



Parshat B'reishit
Isaiah 42:5 - 43:10
October 9, 2015 / 26 Tishre 5775

I can't remember the last time I woke up fully awake with my eyes clearly open. For me, it's more of a gradual process. My eyes are closed and shades of light gently stimulate my eyelids until finally they open, usually, on their own accord, and I greet the day.

Imagine if it were otherwise.

“Opening eyes deprived of light, Rescuing prisoners from confinement, from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.”

Imagine, if every morning you awoke deprived of light, a person imprisoned by your blindness, bound in darkness.

This is what I believe to be the major metaphor of this morning's haftarah. How we understand and experience light, shadow and darkness. It can remind us how the countless numbers of people seeking asylum, seeking not to be prisoners but to walk in the light are feeling and it can help us to understand their feelings of servitude and imprisonment.

It can also appeal to us to become more effective “Guardians of the Land.” The contrast between the Torah portion which speaks of creation and the Haftarah which strives to teach us that God has invested in the world is intended to help us understand that we have a role to play creating and maintaining light.

Sometimes it can feel like a burden. But it can also be considered a source of strength. Just think about it. For nearly two thousand years, our tradition has been reaching out to us attempting to inject the belief that we can bring light.

Let's try to do a better job this year.

This week's Haftarah commentary was written for the Unraveller by Rabbi Charles Simon, Executive Director of the FJMC and author of "Biblical Leadership After Moses," "Understanding the Haftarah. An Everyperson's Guide" and "The Non-Jewish Spouse: Strategies for Clergy and Lay Leadership." This Unraveller was sent out on Thursday, October 8th, 2015, at approximately 11:00 pm (and prior to Shabbat).