

Remarks on the *Haftarah* for *Parashat Vaera*

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The *haftarah* for *Parashat Vaera* is a prophecy delivered by Ezekiel during the Babylonian exile. While *Parashat Vaera* describes the Ten Plagues and Pharaoh losing his power, the *Haftarah* describes the downfall of the later Pharaoh Hophra. Ezekiel condemns Egypt for its haughtiness and for being an unreliable ally to the People of Israel, predicting its conquest by the Babylonians. In contrast, he also foresees hope for the Children of Israel, who he says will live in safety and security thanks to their faith in God.

We find in this *Haftarah* a duality not just of God, but of the Jewish people. We have kept our faith in God and proudly practiced our traditions in the face of war, civil unrest, hate, and beyond. Thus, Ezekiel says, we will have peace and safety; yet as we all know, these are not constantly present for the Jewish people, let alone for ourselves individually. Regardless, we offer prayers and hopes for peace in our own lives and in the world on a daily basis.

And when we do this, we do not simply call on God, but we call God *Oseh Shalom*, the Maker of Peace. We do this because deep down we all know that it will come.

By calling God the Maker of Peace even during troubling times, whether in the world or in our hearts, we manifest who we hope God can be in our lives and for the world. Even if this contrasts with what we see around us or what we feel, we manifest the peace and hope we want to see, not simply waiting for it to happen.

May we all be makers of peace, and may the *Oseh Shalom* bring us safety, security, and hope.