

Bringing the Prophets to Life

**Weekly insights into the Haftara
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DAVID AVDECHA

**HA'AZINU - 51 p'sukim
- Shmuel Bet 22:1-51**

The haftara that we read this Shabbat is one that is not read every year but only when there is a Shabbat between Yom Kippur and Sukkot, i.e., when Parashat Ha'azinu is not read on Shabbat Shuva. This year, therefore, I have the opportunity to share some thoughts about this not-so-common haftara (40% of years), found in the 22nd perek of Sefer Shmuel Bet.

This chapter is actually quite unique as it is the only one in all of Tanach that is repeated a second time, as we also find it in Sefer T'hilim, in the 18th perek of the Book of Psalms (with slight variations). Furthermore, although found in Sefer Shmuel, a book that chronicles the events of that era, it is written in a poetic form and called by Chazal, SHIRAT DAVID, the poem (or song) of David (much as the parasha of Ha'azinu is referred to as SHIRAT MOSHE). Interestingly, this song of David, found at the end of Sefer Shmuel, forms a "bookend" to the entire work, as the book opens

(in the second perek of Shmuel Alef) with SHIRA - SHIRAT CHANA, the beautiful song of thanksgiving to Hashem offered by Chana, the mother of Shmuel HaNavi.

The fact that David composes his song of thanksgiving to G-d should not surprise us. He was, after all, the "Sweet Singer of Israel", N'IM Z'MIROT YISRAEL, as he is called in the very first pasuk following this ode (Shmuel Bet 23:1). And, as we well know, he also authored the bulk of Sefer T'hilim, a collection of poetic prose in praise and thanks to Hashem.

And it is precisely this point that I find both fascinating and illuminating.

King of Israel is a complicated position. Beside the additional mitzvot incumbent upon the Jewish King, he is also expected to create a delicate balance between being seen by his people as a representative of the Divine but never as His replacement. The people must consider his successes as revelations of Hashem's guiding hand and not as the king's military genius. In effect, the King was expected to be a dominant figure and powerful leader but never to take sole credit for his accomplishments. David HaMelech is considered the ideal Jewish King, NOT because he was perfectly sinless but because he was humble enough to confess those sins. He was the ideal king,

NOT because he succeeded in every military confrontation with the enemy - but because he wrote songs of praise and thanksgiving to G-d in recognition that victory was not his - but was His. It is difficult to point to any other king - or, for that matter, any other political leader throughout history - who embodied these two contradictory qualities.

At what time during his lifetime, did David compose this song is a discussion between the parshanim. While Rashi suggests that David wrote it at the end of his life, after he had overcome all of his enemies, Don Yitzchak Abarbanel feels that he wrote it toward the beginning of his reign, but he sang it throughout his life, whenever he experienced a victory. While we may often think of David's actions as king, focusing on one event or decision in his life, this haftara reminds us of his true greatness: a full commitment to G-d and a desire to let people understand that it is HE, Hashem, who guides them and protects them.

Is there any question, therefore, why we will close this haftara reading - as we do every haftara reading - with the bracha of MAGEN DAVID and why, each and every day, we pray that Hashem will bring the Mashiach with the words ET TZEMACH DAVID AVDECHA? He, who dedicated his life to Hashem and His commands and

who saw the importance of teaching his people to recognize their G-d and praise Him, is certainly deserving of being blessed each and every day.

And today, we pray to soon see the fulfillment of both 'David' brachot. 🌟