

SPEECH ON HAFTARAH OF PARSHAS EKEV

The haftarah I am about to read is from the prophet Isaiah.
Isaiah lived 2700 years ago,
at a time when Israel was a weak country,
located between 2 competing superpowers -- Egypt and Babylonia.
The Israeli government naturally wanted to ally itself with the strongest superpower,
which it thought was Egypt.
But Isaiah recommended that the Jews stay neutral
and leave their fate in Gd's hands.
Isaiah correctly predicted that Egypt,
which appeared to be the stronger superpower,
would actually be defeated.
Isaiah predicted that Israel's capital, Jerusalem,
would soon be destroyed by Babylonia
and be **abandoned and desolate** for many years,
But Isaiah also predicted something that, at that time, seemed more incredible,
that Jerusalem would eventually be **rebuilt**.

In this haftarah that I am about to read, Isaiah speaks, poetically and metaphorically,
as though the city of Jerusalem were already destroyed and abandoned,
Isaiah speaks as though the city of Jerusalem had human feelings,
and was like a woman who thought her children had gone extinct,
and had despaired of ever being inhabited again,
and as though Jerusalem was the city that Gd had forgotten.

In this haftarah, Isaiah comforts the Jews by stating:
Gd is even LESS likely to forget Jerusalem than even a mother would forget her own child.
Even though Jerusalem has been desolate and abandoned for so many years,
Jerusalem will one day look around to see her children -- the Jewish nation --
who Jerusalem thought went extinct long ago,
returning home to their homeland.
The presence of the returning Jews will adorn Jerusalem like pearls adorn a bride.
Isaiah states that:
In contrast to Jerusalem's current state of abandonment and desolation,
Jerusalem's inhabitants will, in the future, be so numerous that they will be squeezed for space.
Isaiah states, metaphorically, that:
Jerusalem will say to herself in amazement:
Who bore me all these; I thought I was childless!
Isaiah predicts that one day foreign rulers will respect and help the Jews
and return the Jewish nation to the rebuilt Jewish homeland.