



After the Temple's destruction described in the Haftarah of the "Three of Affliction" (תלת דפורענותא) and Tisha B'Av, the "Seven of Comfort" (שבע דנחמתא) comforted the exiled Jewish people, assuring their eventual glorious redemption. Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the "Two of Repentance" (Aramaic: תרתי דתיובתא)- recited on Tzom Gedaliah (by Ashkenazim only) and Shabbat Shuva (by all)- encourage the people to repent in order to achieve the promised redemption.

## Two of Repentance #2 (Shuva<sup>1</sup>/Vayeilech<sup>2</sup> - Ashkenazim): Hosea 14:2-10, Joel 2:15-27

The Haftarah consists of two sections, both of which call for national repentance and describe God's blessings in response. Its first section is Hosea's final prophecy. The prophet calls for the Northern Kingdom, "Ephraim", to abandon its idolatry and military dependence upon mighty Assyria and return to God. In return, God will shower them with love, protect them, and ensure they flourish lushly.

The second section is from the prophet Joel. To punish and shame the Southern Kingdom for its sins, God has sent locusts to consume Judah's vegetation and starve its people. In keeping with the timing of the Haftarah's recitation, a shofar calls for every single Judean to pray and fast for God's mercy. In response to this national repentance, God drives the locusts away, and grants rain, agricultural abundance, and protection to Judah. All rejoice as God returns to His people's midst, and the international reputation of Judah and God are restored.

### Haftarah Breakdown

**Hosea, verses 14:2-4:** The prophet calls for Israel to abandon their idolatry and their alliance with Assyria's military. Their words of confession, return, and reliance upon God will suffice; sacrifices are not needed.

Hosea 14:3	הושע י"ד:ג
Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to Him, "Forgive all iniquity and accept what is good, and we will pay [for offerings of] bulls, [the offering of] our lips..."	קחו עִמָּכֶם דְּבָרִים וְשׁוּבוּ אֶל־ה' אֲמַרוּ אֱלֹהֵי כָל־תְּשׁוּאָה עוֹל וְחַטָּאת וְנִשְׁלַמָּה פְּרִים שְׁפַתֵּינוּ:

**Verses 14:5-9:** When the people renounce their idols, God's anger for His people will end. In love, God will forgive and protect them, causing them to flourish and nourishing them until they are glorious and delightful.

Hosea 14:6	הושע י"ד:ו
I [God] will be like dew to Israel, which will blossom like a rose and shall strike its roots like the [cedars of] Lebanon.	אֶהְיֶה כַּטֵּל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִפְרַח כַּשֹּׁשַׁן וְיִגְדַע שְׁרָשְׁוֹ פְּלִבְגָּיו:

**Verses 14:10:** Although sinful Israel stumbled (v. 2) on God's straight paths, righteous Israel trods them wisely.

Hosea 14:10	הושע י"ד:ט
Whoever is wise, let him understand these things: whoever is understanding, let him know them. For the Lord's ways are straight-the righteous walk in them, but transgressors stumble on them.	מִי חָכֵם וְיָבִין אֱלֹהֵי נִבּוֹן וְיַדְעֵם כִּי־יִשְׁרָיִם דְּרָכֵי ה' וְצַדִּיקִים יִלְכוּ בָּם וּפְשָׁעִים יִכָּשְׁלוּ בָּם:

<sup>1</sup> The Haftarah's opening word (שׁוּבוּ/Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled in your iniquity) gives this Sabbath its name, "Shabbat Shuva (Sabbath of Return/Repentance)".

<sup>2</sup> Some communities recite this Haftarah for Parashat Haazinu, and the Sepharadi Haftarah for Parashat Vayeilech.

**Joel**, verses 2:15-17: God has sent a locust plague to destroy Judah's crops, to shame and starve its people. With shofar blows declaring a fast in Zion and priests weeping in the Temple, every member of the people must gather to fast and pray for God's mercy. They remind God that nations will deem Him weak if He does not save them.

Joel 2:15	יואל ב:ט"ו
Sound a shofar in Zion! Sanctify a fast day! Call an assembly!	תקעו שופר בציון קדשו צום קראו עצרה:

**Verses 2:18-20:** In response, God spares the Land and His people by driving the locusts far away, where they rot. God gives them ample crops, restoring their international honor.

Joel 2:20	יואל ב:כ
The Lord answered and said to His people, "Behold, I will send you corn, wine, and oil, with which you shall be satiated. I will no more make you a reproach among the nations."	וַיַּעַן ה' וַיֹּאמֶר לְעַמּוֹ הַנְּגִי שְׁלַח לְכֶם אֶת־הַדֶּגֶן וְהַתִּירֹשׁ וְהַיְצִהָר וַיִּשְׂבַּעְתֶּם אֹתוֹ וְלֹא־אָתֶם אֶתְכֶם עוֹד תִּרְפָּה בְּגוֹיִם:

**Verses 2:21-27:** God now provides rain at proper times, making life flourish again. The Land, its animals, and its people rejoice. Knowing that God alone provides bounty and is in their midst, the people will never again be ashamed and must praise Him.

Joel 2:26	יואל ב:כ"ו
You shall surely eat and be sated, and you shall praise the Name of the Lord your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you. My people shall never be ashamed.	וְאָכַלְתֶּם אֶכּוֹל וְשָׂבֹעַ וְהִלַּלְתֶּם אֶת־שֵׁם ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה עִמָּכֶם לְהַפְלִיא וְלֹא־יִבְשׁוּ עַמִּי לְעוֹלָם:

## Haftarah Halakhah

The Talmud explains why **this Haftarah can consist of passages from two different prophets**: its second section, from Joel, follows its first section, from Hosea, among the books of the "Twelve Prophets."

Megillah 24a	מגילה כ"ד עמוד א
It is taught in a Baraita: One may not skip from one prophet to another. Amongst the twelve books of Prophets one may skip provided that one does not skip from the book's end to its beginning.	תניא אידך אין מדלגין מנביא לנביא ובנביא של שנים עשר מדלג ובלבד שלא ידלג מסוף הספר לתחילתו:

## Connection

Hosea 14:3 is a basis for establishing **prayer as a substitute for the Temple service**:

Sefer HaChinukh 185	ספר החינוך קפ"ה
This commandment [of the Yom Kippur service] is practiced at the time of the [Temple]. Now that, due to our iniquities, we have neither Temple nor high priest, neither [priestly] garments nor sacrifices, all of Israel are accustomed on this day [of Yom Kippur] to serve [God] through prayers and supplications as [Hosea 14:3] states, "Let us render [for] bulls [offered in the Temple], [the offering of] our lips."	ונוהגת כל מצוה זו בזמן הבית. ועכשיו בעונותינו שאין לנו לא מקדש ולא כהן גדול ולא בגדי שרד ולא קרבנות, נהגו כל ישראל לעבד ביום זה בתפלות ובתחנונים, וכמו שכתוב (הושע יד ג) 'ונשלמה פרים שפתינו'.

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