

A Special Haftarah for Yom Kippur during the week of Moral Action For Climate Justice:

The Words of Isaiah, Amos, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Martin Luther King, Jr., Pope Francis and Starhawk

10 Tishrei 5776

September 23, 2015

קָרָא בְּגֵרוֹן אֵל-תַּחֲשֹׁדֵי, פְּשׁוּפֹר הָרִם קוֹלְךָ
וְהִגֵּד לְעַמִּי פְּשָׁעָם, וּלְבֵית יַעֲקֹב חַטָּאתָם.

Lift up your voice like the shofar!
Let the people of this country of yours
know that they're making a big mistake,
They're your people!ⁱ

לָמָּה צִמְנוּ וְלֹא רָאִיתָ, עֲנִינוּ נִפְשֵׁנוּ וְלֹא תִדְעַ

They say, "Don't you see we're fasting?
Don't you see how holy we have become?"

הֵן בְּיוֹם צִמְמֶכֶם תִּמְצְאוּ-חִפָּץ, וְכָל-עֲצָבֵיכֶם תִּנְגָּשׁוּ.
הֵן לָרִיב וּמִצָּה תִצּוּמוּ, וּלְהַכּוֹת בְּאֶגְרֹף רָשָׁע
לֹא-תִצּוּמוּ כִּיּוֹם, לְהִשְׁמִיעַ בְּמָרוֹם קוֹלְכֶם.
הַכְּזָה יִהְיֶה צוּם אֲבָחֶרְהוּ--יּוֹם עֲנוּת אָדָם
נִפְשׁוּ הֶלְכֹף כְּאֶגְמוֹן רָאֲשׁוּ
וְשָׁק וְיֶאֱפֹר יִצְיַע--הֶלְזָה תִקְרָא-צוּם, וְיּוֹם רָצוֹן לִיהוָה

But on your fast day you wear clothes that were made in sweatshops,
And the books you hold in your hands are filthy with the tears of dying forests . . .
And your investments fatten the rich, who are destroying the land.

You think this is the kind of fast I want?ⁱⁱ

No!ⁱⁱⁱ

Prayer is no panacea,
no substitute for action.
Prayer is meaningless unless it is subversive,
unless it seeks to overthrow
and to ruin the pyramids of callousness,
hatred, opportunism, falsehoods.^{iv}

The violence . . . reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life . . . the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor. . .

We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth;^v

הָלוֹא זֶה, צוֹם אֲבַחֲרֶהוּ--פִּתַח חֲרָצְבוֹת רָשָׁע

This is the kind of fast that I desire:
Unlock the handcuffs put on by wicked power!^{vi}

The storm is rising against the privileged minority of the earth from which there is no shelter in isolation or armament. The storm will not abate until a fair distribution of the fruits of the earth enables men and women everywhere to live in dignity and human decency.^{vii}

הִתַּר אֲגָדוֹת מוֹטָה וְשַׁלַּח רְצוּצִים חֲפָשִׁים

Let the oppressed worker go free by raising the minimum wage.^{viii}

There is immense silent-agony in the world, and our task is to be a voice for the plundered poor, to prevent the desecration of the soul and the violation of our dreams of honesty.^{ix}

A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.
It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking . . .^x

וְכָל-מוֹטָה תִּנְתְּקוּ: הָלוֹא פָּרַס לָרָעִב לַחֲמֶד

And break off every yoke!

Share your bread with the hungry.^{xi}

I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.^{xii}

וְעֲנִיִּים מְרוּדִים תְּבִיא בַּיִת כִּי-תִרְאֶה עָרֹם וְכִסִּיתוֹ וּמִבְּשָׂרְךָ לֹא תִתְעַלֵּם

Build affordable housing for the homeless,
And welcome back the people you have thrown out of your hearts,
Even the ones in your own family.^{xiii}

But true compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily at the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth.^{xiv}

I still believe that one day humankind will bow before the altars of God, and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and nonviolent redemptive good will proclaim the rule of the land.^{xv}

All people, all living things, are part of the earth life, and so are sacred. No one of us stands higher or lower than any other. Only justice can assure balance; only ecological balance can sustain freedom. . . . To honor the sacred is to create conditions in which nourishment, sustenance, habitat, knowledge, freedom, and beauty can thrive.^{xvi}

אִז יִבְקַע כְּשֶׁחַר אֹרֶךְ, וְאַרְכָּתֶךָ מִהֲרָה תִצְמַח
וְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנֶיךָ צְדָקָה, כְּבוֹד יְהוָה יֵאֱסָפֶךָ.
אִז תִּקְרָא וַיהוָה יַעֲנֶה, תִּשְׁוַע וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי

Then your radiance will burst through like the dawn;
Then when you need healing it will spring up quickly;
And true righteousness will be revealed in your faces,
As God shines through you again.
Then when you call, God will answer gladly,
And when you cry, She will reach out with Her presence,
In each moment whispering, "Here I am!"^{xvii}

וַיִּגַּל כְּמַיִם מִשֶּׁפֶט וּצְדָקָה כְּנַחַל אֵיתָן.

Then justice shall well up like water;
And righteousness flow like a mighty stream.^{xviii}

- ⁱ Isaiah 58:1. English translation/interpretation by R. Shefa Gold.
- ⁱⁱ Isaiah 58:3-5. English translation/interpretation by R. Shefa Gold.
- ⁱⁱⁱ English by R. Arthur Waskow.
- ^{iv} Abraham Joshua Heschel, "On Prayer," Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity, ed. by Susannah Heschel
- ^v Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' of the Holy Father Francis On Care For Our Common Home, ¶1, May 24, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
- ^{vi} Isaiah 58:6. English translation/interpretation by R. Arthur Waskow.
- ^{vii} Martin Luther King, Jr., published posthumously in King's The Trumpet of Conscience, 1968
- ^{viii} Isaiah 58: English translation/interpretation by R. Shefa Gold.
- ^{ix} Abraham Joshua Heschel, "The Reason for My Involvement in the Peace Movement," Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity, pp. 224-6, "the task of man" replaced with "our task."
- ^x Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' of the Holy Father Francis On Care For Our Common Home, ¶91.
- ^{xi} Isaiah 58:6 & 7. English translation by R. Arthur Waskow.
- ^{xii} Martin Luther King, Jr., remarks upon acceptance of the Nobel Prize, December 10, 1964
- ^{xiii} Isaiah 58:7. English translation/interpretation by R. Shefa Gold.
- ^{xiv} Martin Luther King, Jr., address at a meeting of Clergy and Laity Concerned, Riverside Church, New York City, 4/4/67.
- ^{xv} Martin Luther King, Jr., remarks upon acceptance of the Nobel Prize, "humankind" replaces "mankind."
- ^{xvi} Starhawk, The Fifth Sacred Thing, 1993.
- ^{xvii} Isaiah 58:8-9. English translation/interpretation by R. Shefa Gold with the exception of "Then when you need healing it will spring up quickly;" which is translated by R. Arthur Waskow.
- ^{xviii} Amos 5:24. This quote from Amos was incorporated into King's "I Have A Dream" speech delivered at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Washington, D.C., August 28, 1963: *"We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and the Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."*



The original version of this haftarah created in January 2006 with the guidance and assistance of Rabbis Yael Levy and Marcia Prager, with special thanks going to R. Yael for her ongoing inspiration. Also many thanks to Rabbis Arthur Waskow and Shefa Gold for taking the risk to translate biblical text with a modern slant.

Compiled and cantillated by Kohenet Shoshana Bricklin, Oreget ba'chochim (knitter in the thorns), Or-ee ba'shofar (my voice is in the shofar blasts). *I like to think of myself as a knitter in the thorns not only representing the tactile experience of knitting with yarn, but as a metaphor for my political priestessing—meaning the bringing/weaving/knitting together of many voices to speak truth to power, even and especially, at the most uncomfortable (i.e. "thorny") moments. This is what I think my haftarah project represents.* For more information on creative haftarot, contact Shoshana at sbricklin@comcast.net. For more information about Kohenet, see www.kohenet.com or The Hebrew Priestess: Ancient and New Visions of Jewish Women's Spiritual Leadership by Jill Hammer and Taya Shere (Ben Yehuda Press, 2015)