

Haftara-Parshas Shemos
First Galus and Final Geulah
by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

For the Haftara of Shemos, there are different minhagim. The Sephardim read Yirmiyahu 1:1-2:3. According to their minhag, the connection between the Parsha and the Haftara is quite clear. Parshas Shemos contains the beginnings of the slavery in Mitzrayim through its most intense stages. The Parsha also tells us of the birth of Moshe Rabbeinu and his rise to greatness both, on a personal level and as a leader of our people. The Haftara is about Yirmiyahu's beginnings as a prophet. Both, Moshe and Yirmiyahu, were hesitant in the beginning but in the end, both accepted their roles nobly. As stated in the article about the Haftara for the first of the three weeks, it makes no difference whether the prophecies are for good or for bad tidings; in either case the prophet is carrying out his mission as Hashem's agent to deliver the message that Am Yisroel is supposed to hear.

According to the Ashkenazi tradition, the Haftara is taken from Yeshaya 27:6-28:13 and 29:22-23. The connection to the Parsha is a bit more subtle. Perhaps we can connect the Parsha with one verse which we read. Yeshaya 27:13 reads, 'And it will be on that day that a great shofar will be blown and all those last in the land of Asshur and those cast away in Mitzrayim will bow to Hashem on the holy mountain in Yerushalayim. As we read about the first exile in the parsha and how Hashem remembered us, we need to be reminded of the final exile we are in and its redemption. Just as Hashem remembered us in our slavery in Mitzrayim and took us out from there, so too, Hashem will take us out of our current exile and all lost Jews will find their way back home. Both, those sufferings from physical exile as well as those who are spiritually trapped are addressed in this verse. We know that there are many Jews, lo aleinu, practicing Eastern religions, mistakenly seeking 'spirituality', not knowing that their real deliverance is to be found in their own home territory which they hardly even know of in most cases. Also, Jews are found in unusually high numbers in so many atheistic and 'progressive' movements. These are great spiritual exiles as well since they do not know where their neshamos really belong. Hopefully, this will end soon. May we soon hear this great Shofar which will call back every single Jew to his/her roots as avdai Hashem and as children of Avraham Yitzchak and Yaakov.