



Parshat Va-yikra
Isaiah 43:21-44:23
March 21, 2015 / 1 Nisan 5775

(Note this is Shabbat Ha-Hodesh and parashat [Exodus 12:1-20] is the last of four special Torah passages added to the regular Shabbat passage leading up to Pesah. It is recited on the last Shabbat of Adar or in this case the first day of Nisan, since it falls on Rosh Hodesh. The Haftarah for this Shabbat is Ezekiel 45:16-46:18 instead of the usual haftarah for Rosh Hodesh. However, this haftarah commentary is on the haftarah that would normally be read with Va-yikra if this Shabbat were not Rosh Hodesh.)

How many of us attempt to juggle time? We recognized how we have been shaped by past experiences and sometimes those experiences cling to us in a way where they cannot be shed. We just can't let go! And it causes me to wonder are their times when it is more appropriate to let go, to forgo but not necessarily forget how we have been shaped by the past. I suspect to some extent this could have been how Isaiah might have been thinking in this week's haftarah. He envisions God telling us, that we haven't worshipped, haven't sacrificed appropriately and instead of doing what was intended, worshipping God, we have burdened God with our sins.

You have wearied Me with your iniquities. After all, I am the one who wipes your transgressions away and forget your sins but I have become so tired of your transgressions that I am in danger of forgetting that I can forgive you. Help me remember!

But God, according to the prophet can forget the past and can inspire us with new hope. We will be gifted with another opportunity. The future can be bright.

Isn't this a lesson which can be learned? Don't we have the opportunity to perform acts of teshuvah, of repentance and to start again? This doesn't mean that the past can be erased but it does provide us with a message or simply some needed strength to allow us try again and to do a better job.

All of us attempt to juggle time, to balance how we have been shaped with how we hope to be. All of us, like Israel, have been given the opportunity to limit the influence of the past in order to build a healthier, happier, more productive future.

This week's Haftarah commentary was written by Rabbi Simon, Executive Director of the FJMC and author of numerous books, including "Understanding the Haftarot. An Everyperson's Guide"

and "The Non-Jewish Spouse: Strategies for Clergy and Lay Leadership". [Both of these books are available in the FJMC on-line store]