. If a boy was born then the mother advertised about these two evil people being prophets. If a girl was born then the neighbors told the mother, the prophet knew the truth the whole time, but he did not want you to feel bad.

These two evil people had some success in what they were doing. Soon it went to their heads and they decided together to target the queen who was Nevuchadnetzar's wife at the time. Tzidkiyahu turned to her and said, G-d wishes for you to raise prophets and for them to be fathered by his friend Achav. The queen was smart and didn't go along with what they were proposing. If her husband approved of what these evil men wanted, she went along with their plan. There was an emperor in the town and he summoned these two evil men. The emperor asked them how he could know if they were truly telling the truth? The emperor went on to say how the Jewish counselors would stress that the G-d of Israel did not like immoral behavior. The emperor was planning on testing these two evil men. He wanted to see if they were truly messengers of G-d. The emperor stated he recently cast a few people by the names, Chananya, Mishael, and Azarya into a furnace that was heated for seven days. After being in this furnace for a week, these three popped out of it completely unscathed. For the emperor it showed, they were protected by G-d. The emperor turned to the evil men and said he would heat the furnace only for one day. The emperor told them that if they stayed alive, he would believe they were truly prophets. If that was to happen, everyone would believe in these so-called prophets instructions.

Achav and Tzidkiyahu said the three people survived the furnace experience because there were three of them, and there were only two of them. Then it was decided to have three people in this furnace. The evil men were told to pick another Jew to join them in the furnace. They wanted to use Joshua. The king, Nevuchadnetzar said he would throw another Jewish person into the furnace with those two. He wanted Achav and Tzidkiyahu to choose who that person would be. They requested for that person to be Joshua. They thought if Joshua was picked, since he was a great tzaddik there would be a miracle that would occur in his honor and the three of them would for sure be saved. Joshua was called forth towards the Babylonian court

and along with two other evil men. G-d was okay with Joshua having this horrific experience. The reason G-d was okay with this was, His punishment to Joshua for his sons marrying non-Jewish women. Also that Joshua didn't protest his sons choosing the non Jewish women to be

their wives. The three men were put into a blazing fire, but it didn't last long because G-d sent the angel Michael to go there and protect Joshua. Joshua was not harmed, but the other two evil men were. The haftara tells us that the evil men were burned to ashes. Joshua stepped out of the fire, completely unharmed. His garments were singed, this indicated he did somehow sin.

Our sages explain the verse that talks about this refers to Joshua's vision of a scene in the Heavenly courtroom. In this heavenly courtroom, Joshua emerges from the fire and it was Satan who approached Joshua asking him why did the fire harm his garments, but when he was in Chananya, Mishael, and Azarya his clothing was not harmed by the fire at all? Joshua's response to that was that those three had an advantage over him because they were three men who were considered good tzaddikim. Joshua said he only had his own honor. Satan continued the conversation saying he disagreed and that Avraham was also a tzaddik. When he was in the furnace of Ur Kasdim, his garments didn't get burned. Joshua had an answer for that too, it was that Avraham was the only one who was a tzaddik when he was put in the furnace. G0d decided the fire to be totally not working in his honor. Joshua said about himself, he was in the company of two other people who were evil. The flames from the fire in that furnace, G-d made it okay for the evil men's bodies to burn. That was the only reason he was slightly harmed, only his clothing. Satan was okay with that statement. He felt that sometimes it happens for a tzaddik to suffer a misfortune when anyone wicked is involved. There is a saying, if there is a fresh green branch between two branches that are not so good looking, the green one burns together along with the dry ones.

We learn that Satan was defeated by Joshua. Satan was trying to remove Joshua from being the kohen gadol. Satan's accusations against Joshua was about his sons marrying non Jews. Since Joshua's sons did that and Joshua didn't stop them, he was surely unfit to be a kohoanim. He was not considered worthy of retaining such a high position. The angel of mercy argued on Joshua's behalf, using three arguments. The angel of Mercy told Satan that G-d was going to rebuke him. We learn here that G-d's name implies He is intrinsically merciful and usually judges a person leniently. He is always looking for redeeming factors. The angel implored G-d to

apply His trait of mercy to let Joshua remain the kohen gadol. That was the first argument, the second one was based on the ancestry that Joshua had. The angel told Satan that G-d chose Jerusalem to reprimand him. G-d chose Joshua's forebears to serve in the Bais Hamikdash. Joshua's father Yotzadak was a kohen gadol as well as him. It was a plea to let Joshua continue with his work as a kohen gadol. Joshua was going to continue the legacy. The last argument the angel uses on Satan was comparing Joshua to a firebrand, which survived the fire even after everything else was scorched. Joshua was a tzaddik and a holy man as well, since he was both of these things it proved why he was saved from being burned in the furnace. Those three arguments worked against Satan and the angel of Mercy won. One good thing happened to Joshua; he was endorsed in keeping his position as the kohen gadol. His sons choosing to marry non-Jewish women was a sin that was still held against him. Joshua stood in front of the angel of Mercy wearing garments that weren't clean. We learn that G-d's presence was not there in the second Holy Temple, because Joshua allowed his sons to stay married to their non-Jewish wives. Usually kohanim wear beautiful clothing, but since he sinned his clothing was stained. The kedusha of the priesthood was profaned because of his sin.

Clothing that people wear can say something about one's character trait. Joshua stayed in dirty clothing because he didn't stop the forbidden desires his sons had. The Midrash asks why Joshua's sons are not in this vision wearing the filthy clothing and why it was Joshua dressed in them? The reason for this was, Joshua wasn't strong enough when reprimanding his sons about this issue. It was why this sin his sons committed was connected to him, the father. The Midrash talks about the greatest teaching a parent can give a child is how to act in a proper manner. It's an important principle of parenting and is shown a lot throughout the T'nach. There is a story of our forefather Avraham. He didn't reprimand his young son, Ishmael. Avraham came to realize how his son Ishmael's behavior left much to be desired. Avraham was hoping to win him over on his own somehow, but it didn't work out that way. In the end, Ishmael was eventually forced to be expelled from his own home. Another example of people doing what Joshua did was Yitzchak. He didn't reprimand his son Aisav. He was deceived by the other son pretending to be Aisav. Aisav had never criticized himself, on his own he turned into a horrible person.

Aisav couldn't wait for his father to pass away so he could kill his brother Yaakov. The last example the Midrash uses was King David. King David does not say anything to his own son Avshalom. Avshalom pretended to be a G-d fearing man, in reality Avshalom caused his father to suffer a lot. Since he caused him to suffer a lot and tried to take the throne away from King David, he had to flee Jerusalem itself. King David was also at fault for not criticizing his other son Adoniyahu. Later in King David's life he suffered a lot because of Adoniyahu. The Midrash shows that when parents discipline their children, they will find that the child will eventually love him more than if they were to be left to do as they wanted. Avraham loved his son Yitzchak so much, he showed him the proper path. Yitzchak grew up to become just as great as his father was.

Yitzchak admonished his own son Yaakov, and then he in turn disciplined his twelve sons for them to grow up and be tzaddikim. The forefathers we had in the past were not happy with guiding their sons on what was a generally good path. These forefathers also gave their sons specific instruction in a particular situation. They were always criticizing their children for devoting all their time to G-d. The Midrash claims that the approach our forefathers had was an invaluable guide for parents if they are afraid to discipline their children with a modern attitude. Many parents don't want to use too much discipline which is considered pretty old-fashioned or even harmful to a child. The commentary from the Midrash teaches us that it is children who set the standards, inform parents as to what is modern and in style and what is not acceptable. Many parents often try to not be strict or set too high moral standards for fear of having a distance from their child or the society itself.

Back to the story itself, the chief angel who stood before Joshua spoke to the other angels around. He said to those angels, to remove the dirty garments that Joshua was wearing. The angel continued saying, he took away the sin that Joshua had committed. The last thing he said was, he had arranged for Joshua to have clean clothing. Just like that Joshua was cleansed from the sin of having sons who chose to marry non-Jewish women. Maybe the angel believed that Joshua had been punished enough when he experienced being in the furnace. It was a very frightful experience and Joshua spent enough time there to atone for his sins. There is also the idea that the chief angel told the other angels to fly down to the earth and separate Joshua's sons from their non-Jewish women.

The angels were able to complete this mission, but they were not sure how they went about to complete the task. In the end, the sons of Joshua went through a divorce with their wives. That was when Joshua's dirty clothes were removed. The last idea why Joshua was forgiven was his descendants would send away anyone they were involved with romantically. This happened to Ezra and Nechemya. The angel took credit for this because it needed inspiration and help from G-d. Without help from G-d, it would have been very hard for Jews to sever ties with the non-Jewish women who Joshua's sons divorced and their children. With all of this happening, the angel which tried to accuse Joshua no longer was able to critique him. The prophet Zecharya prayed to G-d saying the angels should clean the turban of the kohen gadol that is on his head! This prayer meant to let the crown of the high priesthood stay within his descendants as an inheritance because Joshua's sons were separated from their non-Jewish wives.

Right away, Joshua was given a clean turban to wear on his head and he was clothed with special garments that the kohen gadol wore. The angel stood near Joshua as all of this took place. The Midrash says that people serving in the priesthood such as Joshua, were not guaranteed absolute rights. It was a privilege he was given to have clean clothing and the turban on his head, if he was to keep the Torah. The next part of the prophecy gives a warning and it concludes a message of encouragement coming from Joshua. The angel of G-d warns Joshua that he and his children would have to follow in G-d's footsteps and be like HIm. If they were to do that, G-d would reward them in the world of souls.

G-d planned on letting them walk in the garden of Eden for those who were there with the angels. Another thing G-d promised Joshua and his descendants was to have eternal life. The angels stood around a lot because their job was to stand at what was known as a "standstill" because G-d didn't give them free choice. Everything they said and did was coming from G-d's command. They were to stand before the Heavenly Throne of Glory. It was their way of serving G-d. In the Zohar, the angel's job is to stand, they didn't have any knee joints and never sat down. Standing in front of G-d showed Him that they were ready to do anything He wanted them to do. The Midrash explains that humans are given the term the ability to walk. We have the ability to choose what we want to do, we have free will. Living people are continuously moving in the spiritual way and any direction they want to go.

When Jews get the reward of having eternal life, they join those who are "standing". This means that the person exceeds the level of greatness they have reached. That is because they had that choice and it was because of their own efforts and volition they made it to the ones who are "standing". G-d tells Joshua who was the kohen gadol that his friends who sit in front of him could learn from him. Joshua's friends are included in this message because they were the people who had miracles happen to them. G-d said He will bring His servant with Him. His servant was Tzemach.

Our Sages tell us that the people to whom these miracles occurred were Chananya, Mishael, and Azarya. When these people were saved from the furnace, they disappeared. They were put into this furnace by the Babylonian emperor known as Nevuchadnetzar. These people had reached a very high level of kedusha after the miracle where they chose to leave Bavel and go to Israel. It was there that they sat at the feet of Joshua and they drank from his wellsprings of

Torah. These people had the personalities that Joshua had and prior to that the prophet Zecharya was included in this message as well.

The message starts out that G-d's servant, Tzemach will come. The Midrash has a few explanations of who this is, the first one is Zerubavel. He was going to join Joshua in watching the building of the Second Bais Hamikdash. Zerubavel was given the name Tzemach, it meant plant. The meaning for that name came from the words of being "sown and planted" in the area of Bavel. It wasn't until later in his life that Tzemach went to Israel. This Tzemach is also a name for Mashiach. Tzemach was considered to be an offshoot of the royal house of King David. It could have been a possibility the plant was growing and was undetected in the soil and would only first be visible at the time of them being redeemed.

There was an explanation for the final redemption, this happened after the return from Bavel. Jews to this day are hoping this prediction will be fulfilled within the near future. G-d told Joshua that he would provide strong protection from the enemies of the Jews. The prophet Zecharaya was encouraging Joshua to continue the building of the Second Bais Hamikdash. G-d would watch over the Jews as they built this Second Bais Hamikdash. Those supervising the building of this Second Bais Hamikdash would be Joshua, Ezra, Zerubavel, Nechemya, and the three prophets known as Chagai, Zecharya, and Malachai. In the end, G-d made sure that no enemy of the Jewish people could destroy the construction of the Second Bais Hamikdash.

There finally came a time for the Jews to lay out the foundation of this building. They began fortifying the walls of Jerusalem, there was a kusi delegation that arrived and it requested the Jewish governor who was Zerubavel that they be allowed to join in the construction as well. These people who were Kusim had officially become Jews, in reality though they were serving idols. Zerubavel and Joshua the kohen gadol must have known or picked up on that aspect of these Kusim. Joshua and Zerubavel passed on a message that, "It is not for you to build a House for our G-d". With that said they were planning to build the Second Bais Hamikdash themselves. The Kusim people felt insulted by this and they sent a letter to the Persian emperor known as Artachshasta, "To let it be known to the emperor that the Jewish people who have come back from Babylonia to Jerusaelm are rebuilding the evil city. They have already started with their construction of its walls and foundation". The Kusim people wanted the Emperor to know that if the Jews became successful in creating this city the way they wanted to, they would stop paying their taxes.

They would stop paying any of their tributes and all of the king's income would go down by a lot. Those writing the letter were concerned for their king and writing it in his honor. They went onto say that the Jews had rebelled before and they were going back to their ancient ways and they had always revolted against anyone who ruled over them. These Kusim were reminding the emperor why the city had been destroyed in the first place. The Persian emperor wrote his own response, they wanted peace and that the letter they sent had been read by him. He searched all of his archives and found that the city rebelled against their rulers more than once. The emperor agreed that the building of the Second Bais Hamikdash would come to a stop. The emperor didn't want to suffer any financial losses because of the Jewish people. The Kusim people took this letter and took it over to Jerusalem. They tried talking to the Jews about stopping their construction. It happened in the second year when the Persian emperor got prophecies from G-d that the Jews would do no such thing as stopping the construction.

They were going to carry on as they were doing despite that emperor's ban of it. The Jewish people were under the kohen gadol, Joshua. The Jewish people were hewing stones for the Bais Hamikdash and there was constant encouragement from the Nevi'im. The Jews continued their work diligently, but they were harassed by their vicious enemies who lived near them. There was a new governor of the land, his name was Tatnai and was to the east of Jordan. He appeared with his cohorts and challenged the Jews. He asked them who allowed you to build this Second Bais Hamikdash. He wanted to know who of the Jews was in charge. The Jews felt G-d around them, their belief in G-d was strong and they refused to give into what their enemies asked for.

The governor and his men wrote to the emperor Daryavesh that they found the Jews continuing their work of constructing the Second Bais Hamikdash. The Jews who did give a response to the governor and his men were along the lines that they were servants of G-d and what they were rebuilding was originally created by a great Jewish king. They let the governor and his men know that previously many of the Jewish people's fathers angered G-d. Since they made G-d angry. G-d allowed Nevuchadnetzar, who was the king of Bavel, to destroy the original Bais Hamikdash. That king also led the Jews away to Bavel.

There was an emperor who allowed the Jews to keep building their House for G-d. His name was Koresh. Koresh even had the guts to return the holy vessels to the Jewish people. Daryavesh was allowed to search his archives so he could make sure the proclamation that he allowed the Jews to continue with the building of the Second Bais Hamikdash. Daryavesh found the information that Koresh did allow the Jews to carry on with their construction work. Daryavesh also made sure Koresh's commitment went through financing the project of finishing this construction. The money was coming from royal coffers. Daryavesh sent a response to the governor Tatnai and any other enemies that the Jews had. The response said for them to keep their distance from Jerusalem.

To allow the Jews to keep working on their construction alone. Daryavesh was going to allow the Jews to keep going. The money to keep going to supply this construction was coming from the emperor. Also, from animals such as bulls, rams, lambs, wheat, salt, wine, and oil that the Jews would need for their daily offerings. This way they could sacrifice and pray for the life and well-being of the emperor and his sons. Daryavesh stated that if anyone was to go against this, they would be hanged on some gallows and their house would be destroyed. This was part of G-d's plan, that way the Jews' enemies couldn't hurt them.

It was another four years later that by the time Daryavesh was in power in his sixth year, the Second Bais Hamikdash was built. It was completed and had been dedicated amid much jubilation. There is a verse in the haftara that states G-d saying, "He would remove the sin of the land in one day". What the haftara was referring to was an era of the future redemption the Jews would have. This was something the prophet Zecharya was predicting that on the day the Jews would continue building their Second Bais Hamikdash, G-d would actually forgive them for their wrong doings.

The produce in the land would again be blessed by G-d and it would no longer have any curses happen to it because of wrongdoings that Jews made. G-d told the Jews, the day that



Tzemach/the Mashiach would come there would be a lot of peace on earth. Every Jew would call out to each other and come under their vine or fig tree to rest and enjoy the fruit provided there. When there is an abundance of everything, people would invite each other to share in their vineyards and orchards. The verse is talking about how there will be a plethora of food that would be for everyone to share. The prophecy could have already come in the time of this prophet Zecharya, but it will still happen when the Mashiach comes.

There is an angel that comes to the prophet Zecharya. The angel spoke to Zecharya, he felt like a man that had been woken up from his slumber. Being awoken by this angel prepared Zecharya for the next thing he was going to see. The Midrash also says that maybe Zecharya woke up because he was feeling lethargic. Zecharya and the leaders in the community were worried they could never complete this Second Bais Hamikdash. G-d gave them a prophecy that was supposed to have them make it happen! These words were symbolic to the Jewish people of their future awakening in exile. G-d would wake up the people for them to be able to do repentance. G-d asks Zecharya what he saw in his prophetic vision?

Zecharya responded he saw an entire golden menorah that had a bowl on top of it. This menorah had seven lamps with it and each one had seven pipes attached to the bowl on its top. From these pipes the oil would flow into the lamps. There was no need for a human hand to do anything! Later on in part of the prophecy not shown in this haftara, the prophet is also shown two olive branches that are detaching themselves from the tree and they are falling into two golden pipes that lead into the bowl that is on top of the menorah. The olive oil is automatically pressed into the pipes themselves and it flows into the menorah on its own.

Zecharya lifted his voice and asked the angel that spoke to him, what the significance of these were and called the angel his master. The angel was surprised Zecharya was not following the meaning of what he was seeing. The angel had assumed on his own that Zecharya studied the profound symbolic significance of the menorah in the Second Bais Hamikdash. We learn from the Midrash how G-d could have inspired Zecharya with the explanation of the vision he saw. Zecharya himself was supposed to find his own way of understanding it or come to terms of understanding it on his own without asking the angel anything. Since Zecharya didn't understand what he had seen in the vision, the angel went on to explain. G-d was giving His

word to Zecharya not by any numbers or G-d's power, but simply by his spirit. This meant that even if Zecharya had an army and it was however strong it was, the construction of what the Jews were building couldn't be complete. Only with G-d's help could it be done. G-d inspired Daryavesh with this desire to let the Jews continue with their construction. Just as the menorah in the vision was supplied with oil using only G-d's help and not any human to intervene. The Second Hamikdash was completed because of Divine Providence. The olive trees that were mentioned in the second part of Zecharya's vision are meant to represent two of the highest offices in the Jewish nation. The first one was the kingship and of kehuna gedola. It meant both the king and the kohen gadol are anointed with oil from the olive oil. This verse maybe saying that both Joshua, who was the kohen gadol and Zerubavel who was the governor represented royalty, they would both soon rise to greatness.

Another idea about this is that the Mashiach was a descendant of Zerubavel. Mashiach would not conquer the world by physical force and instead all of the nations would be inspired to follow in the way of G-d. Then G-d's spirit would rest on the Mashiach. In the vision that Zecharya had,

the menorah had forty-nine pipes. It was a hint to a future era for the Jews when the sunlight will be seven times brighter than how it is today. Also that future era will be forty-nine times more splendid than the light G-d first gave when He created the world.

The menorah really is symbolizing the spiritual light coming from the Torah. It is in the future that we are going to be enlightened to understand the forty-nine gates of wisdom that are in it. That last sentence is a fundamental guideline for the Jewish people throughout history. We are not proud of ourselves for the physical superiority we have. We do not measure our success by any military victories either. The nation of the Jews has conquered the world by being on a spiritual plane. The nation proclaimed a revolutionary idea that it is worth it to believe in one G-d rather than many. All principles that Jews have come from truth and justice and they come from the bible. Many of these ideas have been distorted by the religions of Christianity and Islam. Zecharya was encouraged to not be afraid of his surrounding enemies. Those who place obstacles before him to prevent him from helping create the Second Bais Hamikdash. G-d's spirit would be too strong for the enemies of the Jews. It turned out in the end that the Jewish people put a lot of tremendous work in creating the Second Bais Hamikdash. G-d made sure that it would be a splendid building.

There is a verse in this haftarah that talks about the future era. It states even if the army of Gog tried to stop Mashiach from being in power, they could not. That army would turn into a plain before the King Mashiach himself. The Mashiach would bring out a precious stone to lay the foundation for another Bais Hamikdash. This time it would be the Third one. The Jewish people would observe this. They would cheer that the stone would be invested with special grace coming from G-d. The Zohar tells us that the stone was considered an even shesiya. Meaning it was the same stone that came upon which the universe was founded on. This stone was going to be what closes the circle of history. It would serve again as the foundation of the Bais Hamikdash at the time of the Jews redemption.