R’ Carmy

There will be a literary-theological approach. The primary purpose of Tanach is

to learn about Hashem. By literary we mean that how something is stated it is important

about what is being stated. We will use classical Parshanut dually because it helps us

with Pshat and they are important as primary sources being part of the Mesorah. We will understand what we get from Western culture and what we are rejecting from Western culture.

**General Introduction**

Yishai was during the period of 4 different kings

1) Uziahu

2) Yotam

3) Achaz

4) Chizkiahu

This gives us a window of about 50 years here or there (when these kings reigned is not

exactly clear). Seder Olam has Yishayah giving Nevuah for 84 years, Amos Chacham quotes secular scholars who place the time of the Nevuah as somewhere between 60 and 35 years.

When Yishayahu starts giving Nevuos, it is not exactly clear. Many Meforshim

believe Perek 6 to be the first Nevuah and that is recorded as the day of Uziahu’s death,

which means Yishaya started prophesizing late in Uziyahu’s reign. Moreover there is a

Machlokes if this was the day of Uziahu’s death or when he got Tzara’as. And Chazal

have to deal with how the reigns of the Malchei Yehudah and Yisroel work together to

synchronize things and then work out overlaps. Chazal say that Yiahayah gave Nevuah

during the reign of Menashe and Menashe killed him.

During the reign of Achaz there was a war between Yehudah, Yisroel and Aram.

The Assyrians were in a slump. During that period the Aramenians were moving in.

They wanted to fight Ashur, they wanted Achaz to come too and Yishayah told him not

to go. Achaz asked the help of the Assyrians and they did.

Achaz died and Chizkiahu took over. According to Divrei haYamim in the 6th

year of Chizkaihu reign, Malchus Yisroel was no more. Chizkiahu is a Tzadik but he

tends to rely on Egypt. Yishayahu tells Chizkiahu not to take sides. Eventually the

Assyrians invade Yehudah. There is a great dispute whether there were 2 campaigns or

one campaign. The great campaign will be assumed to have taken place in 701. When

push comes to shove the Chizkaihu relies on the Nevuah and the army of Assyria was

destroyed overnight by a plague.

Timeline of the book

The first 5 Perakim are not markable. 2 times they are said to be the Nevuos of

Yishayah.

From 6 to the 12 the Nevuos seem to have a place in history where they are

dated (around Uziahu and one probably to Chizkiyahu).

13 to 23 – nevu’os to other nations. They speak about, Moab, Aram, Damesek, and Egypt.

From 24 – 26 there are apocalyptical Nevuot.

And 27 – 35 are a repeat of leading up to Assyrian invasion. [?]

36 – 39 is mostly historical, it is a record of the invasion of Sancheirev. 38, 39 is

mostly a repeat from Melachim. 39 ends with a frightening note about Yeshayah

declaring Galus Bavel. Chizkiahu gives a surprisingly positive retort, that at least there

will be peace in his time.

40 and on is all Nechama. The setting in 40 on is the Jews being in Bavel and the

Jews coming back from Bavel. There is a specific reference to the Persian king Koresh

who will conquer Bavel.

From 49 on there is no longer any reference to Bavel or to the Persians. The Ramban points out that there are 2 Nevuot in the end of Yishaya, one about Bayit Sheni and another, which are clearly for a later point.

With regard to the 2nd half of the book:

The Bible critics will say that after Perek 40 another Navi wrote the Sefer (“Deutero-Isaiah”). The reason they give is that these nevu’os deal with return from Bavel and Persia, and how would Yeshayahu know about such things, specifically the name of the king Koresh who would allow the Jews to come back. They further say that after Perek 55 there is a third author. We would simply respond that a Navi can predict the future, if Hashem so tells him – what is the problem? The question would merely be if this is a normal thing to expect from a Navi. There are not so many such predictions in Tanach, but there are some, such as Bil’am’s reference to Agag the king of Amalek (though this might be the generic Amalakite king’s name). In Melachim 1:13 there is specific reference to Yoshiyahu being the king over Yehuda several hundred years prior to the event.

We could add that even if this is not the general practice of Nevi’im, it would make sense to reference the Geu;ah from Bavel in detail. It was unheard of to return from Galus in those days, so there is a chance people would despair, so Yashayahu gave details of the return. The context in fact is about Hashem’s control over history.

Furthermore, we would say that the Mesorah is that this is one person, and the onus is upon others to “prove” that there is more than one author here. Ben Sira (2nd century B.C.E.) already states clearly Yeshayahu as one author (in his poem about Jewish history at the end of his book).

There were some Maskilim in the 19th century who thought there were two authors. Nachman Krochmal (Moreh Nevuchei Hazman) said the idea appears in Midrash already, since in Vayikra Rabba says that 2 pesukim in Perek 8 really were authored by Be’eiri the father of Hoshe’a. So we see Chazal already said there could be multiple authors. This is quite a stretch, since there is a very big difference in magnitude, and it also does not justify the argument that Yeshayahu could not know things that would happen later. Netziv mentions this Midrash in one place and explains that it means Yeshayahu was quoting from Be’eiri, not that Be’eiri wrote the Pesukim. Martin Buber said that even if there are two authors, there is a unity to the book, and the language and style reflect that. Whoever “put the two together” did so intelligently. This view has become accepted these days. Nowadays, critics might say that there never was a separate second book, but rather one Yeshayahu whose work was expanded upon by others.

Many people say that Ibn Ezra and Abrabanel believed in 2 Yeshayah. No one can find this Abrabanel - it is not there. People say the Abarbanel says this because he does argue in places with Chazal’s discussion of the authorship of the Tanach (see Bava Basra 14b).

The Ibn Ezra is a much more interesting case. The famous passage of Ibn Ezra is at the beginning of Perek 40. The Ibn Ezra says he thinks this section is here since 39 spoke about Galus Bavel. Ibn Ezra says he thinks it refers mostly to Galus Bayis Sheini, but some points are about Galut Bavel, such as the part about Koresh. He then says that not all the Nevi’im were finished by the Navi who started the Sefer, such as Shmuel and Divrei Hayamim, and he quotes the Pasuk of “Melachim Yir’u V’kamu Sarim V’yishtachavu.” The blaring question is why does he throw this in at the end? What does this reference to Eved Hashem have to do with the authorship of Yeshayahu? The answer is that Ibn Ezra holds that this particular Nevu’ah is about the Navi himself, so it could not be that Yeshayahu wrote this, since it would be odd for Yeshayahu to describe himself as being vindicated many years later, though Ibn Ezra acknowledges that it could be after Yeshayahu’s death. But this is a very fine thread to hang a general approach of multiple authorship on, since he is merely describing a local problem with a particular nevu’ah (that only is a problem l’shitaso that it refers to the Navi himself). He isn’t having hang-ups with a Navi knowing the future.

Yirmiyahu 26 describes the Beis Hamikdash being destroyed, and in the debate he describes there, someone says that Yirmiyahu is allowed to say his nevu’os because Michah also spoke about the destruction. But why didn’t they bring evidence from Yeshayahu, who describes this in 64:10? Yaakov Bart (Tanach teacher at the Hildesheimer Seminary) raised this issue as a proof that this was written later. The answer might be that they wanted precedent to acquit Yirmiyahu from a nevu’ah that was said without any nechama, whereas Yeshayahu has nechama – and it wouldn’t be as good a precedent that we acquit Nevi’im for saying nevu’os like this.[[1]](#footnote-1)

At the end of the Sefer, there are Nevu’os that describe someone as being Eved

Hashem who is suffering. There are Nevu’os in the middle where this Eved Elokim suffers terribly. For the past 100 years there has been a view that these Nevu’os must be treated differently because they have a separate theme. The Rishonim identified the Eved Hashem as different personages. Ramban writes a whole essay about it (Hinei Yaskil Avdi) where he says he thinks it refers to Am Yisrael as a whole. Some Meforshim say that there are references to different people as Eved Hashem, sometimes Koresh, sometimes Am Yisrael, etc. In other words, they didn’t think these Nevu’os were a separate unit that required consistency in interpretation. The idea of treating it as a separate unit came about in 19th century Germany. If we would take this idea further, we would have to say that there is another separate section consisting of the Perakim that describe Am Yisrael as a woman/Tziyon (VaTomer Tziyon, etc.).

**Chapter 6**

There are those that say Perek 6 is the first Nevuah of Yeshayah. It sounds like one and is the first dated Nevuah. The only mention of seraphim (as angels) is here and in Yeshayahu 14. Poisonous snakes are called seraphim in B’midbar (Nechash Hanechoshes). Chizkiyahu got rid of the Nechas Hanechoshes, and the Gemara explains in Pesochim that the Chachamim approved, since people were using it as Avodah Zara. There may be an association here.

**6:2** – the Serafim are standing, as they ready to act, rather than “sitting” for some kind of cabinet function.

**6:3** - The imagery is of the seraphim “ministering” to Hashem (“standing above Him”). The combination of “kadosh, etc.” and yet “melo chol ha’aretz k’vodo” seems to parallel the imagery of **6:1**, where Hashem is “transcendent” yet fills the Heichal.

The first time in Tanach that we have reference to Hashem presiding over the divine court is Melachim I:22, where Achav gets Michayhu to say a nevu’ah if Achav will be successful in his campaign against Ramos HaGilad. Michayhu says that he saw Hashem presiding over the divine court and Hashem was looking for someone to mislead Achav into going to war, and the Ru’ach says it will be a falsity in the mouth of the nevi’im. Maybe Michayhu was being sarcastic and making fun of Achav, which would fit with some of the other context there.

**6:4** – the smoke may be a reference to ketores, if we are assuming we are in the Beis Hamikdash here.

Why do the pillars tremble? This could relate to the fact that this nevu’ah was in the year of Uzziah’s death. We know from Divrei Hayomim (II:26) that Uzziah got tzara’as on his forehead for trying to bring ketores. The “death” here may be when he had to abdicate due to his tzara’as – that is a question in Meforshim. We know from Amos and Zechri’ah (14) that there was an earthquake in the times of Uzziah. So it’s interesting that we have both references here in **6:4** – pillars rocking and smoke billowing. Maybe the nevu’ah was at the time when Uzziah brought the ketores and became a metzora and the earthquake happened – maybe these all happened at the same time. Minimally, he is channeling that imagery.

At what time was this nevu’ah said? It could be when Uzziah actually died, or when he became a metzora, as we noted. One piece of evidence is the imagery of the earthquake and the ketores, if we think that’s what the pesukim refer to. Another piece is that **6:8** implies that it was Yeshaya’s first nevu’ah, which would place it earlier. If we say it means the year Uzziah died and it was the first nevu’ah, that would mean he only was a navi for the last year of Uzziah’s reign, as **1:1** says he was active in Uzziah’s time, which is Ibn Ezra’s view. Either way, Uzziah’s debacle is the backdrop for this nevu’ah. Shada”l claimed that this is in fact Yeshaya’s first nevu’ah but he didn’t tell the people right away since it was so negative. He uses a similar approach to the authorship of the book – there is one person Yeshaya but he didn’t give every nevu’ah to the people – all of the ones about galus bavel were not publicized until 200 years later. Someone else pointed out that the fact that the first 5 chapters have no date might be significant in this context of dating, but he didn’t explain that significance. Chazal say in Mechilta that it is out of order.

We have to ask how Uzziah fell into this trap of ketores in the first place. Abarbanel says he became an apikores, and his proof is that the tzara’as was on his forehead, representative of the intellect. But this is very strange. More simply, we could say Uzziah misunderstood the relationship between kahuna and malchus; in other societies, the king could take over the divine service as well, so maybe Uzziah got a bit of a misunderstanding.

**6:5** – what does “nidmeisi” mean? It might mean silence, perhaps that he is guilty that he isn’t saying praises like the Serafim. Malbim suggests it means that Yeshaya feels guilty that he was silent from giving people mussar until now. The difficulty is that this may be assuming that Yeshaya already knew the people were sinning and needed rebuke. Abarbanel, who may be an antecedent to the Malbim’s view, says that Yeshaya feels guilty that he considered Uzziah so wonderful and didn’t realize that there was a large chasm between Uzziah and Hashem. Some Achronim say “nidmeisi” means delusional, and Yeshaya is saying that he doesn’t think he is fitting to see such visions. The most popular view in Meforshim (e.g. Rashi) is that “nidmeisi” actually means to be destroyed or killed – Yeshaya is saying that he deserves to die since he is unworthy to see Hashem.

**6:6** – the coal seems to be very hot, since the Seraf takes it with a tongs, and yet Yeshaya doesn’t get burned. Strange, however we understand it.

**6:7** – what sin is being forgiven? Chazal and most Meforshim say it was lashon hara of saying he was amongst a nation of unclean lips in **6:5**. According to Malbim that he was bemoaning the fact that he did not give mussar, we could say that was the sin.

There are a bunch of parallels to Moshe’s inaugural nevuah here. Moshe says he is unworthy, while Yeshaya says he is ready (**6:8**). Moshe says he is a bad speaker due to kvad peh, and Yeshaya says he has “tamei” lips. The basic meaning of “tamei” is closed up or blocked, like “atum.”[[2]](#footnote-2) So Yeshaya may be saying he has blocked lips, much like Moshe’s “aral sefasayim.” Yirmiyahu similarly protests that he doesn’t know how to speak, and then Hashem touches his mouth, as the Seraf does to Yeshaya. Yechezkel is told to swallow a megillah in chapter 2 of Yechezkel, towards the beginning of his tenure. This would give additional credence to the idea that this is Yeshaya’s first nevu’ah.

There may be some differences as well – Yeshaya is willing to be Hashem’s messenger, while Moshe is not. Why? Some meforshim (e.g. Abarbanel) say he already knew he was worthy, because this was not his first nevu’ah. But that is an assumption, as discussed. Maybe Yeshaya identifies with the people, as he says “I live within a nation of impure lips,” whereas Moshe was removed geographically and socially from the people, so he felt incapable of leading them. Also, before matan torah there was no chiyuv, necessarily, for a navi to convey Hashem’s word. Moreover, there wasn’t necessarily any tradition of prophets going to the people in the times of Moshe, whereas by the times of Yeshaya there was ample precedent. Yeshaya was from the royal family as well, according to Chazal. So that might also contribute to his willingness to lead – he was born into a role like that.

We could say things more sharply: Hashem is looking for “Whom can I send and who will go for us?” Yirmiyahu 1:4 has a second action Hashem asks from Yirmiyahu “Anything I command you, you shall say.” This extra layer of description of the mission is absent from Yeshaya. In Shemos 3:10, Moshe’s mission is described with being “sent” several times, until in 4:12 Hashem adds that He will teach Moshe what to say. In Moshe’s responses, both there and later at the end of Shemos and the beginning of Va’eira, seem to be focused on being “sent.” In 7:? Hashem commands Moshe and Aharon regarding Par’oh. In other words, the progression in Moshe’s chain is being sent, getting taught, and then being commanded. It seems the instructions are getting more and more specific and direct – a messenger/delegate is just told to get something done, with some latitude about the procedure. Being taught already implies being shown a more particular way of doing things, and then commanding is the most explicit and direct. Shlichus, therefore, seems more of a mature relationship – he is being trusted to accomplish the task.

Yirmiyahu objects that he is not qualified, and Hashem reassures him that He will tell him exactly what to do. This is basically what the Malbim says there in Yirmiyahu. Moshe had the same issue – he wasn’t comfortable doing a Shlichus, so Hashem said He would teach him, and when that didn’t work and Moshe still complains that it is like a shlichus, so Hashem said He would command him what to say. Yeshaya, though, agreed to do a Shlichus. It is noteworthy that Yeshaya never gets a “tzivui” in the entire book, while Yirmiyahu has it very often. It is very rare in general in other books of nevi’im. Thus, the implications of this difference in the inaugural nevu’ah generalize to the rest of the respective books.

**6:9** – Targum Yonasan adds a conjunction so that the pasuk means “speak to the people *that* listen but don’t understand, etc.” The Greek translation does the same, as do some other early translations, including most potential references in the Christian bible.

**6:10** – what does it mean that Yeshaya should “fatten the nation’s heart, etc.?” It sounds like “Hashmein” is a tzivui, which implies that he is supposed to make people not understand or see so that they won’t do teshuva. That’s very odd – it doesn’t sound like something nevi’im do. The alternative is that it is an infinitive – the people are constantly not listening, etc. That just raises the question of why talk to people knowing that they won’t listen. The first way is grammatically simpler but the second way is logically simpler. Perhaps it is deliberately ambiguous and is meant to imply something in between the two.

The Gemara (Rosh HaShana 17) says that Teshuva can overturn a gezar din, and it proves this from **6:10** – we see that Teshuva can cause “refu’ah,” etc., which might imply that the Gemara is reading it as a tzivui – don’t let them understand because that would allow them to overturn the gezar din. Rambam (Teshuva 6:3) describes a case where a person loses his ability to do teshuva as a punishment so that he will get total punishment for his sins, and he cites our pesukim as evidence. In other words, Rambam read it as a tzivui, that Hashem was saying not to let them do teshuva as a punishment for past aveiros so that they will be punished for them. Radak cites this view but says that the alternative is viable.

If we take the infinitive read, Hashem is just telling Yeshaya that all of his efforts will be unsuccessful. Maybe Yeshaya is being sarcastic – he is saying “go ahead, don’t listen to me, I’m going to block your ears, etc. lest you actually understand what I’m saying and save your own lives.” That would fit with the infinitive meaning (that he knows they won’t listen) even though the words themselves would be tzivui.

Malbim reads these pesukim as saying that the people are perfectly capable of noticing things but cannot be reached through philosophical argument or careful analysis – only imagery and clear information will get through. This is a bit more optimistic.

**6:12** – which people are going to be sent away into exile – is he talking to malchus yehuda, yisroel, or both?

**Chapter 1**

**1:1** - According to the Gemara in Yevumos, Menashe killed Yeshaya. If so, he survived into Menashe’s time, so why isn’t he mentioned on the list of kings during whose reign he prophesied? Aybe he didn’t have any nevu’os there, or he didn’t want to mention Menashe since he was a great Rasha. That being said Ibn Ezra, on the basis of this question, says that Yeshaya died before Menashe took over, against the Gemara.

No Malchei Yisroel are on the list, unlike Hoshei’a, who mentions both. Perhaps they were insignificant, even based on the simple reading of pesukim. The Yerushalmi in Horiyos says that after Yarovam the 2nd, the kings of Yisroel did not have the halachos of a king for par he’eleim davar, presumably since their reigns were unstable. Alternatively, we could say that his nevu’os are not relevant for malchus yisroel. The problem with this is that there are several nevu’os that relate to malchus yisroel in Yeshaya. We could say they aren’t so important that they would get mentioned in the heading of the book. This is a dochak. It also is a chiddush to say that he simply ignored the northern kingdom as if they were non-Jews; they are insignificant and are addressed in much the same way that Yeshaya addresses other nations.

Presumably, this is a header for the entire book. But the problem is that **2:1** seems to have a new header – why would that be necessary? There are 2 options: either something about chapter 2 requires a new header, or the header in **1:1** is only for chapter 1. If we take the 2nd approach, we would have to explain how this one nevu’ah was said over many kings’ reigns. Perhaps he repeated it often, or it is an amalgamation of important points he made over the years.

The chapter is one of sharp rebuke. If so, we would assume that the people needed it. If we say the header is for chapter 1 only, then we need to explain why he needed to say this if some of the kings – Chizkiyah and Uzziah, at least – were called righteous by sefer melachim. Maybe we could say the kings were righteous but the people were not necessarily so. Radak makes this suggestion, and he adduces support for this idea from the fact that the people still brought korbanos on bamos until the times of Chizkiyah. If so, then we would expect the nevu’ah to actually be about the bamos, since that is the basis for Yeshaya’s rebuke. But we don’t really find that. Maybe Radak means that the bamos were the test of a king, since not removing bamos was within his purview, so not removing them means the king did not or could not exercise all of the power he could have. Or perhaps that was a much harder area to correct, so he didn’t want to harp on it. Or perhaps he really did deal with bamos a lot – we shall see.

Ibn Ezra wants to say that there isn’t really any evidence for Yeshaya being from the royal family.

**1:2** - There is a lot of Parshanut how the opening Pesukim echo Ha’azinu. The point here is lending an ear – it is more intimate then just hearing. (Moshe) Seydel’s law (Talmid of R’ Kook) states that if a Pasuk copies from another Pasuk, it usually turns it around for purely aesthetic reasons. This would fit into this pattern. But why would he quote Ha’azinu? Presumably, it is to echo the points of Ha’azinu. **1:3** talks about foolish, rebellious children – Ha’azinu has that as well. “koneihu” is from Ha’azinu as well. There are numerous other references as the pesukim go on.

**1:3** – Is the focus here on lack of gratitude or lack of recognition of Hashem’s sovereignty over them? Rashi says that it refers to sovereignty, while Radak says that the donkey represents gratitude.

**1:4-9** – there is a description of everything being destroyed except for one isolated place, i.e. Tziyon. Presumably this is a reference to the current political events – Sancheiriv’s capture of just about everything except Yerushalayim. This is Radak’s understanding. Alternatively, Abarbanel says it means all other nations were conquered by Assyria but not Yehuda.

**1:-10-17** – a mussar schmooze that Hashem is rejecting all of their religious activity, and it seems the reason is that they are not dispensing justice. This is the implication of **1:21-23** as well. Based on his emphasis on the bamos, Radak explains that there was too much emphasis on excess korbanos on bamos at the expense of other aspects of religious life.

Amos and Yirmiyahu also talk a lot about korbanos being brought for the wrong reasons. Amos 5:22-24 seems to say that korbanos aren’t such a high priority in yezti’as mitzrayim compared to other things, and Yirmiyahu 7 says the same (see Radak there and in Hoshei’a 14 on U’neshalma farim sefaseinu). Yeshaya doesn’t mention yetzi’as mitzrayim – he doesn’t say they are unimportant, but merely that there are too many of them. The people are unwelcome in the Beis Hamikdash, there is too much chodesh and mo’ed that it is burdensome.

Yirmiyahu says listening to Hashem is more important than korbanos, and Amos says justice is more important than korbanos. Yeshaya doesn’t have any comment about what is more important then korbanos – he just says there are too many, that they are “bothersome.” Yirmiyahu says that the Jews were not “commanded” to bring korbanos, and listening to Hashem is more important – do what is commanded rather than what isn’t. This focus doesn’t appear in Amos or Yeshaya – the focus is more on the content of the activity rather than the detail of listening to orders. Dealing with the content is a more mature form of rebuke – it isn’t just a power struggle, it is about right and wrong. In general, Yirmiyahu talks more about Hashem commanding the Jews than other nevi’im do. Presumably, the issue was that at the time of Yirmiyahu, the people’s relationship with Hashem was such that Hashem had to relate to them through measures of obedience rather than content. This might parallel Yirmiyahu’s own relationship with Hashem, as we noted in Chapter 6 – he operates as a metzuveh, making him a good role model for a people who are being asked to listen to orders.[[3]](#footnote-3)

What does it mean that Hashem is fatigued by the people’s service? In 43:22, Hashem says the people make Him wearied even though He did not weary them by being too demanding. The context is korbanos. In 66:3, Hashem complains about korbanos that were meaningless. To weary Hashem may mean that people always were showing up with korbanos chatas and other things bespeaking the idea that their relationship revolved around their own failures and neediness and they didn’t invest in the relationship in other venues and forums.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Yeshaya says that even showing up is bothersome, even without bringing any korbanos. This would fit with the Radak that there was an issue of bamos at this time – the korbanos were being brought elsewhere, so even showing up to the Beis HaMikdash clearly wasn’t for a real avodah of korbanos, so even just showing up was a bother.

**1:18-20** – if you do teshuva, your sins will be erased, and everything will be good, but if not, you will be destroyed.

At this point, Ha’azinu and Yeshaya sharply diverge. Ha’azinu never mentions teshuva – and in sefer devarim in general, teshuva may not even show up as a mitzvah. Rambam took the pesukim in Nitzavim as a promise of teshuva, and Ramban agrees but says it also is a mitzvah (and hence is in lashon beinoni). Yeshaya is very stark about this – if you listen, it will be good, and if not, it will be very bad. The point seems to be that Ha’azinu – and devarim in general – focus on what the correct choice to make is, doing what is appropriate for the person to do, while Yeshaya focuses on the fact that we can take either path – it is totally up to the people. Devarim is about how people should be, the makeup of the people, and Ha’azinu particularly is about how history will play out accordingly. The fact that people have a choice isn’t really relevant to that – things are meant to be – and will be – that people will do the right thing. Yeshaya is dealing with prophecy and rebuke, and technically people can choose what they want. The freest choices are those we make out of values, not randomly or capriciously – and that’s the focus in devarim.

That could explain all the parallels to Ha’azinu – to explain how the free will expressed in Ha’azinu applies at present. It is meant to highlight where they in fact diverge.

At the end of the perek, there is a lot about avodah zara, specifically asheira. What does this have to do with all of the social injustice going on? The truth is there is a similar smichus between asheira and appointing justices. The Gemara comments that anyone who appoints an unworthy or inappropriate judge is like planting an asheira. This seems to be corroborated by the pesukim here. What the specific connection between the two ideas is remains unclear.

**Perek 2**

We have a new Nevuah here. It starts with this messianic dream of everyone coming to Beis Hashem.

**2:3** – it is unclear if “ki mitzion” is a comment of the aforementioned goyim or of Yeshaya. Radak goes with the second way.

**2:4** – who will judge? There is very little indication in the pesukim. Mahari Kara says it refers to the aforementioned mountain, i.e. those who sit on the mountain, presumably meaning the Sanhedrin. Radak says it is referring to Mashiach (Ibn Ezra concurs). His idea probably is based on a comparison to similar Messianic prophecies.[[5]](#footnote-5) But why isn’t he mentioned explicitly? It is unclear why we would want to conceal his identity. Parenthetically, this is a very significant Nevuah about a time of universal peace. It is not for naught they put this on the UN.

Why will there be peace? Maybe because there will be real justice, as mentioned in the earlier part of the pasuk; people often fight due to (perceived) injustice. This connects the first two perakim, if we want to connect them – perek 1 is about injustice, and perek 2 starts with a vision of when there will be no such problems. Abarbanel cites a view that religious differences cause war, so when (as pasuk 3 says) all people acknowledge Hashem, there will be no cause for war. These 2 positions probably relate to understanding ki mitzion of the previous pasuk – if the issue is religious warfare, then the statement probably was from the goyim, but if the issue there is judgment, then it could be a comment of Yeshaya rather than the goyim. The Radak, in fact, who said it was a comment of Yeshaya, says the issue is justice rather than religion.

Perek 42:1-4 discusses something about the eved of Hashem who will judge everyone gently yet firmly. Who is this eved? **Rashi** says it refers to the Jewish People as a whole. They will pass judgment through the nevi’im, and he refers to the pesukim at the beginning of perek 2 that we are discussing. All the goyim will come because they realize Hashem is with us, as the pasuk says in Zechariah 8 – he doesn’t cite Yeshaya because it clarifies the motivation as being because Hashem is with us rather than any other ulterior motive. **Rav Saadiah Gaon**, though, says the eved is Koresh. In 44:28 and 45:1, Yeshaya refers to Koresh as Hashem’s shepherd and anointed one. Not raising his voice (42:3) means he was a soft-spoken judge, or it means he took over bavel quietly (which in fact is what happened – there was little resistance), or, as Mahari Kara (who agrees with Rav Saadiah Gaon) says, it means he didn’t raise his voice as a general. **Ibn Ezra** says the eved is Yeshaya. **Radak** says it means Mashiach. Maybe this relates to his position in perek 2, where he also associates the unidentified judge there as well as Mashiach. In **42:6**, Radak says that both peace and unity of religion will contribute to the betterment of the world, and he refers to the Pesukim in perek 2.

There is an obvious parallel between Yeshaya 2:2-4 and Michah 4. There are, however, some differences. Michah adds that each person will sit under his fig tree (i.e. peace), and also adds that each person will follow his gods, and we will follow Hashem. Who said this nevu’ah first – Yeshaya or Michah? Maybe the superscription of perek 2 is meant to tell us the nevu’ah originated with Yeshaya rather than Michah. Yeshaya seems more universalistic, while Michah is less blindingly idealistic – the goyim will retain their gods. This also might indicate that Yeshaya said this first, in its full potential and glory, while Michah was looking at a qualified or watered down version – maybe from when after Chizkiyahu did not become Mashiach (which was around this time). Maybe that’s why the UN chose the pesukim from Yeshaya rather than Michah.[[6]](#footnote-6)

On the other hand, someone in a journal a few months ago said Michah came first, but he doesn’t give any real arguments for his position. His position seems to have been ideologically motivated – Michah was the “good guy” since each person could have his own god, while Yeshaya is the “bad guy” since he wants only one universal religion.

**2:5** – Beis Yaakov should walk b’ohr Hashem. Rashi says the goyim still are talking here – they are telling the Jews to walk with them in the ways of Hashem.

**2:6** – people are following non-Jewish practices.

**2:7** –there is a lot of gold, silver, and horses. This information also sounds like Parshas Shoftim – that’s where the exhortations to the king not have too much money or horses. Maybe this was another part of the drasha Yeshaya (theoretically) gave on parshas shoftim. Radak says the “he” here is Bnei Yisrael; but we might say it was a king, perhaps Shlomo. Yeshaya may be tracing the existence of avodah zara in the country to Shlomo. This would be another instance of concealing the identity of a king-figure – like Mashiach according to Radak.

**2:8** – people are bowing down to things they themselves made. This isn’t the only type of avodah zara – there is the sun and moon, etc. So it might be noteworthy that this type of avodah zara is mentioned. We have this kind of idea in Tehillim (in Hallel) and in the 40s of Yeshaya (e.g. 40:19 and 44:12-17).

**2:9** – man is fallen and degraded – presumably through creating said avodah zara. This leads to an interesting observation – Yeshaya is attacking arrogance yet they degrade themselves through avodah zara. Maybe it is specifically this avodah zara – a person worships his own creation, which is an act of arrogance (“autonomy”). But Yeshaya points out that this itself lowers them, since they put something worthless above themselves. We find this sometimes in modern phenomena as well (nationalism?).

What is “v’al tisa lahem?” It sounds like tzivui – Yeshaya is telling Hashem not to forgive the people. That’s very odd, and it is uncommon. **Rashi** learns it means future tense – Yeshaya is telling Hashem that he knows that Hashem will not forgive them. The better phrasing would have been “v’lo tisa lahem,” but Rashi is willing to fudge that a bit to deal with the problem. **Ibn Ezra** learns it means that none of the people deserve to be saved. He also points out that sometimes “al” is used instead of “lo.”

Even if it doesn’t mean a tzivui, it is interesting that Yeshaya would use a word that sounds like tzivui. It leaves the impression that Yeshaya thinks the people don’t deserve to be forgiven.

**2:10-19** – Everyone should hide from in fear of Hashem, and everyone’s arrogance (a list of high things and strong, mighty places) shall be brought down.

**2:16** – one of the high things is a Tarshish ship. We don’t normally consider ships to be “high” things. Maybe they fit since they carry luxuries like gold and silver, and also because they could be destroyed through a potential earthquake, which may be the way that all of these mountains will fall, etc. (like the one from Uzziah’s time?). That would be most effective in the port of eilat – In Melachim 1:22:49, Yehoshafat makes Tarshish ships to go from Eilat to Ofir to get gold, but the ships got smashed. In Divrei HaYamim 2:20:35 it is clear that this was because of his association with Achazyahu. That may be in the background here.

**2:17** repeats “v’nisgav Hashem l’vado bayom hahu” from **2:11**. That may set **2:12-17** off as one section, with the common refrain demarcating the end to a section. **2:19** repeats **2:10** about people hiding in fear of Hashem, although **2:10** is tzivui while **2:19** is a future-tense statement. Most Rishonim don’t really note this difference.

**2:20-22** – and then people will throw away avodah zara in order to hide from Hashem (again) – and who cares about man anyway, since he is insignificant?

There are two reasons to tremble in front of Hashem – for itself, since Hashem is very great; and because of sin specifically. The element of sin certainly is present. But recognizing the first element explains the tzivui of **2:10** (as Rav Soloveitchik seemed to use it in Worship of the Heart).

What does it mean to try to hide oneself against Hashem’s presence? How does one humble himself in front of Hashem? Perhaps one way is to use body posture – hiding helps a person internalize the idea that Hashem really is awe-inspiring. When Hashem’s Presence becomes manifest, the correct response is to hide in order to help express the correct emotion. He should try to “take up less space.”

**Perek 5**

**5:1-7** – My friend had a vineyard that he worked correctly, and he wanted nice grapes, but it made sour ones. I want you to judge, Yehuda, what I should do to the vineyard. What is the point of this entire thing? Maybe it is to prod the listener to think in a way he might not have if told directly – that may be the point of many meshalim in Tanach. He may be singing a nice song about a vineyard so people will get thinking about how it really isn’t nice of the vineyard, and then when he brings up that there will be no rain, they will realize Yeshaya really is talking to them and they are the vineyard. Alternatively, they might have known that Yeshaya meant to say mussar, since that was what he always did. But they may have thought the mussar was about the northern kingdom; Abarbanel suggests thus possibility. Beit Yisrael in **5:7**, then, might actually be about the northern kingdom. But it still was useful to hide it in a mashal so that the people wouldn’t realize he was talking about them.

**5:8-23** - 6 times “*hoy*” (“woe”).

**5:8** – woe to those who put houses and fields too close together without limits and will be settled alone in the land. He might be describing someone who buys out all the people around him through exploitation. This might have been a new issue, since Yovel recently stopped functioning with the beginning of the exile of the northern kingdom. Once there is no Yovel, there is nothing to stop an ever-expanding estate. There is archaeological evidence for this idea – around this time, the big houses seem to be bigger and more isolated, while the small ones got smaller and closer together.

**5:9-10** – many of these estates will be destroyed, vineyards and fields will have limited yield.

**5:11-14** – woe to those who get up early and go to sleep late drinking alcohol, who don’t see Hashem’s activities. Therefore, my nation is in exile without da’as and is hungry and thirsty. [And] therefore, all of the grand and happy things [in the city] will descend to she’ol. **Ibn Ezra** suggests that “aleiz bah” (5:14) means that other people will be happy about the city’s downfall. He then cites **Ibn Janach** that it means that it refers to the people who die – occasionally, dead people look like they are smiling, as that is a very comfortable muscular position (*rictus sardonicus*).

**5:15-16** – people will be lowered and Hashem will be exalted. **5:15** resembles **2:9** and **2:11**.

**5:17** – and then sheep will graze in peace. Maybe the sheep refer to the people who were exploited by the rich. In Yechezkel 34, the navi talks about the good shepherd who takes care of the flock and the bad shepherd who exploits them – it would be the same kind of imagery. **Rashi** has an approach like this. If it literally means sheep, it would mean that sheep will graze there because it will be desolate with plenty of room for pasturing. **Ibn Ezra** takes this perspective – it means there will be a change in economic system.

**5:18-19** – woe to those who pull themselves into evil, who say “Let Him (Hashem) do something quickly.” In other words, they believe Hashem won’t do anything, and if He does, it won’t be anytime soon.

**5:20** – woe to those with an inverted moral hierarchy

**5:21** – woe to those who think they are smart in the face of truly understanding people.

**5:22** – woe to the “heroes” of the drinking houses, who twist justice for bribery. This seems to be a repetition of the 2nd “woe” in **5:11-14** – why is it here? Maybe the first time Yeshaya was railing against people drinking for fun, and here he is railing against the evildoers who try to use alcohol to escape from the cruel reality of what they are doing.

**5:25-30** – the unrelenting, fear-inspiring enemy will come and things will become very bad.

**Perek 7**

**7:1** - The background to the story here is that Achaz was king of Yehuda for 16 years and was not very righteous. Pekach was king of the northern kingdom for 20 years, and Aram;s king Retzin made an alliance with Pekach to conquer Achaz (see Melachim “II”:16). They make some headway in the south, but then Achaz sends a big bribe to Ashur to get him to help out. They conquer Aram at the time, and then Achaz goes to Damesek and sees a particular altar that he instructs Uriah the Kohen to make a copy of. It is not entirely clear if this was an altar of Assyrian or Aramean worship. In Divrei Hayamim, we get some more information: the northern kingdom captured a lot of people, and then Oded the Navi tells the northern army to let them go since they were brothers, and they agree.

**7:2-4** – Achaz and his people were quite afraid of the invading armies, and Hashem tells Yeshaya (along with She’ar Yashuv his son) to go greet him by some pool of water, and he should tell Achaz not to worry. Presumably, the intention is that he should not call in Ashur to help him.

**7:6** – the northern alliance wants to get rid of malchus beis david and replace Achaz with “ben tov’al.” Who is that? Rashi, using the “Albam” system,[[7]](#footnote-7) suggests that “tov’al” corresponds to “Ramla,” a reference to Pekach ben Remalyah, the northern king. Rashi also cites Targum that it just means someone good in their eyes. One might also say that it refers to some person with that name. In the Bayis Sheini period, Josephus talks about a powerful family named “Tobia” on the eastern side of the Yarden. Nehcemia has reference to Tovia the Amonite, and Yiftach comes from the land of “Tov.” As such, maybe this was some ally of Pekach on the eastern side of the Jordan.

**7:7-8** – The head of Aram is Damesek, and the head of Damesek is Retzin. Within 65 years, Ephraim will be destroyed. And Shomron is the head of Yisroel, and at its head is Pekach. What’s the point of saying Damesek is the head of Aram and that Ephraim will be destroyed in 65 years? Some scholars say he was making a parody of the enemy marching song. **Most Meforshim**, though, see the pasuk as a statement. They say that the 65 years started earlier, when Amos first prophesied the downfall of Ephraim, which might be ending about now. In Amos, all we know is that the prophecy was two years before the earthquake in the times of Uzziah, but we don’t know when that was. It theoretically works out. Alternatively, **Shadal** says that 65 years really means 17, “shishim” meaning two times 6, or 12, +5. This prophecy could have been about 17 years before the destruction of Shomron. A 3rd option is to say it means 65 years from this prophecy of Yeshaya – even though the kingdom was conquered earlier, the reference may be to when all of the Jews finally were removed from the northern kingdom. After all, we know that the exile of the 10 tribes weren’t exiled all at once, as we see in Divrei Hayamim II that Chizkiyah and Yoshiya both tried to get people from the north to participate in korban pesach. So it could be that 65 years after the prophecy the populace was emptied out of the northern kingdom.[[8]](#footnote-8)

**7:9** – If you don’t believe, you won’t have credibility. What does L’ha’amin mean? **Rashi** says it means to believe in the prophecy of Yeshaya, but we could say it means to trust and rely on Yeshaya. It’s not a theological issue. The phraseology may be taken from Divrei Hayamim II:20 where Yehoshafat makes such a statement to his troops.

**7:10-12** – Yeshaya tells Achaz to ask for a sign of whatever magnitude he wants. Achaz responds that he is not one to test Hashem. Tosfos Yom Tov in Avos in the 5th perek brings this pasuk as a question on Rambam’s view that all miracles are built into creation – the pasuk sounds like Achaz could choose whatever sign he wants, which sounds like it is spontaneous.

**7:13** – you weary people and Hashem. Alternatively, it means you ascribe weakness to people and Hashem. “Hal’os” may be a pun on the word “os” used previously and afterwards to refer to the “sign.”

**7:14-16** – But Hashem will give a sign anyway – a woman is pregnant and will give birth to a son who will be named Immanuel, and he will eat butter and honey as part of his knowledge of choosing good and rejecting bad, because before he knows those things, the 2 enemy kings will leave. It is unclear who this woman is. Maybe it is Achaz’s wife or Yeshaya’s wife. **Rashi** and **Ibn Ezra** say it is Yeshaya’s wife, and we see from earlier (She’ar Yashuv) and later in perek 8 that he gives his sons symbolic names. The **Gr”a** says that “os” doesn’t have to mean something extraordinary or miraculous. **Radak** says it means Achaz’s wife, so Achaz will have a son named Immanuel. It would be quite a statement for the king to make by naming his son symbolically. Immanuel can’t be Chizkiyah because Chizkiyah was 25 when he took over and Achaz was 20 when he became king, so he was born before Achaz became king, and this child was born after he became king. This might have messianic overtones if he is from Achaz’s family – this would be another time that Radak has messianic connections where Rashi doesn’t (see also perek 2 about “v’shafat bein hagoyim”). But even if this is true, the language of the pesukim is not very clear that this is the emphasis of the pesukim – it isn’t very explicit.

**Radak** says that the child will immediately prefer butter and honey – there is something miraculous about this, as such preferences don’t usually emerge until age 2-3. **Rashi**, though, says it just means there will be a lot of butter and honey around since the invading armies will be gone.

The gospels, though, took this as a reference to the birth of Yeshu. They base themselves on the Greek (mis)translation that “almah” means virgin. That’s a lousy read of the pesukim because that wouldn’t be a particularly good sign to give Achaz that the currently invading armies will leave – it won’t happen for another 700+ years. Serious Christian scholars probably would agree.

**7:17** – The invading armies will leave, and Hashem will bring days unlike any since Ephraim split away – the king of Ashur. This is odd – it sounds like it was a great nevu’ah and then suddenly switches into saying the king of Ashur will come, which sounds pretty bad. The following pesukim also describe the invasions of Ashur and Egypt.

**7:20** – Hashem will shave the king of Ashur with a razor – his hair, beard, and leg hair will be removed. The Gemara Sanhedrin 98 does some interesting things with this imagery.

**7:21-22** – and then each person will be left with a small heard from which he can produce butter, and everyone left will eat butter and honey. It sounds like the butter and honey is not really a good thing – it’s just all that remains. Rashi earlier assumed it was a sign of prosperity. Maybe it means there will be plenty of necessities but few luxuries (“frugal comforts”).

**7:23-25** – all of the rich areas will be decimated, and in the places where people hoe the land, there will be survival. It seems the point here is that material excesses will be eliminated. The references to milk and honey maybe allusions to Israel, which gives it a positive overtone. Additionally, the **Gr”a** says that honey and butter are references to Torah, since in the times of Chizkiyah every child knew the laws of Tum’ah and Tahora.

**Perek 8**

**8:1-4** – Yeshaya is told to write “maheir shalal chash baz” on a scroll, and to assign to witnesses – Uriah Hakohen and Zechariah son of Yeverechya. Then he has a child with the “neviah” and calls him maheir shalal chash baz, since before he knows how to call to his mother and father Ashur will carry off the spoil of Aram. Is this the same story and child as in Perek 7?

* If we go with **Radak**, it can’t be, since the father in perek 7 is Achaz, not Yeshaya. It is interesting that the symbolic child from beis dovid is associated with the positive/salvation, while the symbolic child of the navi is about the negative/destruction of Aram and Yisroel. Hoshei’a also has symbolic children associated with destruction of Yisroel– yizre’el, lo ami, and lo ruchama. Maybe in both cases the idea is that the navi can or should identify with the downfall of Malchus Yisroel.
* But according to **Rashi**, it could be the same story. **Rashi** in fact says it is another description of the same story, since we assume Yeshaya has only one wife and it is around the same time as perek 7, so she could be pregnant only once at a time. It would be described twice since it emphasizes a different aspect – perek 7 was salvation of Yehuda and perek 8 is about destruction of Aram and Yisroel. This would be similar to the story of Megillas Ester – there is a story of being saved and destroying the enemies, and similarly we have leaving Mitzrayim and destroying Mitzrayim.[[9]](#footnote-9)
* **Ibn Ezra**, though, assumes there could be a time lag between the chapters, so they could be different children even if Yeshaya had only one wife.

Why was Yeshaya told to write this prophecy down? It sounds like it is something to be discussed later on – only later on will people appreciate its significance. The people aren’t listening now. Maybe this is the source for Shadal’s thinking that the second half of Yeshaya and perek 6, were written down to be pronounced or produced later.

What about these witnesses? Uriah Hakohen was mentioned earlier as the person Achaz sent to copy the altar in Damesek. Zechariah might be a levi mentioned in Divrei Hayamim who lived around the same time. Chazal, though, take these as later people – Zechariah is the navi in bayis sheini, and Uriah is the navi mentioned in Yirmiyah 26. The Gemara (end of Makkos) uses this to say that just like the prophecy of Uriah about destruction was fulfilled, so too Zechariah’s prophecy of redemption will be fulfilled. The problem is that these people were not alive at this time, so it would be quite odd to make them “witnesses.”

One question to think about is whether we consider Yisroel an enemy, a brother, or both? Is the destruction coming upon our enemies or our brothers?

**8:8** – Ashur will overflow into Yehuda – even though Achaz called in Ashur to help him, the “help” will end up attacking Yehuda as well.

**8:11-13** – Hashem restrained me from joining the conspiracy against beis dovid – rather, we should serve Hashem.

* Chazal say that Shevna HaSofer wanted to rebel against Chizkiyah – see Yeshaya 22:15-25 and Tosfos Sanhedrin 26a. This was the next generation already – maybe that would be the future time for which Yeshaya wrote this prophecy down.

**8:17** – I wait for Hashem who hides His face from Beis Yaakov. Beis Yaakov refers to everyone or only malchus yisroel? The question is to whom Hashem’s actions are not apparent? **Rashi** says it means specifically the northern kingdom – Yeshaya is waiting for them to be exiled and Yehuda saved. **Ibn Ezra** says it just means the navi will not reveal anything until Hashem gives him the green light.

**8:19** – When people say go to Ov and Yid’oni, don’t listen. According to **Ibn Ezra** in **8:17**, this would be related to the fact that the navi was keeping quiet, whereas according to **Rashi**, it may be that people simply preferred Ov and Yid’oni since they are “nicer” sources of information – they can be bribed or otherwise influenced to give a positive message.

**8:21-23** – These pesukim are very difficult to understand. There will be someone bitter who goes through the land and curses his king and deity, and he sees the land of darkness. Then there will be a later one who is worse than the first “light” one, and something about Zevulun and Naftali. **Chazal** say this refers to the stages of the exile of the ten tribes at the hands of Ashur – the first one was relatively light, and later ones were worse. The Christians claim it is referring to the appearance of Yeshu from the north. And then it would flow into **9:1**, that the people walking in darkness will see great light. But the pesukim are vague, so you can put in just about anything. They didn’t put the prek break before 8:23 perhaps because they wanted to open a perek with a pasuk that worked for a drasha, and 9:1 is great while 8:23 would not do well, since it is so obscure.

**Perek 9-10**

**9:1-2** – the people walking in darkness saw real light – he increased the populace, and the happiness was great as in harvest season. There is a kri u’chsiv which leaves the meaning either as “increased the happiness” – for the nation or “did not increase the happiness” – for the enemy. That’s how **Radak** learns.

**9:3** – the salvation will be like the one from Midyan (i.e. Gid’on). There is a similar reference in Tehillim 83:10, that Hashem should vanquish enemies like He did to Midyan in the days of Gid’on. It is not so clear why this comparison exists – maybe because both are around Pesach time (Gid’on in pshat, Chizkiyah according to Chazal – see Va’amartem zevach pesach at the end of the Haggadah).

**9:4** – there will be a great destruction of the enemy.

**9:5-6** – for a child will be born to us, and he will take the authority, and he will be called a bunch of impressive names. He will strengthen the Davidic dynasty forever, and the Kin’ah of Hashem Tzvakos is the cause of this. It seems clear we are talking about some scion from beis dovid, but this is not made explicit. This would be another time (according to Radak) that we have veiled references to kingship of beis dovid.

**Rashi** says this is a reference to Chizkiyah who already had been born; he is being renamed when he becomes the king, which would be a theme we find often in Tanach that a person gets a new name when he gets a new position or status (Yehoshua, Sarah, etc.).

What does this very long name mean? It also is unclear how much is the name and if some of it is titles of the name-giver or the named. It sounds messianic so it might fit Chizkiyah, but the meforshim blunt this implication somewhat – ad doesn’t mean forever, it means plunder, and el-gibor might just be a theophoric name.

What is with the mem-sofis in the middle of “l’marbei”? Chazal say the end of days are closed up and concealed based on this anomoly. There is a middle-mem in the place of a mem-sofis in Nechemia, and some scholars say it is because the word really could be read as one word with the one after it (heim – perutzim could be hameforatzim).

**9:7** – Hashem has sent something against Yaakov that falls upon Yisroel. What do the two names mean? The **Gr”a** says Yaakov always represents the lower level when used in conjunction with or contrast to Yisroel – the words don’t have fixed meanings but are relative to each other. In this case, then, Yaakov means the Ten Tribes and Yisroel means Yehuda.

We then have a set of pesukim that use a common refrain:

**9:8-12** – Ephraim said it had suffered a setback but will rebuild even higher, but its enemies will defeat it – *and yet Hashem has not relented from His anger and His hand still is outstretched*. And yet the people are not seeking out Hashem, the One really smiting them. **9:10-11** is odd, since it refers to Aram as being on Yisroel’s side and then as attacking Yisroel. Which is it? **Rashi** says that Aram was an enemy at a previous time – the times of Yeho’achaz. **Ibn Ezra** takes the reverse option – that Aram may be Yisroel’s friend now but tomorrow will join Ashur against them.

**9:13-16** – Hashem cut off the people of Yisroel – from the honored leaders to the lowly false prophets, as everyone is speaking nevalah, etc. – *and yet Hashem has not relented form His anger and His hand still is outstretched*. The references to “head” and “tail” in **9:13** may be echoing perek 7 where the “head” of Aram is Damesek, and Pekach and Retzin are called “zavos ha’udim,” tails of firebrand. Yisroel’s head and tail are gone, while its enemies have these things currently. Targum in **9:14** says a navi who teaches falsehood is a “safar” that teaches falsehood, rather than translating “navi” as the usual “nevi’a.” Perhaps he didn’t want to say nevi’a d’shikra since the pasuk doesn’t say explicitly that these people are false prophets, merely that they are nevi’im who teach falsehood. It also would not be such a curse to say that the con men will be killed. There is a similar thing in **3:2** where killing nevi’im is given as a punishment, and Targum again says “safar” – a good navi wouldn’t deserve to die while a bad one dying would not be a curse.

**9:17-20** – There will be fire and destruction – there will be civil wars and people will not have mercy - *and yet Hashem has not relented form His anger and His hand still is outstretched*.

**10:1-4** – woe to those who pervert the justice system – you will have nowhere to hide. *And yet Hashem has not relented form His anger and His hand still is outstretched*.

What is the point of having this phrase repeated so many times: “And yet Hashem has not relented form His anger and His hand still is outstretched?” There seem to be four stages: external enemies, destruction of leadership, internal strife, and injustice. This phrase also appears in **5:25**. **Abarbanel** says this is similar to something in Amos 4, where the navi goes through several punishments Hashem visited upon Yisroel and says “v’lo shavtem adai ne’um Hashem.” He attributes this to a style of nevi’im to build up tension. But the difference is that Amos is focusing on the Jews’ lack of response to Hashem’s messages, and Yeshaya is focusing on Hashem’s “lack of response” to the Jews’ suffering. Amos’s seems like a standard mussar schmooze – what is Yeshaya trying to say when he emphasizes that Hashem is not relenting? Furthermore, Yeshaya is dealing with social and political breakdowns, while Amos mostly describes natural disaster – even when he says that people will be killed, he doesn’t explicitly mention enemies. Amos mentions that horses will be killed and that the camps will stink – presumably that is a reference to diseases that will result or come concomitantly with the punishment. Yeshaya puts emphasis on enemies invading.

In short, Amos is dealing with “natural” punishment, while Yeshaya is dealing with enemies invading and the results – and that’s why Yeshaya focuses on the fact that Hashem has not relented. He wants to emphasize that Hashem is behind those things as well – people have to return to the One really responsible for smiting them (**9:12**) rather than finding some scapegoat. The point in Amos is that people should understand that seemingly natural disasters also require teshuva, so he repeats that “you have not returned to Me.”

This would then flow nicely into the next set of pesukim (**10:5-19**), which talk about Ashur not realizing that it merely is the instrument of Hashem’s punishment. It is exactly the point that Hashem is trying to get the Jews to understand – that Ashur merely is a pawn and not the ultimate source of the problem. And as a result, Ashur will be like a forest burned by Yisroel.

This also would fit with **10:20**, which describes Ashur as the one who smites the Jews – the Jews will not need to rely on them, but rather will rely on Hashem. The point is that the Jews will learn not to rely on the one who appears to be smiting them, but on hashem, who is the real Smiter mentioned in **9:12**.

**10:20-27** describe the downfall of Ashur and how Yisroel will be freed of their yoke.

**10:28-32** describe the march of Ashur against Yehuda

**10:33-34** – Ashur will be cut down by Hashem.

Perek 11 then goes into a nevuah about Moshiach. **11:1** has one more reference to forest imagery – a shoot will come out from the stump of Yishai, etc.

What are we to make of Ashur’s view that it has independent power? If Ashur had agreed that it merely was an instrument, would that make it OK, or are is it still bad for killing so many people? This point is disputed by the Rambam and Ramban about the Egyptians (see Ramban on Lech Lecha in the Bris Bein HaBesarim). Rambam’s view is that the Egyptians were guilty since even if Hashem wanted the Jews to be oppressed, no Egyptian had to volunteer to do it, as it was not a good thing to do. Presumably, he would say that Ashur is responsible even if it had recognized itself as an agent of Hashem. Ramban dissents, arguing that the problem with the Egyptians was that they didn’t do it because Hashem wanted them too, and in fact they exceeded the amount of affliction necessitated by the Bris Bein HaBesarim. In the case of Ashur, then, the only problem is that it did not recognize itself as a mere instrument. And that really is what the pesukim here sound like – the Ramban cites them as support for his position.

In Perek 47:6, describing the downfall of Bavel, the reason given is that they had no mercy on the Jews. In other words, they did act for Hashem but exceeded their mandate. The Ramban thus interprets the pesukim to mean that either exceeding mandates (Perek 47) or not doing it as Hashem’s agent (Perek 10) is sufficient grounds for punishment despite doing what Hashem wanted. Rambam might agree with this distinction between the pesukim but doesn’t think either one is the justification for the punishment – the real justification is that they didn’t need to volunteer.

In **47:7-8** Bavel also seems to be faulted for assuming it will be in power forever, saying “ani v’afsi od.” The Ramban picks up on this and explains that really Bavel deserved punishment on both grounds – for overstepping boundaries and acting of its own volition rather than l’sheim shomayim.

In **45:9-10**, Yeshaya seems to interrupt a prophecy about the salvation of Bavel to say “Woe to He that fights against his Maker, who is clay yet argues with the craftsman that he does nothing. And woe to the one who says to a father and mother that their efforts in childbirth are irrelevant.” According to **Rashi**, this is referring to Chavakuk’s complaints about Hashem’s lack of justice – Yeshaya is castigating Chavakuk. Presumably, in context this is to say that Chavakuk’s complaints were premature, since there would be a salvation from Bavel, and justice would be served eventually. **Radak**, though, says that these pesukim refer to Belshatzar being too arrogant and taking out the vessels of the Beis Hamikdash to drink from them. If so, this would be another reference to a problem with Bavel’s arrogance.

How much does Ashur know about the prophecies about the Jews’ downfall? If they don’t know it, then they couldn’t possibly take credit for doing what Hashem wanted them to do. One could, theoretically, connect this to the question of what “hoy” means. If, like **Rashi**, it means “woe” then it might imply that Ashur isn’t listening – it is an outsider. If, as **Ibn Ezra** says, hoy means a call to attention, it might be that the prophecy is directed to Ashur.

One trend in Assyriology now is that Ashur held a theological position close to monotheism – their one ultimate deity was far beyond the minor ones they had. Hence, their claims rivaled those of monotheists, which might explain why Yeshaya makes such a big deal out of knocking this position. Even without this, we could say that the scope of Ashur’s hegemony created some pseudo-theological enemy for Yisroel.

What is the specific problem with Ashur’s arrogant claim that their one deity charged them with conquering the Jews? We can look at arrogance in two ways – as directed towards other people, an interpersonal offense, or a problem directed at Hashem, as the Smag seems to imply by counting it as an issur d’oraysa in his section on avoda zara. The context here seems to be of this latter type – Ashur isn’t necessarily lording over others, but it is considering itself independent of Hashem. If Ashur was a polytheistic country, then things would fit – they don’t really believe in an Ultimate Power above them, but rather think they have some independent ability to act. If Ashur was something closer to monotheism, there still could be a problem – they don’t feel subservient to Hashem even if they technically profess belief in only one deity. They are moral polytheists even if philosophically they are monotheists, since their deity is subservient to the national goals and agenda. Meaningful monotheism means everything is subservient to one God and that the nation(s) works for Him, a criterion that Ashur did not meet.

**10:24** – Don’t worry about Ashur, though they will smite you and raise their staff against you like Mitzrayim. What is the comparison to Mitzrayim? **Radak** says it means Ashur will levy heavy taxes or impose hardships upon the Jews just as Mitzrayim did. **Rashi**, though, learns that Ashur will try to frighten the Jews as they threatened the Egyptians. **Ibn Ezra** says “derech” means literally the path or way – Ashur will try to conquer the Jews on its way to attacking Egypt.

**10:26** – Hashem will punish Ashur like Midyan and like He did with His staff near the sea to Mitzrayim. The reference seems to be to the splitting of the red sea – this is undisputed, unlike the previous reference to Egypt. There will be other comparisons between Ashur and Mitzrayim. For example, in **12:2** the Jews are going to praise Hashem with “Ozi v’zimras kah, etc.,” a phrase lifted from Shiras HaYam. Amos **4:10** also makes a comparison to Egypt when describing the plague (dever) that will arrive.

The point might be that there are a lot of messianic overtones of this time. Sancheriv could be Gog U’magog, and Chazal already say that Chizkiyah could have been Moshiach. That may be why Yeshaya starts to bring in imagery from yetzi’as mitzrayim, which was the big ge’ulah in the Jewish history; other nevi’im don’t seem to do this so much.

**Perek 11**

According to Radak, this perek is the 4th time we get messianic references, but here it is clear and unanimous that the pesukim are about moshiach.

Giving a symbolic name is a way of conveying a message while still leaving some information shrouded in mystery. While we may be able to guess what “Maheir Shalal Chash Baz” means, it still is a bit foggy. Not giving any symbolic name means that his message is more clear and transparent. In **11:1**, then, the child mentioned is more openly messianic, since he needs no symbolic name.

**11:3** – what does “v’haricho” mean? **Ibn Ezra** takes it literally –he will smell of yir’as Hashem, a metaphor used because the sense of smell is harder to fool than other senses. We say something “smells funny” if it is suspicious. **Rashi**, though, says it comes from “ruach” meaning he will be filled with yir’as Hashem. “Racha” in Arabic means to walk, so we might suggest it means he will walk, but that would require evidence that this was the Arabic meaning back then. And anyway, there is little reason to say it means something other than smell. There is a general problem with using other Semitic languages to interpret Tanach: the books were written for people to understand, so why would we assume that people knew Arabic back then?

**11:6-9** – lions will eat straw, etc. Are these pesukim to be taken literally that the nature of animals will change? **Rambam** (Hilchos Melachim 12) did not take it literally – the pesukim mean merely that there will be international peace. **Ra’avad** there attacks Rambam, since the pesukim say in Vayikra that Hashem will remove dangerous animals and sword from the land. Apparently, Ra’avad holds, this implies that we do take such prophecies literally. Some say Ra’avad would have been willing to entertain Rambam’s position if not for the pasuk in Chumash, and we assume that Chumash does not use metaphors like that, so that pasuk forces us to take the pesukim in Nach literally as well. But the assumption that Chumash does not use metaphors is questionable – metaphors are a natural part of language - so we will try to give a different explanation. It could be the real machlokes is about the pasuk in Vayikra. Ra’avad would say that the pasuk in Vayikra is literal based on context there – if so, there is precedent for animals changing their nature if we do mitzvos, and as such the Ra’avad would say that there is no problem reading the pesukim in Nach literally. Rambam might just distinguish between animals not attacking us (Vayikra) and not attacking other animals, which is a total change of nature. After all, we know that animals can be trained not to hurt humans, and in general animals are more afraid of humans (U’mora’achem v’chitechem yihyeh al kol chayas ha’aretz, etc.). **Radvaz** on the Rambam there tries to say that even Rambam would admit that the pesukim in Chumash are literal and prove that in Eretz Yisroel, at least, the pesukim in Nach are literal. That is a bit hard in **11:9**, where it seems clear Yeshaya is talking about Eretz Yisroel as well.

Radvaz then adds that perhaps the “literal meaning” of the pesukim in Yeshaya is not what most people would think, but rather what the Rambam says. The downside here is that we don’t really know what the literal meaning is. Maybe he is saying that figurative language is by nature false, so he just has to stretch the definition of “literal.” It could be he is driven by the Rambam’s understanding of the first perek of Bereishis in Moreh Nevuchim, where Rambam takes it literally but translates many of the words differently in that context. If so, the Radvaz might have understood that Rambam’s position in general is that things are not metaphorical but have contextual meanings. For understanding Yeshaya, it makes little difference.

**11:8** – a child will play at the opening of a snake’s hole. What is this imagery? In **65:25** we have similar language to perek 11 about lions eating straw, etc. There, it mentions a snake eating dust, as it was cursed in Bereishis 3. In fact, from **65:16-25** there are a bunch of other parallels to the story of Adam, Chavah, and the snake (such as creating new shomayim, people living a long time, etc.), only they are in reverse – now, people will live a long time rather than dying, and they will not be hatred between them and snakes. Maybe that’s what the pesukim are saying in Perek 11 as well. The only problem is that the snake doesn’t seem to have had its fate reversed – it still is eating dust in **65:25**. **Rashi** says that it just means the snake will be doing fine, since it can eat dust as always, whereas a lion must undergo a change of diet. As such, all of the animals will not need to eat other animals, so they can be friends with humans and other animals. **Ibn Ezra** says the pasuk just means that the snake will not cause any damage. But that doesn’t quite explain the fact that it is out of step with the reversal from Bereishis 3 – there, eating dust is a curse, and now it seems to be a good thing.

Maybe we can explain this based on a general idea that shows up in the end of Yeshaya. In the latter perakim, Yeshaya seems to acknowledge that even in messianic times, there will be some noticeable distinction between righteous people and less-than-righteous people (see, for example, **66:24**, which is at the climax of a messianic vision – the people there are dead from beforehand, but not everything seems to be rosy). In line with this, we might say that the image of the snake still eating dirt would be part of this pattern that not everything is going to be so perfect.[[10]](#footnote-10) Bereishis Rabba in fact asks why the snake is mentioned as eating dust if it already eats dust and it answers that his crime was quite heinous since he caused others to sin, so he remains cursed. This fits with this idea that there will remain some division even in the end of days.

One question to ask is whether Perek 11 is talking about Chizkiyah or Moshiach. In context, they seem to be about Chizkiyah, but it also does not seem like any of this transpired at that time. The issue goes back to the times of the Gemara in Sanhedrin, where Rabi Hillel’s view is that there is no Moshiach anymore, since we missed our chance in the times of Chizkiyah. Apparently, the pesukim refer to Chizkiyah but he made some error whereby the prophecy never came to pass. The Gemara seems to reject Rabi Hillel’s view. Some Rishonim say that even Rabi Hillel did not mean there really is no Moshiach, but rather that we cannot prove it from the pesukim because they refer to Moshiach. **Ibn Jikitila** holds likewise that the pesukim refer to Chizkiyah. **Radak** and **Abarbanel** say the pesukim refer to the times of Moshiach. **Malbim** avoids the issue by saying that the original intention was for the times of Chizkiyah (which is why it is placed here), but the pesukim themselves simply are describing the times of Moshiach whenever that would be. Yeshaya himself may have thought he was talking to Chizkiyah.

**11:11-16** – a series of pesukim describing redemption.

**Perek 19**

**19:18-25** – Some enigmatic pesukim. The perek in general is about Mitzrayim.

**19:18** – there will be 5 cities in Egypt speaking Canaanite and swearing by Hashem, one of them being called “Ir HaHeres.” **Targum** says it means “beis Shemesh that is going to be destroyed.” **Rashi** explains that Targum read Heres as Cheres, which can refer to the sun, so it is Beis Shemesh (Heliopolis). And he also read it as Heres, meaning destroyed, so he said that Beis Shemesh will be destroyed.

**19:24** – There seems to be a description of a triumvirate of Mitzrayim, Ashur, and Yisroel as Ovdei Hashem. The meaning here is unclear. It seems to be sending a universalistic message.

**Perek 22**

This is part of the section (13-23) of prophecies to other nations, but for some reason this perek refers to Yerushalayim, as is clear from **22:4** and other places. The beginning describes Yeshaya weeping over the destruction of Yerushalayim, which was such a bustling city and will be ravished by an enemy. The references here are pretty unclear.

**22:9-11** – you saw the breaches in the wall and gathered the water of the lower pool, knocked down houses to fortify the wall, and didn’t trust Hashem. It seems to be referring to people taking various defensive measures without having requisite trust in Hashem.

**22:12-14** – This was supposed to be a time of fasting, but there is merriment instead, since people say “Eat and drink for tomorrow we will die.” And Hashem therefore says that there will be no forgiveness until they die.

What are all of these defensive measures? In Divrei Hayamim (II:32), it says that Chizkiyah stopped up the water supply in order defend himself against Sancheiriv. He also fortified the walls and told the people not to worry, since Sancheiriv may be strong but the Jews have Hashem on their side. These are exactly the measures described in Yeshaya. It then is very noteworthy that the people are described as having a lack of trust when Chizkiyah stressed that they should rely on Hashem despite Sancheiriv’s strength. As a result, many meforshim say that perek 22 is not describing Chizkiyah at all, but rather the times of Nevuchadnetzar 100 years later. After all, Chizkiyah was a good guy and stopping up Gichon seems to be a bad thing in Yeshaya. It is more than a bit odd – they just happened to do the same thing?[[11]](#footnote-11) Chazal in fact say (Pesachim 56) that Chizkiyah did 6 things, 3 of which Chazal approved of and 3 of which they did not. The 3 things they disapproved of were cutting down the doors of the Heichal to pay tribute to Ashur, stopping up the waters of Gichon, and created a leap year when it already was Nissan. It seems that Chazal are referring to the rerouting of the water described in Yeshaya 22, and they don’t seem to have approved. In Avos D’rabi Nosson 1:4 (or 5), though, Chazal say that one of the 4 things Chazal approved of was stopping up Gichon. In other words, there is a machlokes if it was a good thing. According to Avos D’rabi Nosson, then, it will be hard to apply Yeshaya 22 to Chizkiyah, as Yeshaya condemns this activity.

Maybe we could say that it depends on when you lived. In the times of Yeshaya and Chizkiyah, it was referring to him, and it was a condemnation. But once we saw that Chizkiyah was the vehicle of Hashem’s salvation, it makes more sense to learn it as referring to some other time, since Chizkiyah seems to have done very well. If this is correct, then Chizkiyah is a bit more complicated than we generally think. There was a real concern that he was doing the wrong thing.

**Perek 36-37**

These are the narrative perakim about the invasion of Ashur. There is a parallel in Melachim I:18-20. There is an issue in the dating of the invasion of Sancheriv, since it says in Melachim I:18:1 it says that Sancheriv came in the 14th year of Chizkiyah, which would be 8 years after the fall of Shomron, which would be 713 B.C.E., but Sancheriv ascended the throne only in 705 B.C.E. Moreover, in Sancheriv’s Annals, he describes a third campaign into Yehuda in 701. This is a problem.[[12]](#footnote-12) Tanach might not be so discriminating with the names of Assyrian kings. The Gemara in Rosh Hashana says that many of the Persian kings were “the same.” That doesn’t seem to mean they really were the same person, but rather that Tanach doesn’t take such an interest in that.[[13]](#footnote-13) The Gemara in Sanhedrin also says that Sancheriv had 8 different names – it mentions all of the names of Assyrian kings mentioned in Tanach. Maybe they also mean here that Tanach wasn’t careful about this – the point is that whatever we want to say about Sancheriv could fit any of these kings. If so, Tanach calls him Sancheriv even though it was someone else who really had a different name.[[14]](#footnote-14) Yeshaya in facts mentions Sargon in Perek 20, and according to Assyriology, he was king in 713. He would be called Sancheriv in Yeshaya 36 since these perakim would be based off of those from Melachim.[[15]](#footnote-15)

We could say there are two separate invasions here – one in 713 and one in 701. Melachim first describes that of 713, where Chizkiyah sends tribute, and then it describes the later invasion of 701. Alternatively, it all is one story, and Ashur in effect ignored the tribute. In this second read, Chizkiyah was ready to give in but then had to be realistic and changed his attitude to fight, whereas according to the first way, the change is from one invasion to the next – much slower and more gradual, theoretically. This is a machlokes **Ralbag** (two invasions) and **Abarbanel** (one invasion).Yeshaya 36 seems to have only one story – the tribute is not even mentioned. Either this is a proof there only was one invasion, or it is not important to Yeshaya to mention that point, so we skip right to the salvation in the 2nd invasion.

We also could say that sometimes kings restarted the count of years of their reign at some climactic event. It is clear from Divrei HaYamim that Chizkiyah tried to make a universal korban pesach even for the Jews of the vanquished northern kingdom. We know from other sources that the year 715 was a shmittah year – that would be a good opportunity to get everyone to come to the mikdash, since no one was working the land anyway. If so, maybe the recount starts in 715, so the 14th year really is 701, when Sancheriv in fact invades (according to his annals).[[16]](#footnote-16)

Perek 36 describes Ravshakeih’s taunting. In Perek 37, Chizkiyah sends a message to Yeshaya to ask him to daven for the people. Yeshaya responds with a prophecy that Sancheriv will leave and be killed at home. In fact, te army leaves because Kush mobilizes its forces and Ashur is diverted to deal with them. Then Chizkiyah davens – his basic point is to save the Jews for kiddush Hashem. Yeshaya responds with a prophecy that the Jews will be victorious over Sancheriv. The perek concludes with the Mal’ach Hashem kills them.

**Perek 38-39**

Here we have two more narrative perakim about Chizkiyah. Perek 38 starts with Yeshaya telling Chizkiyah that he will die from his current illness, but then Chizkiyah davens and is given another 15 years. According to the Gemara in Brachos, he was going to be punished for not having children, but then he agreed to marry Yeshaya’s daughter. We then have a description of a document Chizkiyah wrote when he recovered – the basic theme is his thanks for the recovery. **38:19**, which speaks of fathers telling children about Hashem, might be a hint to Chazal’s interpretation. In perakim of Tehillim with similar themes, fathers and children are not mentioned, so this would be further reason to focus on this line as a point for Chazal to base themselves on. **38:22** doesn’t make much sense – he was told to smear fig plaster on himself but then asks for a sign that he will go up to the mikdash. There is no response to this request. In Melachim, the order is different – Chizkiyah asks for a sign that the fig plaster will work and Yeshaya responds with the sign of the shadow moving back, which is mentioned earlier in Yeshaya. **Abarbanel** concludes from this that Melachim was the earlier version and Yeshaya copied it with certain things omitted, and then the pesukim were added later as a flashback.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Perek 39 describes the king of Bavel sending messengers to Chizkiyah after hearing of his recovery, and Chizkiyah shows them all of his treasures. Yeshaya rebukes Chizkiyah for it, saying that Bavel eventually will carry off everything he showed them. And Chizkiyah’s children will be servants to Bavel; Chizkiyah accepts the rebuke and says that there will be peace and truth in his time. In Divrei HaYamim (II:32:30), when it sums up Chizkiyah, it describes all of his righteousness but then says that Hashem left Chizkiyah to test him when the ambassadors of Bavel came. It sounds like it is saying that Chizkiyah seems to have failed the test. This also implies that Chizkiyah could easily have gone the wrong way, as we said earlier. He is more multifaceted than we tend to think.

1. This presumes that it was not a philosophical issue in the debate in Yirmiyahu but rather an emotional debate. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. V’nitmeisem-v’nitamtem – Chazal are highlighting that this is the idea of tum’ah in general – that it blocks someone’s ability to experience Hashem, perhaps because the heavy physical experience clouds his ability to experience reality. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Ha’amek Davar to Vayeilech. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Rabbi Carmy’s essay he gave out in class about this. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See, for example, 11:1-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This comment was made in half-jest. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Divide the alphabet into two and give each a rank order number, so alef becomes lamed, beis becomes mem, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. This is difficult, since if we take the reference to Yoshiya helping bring people from the north back to mean that there still were lots of people there, it would be more than 65 years later – by a long shot. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See the **Gr”a** to Mishlei on the pasuk of “binfol oyivcha al tismach.” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This is quite a dochak. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Not so strange – if the strategy worked for Chizkiyah during the previous invasion, why not use it again in later times? [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Only if you think the dates in Assyriology are totally, totally accurate. I see no reason to assume this. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. This doesn’t make any sense. Why would Tanach try to confuse me? If it is important enough for Tanach to include the names of the kings, why not already do it right? You have to explain why we would want to use different names at different times and be deliberately confusing, which I think is much harder than saying that the Gemara means exactly what it says that they all were the same person, and the Ba’al HaMa’or already writes on that Gemara that pshat in the pesukim is does not seem like the Gemara, but honestly, that never bothered anyone. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. That’s backwards – if that was the intention, we should say that all of them could be called Sancheriv not that Sancheriv could be called any of these names. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Chazal would not work with this, since Yirmiyahu wrote Melachim and Yeshaya wrote Yeshaya, so Yeshaya came before Melachim. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. This also means that Tanach is deliberately confusing, since there is absolutely no way to know from Tanach that this recount happened. All of the other chronological issues in Tanach dealt with by the meforshim are internal – Tanach contradicts itself, so we have to work it out. In our case, however, this read comes out of nowhere – there is absolutely nothing in Tanach to indicate this recount, and I see no reason to throttle Tanach based on Assyriology. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. This is among the stranger things I have heard – whoever threw it in did a terrible editing job. Was it so hard for the Anshei Kenesses Hagedolah (or whomever you might think it is) to fix things up? [↑](#footnote-ref-17)