



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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Two Faces of Faith

On Wednesday, June 12, a handwritten note was placed in a crevice of the Kotel. The note read: *“Behold, a nation rises like a lioness, and like a lion it lifts itself.”* (Bamidbar 23:24) These words were originally spoken by Bilam, the prophet who came to curse the Jewish people but, by divine intervention, found himself blessing the Jewish nation instead. He speaks of a people who, when faced with challenge or threat, do not cower but rise—like a lioness awakening to protect her young, like a lion who lifts himself with majestic force. The person who placed this note was Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and the following day, Israel launched a military operation in Iran under the name “Operation Rising Lion.”

The image of the lion is not only a symbol of national strength—it is a deeply rooted prophetic vision. In this week’s Haftorah, the prophet Micha describes the *She’eiriv Yaakov*, the remnant of Jacob, using two metaphors that at first appear to be at odds with one another. Micha writes: *“And the remnant of Yaakov shall be in the midst of many nations like dew from Hashem...”* and shortly after, *“And the remnant of Yaakov shall be among the nations like a lion among the beasts of the forest.”*

This pairing—dew and lion—offers two powerful, seemingly opposite

characterizations of the Jewish people. Dew arrives gently, sustaining the earth with consistency. It represents the Jewish people when we live among others peacefully, offering spiritual clarity, moral courage, and steadfast faith. The impact of dew is subtle, but essential. It descends directly from Hashem, just as the influence of *She’eiriv Yaakov* emanates from a divine mission.

But the lion presents a different face. When the Jewish people are encircled by enemies and threatened with destruction, they do not remain passive. Like a lion among the beasts of the forest, or a young lion among the flocks, they rise with strength and precision. The lion does not wait to be attacked. It senses danger and responds with power. In these moments, *She’eiriv Yaakov* is not merely surviving—it is asserting its role in shaping destiny.

The Malbim emphasizes that this remnant will not place its trust in foreign nations or political alliances. Rather, like the dew that falls directly from Heaven, their salvation will come from Hashem. Yet their trust will not be limited to hope and prayer alone. When the moment demands it, they will act with force. The lion imagery signifies not only protection, but the capacity to confront and defeat those who seek to destroy them.

This dual identity—of being both dew and lion—is not contradictory. It is

complementary. It reflects the complexity and sanctity of the Jewish mission. To those who show kindness and partnership, we bring blessing and peace. But when confronted by hatred and violence, we are prepared to rise with might and conviction.

As Rav Yosef Tzvi Rimon recently observed, we are living through the writing of a new chapter of Nach. The words of the prophets are no longer only studied in classrooms or chanted in shuls; they are unfolding before our eyes. We are not just learning the story—we are part of it.

We bring nourishment to a parched world and we stand strong when threats surround us. We draw strength from above and act with courage below. We carry the legacy of the quiet and the fierce, of blessing and defense, of peace and resilience. The *She'eirit Yaakov* endures and our story continues. ■