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**Parshah and Haftara Bereishis**  
**by Julie Zhuk on 2022-10-22**

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This is the first Parsha of the Five Books of Moses. There is the traditional story of how the world was created starting with, on the very first day, He made darkness and light, and then He moved on to making the Heavens. It was then He divided what was known as the “upper waters and the lower waters.” By the third day, He set the boundaries of land and sea. He called forth the trees and the greenery from the earth. Then it was the fourth day and He fixed the position of the sun, the moon, and the stars. The stars were there as timekeepers as illuminators of the earth. The fish, birds, reptiles, and land animals were created on the fifth day. G-d waited to create mankind until the sixth day, the last day of creation. When it was finally the seventh day, He ceased all work. He sanctified the seventh day to be a day of REST. G-d formed the human body from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils a “living soul.” Originally man was created solo, but G-d didn’t think it would be good for man to be alone.

This is why G-d took a “side” from the man and formed it into a woman. He married the man and the woman to each other. The first man and woman on earth were Adam and Eve. They were placed in the Garden of Eden. They were given one commandment to not eat from the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.” There was a snake laying around and he persuaded Eve to violate the command G-d gave. She shared the forbidden fruit with her husband, Adam. Since they both transgressed here in front of G-d, it was decreed that man would forever experience death. In Judaism learn, when anyone is to experience death they are to return to the soil from which they were once formed. This Parsha tells us that any gain a person gets will come only through struggle and hardship. After Adam and Eve ate from the Garden, the man was banished from the Garden. Adam and Eve have two children, boys named Abel and Cain. One of the reasons they didn’t like each other as Cain was jealous of Abel.

Cain brought some sacrifice or maybe even some flax seeds and that was used as a sacrifice to G-d. Abel brought the best of his sheep and used it as a sacrifice. G-d accepted Abel’s sacrifice of sheep. G-d didn’t accept Cain’s sacrifice. This is just one idea why they didn’t like each other. Nothing has ever been specified. Over thousands of years, people have theorized a lot of things, for starters Cain was born first. Abel was known to be more on the humble side and his brother was not so much. As most brothers do fight, the two of them did that and it didn’t end well. Cain kills Abel and then G-d finds him and asks him what happened to him. There is a famous quote that Cain said, “He wasn’t his brother’s keeper.” Cain becomes a rootless wanderer and then Adam has a third son named Seth. Eight generations later, Seth has a descendant named Noach. Noach lived in a time when the world was a very corrupt place. Noach was the only one who was civilized and humble. Noach was known to be the only righteous man back then.

After reading that part of the Parsha, I came across something from a Chassidic approach. There is a story of a gentleman going into a tailor shop to pick up a pair of pants. Unfortunately for him, those pants weren’t yet ready. He had an uncomfortable conversation with the tailor and the gentleman asked him if G-d could create the world within seven days, how long would it take for the pants to be ready again? The tailor looked at the gentleman and said, “Look at what a

mess the world is in. Do you really want to wear pants to look like G-d's world?" We know that from the start it was G-d who created Heaven and Earth.

From this Chassidic approach, we learn that not only did G-d create a whole new world, but He created the idea of new beginnings and opportunities for all time. If we could imagine that there never was time for a new opportunity or any way to start completely over again. The human race could really suffer if it was this way. According to the Midrash and Kabbalistic tradition, the world that we live in currently was not the first world G-d created. G-d has been known to create other worlds as well, but they never pleased Him and that was why they didn't stick around. When He created our world, He finally felt satisfied and said the words, "That it was good."

This world managed to find favor in the eyes of G-d, unlike the other worlds. If it feels like the Midrash is telling us that G-d too made mistakes, then it doesn't sound like He could be the Supreme Being everyone thinks of Him as. A Rabbi named, Joseph Dov Soloveitchik stated that G-d didn't need to practice anything until He got things right. He created several worlds before creating our world to teach us an important lesson in life. That lesson is it is okay to make mistakes and we can always start over, there is always the chance for new beginnings. This Shabbat is known as Shabbat Bereshais and it is the perfect time for new beginnings.

This Shabbat is a bridge to the new Jewish calendar year. This new year is rich with opportunity and potential. It helps us infuse the new year with inspiration going back to the period of holidays we just had. A lot of synagogues will keep the white curtain over the ark and the white Torah mantles on for this particular Sabbath. The reason for this is it's still connected to Yom Tov. We learn from this Parsha to grasp this opportunity for a fresh start and a new beginning.

### **Bereishis Haftara: Isaiah 42:5-21**

The reading opens with a statement, "the Almighty G-d who created the heavens and stretched them out, then laid out the earth and made the heavens grow from it. This was a very dark period for the Jewish people. This part of the book of Isaiah starts with chapter 40 and is dedicated to the many prophecies of hope and consolation for the Jews. Isaiah foresaw the exiles of both the Ten Tribes and the one of Judah. This chapter is mostly focused on Isaiah giving the Jews strength and comfort to get out of their feelings of misery. This echoes the Torah's portion recounting the creation that took place within six days.

It is in this Haftara, that G-d speaks to the prophet Isaiah. He is reminding him of the purpose he has on the earth, it's his job to arouse the Jewish people. They are supposed to return and be a light to the nations. Isaiah is supposed to help open the blind eyes of the people and bring prisoners out of the dungeon. Especially those who were sitting in the dark in a prison. Where is G-d going with all of this?

There was a prophecy, it continues the conversation of the Jews getting released from their time in exile. The Jews will be redeemed through the Final Redemption that G-d has planned. There is a song that all of creation would sing to G-d on that day. G-d gave His word to the

Jews. He promised to punish all the nations who persecuted the Jewish people. This punishment would happen as the Jews were in a period of exile. Isaiah also reprimanded the Jews for some of the bad ways they showed in front of G-d. Isaiah assured the Jews they would for sure return to the correct path and would be redeemed.

We read in this Haftara that a day would come when honor and praise would no longer be given to false deities. That praise and honor would only be given to the true G-d. During that time all the people living on the earth would come to know that G-d was the One who made them. They would only give praise to Him. Everyone on the earth back then would be with so much G-dly consciousness, it would be as if the earth itself and everything in it would be singing to the Creator. G-d would look down on the people and creatures He created and decide that it was time to go after the nations who persecuted the Jews.

For a very long time, He had restrained Himself from going after the people who caused havoc on the Jewish people. On the day He would go after the evil people in retribution, they would hear Him roar. The Jews who were in exile would be gathered together. The evil people from nations that had been unkind for generations to the Jews would feel embarrassed. G-d had a quest for the Jewish people's spiritual improvement, G-d gave sages and prophets to them. Among these sages and prophets, the Jews received one more thing.

That was the Torah! It was given to them in its entirety and the magnificent scope that it encountered. G-d did this to teach them the ways of Judaism and to elevate the people. The people being elevated were considered to be the guardians of the Jews.

**This is Haftara Bereishis from the book The Midrash Says on The Weekly Haftaros Vol 1**

The first Parsha in Genesis starts with G-d creating heaven and earth. The Haftara also starts this way. It says, "So says G-d, the Creator of heaven and earth. The main theme of the Haftara is the future redemption. There was a link between the creation of the universe and the final redemption, the Haftara hinted that the formation of a totally new society of brotherly love, peace, and this feeling of G-dliness when the mashiach would come was going to require no less than a miracle than that of Creation. The other link is that the Haftara continues the theme mentioned in the parsha. Before G-d created the universe, He had a plan to bring Mashiach. The world was created for the sole purpose of mankind to acknowledge G-d.

The first Parsha describes the actual creation of the universe and the Haftara focuses on the goal, which is the final redemption. When Adam transgressed, the presence of G-d went away back to heaven. When the final redemption would take place, the presence of G-d would be among the Jewish people again. G-d, Who created the heavens was able to expand them like a canopy over the whole world. He spread out the earth with the plants they were created to produce. G-d gave a living soul to each person that was on earth. The kind of people mentioned here had a higher spirit of kedusha given to them.

The reason for this was they were walking in the path of G-d. All of our forefathers were aware when they died, they would be buried in Israel. They were very eager to have this procedure done when it would be their time. Avraham bought the Cave of

Machpaila for his future burial site. It was on his death bed, that Yaakov made for his son Yosef swear that he would carry his remains to Israel in order to be buried there. The reason it was so important to be buried in Israel was, that there was a secret that had been revealed to our forefathers.

At the time of people coming back from the dead (techiyas hamaisim), G-d would only revive those who were buried in Israel. This was because the land was such a holy place and the bodies of the tzaddikim that had been buried outside of Israel had to be transported to Israel before they could be revived. G-d was only going to restore the souls of the tzaddikim who were physically in Israel when it was the time of the revival of the dead.

There were two famous rabbis walking nearby Tiberias when a funeral started. Someone told both of these Rabbis that the person who died outside of Israel had been brought back to be buried in Israel. Rabbi Yehuda wanted to know how being brought back to Israel was going to help him. The other Rabbi Yehuda stated the dead person should have come back here when he was still alive! His failure to not come back when he was alive showed a lack of love for Israel. This was a reason for the dead person to be punished. The second Rabbi, who went by Rav Lazar disagreed with this statement. He said that being buried in Israel is always helpful for the person. Being buried in Israel, it would help atone for that person's wrongdoings in their life.

In this episode, we see the importance of being buried in Israel. It is really great to live a holy life in Israel. People who live there and keep the Torah are assured an eternal reward, this means that G-d will give the future spiritual world to those who live in Israel. The land's holiness can enhance their Torah wisdom and fulfillment of the mitzvos. This also assures them a place in the world to come. The next part of the Haftara focuses on Mashiach leading the Jews out of exile. G-d Who created the universe had assured the Mashiach with certainty that he would support the Jews and guard us. Mashiach will give us the ability to return to our nation, this would allow us to have a covenant of the Torah. We would be able to enlighten all of the nations with the knowledge that G-d is the Master of the universe.

It wasn't just Mashiach who G-d assured to help the Jewish people. It was also the prophet Yeshayah, he had been chosen to bring the Jewish people closer to the Torah. G-d could have been speaking to the Jewish people collectively. Our nation was appointed to serve as an example to the world of what it is like to be servants of G-d. We were all servant's of G-d so we would have the desire to obey Him. G-d's word could be addressing all three, the Mashiach, Yeshayahu, and the Jewish people together.

Mashiach was considered to be on the highest level, he would guide the world back to G-d. Mashiach would have the ability to open the eyes of the Jews who were spiritually blind or couldn't see. This included the people who wouldn't admit the truth of the Torah. This kind of people would repent and as a result, the Mashiach would lead the prisoners out of captivity and those that dwelled in darkness out of the dungeon.

This meant that the period of exile would finally be over. Rambam had an opinion on this topic, he thought if there were to ever be a king from David's family who would be very dedicated to Torah, they would have to keep up with the mitzvos just like David was. This person would have to compel all of the Jews to keep the Torah and fight G-d's wars, then the Jews could assume that this so-called king would be Mashiach. If this person would be successful in building the Bais Hamikdash and gathering all of the Jews from exile, then we can be sure that he is in fact Mashiach.

This so-called king would transform all of the people from the world into servants of G-d. The Haftara asks why a lot of the Jews in exile were blind. The answer is that all of us in exile, including those of us who are observant of the Torah, are blind to a certain extent. We are limited due to our evil inclination to have the ability to understand G-d's ways. We have a hard time attaching ourselves to Him completely.

There are many Jews who are totally blind and never even took a look inside of the Torah. It is possible for a blind person to deny the existence of light just because they never saw it. It doesn't affect the truth that is regarding the existence of light. At the same time, the truth of the Torah does not go away from the multitude of "blind" who insist on denying that there is any light at all. In the future, G-d plans to take away the evil inclination from our hearts. This is going to help the Jews, it will transform us into actually seeing people. We learn in this Haftara the importance of the Mashiach coming down to earth.

G-d is the Eternal One, the Master of the World and that is His true Name. G-d wants the whole world to realize this and until the arrival of Mashiach, G-d's name is not fully revealed. G-d says He can't allow for his nor His honor to be attributed to any other gods forever. Nor His praise going to images. This is why G-d sends prophetic promises that concern the future, it's letting us know they will come true and it's a reminder for the Jewish people.

The first predictions came true, about four hundred years before the Egyptian rule, G-d told Avraham that his children would be enslaved in a strange land and that G-d would ultimately punish their oppressors. This happened, and now G-d was telling the Jews of new happenings, before the Jews would grow forth, G-d was going to hear of them. G-d had told the Jews in the past about His predictions that concerned the future of the redemption would actually come true. The book of Yeshayahu tells us that the prophet was a very authentic prophet. He was able to prophesizes that the Jewish people would be sent to exile in Bavel. The Jews did in fact go there and then he predicted correctly he rise of the Persian king named Korseh. Koresh had support from the rebuilding of the Second Bais hamikdash. As all of these predictions happened, the Jews got the honor of seeing the prophecy that concerned the coming of the Mashiach happen soon.

Yeshayahu starts to explain what the future redemption would be like. He witnessed a lot of great miracles of the redemptions and started singing a new song to G-d. He was praising Him from the end of the earth, all you nations. He was talking about G-d traveling on the sea, which at first was filled with creatures. Then He moved on to talk about G-d traveling on distant islands and the people living there singing G-d's praise.

The prophet addressed all of the nations, after the redemption of the Jewish people they would have cause for rejoicing because they would live in a new and better world. We learn from Our Sages that the Jews sang to G-d a lot more than any other nation. In the Midrash we learn that the Jews sang nine prophetic songs to G-d. The first song was sung on the night of their redemption from Egypt when they ate their Pesach sacrifices. The last song, the ninth song was sung at the time of the righteous King of Yehoshafat. At the time of his life, G-d miraculously granted him salvation from the enemy, this is in the book of Divray Hayamim.

The nine songs of the past were termed songs from the feminine gender. There was a tenth song and it will be sung in the future. It is termed as a song in the masculine gender, as the verse says it comes from the book of Yeshayahu 42:10.

The tenth song is to sing a new song to G-d. The tenth song does differentiate from the other ones. There was salvation and wonders that were praised in the first nine songs. They were all short-lived and they were followed by new troubles that the Jews ran into. These nine songs are compared to a woman going in labor, who is delivered from the pangs of childbirth. She is only anticipating another birth. The song of the future, being the tenth song will last forever because that salvation will be brought about G-d Himself. It is known as a song in the masculine form, because it reminds the Jews of the status of a male who doesn't undergo labor. The desert and the cities or those people who are in the desert will raise their voices in song to G-d. The villages where the people of a nomadic tribe called Kaidar live.

The people living high up in the rocks will sing; from the top of the mountain peaks and they will shout out for joy. They will give praise to G-d and will proclaim His praise even in the distant islands. The prophet, Yeshayahu continued to describe the great joy of the future redemption. Anywhere there were people or even on distant islands, far from civilization people there too would sing songs of praise. The verse that mentions the "rock dwellers will jubilate" is talking about the righteous Jewish people who were buried under the rocky mountains. Those people would come back from the dead and sing to G-d at techiyas hamaism. G-d would punish the Jewish people's oppressors.

The next verse mentioned in the Haftara translated to He will shout, He will wake up, stir up, and He will roar. G-d was going to go forth like a mighty man to rescue the Jewish people. He was going to be like an experienced warrior who would stir up His zealousness to deliver His people. He would make a lot of noise signaling victory to the Jewish people. People could even hear G-d roar, He would strengthen Himself against His enemies those who were evil or who rebelled against Him and those who oppressed the Jewish people too. There is a verse in Hebrew is mentioned that translates as all the mighty men in the world as a whole. The verse can't refer to only one war hero, it didn't matter how strong a soldier was. Eventually he would be defeated by a large army. There was a certain king that generally came around in public. He dressed in ornate royal robes, and his subjects came to associate with his kindness and mild manner. One day there was an important case that came before the king's court and during the proceedings a formidable-looking warrior came in. He was wearing clad in military uniform and he was adorned with many medals that bespoke his fearlessness in wars past. Right away he proceeded to act as the judge, he passed the strict sentence where it was due.

It took some time until those who were around to realize in the fierce judge their own king. The people had never seen him looking this way before. This story is told to relate how G-d's garments that he wore were really His qualities. When the Jews were in exile they could see one aspect of Him. They saw the patience G-d had in giving sinners plenty of time to repent. Soon, the Jews hoped G-d would put on His "military uniform" to punish the oppressors of the Jewish nation. This would truly be a wondrous sight for everyone to see. Presently, G-d sends agents to fight necessary wars, for example the Jewish kings were commanded to attack Amalek, and G-d sent His angel to destroy the Babylonians in King Chizkiyahu's time. The Haftara asks us if G-d will end up leading the battle in the future by Himself?

The Haftara explains the verse, "G-d will roar." There are many ways to interpret this, one of them is the roar will be of anguish and bitter pain, because G-d doesn't want to destroy any of His creatures. It is only because some people failed to obey His will that they will be punished. This explanation comes from the next verse that compares G-d's shouts to how women feel when

they are in labor giving birth. The shouts though feeling very happy are cries of pain. This Haftara talks about G-d coming out to the Jews and letting them know how He has kept quiet for a long time about the Jews suffering. He is specifically speaking about the time when they were in exile. G-d says that He held Himself back, when they will be redeemed, He will scream like a woman going into labor and He will destroy those who are wicked. He will wreck havoc and swallow together all of His enemies, especially anyone who mistreated the Jews.

G-d refers to the time when the Jews were in exile, He had restrained Himself and didn't punish the Jewish people's oppressors. This is why in our daily prayers at the end of Shema, Jews exclaim in amazement "Who can compare to you G-d, Who else could bear His sons' humiliation silently as He did. Of course, the Haftara provides a story for us to have a better understanding of this topic.

One day, Chaim'l came home from school and was complaining that his hand hurt him. When his father examined it, he discovered there was a splinter that had penetrated the skin. The entire palm was red and swollen, but there wasn't a doctor available until the next morning. The father thought for sure by the next morning the hand would be infected. The father realized that he needed to take action right away, he sterilized a knife and began to cut out the splinter.

Of course it was painful and the little boy was crying really loud. His father's heart melted with pity for the boy, but he was confident that he was doing the right thing for his son. He forced himself to keep going until the operation was successfully completed. The term splinters in this story are used to represent the "transgressions" people do. The longer these transgressions remain in the souls of Jews, the more deeply embedded they become. Then finally the Jewish nation will be completely lost altogether and G-d will allow their enemies to afflict the Jews and extract those transgressions.

G-d's pain is really great when He sees the Jewish people suffering, but in His love for the Jewish people, He restrains Himself, because he knows that it is for their benefit. A time will come when G-d will shake off all self-restraint and punish the Jewish people's enemies as they deserve. The words in the verse, "I have kept silent a long time" have another meaning. To understand that meaning the Haftara provides a story. These stories help me as the reader.

A man named Rav Acha from Galil once explained to another Rav Nachman that, "G-d stopped laughing when the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed. G-d grew silent for a long time. The purpose of the Bais Hamikdash was to create a bond of closeness between G-d and the Jews. Without it, there is no feeling of complete happiness not for G-d and not for the Jewish people.

Maybe the Jewish people have lost some of their sensitivity to this point. It is reflected on joyous occasions at weddings when a cup is broken. By breaking the cup, it demonstrates that no celebration can be complete as long as the Bais Hamikdash isn't in our midst. Rabbi Eliezer once said, "the Little" who lived in Bavel, was so disturbed about the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash that he went to the marketplace wearing all-black shoes. He was showing that he was in a period of mourning. At the time shoes were to be worn with white shoelaces.

The messengers of the head of Babylonian Jewry asked him why he was wearing the shoes that way. He explained that he was mourning for Israel. The Babylonian Jewry thought he was

simply trying to draw attention to himself, so they arrested him. They thought it was enough for him to observe the same customs of mourning for the Bais Hamikdash, just like the other Jews were doing. When they compared him to the other Jews, they were admonishing him. Rabbi Eliezer started to defend himself by arguing that he was a talmid chacham and to prove his point he asked a scholarly question and the Babylonian Jewry weren't able to answer.

The man arrested was known as "the Little", he answered the question in the right way. The Babylonian Jewry released him and realized that he indeed took the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash a lot more seriously than the average person. G-d planned to destroy the mountains and the hills, He was talking about the nations' kings and nobles. He was going to dry up all their grass and their followers. He was going to turn rivers into islands and dry up lakes. He would destroy the nations that were likened to water.

G-d said at the redemption He would cause upheavals to happen in nature. The prophet predicted that G-d would treat the Jewish nation at redemption, by leading the Jews who were blind in a way that they never knew. He would guide them in paths they didn't yet know. He would illuminate the darkness before them, and straighten the crooked paths. These things He planned to do and would not fail to execute them. There are several ways to understand what these words are saying.

G-d promises literally that, at the redemption, He would lead the Jews with His Clouds of Glory on a desert route to the Holy Land. It will be done in the same way as He led the Jews out of Egypt through the desert. The Jews won't know the way they are used. They will feel lost as if they are blind, but G-d would steer them to safety in Israel. G-d made a prediction that when Mashiach will come, He would return all the spiritually blind Jews to Him. These Jews' moral and spiritual 'darkness' will turn into light. Their 'crooked paths' this is speaking of their behavior would be turned into straight ones.. These same people would do teshuva and start to study the Torah. There is a higher level mentioned that at the redemption, G-d would reveal a new spiritual light to the Jewish people.

It would give them reasons for why they were doing mitzvos. In the world that we live in, the reasons for doing mitzvos are not explained to us because of our unworthiness. In the future, G-d will remove those barriers and show us the reasons behind His commands. Every Jew will feel as if they were once blind and had undergone surgery to restore their eyesight. It will be the discovery of a new world of joy. Rabbi Yochanan and his brother-in-law-, Raish Lakish, were partners in Torah study.

Raish Lakish passed away, then Rabbi Yochanan felt desolate. The Sages searched for a candidate that would work out to learn with R. Yochanan. They finally decided to pick R. Elazar ben Pedas, he was known for his original Torah-thoughts. He came to R. Yochanan's Bais Hamidrash. He sat down before him, and whenever R. Yochanan explained anything he would comment that it is as you say I can quote a beraissa to support it.

This made R. Yochanan extremely nervous. He thought this Elazar person was trying to replace Raish Lakish. Yochanan was reminded of how his previous Torah partner would always refute any statement he made with twenty-four different objections. All of these objections, R. Yochanan would repudiate. Since this happened, their Torah learning together became pretty



lucid and now R. Yochan turned to R. Elazar and said the words, "There is a beraissa to prove your words!, Don't you think I know that I am right?"

R. Yochanan tore his garments in despair. He started to cry, looking for his dead Torah partner. He grew to be very depressed and eventually lost his sanity. The Sages, started to pray that G-d should take his life and He accepted their prayers. It is really sad to not understand the Torah, our greatest pleasure in the future will be to understand it.

When redemption happens, the Jews who trust in carved idols and molten images will come out. They will say to these images, "You are our gods!". Then those same Jews will step back and feel shame. The things that detain the promised future redemption are our transgressions. The prophet reprimands the Jewish people, he is talking to the people that are deaf to G-d's word. He says to them that they should listen, but they turn a blind eye to Torah and mitzvos.

Look and see! The next verse says, "Who is blind but my Servant, and deaf as the messenger I send? Who is as blind as the one who has perfected his character and as blind as G-d's servant? The verse is confusing, the Haftara asks us why the prophet would accuse G-d's servant of deafness and being blind. The prophet is addressing all the Jews telling them they were created to be servants of G-d. The nation as a whole has failed to go in the path of G-d's ways. It has neglected their study of Torah and observance. They have been spiritually deaf and blind.

The verse reprimands the words "Torah-observant Jews" they are the ones who are called servants of G-d. The prophet is admonishing them, asking them why they are blind to their generation's failings and don't reprimand their brothers who transgress against the Torah. He asks these Jews why they are being deaf to the generations' transgressions. The Haftara reminds us of the time when the Babylonians entered Jerusalem. This was when the Jews had the First Bais Hamkidash. G-d commanded the angel Gavriel to fly down to Jerusalem and see the evil deeds that the people had committed. G-d asked for the angel to mark on the foreheads of all the tzaddikim the letter Tav with ink.

Anyone with this mark wouldn't be touched by the angels of destruction. The letter Tav was used to signify that someone had fulfilled the Torah from the letter Alef to Tav, meaning A to Z. Another meaning was those tzaddikim would live. G-d instructed for the angel to "Mark a bloody Tav on the foreheads of the evil people. They would be delivered into the hands of the destructive angels. The bloody Tav signified that those people violated the Torah and they would die. At the same time, the Attribute of Justice demanded G-d, "Why will the tzaddikim be spared? Did they risk their lives to reprimand those who went astray?" G-d's response was they didn't, but I know that their reproof would have fallen upon deaf ears.

The Attribute of Justice tried to argue, G-d You were aware of this, but the tzaddikim were not. They too are guilty of having failed to reprimand the sinners." G-d accepted this argument and included all the Jewish people in His verdict of destruction. This meant He included the tzaddikim, in fact the holocaust started with the righteous people. Maybe this verse was said by the people referring to the prophet.

In the last verse, Yeshayahu reprimands the people saying, "You deaf ones, listen! And you blind ones, see!" The Jews didn't like these words and threw back at the prophet saying, "It is you- the servant of G-d - who is blind! You are being unrealistic! The people's words were recorded in the verse to explain what the Jews did wrong and to warn the Jews now to not follow their examples. Our Sages tell us that the verse is a compliment to the words, "G-d's servant", meaning the Jewish nation.

How is this possible? Yeshayahu praises our nation for remaining loyal to G-d even during periods of excruciating pain. Is there any other nation that pretends to be blind and deaf and suffer silently at the hands of their enemies and does not lose their faith? When Yeshayahu mentions the word "You", he is specifically speaking to the Jewish people or the Torah community. They have many insights into the Torah's wisdom, but they don't keep the Torah. Or they don't keep their fellow Jews from straying.

The Jews have open ears to understand the commandments G-d sends out, but they don't hear them. Meaning the Jews don't accept the mitzvos or if Yeshayahu is addressing the Jews, he says they don't direct their misguided brothers back to the proper faith. The prophet goes on to explain why G-d wants the entire Jewish nation to keep the Torah. It is not just for G-d's sake, but after all what will He gain by our observance of the mitzvos.

Instead, G-d, wants us to keep the Torah for the sake of giving us the honor and justification to gain a share in the world to come. G-d has made the Torah so large and great. He has included in the vast number of six hundred and thirty mitzvos. It's beneficial to have such a large number to observe because the more mitzvos we complete, the more of a reward we will get. There is another thought to this that the Rambam came up with. There is a fundamental belief in Judaism that if

a person fulfills one of these many mitzvos properly, with all the details as well as the intention of acting purely out of love for the Creator, he will automatically get a place in the world to come.

Jews can understand the kindness G-d has for us in giving us so many mitzvos. Every mitzva is another potential for an "entrance ticket" to having eternal life. By handing out so many of these "tickets", G-d has given us more of a chance to the world to come. It is very likely that everyone will manage to complete at least one mitzva in their life properly.

Another story, is to understand how we can keep studying the Torah and fulfilling the mitzvos G-d asks of us. Rabbi Yossi ben Kisma was extremely sick. R. Chananya ben Tradyon came to see him. They were both Sages in their time, and the one who was sick asked if he still had a chance to go to the world to come? He was shaking and had spent his whole life learning and teaching the Torah. Now that he was sick, he was afraid he couldn't get the honor of going into the world to come. R. Chananya didn't answer right away, he asked a question first. Do you ever recall having fulfilled a mitzva to perfection. R. Yossi thought about that and then answered with his face suddenly brightening, and he responded that sometime ago he had saved money to buy food for his family's Purim meal.

At the time he also had some charity money in his home, and he deposited it with him for safekeeping. By mistake, his own money got mixed with that of the poor and was given away. Some time passed and he discovered his mistake. He felt he could have easily paid himself back from the charity money, but decided against it. He wanted the poor to enjoy it he thought. R. Chananya listened to this and said it was a wonderful mitzva. He told R. Yossi that his share

in the world to come would be enviable. If G-d had given the Torah to the Jewish people so that they could get a reward for keeping its commandments, why are they at present so despised and downtrodden? The next part of the Haftara will focus on answering that. In verse 42:22 it says, the Jews are a robbed and plundered nation.

Their young men are all downcast and hiding in dungeons. There was no way for them to be saved. G-d asks if there is anyone among them who would hearken to the message He was about to give. Which of the Jews would pay attention and listen so that it would do him good at the end? The message was not by chance that the Jewish people's fate was so grave. Who had delivered the Jewish people, called Yaakov, to the plunderers and Israel to the robbers? Didn't we transgress against G-d? Our forefathers didn't want to go in His ways and didn't want to listen to His Torah! R. Yehoshua ben Chananya was pacing the streets of Rome, his heart was very heavy with sorrow. It was a time for national misfortune for the Jews, the Romans had destroyed the Second Bais Hamikdash and exiled thousands of Jewish captives to Rome. There was a fellow Jew who informed Rabbi Yehoshua, calling him, "Honorable Rabbi, not far from here is a handsome Jewish boy.

He is languishing behind prison bars and I am afraid that the Romans are holding him there for sinful purposes. Right away R. Yehoshua made his way to the prison and glimpsed at the young Jewish child who had beautiful eyes and long curly hair. He was staring out from the barred window. The Rabbi thought to himself, who knows what secrets are hidden by this beautiful face? Surely this boy has undergone a lot of suffering. The Rabbi wondered if the boy still clings to his faith.

He decided to test the boy, he called out the first part of verse 42:44, "Who delivered Yaakov to the plunderers and Israel to the robbers?" That boy instantly replied that it was G-d because the Jews sinned against Him and we didn't go in the path of G-d and listen to G-d. This convinced R. Yehoshua that the young boy was still devoted to G-d and the Rabbi decided to set him free. He exclaimed that he wouldn't move from where he stood until he was able to redeem Himself.

He was going to give whatever amount was needed for the young boy to be freed. The Rabbi thought for sure this boy would become a great Torah leader for the Jewish nation. The Rabbi had to raise a fortune to release the young boy, but his prediction came true. The child grew up to be the famous Torah Sage named, Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha. The Jewish nation did transgress greatly and that was why G-d, poured upon it the fury of His wrath and the strength of war. First G-d set fire to the nations around the Jewish people, but the Jews didn't become aware that G-d had done this. Not right away at least, the Jews thought it was just by chance. The fire burned them, but they still didn't acknowledge that it was G-d's providence.

They didn't do teshuva. The Midrash goes on to explain that the Almighty never immediately brought full punishment upon any person. G-d warned the person by punishing him lightly at first. Then the nations around the Jewish people were destroyed. That was when the Jews should have considered it as a warning signal and proceed to mend their ways. During the time Yeshayahu was alive, the Jews failed to do teshuva. The Jewish people's position was caused by their many transgressions. There were powerful assurances that G-d sent them when they were in exile. One of these was when the Jews cried out to Him, to help them survive the time they were in exile. G-d acknowledged how the Jews were degraded, He reminded them how He

was their Creator, and He created Yaakov and He was their Maker and the Makers of Israel as well. He told them to not have any fear of perishing in exile.

G-d reminded them how He redeemed them when they were slaves in Egypt. He called them by their name and told them that they would be His forever. G-d went on telling them, even if they pass through the waters, He would be with them. He would never let the Jewish people drown. If there was a fire, he wouldn't let any of them burn and no flame would touch them. This was a promise that the Jewish people would never be wiped out in their entirety. Our generation is to witness the amazing miracle of a people that is rebuilding itself after having lost six million of our own in the Holocaust.

Maybe we may also read another explanation of this along the lines of even though rivers and flames could destroy you physically, they can't touch your soul. That is your true essence. For G-d made the promise to the Jewish people that He is with us. G-d reminded. G-d is always reminding the Jews that He is their G-d, the Holy One of Israel, and He is the Rescuer of the Jewish people.

G-d used Egypt as a ransom for the Jews, the nations He is talking about are Kush and Sva instead of the Jewish people. This is explained in another verse, G-d is addressing the Jewish people saying they are precious in His eyes. He is honored and loves them. He uses another man in our place and other nations for our life. The Midrash explains what this means. Rabbi Elazar entered a public bathroom. There was a Roman who pushed ahead of Rabbi Elazar.

He took his turn first. The Sage thought everything is decreed by heaven. There must have been a good reason why G-d allowed this Edomi to cause me so much discomfort. There was a shrill sound that pierced the air. There was a snake hidden in the stall, and it had bitten the Roman. The snake biting the Roman, caused the Roman to die. The Sage was happy that it wasn't him who went first. He felt that G-d had spared him his life. He felt that through him, G-d fulfilled the verse Yeshayahu mentioned earlier where G-d gave a man instead of him.

The words "a man" could also be read as Roman. G-d was expressing that the Roman was going to be struck and the Jewish man would be spared. A lot of times someone's punishment was called forth from G-d due to them doing teshuvah. Or perhaps it was because of a special honor in their name. It was channeled in different directions when the punishment was for someone who was evil. That person deserved punishment in any form. Jewish people as a whole or individually speaking were spared from this misfortune because of their special merits.

Instead, the misfortune was directed to people who were not deserving or people from other nations. There were two historical examples used to explain this. The first was in the Egyptian exile, the Jews were called "G-d's firstborn son." These Jews deserved to be killed for having served idols, but G-d found redeeming factors for them. He spared these Jews, instead, He caused the wicked Egyptian firstborn, who were priests of idol worship, to die in the Tenth Plague.

Another historical example was when the righteous King Chizkiyahu was in charge, the Assyrian King Sancheriv demanded a complete surrender of Israel. King Chizkiyahu refused to do this, and as a result, the Assyrian army started to besiege Jerusalem. The general named

Ravshakay was sent at the head of a delegation to demoralize the Jewish people. Ravshakay made fun of saying, "Have any gods of the nations saved their land from the hands of the king of Ashur? He went on to say that G-d was not going to save Jerusalem from the hand of Ravshakay either.

The prophet Yeshayahu, sent a prophecy to the Jews. That prophesy stated, "The Assyrians wouldn't enter the city of Jerusalem." Then a strange thing happened, it was in the middle of the Assyrian army taking over, King Sancheriv got word that Tirhaka, who was King of Kush at the time had taken over an army against him.

The King of Kush was in charge of Ethiopia at the time. King Sancheriv started to give orders for his army to leave Jerusalem right away and fight against the Kush instead. The verse in the Haftara is alluding to both the examples G-d using Egypt as the Jews' ransom when He slew the Egyptian firstborn. The other example is when Kush and Sva who were two related Ethiopian nations were used as ransom instead of the Jewish people. G-d was directing King Sancheriv away from Jerusalem at the time when King Chizkiyahu was alive.

Yeshayahu started gathering all the Jewish people together. Yeshayahu had assured the Jewish people that G-d was with them when they were in exile. Yeshayahu was reaffirming that statement now, it went beyond them being in exile that G-d would always gather them together. G-d told Yeshayahu to let the Jews know to not be afraid of being in exile forever. That wouldn't happen, G-d planned to bring the descendants of the Jewish people from the east and from the west. They would all stand together.

G-d was going to say to the north wind, "Give those Jews who are in exile in the North, and to go to the south wind. Do not withhold those who are exiled in the South. Bring My sons from far away and My daughters from the end of the earth! When the redemption started there was a fight that would break out among the winds. The south wind was going to clamor that it wanted to be the first to blow! It wanted to bring in the ships that carried the Jews who were exiled from Yemen and the Arab countries!

The north wind wanted to shout that it wanted to be the first to blow and bring the ships filled with Jews from the northern countries. G-d was going to make peace between the winds, He was going to combine the north and the south into one wind. They would be in a supernatural manner so that ships from opposite directions would be able to reach the shore of Israel. This was going to happen at the same time. The Midrash uses a parable to describe the speed with which those redeemed would soar to the Holy Land. All of the Jewish people were called by G-d's Name and were closely associated with Him. They were created for His honor, and He had formed and prepared them for all they needed to be redeemed. Even when they were in exile, all the means for them to be redeemed were ready. The verse is a general statement asking, Why did G-d bring all of creation into being? It was for His honor!

A famous Jew named, Chofetz Chaim wrote that if a person is going to consider what their task in the world is, he will realize it is only to serve His Creator. Yeshayahu stated to the Jews that everything G-d created was for His honor. Our souls were simply created to honor and serve G-d. We are temporarily clothed in physical bodies, this way so we can function on earth. Eventually, our bodies will be shed and the soul will go back to its Maker to bask in the glory of the Presence of G-d. We, Jews, must never lose sight of our real goal in life. That is to bring honor to G-d. The purpose of all creation is to honor G-d. His honor will be fully shown to the

world only after redemption is over. There is a verse in the Haftara that talks about G-d having an intrinsic plan of history to bring the Jews out of exile.

G-d is talking about the Jews who were originally sent into exile, though they have their eyes. These same Jews were blind because they refused to see the greatness of G-d and they didn't obey Him. These Jews had ears, but they were deaf because they didn't listen to G-d's words. There are two verses that prove the prophecy regarding redemption was bound to be fulfilled. The truth of the Divine word is about all the people getting together and the nations being able to assemble. Some of the people among others were able to foretell the future in the manner G-d's prophet did.

There were some who could proclaim that they predicted events would happen before they actually did happen. There was an idea that other nations could also claim this, so the Jews asked these nations to bring their witnesses to prove them right! The other nations didn't have witnesses, the Jews said they should listen to the prophet's words and admit that his words were the truth.

There were other nations who could try to predict the future, but their words were only a guess. Only the prophecy coming from G-d was completely true, since it is G-d who knows everything and chooses as His messengers who are truthful men. There is another verse that says to the Jews, they are the witnesses to G-d. They are G-d's servants. The prophet G-d chose bears witness that G-d predicted to Avraham four hundred years before these events happened that his children would be enslaved in a strange land called Egypt.

Part of that prophecy was the Jews would leave with a great fortune. At the same time, the prophecies Yeshayahu predicted all came true. The Midrash asks us why it is important for the Jews to be convinced of the absolute truth of Divine predictions. This way we Jews, will know and believe that it is G-d's words concerning the future generation. From the fact that only G-d knows the future, the Jews will be able to understand how He stands out.

He is the one Who created the world. No other power brought anything into being and after He created the universe, no other power would ever create anything. The Jewish people could be convinced that G-d would keep His promises that concerned the future. It is because of His predictions coming true and He has the power to fulfill them. The Midrash comments to the Jewish people, we are the witnesses G-d is looking for. If we are His witnesses then He is G-d. If we are not His witnesses then it is as though He is not G-d.

The Jewish nation was created to attest to the truth of the Creator's existence and His greatness. G-d creating the world in six days is parallel to Six thousand years of World History. On the first day of Creation, the earth had nothing in it and during the first thousand years, the wicked dominated the world. It didn't have Torah or good deeds. On the Second Day of Creation, G-d separated the upper and lower waters. He did this by putting in a sky. At the same time during the second millennium of history, G-d told the tzaddik Noach to build himself an ark. It separated him from the evil people in his generation.

This building of the ark was also protected physically from the upper and lower waters. The Torah doesn't say on the Second Day of Creation, G-d saw that it was good. G-d did that to hint that the world's destruction wasn't a good thing in His eyes. On the Third day of Creation, G-d made land appear and the earth started producing plants. The great tzaddik Avraham came out and planted in the hearts of people the belief in G-d. It was Avraham who sowed the seeds of Torah so that his children could receive the Torah.

It was on this day, that it was written twice, G-d saw that it was good. This was written once to hint that G-d was pleased that the great Flood was over. And it was written a second time to hint at the Torah, which is called "good." On the Fourth day of Creation, G-d suspended the sun and the moon in the sky. In the fourth millennium of history, there was a light as great as the sun. That was the first Bais Hamikdash, it illuminated the world. The light of the Torah shone on the entire Jewish nation. The Second Bais Hamikdash gave less light; it was compared to the moon.

It didn't have five important objects, one of them was the aron (the ark). On the Fifth day of Creation, the fish and birds were created. The fifth millennium of history will usher in a new era of peace and see the Jews in exile. They were put there by hostile nations, such as the fish or birds when they are caught by -d. On the Sixth Day of Creation, the animals were created. The sixth millennium initially found the animals to be nations that didn't recognize G-d, these same people were dominating.

Adam was created and that was a hint of the emergence of Mashiach. Mashiach and the future redemption is the reason the Sixth day of Creation was prefixed in the Torah with the extra letter, Hai. That meant the sixth day. On the Seventh Day of Creation, G-d decided to rest. At the same time, after six thousand years the world came to a rest. Mashiach will usher in a new generation of peace and tranquility.

The Parsha and the Haftara are connected. Parshas Beraishis is describing the Six Days of Creation that hint at six thousand years of world history. The Haftara has references to world history, especially the final stage. This last part of the Haftara has some footnotes that are interesting, our contemporary life is very different from the visions that our prophets once had of the final redemption. Immorality and the pursuit of pleasure are very common now. People hate and there is a lot of lawlessness strike terror in our hearts.

There isn't much security anywhere, there is no haven of peace where safety could be found. Israel is called the Land of Life, there is no spiritual Heavenly zone above Israel from which life is channeled into the bodies below. Adam was created in Israel and his soul was blown into him from there. The verse speaks the truth about the earth, in general, Our Sages teach this specifically referring to the earth of Israel. Israel is the "heart of the world."

Israel is its central core, the world in essence is Israel. Our Sages interpret the words in Hebrew, the land meaning Israel. There are offshoots saying the land is referring to other countries of the world.

There is a source named Mincha Belula that believes, G-d created the world, and He performed righteousness and kindness for it. G-d already formulated Mashiach's Name. G-d prepared the

ultimate redemption. If we try to understand this interpretation, we will find it challenging. We don't find that Yeshayahu was appointed as a prophet for a nation other than the Jewish people. Rashi refers to this verse to explain that Yeshayahu was a light to the Jewish tribes. Each of the twelve tribes was a distinct min-nation. There is also a source called Aitz Yosef (The Song of Songs Rabba 1:37) It says the songs in the present world are called, "Shira." they are in tribute to Jewish heroines, for women who played a crucial role in the most crucial times.

These crucial times where women played roles for us to remember were Pharaoh's daughter Basya. She became a Jewess, and she raised the Jewish redeemer, Moses. It is because of the Jewish women's honor that caused the redemption from Egypt. There was also the prophetess Devora, she rescued the Jewish nation in the time of the judges. There was another woman who worked with her, named Yael. She slew the Canaanite general, Sisera.

During the time of Chashmonaim, the heroine Yehudis brought about a victory for the Jewish people. She slayed the enemy who was a general named, Holofernes. The last Jewish woman for us to remember is Queen Esther. She self-sacrificed herself to help foil the plan of Haman. There is a Jewish source called Mishkenos Yaakov and it explains the verse uses four expressions. G-d would blind the Jews in a way they would never know.

He would guide them in paths they didn't know. He would illuminate the darkness and He would straighten the crooked paths. He would do this to hint at the four levels of comprehending the Torah. These four levels were Peshat, which was a simple meaning. Remez, giving allusions. Derush, that has profound meaning. Sod, having secrets and the Jews would become proficient in all four of these. There is a question regarding this verse, who is blind and named Shalem? That person is blind just like the people living in Jerusalem.

The prophet Yeshayahu singled out the residents of Jerusalem. He did this because a lot of them turned away from G-d. G-d punished those in a more severe way than others. We learn in this Haftara how the city of Israel was holier than anywhere else. The prophet Yeshayahu admonishes the Jewish people then and our generation now. The Torah observers should set right the squandering of money used on luxuries. There is a failure to resist various social ills of our time. There isn't enough work in the field of outreach to our brothers who have gone astray.

A Jew that is not able to influence their non-observant brother directly should support organizations that can do so. There will be Jews who ask in dismay questions such as why was there a Holocaust, to begin with? These people are provided with Yeshayahu's answer, of didn't we transgress against G-d enough times already? Yeshayahu believed there were large numbers of Jews who were not religious before the Holocaust. That was why G-d responded by bringing the severe punishments that were foretold in the Torah.

A Jewish source named Malbim explains that this verse cites three reasons for G-d's love for the Jewish people. Your souls are precious, just as gold and pearls are rare and precious. Your souls come from a lofty place, they have their forefather's purity. The Jewish people deserve honor for our high standard in Torah study and our good deeds. G-d chose to love the Jews because He willed it so. A commentator named Ben Avraham, says that the verse alludes to three categories of people.



The perfectly righteous souls who come front the world of the mediocres' from the sphere of Yitzirah. (Hebrew term don't know the meaning). This includes the wicked ones' souls from the world of Aseeya. (Hebrew term/name don't know the meaning). These people were created for G-d's honor, but the evil people were punished with G-d's anger. They were punished in Gehinnom.