

הפטרה ליום ראשון של שבועות

HAFTORAH FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SHOBUOS

***The Haftorah for the First Day of Shovuos
(in Eretz Yisroel, of course, there is only the one day of Yom Tov)
is taken from Sefer Yechezkel, Chapter 1, from verse 1 till verse 28
and ends with verse 12 of Chapter 3.***

1. The Torah Reading for Shovuos morning is the description of how HaShem came down on earth, so to speak, to give us His Torah. Never in the history of the world has there ever been such a clear manifestation of the Divine Presence as that event when we received the Torah directly from HaShem.
2. The Haftorah, too, is the description of a similarly wondrous event where the prophet Yechezkel ben Buzi haKohen tells how he was permitted to see the various kinds of Ministering Angels in the Heavenly Presence. But there are a number of important differences and here are two of them. Firstly, the Revelation of the Divine Presence at the Giving of the Torah was a one-off event. It happened once and once only for HaShem will never give His Torah again and there will never be another Torah. By contrast, the vision that Yechezkel was shown is what happens all the time; it's an on-going phenomenon but we ordinary mortals do not see it nor, as far as we know, do those happenings really impinge upon us on this world. Secondly, what Yechezkel saw was seen by him alone (although Yeshayohu was shown a similar vision, too) unlike the Giving of the Torah which was witnessed by a multitude of the Jewish nation estimated conservatively at something more than two-and-a-half million people.
3. Since the event of Mattan Torah was extremely important to us — for without the Torah we are nothing — therefore when HaShem manifested Himself to us, He did so in a way that the experience — miraculous and supernatural though it was — can be described in terms that are of this world and that we can relate to. What goes on in the Heavenly realms as described by Yechezkel, on the other hand, is something so beyond our ken, so beyond our understanding, that even the simple translation of what Yechezkel describes for us doesn't seem to make sense to ordinary mortals. Indeed, this vision of “the Divine Procession” as it's called, stands as one of those great prophetic visions that are as difficult for the ordinary mortal to grasp as it is well-nigh impossible for a man blind from birth to understand the concept of colour. For that reason, our Chachommim, of blessed memory, cautioned against studying these prophetic works as we simply do not have the intellectual equipment to understand properly what Yechezkel describes and if we try, this is bound to lead to serious mistakes. Therefore, we read the prophecy of Yechezkel and simply try to understand — from the very fact that we cannot understand — that HaShem and what happens in His Heavenly Realms are way above and beyond anything that we can even imagine.