



## Two Haftarot in One?

Haftara - 22 p'sukim  
- Yeshayahu 54:1-55:5

The haftara that is read for Parashat No'ach is taken from two p'rakim, perek 54 and perek 55. But that is true only for those following the minhag of the Ashkenazim. The custom of the Sefaradim is to read the first chapter alone - the perek that we read after Tish'a b'Av, during the seven weeks of consolation. In truth, this earlier chapter seems to connect more closely to the theme of Parashat No'ach, including Hashem's reference to the flood itself [KI MEI NO'ACH ZOT LI...] as well as His promise that His mercies remain even though 'the mountains might move' [KI HEHARIM YAMUSHU...]. It is for this reason that the Sefaradi tradition uses only the first ten verses of perek 54 as the fitting haftara for our parasha.

We might rightfully wonder, however, why the Ashkenazim made the decision to extend the haftara

reading by including the final seven p'sukim of that same perek (54) and then, by adding the first five verses of the next perek (55) as well? Our bewilderment would grow even more upon studying and comparing these 'two' (?) haftarot.

Beyond the fact that (as mentioned before) the opening haftara reading included references to No'ach, something that the following section does not, we would find, upon analyzing the two parts, that the two segments of the prophetic message, are quite different!

Yishayahu opens his message by calling out RONI AKARA to his nation, telling the 'barren woman' to "break into song", for her children would eventually outnumber those of the wedded mothers. The subsequent p'sukim describe a glorious future for Israel, portraying an upsurge of population growth, restoration of the neglected land and renewal of the loving relationship between Israel and G-d. It is a prophetic promise of consolation and hope that is understandably read during the weeks of consolation.

And then, we turn to the second part of our haftara, that which is read in the Batei Knesset of the Ashkenazi tradition. And note how this section begins in contrast to the prophet's opening call of the first section: ANIYA SO'ARA - LO NUCHAMA, "O,

Unhappy, storm-tossed one, disconsolate". In but ten p'sukim, Yishayahu goes from encouraging Israel and telling them why they should rejoice - to lamenting a nation he describes as unhappy, storm-tossed and UNcomforted! Nonetheless, the navi's message found in the second part of the haftara is also one of comfort, as Rav Moshe Lichtenstein explains, however, the solace promised in the second nevu'a is based upon a different theme.

The difference we find between the opening segment of the haftara and the "addendum" read in Ashkenazi tradition reflects contrasting relationships that we may have with the Divine One. The more "optimistic" prophecy calling for Israel to 'rejoice' opens Yishayahu's message that reflects a close relationship of G-d and Man, insisting that, although there may be times of punishment and exile, Hashem's enduring love for His children will never permit Him to abandon or reject His chosen nation. As a result, we find that the nevu'a emphasizes G-d's loving relationship with Israel as a husband with his wife of youth and reiterates that He will bring his children back again, with vast love and everlasting kindness [v. 7,8].

The second segment that addresses the "unhappy, storm-tossed" nation reflects the bond of the All-Powerful

King to His subjects - a King Who cares for, and, therefore, guards and defends his 'citizens'. For this reason, we find this second prophecy to be one focusing on Hashem as The Supreme Creator [v. 16] and as Israel's Protector [17].

The extended haftara of the Ashkenazim reminds us that Israel's Geula may come about through a bond of love One to another or through the appreciation of those in need who recognize their only, true Guardian.

One way or the other, Israel's redemption will, undoubtedly, come true. ★