

HAFTORAH SUMMARY FOR PARSHAS DEVARIM

by Rabbi Aron Tendler

Isaiah 1:1 - 1:27
The Third Haftorah

The Shabbos preceding Tisha B'Av receives its name, "Chazon", from the opening verse of the Haftorah. Starting with the words "Chazon Yishayahu - A vision of Isaiah", we fearfully hear the echo of the Prophet as he decries Israel's betrayal of G-d. (1:11-15) Boundless selfishness, greed, misuse of power by those in authority, and oppression of the defenseless widow and orphan is why the Navi characterizes the people as "the lords of Sodom and the people of Gemorah." (1:10)

Hearing Yishayahu's indictment of the people, one would think that the end was near. In truth, Yishayahu began to prophesies in 3142 (619 b.c.e.) and the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed in 3338 (423 b.c.e); 196 years before the end! Clearly, the Navi's intent was to effect change in hope of averting the destruction. If so, our reason for mourning on Tisha B'Av must be better defined.

"The Jew does not mourn that thousand of years ago the Temple was destroyed, but that it had to be destroyed. Not over the destruction, but over the causes of its destruction". (S.R.Hirsch)

If only the people would have heeded the cry of the Navi! If only they could have foreseen with the clarity of a prophet's vision what it means for G-d to "draw back his protecting hand" (1:25) from Israel! Shabbas Chazon transports us back in time. We stand in the shadow of the Beis Hamikdash. We hear the word of G-d as the Navi beseeches His children to do Teshuva. Will we listen? Would we listen?