

# Bringing the Prophets to Life

**Weekly insights into the Haftara  
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## AM K'LAVI YAKUM

**BALAK - 17 p'sukim - Micha 5:6-6:8**

Does the opening phrase of this week's haftara trouble you? It never bothered me - until I began to consider the seemingly innocent words: V'HAYA SH'EIRIT YA'AKOV - "The remnant of Yaakov shall be, in the midst of the many peoples, like dew from G-d..." Certainly, I was unsure of what that meant, exactly, but it was Micha's words SH'EIRIT YA'AKOV that disturbed me. "The remnant of Yaakov"? To what 'remnant' is the navi referring? And why would it be addressed only to a remnant?

I was again reminded how important it is to ascertain the era during which these prophecies were given in order to understand the message Micha was relaying to his generation. I turned to the recently published book KI KAROV EILECHA by HaRav Ya'akov Meidan to better clarify the nevu'a found in our haftara.

Rav Meidan reveals that Micha spoke his words during the reign of the righteous King Chizkiyahu - a time when the Assyrian hordes invaded

Judea and destroyed most of their cities. Hence, the navi addresses the 'remnant' of Israel, i.e. those who survived the Assyrian onslaught. And yet, although Hashem spared Yerushalayim due to the entreaties of the King, Chizkiyahu had sinned by relying upon an alliance with Egypt for salvation - and not upon HAKADOSH BARUCH HU [see Sefer Yishayahu 31:1-3; 36:4-6].

All of this becomes clear with the closing words of this opening verse where Micha states that the surviving Judean nation will become independent from others "that do not look to anyone nor place their hope in mortals" [5:6]. This promise of an independently powerful Israel continues with the navi's assurance that: "Your hand shall prevail over your foes, and all your enemies shall be cut down!" [5:8] and, even more powerfully: "The remnant of Yaakov shall be among the nations... like a fierce lion among flocks of sheep!" [5:7]

In essence, the haftara's initial p'sukim establish the primary theme of Micha's message. The success of the Jewish nation will depend on Israel's complete reliance upon, and faith in, our Father in Heaven. Chizkiyahu's decision to form an alliance with Egypt, would eventually lead to the collapse of the Judean Kingdom some years later, as subsequent monarchs followed his decision and, in fear of enemy attacks

relied on alliances with neighboring powers.

Micha's message to his generation was a simple one: Belief in G-d must mean faith in Him alone - and not in other 'gods', others' promises or other alliances. This simple truth is found in Moshe's farewell "song" in the declaration:

HASHEM BADAD YANCHENU, V'EIN IMO EIL NEICHOR - "Hashem guides [Israel] alone; with no alien deity alongside [D'varim 33: 12].

In fact, Rav Meidan suggests that there is a meaningful connection of this very message found in our haftara to this week's parasha. He submits that this navi's lesson of independent power is actually echoed in Hashem's prophetic words that He placed in the mouth of Bil'am. (And, I would add, the words are ones especially significant for us in these days). For Bil'am declares: HEIN AM L'VADAD YISHKON - that Israel would be a nation that would dwell alone, and then adds: HEIN AM K'LAVI YAKUM! - "She shall be a nation that rises like a lion!

It is only when we place our faith in - and rely on - the One and Only Divine Being, will we be successful! Only of such a nation can it be said to be an AM K'LAVI YAKUM! ✨