

HAFTORAH OF SIDRA : שמות

***This week's Haftorah, for Sefaradim, is taken from the Book of Yirmiyohu,
Chapter 1, verse 1 — Chapter 2, verse 3***

IN THIS WEEK'S NOTES ON THE HAFTORAH,
AS IN MANY OF THESE "HAFTORAH OF THE WEEK" SHEETS,
CONSIDERABLE USE HAS BEEN MADE OF THE ADMIRABLE SERIES
"THE MIDRASH SAYS ON THE WEEKLY HAFTAROS"
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1. The connexion between the Sidra and this Haftorah is that in both is the appointment of the Novvi, Moshe our Teacher in the Sidra and the Novvi Yirmiyohu in the Haftorah. Both of them were reluctant to take up their appointment, both felt inadequate to the task and were worried that as a result of their inadequacy the Jewish People would suffer and both them were initially not believed, Mosheh, by Par'o and Yirmiyohu by the Jewish People.
2. Yirmiyohu was a Novvi during the last forty years or so of the first Beis HaMikdash. The standard of adherence to the Torah and Mitzvos of the Jewish people was greatly disappointing to HaShem and Yirmiyohu's mission was to arouse the people to Teshuvah. Otherwise, he was to warn them, HaShem will send them His punishment in the shape of Nevuchadnetzar, the king of Babylon, a cruel and destructive tyrant. He will besiege the City of Yerushalaim and destroy even the Beis HaMikdash and take the people away into exile as a punishment for their misdeeds. (The northern Kingdom of Israel had already come to an end, its people exiled, nearly a century before — and for very much the same reasons.)
3. But the people would not listen. The kings at the time of Yirmiyohu's prophecy were Yoshiyohu ben Ommon, and, after him, his son, Yehoyokkim ben Yoshiyohu, Kings of Yehudah. As kings, they should have been examples of Torah observance to their people, moral guides and mentors. But instead, they misled the people into thinking that they could avoid the wrath of HaShem. They thought that by making alliances with other kings of the region — Par'o, king of Egypt, for example — they could avoid their fate. Yirmiyohu pleaded with them to turn back to HaShem and the Torah and warned of the great tragedy that will befall them if they refuse. But the king accused him of defeatist talk in the face of the enemy and indeed even tried to eliminate Yirmiyohu.
4. Yirmiyohu was witness to the terrible tragedy of the Destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and Yerushalaim. He saw the end of the Kings of Yehudah and the Exile of the people from their Land. But he comforts the people with the message from HaShem to His People: However far they wander, spiritually and physically, HaShem will never forget how the Jewish People put their complete trust in HaShem and followed Mosheh out of Egypt into the Wilderness. (Another connexion with the Sidra.) For that reason, HaShem says, He sees the great potential there is in the Jewish People and He will never forsake them completely. And He will mete out just punishment to those who do them harm, just as He punished the Egyptians for what they did to the Jewish People.