

THE ' GUTNICK ' EDITION

חמשה חומשי תורה
Chumash

הַפְּטָרוֹת
HAFTAROS

*According to Chabad,
Ashkenazic and Sefardic custom
with a Commentary anthologized from
Classic Rabbinic Texts and the works
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*

*Compiled and Adapted by
Rabbi Chaim Miller*



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CHUMASH - BOOK OF HAFTAROS
with commentary from Classic Rabbinic Texts and the Lubavitcher Rebbe
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Preface

Since the publication of the *Kol Menachem* Chumash, we have received repeated requests for a more thorough treatment of the *Haftarah* cycle. While the possible scope of such a work is immense, our intention in the current presentation has been to provide a text which will be of practical use in the Synagogue; therefore, we have aimed to keep the commentaries relatively concise.

As in the original edition of the Chumash, the text of the *Haftaros* has been translated according to the interpretation of *Metzudos*, a pair of commentaries (*Metzudas Tziyon* and *Metzudas David*) by Rabbi Yechiel Hillel Altschuler (eighteenth century), which stresses the plain meaning of the text. In a similar vein to our translation of the Chumash, numerous small annotations have been included (in brackets) within the translation, to assist the reader in appreciating the text according to its classic, rabbinic interpretation.

In this edition, numerous enhancements have been made:

- a.) A treatment of the full *Haftarah* cycle, encompassing Shabbos, Festivals and all other occasions when a *Haftarah* is read.
- b.) Variations in the cycle according to Chabad, Ashkenazic and Sefardic customs.
- c.) Expanded notes on the connection between the *Haftarah* and the *Parsha* of the week, or the occasion when it is read.
- d.) A brief synopsis of each *Haftarah*, in order to familiarize the reader with its overall content, and enhance biblical literacy.
- e.) Comments on the historical context of the *Haftarah*, where it was deemed necessary for a basic understanding of the text.
- f.) Insights into the *Haftarah* adapted from the Lubavitcher Rebbe's teachings, and the works of his predecessors.
- g.) A general introduction to the public Torah and *Haftarah* reading in the synagogue.

In the vast expanse of the Rebbe's published teachings, which currently spans hundreds of volumes and continues to expand, the *Haftarah* receives more than a cursory treatment. In forty-two years of public addresses, which varied in style and content throughout different periods, the Rebbe spoke on the topic of *Haftarah* regularly. If we add to that many other discussions of the scriptural verses from which the *Haftaros* are drawn, quite a formidable body of commentary emerges.

The content and texture of the material is highly varied, spanning many branches of knowledge: philological concerns, homiletical and kabalistic allusions, theological foundations, and most importantly, religious and ethical instruction for daily life. While fully aware that he is speaking to the modern thinker, and ever sensitive to the shortcomings of human nature, the Rebbe remains convinced that ancient wisdom and mystical truths are pertinent to our current condition. The drama and didacticism of the prophets is thus an excellent platform to present his repeated calls for self-transformation. Each *Haftarah* voices openly so many themes which are of great concern to the Rebbe: the constant redeemability of the individual and the resultant error of despair; the need for an uncompromising presentation of religious values; the essential goodness of the individual; and the promise of global redemption as a compelling stimulus to religious observance.

The present commentary is far from a comprehensive treatment of all this material, and it does not do justice to the passion, faith and love with which the talks were originally delivered. Discussions spanning many pages have been compacted into just a few lines and others have been omitted altogether, either due to their complexity, subtlety, or requirement of background knowledge. Nevertheless, many hundreds of fascinating insights are to be found in these pages which we hope the reader will find meaningful. The source of each concept has been noted in the hope that the reader will pursue further study of the original text (especially as the Rebbe's works have been made so much more available today via the internet* and other electronic media).

For further information about the *Kol Menachem* Chumash the reader is referred to the Foreword, printed at the beginning of *Sefer Bereishis* (Genesis).

We would like to thank the following people for their assistance and encouragement in preparing this volume: Rabbi Itzik Yarmush, Rabbi Mendy Lent, Rabbi Shmuel Rabin, Rabbi Mendy Angyalfi, Rabbi Hillel Blesofsky, Rabbi Michoel Zeligson, Rabbi Ari Raskin, Rabbi Alter Metzger, C. S. Cantor, Y. Homnick and E. Gurary.

We once again extend our thanks to **Rabbi Meyer Gutnick**, who has graciously accepted upon himself the labor and expense of publishing and distributing this work. May this merit be a source of eternal blessing for him and his family.

May we soon merit the true and complete redemption, with *Mashiach Tzidkeinu*, speedily in our days.

Kol Menachem

18th of Elul 5766

Birthday of the "two great luminaries," Rabbi Yisra'el Ba'al Shem Tov (in 5458/1698)
and Rabbi Shne'ur Zalman of Liadi (in 5494/1734).

*See <http://books.chabadlibrary.org/index.htm>; www.livingwiththerebbe.com; www.lahak.org; www.otzar770.com/library; www.sichoskodesh.com; <http://www.jewishcontent.org/windows/Likutei-Sichos-Hebrew-30-39.exe>. For audio: <http://wlcc.org>; www.jewishaudio.com; www.sichos.com. In English: www.sichosinenglish.org; www.chabad.org.

🌀 THE PUBLIC TORAH AND HAFTARAH READING 🌀

Contrary to what it may seem at first glance, the public Torah reading carried out in synagogues on Shabbos (the Sabbath), Monday and Thursday was not introduced purely as an educational exercise. While the enactment of “reading the law,” which dates back to the times of Moshe (Moses)¹, does play some role in familiarizing people with law, Biblical law itself already mandates every person to become fluent in both the Oral and Written traditions.² Rather, the public reading was intended for a somewhat more spiritual purpose.

It was prompted by the first of a series of rebellions that occurred immediately after the splitting of the Reed Sea, when “*the people complained to Moshe*” (Shemos 15:24). The reason for this uprising, as documented by scripture, appears to be quite straightforward: it was simply that “*they traveled for three days in the desert without finding water*” (ibid. 23), and therefore began to question the effectiveness of Moshe’s leadership which had led them into a desert without proper provisions.

The spiritual leaders of that time, however, perceived the affair as a religious rebellion. While it may seem reasonable to complain when faced with a basic lack of life-sustaining provisions, in this case, the people’s harsh criticism of Moshe represented a lack of faith in God. Just a few verses earlier, “*They believed in God and in Moshe, His servant*” (ibid. 14:31), on which our Sages explained, “*If a person believes in a Jewish leader, it is as if he believes in the words of the One Who spoke and caused the world to exist*” (Mechilta). So we can understand that, here, the people’s criticisms of Moshe actually belied a denial of God’s providence.

Since scripture only provides us with one reason for the rebellion, “*They traveled for three days in the desert without finding water*” (ibid. 23), the spiritual ill which prompted this crisis must also be hinted in these words:

Those who expound the inner meaning of scripture taught: Water means nothing other than Torah, as the verse states, “Come! Everyone who is thirsty go to the water” (Isaiah 55:1). It is because they went three days without Torah that they became exhausted. This prompted the prophets among them to enact that they should publicly read the law on Sabbath, make a break on Sunday, read again on Monday, make a break again on Tuesday and Wednesday, read again on Thursday and then make a break on Friday so that they should not be kept for three days without Torah (Bava Kama 82a).

1. Rambam, *Laws of Prayer* 12:1. Ezra enacted the Torah reading of the Shabbos Afternoon service (ibid.)

2. See *Pri Megadim* (R’ Yosef Teumim, 1727-1792), Aishel Avraham, Orach Chaim ch. 135, par. 1.

Apparently, the sages of the time (“the prophets”) understood that a person’s soul needs to be constantly nourished by Torah.³ Just as the body becomes weak and exhausted when denied water, the soul too becomes parched if it is deprived of the holiness it “absorbs” when hearing the word of God. Committing the Torah to memory does not suffice; even if one never forgets what one has learned, there is a constant need to charge the soul with sufficient energy to sustain its constant battle against the evil inclination.⁴ Therefore, no person should go three days without hearing the Torah.⁵

Together with festival readings, the Torah is read on a total of 248 occasions in the year.⁶

RE-ENACTING THE SINAITIC EVENT

Why was there a need for a *public* reading? Would it not suffice for each person to study the Torah personally at least once in three days? (The enactment preceded the requirement to pray in the synagogue on a daily basis).

One could, of course, suggest a number of simple, practical reasons. Some individuals may have been incapable of private study and thus required a communal service; a public reading would have a greater impact on the listeners than private study; and the need to present oneself before the community would provide an element of accountability to ensure that the enactment was observed.

But being that the primary reason for the reading was to satisfy a transcendental “thirsting,” as explained above, it follows that a public reading was chosen so as to enhance the spiritual efficacy of the experience.⁷ Thus, our Sages equated the public Torah reading with the event at Sinai:

My son! Read the Parsha in its time, every year, and I will consider it as if you stood before Mount Sinai and received it (Pesikta d’Rav Kahana, par. 12).

The *Zohar* elaborates further on this theme:

When the Torah Scroll is removed from the Ark, one should be in a state of awe, trepidation, reverence and quivering to focus the heart like those who stood at Mount Sinai and received the Torah from the Almighty....The one who reads the Torah should be aware and take

3. In principle, this could apply to *any* words of Torah. This is highlighted by the view that one could fulfill the obligation of reading the Torah even if the wrong portion was read (*Pri Ha’aretz* by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Mizrahi, Istanbul 1727, vol. 1, responsum 6; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re’eh* 5746, par. 1).

4. See *Toras Chaim* (Rabbi Avraham Chaim Shor, Warsaw 1878) to Bava Kama *ibid*.

5. In a similar vein, the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch) instituted a universally applicable custom to study each day a portion of Chumash, Tehilim (Psalms) and *Tanya* (The primary text, or “Bible” of *Chasidus*). This scheme is known by its acronym, *ChiTaS*. The Rebbe has stressed on numerous occasions that the daily study of *Chitas* is equally applicable to all Jews (*shava l’chol nefesh*) and not only those who are considered to be Lubavitcher Chasidim (see *Likutei Sichos* vol. 23, p. 403).

On occasion, the Rebbe stressed that the concept of not going three days without Torah also applies to the study of *Chasidus* (*Igros Kodesh* vol. 5, p. 286; *ibid.* vol. 9, p. 280)

6. Corresponding to the number of positive commands in the Torah (*Orchos Chaim* by Rabbi Aharon haKohen of Lunille (1280-1330), *Laws of Additions for Monday and Thursday after Shemoneh Esrei*, par. 13).

7. cf. *Toras Chaim* (R’ Ya’akov Shalom Sofer, Paks 1897) *Orach Chaim* ch. 135.

to heart that he is God's agent who is making the Torah heard by the people on His behalf (Zohar II 206a).

Chasidic thought stresses that the reading of the Torah has a broad scope, well beyond the confines of the synagogue. We are taught that the Torah is the “blueprint” from which God created the world (Zohar II 161 a-b), and that, furthermore, it is a *dynamic* blueprint which continues to exert an influence on the world (Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim 6:5). Therefore, by reading the Torah, the world at large becomes realigned with its purpose, and the authority of the Torah over the world is reasserted.⁸ This form of spiritual “actualization” is hinted to in the Hebrew term for reading the Torah, *kriah*, which can also mean “calling,” suggesting “*that the person calls to God to come to him, so to speak, like a person who calls to his friend to come to him, or a child who calls to his father*” (Tanya, chapter 37). Reading the Torah portion thus draws, or “calls,” its spiritual motifs down into the world.⁹

A further theme stressed by Chasidic thought is that reading the Torah is a process of empowerment: God does not merely *command* us, He also grants us the powers necessary to carry out the task at hand. And the fact that each portion, which possesses its own unique messages and challenges to our daily lives, is read just once a year, suggests that the spiritual empowerment that accompanies it will also last a full year, until the portion is read once again.¹⁰

Due to the immense significance of the Torah reading, it should be carried out with precision by the reader, and followed carefully by the listeners. If the reader makes a mistake in pronouncing a word¹¹—or, in Chabad communities, even if he errs in choosing the correct cantillation note¹²—he must be corrected. The listeners must pay careful attention to the reading and should follow from a Chumash¹³ (but *not* by reading along verbally¹⁴). It is forbidden even to study Torah at this time,¹⁵ and certainly private conversations are a mark

8. *Likutei Sichos* vol. 20, p. 344; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bereishis* 5750, par. 1.

9. *Likutei Sichos* vol. 25, p. 379, note 21.

10. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Sisa* 5750, par 10 and note 100.

11. The Torah scroll does not have vowels or cantillation marks and they must be memorized by the reader. The reader is only corrected if his mistake changes the meaning of a word (*Rema to Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 142). According to Jewish tradition, the vowels and cantillation marks were transmitted by God to Moshe (see *Remak, Pardes, Sha'ar* 28; *Igros Kodesh* vol. 4, p. 386).

12. *Sefer Haminhagim* p. 14; *Sefer Hasichos* 5696, p. 51. However, the reader's mistaken cantillation note is not corrected if the verse contains God's name—*ibid*.

The *Zohar* stresses the importance of the cantillation marks: “*The letters and the vowels follow their rhythm, and they go along like soldiers following their king. The letters are the ‘body,’ the vowels are their ‘spirit,’ and they all follow their musical notes and are thus able to stand in their place. When the tune of the cantillation marks moves, the letters and vowels march in step with it. When [the melody] stops, they stop moving and remain stationary*” (Zohar I 15b. See also *Pardes, Sha'ar Hata'amim* ch. 5; *Sefer Halikutim Dach Tzemach Tzedek*, entry “*Ta'amim*”).

13. See at length *Shaloh* 132a; *Sefer Haminhagim* *ibid*.

14. “*When the Torah is read only one voice should be heard....It is forbidden for more than one to read the Torah. Everybody else should be quiet and listen*” (Zohar II 206a). The only exception to this is the person who is called to the Torah who must read along in an undertone, so that his blessings on the Torah are not said in vain (see *Beis Yosef, Orach Chaim* 141; *Shulchan Aruch* *ibid*. par. 2; *Mateh Moshe* 250; *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rashab, vol. 1, p. 179).

15. After citing this view, the *Shulchan Aruch* also mentions dissenting opinions, without coming to any

of disrespect.¹⁶ Some have the custom to stand during the Torah reading as a mark of further respect, though this is not obligatory¹⁷ (except for a few special readings).

“It is certainly true,” remarked Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber of Lubavitch (the Rebbe Rashab), “that when a person listens to the public Torah reading in accordance with the law, besides fulfilling a command of God, the very fact that he honors the Torah will, in turn, lead the Torah to arouse Divine mercy upon him and his family, both in physical and spiritual matters.”¹⁸

THE ALIYAH—BEING CALLED TO THE TORAH

Originally, one person, such as the king or prophet, would read the entire Torah portion for the day. As time passed, this honor was divided among a number of dignitaries of the community who would each ascend the platform on which the Torah was placed—hence the term, *aliyah* or “ascent” to the Torah—and read a portion for the public. In later generations, as the general standard of education declined, sometimes a person who was not capable of reading the Torah would be honored with an *aliyah* and thus embarrassed in public. To avert such a situation arising, it was instituted that one individual should read the entire portion, and that each person called to the Torah would just make the blessings and read along in an undertone—a practice which is followed to this day.

The number of *aliyos* given corresponds to the sanctity of the day¹⁹: Seven people²⁰ are called to the Torah on Shabbos morning, six on Yom Kippur, five on a festival, four on Chol Ha’moed and Rosh Chodesh, and three on a weekday or fast-day. In some communities additional *aliyos* are given on Shabbos, but in Chabad this is not practiced at all.²¹

conclusion (*Orach Chaim* 146:2). However, in such a case, the final ruling follows the first cited opinion (*Yad Malachi, Klalei Shulchan Aruch* par. 17)—in this case, that it is forbidden to study or speak words of Torah after the public Torah reading has commenced (*Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rashab *ibid.* p. 177).

16. See *Igros Kodesh* of the Alter Rebbe vol. 1, p. 12; *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe, vol. 17, p. 208.

17. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 146:4. See at length *Chikrai Minhagim* by Rabbi Eliyahu Yochanan Gurary (*Oholei Shem—Lubavitch*, 5759), p. 62ff.

18. *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rashab, *ibid* in footnote.

19. *Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 282:1. A further rationale is that on workdays fewer *aliyos* are given, so people do not have to lose too much time from work (*Megilah* 22b).

20. According to Chasidic thought, the Menorah in the Holy Temple, which possessed seven lamps, corresponds to a division of Jewish souls into seven general categories (*Likutei Torah*, beginning of *Parshas Beha’aloscha*). Therefore, on *Shabbos* we complete seven *aliyos*, representing the Jewish people in their entirety (*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bo* 5748, [*Hisvaduyos* vol. 2, p. 275]).

21. The concept of adding *aliyos* is mentioned in the *Mishnah* (*Megilah* 21a) and is cited by the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 282:1). However, *Tashbetz* (Rabbi Shimon ben Tzemach Duran, 1361-1444) argues that the sanction to add *aliyos* was only valid in Mishnaic times when just two blessings were made on the entire Torah reading (one before the first *aliyah* and one after the seventh *aliyah*), which meant that adding *aliyos* did not cause additional blessings to be recited. In Talmudic times, it was instituted that all seven *aliyos* should have a blessing beforehand and afterwards so that latecomers (who missed the first blessing) or those leaving early (who missed the last blessing) would not be under the impression that just one blessing is made (*Megilah* 21b). Once this was enacted, argues *Tashbetz*,

While being called to the Torah is in many cases a privilege, rather than an obligation, a person is required to have an *aliyah* on a number of special occasions, such as the day when a boy becomes *Bar Mitzvah*,²² a *yahrzeit* for a parent etc.²³ There is also a custom for a person to have an *aliyah* if his birthday falls during the following week, on the Shabbos preceding it.²⁴

Chasidic thought stresses that an *aliyah* to the Torah is a form of spiritual “ascent” when,

the Jew rises to a higher spiritual level. This is indicated by the word Aliyah (“going up”). And, although the term also refers to the physical ascent of actually going up to the Bimah which is on a higher level than the floor of the Shul, its real meaning is the spiritual aspect. Indeed, it is precisely because of the spiritual ascent (achieved through the reading and study of the Torah) that the Bimah is elevated (Letter of the Rebbe written on 25th of Cheshvan 5735).

In one of his talks, the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe elaborates:

The soul has five levels:²⁵ Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah, Chayah and Yechidah, which are, as it were, its ground floor, second floor, third floor, fourth floor and fifth floor. These levels of the soul correspond to the four spiritual worlds:²⁵ Atzilus, Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah, as well as the infinite worlds above Atzilus... When a Jew down here on the “ground floor” is called up to the Torah and says, “Borchu es Hashem hamevorach” (“Bless God Who is blessed”), even if he does not know what kabalistic ideas to have in mind, nevertheless, these words of his are echoed in all the four Worlds. Just as the Nefesh says them here in the world of Asiyah, so too do his Ruach and Neshamah and Chayah say them in the respective worlds of Yetzirah, Beriah and Atzilus. And these words are all sensed by the Yechidah of his soul in the manner in which they

adding further *aliyos* would mean making unnecessary blessings, causing God’s name to be uttered unnecessarily (*Tashbetz*, vol. 2, responsum 70).

*Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim 282, par 1) criticizes Tashbetz’s conclusion, arguing that we simply do not find in Rabbinic literature that adding *aliyos* was outlawed from the times of the Talmud onwards. He nevertheless recommends that people heed the words of Tashbetz where possible and not to add *aliyos*.*

*Tzemach Tzedek (Orach Chaim, responsum 35) offers a novel insight which resolves Magen Avraham’s criticism. He notes that in addition to the custom of making just two blessings on the Torah reading, there was a further practical difference in Mishnaic times, namely, that the person who was called to the Torah would himself read the section of the law for the entire community (a practice which continued into the early era of the *Rishonim*). In such a situation it would not be problematic to add *aliyos*, since each person is making the blessings on his own reading, and they are thus “necessary” blessings. Nowadays, however, when one reader chants the entire Torah portion it could be the case that all the blessings are made on behalf of the reader, which would mean that to recite more than the allotted seven sets of blessings would be “unnecessary” (as stated in *Shulchan Aruch* 143:5). Due to this problem, *Tzemach Tzedek* rules that one should not add *aliyos* at all, and he testifies that this was the practice of his grandfather, the *Alter Rebbe*. Thus the Chabad custom is not to add *aliyos* at all, and if extra *aliyos* are necessary (for a *chasan*, etc.) a second Torah reading must be arranged (*Sefer Haminhagim* p. 31; *Igros Kodesh* vol. 3, p. 30).*

22. Or the next time that the Torah is read. If this occurs on Shabbos, the *aliyah* should be given at the afternoon service (*Sefer HaMinhagim* p. 74, *Likutei Diburim*, English Translation, vol. 2, p. 199-201).

23. For further details see *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* chapter 136 and commentaries; *Chumash Shai Lamora* (Jerusalem 5763), vol. 4, p. 630.

24. *Sefer Haminhagim* p. 81; see also *Sefer Hasichos* 5748, vol. 2, p. 406.

25. For a clarification of these terms, see Schochet, *Mystical Concepts in Chasidism* (Kehos 1968, printed as an addendum to the bilingual edition of *Tanya*).

*appear in the infinite worlds above Atzilus...Even one who does not have any conception of what is occurring nevertheless causes these reverberations to take place in the upper worlds...even though he is totally unaware of it (Likutei Diburim 25a).*²⁶

This idea—that the *aliyah* brings about lofty spiritual reverberations, regardless of whether the person is aware of them or not—highlights the theme of Jewish unity. Every person who receives an *aliyah* makes the same blessings and follows the same procedure, regardless of his awareness of the spiritual implications of what he is doing, thereby indicating the underlying equality found among all Jews.²⁷

Nevertheless, among the seven *aliyos* themselves, some are considered to be a greater honor than others. The first *aliyah* is always given to a *kohen* (one of priestly lineage), the second to a levite.²⁸ According to the Talmud, the third *aliyah* is the greatest honor for an Israelite, then the fourth, and then the fifth, etc.²⁹ The Kabalists pointed to the sixth *aliyah* as being the greatest.³⁰ Some latter authorities considered the seventh *aliyah* to be the most important, being that it is the conclusion of the Torah reading,³¹ while others taught that *maftir* is the highest honor, for even though it is a repetition of what has already been read, it nevertheless brings with it the honor of reciting the *Haftarah* and its many blessings.³² (The custom of all the Chabad Rebbeim was to be called up for *maftir*).³³

A further, legal implication of being called to the Torah is a connection with the *mitzvah* of *writing* a Torah scroll. Technically speaking, every Jewish man is obligated to write for himself a Torah scroll, which entails two distinct obligations: a.) The person must own the Torah scroll as his personal property, (even a joint ownership does not suffice according to

26. In this talk, the Previous Rebbe compares the spiritual effects of *aliyah* above to the reverberations of a violin string: “An expert knows that if his finger touches a certain string of the violin a certain note will result, and if his finger strikes a certain drum a particular sound will result. An ensemble of instruments combined in harmony can produce sweet music to arouse and delight the soul. If a person who is ignorant of music touches the string or strikes the drum a sound is also produced, according to all the principles of musical theory. But he is ignorant of them.”

27. *Sicha* of 20th *Menachem Av* 5741, par. 36.

28. Thus the number of *aliyos* received by the priests and levites in a week is equal to that of the Israelites. For the priests and levites receive two *aliyos* at each of the four weekly readings (Shabbos morning, Shabbos afternoon, Monday and Thursday), totaling eight *aliyos*, and the Israelites receive five *aliyos* on Shabbos morning and one *aliyah* at each of the three remaining readings, also totalling eight. The reason for this enactment was so as not to cause strife between the priest/levite clan and the Israelites. (*Orchos Chaim* *ibid*).

29. *Gittin* 60a; *Rambam*, *Laws of Prayer* 12:18; *Shulchan Aruch* 136:1.

30. According to the *Kabalah*, the seven *aliyos* of Shabbos correspond to the seven latter *sefiros* (Divine emanations). The sixth *aliyah* thus corresponds to the *sefirah* of *yesod*, whose role is to gather and reveal the light of all the *sefiros* that preceded it. Therefore it is considered to be the greatest (*Arizal Sha'ar Hakavanos*, *Inyan Krias Hatorah*, discourse 2). See also *Zohar* III 164b.

31. *Mishnah Berurah*, ch. 136, par. 5. See also *Tola'as Ya'akov* (by Me'ir ibn Gabai, author of *Avodas Hakodesh*): “The one who completes the reading takes the reward for them all” (Warsaw 1890 edition, p. 27a).

32. *Pri Megadim*, *Aishel Avraham*, ch. 147, par. 11. See also *Chasam Sofer*, responsa, *Orach Chaim* 68; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach* 5743, par. 10.

33. *Sicha* of the night of Simchas Torah 5715, par. 9. The Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, also had the custom of being called for *maftir* (*Toldos Levi Yitzchak*, vol. 3, p. 840). See below for an explanation of the superior quality of the *Haftarah* in Chabad thought.

many authorities)³⁴; and b.) he must actually *write* the scroll, and not merely purchase it. (The latter obligation, however, could be fulfilled through checking and correcting an existing scroll, since this process of validating a Torah is tantamount to writing a new one) (*Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah* 270:1 and *Rema* *ibid.*).

Nevertheless, being that we find that even many of the most righteous of Jews did not write a new Torah scroll or even correct an existing one, there must be other legal means by which this *mitzvah* may be performed.³⁵

A precedent, however, could be found from the case of the *mitzvah* of *esrog*, which must also be a person's own property (and not jointly owned) but, nevertheless, in times of necessity may be purchased by the congregation, since "*being that it was purchased for the purpose of fulfilling each person's obligation, it is as if it was stated explicitly that the entire congregation gives their portion to any person who takes it to fulfill the mitzvah, on condition it is returned to them*" (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 258:9). Likewise, we could argue that a Torah scroll is purchased for the purpose of fulfilling each community member's obligation of owning his own Torah scroll, and when a person is called to the Torah the rest of the congregation temporarily relinquishes their ownership of the scroll and transfers it to him for the duration of his *aliyah*. In this way, he fulfills the requirement of personally owning a Torah scroll.

As for the requirement of *writing* a Torah scroll, it could be argued that this is carried out by a process of validation (similar to that of correcting the scroll, mentioned above) which occurs when the person makes the blessings on his *aliyah*. For being that it is forbidden to make blessings on a Torah scroll that contains errors, which would represent a serious transgression of uttering God's name in vain, it follows that when a person makes the blessings on his *aliyah* he is actually testifying to the validity of the Torah scroll, an act which is legally equivalent to writing it.³⁶

MAFTIR

After the Torah reading, the *Haftarah*, a selection from the prophets, is read (for a further discussion of this enactment, see below). The Sages, however, feared that if a person would be called to read the *Haftarah* in direct succession to the seven Torah *aliyos*, it would

34. See *Chidushei R' Akiva Eiger* to *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah* ch. 270; *Pischei Teshuvah* *ibid.*, par. 1; See also sources cited in *Yesodey Yeshurun* vol. 2 (Rabbi Gedalia Felder, Toronto, 1956) p. 92-3.

35. The *Shulchan Aruch* (*ibid.* 2) states that nowadays, when a Torah scroll is placed in the Synagogue for public use, the *mitzvah* of writing a Torah can be fulfilled by writing (or purchasing) Torah books and learning from them. However, many authorities rule that this is *supplementary* to the basic obligation of writing a Torah scroll, and does not supersede it (*Beis Yosef* *ibid.*; *Bach* *ibid.*; *Taz* *ibid.*; *Shagas Aryeh*, responsum 36; *Birkei Yosef* *ibid.*; *Chasam Sofer, Yoreh Deah* responsum 254).

36. *Sicha of Yud Tes Kislev* 5742 par. 24-31; *Likutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 207ff. From the above explanation, it follows that a person fulfills the *mitzvah* of writing a Torah scroll immediately on becoming *Bar Mitzvah*, since it is the custom for a boy to receive an *aliyah* to the Torah on the day of his *Bar Mitzvah* (*ibid.*).

A further way of fulfilling this *mitzvah* is for a person to have a letter written in the Torah scroll on his behalf (see *Sicha of Yud Tes Kislev* *ibid.* par. 32).

send the message that the Five Books of Moshe and the Books of the Prophets are of equal status.³⁷ Consequently, it was decided that the person who would read the *Haftarah* should first be called to the Torah so as to demonstrate the primacy of Torah over the prophets.³⁸ Furthermore, the *aliyah* of *maftir* grants the person who is honored with reading from the prophets some of the greater spiritual illumination which is found in the Torah.³⁹

In practice, the last few verses of the Torah portion are repeated for this *aliyah*.⁴⁰

To indicate that the *maftir* is not included as one of the seven basic *aliyos*,⁴¹ the post-Talmudic Sages enacted that half-*kaddish* be recited between the seven *aliyos* and the *maftir*, thus making a clear, conceptual break.⁴²

HAGBAH—RAISING THE TORAH SCROLL

The custom of raising the Torah scroll is mentioned in tractate *Sofrim*, one of the minor tractates of the *Talmud*.⁴³ In his commentary to the *Torah*, *Ramban* suggests that the practice is even alluded to by the Chumash itself: “Cursed be the one who does not uphold [literally, “lift up”] the words of this Torah” (*Devarim* 27:26).⁴⁴ The reason for raising the Torah is so that the entire congregation, both men and women, can see the words written inside and proclaim, “This is the Torah which Moshe placed before the children of Israel” (*ibid.* 4:44). Clearly, this public testimony would lack validity if the Torah was closed and the people could not see what was written inside.⁴⁵

The original custom, still practiced today by many Sefardic communities, is to raise the Torah before it is read.⁴⁶ Ashkenazic authorities, however, ruled that *hagbah* should be carried out after the Torah reading,⁴⁷ possibly due to the concern that performing *hagbah*

37. For the distinction between the prophecy of Moshe and that of the other prophets see *Ramban, Principles of Faith (Commentary to the Mishnah, Perek Cheilek)*, principle 7; *Mishneh Torah, Laws of Foundations of the Torah* 7:6.

38. *Megilah* 23a and *Rashi* s.v. *mipnei kovod Torah*; see also *Sefer Hamachria* ch.31, *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* ch. 282.

39. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Eikev* 5743, par. 21. According to the Kabbalah, the *maftir*, the eighth *aliyah*, is connected to the theme of redemption. See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Pinchas* 5749, supplement to note 80.

40. In *Talmudic* times the *maftir* was called for a few verses of the Torah portion which were left unread. See *Tosfos* to *Megilah* *ibid.*

41. Technically speaking, the *maftir* may be called as one of the seven *aliyos*, and this was practiced in *Talmudic* times, but now it has become universal practice that the *maftir* is given an eighth *aliyah*. However, on fast days, *Tisha b'Av* and the afternoon service of *Yom Kippur*, when it is not permitted to add further *aliyos*, the *maftir* is the final of the three obligatory *aliyos* (*Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 282:11).

42. *Ibid.* 12.

43. Chap. 14, law 14.

44. *Ramban* *ibid.*, based on *Jerusalem Talmud, Sotah* 7:4.

45. *Keser Shem Tov* (Rabbi Shemtov Gaguine, 1934), vol. 1, p. 275.

46. *Masechta Sofrim* *ibid.*; *Mechaber, Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* ch. 134; *Zohar* II 206a. This was the *Arizal's* custom: see *Sha'ar Hakavanos, Inyan Krias Hatorah*, beginning of discourse 1; *Pri Etz Chaim, Sha'ar Kriyas Sefer Torah*, end of ch. 1.

47. *Rema*, *ibid.*

first of all would leave people with the impression that *hagbah* is more important than the Torah reading, and they might not even stay to listen to the Torah being read.⁴⁸

The person who is honored with *hagbah* should first unroll the Torah scroll while it is resting on the table, to reveal three columns of text.⁴⁹ After touching the Torah with a *talis* or the Torah's belt, he lifts the Torah, turns ninety degrees to the left, and then returns to his initial position.⁵⁰ According to Chabad custom, he then places the Torah scroll on the table once again⁵¹, rolls it closed (ensuring that a seam between two pieces of parchment is in the center⁵²), lifts it up once again and sits down on a chair. Another person then garbs the Torah with its belt (placed one-third of the way up the scroll)⁵³, mantle and decorations.

When the Torah is lifted, the congregation stands⁵⁴ and recites the verses printed in the *Siddur*. Each person should attempt to come close enough to the Torah so as to be able to read what is written inside, since, according to *Arizal*, this “brings tremendous spiritual illumination to the person.”⁵⁵ Some have the custom to point to the Torah with a finger (or *tzitzis*) and to kiss it,⁵⁶ though this is not practiced in Chabad.⁵³

THE HAFTARAH

The practice of reading a selection from the prophets which is thematically connected with the Torah portion was introduced in the second century B.C.E., in response to a decree of King Antiochus IV Epiphanes against reading the Torah in public. So as not to forfeit a public reading completely, the Jewish community responded by reading a related passage from the prophets instead.⁵⁷ In place of the seven *aliyos*, the person reading the *Haftarah*

48. *Kneses Hagedolah* (R. Chaim Benveniste, 1603-1673) cited in *Kaf Hachaim* (R' Ya'akov Chaim Sofer, 1870-1939), *Orach Chaim* *ibid.*, par 17. For a lengthy discussion of the various merits of each custom see *Divrei Yetziv* (Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam of Sanz, 1904-1995), *Orach Chaim*, responsum 76.

49. *Magen Avraham*, *Orach Chaim* chapter 134, par. 3. *Mishnah Berurah* states that the person should open the Torah only as much as he feels he is able to lift (*ibid.* par. 8, cited in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 18, p. 427).

50. *Siddur Rabeinu Hazaken im tziyunim veba'oros* (Kehos, 2004), p. 711.

51. This is for number of reasons: a.) The *Talmud* states that the one who rolls the Torah scroll after it is read receives a reward equal to all the other participants (*Megilah* 32a). Thus, if the person who performs *hagbah* sits down while the scroll is still open, the person who garbs the Torah is left to do the rolling, and being that the garbing is often given to a person of lesser importance (or a child) it means that the key honor is given to the person of lesser importance, and the lesser task to the more important person (*Aruch Hashulchan*, *Orach Chaim* 147:9). b.) The *Sefer Torah* is kept open for as little time as possible (*Igros Kodesh* *ibid.*). c.) This custom is less distant from that of the Sefardim, who lift up the Torah before it is read, and then place it back on the table to be read. Thus, a lesser degree of disparity in customs is achieved (*ibid.*). d.) The rolling is done more properly and accurately when carried out on the table (*ibid.*).

52. *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* 147:3; *Sefer Haminhagim* p. 15.

53. *Sefer Haminhagim* *ibid.*

54. *Rashba*, responsa 3:281.

55. *Sha'ar Hakavanos* *ibid.*; *Siddur Rabeinu Hazaken* and *Mishnah Berurah* *ibid.* 11.

56. *Me'am Lo'ez*, *Devarim* 27:26.

57. Which were not prohibited by Antiochus, since they were not perceived to be fundamental texts of religion (*Otzar Dinim v'Haminhagim*, Rabbi Yehudah David Eisenstein 1917, p. 102; see the conclusion of this introduction). The scriptural writings (*kesuvim*) were not chosen for the *Haftarah*,

was given seven blessings to recite (at its conclusion), and being that a single *aliyah* to the Torah must contain at least three verses, the *Haftarah* which “compensated” for the seven *aliyos* contained at least twenty-one verses. Afterwards, when the decree was annulled and the reading of the Torah resumed, the practice of reading the *Haftarah* remained and was consolidated as an obligatory requirement according to Jewish law.⁵⁸

In *Talmudic* times it appears that there was a “Book of *Haftaros*” (*Gitin* 60a), which has since been lost. Nevertheless, there was still no fixed cycle of *Haftaros* at that time, and each person simply read a passage that he deemed appropriate.⁵⁹ By the early medieval period there was more of a consensus as to which *Haftarah* should be read, though there were still numerous variations, but the authorities concurred that the matter varied according to regional custom and was not “carved in stone.”⁶⁰ The advent of printed Chumashim brought with it more uniformity, and today Ashkenazic and Sefardic communities have a fixed cycle, with minor local variations.⁶¹

The *Haftarah* always shares a thematic connection with the Torah portion,⁶² or, more specifically, with the *end* of the Torah portion.⁶³ This does not mean that the subject matter of the *Haftarah* is necessarily connected with the Torah portion; the primary parallel between the two readings is that their message and practical lesson should be similar.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the common ground between Torah and *Haftarah* does not imply in any way that the *Haftarah* is a mere accessory to the Torah reading. Rather, the *Haftarah* is an important aspect of Jewish observance in its own right.⁶⁵

The word “*Haftarah*” has numerous interpretations. It is derived from the term *petur*,

possibly because they were also forbidden under the decree, or because parallel readings with the Torah portions were not to be found so easily, as in the case of the prophets (*Levush*, Orach Chaim 284). See also *Keser Shem Tov* (Rabbi Shemtov Gaguine, 1934), vol. 1, p. 378.

58. *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chaim 284:1; *Avudraham* (14th cent. halachist and liturgist), *Shacharis Shel Shabbos*; *Sefer Hatishbi* (Rabbi Eliyahu Levita 1469-1549), p. 49a, cited in *Tosfos Yom Tov* (Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller, 1579-1654) to *Mishnah*, *Megilah* 3:4. Another view maintains that the *Haftarah* was introduced to familiarize the congregation with the books of the prophets (*Rashi*, *Sefer Hapardes*, ed. Ehrenreich, p. 306).

59. *Sefer ha-Eshkol* (halachic compendium by Rabbi Avraham ben Yitzchak of Narbonne, 1110-1179); *Kesef Mishneh to Rambam*, *Laws of Prayer* 12:12.

60. See *Sefer Hapardes* (ed. Ehrenreich), pp. 352-3; *Rambam*, *Seder Tefilos Kol ha-Shanah*.

61. This volume contains the *Haftaros* according to both Ashkenazic and Sefardic communities. The Munkatcher Rebbe writes that Chasidim should follow the Ashkenazic custom (*Darkei Chaim Veshalom* p. 137). However, Chabad communities generally read the *Haftarah* according to Sefardic custom, though there are a number of exceptions to this rule (Note of Rebbe *Rashab* to *Siddur Torah Ohr*, Brooklyn 5747, p. 488).

62. *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chaim, beginning of ch. 284. Even in the period from 17th Tamuz to the end of the year when the *Haftaros* are primarily connected with the destruction of the Temple, there is nevertheless always a connection with the Torah portion (see *Likutei Sichos* vol. 9, p. 61).

63. *Beis Yosef* and *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch* *ibid.* end of chapter 283. See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 18, p. 293. According to the principle that “the end is wedged in the beginning and the beginning in the end” (*Sefer Yetzirah* 1:7), there is also a connection between the end of the *Haftarah* and the beginning of the Torah portion (*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Devarim* 5748, par. 1).

64. *Likutei Sichos* vol. 21, p. 46.

65. See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach* 5743, par 10.

meaning “exemption,” since it arose as a means of “exempting” the congregation from the Torah reading which had been outlawed.⁶⁶ “*Haftarah*” also suggests “conclusion,” as in the phrase, “We may not conclude (*maftirin*) [the meal] after eating the Pesach sacrifice with *afikoman*” (*Pesachim* 119b). Thus, the *Haftarah* acquired its name being that it concludes the morning service,⁶⁷ and its messages are often a development and logical conclusion of the ideas expressed in the Torah portion.⁶⁸

In contrast to the reading of the Torah which is followed by the congregation silently, it is preferable for each person to say the *Haftarah* verbally along with the reader.⁶⁹ (The blessings are recited only by the reader.) However, this should be done quietly in an undertone, so that the reader’s voice alone is heard by the rest of the congregation.⁷⁰

Even though the *Haftarah* is read from a Chumash,⁷¹ or other book, printed with vowels and cantillation marks, it should nevertheless be prepared properly beforehand.⁷² It is also preferable that those listening to the *Haftarah* understand the meaning of the reading.⁷³

At first glance, the basis on which the *Haftarah* was introduced appears to be somewhat bizarre. We can presume that the decree against the Torah being read was a calculated move, intended at causing grief to the Jewish people by separating them from their religion. It also goes without saying that the Greeks would have made inspections in synagogues across the country to confirm that their new edict was being upheld. So why did the Jewish people not fear that reading from another part of the Biblical canon *in public*, on Shabbos,

66. *Machzor Vitry* (Rabbi Simcha Vitry, a disciple of *Rashi*) p. 98.

67. *Avudraham* *ibid.* *Tikun Yissachar* (Rabbi Yissachar Ibn Sosan, b. 1510) notes this in connection with a custom in some communities to leave the synagogue and return home for the Shabbos day meal after the *Haftarah*, and to return later for *Musaf* (ed. Venice 1579, p. 52b).

68. See *Sichas Parshas Vayigash* 5750, par. 2; *Parshas Vayishlach* 5751, par. 3.

69. *Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim* 284:5 (cited in *Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch* *ibid.* 11 and *Mishnah Berurah* *ibid.* 11) from *Arizal, Pri Etz Chaim, Sha’ar Hashabos* ch. 9.

70. *ibid.* See also *Chasam Sofer, Orach Chaim* responsum 68.

71. See *Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 284:4 and *Kuntres Acharon* *ibid.* Some maintain the custom to read the *Haftaros* from a scroll (see *Keser Shem Tov* *ibid.* p. 287-8). Others, however, make a point of reading the *Haftarah* from a Chumash. (Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson (the Rebbe’s father) was once called to read the *Haftarah* from a scroll and he declined to do so—*Sichos Kodesh* 5730, vol. 2, p. 538)

72. When the Rebbe *Rashab* (Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber of Lubavitch) was once called to read the *Haftarah* unexpectedly, he went into a side room and prepared the reading before being called up. This was despite the fact that he was already familiar with the *Haftaros* and had been called to read this very *Haftarah* the previous year (*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Masei* 5741. See also *Sicha of Simchas Torah* 5716, par. 16 and *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bereishis* 5731).

According to Chabad custom, each person also reads the week’s *Haftarah* on *Erev Shabbos* regardless of whether he will receive *maftir* or not (*Sefer Haminhagim* p. 25).

73. *Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch* appears to suggest an obligation, not only to hear the *Haftarah* but to understand it too. He states that the *Haftarah* should be started only after the Torah scroll is garbed so that “the person garbing the Torah can also understand and hear it” (284:11. See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 33, p. 20, supplement to note 37). The Rebbe also suggested that Yeshivah students, especially those who come close to the *Bimah* so as to hear the *Haftarah* clearly, should study the *Haftarah* in advance with the commentary of *Metzudos* (communication to Rabbi Chodakov, *Iyar* 5738).

in the very same part of the service that the Torah is usually read, would not be interpreted by the authorities as an equally forbidden substitute? Could the practice of reading the prophets be construed as nothing less than a mockery of the decree? And if the people were willing to risk their lives to continue Jewish practices, then why did they not read from the Torah itself?⁷⁴ Yet we find no evidence that the Greek authorities opposed the reading of the *Haftarah*, which is especially surprising when we consider the tremendous level of intelligence for which the Greek nation of that era is famed.

The matter becomes clear, however, when one perceives the entire event not merely as an anti-Semitic decree, but as something orchestrated by God. For reasons unknown to us, God sometimes tests the Jewish people by compromising their ability to attach to the Torah, in the hope that they will rededicate themselves with higher levels of commitment, forging new, stronger ties. In the above case, reading a section from the prophets was not merely a substitute for the Torah reading, it was a *more profound* method of reconnecting to God. For, in a sense, the words of the prophets and sages are “more cherished” by God than the Torah itself (*Avodah Zarah* 35a; *Shir Hashirim Rabah* 1:2), since the Torah is God’s *obligatory* demands, whereas the cautionary words of our prophets and sages demonstrate the deep love of the *people themselves* for the Torah. Thus, in the time when the Torah could not be read, reading from the prophets was a way of expressing a more profound commitment to God’s word.⁷⁵ In this merit, the Jewish people witnessed something which could only be described as miraculous: the Greek authorities, who had expressed a deep hatred for the practice of Torah reading, were indifferent to this new, virtually identical custom of reading from the prophets.⁷⁶

The concept of the *Haftarah* could thus be compared to the Chasidic teaching that “spiritual illumination is superior when it arises from a context of concealment,” which is the inner purpose of our long, bitter exile.⁷⁷ For this reason we find that the theme of redemption from the current exile is stressed in many *Haftaros*, more so than in the Torah portions themselves.⁷⁸



74. See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Eikev* 5743, par. 21 where it is explained why *mesiras nefesh* was not possible in this instance.

75. Thus, the practice of reading the *Haftarah* will continue even in the Messianic Era (*Sichas Shabbos Parshas Eikev* 5740, par. 25).

76. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Beshalach* 5743.

77. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz* 5747, note 72. In this sense, the *Haftarah* celebrates a victory somewhat reminiscent of the holiday of Chanukah, which was also a triumph over Greek persecution that ultimately led to new customs being introduced (*ibid.*).

78. *Sichas Parshas Vayigash* 5750, par. 9.

טעמי המקרא / CANTILLATION MARKS

פִּשְׁטָא מְנַח זֶרְקָא מְנַח סְגוּלָּה מְנַח | מְנַח רְבִיעִי
מֵהַפֶּךְ פִּשְׁטָא זְקַף קָטָן זְקַף-גָּדוֹל מְרַכָּא טַפְחָא
מְנַח אֶתְנַחְתָּא פִּזְרֵי תְּלִישָׁא-קִטְנָה
תְּלִישָׁא-גָּדוֹלָה קְדָמָא וְאַזְלָא אֶזְלָא-גֵּרֶשׁ גֵּרֶשִׁים
דְּרַגָּא תְּבִיר יְתִיב פְּסִיק | סוּף-פְּסוּקִי: שְׁלֹשִׁת
קַרְנֵי-פֶרֶה מְרַכָּא-כְּפוּלָה יְרַח-בֶּן-יוֹמוֹ:

Haftaros

הַפְּטָרוֹת

BEREISHIS / בראשית

(Isaiah 42:5 – 43:10)

מב ה כה־אמר האל | יהוה בורא השמים וְנוֹמֵיהֶם
 רַקַּע הָאָרֶץ וַיַּצְאֵצְאֶיהָ נָתַן נֶשְׁמָה לָעָם עָלֶיהָ וְרוּחַ
 לְהִלְכִים בָּהּ: וְאֲנִי יְהוָה קְרָאתִיךָ בְצַדֶּק וְאַחֲזֶק
 בִּיָּדךָ וְאַעֲרֹךְ וְאַתְּנֶנּוּ לְבָרִית עִם לְאוּרִי גוֹיִם: לְפָקַח
 עֵינַיִם עוֹרוֹת לְהוֹצִיא מִמְסַגֵּר אֶסְפִּיר מִבַּיִת כִּלְאֵי
 יוֹשְׁבֵי חֹשֶׁךְ: אֲנִי יְהוָה הוּא שְׁמִי וְכִבּוּדִי לְאַחַר
 לֹא־אֶתֵּן וְתַהֲלֹתִי לְפָסִילִים: הֲרֵאשְׁנוֹת הִנְהִיבֶנּוּ
 וְחֻדְשׁוֹת אֲנִי מִגִּיד בְּטָרָם תִּצְמַחְנָה אֲשַׁמְיעַ אֶתְכֶם:
 שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ תַּהֲלֹתוֹ מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ
 יוֹרְדֵי הַיָּם וּמְלֹאוֹ אֵיִים וַיִּשְׁבִּיהֶם: יִשְׂאוּ מִדְּבַר
 וְעָרְוּ חֲצֵרִים תִּשָּׁב קֶדֶר יִרְנֹו יוֹשְׁבֵי סֹלֶעַ מִרְאֵשׁ
 הָרִים יִצְחֹוּ: יִשְׂיֻמוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְתַהֲלֹתוֹ בְּאֵיִים
 יִגִּידוּ: יְהוָה בְּגִבּוֹר יֵצֵא כְּאִישׁ מִלְחָמוֹת יַעִיר
 קִנְאָה יִרְיַע אֶפְי־יַעֲרִיחַ עַל־אֵיבֹו יִתְנַבֵּר:
 הַחֲשִׁיתִי מֵעוֹלָם אַחֲרִישׁ אֶתְאַפֵּק כִּי־לֹדָה אֶפְעֶה
 אֲשֶׁם וְאֶשְׂאֵף יַחַד: אַחֲרֵיב הָרִים וְגִבְעוֹת

42:5 **T**his was said by the Almighty God, Who Created the heavens and stretched them out (like a tent), Who laid out the earth and made (all types of vegetation) grow from it, Who gives a soul to the people upon it, and a spirit to the (other creatures) who walk upon it:

God is Creator

⁶ "I am God. (What) I have said about you, (Mashiach, through the prophets,) is true (and everlasting)! I will hold your hand (to help you overcome every obstacle). I will guard you, and give you (the might to bring) the covenant of (Torah to My) people, (in order) to enlighten the (eyes of the) nations (about God), ⁷ to (open) eyes that have blinded (themselves not to see the work of God), to release (the Jewish people—who are) prisoners—from (their) captivity, and those who dwell in darkness from (their) imprisonment.

Mashiach will open eyes of the blind

⁸ "I am God—that is My Name. I will no (longer allow the nations to diminish) My honor (by worshiping) other (gods, as they have done until now! No longer will graven images (be given) My praise."

⁹ The first (prophecies which I prophesized about Sanchairiv) have (already) occurred. I (will) tell (you) new ones (about the final redemption). I will (now) let you hear (what is going to happen) before (these events) unfold:

¹⁰ (When the Final Redemption comes, they will) sing a new song to God, and His praise (will be heard) from

Song of the Final Redemption

the ends of the earth. Those who navigate the seas, and (the creatures that live) in it (will praise God. Even) the islands (themselves) and their inhabitants (will praise God. ¹¹ The whole) desert, together with its cities and villages (which are) inhabited by (the people of) Kedar, will raise (their voices in song). Those who live on stone peaks will sing—shouts (of joy will be heard) from the mountaintops. ¹² (With their mouths) they will ascribe glory to God, and they will tell of His praises in the islands.

¹³ God will go out (to rescue the Jewish people), aroused with zeal (for His people) like a man of war. He will shout and cry out against His enemies, and He will overcome (them).

¹⁴ (Says God), "I have kept quiet for all this time (that the nations have persecuted My people). I have been silent (and) I have restrained Myself. (But now) I will scream like a woman in childbirth (to destroy them). I will obliterate them and swallow them up all together. ¹⁵ I will destroy mountains and valleys, and I will dry out all their grass. I will make rivers into (dry

God punishes the nations

HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS BEREISHIS

This *Haftarah* praises God as Creator of Heaven and earth, similar to the *Parshah* which describes the creation of Heaven and earth by God.

The *Haftarah* opens with a description of how God will liberate the Jewish people from exile, and how the entire world will praise God after the final redemption arrives (42:5-12).

God promises to destroy the nations that have persecuted the Jewish people, and lead the people to their Land (13-17). He criticizes the Jewish people for being metaphorically "blind" and "deaf" to Torah and

mitzvos (18-21) and laments over their sorry state during exile (22-25). Finally, the prophet repeats God's promise to redeem them, just as He redeemed them from Egypt (43:1-10).

8. וְכִבּוּדִי לְאַחַר לֹא אֶתֵּן—I will not give My glory to another. When a Jew sins, he causes energy from his soul to be "spilled" into the domain of evil, which is known as the "other side." Nevertheless, only the peripheral layers of the soul could be involved in such an activity; the inner core of the soul always remains loyal to God. Thus, God says: I will not give My glory—the essence of the soul—to another, to the "other side" (*Likutei Sichos* vol.5, pp. 410-11).

and desolate) islands, and I will dry up their bodies of water.”

Jewish People are led home by God

16 “I will walk (the Jewish people to their Land) on a way that they did not know (as if they were) blind. I will lead them on a path they did not know. I will turn the darkness (of an unknown path) into light before them. (I will make) crooked paths straight (for them). I have (already) done such things (previously, when they came out of Egypt), so I will (surely) not forsake them (in the future).”

17 “(Then) those who trust in graven images will turn backwards, (being) embarrassed with (great) shame. (That will be the fate of) those who say to the molten idols: ‘you are our god.’”

Rebuke of the corrupt ones

18 “(You, O Israel,) who are deaf (towards My words) and blind (towards My commandments, now listen and) look to see (the goodness that is awaiting you! 19 I call all of you blind, even the righteous ones who serve Me, for) who is (really) blind if not one who serves Me, (and who knows how corrupt people are, yet he does not attempt to correct them? Who is) deaf if not the one who I (grace with wisdom and) send (to teach the people, and yet he pretends not to hear their evil actions, failing to correct them)? Who is as blind as a person who is perfect (in himself but does not reprimand others)? Who is as blind as a servant of God (who turns a blind eye to his people)? 20 Such people) have seen much (wisdom), yet you do not guard (others from evil ways, so they deserve to be called ‘blind.’ They have) open ears (to understand the mitzvos), yet (act as if they) do not hear (when it comes to guiding others, so they deserve to be called ‘deaf’. 21 The main reason why) God wants (such people, is not for their own merits, but) in order for (them to make another person) righteous, (and in order) for him to increase and strengthen (the) Torah (knowledge of others).”

Chabad* and Sefardic communities conclude here. Ashkenazic communities continue:

Sad state of the Jews in Exile

22 This people is looted and trampled. All their young men are dejected and and hidden in prisons. They are prey with no one to rescue them (from being looted); trampled with no one to say, “Return them (so they will be trampled no more).”

23 Who among you will pay attention to this, listen, and hear from now on (what will establish him in the end)?

24 Who handed Ya’akov over to be trampled and Israel to looters? Was it not God, against Whom we have sinned? (For the Jewish people) did not desire His ways or obey His Torah, 25 so He poured out (His) anger, His wrath and the might of war upon them. It blazed around

וְכָל-עֵשְׂבִים אוֹבִישׁ וְשִׁמְתִי נְהָרוֹת לְאֵיִים וְאֲנָמִים אוֹבִישׁ: 16 וְהוֹלַכְתִּי עוֹרִים בְּדֶרֶךְ לֹא יָדְעוּ בְנֵתִיבוֹת לֹא יָדְעוּ אֲדָרִיכֶם אָשִׁים מִחֶשֶׂד לְפָנֵיהֶם לְאוֹר וּמַעֲקָשִׁים לְמִישׁוֹר אֱלֹה הַדְּבָלִים עֲשִׂיתֶם וְלֹא עֹבְתֵימֶם: 17 נָסַגְנוּ אַחֲוֹר יִכְשׁוּ בְשֵׁת הַבְּטָחִים בַּפֶּסֶל הָאֲמָרִים לְמִסְכָּה אַתֶּם אֱלֹהֵינוּ: 18 הַחֲרָשִׁים שָׁמְעוּ וְהָעוֹרִים הִבִּיטוּ לְרֵאוֹת: 19 מִי עוֹר כִּי אִם-עֲבָדִי וְחָרַשׁ כִּמְלָאכִי אֲשַׁלַּח מִי עוֹר כִּמְשַׁלֵּם וְעוֹר כְּעֶבֶד יִהְיֶה: 20 רֵאוֹת [ראוית כן] רַבּוֹת וְלֹא תִשְׁמַר פְּקוּחַ אָזְנוֹים וְלֹא יִשְׁמַע: 21 יִהְיֶה חֲפִיץ לְמַעַן צְדָקוֹ יִגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וַיֵּאדָר:

כב והוא עם-בזויו ושסויו הפכה בחורים בלם ובבתי כלאים החבאו היו לבו ואין מציל משסה ואין אמר השב: כג מי בכס יאזין זאת יקשב וישמע לאחור: כד מי-נתן למשסה [למשוסה כן] יעקב וישראל לבזזים הלוא יהיה זו חטאנו לו ולא-אבו בדרכיו הלוך ולא שמעו בתורתו: כה וישפך עליו חמה אפו ועזו מלחמה ותלהטהו מסביב ולא ידע ותבער-בו ולא-ישים על-לב:

21. **יגדיל תורה ויאדיר**—To increase and strengthen Torah. The Talmud connects this verse with the highest level of Torah study, that which is carried out purely for the sake of expanding the body of Torah wisdom itself (see Chulin 66b). On the other hand, this verse is also employed in connection with the Torah study of young children, which is clearly at a

very basic level (see Rambam, Laws of Torah Study 2:7). The fact that the same verse is employed in both cases means that they are connected: the sublime spiritual loftiness of very advanced Torah scholars is shared in some measure by even the most basic exercise of Torah study (Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bereishis 5717, par. 7).

*While the Chabad custom is to finish the Haftarah with verse 21, in a leap year the Rebbe followed the custom of saying the extended Haftarah (according to Ashkenazic custom), finishing with 43:10. However, the Rebbe indicated that this was a personal directive that he had received from the Previous Rebbe and was not to be copied by others (See Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bereishis 5714, 5717, 5725 and 5744).

מִגּוֹ ׀ וְעַתָּה כִּהְיֵאתָ אֵלֵינוּ יְהוָה בְּרֵאשִׁית יַעֲקֹב וַיִּצְרֶךְ
 יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־תִּירָא כִּי גִאלְתִּיךָ קָרָאתִי בְשֵׁמִי לִי
 אֶתְּהָ: ׀ כִּי־תַעֲבֹר בְּפָנַי אֶתְּהָ אֲנִי וּבְנֵהְרוֹת לֹא
 יִשְׁטַפּוּךָ כִּי־תִלְךָ בְּמוֹ־אֵשׁ לֹא תִכּוֹה וְלִהְבֶּה לֹא
 תִבְעַר־בְּךָ: ׀ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
 מוֹשִׁיעֶךָ נִתְתִּי כַפְרֶךָ מִצָּרִים פּוֹשׁ וּסְבָא תַחֲתֶיךָ:
 ׀ מֵאֲשֶׁר יִקְרָתְךָ בְּעֵינַי נִכְבַּדְתָּ וְאֲנִי אֶהְבַּתֶיךָ וְאַתָּן
 אֶדָם תַּחֲתֶיךָ וְלֵאמֹרִים תַּחַת נִפְשֶׁךָ: ׀ אֶל־תִּירָא
 כִּי אֶתְּךָ־אֲנִי מִמְזֹרַח אֲבִיא וְרֵעֶךָ וּמִמְעַרְבִי אֶקְבָּצֶךָ:
 ׀ אֲמַר לְצַפּוֹן תִּנְנִי וְלְתִימָן אֶל־תִּכְלְאֵי הִבְיֵאֵי בְנֵי
 מִרְהוֹק וּבְנֹתַי מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ: ׀ כֹּל הַנִּקְרָא בְשֵׁמִי
 וְלִכְבוֹדִי בְּרֵאתִיו יִצְרֵתִיו אֶהְ־עֲשִׂיתִיו: ׀ הֲוֵצֵא
 עִם־עֵר וְעֵינַיִם יֵשׁ וְחַרְשִׁים וְאֲזֻנִים לְמוֹ:
 ׀ כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם נִקְבְּצוּ יַחְדָּו וַיֵּאסְפוּ לְאֲמִים מִי בְּהֵם
 יִגִּיד זֹאת וְרֵאשֹׁנוֹת יִשְׁמִיעֵנוּ יִתְּנוּ עֲדִיהֶם וַיַּעֲדִקוּ
 וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ וַיֵּאמְרוּ אַמֶּת: ׀ אַתֶּם עַד־נֵאֵם־יְהוָה וְעַבְדֵי
 אֲשֶׁר בְּחַרְתִּי לְמַעַן תִּדְבְּעוּ וְתֵאמְרֵנוּ לִי וְתִבְּנֵנוּ
 כִּי־אֲנִי הוּא לְפָנַי לֹא־נֹעַר אֵל וְאַחֲרַי לֹא יִהְיֶה:

them, but they paid no attention (to the fact that it was caused by God, and even after) it burned them they did not take it to heart (as Divine intervention).

^{43:1} (But despite all this) God—Who created you, O Ya’akov, and formed you, O Yisra’el—(nevertheless) says: “Do not fear, for I redeemed you (from Egypt) and I called you My own. ² When you pass through water (and nearly drown) I am with you; (even powerful) rivers will not sweep you away; when you walk through the inferno (of life’s difficulties), you will not be burnt, and the flame will not consume you, ³ for I am God, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. (Didn’t) I make Egypt your ransom (and save you, even though you did not deserve it? Didn’t I send) Ethiopia and Seba (to be destroyed by Sanchairiu) instead of you? ⁴ Because you are precious to Me and honored. I loved you! So I will give men in exchange for you and nations (to be destroyed) in place of you.

Promise of redemption

⁵ Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. ⁶ I will say to the north: “Give (Me the Jewish people who are scattered there),” and to the south, “Don’t hold them back!” Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth, ⁷ all (the Jewish people) who bear My Name, who (were made) for My glory. I have (already) created, fashioned and made (all that is necessary for their redemption in order to), ⁸ free the (exiled) people—who are blind though they have eyes, and deaf though they have ears.

peoples assembled, who among them (could) declare (future events like) this, or announce to us (that they had predicted) past events? (If so), let them produce their witnesses and be proven correct, such that those who hear them will say that it is true.

God’s witnesses

¹⁰ “You are my witnesses,” says God, “My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe in Me, and understand that I am He before whom no god was created, and after whom none will exist.”

43:1. בְּרֵאשִׁית יַעֲקֹב וַיִּצְרֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל—Who created you, O Ya’akov, and formed you, O Israel. Rendered literally, the verse states, “This is what God says: ‘Ya’akov created you; Yisra’el formed you.’” On this, the Midrash expounds: “God said to his world, ‘World of mine! World of mine! I will tell you who created you and formed you. Ya’akov created you; Yisra’el formed you’” (Vayikra Rabah 36:4 and Maharzu ibid.). In other words, being that the purpose of creation is that the mitzvos should be performed by the Jewish people (“Ya’akov”; “Yisra’el”), the world’s very existence is attributed to them. The verse further explains that this takes place on two levels. The lower level of “Ya’akov”* represents the simple observance of mitzvos whose merit ensures the existence of the world’s physical matter (“Ya’akov who created you”). In the merit of the higher level of mitzvah observance signified by Yisra’el, the world is given its form (“who formed you Yisra’el”) (s.v. ha-ba’im 5743).

5-6. מִמְזֹרַח אֲבִיא וְרֵעֶךָ...—I will bring your children from the east etc. With regard to the east and west, scripture uses the expressions:

“I will bring...and gather...,” indicating that God is informing the Jewish people how He will unite them when the Redemption arrives. But in reference to the north and south God addresses the compass points, saying to them “Give (Me),” and, “Don’t hold them back.” Of these latter two directions, the north is given the stronger instruction, to become a “giver,” i.e. a force which actively contributes to the Redemption, whereas the south is merely told not to interfere with or prevent the redemptive process—“Don’t hold them back.” This indicates the uniqueness of the Future Redemption: Even the north—which represents the forces of evil, “From the north, evil will venture forth” (Jer 1:14)—will be transformed into a positive force (Likutei Sichos vol. 4, p. 1065).

10. אַתֶּם עֵדֵי—You are my witnesses. Witnesses are only required to establish facts that have been concealed. Thus, as God’s “witnesses,” our task is to reveal the hidden identity of this physical world, demonstrating how every detail points to the presence of God (Hisvadyos 5745, vol. 3, p. 1566).

*Ya’akov’s change of name to Yisra’el represented a spiritual elevation—see Rashi to Bereishis 32:29; Arizal, Sha’ar ha-Pesukim, Vayishlach 32, 29; Pardes, Sha’ar 23; Etz Chaim, Sha’ar 3. chap. 2; Torah Ohr, Vayeitzei 21a; Likutei Torah, Balak 70b.

NOACH / נח

(Isaiah 54:1 - 55:5)

Jerusalem in the times of Redemption 54:1 **S**ays God: “(O Jerusalem! During exile times, you (were like a) barren woman who never gave birth, (since you were a city devoid of people. But now, in the times of the Redemption, you can) sing! (O Jerusalem!) Open your mouth and sing loudly, for you (were a woman who) never had labor pains. (Now), the inhabitants of (Jerusalem—which previously) lay desolate—are more numerous than the inhabitants of the built up cities (of Edom).”

² “(O Jerusalem!) Extend the area of your tent (to include all your children). Stretch the curtains (that mark the edge) of your dwellings so that they spread out far—do not hold (them) back. Lengthen your ropes (of your tents, expanding your borders) and strengthen your fastening-pegs (so that your borders remain enlarged forever). ³ For you will break through, (spilling into the territory) to the right and (to the) left. Your descendants will inherit nations and (they will multiply so much that they will) inhabit desolate cities.”

Promise to never bring another exile ⁴ “Do not fear (another exile after the redemption). Do not be ashamed or embarrassed (to proudly display your greatness, for fear that you may be exiled again), for you will not be disgraced (with another exile). You will forget the shame (of the exile) of your youth, and you will no longer remember the disgrace of your widowhood (when you were a people without a king). ⁵ For the Name of your Husband, who made you (great), is the God of hosts—(so who could possibly oppose you? Isn't) your Redeemer (none other than) the Holy One of Israel, Who will (then) be called ‘God of the entire earth’ (by all, so why be afraid)?”

⁶ “For God has called you (to return to Him) like a (husband who calls to his) forsaken and dejected wife; like a man who was (briefly) disgusted by the wife of his youth (but soon forgives her),” says your God. ⁷ “(When) I abandoned you (it was only) for a short moment (compared to the time when) I will gather you, (which will last forever, due to My) great mercy.

⁸ (Compared to the) everlasting kindness (with which) I will have mercy upon you, I hid My face from you for (just) a moment, (and I was) only a little angry,” says God, your Redeemer.

נד » רְנִי עֲקָרָה לֹא יִלְדָה פְּעֻלָּהי רְנָה וְצַהֲלִי לֹא-
 חָלָה כִּי-רַבִּים בְּנֵי-שׁוֹמְמָה מִבְּנֵי בְעוּלָה אָמַר יְהוָה:
 ב הֲרַחֲבִי אֶמְקוֹם אֶהְלֶךְ וִירִיעוֹת מִשְׁבְּנוֹתֶיךָ יִשׁוּ
 אֶל-תַּחֲשֻׁכֵי הָאָרֶץ מִיַּתְּרוֹךָ וַיִּתְדַתֶּיךָ תִּזְקֵי:
 ג כִּי-יִמְצֵא וְשָׂמְאוֹל תִּפְרָצִי וְזָרְעֶךָ גּוֹיִם יִלְּשׁ וְעָרִים
 נִשְׁמֹת יוֹשִׁיבוּ: ד אֶל-תִּירָאִי כִּי-לֹא תִכּוֹשִׁי
 וְאֶל-תִּכְבְּלִמִי כִּי לֹא תַחֲפִירִי כִּי בִשְׁתַּעַל עֲלוֹמֶיךָ
 תִּשְׁכַּחִי וְחָרַפְתַּי אֶלְמְנוֹתֶיךָ לֹא תִזְכְּרִי-עוֹד: ה כִּי
 בְעֲלֶיךָ עֲשִׂיךָ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ וְגִבְאוֹךָ קָדוֹשׁ
 יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ יִקְרָא: ו כִּי-כֹאשָׁה עֲזוּבָה
 וְעֲצוּבַת רוּחַ קָרְאֶךָ יְהוָה וְאַשְׁתֵּךָ נְעוּרִים כִּי תִמְאָס
 אָמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ז בְּרִנָּע קָטַן עֲזוּבֶיךָ וּבְרַחֲמִים גְּדֹלִים
 אֶקְבְּצֶךָ: ח בְּשִׁצְפָה קָצַף הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי רְנַע מִמֶּךָ

HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS NOACH

This *Haftarah* mentions God’s promise to Noach not to bring another flood that will destroy the world (v. 9). In general, the *Haftarah* describes the rebuilding of Jerusalem with the Final Redemption, and the universal knowledge of Torah that will be attained by the Jewish people.

The *Haftarah* opens with a description of how Jerusalem will be repopulated with the Redemption (54:1-3), followed with a promise that the present exile is only temporary (4-10). The prophet then describes how God will rebuild Jerusalem with gems (11-12) and how the Jewish people will master the study of Torah and be righteous, thus averting any threat from potential enemies (13-17). The prophet then lauds the virtues of Torah study (55:1-3) and describes the respect that the nations will have for Israel in the times of Mashiach (4-5).

5. כִּי בְעֲלֶיךָ עֲשִׂיךָ—Your Husband, who made you. Our Sages taught: “A woman [before marriage] is unfinished, and she enters into the covenant only with a man who will transform her [into] a [finished] vessel, as the verse states, ‘The Name of your Husband, who made you, is the God of hosts’” (Sanhedrin 22b). In the prophet’s analogy of the marriage between the Jewish people and God, the difference between being an “unfinished” or “finished vessel” is whether or not a person is a suitable receptacle to spiritual matters. If he performs *mitzvos* by rote, without enthusiasm, then he is an “unfinished vessel”; if he finds the *mitzvos* exciting and inspiring, then he is a truly receptive “vessel” to Godliness. Of course, for most people this does not come naturally, which is why the Chasidic movement stresses the importance of prolonged meditative prayer, which is aimed at transforming oneself into a “finished vessel” (*Sefer haMa’amarim* 5718, pp. 311-2).

וּבַחֶסֶד עוֹלָם רַחַמְתִּיךָ אָמַר גְּאֻלְךָ יְהוָה: כִּי־מִי
 נָח זֹאת לִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מֵעַבְר מִי־נָח עוֹד
 עַל־הָאָרֶץ כִּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִקְצָף עָלֶיךָ וּמִגַּעַר־בְּךָ:
 כִּי הַהָרִים יִמוּשׁוּ וְהַגְּבָעוֹת תִּמוּטְיֶנָּה וְחֶסְדִּי
 מֵאַתָּה לֹא־יִמוּשׁ וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי לֹא תִמוּט אָמַר
 מִרַחֲמֶיךָ יְהוָה:

Chabad and Sefardic communities conclude here. Ashkenazic communities continue:

עֲנִיָּה סַעְרָה לֹא נִחַמָּה הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מִרְבִּיץ
 בַּפּוֹד אֲבָנֶיךָ וַיִּסְדַּתֶּיךָ בַּסַּפִּירִים: יִשְׁמְתִי בְּכֹד
 שְׁמֹשֹׁתֶיךָ וְשַׁעֲרֶיךָ לְאַבְנֵי אֶמֶרְחָ וְכֹל־גְּבוּלֶיךָ
 לְאַבְנֵי־חַפְצִין: כִּי וְכֹל־בְּנֵיךָ לְמוֹדֵי יְהוָה וְרַב שְׁלוֹם
 בְּנֵיךָ: יִבְצַדְקָה תִּבּוֹנְנִי רַחֲמֵי מַעֲשֶׂיךָ כִּי־לֹא תִירָאִי
 וּמִמַּחְתָּה כִּי לֹא־תִקְרַב אֵלַיךָ: כִּי הֵן גֹּר יָגוּר אִפְסָם
 מֵאוֹתֵי מִי־גֵר אֶתְּךָ עָלֶיךָ יִפּוֹל: כִּי הִנֵּה הֵן כֹּן אֲנֹכִי
 בְּרֵאתִי חָרַשׁ נִפְחָ בְּאֵשׁ פָּחָם וּמוֹצִיא כְּלִי לְמַעֲשָׂהוּ
 וְאֲנֹכִי בְּרֵאתִי מִשְׁחִית לְחַבֵּל: כִּי כָל־כְּלֵי יוֹצֵר עָלֶיךָ
 לֹא יִצְלָח וְכֹל־לְשׁוֹן תִּקּוּם־אַתָּה לְמַשְׁפַּט תִּרְשָׁעֵי
 זֹאת נִחַלַת עַבְדֵי יְהוָה וְצַדִּיקְתֶּם מֵאַתִּי נֹאֵם־יְהוָה:
 נָח « הוּי כָל־צִמָּא לָכוּ לָמִים וְאֲשֶׁר אֵין־לוֹ כֶּסֶף
 לָכוּ שִׁבְרוּ וְאָכְלוּ וּלְכוּ שִׁבְרוּ בְּלוּ־כֶסֶף וּבְלוּ־אֶת־
 מַחִיר יֵין וְחֶלֶב: כִּי לָמָּה תִשְׁקְלוּ־כֶסֶף בְּלוּ־לָהֶם
 וַיִּנְיַעְכֶם בְּלוּ־אֶת־שְׁמֵעָה שְׁמַעוּ שְׁמוֹעַ אֵלַי וְאֲכַלּוּ־
 מִזֶּבֶן וְתִתְעַנְנַן בְּדֶשֶׁן נִפְשֵׁכֶם: כִּי הֵטוּ אוֹנְכֶם וּלְכוּ אֵלַי
 שְׁמַעוּ וּתְחִי נַפְשֵׁכֶם וְאֶכְרַתְהָ לָכֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם

⁹ “This (anger) was for Me like the waters of Noach. Waters of Noach Just as I swore never to allow the waters of Noach to pass again over the earth, so too, I swore not to be angry at you or rebuke you.

¹⁰ “For the mountains (may) move away and the hills might collapse (in an earthquake), but My kindness will not leave you, nor will My covenant of peace collapse,” says God, Who is merciful to you.

^{54:11} “(O Jerusalem! You) afflicted, storm-tossed one, who has not been comforted! I will lay your (floor) stones upon antimony (instead of sand), and lay your foundations with sapphires. ¹² I will make your window panes from emeralds, your gates from carbuncle stones, and (the floor-stones of) all your borders (will become) desirable gems.

¹³ “All your children will be (extremely wise, as if they were) disciples of God, and your children will have much peace. Torah knowledge

¹⁴ “Through (your) righteousness, you will be fit (for all this). You will distance yourself from fraudsters who have no fear of Me (at all), and from terror, for it will not come near you. ¹⁵ Indeed, people will fear no one but Me. Whoever attacks you will fall into your power. ¹⁶ Behold, it was I who created the smith to fan coal fires and make the tools of his trade, and it was I who created the destroying (enemy) to destroy (itself). ¹⁷ Every weapon engineered against you will not succeed, and every tongue raised against you in judgment you will have condemned. This is the inheritance of God’s servants and their just reward from Me,” says God.

^{55:1} “Oh! Everyone who is thirsty (for God’s word), go to (the prophet and drink his) ‘water’! (Even) those who have no money, go and eat! Come and take wine and milk without paying, without charge (for the prophet’s wisdom is free)! ² Why do you ‘pay money’ (and invest your energies in non-Jewish wisdom) without (getting

any real substance or) ‘bread’? Why do you labor (in something that) cannot give satisfaction? Listen to Me! (Learn Torah) and you will ‘eat’ well and satisfy your souls with ‘rich foods’!

³ Incline your ears and come to Me (to hear my words)! Listen, and you will (merit to) live (again, with the revival of the

9. מִי נָח—The waters of Noach. At first glance, the term “waters of Noach” appears to be self-contradictory, as Noach was the savior of his generation, whereas the waters constituted the punishment. A simple solution is that the waters eliminated the generation because of Noach, since he failed to pray sufficiently for the people to be saved (Zohar I 67b). However, Chasidic thought explains that the waters were named after

Noach because they had a positive effect of cleansing the earth spiritually, like a mikvah, making it more sensitive to spiritual matters (Likutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 40; Torah Ohr, Noach 8c).

12. וְשִׁמְתִי בְּכֹד שְׁמֹשֹׁתֶיךָ—I will make your window panes from emeralds etc. This is not a mere metaphor. This prophecy will materialize physically in the future era (Sefer haMa’amarim 5734, p. 198, 202).

Eternal covenant with Mashiach

dead)! I will make an eternal covenant with you, as enduring as (My) loyalty to David. ⁴ Indeed, I have made his (enduring dynasty) as a proof to the nations (that My word always endures, and Mashiach, his descendant, will be) a ruler and leader of the nations. ⁵ (Likewise My promises to you will be fulfilled). Indeed, nations that you do not know will call upon you (to serve you), and nations which never knew you will run to you (to follow your orders. But they will not do this due to your own power, but) for the sake of the God your God, the Holy One of Israel (Who dwells among you and), Who has glorified you.”

חֲסִדֵי דָוִד הַנְּאֻמָּנִים: הַ הֵן עַד לְאוֹמִים נְתַתִּיו נְגִיד
וּמְצֻנָה לְאֻמִּים: הַ הֵן גְּוֵי לְאֵל־תַּדְעַ תִּקְרָא וְגוֹי
לְאֵל־יִדְעוּד אֱלֹהֵי יְרוּצוּ לְמַעַן יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵיךָ וְלִקְדוֹשׁ
יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי פִאֲרָךְ:

LECH LECHA / לך לך

(Isaiah 40:27 – 41:16)

40:27 **Y**a'akov, why do you say—and Yisra'el, why do you declare—“My way (of serving God) has been hidden from (and ignored by) God, and my judgment passes (unrewarded) from my God”?

²⁸ Don't you know (from your own mind, even) if you have not heard (from your teachers), that God is an everlasting God, the Creator of the (entire) world (from end (to) end? He does not become tired or weary (and fluctuate in His performance. So your reward will definitely come, but) there is no comprehension of His wisdom (as to why He delays it).

²⁹ (The time will come when) He gives strength to the weary (people of Israel), and increases power to those without strength. ³⁰ (The nations of the world who are now strong like) young men, will become tired and weary, and (their) young bachelors will repeatedly stumble. ³¹ But those who place their hope in God will regain (their) strength, (and) grow wings like eagles. They will run (to their land) and not become weary. They will walk and not get tired.

^{41:1} (You, who live in) islands, be silent (and listen) to Me! Let (the) nations muster their strength (to defend themselves before Me). (First) let them come (and listen to My prosecution, and) then they can speak (if they indeed have anything to say in their defense). Then, (the nations and I) will debate together, to judge (their claims that I am unable to save My people).

² Who awakened (Avraham, when he was) in the East (to leave his home and despise idolatry? Everywhere that) he trod, he preached righteousness (demanding that people abandon their idols and believe in God. Who is the One that) placed nations before him, and (enabled him) to dominate (four mighty) kings? (Those killed by) his sword (were as numerous as) the dust, and his bow (killed many people) like (piles of) beaten straw. ³ He pursued them, and passed through in peace,

מַ לְמָה תֹאמַר יַעֲקֹב וּתְדַבֵּר יִשְׂרָאֵל נִסְתָּרָה
דְּרַבְלֵי מִיְהוּה וּמֵאֱלֹהֵי מִשְׁפָּטֵי יַעֲבֹר: הַ הֵלֹוא יִדְעַתָּ
אִם־לֹא שְׁמַעַתָּ אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם | יְהוּה בּוֹרֵא קְצוֹת
הָאָרֶץ לֹא יֵעָף וְלֹא יִיגַע אֵין חֶקֶר לְתַבּוּנָתוֹ: כֵּס נִתֵן
לְיַעֲף כֹּחַ וְלֵאֵין אוֹנִים עֲצֻמָּה יִרְבֶּה: הַ וְיַעֲפוּ נְעָרִים
וְיִגְעוּ וּבַחֹרִים כְּשׁוֹל יִפְשְׁלוּ: זֶ וְקוֹי יְהוּה יִחְלִיפוּ
כֹּחַ יַעֲלוּ אֶבֶר כְּנַשְׂרִים יְרוּצוּ וְלֹא יִיָּגְעוּ יִלְכוּ וְלֹא
יֵעָפוּ: מֵא * הַחֲרִישׁוּ אֵלַי אֲנִים וְלֹא־מִים יִחְלִיפוּ
כֹּחַ יִגְשׁוּ אֵין יִדְבְּרוּ יַחֲדוּ לְמִשְׁפָּט נִקְרָבָה: בַּ מִי
הַעִיר מִמְּזוֹחַ צֶדֶק יִקְרָאֵהוּ לְרַגְלוֹ יִתֵן לְפָנָיו גּוֹיִם
וּמְלָכִים יִרְדּוּ יִתֵן כַּעֲפֹר חֲרָבוֹ כִּקֶּשׁ נִדְהַף קִשְׁתּוֹ:
וְיִרְדָּפֵם יַעֲבֹר שְׁלוֹם אַרְחַ בְּרַגְלָיו לֹא יָבוֹא:

God will strengthen the weary

HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS LECH LECHA

This Haftarah alludes to Avraham's victory over the four kings (41:2-3) which is chronicled in Parshas Lech Lecha (14:13-16). The Haftarah also recounts how God caused Avraham to leave his homeland and settle in the Land of Israel, where he taught the world about God.

The first part of the Haftarah contains words of comfort to the Jewish people that they will survive the sufferings of exile (40:27-41:1).

The prophet then explains to us the messages from Avraham's life (2-8), and this is followed by more words of encouragement for the Jewish people in exile (9-16).

מי־פָּעַל וְעָשָׂה קָרָא הַדְּרוֹת מֵרֹאשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה
 ראשון וְאֶת־אֲחֵרֵינִים אֲנִי־הוּא: ה רָאוּ אַיִם וַיִּזְכְּאוּ
 קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ יַחֲרְדוּ קָרְבוּ וַיֵּאֲתִיּוּן: ו אִישׁ אֶת־רַעְיוֹ
 יַעֲזְרוּ וְלֹאֲחֵיו יֹאמֵר חֲזֹק: ז וַיִּחַזַּק חֲרָשׁ אֶת־עֲרֹף
 מַחֲלִיק פְּטִישׁ אֶת־הוֹלֵם פָּעַם אָמַר לְדָבֵק טוֹב הוּא
 וַיִּחַזְּקוּהוּ בְּמִסְמָרִים לֹא יִמוּט: ח וְאַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדֶי
 יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר בַּחֲרִיתֶיךָ זָרַע אֲבָרְתָם אֲהַבֵּי: ט אֲשֶׁר
 הִחֲזַקְתֶּיךָ מִקְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ וּמֵאֲצִילֶיךָ קָרָאתֶיךָ וְאָמַר
 לְךָ עֲבָדֶי־אֲתָה בַּחֲרִיתֶיךָ וְלֹא מֵאֲסִיתֶיךָ: י אֶל־תִּירָא
 כִּי עֲמָד־אֲנִי אֶל־תִּשְׁתַּע כִּי־אֲנִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲמַצְתֶּיךָ
 אַף־עֲזַרְתֶּיךָ אַף־תִּמְכַּתֶּיךָ בִּימִין עֲדָקֶי: יא הֵן יִבְשׁוּ
 וַיִּפְלְמוּ כָּל הַנְּחָרִים בְּךָ יִהְיוּ כְּאֵין וַיִּאֲבְדוּ אֲנָשֵׁי
 רִיבֶיךָ: יב תִּבְקָשׁם וְלֹא תִמְצָאם אֲנָשֵׁי מִצְּתֶיךָ יִהְיוּ
 כְּאֵין וּכְאִפְסֵם אֲנָשֵׁי מִלַּחֲמֶתֶיךָ: יג כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 מִחֲזֹנֶיךָ יִמְיִנֶךָ הָאָמַר לְךָ אֶל־תִּירָא אֲנִי עֲזַרְתֶּיךָ:
 יד אֶל־תִּירָאִי תוֹלַעַת יַעֲקֹב מִתִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי
 עֲזַרְתֶּיךָ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְגֵאֲלֶךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: טו הִנֵּה
 שִׁמְתֶיךָ לְמוֹרֵג חֲרוּץ חָדָשׁ בְּעַל פִּיפְיוֹת תְּדוּשׁ
 הַרִים וְתִדַּק וְגִבְעוֹת כִּפְיֵן תִּשְׁמִים: טז תִּזְרַם וְרוּחַ
 תִּשְׁאֵם וּסְעָרָה תִּפְיֵן אוֹתָם וְאַתָּה תִּגְיֵל בִּיהוָה
 בַּקְּרוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּתְהַלֵּל:

(though it was) a path where his feet had never tread.

⁴ Who caused and orchestrated (this for him)? The One Who calls (and designates the time and place of) each generation, from before (they are born). I, God, am the first One (before all the generations, and) I am the same (One Who remains) with the last (generations).

God orchestrated Avraham's victories

⁵ The (inhabitants of the distant) islands saw (the miracles that I performed for Avraham) and became frightened. (Even) the (ones who live at the) ends of the earth became terrified. They drew near and came (to Avraham, not to wage war, but merely to beg for their captives).

⁶ (Yet, despite all the miracles that the nations saw God make for Avraham,) each man (carried on) helping his friend (to make idols. Each person) would (encourage) his brother, saying "Be strong! (Keep on sculpting idols!)" ⁷ (When a) carpenter (would make an idol) he (would) hurry the (gold)smith (to finish off the idol's coating quickly). The one who smooths (the idol with the small mallet would hurry) the blacksmith (who did the initial metalwork,) beating very hard (with the large hammer. The one who glued the idol together would) say (with glee) about the glue: "It's good!" and he would fasten (the metal coating onto the idol) with nails, so that it should not fall off.

People ignore God's miracles

⁸ But you, Israel (are not like them because you are) My servant(s)! (Children of) Ya'akov! I chose you (to be My people because you are) the descendants of Avraham who loved Me (and separated from idol worship). ⁹ (In the future) I will grasp you from the corners of the earth, and call (to release) you from (the control of) its powerful people. I told you "you are My servant" (from the time that) I have chosen you, (and) I have not despised you.

God chose Israel

¹⁰ Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not turn away (thinking that I have abandoned you) because I am your God (as I have always been). I strengthened you (with positive words of comfort), I helped you (from the very beginning. When you were in the hands of the enemy) I supported you with My righteous right hand.

¹¹ Indeed, all those who were angry with you will (eventually) be shamed and embarrassed. Those who quarrel with you will be like nothing and perish. ¹² (Even if) you will seek them, you will not find the men who fight with you. The men who wage war with you will be null and void. ¹³ For I am God, your God, who takes hold of your right hand, and says to you, "Don't fear, I will help you," (so you can rely on My word). ¹⁴ Do not fear (children) of Ya'akov, people of Israel, (who are as weak as) a worm (whose only strength is in its mouth, i.e. prayer). I have helped you (in the past), says God, and (I,) the Holy One of Israel, will be your redeemer (in the future).

Israel's enemies to be destroyed

¹⁵ I have made you into a new grooved threshing-hammer with sharp edges. You will thresh (kings mighty as) mountains and crush them fine, and make hills like chaff. ¹⁶ You will scatter them. The wind will carry them away, and a storm will scatter them. You will rejoice with God, and praise yourself (for trusting in) the Holy One of Israel.

8. אֲבָרְתָם אֲהַבֵּי—Avraham who loved Me. Avraham loved God with such a great and sublime love that he became a "chariot" to God (see Bereishis Rabah 47:6). In other words, his total dedication and surrender to

God's will resembled a chariot which does not deviate from side to side but follows the path of its driver directly (Tanya, Igeres Hakodesh 15; Likutei Sichos vol. 20, p. 101).