



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

VAYEILECH

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Two Paths, One Return

The haftorah of Shabbos Shuva calls us into the heart of repentance. Hoshea opens with the stirring words, שׁוּבוּהָ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי כָשַׁלְתָּ, *Return, O Israel, to Hashem your G-d*. At first glance, this echoes Yeshayahu's cry from *Tzom Gedaliah* - דְּרֹשׁוּ ה' בְּהִמָּצְאוֹ קְרָאֵהוּ בְּהִיטְרוֹ - *Seek Hashem when He is found, call Him when He is near*. Why do two prophets of the same era deliver what sounds like the same message?

A closer look reveals that each teaches us a different pathway into teshuva.

YESHAYAHU'S TESHUVA:

TRANSFORMATION IN A MOMENT

Yeshayahu speaks to the leadership of his time. His call is for *radical transformation*: abandon your ways, seize the closeness of Hashem while He is "still near," and turn completely. The Malbim compares this to catching a beloved before they storm out—grabbing hold of the relationship before it slips away. Yeshayahu's model is dramatic, the teshuva of a sudden pivot, the power to turn darkness into light.

Hashem's response is described in jubilant imagery: the mountains and hills singing, the trees clapping their hands. It is the joy of a nation renewed in an instant.

HOSHEA'S TESHUVA: THE PATIENT PROCESS

Hoshea, by contrast, speaks to the people. His message is *gradual return*. As the Ibn Ezra notes, "mi'at, mi'at"—little by little. Hoshea guides us to take words with us—confession

and prayer—and to substitute the sacrifices of the Temple with the offerings of our lips. Teshuva here is a steady movement forward, one step at a time. Even missteps are not failures, for the very act of turning toward Hashem transforms the past into merit.

Hoshea's images are gentle: the dew that nourishes, the rose that blossoms, the cedar that takes root. His is the voice of endurance, growth that is deep and lasting.

TWO MODELS, ONE MESSAGE

Yeshayahu and Hoshea speak in different registers—one to rulers who can change history with a decree, the other to individuals who change life step by step. Together they remind us that teshuva takes many forms. Sometimes we leap, sometimes we inch forward. Both are precious to Hashem.

On Shabbos Shuva, the call is simple and urgent: return. Whether in the thunder of Yeshayahu or the quiet persistence of Hoshea, each of us is invited to take our step back to Hashem. May this season of teshuva draw us close, and may the mountains themselves rejoice at our return. ■

SHABBAT AFTERNOON PARSHAT HASHAVUA SHIUR

Given this week by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**
Beit Knesset Ohel Yitzchak,
Rechov Washington 12 at 5:15pm